

T. Erskine to Capt. J. Payne

Oct. 17th 1784

From Erskine

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My Dear Sir

I have this moment received your letter which I found here in passing to London from Dover by the way of the coast. I have been on a little tour on the other side of the water which prevented me from being at Brighton as I intended.

I took some pains formerly to investigate Lord Clots right to enjoy his place for life, & tho' I do not at this moment recollect upon what my opinion was founded, yet I remember that it was against the power of removing him. I will however make it my business to reconsider the matter with proper attention, as undoubtly if the Prince has the power, it is a power which upon every principle of Policy & justice ought to

be exercised; I will look at the same time into the constitution of the subordinate offices, & in a few days will send you the result of the examination.

With respect to Sir Francis Basset's situation in regard to the Prince of Wales, I feel just as you do. I have a great personal esteem for Sir Francis, & believe him to be very much a man of Honor; But I confess myself to be under great difficulty how to act concerning it. As the profession in which I am engaged gives me but few opportunities of seeing the Prince, I certainly do not wish that his Royal Highness should connect me with what is disagreeable to him, more especially as the subject does not officially belong to me; & I remember that for a great while I never saw the Prince without being some how or

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other involved in speaking to him upon that business, till I resolved at last that I never would again.

If I were in Sir F. Basset's place I would - undoubtedly being in Mr Conway at the general Election or whoever else His Royal Highness thought proper, & leave it to his Royal Highness to make the proper return which I know as surely as I know any thing will be always that which a Prince & a Man of Honor should make. His Royal Highness should be kept aloof from all contracts & engagements beyond the one I have alluded to, which He will always pay.

Regarding Sir F. Basset as I sincerely do, this is the course I would recommend to him; but come of it what may, I have personally

too much satisfaction in the confidence
His Royal Highness has always been
pleased to place in me, & too
much interest in preserving the
regard He has always shown
me with to run the risque of
displeasing him by intermeddling in
a matter on which the Prince
has ~~so~~ much made up his
mind. When I see you in
Town which I suppose will
be soon, we will converse together
on the subject; & my own opinion
is that if Papet does what
I have mentioned above, every
thing else would follow of course.
At all events I shall be very
happy to do in it whatever you
advise me, as I am sure that
your friendship for me will
produce no advice unsafe for me
to follow.

Believe me to be most sincerely yours
Feb^r 17th Forster

Mr. Forster