

Lady Berkeley to H.M. (George IV)

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In obedience to Your Majesty's
Commands formerly very often repeated to
me, I most humbly and dutifully presume
to address Your Majesty, and to lay the
painful situation of myself and my
Family before You, confidently relying
on Your Majesty's most serious attention
and as it may be Your Majesty's pleasure
to take the advice of those whose duty it is
to give it, I am called upon by respect
to Your Majesty to detail at large in
this letter, what Your Majesty knows to

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to be the real facts of our case. — To You
Sir, this would be unnecessary, because Your
Majesty is as well acquainted with the facts of
of my unfortunate private Marriage, and rem
the apparent circumstances which led to the Cor
failure in proving it as I can be, and Your
Majesty's gracious kindness and affection
have been so strongly expressed on every
occasion, when either my eldest Son or
myself have addressed You, that I am
persuaded I am consulting the correct feeling
of Your Majesty by endeavouring to seek
redress, and to relieve Your mind of that which
You have declared to be a source of disquiet to
You. — Your Majesty honored the late

Lady Berkeley to H.M. (George IV)

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Lord Berkeley with the most unbounded
your Confidence from the Year 1700. to the time
of his Death without interruption, and the
remembrance of early Friendship and mutual
the Confidence rendered Devotion to Your Majesty
the leading principle of his life. — Your
Majesty also was frequently pleased to detail
to the late Lord Thurlow anecdotes of former
days, and among other subjects, my private
Marriage was often the topic of conversation
and on one occasion Your Majesty expressed
yourself to him as having seen Shipman
when he was sent for by Lord Berkeley in
order to consult him respecting the possibility
of his marrying me and concealing it. — Lord
Thurlow afterwards requested me to describe

Hepsman, and he told me, my description was the same as Your Majesty had before given of him. — This led Lord Thurlow to believe there was nothing relating to my unfortunate private Marriage concealed from Your Majesty, and more particularly as Your Majesty always stated to him You were going to it from the beginning. — Your Majesty declared also that You knew of the destruction of the Register, together with all the circumstances relating to that transaction before the Death of Hepsman, and that Lord Berkeley had put it out of his own power to bring his Marriage forward, without danger to Hepsman and risk to himself. — And in 1792. when the late Lady Berkeley drew the fact of my private Marriage from Hepsman, she implored Lord

Iife to speak to Your Majesty on the subject, he did so, and again Your Majesty upon this occasion also named my Marriage to Lord Berkeley, telling him how unhappy his Mother was, and how anxious to have me declared as his Wife. — Lord Berkeley expressed contrition and remorse to Your Majesty for what was passed, but declined taking any step respecting his first Marriage in the lifetime of Shipman. — A second Marriage was most anxiously proposed by him, but this I objected to under the impression that I should be acting with injustice to my Eldest Son. — When I had the honor of seeing Your Majesty in the Year 1795. at Weymouth, you were graciously pleased to lament the cruelty of my situation, and to recommend

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a second Marriage in the strongest terms,
almost expressing Your displeasure that I
had not consented to it before my Son Henry
was born. — Your Majesty well knows
what a source of misery the concealment
of my ^{first} Marriage was to Lord Berkeley, and
the restless anxiety he constantly felt to
avow his error publicly as an atonement
for wrong without thinking of future benefit,
and here Sir, I trust I may be allowed to
look back with some satisfaction when I
reflect that the affection and gratitude I
felt for him kept me silent as to what I
privately suffered, and I rejoice that I never
did forget that by every honorable means he
endeavoured to atone for the only great error of
his life. — Your Majesty's knowledge of

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my private Marriage appeared to my mind
such a shield against doubt and difficulty
that I thought it impossible either injustice
or injury could happen to my eldest Son, while
my Prince and future Sovereign knew him to
be the true Earl of Berkeley, and in this opinion
I was strengthened and confirmed by the late
Lord Thurlow, who concluded he had done all
that was necessary when he took a deposition
of facts relative to my private Marriage from
Your Majesty, which Deposition was to be
placed in the hands of those whose duty it
might be to give effect to it, whenever the
ends of Justice should require it to be
forthcoming. — I need not recall to Your
Majesty's mind, the Friendship and regard

which this distinguished Man honored me
with to the day of his death, nor the unbounded
Duty and Affection which he felt for
Your Majesty, nor can the application of
any words be too strong for the repeated
Assurances of regard and protection which
Your Majesty at all times, as well as in
his presence, showered on myself and
Children. — You, Sir, always declared
they could have no friend like yourself,
because You alone knew the Justice of
their claims. — Your Majesty wished also
to have been appointed their Guardian in
Lord Berkeley's Will, but Lord Thurlow saw
an objection to it. — Your Majesty will
recollect Lord Berkeley's rushing into the

House of Lords, to prove his Pedigree, from an anxiety to make his Marriage public without taking legal advice on the occasion. Your Majesty and Lord Thurlow, though not satisfied with the course he had taken lent him every aid, and through Lord Thurlow's means the Order of the House of Lords was rescinded. This Protection and Regard Your Majesty continued to us under every trial, and when Lord Dunsley was returned to serve in Parliament, and a Petition was presented against his legitimacy, Your Majesty supported Lord Berkeley in the bitterest moment of his life. At this period, Sir, the blow was given which shortened his days. — His words to Your Majesty were, "not only my Wife, but my injured Child is involved in my errors." From

From this time he sunk, and in about six
weeks was taken to his grave. — Here Your
Majesty will I trust allow for my feelings,
his words were too affecting to Your Majesty
the last time you ever saw him, when he
foretold his death, and called upon Your
Majesty with all the solemnity of such an
occasion, for that protection to his family
which Your Majesty had so often promised.
During his illness he was calm and quiet,
and had made what atonement he could for
wrong, and his Sovereign Prince had most
solemnly pledged his sacred word and honor
to give his testimony for the benefit of his
Children whenever he was called upon to do
so: his intellect remained clear to the last,
Your Majesty's friendship soothed his dying

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moments, and the last act of his life was to write to Your Majesty, and to impress upon my mind, that neither I, nor my Son were to take any step relative to his Birthright unauthorised by You. — He died, Sir, and the world became a blank to me, till I was roused by Your Majesty to the duties of a Mother and a Guardian. — As soon as I could be removed to London, I found Your Majesty's zeal and regard had stepped beyond our most sanguine expectations. — On my arrival at Cranford, I found a Letter from Your Majesty, telling me Your anxiety was so great to see me and my Children, that You would have met me there, had You not feared I was too weak to support the interview, and Your Majesty met me at

Berkeley House the next day. — The scene
of our unhappiness, was too much for Your
Majesty's feelings, and You were obliged
to retire with my eldest Son whom Your
Majesty embraced as the Earl of Berkeley
and expressed Yourself thankful to Heaven
that You had been privy to my Marriage.
I found Your Majesty had left me little
to do, but to administer to my Husband's Will
as You had Yourself retained Counsel, and
taken every necessary step relative to the
Peerage. — Your Majesty also received
a letter by the hand of the Rev^d John Hughes
addressed by Lord Berkeley to Your Majesty
almost in his dying moments. — That letter
I've, and the minute which You made of
what passed between You and him in Your

Last interview made such an impression upon
Your mind that You carried it in Your
bosom, and with every sensation of sorrow
You asked us if we did not know that the
contents of such a letter, made at such a
moment, and under such painful impressions
would be sufficient to take life away if it
related to a capital offence. That being the
case, Your Majesty said You should not go
into the early and confidential communication
made by Lord Berkeley to You before the
death of Shepsman, as the papers You then
held in Your hand would be sufficient to
establish my sons claim, and when Lord
Baskine, Sir S. Romilly, & Mr. Serjeant Best
met Your Majesty at Berkeley House, You

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confined Yourself to these Papers, they all
declaring their contents, would be received as
legal Evidence; — Contrary however to
expectation the Judges decided otherwise,
doubts were thrown upon the Register, and
for want of Your Majesty's corroborating
testimony, I became justly alarmed for the
rights of my Son. — I therefore most earnestly
entreated Your Majesty to send for the Lord
Chancellor, and state to him all You did know
on the subject, but Your Majesty refused to
communicate with him, or any of the Ministers,
alleging Your want of confidence in them
and Your fears that they might entangle
You, so that You could not have the power
of removing them when the restrictions were

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taken off the Regency; but Your Majesty
said You would send for Mr. Serj^t. Best, and
make him acquainted with the facts You
were in possession of. — The Serj^t. did attend
at Carlton House, and the Duke of
Cumberland contrived by means which I
abstain from describing to put every thing
else out ^{of} his head, as I stated in my Letter
to the Lord Chancellor, which Letter as well
as every other that I ever wrote to his Lordship
respecting my private Marriage was first
read and sanctioned by Your Majesty at
Carlton House. — When the Lords had decided
that my Son had not made out his claim, I
beg to recall to Your Majesty's mind Your continued
assurances of protection to my Eldest Son. You

gave me Your sacred word that the moment the
Restrictions were removed, and You had other
Ministers, Your first act should be, justice
to him, if I left London, and took no step
unsanctioned by You, and from that period to
the present time, I have done all in my
power without effect to recall Your Majesty's
attention to our situation, a situation into
which we have fallen, from being directed
by Your Majesty.

In the Year 1812. Your Majesty honored
me with a visit at Berkeley House, attended
at my desire by the Chancellor of the Duchy
of Cornwall, and in terms of the strongest
feelings of affection, Your Majesty then
expressed Your desire to do justice to my Eldest
Son, and sometime afterwards, Your Majesty

declared, so great was Your anxiety to give
publicity to what You knew of my Marriage,
"that You wished it could be stuck up at
Charing Cross," and when in an agony of
feeling, I told Your Majesty my family would
be ruined, in consequence of my private
Marriage, Your Majesty shed tears, and said
You would not allow me to entertain such
an opinion, as You knew how strictly I
had done my duty in every situation of life.
Your Majesty is still pleased to express the
same kind feelings, and when my Eldest Son
was presented to You after the investigation,
Your Majesty bent forward, and said, You would
only receive him as that which You knew
him to be, The Earl of Berkeley, or words to

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that effect. — In all the applications we
have made to your Majesty, you have
invariably expressed the same anxiety to make of
that Deposition which Truth and Justice
require — On one occasion your Majesty
said, that you should be happier if it
were off your Mind, and that you would
gladly lay aside your great situation for
a time, and be placed as a Witness before a Jury.
These being the gracious and honorable feelings
of your Majesty's mind, my Son Moreton
most dutifully requests me to add, that it is
his intention to petition the House of Lords,
shewing the situation in which he, as well as
the rest of his Family is placed; in which
Petition, Grantley, who is now of age, wishes

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also to join. — The subject Sir, is most truly important, as it involves the Characters of Individuals, but it acquires additional importance as it presents the question, whether the Sovereign who is the fountain of honor is to experience the afflictive mortification of not being able to give effect to that claim of which he has the fullest conviction.

I feel, Sir, it is impossible for Your Majesty to allow such injustice to be done, and to permit an ancient and Noble Family to sink into ruin from a reliance on the solemn and sacred word of Your Majesty. — I have not now detailed any of the Memoranda which from time to time have been sent from Carlton Palace as parts of Your Majesty's

testimony. — I have also a copy of that Document signed by Lord Thurlow, most likely correct, because signed at so early a period. — I have also several others, all supplied by Your Majesty, but I trust You will feel that as Your Majesty was formerly pleased to undertake the responsibility of my Son's claim, without the advice of Your Ministers, until a great failure of Justice took place, so You will be graciously pleased from the impulse of Your own correct and benevolent feelings, to act for Yourself, until You have set it right, or fairly and fully made Your Ministers acquainted with Your anxiety, to do us Justice, and with the real state of the case. — This being done, whatever

advice they may give to Your Majesty, which is for Your honor and happiness, must I am sure be for our benefit. — In the mean time, Sir, as my Daughters are at a time of life to appear in publick, I hope Your Majesty will, as you formerly did, command me to appear before you, either at your private or public Court, and place me in that situation which Your Majesty knows my correct conduct deserves, and which situation I should have held, had your Royal Father been now alive. —

I most humbly conclude this Letter to Your Majesty, relying on your paternal goodness for pardon, if any word has escaped

me, unbecoming the most dutiful Subject
to her Sovereign.

And I remain, Sir,
Your Majesty's most faithful
and affectionate servant
(Signed) M. Berkeley

Tranford House
March 11th 1822.

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Lady Mary Berkeley presents her humble
Duty to His Majesty, and she has copied her Mother's
Letter that it may be more easy to read

Lady Berkeley
to
The King

March 11th 1622.

Lady Berkeley
March 11. 1622.