Duke of Northumberland to Col. McMahon

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Alnwick Castle 27th Jany. 1812.

Confidential

My dear Colonel

In my last letter I mentioned a curious Circumstance relative to the steps taken by certain Persons to procure a multitude of Signatures in support of their favorite Plan of Catholic Emancipation; and which as you justly observe in your letter of the 23d is of a Nature so obvious as quickly to disclose the "Clover Foot." I now send you a Paragraph out of the Globe Newspaper of Thursday the 23d. the very mischievous Intention of which cannot be mistaken. I cannot help being myself convinced that there is not a word of truth contained in this Paragraph. Because I can never bring myself to believe that Lord Granard would have thus publicly committed the Prince in such an Assembly. Much less can I ever be brought to imagine, that Lord Moira would have authorised him to have done so. The evil design however with which this Paragraph has been published is not one bit the less, because the Account is false; and proves too plainly the purport of their eagerness for bringing on this Catholic Question in such a hurry, & with so much indelicacy towards the Regent's Feelings. It is done with no other View, than that of committing the Prince in the strongest manner either one way, or the other; & thus ensuring the Loss of H: R: H:'s Popularity, either amongst the Protestants, or the Catholics; and by so doing they hope to weaken His Strength, & enable them to dictate to Him, or force themselves into Power, as his Masters.

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Duke of Northumberland to Col. McMahon

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What however surprises me the most is, that this Article shoud appear in the Globe. A Paper not only devoted to the Interests, but under the Controul of the Lords L: & L: and their Party. Surely if they have that dutiful Regard for the Prince, which they pretend to have, they shoud not have allowed such a Paragraph to have appeared in their Paper, & have taken such a Liberty with the Names of the Prince, and Lord Moira. It will tend to do an incalculable deal of Mischief. Excuse my dear Colonel, for treating this Subject so much at length; but I am so much alive to every thing, which in any degree is connected with H: R: H:'s Dignity, Honour and Happiness, that I cannot help endeavouring to tear the Mask from the Face of those, who, whilst they are pretending to be attached to H: R: H:, are only occupied by their own Interest, & to let H: R: H: see their undisguised Characters, & Intentions. It is frequently the Object of those, who style themselves the friends of a Prince, to deceive Him for their own Advantage or for that of their Connections. It shall always be mine, to speak the truth, & to clear away the Mists, with which they wood endeavour to encircle Him.

By what you mention of the Complaints of L^d. W—, His Lordship has very unwisely for himself, let the P^r into his true character, & proved to H: R: H: that it was solely his own Interest, & not any regard for the Publick Welfare, which induced him to join the present Administration, & continue to act with them; & the moment he found his Expectations disappointed, he was determined to leave them, let the Consequence be what it would either to H: R: H:, or the Publick. The Services of such a Person are hardly worth having. When Zeal for the Prince, & welfare of the State, induces a man to devote himself to their Service, in any Line, or any Profession, I honour, & respect him. But when a man is induced to take such a step, prompted merely by considerations of his own private Advantage, and Interest, and pretends to bargain for what he is to get, before he will accept of Office, or Commission, making entirely a matter of Profit, & Loss, of the Business, I confess I look upon him in the opposite light; and instead of esteem, & respect, I can only entertain a secret contempt for him. As for L^d. G's intended Resignation, I do not imagine either the Affairs of the P^r, or the Publick, will suffer much from it. He was one of the two, of whom the late M^r. Pitt used to say, "that he never could determine whether it was more disadvantageous to have them connected with, or in opposition to Him. They were so violent, & unmeasured, in their Opposition, that they were very troublesome; & so very wrong headed, & opinionated, that, when connected, they generally did more injury, than Service, to their Friends."

I remember S^r. Charles Saunders, Lord Rodney, & the late Admiral Barrington, used always to tell me, the Affairs of the Admiralty were never so well conducted for the Advantage of the State, & of the Service, as when a Nobleman (not a Seaman) of great Rank, Fortune, & Weight, so as to make him perfectly

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independent, was at the head of that Board, assisted by two Old Admirals, as junior Lords, to act as his Council in Matters merely Professional, & who, by being two, could prevent Partialities, & Jobbs, in granting Commissions & Commands. A Professional Man, as first Lord, could not help entertaining Partialities to, or Prejudices against certain Persons, both perhaps ill founded; which did great Injury to the Service. But the worst of all, (the whole agreed) was when the First Lord had two Captains, or very young Admirals for his Council; for then, they never ventured quietly at the Admiralty to give him the Assistance he wanted, but were always getting themselves employed at Sea; & when in a Fleet, were always disputing with the Admiral, who Commanded, as to what were the Intentions of the Admiralty, instead of obeying his Orders.

The Situation of Secretary of State for foreign Affairs is undoubtedly best filled, by a Person in the habit of being concerned in great Public Correspondence, & Negotiations with foreign Courts, by having filled the previous Situations of Minister in the Diplomatic Line. He is well accustomed beforehand with the Mode of carrying on Business with foreign Courts, & probably personally acquainted with some of the principal Persons at those Courts; which must always give him a great advantage over Others in all Negotiations. In this respect, from his Station as Gov.r General in India, Lord Wellesley always has appeared to me as well adapted to the Situation he holds. Lord Sidmouth, I believe

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to be a most perfectly honest, & honourable Man; most zealous, & well inclined to act for the benefit of his Sovereign, & the State, to the utmost of his abilities. I have very little personal acquaintance with his Lordship, but from some of his particular Friends I understand he is a Person of a most amiable Character in private Life.. I only wish his Publick abilities were equal to those of the late Lr. Fox. With Lr. Fox's Head, & his own Heart, his Lordship would indeed be a most valuable acquisition to any Administration.

The times are very delicate, my dear Colonel, and the present situation of the R— requires great Caution & Prudence on the part of those, who are really & truly attached to Him. I am not yet able to go up to Town, & Lord Percy, with the very best intentions, is yet a Young Man. Confiding in that sincere regard, which I am convinced you are so good as to entertain for me, I most earnestly beg of you, that you will favour him with your Advice how to act upon particular Occasions, so that he may conduct himself, & persuade his friends to do the same, in the manner most satisfactory, & agreeable to the Person, whom above all others I wood wish to please. If now Lord Percy will be happy to receive your Advice, & act accordingly, should he be tempted by any power Declarations, he can always retire, on particular Subjects, when so embarrassed. Give him

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likewise a hint, as to the General Line he ought to pursue. In doing this, I shall feel myself more obliged to you, than it is possible for me to express.

It affords me great satisfaction to be able to say, that my Daughter, Lady Julia, is daily advancing towards health. As for myself, I have been so weakened by my long Confinement, that I improve but slowly, & have for this last fortnight been tormented with a Cold, & Cough, of which I cannot get rid. The rest of the Family are quite well; only the Duchess is naturally much afflicted by the Death of her Sister, Lady Beverley, of which We got the Acct. last night. We all write in the best of Wishes to you, & Mrs. MacMahon. I had an account of Lord Algernon's health a few days ago, & We are all here much rejoiced of course, at finding that Sr. Edward Pellew's Kindness towards me, added to my young Man's own good Conduct, had induced him to appoint Lord Algernon a Lieutenant on the very day after he had passed his Examination, on the Vacancy of a Lieutenant by Death, of which Sr. E., fortunately for Algernon, got the Official Report from Malta, the day before.

Adieu, My dear Colonel, & be assured I ever truly am

Your most faithfull Friend

Northumberland

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Behind enough to say every thing proper for me to H: R: H: Of the Sincerity, & Fervour, of my attachment to Him, I trust this letter is a convincing Proof.

THE PROTESTANT PETITION.

The Earl of Granard, on Saturday last, added another to the names of distinguished and leading Protestants of Ireland, who have enrolled their names in a supplication to Parliament, for the emancipation of their countrymen. It was announced, by the same Noble Lord, that it was the anxious wish of the Earl of Moira, that every Protestant, who approved the great measure in contemplation, should not be diverted by any ordinary impediment or difficulty from subscribing the Petition. In this wish, we have some reason to be certain, all the friends of the Prince Regent strenuously concur.—*Ibid.*

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Duke of Northumberland

27 Jany 1812

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