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**Junius**

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Letter VII

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I am, will be apt to suspect him of having deviated a little from the truth: therefore let Junius ask no more questions. You bite against a file: cease viper.

W. D.

## LETTER VII.

TO SIR WILLIAM DRAPER, KNIGHT OF THE BATH.

S I R,

3. March, 1769.

**A**N academical education has given you an unlimited command over the most beautiful figures of speech. Masks, hatchets, racks, and vipers dance through your letters in all the mazes of metaphorical confusion. These are the gloomy companions of a disturbed imagination; the melancholy madness of poetry, without the inspiration. I will not contend with you in point of composition. You are a scholar, Sir William, and, if I am truly informed, you write Latin with almost as much purity as English. Suffer me then, for I am a plain unlettered man, to continue that style of interrogation, which suits my capacity, and to which, considering the readiness of your answers, you ought to have no objection. Even \* Mr. Bingley promises to answer, if put to the torture.

\* This man, being committed by the court of King's Bench for a contempt, voluntarily made oath, that he would never answer interrogatories, unless he should be put to the torture.

Do you then really think that, if I were to ask a *most virtuous man* whether he ever committed theft, or murder, it would disturb his peace of mind? Such a question might perhaps discompose the gravity of his muscles, but I believe it would little affect the tranquillity of his conscience. Examine your own breast, Sir William, and you will discover, that reproaches and inquiries have no power to afflict either the man of unblemished integrity, or the abandoned profligate. It is the middle compound character which alone is vulnerable: the man, who, without firmness enough to avoid a dishonorable action, has feeling enough to be ashamed of it.

I thank you for the hint of the decalogue, and shall take an opportunity of applying it to some of your most virtuous friends in both houses of parliament.

You seem to have dropped the affair of your regiment; so let it rest. When you are appointed to another, I dare say you will not sell it either for a gross sum, or for an annuity upon lives.

I am truly glad (for really, Sir William, I am not your enemy, nor did I begin this contest with you) that you have been able to clear yourself of a crime, though at the expense of the highest indiscretion. You say that your half-pay was given you by way of pension. I will not dwell upon the singularity of uniting in your own person two sorts of provision, which in their own nature, and in all military and parliamentary views, are incompatible; but I call upon you to justify that declara-

tion, wherein you charge your Sovereign with having done an act in your favor notoriously against law. The half-pay, both in Ireland and England, is appropriated by parliament; and if it be given to persons, who, like you, are legally incapable of holding it, it is a breach of law. It would have been more decent in you to have called this dishonorable transaction by its true name; a job to accommodate two persons, by particular interest and management at the castle. What sense must government have had of your services, when the rewards they have given you are only a disgrace to you!

And now, Sir William, I shall take my leave of you for ever. Motives very different from any apprehension of your resentment, make it impossible you should ever know me. In truth, you have some reason to hold yourself indebted to me. From the lessons I have given you, you may collect a profitable instruction for your future life. They will either teach you so to regulate your conduct, as to be able to set the most malicious inquiries at defiance; or, if that be a lost hope, they will teach you prudence enough not to attract the public attention to a character, which will only pass without censure, when it passes without observation.

JUNIUS.

It has been said, and I believe truly, that it was signified to Sir William Draper, as the request of Lord Granby, that he should desist from writing in his Lordship's defence. Sir William Draper certainly drew *Junius* forward to say more of Lord Granby's character, than he originally intended. He

was reduced to the dilemma of either being totally silenced, or of supporting his first letter. Whether Sir William had a right to reduce him to this dilemma, or to call upon him for his name, after a voluntary attack on *his* side, are questions submitted to the candor of the public. — The death of Lord Granby was lamented by *Junius*. He undoubtedly owed some compensations to the public, and seemed determined to acquit himself of them. In private life, he was unquestionably that good man, who, for the interest of his country, ought to have been a great one, *Bonum virum facile dixeris; — magnum libenter*. I speak of him now without partiality; — I never spoke of him with resentment. His mistakes, in public conduct, did not arise either from want of sentiment, or want of judgment, but in general from the difficulty of saying no to the bad people, who surrounded him.

As for the rest, the friends of Lord Granby should remember, that he himself thought proper to condemn, retract, and disavow, by a most solemn declaration in the House of Commons, that very system of political conduct, which *Junius* had held forth, to the disapprobation of the public.

## L E T T E R VIII.

TO THE DUKE OF GRAFTON.

MY LORD,

18. March, 1769.

**B**EFORE you were placed at the head of affairs, it had been a maxim of the English government, not unwillingly admitted by the people, that every ungracious or severe exertion of the prerogative should be placed to the account of the Minister; but that, whenever an act of grace or benevolence