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Woburn, near Beaconsfield, 17th May 1788.

Sir,

No Occurrence which has happened to me for some time, has surpris'd & astonish'd me more than the Receipt of Mr. Whitehead's Communication of your Royal Highness's Displeasure, in His Letter of the 11th Instant, which reach'd my Hands this morning. Wishing, as I earnestly must, to wipe away any Impression on your Royal Highness's Breast of any Inattention to my Duty on my Part, I beg leave to remind you, that I was never honour'd, at any time, with any Commands from your Royal Highness about your fitting out, either from yourself or Mr. Whitehead. — The Paper of Necessaries wanted was put into my Hands by Capt. Elphinstone; who, I think, said He had received it from the Duke of York; but no Explanation or Directions accompanied this Paper. — Notwithstanding my Want of Both, I did not hesitate in laying this account before the King, altho' I judg'd it could not be such a One as would give Him much Information; as tho' the Articles wanted were minutely-specified, the Expence was not. — To obviate any Difficulty to the best of my Power, I desired Capt. Elphinstone's Opinion what the whole Charge might come to. He replied, He thought it could not amount to more than between £300 & £400, at the utmost. — His Majesty, receiving this Information from me, was pleas'd to decide upon the last mentioned Sum of £400, to be employ'd for this purpose. — It never occur'd to me, nor does it at this Instant, that Your Royal Highness could

possibly mean to employ me in the procuring the things necessary for the Fitting out. My total Ignorance of Naval matters & of a Naval Life would certainly have made me humbly decline the Duty, & I hope, my utter Inability would have pleaded my excuse, & I had every Reason to suppose, that as your Royal Highness frequently corresponded Yourself with Capt. Elphinstone, either He, or some other proper Agents would receive your Commands upon the Occasion.

My Department, I humbly apprehend, must be to Issue Money for the Payment of the Bills the Fitting out makes due, the Instant I have received it from His Majesty; & I some time ago requested Capt. Elphinstone to order all these Bills to be sent in to my Office, where I told Him I would put them into a Course of Payment. It has ever been a Rule with me in the various Accounts His Majesty has done me the Honour to place under my Care, to keep as little Money as possible Unpaid; & I have the Comfort of being conscious, that no Tradesman whatever has ever waited a single day with His Bill Unpaid when I have had the Ability to discharge it.

His Majesty having been Himself pleased to fix upon the Sum He would allot, & being thoroughly apprized of the Business, my Pressing for the Payment of the Money would surely have been an unwarrantable Liberty in me; the rather, as there could, at any Rate be no necessity for these Tradesmen being Paid, till the Goods they severally supplied should be received by Your Royal Highness.

I have thought it my Duty to say thus much in exculpation of myself, that if any Delay has happened improperly, it has not hapened in my Department;

Col. G. Hotham

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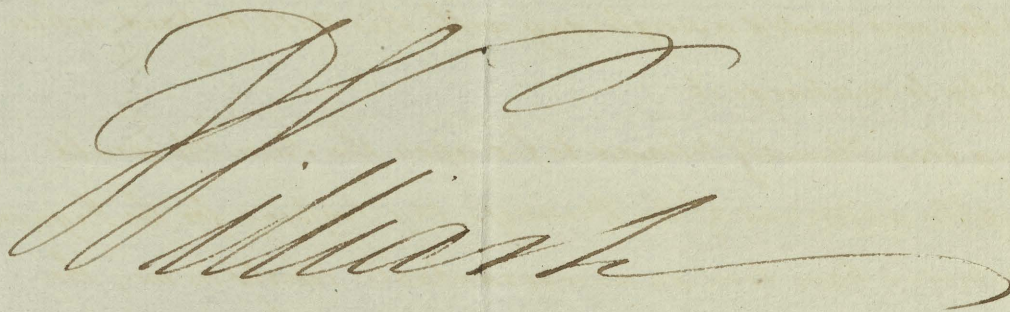
I shall only add, that I feel myself most severely hurt that your Royal Highness should, either from misinformation or misapprehension think it necessary or proper to send me so harsh & unmerited a Reprimand, which falls the heavier, as not coming from your own Hand, but from that of your Purser, a Gentleman to whom I am, (except in Correspondence of Business) an absolute Stranger.
I have the honour to be with the utmost Respect

Sir

Your Royal Highness
Most Obedient &
Most Faithful Servant

G. Hotham

Acopy.



His Royal Highness
Prince William Henry. &c.^a &c.^a &c.^a

11832
Genl. Holman
17th May 1900.