

The GrEco Project

Grenville's Economics

Lord William Wyndham Grenville

Correspondence with Edward Copleston

[1809-1833]

Transcription: Christophe Depoortère

Lord Grenville to Copleston¹

[f. 1r]

Dropmore Dec. 16. 1809.

Sir,

I feel myself bound to take the earliest opportunity of expressing to you my particular acknowledgment for the essential services which I have received from you during the late contest –but more especially for the manly and dignified Paper published by my Committee in answer to the libels [f. 1v] circulated against me. I shall always feel that this publication reflected honour both on my cause & on myself personally, & I am confident it must have been of essential advantage in the contest.

You will very greatly oblige me whenever you have leisure to let me have the pleasure of seeing you either here, or in town, and of expressing personally to you the strong obligations [f. 2r] under which I feel myself to you.

I am Sir with great truth & regard,
Your most faithful and most obed. Servant.

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston²

Camelford House, Feb. 15, 1810.

Sir,

Nothing but the pressure of other avocations could have prevented me from sooner thanking you for the publication which you had the goodness to send me. So able a vindication of the character of the university, and, what is still more important, of the cause of truth and learning, could not but be highly acceptable to me. And, if my wishes do not deceive me, your perspicuous statement of the course and direction of the studies pursued at Oxford is likely to be of permanent and extensive benefit, in the elucidation of a subject very generally misapprehended. The Edinburgh reviewers would think me quite hardened in the prejudices of my youth if they heard me avow, that even you have allowed more weight than is in my judgment due to the popular objections against cultivating with unceasing assiduity the habit of composition, and particularly in Latin verse. Language, as is now well

¹ MS in National Library of Wales MS 21977c n°1. Published in the *Memoir of Edward Copleston*, pp. 25-6.

² Published in the *Memoir of Edward Copleston*, pp. 39-40.

understood, is the best instrument, not of reasoning only, but of thought. The strength and health, therefore, of the mind must, as you have well illustrated it by the case of bodily exercises, be best promoted by that practice which gives most facility, grace, and precision in the use of that instrument ; nor would it be difficult to show, either by the same analogies of bodily exercise, or by close and philosophical reasoning, that such faculties are more readily and more certainly improved by composition in verse than in prose, and in a dead language delivered down to us in models of classic excellence, rather than in that which is of daily and familiar use. I am well aware that I am only urging the same opinions which you have yourself expressed. But I carry them, perhaps, still further than you appear to do ; and, instead of regretting the prevalence, lament the comparative disuse of those very things which these critics consider as most evidently superfluous.

Allow me once more to repeat my thanks to you, and to assure you of the high regard and esteem with which I am, &c., &c.

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston³

Camelford House, May 20, 1813.

My dear Sir,

On my arrival in town I found your book upon my table, and I should sooner have made my acknowledgments to you for it but for the pressure of engagements, which, during my short visits here, leave me no time for writing. The same circumstance has prevented me from indulging the eagerness I feel for making myself acquainted with it. But I am now within a few days of my return to Dropmore, where I shall take it with me, and I already anticipate the pleasure which I am sure I shall receive from it.

But I have not refrained from looking into the first page, where your former letter had taught me to look for expressions of personal regard and good opinion, which, as proceeding from you, I could not but highly value. That your partiality has led you much too far in what you there say, I cannot disguise from myself, however gladly I would do so ; but even that circumstance is in itself a source of no light gratification to me. I beg you to accept my sincere condolence on the circumstance

³ Published in the *Memoir of Edward Copleston*, p. 43.

alluded to in your letter, and to believe me, with very sincere regard and esteem, dear sir, yours, &c., &c.,

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston⁴

[f. 1r]

Dropmore August 16. 1813

Dear Sir,

The death of D^r Ford has opened the Headship of Magdalen Hall, which falls as you know to the disposal of the Chancellor of the University. A power of this description so vested, can be considered by any honourable man in no other light than as a trust to be exercised in such manner as may be most useful to the University. It is [f.1v] on this ground of public Duty, and not from those notions of private regard which would weight so powerfully with me as an inducement to take the same step in a case where those motives might greatly operate, that I apply myself to you in the first instance assuring you that I am fully convinced that if your situation & views will admit, (of which I am well aware there may be some doubt,) of your accepting this station, no other appointment to it could be equally creditable to me.

If it should have the effect [f. 2r] of preventing your future reception to a station of similar Duty, but of more extensive utility that circumstances, & that alone, could prevent its being also the most advantageous choice that I could make for the interests of the University.

I am ever dear Sir

With [?] esteem & regardmost truly & sincerely Yours.

Grenville

Rev^d. M^r. Copleston

Copleston to Lord Grenville⁵

[f. 1r]

(Copy)Exter August 20 1813

If the situation in w.^h your L.ship has so kindly offered to place me, would not preclude me from all chance of obtaining one to which I

⁴ MS in National Library of Wales MS 21977c n^o2.

⁵ MS in National Library of Wales MS 21977c n^o3.

might hereafter [?] & might be allowed to give the preference. I sh^d gladly & most thankfully accept it. I have it offered on such grounds, while it makes the offer more tempting, does at the same time increase my sense of the obligation. It favour [&] certainly is –the more valuable because unsolicited- but it is still more an honour than a favour and I trust your L.ship will be assured that I should never cease to regard it in that light.

After my long residence in the Univ^y. & the various duties I have had to perform there, nothing I believe w^d. be so suitable to me, or enable me to be so useful, as some appointment connected to it. But circumstanced as I am at present, I c^d. not prudently quit the Fellowship – and I must be content to wait for some opening w^h. may allow me without impropriety to make known my wishes.

In the mean time I hope your L.^{ship} will not think your kindness has been ill bestowed or lost upon me. It has made me truly happy to have this proof of your good opinion & even more anxious than ever to preserve it.

I remain my Lord

Y^r. L^{ship}. Much obliged & Obedient Servant

E. C.

Lord Grenville to Copleston⁶

[f. 1r]

Dropmore Feb. 1 1814

My dear Sir

I have this morning received from the V.C. the [dra^t?] of the address as finally settled. Whether I shall think its expressions as now softened down, are such as will fairly bear those interpretations according to which I should cordially concern in them, or must now naturally [f.1v] be considered in their obvious sense as a disavowal & retractation of any known opinions, is a question of too much importance to be decided on a first impression, & I am –not- asked upon for any declaration on that point w^{ich} the address shall finally have passed the convocation.

Much of it is nothing more than the expression of my own sentiment in the very same words or very [f.2r] nearly so in which I have proposed that they should be expressed.

⁶ MS in National Library of Wales MS 21977c n^o4.

For the rest I have only to say that it is perfectly reasonable that the University should express its own opinions in the terms it thinks most suited to the occasion - & on the other hand it is no less reasonable & consonant to usage, that I should exercise the natural right of considering for myself whether they are [f.2v] such as it becomes me to carry to the foot of the Throne , & to deliver from my own mouth.

When I mentioned to you the impression which I had taken from the reading of the first dra^t of address I was confident that there could not be a doubt as to the part I ought to take. I admit that it is now more doubtful – If the praise bestowed, & ⁷ above all the effects attributed, to our –national firmness & perseverance [f.3r] in this great cause, or of that of the P;R. & his minister were strictly true, & in the utmost latitude of the words now used, I should still see much to object to in the public assertion of it. I have had but too many occasions to notice the evils produced by the tone of superiority which it is so much the habit of the English to assume over the great ⁸ Nations of the Continent, & most especially over our Allies & Confederates.

You asked me [f.3v] at Dropmore whether I thought any advantage would arise from your noticing this ground of objection when the Address was proposed in Convocation & I told you decidedly I thought none would.

In this opinion I fairly own that some considerations personal to yourself found their place as they ought to do whatever is done or said upon such occasions is sure to be misrepresented –a hesitation or [f.4r] dislike of exaggerated & ground up boast, is always construed into a want of a just national feeling of exaltation in public success, or a desire to detract from such praise as is justly due.

With your merits & claims both on the University & on the Public, I thought it most highly inexpedient & mischievous that you should on an occasion which so little called for it, put yourself forward as a mark for clamour [f.4v] & calumny. And I think so much more in the present case. I am called upon to *act*. I must either adopt or disclaim the language of this address. I must read in the face of the [patron ?] , as my own sentiments as such as these of the other members of the University, every word which it contains – much that I approve highly, & some things of which I greatly doubt, or I must openly [?] my dissent from it, [f. 5r] and this under the difficulty of having no proper occasion

⁷ “the”

⁸ “Powers” is deleted.

of distinguishing that which I approve of from that which I hesitate or finally refuse to adopt.

As an individual member of Convocation you are under no such necessity. You are pledged only to the general purport & sentiments of the paper, & in those who is there that does not concur?

The recollection of what you read to me [f. 5v] at Dropmore has induced me to trouble you with this unasked opinion on a point on which I feel the greatest anxiety that your judgment should accord with that which I have expressed.

Ever my Dear Sir most truly & faithfully Yours

Grenville

Rev^d M^r. Copleston

Excuse these scraps of paper but I have not time to copy this over. G.

Lord Grenville to Copleston⁹

[f. 1r]

Dropmore Dec. 12. 1814

My dear Sir

I heard yesterday of the Provost's death, and I anticipated the probability that this event must disappoint the hopes we had formed of seeing you here this vacation.

I trust it is impossible that any of the Electors can for a moment [f. 1v] doubt as to the choice of his succession, and sincerely as I feel interested in the success of any object by which your wishes can be gratified I can truly say that the College & the University have much more reason than you can possibly have for desiring to see you in that situation.

That you may long enjoy it, or quit it [f.2r] only for a station of still more extended utility is my earnest wish.

Believe me ever my dear Sir most truly & faithfully yours

Grenville

⁹ MS in National Library of Wales MS 21977c n^o5.

Lord Grenville to Copleston¹⁰

[f. 1r]

From the R^t Hon L^d Grenville to E. C.

Dated Dropmore Dec^r 23 1814

My dear Sir

Though I had no doubt of the result of the Election at Oriel, yet it gives me the greatest pleasure to learn that it has passed in a manner so gratifying to yourself and so honourable to the Electors, who have conferrd a great benefit on the College and on the University, both in the thing itself and in the manner of doing it. I am well aware that we must not hope to see you here this vacation, but whenever you can allow me that satisfaction either here or in Town, I shall be truly happy to express to you in person the congratulations of one who yields to none of your friends in the pleasure he feels on this occasion.

I am most truly your's

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston¹¹

[f. 1r]

Dropmore Feb 23. 1821

My dear Sir

I received your letter on the subject of D^r Hawkins. We made no Election at our meeting but had the satisfaction of being amply convinced that our choice could not but have been well directed on whichever of the candidates it had fallen.

My vote had for some time been engaged, (as far at least as I ever engage it in such cases,) in favour of Dr Watson.

[f. 1v] I should however not have troubled you with a note & state these particulars, if I was not anxious to take the earliest opportunity, *after reading* the volume which you have been so good as to send to me, to thank you for it.

It is not with all authors that it is safe so to time one's tanks.

I do not presume to think myself qualified ¹² even to examine in all its bearings, much less to [?] on the awful and tremendous [f. 2r] question which you discuss. To do so would require a course of studies

¹⁰ MS in National Library of Wales MS 22720B f. 15. Published in the *Memoir of Edward Copleston*, p. 67.

¹¹ MS in National Library of Wales MS 21977c n^o6.

¹² "to" is deleted.

directed & shaped as mine have not been. But whenever I have been led to reflect upon it; & I suppose there is¹³ [as?] thinking [?] but has frequently done so, I have always¹⁴ found¹⁵ it most safe & most satisfactory to acquiesce in the conclusion to which you direct us; that although *we* cannot reconcile the foreknowledge of an event with its contingency, & are neither warranted in limiting the omniscience of our creator, nor in making void his promises & denunciations, we are [f. 2v] not therefore to conclude that this contradiction exists in respect to *his* ways of knowledge, which are not as our ways, tho' by our ways alone we judge them when we argue this point.

But whether I am that matter in its true light or not, I may perhaps think myself [?] competent to judge of the force, & closeness of your reasoning, & of¹⁶ its perspicuity, the first of all virtues, as to all reasoning, but especially on such subjects as these. And there I have found the greatest reason to admire, & have many thanks to return you for the instruction & pleasure I have received from these.

Believe me dear Sir most truly &c &c

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston¹⁷

[f. 1r]

Dropmore July 1 1827

My Dear Sir

Before I received your letter I saw in the Gazette that the Archdeaconry of Rochester was disposed of.

I wish most sincerely well to the present Government, but unable as I am to render them any service, I am naturally very reluctant to intrude myself upon them with applications. But [f.1v] this feeling would not have prevented me from doing whatever might have been in my power to forward your application to Lord Dudley in favour of Dr. Whately. I strongly put how advantageous to this university, & how creditable to myself has been the result of the confidence which I placed in your representation in his favour on one of [f.2r] the few occasions in

¹³ “there is” is inserted.

¹⁴ “thought” is deleted.

¹⁵ “found” is inserted.

¹⁶ “the” is deleted.

¹⁷ MS in National Library of Wales MS. 21743c n°12/3.

which it could fall in my way to be of service to him.

Ever my dear Sir
most truly & faithfully Y^{rs}.

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston¹⁸

London, November 29, 1827.

My dear Sir,

Lord Goderich had the great kindness to communicate to me yesterday evening the offer which he had made to you, well knowing, as he did, the great delight which I should receive from it. I trust I need hardly say to you, for I willingly hope that you already fully believe it, that there is not, and cannot be, any one of your friends who more warmly rejoices in the justice, tardy as it is, which is at length rendered to your merits, or who more laments it having been so long delayed and that, in part, I fear, from the too partial opinion which you manifested towards myself on a former occasion. You will have so many letters of this sort to acknowledge, though written from less powerful motives than I have on this occasion, that I will not delay you longer with this ; and I beg that you will not think of answering it otherwise than by giving me an opportunity, on your way to or from town, to take by the hand a new acquaintance and old friend in the Bishop of Llandaff.

Most truly yours,

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston¹⁹

[f. 1r]

Dropmore Jan^y 11 1831

My dear Lord

I know I need not assure you how much weight your favourable opinion of Mr. Thomas must have with me. But I am anxious by endeavouring to ascertain whether this appointment may not be so arranged, as that the person named, may, by the aid of the facilities (such as they are) which were given to the universities by an act passed some years since, [f. 1v] be enabled once more to restore that neglected hall to

¹⁸ Published in the *Memoir of Edward Copleston*, p. 117.

¹⁹ MS in National Library of Wales MS 21743c n^o12/1.

its true²⁰ purposes as a lace of efficient & beneficial academical education.

I am not unaware of the many difficulties which the present condition of these buildings opposes to such a project – but I am not willing to take any other²¹ final decision on the subject until I am satisfied that this wish, in itself so desirable, is really unattainable itself.

Ever am my dear Lord
with the much regard & most faithfully,

Grenville

Lord Grenville to Copleston²²

[f. 1r]

Dropmore April 22 1833

My dear Lord

I need not explain to you the motives which have determined me on this occasion in the choice of a new Principal for S^t Mary Hall. I am very sensible of M^r Thomas's merits, but on the best judgment I have been able to form where the selection was to be made between several competitors of high pretensions, I have satisfied myself that M^r Hampden's appointment was that by which I could best [f. 1v] discharge my duty to the University Felix faustumque sit.

Ever my dear Lord
with the truest respect & regards most faithfully yours.

Grenville

The Right Reverend
The Lord Bishop of Llandaff

²⁰ “true” is inserted.

²¹ “other” is inserted.

²² MS in National Library of Wales MS 21743c n^o12/2.