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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 XXI. To The Same.

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L E T T E R XXI.

TO THE SAME.

January 29, 1755.

MY DEAR LORD,

I AM little able to write, and less so to think, having been so ill all this week, of my old complaints in my head and stomach, that I am to go to Bath as soon as I shall be able to endure the fatigue of the journey, which I hope may be in five or six days. My answer to your last kind letter must therefore be much shorter than otherwise it probably would have been.

I have carefully read over lord Limerick's * bill, and approve of the principle. I had thought of such a one, when I was in Ireland, but soon found it would be impossible to carry it through the house of commons in any decent shape; but should lord Limerick think proper to push it this session, I would recommend a few alterations. I would only require the priests to take the oath of allegiance simply, and not the subsequent oaths, which, in my opinion, no real papist can take; the consequence of which would be, that the least conscientious priests would be registered, and the most conscientious ones excluded. Besides that, where one oath will not bind, three will not; and the pope's dispensation from the oath of allegiance will not be more prevalent, nor more easily granted, than his dispensation from that oath, by which his power is abjured. Put then I would make that single oath of allegiance more full and solemn, as for instance.

“ I, A. B. duly considering the sacred nature of an oath,
 “ and the horrible crime of perjury, which, by all the reli-
 “ gions in the world, is justly abhorred as a most damnable
 “ sin; do most sincerely promise and swear that I will be
 “ faithful and bear true allegiance to his majesty king
 “ George the second. So help me that great and eternal
 “ God, who knows my inmost thoughts, and whom I now
 “ most solemnly call upon to attest the truth of them.”

* Afterwards earl of Clanbrazil.

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The person taking this oath should be obliged to recite it distinctly and deliberately, and not to be allowed to mutter it over in that indecent and slovenly manner, in which oaths are generally taken. I will venture to add, those who will not observe this oath, taken in this manner, will still less observe any abjuration of the Pope's dispensing power; since such abjuration is, by all papists looked upon as a nullity.

I would also advise that all penalties of death, which in these cases must end in impunity, should be changed into close imprisonment, for a term of years, or in some cases for life. Then there would be perhaps detections and prosecutions; but in case of death there will be none; for who will go and hang a poor devil only for being a regular, or an enthusiast?

When I tell you that these are my thoughts upon this subject, I do not affirm that I think at all, for in truth; I am so weak in body at this time, that I presume I am just as weak in mind too. This only I am sure of, that I am, my dear lord, most faithfully

Yours,

CHESTERFIELD.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE SAME.

London, March 12, 1755.

MY DEAR LORD,

WHITE* was puzzled, what account to give you of me, and therefore gave you none, and, to say the truth, I am pretty much in the same case myself; only resolved to answer as well as I can your kind enquiries after me. I am tolerably well one day, ill the next, and well

* An old and faithful servant of lord Chesterfield.

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