

Lord Mordaunt to Col MacMahon

Oct. 17. 1799

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Strasbourg, Oct 17 1799

You deserve a rebuke, my dear Colonel,
for the apologies with which your report is
introduced. "If you have any Venison, I will
thank you for a basket," is the only formula
admissible, and by using any other you lay
yourself open to the pains & penalties esta-
-blished against the crime of lese-majesté.

Trusting that you will be sensible of your
offence now that it is pointed out, & that
you will view it with due contrition, I shall

not indict you this time. Half a Warer will be
dispatched for Cheltenham this day.

The appearance which you gave to the Piece,
respecting my Dispositions, was perfectly right.
In my professional line, I am ever ready to under-
take any Service for which I may be ordered,
howsoever hopeless the enterprise: Only, if the plan
be such as I think cannot succeed, I must take
care that it be not fathered on my Judgment.
Things are now so overcast in all parts of our
effort on the Continent, that I do not conceive
Ministers can have the notion of trying any other

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experiment of land. There is a distant operation
that might be useful if executed on a decent scale.
I am however, satisfied that it has been a delibe-
-rate determination of Ministers not to employ
me; which, altho' correspondent to my private
wishes & singularly fortunate for me, does not
the less apprise me of a hostility that must
make me tread with great caution if I be
invited to serve: for such an invitation must
now clearly arise from a purpose of circumstances
& could be suggested only by the desire of involving
them in their failures. I gave to the Prince that

counsel which I thought was for his advantage,
that it was contrary to every interest & every in-
-terest of my own. That no suspicion of insincere-
-ness might rest upon the step which he took
(as I believed they would not imagine His Royal
Highness likely to withdraw his friendship from
me) I deemed it necessary to disclaim any
animosity: and I could do so with strict truth.
Had the return to such a proposition been of
a nature that could bear communication,
the speaker would naturally have been very
anxious to impart it to me, since the establish-

- sort of such a sentiment might be useful to
Mr Pitt, tho' I had put it on such a footing as
that it could not benefit me. The speaker's in-
-ference, therefore, was sufficient indication to me
that Mr Pitt's temper over-weighed his policy. Of
course, I must be on my guard against such a
disposition. Indeed, I have great reason to
suspect that the Prince discovered something
of that insincerity: otherwise he would certainly
have endeavored, from a foresight of possible
embarrassment to himself, to have kept
us together. Not having any particular object
myself in the business, I never sound the Prince

as to what he had observed: to that, I am, this is
all loose opposition. Whether the measure be
just or not, is immaterial; for it consists in
-fluence of conduct beyond giving us a degree
of check in that sort of romantic zeal which
for my own interest does require the curb.

Adieu. I will hope to see you here later in
the year; but I think have set of the question
and I have no thoughts of staying hence
with very kind remembrances to Mr & Mrs Mahon
I remain faithfully yours Maria

Colonel Mahon
[Mahon]