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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**

Notes Of Section III.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-52184](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-52184)

NOTES OF SECTION III.

[1] **T**HE following information, which I owe to the bishop of Waterford, renders this conjecture not improbable. “ At the beginning of the reign of George II, “ a person told lord Scarborough, lord Chesterfield, and “ lord Londale, that the king intended to closet them “ with regard to something that was to be proposed to the “ house of lords: but they all three requested that his “ majesty would not do it, for it would have no influence “ upon them; but, on the contrary, make them so much “ the more upon their guard, being determined to vote “ according to their own way of thinking, as their honour “ and conscience directed them.” What this business was we cannot conjecture; but it is remarked by the compiler of the History and Proceedings of the House of Lords, vol. IV. p. 7. that, “ the order against the admission of “ strangers into the house was so strictly observed this session (the first of the new parliament), that no account “ of their lordships speeches or debates was published as “ usual after the recess; and that no one protest therein “ has appeared.”

[2] In return to the embassy from the States to compliment the new king on his accession.

[3] Perhaps it were to be wished, notwithstanding his great success, that this plan might have taken place. His address and penetration, as well as his conciliating spirit, would have been still more usefully exerted in disposing the two nations that have the greatest weight on the continent, to maintain the peace of Europe, instead of disturbing it.

[4] The sense that was entertained of lord Chesterfield's important services in this embassy, may be evinced by the following extract from a letter of lord Townshend's to the ambassador, dated Sept. 6, 1729. “ I cannot “ conclude

“ conclude this letter without applying myself particularly
 “ to your excellency with all the joy imaginable—your
 “ conduct, your activity, your zeal, your ability in per-
 “ forming the king’s commands, gave his majesty the ut-
 “ most satisfaction; and I congratulate your excellency,
 “ not only on your success, but on this opportunity of
 “ shewing his majesty, of how much importance it has
 “ been to his service, to have had so dextrous, vigilant,
 “ and zealous a minister as yourself at the Hague, in this
 “ critical conjecture.” This, and some other information
 of the same kind, was obtained from some original re-
 cords, to which Dr. Maty had access.

[5] Mr. Vitriarius, a man of great knowledge, can-
 dor, and virtue. His countrymen, the Germans, are sup-
 posed to understand the *jus publicum* and *gentium* better
 than the learned of any other nations. The origin and
 state of their very complicated constitution renders this
 study of particular importance to them. It was during
 his travels in Germany that lord Carteret acquired his ex-
 tensive notions of the customs and laws, as well as of the
 constitution, of the empire; and with the same views lord
 Chesterfield sent his son to the university of Leipzig, to
 acquire, under professor Mascow, that knowledge which
 he found so useful to himself.

[6] Lord Chesterfield’s Letters to his son, vol. I. Lett.
 CLXXXIX.

[7] Unfortunately these were not always the best chosen
 or enjoyed with moderation; but yet he continued faith-
 ful to his rule, and though he might sometimes go to bed
 at six in the morning, he never failed to rise at eight.

[8] See the letters and negotiations of Winwood, Car-
 leton, and Sir William Temple, among the English; and
 of Jeanin, d’Avaux, and d’Estrades, among the French.

[9] The limits of this work will not allow me to give
 an account of the standing council of state in Holland,
 and of several particular courts of justice, trade, and
 accompts.

[10] The nature and limits of their jurisdiction are
 admirably well defined by one of the great ornaments of
 the country. “ *Quia res majores antiquitus nisi gentium*
 “ *singularum consensu non expediebantur, mole negoti-*
 “ *orum & periculo cunctationis repertum est, legatos*

“mittere cum liberis mandatis, qui supremæ curiæ im-
 “minerent, et ubi quid gravius obveniret, moraque dig-
 “num, suæ quisque patriæ ordines consulerent.” Grotii
 Annal. lib. V.

[11] Lord Chesterfield mentions an instance of this nature in which he was concerned. Account of the government, &c. of the united provinces, published at the end of the letters to his son, vol. II. p. 508.

[12] Lord Chesterfield very shrewdly conjectures that William the first prince of Orange, who modelled the republic which he saved at his pleasure, permitted that absurd unanimity, in order to render a stadtholder or more powerful chief absolutely necessary. Ibid. p. 509. However, as this law is scarce ever strictly observed, it has not much greater inconveniencies than the unanimity required in English juries.

[13] This office was instituted in the year 1510, long before the provinces shook off the yoke of Austrian tyranny. The elevation of the young Charles of Austria, well known since under the name of Charles V, to the dignity of count of Holland, might induce the states to establish a kind of tribune, as a check to the ambition of that young prince. This officer has, in effect, frequently balanced the power of a stadtholder.

[14] This province contributes fifty-eight per cent in all public charges, of which, if I am not mistaken, Amsterdam alone, the fifth town of that province, pays above five and twenty per cent, or a full quarter of the whole.

[15] His functions are with equal strength and precision described by Grotius. “Is, principum temporibus
 “vox erat publicæ libertatis, utque tunc periculis, ita
 “mutata republica, auctoritate præcipuus, in conventu
 “ordinum et delegatorum consensu exquirat sententias,
 “præit suadendo, componit dissidentes.” Grot. Annal. lib. V.

[16] He lived about the middle of the last century, and was a man of strict integrity, and great poetical as well as political abilities. His works are much esteemed, and judged not inferior to those of Ovid or La-Fontaine.

[17] So

[17] So well known in the times of king William and queen Ann. During this last period, it may be said, that for some years, a triumvirate, consisting of prince Eugene, the duke of Marlborough, and himself, ruled over one half of Europe.

[18] There was a great similarity between this and indeed many other circumstances of lord Chesterfield's embassy, and Sir William Temple's situation and conduct at the same place. He too trusted and loved De Witt, though he himself was in the interest of the prince of Orange. See his Memoirs.

[19] See his letters to his son, vol. II. p. 509.

[20] A complete and magnificent edition of *Telemachus*, together with the archbishop of Cambray's other works, was, with the assistance, and under the inspection, of his grand nephew the ambassador, printed in Holland.

[21] This letter was long kept secret in England, though dated July 1, 1721. It was written in French to the king of Spain, and contained the following article.

"I no longer hesitate to assure your majesty of my readiness to satisfy you with regard to your demand concerning the restitution of Gibraltar; promising you to make use of the first favourable opportunity of settling this article with consent of my parliament." Boyer's *Political State*, vol. XXXVII. p. 263, where the original letter is printed.

[22] It was agreed by the contracting powers, that this last declaration, as well as two other separate articles, should not be published; and accordingly they are not to be found in Rouffet's *Recueil*, nor in any other work of the same kind. I extracted it from an excellent history of the united provinces, published in the low Dutch language. The author was allowed access to the registers of the States, and took the secret article from thence. See *Vaderlandsche Historie*, vol. XVIII. p. 505, 506.

[23] One of his speeches in defence of this treaty was published just before the meeting of parliament in 1730. It was translated into French, and is found in Rouffet's *Recueil*, vol. V.

[24] This is sufficiently evident from several passages in a small tract generally attributed to his lordship, and not unworthy of his pen. It is entitled, *The Case of the Hano-*

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ver forces in the pay of Great Britain, &c. and was published in 1743. I shall have frequent opportunities of referring to this pamphlet, as well as to the two vindications of it by the same hand. "This half year generated
 " a half peace. To be friends with Spain was then (in
 " 1729) our interest upon any terms. We not only treat,
 " but humour, concede, nay, solicit the honor of be-
 " ing convoys to Don Carlos in Italy: that very Don
 " Carlos, who was so lately set forth, as likely to become
 " the so long dreaded universal monarch of Europe—
 " Now to what did all this contribute! Not to the peace,
 " security, wealth, and honor of England." p. 10.

Since I wrote this, I saw a copy of this pamphlet, on the title page of which was written in the hand writing of lord Chesterfield, "by Mr. Waller and lord C——." Edmund Waller, esq; was member of parliament for Chipping Wycomb. He supported in the house of commons, the same cause which lord Chesterfield defended in that of the peers. He was one of the secret committee for inquiring into the conduct of the minister, and spoke in many of the debates with great force of argument, but without the graces that distinguished several other heads of the opposition.

[25] The opinion entertained both of this memoir and of the abilities of the author, appears from the following passage. "Le comte de Chesterfield ambassadeur extra-
 " ordinaire auprez de leurs Hautes Puissances, et l'un des
 " plus experimentés dans les affaires du cabinet, concerta
 " avec les deputez un mémoire qu'ils remirent à Mr.
 " Greys, envoyé de S. M. Danoise à la Haye. Il n'y eut
 " plus d'autre application sur ce sujet, ni de part ni d'au-
 " tre. Le projet de sa compagnie tomba de soi meme,
 " faute de souscrivans." Rouffet Recueil, Tom. V. p.
 37. 42.

[26] The following information I received from one of lord Chesterfield's friends. "In the year 1729, Sir Charles
 " Hotham, brother-in-law to his lordship, was sent as mi-
 " nister plenipotentiary to the king of Prussia, to propose
 " a marriage between the prince of Wales and the eldest
 " princess of Prussia, and another between the prince
 " royal of Prussia, and the king of England's second
 " daughter. His Prussian majesty's answer was, that he
 " would consent to the marriage of his prince royal with
 " our

" our princess, if our king did not insist upon a double
 " marriage on the terms proposed; but that if he did, he
 " would not consent to either of them; for that he thought
 " he had as much right to expect our princess royal for
 " his eldest son, as our king had to expect his princess
 " royal for the prince of Wales. The two kings per-
 " sisting in their respective resolutions, there was an end
 " of the negotiation. In the year 1730, during lord Ches-
 " terfield's absence from the Hague, Mr. Keith, an officer
 " in the king of Prussia's service (an intimate friend to the
 " prince royal, and who was to have accompanied him to
 " England), made his escape from Berlin, came to the
 " Hague, and took refuge in the ambassador's house.
 " Col. D. M. was sent in pursuit of him, with directions
 " to seize him dead or alive. The grand pensionary hear-
 " ing of this, sent for the Colonel, and advised him to
 " forbear putting his design into execution, as he certainly
 " would undergo the severity of the law if he were taken.
 " However, to avoid accidents, Mr. Keith got out of the
 " ambassador's house, and embarked at Scheveling in an
 " open boat, which conveyed him to England. He some
 " time afterwards set out for Dublin, and remained there
 " three years." These particulars are confirmed in the
 eulogy of Mr. Keith, inserted in the memoirs of the acad-
 emy of Berlin, for 1756. p. 533.

[27] See Case of Hanover forces, p. 22, 23.

[28] It appears from the original records mentioned in the note 4 of this section, that by lord Chesterfield's assiduity and address, the Dutch were spirited up to such a degree, that the king of Prussia was glad to submit to an arbitration, the duke of Saxe Gotha on his part, the duke of Wolfenbuttle on the part of his majesty.

[29] On account of the transaction before mentioned, in note 14 of section II.

[30] The following particulars of this court revolution were communicated to me by one of lord Chesterfield's intimate friends. " The first time he appeared at court on his return to London (the 24th of October 1729), Sir Robert Walpole took him aside and told him, *I find you are come to be Secretary of State. Not I, said his lordship, I have as yet no pretensions, and wish for a place of more ease. But I claim the Garter, not as a reward for*
 " my

“ my late services, but in virtue of his majesty’s promise while
 “ prince of Wales. I am a man of pleasure, and the blue
 “ ribband would add two inches to my size. Then I see how
 “ it is, replied Sir Robert, it is Townshend’s intrigue, in
 “ which you have no share; but it will be fruitless, you
 “ cannot be Secretary of State, nor shall you be beholden for the
 “ gratification of your wishes to any body but myself.”

[31] Upon lord Chesterfield’s being made high steward on the 19th of June, 1730, one of his predecessors, who was suspected to have made some advantage of the places in his department, gave him a list of the persons he had put in, and desired that they might be continued. The answer was; *I have at present no thoughts of turning any one out; but if I alter my mind, it will only be in relation to those who have bought.* The bishop of Waterford adds, that his lordship, at first, gave three or four places in his department at the recommendation of the royal family; but that afterwards he followed the example of the duke of Devonshire, when lord steward under king William III. and declined the same complaisance, looking upon those recommendations as so many encroachments.

[32] During his stay he assisted at the council in which the report was made of Colonel Chartres’s trial and condemnation at the Old Bailey for a rape he had not committed. His pardon was voted unanimously.

[33] The spirit and artful memoirs of these two ambassadors are inserted in Rouffet’s Recueil, vol. V. p. 5.

[34] Count Zinzendorf, a man of great parts and vivacity, and lord Chesterfield’s particular friend.

There is a remarkable passage in one of lord Chesterfield’s letters from the Hague, dated July 26, 1729, relative to this minister.

“ Count Zinzendorf, the imperial minister, left this
 “ place last Sunday morning, saying, that he was going
 “ to see some of these provinces, and might possibly go
 “ to Spa, but with an air of great mystery, which has
 “ occasioned some speculation here; but for my own part,
 “ as I know the gentleman, I do not believe the mystery
 “ is upon account of the journey, but I believe he rather
 “ takes the journey for the sake of the mystery.”
 From the records above-mentioned.

[35] See

[35] See his account of the negotiations for the treaty of the triple alliance in 1667.

[36] None of the general histories, or political collections, mention the private conference in which the treaty of Vienna was prepared. I only find in lord Walpole's pamphlet, entitled, *The interests of Great Britain steadily pursued*, p. 48. "that it was imparted in great confidence to the ministers and some of the great men of the republic." And in Rouffet's *Recueil*; "that suspicions were entertained of the pensionary's having been privy to the negotiation." It is likewise said there, "that he undertook to procure the consent of the provinces." But lord Chesterfield has cleared up this matter in the paper already referred to at the end of his letters to his son, vol. II. p. 508. This specimen of lord Chesterfield's political abilities gives us still greater cause to regret, that the account of this embassy which he is said to have written may possibly never see the light.

[37] See the paper quoted above.

[38] The following extracts from two letters of lord Chesterfield's to lord Townshend, the one dated 18th, the other 25th of February, 1729, will give an idea of the ambassador's opinion of the prince.

"The prince of Orange arrived here last night. I went to wait upon him, and as far as I am able to judge from half an hour's conversation only, I think he has extreme good parts. He is perfectly well-bred, and civil to every body, and with an ease and freedom that is seldom acquired but by a long knowledge of the world. His face is handsome—his shape is not so advantageous as could be wished, though not near so bad as I had heard it represented. The acclamations of the people are loud and universal. He assumes not the least dignity, but has all the affability and insinuation that is necessary for a person who would raise himself in a popular government."

"As I have had the honour of frequently conversing with the prince, I can assure your lordship, as far as I am able to judge, that he has both parts and know-
ledge,

"ledge,

“ ledge, not only much above his age, but equal to any
 “ body’s; and without troubling your lordship with par-
 “ ticulars, I believe I may venture to say, that he will
 “ equal the greatest of his ancestors in great and good
 “ qualities; I hope he will in good fortune too.” From
 the original records before mentioned.

[39] Mr. Duncan, a principal officer in the prince’s court, employed at London to conclude this marriage, had several times conferred with lord Chesterfield upon this subject. He continued his lordship’s friend and correspondent even after his defection from the court. Mr. Van Haaren, a nobleman of Friesland, greatly in favor with the prince, and whose poems, though written in Dutch, were so much esteemed by Voltaire as to induce him to write and publish some verses in praise of the author, was likewise our earl’s friend. But the person with whom he was particularly connected, and entertained a constant correspondence, was Mr. Van Kreuningen, a gentleman who unites great singularities with considerable talents.

[40] It appears from the records before quoted, that the pensionary was not only inclined to oppose the prince of Orange in his views to the stadtholderat, but also in the intended match with the princess royal; and that, therefore, lord Chesterfield had great difficulties to overcome in managing this matter, and in treating with the pensionary on a subject of so nice and delicate a nature.

[41] The abbé Strickland, uncle to the gentleman here mentioned, was a man of considerable family; and his interest was so great at Rome, that he had the promise of being made cardinal, upon his resigning his claim to the court of Vienna in favor of the Zinzendorf family; and, at the recommendation of earl Stanhope, he was made bishop of Namur. During the earl’s administration he came over to England, and endeavoured to persuade the Roman catholics to take an oath of allegiance to the king, which might have procured them the abolition of the test and other oppressive acts. But this attempt was unsuccessful; and perhaps both parties were averse from terms of accommodation.

[42] The

[42] The doctor received on this occasion the present of a gold snuff-box from the grand duke.

[43] See lord Chesterfield's own account of this illness in his letters to his son, vol. II. p. 480, 481.

[44] He obtained several small favors for his friends from the minister, and recommended his chaplain to him for a canonry of Windsor or prebend of Westminster.

[45] The frauds practised in the tobacco trade were the motives alledged to subject it to the laws of the excise. These laws were represented, and perhaps with reason, as preferable to the methods used at the Custom-house, to prevent losses in the collection of duties and payment of drawbacks. The scheme was likewise recommended as particularly serviceable to American planters and the English fair traders, and only hurtful to smugglers and contraband dealers. On the other hand, the ill consequences of these abuses seemed not considerable enough to justify such an innovation; the remedy proposed was not allowed to be either necessary or certain; new grievances, as well domestic as public, were apprehended from increasing the number of excise officers; and suspicions were entertained that, under the same pretence (for what branch of trade hath not its frauds?) an universal extension of the excise was either then, or might hereafter be, intended. The people, once possessed with the fear of an attempt upon their liberties, compared this scheme to the Trojan horse; and indeed it was likely to have proved as fatal to this ministry, as the obstinate prosecution of a fanatic priest was to the whig ministry in the time of queen Ann.

[46] The queen, finding that the excise bill was strongly opposed by the whole nation, applied, among others, to lord Scarborough for his advice. His answer was, that the king must give it up. *I will answer for my regiment, said his lordship, against the pretender, but not against the opposers of the excise.* Upon which her majesty, with tears in her eyes, said, *we must then drop it.* Letter of the bishop of Waterford. The second reading of the bill, in the house of commons, was accordingly put off by Sir Robert Walpole for two months.

[47] Lord

[47] Lord Clinton was then one of the lords of his majesty's bed-chamber, and lord lieutenant of Devonshire; he was advanced to the dignities of earl Clinton and baron Fortescue, July 5, 1746.

[48] By a mistake in the History of the debates and proceedings of the House of Lords, vol. IV. p. 152. the earl's resignation is said to have been in May.

[49] Craftsman, N^o 354. April 14.

[50] The Free Briton, N^o 176. April 16.

From the report of the secret committee, printed in 1742, p. 111, 112, it appears, that the author, Mr. Arnall, was paid by the government, and received in three years time, for this and other services, near ten thousand pounds.