

CAPTURE OF BERWICK

Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658)

to William Lenthall (1591–1662), Speaker of the House of Commons (1640–1655, 1659–1660)

Berwick, Monday, 2 October 1648 /OS/

I have formerly represented to the committee at Derby House how far I have prosecuted your business in relation to the commands I did receive from them. To wit, that I having sent a party of horse with a summons to Berwick, and a letter to the committee of estates, which I supposed did consist of the Earl of Lanark¹ and his participates, and a letter of kindness and affection to the Marquess of Argyll² and the well-affected party in arms at Edinburgh, with credence to Colonel Bright³ and Mr. William Rowe, Scout-Master of the army, to let them know upon what grounds and with what intentions we came into their Kingdom; and how that, in the meantime, the Marquess of Argyll and the rest at Edinburgh had sent Sir Andrew Kerr, Laird of Greenhead,⁴ and Major Strangham to me with a letter and papers of instructions expressing their good affection to the Kingdom of England, and disclaiming the late engagement; together with my answer to the said letters and papers; duplicates of all which I sent to the committee at Derby House, and therefore forbear to trouble you with the things themselves.

I think now fit to give you an account what further progress has been made in your business. The two armies being drawn up, the one under Lanark and Monro⁵ at Sterling, and the other under the Earl of Leven⁶ and Lieutenant-General Leslie⁷ betwixt that and Edinburgh, the heads of the two armies being upon treaties concerning their own affairs, and I having given (as I hoped) sufficient satisfaction concerning the justice of your cause and the clearness of my intentions in entering that Kingdom, did, upon Thursday, 21 September, and two days before (the Tweed being fordable) march over Tweed at Norham into Scotland with four regiments of horse and some dragoons, and six regiments of foot, and there quartered, my headquarters being at the Lord Mordington's house.

Where hearing of the Marquess of Argyll, the Lord Elcoe, and some others were coming to me from the Committee of Estates assembled at Edinburgh, I went on Friday, 22 September, some part of the way to wait upon his Lordship; who, when he was come to his quarters, delivered me a letter, of which the enclosed is a copy, signed by the Lord Chancellor, by warrant of the Committee of Estates; and after some time spent in giving and receiving mutual satisfaction concerning each other's integrity and clearness (wherein I must be bold to testify for that noble lord the Marquess, the Lord Elcoe, and the other gentlemen with him, that I have found nothing in them than what becomes Christians and men of honor), the next day it was resolved that the command of the Committee of Estates to the Governor of Berwick for rendering the town should be sent to him by the Lord Elcoe and Colonel Scott, which accordingly was done. But he, pretending that he had not received the command of that place from those hands that now demanded it of him, desired liberty to send to the Earl of Lanark, engaging himself then to give his positive answer, and intimating it should be satisfactory.

Whilst these things were in transacting, I ordered Major-General Lambert to march towards Edinburgh with six regiments of horse and a regiment of dragoons; who accordingly did so and quartered in East Lothian, within six miles of Edinburgh, the foot lying in his rear at Coperspeth and thereabouts.

¹ William Hamilton (1616–1651), Earl of Lanark, Secretary of State for Scotland (1640–1649) and chief negotiator for the Scots at Newcastle (1646). In 1648, he fled to Holland as a Royalist exile.

² Archibald Campbell (1607–1661), Marquess of Argyll, prominent Covenanter and leader of the Scottish rebellion against Charles I.

³ Sir John Bright (1619–1688), colonel of a regiment of foot

⁴ Sir Andrew Kerr (–1665), Baronet Greenhead, Covenanter and member of the Committee of War

⁵ George Munro (1602–1693), Earl of Newmore

⁶ Alexander Leslie (1582–1661), Earl of Leven, Covenanter

⁷ David Leslie (c. 1600–1682), Covenanter general

Upon Friday, 29 September, came an order from the Earl of Lanark, and divers other lords of his party, requiring the Governor of Berwick to march out of the town; which accordingly he did on Saturday, the last of September; at which time I entered it, having placed a garrison there for your use. The Governor would fain have capitulated for the English, but we, having the advantage upon him, would not hear of it; so that they are submitted to your mercy, and are under the consideration of Sir Arthur Haslerig,⁸ who (I believe) will give you a good account of them; and who has already turned out the malignant major and put an honest man in his room.

I have also received an order for Carlisle, and have sent Colonel Bright with horse and foot to receive it. Sir Andrew Kerr and Colonel Scott being gone with him to require an observance of the order, there having been a treaty and an agreement betwixt the two parties in arms in Scotland to disband all forces, except fifteen hundred horse and foot under the command of the Earl of Leven, which are to be kept to see all remaining forces disbanded. And having some other things to desire from the Committee of Estates at Edinburgh for your service, I am myself going thitherward this day; and so soon as I shall be able to give you a further account thereof, I shall do it.

In the meantime I make it my desire that the garrison of Berwick (into which I have placed a regiment of foot, and shall be attended also by a regiment of horse) may be provided for; and that Sir Arthur Haslerig may receive commands to supply it with guns and ammunition from Newcastle, and be otherwise enabled by you to furnish this garrison with all other necessaries, according as a place of that importance will require.

Desiring that these mercies may beget trust and thankfulness to God, the only author of them, and an improvement of them to his glory, and the good of this poor kingdom, I rest your most humble servant...

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:18–22.

⁸ Sir Arthur Haslerig (1607–1661)