Ld. Cowper Ap. 23 1780

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Sire

I take the liberty of addressing this letter to your Majesty to inform your Majesty of the great mortification I am under in not having succeeded in an affair, which I had so much at heart, and in the success of which depended my happiness: I refer your Majesty to the particulars in Sr Horace Mann's dispatches: Be assured, Sire, that I have not left one sinew of my eloquence untryed to prevail upon these Royal Personages to bend the mind of his C. Majesty: and indeed to do them justice, I found them very much inclined to do it, but that their present critical situation would not permit them for the present to hazard an abrupt denial, which they assured me would be the case, if His C. Majesty was resolved not to listen to any proposals whatever, even from his nearest and most dear Relations: They desired me however to assure you, Sire, of their attachment to your Royal Person, and of the satisfaction they would have had in having been able to assist your Majesty in your very just intention of bringing on a general peace: by the long discourse I had yesterday with the Sovereign here, I make no doubt but their Imperial Majesties will use their efforts to second your Majesty's views if they can hit upon a fair opportunity; and if to the Sovereigns

here, they will not fail, in their private correspondence with Catholick Majesty, to do their utmost. The only consolation I have left, is, that your Majesty will approve of my conduct in this affair, and as these two Royal Personages honour me with their confidence, that your Majesty will be so gracious as to employ me in negotiating any affair of importance with them, as I flatter myself of being able to succeed in it sooner than any body else.

May I once more presume to intreat your Majesty for one of the three vacant Blue Ribbons? Such a mark of your Royal favour would in a great measure alleviate the mortification I am under at present in having failed in my enterprize: It is a great honour your Majesty confers to all your Subjects in general, that have the good fortune to meet with your Royal approbation: Be assured, Sire, that your Majesty cannot confer it upon any body, that has your Majesty's measures more at heart than myself.

Permit me, Sire, to inform your Majesty that I have two Raphaels, one his own portrait done by himself, of which there is a mezzotinto print in London by Fearley; the other a Madonna and child in the highest preservation, which I was offered 2000 £ for, but refused it, as I was resolved it should go to England: If your Majesty chooses to purchase them, I will give them both for 2500 £: Coffany can inform your Majesty of them, as he has had them in his hands: the reason of my disposing of them, is, that I have two more fine

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Raphaels in view, but my finances will not at present reach the sum, tho' I am at the same time sorry to let them escape: I flatter myself that my collection tho' much smaller than the Orford one, will greatly exceed it in value: I have packed up part, but dont dare to venture them by sea at present: If your Majesty would lay your commands upon me to purchase any fine pictures, I will be bound to do it in the cheapest and best way possible, as I have many capital ones in view: I have entrusted this Letter to your Majesty by Capt. Stuart, that is setting off for England. That God Almighty may assist your Majesty in your just cause, and give success to your Army, is the constant prayer of

Sire

Florence April 28d
1760.

Your Majesty's most dutiful
and most humble Servant
and Subject
Cresper

Lord Cowper

April 22. 1700