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TWO LETTERS OF RICHARD
CROMWELL, 1659

EDITED BY
RALPH C. H. CATTERALL

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2. *Two Letters of Richard Cromwell, 1659.*

IN the Lansdowne collection of manuscripts in the British Museum, vol. 821, are twenty-three letters of Richard Cromwell to his brother Henry. Most of them are of little value, but two, fols. 153 and 154, possess importance as proving that Richard did not so

readily acquiesce in his downfall as is generally supposed. Heath states that he declared himself unwilling to "have a drop of blood shed for the preservation" of his greatness, which was "a burden" to him (Chronicle, 744). While it is not improbable that he made these assertions, it is plain from these letters that he soon changed his mind, as indeed, was commonly believed at the time. Barwick writing Hyde on May 2d remarks that "they say he much repents of what is past." (Thurloe, VII. 666.) It is equally plain that Guizot was mistaken in asserting that "Richard allowed more than a month to pass before he wrote to his brother or sent him any directions." (Guizot, I. 143.)

The letters here printed are written in cipher (deciphered) and are neither dated nor signed. The events mentioned, however, assign the first letter almost certainly to the 12th of May, and the second to the 17th of the same month. They are misplaced as they stand in the collection. It is possible that they were not received by Henry Cromwell, for he complains in a letter written to his brother on the 23d that he has heard nothing from him "for some time before the last parliament was dissolved." (Thurloe, VII. 674.)

RALPH C. H. CATTERALL.

I. (FOLIO 154).

I shall not say in how sad a condition I and owre family, nay the nations are in for it is better for me to throwe myselfe in the dust and crye before the Lord, my sins hath brought what is come to pase upon us but truly it is as low as men can make it and the flourishing bough of it at spring is weathered I shall let my deportement be made knowne by my Bro¹ and Petty² the first beinge a spectator .to my carriage at the time the par sat I can assure you I stode not so highe as my father did yet I thought it was fitting I should keep the grounde of a good conscience wch I have done hetherto though it be for my present ruen and famuly for I could not have beleved that religion relation and selfe in-trest wold have deceved me sense Petty departure whoe was fuly instructed the same for Scotland at the same time being sent for youre better corre-spondency the rumpe of the parl hath met³ whoe are about sixty and are very violent upon him that is gone as wel flyinge high upon those that are living there is a commite of safety apointed who sits at Walling-ford Howse the names of them are Fl⁴ Des⁵ Vane Hasselrige Ludlow Lambert and others⁶ they are propounding to the parl five generals that

¹ Lord Broghill. He left London April 29, 1659. Thurloe, VII. 665.

² Dr. Petty, afterwards the celebrated Sir William Petty.

³ May 7.

⁴ Fleetwood.

⁵ Desborough.

⁶ Appointed May 7 (C. J., VIII. 646) but did not include Lambert and Desborough until the 9th. (*Ibid.*)

J. W. [unclear]

shal have equal powers whoe are not to act a part in the government of the army¹ though youre provocation is very greate and you have a great sense of the honor of my deceased father and the perishing condition of the famuly yet youe wil be wary what you doe for youre owne sake and the sake of those that shal have an affection with you nothing giveth hopes but a cleare understanding and good correspondency with general Moncke whoe hath written a letter which is very favorable² but I hope it is only to hold himselfe in a good opinion with them at Westminster until a faire oportunity I beleive they here intende to be very vygorous and briske if not timely prevented which cannot be but by a diversion from the forces at the distant places I knowe noe hope but some such way and that must be also assisted by frinds and strong places here³ which if there be and hopes with you there being none left here it wil be necessary that we should keepe boeth often and close correspondency I am now in daly expectation what course they wil take withe me my confidence is in god and to him wil I put my cause I have heard nothing from Scotland or Dunklerque nor fleete this nation is ful of raige and unquietnes 500 horse would have turned al but my E⁴ was a spectator how corporals led troops from there captaines and captaines from there colonels I beleive K and L⁵ are not longe lived if it wold please god to let them see there dainger yet theings might be retreived but oure hopes are lowe I knowe not whether a liberty or a prisson The Lord be with you and for me pray doe nothing that may be for your ruen but lay youre bussines withe united strength and then leave the succese to god I could wish you could have a correspondency by some ship from Ireland to general Mountague

I rest

deare brother

youres most affectionatly

II. (FOLIO 153).

I am not able to advise my freinds my councel and my relations having all forsaken me⁶ I am now attending the greate god, whoe is only

¹ This suggestion was made to Parliament on May 11 (*C. J.*, VII. 649). On the 13th, however, seven instead of five were named (*ibid.*, 650), a fact which shows that Richard wrote after the 11th and not later than the 13th. As he does not mention the discussion in Parliament over the naming of a committee of state, which took place on the 12th, it seems certain that the letter was written on that day.

² *I. e.*, to the Rump. Read in Parliament May 9 (*C. J.*, VII. 647). No date is given when written, but it must have been before the 5th. (Guizot's *R. Cromwell*, I. 381.)

³ As Richard does not mention the offers of assistance repeatedly made by Bordeaux to Thurloe on behalf of France even as late as May 18 (Guizot, I. 379-385, 387, 389) it seems probable that these had not been communicated to him by Thurloe.

⁴ Broghill. The word "lord" preceding has been erased.

⁵ Fleetwood and Desborough. K and L being their cipher designations.

⁶ The formal adhesion of Monk and his officers was read in Parliament on the 18th (*C. J.*, VII. 658). It was dated the 12th. Lockhart's submission to Parliament was made on the 17th (Thurloe, VII. 670-671) and was also read in Parliament on the 18th (*C. J.*, VII. 657).

my hope I wish he had been more when in prosperity but as to the ey of men I was not wanton they have nothing to say though I am in the duste with my mouthe as to god I shall not direct you to your owne counceles being only able to offer you matter of fact wch would be too tedious and supitious to relate it in paper and therefore I have as farre as I can instructed doctor King whoe hath seen things and understood more by his generall converse than myselfe Pray have a care whoe you trust the world is false And for myselfe those that were my father's freinds *pretended ones* only were myne it required time to acquaint myselfe with them and they tripped up my heeles before I knew them for though they were relations yet they forsooke me I knowe Ffld and Desb regards not ruen soe that they may have there ends they are pittiful creatures god will avenge innocency I have acquainted this bearer with Mounkes letter ¹ in answer to what I sent him wch was the same I sent to you it is a poore one ; and without Bro can retriue and the fleete stand stenche there is noe hopes as to my busines greate severities are put upon me and I exspect the greatest this afternoone I looke for comittee to come unto me, with yesterdays votes² this bearer shal alsoe be acquainted wth them thes men intend nothing lese then ruen to us boeth yet let me not provocke youre judgement I knowe not more to say, but to let you know the great men doe not agre and that the army is in greate disorder the horse and foote the one for his penny a day the other for his thrippence a day besides honest men throwne out only because they were protectorians David's case was very heard let us rely upon the god of our ffather. and it wil be as much o' hon^r to know how to. I shall desire the Lord to be y^{or} helpe in all y^{or} streight, and difficultyes with myne, and my wyfes true respects I rest

I would faine knowe what Bro sayes in this oure case pray have a familiar kindnes to him.



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