Leigh House July 5th 1804

Confidential

My Lord

My only motive for troubling your Lordship with a letter to day is to express the sorrow I feel that your Lordship is not likely to receive (unless I send to the Post Master) my answer to the letter you honoured me with from Southampton on the 27th Ult. In this you told me you should set off for Cheltenham on Saturday or Monday last. As I happened to be in London all last week your letter reached me there and as I did not receive it till Saturday last I instantly answer’d it and directed it to Cheltenham.

This will I trust satisfactorily explain any seeming inattention, which I never can wilfully be guilty of towards your Lordship. The only thing I particularly wished in this letter that your Lordship should know was my desire to be as useful as it may be in my power to your Son at the ensuing Winchester Races to which I have not been many years but shall in compliment to Mr Powlett make a point of attending this year. And am very sorry Mrs Garrett’s situation is such to prevent her going with me to the Ball.

My Brother came over to Leigh last Night and told me of your alteration of plan and that you set off for Harrogate next Monday.

I cannot but heartily rejoice that my Brother is out of the Volunteers, and it will be very contrary to my advice that he engages any more in them at Portsmouth. The return we have met with has wounded my feelings to the very quick. All that tends to console me is that events will prove that our efforts and influence were not altogether mere assertion and pretence and that the Service we were of to Government was real and essential. Your Lordship, I fear is deceived about the state of things at Portsmouth, and I suspect Mannooch thinks he is serving a party by misleading your Lordship.

By his informing you that the ten Companies had been “out together the 3 under Mr Rood, etc”, by this he means no doubt to convey to you that they were all going on well, as well, as with the three Captains, far was this from being the fact, the three Captains themselves requested the Men to go out as their Resignations had not then been accepted, or they would not, and particularly under Mr Rood, etc.

As proof that neither Mr Rood or Allen have any influence, all that they can Muster as yet, for both Companies are 25 Men only, and the men of my Brother’s Company will not serve under any other officer. Colonel Mannooch will not inform your Lordship that at their last Field day the whole number of the ten Companies amounted only to 98 Men and Officers. Mr William Deacon’s Company mustered only himself one Serjeant and the two officers. Mr Grant’s on Serjeant and three Privates. The others in a proportionate degree of total indifference and inefficiency. This is the real state of the Volunteers at Portsmouth and this is perhaps the consequence of General Whitelocke’s interference. Let him now be asked whether it would have been so bad had he not joined a confederacy to throw me and my Family into a back ground and drive us out of the Town.

Your Lordship may conceive my feelings to be a little warped by resentment, but I speak the truth, and my Duty I think is to make your sensible of the real state of things and not to suffer you to be deceived by the letters and reports of a Man who I know to be a Creature of the Carter family and consequently of the Corporation who having been the first cause of all this Confusion would naturally be desirous that the failure should be kept from your Lordship.

I met General Whitelocke in London who told me that he was going to leave Portsmouth and no doubt your Lordship knows that he is going to the Isle of Wight. I wish he may not disorganise the Volunteers there who hitherto have been a pattern of regularity and good order. Now that it is know that the General is going away my Brother and Mr Hickley have been solicited by their Men to come forward again, but they must themselves consider it, as I do, impossible. They would be sorry to be idle and for that reason must be Privates in my Corps, I see no other alternative for them. The three Companies who by the unfortunate misunderstanding are lost, were without any prejudice the best of the whole, and without partiality my Brother was as good if not the best officer they had. The struggle hitherto has been to oppose oppression, the Battle yet to be fought will be amongst those who remain for Rank and the command for not a Man whether Officer or Private will submit to Mr Deacon’s being the Commanding Officer, that family is so unpopular. Who then must Command will be the question. Most cordially do I lament all this, for your Lordship’s sake and most readily would I prevent it if I could. I can be of no service now. Perhaps you will be driven to the necessity of disbanding the whole and letting them enlist themselves again afresh. Your Lordship can never auger any good from a body calling themselves a Battalion, having Colours, etc and electing on every Field Day from amongst themselves a Commandant for the Day! My Lord, this is the Corps that General Whitelocke and Colonel Manooch would make your Lordship believe would have been most exemplary if it had not been for my poor friend Greetham. I assert that my friends were the cause of their keeping together out of spite to them, but that now that they have got rid of my friends, they will themselves fall to pieces and be in a short time totally disorganised.

Your Lordship has kindly encouraged me to think you are not displeased at my long letters. I will not trespass in making apologies but conclude.

I have the honor to be

Your Lordship’s

Obedient servant

William Garrett

Right Honorable Lord Bolton