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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**

I. Fog's Journal. Saturday, Jan. 17, 1736. N° 376.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-52092](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-52092)

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S
MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

I.

F O G'S J O U R N A L*.

SATURDAY, Jan. 17, 1736. N° 376.

I AM not of the opinion of those, who think that our ancestors were in every respect wiser than we, and who reject every new invention as chimerical, and brand it with the name of project. On the contrary, I am persuaded, that most things are still capable of improvement; for which reason I always give a fair and impartial hearing to all new proposals, and have often, in the course of my life, found great advantage by so doing.

I very early took Mr. Ward's Drop, notwithstanding the great discouragement it met with, in its infancy, from an honourable author, eminent for his political sagacity, who asserted it to be liquid popery and Jacobitism. I reaped great benefit from it, and recommended it to so many of my friends, that I question whether the author of that great specific is more obliged to any one man in the kingdom than myself, excepting one.

I have likewise, as well as my brother Caleb †, great hopes of public advantage, arising from the skill and discoveries of that ingenious operator, Dr. Taylor, notwith-

VOL. II.

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standing

* This was one of the weekly publications against Sir R. Walpole's administration. It was first intitled *Mist's Journal*. I suspect, that Lord Chesterfield had, several times before, lent his hand to the writers of this witty paper; but I have no authority to assert it. This, and the two following essays, were generally allowed to be his.

† The *Craftsman*, in which lord Bolingbroke was principally engaged, went under the name of Caleb D'Anvers, Esq.

standing the late objections of Mrs. Osborne* and her most subtle distinctions between the eye politic, and the eye natural.

Some inventions have been improved, ages after their first discovery, and extended to uses so obvious, and so nearly resembling those, for which they were at first intended, that it is surprizing how they could have so long escaped the sagacity of mankind. For instance, printing, though used but within these few centuries, has in reality been invented thousands of years; and it is astonishing, that it never occurred to those, who first stamp images and inscriptions upon metals, to stamp likewise their thoughts upon wax, barks of trees, or whatever else they wrote upon.

This example should hinder one from thinking any thing brought to its *ne plus ultra* of perfection, when so plain an improvement lay for many ages undiscovered.

The scheme I am now going to offer to the public is of this nature, so very plain, obvious, and of such evident emolument, that I am convinced my readers will both be surprized and concerned, that it did not occur to every body, that it was not put in practice many years ago.

I took the first hint of it from an account a friend of mine gave me, of what he himself had seen practised with success at a foreign court; but I have extended it considerably, and I flatter myself, that it will, upon the strictest examination, appear to be the most practicable and useful, and, at this time, necessary project that has, it may be, ever been submitted to the public.

My friend, having resided some time at a very considerable court in Germany, had there contracted an intimacy with a German prince, whose dominions and revenues were as small as his birth was great and illustrious; there are some few such in the august Germanic body. This prince made him promise, that whenever he should return to England, he would take him in his way, and make him a visit to his principality. Accordingly, some time afterwards, about two years ago, he
waited

* The signature to one of the ministerial papers being F. Osborne, Esq; (who was the eldest and gravest of their writers) his antagonists made an old woman of the author, and nick-named him Mother Osborne, under which title he figures in the second book of the *Dunciad*:

waited upon his serene highness; who, being apprized a little beforehand of his arrival, resolved to receive him with all possible marks of honor and distinction.

My friend was not a little surprized, to find himself conducted to the palace, through a lane of soldiers, resting their firelocks, and the drums beating a march. His highness, who observed his surprize, and who, by the way, was a wag, after the first compliments usual upon such occasions, spoke very gravely to him thus:

“ I do not wonder, that you, who are well informed
 “ of the narrowness both of my territories and my for-
 “ tune, should be astonish’d at the number of my stand-
 “ ing forces; but I must acquaint you, that the present
 “ critical situation of my affairs would not allow me to
 “ remain defenceless, while all my neighbours were
 “ arming around me. There is not a prince near me,
 “ that has not made an augmentation in his forces, some
 “ of four, some of eight, and some even of twelve men;
 “ so that you must be sensible that it would have been
 “ consistent neither with my honor nor safety, not to
 “ have increased mine. I have therefore augmented my
 “ army up to forty effective men, from but eight and
 “ twenty, that they were before; but in order not to
 “ overburden my subjects with taxes, nor oppress them
 “ by the quartering and insolence of my troops, as well
 “ as to remove the least suspicion of my designing any
 “ thing against their liberties; to tell you the plain truth,
 “ my men are of wax, and exercise by clock-work.
 “ You easily perceive,” added he smiling, “ that if I
 “ were in any real danger, my forty men of wax are just
 “ as good a security to me, as if they were of the very
 “ best flesh and blood in Christendom: as for dignity
 “ and show, they answer those purposes full as well, and
 “ in the mean time they cost me so little, that our dinner
 “ will be much the better for it.”

My friend respectfully signified to him his sincere approbation of his wise and prudent measures, and assured me that he had never in his life seen finer bodies of men, better sized, nor more warlike countenances.

The ingenious contrivance of this wise and warlike potentate struck me immediately, as a hint that might be greatly improved to the public advantage, and without any one inconveniency, at least that occurred to me. I

have turned it every way in my thoughts, with the utmost care, and shall now present it to my readers, willing however to receive any further lights and assistance, from those who are more skilled in military matters than I am.

I ask but two *postulata*, which I think cannot be denied me; and then my proposal demonstrates its own utility.

First, That for these last five and twenty years, our land forces have been of no use whatsoever, nor even employed, notwithstanding the almost uninterrupted disturbances that have been in Europe, in which our interests have been as nearly concerned as ever they are likely to be for these five and twenty years to come.

Secondly, That our present army is a very great expence to the nation, and has raised jealousies and discontents in the minds of many of his majesty's subjects.

I therefore humbly propose, that, from and after the 25th day of March next, 1736, the present numerous and expensive army be totally disbanded, the commission officers excepted, and that proper persons be authorized, to contract with Mrs. Salmon, for raising the same number of men in the best of wax.

That the said persons be likewise authorized to treat with that ingenious mechanic, Myn Heer Von Pinchbeck, for the clock-work necessary for the said number of land forces.

It appears from my first *postulatum*, that this future army will be, to all intents and purposes, as useful as ever our present one has been; and how much more beneficial it will be, is what I now beg leave to shew.

The curious are often at great trouble and expence, to make imitations of things, which things are to be had easier, cheaper, and in greater perfection themselves. Thus infinite pains have been taken of late, but alas in vain, to bring up our present army to the nicety and perfection of a waxen one: it has proved impossible to get such numbers of men, all of the same height, the same make, with their own hair, timing exactly together the several motions of their exercise, and above all, with a certain military fierceness, that is not natural to British countenances: even some very considerable officers have been cashiered for wanting SOME OF THE PROPERTIES OF WAX.

By

By my scheme, all these inconveniencies will be entirely removed; the men will be all of the same size, and, if thought necessary, of the same features and complexion; the requisite degree of fierceness may be given them, by the proper application of whiskers, scars, and such like indications of courage, according to the tastes of their respective officers; and their exercise will, by the skill and care of Myn Heer Von Pinchbeck, be in the highest German taste, and may possibly arrive at the *one motion*, that great *desideratum* in our discipline. The whole, thus ordered, must certainly furnish a more delightful spectacle than any hitherto exhibited, to such as are curious of reviews and military exertations.

I am here aware that the grave Mrs. Osborne will seriously object, that this army, not being alive, cannot be useful; and that the more lively and ingenious Mr. Wallingham* may possibly insinuate, that a waxen army is not likely to stand fire well.

To the lady, I answer thus beforehand, that if, in the late times of war, our present army has been of no more use than a waxen one, a waxen one will now, in time of peace, be as useful as they; and as to any other reasons, that she or her whole sex may have, for preferring a live standing army to this, they are considerations of a private nature, and must not weigh against so general and public a good.

To the pleasant 'squire I reply, that this army will stand its own fire very well; which is all that seems requisite.

But give me leave to say too, that an army thus constituted will be very far from being without its terror, and will doubtless strike all the fear that is consistent with the liberties of a free people; wax, it is well known, being the most natural and expressive imitation of life, as it unites in itself the different advantages of painting and sculpture.

Our British monarchs in the Tower are never beheld but with the profoundest respect and reverence; and that bold and manly representation of Henry the eighth, never fails to raise the strongest images of one kind or ano-

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ther

* The Free Briton by Francis Wallingham, Esq; (published under the direction of Sir Robert Walpole) was written by William Arnall, who was bred an attorney, but commenced party-writer when under twenty. See the notes on the Dunciad, Book II; where Arnall is said to have received, for Free Britons and other writings, in four years, the sum of 1099*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* out of the treasury.

ther in its beholders of both sexes. Such is the force of divine right, though but in wax, upon the minds of all good and loyal subjects.

Nobody ever saw the court of France lately exhibited here in wax-work, without a due regard; insomuch that an habitual good courtier was observed respectfully bowing to their most Christian majesties, and was at last only convinced of his error by the silence of the court. An army of the same materials will certainly have still a stronger effect, and be more than sufficient to keep the peace, without the power of breaking it.

My readers will observe, that I only propose a reduction of the private men, for, upon many accounts, I would by no means touch the commissions of the officers. In the first place, they most of them deserve very well of the public; and in the next place, as they are all in parliament, I might, by proposing to deprive them of their commissions, be suspected of political views, which I protest I have not. I would therefore desire, that the present set of officers may keep the keys, to wind up their several regiments, troops, or companies; and that a master-key to the whole army be lodged in the hands of the general in chief for the time being, or in default of such, in the hands of the prime minister.

From my second *postulatum*, that the present army is expensive, and gives uneasiness to many of his majesty's good subjects, the further advantages of my scheme will appear.

The chief expence here will be only the prime cost; and I even question whether that will exceed the price of live men, of the height, proportions, and tremendous aspects, that I propose these should be of. But the annual saving will be so considerable, that I will appeal to every sensible and impartial man in the kingdom, if he does not sincerely think that this nation would have been now much more flourishing and powerful, if, for these twenty years last past, we had had no other army.

Another considerable advantage consists in the great care and convenience, with which these men will be quartered in the countries; where, far from being an oppression or disturbance to the public houses, they will be a genteel ornament and decoration to them, and instead of being inflicted as a punishment upon the disaffected,
will

will probably be granted as a favour, to such inn-keepers as are supposed to be the most in the interest of the administration, and that too possibly with an exclusive privilege of shewing them. So that I question, whether a certain great city may not be eloquently threatened with having no troops at all.

As I am never for carrying any project too far, I would, for certain reasons, not extend this, at present, to Gibraltar, but would leave the garrison there alive as long as it can keep so.

Let nobody put the Jacobite upon me, and say, that I am paving the way for the Pretender, by disbanding this army. That argument is worn threadbare; besides, let those take the Jacobite to themselves, who would exchange the affections of the people for the fallacious security of an unpopular standing army.

But, as I know I am suspected by some people to be no friend to the present ministry, I would most carefully avoid inserting any thing in this project that might look peevish, or like a design to deprive them of any of the necessary means of carrying on the government. I have therefore already declared, that I did not propose to affect the commissions of any of the officers, though a very great saving would arise to the public thereby. And I would further provide, that, in the disbanding the present army, an exact account should be taken of every foldier's right of voting in elections, and where, and that the like number of votes, and for the same places, shall be reserved to every regiment, troop, or company, of this new army; these votes to be given collectively, by the officers of the said regiment, troop, or company, in as free and uninfluenced a manner as hath at any time been practised within these last twenty years.

Moreover, I would provide, that *Mann and Day* * shall, as at present, have the entire cloathing of this new army, so scrupulous am I of distressing the administration.

People are generally fond of their own projects, and it may be, I look upon this with the partiality of a parent; but I protest I cannot find any one objection to it. It will save an immense expence to the nation, remove the fears that at present disturb the minds of many, and answer every one of the purposes, to which our present army has

* Two very considerable woollen-drapers, in the Strand; the first of them was grandfather to Sir Horatio Mann.

has been applied. The numbers will found great and formidable abroad, the individuals will be gentle and peaceable at home; and there will be an increase to the public of above fifty thousand hands for labour and manufactures, which at present are either idle, or but scurvily employed.

I cannot, I own, help flattering myself, that this scheme will prevail, and the more so from the very great protection and success wax-work has lately met with; which, I imagine, was only as an essay or *tentamen* to some greater design of this nature. But, whatever be the event of it, this alternative I will venture to assert, that by the 25th of March next, either the army or another body of men must be of wax.

II.

F O G ' S J O U R N A L.

SATURDAY, Jan. 24, 1736. N^o 377.

HUMAN nature, though every where the same, is so seemingly diversified by the various habits and customs of different countries, and so blended with the early impressions we receive from our education, that they are often confounded together, and mistaken for one another. This makes us look with astonishment upon all customs that are extremely different from our own, and hardly allow those nations to be of the same nature with ourselves, if they are unlike in their manners; whereas all human actions may be traced up to those two great motives, the pursuit of pleasure, and the avoidance of pain; and upon a strict examination, we shall often find, that those customs, which at first view seem the most different from our own, have in reality a great analogy with them.

What more particularly suggested this thought to me, was an account which a gentleman, who was lately returned from China, gave, in a company where I happened to be present, of a pleasure held in high esteem, and extremely practised by that luxurious nation.

He