

Royal Proclamations and William Penn.

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J. M. Rigg, who wrote the article on William Penn in *D.N.B.*, has given permission for the publication of the following letter, which he has addressed to the Editors :—

“As to the two questions you raise, to wit, (1) what may have been the reasons for Penn’s inclusion among the suspects? and (2) what connection he may have had with the other persons mentioned in the proclamations? I fear it is not in my power to say anything of importance.

“While writing, now a great many years ago, the article on Penn to which you refer in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, I was unable to discover any solid ground for regarding Penn as party to the intrigues of the Jacobites, and I gave my reasons for discrediting his alleged complicity in Preston’s plot. Since then I have not had leisure to pursue the investigation further; but I am not aware that anything has transpired of a nature to invalidate those reasons. Malice and preternatural suspicion are fully adequate to account for the accusation, which, indeed, was never, I think, seriously regarded by the Government.

“Perhaps your readers may be interested in the following extract from the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1690-91, p. 282, which shows how unconcernedly Penn confronted the charge upon its revival in 1691 :—

VISCOUNT SYDNEY to the KING.

1690-91, February 27th.—About ten days ago Mr. Penn sent his brother-in-law, Mr. Lowther, to me to let me know that he would be very glad to see me, if I would give him leave, and promise to let him return without being molested. I sent him word I would, if the Queen would permit it. He then desired me not to mention it to anybody but the Queen, and I said I would not. On Monday he sent to know the time I should appoint, so I named Wednesday evening, and accordingly I went to the place at the time, and found him just as he used to be, not

at all disguised, but in the same clothes and humour I have formerly seen him in.

It would be too long for you to read a full account of our discourse, but in short it was this: that he was a true and faithful servant to King William and Queen Mary; and if he knew anything that was prejudicial to them or their government, he would readily discover it. He protested, in the presence of God, that he knew of no plot, nor did he believe there was any in Europe but what King Louis had said; and he was of opinion that King James knew the bottom of this plot as little as other people. He said he knew that you have a great many enemies, and some who came over with you, and some who joined you soon after your arrival, he was sure, were more convertible against you and more dangerous than the Jacobites. "For," he said, "there is not one man amongst them that hath common understanding to the letters that were found with my Lord Preston, and the paper of the conference." He would not give any positive answer, but said, if he could have the honour to see the King, and the King would be pleased to believe the sincerity of what he said, and pardon the ingenuity of what he confessed, he would freely tell everything he knew of himself, and other things which would be important for his Majesty's service and interest to know. But if he cannot obtain this favour, he will be obliged to quit the kingdom, which he is very unwilling to do. He also said he might have gone away twenty times if he had pleased; but he is so confident of giving you satisfaction, if you would hear him, that he was resolved to wait your return before he took any sort of measures. What he intends to do is all he can do for your service, for he cannot be a witness if he would, it being, as he says, "against his conscience and his principles to take an oath." This is the sum of our conference, and I am sure you will judge it as you ought to do.

"I regret my inability to give this matter the full elucidation which, I gather, some of your community desire; but if you think this letter is of any consequence or interest, you are fully entitled to publish it."

William Penn's Visit to Ireland.

At a Mens Monthly Meeting, held att Horsham, the 12th of the 11th Month, 1697.

Whereas our Deare friend, William Penn, is Jntended to pass ouer into Jreland, this Meeting desires William Garton & Josiah Garton to draw a Letter of Coñunion, and send it vnto him before his passage, and to bring a Coppy of it to our next Monthly Meeting.