

John  
Lees  
Richard  
Fitz  
Patrick

4729

Dublin Castle  
10 May 1702.

Sir

I sit down under Impressions too  
Painful, and in a state of mind very ill at  
ease, to recapitulate the conversation which  
you allowed me to have with you to day,  
but as you wished rather to state from Paper  
than Recollection what I had the Honor,  
under much Agitation, to express, I again  
trespass upon your Leisure, & earnestly  
intreat that you will have the Kindness  
to lay my Letter before the Lord Lieutenant,  
being convinced that when His Grace shall  
be fully apprised of the Circumstances  
Attending mine & my Nephew's Situation,  
He will feel some Degree of concern at  
the Step which has been taken with  
respect to me, & may induce him to pause,  
before He decides finally, upon the Step,  
which Report says, His Grace has in  
Contemplation to take in removing my

The Right Honble

Nephew.

Rich<sup>d</sup> FitzPatrick.

Dublin Castle.



Nephew from his office also. - With regard to  
 myself, the office I fill'd has great Emolument  
 and must in a certain degree be necessarily  
 confidential, and altho' it has not been  
 usual in this Kingdom to dispossess men  
 unconnected with Party & out of Parliament,  
 from their offices, whilst they did their duty  
 with Fidelity & care, I instantly made up  
 my mind to my situation & express'd not  
 a Murmur, which you will do me the Justice  
 to recollect when I had the Honor of seeing  
 you the day following; But when I  
 understood this Morning & from such Authority  
 as I could scarcely doubt that my Nephew  
 was likewise to be removed from a Department  
 which in this Kingdom, certainly does not  
 give Confidence, nor as it is at present  
 circumstanced, Emolument, that could be  
 an Object ~~with~~<sup>to</sup> any even the most  
 necessitous Man, I felt it as a pointed  
 Proscription & Persecution, concluding, and  
 not unreasonably, that such Conduct -  
 towards me must have originated in the  
 Misrepresentation to His Grace of some  
 malignant



Malignant Slanderer, and that the  
Character I had ever maintain'd as a  
Man of Integrity & Truth, became involved  
and irreparably injured. Under such  
painful sensations Sir I instantly ran  
to you. — You heard me with a patient  
& kind Attention. — In the Result, my  
Mind became more at ease as to the  
supposed Injury to my Character, but the  
Impression is very little softened with  
the Public & myself as to the Severity, &  
excuse me if I say, Injustice which we are  
likely to meet with owing I am persuaded,  
to His Grace & you being unacquainted  
with the circumstances attending our  
respective Situations. — Allow me therefore  
to state Sir which I shall do as concisely  
as possible, exactly how they stand, and  
as it is the first Time of my Life that I  
have found it necessary to put myself  
on my defence either as to Character or  
Situation, permit me in a very few Words  
to go back to a period even prior to my  
Introduction.



Introduction into Office in this ~~Office~~ Kingdom.

At a very early Time of my Life, in the last War, I was sent to Germany in a Civil Department — My Station plac'd me generally at Head Quarters — I had frequent Opportunities of doing my duty with supposed Spirit & Effect under the immediate Eye of Lord Granby — At the Affair at Amoneburg or Brugertrid particularly I received his Thanks in public Orders, and as an Additional Proof of his Approbation, He gave me a Commission as Deputy Director General of the Hospitals dating it from the Day I arrived in the Country. — — On my Return to England by His desire I was continu'd on full Pay for Two years. — He recommended me to Lord Townshend and as his Private Secretary I came first to this Kingdom, — Towards the End of his Administration, for the most unremitting & laborious Services, I received a Patent Office yielding in Fees between 20 & £300 with an additional Salary of £400 more, declining the Office which was then offer'd me of Secretary to the Commissioners of Excise of £800 a year. — On Lord Harcourt's Appointment he made it his Request that Lord Townshend would leave



leave me with him as his Private Secretary. -  
- Sometime afterwards His Lordship appointed  
me to the office of Ulster Secretary to the Lord  
Lieutenant of this Kingdom. - My conduct under  
him was rewarded with an office for life of  
£500 a year. - Sir John Blaguirre can  
inform how far my services merited such a  
distinguished mark of the King's Favor. Being  
altho' young, worn down by oppressive  
attention to Business, I determined to retire  
from the laborious Duties of the post, and  
having had an offer made me of an eventual  
Succession in the Post Office, I readily agreed  
with Mr. Malcot the then Secretary, Nephew to  
the late Lord Le Despencer, I was appointed to  
that Department on the Terms specified in the  
Memorandum ~~annexed~~ apart. - I continued  
to act as Secretary to that office during the  
whole of Lord Buckingham's Administration,  
and altho' I did not fill any Station -  
immediately under His Lordship, I experienced  
many Proofs of His Confidence & was uniformly  
treated by him with kindness & Attention. -  
On



6. — On Lord Carlisle's Appointment to this Government, Mr. Eden wrote to a Friend of mine how offering me the office of Black Rod which I accepted as a Station not incompatible with my Duty in the Post office; — Soon after His Lordship's Arrival in this Kingdom, the Death of Mr. Hamilton the then Under Secretary in the Military Department open'd that office to His Lordship's Nomination. — It was offer'd to me on the following Terms Viz. —  
— To resign my office of Black Rod worth during each Session not less than a £1000. —  
— To resign my office in the Post office then yielding to me from an Accumulation of News Paper Debts an increasing Income of between Two & £300 a year exclusive of an excellent House, Coals & Candles, and the eventual Succession to the full Emoluments of the office —  
— And to resign the Patentee office of full £600 a year Net, which I had received in Lord Townshend's Administration. —

— In lieu of these several Offices yielding a permanent Income of £900 a year, which I enjoyed with the good will & approbation

of



of the Public, and a temporary Income of  
 £500 a year by the Black Rod, with no other  
 weight of Business on my mind than what  
 resulted from the Post office Department.  
 - I received the War office - a Patent  
 office of £250 a year at York; and an  
 assurance of an eventual Provision for my  
 Wife. - The above Sir, is a true State of  
 what my situation was, when His Grace came  
 into this Country whom I trust I have not  
 offended. - You know Sir, to what it is now  
 reduced & I presume to what it is owing, for to  
 this Moment I do not. - To Men of Feeling -  
 - To men of Honor, comment becomes unnecessary.  
 - I have served the Crown with fidelity &  
 Zeal these fifteen Years in this Country. - Altho  
 my Income, part of that Time from the Public  
 has been liberal, my Establishment  
 necessarily kept pace with it, & I am afraid  
 it will be found that my Children's Fortune  
 in right of their Mother has not nor is it  
 likely to be much increased from a life  
 spent in faithful & anxious labor by  
 their



0.  
their Father in the Service of the Public. — But to  
Return to the Post office. — It remained  
Vacant for some time after my Appointment  
to the military Department. — It was intended  
for a Gentleman in England, who I understood  
on being informed of the Terms the Appointment  
was liable to decline it. — Understanding  
that to be the case, I then proposed my Nephew  
who at that Time held an Office of £250 a Year  
under the Commissioners of the Revenue. — It was  
Accordingly recommended & approved by the  
Postmaster General in London as my Successor,  
Subject to the same Annual Payment of £800  
~~a year~~ under which I held it & for the Payment  
of which I stand responsible by Bond & he  
resigned his Office in the Custom House. — From  
the Accumulated Arrear of Newspaper Debts  
Due to me, an Income Arises now of about  
£300 a year. — but for this Arrear, a Considerable  
part of which was handed over to me by Mr.  
Malcot, I paid in Net Money out of my Pocket  
to Mr. Malcot the sum of £1600. — From my  
Attention to my Nephew, a young Man not ill  
educated, able & attentive in Business —

and



and of irreproachable Character, I cheerfully gave him up the use of this arrear, & have otherwise contributed to his support in the Prospect of such an Establishment as this office would in the Result yield to him. — Were he now to be removed, I need not point out to you the cruel Hardship that it opens; The Office which he formerly held, the Duties of which he discharged much to the Satisfaction of the Revenue Board, is now possess'd by another and he is now deprived of every support but that which in my now reduced Situation, I can but ill afford from the support of my own Children. —

I will not, I cannot suppose Sir, that when these Circumstances are stated to the Lord Lieutenant, but that in his Justice, my Nephew's Case will intitle him to Protection & Favor. — This I presume to rely on because I am convinced that he has discharged his Duty with a scrupulous Attention & Fidelity to the Office and to the Public. — If on the other Hand there

is



in the smallest suspicion either of neglect or  
 Impropriety in his Conduct either directly or  
 relatively, let me beg for God Sake that it may  
 be probd & scrutinized with the utmost  
 severity, and you will then find Sir, that so far  
 from asking Favor, I shall be among the  
 most sollicitous for his Punishment. — I am  
 aware that for the Purposes of the Moment,  
 and in order to furnish His Grace with a  
 Reason, which cannot have Originated in  
 His Mind, that there are illiberal and  
 scandalous Insinuations thrown out of  
 opening & detaining letters; — Captain  
 William Skiffington told me to-day, that he  
 had heard such a suspicion mentioned, but  
 on being press'd could not recollect where  
 nor by whom. — If a Charge Sir so  
 dishonorable, so injurious to the Character  
 of Mr. Armit, has been made against him,  
 and that such Criminality altho' not  
 ostensibly assigned is made the secret Cause  
 of his removal from Office, — let me again  
 in the Name of God beseech you to institute  
 the strictest Inquiry & if founded let the  
 most



most exemplary Punishment follow. — I will pronounce it a base Insinuation, resulting from the grossest Ignorance & Malignity — The Secretary's Department in the Post Office, were he disposed to betray his Trust, does not give him the opportunity of inspecting or opening Letters, nor can any Letter be opened in the Office by any Person whatever except only in Instances, which very frequently happen when they are thrown into the Receivers without being directed, or where the Postage on Foreign Letters not being paid, the Inspector of the Dead Letters is in such Case Authorised by Act of Parliament to open & return them to the Parties for the Tax. — If Letters not directed are signed by any Person known to the Office or dated when they can be traced, they are sealed by the said Inspector with the Public Office Seal & returned to the Party to be directed. — It often happens too that Letters without Direction are only signed with the Initials of the Writer — Sometimes without either Name, Initial or Date by  
which



which they can be traced, and in that case  
 they remain three months in what is called  
 the Dead Letter office, & if not sought after,  
 are burnt, - but all these Mistakes, Occasions  
 either by the Inebriety or giddiness of the  
 Writer, Hurry in folding up or other -  
 Inattention, are immediately brought in  
 Charge against the office, and the Unfortunate  
 Secretary is immediately without regard  
 either to Principle or his oath of office  
 deemed & talk'd of as the Cause of the  
 Miscarriage for the worst of Purposes. -  
 - With regard to opening Letters regularly  
 directed & put into the office, I do not know  
 a more solemn Proceeding. - During the  
 seven years that I held the office, I only  
 recollect two Instances, - One in Lord  
 Harcourt's Administration upon a supposed  
 treasonable Correspondence carrying on  
 between some Merchants in Newy & the  
 Americans, - Lord Harcourt had omitted  
 to bring over with him the usual Authority  
 from the Secretary of State authorising him  
 to direct the office to open & detain Letters,  
 and



And so sacred was the Right of the Subject held, Government was obliged to wait the Return of a Messenger with the Authority from England. — The other Instance happened in Lord Buckingham's Administration. — Some Principal Merchants in Dublin, Mr. Binns & others applied to Government for Authority to the Office to Open certain Letters, which they supposed would lead to the Discovery of a Swindler, who had defrauded a Number of People in Trade &c. — Lord Buckingham, like Lord Harcourt, had neglected to furnish himself with an Authority from the Secretary of State in England. — It could not be done. — The late Attorney General, Mr. Tisdal who was consulted, and he being also Secretary of State, issued his Warrant to the Office. — The Letters were carried to him, Open'd by him, Copied & re-sealed with his Seal. — There is but one possible Mode, by which the Secretary of the Post Office in Ireland can possess himself of Letters. — It is not his Business ever to sort up any Letters. — He



- He could not do it. - There is a Principal  
 Clerk & two Assistant Clerks for each of the  
 Roads viz. - The Connaught, Munster  
 and North Roads. - To their care and the  
 two Inspectors the sole Management of  
 sorting, Inspecting & forwarding the Letters  
 is committed. - If the Secretary wish'd to  
 detain any particular Letter, He must  
 commit himself to the Clerk & his Assistants  
 of the Road to which the Letter is to be  
 forwarded. - If Address'd to Dublin, He  
 must apply to all the Clerks because the  
 sorting up of the Dublin Delivery is under  
 the Care of the whole office. - Is it possible  
 Sir, to conceive that any Man in his Senses  
 in the Station of Mr. Armit would put  
 himself in the Power of any Man or set of  
 Men whatever, Men too subordinate to  
 himself & over whom a severe Authority  
 & Discipline must be exercised, to gratify  
 what - a Curiosity & Importunence, contrary  
 to his oath of office & which upon Detection  
 subjects him to Death, or consigns him  
 to what is worse - eternal Infamy & Ruin. -  
 - And



- And yet I remember about six years  
 ago just as Lord Harcourt was quitting  
 this Kingdom, a Circumstance in point  
 which happen'd about a letter of Lord  
 Buckingham to Mr. Conolly. - The letter  
 was directed to him at Castle town. - The  
 Post Town to which Castle town belongs is  
 Leixlip. - The Clerk of the Poundage Road  
 reading only the Name of the Post Town  
 without attending to the Address at large,  
 seeing Castle, instead of the Leixlip Box,  
 sort'd it up to Castle bar Box & away it  
 went, and was in Course of Post returned  
 to the Dublin Office as a Misprint letter. - It  
 was then by the Clerk of the Road sort'd up  
 to Leixlip and deliver'd. - Whether from  
 Friction, or possibly the thumbing and  
 examining from idle Curiosity at the  
 Castle bar Office, the Seal of a New Lord  
 Lieutenant, Mr. Conolly concluded the  
 Letter had been open'd. - He called some  
 upon it. - He seem'd hurt & suspicious.  
 - of course I took infinite Pains to convince  
 & satisfy him, as far as I could, how the  
 mistake



Mistake happen'd - put the Clerks of the Road to their Oaths and sent him their Examinations as well as of Mr. Shaw the Dep. Comptroller - but notwithstanding all I could do this same frivolous Circumstance was talk'd of, and altho' Mr. Connelly - appear'd convinced of the Rectitude of the Office, yet it furnish'd Conversation to the Ignorant & to the foolish. - As the Steps that I took at that Time to satisfy Mr. Connelly will give you a tolerable Idea how such Mistakes may in the Hurry of Business happen, I will likewise shew you in what manner the general Business of the Office is conducted, I enclose herewith Copies, the Originals having been sent to Mr. Connelly, of all the Papers that pass'd upon that Occasion. -

I could not help being thus particular upon the subject of the Post Office, so strong an Impression <sup>had</sup> of what Mr. Skiffington told me made upon my Mind. - I will not curtail any part of it, because it may serve to point out to you a Method of ascertaining such Suspicions, if



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if any such shall have reach'd you. And  
I must demand in justice to a young Man  
verging into life, that whatever may be  
his Fate, his Character for Integrity may  
be ascertained & justified. —

I have been long in this Country  
employed & confided in by a Variety of Chief  
Governors. — It was never imputed to me that  
my Connection with one Chief Governor tended to  
influence my Services with His Successor, nor  
that I sacrificed the Confidence plac'd in me  
by a Predecessor to the Person who succeeded  
him. — The only Lord Lieutenant by whom I was  
not employed was Lord Buckingham, and  
I had more reason to be flatter'd by His  
Expressions & those of His Secretary, which were  
not merely address'd to me, than by almost  
any thing that had been said by my best  
Benefactors in the same Station. — I have <sup>had</sup>  
the good Fortune to have been received & treated  
with a kindness approaching to Confidence  
by every Man of great Following in this  
Country. — I have some Reason to think  
that the principal Men now residing here  
do not rejoice at this Stroke of power  
against



against me. And I have only to lament that  
 the Duke of Leinster who is the only Man of  
 that Description from whom I never had the  
 Honor of receiving any Obligation & whom  
 I have endeavour'd at a very considerable  
 Expence & Inconvenience to myself to serve  
 in the most essential manner, as may appear  
 by written Documents under His Grace's Hand  
 in my Possession. - I say, I have to lament  
 his Absence, as I am persuaded that from  
 those Principles of Honor & Consistency, which  
 must attend a Man of his high Birth & Rank  
 and from that Degree of Influence, which his  
 particular connection with part of the British  
 Administration may be supposed to give him  
 with the Duke of Portland & with yourself, I  
 should not stand unsupported in that Quarter  
 while any Thing like Honor or Gratitude,  
 consistency or good Faith is supposed to exist  
 among Men. - I had carried His Grace's  
 Propositions to the British Cabinet. - I  
 succeeded in them perfectly to his Wish as  
 may also appear by a Comparison of His  
 Requests conceded to, with His approbation  
 and



and acknowledgements in his own Hand -  
 Writing as yet undivulged & in my Possession,  
 for this, I do not call publication, as it is  
 at present address'd confidentially to you.  
 - If in my honest zeal for English -  
 Government, connected with the Happiness  
 of this Country, I have unfortunately at any  
 Time given offence, it remains as yet a  
 secret to me, for during Fifteen Years, I  
 have had no personal ~~Quarrel~~ Contest or  
 Dispute with any Man or Set of Men, from  
 which I could suppose the smallest Injury  
 might arise to me. - But if I shall  
 unhappily find that I have been mistaken,  
 my Happiness & my Existence depend  
 upon tracing the Cause to its real source,  
 not only that I may be enabled as soon  
 as possible to correct the Error in myself,  
 but to justify to a generous People, by  
 whom I have been kindly foster'd, the  
 fairness & Integrity of my Character as  
 the best Portion, which I shall probably  
 leave to my Children in this Country, that

The



the public may not say their Father had deceived them, and was dismissed & disgraced for some offence or Crime too black to be named.

If in this very long detail, I have been led to make use of any expression either too strong or too familiar to be consistent with the most dutiful respect, I then beg leave to disclaim it as totally contrary to every sentiment of my Mind, having the highest Reverence for His Grace's Character, as well as being with the greatest Respect,

Sir, &c.

John Kees.

Copy.