Leigh House 17 February 1804

My Lord

I cannot too often how very truly sorry I am and as are my Friend that a subject of this nature and one immediately caused by them should, in addition to your other weighty and important engagements, occupy so much of your time and thoughts, I can however assure your Lordship that there are most sensibly alive to every sentiment of gratitude for the trouble you have taken, and for your manly, generous, and condescending endeavours to protect them against the idle and vain attempts, of Messrs Whitelocke, Mannooch, and Brown particularly in the case of M. Greetham, whose greatest and in fact only crime appears to have been that he seemed to doubt whether an Inspecting Field Officer of a District was also the Commandant of the Volunteers. Whatever may have been the effect of Captain Brown’s interview with your Lordship and the alteration of opinion it may have occasioned in your Lordship’s mind, I most earnestly hope that you have received no impressions that any things has been asserted to you in their narrative, letters, or conversations contrary to the truth. Whatever the treatment they have experienced arose from General Whitelocke or the Duke of Cumberland, whether it was authorized by the Government or not, the effect towards them and upon their minds is the same and there can be no doubt of its being incur’d by the misrepresentation of General Whitelocke who must have told the Duke of Cumberland that he has the Volunteers completely under his influence and he could do as he pleased with them. It would have defeated his plans to communicate them to your Lordship. Did I not confidently hope and believe that this will be the last letter I shall have to trouble your Lordship upon this subject, I should feel much more reluctance at intruding upon you that I now do, but emboldened by the confidence you have honoured me with and encouraged by your Lordship’s condescention to ask me for my thoughts upon the result of your visit to Portsmouth, I will venture to give it as my opinion that, while it must and ought to impress upon the minds of all parties thankfulness for the anxiety you feel and the inconvenience you put yourself to, it will not be attended with the good effects you anticipate, if your Lordship persists in recommending a Field Officer to Superintend them in Independent Companies, my reason for thinking so, is, that though your Lordship might fancy this Man as only in the Character of a Superior Adjutant, General Whitelocke knows that being a Field Officer he must command and that when he pleases, he may order these Companies into Battalion and continue them as such as long as he thinks it may tend to the good of the Service, and the answer to any remonstrance would be such as the General has already given that the Government “had thought proper to place so and so over them and that he is responsible”.

It is impossible to express how hurt these Gentleman are that this should occur and how much they enter into all the reflections that must arise in consequence of it, but if the Violence and intemperance of these who assume command over them even before the legally possess it, are such as to create alarm in their minds, they are more to be pitied than blamed. After reminding your Lordship of all that has been written to you upon this subject even by both sides, I cannot forbear calling your friendly attention to the events that have taken place since the return of the General’s Aide de Camp from Hackwood. Whether they were the effects of disappointment and despair or the consequence of joy and triumph, I know not, I am yet to learn. The General caused it to be reported “that since your Lordship had heard the business explained by Captain Brown you thought very differently of it not having before been put into possession of the true state of the question.” It appears that as soon as Captain Brown came back he issued an order (No. 1 herewith) relative to an act most innocently and inoffensively committed, by Mr Mottley, the day before, that could possibly be, and act that Your Lordship will find was done the Sunday before by one of the Mr Deacons (those friends of mischief discord envy and hatred) of their order I shall only say that it is the very essence of intemperance vanity and folly. Impressed with this order in his mind which he called a Garrison order (to which the Volunteers unless in actual service cannot be deemed liable) he goes down to attend the parade the order was not published till the next day in his way thither poor Captain Mottley fell in his way and the treatment this Gentleman met with, no doubt either had been or will be reported to you, when he reached the parade I hear he gave aloud orders to Captain Brown his Aide de Camp to go and give the same orders to the other three Captains adding “don’t mince the matter with them” meaning I imagine that if they did not attend to his orders he would disband them and their Companies. The Mr Deacons and the Mayor (Mr Cuthbert) were seen to go alternately backward and forward as it were to converse with him, and returning to their party on the parade in apparent pleasure at what they heard from the General.

Under all these circumstances My Lord, would you with all generosity and candour of your Character, recommend these Gentlemen to trust themselves either in a Battalion with such Companies or under the Command of such a General.

From the truely interest you have hitherto taken in their feelings and which I will not suppose have been even weakened by any thing Mr Brown could say (if he adhered to the truth) I am sure you will not press upon them the point of a field Officer, but in the shape of an Inspecting Officer. In such a Garrison as Portsmouth, the General if he wished it might find a Field Officer on any day if he wanted one and thought it necessary to appoint one just for the purpose of Commanding the Volunteers on an occasion when they were brigaded.

But notwithstanding the natural unwillingness they must feel at the system of terror there is exercised towards them with which they are threatened, they are not deter’d from tendering your Lordship their services on the footing they originally understood themselves enrolled namely as Independent Companies. This they are prompted by principles of love and Loyalty to their King and Country and personal respect and attachment for your Lordship, whose mind would be much vexed at seeing a defection of four of the best Companies of the promised strength and Defence of the most important Maritime depot in the Kingdom. Under your friendly protection and active cooperation they need not be afraid of being trampled upon by the Lieutenant Governor notwithstanding his bombastic and tyrannic threats and order. Pardon me, My Lord, for an honest warmth one of the Parties is my Brother, the others are my old companions and have proved themselves my attached friends, imperceptibly became their advocate I cannot but feel their cause to be mine. Avowedly I am not known to have interfered, though there is a passage in the Generals letter that most probably alludes to me and it very probably that a day of reckoning will soon or late take place between us. I shall not shrink from it because I am conscious of having acted uprightly, I have given temperate advice and if your Lordship was not made acquainted with the dissatisfaction long ago it arose from my being prepossessed with an idea that you had left every thing to General Whitelocke and that it was useless to trouble you. They patiently submitted to a thousand unpleasant things from a sense that in these times there would be no merit due to them, if sacrifices were not made to their feelings, their time, their convenience and their fortunes. Wounded as they have oftentimes returned from the field days yet they resolved to persevere and promote to the utmost of their power the efficiency of their Companies and on every occasion (in spite of opposite inclinations) the Inspecting Field Officer yielded to them, the preference in point of discipline, size and number of their Companies over others, they patiently bore all, until Major Maxwell order them to put on black belts and to be separated from each other, avowing publically that he was sent by Government for that very purpose. What was then, their line of conduct. They respectfully remonstrated with General Whitelocke he told them quietly to do one thing and with respect to the other, he never interfered. They learnt from every quarter that they were aimed at, that the Deacons had formed a party against them and they were likely to be in continued danger of misrepresentations, they therefore in as respectful and submissive manner as language could dictate, requested the General to permit them to resign. They were sorry to take this step they were attached to their Men and their Men to them and though they were made to promise by the General, that they would do all they could to secure the Men they soon found that if they retired the greatest part of their Men would withdraw themselves also. In this state of things, your Lordship applied to them for their reasons for wishing to resign and your Lordship being in possession of them and of every other occurrence that has taken place, I ought to make every ample apology for recapitulating them to you. I do apologize and sincerely hope you will forgive me and particularly as I promise your Lordship that this shall be the last time that you shall be troubled upon this subject by him who is happy in the honor of subscribing himself with most sincere respect and esteem

Your Lordship’s

Most obedient and faithful servant

William Garrett

P.S. I hope I act right in not meeting your Lordship at Portsmouth I have not known how to decide but as I can be down in an hour (if you wish to see me) I thought I would stay at home in the hope of seeing your Lordship at Leigh in your way to Portsmouth or at all event I hope to have the honor of your Company for a night in your Way back.

Copy

Head Quarters Portsmouth 15 February 1804

Major General Whitelocke learns with astonishment that notwithstanding his order and many explanations A Captain of an Independent Volunteer Company presumed yesterday (contrary to the Spirit of the original enrolment of the Island of Portsea Volunteers) to take the Command of three others, as well as that of which he was Captain. He therefore wishes it to be clearly understood in future that in the Garrison of Portsmouth the order of the Lieutenant Governor are not to be trampled upon be persons with arms in their Hands.