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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**

Mr. Pulteney.

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up to his purpose---A hearty kind of frankness, which sometimes seemed imprudence, made people think that he let them into his secrets, whilst the impoliteness of his manners seemed to attest his sincerity. When he found any body proof against pecuniary temptations, which alas! was but seldom, he had recourse to a still worse art: for he laughed at and ridiculed all notions of public virtue and the love of one's country, calling them "*The chimerical school-boy flights of classical learning*", declaring himself at the same time "*No Saint, no Spartan, no Reformer.*" He would frequently ask young fellows at their first appearance in the world, while their honest hearts were yet untainted---"*Well, are you to be an old Roman? a patriot? You'll soon come off of that and grow wiser.*" And thus he was more dangerous to the morals, than to the liberties of his country, to which I am persuaded that he meant no ill in his heart.

He was the easy and profuse dupe of women, and in some instances indecently so---He was excessively open to flattery, even of the grossest kind, and from the coarsest bunglers of that vile profession; which engaged him to pass most of his leisure and jovial hours with people whose blasted characters reflected upon his own---He was loved by many, but respected by none, his familiar and illiberal mirth and raillery leaving him no dignity---He was not vindictive, but on the contrary very placable to those who had injured him the most---His good humour, good nature, and beneficence in the several relations of father, husband, master, and friend, gained him the warmest affections of all within that circle.

His name will not be recorded in history amongst the Best Men, or the Best Ministers, but much less ought it to be ranked amongst the Worst.

MR. PULTENEY.

MR. PULTENEY was formed by nature for social and convivial pleasures---Resentment made him engage in business. He had thought himself slighted by
Sir

Sir Robert Walpole, to whom he publicly avowed not only revenge, but utter destruction. He had lively and shining parts, a surprizing quickness of wit, and a happy turn to the most amusing and entertaining kinds of poetry, as epigrams, ballads, odes, &c. in all which he had an uncommon facility. His compositions in that way were sometimes satyrical, often licentious, but always full of wit.

He had a quick and clear conception of business, could equally detect and practice sophistry—he could state and explain the most intricate matters, even in figures, with the utmost perspicuity. His parts were rather above business, and the warmth of his imagination, joined to the impetuosity and restlessness of his temper, made him incapable of conducting it long together with prudence and steadiness.

He was a most complete orator and debator in the House of Commons, eloquent, entertaining, persuasive, strong, and pathetic, as occasion required; for he had arguments, wit, and *tears* at his command. His breast was the seat of all those passions which degrade our nature and disturb our reason. There they raged in a perpetual conflict, but Avarice, the meanest of them all, generally triumphed, ruled absolutely, and in many instances, which I forbear to mention *, *most scandalously*.

His sudden passion was outrageous, but supported by great personal courage.

* One instance, if he had known it, the characterizer might not have thought beneath his notice. Vanity had often loudly insisted that the Earl of Bath should have a burial-place amongst the illustrious dead in Westminster Abbey, and had as often been called to order by Avarice for the extravagant idea. But at length she carried her point by a lucky opportunity of not only bringing her adversary over, but of animating her in a cause, which she now looked upon as her own, from the flattering prospect of extending her triumph, which she was already assured would be felt “strong in death,” even beyond death itself. It was discovered that in this receptacle of fallen grandeur there was a vault belonging to the family of Hatton, of which there was but one life remaining. Lord Bath purchased the reversion of this vault, which soon after became his property, and then sold a division of it for the full sum he had given for the whole, with the unspeakable happiness to foresee that his Right Honourable remnants would rot with Royalty at *free-cost*.

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Nothing

Nothing exceeded his ambition but his avarice: they often accompany and are frequently and reciprocally the causes and the effects of each other, but the latter is always a clog upon the former.

He affected good nature and compassion, and perhaps his heart might feel the misfortunes and distresses of his fellow-creatures, but his hand was seldom or never stretched out to relieve them.

Though he was an able actor of truth and sincerity, he could occasionally lay them aside to serve the purposes of his ambition or avarice.

He was once in the greatest point of view that I ever saw any subject in. When the opposition of which he was the leader in the House of Commons, prevailed at last against Sir Robert Walpole, he became the arbiter between the Crown and the People: the former imploring his protection, the latter his support. In that critical moment his various jarring passions were in the highest ferment, and for a while suspended his ruling one. Sense of shame made him hesitate at turning courtier on a sudden, after having acted the patriot so long, and with so much applause, and his pride made him declare that he would accept of no place, vainly imagining, that he could by such a simulated and temporary self-denial preserve his popularity with the people and his power at court. He was mistaken in both. The King hated him almost as much for what he might have done, as for what he had done: and a motley ministry was formed who by no means desired his company.

The nation looked upon him as a deserter, and he shrunk into insignificancy and an earldom.

He made several attempts afterwards to retrieve the popularity he had lost, but in vain--his situation would not allow it--he was fixed in the House of Lords, that hospital of incurables, and his retreat to popularity was cut off--For the confidence of the people, when once great, and once lost, is never to be regained--He lived afterwards in retirement with the wretched comfort of Horace's miser.

Populus me sibilat &c.

I may

I may perhaps be suspected to have given too strong colouring to some features of this portrait; but I solemnly protest, that I have drawn it conscientiously and to the best of my knowledge, from very long acquaintance with and observation of the original. Nay, I have rather softened than heightened the colouring.

L O R D H A R D W I C K E.

L O R D H A R D W I C K E was perhaps the greatest Magistrate that this country ever had. He presided in the Court of Chancery above twenty years, and in all that time none of his decrees were reversed, nor the justness of them ever questioned. Though avarice was his ruling passion, he was never in the least suspected of any kind of corruption—a rare and meritorious instance of virtue and self-denial, under the influence of such a craving, insatiable, and increasing passion!

He had great and clear parts; understood, loved, and cultivated the Belles Lettres.

He was an agreeable, eloquent speaker in Parliament, but not without some little tincture of the pleader.

Men are apt to mistake, or at least to seem to mistake their own talents, in hopes perhaps of misleading others to allow them that which they are conscious they do not possess. Thus Lord Hardwicke valued himself more upon being a great Minister of state, which he certainly was not, than upon being a great Magistrate, which he certainly was.

All his notions were clear, but none of them great. Good order and domestic details were his proper department. The great and shining parts of government, though not above his parts to conceive, were above his timidity to undertake.

By great and lucrative employments, during the course of thirty years, and by still greater parsimony, he acquired an immense fortune, and established his numerous family in profitable posts and advantageous alliances.

Though he had been Solicitor and Attorney General, he was by no means what is called a prerogative lawyer
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