V. *King Charles the First's Warrant to Admiral Pennington to deliver the Fleet under his command to the French. Communicated by George Duckett, Esq. F. R. S. and S. A. in a Letter to the Secretary, Nicholas Carlisle, Esq.*

Read 17th May, 1810.

SIR,

Upper Grosvenor Street, 21st April, 1810.

As Mr. Hume, in his Observations upon the Conduct of King Charles the First and the Duke of Buckingham, seems to imply a doubt of the truth of the assertion, that was made at the time, namely, that Charles ordered the officer, who commanded the naval force employed against Rochelle, in 1625, to surrender the ships to the French Monarch, I take the liberty, first of inserting the passage, extracted from Mr. Hume's History, and, in the next place, of sending you a true copy of the original Warrant of King Charles the First, which warrant is in my possession.

“ When James deserted the Spanish alliance, and courted that of
 “ France, he had promised to furnish Lewis, who was entirely destitute
 “ of naval force, with one ship of war, and seven armed vessels, hired
 “ from the merchants. These the French Court had pretended they
 “ would employ against the Genoese, who, being firm and useful allies
 “ to the Spanish monarchy, were naturally regarded with an evil eye,
 “ both by the King of France, and of England. When these vessels,
 “ by Charles's orders, arrived at Dieppe, there arose a strong suspi-
 “ cion that they were to serve against Rochelle. The sailors were
 “ inflamed. That race of men, who are at present both careless and
 “ ignorant in all matters of religion, were at that time only ignorant.
 “ They drew up a remonstrance to Pennington, their commander;
 “ and, signing all their names in a circle, lest he should discover the
 “ ringleaders, they laid it under his prayer-book. Pennington de-

“ clared that he would rather be hanged in England for disobedience,
“ than fight against his brother Protestants in France. The whole
“ squadron sailed immediately to the Downs; there they received
“ new orders from Buckingham, Lord Admiral, to return to Dieppe.
“ As the Duke knew that authority alone would not suffice, he em-
“ ployed much art and many subtilties to engage them to obedience;
“ and a rumour which was spread, that peace had been concluded be-
“ tween the French King and the Hugonots, assisted him in his pur-
“ pose. When they arrived at Dieppe, they found that they had been
“ deceived. Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who commanded one of the ves-
“ sels, broke through, and returned to England. All the officers and
“ sailors of all the other ships, notwithstanding great offers made them
“ by the French, immediately deserted. One gunner alone preferred
“ duty towards his King to the cause of religion; and he was after-
“ wards killed in charging a cannon before Rochelle. The care which
“ historians have taken to record this frivolous event, proves with
“ what pleasure the news was received by the nation.” Hume’s His-
tory of Great Britain, 8vo. 1773, Vol. VI. pp. 208, 9.

Mr. Hume, in another part of the same chapter (pp. 215, 16), ob-
serves, “ That when the House of Commons accused Buckingham,”
amongst other charges, “ of delivering ships to the French King, in
“ order to serve against the Hugonots, all the articles appear, from
“ comparing the accusation and reply, to be either frivolous, or false,
“ or both. The only charge which could be regarded as important
“ was, that he had extorted a sum of ten thousand pounds from the
“ East India Company; and that he had confiscated some goods be-
“ longing to French merchants, on pretence of their being the pro-
“ perty of Spanish. The impeachment never came to a full determi-
“ nation, so that it is difficult for us to give a decisive opinion with
“ regard to these articles; but it must be confessed, that the Duke’s
“ answer in these particulars, as in all the rest, is so clear and satis-
“ factory, that it is impossible to refuse our assent to it.” Hume’s
Hist. 8vo. 1773, Vol. VI. p. 216.

The following is the Copy of the original Warrant.

“ CHARLES R.

“ PENNINGTON. These are to charge and command you,
 “ immediately upon sight hereof, that, without all difficulty and delay,
 “ you put our former commandment in execution, for the consigning
 “ of the shippe under your charge, called the Vantgarde, into the
 “ hands of the Marquis d'Effial, with all her equipage, artillery, and
 “ munition; assuring the officers of the said shippe, whom it may con-
 “ cern, that we will provide for their indemnity. And we further
 “ charge and command you, that you also require the seaven mar-
 “ chant shippes, in our name, to put themselves into the service of
 “ our dear brother, the French Kinge, according to the promise we
 “ have made unto him: and in case of backwardness or refusall, we
 “ command you to use all forceable means in your power to compell
 “ them thereunto, even to their sinking. And, in these severall
 “ charges, see you faile not, as you will answer the contrary at your
 “ uttermost perill, and this shall be your sufficient warrant. Given
 “ at our Court at Richmond, this 28 of Julie, 1625.

“ To our trusty and well beloved JOHN PENNINGTON;
 “ Capitaine of our Shippe called the Vantgarde.”

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

G. DUCKETT.

NICHOLAS CARLISLE, Esq.
 &c. &c.