Duke of Northumberland to Col. Mac Mahon

A.A. No. 12.

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Private

Alnwick Castle 21st Feb.y 1812.

My dear Colonel

Many thanks for your letter of the 17th, as well as for the very interesting Paper accompanying it; and I feel most highly honoured by the Prince Regent, in having permitted me to peruse it.

I cannot say I am surprised, altho' rather little shocked, at the Conduct of those two Personages. Their Behaviour, just before H: R: H: was appointed Regent, afforded very little hopes that they would act otherwise, than as they have done. I trust however H: R: H:'s Firmness, & Resolution, (which are by no means inconsistent with Moderation, & Prudence) will make them repent of their inconsiderate Conduct. In a former Letter, long ago, I told you, My dear Colonel, that the Commencement of a Reign, or Government, was always attended by a struggle for Power, & Preeminence. The Prince Regent, has now found, by Experience, that my Observation was correct. If however H: R: H: shall on this Occasion show a weakness

Colonel MacMahon —

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degree of firmness, & convince these Gentlemen that He is not to be alarmed, & that He will never submit to be dictated to, the Struggle will be a very transient one; & the rest of the time of his Government, or Reign, will pass off with advantage to the Kingdom, & with Ease, & Comfort, to himself. But if He suffers himself to be overpersuaded, to give way, We shall again hear the Arrogance of Disappointment talk of "storming the Closet." Taking Places, at once by Storm, is never seriously thought of, but when it is well known, that the Garrison either is weak, or the Gov.^n is supposed to be tired. With a good Garrison, & a Wise, determined Governor, such attempts are never made. I am therefore convinced that H: R: H:'s good understanding, & decisive Character, will frustrate every attempt which Arrogance, Ambition, or Folly may make to take Him Prisoner, & bind Him in fetters. The Goodness of H: R: H:'s Head, & Heart will make him always listen, with Patience, to the Advice of whomever may be his Ministers; but the ultimate Decision must be His. On this, I hope He will ever insist. The late Lord Chatham's Sentiments, with respect to Popularity, is excellent. A little transient Unpopularity, if the measure is a right one, ought to give a wise man very little uneasiness. By continuing to act properly, Popularity soon returns again. Not the Ephemeral Popularity of the wicked, artful Demagogue; but a gay & stable Popularity, accompanied with Reverence, & Veneration. H: R: H: is very popular now; the two Noble Lords think they are the same; but they will, on trial, find they are very much mistaken.

Adieu My dear Colonel, I fear I shall have tired you with these sentiments of mine. The Duchess, & my family, write with me in Compliments to you, & Mrs Bethune. Of course you will be good enough to say every thing proper from me to the Prince Regent. I have the pleasure to be, with the most unfeigned Regard

Your ever faithfull Friend

Northumberland

Duke of Northumberland

20th July 1842