

Ed. Chaucer

3667

Ms. A. 9. 2. 1. 300 December 24 1779

The Commands, Your Majesty honoured me with, were sufficiently difficult and delicate. But the anxiety, with which I sat about to execute them, is much enhanced by observing, that I have had the misfortune to mislead Your Majesty into a wrong impression of some considerable Men. My Duty to Your Majesty, and Justice to them, call upon me to attempt a more accurate representation of these Papages, than I have yet had the good fortune to convey.

Your Majesty's Object undoubtedly was to form an Administration of the wise, and virtuous, and Respectable of all Parties. For which Purpose Your Majesty was pleased to express a disposition to admit into Your Service and Confidence any Men of publick Spirit and Talents, who would join with a Part of Your present Ministry, in forming one upon a more enlarged Plan; providing withal, for every exertion to preserve the Empire entire, and to prosecute the war with vigour, and that Your Majesty's past Measures should be treated with proper respect. Such was the purport of the Paper, which Your Majesty was pleased to put into my Hands on the 17th of November.

According to the possible extent of this Proposition, all or most of the Cabinet might have been removed, except perhaps the Negotiator of the Peace. And I might have seemed to the Ministers removed, and perhaps to a great Part of the World, to have undermined them in Concert with their Successors. Such a suspicion would certainly have been unjust, as I neither knew nor undertook to answer for the publick or private views of Opposition; but proceeded merely on a doubt, whether there existed in the Ministry Strength enough to carry on Your Majesty's business in the actual situation of things. This Doubt I entertained in common with Lord Howe and Lord Weymouth, but knowing nothing of Lord North's opinion,

Such a suspicion might also have proved an impediment to the progress of the business: I had the honour to be admitted twice to your Majesty's presence on this subject, on Wednesday the 17th, and Thursday the 18th of November. On the Thursday I found that Lord North had informed your Majesty, that he had mistaken my Ideas of the strength of Administration; and, supposing that they turned chiefly upon the concurrence of Numbers in Parliament, had undertaken to reconsider this project in that particular. I explained to your Majesty, that the strength of a Ministry, in my notion, consisted, besides the credit and esteem of Parliament, in their influence upon other parts of the Empire, and other great Bodies within the Kingdom, Their Authority over the Fleets, and Armies, and other ^{obvious} ~~obvious~~ articles. However, together with many other ~~obvious~~ ^{obvious} articles. However, not presuming to urge any opinion of mine, nor indeed wishing to do it without the Priority of your Majesty's other Servants, I humbly proposed it to your Majesty to call for all their Opinions on this Point, whether there really existed in Ministry strength enough to conduct the publick business with Dignity and Effect. and this Idea seemed to meet with your Majesty's approbation.

Thus the Matter rested till the 22^d of November; when Lord North communicated to me His receipt of your Majesty's commands to inform Lord North and Lord Hillsborough of your Majesty's gracious purpose to appoint the first President of the Council, and the other Secretary of State. From this circumstance I inferred, that your Majesty meant to proceed no further on the Idea contained in the paper of the 17th of November: and, supposing that it would not be agreeable to leave that outstanding, I thought it my Duty to deliver it up to your Majesty; which I did accordingly on the 23^d of November. On the 3^d instant your Majesty was pleased to replace the same paper in my hands, adding withal, that Lord North thought it advisable to make an attempt to form an Administration on a broader Basis; and that, in order to promote so desirable a measure, He did not

Ed. Che
wish to
which in
the Paper
present
admitted
in answer
would be
Subjects of
course was
to drop the
Majesty
with the
which in
into some
purpose
find to
as a pro
all auth
sort of
imagined
if any
It was d
They were
flattered
I could
with the
to propos
your
concerned
situation
them to
was your
name. In
my own
situation

Ed. Chaucer

3667 (2)

wish to retain his present office, or to make a part of any new Ministry which might be formed. I humbly suggested to your Majesty, that the Paper was somewhat indefinite; ~~and~~ specifying what part of the present Ministry was to be retained, or what number of others to be admitted; and that such questions would naturally occur to be asked, in answer to which only the Treasury could be offered, unless your Majesty would condescend to specify what other offices might be made the subjects of arrangement. As your Majesty did not think that course expedient, I further submitted, whether it might not be proper to drop the idea of making a direct proposal on the part of your Majesty in that indefinite shape; and to try, whether in conversation with Me they would be willing to disclose any ideas of Coalitions, which might be fit for your Majesty to consider further, and shape into some more distinct proposals. Your Majesty gave me leave to pursue that method: and I took such opportunities as I could find to converse with Lord Camden Lord Shelburne and others; but still as a private Man, who wished a Coalition of Parties, and disclaiming all authority to make Proposals. They declined to enter into that sort of conversation about arrangements with Me; but they never imagined that they were returning an answer to your Majesty; so that if any Conspiracy or Treason were shown, which I really did not feel it was directed solely to Me. It was indeed my conjecture that they would think a fuller proposal more gracious; nay that they flattered themselves with the expectation of a larger opening than I could observe to be in your Majesty's contemplation; and even with that of being sent for. But they certainly did not presume to propose any of those things to your Majesty.

Your Majesty's commands of the 10th instant did not as I conceived them, extend beyond those of the 3rd. In both Lord North's situation was considered as dispositive; and in both it was put upon them to explain the extent of their expectations: unless indeed it was your Majesty's meaning to send a direct proposal in your own name. Understanding that otherwise, I only took an opportunity, for my own satisfaction, to open myself, that I had treated Lord North's situation as not likely to stand in the way of a proper Coalition.

If on Thursday the 16th I reserved myself to a different effort from that mentioned before, I have been so unlucky as to mislead your Majesty.

Upon this occasion I think it was, that your Majesty was pleased to inquire into the expediency of sending a Provoise directly, and in your own name, offering Lord North's place, and expressing your Majesty's desire to make a Coalition of the most respectable Men of all Parties, and calling for their Joins of the Queen's which would amount to such a Coalition. Not being prepared for the sequel, I hesitated about the expediency of an measure from which I could form so little hope. And I further submit to your Majesty, whether after my former conversations with them I should be the properest Bearer of such a Message.

This, according to my memory of it, is the sum of what hath passed. From which it must appear, that no Provoise hath yet been made to any Part of Opposition; nor consequently any answer received from them. They have a right to disavow my conjectures, and even to complain of their being heard at all. Therefore if it be thought expedient to hold out to the Dublin, your Majesty's gracious disposition to admit into your Service and confidence the most eminent of all Parties, it seems necessary to cause some Direct offer of that sort to be made to them.

W. Macclesfield
Dec. 25. 1719.