

**ADDRESS TO THE RIGHT
HONORABLE AND HONORABLE
LORD AND COMMONS OF THE
KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN**

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Address to the right honorable and honorable lord and commons of the Kingdom of Great Britain by Alexander Di Gonzaga

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ALEXANDER DI GONZAGA

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ADDRESS

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE AND HONORABLE

LORDS AND COMMONS

OF THE

KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN,

BY

HIS SERENE HIGHNESS

PRINCE ALEXANDER DI GONZAGA,

DUKE OF MANTUA, &c., &c., &c.,

LONDON:

DECEMBER, 1859.

345. 54.

ADDRESS.

TO THE
HONORABLE LORDS AND COMMONS
OF THE
KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

As the true supporters of the laws of your own country and the rights of nations and individuals, I have the honor to present this Appeal to your notice, and to request your special attention to the following statement of facts, being entitled to the privilege of a *natural born British subject*, as the only surviving son of His Serene Highness Prince Joseph Louis of Gonzaga Mantova Castiglione, who was *born in London*, on the 19th of March, 1761, and as grandson of His Serene Highness Prince Philip Louis of Gonzaga Mantova Castiglione, who was *married in London*, on the 12th of April, 1760, as the registry-book of the Spanish Chapel, Manchester Square, in the Parish of Marylebone, fully authenticates. (See at the end, Acts No. 1 and 2.)

Having been married by special-licence to an English lady, Maria Elisa, daughter of Colonel Coke, in London, on the 22nd of February, 1841, I expressed my desire to be naturalized as an English subject, on account of my birth at Dresden (see Acts No. 3 and 4) leaving it doubtful to me whether I was entitled to all the privileges afforded by the laws of this country. My legal advisers in London, after having taken cognizance of my act of baptism, as the son of Prince Joseph Louis de Gonzaga and the Princess Esterhazy, (which act was examined and legalized by order of Prince Metternich, at Vienna, the 17th January, 1837,) and of other family documents which are subjoined, informed me that I am to all intents and purposes a *natural born British subject*, and that *no formality* could be required to establish myself as such, more than from any other native of this country: they quoted from various authorities, and legal opinions were also given in writing from the learned council of the Temple, on the laws in force, 7th Anne, c. 5.—4th Geo. II. c. 21.—13th Geo. III. c. 21, and a reference to "Blackstone's Commentaries," vol. 1, page 374, proving the child born in a Foreign land of a native born parent, to be entitled to all the protection and advantages this country affords to a natural born Englishman. More recently the law passed in the British Parliament, the 6th of August, 1844, 7th and 8th Victoria, c. 66, extends the above mentioned privileges to the child of a *mother* born in England, although the child's birth may have taken place in a Foreign land.

My civil rights being thus demonstrated, and being confirmed the 17th January, 1837, at Vienna, and in other countries (see Act No. 5), I beg leave to premise briefly, and only as a necessary introduction to the subject of this Petition, that my political position is that of a claimant by hereditary right (and in virtue of the

Treaties of the last century, in reference to my grandfather especially, in 1748, at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle), to the Duchies of Mantua, Guastalla, Castiglione, Solferino, &c., &c., &c. in Italy: and in order to avoid incurring prescription, regarding my rights to private property in Italy, France, and elsewhere, I addressed my protestation at stated epochs to the sovereigns and potentates of Europe, and refer to the one dated April, 1843, subjoined (see Act No. 6), in which I requested some indemnity might be allowed me, until a congress would enable the five great powers, signators of the Treaty of Vienna, 1815, to grant me the reversionary right on *Guastalla* (purchased as a private possession by the Prince Ferdinand di Gonzaga, in 1539, from the family of Torelli), as they had reserved to themselves that privilege, by Art. 99, of the Treaty of Vienna, 1815.

I also submitted to the Governments (who were aware of the fact) that, as the question regarding the restitution of Italian possessions to their rightful owners had been interrupted at the moment the subject was selected as the *order of the day* at the Treaty of Vienna, by the unexpected return of the Emperor Napoleon from Elba (which broke up the conference), I should be allowed to place all my family documents before their respective ambassadors and ministers in London. Many distinguished personages and also sovereigns took cognizance of them, and testified their sympathy for my position; and, amongst the most eminent Statesmen, the Earl of Clarendon, who returned them with the following letter, dated London, June 17th, 1843.

“ To His Serene Highness Prince Alexander di Gonzaga, &c., &c., &c., *Paris*.

“ Prince,

“ I have had the honor to receive the protestations your Serene Highness has been kind enough to send me, which will be carefully preserved by me, as a solemn manifestation on your part, and founded on the authentic acts of your family.

“ With my wish for the re-integration of your Serene Highness in your rights, I accept Prince the assurance of my most distinguished consideration.

(Signed) “ CLARENDON.”

I received also the following letter on the same subject, dated October the 8th, 1843, from His Excellency the British Minister at Turin.

“ Prince,

“ I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt this morning of the letter and its annexed, which your Highness was pleased to address to me from Rome, dated the 3rd of October, of this year.

“ I have no reason to believe that the conferences on the affairs of High Italy will be held at Turin, but should they happen to assemble there, the protestation of your Highness, which is addressed to all the sovereigns and princes of Europe, would place the Government of Her British Majesty, who ought consequently to be made acquainted with it, in the position to give me the instructions it may consider necessary on this subject.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Your Highness's very humble servant,

(Signed) “ RALPH ABERCROMBY.”

“ Turin, the 8th October, 1843.

“ To His Highness the Prince Gonzaga Mantua,

“ At Rome.”

I repeated in 1846, at London, my protestation of the 26th of April, 1843, and afterwards at Rome, in 1848, where I resided at that period, in consequence of His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, who then advocated the cause of Italian Independence,

having done me the honor, when I went to offer my felicitations to him in 1847, to invite me with my family to reside at Rome;* but the political events which followed obliged the Pope to quit for a time the Pontifical States, and I, willing to share the dangers of the besieged city with my Italian brethren, remained in Rome and Italy, until the commencement of 1852, when, my affairs requiring my return to England, I travelled from Italy, passing through Paris, with my *English passport*; in which capital I could not be considered a stranger, as I had paid taxes there, like any other citizen, for a house I occupied in 1841 in Paris, and had been known in France during a period of forty years; besides having lived six years consecutively in that country till November 1845, three years in London, and four in Italy.

I arrived in Paris just at the time of the confiscation of the Orleans property, by order of the Prince President Louis Napoleon, including the immense possessions of the Duc d'Aumale, which he inherited owing to the unfortunate assassination of the Prince de Condé. This confiscation had been strongly opposed by many of the principal authorities in the magistracy, who were administrators or agents of the Orleans family in France, and by Mr. Laplague Barris, chief administrator of the Duc d'Aumale's property, and also President of the Court of Cassation.

It is well known that a plot had been decided upon for the overthrow of the Prince President, Louis Napoleon, which was rendered fruitless by his extraordinary coup d'état of the 2nd of December. The storm thus roused was scarcely quelled, than a writer more zealous than judicious, in the time he selected, inserted an article in the public papers stating that Charleville, included in the property of the Duc d'Aumale (which without this estate amounts to several millions of francs yearly), was built by Prince Charles of Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers, Rethel and Mayenne, who left it by will to his legitimate *male heirs* for ever, in all the branches of the family of Gonzaga; and that the decrees of Parliament and of the Kings of France (Louis the XIV especially), had confirmed these rights to his *male heirs*, and also that the marriage of the Prince of Condé with the *second* daughter of the Princess Anne of Gonzaga, Princess Palatine of Bavaria, was made the pretext for the appropriation of the dependencies of Charleville by the family of Condé, during the minority of the rightful heir; and that consequently, as the only surviving legitimate male descendant, this property by right devolved upon me. (See *Courier des Ardennes*, April 21, 1852).

I had made known these claims to Louis Philippe during his reign, and likewise to the Prince Louis Napoleon in 1849, and received from his secretary a letter (see Act No. 7); but the extraordinary opposition created amongst the members of the French magistracy of the Orleans party against Louis Napoleon, at the prospect of any reduction of the enormous revenue of the Duc d'Aumale, the richest proprietor in France, would not have led me at the moment of my intended journey to England, and whilst merely staying at an hotel as a passing traveller, to insist upon these points, or scarcely to think of them, had I not been urged by a coterie, whom I imagined friendly councillors, to prolong my stay in Paris until after the fêtes of the 10th of May. My astonishment was therefore great on receiving on the 5th of May, 1852, a mandate to quit Paris in twenty-four hours, on the plea that public security was endangered by my presence in France. As the

* The house of Gonzaga reigned in Lombardy from the 13th of November, 962, when Prince Guaitieri de Gonzaga, *Prince Royal of Italy*, Const of Turin (son of Hugo II., King of Italy and the Princess Elizabeth de Gonzaga, *Princess of Lombardy*), was created by his cousin, the Emperor Otto I., Imperial Vicar of Italy, and first Sovereign Margrave of Mantua. His descendant, Prince Louis I. di Gonzaga, was Governor of the Republic of Modena during the war of the Guelphs and Ghiblins, which desolated Italy, and was re-elected by the *Vox populi* Sovereign of Mantua in 1278. The whole of the patrimony of St. Peter, yielding eleven thousand crowns a day, was the donation of the Sérénissime Grand Countess Matilda di Gonzaga, Princess of Mantua, Duchess of Tuscany and of Spoleto; and was bequeathed at her death to the Popes for ever. This Princess died in 1115.

Princess, who had been staying at Genoa, was to join me on the 10th that she might accept the invitation to be at the fêtes, my only alternative was to see General Count Roguet, the Aide-de-Camp of the Prince President, to whom I had been presented at the Elysée, on my arrival at Paris, by the General-in-Chief of the French Army of Occupation, Rostolan, Ex-Governor of Rome. General Roguet assured me that this order from the police did not emanate either from the Government or the Elysée, but probably from some member of the subaltern police belonging to a contrary party, and that I might remain in Paris without any fear of future annoyance, as I had not done anything to occasion such an order. (See Act No. 8.)

I then called upon the chief of the cabinet, at the Ministry of Police, to enquire into the motive of this step; and he observed, that all foreigners were liable to receive such an injunction without even the necessity of an explanation on the subject; but that if I could bring forward three or four living witnesses, who had known me from childhood up to that date, I could remain in Paris, and as a foreigner he would give me six weeks for this research. I replied that I should not be embarrassed to find a hundred persons; but he said *four* would suffice. From that day I perceived myself to be under a regular system of espionage; I could not take a step without observing that persons were stationed at the corners of the streets leading to the hotel I inhabited. As I felt assured that justice must be done to me, I determined upon taking a house and furnishing it in Paris, and on awaiting the result; and with this view I removed to No. 26, Rue Monthabor. Accompanied by the Princess I attended the fêtes of May, 1852. Many foreigners came from all parts of Europe to attend this interesting spectacle. I mention this circumstance on account of an occurrence which took place at this time, trifling in itself, but showing the animosity with which I was pursued. The Count d'Hautpoul, the Grand Referendary (with whose nephew, the Marquis d'Hautpoul, I had been well acquainted, when he was the official diplomatic agent for Don Carlos, in France), had sent us invitations which were intercepted by some agent of the police, who demanded them of the person who was bringing them to my hotel, possibly with the view of preventing my meeting amongst the guests some of the friends of my youth. Notwithstanding these machiavelian manoeuvres, I succeeded in completing the series of witnesses for the years required. Mr. de Gréham, chief of the personnel of the Marine Department, and Mr. Guiffrey, stated upon oath, and also in writing, that they had known me intimately from 1844 to 1852.

General Trézel, Ex-Minister for the War Department, certified that he had been acquainted with me from 1840 to 1852, and had proposed for my acceptance the rank of *Colonel*, in the Foreign Legion of Algiers, (as that of General could not be offered to a foreigner without being first a Colonel in the French Service). He also stated that he had known my father, Prince Joseph Louis of Gonzaga, when he was General of division in Spain, in 1810. (See Act No. 9.)

Baron Wachter, Minister for Wurtemberg, in Paris, stated his long acquaintance with me, ever since the year 1833, at Stutgard, when I received the citizenship of that city. (See Act No. 10.)

Lieutenant Chmielinski, of the Lancers, affirmed upon oath, likewise before notary, that he had known me since 1826, when at his uncle's, Colonel Gurski; and that he had seen me repeatedly afterwards, particularly at the Battle of Ostrolenka, in 1831, and more recently in 1832, in 1834, and 1852, at Paris. (See Act No. 11.)

General de Lamarre bore testimony to the fact of being present when Commandant Corbet recognised me at Rome, in 1850, speaking to me of facts with which we were both familiar, when he knew me as a youth of 13 years of age, at Dantzic, on the staff of Marshal Ney, during the campaigns of 1813 and 1814. (See Act No. 12.)

The Abbé Stankiewicz stated upon oath, and in writing, signed before the notary Baudier, that he knew me under the same circumstances in 1812, 1813, and 1814, that he saw me again at the Battle of Ostrolenka, in 1831, and other engagements during the revolution in Poland, and again in 1852, at Paris. (See Act No. 13.)

I collected all these statements, which were signed before the notary Baudier and registered in the public records of Paris, and might have procured many more, when I received a friendly warning to *beware*, for there was an intrigue on foot to seize both myself and papers. As a further proof of an evil intention towards me, it was stated that some agents of the police, affecting to be gentlemen employed at the Austrian legation and wearing the Austrian cockade for their servants' livery, had presented themselves to several of my acquaintances, recommending those who had given their certificates to withdraw them (which of course they did not), and enjoining others to decline giving their testimony, or making known any facts to my advantage. Threats and promises were alternately tried, but at that time ineffectually, to obtain revocations. Secure in my integrity, and the conviction that I had never failed in my duty to the laws of any country, or to man, I did not pay much attention to this and many other intimations: I merely advised the notary Baudier to present the above mentioned *seven* certificates (the number required in *law*, though not by the chief of the cabinet at the Ministry of Police, who only required *four*) to the Prefect of Police, without further delay; as the six weeks accorded had nearly expired. This recommendation he did not follow, but preferred dividing them, giving three to Mr. Domergue, chief of one of the bureaux, and three to his friend Mr. Soufflon, Commissary of Police. I called a second time on Mr. Baudier and mentioned the suspicions of my friends, and the necessity of placing *all* the certificates in the hands of the Prefect himself, or in those of the Minister of Police—a friend afterwards took him from his office to the door of the Prefecture; but he said, that neither Mr. Domergue or Mr. Soufflon were within; and the result of all these mistakes was, that, during the time Prince Louis Napoleon was at Strasburg accompanied by the authorities and principal personages of Paris, I was arrested in the most unjustifiable manner on the 23rd of July, 1852. At seven o'clock in the morning, about thirty of the police surrounded the house, and seven or eight of them broke into my sleeping apartment upon the pretext of making a search for arms and political papers: not finding anything to excuse such conduct, or that could implicate me in the slightest degree, they compelled me follow them to the Prefecture, and in order to blind public opinion, announced in all the principal journals throughout France, the monstrous falsehood that I had been arrested at the moment I was forcing the consign of the sentinel placed at the Elysée, with the intention of penetrating into the palace. By this means they succeeded in blinding the public opinion, and accounting not only for the arrestation, but also for keeping me *au secret* and in solitary confinement for more than a year afterwards. In vain the Princess, at the instigation of some friends, demanded a contradiction of this article in the same paper which had produced it. A positive denial was given to any refutation. But this was only the commencement of a series of oppressions. I have said that I was *au secret*, and the stone walls of Mazas do not echo the sufferings of those detained there; even the Princess who came daily for nearly three months, in vain requested to see me. (See Acts No. 14, 15, 16.)

This most iniquitous arrest lasted from the 23rd of July, 1852, until the 1st of January, 1854, when it pleased the Emperor, Louis Napoleon, to restore me to liberty, after having embittered a life so early devoted to the service of Napoleon the 1st. But there is a sentiment far dearer to me than life, more precious a thousand times than the crown of my ancestors, or my private hereditary possessions. *It is my honor!* which has been impugned in the *most*

base and cowardly manner, in violation not only of the laws of France, but of the whole world.

With regard to my military career, even at the early age of twelve years I quitted the splendour and luxury of my father's palace, and the tenderness of a fond mother and sisters, to follow in the path of glory traced by the Emperor Napoleon I. Not being able to reconcile myself to remaining at home whilst my father and two elder brothers (one of whom died at the Battle of Leipsic in 1813) were fighting beneath his banner, I shared the dangers of the campaigns of Russia, Germany, and France, in 1812, 1813, and 1814.

But what has it availed me to have exposed my life so often, even from childhood, in the face of the enemies' cannon? Of what avail are riches which one day are mine and the next belong to another, if a low intrigant of a Mr. *Braut* bearing the title of Juge d'Instruction (of the police tribunal, an office happily unknown in England), can, because he finds it to his interest to do so, interrogate his victim *au secret*, and wantonly draw up a false report? This *Braut* well knew that my arrest was unjustifiable, and that if he accepted the evidence of my friends, I must instantly be set at liberty. Amongst those who offered their testimony was General Count Bussy, who knew me since 1812 and 1813, when I was on the staff of Marshal Ney. But such a course would not have accorded with his views; by refusing their evidence he calculated upon detaining me in solitary confinement for five years, the longest extent of time in his power, whilst he circulated the basest inventions to obtain my condemnation, and to deprive me of the sympathy of old and tried friends.

I consider it my duty not only for my own justification, but also for the good of all those who may at any future period be travelling, or entitled to property, in France, to lay before your Honorable House a statement of the outrages committed upon me, and of which, I should hope, there is no parallel in history. I claim then of you, as one having the privileges of a British subject and travelling with a British passport, that reparation of my wrongs which is due to me if justice exists on earth. You will learn with indignation that it has not been sufficient for me to have received several honorable wounds on the field of battle, of which I bear the marks on my person, nor the fact of having been decorated Officer of the Legion of Honor, by the hands of Napoleon on the field in 1814 (see Act No. 17); that it has not sufficed to have received testimonials of honors for which I never sought (see Acts Nos. 18 and 19), nor certificates from the most distinguished generals, nor the high respect and consideration of which a Minister of the War Department in France gave me the strongest proof, when, for my well known services to his country, he offered me, in 1840, the rank of Colonel in the Foreign Legion of Algiers; nor to have received the most flattering proposition by letter, to accept the rank of General and Commander-in-Chief from other countries (see Act No. 20); nor even quotations from letters written by the Emperor Napoleon in 1812, respecting the 9th regiment of the Vistula Legion, in which I commenced my military career the 13th of April, 1812. Nothing, nothing has sufficed to prevent the iniquitous falsehoods and abuse of power exercised against me by this *Braut*, Judge of the Police Department. When I threatened to appeal to the Prince President for address, he replied that he could easily find means to *silence me*; that the power of an Interrogatory Judge was paramount to any other in France, even to that of the Prince President, who had been, and might again be placed before him in the same position as myself.

The police agents had taken a *second* copy of the *legalised certificates*, containing the attestations of several living witnesses, and some of my family documents, which lay before Mr. *Braut*, also the copy of my requests dated the 24th and 26th of March, 1852, addressed to the Prince President, in which I re-vindicated