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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 XXXIX. To The Same.

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LETTER XXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

London, Dec. 9, 1759.

MY DEAR LORD,

I Confess I have been long in arrears with you, and owe you a great deal for your frequent and kind enquiries after my health, or, to speak more properly, my want of it; but it has not been in my power to pay. I have been often within these three months, not only too ill to write, but too ill to speak, think, or move. I have now a favourable moment of negative health, and that is the most that I must ever expect, and I think I cannot employ it better than in thanking you for your friendship, and in assuring you of mine. When I reflect upon the poor remainder of my life, I look upon it as a burthen that must every day grow heavier and heavier, from the natural progression of physical ills, the usual companions of increasing years; and my reason tells me that I should wish for the end of it, but instinct, often stronger than reason, and perhaps oftener in the right, makes me take all proper methods to put it off. This innate sentiment alone, makes me bear life with patience, for I assure you I have no farther hopes, but on the contrary many fears, from it. None of the primitive Anachorettes in the Thebais could be more detached from life than I am. I consider it as one who is wholly unconcerned in it, and even when I reflect back, upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done myself, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle, and pleasures of the world, had any reality, but they seem to have been the dreams of restless nights. This philosophy, however, I thank God, neither makes me sour nor melancholic; I see the folly and absurdity of mankind, without indignation or peevishness. I wish them wiser, and consequently better than they are. I pity the weak and the wicked, without envying the wise and the good, but endeavouring to the utmost of my abilities to be one of that minority.

You

You are not quite so philosophical in Ireland, where all the tourbillons of Descartes seem to be in the most rapid motion. What do your mobs mean? The Hibernian spirits are exceedingly inflammable. Lenients and refrigeratives will cool and quiet them.

I am very sorry that your daughter's lameness seems incurable, for I heartily wish well to every limb of your family, and am

Your most sincere and faithful servant,

CHESTERFIELD.

P. S. Lady Chesterfield bids me assure you of her service and esteem.

LETTER XL.

TO THE SAME.

London, Jan. 22, 1760.

MY DEAR LORD,

WHEN I received your last letter, I was not in a condition to answer, and hardly to read it; I was so extremely ill, that I little thought that I should live to the date of this letter. I have within these few months more than once seen death very near, and when one does see it near, let the best or the worst people say what they please, it is a very serious consideration. I thank God, I saw it without very great terrors, but at the same time the divine attribute of mercy, which gives us comfort, cannot make us forget, nor ought it, his attribute of justice, which must blend some fears with our hopes. The faculty tell me that I am now much better, and to be sure I am so, compared with what I was a fortnight ago, but however still in a very weak and lingering condition, not likely in my opinion to hold out long; but whether my end be more or less remote, I know I am tottering upon the brink of this