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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**

LVII. The character of Richard, Earl of Scarborough, August 29, 1759.

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## LVII.

The Character of RICHARD, Earl of Scarborough, August 29, 1759\*.

**I**N drawing the character of lord Scarborough, I will be strictly upon my guard against the partiality of that intimate and unreserved friendship, in which we lived for more than twenty years; to which friendship, as well as to the public notoriety of it, I owe much more than my pride will let my gratitude own. If this may be suspected to have biased my judgment, it must, at the same time, be allowed to have informed it; for the most secret movements of his soul were, without disguise, communicated to me only. However, I will rather lower than heighten the colouring; I will mark the shades, and draw a credible rather than an exact likeness.

He had a very good person, rather above the middle size; a handsome face, and when he was chearful, the most engaging countenance imaginable; when grave, which he was ofteneft, the most respectable one. He had in the highest degree the air, manners and address of a man of quality, politeness with ease, and dignity without pride.

Bred in camps and courts, it cannot be supposed that he was untainted with the fashionable vices of these warm climates; but (if I may be allowed the expression) he dignified them, instead of their degrading him into any mean or indecent action. He had a good degree of classical, and a great one of modern, knowledge; with a just, and, at the same time, a delicate taste.

In

\* I received this piece from lady Chesterfield. Indeed it wants no marks of authenticity. - The noble author's mind and heart are painted in it in the liveliest manner; and he who can read it without sharing his feelings must have a soul very different from his.

In his common expences he was liberal within bounds; but in his charities and bounties he had none. I have known them put him to some present inconveniencies.

He was a strong, but not an eloquent or florid speaker in parliament. He spoke so unaffectedly the honest dictates of his heart, that truth and virtue, which never want, and seldom wear, ornaments, seemed only to borrow his voice. This gave such an astonishing weight to all he said, that he more than once carried an unwilling majority after him. Such is the authority of unsuspected virtue, that it will sometimes shame vice into decency at least.

He was not only offered, but pressed to accept, the post of secretary of state; but he constantly refused it. I once tried to persuade him to accept it; but he told me, that both the natural warmth and melancholy of his temper made him unfit for it; and that moreover he knew very well that, in those ministerial employments, the course of business made it necessary to do many hard things, and some unjust ones, which could only be authorised by the jesuitical casuistry of the direction of the intention; a doctrine which he said he could not possibly adopt. Whether he was the first that ever made that objection, I cannot affirm; but I suspect that he will be the last.

He was a true constitutional, and yet practicable patriot; a sincere lover and a zealous asserter of the natural, the civil, and the religious rights of his country. But he would not quarrel with the crown, for some slight stretches of the prerogative; nor with the people, for some unwary ebullitions of liberty; nor with any one, for a difference of opinion in speculative points. He considered the constitution in the aggregate, and only watched that no one part of it should preponderate too much.

His moral character was so pure, that if one may say of that imperfect creature man, what a celebrated historian says of Scipio, *nil non laudandum aut dixit, aut fecit, aut sensit*, I sincerely think (I had almost said I know) one might say it with great truth of him, one single instance excepted, which shall be mentioned.

He

He joined to the noblest and strictest principles of honor and generosity the tenderest sentiments of benevolence and compassion; and as he was naturally warm, he could not even hear of an injustice or a baseness, without a sudden indignation, nor of the misfortunes or miseries of a fellow creature, without melting into softness, and endeavouring to relieve them. This part of his character was so universally known, that our best and most satyrical English poet says;

When I confess, there is who feels for fame,  
And melts to goodness, Scarb'rough need I name?

He had not the least pride of birth and rank, that common narrow notion of little minds, that wretched mistaken succedaneum of merit; but he was jealous to anxiety of his character, as all men are who deserve a good one. And such was his diffidence upon that subject, that he never could be persuaded that mankind really thought of him as they did. For surely never man had a higher reputation, and never man enjoyed a more universal esteem. Even knaves respected him; and fools thought they loved him. If he had any enemies (for I protest I never knew one), they could only be such as were weary of always hearing of Aristides the Just.

He was too subject to sudden gusts of passion, but they never hurried him into any illiberal or indecent expression or action; so invincibly habitual to him were good-nature and good-manners. But, if ever any word happened to fall from him in warmth, which upon subsequent reflection he himself thought too strong, he was never easy till he had made more than a sufficient atonement for it.

He had a most unfortunate, I will call it a most fatal kind of melancholy in his nature, which often made him both absent and silent in company, but never morose or sour. At other times he was a chearful and agreeable companion; but, conscious that he was not always so, he avoided company too much, and was too often alone, giving way to a train of gloomy reflexions.

His

His constitution, which was never robust, broke rapidly at the latter end of his life. He had two severe strokes of apoplexy or palsy, which considerably affected his body and his mind.

I desire that this may not be looked upon as a full and finished character, writ for the sake of writing it; but as my solemn deposit of the truth to the best of my knowledge. I owed this small tribute of justice, such as it is, to the memory of the best man I ever knew, and of the dearest friend I ever had.

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