

George Pitt

This must be later than Oct. 5, the date of the last
of the enclosures, 1765.

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†
Most Gracious Sovereign

The Administration being form'd when
your Majesty was graciously pleas'd to receive my last memorial,
I thought it would be more agreeable both to your Majesty, and to
them, that I should endeavour to obtain through their mediation
the Object of my present pursuit: Since that time I have been most
disagreeably detain'd in England by this fruitless application, the
substance of which, with its success, I humbly entreat that your
Majesty would be pleas'd to consider by perusing the Letters I
now take the liberty to lay before you. These, with the Memorial,
contain the whole state of my Case, and the wishes of me, and my
Family; and if they are written with a degree of strength that may
appear improper, your Majesty's great Candour will naturally lead
you to recollect that they are address'd to those only, whose Conduct may
be suppos'd to justify that stile. After being long amuss'd, I have
at last been plainly told that I am to expect nothing from them but
opposition to what I must call my just pretensions; and therefore,
Sir, I humbly beg leave to lay at your Majesty's Feet my present

Circumstances, and the Arguments I have oppos'd to the Opinions, and Resolutions they express'd at our last interview. If I presume too much in taking this method of addressing your Royal Person, I doubt not but your Majesty will honour me with your Pardon, and conclude that it proceeds from that awfull respect, with which I always approach you, and ^{ye} incapacity I feel of doing justice to that Cause, which I am left alone to support against so many powerfull Opponents.

Your Majesty's Ministers are, I find, resolv'd to remonstrate strongly against my being honour'd with a Creation, because they apprehend that this would open the Door to many, who flatter themselves with hopes of the same Dignity; and I fear they will neither spare my pretensions in Abeyance, because they think this a favourable occasion of making a signal Example of a Man, who dares attempt to procure for himself, and his Family what he has a lawfull title to request: What I have found necessary to say upon the first Article appears in my Letters, but as the intentions of my Opponents concerning my Claim were but lately communicated to me, I most humbly beg your Majesty's attention to them, and what the best of my reason dictates in answer.

I must still flatter myself that what I urg'd in my last conversation with Lord Rockingham will prevent their being very sanguine in their opposition to my expectations in Abeyance: Their intentions then were to offer it to your Majesty, as their Opinion only, that no decision should ever be made in cases of Abeyance, till, by the extinction of the other Branches, there should remain but one Claimant: This is such a Stroke against the Royal Prerogative, and so bold an attempt upon the Rights, and Priviledges of the Commons, that I can

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hardly think they seriously intend it: Laying my Case out of the question, and the very humane, and benevolent manner in which my humble Petition was receiv'd, and encourag'd, I have been greatly deceiv'd, by the Opinions I have consulted, if this Advice be not directly contrary to the Law, and Constitution of this Country. In support of this I have taken the liberty to lay before your Majesty some extracts upon the doctrine of Obedience, and will venture to forfeit all farther pretensions if any disinterested Judge will not second this doctrine, and consequently condemn the intended Advice of your Majesty's Ministers.

I cannot presume to know from whom the Advice proceeded that your Majesty should refer my Petition to the Peers; but if that, and the Advice not to decide are from the same quarter, I dare not, to your Majesty, express the degree, and nature of my Astonishment. Could they mean, after two very expensive hearings before your Attorney General, and the House of Peers, that no determination should follow? Or could they know so little of your Majesty's humane, and equitable disposition as seriously to suppose that you would encourage even the most undeserving of your Subjects to incur so heavy an Expence, and such a Series of Trouble, and Anxiety, without any intent that he should reap the fruits of it?

It is too evident that neither Justice in general, or Friendship to any other Claimant is their motive to this opposition: When their Advice to refer was frustrated by my humbly presuming to remind your Majesty of your former most Gracious Promise of a Creation, and my preferring that to the risk I now too plainly see would have attended such a reference, they had immediate recourse to strong remonstrances, not only against a new Creation, but also against any

decision at all in consequence of Sir Fletcher Norton's very favourable Report. From this, Sir, it is too evident that a Mark is set upon me, as an intended Victim to their enmity, nor is it in my power to assign any Cause for this unexpected Stroke, but that I am of no Club, no Party, and dare avow the most cordial attachment to Your Majesty's sacred Person, independent of every factious connection.

In so unmerited, and oppressive a Situation I must beg leave humbly to throw myself at Your Majesty's Feet, and to implore the interposition of that Humanity, and Justice which are inseparable from Your Royal Breast, and which you never refuse to an injurd Servant. I am the more sanguine in my hopes of Your Royal Protection, from the Reasons which first induc'd me to ask leave to present my Petition, from the signal Marks of Favour, and encouragement with which it was receiv'd, and from a lively confidence that Your goodness will not suffer me, with so many circumstances pleading in my behalf, to be the first Victim to such dangerous and unconstitutional Advice.

What I have now presum'd to submit to Your Majesty's known Wisdom, and Equity, and the Supplications I have ventur'd to address to Your benevolent Heart are the necessary results of that duty I owe to myself, and every Branch of my Family; so far I have perform'd what is incumbent upon me, but my own Heart would be far from satisfied, if I did not assure Your Majesty that all these considerations, as far as they affect me personally, weigh not a Feather against my ardent desire of promoting Your Peace
and

and Tranquility: It was this Principle, and the warmth of my Wishes to see so excellent a Prince reigning happily over an undivided, and gratefull People, which first tempted me (still then in opposition) to lend my weak assistance towards this salutary end, by persuading others to the same Measure, and by an humble offer of my own Services to Your Majesty: From the moment they were so graciously accepted, both my reason, and warmest inclination have detach'd me from every other political connection, and invariably bound me to the best of Kings, and Masters: Do me the justice, Sir, to believe this Truth, and if the difficulties so unjustly oppos'd to Your Majesty's engagements should embarrass that inclination, which I am confident Your Majesty has to make a very faithfull Servant happy, put the matter from Your Thoughts, do him the honour of laying on him Your final Commands, and suffer him to enjoy the cordial Pleasure of removing the smallest Disquietude from a Mind so exquisitely sensible: That Your Majesty should ever experience any is matter of the sincerest Grief to all who approach, and know how to love You.

As far as I am concern'd, Sir, the Gentlemen of the Administration may continue the same sensible, and humane Conduct: They may force me from my Employments, and from Your Royal Presence, but all their Power will never reach my Heart, or in the least weaken that perfect Veneration,
and

and respectfull Affection, with which I have the Honour to be

Your Majesty's

Most Faithfull Subject, and

Most Dutifull Servant

Geo: Pitt

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Mr. Geo. Pitt

1796

Geo. Pitt to Gen. Henry Seymour Conway
Enclosure

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Copy of a Letter to General Conway
Aug. 28th 1765

Sir

As I have the honour of being in your department, and as I flatter myself you would not be displeas'd if I succeed in my present pursuit, I think it incumbent on me to give you all possible insight into its present situation, that you may seize any opportunity His Majesty may afford you of expressing those Sentiments, which I am persuaded your love of justice will dictate, however little I may suppose myself personally entitl'd to your interposition in my favour.

I followed your kind Advice, and so far conquer'd my dislike of troubling His Majesty with a recollection of His most gracious Promise of a Peerage, as to obtain from Him a repetition of it, with ^{the} kindest Assurances that I should succeed at all Events: Upon the strength of such Assurances, of near five Years date, and the just Claim I have shewn in Obedience to two antient Baronies, should I not be guilty of injustice to the best of Characters, if I could harbour the least doubt of success? Upon this just Dependence I ground the following Arguments, which I beg leave to submit to your consideration.

I have labour'd at a great Expence of Time, Ease and Money to prove my Right to a Peerage, with no other intent than to enable His Majesty to perform His most gracious Promise in the manner I thought would be most agreeable to Himself. My Petition was receiv'd with such evident Marks of Favour, and Encouragement that I could have entertain'd no fears from any of those Claimants, of whose existence I inform'd the King, had I not even been fortified with the Promise already mention'd. I could not have the least suspicion that, in such flattering Circumstances, a strong, and favourable Report from the Attorney General would have avail'd nothing, and I can truly assure you that, had I not depended upon immediate success, and that by being

convinced by my Lord Chancellor, as well as Sir Fletcher Norton that His Majesty's ordering a Writ of Summons, without any Preference to the Lords, would depend upon the Report / I should not have prosecuted my Claim, but have asked a performance of His Majesty's Promise of a Creation. The advice to His Majesty to refer must have proceeded from those who are ignorant of these, and other Circumstances I shall mention, and, therefore, I must hope that it will be no longer insisted upon. The King's Right to confirm my Claim, upon the Authority He has before Him, is not to be question'd, nor can there be an Instance better calculated for the exertion of it. A Claimant in His Majesty's Family; for several years in His Service at a foreign Court; kept from his Residence there by the suspension in which this matter holds him, and one to whom, at all Events, His Majesty is engag'd by His Royal Promise of a Peerage. Should this have no weight, let me, Sir, appeal to you whether, if all such Claims must for the future have the sanction of the Lords, it would not be more consonant to the just and tender Disposition of His Majesty to spare a Subject all that anxiety, and Expence which must attend a full, tho' unnecessary examination of his Claim by an Attorney General. Could it have been the original, and genuine Intention of such a Thing, as we have the happiness of seeing, to embarrass, and distress the lowest of His Subjects, in the prosecution of his Right, by obliging him to pass a rigid examination of two successive Tribunals, when by a favourable Report from the first, He is lawfully authoris'd to grant his Petition? And if this Argument has any force in general, does it receive no additional Weight from the Circumstances of the present petitioner? I venture to state this in full conviction of the impossibility of its proceeding from the Royal Breast, and whatever Advice may first have suggested it, I cannot but flatter myself that my Case will not be chosen as the unfortunate Precedent for such Proceedings: I say Precedent, for by Mr. Gort's Report, in Lord Botetourts's Case, The King could not well

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Geo. Pitt to Gen. Henry Seymour Conway

Enclosure

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avoid a Reference, in mine he is authoris'd to act without any, and in this I am supported by my Lord Chancellor's Opinion, who repeatedly assur'd me that my being oppos'd a Reference to the Lords would depend upon the Report, to which he add'd, the Day before he left Town, that I need not be allarm'd at his absence, as Messengers were often coming down to him, and that he would seal the Writ whenever it should be sent him without delaying me four Days. The Lords indeed may claim the Right of placing a Peer whom His Majesty has thought fit to summons, and the Claimant in question will not dispute this Right, but satisfy himself with any Place they, in their Candour, and Justice, shall allot him.

Thus, Sir, I have troubled you with my Arguments against a Reference, and I must now confess to you that for weighty considerations I owe both to myself, and my Posterity, I have resolv'd to withdraw my Claim rather than submit it to the Decision of the Peers, and have taken the liberty humbly to make this request to the King.

Having been honour'd, even at my last Audience, with the strongest, and most benevolent assurances that I shall have a Seat at all Events; let me call upon your good Sense, and Candour either to second, or condemn what I am going to submit to you.

After shewing a clear Right to two antient Titles to facilitate the Kings gracious Intentions, can a Creation to a new Barony only be adequate to my just Expectations? Would it not encourage other Claimants to sue for that Right, which I may hereafter see them in possession of to my prejudice? and would not this occasion that multiplication of Peers which it is intended to avoid? On the other Hand, would a Creation, in

consequence of a failure of my Cause in the House of Lords, were even to alleviate the heavy Expence, and Disgrace that would necessarily attend it? Can you suppose, Sir, that His Majesty's ben-
-volent Intentions of Favour can be fulfill'd to the satisfaction of His own generous Breast, by either of these Alternatives? I am convinced they cannot, and must beg leave to say for myself, what in the same circumstances common Sense, and Justice would oblige me to say for another, that I can never be persuaded that the King in His known Equity, and Generosity can order me to obey as I ever shall be to His Royal Will, to relinquish such very strong Pretentions as both His promise of Favour, and my own Claim entitle me to, for less than their Value, and there never was a Case which call'd more loudly for an immediate favourable Decision, by ordering a Trial for a Writ of Summons to the Baronies in question. At all Events, I shall wait with humble Patience whatever Mark of Favour it shall please His Majesty, from His great Goodness, and Equity to honour me with, since the Expectations of all my Friends are rais'd even without being as yet acquainted with the whole of these Arguments, and since the Eyes of all who know me at home, in the County I serve, and at my Residence abroad are too much fix'd upon this Event for me now to recede from, or postpone my just solicitations.

You must be too sensible of the importance this matter is to me, and my Family not to pardon the trouble I give you, and will I flatter myself be persuaded of the sincere esteem, and consideration with which I have the Honour to be,

To
The R^t. Hon^{ble}. General Conway.
ye ye ye.

Sir,
Your most obedient, and
most Humble Servant
Geo: Pitt

Geo. Pitt to Gen. H. S. Conway

Enclosure

183 Half Moon Street Sept. 24th 1765

Sir

You will not be surpris'd, after our late conversation, that I trouble you once more upon my Business: 'Tis much against my inclination, nor shall it be my fault if it be not for the last time.

From a few words that fell from you a fortnight ago, intimating a supposition that I might soon be released by the performance of His Majesty's Promise, as well as from your general Character, I can have no doubt that you, Sir, would be glad that I should be enabled to depart for Turin, upon such Terms as in justice I cannot but expect, and depend on. Under this persuasion, and from your being that Minister with whom I am more immediately connected, I beg leave to address to you what I find necessary to oppose to what dropt from Lord Rockingham Sunday last. If I misapprehended his Lordship, or if the steps I shall lay upon some of my Arguments be not warranted, I must beg it may be imputed to the zeal with which I cannot but prosecute the only pursuit of this kind I have ever had, or shall have.

In answer to the whole of my reasoning, Lord Rockingham's only Argument was that the Door must not be open'd, from which I am much concern'd to foresee that I am not to expect any assistance from his Lordship. It is, however, fair, and manly to speak explicitly, and I shall imitate what I cannot but approve.

If it be meant that the Door is not to be open'd to Claimants of dormant Beverages, I must beg leave to ask a few questions upon this Head. Can a right exist to a dormant Beverage? If it can, may not the Court of Chancery be as equitably shut.

against a Suitor for his Estate? Will the Commons of England hear with patience such a Doctrine, and, whatever his intentions may be, can that Man be in fact the King's Friend, who would advise that so valuable a Branch of the Prerogative should be lost to the Crown? This Argument holds equally against a Reference of such Cases to the Lords, after a full, and favourable Report from His Majesty's Attorney General; such a Reference being but a less odious method of shutting the Door, a direct Infringement of the Rights of the Crown, and a most unjust obstruction to those of the Subject. I can, from the best authority, insist upon the Legality of this Doctrine, when, as in the present Case, the King is authoris'd by the Report of his Law-officer to confirm immediately the Right of his Petitioner.

If the Argument of opening the Door can be meant in opposition to a Creation, can it be justly urged against a Man who has patiently seen the Creation of at least five Peers since he was absolutely promis'd to be the next, and who now for the first time, takes the liberty of claiming that Promise? Can any, who may now ask for this Dignity, plead such an Argument, or shew a Right to two Baronies in Abeyance? Could Lord Digby be better entitl'd to success, and must a Man, with better pretensions, have that Door shut upon him, which his Lordship has open'd, least others should ask what, perhaps, they have no right to expect? Am I, and my Family, to whom the King has been most graciously pleas'd repeatedly to promise His Royal Protection from any injurious Decision, to be so signally punished because others may be unreasonable? I pretend not to be honour'd with the Friendship of any of the present Administration, nor am I conscious of having merited their Enmity; without the latter, however, the above Arguments would naturally suggest themselves as a very sufficient

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answer to any, who may expect success in consequence of mine. I beg leave, Sir, to address these Reflections to your Head, and your Heart; lay aside the Minister, and consider candidly whether in my unexpected, and I hope undeserv'd situation, you yourself would act, or think otherwise. To postpone again my just Expectations, after so long a delay, and during my intended absence abroad, must be look'd upon as a refusal of them; a Stroke of Cruelty, and Injustice, which it is absolutely impossible that the best of Kings should conceive, or His present Ministers advise: They, I am confident, are as watchfull of their Master's Honour, as of their own, nor could His Majesty have found those, who, from their Rank, and Character, promise fairer to be the faithfull Guardians of that sacred trust.

Tho' of little consequence myself, this Honour is as dear to me as to others, and if I were not interested in the performance of the Royal Promise, and had the same opportunity of obtaining it for another, I should be sorry not to look on it as my Duty. Upon this Principle, therefore, I should be both faithless to my Sovereign's Honour, and weak to my own Interest, if I departed from my just Expectations: of these I have talk'd freely to every body, and of the reason for shewing my Claim in Obedience: It has been my duty to be very open to the County I represent, and needless to be less so in general. Insignificant as the subject of this Business may be, the Eyes of many are upon it, and I must beg leave to say, that I have heard but one slight Argument against the many serious Reasons that exist in my favour: If these succeed not, I must conclude that some misconduct of mine will soon be made appear to justify their being disregarded; and till this be done, I must tell you, Sir, calmly, but firmly, that after producing, by the King's permission, and Commands a clear Right to two valuable Baronies, and being honour'd with the most gracious encouragement to hope for the possession of them; after silently seeing at least five Peers created

since I had an absolute Promise of the next Patent, and after the kindest, and strongest Assurances that I should succeed to my wish at all Events; I say, Sir, after such very cogent Reasons to depend upon some Mark of His Majesty's Favour, nothing but His own absolute Commands shall make me desist from my pretensions. I shall wait as patiently as possible till I am releas'd, and will candidly confess to you / what His Majesty already knows to be my resolution from the dependance I have upon His Royal Word / that I shall defer setting out for Turin, till I have had the honour of kissing His Hand for a Title: Till then I shall be detain'd from my Duty, for it would be insulting Justice to fear the being discharg'd from my Employment, because I have dared to ask my Right, to trust to the Assurances, and to depend on the Promise of the best of Kings, and Masters: This would flatly contradict His repeated Gracious Declarations that nothing should happen to injure me, and it would be an Insult to suppose it possible. Believe me, Sir, I say this with perfect calmness, and temper, and from no other Spirit than of that Candour, Openness, and Firmness, from which as long as I am a Man, I hope never to depart.

I have the honour to be with great esteem; and consideration,

Sir

Your most obedient, and
most Hum: Servant

Geo: Pitt

To the R^t. Hon^{ble}. General Conway.

To [3]
General Conway
Sept. 25 1765

Enclosure

Gen. Conway's Letter in
answer to that of Sept. 25th
to which this is a Reply,
cannot in justice be shewn
without his Permission.

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Copy of a Letter to General Conway
Sept. 25 1765

Sir

I am very sincerely concern'd that what I intended should be purely Argumentative, should appear to you to proceed from warmth, I must confess that the Expressions of my last Letter are not destitute of strength, but it is because they are not destitute of reason. Whenever you will do me the Justice to read them coolly under a persuasion that I wrote them in that temper, you will give to its proper Cause what, I am sorry, carries the appearance of improper Heat: You will perceive also, that I lament the not being honour'd myself with the Friendship of the present Administration, and have not been impertinent enough to give the least insinuation that I should not be extremely happy if they would do me the honour to accept of mine.

I am, Sir, extremely oblig'd to you for the manner in which you laid before His Majesty my first Pretensions, as I also am for the kind Advice you now offer me: You cannot suppose that I should choose you should tell His Majesty that I cannot go to Turin without the Peerage; but it is my humble Request that you do me the Justice to lay before His Majesty that Letter from which you infer that this was my wish: And so high is my opinion of your Candour, and Honour that I will entertain no Apprehensions from any Comments or unfavourable Constructions, that many in your situation would be tempted to make in the temper which the suppos'd warmth of my Letter would naturally have left them. Your Generosity, and your opinion

of the justice of my Cause may perhaps occasion your hesitating
at this Measure from the ~~continued~~ ^{continued} persuasion that I express my
self with warmth, and that that may be of disservice to me
with His Majesty: I have so entire a Dependance upon the
excellence of His Heart, and Judgment, as to entertain no ^{such} apper-
-hensions, and, therefore, without farther Consideration I repeat
my wish that you would lay before His Majesty, both that Letter
and this Note, tho' written, as you must observe, in the utmost
hast, and without any consideration: Having express'd this my
wish, I hope, Sir, you will understand that I submit it totally
to your better Judgment, and pleasure, and that I shall be per-
-fectly satisfied with whatever you shall think fit to do in this
Business.

I have the honour to be with great respect, and regard

Sir,

Your most obedient, and
most humble servant

Geo: Pitt

To
The Rt. Hon^{ble} General Conway.

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Geo. Pitt

To (4)
Lord Rockingham
Oct. 5 1768

Enclosure

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Half Moon Street Oct. 5 1768

My Lord

After the very candid, and effectual method I have taken to give your Lordship the perfect Knowledge of my Claim, and just Pretensions to a Seat in the House of Peers, I look upon myself as entitled to expect that your Lordship will grant me one Favour: This is, that I may fairly, and explicitly be acquainted with your Lordship's Opinion, and Intentions, previous to the taking any farther Step in this Business.

General Conway having inform'd me that he communicated to your Lordship my Letter to him of the 24th of September, which I desired him to lay before the King, I beg leave to refer to it for all I have to say upon this Subject, and to assure your Lordship that in Justice to myself, and to every Branch of my Family, I shall most firmly, and religiously abide by every Article of that Letter.

I shall hope for the favour of an Answer to this, and have the honour to be with great respect,
my Lord,

To
The Marquis of Rockingham.

Your Lordship's
most Obedient, and
most Humble Servant

Geo: Pitt

An Interview, in consequence of this Note, gave Mr. Pitt clearly to understand that he was to expect nothing but Opposition from Administration.

