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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**

II. Fog's Journal. Saturday, Jan. 24, 1736. N° 377.

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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.

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He told us, that the tickling of the ears, was one of the most exquisite sensations known in China; and that the delight administered to the whole frame, through this organ, could, by an able and skilful tickler, be raised to whatever degree of extasy the patient should desire.

The company, struck with this novelty, expressed their surprize, as is usual on such occasions, first by a silly silence, and then by many silly questions. The account too, coming from so far as China, raised both their wonder and their curiosity much more than if it had come from any European country, and opened a larger field for pertinent questions. Among others, the gentleman was asked, whether the Chinese ears and fingers had the least resemblance to ours; to which having answered in the affirmative, he went on thus.

“ I perceive, I have excited your curiosity so much by mentioning a custom so unknown to you here, that I believe it will not be disagreeable, if I give you a particular account of it.

“ This pleasure, strange as it may seem to you, is in China reckoned almost equal to any that the senses afford. There is not an ear in the whole country untickled; the ticklers have, in their turn, others who tickle them, insomuch, that there is a circulation of tickling throughout that vast empire. Or if, by chance, there be some few unhappy enough not to find ticklers, or some ticklers clumsy enough not to find business, they comfort themselves at least with self-titillation.

“ This profession is one of the most lucrative and considerable ones in China, the most eminent performers being either handsomely requited in money, or still better rewarded by the credit and influence it gives them with the party tickled; insomuch, that a man's fortune is made, as soon as he gets to be tickler to any considerable mandarin.

“ The emperor, as in justice he ought, enjoys this pleasure in its highest perfection; and all the considerable people contend for the honor and advantage of this employment, the person who succeeds the best in it being always the first favourite, and chief dispenser of his imperial power. The principal mandarins are allowed to try their hands upon his majesty's sacred ears, and according to their dexterity and agility,
commonly

commonly rise to the posts of first ministers. His wives too are admitted to try their skill; and she among them, who holds him by the ear, is reckoned to have the surest and most lasting hold. His present imperial majesty's ears, as I am informed, are by no means of a delicate texture, and consequently not quick of sensation, so that it has proved extremely difficult to nick the tone of them: the lightest and finest hands have utterly failed, and many have miscarried, who, from either fear or respect, did not treat the royal ear so roughly as was necessary. He began his reign under the hands of a bungling operator, whom for his clumsiness he soon dismissed: he was afterwards attempted by a more skilful tickler; but he sometimes failed too, and, not being able to hit the humour of his majesty's ear, his own have often suffered for it.

“ In this public distress, and while majesty laboured under the privation of auricular joys, the empress, who, by long acquaintance, and frequent little trials, judged pretty well of the texture of the royal ear, resolved to undertake it, and succeeded perfectly, by means of a much stronger friction than others durst either attempt, or could imagine would please.

“ In the mean time, the skilful mandarin, far from being discouraged by the ill success he had sometimes met with in his attempts upon the emperor's ear, resolved to make himself amends upon his imperial consort's: he tried, and he prevailed; he tickled her majesty's ear to such perfection, that, as the emperor would trust his ear to none but the empress, she would trust hers to none but this light-fingered mandarin, who, by these means, attained to unbounded and uncontrouled power, and governed ear by ear.

“ But, as all the mandarins have their ear-ticklers too, with the same degree of influence over them, and as this mandarin was particularly remarkable for his extreme sensibility in those parts, it is hard to say from what original titillation the imperial power now flows.”

The conclusion of the gentleman's story was attended with the usual interjections of wonder and surprize from the company. Some called it strange, some odd, and some very comical; and those, who thought it the most improbable, I found by their questions, were the most desirous

desirous to believe it. I observe too, that, while the story lasted, they were most of them trying the experiment upon their own ears, but without any visible effect that I could perceive.

Soon afterwards, the company broke up; and I went home, where I could not help reflecting, with some degree of wonder, at the wonder of the rest, because I could see nothing extraordinary in the power, which the ear exercised in China, when I considered the extensive influence of that important organ in Europe. Here, as in China, it is the source of both pleasure and power; the manner of applying to it is only different. Here the titillation is vocal, there it is manual, but the effects are the same; and, by the bye, European ears are not always unacquainted neither with manual application.

To make out the analogy I hinted at, between the Chinese and ourselves, in this particular, I will offer to my readers, some instances of the sensibility and prevalence of the ears of Great Britain.

The British ears seem to be as greedy and sensible of titillation as the Chinese can possibly be; nor is the profession of an ear-tickler here any way inferior, or less lucrative. There are of three sorts, the private tickler, the public tickler, and the self-tickler.

Flattery is, of all methods, the surest to produce that vibration of the air, which affects the auditory nerves with the most exquisite titillation: and according to the thinner or thicker texture of those organs, the flattery must be more or less strong. This is the immediate province of the private tickler, and his great skill consists in tuning his flattery to the ear of his patient: it were endless to give instances of the influence and advantages of those artists, who excel in this way.

The business of a public tickler is, to modulate his voice, dispose his matter, and enforce his arguments in such a manner, as to excite a pleasing sensation in the ears of a number or assembly of people: this is the most difficult branch of the profession, and that in which the fewest excel; but to the few who do it, is the most lucrative, and the most considerable. The bar has at present but few proficient of this sort, the pulpit none, the ladder alone seems not to decline.

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I must not here omit one public tickler of great eminency, and whose titillative faculty must be allowed to be singly confined to the ear, I mean the great signior Farinelli, to whom such crowds resort, for the extasy he administers to them through that organ, and who so liberally requite his labours, that, if he will but do them the favour to stay two or three years longer, and have two or three benefits more, they will have nothing left but their ears to give him.

The self-tickler is as unhappy as contemptible; for, having none of the talents necessary for tickling of others, and consequently not worth being tickled by others neither, he is reduced to tickle himself: his own ears alone receive any titillation from his own efforts. I know an eminent performer of this kind, who, by being nearly related to a skilful public tickler, would fain set up for the business himself, but has met with such repeated discouragements, that he is reduced to the mortifying resource of self-titillation, in which he commits the most horrid excesses.

Besides the proofs above-mentioned, of the influence of the ear in this country, many of our most common phrases and expressions, from whence the genius of a people may always be collected, demonstrate, that the ear is reckoned the principal and most predominant part of our whole mechanism. As for instance.

To have the ear of one's prince, is understood by every body to mean having a good share of his authority, if not the whole, which plainly hints how that influence is acquired.

To have the ear of the first minister, is the next, if not an equal advantage. I am therefore not surprized, that so considerable a possession should be so frequently attempted, and so eagerly solicited, as we may always observe it is. But I must caution the person, who would make his fortune in this way, to confine his attempt strictly to the ear in the singular number; a design upon the ears, in the plural, of a first minister being for the most part rather difficult and dangerous, however just.

To give ear to a person implies, giving credit, being convinced, and being guided by that person; all this by the success of his endeavours upon that prevailing organ.

To

To lend an ear, is something less, but still intimates a willingness and tendency in the lender to be prevailed upon by a little more tickling of that part. Thus the lending of an ear is a sure preface of success to a skilful tickler. For example, a person who lends an ear to a minister, seldom fails of putting them both in his power soon afterwards; and when a fine woman lends an ear to a lover, she shews a disposition at least to further and future titillation.

To be deaf, and to stop one's ears, are common and known expressions, to signify a total refusal and rejection of a person or proposition; in which case I have often observed the manual application to succeed by a strong vellication or vigorous percussion of the outward membranes of the ear.

There cannot be a stronger instance of the great value that has always been set upon these parts, than the constant manner of expressing the utmost and most ardent desire people can have for any thing, by saying they would "give their ears" for it; a price so great, that it is seldom either paid or required. Witness the numbers of people actually wearing their ears still, who in justice have long since forfeited them.

Over head and ears would be a manifest *pleonasmus*, the head being higher than the ears, were not the ears reckoned so much more valuable than all the rest of the head, as to make it a true climax.

It were unnecessary to mention, as farther proofs of the importance and dignity of those organs, that pulling, boxing, or cutting off the ears, are the highest insults that choleric men of honor can either give or receive; which shews that the ear is the seat of honor as well, as of pleasure.

The anatomists have discovered, that there is an intimate correspondence between the palm of the hand and the ear, and that a previous application to the hand communicates itself instantly, by the force and velocity of attraction, to the ear, and agreeably prepares that part to receive and admit of titillation. I must say too, that I have known this practised with success upon very considerable persons of both sexes.

Having

Having thus demonstrated, by many instances, that the ear is the most material part in the whole mechanism of our structure, and that it is both the seat and source of honor, power, pleasure, and pain, I cannot conclude without an earnest exhortation to all my country-folks, of whatsoever rank or sex, to take the utmost care of their ears. Guard your ears, O ye princes, for your power is lodged in your ears. Guard your ears, ye nobles, for your honor lies in your ears. Guard your ears, ye fair, if you would guard your virtue. And guard your ears, all my fellow subjects, if you would guard your liberties and properties.

 III.

FOG'S JOURNAL.

 SATURDAY, April 10, 1736. N^o 388.

HAVING in a former paper set forth the valuable privileges and prerogatives of the EAR, I should be very much wanting to another material part of our composition, if I did not do justice to the EYES, and shew the influence they either have, or ought to have, in Great Britain.

While the eyes of my countrymen are in a great measure the part that directed, the whole people saw for themselves; seeing was called believing, and was a sense so much trusted to, that the eyes of the body and those of the mind were, in speaking, indifferently made use of for one another. But I am sorry to say that the case is now greatly altered; and I observe with concern an epidemical blindness, or, at least, a general weakness and distrust of the eyes scattered over this whole kingdom, from which we may justly apprehend the worst consequences.

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