ONE MORE LAUDERDALE LETTER.

THE unplumbed depths of the Baxter collection of manuscripts have yielded up another of the letters written by the Earl of Lauderdale to Richard Baxter before the Restoration. In a search for material concerning the activities of the first Earl of Shaftesbury during that period the writer came across the letter herewith printed. Although unsigned, it is in Lauderdale's hand, and presumably is the last of the series.¹

Apparently it came to Baxter enclosed in one from his friend William Bates, which is to be found in the same collection.² Both letters show how important Baxter's adhesion to the royal cause was felt to be, and the implication that Baxter was on the point of throwing his weight in the other scale is full of interest, as is the line of argument by which Lauderdale finally gained the day.

LOUISE FARGO BROWN.


Deare Sir,

Yo of the 24 came not to my hands till yesterday & then in such a way as is no great incouragement to me to write, for ane unknowen porter brought it from I know not who. Alwayes I am glade I had it. And must in the first place returne my most hearty thankes for that undeserved value you are pleasd to put on me. Yo

¹ See the twelve letters published by Professor Powicke in the BULLETIN, vol. vii. (July, 1922), pp. 73-105, and vol. x. (July, 1926), pp. 524-531.

² Baxter MSS., Dr. Williams' Library, letters, vol. iv., ff. 155, 156. The letter, in Bates' hand, is signed with initials only, and dated from London, March 30. Bates congratulates Baxter on his recovery from his recent illness, and continues: "The losse of you in this season would have bin very much aggravated; considering ye powerful influence your counsells may haue uppon ye spiritts of good men to keepe them in submission and dependance on God as to ye issue of our present affaires. . . . I was moved to write to you by some freinds . . . there being a report . . . that you are extremelye opposite to ye cominge of———. I beleive my lord whose letter is inclosed can giue you as much satisfaction as any one."
Letter is so full that in a Letter I cannot pretend to give it a particular answer Especially being so straitned with time that I have not above halfe ane howre to write in.

But by the assistance of God I shall compes it wth speedy waiting upon you, & truely I never made a journey with greater satisfaction. I had done it before, but to speake freely Want of money to discharge necessary debts at my Last Lodging (for no manner of provision is made for me) hath hitherto stopt me, but that rub wilbe over next week I hope. And then God willing the week after I shalbe in Kidderminster where I hope none will know me but yor self. Yet something I must needs now say.

Our old obligations to C. R. are in my opinion cleirly on us. The violences of the army first against 11 members & the peers 1647 (wch I reckon as the root of our evills) and their continued violences 1648. Their pretended change of government & all wch O. did (of wch you give ane excellentcaracter) all those actions & what ever were the consequents of them could not free this nation of the many oaths of God that they were under. And as for poore R. P. alas he was but ane appendix of his fathers unjust violences. At best he was made by his nomination (if it was not a cheat). And as to the pretended Parl1 which confirmd him where they found him. 1. They were no Parl1. 2. no Hous of Comons for there were 60 members of Scotland and Ireland who sure had nothing to doe in ane English Parl1, & those from Scotland were as truely the representatives of Madagascar as of Scotland. If they tooke ane oath at the doore Let them repent who tooke it, since they did not by it ingage the Nation. Many were sword men, most imposed by the pretended Court. It was a strange Olio, such a hodg podg as can never be reckoned the representative of either, much less of all the kingdoms. In a word Sr ane armed violence deprived us of our government & hurried us into confusions. Now it hath pleasd God to give us some hopes That the souldiery shall be subject to the civil power. And then we may by the Lord's blessing hope for a setlement. The question is not what government we shall have (Blessed be God we had one nay we have one if we can be allowed to returne to what we were when violence was first used to the Parl1). But the question is whether a

1 Windsor Castle. For Baxter's efforts to secure some provision for Lauderdale see his letter to Swinfen, Feb. 17, 1659, ibid. vi., 233, 234.
sword shall prevaile to the apparent ruine of Churche & state or if England shall returne againe to be governd by Parl*^t. This I thinke is a cleir duety to be endeavored. And being a duety we need not doubt of God's protection from those feares that are suggested. England I hope is not in a condition to feare a Parl^t (especially under the Limitations agreed on) If I know my owne heart I may solemnly profess that the interests of Jesus Christ & the good of his people shall ever sway me beyond the interest of any or of all the men on earth. The dangers they suggest shall I hope be cleirly satisfied. The Eldest brother I know to be a wise just & excellent person. The second I am confident is not what it seems he is by enemies reported to be. Those who Love religion best may have the greatest interest If they please. They are free from the guilt of destroying King & Parl^t, God forbid they joyne wth their enemies to involve us in new confusions. That Providence wch hath so strangely raised the spirits of these nations gives me hope that it is in mercie. For the Lords sake ingage not in anything wch may hinder you from being the great instrument of union in these Churches. If you should smile again at it, I must repeat it, I am most confident God will reserv you for that worke.

Let me but beg that you will not write till I see you. I have nothing els to Loose, but I had much rather Loose much blood, Then you should use inke in such a cause. Oh,if it were God's will that you could come to London, How joyfully wold I meet you a dayes journey from it. But I dare not hope for it, and therfor if before this day sennet you give me no hopes of yo^t coming, I shall by Gods grace be with you next week after. Deare Sir ingage not in that wch in my poore judgment may doe so much hurt. Remember Nescit vox missa reverti. You shall not be a neuter Long, I trust to see you as you have been often, a champion for the good old cause. You will pardon what I say in confusion, often interrupted. Debate must cleir one of us, we agree in the maine and I trust we shall agree in the means. Take heed of the man by whom you sent me a message. He hath a heart & a heart & a tongue wch agrees wth neither. You know I am, Yo^t

Endorsed

For my much honored
reverend freind Mr. Richard Baxter
minister of the gospell
at Kiderminster.