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further practice

Document 40: Report from Oliver Cromwell dated 1650

(Catalogue reference: SP 25/15 pages 54 and 55)

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ABOUT this document

This report from State Papers books and accounts refers to the banning of Christmas. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England, he banned Christmas in an effort to rid the country of decadence. Soldiers were ordered to go round the streets and take food being cooked for a Christmas celebration, by using force, if necessary. Traditional Christmas decorations like holly were banned. This move was unpopular with the people of England, many of whom resisted it. The Puritan regime was eventually removed from power when Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660.

Please note:

- The document is written in a clear cursive hand.

Report

sent to Sr. Hon.
midway

The Countroll having received several Informations that there was a very wilfull & strict observacion of the day commonly called Christmas day throughout the City of London & Westm: by a generall keeping of their shops shut up and that there were Contumptuous speeches used by some in favour thereof, which the Countroll conceiving to be upon the old grounds of superstition and malignancy and tending to the avowing of the same and Contempt of the present Lawes & government: have thought fit that the Parliam: be moved to take the same into Consideration for such further provisions

8

55.

& penalties for the abolishing & punishing
of those old superstitious observations and
meeting w^{ch} such malicious contradiction
of offenders in that behalf as their
wisdoms shall judge fit, They have
likewise received informations of frequent
report unto & exercising of the idolatrous
masses in severall places to the great dishon^r
of Almighty God, notorious breach of the
lawes & scandal of the government: wherein
according to notice given they have already
taken some course and desire the parliam^t
will be pleased to take that matter also
unto their Consideration for further remedies
& suppression of that Idolatry in such way
as to them shall seeme meet That it be
likewise reported to the Part^t that the Council
is informed that there are still remaining
the Armes & pictures of the late King in
severall Churches Halls, upon the Gates
& in other publique places of the City of London
That the part^t be moved to appoint whom they
shall thinke fit to see the same Armes & pictures
taken downe & defaced and to give an Account
of those executing the same w^{ch} in such time
as they shall thinke fit to allow for that purpose
And Sr Henry Mildmay is desired to make
this report

transcript

1. Report sent to S[i]r Hen[ry] Mildmay
2. The Councill haveing received severall
3. Informations that there was avery wilfull &
4. strict observation of the day com[m]only called
5. Christmasse day throughout the Cittyes of
6. London & Westm[inster] by a general keeping of
7. their shops shut up and that there were
8. Contemptuous speeches used by some in favour
9. thereof, which the Councill conceiving to be
10. upon the old grounds of superstition and
11. malignancy and tending to the avowing of
12. the same and Contempt of the present
13. Lawes and governm[en]t have thought fit that
14. of and in certaine old rents parcell of the Mannours of Pull and
15. into Consideration for such further provisions
16. and penaltyes for the abolishing & punishing
17. of those old superstitions observations and
18. meeting w[i]th such malicious contradiction
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20. wisdomes shall iudge fit, They have
21. likewise received informations of frequent
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23. masse in severall places to the great dishono[u]r
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32. likewise reported to the Parl[amen]t that the Councill
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38. shall thinke fitt to see the same armes & pictures
39. taken downe and defaced and to give an Account
40. of their executing the same w[i]thin such tyme
41. as they shall thinke fit to allow for that purpose
42. And S[i]r Henry Mildmay is desired to make
43. this report