

# PETITION

## County of Hereford

10 January 1642 [OS]

Whereas many grievances abounded in the Kingdom which we hoped would have been reformed by this Parliament, gladding our hearts by the establishing of some excellent laws at the beginning, but is now become unfortunate by the misunderstanding between His Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament, to our great grief and damage, whereof we of these parts have a more particular feeling for that the Earl of Stamford<sup>1</sup> and others coming into our country (pretending the peaceable government thereof) by authority of both Houses of Parliament, and protesting that wrong should be done to none, the clean contrary whereof we have found by the plundering of many of the houses of many of His Majesty's good subjects, laying nothing to their charge but not assisting them, killing and hanging some and hauling others at horses' heels very inhumanely, and committing diverse spoils and outrages contrary to all laws and conscience, to the horrible astonishment of His Majesty's subjects of this County, who before that lived in peace and obedience to His Majesty and the laws of the land.

Likewise there came in the company of the said Earl one Mr. Sedgwicke, a preacher, who in his sermons used many unseemly speeches, tending not only to the great disgrace of persons of high honour and of the gentlemen of this County then attending His Majesty, but also to the seducing of His Majesty's people to adhere unto him and his tenets of separatism and innovations. And the said Earl caused the common gaol and other prisons of the said County to be set open, and the prisoners therein, as well felons as others, to go at large, contrary to law, justice, good government, and humane society.

And the said Earl, neglecting the laws of the land, forced great sums of money from many of His Majesty's subjects; received part of the rents and revenues to the cathedral church belonging; removed a minister from his benefice and placed another in his stead; settled possession of lands and tenements; used tyrannical government at his pleasure, contrary to the Law; disarmed many trained soldiers of the County so far as in him lay and carried away their arms, together with the magazine of the County.

The consideration whereof, and the future evil that is like to ensue to the whole Kingdom if peace be not speedily established, and for that by grievous experience we find that the government of the Houses of Parliament disjoined from His Majesty's co-operation with them has not produced, nor is like to bring forth, those happy fruits of peace and charity (which we must acknowledge) we have been filled with under the reign of His Majesty that now is, until the misunderstanding did arise between his sacred person and his two Houses of Parliament; and for that we would rather choose our lives and fortunes should endure anything required by His Majesty, with the assent of the Lords and Commons in Parliament, than receive all the felicity which is promised by both Houses of Parliament accompanied with the tyrannical oppressions which their ministers have even overwhelmed the Kingdom with.

We humbly pray that both Houses of Parliament would forthwith submit to such terms of accommodation as His Majesty will graciously yield unto, rather than suffer us to remain any longer under the extremest of all evils—we say not a civil war, but that which is like to be the most horrid and desperate civil war that can be apprehended possible to befall any nation.

John Webb, *Memorials of the Civil War Between King Charles I and the Parliament of England as it Affected Herefordshire and the Adjacent Counties* (London: Longman, Green, and Company, 1879), II:354–355.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Grey (c. 1599–1673), Earl of Stamford