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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 XXIII. To The Same.

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wishes, which every man owes to his country, that I am ill informed myself, and consequently no good informer of others.

I hope your little family are all well, and continue to answer your care in their education. May you and they be long and mutually comforts to each other! Adieu, my dear lord; no man living can be more sincerely and affectionately than I am,

Your faithful friend and servant,

CHESTERFIELD.

L E T T E R XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Blackheath, June 26, 1755.

MY DEAR LORD,

COULD I take any thing ill of you, who I am sure never meant any to me or any man living, it would be your suspecting that I did; which I believe is the first unjust suspicion that ever you entertained of any body, and I am the more concerned at it, because I know that it gave you uneasiness. I confess myself four letters in your debt, but, to tell you the truth, I have of late contracted so many debts of that kind that I am very near a bankruptcy, though not a fraudulent one, upon my word, for I will honestly declare my circumstances; and then my creditors will, I dare say, compound with me upon reasonable terms. White told you true, when he told you that I was well, by which he meant all that he could know, which was, that I had no immediate illness; but he did not know the inward feelings, which increasing deafness and gradually declining health occasion. Some time before I left London I had a severe return of my old complaints in my head and stomach, which are always followed

followed by such weakness, and languors, that I am incapable of any thing but reading, and that too in an idle and desultory manner. Writing seems to be acting, as was asserted in the case of Algernon Sidney, which my *vis inertiae* will not suffer me to undertake, and I put it off from day to day, as Felix did Paul, to a more convenient season. When I removed to this place, I flattered myself that the purity of the air, and the exercise of riding, which it would tempt me to take, would restore me to such a degree of health, strength, and consequently spirits, as to enable me not only to discharge my epistolary debts, but also to amuse myself with writing some essays and historical tracts. I was soon disappointed; for I had not been here above ten days, when I had a stronger attack than my former, and which, I believe, would have been the final one, had I not very seasonably been let blood. From that time, though, as they call it, recovered, I have more properly crawled, than walked among my fellow vegetables, breathed than existed, and dreamed than thought. This, upon my word, is the true and only cause of my long silence. I begin to regain ground a little, but indeed very slowly.

As to the letter which you feared might have displeased me, I protest, my dear lord, I looked upon it as the tenderest mark of your friendship; I had given occasion to it, and I expected it both from your affection and your character. Those reflections are never improper, though too often unwelcome, and consequently useless in youth: but I am now come to a time of life both to make and receive them with satisfaction, and therefore I hope with utility. One cannot think of one's own existence without thinking of the eternal author of it; and one cannot consider his physical or moral attributes without some fear, though in my mind still more hopes. It is true we can have no adequate notions of the attributes of a being so infinitely superior to us; but according to the best notions, which we are capable of forming of his justice and mercy, the latter, which is the comfortable scale, seems necessarily to preponderate. Your quotation from archbishop Tillotson contains a fair and candid account of the Christian religion; and had his challenge been accepted, he would certainly have had an easy victory. He was certainly the most gentle and candid of all churchmen of any religion.

Un esprit de corps is too apt, though I believe often unperceived, to bias their conduct and inflame an honest, though too intemperate, zeal. It is the same in every society of men; for it is in human nature to be affected and warped by example and numbers: you are, without a compliment, the only one that I know untainted.

To descend to the world, and particularly to that part of it where you reside, your present state seems to me an awkward one; your late ferment seems rather suspended than quieted, and I think I see matter for a second fermentation, when your parliament meets. Some, I believe, will ask too much, and others perhaps will grant too little. I wish both parties may be wiser and honest, and then they will be quieter than they have been of late. Both sides would be highly offended, if one were to advise them to apply themselves to civil matters only, in the limited sense of that word, I mean trade, manufactures, good domestic order, subordination, &c. and not to meddle so much with politics, in which I cannot help saying, they are but bunglers. No harm is intended them from hence, and if they will be quiet, no harm will be done them. The people have liberty enough, and the crown has prerogative enough. Those are the real enemies to Ireland, who would enlarge either at the expence of the other, and who have started points, that ought never to have been mentioned at all, but which will now perpetually recur.

By this time, I fear, I have tired you; but I am sure that in half this time I should have been tired with writing half so much to any body else. Adieu then, my dear lord, and be convinced that while I am at all, I shall be, with the truest esteem and affection,

Your most faithful friend and servant,

CHESTERFIELD.

I hope the young family continues to be well, and to do well.

L E T.