

For the Honourable William Lenthall, Speaker of the Commons House of Parliament: These.

Bristol, 14th September, 1645.

SIR,

It has pleased the General to give me in charge to represent unto you a particular account of the taking of Bristol; the which I gladly undertake.

After the finishing of that service at Sherborne, it was disputed at a council of war, Whether we should march into the West or to Bristol? Amongst other arguments, the leaving so considerable an enemy at our backs, to march into the heart of the Kingdom, the undoing of the country about Bristol, which was 'already' exceedingly harassed by the Prince his being thereabouts but a fortnight; the correspondency he might hold in Wales; the possibility of uniting the Enemy's forces where they pleased, and specially of drawing to an head the disaffected Club-men of Somerset, Wilts and Dorset, when once our backs were towards them: these considerations, together with 'the hope of' taking so important a place, so advantageous for the opening of trade to London, did sway the balance, and beget that conclusion.

When we came within four miles of the city, we had a new debate, Whether we should endeavour to block it up, or make a regular siege? The latter being overruled, Colonel Welden with his brigade marched to Pile Hill, on the South side of the City, being within musket-shot thereof: where in a few days they made a good quarter, overlooking the City. Upon our advance, the enemy fired Bedminster, Clifton, and some other villages lying near to the City: and would have fired more, if our unexpected coming had not hindered. The General caused some Horse and Dragoons under Commissary-General Ireton to advance over Avon, to keep-in the enemy on the North side of the Town, till the foot could come up: and after a day, the General, with Colonel Montague's and Colonel Rainsborough's Brigades, marched over at Kensham to Stapleton, where he quartered that night. The next day, Colonel Montague, having his post assigned with his brigade, To secure all between the Rivers From and Avon; he came up to Lawford's Gate, within musket-shot thereof. Colonel Rainsborough's Post was near to Durdam Down, whereof the Dragoons and three regiments of Horse made good a post upon the Down, between him and the River Avon, on his right hand. And from Colonel Rainsborough's quarters to From River, on his left, a part of Colonel Birch's, and 'the whole of' General Skippon's regiment were to maintain that post.

These posts thus settled, our Horse were forced to be upon exceeding great duty; to stand by the Foot, lest the Foot, being so weak in all their posts, might receive an affront. And truly herein we were very happy, that we should receive so little loss by sallies; considering the paucity of our men to make good the posts, and strength of the enemy within. By sallies (which were three or four) I know not that we lost thirty men in all the time of our siege. Of officers of quality, only Colonel Okey was taken by mistake (going 'of himself' to the enemy, thinking they had been friends), and Captain Guilliams slain in a

charge. We took Sir Bernard Astley; and killed Sir Richard Crane,-one very considerable with the Prince.

We had a council of war concerning the storming of the Town, about eight days before we took it; and in that there appeared great unwillingness to the work, through the unseasonableness of the weather, and other apparent difficulties. Some inducement to bring us thither had been the report of the good affection of the Townsmen to us; but that did not answer expectation. Upon a second consideration, it was overruled for a storm. And all things seemed to favour the design;-and truly there hath been seldom the like cheerfulness to any work like to this, after it was once resolved upon. The day and hour of our storm was appointed to be on Wednesday morning, the Tenth of September, about one of the clock. We chose to act it so early because we hoped thereby to surprise the Enemy. With this resolution also, to avoid confusion and falling foul one upon another, That when 'once' we had recovered the Line, and Forts upon it, we should not advance further till day. The General's signal unto a storm was to be, The firing of straw, and discharging four pieces of cannon at Pryor's Hill Fort.

The signal was very well perceived of all;-and truly the men went on with great resolution; and very presently recovered the Line, making way for the Horse to enter. Colonel Montague and Colonel Pickering, who stormed at Lawford's Gate, where was a double work, well filled with men and cannon, presently entered; and with great resolution beat the Enemy from their works, and possessed their cannon. Their expedition was such that they forced the Enemy from their advantages, without any considerable loss to themselves. They laid down the bridges for the Horse to enter;-Major Desborow commanding the Horse; who very gallantly seconded the Foot. Then our Foot advanced to the City Walls; where they possessed the Gate against the Castle Street: whereinto were put a Hundred men; who made it good. Sir Hardress Waller with his own and the General's regiment, with no less resolution, entered on the other side of Lawford's Gate, towards Avon River; and put themselves into immediate conjunction with the rest of brigade.

During this, Colonel Rainsborough and Colonel Hammond attempted Pryor's Hill Fort, and the Line downwards towards From; and the Major-General's regiment being to storm towards, From River, Colonel Hammond possessed the Line immediately, and beating the enemy from it, made way for the Horse to enter. Colonel Rainsborough, who had the hardest task of all at Pryor's Hill Fort, attempted it; and fought near three hours for it. And indeed there was great despair of carrying the place; it being exceeding high, a ladder of thirty rounds scarcely reaching the top thereof; but his resolution was such that, notwithstanding the inaccessibleness and difficulty, he would not give it over. The Enemy had four pieces of cannon upon it, which they plied with round and case shot upon our men: his Lieutenant-Colonel Bowen, and others, were two hours at push of pike, standing upon the palisadoes, but could not enter. 'But now' Colonel Hammond being entered the Line (and 'here' Captain Ireton, with a forlorn of Colonel Rich's regiment, interposing with his Horse between the Enemy's Horse and Colonel Hammond, received a shot with two pistol bullets, which broke his arm),-by means of his entrance of Colonel Hammond

they did storm the Fort on that part which was inward; 'and so' Colonel Rainsborough's and Colonel Hammond's men entered the Fort, immediately put almost all the men in it to the sword.

And as this was the place of most difficulty, so 'it was' of most loss to us on that side, -and of very great honour to the undertaker. The Horse 'too' did second them with great resolution: both these Colonels do acknowledge that their interposition between the Enemy's Horse and their Foot was a great means of obtaining of this strong Fort. Without which all the rest of the Line to From River would have done us little good: and indeed neither Horse nor Foot could have stood in all that way, in any manner of security, had not the Fort been taken. -Major Bethel's were the first Horse that entered the Line; who did behave himself gallantly; and was shot in the thigh, had one or two shot more, and had his horse shot under him. Colonel Birch with his men, and the Major-General's regiment, entered with very good resolution where their post was; possessing the Enemy's guns, and turning them upon them.

By this, all the Line from Pryor's Hill Fort to Avon (which was a full mile), with all the forts, ordnance and bulwarks, were possessed by us; -save one, wherein were about Two Hundred and twenty men of the Enemy; which the General summoned, and all the men submitted.

The success on Colonel Welden's side did not answer with this. And although the Colonels, and other the officers and soldiers both Horse and Foot, testified as much resolution as could be expected, -Colonel Weldon, Colonel Ingoldsby, Colonel Herbert, and the rest of the Colonels and Officers, both of Horse and Foot, doing what could be well looked for from men of honour, -yet what by reason of the height of the works, which proved higher than report made them, and the shortness of the ladders, they were repulsed, with the loss of about One Hundred men. Colonel Fortescue's Lieutenant Colonel was killed, and Major Cromwell dangerously shot; and two of Colonel Ingoldsby's brothers hurt; with some officers.

Being possessed of thus much as hath been related, the Town was fired in three places by the Enemy; which we could not put out. Which begat a great trouble in the General, and us all; fearing to see so famous a City burnt to ashes before our faces. Whilst we were viewing so sad a spectacle, and consulting which way to make further advantage of our success, the Prince sent a trumpet to the General to desire a treaty for the surrender of the Town. To which the General agreed; and deputed Colonel Montague, Colonel Rainsborough, and Colonel Pickering for that service; authorising them with instructions to treat and conclude the Articles, -which 'accordingly' are these enclosed. For performance whereof hostages were mutually given.

On Thursday about two of the clock in the afternoon, the Prince marched out; having a convoy of two regiments of Horse from us; and making election of Oxford for the place he would go to, which he had liberty to do by his Articles.

The cannon which we have taken are about a Hundred-and-forty mounted; about a Hundred barrels of powder already come to our hands, with a good

quantity of shot, ammunition, and arms. We have found already between Two and Three thousand muskets. The Royal Fort had victual in it for a Hundred-and-fifty men, for Three-hundred-and-twenty days; the Castle victualled for nearly half as long. The Prince had in Foot of the Garrison, as the Mayor of the City informed me, Two-thousand five-hundred, and about a thousand Horse, besides the Trained Bands of the Town, and Auxiliaries a Thousand, some say a Thousand five-hundred.-I hear but of one man that hath died of the plague in all our Army, although we have quartered amongst and in the midst of infected persons and places. We had not killed of ours in the Storm, nor in all this Siege, Two-hundred men.

Thus I have given you a true, but not a full account of this great business; wherein he that runs may read, That all this is none other than the work of God. He must be a very Atheist that doth not acknowledge it.

It may be thought that some praises are due to those gallant men, of whose valour so much mention is made:-their humble suit to you and all that have an interest in this blessing is, That in the remembrance of God's praises they be forgotten. It's their joy that they are instruments of God's glory, and their country's good. It's their honour that God vouchsafes to use them. Sir, they that have been employed in this service know, that faith and prayer obtained this City for you: I do not say ours only, but of the people of God with you and all England over, who have wrestled with God for a blessing in this very thing. Our desires are, that God may be glorified by the same spirit of faith by which we ask all our sufficiency, and have received it. It is meet that He have all the praise. Presbyterians, Independents, all have here the same spirit of faith and prayer; the same presence and answer; they agree here, have no names of difference-pity it is it should be otherwise anywhere! All that believe have the real unity, which is most glorious; because inward, and spiritual, in the Body, and to the Head. For being united in forms, commonly called Uniformity, every Christian will be peace-sake study and do, as far as conscience will permit. And for brethren, in things of the mind we look for no compulsion, but that of light and reason. In other things, God hath put the sword in the Parliament's hands,-for the terror of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well. If any plead exemption from that,-he knows not the Gospel: if any would wring that out of your hands, or steal it from you under what pretence soever, I hope they shall do it without effect. That God may maintain it in your hands, the direct you in the use thereof, is the prayer of

Your humble servant,
OLIVER CROMWELL.