XX.—Original Letter containing some account of the Parliament which met at Edinburgh the 26th June 1678, and of the Seizure of Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, Baronet.


Sir,—It is like you may think strange I have not written sooner: the great interruption of letters has been my hinderance. To give you a plain account of our Convention of Estates here, I must tell you, that the King's Commissioner had all things so well ordered before our Countrymen came down from London, that they became unnecessary members: many of the peers being at his devotion, upon pensions, court benefits & expectations, he had them engaged to be present; of the other side many being excluded by a test, or declaration against the Covenant, the honest party now weak among the noblemen; as for the gentlemen who represent the shires he had taken so great pains, that he had prevailed to get a few shires to elect according to his humor, & all the others he was sure to have double elections in them even though 4 should elect 2 of their number as they did in some shires; the burrowes he ordered partly by largesses, partly by threatening, to choose such as he pleased: And thus the Convention, so constitute, met the 26th of June the day appointed.

The honest party being very weak in the house by the gentlemen's being for the most part out by double elections, which were to be tried by the house before they could be admitted: The other easily carried, debate what they could against it, to have the naming of the Committee for deciding elections referred to the Commissioner: & this was in effect the carrying of the whole affair, for that Committee, without regard of justice or reason,
rejected all the honest party, & approved all the contrary, & the Convention accordingly approved what they brought in by report: the whole Bishops were unanimous, & the Officers of State & they were so grosse as to cause above 14 members, against whom objections of incapacity were given in by the Duke of Hamilton and other noblemen and gentlemen, who offered to prove what they alleged in instant, to vote in approbation of the committys report; & so set the house according to their hearts desire.

The Duke of Hamilton debated the electiones earnestly, & the Erles of Perth Dumfreis Roxbrugh Hadinton Southesk Tweadale & the Lord Bargeny, among the gentlemen Mr Fletcher of Salton, Mr MacDougal of Makerston Mr Pringle of Stitchil, & of the burrowes S Alexander Bruce of Bromhal only: Several of the gentlemen double elected debated their own rights fully, especially Sr Patrick Howme of Polwart Sr John Cocheran of Ochiltree & Sr John Cunigame of Cambrochtoun; but to no purpose, reason had there no place: yet no point went away without full debate; which the vote never regarded but carried with the speat: and certainly all things will at this time goe as the Commissioner pleases, how & to what degree the country will endure their load God knowes: a particulaire of the whole debates and manner of procedor in this Convention shall certainly be sent so soone as it is closed & up.

On Monday last Sir Patrick Howme before mentioned was taken out of his bed about 12 a clocke at night, by the Commissioners order, to the gaurd; & next morning conveyed by a company of foote with fired matches to the tolbooth of Edenbrugh, wher he is now close prisoner, prohibite pen, inke, or paper, & none admitted to see or speak with him. Every one believed the reason to be his stirring much among the members of Convention till it came to be talked, from the Commissioners house, that it was done for reason relating to England, by the Kings expresse order: All his papers found at his lodging wer seized upon, & a Troupe of dragoones sent to his house in the country, wher likewise all his papers wer searched for letters or pamflets, as their order did bear, but their was nothing found relating or from any persone in England, not so much as a direction of a letter, or any thing that might look like correspondence; yet is he kept close, & not his Lady allowed to see him: & its said that a servant of the Erle of Shaftesberies has reported to the King some words of high importance that he heard passe betwixt the Erle & Sr Patrick: others talke that Sir Richard Grame has vented & divulged some free discourse Sir Patrick had to him: & generally they say it was observed that, while he was at London, he frequented the company of disaffected persones: These who have heard Sir Patrick speak of the E. of Shaftesberry and Sir Richd, say, they are confident that these are not persons who would have treated of such things as are talked of with him or any body: that the Erle would not come under the danger of overhearing; and that Sir Richard would not betray whatever he could have from Sr Pat.

The Lord Tresurer depute & the Lord Advocate were appointed to examine him on questiones about some listes, notes, and memorials, relating to the Convention, and billetes from some persones found about him in his pockets or closet. But Sir Patrick was so peremptory that he would not satisfy them in any one question, would not tell from whom the billets were, the meaning of the notes, or anything, still insisting on the manner and closeness of his imprisonment, desiring to know the cause, or else to be liberate, answering as to the papers that if they intended to found any thing upon them against him, it were them time enough to answer questions about them: but that he found not himself obliged to inform them in that manner & cause: so they parted displeased. I give you the fuller account of this, because I know his freinds their will desire to be informed anent him, though many heer are much troubled a person of his worth should be so badly used; yet all know that none could stand it out better then he will doe.  J. C.

Let this be copied & closed up in a clean paper, & sealed with a fancy seal, & directed with a good hand for Mr Robert Daniel at Mr Dodes haberdashers house, near Ware.