

MONMOUTH'S REBELLION

Paul Barillon d'Amoncourt (1630–1691), French Ambassador to England (1677–1688)

to Louis XIV (1638–1715), King of France (1643–1715)

London, 16 July 1685

I have now to give you as exact an account as I can of the state of the Duke of Monmouth's affair. It is not exactly known how many men he has; they say in London 20,000. I believe he has really eight or ten thousand, of which 6000 are tolerably well-armed; the rest are not sufficiently well-armed for a field of battle. It is clear his forces have gone on increasing, and it seems they have not acted against him with the promptitude and vigour which would have been necessary to finish at once an affair the consequences of which may be dangerous. But the small number of troops of His Britannic Majesty has not been sufficient to enable them to fall at once upon the Duke of Monmouth and stop his further progress. It would have been necessary to have left London unprotected, which would have been very imprudent, for men's minds are in such a state that the least incident might cause great disorder there.

More than two hundred suspected persons have been arrested there, among whom are many rich merchants and other rich persons of note. This causes a great change in people's minds and much interruption to commerce. The people secretly favour Monmouth, and that would openly appear, should an occasion present itself which would allow them to declare without great danger. The King of England is well aware of this and is determined not to leave London upon any consideration. It is certain that if any movement is made in any part of England, Monmouth's affair will become more difficult, because it will be necessary to separate the King of England's troops, for they can place no dependence upon the militia, who are more disposed to favour Monmouth than the King's party. The news which came yesterday is that Monmouth, having taken and pillaged the town of Wells, is gone to Bridgewater, which he designs to fortify. It is a post where, it is said, he can subsist very well, having in his rear a very fruitful country and full of the factious. It is even said that he cannot be attacked in Bridgewater but by separating the King's troops and making points of communication upon the river, which is very broad at that place. This requires time and more regular troops than Lord Feversham¹ has under his command. The three Scotch regiments have passed through London on their way to him. Mr. Lasnis will have in a few days a regiment of 600 Horse in a condition to march. The three English regiments are in the river, and will march towards the army. All these together will, in twelve or fifteen days, make up 7000 men.

Up to the present Lord Feversham has not been in a state to undertake anything very vigorous against Monmouth. The Royalists' loss has been greater than was said in the engagement at Philips Norton. There were full 100 men killed at the spot where the Duke of Grafton advanced. It is clear that the Duke of Monmouth subsists with facility, and that the people furnish him with necessaries more willingly than they do to His Britannic Majesty's troops.

George Roberts, *The Life, Progresses, and Rebellion of James, Duke of Monmouth* (London: Longman, 1844), II:40–42.

¹ Louis de Duras (1641–1709), Earl of Feversham, a French Huguenot émigré, commanded the English army against Monmouth.