

To the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Fairfax, Commander in Chief of the Parliament's Forces, at 'Sherborne: These:'

'Shaftesbury,' 4th August, 1645.

SIR,

I marched this morning towards Shaftesbury. In my way I found a party of Clubmen gathered together, about two miles on this side of the Town, towards you; and one Mr. Newman in the head of them,-who was one of those that did attend you at Dorchester, with Mr. Hollis. I sent to them to know the cause of their meeting: Mr. Newman came to me, and told me, That the Clubmen in Dorset and Wilts, to the number of ten-thousand, were to meet about their men who were taken away at Shaftesbury, and that their intendment was to secure themselves from plundering. To the first I told them, That although no account was due to them, yet I knew the men were taken by your authority, to be tried judicially for raising a Third Party in the Kingdom; and if they should be found guilty, they must suffer according to the nature of their offence; if innocent, I assured them you would acquit them. Upon this they said, If they have deserved punishment, they would not have any thing to do with them; and so were quieted as to that point. For the other 'point', I assured them, That it was your great care, not to suffer them in the least to be plundered, and that they should defend themselves from violence, and bring to your Army such as did them any wrong, where they should be punished with all severity: upon this, very quietly and peaceably they marched away to their houses, being very well satisfied and contented.

We marched on to Shaftesbury, where we heard a great body of them was drawn together about Hambledon Hill;-where indeed near two-thousand were gathered. I sent 'up' a forlorn-hope of about fifty Horse; who coming very civilly to them, they fired upon them; and ours desiring some of them to come to me, were refused with disdain. They were drawn into one of the old Camps, upon a very high Hill: I sent one Mr. Lee to them, To certify the peaceableness of my intentions, and To desire them to peaceableness, and to submit to the Parliament. They refused, and fired at us. I sent him a second time, To let them know, that if they would lay down their arms, no wrong should be done them. They still (through the animation of their leaders, and especially two vile Ministers) refused; I commanded your Captain-Lieutenant to draw up to them, to be in readiness to charge; and if upon his falling-on, they would lay down arms, to accept them and spare them. When we came near, they refused his offer, and let fly at him; killed about two of his men, and at least four horses. The passage not being for above three abreast, kept us out: whereupon Major Desborow wheeled about; got in the rear of them, beat them from the work, and did some small execution upon them;-I believe killed not twelve of them, but cut very many, 'and put them all to flight.' We have taken about 300; many of which are poor silly creatures, whom if you please to let me send home, they promise to be very dutiful for time to come, and "will be hanged before they come out again."

The ringleaders which we have, I intend to bring to you. They had taken divers of the Parliament soldiers prisoners, besides Colonel Fiennes his men; and used them most barbarously; bragging, They hoped to see my Lord Hopton, and that he is to command them. They expected from Wilts great store; and gave out they meant to raise the siege at Sherborne, when 'once' they were all met. We have gotten great store of their arms, and they carried few or none home. We quarter about ten miles off, and purpose to draw our quarters near to you to-morrow.

Your most humble servant,  
OLIVER CROMWELL.