

Private,

Head Quarters, Halifax

April 19th 1000.

My dearest Frederic,

Unfortunately for me, the December mail was four months before it reached Halifax, I therefore had not the satisfaction of getting your letter until the 15th Instant; you will perceive by the date of this, that I have no time in answering it.

I must first return you my warmest thanks, for the very affectionate manner in which you have promised to send me the Dutchess's picture, and your own, as soon as you could get them painted after your return to town, and then request that you will offer to her my most grateful acknowledgments for this very flattering mark of her regard for me.

There was no occasion my dear Frederic, for you to make any apology for not fulfilling your promise of writing to me sooner than you did: of your numberless occupations from the moment I left England to that of your return from Holland I was well aware, and being fully

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sensible that they were the only causes of your silence,
I feel not a little gratified, and flattered to find
that you thought of me so soon after your return.

I am very grateful for the candor with which
you enter into an explanation of the nature of the
two situations in Scotland, and Ireland, to one
or other of which I had expressed to Mr. Dundas
my desire of being appointed, should either of them
fall vacant during my absence. I was perfectly well
aware before I left England, that the Command of
the forces in Ireland, would be ineligible for me unless
the Union was concluded, and I was equally sensible
from what you did me the favor to communicate,
when last we exchanged a few words upon the subject,
that (upon that measure being carried) it would be
placed precisely upon the same footing as that of
Scotland, which you then told me was no more, and
no less, than a district similar to any of those
in South Britain. This knowledge however did by
no means then, and does not now lessen my desire
to hold either the Irish, or North British Command,
for I never had a wish to be independent of you, or
the contrary it has always been my ambition to
look up to you as my elder brother, and as the
person at the head of my profession, whom it was
both my duty, and my inclination to please,
and

and from whom in return, I expected friendship,
 protection, and assistance to aid me in the
 accomplishment of those wishes, which I might
 form for my future establishment in the line
 of it. At the same time I was as fully a-
 ware then, as I am now from your letter, that
 in holding either of those situations I should be
 far more limited in point of power, and au-
 thority, than I am here from the Commission
 I hold in this Country. But believe me, am-
 bition never was, is not, and never will be a
 predominant passion with me: as such, not-
 withstanding this difference, it will not cost
 me one moment's uneasiness to move from hence
 to either of those stations. Indeed could I have
 foreseen when it was in agitation whether I
 should come out or not to North America, that
 the General Officers then Commanding the East,
 West, and South West districts in South Bri-
 tain, were so near giving up those situations,
 I should never have thought of leaving England,
 could I have been assured that one of those would
 have been conferred upon me. Even now should
 I be disappointed in my wish to be named to
 the command of the forces in Ireland, or in Scot-
 land, I shall not perfectly satisfied for the
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present, if you are good enough to obtain for me, that of
 either of these three districts (though Down, if I
 were permitted to declare a preference, it would be
 for the Weston, or South Weston one,) and shall
 esteem it a great indulgence to be removed to a
 situation where I am near my family, and
 more immediately under the eye of the King.

It is true that situated as I am with an
 incumbrance to clear off (which you must remember
 my answering you was the only motive of my return to
 America, when I had before me the experience of the
 injury done to my health, by my prior residence in
 it, and knew there was no one comfort to be met
 with in the country that could in the least counter-
 -balance that certainty) the pay of ten pounds per
 day, which is attached to the post of Commander in
 Chief cannot be considered a trifle to give up; but
 I presume this would not be insisted upon, as surely
 in the event of my being stationed in Scotland, or
 Ireland, little difficulty would be made to continue
 me the same on your representation, although it
 might be judged expedient to give me a commission
 only as Commander of the forces, and to leave out the
 words "in Chief": should however wish that not be
 admitted as proper under the arrangements you
 may choose to adopt, or if the utmost I can obtain
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is, to be put at the head of a district on the Staff of South Britain (in which case, I feel the pecuniary arrangement would be impracticable) I am perfectly willing to serve on the Staff pay of a General, being sure that with your good offices at the Treasury, some mode could be found of making up to me the loss of the four pounds per day by adding to the allowance I now enjoy in lieu of table money.

I hope I have now been sufficiently explicit upon the first part of your letter, and that you will fully understand from what I have said, that any dissent at home, if there are objections to my going to Ireland or to Scotland, would be infinitely preferred by me to continuing any longer here. But to misperse you more forcibly with my anxiety that such an arrangement should be made, I will candidly confess to you, that the confinement which the faithful discharge of my duty has imposed upon me, is more than my health can possibly stand long; as during the period of nearly eight months which have passed, since my arrival, I can prove, that for five days at least, out of the seven, I have been shut up eleven, and at particular times upwards of twelve hours a day.

This will not surprise you when you consider that exclusive of those duties which I have to attend to

in common with any General Commanding a district at home, I have also the charge of the Commissary, the Banack, and the Engineer department, way estimate, and account of which pass through my hands: Besides this there is not a single shilling goes out of the pay office, but by warrant under my own signature. You will therefore feel the responsibility that attaches to me, and that for my own safety, I cannot avoid devoting every hour of my time entirely to business.

I am sensible that to a man in the habits of a sedentary life, this sort of occupation might appear as nothing, but to me who require several hours of hard exercise to keep me in health, this close confinement to my office, is the greatest punishment that I could possibly undergo. It is true that from being so little exposed to cold this last winter, I have been fortunate enough to escape a severe attack of rheumatism, which I have had every other winter I have hitherto passed in this climate: but this benefit has been obtained by the sacrifice of what alone is conducive to the enjoyment of hearty health, and of which I have felt the painful effects in being unable for six weeks to wear anything but a pair of loose trousers, from a very troublesome humour, which after showing itself in several parts of my body, at length settled in my leg

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leg; indeed at this moment I am writing, one of
my eyes is nearly closed up from the same cause.

After what I have said, I almost feel
confident, that your representations to the King, will
be such as to move His Majesty's orders to recall me
to a station nearer home, by the first mail that
may leave England, after this comes to your hands,
particularly as on leaving Windsor I ventured to
express to Him my hope, that if anything fell
vacant at home, while I was abroad, I might not be
forgotten, and have since by letter, presumed to
recall the same to His Majesty's recollection; but if the cause
you intimate as likely to prevent ministers from re-
commending to His Majesty my being appointed to
the command of His forces in Scotland or Ireland,
is equally to operate against my being put on the
Staff at home, perhaps the reply I am going to
make to that part of your letter, in which this is
mentioned, may not be thought sufficient to do it
altogether away; yet I must own I shall be much
surprised, if after perusing the following lines, you
should still continue to be impressed with that
opinion of my conduct when last in England, which
you seemed to entertain when last you wrote.

However, without
further preamble, I will proceed to this subject.

From the moment I got home in the fall of 1790, having no other reason to shake off a connection which had then lasted eight years, and which in many of the most painful moments of my long banishment from my family under the pressure occasioned by the apparent total loss of parental affection, had been almost the only comfort of my existence, I did nevertheless to regulate my conduct in that particular, so as to avoid giving any offence to the prejudices of the world. This motive alone induced me to establish Madame de S. Laurent in a residence altogether separate from mine, where she was attended by a distinct set of servants, and from the same principle we mutually agreed upon never appearing together in the streets of London, in the parks, or any place which could be termed public, or where there appeared to be the slightest chance of incurring either censure, or even an unpleasant observation on the part of the most rigid, precise, and formal.

To this resolution I can solemnly declare, the most faithful adherence was observed, for if I except driving her out now and then in an open carriage, (in doing which we were careful to make choice of the most private rides) and going to the Prince's Lodge galleries at the two theatres (a part where I always understood no one was subject to the prying of importunate cu-

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riosity) I am confident there is no person who can
apart having seen us together anywhere. For my
own part so perfectly convinced was I of having fully
succeeded in not exposing myself to censure by any
part of my conduct with respect to her, that on leaving
England, it was one of the most pleasing reflections
to me, and I felt the more confident in this belief,
as I never once was able to find out, that even in the
most scurrilous public prints, the shaft of satire
had been levelled either at her, or at me. You will
easily conceive then what must have been my sur-
-prize at reading that sentence in your letter,
in which you say "that I can have no idea how
"much the world talked of the public manner in
"which I appeared every where accompanied by Madame
"de St. Laurent."

That some people have spoken
in this manner I cannot have a doubt after what
you have said, being satisfied you can only have
mentioned it from motives of friendship and affection
for me, I am sure therefore you will not be
offended, if I say, that I cannot help feeling, no
one had a right to make this observation, as the
assertion on which it is grounded, is wholly un-
-founded; the remark made by you, that you
"was well aware such things might be done abroad,
but

"but I might depend they could not at home", leads me naturally to say, that I so fully felt this myself, that I did on landing in England totally and entirely alter my mode of living with Madame de St. Laurent. How she always did, and does now again live in the same house with me, she therefore presides at my table, goes very often into Company with me, and it is a rule with me never to accept of any invitation where there are ladies, unless she is asked; but I never looked forward to a similar plan of life at home, and she never had an expectation of the kind. I should have thought the little insight which you would unavoidably get into our mode of going on, by seeing how things were managed, when you did us the favour to dine at Knightsbridge, would have been sufficient to convince you of the injustice of the animadversion you have heard passed upon my conduct on that point. But as it is but too clear to me that the case is otherwise, it is in vain to attempt by any comments of mine, to undo the past; as it is however necessary that you should perfectly understand, and have it from under my own hand, what are my intentions with respect to my future conduct on this point, in the event of my being named to the command of the troops in Ireland, Scotland, or one of the districts in South Britain, I will

communicate

communicate the plan I had intended, and which I should still propose to pursue in that case.

I would in the first instance join my command unaccompanied by Madame de S.^{te} Laurant, and establish my own residence in such place as might be pointed out for Head Quarters: this done, I would take a house for her in the country at some little distance off, where her ménage would be totally separate from mine: she would of course, not appear at my house on the days I gave my public dinners, and when I went to hers, I should consider myself as her guest. I should avoid being seen with her at any place of public entertainment, that might occur in the neighbourhood, unless it could be managed so as to be done in the most private manner, and without exposing myself to be criticised for so doing; but in all this arrangement I desire it may be understood, that she is ^{not} only now the first to acquiesce, but that she has been uniformly averse to anything that brought her into public view.

Should this detail of my plan be deemed, as I am confident it ought, a sufficient assurance of the perfect propriety of my conduct, you may depend upon my strictly abiding by it, but if

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if more is expected, or if I am to understand it is
 the intention to make my separation from Madame
 de St Laurent, a term without which I am not
 to be employed on the other side of the Atlantic,
 (which however, it is too repugnant to my feelings
 to credit) I must at once declare, that it is one
 which I will not admit to be dictated to me, and
 to which even I to subscribe, I should consider
 myself as meriting every opprobrious, and contemp-
 tuous epithet, to which those expose themselves
 who commit mean, and despicable actions.

I will
 frankly confess to you, my dear Brother, I cannot
 bring myself to think otherwise than that you
 will be fully satisfied with the assurance I have
 given you, and that no impediment can any longer
 exist on your part in the way of one or other of the
 arrangements I have pointed out being concluded
 for me. But if the case should be otherwise,
 (as it is indispensable at this very great distance
 from home, to guard against every possibility)
 I should declare to you, as I am sensible that
 my health can neither stand the labors of my
 present situation, from the unavoidable inconve-
 nient that is attached to it, nor the heat of a
 swow winter, which according to all human
 judgment

judgement, the next is expected to be, in the same proportion as the last was mild: my firm and unmovable resolution is, not to remain in this Country beyond the period when I know an answer ought to arrive to this letter, if it meets with that early attention which I trust it will be thought to merit. I must therefore request, if either I have not succeeded in removing by these lines any delicacy which His Majesty's Ministers, as you inform me might have felt in recommending to the King for the Command of His forces in Scotland, or Ireland; or if by having failed in so doing, the same obstacle is intended to be considered as of sufficient force to prevent my obtaining the Command of one of the districts in South Britain, that you will lay my humble petition before His Majesty for leave of absence for a twelvemonth, a removal from this climate, being essential for the recovery of my health. But should this indulgence be refused, much as it would grieve me, and wound my feelings to be drove to such an extremity, I am under the painful necessity of desiring you in that case, to lay at His feet my resignation of that situation to which He was pleased to appoint me in this Country, for though I have hitherto considered it at most

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honourable mark of His confidence, it cannot fail to lose every credit that was attached to it. The moment I am compelled to feel, that in order to obtain the honor of serving nearer His person, which it is well known I should prefer above every thing, the sacrifice of my private comfort, and happiness that cannot possibly injure any one, is to be made the *tertium quid* non, a condition which I am confident never sprung from His breast, and I trust never could spontaneously have arisen from yours.

I cannot think it foreign to the purpose now to remind you, that in the whole of the last fifteen years of my life, I have not in all been nine months at home, and of that time, (exclusive of the eighteen months during which I commanded the Guards at Hanover, and which I do not wish to reckon anything,) I have been upwards of ten years in foreign service, and undergone some of the worst, and most trying climates, from which I have no scruple in saying, I have contracted the seeds of disorders likely to stay by me as long as I live. I therefore should hope, that this consideration would have some weight in obtaining for me that indulgence, which would not be refused the meanest soldier

in the certificate of the surgeon of his Regiment, and that there can be no chance of my having to apprehend a negative for leave, which would without fail, drive me to the painful alternative I have before intimated.

Before I conclude let me explain myself clearly with respect to my intention of returning home; the present letter according to common calculation ought to reach you before the 20th of May, which will give you a full fortnight to determine with His Majesty's Ministers, and to take the King's pleasure either as to my being named to one of the situations I have pointed out, or to my receiving leave of absence for the term I have requested: I shall therefore expect your answer by the same mail, which generally reaches this sometime between the 10th and 20th of the month of July: if by that, I do not receive from you the intimation of my being recalled home, in one of the two modes I have solicited, I shall consider myself as thereby reduced to the cruel alternative of being obliged to resign that situation which I now hold, as the proof of His Majesty's approbation of my conduct, during the long period I served in this Country before, and you may then depend upon
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my embarking at latest by the 24th of July, not
 choosing to run the risk of delaying so long as to
 be at sea, at the time of the Autumnal Equinox,
 which from former experience, I should not be
 very fond of encountering in the neighbourhood
 of Scilly. You will receive this within a very few
 hours after the arrival of the Sloop of War,
 at Dalmouth. I send it by the hands of
 Lieutenant Colonel Wetherall, who I trust will
 be permitted to deliver it to you in person, and
 who is also commissioned, to present you with
 an official letter, should you think it advisable
 to lay that before the King, as motives of deli-
 =cacy may prevent your communicating the
 contents of this to Him.

I have now only to say,
 that as I have by no means taken ill what
 you have written to me, although I must own
 that some part of your letter severely wounded my
 feelings; so I flatter myself you will not be
 offended with the candor of my reply, which I
 sincerely hope may have the effect of enabling me
 to owe to your friendships, my recall under flattering
 auspices, and not under such as must give me
 the greatest distress, though I feel myself com-
 =pelled to encounter them, rather than submit
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to remaining abroad to the widest daily pre-
-judice of my health, and under circumstances,
that I cannot but consider as pressing upon a
-fairly hard upon me, and wholly unprovoked by
-any conduct of mine.

After troubling you with
so long and tedious a letter, I feel I do
-least to offer you an apology for trespassing upon
-upon your time, which I am sensible must be
-so much taken up with business of more im-
-portance than attending to me, but really I
-cannot help flattering myself, that as the subject
-of it is one in which I am so particularly inter-
-ested, you will not judge it necessary for me
-to attempt an excuse; I shall therefore only add
-that I hope nothing that I have been under the
-necessity of saying, will occasion any coolness on
-your part towards me, as on mine, whatever may
-be the case. I am, Sir, always
-always find every disposition to prove that I
-sincerely am what I shall ever profess myself
-to be.

Your most affectionate brother,
and faithful friend.
Signed Edward.

The Duke of York.

The Duke of Kent
to
The Duke of York
19th April 1800