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*June.*  
*M. Wel-*  
*lesley re-*  
*signs his*  
*commission.*

Moira, and which was reciprocal on their own part, that no difference of opinion on the matter in question should produce on either side any personal impression which might obstruct the renewal of a conciliatory intercourse whenever a more favourable opportunity shall be afforded for it." Marquis Wellesley then thought it indispensably necessary for his public and private honour to declare in Parliament that he had resigned the commission with which the Prince had charged him. Something he lost in public opinion through the indiscretion of his friends, which had rendered it impossible for his former colleagues ever again cordially to unite with him; something on the other hand he gained by the unavoidable comparison which was drawn between the fair and explicit straight-forwardness of his overtures to the two lords, and the captious manner in which they had been received.

*Negotiation*  
*with Earl*  
*Moira.*  
*June 5.*

Earl Moira now, after conferring with the Duke of Bedford, addressed a note to the two lords: "Venturing, as being honoured," he said, "with the Prince Regent's confidence, to indulge his anxiety that an arrangement of the utmost importance to the country should not go off on any misunderstanding, he entreated them to advert to his explanatory letter, and desired an interview with them, if they thought the disposition expressed in that letter were likely to lead to any co-operation. Should the issue of the interview be according to his hope, he would then solicit the Prince's permission to address them formally: the present mode he had adopted for the sake of precluding all difficulties in the outset." The two lords replied, "That they were highly gratified by the kindness of the motive on which Earl Moira acted; that personal communication with him would always be acceptable and honourable to them, but they hoped he would be sensible that no

advantage was likely to result from pursuing this subject by unauthorized discussion, and in a course different from the usual practice. Motives of obvious delicacy," they said, "must prevent their taking any step toward determining the Prince to authorize Earl Moira to address them personally. They should always receive with dutiful submission His Royal Highness's commands, in whatever manner and through whatever channel he might be pleased to signify them; but they could not venture to suggest to His Royal Highness, through any other person, their opinions on points on which His Royal Highness was not pleased to require their advice."

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Earl Moira reported this to the Prince, and being then provided with the required formalities, he renewed his overture, but with diminished hope. "Discouraged," he said, "as he must be, he could not reconcile it to himself to leave any effort untried, and he had therefore adopted the principle of the two lords for an interview, though doubting whether the desired conclusion could be so well advanced by it as by the mode which he had suggested. He had now the Prince's instructions to take steps for the formation of a ministry, and was specially authorized to address himself to Lords Grey and Grenville, with whom, therefore, in company with Lord Erskine, he requested an interview." It was one characteristic of these remarkable negotiations, that whatever past in conversation between the parties was minuted, and that publicity was given to those minutes and to all the notes which were interchanged... a mode of proceeding neither prudent in itself nor as a precedent. At this meeting, what Earl Moira considered the preliminary points were satisfactorily disposed of; the two lords, it was declared, might pursue their own course of policy both with regard to Ireland and to the United States of America, and the majority which they were to have in the cabinet assured

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 XLI. was, however, another preliminary which appeared to them of  
 1812. great importance, and which they thought it necessary to bring  
 June. forward immediately, lest farther inconvenient and embarrassing  
 delay might be produced, if this negotiation should be broken  
 off in a more advanced state: no restriction was laid on their  
 considering any points which they might deem useful for the  
 Prince's service; they asked, therefore, whether this full  
 liberty extended to the consideration of new appointments to  
 those great offices of the household which have usually been  
 included in the political arrangements made on a change of  
 administration; and they intimated their opinion, that it would  
 be necessary to act on the same principle now. Earl Moira  
 answered, "that the Prince had laid no restriction upon him  
 in that respect, and had never pointed in the most distant  
 manner at the protection of those officers from removal;" but  
 he added, "that it would be impossible for him to concur in  
 making the exercise of this power positive and indispensable in  
 the formation of the administration, because he should deem it  
 on public grounds peculiarly objectionable." To this Lords  
 Grey and Grenville replied, "that they also acted on public  
 grounds alone, and with no other feeling whatever than that which  
 arose from the necessity of giving to a new government that  
 character of efficiency and stability, and those marks of the  
 constitutional support of the Crown, which were required for  
 enabling it to act usefully for the public service; and that on  
 these grounds it appeared indispensable that the connexion of the  
 great offices of the court with the political administration should  
 be clearly established in its first arrangement." This decided  
 difference having been thus expressed on both sides, the conver-  
 sation ended here, with mutual declarations of regret: and here  
 also, to the great satisfaction of the public, ended all negotiations

with the two leaders of opposition, at the very time when, but for their own marvellous mismanagement, the government would have been delivered into their hands.

On the second day after this decisive interview, Lord Liverpool informed the House of Lords, that the Prince had been pleased to appoint him first Commissioner of the Treasury, and had authorized him to complete the other arrangements of the administration. This led to a conversation, in which Earl Moira stated what his views had been in these transactions . . . and declared his determination to support the ministry, so far as they might act consistently with the principles which had guided his political life. He had called upon Marquis Wellesley to explain what he meant by asserting that dreadful personal animosities had manifested themselves in the course of the negotiation. The Marquis replied, "that he had used the words advisedly; and no better proof of the charge could be required than the language of Lords Liverpool and Melville, one of whom had expressly declined to be a member of any administration formed by him, and the other had stated his objection as a matter of personal feeling." Lord Harrowby made answer to this: . . . "On the very day," he said, "on which Mr. Stuart Wortley's motion was carried, he and his friends had agreed to form part of an administration of which Marquis Wellesley was to have had the lead; but subsequent circumstances had made them alter that determination. The statement in which the Marquis accused his late colleagues of incapacity to conduct the government had wounded them through the memory of him who had just fallen by the hand of an assassin, whom they had considered as the life and soul of their cabinet, and whom they in the highest degree respected and esteemed; . . . a man of unimpeachable integrity, who never wanted defence in the eyes of those who knew his value. That

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*June.**The old ministry is re-established.**June 8.**M. Wellesley's explanation.*

CHAP. statement had produced feelings in himself and his friends which rendered it impossible for them cordially to unite with the Marquis in any administration." Marquis Wellesley replied, "that what had been just said confirmed the truth of his assertion, but he acquitted himself of any part in the publication of the statement. As soon as his resignation was known, some of his friends," he said, "took down in writing his account of it in the expressions which fell from him in the heat of conversation: though they had often been solicited to publish this, they had uniformly refused, and he himself was horror-struck when he saw it in the public newspapers: for the statement," he said, "was not his; it contained expressions which he would not have used in a document intended for the public eye, more especially at a moment when the country had just lost a man of the most irreproachable character, of the most perfect integrity, of the mildest heart, of the most amiable qualities, having, indeed, been distinguished by every private virtue. But it was no reproach to any man to be thought unfit for the supreme direction of government; and though he looked upon the act which deprived Mr. Perceval of his life as a stain on humanity, he never considered him, when living, as a fit person to lead the councils of this great empire. He admitted that he had never formally dissented in the cabinet from the opinions of his colleagues, though he had frequently put them in full possession of his own: he declared also, that there were many of their measures which he highly approved, and that he would give them his cordial support, as far as that could be done consistently with the deliberate opinion which he had formed on the great points of national policy: but he concluded by repeating, that they had opposed obstacles to the establishment of an efficient administration, and that those obstacles originated in personal feelings."

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There was no tendency in this speech to conciliate, but it

was not likely farther to displease those whom Marquis Wellesley had already wounded, nor to wound others. Earl Grey then rose to make his explanation and his charges. "For himself," he said, "no man could be more anxious than he was, even as far as was consistent with his honour, to outstretch a feeble but a ready hand to save a sinking nation. But a strong suspicion had operated on his mind throughout the recent negotiations, that he and his friends were either not to be admitted into the cabinet at all, or, if admitted, to be bound down in such a manner that the public should be secured against the influence of the principles and measures to which, during their whole parliamentary existence, they had been pledged." Alluding then to Marquis Wellesley and Earl Moira, he said, "that though in his late intercourse with them he could discover nothing but an unceasing and earnest desire to conciliate, and a laudable anxiety for the general good, he nevertheless suspected that they themselves had been deceived, and were not aware of the secret management of which they had been made the instrument." Earl Moira replied with becoming warmth to the imputation, solemnly declaring, "that he had undertaken the negotiation without a single particle of reservation in the authority with which he was intrusted; that he had stated to Lords Grey and Grenville, beyond the possibility of misapprehension, that his instructions were of the most liberal and unlimited nature, and that the transaction from beginning to end had been conducted with a severity of fairness, if he might use the expression, which was perfectly unparalleled. I claim," said he, "of the noble Earl, a statement of the particular circumstances to which he alludes, that I may repel the assertion in as haughty a tone as he has ventured to make it. My lords, I feel that I have not deserved this reproach: it is a disgrace which I do not merit and which I cannot bear. If he can bring forward but

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*June.**Earl Grey.**Earl  
Moira's  
reply.*

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the shadow of a proof that even unknowingly I submitted to be made such an instrument, I shall bow my head to his reproof, and to the degradation which must ensue. If he cannot, I shall repel the imputation as proudly as it was made. There was never in the most insignificant point the slightest reservation or hint of reservation: the powers given to me were complete and ample; and whenever limited, they were limited only by me from a sense of what was due to the public. I now call upon the noble Earl more satisfactorily to explain his meaning." But Earl Grey contented himself with hinting that he might find some future opportunity for a more distinct explanation; and he let it appear that he himself was the person to whom the authority for forming an administration ought, in his opinion, to have been intrusted. Lord Grenville, with more judgement, avoided all offensive topics in his speech; the points which Earl Grey and he had refused to concede were, he averred, of material and fundamental importance, and they never would consent to become members of a ministry founded on a principle which, in their deliberate opinion, was calculated to overthrow the practice of the constitution.

*Mr. Stuart  
Wortley's  
second mo-  
tion.*

But it was in the House of Commons that it was made known with what hasty imprudence the two lords had broken off their negotiation with Earl Moira. Mr. Stuart Wortley, who ought to have learned from the result of his former motion how bootless the repetition of such an experiment must prove, moved for a second address to the Prince, regretting that the first had not led to its expected consequences, and expressing the anxiety of the House that the arrangements for establishing an efficient administration should speedily be brought to a close. But the House was not disposed a second time to entertain such a motion. The temper in which Earl Moira's overtures had been rejected drew forth severe comments in the course of the

debate; and a statement which Lord Yarmouth made on the part of the household produced a strong impression both in and out of Parliament. "With respect to the household," he said for himself and his friends, "that it was their intention to resign their situations before the new administration should enter upon office. This intention," he affirmed, "was well known: they had taken every means of stating it in quarters whence it was likely to reach the interested parties, and in particular they had communicated it to one who took an active part in the negotiation, and with whom all who knew him confessed it was a happiness to spend their private hours." Mr. Sheridan, who was the person intended, confirmed this statement. "They took every means short of resignation," Lord Yarmouth continued, "to show that they never wished to have any connexion with the noble lords; and their intention originated in a wish to save the Prince from the humiliation which he must have experienced at seeing them turned out of office, . . . a humiliation which could only serve to convey an unfavourable impression against the government throughout the country. He did not speak in the name of one or two, but of all the officers of the household: they stated expressly to His Royal Highness, that they wished to resign and not to be turned out; and all they requested was, that they might know ten minutes before certain gentlemen received the seals that such a circumstance was to take place: before God he declared that this had been their intention, and that the only principle by which they were actuated was to save the Prince from humiliation; for they could not but consider the attempt at making this change in the household a preliminary to entering upon the negotiation as calculated to humiliate His Royal Highness in the eyes of the country."

The party who were in opposition seemed to think it preposterous that the existing ministers should presume to hold

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*June.**Lord Yarmouth's statement.*



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 XLI. men who were held up repeatedly to scorn and ridicule brave  
 1812. public opinion and return into power !” Lord Castlereagh de-  
 fended himself and his colleagues with considerable address, and  
 ably performed the not very difficult task of contrasting their  
 conduct with that of their assailants. “ The proposed address,”  
 he said, “ contained no expressions to which he could hesitate  
 in becoming a party, neither should he to the further expression  
 of a hope that the Prince would avail himself of any opportunity  
 for strengthening the present administration : .. but such an address  
 was uncalled for by any message from the Crown ; it could lead  
 to no practical result ; its obvious import was to insinuate that  
 the administration was not likely to possess the confidence of  
 the country, and this insinuation was founded upon its structure,  
 not upon its conduct ; he could not then think it possible that  
 the House would sanction it for no other purpose but to dis-  
 qualify the government from the arduous task in which it was  
 engaged. The late transactions would induce the House not  
 again to push the principle which they had so strongly asserted.  
 A proceeding so sudden was not to be found in English history  
 as that which they had lately seen, when the House decided, not  
 against a ministry who had proved themselves unworthy of con-  
 fidence, but against an administration the formation of which  
 was but in progress. This precedent he hoped future Parlia-  
 ments would never follow ; for those must be blind who could  
 not see the calamitous consequences which the occurrences of  
 the last three weeks were calculated to produce on our foreign  
 and domestic relations. Three or four distinct negotiations had  
 failed, and the Crown was obliged to call on the present cabinet  
 to charge itself with the affairs of the country. It was his con-  
 solation to think, that while on the one hand he and his colleagues  
 had never stood between the Crown and the people, so on the other

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*Lord Cas-  
 tlereagh's*  
*speech.*

hand they had never shown a disposition to shrink from the discharge of public duties, deterred as they otherwise might be by the accumulated difficulties which the late transactions had occasioned. For he could not help thinking that the course which had been pursued was most injurious, and might be fatal to the interests of the public. Never in former times had a negotiation between public men been exhibited to the eyes of Parliament and the country at large, and exposed to all the invidious comments which the malignity and the ignorance of mankind might pass upon them. For his part he could never augur well of any negotiation in which two men could not approach each other in a private room, although on public principles, without coming armed with pen and ink, and prepared to let every thing they might utter go forth immediately for the judgement of the public! The consequences in this instance would, he trusted, have the effect of preventing the recurrence of such scenes for the time to come. . . . It was a painful task for him to speak of the overtures from Marquis Wellesley, though he disclaimed any thing like personal animosity to him. The paper which had appeared he understood to have been published without the noble Marquis's consent; but after such a statement had appeared, describing as it had described Mr. Perceval and those who acted with him, he appealed to the House, whether gentlemen situated as his colleagues were could without degradation meet such an overture in any other way than that in which it had been met? He entertained the sincerest respect for Marquis Wellesley, with the highest admiration for his accomplishments and his talents; and those feelings were heightened by the consideration that he was the brother of the greatest soldier this country had produced. For him, therefore, it was peculiarly painful to be called on to decide on such an occasion; but when one answer only could be given by his

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