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### **Miscellaneous works Of The Late Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl Of Chesterfield**

Consisting Of Letters to his Friends, never before printed, And Various  
Other Articles

**Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope of  
Dublin, 1777**

Section I.

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[ 5 ]

S E C T I O N I.

**P**HILIP Dormer Stanhope, earl of Chesterfield, <sup>1694.</sup> was born in London, on the 22d of September 1694 [1].

The antiquity of the Stanhopes [2] is sufficiently known, and needs no illustration. Several of our first nobility trace their origin from them [3], and their connections and intermarriages with the principal families of the kingdom have been very numerous and extensive [4]. Their zeal for their country and fidelity to the crown, ever since the reign of Edward III. though often tried, could never be shaken; and their eminent services in the most critical times were justly rewarded by places of trust, and marks of distinction. The honor of peerage was conferred upon this family by king James I. and the title of earl by his son. The late lord stood the eighteenth in the rank of the English earls.

The first earl of Chesterfield lost his fortune, and two of his sons, in support of the royal cause; and, being himself taken prisoner, died in 1656, after twelve years confinement. His eldest son had been dead ever since the year 1634. By his wife, Catharine eldest daughter and coheiress to lord Wotton, he left an only son one year old. His mother undertook the care of his education, and, being appointed governess to Charles the First's eldest daughter,

daughter,

1694. daughter, accompanied her into Holland, on the completion of her marriage with the prince of Orange's son, in 1642. She herself had married the Dutch nobleman [5] employed in that negotiation, and by his interest and fortune had opportunities of sending supplies of arms and money to the king, during his greatest distress. Charles II. on the restoration, acknowledged these services, by promoting that lady to the rank of countess of Chesterfield in her own right. Her son Philip, in the mean while, had the advantage both of a military education in the best school of Europe, and of imbibing principles opposite to arbitrary power and persecution [6], in a country then struggling against their united efforts. The finishing of his education, indeed, may be thought not to have been equally happy, as he was sent over to Italy, and spent some years there. He returned, however, time enough, after he had inherited his grandfather's title, to bear a considerable part in forwarding the restoration; and in consideration of his services, the king appointed him lord chamberlain to queen Catharine, and gave him successively two regiments. He was likewise constituted lord warden and lord chief justice of all the king's forests, parks, &c. on this side Trent [7], and the honor of doctor of civil laws was conferred upon him by the university of Oxford. In his youth he was a man of wit and gallantry, though rather of a ceremonious and jealous disposition [8]. He was thought to have shared with his master the affections of the famous lady Castlemaine. This trespass was slightly resented by the easy king; but retaliated by the duke of York, who, not very secretly nor altogether in vain, paid his addresses to this lord's second wife, a daughter of the duke of Ormond. He shewed his resentment on this occasion,

1694.  
fion, in a manner, which drew upon him the raillery of the French and other wits of that profligate court [9]. It was most probably this motive, that induced him to resign all his employments, on the accession of king James to the throne. He passed the remainder of his life, free and disengaged, in a delightful villa [10], and being a great lover of gardening, as well as a scholar, was complimented with Mr. Dryden's dedication of the Georgics [11]. An uninterrupted course of temperance, exercise, and useful amusements, procured him a happy and long life, being upwards of fourscore when he died in 1713.

This nobleman's third wife was Elizabeth Dormer, the earl of Carnarvon's eldest daughter, from whom the late earl inherited one of his names, together with an estate. His father was born of that marriage; and of him we know little more than that he was an earl of Chesterfield [12]. It is said that his apprehensions of the return of the Stuarts, an event which he judged near at hand, kept him attached to their cause, and that consequently he disapproved of his eldest son's engagements with the reigning family. It would appear surprising that with such principles he should have married one of the daughters of George Savile, marquis of Halifax, if the versatility of that celebrated nobleman were not sufficiently known [13].

He had four sons and two daughters [14]. Their mother did not live long enough to take the charge of their education. The eldest son, being rather neglected by his father [15], was taken care of by his grand-mother lady Halifax [16], who proved every way equal to this important task. Her mind seems to have been congenial with that of her late  
lord,

1694. lord, and her understanding and wit were still exceeded by the goodness of her heart.

It does not appear that her young ward was sent to any of the public schools. His sentiments, manners, and taste, were all formed upon the model he found at home. The best masters were chosen to render his accomplishments suitable to his birth. They hit upon the art of adapting their instructions to his disposition, and by this method improved his mind, while they gained his affection.

From his earliest youth he shewed an ardent desire of excelling in whatever he undertook [17], and an uncommon resolution in never deviating from the track he at first chalked out to himself, whatever difficulties he might find in his way. Two instances of this, however trifling, I shall beg leave to relate from the informations, which were transmitted to me by the bishop of Waterford.

He was very young, when lord Galway, who, though not a very fortunate general, was a man of uncommon penetration and merit, and who often visited the marchioness of Halifax, observing in him a strong inclination for a political life, but at the same time an unconquerable taste for pleasure, with some tincture of laziness, gave him the following advice. "If you intend to be a man of business, you must be an early riser. In the distinguished posts your parts, rank, and fortune, will intitle you to fill, you will be liable to have visitors at every hour of the day, and unless you will rise constantly at an early hour, you will never have any leisure to yourself." This admonition, delivered in the most obliging manner, made a considerable impression upon the mind of our young man, who ever after observed that excellent rule, even when he went to bed late, and was already advanced in years.

With

With such advantages and expectations, it is not surprising that he should have had an uncommon share of spirits. His natural liveliness was, in the beginning of his life, accompanied with some degree of warmth. He was rather impatient of contradiction, and is reported to have been somewhat passionate. This disposition, so improper for a statesman, was happily corrected by an incident; and the lesson he received, was the most efficacious, as he gave it to himself. Something, which he said or did in a fit of anger when he was young, made him so uneasy afterwards that he resolved from that time to watch over himself, and endeavour to curb the impetuosity of his temper. This he was happy enough to succeed in, and for the remainder of his life he was never known to be discomposed by any emotion of his mind.

1705.

When he was about fourteen years old, he had an opportunity of seeing an extraordinary person, Richard [18], the son of Oliver Cromwell. That great wicked man, as he was justly called, had left that son in possession of an authority, which, under the title of protector, raised him above most kings. But he could not inspire him with his own genius, aspiring spirit, and undaunted courage. Indolence and incapacity, which were Richard's characteristics, soon drove him from a seat much too exalted for him. Too weak and too inoffensive not to be suffered to live, he quietly retired to the happier station of a country gentleman; and, without entertaining the least idea of his having lost any advantages, he finished in obscurity a long life, untainted by ambition and secured from envy. Such was his situation, when he was called upon to give evidence in a court of justice. Upon his being named, the attention of the audience was fixed upon him. The

1708.

1708. judge, sir John Holt, either from regard to his former state, or in consideration of his age, shewed him a kind of distinction, by ordering him a seat. This act of humanity drew upon the lord chief justice the censure of some persons; but he was highly commended for it by the queen, when he related the fact to her in the public drawing-room. Lord Chesterfield, who remembered distinctly this transaction, said that he only saw in Richard Cromwell a plain old man, without any appearance that could excite either regard or pity.

1710. The study of the French language had been an early part of young Stanhope's education (19); and when he was about sixteen, Mr. Jouneau, a French clergyman, was employed to improve him in the speaking of it, as well as to give him some tincture of classical knowledge, and the first rudiments of history and philosophy. His letters to that worthy man (22), at the same time that they shew the great progress which he had already made in the French tongue, disclose the natural turn both of his mind and heart. He expresses, in a most lively manner, his regard for his master; and he lost no opportunity of giving him ever after substantial proofs of his gratitude and attachment.

1712. At the age of eighteen, Mr. Stanhope was sent to Cambridge in order to improve his talents, and form those early connections, which commonly discover a young man's natural propensities, and almost constantly determine his future conduct.

Like other majestic monuments of antiquity, the English universities, defended by their own grandeur, and supported by the veneration in which they are held, resist the hand of time, and baffle any attempt to impair or to improve. Perhaps, they

1712.

they may be thought not so well calculated to fit young men for a public as for a studious life. The colleges, of which they are composed, having been founded in those rude ages, when the clergy were in possession both of the little stock of learning still subsisting, and of the great power and influence which that superiority, such as it was, gave them, have ever since retained, and even now that this preeminence has ceased, continue to possess advantages peculiar to that order. Ecclesiastics are almost exclusively members and governors of these noble seminaries of useful knowledge. There are, however, some exceptions; and the society of Trinity-Hall, which was chosen for our young nobleman's residence, has long been distinguished on that account. "I find," he says, in a letter dated August 22, 1712, "the college, where I am, infinitely  
 " the best in the university; for it is the smallest,  
 " and it is filled with lawyers, who have lived in  
 " the world, and know how to behave. What-  
 " ever may be said to the contrary, there is certainly  
 " very little debauchery in this university, especi-  
 " ally amongst people of fashion, for a man must  
 " have the inclinations of a porter to endure it  
 " here (23)."

It is an object, at least, of curiosity to be informed of the first steps of a young man, called by his birth, and entitled by his talents, to the highest stations; and I have great satisfaction in being able to gratify this curiosity by informations drawn from his own letters. "It is now," says he, "sir, I have  
 " a great deal of business upon my hands; for I  
 " spend above an hour every day in studying the  
 " civil law (24), and as much in philosophy; and  
 " next week the blind man (25) begins his lectures  
 " upon the mathematics; so that I am now fully  
 " employed.

1712. " employed. Would you believe too that I read  
 " Lucian and Xenophon in Greek? which is made  
 " easy to me; for I do not take the pains to learn  
 " all the grammatical rules; but the gentleman,  
 " who is with me (26), and who is himself a living  
 " grammar, teaches me them all as I go along. I  
 " reserve time for playing at tennis, for I wish to  
 " have the *corpus sanum* as well as the *mens sana*; I  
 " think the one is not good for much without the  
 " other. As for anatomy, I shall not have an op-  
 " portunity of learning it; for though a poor man  
 " has been hanged, the surgeon, who used to per-  
 " form those operations, would not this year give  
 " any lectures, because it was a man, and then he  
 " says the scholars will not come." I have been in-  
 " duced to transcribe these last lines, on purpose to  
 " shew our young nobleman's early turn to pleasan-  
 " try. It appears from a subsequent letter, that he  
 " found means to go through a course of anatomy,  
 " which, from the satisfaction it gave him, retarded  
 " for some time his return to London. It might have  
 " been better for him, if he had not also dabbled in  
 " physic; he would not so often have been his own  
 " patient, or intrusted his health to the care of empirics.

1713. The multiplicity of these different studies, and  
 the reclusive life which he led at Cambridge, seem,  
 from his own account (27), to have rendered him  
 rather more desirous of displaying his philological  
 acquisitions than was suitable to his rank and desti-  
 nation. But this college-rust could not have pene-  
 trated very deep, since it was so soon and so per-  
 fectly worn off; and our young student never for-  
 got or neglected what he, in the decline of life, so  
 strongly pressed upon his son, that the art of per-  
 suading (28) is in fact that of pleasing.

Party

Party divisions, at that time, ran extremely high, throughout England, and Cambridge was by no means exempt from them. Lord Stanhope, so he was called upon the death of his grandfather Chesterfield, discloses very naturally and with good humor, his own ideas in the following lines to Mr. Jouneau. "Methinks our affairs are in a very bad way; but, as I cannot mend them, I meddle very little with politics: only I take a pleasure in going sometimes to the coffee-house, to see the pitched battles that are fought between the heroes of each party with inconceivable bravery, and are usually terminated by the total defeat of a few tea-cups on both sides." The same coolness may be discerned in some of his lordship's last letters: old age and youth have more than one affinity.

1713.

After having passed two years at the university (29), lord Stanhope was sent, according to the custom of his country, to begin the tour of Europe. He did not, however, follow the *costume* in every particular; for, he was not attended by any governor. He hastily passed through the towns in Flanders, without meeting with any proper objects to improve his understanding or excite his curiosity. He had not yet acquired a taste for pictures; and his mind was even at that time, as he expressed himself (30), more turned to persons than to things.

1714.

The summer of the year 1714 was more agreeably at least, if not more profitably, spent in Holland, and the greatest part of it at the Hague. It was in this enchanting place, that he first began to see the world. The company he found there, and which he thought the best, consisting chiefly of foreigners of different countries, and of different ranks, soon enabled him to throw off the scholar, and to become in some measure a new man. But, however

1714. however indebted he might be for his improvements in good-breeding to his new friends, who laughed him out of some of his scholastic habits, he often regretted that he had contracted others among them, no less disgraceful to his understanding than detrimental to his reputation (31).

His pleasures, however, never made him lose sight of his great object, that of making a figure in his own country. His principles of liberty were sufficiently known, and he made no scruple of avowing them. The earl of Strafford, the British ambassador at the Hague, and one of the plenipotentiaries at the congress of Utrecht, entertained very different sentiments, and did not easily brook contradiction. I have been credibly informed (32), that our young traveller, the late earl of Burlington, and Mr. Doddington, since lord Melcombe, who met all together at the Hague, sometimes diverted themselves with teasing the warm negotiator, by speaking in favor of the whig party, and condemning the tory administration. They would scarcely have been so unreserved, had not affairs in England been near a crisis.

The accomplishments, which lord Stanhope had hitherto acquired, prepared him for Paris, and helped to qualify him for the polite world, which he found there. The reception he met with must have been very flattering, since he described it in the following manner. "I shall not give you my opinion  
 " of the French, because I am very often taken for  
 " one, and many a Frenchman has paid me the  
 " highest compliment they think they can pay to  
 " any one, which is, sir, you are just like one of  
 " us." "I talk a great deal, I am very loud and  
 " peremptory; I sing and dance as I go along;  
 " and, lastly, I spend a monstrous deal of money in  
 " powder,

“ powder, feathers, white gloves, &c. (33).” As this description is not unlike that which he gave many years afterwards of his countrymens way of spending their time at Paris (34), we may suppose that he was as yet far from being what he wished his favourite son to be, *le petit et l'aimable Stanhope* (35). This surmise is confirmed by his own account of his aukward appearance in that metropolis of levity and taste, and of the means that were used to give him the *bon ton* (36).

1714.

So great were the changes queen Ann's death made in England, that he regretted not having been present to partake of the general joy upon the arrival of her successor. He enjoyed, however, almost an equivalent satisfaction, in being a witness of the concern expressed both by the French and the Jacobites on this event. He, himself, esteemed it the greatest blessing that could have happened to Great Britain, whose religion and liberties he firmly believed would otherwise, in three months time, have been totally subverted (37).

Whether his apprehensions were altogether groundless is a point perhaps not easy to be determined. That suspicions of an intended invasion by the pretender were at that time entertained, appears from most of the papers and letters written by order of the electoral family of Hanover a few months before the queen's death (38). From these we may judge of the popular fears at that critical period. Lord Chesterfield told the bishop of Waterford, that, if the queen had lived but a short time longer, the whigs would have taken up arms (39). General Stanhope was to have commanded the army, and lord Cadogan to have seized the tower. All the officers on half-pay, some of whom are still living, had signed the association. The place of rendez-

*vous*

1714. *vous* was appointed behind Montagu House. The officers held their arms in readiness in their bed-chambers, and were prepared to obey the summons at a minute's warning. Not one of them betrayed the secret; and lord Bolingbroke (40) never heard of this design till his return, when lord Chesterfield told him of it. Lord Bolingbroke, on the other hand, assured his friend, that he never had any fixed scheme in relation to the pretender, and that he had always avoided speaking of him to the queen, who, he said, did not like to hear any thing of a successor. He added, that the pretender never was in England, during the tory administration. How far *simulation* or *dissimulation* influenced the two lords in these reciprocal communications, may, perhaps, be a problem, which will be differently solved according to different systems. Lord Bolingbroke often said that we were still too near the scene, but that, one day, when private interests and connections should act with less force, the curtain would be drawn up, and many secrets disclosed.

Lord Chesterfield's sentiments, however, appear to have been at all times perfectly uniform. From these he never varied; his zeal and attachment to the crown were always tempered by the liberty he allowed himself of judging of those, who were in actual possession of it. These rulers of the world sat long before him; he observed them both in their royal robes and in their undress, and, having alternately been in favor and in disgrace with them, he drew their pictures from life with a true, but never flattering pencil.

The period we now conclude, and which may be called preparatory, is not in the least interesting in the earl of Chesterfield's life. It shews the early pains

1714.

pains he took to lay in a store of useful as well as extensive knowledge, and to habituate himself to an exertion of the mental powers he had received from nature. The building was now begun, and, to use his own metaphor, truly upon the principles of the Tuscan order, having all the strength and solidity necessary to bear a noble and permanent superstructure. As yet, however, the work was coarse and inelegant. The ornamental parts of the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, were still wanting to complete the whole. How these deficiencies were supplied, or, to quit the metaphor, how the accomplished gentleman succeeded to the imperfect youth, shall be shewn in the next section.

S E C T -