

SECOND SIEGE OF BRAMPTON BRYAN CASTLE

Colonel Sir Michael Woodhouse (1601–)

to Prince Rupert (1619–1682), Count Palatine of the Rhine

Brampton, 6 April 1644

This day, between one and two of the clock, the rogues made a sally out of the Castle. Colonel Cost [and] his men had the approaches. Both officer and soldier ran; quitted the works. Some pioneers were killed; not above two soldiers killed, for they were swift of foot and left twenty muskets.

The rogues were in our courts of guard betimes to throw down our works [and] fired our battery, but before they could accomplish anything to purpose of their desires, I was with them and regained the works again, and shall this night make all up again with my own men, for pioneers to purpose I cannot get.

If Your Highness intends to have this castle, you must please to send me men which will defend what we make, and fight. Those men which are ordered for me I am confident will serve me still at this rate; all the officers are in fault of theirs, wherefore I desire to know of Your Highness where they shall be hanged.

I have taken a woman that was sent out of the castle with a letter to a man of this county for relief from Gloucester; the man I have likewise. He denies any letter to be returned by him from her, and she justifies the delivery of it to her hand. The queen was returning in man's apparel and offered to be a soldier in Croft's company. I desire Your Highness' pleasure concerning them.

Those of my men are now upon the place and shall not stir to have another battery burnt. This was the second, and I hope Your Highness will not let the poor remainder I have [be] tired out or the castle left for want of good men, when they are to be had, if a greater concern commands them not another way.

When there is anything good, Your Highness shall have it sooner. Monsieur Degone is of my opinion that in eight days the castle may be in our hands if we had wherewithal, I shall be very diligent and rest Your Highness' most obliged servant

Brampton, 12 April 1644

I now received these enclosed from Sir William Vavasour,¹ and do think it fit to declare to Your Highness that if they advance without I receive assistance to the purpose, I cannot make good the place I am engaged in. Last night about 12 of the clock I attempted to fire the breach, it being filled with timber, and did it, but the rogues put it out again with much ado. I had a sergeant shot, and yesterday one cannoneer. The last night the miners lodged themselves and, if I be let alone, doubt not of the place. Sir, what is past I refer to Your Highness' consideration.

Brampton, 14 April 1644

This day at twelve of the clock I received your letter, and give Your Highness humble thanks for sending more men, for we were tired out. Last night we were with our mine under the graft, and found several springs that hinder much, but notwithstanding I hope towards the latter end of this (week) to have the main spring...

Brampton, 17 April 1644

This day Sir William Vavasour came to my quarters and advised me to send to the castle once more, which I did with him. And it wrought with them for the delivery of the place, giving them their lives and to be at Your Highness' pleasure. We were treating with them before your Highness' letter came to my hands, which I am sorry for, but your command shall be obeyed for the ward and children.... Sir, I desire your orders concerning the men from Oswestry, Harberts, or Russells; for those Your Highness sent me, they shall return

¹ Sir William (–1659), Baronet Vavasour of Copmanthorpe, Royalist commander

tomorrow towards Salop, and for the cannon that Your Highness will give me order for them likewise.

I desire Your Highness' commands whether or not you will have a garrison kept here and likewise in Hampton Castle. This place is strong and I believe cause these parts to bring in their contributions, and a good company may be had here by Your Highness' order in a short time.

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:358–360.