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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 IV. To The Same.

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There is one thing which I would much rather know, than all the contending parties in Ireland say or write against each other, and that is, your real sentiments upon the whole; but all that I know of them, is that I never shall know them, such is your candour, and such is your caution. The celebrated Atticus seems to me to have been your prototype. He kept well with all parties, so do you; he was trusted and consulted by individuals on all sides, so are you; he wrote some histories, so have you; he was the most eminent bookseller of the age he lived in, so are you; and he died immensely rich, and so will you. It is true he was a knight, and you are not, but that you know is your own fault; and he was an epicurean, and you are a stoic.

For the next seven weeks pray direct your packets to me at Bath, where I am going next week, as deaf as ever your friend the Dean was, and full as much, though not so profitably,

Your friend and servant,

CHESTERFIELD.

Pray make my compliments to our friend Mr. Bristow when you see him.

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LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

London, April 13, 1754.

MY WORTHY FRIEND,

THESE things never happened to your prototype Atticus, even in the height and rage of the civil dissensions at Rome, and yet I will venture to affirm that he neither was, nor could be more prudent, cautious, and circumspect, than yourself. But there is a chance, a fatality,

a fatality, which we cannot define, that attends particular men, and particular times. Pompey the Great was publicly insulted upon the Roman stage, and the actor obliged to repeat that part a second and a third time; and you my friend, it seems, have been most unaccountably, and unjustly I will add, disturbed for a slight omission in your weekly historical labours. I have upon this occasion searched for precedents among all the best Greek and Latin historians, and I cannot find the drinking of any one political health, recorded by any one of them. Perhaps the Greeks and Romans had not parts enough to invent those ingenious toasts which make so shining a figure in the late annals of Ireland, and possibly it might not occur to them, that the health of any particular day or event long past, could with any propriety be drunk, or perhaps the injudicious historians might think the mention of them below the dignity of history; but be that as it will, it is certain that neither Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, nor Tacitus, say one word of bumpers, toasts, political, loyal or patriot healths. You stand therefore fully justified by precedents. But however, as wise men will to a certain degree conform to prevailing though perhaps absurd customs; why should you not repair your omission by a more minute and circumstantial account of those elegant drinking bouts or *Symposia* than any of your co-temporary historians have yet thought fit to give? Why not relate circumstantially the convivial wit and urbanity of those polite computations, the serious, the jocular, the ironical, and satirical toasts, the numbers of bottles guzzled down and spewed up again, the political discourses and plans of government attempted, and now and then interrupted by hiccups and four eructations, the downfall of heroes weltering in their vomit, and in short the exact detail of those *Noctes Atticæ*. The style of your late friend the Dean, of which you are master, seems admirably adapted to this descriptive part of your historical works, and one way or another you would please all your readers by it. The performers themselves must be glad to see their achievements recorded and transmitted to posterity.

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Their enemies perhaps (such is the malignity of the human heart) would not be sorry. Only sober people would or could object to it, and they are too few, and too inconsiderable to deserve your attention.

The riot at the play-house was so extraordinary a one and lasted so long, that I cannot imagine where the civil magistrate, assisted by the military force, was all that time; I am sorry for Sheridan's loss, but I carry my thoughts much farther; and I consider all these events, as they may in their consequences affect you; the precedent seems a dangerous one, and *proximus ardet Eucalegon*. I take the play-house to be the shop of the proprietor, and the plays that he acts his goods, which those that do not like them, are not obliged to take, and need not go to his shop; but those who enter it forcibly, destroy his scenes, benches, &c. are perhaps a more dangerous sort of shop-lifters. Now consider my friend, the near relation that there is between your shop and Mr. Sheridan's. You have, I believe, printed all that he has ever acted, and a great deal more. If therefore these vigorous correctors of the theatre, should take it into their heads to be likewise the correctors of your press, what might be the consequence? I will not anticipate by conjectures so gloomy a scene, but I will only say with the bishop of St. Asaph—*our enemies will tell us with pleasure.*

Pray send me your bill for the innumerable pamphlets, sheets, and half-sheets, which you have been so kind to transmit to me from Dublin; I have, being very idle, read them all, and cannot say that many of them entertained me; but all together they gave me serious concern, to find a people that I love so divided and distracted by party feuds and animosities, of which in the mean time the public is the victim. That Providence and your own prudence may protect you, is sincerely wished by,

Your faithful friend, and servant,

CHESTERFIELD.

LET-