

whilst the insignia continue to be worn by the head of the church. So much, indeed, did the late bishop consider himself the representative of the order, that he continued to administer to the effects of such of the knights as have died here since the island was ceded to Great Britain.

The proceeds of such effects remain still in deposit; and, I conceive, that the amount may, with great propriety, be applied towards the maintenance of the public hospitals, which are at present a very serious expense to government.

I have only to add, Sir, that the Chapter yesterday assembled in the cathedral church, and elected one of their number (the archdeacon Xerri), to officiate as head of the church, during the vacancy of the see, under the title of Vicario Capitolare.

I have, &c.

To the Right Hon. William Windham,
&c. &c. &c.

(Signed) *Alex. Ball.*

II.—Copy of a LETTER from Sir Alexander John Ball, to the Viscount Castlereagh, dated Malta, 6th January 1808.

My Lord,

Malta, 6th January 1808.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship the Copy of a Letter which I have received from the Marquis Circello, signifying the nomination by the Pope of Monsignor Mattei, titular bishop of Paphos, to the vacant see of Malta; and expressing the desire of his Sicilian Majesty, that that prelate may be allowed to enter immediately upon the functions of the bishopric, and the enjoyment of the revenues attached to it. In my answer to the marquis, (a copy of which I enclose for your Lordship's information) I have stated, that however much I am inclined to favour the views of Monsignor Mattei, I must decline giving effect to the papal bull until His Majesty's pleasure is known.

In justice, however, to this gentleman, I think it proper to add, that of the candidates for the vacant see, none is more attached to the British government, or, in my opinion, better qualified to fill with respectability the high situation to which he aspires.

I beg, however, with great deference to suggest, that should Mr. Mattei's nomination be sanctioned by His Majesty, he should be required to accede to the terms proposed in my letter on this subject, addressed to your Lordship's predecessor in office; as, without some restriction, the bishop of Malta, possessing a larger revenue than is necessary for the support of his dignity, might become a formidable opponent of the measures of government. In proof of this assertion it may be proper to state, that since the death of the late bishop of the diocese, I have discovered that several adherents of the order, and of the French party, were pensioned by that prelate.

I have the honour, &c.

The Right
Hon. Viscount Castlereagh,
&c. &c. &c.

(Signed) *Alexander John Ball.*

(Enclosure, No. 1.)

Copy of a LETTER from the Marquis of Circello, to Sir A. Ball; dated Palermo, 28th October 1807.

ECCCELLENZA,

TRA i Vescovi preconizzati dalla Santità di Papa Pio 7^a, nell'ultimo concistore delli 18 dell passato Settembre vi è stato Monsig. D. Ferdinando Mattei per Vescovo di codesta Chiesa. Il Re, Mio Signore, essendo stato informato di ciò, è ben volentieri divenuto ad ordinare, che si dia il solito corso ed effetto alle Bolle Apostoliche. Allo stesse spedite, e che in conseguenza sia egli Autorizzato alla percezione delle rendite, che la mensa Vescovile di Malta gode in questo Regno.

Non dubitando, che questa benigna determinazione presa dalla Maesta Sua, a favore di Monsignor Mattei sarà per riuscire grata a V. E. trattandosi di un Soggetto da lei particolarmente raccomandato, allorché si portò egli in questa Capitale, e che ha saputo meritarsi colla sua Fianeglia la di lei stima, e la considerazione del Governo di Sua Maesta Britannica, mi Affretto di renderne informata L. E. V., e profitto di questa occasione per esprimere, la conferma del particolare ossequio con cui ho l'onore di airmi.

Di V. E.

Palermo, 28 Ottobre 1807.

Dev^{mo} Ob^{mo} Servo veir

(Signed) *Il Marchese de Circello.*

Sign^r. Cav. Ball,
Malta.

A Copy.

(Signed) *Alex. Jn. Ball.*