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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**

XLIV. The World. Thursday, Sept. 30, 1756. N° 196.

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*tetes* with the pretty men might be contrived and brought about in places less public than Kenfington-gardens, the two parks, the high roads, or the streets of London.

Having thus combined, as I flatter myself that I have, the solid enjoyment of vice, with the useful appearances of virtue, I think myself entitled to the thanks of my country in general, and to that just praise which Horace gives to the author, *qui miscuit utile dulci*; or in English, who joins the useful with the agreeable.

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 XLIV.

## THE WORLD.

 THURSDAY, Sept. 30, 1756. N<sup>o</sup> 196.

**I**T is a vulgar notion, and worthy of the vulgar, for it is both false and absurd, that passionate people are the best-natured people in the world. *They are a little hasty, it is true; a trifle will put them in a fury, and while they are in that fury, they neither know nor care what they say or do: but then as soon as it is over, they are extremely sorry and penitent for any injury or mischief they did.* This panegyric of these choleric good-natured people, when examined and simplified, amounts in plain common sense and English to this: that they are good-natured when they are not ill-natured; and that when, in their fits of rage, they have said or done things that have brought them to the gaol or the gallows, they are extremely sorry for it. It is indeed highly probable that they are; but where is the reparation to those whose reputations, limbs, or lives, they have either wounded or destroyed? This concern comes too late, and is only for themselves. Self-love was the cause of the injury, and is the only motive of the repentance.

Had these furious people real good nature, their first offence would be their last, and they would resolve at all events  
never

never to relapse. The moment they felt their choler rising, they would enjoin themselves an absolute silence and inaction, and by that sudden check rather expose themselves to a momentary ridicule, which, by the way, would be followed by universal applause, than run the least risk of being irreparably mischievous.

I know it is said in their behalf, that this impulse to wrath is constitutionally so sudden and so strong, that they cannot stifle it, even in its birth: but experience shews us, that this allegation is notoriously false; for we daily observe that these stormy persons both can and do lay those gusts of passion, when awed by respect, restrained by interest, or intimidated by fear. The most outrageous furious does not give a loose to his anger in presence of his sovereign, or his mistress; nor the expectant heir in presence of the peevish dotard from whom he hopes for an inheritance. The soliciting courtier, though perhaps under the strongest provocations from unjust delays and broken promises, calmly swallows his unavailing wrath, disguises it even under smiles, and gently waits for more favourable moments: nor does the criminal fly in a passion at his judge or jury.

There is then but one solid excuse to be alledged in favour of these people; and, if they will frankly urge it, I will candidly admit it, because it points out its own remedy. I mean, let them fairly confess themselves mad, as they most unquestionably are: for what plea can those that are frantic ten times a day, bring against shaving, bleeding, and a dark room, when so many much more harmless madmen are confined in their cells at Bedlam, for being mad only once in a moon? Nay, I have been assured by the late ingenious doctor Monro, that such of his patients who are really of a good-natured disposition, and who, in their lucid intervals, were allowed the liberty of walking about the hospital, would frequently, when they found the previous symptoms of their returning madness, voluntarily apply for confinement, conscious of the mischief which they might possibly do if at liberty. If those who pretend not to be mad, but who really are so, had the same fund of good-nature, they would make the same application to their friends, if they have any.

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There is in the Menagiana a very pretty story of one of these angry gentlemen, which sets their extravagancy in a very ridiculous light.

Two gentlemen were riding together, one of whom, who was a choleric one, happened to be mounted on a high-mettled horse. The horse grew a little troublesome, at which the rider grew very angry, and whipped and spurred him with great fury; to which the horse, almost as wrongheaded as his master, replied with kicking and plunging. The companion, concerned for the danger, and ashamed of the folly of his friend, said to him coolly, "Be quiet, be quiet, and shew yourself the wiser of the two."

This sort of madness, for I will call it by no other name, flows from various causes, of which I shall now enumerate the most general.

Light unballasted heads are very apt to be overset by every gust, or even breeze, of passion; they appretiate things wrong, and think every thing of importance, but what really is so: hence those frequent and sudden transitions from silly joy to sillier anger, according as the present silly humour is gratified or thwarted. This is the never-failing characteristic of the uneducated vulgar, who often in the same half-hour fight with fury, and shake hands with affection. Such heads give themselves no time to reason; and, if you attempt to reason with them, they think you rally them, and resent the affront. They are, in short, overgrown children, and continue so in the most advanced age. Far be it from me to insinuate, what some ill-bred authors have bluntly asserted, that this is in general the case of the fairest part of our species, whose great vivacity does not always allow them time to reason consequentially, but hurries them into testiness upon the least opposition to their will. But, at the same time, with all the partiality which I have for them, and nobody can have more than I have, I must confess that, in all their debates, I have much more admired the copiousness of their rhetoric, than the conclusiveness of their logic.

People of strong animal spirits, warm constitutions, and a cold genius, a most unfortunate and ridiculous though common compound, are most irascible animals, and very dangerous in their wrath. They are active, puzzling,  
blundering,

blundering, and petulantly enterprising and persevering. They are impatient of the least contradiction, having neither arguments nor words to reply with; and the animal part of their composition bursts out into furious explosions, which have often mischievous consequences. Nothing is too outrageous or criminal for them to say or do in these fits: but, as the beginning of their frenzy is easily discoverable, by their glaring eyes, inflamed countenances, and rapid motions, the company, as conservators of the peace, which by the way, every man is till the authority of a magistrate can be procured, should forcibly seize these madmen, and confine them in the mean time, in some dark closet, vault, or coal-hole.

Men of nice honor, without one grain of common honesty, for such there are, are wonderfully combustible. The honorable is to support and protect the dishonest part of their character. The consciousness of their guilt makes them both fore and jealous.

There is another and very irascible sort of human animals, whose madness proceeds from pride. These are generally the people, who, having just fortunes sufficient to live idle, and useless to society, create themselves gentlemen, and are scrupulously tender of the rank and dignity which they have not. They require the more respect, from being conscious that they have no right to any. They construe every thing into a slight, ask explanations with heat, and misunderstand them with fury. "Who are you? What are you? Do you know who you speak to? I will teach you to be silent to a gentleman," are their daily idioms of speech, which frequently end in assault and battery, to the great emolument of the Round-house and Crown-office.

I have known many young fellows, who, at their first setting out into the world, or in the army, have simulated a passion which they did not feel, merely as an indication of *spirit*, which word is falsely looked upon as synonymous with courage. They dress and look fierce, swear enormously, and rage furiously, seduced by that popular word, *spirit*. But I beg leave to inform these mistaken young gentlemen, whose error I compassionate, that the true spirit of a rational being consists in cool and steady resolution, which can only be the result of reflection and virtue.

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I am very sorry to be obliged to own, that there is not a more irritable part of the species, than my brother authors. Criticism, censure, or even the slightest disapprobation of their immortal works, excite their most furious indignation. It is true, indeed, that they express their resentment in a manner less dangerous both to others and to themselves. Like incensed porcupines, they dart their quills at the objects of their wrath. The wounds given by these shafts are not mortal, and only painful in proportion to the distance from whence they fly. Those which are discharged, as by much the greatest numbers are, from great heights, such as garrets or four-pair-of-stair rooms, are puffed away by the wind, and never hit the mark; but those which are let off from a first or second floor, are apt to occasion a little smarting, and sometimes festering, especially if the party wounded be unsound.

Our GREAT CREATOR has wisely given us passions, to rouse us into action, and to engage our gratitude to him by the pleasures they procure us; but, at the same time, he has kindly given us reason sufficient, if we will but give that reason fair play, to controul those passions; and has delegated authority to say to them, as he said to the waters, "thus far shall ye go, and no farther." The angry man is his own severest tormentor; his breast knows no peace, while his raging passions are restrained by no sense of either religious or moral duties. What would be his case, if his unforgiving example, if I may use such an expression, were followed by his ALL MERCIFUL MAKER, whose forgiveness he can only hope for, in proportion as he himself forgives and loves his fellow-creatures!