

BATTLE OF WORCESTER

Sir Rowland Berkeley (1613–1696)

to Sir Thomas Cave (–c. 1663), his Father-in-Law

Cotheridge (Worcestershire), 12 September 1651

I hope that you have before this received a letter from my wife, and another from me, by one Colledge, who promised to be with you at Stamford by 10 o'clock yesterday. In those letters you were informed of our late trouble and present quiet.

I now thank you for your kind writing by Major Smith's servant, and for your fatherly affection. Your invitation to myself, my wife, and my children to come over to you is most comfortable, but I cannot be away from home, as you will perceive anon. In my last I only intimated to you some difficulties I passed through in the late bustle; I will now acquaint you more fully of them.

On the 3rd of the month, the very day and time of the fight, I was taken from hence by a major with a party of horse, who had orders to bring me to the King. I had received several private messages from Worcester while the King was there urging me to come to him; but, resolving not to meddle, I had remained at home. Before I came to the town the fight was begun at Powick, and I, being dismissed from the major and his party to await the King's leisure, enquired the occasion of my being sent for. I was told that Major-General Massey was made Governor of Worcester, and that there was a commission to certain gentlemen of the County, whereof I was one, for the aiding and assisting of him; which employment I not liking, went presently to my horse, intending to get home again with what speed I could, the battle being this time hot on both sides of the town.

By the time I came to the bridge, the King's forces were retreating from Wick and the Parliament pursuing, and no man was suffered to pass, I presently made to the Foregate, where I was likewise stopped, and thence to Saint Martin's Gate, and getting out there endeavoured in vain to go into the Droitwich road. I then took the footpath that goes to Perry Wood, and made up towards the battle, where there was hot service and, being within musket shot, turned over hedge and ditch on the left hand and got into Droitwich way at Barbourne Bridge, not meeting a man to trouble me, and thence to Ombersley and so to Holt Fleet as fast as I could.

Having well passed through the army, I rode through fields and closes for about a mile and then, being to cross Worcester Road, I was taken by a party of Scots, I having neither sword nor pistol. They would not let me pass, and at last began to quarrel as to whose prisoner I should be. At last they told me they would carry me to their party of about 120 horse that were before.

When we came to the party, they brought the news of the forces at Wick, and finding them in dis-order with it, I lagged by degrees until I was in the rear and, taking the opportunity of a blind lane, clapped spur over hedge and ditch and was presently out of sight. About 9 at night I came home, having been five hours about it.

The next morning, by sunrise, came a party of the Parliament horse and took me from hence, telling me I must go to the General, and took my dun colt with them, but by the time I came to Saint John's I found that they had no orders for what they did. At last they were all gone excepting him that had the colt, and for about half-an-hour we rode about the fields among the dead bodies, and I persuaded him to deliver the colt to my man again, and gave him all the silver I had in my pocket, about 15s or 16s.

Since then I have been informed that my name has been given in, amongst many others, for coming with the King of Scots, and that there are orders issued for inventorying the goods and stopping the rents of all named in the list. If there be any justice left upon earth, I hope they cannot touch me.