



UNIVERSITÄTS-  
BIBLIOTHEK  
PADERBORN

# **The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl Of Orford**

In Five Volumes

**Walpole, Horace**

**London, 1798**

A Parody on Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son

---

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-59887](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-59887)

A  
**P A R O D Y**  
 OF  
**LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS**  
 TO  
**HIS SON.**

**INTRODUCTION.**

**I**T can never be sufficiently lamented by philosophers, that the late earl of Chesterfield, who was so perfect a master of all the decorations of which the human mind or body is susceptible, should not have left us a system of education for a daughter as well as for a son: or rather may we not regret that his lordship's amours were not crowned with a perfect exemplar of each sex? No man, by his lordship's own account, was more intimately acquainted with the fairer part of the creation: and sensible as he seems to have been of their defects, who could have better chalked out a dispensatory of remedies? His whole study seems to have been to have imposed upon mankind by specious qualities—undoubtedly, for no reason, but because he thought external qualifications were all that mankind could judge of, or that could procure their esteem. As his appetite for fame and approbation was both intense and indefatigable, he would assuredly not have omitted all the virtues of the heart, had he not been convinced that virtue was never rewarded with public applause. He, who in forty years never uttered a word without stopping to search for a

better, could not have been so indolent as not to cultivate the duties of humanity, had he discovered that they tended to recommend the possessor. When he enjoins his pupil to be *aimable*, and *d'avoir des attentions*, is it not evident he knew that generosity, patriotism, charity, and friendship, were useless attributes? It is plain he thought so, for he has never mentioned them in the list of attractions. For friendship, he seems rather to have warned his disciple against it—a caution imbibed from ambassadors, the profession to which he dedicated his son, and who, being trained to be spies, are rather incompatible with friends. To hear and see, only to tell and betray, is not an intercourse proper for Orestes or Pylades.

To supply this want of a female education, whither can we go so judiciously as to the same source? Having perused his lordship's tractate as often as Rapin read over Livy before he composed his History of England (which is so unlike Livy), I am persuaded that his lordship's system will answer the purpose. Nay, I do not know whether it is not itself, *mutatis mutandis*, more properly a system of female than male education, and may not with some slight alterations serve as well to bring up a fine lady as a fine gentleman. *The Graces, the Graces!* on them alone is founded his lordship's whole plan. Are not the Graces as essential to a maid of honour or a duchess (I do not mean a pun) as to an ambassador or a senator? To write French letters, to speak languages, to be acquainted with ribbands, stars, orders of knighthood, religious orders, the ceremonies of the Romish church, to dance well, come into a room well, carve well, would fit as well on a woman of quality as on sir Joseph Y—or sir Joseph M—. To tell fibs, to pick the nose or ears, to eructate, to be absent in company, to be as unhandy as lord Lyttelton, to write bad grammar or spell message-cards ill, would as little become the lady of the bed-chamber in waiting as the first minister. For a woman of fashion to intrigue with her footman is as disgraceful and as dangerous as a lad's frequenting common women. Drams and champagne disorder both sexes. Gallantry in both is genteel; and an affair with Mr. F—— may be as creditable as one with madame de Blot. When a daughter comes home from the boarding-school, would not a tender mother be as much shocked at the young lady's bursting into the room without a curtsy, as lord Chesterfield declared he should be if Mr. Stanhope's *premier abord*, on his return from his travels, was not graceful? Would it not give the signora madre an equal fever?

Let

PARODY OF LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS. 357

Let us run a parallel a little farther. Elocution and style his lordship pronounces the chief ingredients of eloquence. Every body's matter, he declares, is the fame. If words, style and manner are all, and matter is nothing, who can deny but under the character of a complete orator his lordship has drawn the portrait of an empty, loquacious, but agreeable woman? No matter what she says, if she says it politely.

As his lordship unquestionably fat for the picture he has drawn of a fine gentleman, may not his lordship's example be adopted into the system with the highest propriety; and with equal propriety be recommended to fine ladies? Ought not a matron, on such a precedent, to write to miss her daughter all the scandal she hears or invents? May she not depend upon her daughter's discretion for its being spread? or to her daughter's husband for its being published while the parties are living? Parental fondness and prudence will justify the propagation of any cruelty; as to furnish one's child with any instance of successful futility, will justify advising that child to copy the capital triflers of every age. No century can be barren in marshal Richelieus of the female sex.

This then is the plan I mean to pursue. Without deviating from the sacred text, I shall paraphrase every letter for the use of young ladies, making none but the necessary alterations—dilating the author's sense when too compressed; but never presuming to abridge the abundant repetitions, as it is impossible to beat the graces into a young head too often. If the version I have presumed to give of the three first letters should meet with success, I shall continue with equal fidelity to adapt the rest to the meanest capacities; and though the present age seems as it were by intuition to have educated itself on his lordship's plan, I shall still have the satisfaction of transmitting to posterity a faithful delineation of the system of education necessary to form a complete *Macaroness*.

THE

THE  
NEW WHOLE DUTY OF WOMAN,

In a SERIES of LETTERS from a MOTHER to a DAUGHTER

BEING

A COUNTER-PART

TO

The Earl of CHESTERFIELD'S "System of Education."

---

LETTER I.

THEY tell me, miss, that you are disposed to travel, and that your first airing will be to Hammermith. Wherefore I think it my duty to wish you a good journey and fine weather. You will be so kind, I flatter myself, as to inform me of your arrival; and if you meet with any good buns or cheefecakes, pray bring me some.

Hammermith is a smaller town than Brentford, but not so ugly or dirty. In its neighbourhood are other villages; as Ealing, Acton, Kew, and Turnham Green. The latter carries on a great commerce in pigeons. They are better eating than turtle-doves, which only last in season during the honeymoon.

PARODY OF LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS. 359

As Kew is governed by a king, there is generally in the lanes about Brentford a nation called gipfies, governed by a queen. They tell your fortune, and pick your pocket. Their faces are extremely brown, but their teeth are finer than those of ladies who wear white.

You are going to have a great many holidays; so pray, play your bellyfull. When you come back, you must stick clofer to your horn-book than ever.

Adieu.

---

LETTER II.

MY DEAR CHILD,

AS you will all in good time read Dryden's Virgil and Pope's Homer, it is good in the first place to have some tincture of poetry, and to know in general the fibs to which poets often make allusion. You have heard the Bellman's verses at Christmas, and you have already perused Jack the Giant-killer and Mother Goose's Tales. You have heard of fairies, hobgoblins, ghosts, gods and goddeses, and jack o'lanthorns, and I hope you remember them. These are old stories, yet modern poets have never done with them; in particular, they always call upon Apollo and the Muses, though they are sure of never finding them at home, nor of having any notice taken of their visit. It is for this reason I send you the history of Apollo and the nine Muses; for, if you use yourself to leave your name for those who never visit you again, you will certainly never neglect those who are well bred and punctilious in returning visits. It is a charming thing to make visits and verses, and I hope you will have a talent for both. It is harder to make verses than visits; but the more difficult a thing is, the better: consequently, if you could do any thing that is impossible, it would be still more glorious.

Adieu.

LET-

## LETTER III.

APOLLO was the son of Jupiter and Latona, a god and a woman, who, as the heathens thought, breed as easily together as animals of different species. Latona was delivered of him in the isle of Delos without the assistance of a midwife; for a god's children always come into the world when people don't think of it. He is the god of day; and thence, when verses have more tinsel than sense, it is called phebus or clinquant. He had a famous temple at Delphi, which delivered oracles. An oracle is an ambiguous account of something that is to happen, and consequently has not happened, and therefore impossible to be known. A prophecy is more certain, because it is generally made after the event.

The Muses were the daughters of Jupiter and Memory; that is, he remembered he had daughters, but forgot by whom. They are the goddesses of poetry, history, music, and of all the arts and sciences: of poetry, because it has nothing to do with memory, but with invention; of history, because they are ancient maidens, who always invent scandal or remember it; of music, because poetry is akin to sound; and of arts and sciences, because ladies who were invented, must have invented them likewise; for the ancients, who were wiser than we, never gave a reason, that could be a reason, for any thing.

The Muses have three mountains, two fountains, and one horse, which compose a territory about as large as that of a German prince.