

Letter from Beau Brummell

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Calais Oct. 10. 1800.

There are about half a dozen individuals existing, who, if they did not exchange a word of communication with me from year end to year end, either by letter, or by message, I should still hold in the same confident estimation, for I am well assured that, with them, silence, however prolonged, is no serious indication of forgetfulness, or of intentional neglect. You, my dear Peterham, are of this number, therefore I beg you will not again impose so unnecessary a demand upon your invention, or your time, as to write me excuses for having mislaid in your memory. A thousand thanks for the jar of snuff which your letter promises, though it has not as yet reached my nostril. This is of course the fault of the Commodore, as you naturally ordered the Royal Yacht to convey it to me. Receive, also, my acknowledgments for your trouble in having sent me Coluza's - but it was indeed, far from my design to impose so heavy a charge upon your kindness as you seem to interpret. My request did not extend, at least, I did not mean that it should, to any engravings after the Artists I named, of an expensive class -

and the purpose to which it was ^{my} wish to appropriate them, will
at once explain the intended moderation of my demands. I am
patching a paravent, or, in vulgar English, a folding screen;
and as the materials requisite for its accomplishment are
scarce (that is to say of good taste) in this Gravesend of a
place, I mustered up sufficient colours, to solicit your good
office in furthering the undertaking - The compositions, then,
you mention, in messtents for Concerts &c (provided they
are in colours, or brown tint, seem to be precisely suitable
to my object; and I shall be greatly indebted to you to procure
me as many as Colaspi, or Mottens will liberally dispose
of, cent à dix, without asking you for payment - and any
other scraps of allegories, or souping Cupids, in Medallions,
ornettes de de - flowers too, and butterflies (forgive me)
as large as life in Colours, would be most acceptable - "These
presents" I would humbly beg you to transmit to me per thro' the
(directed as usual to the care of Capt. Adams, Defence Packet
Dover / wrapped round a roller of wood, a Marschals' Staff
will do as they are no longer in request, which is the securest
manner of conveying prints; and as something of larger dimensions
will be necessary by

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way of covering party for the light troops, I should be more than
obliged to you for the following engraved portraits (always with
the proviso that Colman's does not insult you with one word about
disembowment) The Carved head whole length of Nelson and
Wellington after Hoppner - half length of Lord Eldon in mezzo:
after I know not whom - the best likeness of the G. Charlotte -
any but Hayter's - and the small whole length of the Regent
after Cosway - the latter, I believe, is rather scarce from the time
it has existed, having been executed in his R. H. youth, some
thirty and seven years ago (don't tell him) - you will know what
I mean, it is in a Vandyke costume - these requested resemblances
are destined to embellish the walls of my cell - I have
thought but little of poetry lately - my Album, has, however,
been re-opened at your desire, and I have scribbled you as much
as can conveniently be comprised within the scanty limits of
a letter - I will from time to time write you transcripts from
the same miscellany. During the last eighteen months I have
been almost constantly occupied in writing a sort of history
of my own times, confining myself to private ^{life} ~~conduct~~, and to the
exclusion, as much as possible, of political matter - it will be
ready for publication early in the winter - You may perceive,
I have not

inclined to the flattering side of representation in the many
portraits that form my cabinet. The majority of my former dear
friends, and all the Town once affected to be my dear friends,
that is, as long as the Sun shone upon me, may wince and cry
shame upon me, at their unreserved definition and exposure
they are welcome. I have not written to please their palates,
but to provide for my own. I have recorded nothing but the truth
in my descriptions, and if the cap chafes their temples, let
them remember their own desertion and abuse of me the moment
misfortune had compelled me to seek refuge in another country.

Of one personage who professed to be my earliest friend and patron
I have endeavored to speak with as much becoming deference to
his public situation as candour and the nature of my society
would allow; still, perhaps, with what may be considered too
much severity, because too explicitly - my object has been to
particularise ad oivam; not to shade too darkly, nor to employ
false lights from imagination - I never intentionally offended him,
though I was sacrificed to the envious whispers of those about him.
I have depicted what has come immediately under my own cognizance
and forth it will go to the world with all its own faults as well as
others upon its shoulders for I cannot starve from a punctilious
principle of unrequited feeling even towards the highest among
the Lord's servants. You need not make this a secret -
Cromwell's friend 1713