

NEGOTIATIONS IN KENT

Thomas Stanley (1581–1669)

to Royalist Commanders at Tonbridge

In July 1643, a Royalist detachment defeated a small Parliamentary force near Tonbridge (Kent), capturing two of the Kentish Parliamentary leaders—Sir Thomas Walsingham (1600–1669), Vice-Admiral of Kent, and Lieutenant Lee. Captain Thomas Stanley, a prominent Royalist gentleman of the County, served as an intermediary in negotiations between the two factions.

West Peck (Kent), 23 July 1643

We came so late last night to Wrotham that the Deputy-Lieutenants were gone to bed, and we were forced to sit up the rest of the night until they met this morning about 6 o'clock, at which time we delivered our petition and letter, after which (and their consultation between themselves) we were called in and they delivered their minds unto us very fairly, but not so fully as we desired. Which occasioned a long debate and at the last, for the preventing of blood and ruin to this county, they have agreed to send our petition to the Parliament this day by a messenger of their own with their letters of recommendation, hoping such an answer as may content reasonable men.¹ And as touching our letter for a cessation of arms until an answer from the two Houses to our petition; they have thereunto agreed, so we will do the like, as also keep our soldiers from plundering and violence.

The great hardship of this last day and night have so distempered my body that I cannot come unto you this day, but I shall (God willing) wait upon you tomorrow and do you the best service I can if I may enjoy my former freedom and liberty, whereof I would make no question if I had not some cause of suspicion. I protest I have (since I came among you) bestowed all the faculties of my wit and understanding for a good accommodation between them and us, for the peace and utility of this county in danger to be destroyed by these unhappy distractions; no man can promise to himself his desired success, a bad end is better than law, so a reasonable satisfaction is far better than a miserable devastation.

Let me entreat you to send me a letter by this bearer which may testify your consent to avoid all acts of hostility and plundering, as also that I may freely come unto you; and if your minds be unhappily otherwise, yet send it presently unto me that I may give an account unto the Deputy-Lieutenants. The God of peace direct you all for His glory and our comfort.

Scott Robertson, ed. "Dalison Documents," *Archæologia Cantiana* 17 (1887):365–366. [modernized]

¹ In response to this petition, the House of Commons on 24 July 1643 ordered "the Deputy-Lieutenants and officers of the forces in Kent to pursue the directions sent unto them on Saturday last; and to let the mutineers know that this House will accept no petition from them till they have laid down their arms, and returned to their dwellings."