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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**

LVI. Preface to Love Elegies, by William Hammond, Esquire, published in  
1742.

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## LVI.

Preface to Love Elegies, by WILLIAM HAMMOND,  
Esquire, published in 1742 (a).

THE following elegies were wrote by a young gentleman lately dead, and justly lamented.

As he had never declared his intentions concerning their publication, a friend of his, into whose hands they fell, determined to publish them, in the persuasion that they would neither be unwelcome to the public, nor injurious to the memory of their author. The reader must decide, whether this determination was the result of just judgment or partial friendship, for the editor feels, and avows so much of the latter, that he gives up all pretensions to the former.

The author composed them ten years ago, before he was two-and-twenty years old; an age, when fancy and imagination commonly riot, at the expence of judgment and correctness, neither of which seem wanting here. But, sincere in his love as in his friendship, he wrote to his mistresses, as he spoke to his friends, nothing but the true genuine sentiments of his heart; he sat down to write what he thought, not to think what he should write; it was nature and sentiment only that dictated to a real mistress, not youthful and poetic fancy, to an imaginary one. Elegy therefore speaks here her own, proper, native language, the unaffected plaintive language of the tender passions; the true elegiac dignity and simplicity are preserved, and united; the one without pride, the other without meanness. Tibullus seems to have been the model our author judiciously preferred to Ovid; the former writing directly

(a) See Memoirs of Lord Chesterfield under that year. This preface, which fell from his pen, is a noble monument of his feelings, his taste, and the love which he bore to his country; a sentiment as distant from modern patriotism, as those that usurp that qualification are from the noble author.

directly from the heart, to the heart; the latter too often yielding and addressing himself to the imagination.

The undissipated youth of the author, allowed him time to apply himself to the best masters, the antients, and his parts enabled him to make the best use of them; for upon those great models of solid sense and virtue, he formed not only his genius, but his heart, both well prepared by nature to adopt, and adorn the resemblance. He admired that justness, that noble simplicity of thought, and expression, which have distinguished and preserved their writings to this day; but he revered that love of their country, that contempt of riches, that sacredness of friendship, and all those heroic and social virtues, which marked them out as the objects of the veneration, though not the imitation of succeeding ages; and he looked back with a kind of religious awe and delight, upon those glorious and happy times of Greece and Rome, when wisdom, virtue and liberty formed the only triumvirates, ere luxury invited corruption to taint, or corruption introduced slavery to destroy, all public and private virtues. In these sentiments he lived, and would have lived even in these times: in these sentiments he died—but in these times too—*Ut non erepta à diis immortalibus vita, sed donata mors esse videatur.*