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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 III.

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SECTION III.

LORD Chesterfield was three and thirty years of age, when the crown of Great Britain devolved on a prince, in whose family and favor he had continued thirteen years. His sentiments, on this occasion, may easily be conceived; and he had an early opportunity of expressing them, as well as the wishes of the nation, in the speech he made in the house of lords, to introduce the motion for the address of condolence, of congratulation, and of thanks to the king, a fortnight after the death of his father.

1727.

As the earl's joy, on this occasion, was natural, his expectations must likewise have been great. If sufferings in the prince's cause, if the refusal of considerable offers to detach him from his service, if trials of zeal, and all the attentions of a courtier joined to the abilities of a statesman, could have secured a master's affection, he had every reason to hope that he should succeed in a short time to the same degree of influence and trust with George II. which earl Stanhope had deservedly acquired with George I.

The first appearances, however, were different. The sovereign, at his accession, seemed rather more disposed to forget former offences, than anxious to reward past services. Few changes were made in
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1727. public offices; the prince re-admitted several, who, having formerly belonged to his court, had since thought proper to desert it; and it was soon observed that some persons, who had been most in favor with the late king, were likely to enjoy the same influence under the present reign.

Whether the earl's attachment was thought so strong as not to require any immediate encouragement, or whether a want of obsequiousness, even at that early period [1], diverted for some time the course of royal favors from him, is uncertain. His name, however, was not in the list of promotions; he kept only his post of lord of the bed-chamber, and was not even restored to the place of captain of the yeomen of the guard, which on his dismissal had been bestowed on the earl of Leicester. Lord Scarborough seemed to have been distinguished more early. He was immediately appointed master of the horse, and made a member of the privy council, into which lord Chesterfield was not admitted till six months afterwards.

1728. To persons unacquainted with courts, it may appear that the nomination of the earl to the embassy of Holland [2] was not only a sufficient equivalent for the rewards he might have expected, but also an earnest of future advancement. Perhaps it was intended to be so; but those, who know by what precarious tenure kingly favor is held, may suspect that the fear of giving his lordship further opportunities of ingratiating himself with his master had some share in this promotion.

But whatever the minister's views, in sending him as ambassador to the Hague, may have been, the post itself was equally suited to lord Chesterfield's

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taste and abilities, and he was determined to distinguish himself in this station, that it might be a step to his further elevation.

1728.

The choice of his attendants was his first object, and he was in general directed in it by the strictest laws of decency and propriety. The honorable John Stanhope, his brother, was, at his recommendation, appointed secretary of embassy. In him, he was sure to find an amiable companion and a true friend; but could neither expect a guide, nor apprehend a rival. Indeed it was at all times his principle, to suffer no person about him, who might assume the consequence of a prime minister.

The other persons, who composed his family, were either such as he himself perfectly knew, or who were recommended to him, by those, with whom he was most intimate. To lord Bolingbroke he was indebted for the choice of his equerry Mr. now colonel Rutter, a gentleman often mentioned with distinction in his letters.

Dr. Broxholm, his friend as well as his physician, a man of taste as well as great skill in his profession, introduced to his lordship his brother-in-law, who, from a happy and singular conformity of character, manners, and inclinations, soon became particularly attached to him. He was a second son, of a good family, and about eighteen years old. His father Anthony Hammond, esq; was one of the commissioners of the navy, accounted a good speaker in parliament, and well known by the name of silver-tongued Hammond, given to him by lord Bolingbroke. He was a man of wit, but, not unlike other orators, wanted conduct, and had, as lord Chesterfield used to say, "all the senses but common sense."

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1728. He, however, did not neglect the education of his son, and sent him to Westminster school, where he laid in a considerable stock of classical and polite learning. Born a poet, and endowed with a considerable share of sensibility as well as delicacy, he was particularly happy in imitating those great masters of antiquity, whose writings contain the most faithful representations of the human heart, and in particular that poet, who, in this respect, has excelled them all, Tibullus. His life was a remarkable instance of the different use that can be made of great talents. He divided his time between the pursuit of pleasures and fashionable amusements, and a close attention to his favorite study of poetry; but these two objects could not, at the same time, occupy his soul. When he was the man of the world, the agreeable companion, the lively wit, he entirely lost sight of books and studies. But these times of dissipation were succeeded by intervals of retirement. In these, which often lasted many weeks, he shut himself up, and devoted himself to the service of his favorite authors; from whom he afterwards returned to the world with a fresh stock of fancy and spirits. His heart was a most friendly one, and he enjoyed every opportunity of obliging, in a manner peculiar to himself. The ambassador loved him with all his singularities, which in some measure were his own. Their intimacy grew to a very great degree, and shewed itself, even after the death of the poet.

But it was particularly from the hands of friendship that he received his chaplain. Richard Chenevix, born in England, but of a distinguished family in France, was chosen for this office. This gentleman's father, one of the unfortunate victims

of perfecution, driven out of his native country by the repeal of the edict of Nantz, had served as exempt in a troop of horse-guards, at the time that lord Scarborough's father commanded that corps, and afterwards died gloriously at Blenheim, at the head of the second squadron of carabineers, of which he was major. His second son, who was the earl of Scarborough's godson, was educated at the university of Cambridge, afterwards went into orders, and was appointed domestic chaplain to the earl of Scarborough, and to the lord Whitworth at the congress of Cambray. On his return to England, lord Scarborough recommended him to lord Chesterfield, to accompany him to Holland. The choice of a clergyman, who understood and could speak the French and English languages equally well, was particularly proper, as it was then intended that the earl, after staying some time in Holland, should go from thence ambassador to France [3]. Mr. Che-nevix was told by his patron that he would then be obliged to preach in French as well as in English. Lord Stair was the last of the English ambassadors, who had divine service performed in his chapel in the language of the country; and there is great reason to believe that lord Chesterfield would have followed the example of his predecessor, but he was not put to the trial. The distinguished manner, in which he acquitted himself of the embassy at the Hague [4], engaged the king to continue him at that place much longer than he at first intended. The personal regard which lord Chesterfield professed to his death for this worthy clergyman, and the warm sentiments of affection which the bishop of Waterford retains for the memory of his patron, do equal honor to both.

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1728.

From the nature of lord Chesterfield's education, and his studious manner of life, but still much more from his intercourse with most experienced statesmen of different principles, it may be judged, that he had acquired no inconsiderable fund of political knowledge; yet he was diffident of himself, and thought it proper to recur to other helps. We have seen that a course of lectures in civil law had been the principal object of his studies at Cambridge; but these lectures, even supposing them to have been well attended by him, did not comprehend the laws and customs of other countries. Immediately, therefore, upon his arrival at the Hague, he applied to a celebrated professor [5] of the university of Leyden; and, at his recommendation, took into his house a gentleman who was perfectly well qualified to instruct him in the science both of the civil law and the imperial code.

But lord Chesterfield was thoroughly sensible, that knowledge alone, however extensive, would avail him but little in his political career, unless adorned with other ministerial accomplishments. He wished to be a man of the world, as well as a man of business; and had strongly imbibed the idea, that labour and pleasure were not incompatible, and that the one contributed to heighten the taste of the other. His first occupation in the morning was to write his dispatches; and, as he left little for his secretary to do, he frequently staid in his room till dinner-time, unless business called him out. Sometimes he returned there in the afternoon; but, in general, like those of the famous De Witt [6], his evenings were spent in assemblies and amusements [7]. These very amusements furnished him with many opportunities, which he never neglected, of studying characters; so that, in the midst of his pleasures,

pleasures, he never lost sight of his main object, which was, to distinguish himself as a man of business.

1728.

In the middle of the year 1728 he arrived at the Hague. This village is justly considered as the capital of the United Provinces, and, almost for these two centuries past, has been the center of the most important negotiations [8]. A foreign minister cannot be in a better school for improving his talents, and exercising his patience, both from the character of the nation, and from the nature of its constitution. As this differs, in many respects, from that of most other modern states; and as, among the ancient, none comes nearer to it than the confederacy of the Achæans; it will not be improper to insert here a short sketch of it.

It consists of seven provinces, various in extent, unequal in force, and often divided in interest. Each of the provinces is composed of several towns or cities, every one of which has its own government and laws, and is as independent of its neighbours, as the provinces are both of each other and of the state. Supreme authority resides in every part, and common interest affords the only bond of union. In order to carry on the public concerns, a certain number of deputies from each province meet, at stated times, at the Hague, and compose what is called, the Assembly of the States General [9]. The majority there decides, but only in common matters [10]. Affairs of importance, such as war, taxes, navigation, the regulation of the colonies, &c. are referred to each of the provinces; and although each of them has its own states, these cannot give their final consent till they have procured the suffrages of every one of the voting towns. This previous application to each of these single commu-

1728. communities, and their approbation, are seldom dispensed with, except in cases where necessity takes place of law. The difficulties in obtaining this unanimity are great, and the inconveniencies attending it obvious; dispatch and secrecy can never be expected, and the door is left open for cabals and machinations. It sometimes happens, that the refusal of one small town stops a resolution; and that its consent cannot be obtained without some stipulation in favor of one of the magistrates [11]. These inconveniencies are, in great measure, prevented, when the republic has a chief, of power and influence sufficient to prevail over private interest and intrigues [12]. When there is no stadtholder, as was the case during lord Chesterfield's embassies, the great officers of state supply his place, though destitute of his power. Their acknowledged talents and experience procure them the confidence of the provinces, and their advice is generally followed. The principal of these officers bears the title of grand pensionary of Holland, and was formerly styled their advocate [13]. He is constantly appointed by the province of Holland, which, though only the second in rank, is by far the most considerable in opulence and credit [14]. The pensionary regularly attends the meeting of the States General, as well as those of his province, and he may be looked upon as prime minister [15]. It is with him that foreign ministers negotiate, and that those of the States in foreign courts correspond. He is elected only for five years; but he may be, and most commonly is, continued at the expiration of that term. The importance of this post has ever excluded from it persons of inferior abilities; and the list of those, who have filled it, contains the respectable names of Barneveldt, Catz [16], De Witt, Fagel, Heinsius [17], &c. Slingeland, an old
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1728.

and experienced magistrate of one of the principal towns, at the time of lord Chesterfield's embassy, occupied that important place; as Fagel most ably filled that of Greffier, or secretary of state. With these two, but chiefly with the first, our ambassador contracted a greater intimacy than it is commonly supposed can subsist between the prime minister of one power and the ambassador of another [18]; but lord Chesterfield's own account of the nature of their connection, is sufficient to remove this seeming inconsistency [19]. "Mr. Slingeland," says he, "was the ablest minister, and the greatest man I ever knew. I may justly call him my friend, my master, and my guide, for I was then quite new in business; he instructed me, he loved me, he trusted me." The man, who having had such obligations to another, scruples not to own them, must himself be very great.

The ambassador found a most useful assistant in James Dayrolles, his majesty's resident at the Hague. The regard he had for that old and experienced minister did not cease at the death of the latter, but was transferred to his nephew, the present Mr. Solomon Dayrolles. This gentleman, who possessed his lordship's confidence and friendship, and kept up an uninterrupted correspondence with him, after having successively and most ably filled the posts of resident minister at the Hague, and minister and commissary plenipotentiary at Brussels, is now retired from public employments, and enjoys that general respect which is justly due to his services and merit.

The ministers of the other princes, who were at the Hague during the same period with lord Chesterfield, were chiefly men of eminence, who were far advanced in the political career when his lordship

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1728.

ship was commencing it. As the interests of their respective courts were very different from those of Great Britain, he was obliged to keep a watchful eye over them, to penetrate into their secrets, while he concealed his own, and to oppose or prevent their plans and intrigues, by supporting, at the same time, the almost irreconcilable character of their personal friend and political adversary. The *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, which he afterwards so strongly recommended to his son, together with the *volti sciolti & pensieri stretti*, became rules as familiar to him as they were necessary. He conversed, without any apparent prejudice, with the heads of the opposite parties in Holland; he directed his pursuits to a constant point of view, and carried them on without heat or affectation, but with firmness and perseverance. He sometimes was best pleased when he appeared least so, and often concealed his difficulties under the mask of ease and indifference.

The marquis of Fenelon, heir to the merit as well as to the name of the author of *Telemachus* [20], had, for some years, been ambassador from the court of France, when lord Chesterfield first came to the Hague. These two noblemen were both young, possessed of similar talents, and equally desirous of distinguishing themselves. Actuated by a powerful spirit of emulation, they strove to excel each other in industry and application, as well as in politeness and splendor, and were no less attentive to support the dignity of their characters than the authority of their respective nations.

1729.

Great Britain, France, and the United Provinces, were at that time engaged in one common cause. Their object was, to maintain the peace of Europe, and to extinguish the flames of a general war, which were

1729.

were beginning to break out. The emperor Charles VI. and Philip V. king of Spain had for a while suspended their animosities, and had entered into an alliance, in order to be revenged on those who interposed to prevent them from pursuing their reciprocal claims. This forced the English ministers into a stricter union with those of France. The emperor being highly dissatisfied with the king of Great Britain, not merely because his majesty had declined the office of mediator between him and his rival, but more especially on account of his refusing to become a guarantee of his possessions after his death, threatened his new electoral acquisitions; and, notwithstanding the representations of the United Provinces, endeavoured to establish an East India company at Ostend. The king of Spain, on his side, finding an insurmountable opposition from the British nation to the cession of Gibraltar, which some indecisive expressions, in a letter from the late king [21], had induced him to demand, attempted the reduction of that important fortress, and refused to restore several ships illegally taken in America, as well as to give satisfaction to the Dutch on their commercial complaints.

Notwithstanding these hostile proceedings, the view of the two princes was not to break with the maritime powers; but rather to engage them, as parties, in their disputes. An establishment for the Spanish prince, Don Carlos, in Italy, had been the great object of the court of Spain, and was as warmly opposed by that of Vienna. Neither the congress of Cambray, nor that of Soissons, had been able, in the course of many years, to adjust the manner and conditions of this settlement; and nothing seemed remaining but the alternative of a rupture with either of the two courts. France could not
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1729.

have avoided taking part in such a war, for which she was not as yet sufficiently prepared. It was, therefore, thought proper to detach Spain from her new connections with the Imperial court, and to reconcile her with England and France. This was effected by the treaty concluded and signed at Seville, in the month of November 1729. An English fleet was promised to the infant of Spain, to protect the landing of six thousand of his countrymen in Italy, and to secure to him the eventual succession to Parma and Placentia.

Philip and his father, on their part, together with the French king, guaranteed all the possessions of the British crown in every part of the world, according to former treaties; and this was supposed to imply a formal renunciation of Gibraltar and Minorca. They likewise agreed to respect for the future the British trade in America, and to restore the ships that had been seized. The Dutch, at last acceding to the treaty, obtained a satisfaction with regard to their complaints; and his Catholic majesty promised to concur in the abolition of the Ostend company. He even consented, which none of his predecessors had done, to allow the States their title of high and mighty, and to treat with them, in every respect, as with crowned heads [22].

The persons concerned in this negotiation were those who had been employed as plenipotentiaries at the congress of Soissons. Colonel Stanhope was one of them; and, on account of this and other services, he was soon after created a peer, by the title of lord Harrington, and appointed ambassador to the court of Madrid. Mr. Horace Walpole, the prime minister's brother, was, however, supposed to have been principal agent in this treaty, which he ever after defended with great warmth [23]. It does

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1729.

not appear, that the earl of Chesterfield was concerned in this transaction, any otherwise than in giving notice of it, by order of his court, to the States General, from whom, as well as from the emperor, it had long been concealed. Were we to form any conjectures, from the decisive part which his lordship afterwards took in the parliamentary debates relative to Spain, we should be induced to suspect, that the treaty never met with his approbation [24].

The establishment of a new East India company at Altena, under the protection of the king of Denmark, had lately been attempted. Subscriptions for it were solicited even in Holland; and the desire of gain encouraged several monied people to become adventurers in this undertaking. Great Britain could not patiently suffer, any more than the United Provinces, such a scheme to be carried into execution. The ambassador's pen was usefully employed in the support of their rights, and the masterly memoir which he composed on this occasion, in conjunction with one of the deputies of the States, was delivered by him to the Danish minister at the Hague [25]. Their opposition was successful; and this company, as well as that of Ostend, was soon afterwards entirely abolished.

Lord Chesterfield had a still greater share in a matter seemingly of less consequence, but which nearly concerned his master, as elector of Hanover. The king of Prussia had married his sister, and a new alliance between the two families, by means of a double marriage, had been proposed on the accession of George II. to the crown; and, on account of some matters of punctilio, refused [26]. "The ties of blood," says an energetic writer [27], "have but a feeble hold on princes. Thus, notwithstanding

VOL. I.

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1729.

“ the courts of Berlin and Hanover were so nearly related, interest had set them at variance, not only with regard to the affair of Mecklenburg, but also on certain family claims, at that time unadjusted; as likewise, that there was a sort of rivalry between the families, and any access of interest and power to the one was sure to give umbrage to the other.”

Levies of men were forcibly raised in the Hanoverian dominions by Prussian emissaries; and these proceedings occasioned retaliations on the side of Hanover. The two monarchs felt themselves offended still more as private gentlemen than as sovereigns; and, as both possessed great personal bravery, the repetition of the scene between Charles V. and Francis I. was talked of. If royal disputes were suffered to be settled in this manner, contentions between crown heads would be more rare and less destructive. In the present case, the *delirant reges plectuntur Achivi* was, for the thousandth time, likely to have been verified. The country of Hanover was threatened with an invasion, which it was but ill-prepared to resist. No assistance from England could reasonably be desired, or obtained without difficulty; as, by the act of settlement, the kingdom was not to be concerned in the wars of the electorate, and no pretence could be alledged to elude this article. Our ambassador's zeal was happily exerted in preventing the consequences of this dispute. On his application to the States, a letter was written, in their name, to the king of Prussia, to intreat him to suspend hostilities, and listen to conciliatory terms [28]. To add weight to this letter, several Dutch regiments received orders to march towards Cleves. This step had the desired effect; an arbitration was proposed and accepted; and soon after an accommodation took place, which did not, however, produce a sincere reconciliation between the brother kings.

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1729.

The education of kings can hardly permit them to feel like men. Happy those, whose hearts are not insensible to the calls of gratitude and humanity! That of George II. was for the most part in a state of neutrality; but, if any thing could rouse him from that indifference, it certainly was his native country. As his first movements were generally on the side of justice and of truth, he expressed his approbation of lord Chesterfield's conduct, with a warmth not very usual to him; and it may be presumed, that, being at Hanover, he expressed these sentiments with less reserve than he might have done in London. In that capital of his little empire, he thought himself greater than any where else, and he enjoyed in it more freedom and more happiness. He had with him none of his English ministers, except lord Townshend, who still occupied the place of secretary of state, but had lost the influence in the cabinet which he possessed under the late king. Being now reduced to act a secondary part, he wished for an opportunity of recovering his former superiority; and having secured, as he flattered himself, a private interest with his master, he thought the present instant favourable, and resolved to try the experiment, however hazardous it might be. The other secretary of state was the duke of Newcastle, formerly obnoxious to the king [29], but reconciled to him by sir Robert Walpole and the queen, who at St. James's at least, had more than a deliberative voice. Lord Townshend attempted to remove the duke; and, in order to lessen the influence of his rival, and to increase his own, he was desirous of having his friend lord Chesterfield for his colleague. These views, however, he concealed, and only acquainted him, that, as the king appeared pleased with his negotiation, he would do well, when he waited upon his majesty at Helvoet-Sluis, to desire the permission

1729.

of attending him to London, on account of private business. Thus far every thing succeeded. The ambassador was graciously received by the monarch; who thanked him for his services, and readily granted his request. It may be presumed, that lord Townshend had received some encouragement from his master to persist in his scheme; but the private cabinet had not been consulted, and it was too alert and powerful not to baffle this attempt [30]. Lord Townshend, far from being able to displace the duke of Newcastle, was himself forced to resign; and lord Chesterfield, instead of being made secretary of state, saw lord Harrington succeed his friend in that office.

1730.

His disappointment was, in some measure, made up to him by the place of high steward of his majesty's household [31] and the garter, which had been the supreme object of his wishes. He was installed at Windsor the 18th of June, with the duke of Cumberland, and at the expence of the sovereign, who was present at the ceremony. He soon after left England [32], and returned to his post.

Business of importance awaited him in Holland. The emperor was highly displeas'd, that the treaty of Seville had been concluded; and Philip V. was no less so, that it still remained unexecuted. France, since the birth of the dauphin in 1729, had renewed her old connexions with the court of Madrid, and was projecting new schemes against the house of Austria. The maritime powers were accus'd, not altogether without reason, of having delayed the promised conveyance of the Infant into Italy.

1731.

The French ambassador press'd the States to fulfil their engagements and break off with the emperor; and the Spanish ambassador at Paris openly declared,

1731.

declared, that, these engagements having been violated by the allies, his master would no longer be restrained by those he had entered into [33]. Nothing could be more inconsistent with the interests of Great Britain than to commence a war with the house of Austria. Far from desiring to destroy the only barrier against the rising and aspiring power of the Bourbons, both the English and Dutch sincerely wished it might be strengthened. The ancient system, too long neglected, was now to be revived; and the Imperial court was to be induced, by some equivalent, to desist from its opposition to the treaty of Seville. This would have been a difficult task, if particular reasons had not disposed the emperor to comply with the solicitations of his former allies. He had no male heir, and earnestly wished that his hereditary dominions might, after his death, pass undivided to one of his daughters. Such an arrangement had been long before proposed, and was called the pragmatic sanction. By the French it was rejected at the congress of Soissons, for this plain reason, that it was contrary to their views ever since the administration of cardinal Richelieu. The British cabinet at the same time, though strongly solicited by the Imperial court, declined entering into this engagement. But circumstances were altered; the political mist began to disperse, and the ministry were apparently disposed to purchase, at any price, the emperor's consent, both to the Seville articles, and to the abolition of the Ostend company. A secret negotiation was accordingly set on foot at the Hague, between the British ambassador, the Imperial envoy [34], and the grand pensionary of Holland. The articles, being settled among the three ministers, were sent to the court of Vienna; where, after some private stipulation in favor of Hanover, and without waiting for the deliberations of the United Provinces,

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1731. the treaty was signed on the 16th of March. The consent of the States to the treaty was afterwards demanded in form, and with some difficulty obtained. This secret and important negociation did great honor to the conciliatory talents of lord Chesterfield, who in this, as well as in several other parts of his ministry, seems to have taken Sir William Temple for his model [35]: yet, without his own account of this transaction, the great share he had in it could only have been surmised [36].

1732. There is reason to believe, that, besides these national concerns, our ambassador employed himself usefully in favour of the house of Orange. He declared to the grand pensionary [37], that, although he had received no positive orders to that effect, yet he would, to the utmost of his power, promote the views of the family, from a conviction, that the interest both of his own country and of the republic required it. His early connections with the young and amiable offspring of that house were publicly known [38]. The prince, who was then completing his studies at the university, whenever he came to the Hague, was always magnificently entertained by the earl, who kept up a constant correspondence with him, and continued, during his life, to be his well-wisher, encourager, and friend. Though he could not prevent the resolutions, by which the states of Zealand, in conjunction with those of Holland, thought proper to set aside the prince's claim to the marquisates of Terveer and Flessingen, he certainly contributed a great deal to lessen the influence of the republican party. He foresaw, and earnestly advised, the re-establishment of the stadtholder, and made the first overtures of the prince's marriage with the princess royal of England, which was concluded some time after [39]. When all these facts are combined,

combined, it will scarcely be denied, that George II. had no less personal obligations to the earl of Chesterfield than the prince of Wales had had to lord Stanhope [40].

1732.

During lord Chesterfield's residence at the Hague, the duke of Lorrain, the intended husband to the emperor's eldest daughter, and afterwards emperor himself, made a tour through England and Holland. This young prince treated our ambassador with particular marks of distinction and friendship, on account of his warm solicitations in favour of the house of Austria. This attachment extended even to his social hours so far that he chose to be made a freemason by lord Chesterfield, in a lodge composed of his excellency, Mr. John Stanhope his brother, Mr. Strickland nephew to the bishop of Namur [41], Dr. Defaguliers [42], and one of his friends.

To enjoy the fruits of his labors, and to recover his health, which, as well as his fortune, had been greatly impaired, lord Chesterfield desired to be recalled. His request was granted, and perhaps for the very reason that had procured him his appointment, the fear of his acquiring too great an interest with his sovereign. His disorder, which was the consequence of a fever, baffled for a long time the efforts of the physicians, and the swelling of his legs could not be dispersed in less than six months [43].

On the recovery of his health, he began to appear as a speaker in the house of lords. We have already seen that eloquence had been his favourite pursuit from his youth; and he frequently told his chaplain, before his return from his embassy, that he intended to exert all his powers to distinguish himself as an orator. He, at first, appeared to be on good terms with the prime minister [44], and supported his measures. In the debate upon the reduction of the number

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1732. ber of troops from 18,000 to 12,000 men, he in conjunction with the duke of Argyle, stood up one of the first to oppose it. The argument he made use of seemed to be convincing. He insisted, that the present number was barely sufficient for the security of the nation, but by no means considerable enough to inspire any fears. He professed, that he had too good an opinion of his countrymen, to think they could be enslaved by so small a body; and of the gentlemen of the army, to imagine they would be base enough to concur in such a design. However he may since have varied in his opinion concerning a standing army, he never could be persuaded to approve of a militia to replace it.

Notwithstanding these appearances of harmony and friendship, it was scarcely to be expected, that a real or lasting confidence could be established between Sir Robert Walpole and lord Chesterfield. The former dreaded a rival, the latter could not brook a superior. The art of obliging was too well known to the earl, too little to the minister. Absolute dependence was expected by the one, and could not be submitted to by the other. An opportunity soon offered, which discovered both their dispositions. The excise scheme [45] proposed by the minister, perhaps with a view to the interest of his country, was principally disliked from an apprehension, that it might add to his power, at the same time that it increased the revenue. It was represented as an infringement upon national liberty, as well as private security and honor. An universal clamor was raised throughout the kingdom; the court experienced an almost total desertion; and, finding some of its firmest friends on the side of opposition [46], was at last obliged to yield, though with reluctance; and the minister narrowly escaped being involved in the fate of his bill.

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1732.

This was the decisive moment in which our earl openly declared himself against the ministry. He expressed, in the strongest terms, his disapprobation of the scheme, and his three brothers voted against it in the house of commons. Unable to stem the impetuosity of the torrent, Sir Robert gave way to it, and by this prudent conduct, at the same time that he preserved, or rather increased, his influence with the ruling power, he detected and rendered ineffectual the projects of his enemies. To themselves alone their victory was fatal; and the minister, though in general not of a vindictive turn, thought proper, if not to inspire terror, at least to excite a degree of caution by some examples of severity.

The two noblemen who first experienced the effects of his resentment were lord Clinton [47] and lord Chesterfield. Some regard was paid to the latter, at least in appearance; and, to avoid the odium of displacing him, endeavours were used to induce him to resign. But his lordship's intentions were different; he would listen to no solicitations, and, with a view of becoming popular, was determined to suffer himself to be turned out. The excise bill was given up on the 11th of April, and the 13th was fixed for the earl's removal [48]. That day, as he came from the house of lords with the earl of Scarborough, and was going up the great stairs at St. James's, he was stopped by one of the duke of Grafton's servants, and told, that his grace had been that morning at his house, and wished to see him there, on business of importance. The earl's chariot not being at hand, he was carried home by his friend, and immediately followed by the duke of Grafton; who informed him, that he came by the king's order to demand the surrender of his white staff. His lordship cheerfully complied; and, without attempting
any

1732.

any apology for his conduct, begged of his grace to assure his majesty, that he was ready to sacrifice every thing for his service, except his honor and conscience. Two days afterwards he wrote to the king, and expressed the same sentiments. This letter certainly did not lessen the resentment of a monarch, who, by his cotemporaries, is allowed to have been no dissembler. Lord Chesterfield took the first opportunity of going to court; but he was so far from being graciously received, that, contrary to his former intentions, he never again appeared in the royal presence, till the necessity of the times occasioned his recall. His place of lord steward was immediately after disposed of in favour of the duke of Devonshire.

The *eclat*, which attended the earl's dismissal, was still increased by the manner in which it was announced to the public. While the ministerial papers represented it in a light unfavourable to his lordship, the political publication, so well known under the name of *The Craftsman*, and in which lord Bolingbroke, together with Mr. Pulteney and several other persons of rank, on the side of opposition, were concerned, spared no pains to interest the nation in his favor. The author, after enumerating his lordship's services and eminent qualifications, concluded his account in the following words [49]. "The world seems greatly astonished at so unexpected an event; and those who are most zealous for the present royal family, grieve to see so able and faithful a servant dismissed in so critical a conjuncture." These inflaming expressions were highly offensive to the administration, and were accordingly severely criticised in one of the papers under their controul [50]. The writer exclaimed against the indecency of calling the king to an account for the choice

choice of his servants; and upbraided the earl, or his friends, with ingratitude, after having received so many marks of royal favor. Some misbehaviour or mistake, he said, might have necessitated his majesty to remove one whom he had so particularly distinguished; and he even hinted, that the reasons for this removal might be disclosed, if the authority of the house of lords, and the fear of an action for *scandalum magnatum*, did not deter the boldest man from speaking the truth of a peer, if to his disadvantage. Such illiberal insinuations engaged lord Chesterfield to send a message, in writing, to an anonymous author, who, in any other respect, would have been unworthy of his notice. He very nobly and politely set him at defiance, and gave him leave, freely to say what he knew, or what he pleased of him [51]. This public call, however, had no other effect than to draw, from the author, an evasive answer, for which he was severely lashed in some of the subsequent *Craftsmen* [52].

As lord Chesterfield had not stood single in the offence, neither was he the only object of resentment. The lords Cobham, Stair, and Westmoreland, who had declared their sentiments in the same manner, came to him immediately after his dismissal, and made him the offer to surrender directly the employments they held under the crown. This he politely declined; and advised them, even for the sake of the cause, to put the minister to the trouble of taking away their places. They accordingly were soon after dismissed; and with the duke of Montrose, the earl of Marchmont, and the earl of Burlington, considerably increased, in the house of lords, the party of the opposition.

SECTION

1732.