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 XCVII. To The Same.

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LETTER XCVII.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR LORD,

I WISH I had any thing better than thanks to return you for your ſeveral letters, but unfortunately I can ſend you no accounts from hence, that I can write or you read with ſatisfaction. The oppoſition is in truth become no oppoſition at all; is looked upon already in that light by the court, and, I am afraid, will ſoon be ſo by the whole nation. The views of the individuals are too different for them to draw together. Some few mean the public good, and they are for acting and puſhing of conſtitutional meaſures; but many more mean only their private intereſt, and they think public inaction and ſecret negociations the moſt conducive to it. They conſider ſir Robert's life as a bad one, and deſire, by their ſubmiſſion and tameneſs, to recommend themſelves to be his ſucceſſors. The court, they ſay, is too ſtrong to be overcome by oppoſition; that is, in truth, they think it would be too ſtrong for their impatience for power upon any terms. In this diſtracted ſtate of the oppoſition, you will not be ſurprized that nothing is done, and that the court triumphs. Thoſe of your friends here, with whom I am connected, wiſh, as I do, many things which it is not in our power to bring about, and which would only diſcover our weakneſs to attempt. My only hopes are from the ſpirit of the nation in the next election, where, if we exert, I think there are hopes of having a better parliament than this. In your part of the kingdom more may be done with effect in that affair than in this part, where the influence of the court is more powerful; and I hope, therefore, you will all exert at that laſt ſtruggle for our conſtitution. We are to have here next week a general meeting, to ſettle the elections for the next parliament, in which, I make no doubt, but thoſe who have ruined the oppoſition will uſe their endeavours to fruſtrate this deſign too; but ſtill I hope, it will have ſome good effect, though

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to be ſure not ſo good a one as if we all meant the ſame thing. The place bill comes in on Tueſday next, and will be thrown out the ſame day. Some of our patriots will rant that day, *par manière d'acquit*, by permiſſion from the court, and then the ſeſſion is ended. I ſhewed your paper upon that ſubject to ſome of my friends, who will endeavour to make what uſe they can of it.

Your old friend lord Cathcart kiſſed the king's hand yeſterday, for the command of the intended expedition. Some ſay it is againſt Cuba; others, againſt Buenos Ayres; but none know, and the ſecret is inviolably kept. For my own part, wherever it is intended, I have a very bad opinion of the ſucceſs of it, when I know that nobody capable of forming a right plan has been conſulted in it, and that no officer able to conduct it is well enough at court to be employed in it.

As I have writ all this to you *à coeur ouvert*, I beg it may go no further, it being better that the real wretched ſtate of the oppoſition ſhould not be univerſally known, though, I fear, it is but too well gueſſed at. It might diſcourage, and could do no good.

If all meant as well as you do, I ſhould, with more hopes and better ſpirits, take what little part I am able; but I confeſs that, in the preſent ſituation of things, I rather content myſelf with not doing ill, than hope to do any good. I will keep my conſcience and my character clear, wiſh what I ſhould, and do what I can, *et pour le reſte, alors comme alors*. But in all ſituations, pleaſed and proud of being reckoned in the number of thoſe who love and value you as you deſerve, and who wiſh you in a condition of doing your country all the good you are both ſo deſirous and ſo able to do it. Adieu, my dear lord; believe me,

Moſt faithfully yours,

CHESTERFIELD.

INDEX