Dear Sir

You have had no doubt ere this, numerous applications on behalf of the unfortunate men now under sentence of death in this City…and I trust will try what your intercession can effect to have the rigour of the law softened towards them and their lives spared.

You will be told that Property must be protected and the same course adopted towards these men that was followed in the Bristol cases elsewhere. But I think it must be admitted that there are features in this lamentable occurrence making it different from any that has lately happened. This was no political riot. It was no rebellion against authority, no violence committed for mere mischief or for malice or in open defiance of law. Looking at the motives causing this outrage, we find it originated in the distress of the artisans, and their natural (and I could almost say justifiable) hostility to the use of any machinery which could abridge or wholly deprive them of the profits of their labour. I do not mean to defend crimes of this sort but merely wish to show that in the adjudication of punishment every mitigation and degree of guilt ought to have consideration in the eyes of those who exercise the power of life or death over their fellow creatures. I do then report my belief that the law ought not to be too rigorously interpreted in the punishment of an offence arising from no felonious motive, but deriving its source from the distress of the artisan, and their mistaken views of the best means of securing to themselves the exercise and reward of their industry.

Some of the wisest and most enlightened of mankind have thought Capital Punishment objectionable in every case except those of Murder. We have in this instance a crime which, deprived as it is, of malice, conspiracy or cruelty would offer to the sage and the philosopher the strongest claims for mercy. An accidental distress in the trade and an excitement of two hours during which with an ineffective Police and without resistance, the whole riot was suppressed, sufficed to place these unhappy criminals in their present awful situation. A pardon, transposing their sentence to perpetual exile in the colonies will satisfy all the ends of justice, accord with public feeling and spare our already too sanguinary code of laws this additional blood stain.

Pray give them what aid you can but I need not urge this for I am already sufficiently aware of your promptness where you have had the opportunity of being generous or humane.

I remain Sir with fidelity

Percy Fitzpatrick

To: Edward Ellice Esq

M.P. etc etc etc

Coventry, March 29 1832