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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Letters from Francis Kennedy, Abbeyhill, to Baron Kennedy at Dalquharran, Mayboll. The Siege of Edinburgh, 1745..... | 54 |
|---|----|

Letters from Francis Kennedy, Abbeyhill, to Baron Kennedy at Dalquharran, Mayboll

Relative to the seege of EDINBURGH 1745

THE following letters are the property of Mr. John C. Kennedy of Dunure, to whom the Editor is indebted for allowing them to be printed. They had been in the hands of Mr. Kennedy's family since they were written.

Mr. Andrew Lang, who has seen the proof, writes: "The author of the letters to Baron Kennedy was a friend of Pickle the Spy, who alludes to him in his epistles to English officials. As Mr. Francis Kennedy speaks of 'The Prince,' not 'The Pretender,' it appears that he and Baron Kennedy were not enthusiastically Whiggish; Mr. Kennedy reports favourably about the conduct of the Highlanders in and near Edinburgh; and of the military qualities of his Royal Highness. The 'french minister' mentioned in the letter of October 19 is M. Boyer d'Eguilles, who represented France in the Jacobite army. Prince Charles entered England, as he wrote to King James, with no belief, or very little, in the Earl Marischal's arrival 'with a very great army from France.'"

The Editor is indebted to Mr. A. Francis Steuart for the following note with regard to Mr. Francis Kennedy, the author of these letters.

"Francis Kennedy of Dunure (the writer of these letters) succeeded his two elder brothers, General James Kennedy of Dunure, and Thomas Kennedy of Dunure, advocate, a Baron of Exchequer in Scotland. The latter died 13th May, 1754 (leaving a widow, Dame Grizel Kynnymound, who died 3 Feb., 1758, aged 70), and his brother Francis was served heir special in Abbeyhill (whence the letters are dated), with the Manor place and Brewery in the Parish of South Leith, 29 Jan., 1762. He did not live long after this, as 'Thomas Kennedy of Dunure' was served heir general 'to his father Francis Kennedy of Dunure' 2 October, 1765. The testament of 'Mrs. Isobel Edmonston, relict of Francis Kennedy of Dunure,' was recorded at Glasgow, 29 May, 1778."

I

To The Honorable Baron Kennedy,
at his house near Mayboll

When I wrote to my Dearest Brother on Saturday last, the toun of Edin: was in the utmost Consternation from the Castle firing down the toun & burning some houses, but as the blockade is removed people seem a little eased of their terror & enjoy some more quiet

than they did last week, however the Castle still fyre about the West Port & Grass market & wherever they Spye any Highlanders, so that the Innocent Inhabitants very often Suffer in going to places within view of the Castle, where there may happen at the Same time to be Highlanders, which makes me think that it would not be very advisably for you to be at Foulbridge till the Highlanders are quite gone from this, & when that may be no body that I see can pretend to tell, most people of fashion that are not engaged with the Prince are out of town & every body within reach of the Castle have left their houses, tho since this last Proclamation its thought they will return to them when the Highland Army is gone—. Im still Confin'd to the house & know nothing of whats passing but from the newspapers which Mr A—s sends you & what else he can pick up worth writing, she & her family are still here not thinking it safe to return to her house as yet, All is safe & well hitherto at Foulbridge. I'm still in an undetermined way about my time of leaving this, for Mr Monro has ordered me some things to buye to make me easy, & save the trouble of undergoing another painfull operation which I doubt anything will do. I have sent twice to enquire after Miss Cathcart who is very well but out of toun with all her Companions in some place of safety in the Country. I beg when you see Sir John youl tell him this & make my excuse for keeping his house so long, all the family here are well & make their Complements to your Lady & you. I beg mine in the most affectionate manner & that youl believe me to be ever my Dearest Brother with the most dutifull Affection Entirely yours.

Abbey hill the 8 Sept 1745¹

(this letter is doqueted as from Francis Kennedy)

¹ Page 223

LETTERS FROM FRANCIS KENNEDY RELATIVE TO THE SIEGE OF
EDINBURGH, 1745.

The Editor has to thank Mr. John Morrison for pointing out that the letter from Mr. Francis Kennedy (S.H.R, viii. 54), which is dated 8th September, 1745, should have been dated 8th October, 1745; this letter, instead of being the first of the series, should, therefore, have been the third. The Editor regrets that this error in dating on Mr. Francis Kennedy's part was not noticed earlier. The occupation of Edinburgh by the Jacobites only began on 17th September, and internal evidence also goes to show that this letter should have followed that of 5th October.

II

To The Honorable Baron Kennedy
at Dalquharran near Mayboll

Dear Brother

I got here on Tuesday afternoon very wet & fatigued, & found your friends here pretty well considering the Allarms & fears every body are in. this will come to you enclosed in a letter from Mr A—s who is to send you the newspapers by which you see the situation we are in here better than it is possible for me to write, his Wife & family left their house on Tuesday night & has slept here ever since, & the people in the town are removing their things very fast, the Castle having already thrown some bullets into the town, one of which fell on Mrs Alvey's house which made her quit it. she sent back your things to foulbridge thinking them safer there than in the town. I have been in the utmost torture ever since yesterday afternoon by a return of my old distemper which has kept me all night from any sleep, so that I'm not in a Condition to write a longer letter. I hope if I was once free of my pain to set out again soon for Dalq; but at present I'm not able to say any more but to beg my Compliments & all of this family to your Lady & that you believe me to be ever with the most Dutifull affection Entirely yours

FK

Abbey hill the 3d Oct 1745

III

I wrote to my Dearest Brother a short line on Thursday last in very great pain, it is at present not so violent tho I'm apprehensive I shall be obliged to undergo such another terrible operation as I suffered two years ago, You are happy to be at Dalquharran enjoying peace & tranquillity while we are here in a state of War, for the Castle is in a manner besieged by the Highlanders who expect, as I'm told, to oblige it to surrender by hindering any provisions to be carryed up to them—& the Castle for these 4 days past have been firing all round them upon every place where they suspected or saw the Highlanders— I don't hear that many are killed on either side, but the Castle has burnt & beat down houses about Livingstons yards, the West port, & Grass market & the Castle hill towards the north Loch as far down as James's Court & this siege is like to be carryd on till the Castle surrenders, so you may judge what kind of situation the Inhabitants both of town & Subburbs are in, & how inadvisable it is for you to think of coming to town till things are upon a more peaceable footing. I don't hear but the greatest care is taken to hinder the Highlanders from committing any disorders, &

the inhabitants of the toun seem to dread nothing so much as there leaving Edin: since they have no magistrates to keep the peace & order of the toun when they are gone, they say there are some dissentions amongst the officers of the Castle about the vigorous orders that came to destroy the toun, some for executing them & others preferring to quit their commissions rather than do so creul an action, of which last number is Genrl: Guest tho he persists as strongly as any to defend it to the last extremity, but you will have a more particular account of what is doing from A—s who is going about to hear what is doing which I cant do. he will send you the newspapers which dont come out so regularly as usual. Your Gardner was here today in great fears for your house because of an allarm he had got that the Highlanders had threatened to burn all the houses without the west port for assisting the soldiers that sallied from the Castle to take some of the people that were lodged in Livingstons yeard to prevent carrying up provisions to the Castle, but as I dont believe they will be allowed to do any such thing, I desired him to keep at home with the maid & keep the doors shut & if any Highlanders should come to offer any disorder to show them the P—s protection which your neice got & sent out there before I came here. Lord Kilkerran's house has also a protection which Mrs Murray got for it, & several other Government people have the same to preent the disorders that wrong headed people might be ready to committ, & which Im told the P— is very desirous to prevent. I can hear nothing of Newton so that probably he has gone home again, all your old Hay is carryd away, there came a message here on Wednesday from Lord Elcho to Lady Wallace telling her that he must have your hay for the Prince's use which he would not take before acquainting her. Smith came afterwards to me to know what he must do. I told him if the person that came for the hay showed him orders from Lord Elcho, to deliver it but not otherwise & I doubt if they stay long here the other stack will go the same way. in these troublesome times we must be content to make the best composition we can. all the family here desire to make their Complements to your Lady & you. I beg the same & that you'l believe me to be my Dearest Brother ever with a most dutifull affection Entirely yours

FK.

Abbey hill the 5 Oct 1745

IV

Im told that the P— is so hardy & Vigilant that he is like to kill the most robust Highlander, he lys every night in a tent no better than the poorest soldier, gos frequently thro his camp to see that the men have their necessarys rightly provided for them, in order to give an

Example to his officers which they are not so ready to follow as their Interest, now they have gone so far, should oblige them to.

I have just now received My Dearest Brothers letter of the 6 Oct: by the Carryer & am sorry to see by it that none of the 3 letters I wrote was come to your hand. It is true I got to town on Tuesday but so wet and fatigued with, the journey that I was not able to put pen to paper to write to you that night, next day I was seized with a return of my old distemper & have been mostly Confined to the house ever since. I wrote you a short line on the Thursday, a longer one on Saturday & another on Tuesday thereafter, all which I sent to Mr A—s to enclose to you with the news papers & what other news he could pick up, which he told me he forwarded duly, so that I hope before now you have got them, I therein told you that your neice had got a protection for your house immediately upon the Highlan Armys coming here which was better than having any Highlanders to protect it while it was within reach of the Castle since they fired at all of them they saw, so that your house & everything in it is safe, no body could tell me anything about Newton so that I believe he went out of town before I came to it. I told you in my former letters how improper & even dangerous it was for you to come to town while the Castle was blockaded, they have retired the blockade & given over Im told any thought of taking the Castle since it endangered so much the inhabitants of the town, & are come to a resolution on both sides not to fyre but at those that attack them, so that things are in a more peaceable way than they were last week & people think that the Army will remove from this as soon as all their body of highlanders & others are come here, but how peaceable and safe the town & suburbs will be after they are gone is a question I dont yet hear is resolved, so that I believe it will be best to suspend your journey till you hear the Army is gone & know what footing people are upon in this place as to preserving the peace & order of the town. I was not able to write to you last night because I had the operation performed yesterday upon my posteriors, I hope in God it will free me of any more pain of that kind for the future. I have heard no manner of news but what we get from the papers which Mr A—s tells me he sends you duly as they come out, which is not so regular as usual, whenever Im able to ride I purpose to set out for Dalquharran. All your friends here are well & desire their Complements to your Lady & you. I beg to make mine to her in the most affectionate manner & that you'l believe me to be my Dearest Brother ever with a most dutifull affection Entirely yours
FK

This letter, in the way Im in, has you may easily believe been no easy task.

Friday Oct the 11 1745

V

I received only this morning My Dearest Brothers letter of the 10th, & tho' I now put pen to paper to thank you for it, yet as Im still confined to the house I know no more nor so much of whats passing as you do at Dalquharran. the folks that are in the house with me go as seldom abroad as I do, so that whatever storys have been told you or wrote about a certain persons aggrieving frequently at a Certain place must be false, at least since I have been here so that you need be in no uneasiness upon that account. The protection that was got for your house has been very sufficient hitherto & I hear of no disorders committed on any gentlemans house that had them, there has been some hay ordered in from all the gentlemans houses near the toun I hear, but I hear of no pillaging any where not even at Newliston unless the taking of horses or arms be such, which they take every where & chuse to take their hay rather from the rich than the poor, however if it be true what is told this day that the Army is soon to leave this I believe there will be no fear of your new stock of hay. I shall send Sam tomorrow with the money you ordered for you maid, I hope in a few days to be able to venture abroad & as soon as I am able to bear riding endeavour to get to Dalq: by easy journeys. I have seen no news papers this week for they dont come out as usual. Mrs Alves went back to her house yesterday. She will send you what news papers come out, which I shall send word to him to continue, all the family here are well & desire to offer their Complements to your Lady & you, I beg mine to her in the most affectionate manner & that you'l believe me to be ever with a most dutifull affection

Entirely yours FK

Abbey hill the 15 Oct 1745

Mrs Alves told me your plate was in the Castle & that all the other things that were removed out of your house to hers are carried back again.

VI

I wrote to my Dearest Brother on Tuesday last & sent it to Mr Alves to forward to you under cover of his frank, I have been seldom abroad since tho' I thank God I grow better of the ailment, but excessively low spirited, however I would fain hope that I shall be able to leave this on munday or Tuesday next, but whether to make the journey on horseback or to hyre a chaise I have not yet determined, tho' I believe I shall be obliged to do the last. Things

here seem to be in great quietness & its now talked for certain that the Prince with his Army will march from this the beginning of next week, they say they are all in high spirits & very confident of success. There is another ship (besides the one that brought the french minister) come to a port near Monross with more money & arms & some officers, they expect to enter England with a body of men superior to any can be brought against them, & that Lord Marshall is to land in England with a very great army from France, this force together with the commotions in London & other parts of England makes some people think that the dispute will be decided without much bloodshed, the others dread the contrary, howevr vast numbers of people of all ranks every day flock to the Abbey & the number of the Princes friends have increased beyond most peoples imagination. I pray God Conduct all in the way that may be most for the good of our country. I have not yet heard how the toun of Edin: is to be governed after the Army leaves it, but as it is not to be expected that they will leave any force behind sufficient to guard it against the attempts of the garrison of the Castle to regain it, it will probably be left to govern itself. I hope none of your new hay will be touched & before I leave this I shall desire David Smith to carry as much of it out as to fill the loft at Foulbridge. I must refer you to the news papers for any other thing, & beg to offer my most affectionate Complements to your Lady & that you'l believe me to be my Dearest Brother ever with a most dutifull affection

Entirely yours FK

All this family desire to make their Complements to your Lady & you.

Saturday the 19 Oct: 1745