

Letter to Sir Miles Fleetwood, his father, on the death of the King of Sweden (22 December 1632)

Sir George Fleetwood

Transcript

British Library, Harley MS 537, ff. 56r–62v

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A letter from Sir George Fleetwood Colonell to his father Sir Miles Fleetwood knight

Sir I am thus farre returned from a longe & tedious iournie & could haue wished yt had pleased god all things had byn as successfull to vs as my Iournie was to mee then I am confident my Iournie had not bin soe suddaine nor soe Malancolly, I met the King & the Chauncelo[u]r both att Arnstat in Thuring the 26th of October. *stilo veteri*: butt the Chauncellor beinge the next daye to returne back for the orderinge of the affayres of Bavaria & the Palatinate tooke me with him the first dayes Iournie to Alkenan where hee presently gaue me my dispatch with letters to the King accordinge to my desire with soe greate manifeistac[i]on of his singuler affecc[i]ons that yt surpassed my expectac[i]on and withall gaue me assurance that whilest hee lived hee wold bee my Patron beinge very Ioyfull of the good Reporte hee had heard of my Regiment from every one The King vppon the first delivery of my letters gaue mee Comaund & caused the Secratary to write whatsoever I pleased grauntinge all my desires to witt that my Regiment the next Springe shold march to his Armie & that I shold levy fower Companies more to make my Regim[en]t compleat & divers other things hee graciously graunted mee Butt this vnfortunate losse of our noble m[aste]r was soe suddaine that I could nott gett his l[ett]re And not knoweinge howe things may alter in

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this distracc[i]on I am by post returned to my Regiment for I beleeeve wee shall bee sett on worke in Sprusia by Lawdislaws lately established king of Poland I haue lately sent my post to the Chauncelo[u]r from whome I hope to receave satisfacc[i]on & I beleeeve hee will haue the manageinge of all martiall affayrs heere I haue omitted some opp[or]tunityes of writinge not beinge willinge to bee the firste messenger of such dolfull newes butt before this letter arive att yo[u]r hand[es] I doubt not butt yow will haue some intilligence wherefore I thought fitt to check scandulous or partiall Report[es] and to acquainte yow with all memorable passages since my being with the Armie The King when hee lay att Noringberge p[er]ceaveinge hee could by noe meanes drawe Generall Walestine out of his Trenches marched with flyeing collo[u]rs & drumes beateinge round about thenimyces leagure & then devided his Armie & comanded thone halfe to duke Barnard Saxon Weymer sendinge him to {Irvinford} to waite vppon Walesteyne and w[i]th thother halfe hee marched to Nurenberge three miles from Ingolstat in Bavaria and intendinge to make that the seate of the Warre Butt Walesteyne contrary to expectac[i]on tooke his march pr[e]sently through Vogtland & misen directly to Lipswich sendinge the Colonell Hulke & Merodie with 15000. whoe plowndred & burned all Misen on thone side & on thother Papenheime with 10000: men on

the Westersteyne defaced all with fyre & sword in his march vntill hee came to Lipswich where

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the generalls Papemham & Walesteyne the Colonells Hulke & Merodie ioyned all their forces together beinge in all .36000. stronge The braue Governour of Lipswich scillfull in betrayinge of townes beinge the same man that gaue yt vpp the same daye the battell was fought att Lipswich did the same day both of the towne & castle the next day the enimye came before yt, The king was att Norenberge when hee rec[eived]ed the first Intilligence of Wallesteysn marchinge for Misen wherevpon hee sent ymeadiatly .15000. men vnder the com[m]and of the Palsgraue Brinkinfeild to goe ag[ains]t the duke of Bavaria & comaunded the Reare of his Armie to followe him hee rod post himselfe to duke Barnard[es] Armie with w[hi]ch hee m[ar]ched day and night through the Forest of Thursinge feareinge least thenimye shold fortife ag[ain]t him and never rested vntill hee came to Arnstat where hee lay .8. dayes vntill his Armie & Ordinance came vpp And the next day after his Armie cam together wee m[ar]ched directly to Nuenberge where wee laye still .6. dayes the Kings whole Armie consistinge of 20000. reall men thenimye then lay att Wisenfeild 2. miles from vs the King dayly sent post to the Elector Saxonie to haue his Armie of .14000 to come presently unto him, Uppon the .3. & .4. of November thenimye marched from Wisenfeild toward[es] Lipswich & the .5th of November the King broke vpp to followe him, And that morninge in stead of the D. of Saxe ioyninge with him

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hee had his l[ett]res that all their Armies were first to Ioyne att Maydenberge att which newes the King was passionatly {displeased} sayeing hee saw the princes of Germanie cared of not what hee Comaunded butt did the Contrarie butt they should see that hee durst fight with the {enimye} though they were twice his strength & Comaunded pr[e]sently to March & that daye were^{wee} beat about .500. horse & tooke some of their Collours & there the King was enformed by the prisoners that Generall Papenheime was Marched with his Armie to Hall & Colonell Hulke to Lipswich & Colonell Moradie to another place & that Walesteine alone with an Armie of about .20000. was left there to abide the Kings approches w[hi]ch made the King resolute the next daye to Ioyne battell butt the Intilligence p[ro]ued falce saue onely Gen[er]all Papenheyme with his Army marched toward[es] Hall butt y[a]t night followeing hee returned & m[ar]ched backward[es] & himselfe was in p[er]son att the begininge of the battayle butt his Armie came not vpp vntill .2. of the clocke in the afternoone the King lodgeinge that night in the playne feild about a mile from Litzen where thenimyес randevouse was, The sixte of November the King att the breake of the day Marshalled his Armie & himselfe leadinge the right Winge the D. Barnard

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Sax - Weymar the lefte winge Kimphowsen Maior Generall Comaunded the foote the Enimyес Armie was ordered like ours the Crabbatt[es] haueinge the lefte winge the Enimye had the advantage of Lipswich highwaye one on each side whereof is a mote & close by the towne there stood .4. wind mills which are by nature fortified very stronge there they

fortified planted [*Left margin: the battaile begun*] 9. peeces of Ordinance & in .2. or .3. other places they planted .12. more, The King about .8. of the Clocke shott his loosinge shott and soe advanced toward[es] thenimye, The enimye att firste seemed to advance which when the King p[er]ceaved hee gaue Comaund to advance with more expedic[i]on uppon w[hi]ch thenemye retyred behinde the dike where they had cast vpp a kinde of breaste worke they had ordered the Crabbatt[es] to fall rownd aboute our Rear which the K. p[er]ceaveinge gaue Com[m]and to the Finlanders vnder the Com[m]and of Colonell Statehawse to waite vppon then which he dilligently did & haueing .8. companies hee charged them with .4. putting them to flight butt vppon their retyringe they charged him soe furiously that they putt him to the worst till beinge releived with thother .4. Companies sett for that purpose hee Charged them soe sore that hee quite rowted them & that day was troubled with them noe more. Then [*Left margin: Battaile Ioyned*] the battaile Ioyned about .2. of the clock yt beinge then a very fayre day butt iust as they ioyned there

fell

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fell such a palpable Fogg & soe thick a miste that wee could scarce see one a nother which if it had not bene I thinke wee had quickly made ann end of that dayes worke butt all must bee as god will haue it, Uppon our firste fallinge on they sett the towne of Litzen on fyre which did vs much inconvenience the winde bloweing the smoake vppon vs very vemenntly d.

Barnard[es] & Colonells Wincols Regim[en]t[es] were com[m]anded vppon the Cannon^s att the mills thother Cannons were soone taken & nayled butt those att the mills wee had .3. tymes in our possession & beaten againe from them, The K. att the first onsett att the moate was shott through the Arme & his horse through the neck vppon which they wold haue p[er]swaded him to haue retired butt hee refused ridinge to head of the right Winge of the horse encouraginge them sayinge nothings ayled him And with that Comaunded them all to followe him And hee himselfe leapinge over the moate charged the enemyes butt there followed him but .4. Regim[en]t[es] which were encountred with soe many of the enemyes that they were enforced to retyre & there the King fell being [*Left margin: The king[es] fall*] shott in the head & through the body there fell by him one Trunk[es] a Chamber Yonker whose

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was brought of alive butt is since dead hee reported that when our horse retreated there came an Officer of thenemyes whose asked him which was the King which when hee refused to tell hee shott him through the body & then hee went to the King & demaunded what hee was whose Replyed I am the King of Sweden vppon which hee had thought to haue taken of the body but seeinge our horse comeinge againe to Charge them hee strooke the King twice [*Left margin: King slayne*] through the body with a broad sword & rann awaye for the d. Barnard Saxon Wymar Charged them with the horse & beate^{the} enemye backe & tooke the Corps & brought yt of fayre which had receaved in all .10. wound[es] the reporte of the Kings death comeinge amongst the soldiers quite contrary to expectac[i]on made them fight the braver as seeminge to revenge the Kings death or dye all, Soe this victorious prince dyed with victory and rec[eive]d his mortall wound att the firste Charge of the horse betweene .11. & .12. of the Clocke & the battaile lasted vntill .5. of the clock att night butt I beleeeve yt had not soe

longe continued had yt byn cleere weather for the Miste was soe greate that wee could not see to followe the

victorie

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victory and att last when wee had quite beaten them wee turned the Cannons vppon them aboute .3. of the clock then there came on .8000. fresh soldiers w[hi]ch were of Papenheimes Armie & charged vs againe att the mills & gaue vs soe braue a Charge that the whole day before wee observed not the like dexterity & Resoluc[i]on in any other p[ar]te of the Armie The Regim[en]t of d. Saxon Weymar did Aunswere this ^{newe} Replye with an unspeakable resistance and in that encounter fell the Comander of that fresh Armie which wee suppose [*Left margin: Colonell Merdoie slayne*] was Colonell Merodie for Gen[er]all Papenheim was slayne att the begininge of the battayle before his Armie came vpp The losse of this Comander did soe much amase them all that the officers ran aboute him & the soldiers flunge downe their Armes & ran away & the officers cold by noe meanes make them longer staye For vppon that .d. Barnard Saxon Weymar himselfe Charged att the mills with his horse beateinge them from their Cannons & there lodged him selfe that night But their^{our} distracc[i]on was soe greate by reason of the losse of our noble m[aste]r that wee p[er]sued not our victory that night butt contented our selues with veiwinge of the feild & Cannons, wee tooke there in the place 13. halfe Cannons & .8. other peeces & all their Amunic[i]on, wee killed on the place .4000. of thenemyes side & of our owne were lost aboute 1500. And on thenemyes side moste of their

greate

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Comanders are dead saue onely Generall. Wallesteyne whoe is certainly shott. & as yt is reported taken prisoner, butt must bee since I left the Armie, Yet howsoever I counte our losse the greatest haueinge loste the bravest Comander in the world And I am confident had yt pleased god hee had survived this dismall daye hee had putt a period to all the Warrs in Germanie butt nowe god knowes howe all things will goe And thus I conclude our famous Battayle att Litzen farre exceedinge that att Lipswich for had not our foote stood like a brasen Wall there had not one man of ours come of alive they beinge for certayne twice our number & our horse did butt poorely, The Enemy more afayd then hurt fled in greate disorder & amazem[en]t & never rested till they came to Trunksen vppon the borders of Voitland & Bohemia the Bores cutt of twice as many of the Enimyes as wee

{gap: illegible}

in their flight when noe man followed them (there is butt a small number of them together, the greateste p[ar]te of them beinge rann^{away} soe farre that I hope they will not meete againe, And yf the Princes wold doe as they

ought

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ought I dare say they will never be able to come to any greate head wee haueinge taken all their Amunic[i]on & their Ordinance in the place besid[es] they left about .20. more in the Feild by By Lipswich our Armie [*Left margin: King embalmed*] marched back to Wesenfeild

to embalme the King & to take order for our hurt men which were many and to encorporat our horse into the [*Left margin: body of our*] Armie, for many troopes were disbanded att the firste Charge The 10th of Nov: wee rose from Wesingfeild & marched to Pect bearinge the Kings body with vs ~~whoe~~^{which} marched betweene the foote & the horse the .11th. wee Marched to Bourne whence some forces were sent to Lipswich where they cutt of .500. of thenemie which lay in the towne where younge Wallesteyne is eyther slaine or taken prisoner. The Castle offred pr[e]sently to yeild of their owne accord butt that was refused because they had intilligence that divers princes & greate Officers were in yt I. lefte them playinge with their greate Ordinance vppon yt & doubt not butt eare this it is taken in w[hi]ch Maior Kemhowse fell vppon Firbidge haueinge intilligence of the Burgers & there cutt of about .4. or .500. of

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the Enemyes and fayrely tooke the towne, duke Barnard himselfe attempted a great strength where hee cutt of .200. Crabbatt[es] the .12th of Nov: wee marched to Grymers the Armie beinge 13000. stronge & there rested expectinge dayly to heare from the Kings Chauncellor whoe eare nowe is with them there & must setle a Course for the Armie, Wee suppose that all the Marshall affayres will bee managed in the name of the Queene^{of Sweden} & Princes of Germanie and that the Chauncelo[u]r shall be Gen[er]all Ambassado[u]r For the Ambic[i]ons of the Princes of Germanie are soe greate that they will not suffer one another to com[m]ande And therefore howe desp[er]atly things att this tyme stand I referre yt to thevent The duke of Saxonie is the Authore of all this mischeife, For first when hee tooke in Prague hee never attempted other places which then might haue byn easely mastered nor kepte his Armie together butt discharged his forces into their winter quarters And suffered the Enemye in severall places to ruine .7000. of his men where vppon hee was forced to quitt all Bohemia and to leave yt ~~to leave yt~~ to the discrec[i]on of the Imperialist[es] And allthough hee had vnder his Comaund a braue Armie, And hee allsoe

suffred.

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suffered Colonell Hulke beinge butt .4000. to make vpp an Armie of .15000. stronge And I dare saye had not the King pr[e]vented hee had taken the Elue streame & what not, For in Witingberge his principall strenght was not aboue .2000. soldiers. And had the duke fortified Mizen Lipswich & Treberge and managed them well the whole Armie could haue done him noe harme Butt his Armie of 26000. lay still in Silecia in firme quarter And nowe att laste to recompence all when the King by much {ymportuni^{te}} & divers letters invited him and the duke of Lav^{un}enberge to bee within a dayes M[ar]ch of him for his assistance in Case of necessity They ordered their rendezvous att Maydenburge [*Left margin: Duke of Saxonie*] .17. dutch miles from vs which I suppose made the King soe desp[er]ate, wee haue newes that hee is dead vppon reporte of the Kings death The duke Lavenburge hath allsoe suffred Condigne punishm[en]t for his Ambic[i]ons for that hee would not suffer the Gen[er]all Bawdys to Comande butt forced him with intollarable affront[es] to leave him which gaue Papenheim their bravest Generall opp[or]tunity to March which otherwise hee durst not haue done

The

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The Feild Marshall Gustavas Horne hath taken Launtberge & many other places, Alsatia is all ours and the passage for Switzerland is Free The Palsgraue Brinkenfeild is m[ar]ched vpp to Manchem eyther to Plounder or force them to a greater Contribuc[i]on Generall Bawdys is fallne into the Principatye of Cullen and by pillageinge of the Country enricheth himselfe and his soldiers as hee pleaseth Gen[er]all Aienham lyeth in Seleckia where the Enemy is quite ruyned haueinge butt .3. places in that whole land and those in the borders of Bohemia But all those are butt Petty victories in regard of our braue King whose valour and experience was an Armie alone butt god[es] will must bee done and wee ought to referre all to him, Wee haue greate iea~~l~~ Ielousie that in the day of battaile there was falce playe For there was in the Armie one duke Francis Saxon Lev^{aw}enberge whoe allwayes served the Enemye before butt was lately come to the Kings side haueinge noe

Charge

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Charge butt served as a volanteere hee that day was seene to alter his apparrell And when the King was goeing to charge hee retyred his servant[es] giveinge out that hee was shott when nothing ailed him butt that which I moste misliked hee posted from the Armie to Witenberge and from thence to the duke of Saxonie and in all places gaue out the King was killed, howesoever yt came to passe I am sure the Kinge had falce Intilligence the daye before the Battayle //

Stateene this 22th of december 1632.

Other manuscript witnesses

- Gonville & Caius College, MS 174/95, pp551–558
- Surrey History Centre, LM/2040, ff. 1r–5r

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/FleetwoodToFleetwood1632.html>