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[February 1812]

A.A. No. 6

An anxious desire not to be mis-
-understood by your Royal Highness, in the
-sentiments which the Duke of Wellington thinks it
his duty to lay before your Royal Highness, has
induced him to commit them to writing, and to
submit your Royal Highness's permission to
have the paper in your hands —

In the present awful situation of public
-affairs, when the anxiety of every man alive
-for the welfare of his Country is excited to a more
-than ordinary degree, by the recent Comma-

- mission which it has pleased your Royal
 Highness to make to the Lords Grey and Grenville,
 through his Royal Highness the Duke of York,
 on the subject of the future Government of the
 Country, the Duke of Medford feels it to be
 his Duty humbly to approach your Royal Highness
 with the Expression of some apprehensions which
 weigh so heavily upon his mind, in the Crisis
 in which we are placed - a Crisis of almost
 unexampled Danger to the dearest and
 most essential Interests of the State -

The Duke of Medford feels himself more imperatively
 - by called upon to exercise this painful Duty,
 from a consideration of the alarming Situation
 in which Ireland is placed, by the Conduct
 of the Government of that Country during the
 Period of the last six Months, and the little
 Prospect which appears now to be held out of

of a better and a wiser Policy prevailing there,
 and he cannot but combine the Consideration
 of these Circumstances, with the previous and
 amicable Assurance which your Royal
 Highness authorized him to make to the
 leading Catholics of Ireland, when in the
 Year 1805. he was entrusted by his Majesty
 with the Government of that Country; an Assurance
 which you the most cordial to his Majesty ^{to them}
 whom it was made, and enabled them to accept
 - fully to express every impatient Solicitude
 on the part of that numerous and increasing
 Portion of the
 Population of Ireland - Deeply impressed
 with a sense of the unhappy Consequences
 that may result from a Disappointment,
 which must in the Nature of it be severe in
 the extreme, the Duke of Medford cannot

but respectfully, yet earnestly implore your
Royal Highness to turn your attention to that
part of the United Kingdom; & which he anxiously
and truly the Wounds of your Kingdoms of his
Majesty's Subjects, labouring under Disabi-
-lities and Deprivations of the most paining
and mortifying Description, but which the
constant hope of your Royal Highness's just
sense of their wrongs, and the ultimate ex-
-pectation of redress from the hands of your
Royal Highness, have hitherto taught them
to support with feelings of unintermitted
Imitation and Impatience —

The Duke of Bedford must repeat to your
Royal Highness (because he is persuaded
that it will gratify that spirit of Benevolence
which he has uniformly witnessed through

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all your actions, that the assurance which
 your Royal Highness granted him to give to
 the Roman Catholics of Ireland, through the
 leading members of their Body, that you
 acknowledged the full justice of their Claims,
 and should not fail to redress the Grievances
 which they complained, whenever your
 Royal Highness felt yourself authorized
 to do so, produced the most heartfelt and
 unqualified Satisfaction - your Royal
 Highness may not expect that the Disappoint-
 -ment which they must now feel, if they find
 that the Prayers of the Petitioners they have so fre-
 -quently, but respectfully submitted to the
 Legislature is not to be sanctioned and
 conceded by your Royal Highness's Government,
 will be proportional to the satisfaction

They have experienced -

Not only the Catholics of Ireland, but every part of the Population of that truly interesting Part of the British Empire, have long and habitually looked to your Royal Highness as their peculiar, and almost their exclusive Friends - They have uniformly considered your Royal Highness, as the avowed Protector of their rights, and the natural guardian of their happiness - They have looked forward with an anxious solicitude to the period of your Royal Highness exercising the Government of the united Realm, as that of closing for ever the mutual animosities of Protestant and Catholic, and the various oppressive Bills under which the People of Ireland have so long

suffered, and your Royal Highness is justly entreated to believe, from the purest and most unquestionable source of Information which has reached the Duke of Bedford, that "the history who may be empowered by your Royal Highness to offer the strict Branch to the conflicting sects would be hailed almost with one voice, as the benefactor, or rather as the Saviour of the Country" -

For the contrary see, the same System is to be pursued towards that ill-fated People, if the same ill-founded jealousies are still to prevail, if the same errors are still to be acted upon; if the same unjust, unwise, and impolitic Restrictions, penalties, and Disabilities, are to continue to operate against the Roman Catholic Body, the Duke of Bedford

is under the painful necessity of repeating
to your Royal Highness, what he humbly stated
to the King when he was honoured with an
Audience on his return from Ireland in 1807,
namely, his firm and conscientious belief
that Ireland must inevitably be lost to the
British Empire - This strong and decided
Conviction of his mind, is unfortunately
strengthened and confirmed by all that has
happened in that Country from the period
alluded to, to the present hour -

The Duke of Bedford feels that it would
be superfluous in him to offer any argument
to convince your Royal Highness of the Policy
of conceding to the Catholics what they claim
from the Justice of Parliament - He has had

The happiness of hearing from your Royal
Highness, on a former occasion, that you
completely concurred in the views he has formed
of this important measure — having been
informed by the kind and grateful regard
of your Royal Highness for two and twenty
years, he has had frequent opportunities
of witnessing your Royal Highness's zeal and
anxiety for the welfare of the Dominions you
were born to govern; he has listened with
a pleasure he can not describe to the
doctrines he has heard from your Royal
Highness's mouth, on civil and religious
Liberty, and on the constitutional Rights of
the Subject; he has heard your Royal Highness
speak in eloquent Praise of that great and
virtuous Statesman Mr. Fox, and the Duke of
Devonshire can never forget the manner in

which your Royal Highness was pleased to
express yourself, when you condescended to
write to him in Dublin on the death of that
incomparable Man; he has also had the
relancholy gratification of hearing your
Royal Highness speak in almost the same
Terms of one who was endeared to him by Ties
of Consanguinity, and the warmest veneration
and affection, and whose Loss he has more
than ever to deplore at this moment —

With all these powerful feelings and gra-
=tifying reflections deeply engraven on his
Mind, and with a knowledge of the avowed
Sentiments of the two great Men he has attended
to on this important Point, he cannot bring
himself to doubt your Royal Highness's
just and unalterable Sense on the policy
of the numerous Questions which he has

submitted to submit to your Royal Highness's
view; and he treats of your Royal Highness's
Justice to acquit him of any thing like
Personal disrespect to your Royal Highness;
If he has delivred himself with too much
Freedom, it is only because he feels warmly
for the interests of the Country, and that he
considers the Question of the Catholic Claims
to be of vital Importance to the Happiness and
Security of the Empire —

Upon all other Questions of national Policy,
though of great Moment, the Duke of Bedford
has purposely abstained from touching —
Every thing which relates to Ireland,
he has long given the most deliberate and
anxious Consideration, and from the high
and responsible Station which he had the
Honour to fill in that Country, he has thought
it his bounden Duty to deliver his Sentiments

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To your Royal highness upon what most
authoritatively relates to the Policy which is his
most the opinion ought to govern the Councils
of State —

Descended from a line of Ancestors who for
upwards of 300 years have uniformly devoted
themselves to the active service of their Country, &
the Sovereigns of these Realms, under whom
they lived, the Duke of Bedford would have
thought himself unworthy of the Blood,
which flows in his veins, and of the hereditary
Honours which have descended to him, if in a
Judgment like this, he should have neglected
to give his mind freely, but dutifully and
respectfully to your Royal highness —
He has stated the serious and solemn
Conviction of his honest and unbiased,
but imperfect Judgment, and the Nature
which he has presumed to lay before your
Royal highness, he thinks of the highest
Importance to the Publick Good —