

APPENDIX K

LAURENCE WOULFE'S REPORT

THE Stuart MSS. contain the following Report on the operations of the Prince in England, from which the writer had just returned:

Sir,

As you commissioned me to give you an account of every circumstance relating to the King's affairs that I could have learn'd whilst I was in England, I shall endeavour to satisfye you in every particular my memory can help me in, besides what has been inserted in the publick news-papers. I shall only beg you'll excuse the little order of this my report as it is impossible for me in the small space of time you allott me for that purpose to relate the facts otherwise than as they occur to my memory.

In the first place it is a wonderfull satisfaction to all the King's friends that the Prince by his heroick actions has gained the admiration of all the People of England in general, even of his more bitter enemys: my Lord Cobham's expression in this respect before a numerous assembly is very remarkable: it must be owned, says he, that this young man is a most glorious fellow; it is a pity he is a Catholick and again, his Lordship discoursing about the Prince's operations in England: I don't know who has the conduct of those People's affairs in the military, but this I can assert that they have not committed one mistake since they came into the Kingdom. It is generally wonder'd, Sir, why after the Prince's pushing into the center of England, no body has declared for him; in answer to this I can assure you I have hear'd from very good authority that several leading men throughout the several Shires the Prince made his progress, were very forward to rise, but that they expected by his Royal Highness's own consent, so to doe until they could hear of a Body of Troops landed in England, which for a long time was dayly thought would have been effected: the whole Nation was so perswaded of this that when I parted London the 4th Instant every body expected, some through hope, others through fear, to hear every moment the alarum Guns goe off from the Tower and the Park, which was the signal intended in case the french Army landed. the principal reason for which the well affected People in England dared not rise in any other form and join the Prince's Army, is their want of Officers to lead their undisciplined men which the Prince could not spare them: and as it was well known the Prince could never

keep his ground in England with so small an Army as nine thousand men in case the landing could not be effected from France, it was as well known again that the English could not bear the same fatigue of long marches and a precipitate retreat as the Scots, and consequently they must have been sacrificed. however I have it from good hands that several very zealous gentlemen notwithstanding these difficultys have joined our brave Prince, and the gênerai opinion is that he marched out of England at least a thousand stronger than when he came in. I have been well assured that in Lancashire alone the Prince could have been joined by three thousand able men and proportionably in all the other well affected Shires: the Town of Chester in particular was so ripe and the People declared themselves so openly that Lord Cholmondley who commanded there was obliged to shut himself up with his Regiment in the Castle for to secure himself from any insuit or surprize from the Town. I saw myself three Days before I left London an original Letter of a Soldier in the foot-guards from Stafford which runs thus . . . this is a damn'd Popish Town: the People here make no bones of telling us they would rather see the highlanders among them than the King's troops: the Rogues use us very ill but we will be even with them.

It is remarked that the raising these new Regiments in England which consist of thirteen Regts. of foot and two of Horse is the best thing that could have happen'd for our cause; for besides their hindering all the old Regiments to be recruited, since it has been voted in Parliament that their Officers should rank with those of the veteran troops, all the later have been extreamly disconted and offended at such a resolution those of Wade's Army have protested against it in a solemn manner which every officer signed, and this incident alone has created a great deal of ill blood in all the Army. but to give you a specimen of these new raised Regiments and what a stress is to be laid upon them, I think it will not be improper to let you know the behaviour of one of them namely the Duke of Devonshire's which his Grace commanded in Person in Derby when the Prince was in his march thither. it is remarkable that he could have stopp'd the Prince's Army for a considerable time at a Bridge he was in possession of, but at his Highness's approach he immediately abandonned it and marched without halting to a Town ten miles further: after a few hours repose one Capn. Lowe who commanded an advanced guard with his Company, spyed a body of men, as he thought, on a neighbouring mountain, and immediately took legg with his men, all the Regiment followed

and scarce never stopp'd untill they got under the protection of Marshall Wade's Army at Doncaster spreading the alarum through all the Country and every man swearing by G.d the Highlanders were at their heels. this flight even put the Duke of Cumberland's Army in confusion tho' a Gentleman arrived there the next day after this Rumour from Derby who deposed he left the Prince's Army there very quiet and in no disposition then for a further march; but it was soon found out all this pannick proceeded from a great herd of Cattle that a considerable farmer was driveing to Pasture.

When the Prince had slipt the Duke of Cumberland's Army and had march'd to Derby, his vanguard reach'd Loughborough and seized upon Swanson's Bridge four hours before the Duke's party that was sent for the same purpose got thither: the Prince by his position there could have marched to London and reached that Capital three days before either the Duke of Cumberland or Marsh^l. Wade. the Town was then in such an uproar as can not be expressed and is scarce to be imagined. whatever troops could be brought together to make a Camp were assembled on finchley common to the number of about seven thousand a train of 30 p^{ces} was sent from the Tower and King George was the next Day to take the field with his standard accompanied by his Eldest son whose Princess and the rest of the family were to be sent to Portsmouth, but all this was prevented by an Express comeing to town with advice that the Prince began to march back. I have been well assured that in so desperate a situation K. George was in a strange dilemma how he should dispose of the Highland Regiment then near London but upon Lord Stair's offering to be security for their behaviour they were likewise ordered out to finchley Camp. I assure you his Lordship had been very much mistaken, for numbers of the Highlanders declared to their friends that if they were ever within twenty miles of the Prince and their brave countrymen, nothing should hinder them from goeing over to him all to a man. I have been likewise positively assured that above 200 officers then in London were ready to throw up their Commissions and goe over to the Prince in case he advanced near London, yet it is judged by the King's friends that the Prince acted the most prudent part in not risking so bold a march whereas his Army must certainly have been very much harass'd, and that in such a condition he must have fought the army assembled on finchley common that was fresh, and though attended with success, in three or four Days after, another superior Army composed of the best troops in England under the Command of the D. of Cumberland and M. Wade.

In the position abovemention'd of the Prince's army in & near Derby his Royal Highness could have likewise marched without opposition to any part of the Coast of Essex, Sussex or Kent, which was the principal object of his glorious march into the heart of England but as there was no appearance of his meeting his expected succours there, he could not warrant to engage himself with his brave Scots any further. his R. Highness could have marched with the same facility into Wales where he would have met with a great many friends, but his Highness had exposed himself to be locked up in that corner of England, and to have had his retreat cut off to Scotland where my Lord John Drummond and Lord Lewis Gordon had already assembled a handsome body of six or seven thousand men which I hope his R. Highness has joined before now.

I must not forget, Sir, to let you know that money is so scarce now in England and publick credit so very low, that the present Government could not raise before my departure from London upon the Land tax Malt tax &c. above five hundred and twenty thousand pounds, w^{ch} hitherto has been subscribed to in 24 hours, and that by favourites to y^e amount of two millions eight hundred thousand Pounds. they have even offered the Dutch to subscribe and raise the interest one per cent more and that too commission-gratis which is $\frac{1}{2}$ p. Ct. and all hitherto to noe purpose.

Of the new raised Regiments there are but three or four quite compleat and some of them that are not even as yet raised; and of the old Regiments there is not one in England compleat but the foot Guards: I saw two come back to London from the D. of Cumberland's Army Skelton's & Sowle's which I exactly counted and they did not amount each to above 300 Men. Wade's Army is prodigiously reduced by Death and sickness, in one night alone in his march to Hexham he lost 300 horses in w^{ch} march the soldiers were 24 hours without bread, straw or tents. this, Sir, is all I can recollect at present that is material if any circumstance might have escaped my memory I shall doe myself the honour to communicate it to you and lay hold of all opportunitys to convince you of my being with the utmost respect

Sir

Your most obedient & most humb^l Serv^t

LAUR. WOULFE.

January y^e 24th, 1746.