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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**

Letter XX. To The Same. Lettre XX. A La Même.

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## LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME.

London, Sep. 8, O. S. 1747.

I AM more than infinitely obliged to you, madam, for the Anti-Lucretius \* you have done me the favour to send me, and which the abbé de la Ville forwarded to me in the politest manner in the world. I have read it eagerly and with pleasure; the work is worthy of its author; the poetry is elegant, and the Latin favours of the Augustan age: in short, if we can but divest ourselves of our early prejudices in favour of antiquity, we must confess that the Anti-Lucretius is at least equal to Lucretius himself; and in point of philosophy, far superior. We Englishmen, indeed, are displeas'd at his giving the preference to the Cartesian system, and not rather adopting that of our Newton, out of which we think there is no salvation. As for me, who am no philosopher, and consequently no way prejudic'd in favour of any system, I own I find something much prettier and more pleasing in our Newton's universal attraction, than in those nasty whirlwinds, which convey a notion of bustle and tumult, whereas attraction on the contrary conveys ideas of a softer kind. The duke of Nevers, and I, we feel the whole truth of the Newtonian system.

I beg, madam, you will thank abbé le Blond from me, in the politest manner you are able, and I am no stranger to your abilities in that way. I had once a mind to write to him myself; but I consider'd that if I commission'd you to thank him for me, he might think I had indict'd the pretty

\* That poem, not less celebrated than its author, was begun by him, when very young, on his return from Poland, where he had been employ'd in some fruitless negociations, to place the prince of Conti upon the throne. He undertook it in consequence of some conversations, which he had with the famous Mr. Bayle in Holland. Religion having been their principal topic, and Lucretius often quoted by the author of the Dictionary, the young abbé de Polignac form'd the plan of a poem in opposition to that of the Latin author, and in the language as well as the style of Virgil. He employ'd in the execution of it, all the leisure hours of a life divided between politics and the study of fine arts. He was made cardinal on account of the great share he had in the negociations for the peace of Utrecht. Being ambassador at Rome, he made one of the finest collections extant of medals, urns, sculptures and other pieces of antiquity; the best part of which, I think, has been purchas'd by the king of Prussia. As he continued several years in that capital of the world, where the poet lived, whom he had propos'd to himself as a model and an adversary, he was in some measure

sure

## L E T T R E XX.

A LA MÊME.

A Londres, ce 8 Sept. V. S. 1747.

**J**E vous suis plus qu'infiniment obligé de l'Anti-Lucrèce que vous avez eu la bonté de m'envoyer, et que monsieur l'abbé de la Ville m'a fait tenir le plus poliment du monde. Je l'ai lu avec avidité et plaisir. C'est un ouvrage digne de son auteur; la poésie en est belle, et le Latin sent le siècle d'Auguste; enfin si l'on se dégage des préjugés dans lesquels on est élevé en faveur de l'antiquité, il faut convenir que l'Anti-Lucrèce ne le cède en rien à Lucrèce même, et qu'en fait de philosophie, il l'emporte de bien loin. Nous autres Anglois, à la vérité, nous sommes fâchés que le cardinal aît donné la préférence au système de Descartes, et qu'il n'aît pas plutôt adopté celui de notre Newton, hors duquel nous ne croyons pas qu'il y aît de salut. Pour moi, qui ne suis nullement philosophe, et par conséquent nullement prévenu en faveur de quelque système que ce soit, j'avoue que je trouve que l'attraction universelle de notre Newton a quelque chose d'infiniment plus joli et de plus galant, que ces vilains tourbillons, qui ne me donnent que des idées de fracas et de tumulte, au lieu que l'attraction en fournit de plus douces. Monsieur de Nevers et moi nous sentons tout le vrai du Newtonianisme. Au reste, madame, je vous supplie de vouloir bien dire de ma part tout ce que vous pouvez dire de plus poli (et que ne pouvez-vous pas dire de la sorte?) à monsieur l'abbé le Blond. J'ai voulu d'abord lui écrire moi-même, pour le remercier; mais j'ai fait réflexion, que si je vous en chargeois, il pourroit peut-être croire que je vous avois dicté ce que vous lui diriez, et j'ai mieux aimé profiter d'une

erreur

sure inspired with the same fire, and acquired a facility as well as an elegance in writing Latin verses, not unworthy of the court of Augustus. For near half a century, he amused himself in completing and polishing that extraordinary work, and added some verses to it a few days before his death, which happened in 1741, at the age of fourscore. His poem was put in order by a respectable friend, (abbé Rothelin) whom he had entrusted with it. He did not live to publish it, and that care devolved to a third abbé equally well qualified for that task. It was printed in 1747, and received by all Europe with the same sentiments, which our noble author expresses in this letter. It was sent to him both as a judge of the work, and a friend of the writer; and that copy, which was the first that appeared in England, was conveyed by a trumpet from marshal Saxe to the duke of Cumberland, directed for the earl of Chesterfield.

pretty things you said, so I chose to reap the benefit of an error so advantageous to me. Now I talk of abbés, how is our abbé Sallier †? Does he still enjoy his health, his library, his Hebrew, his Syriac, and all his store of learning? Be so good as to give my compliments to him.

You will allow me no feeling, and at the same time you and your duke of Nevers make me feel too much, at least if jealousy ‡ is a proof of sensibility, as it certainly is; and I believe you both agreed to send me his last letter to make me mad. It is certainly a barefaced insult on his part: his upbraiding you with my triumph, plainly shews me his own, and his whole letter speaks the language of a rival, who assumes the more modesty and discretion, as he is conscious of his victory. What can I do? My heart tells me I must be angry with both, but my mind tells me you are both in the right. My rival must not expect that the little grey horse should be a fine one, for he would find himself much mistaken; he is pretty enough at most, but his paces are good, and he will find him easy. His haunches are slim, but our race horses are all so. Your mother's chiding you on my account is very flattering for me; I beg madam, you will assure her of my gratitude and respect,

Good God! what a letter here is! I am quite ashamed, and retire.

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## L E T T E R   X X I .

T O   T H E   S A M E .

London, Oct. 20, O. S. 1747.

**U**PON my honor, madam, you have spoiled me a good deal already, and if you go on at this rate, you will absolutely ruin me. I swallow your flattery in large draughts; you prepare it so well that you make it downright nectar, but it is but the more intoxicating.

† He understood most antient and modern languages; and was Hebraic professor in the university of Paris, and keeper of the royal library. Several memoirs of his composition upon capital subjects of history and literature, have been inserted in the memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions and belles lettres, of which he was a member. He belonged to several foreign academies, and to the Royal Society of London—He died in 1761 at the age of 75.

‡ That *badinage* about his rivalship with the old duke de Nevers is entirely in the French style.

I have

erreur si avantageuse pour moi. A propos d'abbés, comment se porte notre abbé Sallier? jouit-il toujours de sa santé, de sa bibliothèque, de son Hebreu, de son Syriaque, et de tout son grimoire savant? Ayez la bonté de lui faire bien mes complimens.

Vous ne voulez pas m'accorder le sentiment, et en même tems, vous et votre monsieur de Nevers, vous me faites sentir que je ne l'ai que trop, au moins si la jalousie est une preuve du sentiment, comme sûrement elle l'est, et je crois que vous êtes convenus ensemble de m'envoyer la dernière lettre, pour me faire enrager. C'est assurément une insulte des plus marquées de sa part: les reproches qu'il vous fait de mon triomphe ne font que m'annoncer le sien; et j'y vois tout le langage d'un rival d'autant plus modeste et discret qu'il se sent victorieux et sûr de son fait. Que faire? le coeur me dit de me fâcher contre tous les deux, mais l'esprit me dit que vous avez tous deux raison. Que mon rival au moins ne s'attende pas que le petit cheval gris soit beau, car il se trouveroit bien trompé; il n'est tout au plus que passablement joli, mais il a les allures bonnes, et il fera commode; il est mince par derrière, mais voila comme tous nos chevaux de race sont faits.

Les reproches, que vous fait madame votre mère sur mon sujet, sont bien flatteurs pour moi; ayez la bonté, madame, de l'assurer de ma reconnoissance et de mon respect.

Bon Dieu! quelle lettre! J'en ai honte, je me cache.

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## LET T R E XXI.

A L A M Ê M E.

A Londres, ce 20 Oâ. V. S. 1747.

**S**UR mon honneur, madame, vous m'avez déjà fort gâté, et si vous continuez sur ce même ton, vous me ruinerez absolument. J'avale à long traits votre flatterie, vous l'appêtez si bien que vous en faites un nectar, mais il n'en tourne la tête que plus pour cela.

J'ai