

FOR THE BETTER GOVERNMENT OF HIS MAJESTY'S ARMY

Reading, 25 November 1642

We, having taken into Our princely and serious consideration the great misery and ruin falling and likely to fall upon Our good subjects (if not timely prevented) by the plundering, robbing, and spoiling of their houses, and taking from them their money, plate, household stuff, cattle, and other goods, under pretence of their being disaffected to Us and Our service.

And these unjust and unlawful actions done by diverse soldiers of Our army, and others sheltering themselves in the same, under that title, have, of Our tender commiseration of such their sufferings, as detesting all such horrid and barbarous proceedings, and for their future defence and preservation, thought fit to publish and declare Our royal pleasure to be that from henceforth no officer, soldier, of horse or foot, or party sent from Our army presume to search for or seize upon any money, plate, goods, or household stuff belonging to any of Our subjects, of what condition soever, without Our express warrant for the same, under Our sign manual, declaring the cause of such seizure.

And if any, either officer or soldier of Our army, of horse or foot, presume from henceforth to plunder, spoil, or rob any of Our people, or take from them any of their money, plate, household stuff, or any oxen, sheep, or other cattle, or any victuals, corn, hay, or other commodities or provisions going to or from any Our markets or otherwise, being in the grounds, houses, or possession of any Our subjects, without giving full satisfaction for the same; upon complaint made thereof, We will and command the officer-in-chief of the quarter within which such fact shall be committed to proceed against such offender or offenders by the law martial, without favor or connivance, and cause him or them to be executed accordingly without mercy.

And if any officer-in-chief of such quarter shall either neglect or refuse to do justice upon any person whatsoever offending against any particular herein mentioned, Our will is and We do require the party grieved to repair unto Us, wheresoever We shall remain, and appeal to Our justice, which We shall be ever most ready to afford any of Our subjects for redress of their suffering, in any the least kind whatsoever.

Likewise for the better order in Our army, and for the preservation of the due government thereof, We do further strictly charge and command all officers and soldiers, both of horse and foot of the same, as also all parties sent out, that they, nor any of them, presume to depart or be absent from their quarter without a pass or license under the hand of the officer commanding in chief in such quarter of Our army, upon pain of death; nor that any other but such Our officer-in-chief presume to give any pass or other license to any officer or soldier to be absent, upon pain of cashiering.

And that Our pleasure herein declared may be fully observed and produce the effects We intend for the good and security of Our subjects, We do hereby further require all the officers commanding in chief in any the quarters of Our army to cause this, Our proclamation, to be published and made known to all the officers and soldiers under their command, and to see that severe and due punishment be inflicted upon such as shall henceforth offend against any the least particulars herein before mentioned, as they and every of them expect to avoid our high displeasure for the neglect thereof.

A Proclamation for the Better Government of His Majesty's Army, and for the Preventing the Plundering, Spoiling, and Robbing of His Majesty's Subjects under any Pretence whatsoever, upon Pain of the Punishments herein Declared (1642).