Leigh House

June 11th 1804

My Lord,

In every letter that I ever had the honor of writing to your Lordship I have expressed not only apology but a reluctance at the trouble it was giving you and from being more and more sensible of the annoyance it must occasion to your comforts I should feel disposed never again to trouble you upon this unfortunate business did I not know that you would like to hear what steps the General is likely to take. Certain it is that he has no intention to communicate with your Lordship and I hope you will pardon the warmth with which I take the liberty of urging your Lordship to shew him by your treatment of him, that you are Lord Lieutenant of the County. I do not urge it to irritate or make it worse but because I would not like to see your Lordship treated with disrespect. About 10 o’clock last night I was much surprized at General Whitelocke being announced. His visit lasted till past 12. He began this long conversation by telling me that he came to apprize me of his intentions relative to the business of the 4th Instant that consistent with the sincerity of his regard and friendship for me he could not take a measure of such a nature as the Contents of his letter to the Duke of Cumberland would lead to, without coming to express his concern to and (as I imagined) putting me upon my guard. He desired me not to interrupt him while he told his story, which I agreed to, provided, he suffer’d me to endeavour to justify my friends and to explain every thing to him. It is impossible for me to recollect all that passed in conversation of two hours, neither would it amuse your Lordship. I have the satisfaction of reflecting that I do not regret one word that I spoke to him, that I said all I wished to say to him, and left nothing unsaid descriptive of his behaviour to me and to the Volunteers in General. He had all the letters to show the Duke, up to No. 7 – I told him that if he proceeded with his charge, that my friends must supply His Royal Highness with the remaining papers of the correspondence. That there was a paper of very great importance towards the justification of these Gentlemen which was, his own Invitation to the Men to go without their Officers. This General, said I, I thought you were too rigid a disciplinarian to be led into. He appeared to be me to be sensible he had got into a scrape and although he was absurdly ridiculous in all his conversation, yet I really felt for him and if it had not been for the very unhandsome terms of his letter to the Duke I should be ready to forgive him. He told me he was going to day to Dine with the Duke at Kew after seeing his [blank] and that he should put this letter with all the papers into his hands. I advised[?] him not, because said I, the Duke must apply to the Lord Lieutenant and his Lordship will naturally furnish himself with proofs of the disobedience of these Gentlemen before he will be instrumental to their disgrace you insist upon. He did not read to me the whole of his letter which was very long, but in a moment of heat, he took it out of his pocket in order to read me one passage, when he (not[?] meaning it, I rather think) went on and as near as I can recollect the following were the words, if not very identical words or expressions, that are of the same meaning and tendency, what precisely or what followed, I know not, but something I dare say equally unjust, unfounded and illiberal. His words are, “I am sort to impose upon your Royal Highness the perusal of the enclosed letters No. 1 to No. 7 relative to the Officers I have already alluded to and I am to claim your further protection against being treated so again by requesting you will cause the Lord Lieutenant of the County to refuse the resignations of these Captains. I am inclined to think that the family of one of these people may from recent circumstances, now meet with some protection from their former politics, but I think it my duty to urge your Royal Highness to cause Captains Garrett, Greetham and Hickley to be dismissed and degraded with every possible mark of disgrace.”

“He also endeavours to impress upon the mind of the Duke, that 3000 Volunteers were rendered of no service by this cabal, and I have reason to think he has attributed it all to me from the influence he imagines I have and from my personal hatred to certain Characters arising from Politics.” If he gives this letter to the Duke I hope your Lordship will gain a sight of it, every syllable in it I will engage to refute. I am not surprized at his endeavours to impute the failure of his system to me but I deny that I ever otherwise exerted my influence than to promote it, and I gave my Brother and his Friends every assistance in my power, but to say and to endeavour to make Government believe, that he had organised 3000 Men at Portsmouth, it is absurd. I believe at the most, there might be 1200 on the Hill when all came out, they mustered not more than 1000 in Portsmouth and Portsea, and he does not conceal that he was perfectly ashamed of them. I told him that he had to thank himself for the failure of the system that I forewarned him of it, but he persisted in listening to people who neither wished him well, me well, or the Country well. Men who were enemies of all. He endeavoured to exculpate himself by solemnly declaring that he had used his utmost efforts to place me at the head of the whole, but the Government prevented him and he received orders to arm the Multitude, and to get as many, as it was possible, in arms and he was advised that this was the best mode. Your Lordship best knows whether in these assertions he spoke the truth. He said that it was his intention to have disarmed and disbanded the three Companies on their return from the Hill on Public Parade, yes said I, General, and you had ordered them to repair there for the purpose, what then prevented you? “Mr Garrett of Leigh, for his sake I did not do it.” Then replied I “he was of most important service to you, for, you would have been in a more awkward predicament that you are now.” He in short appeared to me to be sensible of the scrape he is got into through rashness and violence of temper. He thought by this visit to me to get me to promise that my Brother, etc., should not resign, but that if they did and he found they had brought any charge against him he must defend himself. I assured him that although it was quite impossible for my Brother and his Friends to continue in the Volunteers they had no intention of accusation against him, unless he accused them and then in their defence they must come forward with all the facts.

He appeared to be ignorant of the provocation that the 4 companies had met with and had he been a cool and dispassionate Man he would, I verily believe, have confessed himself convinced that he had been mistaken. In one of his although movements he could not conceal his expectations of soon convincing me and the world of the high estimation he was held in by His Majesty’s Ministers, conveying to me the idea of his having a red ribbon or a Baronetcy that latter I fancy he expects shortly to have.

We parted good friends. He is gone to London and returns on Wednesday to receive the Duke of Cambridge at his House, so that he really does appear to be in great request with the Royal Dukes and may by their means obtain some mark of Distinction, but that he should receive it at the hand of the Ministers, I shall be surprized at, for there never was a Man so unfit to carry the leading objects of the late or present Ministry into effect as he is. He had no conciliation in his Manners. He over and over again expressed his regret that an interruption had taken place to our intercourse, that he had always spoken of me with respect and that he hoped notwithstanding this unpleasant business, our intimacy would be renewed. Never Sir, said I, until the expressions relative to my family and our services to Government for twenty years last past, which has caused this host of Enemies against us, are obliterated from your letter and your mind and you speak to them in other terms. “Well,” said he, “then I will not give the Duke the letter,” “You will do as you please General, let us undertake each other fairly if you accuse, I must defend.” Whether he will shew the letter or not, is to be seen. I own I have not faith in his professions. He cannot however do any thing without your Lordship’s knowledge. He said he would go to Mr Pitt and if he did not get redress he would resign his post. “Can you” asked I, “accuse these Gentlemen of disobedience of orders, in or out of Arms?” “No” he said “I have carefully avoided giving them any order, I knew better” “Then, General what become of your charge against them” Mrs Whitelocke and her daughter have been here to Drink tea with Mrs Garrett who received a severe shock at the General’s visit at so extraordinary an hour, and from her situation I fear serious consequences will arise, but it was not to guarded against and must be submitted to. Mrs Whitelocke has said a good deal but chiefly expressive of her regret but evidently conscious of her Husband having got into an unpleasant dilemma. I have not seen nor heard of my Brother since his visit to your Lordship. I shall be glad to hear of your having transmitted their resignations without any history of the General’s behaviour. An enquiry though it might rebound to their credit must have an unpleasant tendency at this time, and although he does not deserve it of me, for I have been for these 8 months past in a constant state of irritation about Volunteers and quite miserable, yet I would not wound General Whitelocke’s feelings more than they now appear hurt by his own intemperate conduct.

This my Lord is a very long tedious uninteresting letter, it may serve to amuse you in a walk through your delightful Groves, but it is not worthy of a perusal in your Study.

I am very much obliged to your Lordship for applying to Lord Melvill for a Sergeant Major. I am most vexed at its ill success for the Poor Man’s sake than for myself. I rather wonder at the little desire there appears to assist the Volunteers upon whose exertions so much reliance is placed.

With every sentiment of respect and regard, I have the honor to be

My Lord, your Lordship’s

Most obedient servant

William Garrett

Right Honorable Lord Bolton