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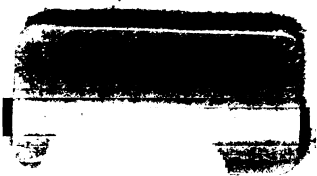
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A  
**PLAIN STATEMENT**  
OF  
**FACTS,**  
RELATIVE TO  
**SIR EYRE COOTE:**  
CONTAINING  
THE OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE AND DOCUMENTS  
CONNECTED WITH HIS CASE;  
AND THE  
*PROCEEDINGS OF THE MILITARY BOARD*  
APPOINTED FOR ITS INVESTIGATION.

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THE  
C A S E  
OF  
SIR EYRE COOTE.

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115-15-73

A RECENT and extraordinary exercise of the prerogative of the Crown, in the case of General SIR EYRE COOTE, K.B. and K.C. depriving that distinguished officer of his military rank, in the decline of a life devoted from the age of fourteen to the service of his country, having in an extreme degree added confidence to the cruel and unfounded reports highly injurious to his character and happiness, which have been widely and industriously circulated\* ; it is

\* The following paragraph appeared in the Morning Post of 27th May, and was from that copied into several other papers.—

*“Degradation of a Person in High Life.*—Among the extraordinary and unprecedented occurrences, happening in

conceived to be due no less to his family, who must feel most deeply affected by the disgraceful insinuations which have been promulgated against him, than to Sir Eyre Coote himself, to repel the injustice by a plain statement of all the facts and evidence which are connected with this, in every point of view, most important and most distressing case.

In doing this, no attempt will be made to influence the public mind by artful or abstruse reasoning: such an attempt is wholly unnecessary where justice alone is sought for, and would be useless where a discerning public is to be the judge. In the case of Sir Eyre Coote, there is nothing to conceal; and the only

these eventful times, may be enumerated the degradation which an officer of exalted rank experienced, not long since, for dishonourable conduct proved at the bar of public opinion, as well as of that of justice. To our great surprise, we now learn, that another distinguished officer (whose name has been continually before our eyes in print) is shortly to be publicly disgraced—he is to be stripped of *all his honours*—and his name struck out of the Army List. The judicial exposition of the offending party is abandoned, the necessary proofs being wanting; but enough is known to justify the conduct of the higher powers, and at the same time to demonstrate, that neither titles nor riches can screen offenders from merited punishment. The reported nature of the present offence we must decline stating.”

danger to his reputation is, that the truth may not be circulated as extensively as the false reports with which his character has been assailed.

The object of this publication is simply to enable every individual, into whose hands it may fall, to form his own free, unbiassed judgment; and a confident hope is entertained, that when a knowledge of the whole truth shall have removed the prejudice naturally excited by uncontradicted falsehood, Sir Eyre Coote will receive that justice from the public, to which an upright and honourable character so amply entitles him, and which the following documents show him to have already found in the opinions of those best acquainted with his virtues and infirmities.

To contemplate the weaknesses to which the greatest and best of men are occasionally subject, is always a painful task; and many will feel, on the perusal of these pages, how dreadful must be the necessity which compels the present exposure, as the only means of vindicating from a suspicion of the most foul description of criminality, the character of a soldier, whose blood has been shed in the field,



and whose glorious deeds in arms have frequently merited and received, through parliament, the thanks of his country.

The papers now submitted to the public, consist of the evidence taken at the Mansion House, by order of the Commander in Chief, in consequence of certain rumours which had reached his Royal Highness respecting the conduct of Sir Eyre Coote, in visits made by him to Christ's Hospital; together with the whole of the correspondence which took place between the department of the Commander in Chief and the Right Honourable Colonel Bagwell, brother-in-law of Sir Eyre Coote, as the medium of communication between that department and the General's friends.

Considerations of delicacy alone towards Sir Eyre Coote's family, prevent the publication of several of the documents which it was deemed, by his friends, expedient to lay before the Duke of York, in explanation and extenuation of the acts of folly acknowledged to have been committed. It is felt, that the omission of evidence so important may be prejudicial to Sir Eyre Coote; but it will appear the less so, from a distinct acknowledgment, in the final report of

the General Officers to whom the papers were referred, that they contained "AMPLE TESTIMONY OF VERY ECCENTRIC AND INCOHERENT CONDUCT, AMOUNTING PERHAPS TO DERANGEMENT OF MIND." An acknowledgment, slightly qualified by the word *perhaps*, of the very fact which the papers were intended to prove.

The documents are accompanied by such notes as appear necessary to show their connexion, and to direct the reader's attention to particular points.

In order that the whole of the case may be clearly understood, it is necessary to premise, that for many years Sir Eyre Coote has been subject to occasional aberrations of mind, which have been observed by his friends to lead to the most extraordinary eccentricities of conduct.

These eccentricities being perfectly innocent, and not likely to produce injurious consequences either to himself or others, were viewed without serious alarm by his friends; yet they were of such a nature, as to leave on the minds of many the painful conviction that they were the effects of temporary derangement.

At the period when the transactions took place, which occasion this unhappy exposition, the spirits of Sir Eyre Coote had been most painfully depressed by the severest domestic calamities; the recent death of two most amiable daughters, and the dangerous illness of the third and only remaining one: and his own mind, which had been visibly affected by fevers nearly fatal, produced by too much exertion and exposure to the sun in the performance of his duties in the West Indies, exhibited a melancholy proof of the additional effect of anxiety and distress.

On Saturday, the 25th of November last, Sir Eyre Coote was found in the Mathematical School at Christ's Hospital, under the circumstances stated in the evidence, and taken before the Lord Mayor, on a charge of improper and indecent conduct in the school. As time for further inquiry was necessary, he was allowed to depart, on his promising to appear at the Mansion House on the following Monday, to meet such charges as might be preferred against him.

In the mean time the most minute investigation took place of all the circumstances con-

nected with the charge; and on Sir Eyre Coote's re-appearance at the Mansion House on the Monday, it having been satisfactorily proved to the Lord Mayor, as well as to Sir William Curtis and Mr. Corp, the President and Chief Clerk of Christ's Hospital, who from their connexion with the school, were more particularly the guardians of its morals, that, though an act of egregious folly had been committed, there was not the slightest ground for supposing it to have proceeded from any vicious or criminal intention or propensity; the Lord Mayor, in his judicial capacity, with that discriminating justice which peculiarly belongs to his honourable character, observing the diseased state of Sir Eyre Coote's mind, and fully impressed with a conviction of his innocence, dismissed the case altogether.

Upon such dismissal, it was suggested by Sir William Curtis, President of the Hospital, that as Sir Eyre Coote acknowledged himself to have committed an act of great folly and impropriety, he ought to atone for it by making a present to the institution; and a thousand pounds was named as a proper sum. This proposal was objected to in the strongest manner by Sir Eyre Coote, on the supposition that

it might have the appearance of money given as a compromise; but on its being represented to him, that as the case had been already formally dismissed by the Lord Mayor, a gift could not be supposed to proceed from any improper motive; and as the one in question was certainly not considered as a compromise, he reluctantly acquiesced, and gave his draught for the money\*.

It was natural to hope, that after a decision by the highest authority, founded on a full investigation, this unfortunate transaction, the publicity of which must necessarily lead to a disclosure of mental infirmities, and the most distressing afflictions with which an amiable and highly respectable family could be visited, would remain unknown, except to a few: it appeared, however, after a lapse of several months, that so much had transpired as to make it the subject of general conversation; but the facts being unknown, insinuations of a most disgraceful nature supplied their place. Some of the reports in circulation having reached the

\* The money was subsequently returned by a Committee of the Governors of the Hospital, as having been improperly demanded.

ears of Mr. Corp, Chief Clerk to Christ's Hospital, that gentleman, who had taken an active part in the investigation when the case was before the Lord Mayor, thought it an act of justice to state fully his sentiments on the subject; and on the 27th of March, addressed the following letter to Sir Eyre Coote.

“ I cannot well reconcile to my feelings, Sir Eyre, the circumstance of your departure from this country, however short, without adverting to the origin of our acquaintance, and to state without reserve my sentiments touching the subsequent anxiety yourself and friends have been compelled to encounter, in consequence of the injunction imposed upon you in the earliest stage of the transaction; I say imposed upon you, because it originated not with yourself, and because you cheerfully acquiesced in the same, as an atonement for your unguarded folly; and one would have hoped, after the full investigation of all its bearings by so able and sensible a person as the Chief Magistrate, the transaction would have been permitted to rest; and I am persuaded it would so have been, if no pecuniary consideration had been contemplated.

“ From the knowledge I possess of the integrity of the Managers of our much valued institution, and the virtue which is embraced within its walls, I had no hesitation whatever in pronouncing upon the impropriety of entertaining even the idea of such a stipulation; and my judgment (founded on forty years experience), from what has

subsequently transpired, has most unequivocally been confirmed. From the situation which I hold, and the comprehensive charge my office embraces, my most important duty rests on the keeping a vigilant eye over the general good of the house, and guarding, to the utmost of my ability and judgment, against any injury its reputation may on any occasion be exposed to.

“The inadvertence which occurred near five months since, though by no means at all criminal, was of such a nature as to stand in need of deliberate investigation; and I take upon myself to pronounce to the whole world, that no pains were omitted to get possession of every fact, and that upon the most scrupulous examination, nothing could be traced beyond an act of unguarded folly: therefore, for the reputation of the institution which protected me in my juvenile days, and which for so many years in manhood I have been entrusted to watch over, I was persuaded that a total dismissal of the subject was the best possible line to be adopted; and here too my judgment was sanctioned by the concurrence of one possessing the experience of the Chief Magistrate of the City of London.

“Knowing as I do every minutiae from its origin to the present time, and from the full conviction that nothing has been omitted in its investigation, I have thought it a piece of justice you are entitled to, for you to possess these my full sentiments hereon. After forty years active service here, a few more only can be left for me: those past have been expended to the best of my judgment, and those which remain, the Almighty, I am confident, will not permit me to tarnish.

“ Hoping, Sir Eyre, you will receive this letter, as containing, in the event of accident to me, my sincere sentiments, and as conveying my best wishes for your future peace of mind and happiness,

“ I remain,

“ With every feeling of respect,

“ Your faithful, humble Servant,

(Signed)

“ RICHARD CORP.

“ *Christ's Hospital, March 27, 1816.*

“ *To Sir Eyre Coote.*”

The affair having at length assumed a most serious aspect, from the various ways in which different persons had exaggerated the few facts that had transpired, his Royal Highness the Duke of York thought it proper to make inquiry into the circumstances which had given rise to reports so strongly affecting the character of Sir Eyre Coote; and on application to the Lord Mayor for copies of the Minutes of Evidence, taken when the charge was before his Lordship, received the following letter\*:

\* The copy of this Letter was furnished by the Lord Mayor, at the request of Sir Eyre Coote's friends, it having been refused by the Commander in Chief.



(COPY.)

*To His Royal Highness the Duke of York and Albany,  
Commander in Chief, &c. &c. &c.*

SIR,

IN compliance with your Royal Highness's commands, I hasten to state what took place before me in my judicial capacity, touching the conduct and affecting the character of Lieut. Gen. Sir Eyre Coote; of which, however, no minutes were taken.

On the 25th day of November last, Mr. Corp, Chief Clerk of Christ's Hospital, waited upon me, and said that Lieut. Gen. Sir Eyre Coote had gone into the Mathematical School and conversed improperly with the boys,—asking them whether they liked flogging, and telling them they might flog him: and that for this extraordinary conduct, the Lieut. Gen. was taken by the Porter of the Lodge to the City Compter,

Mr. Corp then added, that he had made strict inquiry of all the boys, and all other persons who saw and heard the Lieut. Gen. in the Mathematical School, and the result was, that he could not attach any criminal conduct to the Lieut. Gen.—the most that could be made of it was egregious folly. The Lieut. Gen. told the boys who he was. Sir James Shawe and Mr. Robarts afterwards waited upon me, and the latter gentleman becoming personally responsible for the appearance of the Lieut. Gen,

before me on Monday morning, the Lieut. Gen. was liberated.

On Monday the Lieut. Gen. did appear before me, and being interrogated, declared, with considerable agitation, that he had not taken any improper liberties with the boys, save in the indulgence of frivolous conversation, of which he was heartily ashamed. Now, as the Lieut. Gen.'s account of his conduct did not materially vary from Mr. Corp's statement, I concluded that by concealment of all the circumstances as far as laid within my power, I should, upon the whole, best consult the interest of the Hospital, the honour and dignity of the army, and the public feeling. I reflected that the Lieut. Gen. had frequently distinguished himself in the service of his country, and was connected with an amiable family; and that, under such circumstances, to expose <sup>more</sup> ~~mere~~ folly, would be an act of severity, where tenderness and forbearance would be more becoming.—I have only to add, for your Royal Highness's information, that, on its being suggested that the Lieut. Gen. should be made to feel the impropriety of his conduct by a mulct of a thousand pounds, to be paid the Treasurer for the benefit of the Institution, it was objected to immediately by Sir Eyre Coote, if it were to be considered as a compromise; but upon being assured it was not so considered, the Lieut. Gen. gave a draft for a thousand pounds, which was sent in an anonymous letter to the Treasurer, and I understand has been returned by the Committee of Almoners, on their learning from what source it came.—These are all the circumstances that I now recollect; but if your

Royal Highness wishes to see me on the subject, I shall be ready, at any time, to attend to your Royal Highness's commands.

I have the honour to be,

Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient and very humble servant,

(Signed) MATTHEW WOOD, MAYOR.

*Mansion House, April 10th, 1816.*

This letter led to a personal interview with the Commander in Chief; in which the Lord Mayor explained verbally such particulars as he had, from a feeling of delicacy, but slightly noticed in writing.

Neither the complete acquittal of all criminality contained in the Lord Mayor's letter, nor the reasons so forcibly urged by his Lordship against the further exposure of an act of "mere folly," could prevent measures which appear to have been already determined upon. On the 18th of April, therefore, a Lieutenant-General and two Major-Generals\* met at the

\* It is submitted to the consideration of military men, whether, if it was thought necessary that the conduct of an

Mansion House, by order of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and proceeded to a fresh inquiry into all the circumstances connected with a charge which, nearly five months before, had been fully investigated and dismissed by the Chief Magistrate of the City of London.

When the examination was finished, the Lord Mayor, who had been present, stated to the General Officers that nothing further had arisen from the examination than what was already known to him; and that he had been induced to dismiss the matter when formerly before him, it not appearing that there was any ground for suspecting any thing vicious or criminal.

The friends of Sir Eyre Coote not having received any previous intimation whatsoever of the appointment of this Board for the investigation of his case, no one had an opportunity of attending it on his behalf, and consequently no cross-examination took place; the evidence, if

old general should be investigated by a Military Board, that Board should not have been composed of a number of officers, some of them at least of his own rank (that of General), and not confined to three of inferior rank, a Lieutenant-General, and two Major-Generals.

such it can be called, was the loose and unconnected declarations of children. But on its coming to their knowledge that such investigation had actually taken place, Colonel Bagwell, on their part, solicited and obtained an interview with the Duke of York; in which he explained to his Royal Highness the melancholy state of Sir Eyre Coote's mind, and the perfect conviction felt by all who knew him, that his extraordinary conduct had proceeded from temporary insanity; a misfortune which was known to exist in his family to a considerable extent. He also acquainted his Royal Highness, that many of Sir Eyre Coote's friends were ready to come forward and testify to this fact, as well as to their having, at various times, observed in his (Sir Eyre's) manner that which they could impute to no other cause than mental derangement.

His Royal Highness assured Colonel Bagwell, that no further step should be taken in the case of Sir Eyre Coote, without his (Colonel B's) being previously informed of it. This interview took place on Saturday, the 20th of April, and on the 22d Colonel Bagwell received a letter from the Commander in Chief, accompanied by a copy of the Examination

taken at the Mansion House on the preceding Thursday.

As by His Royal Highness's letter, Colonel Bagwell was called upon to furnish such observations as Sir Eyre Coote, or his friends, might have to offer on his case, they proceeded immediately to collect such documents as the shortness of the time\* allowed them would permit: and in the short space of *one fortnight* collected and transmitted to the Commander in Chief, a mass of evidence containing the testimony of between sixty and seventy persons, including many noblemen and members of the legislature, who declared their knowledge of Sir Eyre Coote's infirmities, and their firm belief, that insanity alone had led to the acts of folly detailed in the copy of the Examination.

\* Sir Henry Torrens, in his letter of the 24th May, states, in answer to Colonel Bagwell's letter soliciting time to collect evidence, that "His Royal Highness really could not sanction indefinite delay, in the decision of a case so materially involving the honour of the army." And again on the 26th, that "His Royal Highness could not feel justified in giving a sanction to delay urged on such grounds alone," viz. the collection of evidence to establish the plea of insanity. The only plea on which Sir Eyre Coote's complete justification rested.

Had time been allowed, much more could have been collected from Ireland and other distant places; but though in many respects desirable, it could scarcely be supposed necessary, to add to a body of evidence, less than one-third of which would, without doubt, have been amply sufficient to establish Sir Eyre Coote's innocence, to the complete satisfaction of any jury that could have been assembled in a court of justice.

The correspondence between the department of the Commander in Chief and Colonel Bagwell, contains abundant proof that there existed a disposition to proceed to extremities against Sir Eyre Coote. The letter from Major General Sir Henry Torrens, dated Saturday morning (20th of April), before Colonel Bagwell's interview with the Duke of York, and before it was *officially* known that an investigation had been ordered, urges the necessity of Sir Eyre Coote's withdrawing himself from parliament, evidently implying that a crime had been committed, and that retirement from parliament was the only means of avoiding that expulsion which must necessarily follow the punishment intended for him.

The letter from Sir Henry Torrens, dated

Tuesday night (23d. April), refuses the audience solicited by Dr. Bain of the Duke of York, although it was solicited in order that he (Dr. B.), as the family physician, might acquaint his Royal Highness with facts, which, as they related to other members of Sir Eyre Coote's family, suffering under the same distressing malady, as well as to Sir Eyre Coote himself, it would have been improper to commit to paper. And another letter, dated the 26th of April, long before it could have been known, or even guessed, what kind of evidence Sir Eyre Coote's friends were likely to collect, states in language not to be misunderstood, that the plea of insanity would not be admitted at all, because Sir Eyre Coote "was known to be conducting himself, in the common relations of life, with his usual *sanity and decorum*. Thus clearly intimating that the door was closed against any defence that could be offered, unless facts could be controverted which, as was well known, it was never attempted to deny.

Notwithstanding intimations so unequivocal, that a sentence had been already virtually pronounced, it was hardly possible to anticipate an opposition to the testimony of above sixty noblemen and gentlemen, who had long known



Sir Eyre Coote, and to the mass of evidence which had been produced in his justification, by that of two individuals\*, neither of whom had ever seen him more than once. Nevertheless, on the 14th of May, three General Officers, to whom the papers had been referred, proceeded again, by order of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, to the Mansion House, to institute a *third investigation*.

Dr. Bain having heard from Lord Lynedoch that this court of inquiry was ordered, he and Colonel Bagwell attended. The circumstances attending Sir Eyre Coote's former visits to the Hospital were not inquired into, notwithstanding the distinct challenge held out by Colonel Bagwell on the part of his friends, in his letter of the 1st of May, and substantially repeated in his letter to Sir John Cradock of the 2d of May.

Two witnesses only were re-examined, the Nurse and Porter of the Hospital; and the only important point of evidence obtained, was a declaration from the Nurse, in answer to a question put by Colonel Bagwell, that she had

\* The Nurse and Porter.

no reason to think there was any disposition whatever in Sir Eyre Coote to the commission of a crime.

This question and answer (for which see the evidence) become highly important with a view to a total acquittal of criminality, from the fact, that when Colonel Bagwell proposed to ask the woman, whether from any circumstances which at the time when she saw Sir Eyre Coote at the Hospital, or subsequently, had come to her knowledge, she had any reason to think there was any disposition to the commission of a crime; the General Officers interposed, and said, it was *totally unnecessary to put such a question, as there was no such charge, nor did they entertain any such opinion.*

Colonel Bagwell, however, wishing to have the testimony of the Nurse, as she, from her situation in the school, was the most competent to form an opinion on the subject, in order to record such evidence, being most convinced of the perfect innocence of his afflicted friend, the question was permitted to be put, and the woman answered thus: "*The Boys have said NO—there never was.*"

It is also proper here to observe, the General Officers agreed with Colonel Bagwell, that it was wholly unnecessary for him to put similar questions to the Porter, in respect of criminality, as they repeated there was no such charge.

At a meeting, the following day, at Lord Lynedoch's house, his Lordship and Sir Henry Fane both admitted to Dr. Bain their belief of the existence of mental derangement in Sir Eyre Coote; and the former related an anecdote respecting some extraordinary conduct and conversation of Sir Eyre, when commanding the troops at the siege of Flushing, in the year 1809, to which his Lordship's attention had been particularly drawn, and which convinced him at the time that the mind of Sir Eyre Coote was not always in a sound state.

It will therefore excite no small degree of astonishment, when observed, that the final Report made by the same General Officers, on the 17th of May, after referring to the evidence, with an asperity of language (without here applying any more harsh epithet) clearly intended to make the most unfavourable impression, contains the following concluding paragraph:

“That although there is ample testimony of very eccentric and incoherent conduct, amounting perhaps to derangement of mind ; yet, at the period when the aforesaid discovery occurred, he seems to have had such possession of himself as to be fully sensible of the indecency of the proceeding, and capable of adopting the most grounded and prudent means to avoid further disclosure.”

This assertion is directly at variance with the opinion of the Lord Mayor\* ; and it is presumed that a perusal of the Minutes of the Examination will clearly convince, even the most careless reader, that it is totally unsupported by the evidence. The last examination of the Nurse and Porter respected the state of Sir Eyre Coote's mind ; and on that subject neither of them felt competent to give a decided opinion ; though the tenour of the Nurse's answers shows her to have been inclined to the belief that he was not sane. Neither does it

\* The Lord Mayor states, in his letter of the 29th of April, to Mr. Harriott, that on Sir Eyre Coote's first appearance before him on the 25th of March, he, and other persons present, were satisfied that Sir Eyre was deranged ; and his Lordship's opinion was not altered when he saw him the second time.

appear from the former examination of the 18th of April, that he "adopted the most grounded and prudent means to avoid further disclosure," or that he adopted any means at all for that purpose till after he had had ample time for recollection and reflection on the extraordinary situation in which he stood. He remained a considerable time with the woman after she came into the room, before the arrival of the Porter; he quitted the room, and returned to it; and could undoubtedly have quitted the place altogether, if it had occurred to him that it was necessary.

But admitting the fact, that Sir Eyre Cooté was, after the appearance of the Nurse and Porter, "fully sensible of the indecency of the proceeding, and capable of adopting the most grounded and prudent means to avoid further disclosure," it proves nothing more than that the appearance of danger served to recall his wandering senses, in the same manner as the voice or appearance of the keeper instantaneously produces an alarm among the miserable inhabitants of a lunatic asylum, and induces them to attempt the concealment of whatever mischief they contemplated in his absence.

If the increasing prevalence of mental disease in this country did not render this conclusion unfortunately too generally obvious, the correctness of it would be clearly established by the annexed joint opinion of Dr. Monro and Dr. Bain; the former of whom, to talents of the first order as a physician, unites an experience and practical knowledge of the various complicated symptoms and characteristics of this most distressing of human afflictions, fully equal, if not superior, to those of any man living.

These gentlemen being professionally consulted, gave it as their opinion\*, after having examined the whole of the documents, particularly the copy of the Examination taken at the Mansion House, that the conduct and conversation of Sir Eyre Coote was occasionally influenced by a morbid state of mind, to which they could assign no other name than *mental derangement*, and that a person under such influence certainly might have been conducting himself, *in the common relations of life, with apparent sanity and decorum.*

\* See Numbers 26 and 27 of the annexed Documents.

It is unnecessary to add more than that on the 21st of May, Lieutenant-General Sir G. Lowry Cole was appointed Colonel of the 34th Regiment of Foot, *vice* General Sir Eyre Coote.

The notification of Sir Eyre Coote's removal from the service, by gazetting his successor without any explanation, although perhaps delicacy towards his family may have dictated that mode of proceeding, has been, as might have been foreseen, productive of the worst consequences.

It could not be supposed, by persons unacquainted with the extent of the prerogative, that a general officer could be removed from the service at the mere will of the Crown, without trial, or even without an accusation. The natural conclusion therefore drawn from their silence was, that Sir Eyre Coote had committed a crime, and one of too heinous a nature to be made the subject of a general order. The most malignant reports received countenance from this apparently delicate mode of procedure; while it proved the surest means of diminishing the sympathy usually felt for the

oppressed, by giving to the conduct of the oppressor an appearance of magnanimity.

The public is now in possession of every circumstance connected with this extraordinary and distressing case, which has plunged into the deepest misery one of the oldest and most meritorious of its military servants.

These papers prove, it is hoped, satisfactorily, that no crime has been committed or even contemplated by Sir Eyre Coote; *for of neither committed nor intended crime was he accused.* His acts of folly are acknowledged; but they are shown to have proceeded from occasional derangement of mind; when under the influence of which, the responsibility of the unhappy sufferer is universally acknowledged to cease.

It remains with the people of England to judge how far it is just, that the errors of a mind labouring under a disease, with which in this perhaps more frequently than in any other country, it has pleased the Almighty to afflict the most exalted no less than the humblest of his creatures, should deprive an old officer of the honours conferred upon him by his sove-



reign, as the reward of forty years arduous and brilliant services.

The life of Sir Eyre Coote is in all probability drawing very near its close; the shock produced by this last, severest stroke, can hardly fail to remove him shortly beyond the reach of earthly care. But the justice of his country may afford him some consolation, even in his last hours, by the acknowledgment that his sufferings have been unmerited.

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Sir Eyre Coote purchased the whole of his Commissions, except his Lieutenancy: nevertheless, if he had been, after forty years service, entirely dependant on his profession, as is too frequently the case with military officers, he would now, without having committed, or even contemplated, a crime, be compelled to beg bread for the support of his family, through the country to which his best years have been devoted.

*The following is a Statement of the Military  
Services of Sir EYRE COOTE.*

HE embarked for America in the year 1776, as Ensign in the 37th Foot. Being promoted in that year to a Lieutenancy, he carried the colours of the 37th Regiment, in the Battle of Brooklyn, Long Island, on the 27th of August. Was present at the reduction of Fort Washington, and of York Island. On the Expedition to Rhode Island, in the latter end of 1776; and in that to the Chesapeake, in 1777. He was in the Battle of Brandywine, in September, 1777; and in that of Germantown, in October following. Present at the Siege of Mud Island, in the same year; and at the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey, on the 28th of June, 1778: previously to which he had been appointed Adjutant of the 37th Regiment. Being promoted to a Company by purchase, he was present at the attack of Washington's Dragoons in New Jersey, under Sir Charles Grey. Made the whole of the Campaign in the Province of New York, in 1779; and that in South Carolina, in 1780. He was present at the Siege of Charleston in that year. Made the Campaign in Virginia, and was besieged at York Town, in 1781;

was taken at the surrender, and sent prisoner up the country: released in 1782, and returned to England.

He was appointed to the Majority of the 47th Regiment, by purchase, in 1783; and in 1788 to the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of the 70th, also by purchase; during which time he was on duty with his regiment in Ireland; and in 1793, he was employed under Sir Charles Grey on the Expedition against the French West India Islands. Commanded the first Battalion of Light Infantry, and was materially concerned in the reduction of Martinique, St. Lucia, and Guadaloupe; particularly in the Siege of Fort Bourbon, and the storming of the out-works of Morne Fortunée. He returned to England, in bad health, with the dispatches of the unfortunate failure at Fleur d'Epée in Guadaloupe.

In 1795 he was made Aid-de-camp to the King; and in 1796 was appointed a Brigadier-General on the Irish Staff, and commanded the Camp near Bandon.

He was removed, as Major-General on the Staff, to England; and in May, 1798, commanded an Expedition against Ostend, for the

purpose of destroying the sluices. The service was effectually performed, but, from unfortunate circumstances, the troops could not be re-embarked. He was attacked by a very superior French force, wounded, and taken prisoner. Exchanged in October, 1798.

In 1799 General Coote commanded a Brigade on the Expedition to the Helder, and landed on the 27th of August, with the first division; was engaged with the enemy the whole of that day, and subsequently in the Battles of the 19th of September, and the 2d and 6th of October. In 1800 he proceeded to the Mediterranean, and commanded, as senior General Officer, the landing of the British troops on the coast of Egypt, on the 8th of March, 1801. He afterwards commanded a Brigade in the Battles of the 13th and 21st of March. He conducted the Blockade of Alexandria from April to August, afterwards invested the town to the westward, and commanded in the Action of the 22d of August, near Marabout.

After the surrender of Alexandria, on the 2d of September, 1801, he was appointed to the command of an Expedition ordered to rendezvous at Gibraltar, and destined against the

Spanish possessions in South America; but peace taking place in October, the Expedition was countermanded.

At the commencement of the war in 1803, Sir Eyre Coote was placed on the Staff in England, and subsequently commanded a district in Ireland. In 1805 he was named to the Chief Command of an Expedition assembled at Cork, which however did not sail; and in May of the same year he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in Chief of Jamaica; in which situation he continued until April, 1808. In 1809 he was appointed second in command to the force under the Earl of Chatham, and was entrusted with the command of the left wing of that army, destined for the attack of Walcheren; conducted the Siege of Flushing, and by its fall completed the conquest of the island.

THE friends of General Sir Eyre Coote, having learned that an inquiry had been instituted by order of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, into the circumstances which had given rise to certain reports affecting the character of the General—Colonel Bagwell obtained an interview with His Royal Highness; the substance of the conversation which took place at that interview has already been stated, as far as appears necessary or proper.

With a note admitting Colonel Bagwell to an interview with His Royal Highness the Duke of York, he (Colonel Bagwell) received the following from Sir Henry Torrens, which he presumes to have been written in consequence of Colonel Bagwell having solicited of Sir H. Torrens to communicate to him, as far as was consistent with his duty, any information he might become possessed of on the subject. It was, therefore, not Colonel Bagwell's intention to notice it as a public document; but as it is stated in a subsequent letter from Sir Henry Torrens, that he had placed it with the rest of the correspondence—Colonel Bagwell presumes he is at liberty to do the same.

(Private and confidential.)

Horse Guards, Saturday morning.

MY DEAR SIR,

FROM my heart I grieve to say, that matters look *very bad*, and I would recommend you to take early measures to get this unfortunate man out of Parliament. In order to afford you fair time to do this, I shall endeavour to protract any measures it may be found necessary to adopt—as yet nothing is decided, but I really think you should lose no time.

I assure you no man can lament more forcibly than myself this deplorable case, and the misery it entails on your amiable sister.

Ever your's most truly,

Right Hon. Wm. Bagwell, M. P.

H. TORRENS.

On Monday, the 22nd of April, Colonel Bagwell received the following letter from His Royal Highness the Duke of York, accompanied with a copy of the examinations taken at the Mansion House by command of His Royal Highness on the 18th of April.

(Private and confidential.)

Horse Guards, 22nd April, 1816.

SIR,

THE reports which have been currently spread affecting the honour and character of General Sir Eyre Coote, rendered it an imperative duty due from me to the service, to institute a confidential inquiry into the circumstances which may have given them origin, with the view, if untrue, of rescuing the individual from imputations which tended to sully the honour of the profession, or if unfortunately they should be well founded, to vindicate the latter by a suitable notice of the misconduct, which, if unnoticed, would tend to its injury.

I accordingly deputed Lieutenant-General Sir John Abercromby, and Major-Generals Sir Henry Fane, and Sir George Cooke, to make a due inquiry with the concurrence and assistance of the Lord Mayor, in the most private and delicate manner, into the facts of this most unhappy transaction; and after having perused the minutes of their investigation, it has occurred to me, upon a principle of justice, that their import should be made known to the accused, or his immediate friends, before any final determination should be taken upon the case.

In considering how this reference could be made with delicacy towards the misfortunes of the family, the occasion of your interview with me on Saturday has suggested the expediency of making it through you. I, therefore, send you a confidential copy of the evidence of facts collected by the above-named officers; and I have to request that you will use your judgment as to the mode of furnishing me with any observations, that the individual or his friends may have to offer on this melancholy case, in order that the whole may be considered before the adoption of any proceeding upon it.

I cannot withhold from you, sir, the expression of my unfeigned regret at the aspersions which these minutes cast upon the honour of an officer who has served his country with so much credit and distinction; and I lament most sincerely the deep distress which the transaction must occasion the amiable family with whom that individual is connected.

I am, sir,

Yours,

**FREDERICK,**

Commander in Chief,

Right Hon. Colonel Bagwell.

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Mansion House, 18th April, 1816.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR JOHN ABERCROMBY, G. C. B.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HENRY FANE, K. C. B.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE COOKE, K. C. B.

HAVING met at the Mansion House, in obedience to the orders of the Commander in Chief, conveyed to them through His Royal Highness's Military Secretary, they proceed to collect and record evidence on the subject to which their instructions relate.

*Edward Deane*, aged 15 years, 7 months—a scholar in Christ's Hospital (in the mathematical school).—On a



Saturday before Christmas, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon—the gentleman came into the school—he asked if we would let him flog us, and he would give us so much money—after he asked me several questions, he asked if he should flog me—I consented—he said he would give me 1s. 6d. for six stripes—I let down my breeches, and he flogged me—after he flogged me, he flogged another boy—then he asked if any more would be flogged; they said no—and he asked if we would flog him—after some boys flogged him—I held his watch whilst he was flogged—he pulled down his breeches when the boys had flogged him—the Nurse came in just as he was pulling up his breeches—she sent me for the Beadle—I could not find him—another boy found two of the Beadles; they took him to the Steward—Seagrim was one that flogged him—I believe there were two others—he flogged us with a rod—he gave me 1s. 6d.—I had seen him go into the school with other boys about two years ago, twice on Saturday afternoons.

*John Mears*, aged 15, last December—(in Mathematical School.)—I was standing in the ward, one of the boys came and told me there was a gentleman in the school sketching—I went down the school, saw him sitting on a form at second table—some time after I heard him ask if there were any rods—Mathews went and fetched one from the cupboard—he asked if the master was severe, whether he flogged much; one of the boys answered no—he then asked if any of us would be flogged—I said I would—he agreed to give me 2s. if I would let him have eight stripes—I stood by the side of the table, and he gave me four—he then put his hand and lifted me on the table, put his hand between my legs—my breeches were down—after he gave me the other four, he called me to the fire, and asked if he had made any mark; he put his hand between my legs, put me across his knee, gave me two slaps on the backside with his bare hand—he gave

me 2s. and asked if any other boy would be flogged—no one answered at first—he asked Deane, he was the largest boy there, if he would like to be flogged—Deane said he did not care, did not mind—he agreed to give 1s. 6d. for six stripes—he flogged him—he then gave 3s. between the boys in the school—after that he said he would be flogged himself—he pulled his breeches down, and it was either me or Bailey, I don't recollect which, gave him two lashes with the rod—we both gave him two, don't recollect which first; he pulled up his shirt behind, not in front—Deane held his watch—Seagrim hit him another stripe, and in pulling up his breeches Nurse came in—she sent for a Beadle—he asked her to let him go, you had better let me go, you don't know who I am—he then went out of the school, Nurse with him—he stood against the door on the outside with the Nurse—he pulled something out of his pocket and offered it to her—she said take your detested hand away; at that time the Beadle came up, and he was taken to the Steward's Office—I have heard him say his name was Best, but the boys saw Eyre Coote on his seal\*, sometimes said

\* The extraordinary evidence of these children deserves some notice.

*John Mears says*—"The boys saw Eyre Coote on his seal."

*Paulette Mathews.*—"He had a seal which the boys had seen—he said he had taken it in the battle of Egypt."

*Charles Rowland.*—"He had a seal with Eyre Coote upon it."

*Thomas Bailey.*—"By the seal, we thought him Sir Eyre Coote—the last time I looked at the seal, Sir Eyre Coote upon it."—

It is a fact, known to many of Sir Eyre Coote's friends, and since this examination took place proved satisfactorily to others on inquiry, that he neither has at this time, nor ever had, a seal with his name on it; and that he has not, for many years, had in his possession a seal with even his initials. Indeed the falsehood is so gross, as scarcely to require contradiction. Is it probable, that any gentleman would have his name engraved at full

Churchill, have seen him before, was flogged by him once before, just before the August vacation, believe it was a Saturday; the former time he desired the door to be locked, remained about three quarters of an hour; he was flogged himself at that time—I was let in on condition I would be flogged—Gordon it was, he is gone to sea.

*Henry Seagrim*, aged 14, last March.—Remembers the gentleman coming, was in the school at my business, Bailey was sitting at second table, was door-boy—a gentleman came in, said it was one of the best schools for writing, and desired Bailey to let him look at his writing, and asked how often the master flogged, and if we had any rods—Mathews went to the cupboard, got one out—he asked if they liked being flogged, if any of us would be flogged, he would give us some money—he asked Deane in particular, he is the biggest boy; whilst he was talking to Deane, Mears came in, and asked him how he did, and shook hands with him—he asked Mears if he would be flogged, would give him 1s. 6d. Mears would not for less than 2s. he flogged Mears and Deane—he asked me to flog him, (Mears was on the table, Deane standing) Bailey first, Mears second, and myself third, the same rod, his breeches down, and shirt up behind, he held it up himself—he said he would give 3s. between us all—the Nurse came in when he was buttoning up his breeches, and asked what he came for, she thought he came for no good purpose, and sent a boy down for a Beadle and locked the door, and locked him in—he asked her if she was the mother of a family, she said yes, and

length on a seal? If such evidence had been given on oath, in a court of justice, the palpable falsehood would have been sufficient to invalidate the whole testimony of these witnesses, and might in fairness have given strong ground of suspicion, that improper influence had been employed to produce consistency in their stories.

he asked her to let him go, said several times upon my word and honour I was doing no harm—he offered her something—she said take your detestable hand from me and all its contents. The Beadles came and took him—had never seen him, but heard of him before that he came to flog the boys and give them money; he went by a number of names, some boys said it was Sir Eyre Coote.

*Paulette Mathews*, aged 14, last March.—I was sitting writing, the gentleman came in, sat down at second table, looked at some of the boys writing, said it was the best school in England—asked if the master punished often—told him, no—he asked if they had any rods—I told him there was one, and shewed it to him—he then asked Mears if he should flog him—he did, and Dean likewise—gave Mears 2s. and Deane 1s. 6d., and 3s. between the rest to let the boys punish him themselves, (he said flogged)—Mears gave him two stripes, and whilst he was doing it, Deane held his watch, Enner and myself hit him on the backside with our hands. He was buttoning up his breeches when Nurse came in—asked what business he had there—he began to make several excuses, saying, it was the best school he ever saw; the Nurse sent for a Beadle and had him taken to the Steward's. Coote put his hand to her with something in it, the Nurse said, take that cursed hand from me—I don't know if the door was locked. I had heard of him coming, but had never seen him to know him—came to flog the boys—came once in about two months—came by name of General Sir Eyre Coote, Smith, and names I don't recollect; he had a seal the boys had seen, which he said he had taken from the battle of Egypt—have stood outside the door twice when he has been there—they used to turn the little boys out. I understood he was the same person—he put Mears and Dean on his knee, one hand on Mears's private parts, and

with the other on his backside, which he rubbed with his hand\*.

*Charles Rowland*, aged 14, last December.—Remembers the gentleman coming one afternoon on a Saturday, he came into the school whilst we were going on in our business—said it was the finest school in the kingdom—who was our master—how often he flogged us; he asked if we had a rod, he should like to see it. Mathews got a rod, he took it—he asked if he should flog one of us—pointed to Deane—said would give 1s. 6d. for half a dozen—Dean agreed; afterwards Mears was flogged, had eight—gave 2s.—stood against the table—then he asked if any more would be flogged, they said, no—then he said, should you like to flog me—he smiled, and we laughed—he began to put down his breeches, Mears and Bailey hit him two a piece—he took up his shirt himself behind, but not before—Seagrim gave him one, Heener slapped him with his hand—he said they hurt him—would not have any more, and whilst he was putting up his breeches, Nurse came in; she asked him what he wanted there—he only came to see what sort of school it was—he had heard it was the best school in England—he spoke as if it was the first time he had been there—Nurse said he did not appear like a gentleman coming to see the school, and she should send for a constable—he said he was a gentleman—he seemed to offer her something—

\* It is proper to observe that when the evidence of Paulette Mathews was concluded, the General Officers were informed by one of the officers of the hospital, that this boy had been frequently punished in the school for telling lies; it was therefore thought necessary to call in and re-examine John Mears, whose evidence contradicts that of Paulette Mathews, being, “He put his hand here (putting his hand in front) and slapped me with the other, *outside my shirt*—in the inner part of my thigh he put his hand.”

she said something about taking away his disgusting hand—he seemed to wish to pass her, she prevented him—the door was not locked, but it was shut—the Beadle came, and he was taken to Stewards' Office. After he flogged Mears he took him on his knee and felt him behind, and round the thigh where the rod went—I had seen him come into the school once, and I was sent out—he had a seal with Eyre Coote on it, and they found his name in the list—they called him Sir Eyre Coote.—When he next came he said his name was Churchill, another time Best. I heard he had a pail of water thrown over him the last time\*—he always gave money, whether he did any thing or not.

*Thomas Bailey*, aged 14 years.—He came on a Saturday afternoon—I was door-boy—he spoke to me—I knew his face—had seen him once before—he said he was come to see the boys' writing—asked to see mine—he said he knew it was the best school in England—he asked if the master flogged much, and to see the rods—Mathews brought a rod, gave it to him, we were all round him—he asked Mears to let him flog him, would give 1s. 6d.—he refused—would have 2s.—he agreed to it, and Mears was flogged—he stood leaning against the table—the gentleman held his shirt up with one hand and flogged him with the other—then Deane said he'd be flogged for 1s. 6d.—Deane was flogged in same way—he asked if any more—none of the rest would—then he said he would let them flog him—Mears had the rod—I took it, and gave him two stripes—he had let his breeches down—he held his shirt up himself—Mears gave him two more—

\* It is scarcely possible that such an occurrence could have taken place without some notice having been subsequently taken of it; but supposing it is a fact, that a pail of water was thrown on him, his returning to the hospital, where he was likely again to meet with the same treatment, is a strong corroborative proof of his insanity.

two other boys struggled for the rod, and I think Seagrim got it—cut at him whilst he was putting up his breeches—he said we hurt him—Henner struck him with his hand as he was putting up his breeches—Nurse came in as he was buttoning up his breeches—she asked what he was doing—he said, nothing—she said, I'll not believe it—I see what posture you are in—he said upon his honour he only came to see the school—she said she was the mother of a family—would not suffer her boys to be treated so—he said he was the father of a family—she sent for a Beadle—he offered her something—she rejected it—she took the money from the boys and sent it to the Steward's—he offered to put Mears across his knee, and Mears pulled himself back—he tried to put his hand to Mears's private parts, and he pushed it away—this was directly after he had flogged Mears—his left hand was on Mears's side, outside his shirt, and his right hand in front—could not see whether under his shirt or not—was not near enough—have seen him before—never saw him flog any one before—I was too little—some used to say it was Serjeant Best, by the seal we thought him Sir Eyre Coote—the last time I looked at the seal, Sir Eyre Coote on it.

*Polly Robinson, Nurse of King's Ward.*—On Saturday afternoon, in the month November, saw some of the boys up stairs—asked why they were not in school—they said they could not, there was a gentleman there—I went down, saw a gentleman uncovered as low as his knees from his breeches—was closing his drawers—I asked him what he was doing there—no harm, I assure you upon my honour—no harm, he repeated—I said that cannot be, sir, I will have the Beadle—Don't have the Beadle, he said—Again he repeated, I am doing no harm, upon my honour—I was only flogging those boys—I said I am a mother, I will have a Beadle, fetch me a Beadle—I am also a father, he said—worse and worse, I said—do let

me go, you don't know who I am, nor what I am—I said who you are I do not care, but what you are I plainly see—he said, I will go outside the door and stand if you will not let me go—I said, so you shall, I will go with you; he stood a short time, then he said, I will go in again, ma'am—I said so you shall, I will go with you; he walked about agitated for a short time, then came near, said, Hear me, madam, and commanded me—he held his hand, there was paper in it—I said, take your detestable hand from me and its contents, your voice is dreadful to me and shocks me—he said let me go before I make use of force—I said don't talk to me of force, before you should go, I would knock you down—Mr. Rigby, our porter, came, and I gave him into his custody.

*John Rigby.*—In month of November, on a Saturday, I was sent for to the Mathematical School by the Nurse; found a gentleman there, I asked what was amiss—she said he had behaved very improperly and very indecently—he then acknowledged to me that he had behaved very wrong and was very sorry for it, and asked me if I would let him go. I told him I could not do that—would send for the Steward to know how to act; I took him to the Steward's Office, and told what I had heard, in the gentleman's presence—he then acknowledged he had acted very wrong, was very sorry, was a person of rank in the country, and a magistrate—the Steward asked his name, he refused to tell—the Steward said he could not of himself let him go, would speak to the Treasurer, and I was directed to take him to the Compter; going along he wished me to take his word, promised on his honour to attend on Monday; he said he was a person of rank, was acquainted with Sir W. Curtis, Sir Charles Price, and Sir James Shaw; those three gentlemen he named; would I go or send for those gentlemen; when he got to the Compter, and was asked his name, he refused to tell.

*John Mears,* again called.—He put his hand here (put-



ting his hand in front) and slapped me with the other; outside my shirt, in the inner part of my thigh he put his hand.

(Signed) JOHN ABERCROMBY, Lieut.-General,  
H. FANE, Major-General,  
GEORGE COOKE, Major-General.

The receipt of the foregoing letter and enclosure was *immediately* acknowledged by a letter, of which Colonel Bagwell believes the following to be nearly an exact copy.

16, Bolton Street, 22d April, 1816.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Royal Highness's gracious letter of this date, together with the examinations taken at the Mansion House on the 18th instant; and to implore of your benevolence, that no decision shall be taken upon the melancholy case of my friend Sir Eyre Coote, until I shall have first communicated with his friends and counsel upon the subject. For that purpose I entertain hopes of being able to see Sir Samuel Romilly this evening.

I have the honour to be,

Most respectfully,

Your Royal Highness's most humble servant,

WM. BAGWELL.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York,

The following letter was written by desire of Doctor Bain, in consequence of his having been for many years the family physician of Sir Eyre Coote, and in order that he might have an opportunity of representing to His Royal Highness some circumstances which motives of delicacy prevented his stating in writing.

16, Bolton Street, 23rd April, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WRITE at the request of Doctor Bain, to solicit for him an interview with the Commander in Chief; or should it not be convenient to His Royal Highness, with you, upon the melancholy subject of Sir Eyre Coote's case.

Ever, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

16, Bolton Street, 23rd April, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU will very much oblige me, by laying my humble request before the Commander in Chief, that His Royal Highness may be graciously pleased to inform me how far I am authorized to shew his letter of yesterday's date, and also the copy of examinations taken at the Mansion House by command of His Royal Highness, both being marked "*private and confidential.*"

And I further take this opportunity of entreating the Commander in Chief may be graciously pleased to allow me as much time as may be consistent, in order to collect the evidence of persons, now widely dispersed, to establish the plea of insanity, in the truly afflicting case of General Sir Eyre Coote.

I am, my dear sir,

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

(Private.)

Fulham, Tuesday Night.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAD not a moment to answer your note of this morning before I left the office; but I now beg to acquaint you,

that I did not fail to submit your wishes to the Duke : and I am authorized to say, that with every disposition to shew them attention, His Royal Highness cannot see the utility of his affording an interview to Doctor Bain, having transmitted you the Minutes of the Inquiry, with a view of your availing yourself of any observations which the Doctor, or any other of the friends of the family, might have to offer.

As the interview with me can only have the object which the Doctor proposes in a direct communication with his Royal Highness, and is therefore liable to the same observation, I can have no objection, however, to receive him, if you have any particular wish upon the subject. But I beg to observe, that Lord Suffolk has already imparted to me the opinion which I imagine the Doctor wishes to express personally, and I did not fail to communicate that opinion to the Commander in Chief.

I have not had an opportunity this evening of taking His Royal Highness's pleasure upon the second note I have received from you ; but you shall hear from me on the subject to-morrow.

Yours most sincerely,

The Right Hon. Col. Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

The above letter was transmitted by Colonel Bagwell to Doctor Bain.

(Private.)

Horse Guards, April 24, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

UPON the subject of your second note, the Duke observes, that on a reference to his letter of the 22d instant, and its enclosure, you will find it expressly stated, that the communication was made through you, in order that his Royal Highness should be furnished with such observations from the individual, or his immediate friends,

as in your judgment you might obtain. The mark "private and confidential" upon the paper, therefore, was not intended to limit your discretion; but was merely suggested by the extreme delicacy of the subject, which, in deference to the feelings of the family, it would appear proper to impart only to these confidential friends. A fair and reasonable time would of course be allowed to make what communications you should think proper; but His Royal Highness *really* could not sanction *indefinite* delay in the decision of a case so materially involving the honour of the army.

Yours most faithfully,

Right Hon. Colonel Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

(Private.)

Horse Guards, 26th April, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

To the great regret of the Commander in Chief and myself, I am again under the necessity of addressing you with reference to my last note upon the subject of the melancholy case transmitted with His Royal Highness's letter of the 22nd instant. But upon a further consideration of the contents of your private to me of the 24th instant, His Royal Highness deems it incumbent upon him to request an explicit explanation as to the extent to which the friends of Sir Eyre Coote may propose to collect testimony upon the tendency of the minutes taken at the Mansion House.

Unless his friends mean to controvert the fact of the General's former visits to Christ's Hospital, as alledged in those minutes, it would appear nugatory to collect recent evidence to establish the plea of insanity, in extension of the circumstances which are stated to have occurred in the *last* visit; but should they take a wider retrospect in the examination of his conduct in common life, in order to extend such a plea regarding his former

visits made under different names, His Royal Highness would consider it his painful duty to have evidence taken also as to the circumstances which may have occurred in these visits, to which only a cursory allusion was made in the examination at the Mansion House.

In requesting to know from you what may be the views of Sir Eyre Coote's friends in this respect, His Royal Highness must make some allusion to the time which may be required to carry their proceedings into effect; and he desires I will repeat, that he would be extremely sorry to press them, so as to weaken any advantage which the case might derive from any testimony to be collected; yet, as no apparent advantage can attend the plea of insanity, should it be intended to embrace the retrospective period, when the General appears to have visited Christ's Hospital, and while he was known to be conducting himself, in the common relations of life, with his usual sanity and decorum, His Royal Highness could not feel justified in giving a sanction to delay urged upon such grounds alone, both on account of what is due to the honour of the profession which stands implicated under a disgraceful charge against one of its chief members, and to the convenience of the General Officers, who having taken the original evidence, are held in readiness to have submitted to them whatever may be alledged in its extenuation.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Yours very faithfully,

Right Hon. Col. Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

Bolton Street, 27th April, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date; and, in reply thereto, have to observe, for the information of His Royal Highness the

Commander in Chief, that it is the intention of the friends of Sir Eyre Coote to comprehend every circumstance as narrated by the boys and others at Christ's Hospital (without reference to any particular periods), in the defence founded upon a plea of insanity, which they propose to set up in his justification; feeling most confident of success in this truly melancholy undertaking, provided His Royal Highness shall be graciously pleased to allow them sufficient time for the collection of cases affecting the individual, for the expression of the sentiments of those to whom the General has been best known for a series of years past, as also for proofs that many of his immediate relations have laboured under, and that some at this present time labour under the same dreadful malady.

With respect to the extent of time which may be required by the friends of Sir Eyre Coote, in order to collect the necessary documents, I shall not fail communicating to you their joint opinion with the least possible delay. But I must be permitted to remark, *if*, as you state in your letter, no advantage can attend the plea of insanity, should it be intended to embrace a retrospective period beyond the General's last visits to the Hospital (which it is undoubtedly the intention of his friends to set forth); and that His Royal Highness could not feel justified in giving a sanction to delay urged upon such grounds, they must consider such a refusal as debarring them from the means of obtaining such a complete body of evidence as would, in their judgment, make out the case irrefragably. However, they must, in justice to the unhappy individual, and with a view to rescue a distinguished officer from the indelible opprobrium the adoption of unfavourable measures would cast upon him, and entail upon his family, most earnestly supplicate of His Royal Highness that sufficient time may be afforded. At the same time, I can

assure you most truly, every practicable expedition shall be used in furnishing the documents in question.

And to you personally, I must take leave, in conjunction with others of Sir Eyre Coote's friends, humbly to observe, that in our opinion, as a military inquiry has been instituted, after the total dismissal of this most delicate and afflicting subject by the Lord Mayor of London, in his judicial capacity, the honour of the army would be better consulted in the vindication of one of its chief members, who has been guilty of such follies as have been detailed in the examinations taken at the Mansion House, upon the plea of insanity now preferred, being established, than in the precipitation of a decision so materially involving in its consequences, the character and happiness of a highly respectable family.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Most faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

16, Bolton Street, 30th April, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I BEG the favour of you to lay my humble request before the Commander in Chief, that His Royal Highness may be graciously pleased to furnish me with copies of any written communications which may have passed between him and the Lord Mayor of London, relative to General Sir Eyre Coote.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

16, Bolton Street, 30th April, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I SEIZE the earliest opportunity of acquainting you, for the information of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, that the friends of Sir Eyre Coote will be enabled to furnish the several (which they deem irresistible) documents, proposed to be submitted in his justification, early the ensuing week; and I beg leave to observe, they have applied, and continue to apply, the utmost diligence in the collection, both in consequence of the tenor of your letter of the 26th instant, and with a view to the convenience of the General Officers who are held in readiness to receive them.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

16, Bolton Street, 1st May, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

UPON reference to that part of your letter of the 26th ult. wherein you write, "Should the friends of Sir Eyre Coote take a wide retrospect in the examination of his conduct in common life, in order to extend such a plea (insanity) regarding his former visits (to Christ's Hospital) made under different names; His Royal Highness would consider it his painful duty to have evidence taken also as to the circumstances that may have occurred in these visits, to which only a cursory allusion was made in the examination at the Mansion House."

I have, on the part of Sir Eyre Coote's friends, to state, that fearing their silence upon that subject might be considered as betraying an apprehension of the consequences of such further inquiry being instituted, they



feel anxious to have it distinctly understood, that such *an intention being expressed*\*, it is their most earnest wish that the most rigid investigation may take place, being perfectly confident of its appearing in the result, that nothing whatever criminal occurred; and that the extraordinary acts of folly of which their afflicted friend has been guilty, can only be imputed to his having been subject to periodical fits of insanity.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

(Private.)

Horse Guards, May 1, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN reply to your letter of yesterday, I have the Commander in Chief's commands to acquaint you, that His Royal Highness does not feel himself at liberty to comply with your request of furnishing you with copies of the letters which passed between His Royal Highness and the Lord Mayor.

Being anxious, however, to relieve your mind from any unfounded apprehension as to the purport of that correspondence, His Royal Highness has directed me further to state, that the sole object of his letter was to request a copy of any minutes of evidence that might have been taken upon the examinations before the Lord Mayor; and that it appears by his Lordship's answer, that no written evidence was taken upon the occasion.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Most faithfully yours,

H. TORRENS.

Right Hon. Col. Bagwell.

\* Vide letter to Sir John Cradock in the next page.

On the 2nd of May, Sir John Cradock called upon Colonel Bagwell, and stated that an expression in a letter from Colonel Bagwell to Sir Henry Torrens had given considerable offence; and, as a mutual friend, he entreated of him to explain it away in as satisfactory a manner as he was able; as, should it not be so explained, it might give rise to much irritation, perhaps, on both sides, in the future correspondence which might be carried on between the Horse Guards and him. Colonel Bagwell told Sir John Cradock, he presumed the expression to which he alluded, was "a menace," in his letter of yesterday's date (to which he replied in the affirmative). Colonel Bagwell stated, he was not a man who would designedly make use of an expression which might be offensive to any person, and certainly the last man who would presume to write any thing disrespectful to so exalted a personage as His Royal Highness the Duke of York; but that he really, upon the best consideration, could find no term which could convey his meaning, excepting *threat* or *menace*; and he considered the latter the least harsh. Yet he was most willing, as a wrong interpretation was put by Sir Henry Torrens upon his intentions, to substitute the mildest term he should be enabled upon further consideration to devise, provided it did not materially alter the substance, which he was not authorized to do, being the joint expression of the friends of Sir Eyre Coote: and he added, he should take the liberty of availing himself of Sir John Cradock's suggestion, by writing him a letter upon the subject, which he might shew to Sir Henry Torrens. He accordingly wrote the following:

Bolton Street, 2nd May, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN consequence of the kind intimation I received from you, when you did me the honour of calling here this day, I lose no time in solieiting the favour of you to take

the earliest opportunity which may, consistently with your convenience, present itself, to express from me to Sir Henry Torrens, the extreme regret with which I have understood, that an expression in a letter from me to him, of yesterday's date, should in any manner be so construed, as to convey the slightest apprehension on his part, that it was dictated by any sentiment opposite to that of the most profound respect to His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

Adverting to the particular word, I can with the utmost truth assure you I was not aware the English vocabulary afforded any term synonymous in its import, and yet less harsh in sound, so as to impress on the mind of the reader the real intention with which it was used; however, I have ventured to substitute in my copy of the letter in question the words "*intention so expressed*," for "*menace so held out*," and I earnestly trust this alteration will so far meet the views of Sir Henry Torrens, as to induce him to make a similar one in the original.

If, however, I shall have been considered as having *in substance*, transgressed the limits prescribed by a deep sense of what is due from so very humble an individual as myself towards His Royal Highness, I entertain a confident hope it will be ascribed to its true cause, namely, an extreme degree of susceptibility in the deplorable undertaking in which I am engaged.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Most faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

General Sir John Cradock, G. C. B.

Bolton Street, 6th May, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE now the honour herewith to enclose the several papers proposed by the friends of Sir Eyre Coote, toge-

ther with the schedule thereof, to be laid before His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, in extenuation of acts of insanity, confessedly committed in visits made to Christ's Hospital, and they beg leave to express an earnest hope that when the extreme delicacy and difficulties which necessarily attended the collection of such a mass of evidence are considered (although from obvious reasons they have been precluded from all application to any of Sir Eyre's own immediate relations), they will not be subject to the imputation of having caused any unreasonable delay. They must here also be permitted to remark, that were it not from serious apprehensions arising from their construction of your letter of the 26th ult. they would doubtless have been enabled to procure many corroborative documents, particularly from Ireland.

They purposely abstain from any enumeration of the public merits or private virtues of their afflicted friend, judging that the former must be well known and appreciated by the Commander in Chief, as the latter are fully acknowledged by a wide circle of intimates; yet whilst they have to express their unfeigned sorrow at having had a most distressing alternative imposed upon them, they have nevertheless adopted that line which they conceive to be best calculated to rescue his character and that of his posterity from the indelible disgrace which might otherwise attach to it. They feel also most confident in asserting that upon the most deliberate examination of the minutes of the investigation taken at the Mansion House, there does not appear any circumstance which could induce the slightest belief that that which occurred, had been committed through any propensity to criminality, or vice, and they are strongly fortified in this opinion, by the knowledge they possess of the high honour and virtuous habits which have peculiarly marked the character of Sir Eyre Coote, during a long well-spent life,

the greater part of which has been devoted to the service of his king and country.

It now only remains for me humbly to solicit of the Duke of York, should the plea of insanity not be established to the perfect satisfaction of His Royal Highness, as it most unquestionably has been to the friends of Sir Eyre Coote, and that a further exposure of the dreadful malady with which many of his family have been afflicted, shall be deemed necessary; it may be graciously pleased, in justice to the unhappy man, to give directions to the General Officers, who it appears are to receive the papers, that Dr. Bain, the professional and confidential attendant upon the family, may be called before them, as the Doctor has expressed his willingness to disclose that which he could not with propriety commit to paper.

And I beg leave most respectfully to submit, that I may be commanded by His Royal Highness to give my personal attendance, as the friend of General Sir Eyre Coote.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

The following letter was received at ten A. M. on Saturday, the 11th of May, 1816.

Horse Guards, May 10th, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I CONSIDER it due to your feelings to account for the delay that has occurred upon the distressing case of our recent correspondence.

Sir John Abercromby is unfortunately very unwell, and

having ascertained that there was little chance of his being able to resume the duty in which he was employed, the Commander in Chief has nominated Lord Lynedock to take his place. The proceedings will now go on; and in reference to your last letter, transmitting the different papers regarding Sir Eyre Coote's mental infirmities, I can only say that His Royal Highness has no objection whatever to you and Dr. Bain being present at any further examination which the General Officers may adopt.

Ever, my dear sir,

Yours most faithfully,

Right Hon. Colonel Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

16, Bolton Street, 21st May, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE friends of Sir Eyre Coote feel particularly desirous of obtaining a copy of the Report made to the Commander in Chief by the General Officers, to whom the several papers relating to the case of Sir Eyre Coote were referred, should His Royal Highness not deem it inexpedient to furnish them with that document.

It being likewise of material consequence, that they should be put in possession of the examinations taken at the Mansion House on Wednesday the 15th instant; they humbly hope that His Royal Highness will be graciously pleased to give directions that they may be supplied with them.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Very truly yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-Gen. Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

Horse Guards, 23d May, 1816.

DEAR SIR,

IN consequence of the Commander in Chief's absence from town yesterday, I had it not in my power to make an immediate reply to your letter; but, in compliance with your request, I have now His Royal Highness's commands to transmit further copies of the evidence taken at the Mansion House, by the General Officers employed to investigate the transaction which occurred at Christ's Hospital, together with their final Report.

I have the honour to be,

Dear sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

The Right Hon. Colonel Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

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Grafton Street, 14th May, 1816.

(Present.)

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LORD LYNEDOCK.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR H. FANE.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE COOKE.

HAVING read and considered the evidence given at the Mansion House on the 18th of April last, relative to the transaction in which General Sir Eyre Coote is a party, (submitted to their consideration by order of His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief); and having also read the letter from Colonel Bagwell, dated the 6th instant, and the twenty-seven papers which accompanied it: resolved, that they will to-morrow further examine the two witnesses, Polly Robinson, and John Rigby; and that Colonel Bagwell and Dr. Bain be requested to be present.—They then adjourned until to-morrow.

Mansion House, 15th May, 1816.

THE General Officers before named, having met Colonel Bagwell and Dr. Bain, according to appointment, at the Mansion House; they proceeded to put the following questions to Polly Robinson, the Nurse of Christ's Hospital, one of the witnesses whose testimony appears in the examinations of the 18th of April—(her replies to which follow each question).

Question 1st.—Did you observe any thing in the manner or conduct of the gentleman (relative to whom you gave your testimony upon a former occasion), which could lead you to have supposed him in a deranged state of mind, at the period when you detected him?

Answer.—My agitation was so great, I do not reckon myself a competent judge.

The gentleman was violently agitated, and his appearance strange.

There was a wildness in his manner, which I attributed to his having been detected in the manner he was.

Question 2d.—Was there any incoherence in his conversation; or any thing more in his appearance than the confusion likely to arise from being detected under the circumstances you have on a former occasion detailed?

Answer.—At the time of his saying, "you had better let me go before I use force"—he had something very wild about his eyes.

Question 3d.—If you were on your oath, should you declare you thought him, at the time alluded to in your former examination, capable of knowing *right* from *wrong*?

Answer.—I could not take my oath either way.

Question 4th.—Did he say any thing to you, to lead you to suppose it was the *first time* he had been at the Hospital?



Answer.—He certainly did. He told me he never was there before.

Question by Colonel Bagwell.—Upon the reflection you have been enabled to give the subject since its occurrence, do you consider the person was or was not in a deranged state of mind?

Answer.—I conclude no gentleman in his senses could have been guilty of such conduct.

Question by Colonel Bagwell.—From any circumstances which at that time, or subsequently, have come to your knowledge; have you any reason to think there was any disposition to the commission of a crime?

Answer.—The boys have said, no; that there never was.

John Rigby, the Porter of the Hospital, who also was a witness upon the former occasion, was then called in and examined.

Question 1st.—Did you observe any thing in the manner or conduct of the gentleman, (concerning whom you gave your testimony on a former occasion) which could lead you to have supposed him deranged in mind?

Answer.—I saw nothing particular, but that he seemed very much agitated.

Question 2d.—Was there any incoherence in his conversation? or any thing more in his appearance than the confusion likely to arise from being detected under the circumstances you have before detailed?

Answer.—Nothing beyond particular agitation.

Question 3d.—If you were on your oath, should you declare you thought him at any part of the time he was under your observation, incapable of knowing *right* from *wrong*?

Answer.—He was very much agitated; but there was no period I did not think him capable of knowing right from wrong.

An adjournment then took place till ten o'clock tomorrow.

Grafton Street, 16th May, 1816.

THE before-named General Officers having assembled in Grafton Street, proceeded, at the request of Colonel Bagwell and Dr. Bain, to hear the testimony of the latter, relative to the general state of mind of Sir E. Coote.

Dr. Bain stated himself to have been acquainted with Sir E. Coote for a period of twenty-two years; and to have been *professionally* acquainted as well as personally connected with him. He detailed a variety of circumstances tending to shew the morbid state of Sir Eyre Coote's mind for a considerable period passed; and especially since his return from his government in the West Indies. He instanced, as examples of this state, great depression of spirits, without any apparent cause; great caprice on various occasions, as respected both his intimate friends and others—complaints without cause of the treatment he experienced from the government of the country, and a constant and general restlessness, and disinclination to being settled any where. Upon the whole he declared he had long since drawn the conclusion, that Sir Eyre Coote was a deranged person; that the disease of his mind was increasing upon him, and that it would end in confirmed madness; and that he had upon several occasions mentioned this as his opinion to his (Dr. Bain's) son.

An adjournment then took place.

**REPORT.**

May 17th, 1816.

It appears to us from a careful examination of the declarations of the different persons examined at the Mansion House on the 18th of April, 1816, and on the 15th of May, 1816, as also of the documents furnished by Colonel

Bagwell (numbered from 1 to 27 inclusive), to be established,

1. That General Sir Eyre Coote was detected at Christ's Hospital on a Saturday afternoon, in the month of November last, under the circumstances detailed in the evidence.

2. That he had been there before on the same errand.

3. That, although there is ample testimony of very eccentric and incoherent conduct, amounting perhaps to derangement of mind; yet, at the period when the aforesaid discovery occurred, he seems to have had such possession of himself as to be fully sensible of the indecency of the proceeding, and capable of adopting the most grounded and prudent means to avoid further disclosure.

(Signed.) LYNEDOCK, Lieutenant-General.  
H. FANE, Major-General.  
GEORGE COOKE, Major-General.

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Received Tuesday Morning, 21st May, 1816.

(Private and confidential.)

Horse Guards, Monday night.

MY DEAR SIR,

ALTHOUGH the intimation I have already given you, would appear to have sufficiently redeemed the promise I made of affording you such information as might guide your proceedings in regard to Sir Eyre Coote's seat in Parliament, yet the desire, prompted by every motive, to adhere to the very letter of my words fulfilment, induces me to repeat, *that you have no time to lose in getting him out of the House of Commons*. Should you still think such a precaution an expedient anticipation of any proceedings that might otherwise be adopted in this unfortunate and most unhappy case.

It does not belong to me to attempt to controvert the opinion you entertain, as expressed to our mutual friends,

upon the personal indisposition you consider to have been manifested in this Building towards your unfortunate friend. But I owe it to myself to declare that no one circumstance in my public life has ever given me so much heartfelt uneasiness ; nor has there ever been, both in the case of those whose orders I execute and myself, a more distressing conflict between a sense of public duty, and private feelings of commiseration for the misery of an amiable family.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Yours most truly,

Right Hon. Col. Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

As I have written "*private and confidential*" letters to you, which partook at the same time of an official character, it may be necessary to say, that *this* is solely from myself.

H. T.

16, Bolton Street, Thursday morning, 23d May, 1816.

NY DEAR SIR,

IN reference to your note of Monday night last, I beg leave to represent to you in the most explicit manner, that so far from my entertaining any apprehensions which should induce me to take precautionary steps to get Sir Eyre Coote out of Parliament ; I shall not fail, in the event of the adoption of any unfavourable measures towards him by the executive power of the state, myself to submit the whole case to the House of Commons, being the only tribunal to which such an ulterior appeal can with propriety be made by me.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Very truly yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-General Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

The following letter was received at five minutes past six P. M. on 23d of May; it arrived at Colonel Bagwell's house half an hour or thereabouts before that time, according to the account of his servant.

Horse Guards, 23d May, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE just now the honour of receiving your letter of to-day, in reply to my "*private and confidential*" note! It may be necessary to say that an intimation of your ulterior intentions cannot be a matter of importance to me personally; nor can it in any manner affect the proceedings that may be considered expedient by the executive power of the state, should I find myself at liberty to impart the answer you have thought it necessary to make to a confidential communication from myself, for which I have no authority; and in which I could have no other view than a compliance with a personal request from you, and the promise I made in consequence of it.

As your letter does not bear the confidential mark of *that* from me to which it is a reply, I presume I may be justified in imparting its contents; but deeming it fair to understand your views on this point most explicitly, and at the same time thinking it essential that all correspondence, but what may be absolutely necessary, should cease between us, I shall consider myself at liberty to shew your letter of this date, and the previous communications from *myself*, provided I do *not* hear from you before *six* o'clock this evening.

I have the honour to be,

Dear sir,

Your most faithful servant,

Right Hon. Col. Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

Bolton Street, 24th May, 1816.

MY DEAR SIB,

I CANNOT refrain in imploring a release from the excruciating state of suspense in which Sir Eyre Coote, my disconsolate sister, and myself have now been so long kept, from making some allusions to the time which has elapsed without any communication having been made to me of a decision in my unhappy friend's case; for upon reference to my letter of the 23d of April, it will be seen, "I entreat His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief may be graciously pleased to allow as much time as shall be found consistent, in order to enable me to collect the evidence of persons widely dispersed to establish the plea of insanity in the case of Sir Eyre Coote;" and to your reply of the 24th of April, in which you state, "A fair and reasonable time would of course be allowed to make what communications I should think proper; but His Royal Highness *really* could not sanction *indefinite* delay in the decision of a case so materially involving the honour of the army." It will also appear in a subsequent communication from me, that by great exertion to meet the views of His Royal Highness in that respect, I succeeded in collecting the mass of evidence offered by the friends of Sir Eyre Coote in his defence, and actually furnished it on the morning of the 6th of May, being precisely *fourteen* days from the date of the first letter I had the honour to receive from His Royal Highness upon the subject; and that *eighteen* days have *now* passed by since that period, without any official result having been made known to me. It is also observable that the final Report of the General Officers to whom the case has been referred, was, as it appears by the letter of Lord Lynedock which accompanied it, made on the 17th instant, *now seven days* ago.

By a letter I have received from Lady Coote, it appears Sir Eyre is in a very bad state of health, and his only daughter of *three* dangerously ill and dreadfully affected, which circumstances, added to my own feelings, induce me to supplicate of His Royal Highness's clemency, a prompt decision in this calamitous case—as I really dread delay may be attended with the most fatal consequences.

I have the honour to be,

My dear sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-General Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

Horse Guards, May 23d, 1816.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE had the honour to receive and to lay before the Commander in Chief your letter of yesterday's date; and am commanded to express His Royal Highness's concern for the painful state of suspense to which the family and friends of Sir Eyre Coote have been subjected by the unavoidable delay attending a decision in his case—but His Royal Highness is not aware that any time has been afforded that was not essential to the consideration of so great and important a question—or that could sanction the implied inconsistency connected with your allusion to the former communications to you on the subject of delay. Whatever length of time might have elapsed in the investigation, or in the collection of your documents upon which to establish the plea of insanity, the same period that has occurred in the final consideration of the case must have been afforded to it, with the exception of Lieutenant-General Sir John Abercromby—the substitution of

Lieutenant-General Lord Lynedock, as explained and apologised for to you in my letter of the 10th instant.

I must now explain, that immediately after the case was finally decided upon—I wrote to you confidentially, and from a misapprehension of your views and wishes, I had framed a plan of delaying the publication of such decision until the latter end of next week; but finding by your letter of the 23d, in reply to that communication, that I had been mistaken, and having shewn the latter to the Commander in Chief and Secretary of State, at the expiration of the time I mentioned to you in answer to it, an immediate order was given for publishing in the Gazette of this night the pleasure of the Prince Regent.

I lament to say that this decision goes the length of removing Sir Eyre Coote from the service; and the measure is merely conveyed to the public by the succession to his regiment, without mentioning the act of removal itself.

This matter might certainly have been imparted to you yesterday; and as you appear to attach a consequence to the most early information, I regret that an official communication of the decision was not made to you; particularly as the omission rests with myself, inasmuch as I have no doubt but it would have been sanctioned, had I felt it necessary after what had passed between us, to put the Commander in Chief in mind of your probable expectations on the subject.

I have the honour to be,

Dear sir,

Your most faithful servant,

Right Hon. Col. Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

N. B. It may be necessary to explain, that having been obliged to shew your letter of the 23d to the Commander in Chief, and consequently the confidential communications from myself, the latter have now been placed with the rest of the correspondence.

H. T.



16, Bolton Street, 26th May, 1816.

DEAR SIR,

UPON consulting with the immediate relations of Sir Eyre Coote, regarding their sentiments and wishes, in respect to the expediency of my submitting his case to Parliament—I find they express so decided a repugnance to accede to such a proposition, inasmuch as it would expose more than has already been, the malady to which many of his family are unhappily subject; that I am induced to forego my own feelings, and renounce my intentions of making any specific motion in the House of Commons upon the melancholy occasion. Should it however so happen, that any measure shall be grounded in Parliament upon the decision of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, over which I can have no controul, I shall of course, in furtherance of the defence I shall have to set up in my poor fallen friend's case, feel myself at liberty to state every circumstance which has come within my knowledge in the course of the investigation, in my place in the House of Commons.

I have thought it fair and proper to explain thus much, perhaps in my own justification, as I had expressed myself otherwise in a former letter to you, without any previous communication with the relations of Sir Eyre Coote upon this most delicate subject.

I have the honour to be,

Dear sir,

Very truly yours,

WM. BAGWELL.

Major-General Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

Horse Guards, 27th May, 1816.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE had the honour to receive and to lay before the Commander in Chief your letter of yesterday, and I am commanded to acquaint you, that should the unfortunate subject of Sir Eyre Coote's case be made the ground of any measure in Parliament, His Royal Highness can have no other wish, than that you should state in your place, in the House of Commons, every circumstance connected with the investigation that has come within your knowledge.

I have the honour to be,

Dear sir,

Your most faithful servant,

Right Hon. Colonel Bagwell.

H. TORRENS.

## No. 2\*.

Documents transmitted to His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief with Colonel Bagwell's Letter of the 6th May, 1816.

Copy of a letter from the Lord Mayor to Mr. Hanrott.

SIR,

FROM your intimation of the wish of the friends of Sir Eyre Coote to be in possession of my opinion upon the state of that gentleman's mind, when a complaint came before me by the officers of Christ's Hospital in November last, I feel no difficulty in acceding to their wishes, and do not scruple therefore to say, that independent of the public manner in which he so foolishly conducted himself at the time he was with the boys, his general manner of expression and action was such that all those persons present thought he was a deranged man; and on his appearing the second time my opinion remained unaltered, for he frequently declared he was mad, as he was sure he never could have been guilty of such folly.

I remain, sir,

Your very humble servant,

(Signed) **MATHEW WOOD**, Mayor.

P. A. Hanrott, Esq.

Mansion House, 29th April, 1816.

\* No. 1 is the Letter from Mr. Corp to Sir Eyre Coote, inserted in the Introduction.

The Papers numbered 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 22, it is considered necessary to suppress, for the reasons before stated.

## No. 3.

Copy of a letter from Mr. Corp to Mr. Hanrott,  
Solicitor to Sir Eyre Coote.

Christ's Hospital, 24th April, 1816.

DEAR SIR,

FROM the very unexpected publicity attending the transaction which occurred here with Sir Eyre Coote, I have felt it correct in myself, as having the opportunity of seeing that gentleman at the time, namely, Saturday afternoon, the 25th November last, to declare, that as far as my knowledge or judgment of mankind can be considered accurate, I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction, that Sir Eyre Coote then laboured under a great degree of mental imbecility, or what I consider derangement of mind. This impression upon myself, if unimportant with others, is so strong, that when I was officially preparing a record to be considered by the Governors of this house, and entered upon their minutes, if approved, I incorporated that circumstance, which, after discussion, was resolved to be expunged, from delicacy, united to the feeling which the Committee entertained, that as the occurrence had been *judicially* settled, it was unnecessary for them to act further than take their own measures as to the return of the £1000, that being then their sole subject of consideration.

I feel, under all the *recent* circumstances which have occurred, that I ought to communicate to *you* this my undisguised opinion, now that the absence of Sir Eyre relieves me from the difficulty which existed when I addressed him a few lines previous to his departure with his family to the continent. And I am extremely desirous that you should be enabled to inform any friend of Sir Eyre's of these my sentiments, and which are confined to

the *precise period* of the transaction from which so much unhappiness to himself and family has resulted.

I am, dear sir,

Very obediently yours,

P. A. Hanrott, Esq.

RICHARD CORP.

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No. 4.

Copy of a letter from Thomas O'Reilly, Esq. to Colonel Bagwell.

Gloucester Place, 24th April, 1816.

DEAR SIR,

THE unfortunate occurrence at Christ's Hospital having been the subject of conversation at table where our friend Daly also was, I said I had long supposed there was something odd about Sir Eyre, from the following anecdote, which I then stated, though I had not before mentioned it out of my own family. Shortly after Sir Eyre left our street and went to reside in Hampshire, he dined at our house, and when we went up to the drawing-room and conversing on some indifferent subject, he suddenly, though not violently, rose from his chair, placed his back flat against the wall, extended his arms against the wall also, and very calmly and distinctly said, "This is a wicked world, you are all damned, don't you know you are all damned?" At first I could scarcely refrain from laughing; he immediately sat down again; I looked at him very earnestly, and was beyond measure astonished that he looked just as if nothing had occurred, and remained two or three hours afterwards in familiar conversation as usual: Mrs. O'Reilly and her sister Miss O'Callaghan were present, no body else; we agreed to say nothing about it, and concluded it was a sort of momentary madness; indeed, if you will excuse my candour,

I sincerely believe neither of the ladies mentioned would have felt very safe in his company, such was their impression at the time. I can confidently assert it did not arise from having drank too much wine, as we were quite alone, and did not remain long at table. It made a strong impression upon me, partly from the very great uneasiness Mrs. O'Reilly laboured under lest I should mention it, she being at that time on intimate terms with and entertaining a great regard for Lady Coote; and as I was disposed to make a joke of it, she frequently reminded me that I must not mention it.

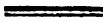
I remain, dear sir,

Your humble servant,

THOMAS O'REILLY.

P. S. There had been no conversation about religion to lead to this ejaculation of Sir Eyre's. The circumstance occurred in the winter of 1810.

The Right Hon. William Bagwell.



No. 7.

Declaration of Thomas Elford, Wax-Chandler.

ON Thursday, the 4th of May, 1814, was the first time I had any knowledge of Sir Eyre, when I waited upon him, respecting an order for some wax candles; he very familiarly said to me, Did you know that gentleman that is just gone out?—I said, no—he said, its Dr. ———, the physician, he has been to visit my daughter, who we are sadly afraid is going into a decline. I answered, I am sorry for it, Sir Eyre. On the 27th of February, 1816, he came in a hackney coach to my house; after being in the shop some time, and I had shown him some wax candles, a woman came into the shop, when he said

to her immediately she came to the counter, " Now, my good woman, you cannot be attended to; you must wait upon me, Elford." I called my lad up out of the cellar, and he served the woman. Directly after the woman was gone, he shut the shop door, and chained it; he tried to lock it, but could not. He said that nobody else *should* come in. He afterward gave his order, and went away in the coach again.

THOMAS ELFORD.

The above letter was received by Colonel Bagwell on Saturday the 27th of April, 1816, accompanied by the following note from General Sir John Cradock, G. C. B.

Saturday.

MY DEAR COLONEL BAGWELL,

I SEND the statement from Elford, but he does not go *near* so far as he related to me; but it seems, like all people of his class, that *he is* afraid of being brought into a court.

Yours, most truly,

Right Hon. Colonel Bagwell.

J. CRADOCK.

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No. 10.

Letter from C. N. Pallmer, Esq. M. P.

28, Gloucester Place, 3d May, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE known Sir Eyre Coote about ten years. Our acquaintance began in Jamaica, where he was Governor, and I held a professional situation under the crown; and our intimacy began almost with our acquaintance. I have transacted important business with him, and associated with him in the hours of conviviality and domestic free-

dom, and I can declare upon my honour, that I never heard or saw any thing which could make me for a moment believe him to be addicted to improper propensities. The impression on my mind always has been (confirmed by many collateral proofs), that when his mind was not worked up to subjects of importance, or under the influence of some grand occupation and restraint, it fell, from a natural irregularity or disease, into that sort of want of controul, which, though it did not amount to decided insanity, had almost every feature of that dreadful malady.

Believe me, dear sir,  
Sincerely yours,  
C. N. PALLMER.

Right Hon. William Bagwell, &c. &c. &c.

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No. 12.

Christ Church, 2d May, 1816.

SIR,

DURING my attendance on Sir Eyre Coote's family, whilst at Mudiford, I could not but notice great eccentricity and flightiness in Sir Eyre Coote's conduct; which became more particularly conspicuous in the latter part of Miss Sarah Coote's illness (since dead), for whose recovery he used to express the most anxious solicitude, and to whom he appeared to be most affectionately attached.

I have the honour to be, &c.

ARTHUR QUARTLEY, Surgeon.

Right Hon. William Bagwell, M. P. &c. &c. &c.



## No. 13.

Fordingbridge, 1st May, 1816.

SIR,

FROM having several years attended Sir Eyre Coote's family in my profession as surgeon and apothecary, I had frequent opportunities of noticing Sir Eyre Coote's conversation and manners, which I could not help considering at times as both flighty and inconsistent.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

PHILIP PARGETER.

To the Right Hon. William Bagwell, M. P.  
16, Bolton Street, Piccadilly, London.

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 No. 14.

Declaration of several Noblemen and Gentlemen.

THE undersigned having seen a letter from His Royal Highness the Duke of York, Commander in Chief, to Colonel Bagwell, bearing date the 22d of April, 1816, and having maturely and deliberately considered the nature of its contents, and more particularly that part wherein His Royal Highness has been graciously pleased to desire, "That Colonel Bagwell should use his judgment in the mode of furnishing any observations that the friends of General Sir Eyre Coote may have to offer on this melancholy case, in order that the whole may be considered before the adoption of any proceeding upon it," feel no hesitation in declaring it to be the firm conviction of their minds, and upon their honours, founded upon a long acquaintance with Sir Eyre Coote; and from

their having frequently observed in the course of that acquaintance, unaccountable eccentricities and follies in his manner and conduct, that what passed at Christ's Hospital, as detailed in the copy of the examinations taken by the command of the Duke of York, proceeded from insanity alone, and *therefore* they cannot impute it to any vicious or criminal intention, or propensity whatever.

Henry, Norwich.	Kirkwall, M. P.
William Bagwell, M. P.	J. Wickham, late 40th Regt.
A. Bain, M. D.	Edward Herrick, R. N.
Suffolk.	Daniel Callaghan, Jun.
Charles Morgan, M. P.	J. P. Beresford, Rear Admiral,
John Calcraft, M. P.	Bart. M. P.
C. N. Pallmer, M. P.	George T. Beresford, Major-
Thomond.	General, M. P.
De Dunstanville.	William Henry Keily.
James Gordon, Hill Street.	Walter Jones, late Colonel Lei-
J. H. Massy Dawson.	trim Militia.
John Pearse.	G. Doveton, M. P.
D. Daly, Kent Lodge, Hanwell.	H. Seymour Moore, M. P.
Benjamin Bousfield, Shirley	Thomas O'Reilly.
Hall, Twickenham.	Frederick G. Carmichael.
Angus Macdonald.	John Nesbitt.
George Purling.	John Travers.
Charles Pieschall.	Chidley Coote.
Richard Borough, Bart.	Hardress Lloyd, M. P.
Charles Shaw Lefevre, M. P.	Amelius Beauclerk, Rear Ad-
Mountifort Longfield, M. P.	miral.
Masseh Lopes, M. P. Bart.	Thomas Bernard, M. P.
Marcus Lynch.	J. M'Grigor, M. D. Director
P. A. Hanrott, Clapham.	Gen. Army Medical Board.

The signature of Sir James M'Grigor was affixed to the copy of this paper, the original having been sent in to the Commander in Chief.

## No. 15.

## Declaration of several Magistrates of the County of Southampton.

WE whose names are hereunto subscribed, Magistrates of the County of Southampton, hereby certify, that we have for years past known, and are most of us intimately acquainted with Sir Eyre Coote; that in respect to his character we ever considered it as highly honourable, and believe him to be the last man who would be guilty of the abominable crime with which he is now charged. At the same time we think from his general levity of manner, and eccentricity of conduct (at times more like that of an insane person than otherwise), that the circumstances, which to his misfortune occurred at Christ's Hospital, arose from the folly of the moment, without any previous thought, rather than from any intentional idea, or wilful design of immorality or criminality on his part.

Charles Hulse.

Stephen Tunks.

Samuel Clapham.

Robert Budden.

Charles Shaw Lefevre, Acting

Magistrate for Hants and Wilts.

James Willis.

B. Bullock.

James Jopp.

Percival Lewis.

Charles Samuel Barbe.

Henry Longden, Rector of the Parish of Rockbourne.

I knew Sir Eyre Coote for a short time at Marseilles, and considered him as very unsettled in his disposition.

H. NEALE.

## No. 16.

## Declaration of Thomas Grimston Estcourt, Esq. M. P.

April 25th, 1816.

HAVING examined the contents of the evidence collected by General Sir John Abercromby, and Major-Generals

Sir Henry Fane and Sir George Cooke, I am bound to declare, that in the transaction at Christ's Hospital, I consider Sir Eyre Coote to have been so completely deprived of judgment and mental controul as to have been reduced to a state of positive imbecility; to which conclusion I am, perhaps, the more disposed to come, from having (during an acquaintance of many years) observed and lamented, that in the ordinary transactions of life, his conduct has often been marked by a peculiar eccentricity and folly wholly unaccountable in a man deemed capable of at all times exercising a sound discretion.

If to the contents of the examination above alluded to, I add the important information which I have this day received from those better acquainted with circumstances attached to Sir Eyre Coote than myself, I am led to indulge the hope that his late extravagant demeanour at Christ's Hospital (dispossessed as it is of any criminal act or apparent intention) may be attributed with justice to *great imbecility*, if not to *insanity*, rather than to any vicious propensity.

THOMAS G. ESTCOURT, M. P.

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No. 17.

Declaration of Alexander Adair, Esq.

I HAVE observed frequent instances of unaccountable and eccentric conduct in General Sir Eyre Coote, though not any positive insanity; but coupling them with the known infirmities of his family, and knowing his high and manly spirit, I cannot but attribute his late indiscreet conduct to a temporary disorganization or derangement of his mental faculties.

ALEXANDER ADAIR,

Colonel Bagwell.

27th April, 1816.

## No. 18.

## Declaration of Colonel Jones.

I HAVE known Sir Eyre Coote for many years; I served in his brigade in the camp near Bandon, and afterwards in the town of Bandon the rest of the winter; I declare, upon my honour, I never heard the slightest imputation against him of the nature alluded to. Since the period I mention, I have known him intimately, and never heard from any one, any thing injurious to his character as an officer and a gentleman, until within these few days that this unfortunate report was mentioned to me.

12, Bolton Row,  
28th April, 1816.

WALTER JONES,  
Late Colonel, Leitrim Militia.

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 No. 19.

## Declaration of the Earl of Shannon.

I HAVE been acquainted with Sir Eyre Coote several years, during that period I have frequently thought his manners odd, and I may say eccentric. The conduct imputed to him at Christ's Hospital, if true, can I think be accounted for, only by temporary insanity.

SHANNON.

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 No. 20.

## Declaration of General Sir John Cradock, G. C. B.

IN the course of thirty years intimate acquaintance with Sir Eyre Coote, and upon service with him in different parts of the world, I declare, upon my honour, I never heard the slightest circumstance of the nature in question against his character.

J. F. CRADOCK, General.

Hereford Street, 26th April, 1816.

