

LETTER

James Stanley (1607–1651), Earl of Derby
to George Browne (–), his secretary

25 July 1651

I am put out of pain by Donald's coming, for we had heard sad stories, and I was doubtful of the worst. I pray God the business go well forward, for it concerns Heaven and earth. My Lord Galloway¹ had written that the enemies' forces were between him and the army, and could therefore inform me little; and the boatmen reported bad things, for which I purpose some good unto them in way of correction.

I understand that Mr. Digby² is at the waterside near Galloway; by him I hope of some more comfortable relations. If please God that you may come yourself with glad tidings our hopes will be then completed. If you do not come yourself, be sure to write (which I hope is truth) that His Majesty expects the gentlemen that are with me to accompany me till I receive His Majesty's summons, at which time we may march together in pursuance of the former resolutions.

This I desire, in regard that some of them here are very impatient and doubtful concerning my commands, since Mr. Ilsley writ to Sir Thomas Tiddesley that his best were to come to court, and that it is his friends' advice to him. Indeed, I do easily believe that the good man is deceived by some that wish me no good; for if those persons who I have fixed upon as such that may assist me in my intended services be taken from me, I may have a melancholy time on it.

I understand that Jack Ashurst and Mr. Ilsley have both of them commands in the army, and I therefore wonder less at their persuasions of their friends to come unto them; and I am not so dull as not to know that the party which has engaged them would engross also all the rest. Write to me therefore very particularly, I pray, such a letter as I may show unto the gentlemen now with me to take off any jealousy that may possess them in this matter.

I have made my preparations to come with all speed when I am called. I thank God I shall have five hundred good fellows with me, I hope in good equipage. This you may be sure of; but your report hereof may be more or less, according to your discretion, for I see noise carries much in these days.

The common people of Scotland say (as Donald tells me) that the Duke of Derby is coming with five thousand; you may also, if you will, say so in jest, till the often repeating make it so in earnest.

I have sent notice into Lancashire of my coming in with the King. Now, if they be deceived of that expectation, as when Duke Hamilton came there without me, it may endanger some ill, as it did then.

God be thanked, all is well with us in this country, though the Bishop of Down³ bid us be sure of an enemy ere now. And I hope that such order is taken here, both in furnishing my forts and settling the militia, that an enemy will have no encouragement to come, though they know me out of the land.

I would willingly that it were made known unto the gentlemen here that such orders as they or any of them shall receive from me, either to go with me or to stay here, as I shall appoint, will equally be resented by His Majesty; and that His Majesty will well receive from me such motions as I shall make to him on their behalf, when please God he be enabled to do for them. And all this the rather, because the security of this place will be a service as acceptable to him as if it were done in England.

¹ James Stewart (1610–1671), Earl of Galloway

² George Digby (1612–1677), Baron Digby, eldest son of the Earl of Bristol

³ Henry Leslie (1580–1661), Bishop of Down (1635–1661)

I have sent a boat for Ireland and a man to seek out Sir Thomas Armstrong.⁴ The diurnals that have been taken by our frigates tell strange things—that my Lord Clanricarde⁵ is retired to a religious house; that all is their own in that Kingdom, etc.

But this is very true—that Ireton had besieged Limerick, and had put over a water, near the town, at least 2.000 foot and 600 horse. They battered the walls of the town with three great guns, but their bridge broke; and my Lord Castlehaven⁶ came into the town with a good strength of horse and foot. So they of Limerick had a good opportunity to fall on the enemy (in a place called the Little Island), which they did to some purpose, for they cut off the aforesaid horse and foot, and put all to the sword but what they drowned in the river. The report goes further, but that I dare not aver for a truth, though it be believed by very many, that upon this defeat Ireton drew all his forces together, and in a rage assaulted the old town (so is called a village by the great town), but was beaten off, and the townsmen had execution of them for three miles, and killed 4.000 more.

I pity your condition at the sight of every good magpie, and on many more occasions. God will send a time, I trust, when we shall have rest; not only in the world to come, but here a while, for a matter of forty or fifty years.

Donald comes, according to your desire, both for the time, as soon as the weather could permit, and for the *dequoy*, the sum of £20, of which you will know more particularly by others letters from Baggerly, etc. I have the greatest satisfaction of my cousin Musgrave that I can wish. He was much pleased at your letter, and I shall be no less at anything more which you can write unto him that may be in order to his desires, which you are already enough acquainted with.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:284–288.

⁴ Sir Thomas Armstrong (c. 1633–1684)

⁵ Ulick Burke (1604–1657), Marquess of Clanricarde, Royalist commander in Ireland

⁶ James Tuchet (c. 1617–1684), Earl of Castlehaven, Royalist commander in Ireland