

Thomas M. F. Berkeley to HRH.

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Sir

I venture most humbly to address your Royal Highness, impelled by the unfortunate situation in which my family is placed, by a sense of duty to my late Father - the highest feeling of reverence, and confidence in my mother, and the fear that I may in any way be an obstacle in preventing my Elder Brother from the enjoyment of what, I must consider their undoubted rights - I have ventured with the more confidence to address your Royal Highness, because I am led to believe, by perusing the various documents in my Mother's possession, and from the uninterrupted kindness, attention, and condescension, she has ever received from your Royal Highness, both previous to,

and since, the investigation of the Berkeley
Peerage, that your Royal Highness has ever
felt, and still feels, on this Subject, that
there has been a failure of Justice —

I therefore beg to acquaint your Royal Highness
that for my own satisfaction, as well as at
the request of all my Family, I have investigated
most minutely the rights of my eldest brother
and I beg, most humbly, at the same time,
most decidedly to state, That I could never
bring myself to doubt the dying declaration
of my late Father, nor the veracity of my
deeply injured Mother, and I rejoice to find
that they are completely supported by the
extremely important and conclusive evidence
furnished by your Royal Highness, in support
of my Eldest Brother's Claim to the title and
honours of his Father, the late Earl of Berkeley.
— As from that evidence I collect, that
my Father, did in the year 1792, being

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questioned by your Royal Highness as to my Mother being his wife, or his mistress, admit, though most reluctantly, that she was his wife, and not his mistress. That in the year 1795 he confirmed such statement and explained to your Royal Highness, the circumstances which had originally induced him to conceal his marriage, and which afterwards in his opinion, rendered the avowal of it, extremely dangerous and I have great reason to believe, could your Royal Highness find the original deposition made to Lord Thurlow at Brighton ~~in~~ ~~1812~~, the dates of such communication would be found earlier, and the substance much fuller in confirmation of my brother's claim, than that which ^{was} signed in 1812. That a Document of such importance should be mislaid, I shall ever most deeply deplore, and that evidence of such moment,

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Should have been overlooked in the year
1811 when my brother's claim was before
the house of Lords, I most seriously regret
as I feel convinced it must have produced
conviction on the minds of their Lordships
— I beg leave most humbly therefore to
assure your Royal Highness of the satisfaction
I have always felt from knowing you were
convinced my Eldest Brother was the true
Earl of Berkeley. Fortunately your
Royal Highness has the power of remedying
some of the evils of this strange omission, and
I trust that your Royal Highness's regard
for the rightful succession of the Peerage,
and your experienced kindness to my
Family, will allow me to hope that you
will be graciously pleased to exercise it
in such a manner

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as you may judge best calculated
to secure to my brother the enjoyment
of that Birth-right from which he has
already been so long unfortunately excluded.

I remain Sir, your Royal Highness
most dutiful and faithful humble
Servant,

Thomas Moreton Fitzhardinge

Berkeley

Cranford House
June 13th 1819

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