

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1748 eBook

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1748 by Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1748 eBook...	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	6
Page 1.....	8
Page 2.....	10
Page 3.....	12
Page 4.....	14
Page 5.....	16
Page 6.....	18
Page 7.....	19
Page 8.....	20
Page 9.....	21
Page 10.....	22
Page 11.....	24
Page 12.....	26
Page 13.....	27
Page 14.....	29
Page 15.....	31
Page 16.....	32
Page 17.....	33
Page 18.....	35
Page 19.....	36
Page 20.....	38
Page 21.....	39
Page 22.....	40

Page 23.....	41
Page 24.....	42
Page 25.....	43
Page 26.....	44
Page 27.....	45
Page 28.....	46
Page 29.....	48
Page 30.....	49
Page 31.....	50
Page 32.....	51
Page 33.....	52
Page 34.....	53
Page 35.....	55
Page 36.....	56
Page 37.....	58
Page 38.....	59
Page 39.....	60
Page 40.....	61
Page 41.....	62
Page 42.....	63
Page 43.....	64
Page 44.....	65
Page 45.....	66
Page 46.....	67
Page 47.....	69
Page 48.....	70

Page 49.....	71
Page 50.....	72
Page 51.....	74
Page 52.....	75
Page 53.....	76
Page 54.....	77
Page 55.....	78
Page 56.....	80
Page 57.....	81
Page 58.....	82
Page 59.....	83
Page 60.....	84
Page 61.....	85
Page 62.....	86
Page 63.....	88
Page 64.....	89
Page 65.....	90
Page 66.....	91
Page 67.....	92
Page 68.....	93
Page 69.....	94
Page 70.....	95
Page 71.....	96
Page 72.....	97
Page 73.....	98
Page 74.....	99

Page 75.....	101
Page 76.....	102
Page 77.....	103
Page 78.....	104
Page 79.....	106
Page 80.....	107
Page 81.....	109
Page 82.....	110
Page 83.....	111
Page 84.....	113
Page 85.....	115

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
LETTER XXIV	1
LETTER XXV	2
LETTER XXVI	3
LETTER XXVII	4
LETTER XXVIII	4
LETTER XXIX	5
LETTER XXX	7
LETTER XXXI	10
LETTER XXXII	11
LETTER XXXIII	14
LETTER XXXIV	17
LETTERS TO HIS SON	17
LETTER XXXV	17
LETTER XXXVI	19
LETTER XXXVII	19
LETTER XXXVIII	21
LETTER XXXIX	24
LETTER XL	25
LETTER XLI	28
LETTER XLII	30
LETTER XLIII	32
LETTER XLIV.	34
LETTER XLV	36
LETTER XLVI	39
LETTER XLVII	42
LETTER XLVIII	43
LETTER XLIX	46
LETTER L	50
LETTER LI	52
LETTER LII	55
LETTER LIII	59
LETTER LIV	62
LETTER LV	66
LETTER LVI	70
LETTER LVII	74
LETTER LVIII	75
LETTER LIX	76
LETTER LX	78
LETTER LXI	80

Page 1

LETTER XXIV

January 2, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I am edified with the allotment of your time at Leipsig; which is so well employed from morning till night, that a fool would say you had none left for yourself; whereas, I am sure you have sense enough to know, that such a right use of your time is having it all to yourself; nay, it is even more, for it is laying it out to immense interest, which, in a very few years, will amount to a prodigious capital.

Though twelve of your fourteen 'Commensaux' may not be the liveliest people in the world, and may want (as I easily conceive that they do) 'le ton de la bonne compagnie, et les graces', which I wish you, yet pray take care not to express any contempt, or throw out any ridicule; which I can assure you, is not more contrary to good manners than to good sense: but endeavor rather to get all the good you can out of them; and something or other is to be got out of everybody. They will, at least, improve you in the German language; and, as they come from different countries, you may put them upon subjects, concerning which they must necessarily be able to give you some useful informations, let them be ever so dull or disagreeable in general: they will know something, at least, of the laws, customs, government, and considerable families of their respective countries; all which are better known than not, and consequently worth inquiring into. There is hardly any body good for every thing, and there is scarcely any body who is absolutely good for nothing. A good chemist will extract some spirit or other out of every substance; and a man of parts will, by his dexterity and management, elicit something worth knowing out of every being he converses with.

As you have been introduced to the Duchess of Courland, pray go there as often as ever your more necessary occupations will allow you. I am told she is extremely well bred, and has parts. Now, though I would not recommend to you, to go into women's company in search of solid knowledge, or judgment, yet it has its use in other respects; for it certainly polishes the manners, and gives 'une certaine tournure', which is very necessary in the course of the world; and which Englishmen have generally less of than any people in the world.

I cannot say that your suppers are luxurious, but you must own they are solid; and a quart of soup, and two pounds of potatoes, will enable you to pass the night without great impatience for your breakfast next morning. One part of your supper (the potatoes) is the constant diet of my old friends and countrymen,—[Lord Chesterfield, from the time he was appointed Lord-lieutenant of Ireland, 1775, used always to call the Irish his countrymen.]—the Irish, who are the healthiest and the strongest bodies of men that I know in Europe.



As I believe that many of my letters to you and to Mr. Harte have miscarried, as well as some of yours and his to me; particularly one of his from Leipsig, to which he refers in a subsequent one, and which I never received; I would have you, for the future, acknowledge the dates of all the letters which either of you shall receive from me; and I will do the same on my part.

Page 2

That which I received by the last mail, from you, was of the 25th November, N. S.; the mail before that brought me yours, of which I have forgot the date, but which inclosed one to Lady Chesterfield: she will answer it soon, and, in the mean time, thanks you for it.

My disorder was only a very great cold, of which I am entirely recovered. You shall not complain for want of accounts from Mr. Grevenkop, who will frequently write you whatever passes here, in the German language and character; which will improve you in both. Adieu.

LETTER XXV

London, January 15, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I willingly accept the new-year's gift which you promise me for next year; and the more valuable you make it, the more thankful I shall be. That depends entirely upon you; and therefore I hope to be presented, every year, with a new edition of you, more correct than the former, and considerably enlarged and amended.

Since you do not care to be an assessor of the imperial chamber, and that you desire an establishment in England; what do you think of being Greek Professor at one of our universities? It is a very pretty sinecure, and requires very little knowledge (much less than, I hope, you have already) of that language. If you do not approve of this, I am at a loss to know what else to propose to you; and therefore desire that you will inform me what sort of destination you propose for yourself; for it is now time to fix it, and to take our measures accordingly. Mr. Harte tells me that you set up for a-----; if so, I presume it is in the view of succeeding me in my office;—[A secretary of state.]—which I will very willingly resign to you, whenever you shall call upon me for it. But, if you intend to be the-----, or the-----, there are some trifling circumstances upon which you should previously take your resolution. The first of which is, to be fit for it: and then, in order to be so, make yourself master of ancient and, modern history, and languages. To know perfectly the constitution, and form of government of every nation; the growth and the decline of ancient and modern empires; and to trace out and reflect upon the causes of both. To know the strength, the riches, and the commerce of every country. These little things, trifling as they may seem, are yet very necessary for a politician to know; and which therefore, I presume, you will condescend to apply yourself to. There are some additional qualifications necessary, in the practical part of business, which may deserve some consideration in your leisure moments; such as, an absolute command of your temper, so as not to be provoked to passion, upon any account; patience, to hear frivolous, impertinent, and unreasonable applications; with address enough to refuse, without offending, or, by your manner of granting, to double the obligation; dexterity enough to conceal a truth without telling a lie; sagacity enough to read other people's countenances; and serenity enough not to let them discover anything by yours; a

seeming frankness with a real reserve. These are the rudiments of a politician; the world must be your grammar.

Page 3

Three mails are now due from Holland; so that I have no letters from you to acknowledge. I therefore conclude with recommending myself to your favor and protection when you succeed. Yours.

LETTER XXVI

London, January 29, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I find, by Mr. Harte's last letter, that many of my letters to you and him, have been frozen up on their way to Leipsig; the thaw has, I suppose, by this time, set them at liberty to pursue their journey to you, and you will receive a glut of them at once. Hudibras alludes, in this verse,

“Like words congealed in northern air,”

to a vulgar notion, that in Greenland words were frozen in their utterance; and that upon a thaw, a very mixed conversation was heard in the air, of all those words set at liberty. This conversation was, I presume, too various and extensive to be much attended to: and may not that be the case of half a dozen of my long letters, when you receive them all at once? I think that I can, eventually, answer that question, thus: If you consider my letters in their true light, as conveying to you the advice of a friend, who sincerely wishes your happiness, and desires to promote your pleasure, you will both read and attend to them; but, if you consider them in their opposite, and very false light, as the dictates of a morose and sermonizing father, I am sure they will be not only unattended to, but unread. Which is the case, you can best tell me. Advice is seldom welcome; and those who want it the most always like it the least. I hope that your want of experience, of which you must be conscious, will convince you, that you want advice; and that your good sense will incline you to follow it.

Tell me how you pass your leisure hours at Leipsig; I know you have not many; and I have too good an opinion of you to think, that, at this age, you would desire more. Have you assemblies, or public spectacles? and of what kind are they? Whatever they are, see them all; seeing everything, is the only way not to admire anything too much.

If you ever take up little tale-books, to amuse you by snatches, I will recommend two French books, which I have already mentioned; they will entertain you, and not without some use to your mind and your manners. One is, ‘La Maniere de bien penser dans les Ouvrages d’Esprit’, written by Pere Bouhours; I believe you read it once in England, with Monsieur Coderc; but I think that you will do well to read it again, as I know of no book that will form your taste better. The other is, ‘L’Art de plaire dans la Conversation’, by the Abbe de Bellegarde, and is by no means useless, though I will not pretend to say, that the art of pleasing can be reduced to a receipt; if it could, I am sure that receipt would be worth purchasing at any price. Good sense, and good nature, are the

principal ingredients; and your own observation, and the good advice of others, must give the right color and taste to it. Adieu! I shall always love you as you shall deserve.

Page 4

LETTER XXVII

London, February 9, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: You will receive this letter, not from a Secretary of State but from a private man; for whom, at his time of life, quiet was as fit, and as necessary, as labor and activity are for you at your age, and for many years yet to come. I resigned the seals, last Saturday, to the King; who parted with me most graciously, and (I may add, for he said so himself) with regret. As I retire from hurry to quiet, and to enjoy, at my ease, the comforts of private and social life, you will easily imagine that I have no thoughts of opposition, or meddling with business. 'Otium cum dignitate' is my object. The former I now enjoy; and I hope that my conduct and character entitle me to some share of the latter. In short, I am now happy: and I found that I could not be so in my former public situation.

As I like your correspondence better than that of all the kings, princes, and ministers, in Europe, I shall now have leisure to carry it on more regularly. My letters to you will be written, I am sure, by me, and, I hope, read by you, with pleasure; which, I believe, seldom happens, reciprocally, to letters written from and to a secretary's office.

Do not apprehend that my retirement from business may be a hindrance to your advancement in it, at a proper time: on the contrary, it will promote it; for, having nothing to ask for myself, I shall have the better title to ask for you. But you have still a surer way than this of rising, and which is wholly in your own power. Make yourself necessary; which, with your natural parts, you may, by application, do. We are in general, in England, ignorant of foreign affairs: and of the interests, views, pretensions, and policy of other courts. That part of knowledge never enters into our thoughts, nor makes part of our education; for which reason, we have fewer proper subjects for foreign commissions, than any other country in Europe; and, when foreign affairs happen to be debated in Parliament, it is incredible with how much ignorance. The harvest of foreign affairs being then so great, and the laborers so few, if you make yourself master of them, you will make yourself necessary; first as a foreign, and then as a domestic minister for that department.

I am extremely well pleased with the account which you give me of the allotment of your time. Do but go on so, for two years longer, and I will ask no more of you. Your labors will be their own reward; but if you desire any other, that I can add, you may depend upon it.

I am glad that you perceive the indecency and turpitude of those of your 'Commensaux', who disgrace and foul themselves with dirty w—s and scoundrel gamesters. And the light in which, I am sure, you see all reasonable and decent people consider them, will be a good warning to you. Adieu.

LETTER XXVIII

Page 5

London, February 13, O. S. 1748

Dear boy: your last letter gave me a very satisfactory account of your manner of employing your time at Leipsig. Go on so but for two years more, and, I promise you, that you will outgo all the people of your age and time. I thank you for your explanation of the 'Schriftsassen', and 'Amptsassen'; and pray let me know the meaning of the 'Landsassen'. I am very willing that you should take a Saxon servant, who speaks nothing but German, which will be a sure way of keeping up your German, after you leave Germany. But then, I would neither have that man, nor him whom you have already, put out of livery; which makes them both impertinent and useless. I am sure, that as soon as you shall have taken the other servant, your present man will press extremely to be out of livery, and valet de chambre; which is as much as to say, that he will curl your hair and shave you, but not condescend to do anything else. I therefore advise you, never to have a servant out of livery; and, though you may not always think proper to carry the servant who dresses you abroad in the rain and dirt, behind a coach or before a chair, yet keep it in your power to do so, if you please, by keeping him in livery.

I have seen Monsieur and Madame Flemming, who gave me a very good account of you, and of your manners, which to tell you the plain truth, were what I doubted of the most. She told me, that you were easy, and not ashamed: which is a great deal for an Englishman at your age.

I set out for Bath to-morrow, for a month; only to be better than well, and enjoy, in, quiet, the liberty which I have acquired by the resignation of the seals. You shall hear from me more at large from thence; and now good night to you.

LETTER XXIX

Bath, February 18, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: The first use that I made of my liberty was to come here, where I arrived yesterday. My health, though not fundamentally bad yet, for want of proper attention of late, wanted some repairs, which these waters never fail giving it. I shall drink them a month, and return to London, there to enjoy the comforts of social life, instead of groaning under the load of business. I have given the description of the life that I propose to lead for the future, in this motto, which I have put up in the frize of my library in my new house:—

Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, et inertibus horis
Ducere sollicitae jucunda oblivis vitas.

I must observe to you upon this occasion, that the uninterrupted satisfaction which I expect to find in that library, will be chiefly owing to my having employed some part of my life well at your age. I wish I had employed it better, and my satisfaction would now be complete; but, however, I planted while young, that degree of knowledge which is now my refuge and my shelter. Make your plantations still more

Page 6

extensive; they will more than pay you for your trouble. I do not regret the time that I passed in pleasures; they were seasonable; they were the pleasures of youth, and I enjoyed them while young. If I had not, I should probably have overvalued them now, as we are very apt to do what we do not know; but, knowing them as I do, I know their real value, and how much they are generally overrated. Nor do I regret the time that I have passed in business, for the same reason; those who see only the outside of it, imagine it has hidden charms, which they pant after; and nothing but acquaintance can undeceive them. I, who have been behind the scenes, both of pleasure and business, and have seen all the springs and pullies of those decorations which astonish and dazzle the audience, retire, not only without regret, but with contentment and satisfaction. But what I do, and ever shall regret, is the time which, while young, I lost in mere idleness, and in doing nothing. This is the common effect of the inconsideracy of youth, against which I beg you will be most carefully upon your guard. The value of moments, when cast up, is immense, if well employed; if thrown away, their loss is irrecoverable. Every moment may be put to some use, and that with much more pleasure, than if unemployed. Do not imagine, that by the employment of time, I mean an uninterrupted application to serious studies. No; pleasures are, at proper times, both as necessary and as useful; they fashion and form you for the world; they teach you characters, and show you the human heart in its unguarded minutes. But then remember to make that use of them. I have known many people, from laziness of mind, go through both pleasure and business with equal inattention; neither enjoying the one, nor doing the other; thinking themselves men of pleasure, because they were mingled with those who were, and men of business, because they had business to do, though they did not do it. Whatever you do, do it to the purpose; do it thoroughly, not superficially. 'Approfondissez': go to the bottom of things. Any thing half done or half known, is, in my mind, neither done nor known at all. Nay worse, it often misleads. There is hardly any place or any company, where you may not gain knowledge, if you please; almost everybody knows some one thing, and is glad to talk upon that one thing. Seek and you will find, in this world as well as in the next. See everything; inquire into everything; and you may excuse your curiosity, and the questions you ask which otherwise might be thought impertinent, by your manner of asking them; for most things depend a great deal upon the manner. As, for example, *I am afraid that I am very troublesome with my questions; but nobody can inform me so well as you; or something of that kind.*

Page 7

Now that you are in a Lutheran country, go to their churches, and observe the manner of their public worship; attend to their ceremonies, and inquire the meaning and intention of everyone of them. And, as you will soon understand German well enough, attend to their sermons, and observe their manner of preaching. Inform yourself of their church government: whether it resides in the sovereign, or in consistories and synods. Whence arises the maintenance of their clergy; whether from tithes, as in England, or from voluntary contributions, or from pensions from the state. Do the same thing when you are in Roman Catholic countries; go to their churches, see all their ceremonies: ask the meaning of them, get the terms explained to you. As, for instance, Prime, Tierce, Sexte, Nones, Matins, Angelus, High Mass, Vespers, Complines, *etc.* Inform yourself of their several religious orders, their founders, their rules, their vows, their habits, their revenues, *etc.* But, when you frequent places of public worship, as I would have you go to all the different ones you meet with, remember, that however erroneous, they are none of them objects of laughter and ridicule. Honest error is to be pitied, not ridiculed. The object of all the public worships in the world is the same; it is that great eternal Being who created everything. The different manners of worship are by no means subjects of ridicule. Each sect thinks its own is the best; and I know no infallible judge in this world, to decide which is the best. Make the same inquiries, wherever you are, concerning the revenues, the military establishment, the trade, the commerce, and the police of every country. And you would do well to keep a blank paper book, which the Germans call an *album*; and there, instead of desiring, as they do, every fool they meet with to scribble something, write down all these things as soon as they come to your knowledge from good authorities.

I had almost forgotten one thing, which I would recommend as an object for your curiosity and information, that is, the administration of justice; which, as it is always carried on in open court, you may, and I would have you, go and see it with attention and inquiry.

I have now but one anxiety left, which is concerning you. I would have you be, what I know nobody is—perfect. As that is impossible, I would have you as near perfection as possible. I know nobody in a fairer way toward it than yourself, if you please. Never were so much pains taken for anybody's education as for yours; and never had anybody those opportunities of knowledge and improvement which you, have had, and still have, I hope, I wish, I doubt, and fear alternately. This only I am sure of, that you will prove either the greatest pain or the greatest pleasure of, Yours.

LETTER XXX

Bath, February 22, O. S. 1748.

Page 8

Dear Boy: Every excellency, and every virtue, has its kindred vice or weakness; and if carried beyond certain bounds, sinks into one or the other. Generosity often runs into profusion, economy into avarice, courage into rashness, caution into timidity, and so on:—insomuch that, I believe, there is more judgment required, for the proper conduct of our virtues, than for avoiding their opposite vices. Vice, in its true light, is so deformed, that it shocks us at first sight, and would hardly ever seduce us, if it did not, at first, wear the mask of some virtue. But virtue is, in itself, so beautiful, that it charms us at first sight; engages us more and more upon further acquaintance; and, as with other beauties, we think excess impossible; it is here that judgment is necessary, to moderate and direct the effects of an excellent cause. I shall apply this reasoning, at present, not to any particular virtue, but to an excellency, which, for want of judgment, is often the cause of ridiculous and blamable effects; I mean, great learning; which, if not accompanied with sound judgment, frequently carries us into error, pride, and pedantry. As, I hope, you will possess that excellency in its utmost extent, and yet without its too common failings, the hints, which my experience can suggest, may probably not be useless to you.

Some learned men, proud of their knowledge, only speak to decide, and give judgment without appeal; the consequence of which is, that mankind, provoked by the insult, and injured by the oppression, revolt; and, in order to shake off the tyranny, even call the lawful authority in question. The more you know, the modester you should be: and (by the bye) that modesty is the surest way of gratifying your vanity. Even where you are sure, seem rather doubtful; represent, but do not pronounce, and, if you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself.

Others, to show their learning, or often from the prejudices of a school education, where they hear of nothing else, are always talking of the ancients, as something more than men, and of the moderns, as something less. They are never without a classic or two in their pockets; they stick to the old good sense; they read none of the modern trash; and will show you, plainly, that no improvement has been made, in any one art or science, these last seventeen hundred years. I would by no means have you disown your acquaintance with the ancients: but still less would I have you brag of an exclusive intimacy with them. Speak of the moderns without contempt, and of the ancients without idolatry; judge them all by their merits, but not by their ages; and if you happen to have an Elzevir classic in your pocket neither show it nor mention it.

Page 9

Some great scholars, most absurdly, draw all their maxims, both for public and private life, from what they call parallel cases in the ancient authors; without considering, that, in the first place, there never were, since the creation of the world, two cases exactly parallel; and, in the next place, that there never was a case stated, or even known, by any historian, with every one of its circumstances; which, however, ought to be known, in order to be reasoned from. Reason upon the case itself, and the several circumstances that attend it, and act accordingly; but not from the authority of ancient poets, or historians. Take into your consideration, if you please, cases seemingly analogous; but take them as helps only, not as guides. We are really so prejudiced by our education, that, as the ancients deified their heroes, we deify their madmen; of which, with all due regard for antiquity, I take Leonidas and Curtius to have been two distinguished ones. And yet a solid pedant would, in a speech in parliament, relative to a tax of two pence in the pound upon some community or other, quote those two heroes, as examples of what we ought to do and suffer for our country. I have known these absurdities carried so far by people of injudicious learning, that I should not be surprised, if some of them were to propose, while we are at war with the Gauls, that a number of geese should be kept in the Tower, upon account of the infinite advantage which Rome received *in A parallel case*, from a certain number of geese in the Capitol. This way of reasoning, and this way of speaking, will always form a poor politician, and a puerile declaimer.

There is another species of learned men, who, though less dogmatical and supercilious, are not less impertinent. These are the communicative and shining pedants, who adorn their conversation, even with women, by happy quotations of Greek and Latin; and who have contracted such a familiarity with the Greek and Roman authors, that they, call them by certain names or epithets denoting intimacy. As *old Homer*; that *Sly rogue Horace*; *Maro*, instead of Virgil; and *Naso*, Instead of Ovid. These are often imitated by coxcombs, who have no learning at all; but who have got some names and some scraps of ancient authors by heart, which they improperly and impertinently retail in all companies, in hopes of passing for scholars. If, therefore, you would avoid the accusation of pedantry on one hand, or the suspicion of ignorance on the other, abstain from learned ostentation. Speak the language of the company that you are in; speak it purely, and unlarded with any other. Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than the people you are with. Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket: and do not pull it out and strike it; merely to show that you have one. If you are asked what o'clock it is, tell it; but do not proclaim it hourly and unasked, like the watchman.

Page 10

Upon the whole, remember that learning (I mean Greek and Roman learning) is a most useful and necessary ornament, which it is shameful not to be master of; but, at the same time most carefully avoid those errors and abuses which I have mentioned, and which too often attend it. Remember, too, that great modern knowledge is still more necessary than ancient; and that you had better know perfectly the present, than the old state of Europe; though I would have you well acquainted with both.

I have this moment received your letter of the 17th, N. S. Though, I confess, there is no great variety in your present manner of life, yet materials can never be wanting for a letter; you see, you hear, or you read something new every day; a short account of which, with your own reflections thereupon, will make out a letter very well. But, since you desire a subject, pray send me an account of the Lutheran establishment in Germany; their religious tenets, their church government, the maintenance, authority, and titles of their clergy.

'Vittorio Siri', complete, is a very scarce and very dear book here; but I do not want it. If your own library grows too voluminous, you will not know what to do with it, when you leave Leipsig. Your best way will be, when you go away from thence, to send to England, by Hamburg, all the books that you do not absolutely want.

Yours.

LETTER XXXI

Bath, March 1, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: By Mr. Harte's letter to Mr. Grevenkop, of the 21st February, N. S., I find that you had been a great while without receiving any letters from me; but by this time, I daresay you think you have received enough, and possibly more than you have read; for I am not only a frequent, but a prolix correspondent.

Mr. Harte says, in that letter, that he looks upon Professor Mascow to be one of the ablest men in Europe, in treaty and political knowledge. I am extremely glad of it; for that is what I would have you particularly apply to, and make yourself perfect master of. The treaty part you must chiefly acquire by reading the treaties themselves, and the histories and memoirs relative to them; not but that inquiries and conversations upon those treaties will help you greatly, and imprint them better in your mind. In this course of reading, do not perplex yourself, at first, by the multitude of insignificant treaties which are to be found in the Corps Diplomatique; but stick to the material ones, which altered the state of Europe, and made a new arrangement among the great powers; such as the treaties of Munster, Nimeguen, Ryswick, and Utrecht.



But there is one part of political knowledge, which is only to be had by inquiry and conversation; that is, the present state of every power in Europe, with regard to the three important points, of strength, revenue, and commerce. You will, therefore, do well, while you are in Germany, to inform yourself carefully of the military force, the revenues, and the commerce of every prince and state of the empire; and to write down those informations in a little book, for that particular purpose. To give you a specimen of what I mean:—

Page 11

The electorate of Hanover

The revenue is about L500,000 a year.

The military establishment, in time of war, may be about 25,000 men; but that is the utmost.

The trade is chiefly linens, exported from Stade.

There are coarse woolen manufactures for home-consumption.

The mines of Hartz produce about L100,000 in silver, annually.

Such informations you may very easily get, by proper inquiries, of every state in Germany if you will but prefer useful to frivolous conversations.

There are many princes in Germany, who keep very few or no troops, unless upon the approach of danger, or for the sake of profit, by letting them out for subsidies, to great powers: In that case, you will inform yourself what number of troops they could raise, either for their own defense, or furnish to other powers for subsidies.

There is very little trouble, and an infinite use, in acquiring of this knowledge. It seems to me even to be a more entertaining subject to talk upon, than 'la pluie et le beau tens'.

Though I am sensible that these things cannot be known with the utmost exactness, at least by you yet, you may, however, get so near the truth, that the difference will be very immaterial.

Pray let me know if the Roman Catholic worship is tolerated in Saxony, anywhere but at Court; and if public mass-houses are allowed anywhere else in the electorate. Are the regular Romish clergy allowed; and have they any convents?

Are there any military orders in Saxony, and what? Is the White Eagle a Saxon or a Polish order? Upon what occasion, and when was it founded? What number of knights?

Adieu! God bless you; and may you turn out what I wish!

LETTER XXXII

Bath, March 9, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I must from time to time, remind you of what I have often recommended to you, and of what you cannot attend to too much; *sacrifice to the graces*. The different

effects of the same things, said or done, when accompanied or abandoned by them, is almost inconceivable. They prepare the way to the heart; and the heart has such an influence over the understanding, that it is worth while to engage it in our interest. It is the whole of women, who are guided by nothing else: and it has so much to say, even with men, and the ablest men too, that it commonly triumphs in every struggle with the understanding. Monsieur de Rochefoucault, in his "Maxims," says, that 'l'esprit est souvent la dupe du coeur.' If he had said, instead of 'souvent, presque toujours', I fear he would have been nearer the truth. This being the case, aim at the heart. Intrinsic merit alone will not do; it will gain you the general esteem of all; but not the particular affection, that is, the heart of any. To engage the affections of any particular person,

Page 12

you must, over and above your general merit, have some particular merit to that person by services done, or offered; by expressions of regard and esteem; by complaisance, attentions, *etc.*, for him. And the graceful manner of doing all these things opens the way to the heart, and facilitates, or rather insures, their effects. From your own observation, reflect what a disagreeable impression an awkward address, a slovenly figure, an ungraceful manner of speaking, whether stuttering, muttering, monotony, or drawling, an unattentive behavior, *etc.*, make upon you, at first sight, in a stranger, and how they prejudice you against him, though for aught you know, he may have great intrinsic sense and merit. And reflect, on the other hand, how much the opposites of all these things prepossess you, at first sight, in favor of those who enjoy them. You wish to find all good qualities in them, and are in some degree disappointed if you do not. A thousand little things, not separately to be defined, conspire to form these graces, this *je ne sais quoi*, that always please. A pretty person, genteel motions, a proper degree of dress, an harmonious voice, something open and cheerful in the countenance, but without laughing; a distinct and properly varied manner of speaking: All these things, and many others, are necessary ingredients in the composition of the pleasing *je ne sais quoi*, which everybody feels, though nobody can describe. Observe carefully, then, what displeases or pleases you in others, and be persuaded, that in general; the same things will please or displease them in you. Having mentioned laughing, I must particularly warn you against it: and I could heartily wish, that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and in manners; it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. True wit, or sense, never yet made anybody laugh; they are above it: They please the mind, and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; and that is what people of sense and breeding should show themselves above. A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down upon his breech for want of one, sets a whole company a laughing, when all the wit in the world would not do it; a plain proof, in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is: not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions. Laughter is easily restrained, by a very little reflection; but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy nor a cynical disposition, and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody; but I

Page 13

am sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh. Many people, at first, from awkwardness and 'mauvaise honte', have got a very disagreeable and silly trick of laughing whenever they speak; and I know a man of very good parts, Mr. Waller, who cannot say the commonest thing without laughing; which makes those, who do not know him, take him at first for a natural fool. This, and many other very disagreeable habits, are owing to mauvaise honte at their first setting out in the world. They are ashamed in company, and so disconcerted, that they do not know what they do, and try a thousand tricks to keep themselves in countenance; which tricks afterward grow habitual to them. Some put their fingers in their nose, others scratch their heads, others twirl their hats; in short, every awkward, ill-bred body has his trick. But the frequency does not justify the thing, and all these vulgar habits and awkwardnesses, though not criminal indeed, are most carefully to be guarded against, as they are great bars in the way of the art of pleasing. Remember, that to please is almost to prevail, or at least a necessary previous step to it. You, who have your fortune to make, should more particularly study this art. You had not, I must tell you, when you left England, 'les manieres prevenantes'; and I must confess they are not very common in England; but I hope that your good sense will make you acquire them abroad. If you desire to make yourself considerable in the world (as, if you have any spirit, you do), it must be entirely your own doing; for I may very possibly be out of the world at the time you come into it. Your own rank and fortune will not assist you; your merit and your manners can alone raise you to figure and fortune. I have laid the foundations of them, by the education which I have given you; but you must build the superstructure yourself.

I must now apply to you for some informations, which I dare say you can, and which I desire you will give me.

Can the Elector of Saxony put any of his subjects to death for high treason, without bringing them first to their trial in some public court of justice?

Can he, by his own authority, confine any subject in prison as long as he pleases, without trial?

Can he banish any subject out of his dominions by his own authority?

Can he lay any tax whatsoever upon his subjects, without the consent of the states of Saxony? and what are those states? how are they elected? what orders do they consist of? Do the clergy make part of them? and when, and how often do they meet?

If two subjects of the elector's are at law, for an estate situated in the electorate, in what court must this suit be tried? and will the decision of that court be final, or does there lie an appeal to the imperial chamber at Wetzlaer?

What do you call the two chief courts, or two chief magistrates, of civil and criminal justice?

Page 14

What is the common revenue of the electorate, one year with another?

What number of troops does the elector now maintain? and what is the greatest number that the electorate is able to maintain?

I do not expect to have all these questions answered at once; but you will answer them, in proportion as you get the necessary and authentic informations.

You are, you see, my German oracle; and I consult you with so much faith, that you need not, like the oracles of old, return ambiguous answers; especially as you have this advantage over them, too, that I only consult you about past and present, but not about what is to come.

I wish you a good Easter-fair at Leipsig. See, with attention all the shops, drolls, tumblers, rope-dancers, and 'hoc genus omne': but inform yourself more particularly of the several parts of trade there. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIII

London, March 25, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I am in great joy at the written and the verbal accounts which I have received lately of you.

The former, from Mr. Harte; the latter, from Mr. Trevanion, who is arrived here: they conspire to convince me that you employ your time well at Leipsig. I am glad to find you consult your own interest and your own pleasure so much; for the knowledge which you will acquire in these two years is equally necessary for both. I am likewise particularly pleased to find that you turn yourself to that sort of knowledge which is more peculiarly necessary for your destination: for Mr. Harte tells me you have read, with attention, Caillieres, Pequet, and Richelieu's "Letters." The "Memoirs" of the Cardinal de Retz will both entertain and instruct you; they relate to a very interesting period of the French history, the ministry of Cardinal Mazarin, during the minority of Lewis XIV. The characters of all the considerable people of that time are drawn, in a short, strong, and masterly manner; and the political reflections, which are most of them printed in italics, are the justest that ever I met with: they are not the labored reflections of a systematical closet politician, who, without the least experience of business, sits at home and writes maxims; but they are the reflections which a great and able man formed from long experience and practice in great business. They are true conclusions, drawn from facts, not from speculations.

As modern history is particularly your business, I will give you some rules to direct your study of it. It begins, properly with Charlemagne, in the year 800. But as, in those times of ignorance, the priests and monks were almost the only people that could or did write,

we have scarcely any histories of those times but such as they have been pleased to give us, which are compounds of ignorance, superstition, and party zeal. So that a general notion of what is rather supposed, than really known to be, the history

Page 15

of the five or six following centuries, seems to be sufficient; and much time would be but ill employed in a minute attention to those legends. But reserve your utmost care, and most diligent inquiries, from the fifteenth century, and downward. Then learning began to revive, and credible histories to be written; Europe began to take the form, which, to some degree, it still retains: at least the foundations of the present great powers of Europe were then laid. Lewis the Eleventh made France, in truth, a monarchy, or, as he used to say himself, 'la mit hors de Page'. Before his time, there were independent provinces in France, as the Duchy of Brittany, *etc.*, whose princes tore it to pieces, and kept it in constant domestic confusion. Lewis the Eleventh reduced all these petty states, by fraud, force, or marriage; for he scrupled no means to obtain his ends.

About that time, Ferdinand King of Aragon, and Isabella his wife, Queen of Castile, united the whole Spanish monarchy, and drove the Moors out of Spain, who had till then kept position of Granada. About that time, too, the house of Austria laid the great foundations of its subsequent power; first, by the marriage of Maximilian with the heiress of Burgundy; and then, by the marriage of his son Philip, Archduke of Austria, with Jane, the daughter of Isabella, Queen of Spain, and heiress of that whole kingdom, and of the West Indies. By the first of these marriages, the house of Austria acquired the seventeen provinces, and by the latter, Spain and America; all which centered in the person of Charles the Fifth, son of the above-mentioned Archduke Philip, the son of Maximilian. It was upon account of these two marriages, that the following Latin distich was made:

Bella gerant alii, Tu felix Austria nube;
Nam qua, Mars aliis; dat tibi regna Venus.

This immense power, which the Emperor Charles the Fifth found himself possessed of, gave him a desire for universal power (for people never desire all till they have gotten a great deal), and alarmed France; this sowed the seeds of that jealousy and enmity, which have flourished ever since between those two great powers. Afterward the House of Austria was weakened by the division made by Charles the Fifth of his dominions, between his son, Philip the Second of Spain, and his brother Ferdinand; and has ever since been dwindling to the weak condition in which it now is. This is a most interesting part of the history of Europe, of which it is absolutely necessary that you should be exactly and minutely informed.

Page 16

There are in the history of most countries, certain very remarkable eras, which deserve more particular inquiry and attention than the common run of history. Such is the revolt of the Seventeen Provinces, in the reign of Philip the Second of Spain, which ended in forming the present republic of the Seven United Provinces, whose independency was first allowed by Spain at the treaty of Munster. Such was the extraordinary revolution of Portugal, in the year 1640, in favor of the present House of Braganza. Such is the famous revolution of Sweden, when Christian the Second of Denmark, who was also king of Sweden, was driven out by Gustavus Vasa. And such also is that memorable era in Denmark, of 1660; when the states of that kingdom made a voluntary surrender of all their rights and liberties to the Crown, and changed that free state into the most absolute monarchy now in Europe. The Acta Regis, upon that occasion, are worth your perusing. These remarkable periods of modern history deserve your particular attention, and most of them have been treated singly by good historians, which are worth your reading. The revolutions of Sweden, and of Portugal, are most admirably well written by L'Abbe de Vertot; they are short, and will not take twelve hours' reading. There is another book which very well deserves your looking into, but not worth your buying at present, because it is not portable; if you can borrow or hire it, you should; and that is, 'L' Histoire des Traits de Paix, in two volumes, folio, which make part of the 'Corps Diplomatique'. You will there find a short and clear history, and the substance of every treaty made in Europe, during the last century, from the treaty of Vervins. Three parts in four of this book are not worth your reading, as they relate to treaties of very little importance; but if you select the most considerable ones, read them with attention, and take some notes, it will be of great use to you. Attend chiefly to those in which the great powers of Europe are the parties; such as the treaty of the Pyrenees, between France and Spain; the treaties of Nimeguen and Ryswick; but, above all, the treaty of Munster should be most circumstantially and minutely known to you, as almost every treaty made since has some reference to it. For this, Pere Bougeant is the best book you can read, as it takes in the thirty years' war, which preceded that treaty. The treaty itself, which is made a perpetual law of the empire, comes in the course of your lectures upon the 'Jus Publicum Imperii'.

In order to furnish you with materials for a letter, and at the same time to inform both you and myself of what it is right that we should know, pray answer me the following questions:

How many companies are there in the Saxon regiments of foot? How many men in each company?

How many troops in the regiments of horse and dragoons; and how many men in each?

What number of commissioned and non-commissioned officers in a company of foot, or in a troop of horse or dragoons? N. B. Noncommissioned officers are all those below ensigns and cornets.

Page 17

What is the daily pay of a Saxon foot soldier, dragoon, and trooper?

What are the several ranks of the 'Etat Major-general'? N. B. The Etat Major-general is everything above colonel. The Austrians have no brigadiers, and the French have no major-generals in their Etat Major. What have the Saxons? Adieu!

LETTER XXXIV

London, March 27, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: This little packet will be delivered to you by one Monsieur Duval, who is going to the fair at Leipsig. He is a jeweler, originally of Geneva, but who has been settled here these eight or ten years, and a very sensible fellow: pray do be very civil to him.

As I advised you, some time ago, to inform yourself of the civil and military establishments of as many of the kingdoms and states of Europe, as you should either be in yourself, or be able to get authentic accounts of, I send you here a little book, in which, upon the article of Hanover, I have pointed out the short method of putting down these informations, by way of helping your memory. The book being lettered, you can immediately turn to whatever article you want; and, by adding interleaves to each letter, may extend your minutes to what particulars you please. You may get such books made anywhere; and appropriate each, if you please, to a particular object. I have myself found great utility in this method. If I had known what to have sent you by this opportunity I would have done it. The French say, 'Que les petits presens entretiennent l'amite et que les grande l'augmentent'; but I could not recollect that you wanted anything, or at least anything that you cannot get as well at Leipsig as here. Do but continue to deserve, and, I assure you, that you shall never want anything I can give.

Do not apprehend that my being out of employment may be any prejudice to you. Many things will happen before you can be fit for business; and when you are fit, whatever my situation may be, it will always be in my power to help you in your first steps; afterward you must help yourself by your own abilities. Make yourself necessary, and, instead of soliciting, you will be solicited. The thorough knowledge of foreign affairs, the interests, the views, and the manners of the several courts in Europe, are not the common growth of this country. It is in your power to acquire them; you have all the means. Adieu!

Yours.

LETTERS TO HIS SON

LETTER XXXV

London, April 1, O. S. 1748.

Page 18

Dear boy: I have not received any letter, either from you or from Mr, Harte, these three posts, which I impute wholly to accidents between this place and Leipsig; and they are distant enough to admit of many. I always take it for granted that you are well, when I do not hear to the contrary; besides, as I have often told you, I am much more anxious about your doing well, than about your being well; and, when you do not write, I will suppose that you are doing something more useful. Your health will continue, while your temperance continues; and at your age nature takes sufficient care of the body, provided she is left to herself, and that intemperance on one hand, or medicines on the other, do not break in upon her. But it is by no means so with the mind, which, at your age particularly, requires great and constant care, and some physic. Every quarter of an hour, well or ill employed, will do it essential and lasting good or harm. It requires also a great deal of exercise, to bring it to a state of health and vigor. Observe the difference there is between minds cultivated, and minds uncultivated, and you will, I am sure, think that you cannot take too much pains, nor employ too much of your time in the culture of your own. A drayman is probably born with as good organs as Milton, Locke, or Newton; but, by culture, they are as much more above him as he is above his horse. Sometimes, indeed, extraordinary geniuses have broken out by the force of nature, without the assistance of education; but those instances are too rare for anybody to trust to; and even they would make a much greater figure, if they had the advantage of education into the bargain. If Shakespeare's genius had been cultivated, those beauties, which we so justly admire in him, would have been undisgraced by those extravagancies, and that nonsense, with which they are frequently accompanied. People are, in general, what they are made, by education and company, from fifteen to five-and-twenty; consider well, therefore, the importance of your next eight or nine years; your whole depends upon them. I will tell you sincerely, my hopes and my fears concerning you. I think you will be a good scholar; and that you will acquire a considerable stock of knowledge of various kinds; but I fear that you neglect what are called little, though, in truth, they are very material things; I mean, a gentleness of manners, an engaging address, and an insinuating behavior; they are real and solid advantages, and none but those who do not know the world, treat them as trifles. I am told that you speak very quick, and not distinctly; this is a most ungraceful and disagreeable trick, which you know I have told you of a thousand times; pray attend carefully to the correction of it. An agreeable and, distinct manner of speaking adds greatly to the matter; and I have known many a very good speech unregarded, upon account of the disagreeable manner in which it has been delivered, and many an indifferent one applauded, from the contrary reason. Adieu!



Page 19

LETTER XXXVI

London, April 15, O. S. 1748

Dear boy: Though I have no letters from you to acknowledge since my last to you, I will not let three posts go from hence without a letter from me. My affection always prompts me to write to you; and I am encouraged to do it, by the hopes that my letters are not quite useless. You will probably receive this in the midst of the diversions of Leipsig fair; at which, Mr. Harte tells me, that you are to shine in fine clothes, among fine folks. I am very glad of it, as it is time that you should begin to be formed to the manners of the world in higher life. Courts are the best schools for that sort of learning. You are beginning now with the outside of a court; and there is not a more gaudy one than that of Saxony. Attend to it, and make your observations upon the turn and manners of it, that you may hereafter compare it with other courts which you will see; And, though you are not yet able to be informed, or to judge of the political conduct and maxims of that court, yet you may remark the forms, the ceremonies, and the exterior state of it. At least see everything that you can see, and know everything that you can know of it, by asking questions. See likewise everything at the fair, from operas and plays, down to the Savoyard's raree-shows.

Everything is worth seeing once; and the more one sees, the less one either wonders or admires.

Make my compliments to Mr. Harte, and tell him that I have just now received his letter, for which I thank him. I am called away, and my letter is therefore very much shortened. Adieu.

I am impatient to receive your answers to the many questions that I have asked you.

LETTER XXXVII

London, April 26, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I am extremely pleased with your continuation of the history of the Reformation; which is one of those important eras that deserves your utmost attention, and of which you cannot be too minutely informed. You have, doubtless, considered the causes of that great event, and observed that disappointment and resentment had a much greater share in it, than a religious zeal or an abhorrence of the errors and abuses of popery.

Luther, an Augustine monk, enraged that his order, and consequently himself, had not the exclusive privilege of selling indulgences, but that the Dominicans were let into a share of that profitable but infamous trade, turns reformer, and exclaims against the



abuses, the corruption, and the idolatry, of the church of Rome; which were certainly gross enough for him to have seen long before, but which he had at least acquiesced in, till what he called the rights, that is, the profit, of his order came to be touched. It is true, the church of Rome furnished him ample matter for complaint and reformation, and he laid hold of it ably.

Page 20

This seems to me the true cause of that great and necessary, work; but whatever the cause was, the effect was good; and the Reformation spread itself by its own truth and fitness; was conscientiously received by great numbers in Germany, and other countries; and was soon afterward mixed up with the politics of princes; and, as it always happens in religious disputes, became the specious covering of injustice and ambition.

Under the pretense of crushing heresy, as it was called, the House of Austria meant to extend and establish its power in the empire; as, on the other hand, many Protestant princes, under the pretense of extirpating idolatry, or at least of securing toleration, meant only to enlarge their own dominions or privileges. These views respectively, among the chiefs on both sides, much more than true religious motives, continued what were called the religious wars in Germany, almost uninterruptedly, till the affairs of the two religions were finally settled by the treaty of Munster.

Were most historical events traced up to their true causes, I fear we should not find them much more noble or disinterested than Luther's disappointed avarice; and therefore I look with some contempt upon those refining and sagacious historians, who ascribe all, even the most common events, to some deep political cause; whereas mankind is made up of inconsistencies, and no man acts invariably up to his predominant character. The wisest man sometimes acts weakly, and the weakest sometimes wisely. Our jarring passions, our variable humors, nay, our greater or lesser degree of health and spirits, produce such contradictions in our conduct, that, I believe, those are the oftenest mistaken, who ascribe our actions to the most seemingly obvious motives; and I am convinced, that a light supper, a good night's sleep, and a fine morning, have sometimes made a hero of the same man, who, by an indigestion, a restless night, and rainy morning, would, have proved a coward. Our best conjectures, therefore, as to the true springs of actions, are but very uncertain; and the actions themselves are all that we must pretend to know from history. That Caesar was murdered by twenty-three conspirators, I make no doubt: but I very much doubt that their love of liberty, and of their country, was their sole, or even principal motive; and I dare say that, if the truth were known, we should find that many other motives at least concurred, even in the great Brutus himself; such as pride, envy, personal pique, and disappointment. Nay, I cannot help carrying my Pyrrhonism still further, and extending it often to historical facts themselves, at least to most of the circumstances with which they are related; and every day's experience confirms me in this historical incredulity. Do we ever hear the most recent fact related exactly in the same way, by the several people who were at the same time eyewitnesses of it? No. One mistakes, another misrepresents,

Page 21

and others warp it a little to their own, turn of mind, or private views. A man who has been concerned in a transaction will not write it fairly; and a man who has not, cannot. But notwithstanding all this uncertainty, history is not the less necessary to be known, as the best histories are taken for granted, and are the frequent subjects both of conversation and writing. Though I am convinced that Caesar's ghost never appeared to Brutus, yet I should be much ashamed to be ignorant of that fact, as related by the historians of those times. Thus the Pagan theology is universally received as matter for writing and conversation, though believed now by nobody; and we talk of Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, *etc.*, as gods, though we know, that if they ever existed at all, it was only as mere mortal men. This historical Pyrrhonism, then, proves nothing against the study and knowledge of history; which, of all other studies, is the most necessary for a man who is to live in the world. It only points out to us, not to be too decisive and peremptory; and to be cautious how we draw inferences for our own practice from remote facts, partially or ignorantly related; of which we can, at best, but imperfectly guess, and certainly not know the real motives. The testimonies of ancient history must necessarily be weaker than those of modern, as all testimony grows weaker and weaker, as it is more and more remote from us. I would therefore advise you to study ancient history, in general, as other people, do; that is, not to be ignorant of any or those facts which are universally received, upon the faith of the best historians; and whether true or false, you have them as other people have them. But modern history, I mean particularly that of the last three centuries, is what I would have you apply to with the greatest attention and exactness. There the probability of coming at the truth is much greater, as the testimonies are much more recent; besides, anecdotes, memoirs, and original letters, often come to the aid of modern history. The best memoirs that I know of are those of Cardinal de Retz, which I have once before recommended to you; and which I advise you to read more than once, with attention. There are many political maxims in these memoirs, most of which are printed in italics; pray attend to, and remember them. I never read them but my own experience confirms the truth of them. Many of them seem trifling to people who are not used to business; but those who are, feel the truth of them.

It is time to put an end to this long rambling letter; in which if any one thing can be of use to you, it will more than pay the trouble I have taken to write it. Adieu! Yours.

LETTER XXXVIII

London, May 10, O. S. 1748.

Page 22

Dear boy: I reckon that this letter will find you just returned from Dresden, where you have made your first court caravanne. What inclination for courts this taste of them may have given you, I cannot tell; but this I think myself sure of, from your good sense, that in leaving Dresden, you have left dissipation too; and have resumed at Leipsig that application which, if you like courts, can alone enable you to make a good figure at them. A mere courtier, without parts or knowledge, is the most frivolous and contemptible of all beings; as, on the other hand, a man of parts and knowledge, who acquires the easy and noble manners of a court, is the most perfect. It is a trite, commonplace observation, that courts are the seats of falsehood and dissimulation. That, like many, I might say most, commonplace observations, is false. Falsehood and dissimulation are certainly to be found at courts; but where are they not to be found? Cottages have them, as well as courts; only with worse manners. A couple of neighboring farmers in a village will contrive and practice as many tricks, to over-reach each other at the next market, or to supplant each other in the favor, of the squire, as any two courtiers can do to supplant each other in the favor of their prince.

Whatever poets may write, or fools believe, of rural innocence and truth, and of the perfidy of courts, this is most undoubtedly true that shepherds and ministers are both men; their nature and passions the same, the modes of them only different.

Having mentioned commonplace observations, I will particularly caution you against either using, believing, or approving them. They are the common topics of wittings and coxcombs; those, who really have wit, have the utmost contempt for them, and scorn even to laugh at the pert things that those would-be wits say upon such subjects.

Religion is one of their favorite topics; it is all priest-craft; and an invention contrived and carried on by priests of all religions, for their own power and profit; from this absurd and false principle flow the commonplace, insipid jokes, and insults upon the clergy. With these people, every priest, of every religion, is either a public or a concealed unbeliever, drunkard, and whoremaster; whereas, I conceive, that priests are extremely like other men, and neither the better nor the worse for wearing a gown or a surplice: but if they are different from other people, probably it is rather on the side of religion and morality, or, at least, decency, from their education and manner of life.

Another common topic for false wit, and cool raillery, is matrimony. Every man and his wife hate each other cordially, whatever they may pretend, in public, to the contrary. The husband certainly wishes his wife at the devil, and the wife certainly cuckolds her husband. Whereas, I presume, that men and their wives neither love nor hate each other the more, upon account of the form of matrimony which has been said over them. The cohabitation, indeed, which is the consequence of matrimony, makes them either love or hate more, accordingly as they respectively deserve it; but that would be exactly the same between any man and woman who lived together without being married.

Page 23

These and many other commonplace reflections upon nations or professions in general (which are at least as often false as true), are the poor refuge of people who have neither wit nor invention of their own, but endeavor to shine in company by second-hand finery. I always put these pert jackanapes out of countenance, by looking extremely grave, when they expect that I should laugh at their pleasantries; and by saying *well, and so*, as if they had not done, and that the sting were still to come. This disconcerts them, as they have no resources in themselves, and have but one set of jokes to live upon. Men of parts are not reduced to these shifts, and have the utmost contempt for them, they find proper subjects enough for either useful or lively conversations; they can be witty without satire or commonplace, and serious without being dull. The frequentation of courts checks this petulancy of manners; the good-breeding and circumspection which are necessary, and only to be learned there, correct those perversities. I do not doubt but that you are improved in your manners by the short visit which you have made at Dresden; and the other courts, which I intend that you shall be better acquainted with, will gradually smooth you up to the highest polish. In courts, a versatility of genius and softness of manners are absolutely necessary; which some people mistake for abject flattery, and having no opinion of one's own; whereas it is only the decent and genteel manner of maintaining your own opinion, and possibly of bringing other people to it. The manner of doing things is often more important than the things themselves; and the very same thing may become either pleasing or offensive, by the manner of saying or doing it. 'Materiam superabat opus', is often said of works of sculpture; where though the materials were valuable, as silver, gold, *etc.*, the workmanship was still more so. This holds true, applied to manners; which adorn whatever knowledge or parts people may have; and even make a greater impression upon nine in ten of mankind, than the intrinsic value of the materials. On the other hand, remember, that what Horace says of good writing is justly applicable to those who would make a good figure in courts, and distinguish themselves in the shining parts of life; 'Sapere est principium et fons'. A man who, without a good fund of knowledge and parts, adopts a court life, makes the most ridiculous figure imaginable. He is a machine, little superior to the court clock; and, as this points out the hours, he points out the frivolous employment of them. He is, at most, a comment upon the clock; and according to the hours that it strikes, tells you now it is levee, now dinner, now supper time, *etc.* The end which I propose by your education, and which (*if you please*) I shall certainly attain, is to unite in you all the knowledge of a scholar with the manners of a courtier; and to join, what is seldom joined by any of my countrymen,

Page 24

books and the world. They are commonly twenty years old before they have spoken to anybody above their schoolmaster, and the fellows of their college. If they happen to have learning, it is only Greek and Latin, but not one word of modern history, or modern languages. Thus prepared, they go abroad, as they call it; but, in truth, they stay at home all that while; for being very awkward, confoundedly ashamed, and not speaking the languages, they go into no foreign company, at least none good; but dine and sup with one another only at the tavern. Such examples, I am sure, you will not imitate, but even carefully avoid. You will always take care to keep the best company in the place where you are, which is the only use of traveling: and (by the way) the pleasures of a gentleman are only to be found in the best company; for that not which low company, most falsely and impudently, call pleasure, is only the sensuality of a swine.

I ask hard and uninterrupted study from you but one year more; after that, you shall have every day more and more time for your amusements. A few hours each day will then be sufficient for application, and the others cannot be better employed than in the pleasures of good company. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIX

London, May 31, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I received yesterday your letter of the 16th, N. S., and have, in consequence of it, written this day to Sir Charles Williams, to thank him for all the civilities he has shown you. Your first setting out at court has, I find, been very favorable; and his Polish Majesty has distinguished you. I hope you received that mark of distinction with respect and with steadiness, which is the proper behavior of a man of fashion. People of a low, obscure education cannot stand the rays of greatness; they are frightened out of their wits when kings and great men speak to them; they are awkward, ashamed, and do not know what nor how to answer; whereas, 'les honnetes gens' are not dazzled by superior rank: they know, and pay all the respect that is due to it; but they do it without being disconcerted; and can converse just as easily with a king as with any one of his subjects. That is the great advantage of being introduced young into good company, and being used early to converse with one's superiors. How many men have I seen here, who, after having had the full benefit of an English education, first at school, and then at the university, when they have been presented to the king, did not know whether they stood upon their heads or their heels! If the king spoke to them, they were annihilated; they trembled, endeavored to put their hands in their pockets, and missed them; let their hats fall, and were ashamed to take them up; and in short, put themselves in every attitude but the right, that is, the easy and natural one. The characteristic of a well-bred man, is to converse with his inferiors without insolence, and

Page 25

with his superiors with respect and ease. He talks to kings without concern; he trifles with women of the first condition with familiarity, gayety, but respect; and converses with his equals, whether he is acquainted with them or not, upon general common topics, that are not, however, quite frivolous, without the least concern of mind or awkwardness of body: neither of which can appear to advantage, but when they are perfectly easy.

The tea-things, which Sir Charles Williams has given you, I would have you make a present of to your Mamma, and send them to her by Duval when he returns. You owe her not only duty, but likewise great obligations for her care and tenderness; and, consequently, cannot take too many opportunities of showing your gratitude.

I am impatient to receive your account of Dresden, and likewise your answers to the many questions that I asked you.

Adieu for this time, and God bless you!

LETTER XL

London, May 27, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: This and the two next years make so important a period of your life, that I cannot help repeating to you my exhortations, my commands, and (what I hope will be still more prevailing with you than either) my earnest entreaties, to employ them well. Every moment that you now lose, is so much character and advantage lost; as, on the other hand, every moment that you now employ usefully, is so much time wisely laid out, at most prodigious interest. These two years must lay the foundations of all the knowledge that you will ever have; you may build upon them afterward as much as you please, but it will be too late to lay any new ones. Let me beg of you, therefore, to grudge no labor nor pains to acquire, in time, that stock of knowledge, without which you never can rise, but must make a very insignificant figure in the world. Consider your own situation; you have not the advantage of rank or fortune to bear you up; I shall, very probably, be out of the world before you can properly be said to be in it. What then will you have to rely on but your own merit? That alone must raise you, and that alone will raise you, if you have but enough of it. I have often heard and read of oppressed and unrewarded merit, but I have oftener (I might say always) seen great merit make its way, and meet with its reward, to a certain degree at least, in spite of all difficulties. By merit, I mean the moral virtues, knowledge, and manners; as to the moral virtues, I say nothing to you; they speak best for themselves, nor can I suspect that they want any recommendation with you; I will therefore only assure you, that without them you will be most unhappy.

Page 26

As to knowledge, I have often told you, and I am persuaded you are thoroughly convinced, how absolutely necessary it is to you, whatever your destination may be. But as knowledge has a most extensive meaning, and as the life of man is not long enough to acquire, nor his mind capable of entertaining and digesting, all parts of knowledge, I will point out those to which you should particularly apply, and which, by application, you may make yourself perfect master of. Classical knowledge, that is, Greek and Latin, is absolutely necessary for everybody; because everybody has agreed to think and to call it so. And the word *illiterate*, in its common acceptation, means a man who is ignorant of those two languages. You are by this time, I hope, pretty near master of both, so that a small part of the day dedicated to them, for two years more, will make you perfect in that study. Rhetoric, logic, a little geometry, and a general notion of astronomy, must, in their turns, have their hours too; not that I desire you should be deep in any one of these; but it is fit you should know something of them all. The knowledge more particularly useful and necessary for you, considering your destination, consists of modern languages, modern history, chronology, and geography, the laws of nations, and the 'jus publicum Imperii'. You must absolutely speak all the modern Languages, as purely and correctly as the natives of the respective countries: for whoever does not speak a language perfectly and easily, will never appear to advantage in conversation, nor treat with others in it upon equal terms. As for French, you have it very well already; and must necessarily, from the universal usage of that language, know it better and better every day: so that I am in no pain about that: German, I suppose, you know pretty well by this time, and will be quite master of it before you leave Leipsig: at least, I am sure you may. Italian and Spanish will come in their turns, and, indeed, they are both so easy, to one who knows Latin and French, that neither of them will cost you much time or trouble. Modern history, by which I mean particularly the history of the last three centuries, should be the object of your greatest and constant attention, especially those parts of it which relate more immediately to the great powers of Europe. This study you will carefully connect with chronology and geography; that is, you will remark and retain the dates of every important event; and always read with the map by you, in which you will constantly look for every place mentioned: this is the only way of retaining geography; for, though it is soon learned by the lump, yet, when only so learned, it is still sooner forgot.

Page 27

Manners, though the last, and it may be the least ingredient of real merit, are, however, very far from being useless in its composition; they adorn, and give an additional force and luster to both virtue and knowledge. They prepare and smooth the way for the progress of both; and are, I fear, with the bulk of mankind, more engaging than either. Remember, then, the infinite advantage of manners; cultivate and improve your own to the utmost good sense will suggest the great rules to you, good company will do the rest. Thus you see how much you have to do; and how little time to do it in: for when you are thrown out into the world, as in a couple of years you must be, the unavoidable dissipation of company, and the necessary avocations of some kind of business or other, will leave you no time to undertake new branches of knowledge: you may, indeed, by a prudent allotment of your time, reserve some to complete and finish the building; but you will never find enough to lay new foundations. I have such an opinion of your understanding, that I am convinced you are sensible of these truths; and that, however hard and laborious your present uninterrupted application may seem to you, you will rather increase than lessen it. For God's sake, my dear boy, do not squander away one moment of your time, for every moment may be now most usefully employed. Your future fortune, character, and figure in the world, entirely depend upon your use or abuse of the two next years. If you do but employ them well, what may you not reasonably expect to be, in time? And if you do not, what may I not reasonably fear you will be? You are the only one I ever knew, of this country, whose education was, from the beginning, calculated for the department of foreign affairs; in consequence of which, if you will invariably pursue, and diligently qualify yourself for that object, you may make yourself absolutely necessary to the government, and, after having received orders as a minister abroad, send orders, in your turn, as Secretary of State at home. Most of our ministers abroad have taken up that department occasionally, without having ever thought of foreign affairs before; many of them, without speaking any one foreign language; and all of them without manners which are absolutely necessary toward being well received, and making a figure at foreign courts. They do the business accordingly, that is, very ill: they never get into the secrets of these courts, for want of insinuation and address: they do not guess at their views, for want of knowing their interests: and, at last, finding themselves very unfit for, soon grow weary of their commissions, and are impatient to return home, where they are but too justly laid aside and neglected. Every moment's conversation may, if you please, be of use to you; in this view, every public event, which is the common topic of conversation, gives you an opportunity of getting some information. For example, the preliminaries of peace, lately concluded

Page 28

at Aix-la-Chapelle, will be the common subject of most conversations; in which you will take care to ask the proper questions: as, what is the meaning of the Assiento contract for negroes, between England and Spain; what the annual ship; when stipulated; upon what account suspended, *etc.* You will likewise inform yourself about Guastalla, now given to Don Philip, together with Parma and Placentia; who they belonged to before; what claim or pretensions Don Philip had to them; what they are worth; in short, everything concerning them. The cessions made by the Queen of Hungary to the King of Sardinia, are, by these preliminaries, confirmed and secured to him: you will inquire, therefore, what they are, and what they are worth. This is the kind of knowledge which you should be most thoroughly master of, and in which conversation will help you almost as much as books: but both are best. There are histories of every considerable treaty, from that of Westphalia to that of Utrecht, inclusively; all which I would advise you to read. Pore Bougeant's, of the treaty of Westphalia, is an excellent one; those of Nimeguen, Ryswick, and Utrecht, are not so well written; but are, however, very useful. 'L'Histoire des Traites de Paix', in two volumes, folio, which I recommended to you some time ago, is a book that you should often consult, when you hear mention made of any treaty concluded in the seventeenth century.

Upon the whole, if you have a mind to be considerable, and to shine hereafter, you must labor hard now. No quickness of parts, no vivacity, will do long, or go far, without a solid fund of knowledge; and that fund of knowledge will amply repay all the pains that you can take in acquiring it. Reflect seriously, within yourself, upon all this, and ask yourself whether I can have any view, but your interest, in all that I recommend to you. It is the result of my experience, and flows from that tenderness and affection with which, while you deserve them, I shall be, Yours.

Make my compliments to Mr. Harte, and tell him that I have received his letter of the 24th, N. S.

LETTER XLI

London, May 31, O. S. 1748

Dear boy: I have received, with great satisfaction, your letter of the 28th N. S., from Dresden: it finishes your short but clear account of the Reformation which is one of those interesting periods of modern history, that can not be too much studied nor too minutely known by you. There are many great events in history, which, when once they are over, leave things in the situation in which they found them. As, for instance, the late war; which, excepting the establishment in Italy for Don Philip, leave things pretty much in state quo; a mutual restitution of all acquisitions being stipulated by the

preliminaries of the peace. Such events undoubtedly deserve your notice, but yet not so minutely as those, which

Page 29

are not only important in themselves, but equally (or it may be more) important by their consequences too: of this latter sort were the progress of the Christian religion in Europe; the Invasion of the Goths; the division of the Roman empire into Western and Eastern; the establishment and rapid progress of Mahometanism; and, lastly, the Reformation; all which events produced the greatest changes in the affairs of Europe, and to one or other of which, the present situation of all the parts of it is to be traced up.

Next to these, are those events which more immediately effect particular states and kingdoms, and which are reckoned entirely local, though their influence may, and indeed very often does, indirectly, extend itself further, such as civil wars and revolutions, from which a total change in the form of government frequently flows. The civil wars in England, in the reign of King Charles I., produced an entire change of the government here, from a limited monarchy to a commonwealth, at first, and afterward to absolute power, usurped by Cromwell, under the pretense of protection, and the title of Protector.

The Revolution in 1688, instead of changing, preserved one form of government; which King James II. intended to subvert, and establish absolute power in the Crown.

These are the two great epochs in our English history, which I recommend to your particular attention.

The league formed by the House of Guise, and fomented by the artifices of Spain, is a most material part of the history of France. The foundation of it was laid in the reign of Henry II., but the superstructure was carried on through the successive reigns of Francis II., Charles IX. and Henry III., till at last it was crushed, partly, by the arms, but more by the apostasy of Henry IV.

In Germany, great events have been frequent, by which the imperial dignity has always either gotten or lost; and so it they have affected the constitution of the empire. The House of Austria kept that dignity to itself for near two hundred years, during which time it was always attempting extend its power, by encroaching upon the rights and privileges of the other states of the empire; till at the end of the bellum tricennale, the treaty of Munster, of which France is guarantee, fixed the respective claims.

Italy has been constantly torn to pieces, from the time of the Goths, by the Popes and the Anti-popes, severally supported by other great powers of Europe, more as their interests than as their religion led them; by the pretensions also of France, and the House of Austria, upon Naples, Sicily, and the Milanese; not to mention the various lesser causes of squabbles there, for the little states, such as Ferrara, Parma, Montserrat, *etc.*

Page 30

The Popes, till lately, have always taken a considerable part, and had great influence in the affairs of Europe; their excommunications, bulls, and indulgences, stood instead of armies in the time of ignorance and bigotry; but now that mankind is better informed, the spiritual authority of the Pope is not only less regarded, but even despised by the Catholic princes themselves; and his Holiness is actually little more than Bishop of Rome, with large temporalities, which he is not likely to keep longer than till the other greater powers in Italy shall find their conveniency in taking them from him. Among the modern Popes, Leo the Tenth, Alexander the Sixth, and Sextus Quintus, deserve your particular notice; the first, among other things, for his own learning and taste, and for his encouragement of the reviving arts and sciences in Italy. Under his protection, the Greek and Latin classics were most excellently translated into Italian; painting flourished and arrived at its perfection; and sculpture came so near the ancients, that the works of his time, both in marble and bronze, are now called Antico-Moderno.

Alexander the Sixth, together with his natural son Caesar Borgia, was famous for his wickedness, in which he, and his son too, surpassed all imagination. Their lives are well worth your reading. They were poisoned themselves by the poisoned wine which they had prepared for others; the father died of it, but Caesar recovered.

Sixtus the Fifth was the son of a swineherd, and raised himself to the popedom by his abilities: he was a great knave, but an able and singular one.

Here is history enough for to-day: you shall have some more soon. Adieu.

LETTER XLII

London, June 21, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: Your very bad enunciation runs so much in my head, and gives me such real concern, that it will be the subject of this, and, I believe, of many more letters. I congratulate both you and myself, that, was informed of it (as I hope) in time to prevent it: and shall ever think myself, as hereafter you will, I am sure think yourself, infinitely obliged to Sir Charles Williams for informing me of it. Good God! if this ungraceful and disagreeable manner of speaking had, either by your negligence or mine, become habitual to you, as in a couple of years more it would have been, what a figure would you have made in company, or in a public assembly? Who would have liked you in the one or attended you; in the other? Read what Cicero and Quintilian say of enunciation, and see what a stress they lay upon the gracefulness of it; nay, Cicero goes further, and even maintains, that a good figure is necessary for an orator; and particularly that he must not be vastus, that is, overgrown and clumsy. He shows by it that he knew mankind well, and knew the powers of an agreeable figure and a graceful, manner. Men, as well as women, are much oftener led by their

Page 31

hearts than by their understandings. The way to the heart is through the senses; please their eyes and their ears and the work is half done. I have frequently known a man's fortune decided for ever by his first address. If it is pleasing, people are hurried involuntarily into a persuasion that he has a merit, which possibly he has not; as, on the other hand, if it is ungraceful, they are immediately prejudiced against him, and unwilling to allow him the merit which it may be he has. Nor is this sentiment so unjust and unreasonable as at first it may seem; for if a man has parts, he must know of what infinite consequence it is to him to have a graceful manner of speaking, and a genteel and pleasing address; he will cultivate and improve them to the utmost. Your figure is a good one; you have no natural defect in the organs of speech; your address may be engaging, and your manner of speaking graceful, if you will; so that if you are not so, neither I nor the world can ascribe it to anything but your want of parts. What is the constant and just observation as to all actors upon the stage? Is it not, that those who have the best sense, always speak the best, though they may happen not to have the best voices? They will speak plainly, distinctly, and with the proper emphasis, be their voices ever so bad. Had Roscius spoken *quick, thick, and ungracefully*, I will answer for it, that Cicero would not have thought him worth the oration which he made in his favor. Words were given us to communicate our ideas by: and there must be something inconceivably absurd in uttering them in such a manner as that either people cannot understand them, or will not desire to understand them. I tell you, truly and sincerely, that I shall judge of your parts by your speaking gracefully or ungracefully. If you have parts, you will never be at rest till you have brought yourself to a habit of speaking most gracefully; for I aver, that it is in your power — You will desire Mr. Harte, that you may read aloud to him every day; and that he will interrupt and correct you every time that you read too fast, do not observe the proper stops, or lay a wrong emphasis. You will take care to open your teeth when you speak; to articulate every word distinctly; and to beg of Mr. Harte, Mr. Eliot, or whomsoever you speak to, to remind and stop you, if you ever fall into the rapid and unintelligible mutter. You will even read aloud to yourself, and time your utterance to your own ear; and read at first much slower than you need to do, in order to correct yourself of that shameful trick of speaking faster than you ought. In short, if you think right, you will make it your business; your study, and your pleasure to speak well. Therefore, what I have said in this, and in my last, is more than sufficient, if you have sense; and ten times more would not be sufficient, if you have not; so here I rest it.

Page 32

Next to graceful speaking, a genteel carriage, and a graceful manner of presenting yourself, are extremely necessary, for they are extremely engaging: and carelessness in these points is much more unpardonable in a young fellow than affectation. It shows an offensive indifference about pleasing. I am told by one here, who has seen you lately, that you are awkward in your motions, and negligent of your person: I am sorry for both; and so will you be, when it will be too late, if you continue so some time longer. Awkwardness of carriage is very alienating; and a total negligence of dress and air is an impertinent insult upon custom and fashion. You remember Mr.-----very well, I am sure, and you must consequently remember his, extreme awkwardness: which, I can assure you, has been a great clog to his parts and merit, that have, with much difficulty, but barely counterbalanced it at last. Many, to whom I have formerly commended him, have answered me, that they were sure he could not have parts, because he was so awkward: so much are people, as I observed to you before, taken by the eye. Women have great influence as to a man's fashionable character; and an awkward man will never have their votes; which, by the way, are very numerous, and much oftener counted than weighed. You should therefore give some attention to your dress, and the gracefulness of your motions. I believe, indeed, that you have no perfect model for either at Leipsig, to form yourself upon; but, however, do not get a habit of neglecting either; and attend properly to both, when you go to courts, where they are very necessary, and where you will have good masters and good models for both. Your exercises of riding, fencing, and dancing, will civilize and fashion your body and your limbs, and give you, if you will but take it, 'l'air d'un honnete homme'.

I will now conclude with suggesting one reflection to you; which is, that you should be sensible of your good fortune, in having one who interests himself enough in you, to inquire into your faults, in order to inform you of them. Nobody but myself would be so solicitous, either to know or correct them; so that you might consequently be ignorant of them yourself; for our own self-love draws a thick veil between us and our faults. But when you hear yours from me, you may be sure that you hear them from one who for your sake only desires to correct them; from one whom you cannot suspect of any, partiality but in your favor; and from one who heartily wishes that his care of you, as a father, may, in a little time, render every care unnecessary but that of a friend. Adieu.

P. S. I condole with you for the untimely and violent death of the tuneful Matzel.

LETTER XLIII

London, July 1, O. S. 1748.

Page 33

Dear Boy: I am extremely well pleased with the course of studies which Mr. Harte informs me you are now in, and with the degree of application which he assures me you have to them. It is your interest to do so, as the advantage will be all your own. My affection for you makes me both wish and endeavor that you may turn out well; and, according as you do turn out, I shall either be proud or ashamed of you. But as to mere interest, in the common acceptation of that word, it would be mine that you should turn out ill; for you may depend upon it, that whatever you have from me shall be most exactly proportioned to your desert. Deserve a great deal, and you shall have a great deal; deserve a little, and you shall have but a little; and be good for nothing at all, and, I assure you, you shall have nothing at all.

Solid knowledge, as I have often told you, is the first and great foundation of your future fortune and character; for I never mention to you the two much greater points of Religion and Morality, because I cannot possibly suspect you as to either of them. This solid knowledge you are in a fair way of acquiring; you may, if you please; and I will add, that nobody ever had the means of acquiring it more in their power than you have. But remember, that manners must adorn knowledge, and smooth its way through the world. Like a great rough diamond, it may do very well in a closet by way of curiosity, and also for its intrinsic value; but it will never be worn or shine if it is not polished. It is upon this article, I confess, that I suspect you the most, which makes me recur to it so often; for I fear that you are apt to show too little attention to everybody, and too much contempt to many. Be convinced, that there are no persons so insignificant and inconsiderable, but may, some time or other, have it in their power to be of use to you; which they certainly will not, if you have once shown them contempt. Wrongs are often forgiven; but contempt never is. Our pride remembers it forever. It implies a discovery of weaknesses, which we are much more careful to conceal than crimes. Many a man will confess his crimes to a common friend, but I never knew a man who would tell his silly weaknesses to his most intimate one—as many a friend will tell us our faults without reserve, who will not so much as hint at our follies; that discovery is too mortifying to our self-love, either to tell another, or to be told of one's self. You must, therefore, never expect to hear of your weaknesses, or your follies, from anybody but me; those I will take pains to discover, and whenever I do, shall tell you of them.

Next to manners are exterior graces of person and address, which adorn manners, as manners adorn knowledge. To say that they please, engage, and charm, as they most indisputably do, is saying that one should do everything possible to acquire them. The graceful manner of speaking is, particularly, what I shall always holloa in your ears, as Hotspur holloaed *Mortimer* to Henry IV., and, like him too, I have aimed to have a starling taught to say, *speak distinctly and gracefully*, and send him you, to replace your loss of the unfortunate Matzel, who, by the way, I am told, spoke his language very distinctly and gracefully.

Page 34

As by this time you must be able to write German tolerably well, I desire that you will not fail to write a German letter, in the German character, once every fortnight, to Mr. Grevenkop: which will make it more familiar to you, and enable me to judge how you improve in it.

Do not forget to answer me the questions, which I asked you a great while ago, in relation to the constitution of Saxony; and also the meaning of the words 'Landsassii and Amptsassii'.

I hope you do not forget to inquire into the affairs of trade and commerce, nor to get the best accounts you can of the commodities and manufactures, exports and imports of the several countries where you may be, and their gross value.

I would likewise have you attend to the respective coins, gold, silver, copper, *etc.*, and their value, compared with our coin's; for which purpose I would advise you to put up, in a separate piece of paper, one piece of every kind, wherever you shall be, writing upon it the name and the value. Such a collection will be curious enough in itself; and that sort of knowledge will be very useful to you in your way of business, where the different value of money often comes in question.

I am doing to Cheltenham to-morrow, less for my health; which is pretty good, than for the dissipation and amusement of the journey. I shall stay about a fortnight.

L'Abbe Mably's 'Droit de l'Europe', which Mr. Harte is so kind as to send me, is worth your reading. Adieu.

LETTER XLIV.

Cheltenham, July 6, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: Your school-fellow, Lord Pulteney,—[Only child of the Right Hon. William Pulteney, Earl of Bath. He died before his father.]—set out last week for Holland, and will, I believe, be at Leipsig soon after this letter: you will take care to be extremely civil to him, and to do him any service that you can while you stay there; let him know that I wrote to you to do so. As being older, he should know more than you; in that case, take pains to get up to him; but if he does not, take care not to let him feel his inferiority. He will find it out of himself without your endeavors; and that cannot be helped: but nothing is more insulting, more mortifying and less forgiven, than avowedly to take pains to make a man feel a mortifying inferiority in knowledge, rank, fortune, *etc.* In the two last articles, it is unjust, they not being in his power: and in the first it is both ill-bred and ill-natured. Good-breeding, and good-nature, do incline us rather to raise and help people up to ourselves, than to mortify and depress them, and, in truth, our own private interest concurs in it, as it is making ourselves so many friends, instead of so many enemies.

The constant practice of what the French call 'les Attentions', is a most necessary ingredient in the art of pleasing; they flatter the self-love of those to whom they are shown; they engage, they captivate, more than things of much greater importance. The duties of social life every man is obliged to discharge; but these attentions are voluntary acts, the free-will offerings of good-breeding and good nature; they are received, remembered, and returned as such. Women, particularly, have a right to them; and any omission in that respect is downright ill-breeding.

Page 35

Do you employ your, whole time in the most useful manner? I do not mean, do you study all day long? nor do I require it. But I mean, do you make the most of the respective allotments of your time? While you study, is it with attention? When you divert yourself, is it with spirit? Your diversions may, if you please, employ some part of your time very usefully. It depends entirely upon the nature of them. If they are futile and frivolous it is time worse than lost, for they will give you an habit of futility. All gaming, field-sports, and such sort of amusements, where neither the understanding nor the senses have the least share, I look upon as frivolous, and as the resources of little minds, who either do not think, or do not love to think. But the pleasures of a man of parts either flatter the senses or improve the mind; I hope at least, that there is not one minute of the day in which you do nothing at all. Inaction at your age is unpardonable.

Tell me what Greek and Latin books you can now read with ease. Can you open Demosthenes at a venture, and understand him? Can you get through an "Oration" of Cicero, or a "Satire" of Horace, without difficulty? What German books do you read, to make yourself master of that language? And what French books do you read for your amusement? Pray give me a particular and true account of all this; for I am not indifferent as to any one thing that relates to you. As, for example, I hope you take great care to keep your whole person, particularly your mouth, very clean; common decency requires it, besides that great cleanliness is very conducive to health. But if you do not keep your mouth excessively clean, by washing it carefully every morning, and after every meal, it will not only be apt to smell, which is very disgusting and indecent, but your teeth will decay and ache, which is both a great loss and a great pain. A spruceness of dress is also very proper and becoming at your age; as the negligence of it implies an indifference about pleasing, which does not become a young fellow. To do whatever you do at all to the utmost perfection, ought to be your aim at this time of your life; if you can reach perfection, so much the better; but at least, by attempting it, you will get much nearer than if you never attempted it at all.

Adieu! *Speak gracefully and distinctly* if you intend to converse ever with, Yours.

P. S. As I was making up my letter, I received yours of the 6th, O. S. I like your dissertation upon Preliminary Articles and Truces. Your definitions of both are true. Those are matters which I would have you be master of; they belong to your future department, But remember too, that they are matters upon which you will much oftener have occasion to speak than to write; and that, consequently, it is full as necessary to speak gracefully and distinctly upon them as to write clearly and elegantly. I find no authority among the ancients, nor indeed among the moderns, for

Page 36

indistinct and unintelligible utterance. The Oracles indeed meant to be obscure; but then it was by the ambiguity of the expression, and not by the inarticulation of the words. For if people had not thought, at least, they understood them, they would neither have frequented nor presented them as they did. There was likewise among the ancients, and is still among the moderns, a sort of people called Ventriloqui, who speak from their bellies, on make the voice seem to come from some other part of the room than that where they are. But these Ventriloqui speak very distinctly and intelligibly. The only thing, then, that I can find like a precedent for your way of speaking (and I would willingly help you to one if I could) is the modern art 'de persifler', practiced with great success by the 'Petits maitres' at Paris. This noble art consists in picking out some grave, serious man, who neither understands nor expects, raillery, and talking to him very quick, and inarticulate sounds; while the man, who thinks that he did not hear well; or attend sufficiently, says, 'Monsieur?' or 'Plait-il'? a hundred times; which affords matter of much mirth to those ingenious gentlemen. Whether you would follow, this precedent, I submit to you.

Have you carried no English or French comedies of tragedies with you to Leipsig? If you have, I insist upon your reciting some passages of them every day to Mr. Harte in the most distinct and graceful manner, as if you were acting them upon a stage.

The first part of my, letter is more than an answer to your questions concerning Lord Pulteney.

LETTER XLV

London, July, 20, O. S. 1748

Dear boy: There are two sorts of understandings; one of which hinders a man from ever being considerable, and the other commonly makes him ridiculous; I mean the lazy mind, and the trifling, frivolous mind: Yours, I hope, is neither. The lazy mind will not take the trouble of going to the bottom of anything; but, discouraged by the first difficulties (and everything worth knowing or having is attained with some), stops short, contents, itself with easy, and consequently superficial knowledge, and prefers a great degree of ignorance to a small degree of trouble. These people either think, or represent most things as impossible; whereas, few things are so to industry and activity. But difficulties seem to them, impossibilities, or at least they pretend to think them so—by way of excuse for their laziness. An hour's attention to the same subject is too laborious for them; they take everything in the light in which it first presents itself; never consider, it in all its different views; and, in short, never think it through. The consequence of this is that when they come to speak upon these subjects, before

people who have considered them with attention; they only discover their own ignorance and laziness, and lay themselves

Page 37

open to answers that put them in confusion. Do not then be discouraged by the first difficulties, but 'contra audentior ito'; and resolve to go to the bottom of all those things which every gentleman ought to know well. Those arts or sciences which are peculiar to certain professions, need not be deeply known by those who are not intended for those professions. As, for instance; fortification and navigation; of both which, a superficial and general knowledge, such as the common course of conversation, with a very little inquiry on your part, will give you, is sufficient. Though, by the way, a little more knowledge of fortification may be of some use to you; as the events of war, in sieges, make many of the terms, of that science occur frequently in common conversation; and one would be sorry to say, like the Marquis de Mascarille in Moliere's 'Precieuses Ridicules', when he hears of 'une demie lune, Ma foi! c'etoit bien une lune toute entiere'. But those things which every, gentleman, independently of profession, should know, he ought to know well, and dive into all the depth of them. Such are languages, history, and geography ancient and modern, philosophy, rational logic; rhetoric; and, for you particularly, the constitutions and the civil and military state of every country in Europe: This, I confess; is a pretty large circle of knowledge, attended with some difficulties, and requiring some trouble; which, however; an active and industrious mind will overcome; and be amply repaid. The trifling and frivolous mind is always busied, but to little purpose; it takes little objects for great ones, and throws away upon trifles that time and attention which only important things deserve. Knick-knacks; butterflies; shells, insects, etc., are the subjects of their most serious researches. They contemplate the dress, not the characters of the company they keep. They attend more to the decorations of a play than the sense of it; and to the ceremonies of a court more than to its politics. Such an employment of time is an absolute loss of it. You have now, at most, three years to employ either well or ill; for, as I have often told you, you will be all your life what you shall be three years hence. For God's sake then reflect. Will you throw this time away either in laziness, or in trifles? Or will you not rather employ every moment of it in a manner that must so soon reward you with so much pleasure, figure, and character? I cannot, I will not doubt of your choice. Read only useful books; and never quit a subject till you are thoroughly master of it, but read and inquire on till then. When you are in company, bring the conversation to some useful subject, but 'a portee' of that company. Points of history, matters of literature, the customs of particular countries, the several orders of knighthood, as Teutonic, Maltese, etc., are surely better subjects of conversation, than the weather, dress, or fiddle-faddle stories, that carry no information

Page 38

along with them. The characters of kings and great men are only to be learned in conversation; for they are never fairly written during their lives. This, therefore, is an entertaining and instructive subject of conversation, and will likewise give you an opportunity of observing how very differently characters are given, from the different passions and views of those who give them. Never be ashamed nor afraid of asking questions: for if they lead to information, and if you accompany them with some excuse, you will never be reckoned an impertinent or rude questioner. All those things, in the common course of life, depend entirely upon the manner; and, in that respect, the vulgar saying is true, 'That one man can better steal a horse, than another look over the hedge.' There are few things that may not be said, in some manner or other; either in a seeming confidence, or a genteel irony, or introduced with wit; and one great part of the knowledge of the world consists in knowing when and where to make use of these different manners. The graces of the person, the countenance, and the way of speaking, contribute so much to this, that I am convinced, the very same thing, said by a genteel person in an engaging way, and *gracefully* and distinctly spoken, would please, which would shock, if *muttered* out by an awkward figure, with a sullen, serious countenance. The poets always represent Venus as attended by the three Graces, to intimate that even beauty will not do without: I think they should have given Minerva three also; for without them, I am sure learning is very unattractive. Invoke them, then, *distinctly*, to accompany all your words and motions. Adieu.

P. S. Since I wrote what goes before, I have received your letter, *of no date*, with the inclosed state of the Prussian forces: of which, I hope, you have kept a copy; this you should lay in a 'portefeuille', and add to it all the military establishments that you can get of other states and kingdoms: the Saxon establishment you may, doubtless, easily find. By the way, do not forget to send me answers to the questions which I sent you some time ago, concerning both the civil and the ecclesiastical affairs of Saxony.

Do not mistake me, and think I only mean that you should speak elegantly with regard to style, and the purity of language; but I mean, that you should deliver and pronounce what you say gracefully and distinctly; for which purpose I will have you frequently read very loud, to Mr. Harte, recite parts of orations, and speak passages of plays; for, without a graceful and pleasing enunciation, all your elegance of style, in speaking, is not worth one farthing.

Page 39

I am very glad that Mr. Lyttelton approves of my new house, and particularly of my *canonical*—[James Brydges, duke of Chandos, built a most magnificent and elegant house at *cannons*, about eight miles from London. It was superbly furnished with fine pictures, statues, *etc.*, which, after his death, were sold, by auction. Lord Chesterfield purchased the hall-pillars, the floor; and staircase with double flights; which are now in Chesterfield House, London.]—pillars. My bust of Cicero is a very fine one, and well preserved; it will have the best place in my library, unless at your return you bring me over as good a modern head of your own, which I should like still better. I can tell you, that I shall examine it as attentively as ever antiquary did an old one.

Make my compliments to Mr. Harte, at whose recovery I rejoice.

LETTER XLVI

London, August 2, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: Duval the jeweler, is arrived, and was with me three or four days ago. You will easily imagine that I asked him a few questions concerning you; and I will give you the satisfaction of knowing that, upon the whole, I was very well pleased with the account he gave me. But, though he seemed to be much in your interest, yet he fairly owned to me that your utterance was rapid, thick, and ungraceful. I can add nothing to what I have already said upon this subject; but I can and do repeat the absolute necessity of speaking distinctly and gracefully, or else of not speaking at all, and having recourse to signs. He tells me that you are pretty fat for one of your age: this you should attend to in a proper way; for if, while very young; you should grow fat, it would be troublesome, unwholesome, and ungraceful; you should therefore, when you have time, take very strong exercise, and in your diet avoid fattening things. All malt liquors fatten, or at least bloat; and I hope you do not deal much in them. I look upon wine and water to be, in every respect; much wholesomer.

Duval says there is a great deal of very good company at Madame Valentin's and at another lady's, I think one Madame Ponce's, at Leipsig. Do you ever go to either of those houses, at leisure times? It would not, in my mind, be amiss if you did, and would give you a habit of *attentions*; they are a tribute which all women expect; and which all men, who would be well received by them; must pay. And, whatever the mind may be, manners at least are certainly improved by the company of women of fashion.

Page 40

I have formerly told you, that you should inform yourself of the several orders, whether military or religious, of the respective countries where you may be. The Teutonic Order is the great Order of Germany, of which I send you inclosed a short account. It may serve to suggest questions to you for more particular inquiries as to the present state of it, of which you ought to be minutely informed. The knights, at present, make vows, of which they observe none, except it be that of not marrying; and their only object now is, to arrive, by seniority, at the Commanderies in their respective provinces; which are, many of them, very lucrative. The Order of Malta is, by a very few years, prior to the Teutonic, and owes its foundation to the same causes. These' knights were first called Knights Hospitaliers of St. John. of Jerusalem, then Knights of Rhodes; and in the year 1530, Knights of Malta, the Emperor Charles V. having granted them that island, upon condition of their defending his island of Sicily against the Turks, which they effectually did. L'Abbe de Vertot has written the history of Malta, but it is the least valuable of all his works; and moreover, too long for you to read. But there is a short history, of all the military orders whatsoever, which I would advise you to get, as there is also of all the religious orders; both which are worth your having and consulting, whenever you meet with any of them in your way; as, you will very frequently in Catholic countries. For my own part, I find that I remember things much better, when I recur, to my books for them, upon some particular occasion, than by reading them 'tout de suite'. As, for example, if I were to read the history of all the military or religious orders, regularly one after another, the latter puts the former out of my head; but when I read the history of any one, upon account, of its having been the object of conversation or dispute, I remember it much better. It is the same in geography, where, looking for any particular place in the map, upon some particular account, fixes it in one's memory forever. I hope you have worn out your maps by frequent, use of that sort. Adieu.

A short account of the Teutonic order

In the ages of ignorance, which is always the mother of superstition, it was thought not only just, but meritorious, to propagate religion by fire and sword, and to, take away, the, lives and properties of unbelievers. This enthusiasm produced the several crusades, in the 11th, 12th, and following centuries, the object of which was, to recover the Holy Land out of, the hands of the Infidels, who, by the way, were the lawful possessors. Many honest enthusiasts engaged in those crusades, from a mistaken principle of religion, and from the pardons granted by the Popes for all the sins of those pious adventurers; but many more knaves adopted these holy wars, in hopes of conquest and plunder. After Godfrey of Bouillon, at the

Page 41

head of these knaves and fools, had taken Jerusalem, in the year 1099, Christians of various nations remained in that city; among the rest, one good honest German, that took particular care of his countrymen who came thither in pilgrimages. He built a house for their reception, and an hospital dedicated to the Virgin. This little establishment soon became a great one, by the enthusiasm of many considerable people who engaged in it, in order to drive the Saracens out of the Holy Land. This society then began to take its first form; and its members were called Marian Teutonic Knights. Marian, from their chapel sacred to the Virgin Mary; Teutonic, from the German, or Teuton, who was the author of it, and Knights from the wars which they were to carry on against the Infidels.

These knights behaved themselves so bravely, at first; that Duke Frederick of Swabia, who was general of the German army in the Holy Land, sent, in the year 1191, to the Emperor Henry VI. and Pope Celestine III. to desire that this brave and charitable fraternity might be incorporated into a regular order of knighthood; which was accordingly done, and rules and a particular habit were given them. Forty knights, all of noble families, were at first created by the King of Jerusalem and other princes then in the army. The first grand master of this order was Henry Wallpot, of a noble family upon the Rhine. This order soon began to operate in Europe; drove all the Pagans out of Prussia, and took possession of it. Soon after, they got Livonia and Courland, and invaded even Russia, where they introduced the Christian religion. In 1510, they elected Albert, Marquis of Bradenburg, for their grand master, who, turning Protestant, soon afterward took Prussia from the order, and kept it for himself, with the consent of Sigismund, King of Poland, of whom it was to hold. He then quitted his grand mastership and made himself hereditary Duke of that country, which is thence called Ducal Prussia. This order now consists of twelve provinces; viz., Alsatia, Austria, Coblentz, and Etsch, which are the four under the Prussian jurisdiction; Franconia, Hesse, Biessen, Westphalia, Lorraine, Thuringia, Saxony, and Utrecht, which eight are of the German jurisdiction. The Dutch now possess all that the order had in Utrecht. Every one of the provinces have their particular Commanderies; and the most ancient of these Commandeurs is called the Commandeur Provincial. These twelve Commandeurs are all subordinate to the Grand Master of Germany as their chief, and have the right of electing the grand master. The elector of Cologne is at present 'Grand Maitre'.

This order, founded by mistaken Christian zeal, upon the anti-Christian principles of violence and persecution, soon grew strong by the weakness and ignorance of the time; acquired unjustly great possessions, of which they justly lost the greatest part by their ambition and cruelty, which made them feared and hated by all their neighbors.

Page 42

I have this moment received your letter of the 4th, N. S., and have only time to tell you that I can by no means agree to your cutting off your hair. I am very sure that your headaches cannot proceed from thence. And as for the pimples upon your head, they are only owing to the heat of the season, and consequently will not last long. But your own hair is, at your age, such an ornament, and a wig, however well made, such a disguise, that I will upon no account whatsoever have you cut off your hair. Nature did not give it to you for nothing, still less to cause you the headache. Mr. Eliot's hair grew so ill and bushy, that he was in the right to cut it off. But you have not the same reason.

LETTER XLVII

London, August 23, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: Your friend, Mr. Eliot, has dined with me twice since I returned here, and I can say with truth that while I had the seals, I never examined or sifted a state prisoner with so much care and curiosity as I did him. Nay, I did more; for, contrary to the laws of this country, I gave him in some manner, the *question* ordinary and extraordinary; and I have infinite pleasure in telling you that the rack which I put him to, did not extort from him one single word that was not such as I wished to hear of you. I heartily congratulate you upon such an advantageous testimony, from so creditable a witness. 'Laudati a laudato viro', is one of the greatest pleasures and honors a rational being can have; may you long continue to deserve it! Your aversion to drinking and your dislike to gaming, which Mr. Eliot assures me are both very strong, give me, the greatest joy imaginable, for your sake: as the former would ruin both your constitution and understanding, and the latter your fortune and character. Mr. Harte wrote me word some time ago, and Mr. Eliot confirms it now, that you employ your pin money in a very different manner, from that in which pin money is commonly lavished: not in gew-gaws and baubles, but in buying good and useful books. This is an excellent symptom, and gives me very good hopes. Go on thus, my dear boy, but for these next two years, and I ask no more. You must then make such a figure and such a fortune in the world as I wish you, and as I have taken all these pains to enable you to do. After that time I allow you to be as idle as ever you please; because I am sure that you will not then please to be so at all. The ignorant and the weak are only idle; but those who have once acquired a good stock of knowledge, always desire to increase it. Knowledge is like power in this respect, that those who have the most, are most desirous of having more. It does not clog, by possession, but increases desire; which is the case of very few pleasures.

Upon receiving this congratulatory letter, and reading your own praises, I am sure that it must naturally occur to you, how great a share of them you owe to Mr. Harte's care and attention; and, consequently, that your regard and affection for him must increase, if there be room for it, in proportion as you reap, which you do daily, the fruits of his labors.

Page 43

I must not, however, conceal from you that there was one article in which your own witness, Mr. Eliot, faltered; for, upon my questioning him home as to your manner of speaking, he could not say that your utterance was either distinct or graceful. I have already said so much to you upon this point that I can add nothing. I will therefore only repeat this truth, which is, that if you will not speak distinctly and gracefully, nobody will desire to hear you. I am glad to learn that Abbe Mably's 'Droit Public de l'Europe' makes a part of your evening amusements. It is a very useful book, and gives a clear deduction of the affairs of Europe, from the treaty of Munster to this time. Pray read it with attention, and with the proper maps; always recurring to them for the several countries or towns yielded, taken, or restored. Pyre Bougeant's third volume will give you the best idea of the treaty of Munster, and open to you the several views of the belligerent and contracting parties, and there never were greater than at that time. The House of Austria, in the war immediately preceding that treaty, intended to make itself absolute in the empire, and to overthrow the rights of the respective states of it. The view of France was to weaken and dismember the House of Austria to such a degree, as that it should no longer be a counterbalance to that of Bourbon. Sweden wanted possessions on the continent of Germany, not only to supply the necessities of its own poor and barren country, but likewise to hold the balance in the empire between the House of Austria and the States. The House of Brandenburg wanted to aggrandize itself by pilfering in the fire; changed sides occasionally, and made a good bargain at last; for I think it got, at the peace, nine or ten bishoprics secularized. So that we may date, from the treaty of Munster, the decline of the House of Austria, the great power of the House of Bourbon, and the aggrandizement of that of Brandenburg: which, I am much mistaken, if it stops where it is now.

Make my compliments to Lord Pulteney, to whom I would have you be not only attentive, but useful, by setting him (in case he wants it) a good example of application and temperance. I begin to believe that, as I shall be proud of you, others will be proud too of imitating you: Those expectations of mine seem now so well grounded, that my disappointment, and consequently my anger, will be so much the greater if they fail; but as things stand now, I am most affectionately and tenderly, Yours.

LETTER XLVIII

London, August 30, O. S. 1748

Dear boy: Your reflections upon the conduct of France, from the treaty of Munster to this time, are very just; and I am very glad to find, by them, that you not only read, but that you think and reflect upon what you read. Many great readers load their memories, without exercising their judgments; and make lumber-rooms of their heads instead of furnishing them usefully; facts are heaped upon facts without order or distinction, and may justly be said to compose that

Page 44

'-----Rudis indigestaque moles
Quem dixere chaos'.

Go on, then, in the way of reading that you are in; take nothing for granted, upon the bare authority of the author; but weigh and consider, in your own mind, the probability of the facts and the justness of the reflections. Consult different authors upon the same facts, and form your opinion upon the greater or lesser degree of probability arising from the whole, which, in my mind, is the utmost stretch of historical faith; certainty (I fear) not being to be found. When a historian pretends to give you the causes and motives of events, compare those causes and motives with the characters and interests of the parties concerned, and judge for yourself whether they correspond or not. Consider whether you cannot assign others more probable; and in that examination, do not despise some very mean and trifling causes of the actions of great men; for so various and inconsistent is human nature, so strong and changeable are our passions, so fluctuating are our wills, and so much are our minds influenced by the accidents of our bodies that every man is more the man of the day, than a regular consequential character. The best have something bad, and something little; the worst have something good, and sometimes something great; for I do not believe what Velleius Paterculus (for the sake of saying a pretty thing) says of Scipio, 'Qui nihil non laudandum aut fecit, aut dixit, aut sensit'. As for the reflections of historians, with which they think it necessary to interlard their histories, or at least to conclude their chapters (and which, in the French histories, are always introduced with a '*tant il est vrai*', and in the English, *so true it is*), do not adopt them implicitly upon the credit of the author, but analyze them yourself, and judge whether they are true or not.

But to return to the politics of France, from which I have digressed. You have certainly made one further reflection, of an advantage which France has, over and above its abilities in the cabinet and the skill of its negotiators, which is (if I may use the expression) its *soleness*, continuity of riches and power within itself, and the nature of its government. Near twenty millions of people, and the ordinary revenue of above thirteen millions sterling a year, are at the absolute disposal of the Crown. This is what no other power in Europe can say; so that different powers must now unite to make a balance against France; which union, though formed upon the principle of their common interest, can never be so intimate as to compose a machine so compact and simple as that of one great kingdom, directed by one will, and moved by one interest. The Allied Powers (as we have constantly seen) have, besides the common and declared object of their alliance, some separate and concealed view to which they often sacrifice the general one; which makes them, either directly or indirectly, pull different ways. Thus,

Page 45

the design upon Toulon failed in the year 1706, only from the secret view of the House of Austria upon Naples: which made the Court of Vienna, notwithstanding the representations of the other allies to the contrary, send to Naples the 12,000 men that would have done the business at Toulon. In this last war too, the same causes had the same effects: the Queen of Hungary in secret thought of nothing but recovering of Silesia, and what she had lost in Italy; and, therefore, never sent half that quota which she promised, and we paid for, into Flanders; but left that country to the maritime powers to defend as they could. The King of Sardinia's real object was Savona and all the Riviera di Ponente; for which reason he concurred so lamely in the invasion of Provence, where the Queen of Hungary, likewise, did not send one-third of the force stipulated, engrossed as she was by her oblique views upon the plunder of Genoa, and the recovery of Naples. Insomuch that the expedition into Provence, which would have distressed France to the greatest degree, and have caused a great detachment from their army in Flanders, failed shamefully, for want of every one thing necessary for its success. Suppose, therefore, any four or five powers who, all together, shall be equal, or even a little superior, in riches and strength to that one power against which they are united; the advantage will still be greatly on the side of that single power, because it is but one. The power and riches of Charles V. were, in themselves, certainly superior to those of Frances I., and yet, upon the whole, he was not an overmatch for him. Charles V.'s dominions, great as they were, were scattered and remote from each other; their constitutions different; wherever he did not reside, disturbances arose; whereas the compactness of France made up the difference in the strength. This obvious reflection convinced me of the absurdity of the treaty of Hanover, in 1725, between France and England, to which the Dutch afterward acceded; for it was made upon the apprehensions, either real or pretended, that the marriage of Don Carlos with the eldest archduchess, now Queen of Hungary, was settled in the treaty of Vienna, of the same year, between Spain and the late Emperor Charles VI., which marriage, those consummate politicians said would revive in Europe the exorbitant power of Charles V. I am sure, I heartily wish it had; as, in that case, there had been, what there certainly is not now, one power in Europe to counterbalance that of France; and then the maritime powers would, in reality, have held the balance of Europe in their hands. Even supposing that the Austrian power would then have been an overmatch for that of France (which, by the way, is not clear), the weight of the maritime powers, then thrown into the scale of France, would infallibly have made the balance at least even. In which case too, the moderate efforts of the maritime powers on the side of France would have been sufficient; whereas now, they are obliged to exhaust and beggar themselves; and that too ineffectually, in hopes to support the shattered; beggared, and insufficient House of Austria.

Page 46

This has been a long political dissertation; but I am informed that political subjects are your favorite ones; which I am glad of, considering your destination. You do well to get your materials all ready, before you begin your work. As you buy and (I am told) read books of this kind, I will point out two or three for your purchase and perusal; I am not sure that I have not mentioned them before, but that is no matter, if you have not got them. 'Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire du 17ieme Siecle', is a most useful book for you to recur to for all the facts and chronology of that country: it is in four volumes octavo, and very correct and exact. If I do not mistake, I have formerly recommended to you, 'Les Memoires du Cardinal de Retz'; however, if you have not yet read them, pray do, and with the attention which they deserve. You will there find the best account of a very interesting period of the minority of Lewis XIV. The characters are drawn short, but in a strong and masterly manner; and the political reflections are the only just and practical ones that I ever saw in print: they are well worth your transcribing. 'Le Commerce des Anciens, par Monsieur Huet. Eveque d'Avranche', in one little volume octavo, is worth your perusal, as commerce is a very considerable part of political knowledge. I need not, I am sure, suggest to you, when you read the course of commerce, either of the ancients or of the moderns, to follow it upon your map; for there is no other way of remembering geography correctly, but by looking perpetually in the map for the places one reads of, even though one knows before, pretty near, where they are.

Adieu! As all the accounts which I receive of you grow better and better, so I grow more and more affectionately, Yours.

LETTER XLIX

London, September 5, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I have received yours, with the inclosed German letter to Mr. Gravenkop, which he assures me is extremely well written, considering the little time that you have applied yourself to that language. As you have now got over the most difficult part, pray go on diligently, and make yourself absolutely master of the rest. Whoever does not entirely possess a language, will never appear to advantage, or even equal to himself, either in speaking or writing it. His ideas are fettered, and seem imperfect or confused, if he is not master of all the words and phrases necessary to express them. I therefore desire, that you will not fail writing a German letter once every fortnight to Mr. Gravenkop; which will make the writing of that language familiar to you; and moreover, when you shall have left Germany and be arrived at Turin, I shall require you to write even to me in German; that you may not forget with ease what you have with difficulty learned. I likewise desire, that while you are in Germany, you will take all opportunities of conversing in German, which is the only way of knowing that, or any other language, accurately. You will also desire your German master to teach you the proper titles and superscriptions to be used to people of all ranks; which is a point so material, in

Germany, that I have known many a letter returned unopened, because one title in twenty has been omitted in the direction.

Page 47

St. Thomas's day now draws near, when you are to leave Saxony and go to Berlin; and I take it for granted, that if anything is yet wanting to complete your knowledge of the state of that electorate, you will not fail to procure it before you go away. I do not mean, as you will easily believe, the number of churches, parishes, or towns; but I mean the constitution, the revenues, the troops, and the trade of that electorate. A few questions, sensibly asked, of sensible people, will produce you the necessary informations; which I desire you will enter in your little book, Berlin will be entirely a new scene to you, and I look upon it, in a manner, as your first step into the great world; take care that step be not a false one, and that you do not stumble at the threshold. You will there be in more company than you have yet been; manners and attentions will therefore be more necessary. Pleasing in company is the only way of being pleased in it yourself. Sense and knowledge are the first and necessary foundations for pleasing in company; but they will by no means do alone, and they will never be perfectly welcome if they are not accompanied with manners and attentions. You will best acquire these by frequenting the companies of people of fashion; but then you must resolve to acquire them, in those companies, by proper care and observation; for I have known people, who, though they have frequented good company all their lifetime, have done it in so inattentive and unobserving a manner, as to be never the better for it, and to remain as disagreeable, as awkward, and as vulgar, as if they had never seen any person of fashion. When you go into good company (by good company is meant the people of the first fashion of the place) observe carefully their turn, their manners, their address; and conform your own to them. But this is not all neither; go deeper still; observe their characters, and pray, as far as you can, into both their hearts and their heads. Seek for their particular merit, their predominant passion, or their prevailing weakness; and you will then know what to bait your hook with to catch them. Man is a composition of so many, and such various ingredients, that it requires both time and care to analyze him: for though we have all the same ingredients in our general composition, as reason, will, passions, and appetites; yet the different proportions and combinations of them in each individual, produce that infinite variety of characters, which, in some particular or other, distinguishes every individual from another. Reason ought to direct the whole, but seldom does. And he who addresses himself singly to another man's reason, without endeavoring to engage his heart in his interest also, is no more likely to succeed, than a man who should apply only to a king's nominal minister, and neglect his favorite. I will recommend to your attentive perusal, now that you are going into the world, two books, which will let you as much into

Page 48

the characters of men, as books can do. I mean, 'Les Reflections Morales de Monsieur de la Rochefoucault, and Les Caracteres de la Bruyere': but remember, at the same time, that I only recommend them to you as the best general maps to assist you in your journey, and not as marking out every particular turning and winding that you will meet with. There your own sagacity and observation must come to their aid. La Rochefoucault, is, I know, blamed, but I think without reason, for deriving all our actions from the source of self-love. For my own part, I see a great deal of truth, and no harm at all, in that opinion. It is certain that we seek our own happiness in everything we do; and it is as certain, that we can only find it in doing well, and in conforming all our actions to the rule of right reason, which is the great law of nature. It is only a mistaken self-love that is a blamable motive, when we take the immediate and indiscriminate gratification of a passion, or appetite, for real happiness. But am I blamable if I do a good action, upon account of the happiness which that honest consciousness will give me? Surely not. On the contrary, that pleasing consciousness is a proof of my virtue. The reflection which is the most censured in Monsieur de la Rochefoucault's book as a very ill-natured one, is this, 'On trouve dans le malheur de son meilleur ami, quelque chose qui ne des plait pas'. And why not? Why may I not feel a very tender and real concern for the misfortune of my friend, and yet at the same time feel a pleasing consciousness at having discharged my duty to him, by comforting and assisting him to the utmost of my power in that misfortune? Give me but virtuous actions, and I will not quibble and chicanery about the motives. And I will give anybody their choice of these two truths, which amount to the same thing: He who loves himself best is the honestest man; or, The honestest man loves himself best.

The characters of La Bruyere are pictures from the life; most of them finely drawn, and highly colored. Furnish your mind with them first, and when you meet with their likeness, as you will every day, they will strike you the more. You will compare every feature with the original; and both will reciprocally help you to discover the beauties and the blemishes.

As women are a considerable, or, at least a pretty numerous part of company; and as their suffrages go a great way toward establishing a man's character in the fashionable part of the world (which is of great importance to the fortune and figure he proposes to make in it), it is necessary to please them. I will therefore, upon this subject, let you into certain Arcana that will be very useful for you to know, but which you must, with the utmost care, conceal and never seem to know. Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle, and sometimes wit; but for solid reasoning, good sense, I never knew in my life one that had it,

Page 49

or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four-and-twenty hours together. Some little passion or humor always breaks upon their best resolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increased, or their supposed understandings depreciated, instantly kindles their little passions, and overturns any system of consequential conduct, that in their most reasonable moments they might have been capable of forming. A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with serious matters; though he often makes them believe that he does both; which is the thing in the world that they are proud of; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business (which by the way they always spoil); and being justly distrustful that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks more seriously to them, and who seems to consult and trust them; I say, who seems; for weak men really do, but wise ones only seem to do it. No flattery is either too high or too low for them. They will greedily swallow the highest, and gratefully accept of the lowest; and you may safely flatter any woman from her understanding down to the exquisite taste of her fan. Women who are either indisputably beautiful, or indisputably ugly, are best flattered, upon the score of their understandings; but those who are in a state of mediocrity, are best flattered upon their beauty, or at least their graces; for every woman who is not absolutely ugly thinks herself handsome; but not hearing often that she is so, is the more grateful and the more obliged to the few who tell her so; whereas a decided and conscious beauty looks upon every tribute paid to her beauty only as her due; but wants to shine, and to be considered on the side of her understanding; and a woman who is ugly enough to know that she is so, knows that she has nothing left for it but her understanding, which is consequently and probably (in more senses than one) her weak side. But these are secrets which you must keep inviolably, if you would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex; on the contrary, a man who thinks of living in the great world, must be gallant, polite, and attentive to please the women. They have, from the weakness of men, more or less influence in all courts; they absolutely stamp every man's character in the beau monde, and make it either current, or cry it down, and stop it in payments. It is, therefore; absolutely necessary to manage, please, and flatter them and never to discover the least marks of contempt, which is what they never forgive; but in this they are not singular, for it is the same with men; who will much sooner forgive an injustice than an insult. Every man is not ambitious, or courteous, or passionate; but every man has pride enough in his composition to feel and resent the least slight and contempt. Remember, therefore, most carefully to conceal your

Page 50

contempt, however just, wherever you would riot make an implacable enemy. Men are much more unwilling to have their weaknesses and their imperfections known than their crimes; and if you hint to a man that you think him silly, ignorant, or even ill-bred, or awkward, he will hate you more and longer, than if you tell him plainly, that you think him a rogue. Never yield to that temptation, which to most young men is very strong; of exposing other people's weaknesses and infirmities, for the sake either of diverting the company, or showing your own superiority. You may get the laugh on your side by it for the present; but you will make enemies by it forever; and even those who laugh with you then, will, upon reflection, fear; and consequently hate you; besides that it is ill-natured, and a good heart desires rather to conceal than expose other people's weaknesses or misfortunes. If you have wit, use it to please, and not to hurt: you may shine, like the sun in the temperate zones, without scorching. Here it is wished for; under the Line it is dreaded.

These are some of the hints which my long experience in the great world enables me to give you; and which, if you attend to them, may prove useful to you in your journey through it. I wish it may be a prosperous one; at least, I am sure that it must be your own fault if it is not.

Make my compliments to Mr. Harte, who, I am very sorry to hear, is not well. I hope by this time he is recovered. Adieu!

LETTER L

London, September 13, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I have more than once recommended to you the "Memoirs" of the Cardinal de Retz, and to attend particularly to the political reflections interspersed in that excellent work. I will now preach a little upon two or three of those texts.

In the disturbances at Paris, Monsieur de Beaufort, who was a very popular, though a very weak man, was the Cardinal's tool with the populace.

Proud of his popularity, he was always for assembling the people of Paris together, thinking that he made a great figure at the head of them. The Cardinal, who was factious enough, was wise enough at the same time to avoid gathering the people together, except when there was occasion, and when he had something particular for them to do. However, he could not always check Monsieur de Beaufort; who having assembled them once very unnecessarily, and without any determined object, they ran riot, would not be kept within bounds by their leaders, and did their cause a great deal of harm: upon which the Cardinal observes most judiciously, 'Que Monsieur de Beaufort



me savoit pas, que qui assemble le peuple, l'emeut'. It is certain, that great numbers of people met together, animate each other, and will do something, either good or bad, but oftener bad; and the respective individuals, who were separately very quiet, when met together

Page 51

in numbers, grow tumultuous as a body, and ripe for any mischief that may be pointed out to them by the leaders; and, if their leaders have no business for them, they will find some for themselves. The demagogues, or leaders of popular factions, should therefore be very careful not to assemble the people unnecessarily, and without a settled and well-considered object. Besides that, by making those popular assemblies too frequent, they make them likewise too familiar, and consequently less respected by their enemies. Observe any meetings of people, and you will always find their eagerness and impetuosity rise or fall in proportion to their numbers: when the numbers are very great, all sense and reason seem to subside, and one sudden frenzy to seize on all, even the coolest of them.

Another very just observation of the Cardinal's is, That, the things which happen in our own times, and which we see ourselves, do not surprise us near so much as the things which we read of in times past, though not in the least more extraordinary; and adds, that he is persuaded that when Caligula made his horse a Consul, the people of Rome, at that time, were not greatly surprised at it, having necessarily been in some degree prepared for it, by an insensible gradation of extravagances from the same quarter. This is so true that we read every day, with astonishment, things which we see every day without surprise. We wonder at the intrepidity of a Leonidas, a Codrus, and a Curtius; and are not the least surprised to hear of a sea-captain, who has blown up his ship, his crew, and himself, that they might not fall into the hands of the enemies of his country. I cannot help reading of Porsenna and Regulus, with surprise and reverence, and yet I remember that I saw, without either, the execution of Shepherd,—[James Shepherd, a coach-painter's apprentice, was executed at Tyburn for high treason, March 17, 1718, in the reign of George I.]—a boy of eighteen years old, who intended to shoot the late king, and who would have been pardoned, if he would have expressed the least sorrow for his intended crime; but, on the contrary, he declared that if he was pardoned he would attempt it again; that he thought it a duty which he owed to his country, and that he died with pleasure for having endeavored to perform it. Reason equals Shepherd to Regulus; but prejudice, and the recency of the fact, make Shepherd a common malefactor and Regulus a hero.

Examine carefully, and reconsider all your notions of things; analyze them, and discover their component parts, and see if habit and prejudice are not the principal ones; weigh the matter upon which you are to form your opinion, in the equal and impartial scales of reason. It is not to be conceived how many people, capable of reasoning, if they would, live and die in a thousand errors, from laziness; they will rather adopt the prejudices of others, than give themselves the trouble of forming opinions of their own. They say things, at first, because other people have said them, and then they persist in them, because they have said them themselves.

Page 52

The last observation that I shall now mention of the Cardinal's is, "That a secret is more easily kept by a good many people, than one commonly imagines." By this he means a secret of importance, among people interested in the keeping of it. And it is certain that people of business know the importance of secrecy, and will observe it, where they are concerned in the event. To go and tell any friend, wife, or mistress, any secret with which they have nothing to do, is discovering to them such an unretentive weakness, as must convince them that you will tell it to twenty others, and consequently that they may reveal it without the risk of being discovered. But a secret properly communicated only to those who are to be concerned in the thing in question, will probably be kept by them though they should be a good many. Little secrets are commonly told again, but great ones are generally kept. Adieu!

LETTER LI

London, September 20, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I wait with impatience for your accurate history of the 'Chevaliers Forte Epees', which you promised me in your last, and which I take to be the forerunner of a larger work that you intend to give the public, containing a general account of all the religious and military orders of Europe. Seriously, you will do well to have a general notion of all those orders, ancient and modern; both as they are frequently the subjects of conversation, and as they are more or less interwoven with the histories of those times. Witness the Teutonic Order, which, as soon as it gained strength, began its unjust depredations in Germany, and acquired such considerable possessions there; and the Order of Malta also, which continues to this day its piracies upon the Infidels. Besides one can go into no company in Germany, without running against Monsieur le Chevalier, or Monsieur le Commandeur de l' Ordre Teutonique. It is the same in all the other parts of Europe with regard to the Order of Malta, where you never go into company without meeting two or three Chevaliers or Commandeurs, who talk of their 'Preuves', their 'Langues', their 'Caravanes', etc., of all which things I am sure you would not willingly be ignorant. On the other hand, I do not mean that you should have a profound and minute knowledge of these matters, which are of a nature that a general knowledge of them is fully sufficient. I would not recommend you to read Abbe Vertot's "History of the Order of Malta," in four quarto volumes; that would be employing a great deal of good time very ill. But I would have you know the foundations, the objects, the *insignia*, and the short general history of them all.

Page 53

As for the ancient religious military orders, which were chiefly founded in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as Malta, the Teutonic, the Knights Templars, *etc.*, the injustice and the wickedness of those establishments cannot, I am sure, have escaped your observation. Their pious object was, to take away by force other people's property, and to massacre the proprietors themselves if they refused to give up that property, and adopt the opinions of these invaders. What right or pretense had these confederated Christians of Europe to the Holy Land? Let them produce their grant of it in the Bible. Will they say, that the Saracens had possessed themselves of it by force, and that, consequently, they had the same right? Is it lawful then to steal goods because they were stolen before? Surely not. The truth is, that the wickedness of many, and the weakness of more, in those ages of ignorance and superstition, concurred to form those flagitious conspiracies against the lives and properties of unoffending people. The Pope sanctified the villany, and annexed the pardon of sins to the perpetration of it. This gave rise to the Crusaders, and carried such swarms of people from Europe to the conquests of the Holy Land. Peter the Hermit, an active and ambitious priest, by his indefatigable pains, was the immediate author of the first crusade; kings, princes, all professions and characters united, from different motives, in this great undertaking, as every sentiment, except true religion and morality, invited to it. The ambitious hoped for kingdoms; the greedy and the necessitous for plunder; and some were enthusiasts enough to hope for salvation, by the destruction of a considerable number of their fellow creatures, who had done them no injury. I cannot omit, upon this occasion, telling you that the Eastern emperors at Constantinople (who, as Christians, were obliged at least to seem to favor these expeditions), seeing the immense numbers of the 'Croisez', and fearing that the Western Empire might have some mind to the Eastern Empire too, if it succeeded against the Infidels, as 'l'appetit vient en mangeant'; these Eastern emperors, very honestly, poisoned the waters where the 'Croisez' were to pass, and so destroyed infinite numbers of them.

The later orders of knighthood, such as the Garter in England; the Elephant in Denmark; the Golden Fleece in Burgundy; the St. Esprit, St. Michel, St. Louis, and St. Lazare, in France *etc.*, are of a very different nature and were either the invitations to, or the rewards of; brave actions in fair war; and are now rather the decorations of the favor of the prince, than the proofs of the merit of the subject. However, they are worth your inquiries to a certain degree, and conversation will give you frequent opportunities for them. Wherever you are, I would advise you to inquire into the respective orders of that country, and to write down a short account of them. For example, while you are in Saxony, get an account of

Page 54

l'Aigle Blanc and of what other orders there may be, either Polish or Saxon; and, when you shall be at Berlin, inform yourself of three orders, l'Aigle Noir, la Generosite et le Vrai Merite, which are the only ones that I know of there. But whenever you meet with straggling ribands and stars, as you will with a thousand in Germany, do not fail to inquire what they are, and to take a minute of them in your memorandum book; for it is a sort of knowledge that costs little to acquire, and yet it is of some use. Young people have frequently an incuriousness about them, arising either from laziness, or a contempt of the object, which deprives them of several such little parts of knowledge, that they afterward wish they had acquired. If you will put conversation to profit, great knowledge may be gained by it; and is it not better (since it is full as easy) to turn it upon useful than upon useless subjects? People always talk best upon what they know most, and it is both pleasing them and improving one's self, to put them upon that subject. With people of a particular profession, or of a distinguished eminency in any branch of learning, one is not at a loss; but with those, whether men or women, who properly constitute what is called the beau monde, one must not choose deep subjects, nor hope to get any knowledge above that of orders, ranks, families, and court anecdotes; which are therefore the proper (and not altogether useless) subjects of that kind of conversation. Women, especially, are to be talked to as below men and above children. If you talk to them too deep, you only confound them, and lose your own labor; if you talk to them too frivolously, they perceive and resent the contempt. The proper tone for them is, what the French call the 'Entregent', and is, in truth, the polite jargon of good company. Thus, if you are a good chemist, you may extract something out of everything.

A propos of the beau monde, I must again and again recommend the Graces to you: There is no doing without them in that world; and, to make a good figure in that world, is a great step toward making one in the world of business, particularly that part of it for which you are destined. An ungraceful manner of speaking, awkward motions, and a disagreeable address, are great clogs to the ablest man of business, as the opposite qualifications are of infinite advantage to him. I am told there is a very good dancing-master at Leipsig. I would have you dance a minuet very well, not so much for the sake of the minuet itself (though that, if danced at all, ought to be danced, well), as that it will give you a habitual genteel carriage and manner of presenting yourself.

Since I am upon little things, I must mention another, which, though little enough in itself, yet as it occurs at, least once in every day, deserves some attention; I mean Carving. Do you use yourself to carve *adroitly* and genteelly, without hacking half an hour across a bone; without bespattering the company with the sauce; and without overturning the glasses into your neighbor's pockets? These awkwardnesses are extremely disagreeable; and, if often repeated, bring ridicule. They are very easily avoided by a little attention and use.

Page 55

How trifling soever these things may seem, or really be in themselves, they are no longer so when above half the world thinks them otherwise. And, as I would have you 'omnibus ornatum—excellere rebus', I think nothing above or below my pointing out to you, or your excelling in. You have the means of doing it, and time before you to make use of them. Take my word for it, I ask nothing now but what you will, twenty years hence, most heartily wish that you had done. Attention to all these things, for the next two or three years, will save you infinite trouble and endless regrets hereafter. May you, in the whole course of your life, have no reason for any one just regret! Adieu.

Your Dresden china is arrived, and I have sent it to your Mamma.

LETTER LII

London, September 27, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I have received your Latin "Lecture upon War," which though it is not exactly the same Latin that Caesar, Cicero, Horace, Virgil, and Ovid spoke, is, however, as good Latin as the erudite Germans speak or write. I have always observed that the most learned people, that is, those who have read the most Latin, write the worst; and that distinguishes the Latin of gentleman scholar from that of a pedant. A gentleman has, probably, read no other Latin than that of the Augustan age; and therefore can write no other, whereas the pedant has read much more bad Latin than good, and consequently writes so too. He looks upon the best classical books, as books for school-boys, and consequently below him; but pores over fragments of obscure authors, treasures up the obsolete words which he meets with there, and uses them upon all occasions to show his reading at the expense of his judgment. Plautus is his favorite author, not for the sake of the wit and the vis comica of his comedies, but upon account of the many obsolete words, and the cant of low characters, which are to be met with nowhere else. He will rather use 'olli' than 'illi', 'optume' than 'optima', and any bad word rather than any good one, provided he can but prove, that strictly speaking, it is Latin; that is, that it was written by a Roman. By this rule, I might now write to you in the language of Chaucer or Spenser, and assert that I wrote English, because it was English in their days; but I should be a most affected puppy if I did so, and you would not understand three words of my letter. All these, and such like affected peculiarities, are the characteristics of learned coxcombs and pedants, and are carefully avoided by all men of sense.

I dipped accidentally, the other day, into Pitiscus's preface to his "Lexicon," where I found a word that puzzled me, and which I did not remember ever to have met with before. It is the adverb 'praefiscine', which means, *in A good hour*; an expression which, by the superstition of it, appears to be low and vulgar. I looked for it: and at last I found that it is once or twice made use of in Plautus, upon the strength of which this learned pedant thrusts it into his preface. Whenever you write Latin, remember that

every word or phrase which you make use of, but cannot find in Caesar, Cicero, Livy, Horace, Virgil; and Ovid, is bad, illiberal Latin, though it may have been written by a Roman.

Page 56

I must now say something as to the matter of the "Lecture," in which I confess there is one doctrine laid down that surprises me: It is this, 'Quum vero hostis sit lenta citave morte omnia dira nobis minitans quocunque bellantibus negotium est; parum sane interfuerit quo modo eum obruere et interficere satagamus, si ferociam exuere cunctetur. Ergo veneno quoque uti fas est', etc., whereas I cannot conceive that the use of poison can, upon any account, come within the lawful means of self-defense. Force may, without doubt, be justly repelled by force, but not by treachery and fraud; for I do not call the stratagems of war, such as ambuscades, masked batteries, false attacks, etc., frauds or treachery: They are mutually to be expected and guarded against; but poisoned arrows, poisoned waters, or poison administered to your enemy (which can only be done by treachery), I have always heard, read, and thought, to be unlawful and infamous means of defense, be your danger ever so great: But 'si ferociam exuere cunctetur'; must I rather die than poison this enemy? Yes, certainly, much rather die than do a base or criminal action; nor can I be sure, beforehand, that this enemy may not, in the last moment, 'ferociam exuere'. But the public lawyers, now, seem to me rather to warp the law, in order to authorize, than to check, those unlawful proceedings of princes and states; which, by being become common, appear less criminal, though custom can never alter the nature of good and ill.

Pray let no quibbles of lawyers, no refinements of casuists, break into the plain notions of right and wrong, which every man's right reason and plain common sense suggest to him. To do as you would be done by, is the plain, sure, and undisputed rule of morality and justice. Stick to that; and be convinced that whatever breaks into it, in any degree, however speciously it may be turned, and however puzzling it may be to answer it, is, notwithstanding, false in itself, unjust, and criminal. I do not know a crime in the world, which is not by the casuists among the Jesuits (especially the twenty-four collected, I think, by Escobar) allowed, in some, or many cases, not to be criminal. The principles first laid down by them are often specious, the reasonings plausible, but the conclusion always a lie: for it is contrary, to that evident and undeniable rule of justice which I have mentioned above, of not doing to anyone what you would not have him do to you. But, however, these refined pieces of casuistry and sophistry, being very convenient and welcome to people's passions and appetites, they gladly accept the indulgence, without desiring to detect the fallacy or the reasoning: and indeed many, I might say most people, are not able to do it; which makes the publication of such quibblings and refinements the more pernicious. I am no skillful casuist nor subtle disputant; and yet I would undertake to justify and qualify the profession of a highwayman, step by step, and so plausibly, as

Page 57

to make many ignorant people embrace the profession, as an innocent, if not even a laudable one; and puzzle people of some degree of knowledge, to answer me point by point. I have seen a book, entitled 'Quidlibet ex Quolibet', or the art of making anything out of anything; which is not so difficult as it would seem, if once one quits certain plain truths, obvious in gross to every understanding, in order to run after the ingenious refinements of warm imaginations and speculative reasonings. Doctor Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, a very worthy, ingenious, and learned man, has written a book, to prove that there is no such thing as matter, and that nothing exists but in idea: that you and I only fancy ourselves eating, drinking, and sleeping; you at Leipsig, and I at London: that we think we have flesh and blood, legs, arms, *etc.*, but that we are only spirit. His arguments are, strictly speaking, unanswerable; but yet I am so far from being convinced by them, that I am determined to go on to eat and drink, and walk and ride, in order to keep that *matter*, which I so mistakenly imagine my body at present to consist of, in as good plight as possible. Common sense (which, in truth, very uncommon) is the best sense I know of: abide by it, it will counsel you best. Read and hear, for your amusement, ingenious systems, nice questions subtilly agitated, with all the refinements that warm imaginations suggest; but consider them only as exercitations for the mind, and turn always to settle with common sense.

I stumbled, the other day, at a bookseller's, upon "Comte Gabalis," in two very little volumes, which I had formerly read. I read it over again, and with fresh astonishment. Most of the extravagances are taken from the Jewish Rabbins, who broached those wild notions, and delivered them in the unintelligible jargon which the Caballists and Rosicrucians deal in to this day. Their number is, I believe, much lessened, but there are still some; and I myself have known two; who studied and firmly believed in that mystical nonsense. What extravagancy is not man capable of entertaining, when once his shackled reason is led in triumph by fancy and prejudice! The ancient alchemists give very much into this stuff, by which they thought they should discover the philosopher's stone; and some of the most celebrated empirics employed it in the pursuit of the universal medicine. Paracelsus, a bold empiric and wild Caballist, asserted that he had discovered it, and called it his 'Alkahest'. Why or wherefore, God knows; only that those madmen call nothing by an intelligible name. You may easily get this book from The Hague: read it, for it will both divert and astonish you, and at the same time teach you 'nil admirari'; a very necessary lesson.

Page 58

Your letters, except when upon a given subject, are exceedingly laconic, and neither answer my desires nor the purpose of letters; which should be familiar conversations, between absent friends. As I desire to live with you upon the footing of an intimate friend, and not of a parent, I could wish that your letters gave me more particular accounts of yourself, and of your lesser transactions. When you write to me, suppose yourself conversing freely with me by the fireside. In that case, you would naturally mention the incidents of the day; as where you had been, who you had seen, what you thought of them, *etc.* Do this in your letters: acquaint me sometimes with your studies, sometimes with your diversions; tell me of any new persons and characters that you meet with in company, and add your own observations upon them: in short, let me see more of you in your letters. How do you go on with Lord Pulteney, and how does he go on at Leipsig? Has he learning, has he parts, has he application? Is he good or ill-natured? In short, What is he? at least, what do you think him? You may tell me without reserve, for I promise you secrecy. You are now of an age that I am desirous to begin a confidential correspondence with you; and as I shall, on my part, write you very freely my opinion upon men and things, which I should often be very unwilling that anybody but you and Mr. Harte should see, so, on your part, if you write me without reserve, you may depend upon my inviolable secrecy. If you have ever looked into the "Letters" of Madame de Sevigne to her daughter, Madame de Grignan, you must have observed the ease, freedom, and friendship of that correspondence; and yet, I hope and I believe, that they did not love one another better than we do. Tell me what books you are now reading, either by way of study or amusement; how you pass your evenings when at home, and where you pass them when abroad. I know that you go sometimes to Madame Valentin's assembly; What do you do there? Do you play, or sup, or is it only 'la belle conversation?' Do you mind your dancing while your dancing-master is with you? As you will be often under the necessity of dancing a minuet, I would have you dance it very well. Remember, that the graceful motion of the arms, the giving your hand, and the putting on and pulling off your hat genteelly, are the material parts of a gentleman's dancing. But the greatest advantage of dancing well is, that it necessarily teaches you to present yourself, to sit, stand, and walk, genteelly; all of which are of real importance to a man of fashion.

I should wish that you were polished before you go to Berlin; where, as you will be in a great deal of good company, I would have you have the right manners for it. It is a very considerable article to have 'le ton de la bonne compagnie', in your destination particularly. The principal business of a foreign minister is, to get into the secrets, and to know all 'les allures' of the courts

Page 59

at which he resides; this he can never bring about but by such a pleasing address, such engaging manners, and such an insinuating behavior, as may make him sought for, and in some measure domestic, in the best company and the best families of the place. He will then, indeed, be well informed of all that passes, either by the confidences made him, or by the carelessness of people in his company, who are accustomed to look upon him as one of them, and consequently are not upon their guard before him. For a minister who only goes to the court he resides at, in form, to ask an audience of the prince or the minister upon his last instructions, puts them upon their guard, and will never know anything more than what they have a mind that he should know. Here women may be put to some use. A king's mistress, or a minister's wife or mistress, may give great and useful informations; and are very apt to do it, being proud to show that they have been trusted. But then, in this case, the height of that sort of address, which, strikes women, is requisite; I mean that easy politeness, genteel and graceful address, and that 'exterieur brilliant' which they cannot withstand. There is a sort of men so like women, that they are to be taken just in the same way; I mean those who are commonly called *fine men*; who swarm at all courts; who have little reflection, and less knowledge; but, who by their good breeding, and 'train-tran' of the world, are admitted into all companies; and, by the imprudence or carelessness of their superiors, pick up secrets worth knowing, which are easily got out of them by proper address. Adieu.

LETTER LIII

Bath, October 12, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I came here three days ago upon account of a disorder in my stomach, which affected my head and gave me vertigo. I already find myself something better; and consequently do not doubt but that the course of these waters will set me quite right. But however and wherever I am, your welfare, your character, your knowledge, and your morals, employ my thoughts more than anything that can happen to me, or that I can fear or hope for myself. I am going off the stage, you are coming upon it; with me what has been, has been, and reflection now would come too late; with you everything is to come, even, in some manner, reflection itself; so that this is the very time when my reflections, the result of experience, may be of use to you, by supplying the want of yours. As soon as you leave Leipsig, you will gradually be going into the great world; where the first impressions that you shall give of yourself will be of great importance to you; but those which you shall receive will be decisive, for they always stick. To keep good company, especially at your first setting out, is the way to receive good impressions. If you ask me what I mean by good company, I will confess to you that it is pretty difficult to define; but I will endeavor to make you understand it as well as I can.

Page 60

Good company is not what respective sets of company are pleased either to call or think themselves, but it is that company which all the people of the place call, and acknowledge to be, good company, notwithstanding some objections which they may form to some of the individuals who compose it. It consists chiefly (but by no means without exception) of people of considerable birth, rank, and character; for people of neither birth nor rank are frequently, and very justly admitted into it, if distinguished by any peculiar merit, or eminency in any liberal art or science. Nay, so motly a thing is good company, that many people, without birth, rank, or merit, intrude into it by their own forwardness, and others slide into it by the protection of some considerable person; and some even of indifferent characters and morals make part of it. But in the main, the good part preponderates, and people of infamous and blasted characters are never admitted. In this fashionable good company, the best manners and the best language of the place are most unquestionably to be learned; for they establish and give the tone to both, which are therefore called the language and manners of good company: there being no legal tribunal to ascertain either.

A company, consisting wholly of people of the first quality, cannot, for that reason, be called good company, in the common acceptation of the phrase, unless they are, into the bargain, the fashionable and accredited company of the place; for people of the very first quality can be as silly, as ill-bred, and as worthless, as people of the meanest degree. On the other hand, a company consisting entirely of people of very low condition, whatever their merit or parts may be, can never be called good company; and consequently should not be much frequented, though by no means despised.

A company wholly composed of men of learning, though greatly to be valued and respected, is not meant by the words *good company*; they cannot have the easy manners and, 'tournure' of the world, as they do not live in it. If you can bear your part well in such a company, it is extremely right to be in it sometimes, and you will be but more esteemed in other companies, for having a place in that. But then do not let it engross you; for if you do, you will be only considered as one of the 'literati' by profession; which is not the way either, to shine, or rise in the world.

The company of professed wits and pests is extremely inviting to most young men; who if they have wit themselves, are pleased with it, and if they have none, are sillily proud of being one of it: but it should be frequented with moderation and judgment, and you should by no means give yourself up to it. A wit is a very unpopular denomination, as it carries terror along with it; and people in general are as much afraid of a live wit, in company, as a woman is of a gun, which she thinks may go off of itself, and do her a mischief. Their acquaintance is, however, worth seeking, and their company worth frequenting; but not exclusively of others, nor to such a degree as to be considered only as one of that particular set.

Page 61

But the company, which of all others you should most carefully avoid, is that low company, which, in every sense of the word, is low indeed; low in rank, low in parts, low in manners, and low in merit. You will, perhaps, be surprised that I should think it necessary to warn you against such company, but yet I do not think it wholly, unnecessary, from the many instances which I have seen of men of sense and rank, discredited, verified, and undone, by keeping such company.

Vanity, that source of many of our follies, and of some of our crimes, has sunk many a man into company, in every light infinitely, below himself, for the sake of being the first man in it. There he dictates, is applauded, admired; and, for the sake of being the Coryphceus of that wretched chorus, disgraces and disqualifies himself soon for any better company. Depend upon it, you will sink or rise to the level of the company which you commonly keep: people will judge of you, and not unreasonably, by that. There is good sense in the Spanish saying, "Tell me whom you live with, and I will tell you who you are." Make it therefore your business, wherever you are, to get into that company which everybody in the place allows to be the best company next to their own; which is the best definition that I can give you of good company. But here, too, one caution is very necessary, for want of which many young men have been ruined, even in good company.

Good company (as I have before observed) is composed of a great variety of fashionable people, whose characters and morals are very different, though their manners are pretty much the same. When a young man, new in the world, first gets into that company, he very rightly determines to conform to, and imitate it. But then he too often, and fatally, mistakes the objects of his imitation. He has often heard that absurd term of genteel and fashionable vices. He there sees some people who shine, and who in general are admired and esteemed; and observes that these people are whoremasters, drunkards, or gamesters, upon which he adopts their vices, mistaking their defects for their perfections, and thinking that they owe their fashions and their luster to those genteel vices. Whereas it is exactly the reverse; for these people have acquired their reputation by their parts, their learning, their good-breeding, and other real accomplishments: and are only blemished and lowered, in the opinions of all reasonable people, and of their own, in time, by these genteel and fashionable vices. A whoremaster, in a flux, or without a nose, is a very genteel person, indeed, and well worthy of imitation. A drunkard, vomiting up at night the wine of the day, and stupefied by the headache all the next, is, doubtless, a fine model to copy from. And a gamester, tearing his hair, and blaspheming, for having lost more than he had in the world, is surely a most amiable character. No; these are alloys, and great ones too, which can

Page 62

never adorn any character, but will always debase the best. To prove this, suppose any man, without parts and some other good qualities, to be merely a whoremaster, a drunkard, or a gamester; how will he be looked upon by all sorts of people? Why, as a most contemptible and vicious animal. Therefore it is plain, that in these mixed characters, the good part only makes people forgive, but not approve, the bad.

I will hope and believe that you will have no vices; but if, unfortunately, you should have any, at least I beg of you to be content with your own, and to adopt no other body's.

The adoption of vice has, I am convinced, ruined ten times more young men than natural inclinations.

As I make no difficulty of confessing my past errors, where I think the confession may be of use to you, I will own that when I first went to the university, I drank and smoked, notwithstanding the aversion I had to wine and tobacco, only because I thought it genteel, and that it made me look like a man. When I went abroad, I first went to The Hague, where gaming was much in fashion, and where I observed that many people of shining rank and character gamed too. I was then young enough, and silly enough, to believe that gaming was one of their accomplishments; and, as I aimed at perfection, I adopted gaming as a necessary step to it. Thus I acquired by error the habit of a vice which, far from adorning my character, has, I am conscious, been a great blemish in it.

Imitate then, with discernment and judgment, the real perfections of the good company into which you may get; copy their politeness, their carriage, their address, and the easy and well-bred turn of their conversation; but remember that, let them shine ever so bright, their vices, if they have any, are so many spots which you would no more imitate, than you would make an artificial wart upon your face, because some very handsome man had the misfortune to have a natural one upon his: but, on the contrary, think how much handsomer he would have been without it.

Having thus confessed some of my 'egaremens', I will now show you a little of my right side. I always endeavored to get into the best company wherever I was, and commonly succeeded. There I pleased to some degree by showing a desire to please. I took care never to be absent or 'distract'; but on the contrary, attended to everything that was said, done, or even looked, in company; I never failed in the minutest attentions and was never 'journalier'. These things, and not my 'egaremens', made me fashionable. Adieu! This letter is full long enough.

LETTER LIV

Bath, October 19, O. S. 1748.



Dear boy: Having in my last pointed out what sort of company you should keep, I will now give you some rules for your conduct in it; rules which my own experience and observation enable me to lay down, and communicate to you, with some degree of confidence. I have often given you hints of this kind before, but then it has been by snatches; I will now be more regular and methodical. I shall say nothing with regard to your bodily carriage and address, but leave them to the care of your dancing-master, and to your own attention to the best models; remember, however, that they are of consequence.

Page 63

Talk often, but never long: in that case, if you do not please, at least you are sure not to tire your hearers. Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company; this being one of the very few cases in which people do not care to be treated, everyone being fully convinced that he has wherewithal to pay.

Tell stories very seldom, and absolutely never but where they are very apt and very short. Omit every circumstance that is not material, and beware of digressions. To have frequent recourse to narrative betrays great want of imagination.

Never hold anybody by the button or the hand, in order to be heard out; for, if people are not willing to hear you, you had much better hold your tongue than them.

Most long talkers single out some one unfortunate man in company (commonly him whom they observe to be the most silent, or their next neighbor) to whisper, or at least in a half voice, to convey a continuity of words to. This is excessively ill-bred, and in some degree a fraud; conversation-stock being a joint and common property. But, on the other hand, if one of these unmerciful talkers lays hold of you, hear him with patience (and at least seeming attention), if he is worth obliging; for nothing will oblige him more than a patient hearing, as nothing would hurt him more than either to leave him in the midst of his discourse, or to discover your impatience under your affliction.

Take, rather than give, the tone of the company you are in. If you have parts, you will show them, more or less, upon every subject; and if you have not, you had better talk sillily upon a subject of other people's than of your own choosing.

Avoid as much as you can, in mixed companies, argumentative, polemical conversations; which, though they should not, yet certainly do, indispose for a time the contending parties toward each other; and, if the controversy grows warm and noisy, endeavor to put an end to it by some genteel levity or joke. I quieted such a conversation-hubbub once, by representing to them that, though I was persuaded none there present would repeat, out of company, what passed in it, yet I could not answer for the discretion of the passengers in the street, who must necessarily hear all that was said.

Above all things, and upon all occasions, avoid speaking of yourself, if it be possible. Such is the natural pride and vanity of our hearts, that it perpetually breaks out, even in people of the best parts, in all the various modes and figures of the egotism.

Some, abruptly, speak advantageously of themselves, without either pretense or provocation. They are impudent. Others proceed more artfully, as they imagine; and forge accusations against themselves, complain of calumnies which they never heard, in order to justify themselves, by exhibiting a catalogue of their many virtues. They acknowledge it may, indeed, seem odd that they should talk in that manner

Page 64

of themselves; it is what they do not like, and what they never would have done; no; no tortures should ever have forced it from them, if they had, not been thus unjustly and monstrously accused. But, in these cases; justice is surely due to one's self, as well as to others; and when our character is attacked, we may say in our own justification, what otherwise we never would have said. This thin veil of Modesty drawn before Vanity, is much too transparent to conceal it, even from very moderate discernment.

Others go more modestly and more slyly still (as they think) to work; but in my mind still more ridiculously. They confess themselves (not without some degree of shame and confusion) into all the Cardinal Virtues, by first degrading them into weaknesses and then owning their misfortune in being made up of those weaknesses. They cannot see people suffer without sympathizing with, and endeavoring to help them. They cannot see people want, without relieving them, though truly their own circumstances cannot very well afford it. They cannot help speaking truth, though they know all the imprudence of it. In short, they know that, with all these weaknesses, they are not fit to live in the world, much less to thrive in it. But they are now too old to change, and must rub on as well as they can. This sounds too ridiculous and 'outré', almost, for the stage; and yet, take my word for it, you will frequently meet with it upon the common stage of the world. And here I will observe, by the bye, that you will often meet with characters in nature so extravagant, that a discreet dramatist would not venture to set them upon the stage in their true and high coloring.

This principle of vanity and pride is so strong in human nature that it descends even to the lowest objects; and one often sees people angling for praise, where, admitting all they say to be true (which, by the way, it seldom is), no just praise is to be caught. One man affirms that he has rode post an hundred miles in six hours; probably it is a lie: but supposing it to be true, what then? Why he is a very good post-boy, that is all. Another asserts, and probably not without oaths, that he has drunk six or eight bottles of wine at a sitting; out of charity, I will believe him a liar; for, if I do not, I must think him a beast.

Such, and a thousand more, are the follies and extravagances, which vanity draws people into, and which always defeat their own purpose; and as Waller says, upon another subject,—

“Make the wretch the most despised,
Where most he wishes to be prized.”

Page 65

The only sure way of avoiding these evils, is never to speak of yourself at all. But when, historically, you are obliged to mention yourself, take care not to drop one single word that can directly or indirectly be construed as fishing for applause. Be your character what it will, it will be known; and nobody will take it upon your own word. Never imagine that anything you can say yourself will varnish your defects, or add lustre to your perfections! but, on the contrary, it may, and nine times in ten, will, make the former more glaring and the latter obscure. If you are silent upon your own subject, neither envy, indignation, nor ridicule, will obstruct or allay the applause which you may really deserve; but if you publish your own panegyric upon any occasion, or in any shape whatsoever, and however artfully dressed or disguised, they will all conspire against you, and you will be disappointed of the very end you aim at.

Take care never to seem dark and mysterious; which is not only a very unamiable character, but a very suspicious one too; if you seem mysterious with others, they will be really so with you, and you will know nothing. The height of abilities is to have 'volto sciolto' and 'pensieri stretti'; that is, a frank, open, and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent interior; to be upon your own guard, and yet, by a seeming natural openness, to put people off theirs. Depend upon it nine in ten of every company you are in will avail themselves of every indiscreet and unguarded expression of yours, if they can turn it to their own advantage. A prudent reserve is therefore as necessary as a seeming openness is prudent. Always look people in the face when you speak to them: the not doing it is thought to imply conscious guilt; besides that you lose the advantage of serving by their countenances what impression your discourse makes upon them. In order to know people's real sentiments, I trust much more to my eyes than to my ears: for they can say whatever they have a mind I should hear; but they can seldom help looking, what they have no intention that I should know.

Neither retail nor receive scandal willingly; defamation of others may for the present gratify the malignity of the pride of our hearts; cool reflection will draw very disadvantageous conclusions from such a disposition; and in the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought, as bad as the thief.

Mimicry, which is the common and favorite amusement of little low minds, is in the utmost contempt with great ones. It is the lowest and most illiberal of all buffoonery. Pray, neither practice it yourself, nor applaud it in others. Besides that the person mimicked is insulted; and, as I have often observed to you before, an insult is never forgiven.

I need not (I believe) advise you to adapt your conversation to the people you are conversing with: for I suppose you would not, without this caution, have talked upon the same subject, and in the same manner, to a minister of state, a bishop, a philosopher, a captain, and a woman. A man of the world must, like the chameleon, be able to take every different hue; which is by no means a criminal or abject, but a necessary complaisance; for it relates only to manners and not to morals.

Page 66

One word only as to swearing, and that, I hope and believe, is more than is necessary. You may sometimes hear some people in good company interlard their discourse with oaths, by way of embellishment, as they think, but you must observe, too, that those who do so are never those who contribute, in any degree, to give that company the denomination of good company. They are always subalterns, or people of low education; for that practice, besides that it has no one temptation to plead, is as silly and as illiberal as it is wicked.

Loud laughter is the mirth of the mob, who are only pleased with silly things; for true wit or good sense never excited a laugh since the creation of the world. A man of parts and fashion is therefore only seen to smile; but never heard to laugh.

But to conclude this long letter; all the above-mentioned rules, however carefully you may observe them, will lose half their effect, if unaccompanied by the Graces. Whatever you say, if you say it with a supercilious, cynical face, or an embarrassed countenance, or a silly, disconcerted grin, will be ill received. If, into the bargain, *you mutter it, or Utter it indistinctly and ungracefully*, it will be still worse received. If your air and address are vulgar, awkward, and gauche, you may be esteemed indeed, if you have great intrinsic merit; but you will never, please; and without pleasing you will rise but heavily. Venus, among the ancients, was synonymous with the Graces, who were always supposed to accompany her; and Horace tells us that even Youth and Mercury, the god of Arts and Eloquence, would not do without her:

‘Parum comis sine to Juventas Mercuriusque.’

They are not inexorable Ladies, and may be had if properly, and diligently pursued. Adieu.

LETTER LV

Bath, October 29, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: My anxiety for your success increases in proportion as the time approaches of your taking your part upon the great stage of the world. The audience will form their opinion of you upon your first appearance (making the proper allowance for your inexperience), and so far it will be final, that, though it may vary as to the degrees, it will never totally change. This consideration excites that restless attention with which I am constantly examining how I can best contribute to the perfection of that character, in which the least spot or blemish would give me more real concern, than I am now capable of feeling upon any other account whatsoever.

Page 67

I have long since done mentioning your great religious and moral duties, because I could not make your understanding so bad a compliment as to suppose that you wanted, or could receive, any new instructions upon those two important points. Mr. Harte, I am sure, has not neglected them; and, besides, they are so obvious to common sense and reason, that commentators may (as they often do) perplex, but cannot make them clearer. My province, therefore, is to supply by my experience your hitherto inevitable inexperience in the ways of the world. People at your age are in a state of natural ebriety; and want rails, and 'gardefous', wherever they go, to hinder them from breaking their necks. This drunkenness of youth is not only tolerated, but even pleases, if kept within certain bounds of discretion and decency. These bounds are the point which it is difficult for the drunken man himself to find out; and there it is that the experience of a friend may not only serve, but save him.

Carry with you, and welcome, into company all the gaiety and spirits, but as little of the giddiness, of youth as you can. The former will charm; but the latter will often, though innocently, implacably offend. Inform yourself of the characters and situations of the company, before you give way to what your imagination may prompt you to say. There are, in all companies, more wrong beads than right ones, and many more who deserve, than who like censure. Should you therefore expatiate in the praise of some virtue, which some in company notoriously want; or declaim against any vice, which others are notoriously infected with, your reflections, however general and unapplied, will, by being applicable, be thought personal and leveled at those people. This consideration points out to you, sufficiently, not to be suspicious and captious yourself, nor to suppose that things, because they may be, are therefore meant at you. The manners of well-bred people secure one from those indirect and mean attacks; but if, by chance, a flippant woman or a pert coxcomb lets off anything of that kind, it is much better not to seem to understand, than to reply to it.

Cautiously avoid talking of either your own or other people's domestic affairs. Yours are nothing to them but tedious; theirs are nothing to you. The subject is a tender one: and it is odds but that you touch somebody or other's sore place: for, in this case, there is no trusting to specious appearances; which may be, and often are, so contrary to the real situations of things, between men and their wives, parents and their children, seeming friends, etc., that, with the best intentions in the world, one often blunders disagreeably.

Page 68

Remember that the wit, humor, and jokes, of most mixed companies are local. They thrive in that particular soil, but will not often bear transplanting. Every company is differently circumstanced, has its particular cant and jargon; which may give occasion to wit and mirth within that circle, but would seem flat and insipid in any other, and therefore will not bear repeating. Nothing makes a man look sillier than a pleasantry not relished or not understood; and if he meets with a profound silence when he expected a general applause, or, what is worse, if he is desired to explain the bon mot, his awkward and embarrassed situation is easier imagined' than described. 'A propos' of repeating; take great care never to repeat (I do not mean here the pleasantries) in one company what you hear in another. Things, seemingly indifferent, may, by circulation, have much graver consequences than you would imagine. Besides, there is a general tacit trust in conversation, by which a man is obliged not to report anything out of it, though he is not immediately enjoined to secrecy. A retailer of this kind is sure to draw himself into a thousand scrapes and discussions, and to be shyly and uncomfortably received wherever he goes.

You will find, in most good company, some people who only keep their place there by a contemptible title enough; these are what we call *very good-natured fellows*, and the French, 'bons diables'. The truth is, they are people without any parts or fancy, and who, having no will of their own, readily assent to, concur in, and applaud, whatever is said or done in the company; and adopt, with the same alacrity, the most virtuous or the most criminal, the wisest or the silliest scheme, that happens to be entertained by the majority of the company. This foolish, and often criminal complaisance flows from a foolish cause,—the want of any other merit. I hope that you will hold your place in company by a nobler tenure, and that you will hold it (you can bear a quibble, I believe, yet) 'in capite'. Have a will and an opinion of your own, and adhere to them steadily; but then do it with good humor, good-breeding, and (if you have it) with urbanity; for you have not yet heard enough either to preach or censure.

All other kinds of complaisance are not only blameless, but necessary in good company. Not to seem to perceive the little weaknesses, and the idle but innocent affectations of the company, but even to flatter them, in a certain manner, is not only very allowable, but, in truth, a sort of polite duty. They will be pleased with you, if you do; and will certainly not be reformed by you if you do not.

Page 69

For instance: you will find, in every group of company, two principal figures, viz., the fine lady and the fine gentleman who absolutely give the law of wit, language, fashion, and taste, to the rest of that society. There is always a strict, and often for the time being, a tender alliance between these two figures. The lady looks upon her empire as founded upon the divine right of beauty (and full as good a divine right it is as any king, emperor, or pope, can pretend to); she requires, and commonly meets with, unlimited passive obedience. And why should she not meet with it? Her demands go no higher than to have her unquestioned preeminence in beauty, wit, and fashion, firmly established. Few sovereigns (by the way) are so reasonable. The fine gentleman's claims of right are, 'mutatis mutandis', the same; and though, indeed, he is not always a wit 'de jure', yet, as he is the wit 'de facto' of that company, he is entitled to a share of your allegiance, and everybody expects at least as much as they are entitled to, if not something more. Prudence bids you make your court to these joint sovereigns; and no duty, that I know of, forbids it. Rebellion here is exceedingly dangerous, and inevitably punished by banishment, and immediate forfeiture of all your wit, manners, taste, and fashion; as, on the other hand, a cheerful submission, not without some flattery, is sure to procure you a strong recommendation and most effectual pass, throughout all their, and probably the neighboring, dominions. With a moderate share of sagacity, you will, before you have been half an hour in their company, easily discover those two principal figures: both by the deference which you will observe the whole company pay them, and by that easy, careless, and serene air, which their consciousness of power gives them. As in this case, so in all others, aim always at the highest; get always into the highest company, and address yourself particularly to the highest in it. The search after the unattainable philosopher's stone has occasioned a thousand useful discoveries, which otherwise would never have been made.

What the French justly call 'les manieres nobles' are only to be acquired in the very best companies. They are the distinguishing characteristics of men of fashion: people of low education never wear them so close, but that some part or other of the original vulgarity appears. 'Les manieres nobles' equally forbid insolent contempt, or low envy and jealousy. Low people, in good circumstances, fine clothes, and equipages, will insolently show contempt for all those who cannot afford as fine clothes, as good an equipage, and who have not (as their term is) as much money in their pockets: on the other hand, they are gnawed with envy, and cannot help discovering it, of those who surpass them in any of these articles; which are far from being sure criterions of merit. They are likewise jealous of being slighted; and, consequently, suspicious and captious; they are eager and hot about trifles because trifles were, at first, their affairs of consequence. 'Les manieres nobles' imply exactly the reverse of all this. Study them early; you cannot make them too habitual and familiar to you.

Page 70

Just as I had written what goes before, I received your letter of the 24th, N. S., but I have not received that which you mention for Mr. Harte. Yours is of the kind that I desire; for I want to see your private picture, drawn by yourself, at different sittings; for though, as it is drawn by yourself, I presume you will take the most advantageous likeness, yet I think that I have skill enough in that kind of painting to discover the true features, though ever so artfully colored, or thrown into skillful lights and shades.

By your account of the German play, which I do not know whether I should call tragedy or comedy, the only shining part of it (since I am in a way of quibbling) seems to have been the fox's tail. I presume, too, that the play has had the same fate with the squib, and has gone off no more. I remember a squib much better applied, when it was made the device of the colors of a French regiment of grenadiers; it was represented bursting, with this motto under it: 'Peream dum luceam'.

I like the description of your *pic-NIC*; where I take it for granted, that your cards are only to break the formality of a circle, and your SYMPOSION intended more to promote conversation than drinking. Such an *amicable collision*, as Lord Shaftesbury very prettily calls it, rubs off and smooths those rough corners which mere nature has given to the smoothest of us. I hope some part, at least, of the conversation is in German. 'A propos': tell me do you speak that language correctly, and do you write it with ease? I have no doubt of your mastering the other modern languages, which are much easier, and occur much oftener; for which reason, I desire that you will apply most diligently to German, while you are in Germany, that you may speak and write that language most correctly.

I expect to meet Mr. Eliot in London, in about three weeks, after which you will soon see him at Leipsig. Adieu.

LETTER LVI

London, November 18, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: Whatever I see or whatever I hear, my first consideration is, whether it can in any way be useful to you. As a proof of this, I went accidentally the other day into a print-shop, where, among many others, I found one print from a famous design of Carlo Maratti, who died about thirty years ago, and was the last eminent painter in Europe: the subject is 'il Studio del Disegno'; or "The School of Drawing." An old man, supposed to be the master, points to his scholars, who are variously employed in perspective, geometry, and the observation of the statues of antiquity. With regard to perspective, of which there are some little specimens, he has wrote, 'Tanto che basti', that is, "As much as is sufficient"; with regard to geometry, 'Tanto che basti' again; with regard to the contemplation of the ancient statues, there is written, 'Non mai a bastanza',—"There

Page 71

never can be enough.” But in the clouds, at the top of the piece, are represented the three Graces, with this just sentence written over them, ‘Senza di noi ogni fatica e vana’, that is, “Without us, all labor is vain.” This everybody allows to be true in painting; but all people do not seem to consider, as I hope you will, that this truth is full as applicable to every other art or science; indeed to everything that is to be said or done. I will send you the print itself by Mr. Eliot, when he returns; and I will advise you to make the same use of it that the Roman Catholics say they do of the pictures and images of their saints, which is, only to remind them of those; for the adoration they disclaim. Nay, I will go further, as the transition from Popery to Paganism is short and easy, I will classically end poetically advise you to invoke, and sacrifice to them every day, and all the day. It must be owned, that the Graces do not seem to be natives of Great Britain; and, I doubt, the best of us here have more of rough than polished diamond.

Since barbarism drove them out of Greece and Rome, they seem to have taken refuge in France, where their temples are numerous, and their worship the established one. Examine yourself seriously, why such and such people please and engage you, more than such and such others, of equal merit; and you will always find that it is because the former have the Graces and the latter not. I have known many a woman with an exact shape, and a symmetrical assemblage of beautiful features, please nobody; while others, with very moderate shapes and features, have charmed everybody. Why? because Venus will not charm so much, without her attendant Graces, as they will without her. Among men, how often have I seen the most solid merit and knowledge neglected, unwelcome, or even rejected, for want of them! While flimsy parts, little knowledge, and less merit, introduced by the Graces, have been received, cherished, and admired. Even virtue, which is moral beauty, wants some of its charms if unaccompanied by them.

If you ask me how you shall acquire what neither you nor I can define or ascertain, I can only answer, *by observation*. Form yourself, with regard to others, upon what you feel pleases you in them. I can tell you the importance, the advantage, of having the Graces; but I cannot give them you: I heartily wish I could, and I certainly would; for I do not know a better present that I could make you. To show you that a very wise, philosophical, and retired man thinks upon that subject as I do, who have always lived in the world, I send you, by Mr. Eliot, the famous Mr. Locke’s book upon education; in which you will end the stress that he lays upon the Graces, which he calls (and very truly) good-breeding. I have marked all the parts of that book that are worth your attention; for as he begins with the child, almost from its birth, the parts relative to its infancy would be useless to you. Germany is, still less

Page 72

than England, the seat of the Graces; however, you had as good not say so while you are there. But the place which you are going to, in a great degree, is; for I have known as many well-bred, pretty men come from Turin, as from any part of Europe. The late King Victor Amedee took great pains to form such of his subjects as were of any consideration, both to business and manners; the present king, I am told, follows his example: this, however, is certain, that in all courts and congresses, where there are various foreign ministers, those of the King of Sardinia are generally the ablest, the politest, and 'les plus delies'. You will therefore, at Turin, have very good models to form yourself upon: and remember, that with regard to the best models, as well as to the antique Greek statues in the print, 'non mai a bastanza'. Observe every word, look, and motion of those who are allowed to be the most accomplished persons there. Observe their natural and careless, but genteel air; their unembarrassed good-breeding; their unassuming, but yet unprostituted dignity. Mind their decent mirth, their discreet frankness, and that 'entregent' which, as much above the frivolous as below the important and the secret, is the proper medium for conversation in mixed companies. I will observe, by the bye, that the talent of that light 'entregent' is often of great use to a foreign minister; not only as it helps him to domesticate himself in many families, but also as it enables him to put by and parry some subjects of conversation, which might possibly lay him under difficulties both what to say and how to look.

Of all the men that ever I knew in my life (and I knew him extremely well), the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the graces in the highest degree, not to say engrossed them; and indeed he got the most by them; for I will venture (contrary to the custom of profound historians, who always assign deep causes for great events), to ascribe the better half of the Duke of Marlborough's greatness and riches to those graces. He was eminently illiterate; wrote bad English and spelled it still worse. He had no share of what is commonly called *parts*: that is, he had no brightness, nothing shining in his genius. He had most undoubtedly, an excellent good plain understanding with sound judgment. But these alone, would probably have raised him but something higher than they found him; which was page to King James the Second's queen. There the Graces protected and promoted him; for while he was an ensign of the Guards, the Duchess of Cleveland, then favorite mistress to King Charles the Second, struck by those very Graces, gave him five thousand pounds, with which he immediately bought an annuity for his life of five hundred pounds a year, of my grandfather Halifax; which was the foundation of his subsequent fortune. His figure was beautiful; but his manner was irresistible, by either man or woman. It was by this engaging, graceful manner,

Page 73

that he was enabled, during all his war, to connect the various and jarring powers of the Grand Alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies, and wrongheadednesses. Whatever court he went to (and he was often obliged to go himself to some resty and refractory ones), he as constantly prevailed, and brought them into his measures. The Pensionary Heinsius, a venerable old minister, grown gray in business, and who had governed the republic of the United Provinces for more than forty years, was absolutely governed by the Duke of Marlborough, as that republic feels to this day. He was always cool; and nobody ever observed the least variation in his countenance; he could refuse more gracefully than other people could grant; and those who went away from him the most dissatisfied as to the substance of their business, were yet personally charmed with him and, in some degree, comforted by his manner. With all his gentleness and gracefulness, no man living was more conscious of his situation, nor maintained his dignity better.

With the share of knowledge which you have already gotten, and with the much greater which I hope you will soon acquire, what may you not expect to arrive at, if you join all these graces to it? In your destination particularly, they are in truth half your business: for, if you once gain the affections as well as the esteem of the prince or minister of the court to which you are sent, I will answer for it, that will effectually do the business of the court that sent you; otherwise it is up-hill work. Do not mistake, and think that these graces which I so often and so earnestly recommend to you, should only accompany important transactions, and be worn only 'les jours de gala'; no, they should, if possible, accompany every, the least thing you do or say; for, if you neglect them in little things, they will leave you in great ones. I should, for instance, be extremely concerned to see you even drink a cup of coffee ungracefully, and slop yourself with it, by your awkward manner of holding it; nor should I like to see your coat buttoned, or your shoes buckled awry. But I should be outrageous, if I heard you mutter your words unintelligibly, stammer, in your speech, or hesitate, misplace, and mistake in your narrations; and I should run away from you with greater rapidity, if possible, than I should now run to embrace you, if I found you destitute of all those graces which I have set my heart upon their making you one day, 'omnibus ornatum excellere rebus'.

This subject is inexhaustible, as it extends to everything that is to be said or done: but I will leave it for the present, as this letter is already pretty long. Such is my desire, my anxiety for your perfection, that I never think I have said enough, though you may possibly think that I have said too much; and though, in truth, if your own good sense is not sufficient to direct you, in many of these plain points, all that I or anybody else can say will be insufficient. But where you are concerned, I am the insatiable man in Horace, who covets still a little corner more to complete the figure of his field. I dread every little corner that may deform mine, in which I would have (if possible) no one defect.

Page 74

I this moment receive yours of the 17th, N. S., and cannot condole with you upon the secession of your German 'Commensaux'; who both by your and Mr. Harte's description, seem to be 'des gens d'une amiable absence'; and, if you can replace them by any other German conversation, you will be a gainer by the bargain. I cannot conceive, if you understand German well enough to read any German book, how the writing of the German character can be so difficult and tedious to you, the twenty-four letters being very soon learned; and I do not expect that you should write yet with the utmost purity and correctness, as to the language: what I meant by your writing once a fortnight to Grevenkop, was only to make the written character familiar to you. However, I will be content with one in three weeks or so.

I believe you are not likely to see Mr. Eliot again soon, he being still in Cornwall with his father; who, I hear, is not likely to recover. Adieu.

LETTER LVII

London, November 29, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I delayed writing to you till I could give you some account of the motions of your friend Mr. Eliot; for whom I know you have, and very justly, the most friendly concern. His father and he came to town together, in a post-chaise a fortnight ago, the rest of the family remaining in Cornwall. His father, with difficulty, survived the journey, and died last Saturday was seven-night. Both concern and decency confined your friend, till two days ago, when I saw him; he has determined, and I think very prudently, to go abroad again; but how soon, it is yet impossible for him to know, as he must necessarily put his own private affairs in some order first; but I conjecture that he may possibly join you at Turin; sooner, to be sure, not. I am very sorry that you are likely to be so long without the company and the example of so valuable a friend; and therefore I hope that you will make it up to yourself, as well as you can at this distance, by remembering and following his example. Imitate that application of his, which has made him know all thoroughly, and to the bottom. He does not content himself with the surface of knowledge; but works in the mine for it, knowing that it lies deep. Pope says, very truly, in his "Essay on Criticism":—

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

I shall send you by a ship that goes to Hamburg next week (and by which Hawkins sends Mr. Harte some things that he wrote for) all those which I propose sending you by Mr. Eliot, together with a very little box that I am desired to forward to Mr. Harte. There will be, likewise, two letters of recommendation for you to Monsieur Andrie and Comte Algarotti, at Berlin, which you will take care to deliver to them, as soon as you shall be rigged and fitted out to appear there. They will introduce you into the best company,

and I depend upon your own good sense for your avoiding of bad. If you fall into bad and low company there, or anywhere else, you will be irrecoverably lost; whereas, if you keep good company, and company above yourself, your character and your fortune will be immovably fixed.

Page 75

I have not time to-day, upon account of the meeting of the parliament, to make this letter of the usual length; and indeed, after the volumes that I have written to you, all I can add must be unnecessary. However, I shall probably, 'ex abundanti', return soon to my former prolixity; and you will receive more and more last words from, Yours.

LETTER LVIII

London, December 6, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I am at present under very great concern for the loss of a most affectionate brother, with whom I had always lived in the closest friendship. My brother John died last Friday night, of a fit of the gout, which he had had for about a month in his hands and feet, and which fell at last upon his stomach and head. As he grew, toward the last, lethargic, his end was not painful to himself. At the distance which you are at from hence, you need not go into mourning upon this occasion, as the time of your mourning would be near over, before you could put it on.

By a ship which sails this week for Hamburg, I shall send you those things which I proposed to have sent you by Mr. Eliot, *viz.*, a little box from your Mamma; a less box for Mr. Harte; Mr. Locke's book upon education; the print of Carlo Maratti, which I mentioned to you some time ago; and two letters of recommendation, one to Monsieur Andrie and the other to Comte Algarotti, at Berlin. Both those gentlemen will, I am sure, be as willing as they are able to introduce you into the best company; and I hope you will not (as many of your countrymen are apt to do) decline it. It is in the best companies only; that you can learn the best manners and that 'tournure', and those graces, which I have so often recommended to you, as the necessary means of making a figure in the world.

I am most extremely pleased with the account which Mr. Harte gives me of your progress in Greek, and of your having read Hesiod almost critically. Upon this subject I suggest but one thing to you, of many that I might suggest; which is, that you have now got over the difficulties of that language, and therefore it would be unpardonable not to persevere to your journey's end, now that all the rest of your way is down hill.

I am also very well pleased to hear that you have such a knowledge of, and taste for curious books and scarce and valuable tracts. This is a kind of knowledge which very well becomes a man of sound and solid learning, but which only exposes a man of slight and superficial reading; therefore, pray make the substance and matter of such books your first object, and their title-pages, indexes, letter, and binding, but your second. It is the characteristic of a man of parts and good judgment to know, and give that degree of attention that each object deserves. Whereas little minds mistake little objects for great ones, and lavish away upon the former that time and attention which only the latter deserve. To such

Page 76

mistakes we owe the numerous and frivolous tribes of insect-mongers, shell-mongers, and pursuers and driers of butterflies, *etc.* The strong mind distinguishes, not only between the useful and the useless, but likewise between the useful and the curious. He applies himself intensely to the former; he only amuses himself with the latter. Of this little sort of knowledge, which I have just hinted at, you will find at least as much as you need wish to know, in a superficial but pretty French book, entitled, 'Spectacle de la Nature'; which will amuse you while you read it, and give you a sufficient notion of the various parts of nature. I would advise you to read it, at leisure hours. But that part of nature, which Mr. Harte tells me you have begun to study with the Rector magnificus, is of much greater importance, and deserves much more attention; I mean astronomy. The vast and immense planetary system, the astonishing order and regularity of those innumerable worlds, will open a scene to you, which not only deserves your attention as a matter of curiosity, or rather astonishment; but still more, as it will give you greater, and consequently juster, ideas of that eternal and omnipotent Being, who contrived, made, and still preserves that universe, than all the contemplation of this, comparatively, very little orb, which we at present inhabit, could possibly give you. Upon this subject, Monsieur Fontenelle's 'Pluralite des Mondes', which you may read in two hours' time, will both inform and please you. God bless you! Yours.

LETTER LIX

London, December 13, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: The last four posts have brought me no letters, either from you or from Mr. Harte, at which I am uneasy; not as a mamma would be, but as a father should be: for I do not want your letters as bills of health; you are young, strong, and healthy, and I am, consequently, in no pain about that: moreover, were either you or Mr. Harte ill, the other would doubtless write me word of it. My impatience for yours or Mr. Harte's letters arises from a very different cause, which is my desire to hear frequently of the state and progress of your mind. You are now at that critical period of life when every week ought to produce fruit or flowers answerable to your culture, which I am sure has not been neglected; and it is by your letters, and Mr. Harte's accounts of you, that, at this distance, I can only judge at your gradations to maturity; I desire, therefore, that one of you two will not fail to write to me once a week. The sameness of your present way of life, I easily conceive, would not make out a very interesting letter to an indifferent bystander; but so deeply concerned as I am in the game you are playing, even the least move is to me of importance, and helps me to judge of the final event.

Page 77

As you will be leaving Leipsig pretty soon after you shall have received this letter, I here send you one inclosed to deliver to Mr. Mascow. It is to thank him for his attention and civility to you, during your stay with him: and I take it for granted, that you will not fail making him the proper compliments at parting; for the good name that we leave behind at one place often gets before us to another, and is of great use. As Mr. Mascow is much known and esteemed in the republic of letters, I think it would be of advantage to you, if you got letters of recommendation from him to some of the learned men at Berlin. Those testimonials give a lustre, which is not to be despised; for the most ignorant are forced to seem, at least, to pay a regard to learning, as the most wicked are to virtue. Such is their intrinsic worth.

Your friend Duval dined with me the other day, and complained most grievously that he had not heard from you above a year; I bid him abuse you for it himself; and advised him to do it in verse, which, if he was really angry, his indignation would enable him to do. He accordingly brought me, yesterday, the inclosed reproaches and challenge, which he desired me to transmit to you. As this is his first essay in English poetry, the inaccuracies in the rhymes and the numbers are very excusable. He insists, as you will find, upon being answered in verse; which I should imagine that you and Mr. *Harte*, together, could bring about; as the late Lady Dorchester used to say, that she and Dr. Radcliffe, together, could cure a fever. This is however sure, that it now rests upon you; and no man can say what methods Duval may take, if you decline his challenge. I am sensible that you are under some disadvantages in this proffered combat. Your climate, at this time of the year especially, delights more in the wood fire, than in the poetic fire; and I conceive the Muses, if there are any at Leipsig, to be rather shivering than singing; nay, I question whether Apollo is even known there as god of Verse, or as god of Light: perhaps a little as god of Physic. These will be fair excuses, if your performance should fall something short; though I do not apprehend that it will.

While you have been at Leipsig, which is a place of study more than of pleasure or company, you have had all opportunities of pursuing your studies uninterruptedly; and have had, I believe, very few temptations to the contrary. But the case will be quite different at Berlin, where the splendor and dissipation of a court and the 'beau monde', will present themselves to you in gaudy shapes, attractive enough to all young people. Do not think, now, that like an old fellow, I am going to advise you to reject them, and shut yourself up in your closet: quite the contrary; I advise you to take your share, and enter into them with spirit and pleasure; but then I advise you, too, to allot your time so prudently, as that learning may keep pace with pleasures; there

Page 78

is full time, in the course of the day, for both, if you do but manage that time right and like a good economist. The whole morning, if diligently and attentively devoted to solid studies, will go a great way at the year's end; and the evenings spent in the pleasures of good company, will go as far in teaching you a knowledge, not much less necessary than the other, I mean the knowledge of the world. Between these two necessary studies, that of books in the morning, and that of the world in the evening, you see that you will not have one minute to squander or slattern away. Nobody ever lent themselves more than I did, when I was young, to the pleasures and dissipation of good company. I even did it too much. But then, I can assure you, that I always found time for serious studies; and, when I could find it no other way, I took it out of my sleep, for I resolved always to rise early in the morning, however late I went to bed at night; and this resolution I have kept so sacred, that, unless when I have been confined to my bed by illness, I have not, for more than forty years, ever been in bed at nine o'clock in the morning but commonly up before eight.

When you are at Berlin, remember to speak German as often as you can, in company; for everybody there will speak French to you, unless you let them know that you can speak German, which then they will choose to speak. Adieu.

LETTER LX

London, December 20, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I received last Saturday by three mails, which came in at once, two letters from Mr. Harte, and yours of the 8th, N. S.

It was I who mistook your meaning, with regard to your German letters, and not you who expressed it ill. I thought it was the writing of the German character that took up so much of your time, and therefore I advised you, by the frequent writing of that character, to make it easy and familiar to you: But, since it is only the propriety and purity of the German language which make your writing it so tedious and laborious, I will tell you I shall not be nice upon that article; and did not expect that you should yet be master of all the idioms, delicacies, and peculiarities of that difficult language. That can only come by use, especially frequent speaking; therefore, when you shall be at Berlin, and afterward at Turin, where you will meet many Germans, pray take all opportunities of conversing in German, in order not only to keep what you have got of that language, but likewise to improve and perfect yourself in it. As to the characters, you form them very well, and as you yourself own, better than your English ones; but then let me ask you this question: Why do you not form your Roman characters better? for I maintain, that it is in every man's power to write what hand he pleases; and, consequently, that he ought

to write a good one. You form, particularly, your 'ee' and your 'll' in zigzag, instead of making

Page 79

them straight, as thus, 'ee', 'll'; a fault very easily mended. You will not, I believe, be angry with this little criticism, when I tell you, that by all the accounts I have had of late from Mr. Harte and others, this is the only criticism that you give me occasion to make. Mr. Harte's last letter, of the 14th, N. S., particularly, makes me extremely happy, by assuring me that, in every respect, you do exceedingly well. I am not afraid, by what I now say, of making you too vain; because I do not think that a just consciousness and an honest pride of doing well, can be called vanity; for vanity is either the silly affectation of good qualities which one has not, or the sillier pride of what does not deserve commendation in itself. By Mr. Harte's account, you are got very near the goal of Greek and Latin; and therefore I cannot suppose that, as your sense increases, your endeavors and your speed will slacken in finishing the small remains of your course. Consider what lustre and 'eclat' it will give you, when you return here, to be allowed to be the best scholar, for a gentleman, in England; not to mention the real pleasure and solid comfort which such knowledge will give you throughout your whole life. Mr. Harte tells me another thing, which, I own, I did not expect: it is, that when you read aloud, or repeat parts of plays, you speak very properly and distinctly. This relieves me from great uneasiness, which I was under upon account of your former bad enunciation. Go on, and attend most diligently to this important article. It is, of all Graces (and they are all necessary), the most necessary one.

Comte Pertingue, who has been here about a fortnight, far from disavowing, confirms all that Mr. Harte has said to your advantage. He thinks that he shall be at Turin much about the time of your arrival there, and pleases himself with the hopes of being useful to you. Though, should you get there before him, he says that Comte du Perron, with whom you are a favorite, will take that care. You see, by this one instance, and in the course of your life you will see by a million of instances, of what use a good reputation is, and how swift and advantageous a harbinger it is, wherever one goes. Upon this point, too, Mr. Harte does you justice, and tells me that you are desirous of praise from the praiseworthy. This is a right and generous ambition; and without which, I fear, few people would deserve praise.

But here let me, as an old stager upon the theatre of the world, suggest one consideration to you; which is, to extend your desire of praise a little beyond the strictly praiseworthy; or else you may be apt to discover too much contempt for at least three parts in five of the world, who will never forgive it you. In the mass of mankind, I fear, there is too great a majority of fools and, knaves; who, singly from their number, must to a certain degree be respected, though they are by no means respectable. And a man who will show every knave or fool that he thinks him such, will engage in a most ruinous war, against numbers much superior to those that he and his allies can bring into the field. Abhor a knave, and pity a fool in your heart; but let neither of them, unnecessarily, see that you do so. Some complaisance and attention to fools is prudent, and not mean; as a silent abhorrence of individual knaves is often necessary and not criminal.

Page 80

As you will now soon part with Lord Pulteney, with whom, during your stay together at Leipsig, I suppose you have formed a connection, I imagine that you will continue it by letters, which I would advise you to do. They tell me that he is good-natured, and does not want parts; which are of themselves two good reasons for keeping it up; but there is also a third reason, which, in the course of the world, is not to be despised: His father cannot live long, and will leave him an immense fortune; which, in all events will make him of some consequence; and, if he has parts into the bargain, of very great consequence; so that his friendship, may be extremely well worth your cultivating, especially as it will not cost you above one letter in one month.

I do not know whether this letter will find you at Leipsig: at least, it is the last that I shall direct there. My, next to either you or Mr. Harte will be directed to Berlin; but as I do not know to what house or street there, I suppose it will remain at the posthouse till you send for it. Upon your arrival at Berlin you will send me your particular direction; and also, pray be minute in your accounts of your reception there, by those whom I recommend you to, as well as by those to whom they present you. Remember, too, that you are going to a polite and literate court, where the Graces will best introduce you.

Adieu. God bless you, and may you continue to deserve my love, as much as you now enjoy it!

P. S. Lady Chesterfield bids me tell you, that she decides entirely in your favor against Mr. Grevenkop, and even against herself; for she does not think that she could, at this time, write either so good a character or so good German. Pray write her a German letter upon that subject, in which you may tell her, that, like the rest of the world, you approve of her judgment, because it is in your favor; and that you true Germans cannot allow Danes to be competent judges of your language, *etc.*

LETTER LXI

London, December 30, O. S. 1748.

Dear boy: I direct this letter to Berlin, where, I suppose, it will either find you, or at least wait but a very little time for you. I cannot help being anxious for your success, at this your first appearance upon the great stage of the world; for, though the spectators are always candid enough to give great allowances, and to show great indulgence to a new actor; yet, from the first impressions which he makes upon them, they are apt to decide, in their own minds, at least, whether he will ever be a good one, or not. If he seems to understand what he says, by speaking it properly; if he is attentive to his part, instead of staring negligently about him; and if, upon the whole, he seems ambitious to please, they willingly pass over little awkwardnesses and inaccuracies, which they ascribe to a commendable modesty in a young and inexperienced actor. They pronounce that he will be a good one in time; and, by the encouragement which they give him, make him

so the sooner. This, I hope, will be your case: you have sense enough to understand your part; a constant attention, and ambition to excel in it, with a careful observation of the best actors, will inevitably qualify you, if not for the first, at least for considerable parts.

Page 81

Your dress (as insignificant a thing as dress is in itself) is now become an object worthy of some attention; for, I confess, I cannot help forming some opinion of a man's sense and character from his dress; and I believe most people do as well as myself. Any affectation whatsoever in dress implies, in my mind, a flaw in the understanding. Most of our young fellows here display some character or other by their dress; some affect the tremendous, and wear a great and fiercely cocked hat, an enormous sword, a short waistcoat and a black cravat; these I should be almost tempted to swear the peace against, in my own defense, if I were not convinced that they are but meek asses in lions' skins. Others go in brown frocks, leather breeches, great oaken cudgels in their hands, their hats uncocked, and their hair unpowdered; and imitate grooms, stage-coachmen, and country bumpkins so well in their outsides, that I do not make the least doubt of their resembling them equally in their insides. A man of sense carefully avoids any particular character in his dress; he is accurately clean for his own sake; but all the rest is for other people's. He dresses as well, and in the same manner, as the people of sense and fashion of the place where he is. If he dresses better, as he thinks, that is, more than they, he is a fop; if he dresses worse, he is unpardonably negligent. But, of the two, I would rather have a young fellow too much than too little dressed; the excess on that side will wear off, with a little age and reflection; but if he is negligent at twenty, he will be a sloven at forty, and stink at fifty years old. Dress yourself fine, where others are fine; and plain where others are plain; but take care always that your clothes are well made, and fit you, for otherwise they will give you a very awkward air. When you are once well dressed for the day think no more of it afterward; and, without any stiffness for fear of discomposing that dress, let all your motions be as easy and natural as if you had no clothes on at all. So much for dress, which I maintain to be a thing of consequence in the polite world.

As to manners, good-breeding, and the Graces, I have so often entertained you upon those important subjects, that I can add nothing to what I have formerly said. Your own good sense will suggest to you the substance of them; and observation, experience, and good company, the several modes of them. Your great vivacity, which I hear of from many people, will be no hindrance to your pleasing in good company: on the contrary, will be of use to you, if tempered by good-breeding and accompanied by the Graces. But then, I suppose your vivacity to be a vivacity of parts, and not a constitutional restlessness; for the most disagreeable composition that I know in the world, is that of strong animal spirits, with a cold genius. Such a fellow is troublesomely active, frivolously busy, foolishly lively; talks much with little meaning, and laughs more, with less reason whereas, in my opinion, a warm and lively genius with a cool constitution, is the perfection of human nature.

Page 82

Do what you will at Berlin, provided you do but do something all day long. All that I desire of you is, that you will never slattern away one minute in idleness and in doing of nothing. When you are (not) in company, learn what either books, masters, or Mr. Harte, can teach you; and when you are in company, learn (what company can only teach you) the characters and manners of mankind. I really ask your pardon for giving you this advice; because, if you are a rational creature and thinking being, as I suppose, and verily believe you are, it must be unnecessary, and to a certain degree injurious. If I did not know by experience, that some men pass their whole time in doing nothing, I should not think it possible for any being, superior to Monsieur Descartes' automaton, to squander away, in absolute idleness, one single minute of that small portion of time which is allotted us in this world.

I have lately seen one Mr. Cranmer, a very sensible merchant, who told me that he had dined with you, and seen you often at Leipsig. And yesterday I saw an old footman of mine, whom I made a messenger, who told me that he had seen you last August. You will easily imagine, that I was not the less glad to see them because they had seen you; and I examined them both narrowly, in their respective departments; the former as to your mind, the latter, as to your body. Mr. Cranmer gave me great satisfaction, not only by what he told me of himself concerning you, but by what he was commissioned to tell me from Mr. Masow. As he speaks German perfectly himself, I asked him how you spoke it; and he assured me very well for the time, and that a very little more practice would make you perfectly master of it. The messenger told me that you were much grown, and, to the best of his guess, within two inches as tall as I am; that you were plump, and looked healthy and strong; which was all that I could expect, or hope, from the sagacity of the person.

I send you, my dear child (and you will not doubt it), very sincerely, the wishes of the season. May you deserve a great number of happy New-years; and, if you deserve, may you have them. Many New-years, indeed, you may see, but happy ones you cannot see without deserving them. These, virtue, honor, and knowledge, alone can merit, alone can procure, 'Dii tibi dent annos, de te nam cetera sumes', was a pretty piece of poetical flattery, where it was said: I hope that, in time, it may be no flattery when said to you. But I assure you, that wherever I cannot apply the latter part of the line to you with truth, I shall neither say, think, or wish the former. Adieu!

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:



Page 83

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Above all things, avoid speaking of yourself
Above the frivolous as below the important and the secret
Abroad but they stay at home all that while
Absolute command of your temper
Abstain from learned ostentation
Absurd term of genteel and fashionable vices
Advice is seldom welcome
Affectation whatsoever in dress
Always look people in the face when you speak to them
Ancients and Moderns
Argumentative, polemical conversations
As willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody
Authority
Better not to seem to understand, than to reply
Bruyere
Cannot understand them, or will not desire to understand them
Cardinal de Retz
Cardinal Virtues, by first degrading them into weaknesses
Cautious how we draw inferences
Chameleon, be able to take every different hue
Cheerful in the countenance, but without laughing
Common sense (which, in truth, very uncommon)
Commonplace observations
Complaisance
Consciousness and an honest pride of doing well
Contempt
Conversation will help you almost as much as books
Conversation-stock being a joint and common property
Converse with his inferiors without insolence
Deriving all our actions from the source of self-love
Deserve a little, and you shall have but a little
Desirous of praise from the praiseworthy
Dexterity enough to conceal a truth without telling a lie
Difficulties seem to them, impossibilities
Distinguish between the useful and the curious
Do as you would be done by
Do what you will but do something all day long
Either do not think, or do not love to think
Equally forbid insolent contempt, or low envy and jealousy
Even where you are sure, seem rather doubtful
Every virtue, has its kindred vice or weakness
Fiddle-faddle stories, that carry no information along with the



Flattery of women
Forge accusations against themselves
Forgive, but not approve, the bad
Frank, open, and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent interior
Gain the affections as well as the esteem
Generosity often runs into profusion
Go to the bottom of things
Good company
Graces: Without us, all labor is vain
Great learning; which, if not accompanied with sound judgment
Great numbers of people met together, animate each other
Habit and prejudice
Half done or half known
Hardly any body good for every thing
Have a will and an opinion of your own, and adhere
Have but one set of jokes to live upon
He will find it out of himself without your endeavors
Heart has such an influence over the understanding
Helps only, not as guides
Historians
Honest error is to be pitied, not ridiculed
Honestest man loves himself best
How much you have to do; and how little time to do it in
I hope, I wish, I doubt, and fear alternately
I shall always love you as you shall deserve

Page 84

If you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself
Impertinent insult upon custom and fashion
Inaction at your age is unpardonable
Jealous of being slighted
Judge them all by their merits, but not by their ages
Keep good company, and company above yourself
Know their real value, and how much they are generally overrated
Knowledge is like power in this respect
Knowledge of a scholar with the manners of a courtier
Laughing, I must particularly warn you against it
Lazy mind, and the trifling, frivolous mind
Learning
Let me see more of you in your letters
Little minds mistake little objects for great ones
Livery
Loud laughter is the mirth of the mob
Low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter
Low company, most falsely and impudently, call pleasure
Luther's disappointed avarice
Make yourself necessary
Manner of doing things is often more important
Manners must adorn knowledge
May not forget with ease what you have with difficulty learned
Mimicry
More one sees, the less one either wonders or admires
More you know, the modester you should be
Mortifying inferiority in knowledge, rank, fortune
Most long talkers single out some one unfortunate man in company
Much sooner forgive an injustice than an insult
Mystical nonsense
Name that we leave behind at one place often gets before us
Neglect them in little things, they will leave you in great
Negligence of it implies an indifference about pleasing
Neither retail nor receive scandal willingly
Never quit a subject till you are thoroughly master of it
Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than the people you are with
Never slattern away one minute in idleness
Never to speak of yourself at all
Not one minute of the day in which you do nothing at all
Not to admire anything too much



Often led by their hearts than by their understandings
Out of livery; which makes them both impertinent and useless
Overvalue what we do not know
Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company
People angling for praise
People never desire all till they have gotten a great deal
Plain notions of right and wrong
Planted while young, that degree of knowledge now my refuge
Pleased to some degree by showing a desire to please
Pleasing in company is the only way of being pleased in yourself
Pleasure and business with equal inattention
Prefer useful to frivolous conversations
Pride remembers it forever
Prudent reserve
Pyrrhonism
Reason ought to direct the whole, but seldom does
Reformation
Refuge of people who have neither wit nor invention of their own
Refuse more gracefully than other people could grant
Repeating
Represent, but do not pronounce
Rochefoucault
Rough corners which mere nature has given to the smoothest
Scandal: receiver is always thought, as bad as



Page 85

the thief

Scarcely any body who is absolutely good for nothing

Scrupled no means to obtain his ends

Secrets

Seeming frankness with a real reserve

Seeming openness is prudent

Self-love draws a thick veil between us and our faults

Serious without being dull

Shakespeare

Shepherds and ministers are both men

Some complaisance and attention to fools is prudent, and not me

Some men pass their whole time in doing nothing

Something or other is to be got out of everybody

Swearing

Take nothing for granted, upon the bare authority of the author

Take, rather than give, the tone of the company you are in

Talk often, but never long

Talk sillily upon a subject of other people's

Talking of either your own or other people's domestic affairs

Tell me whom you live with, and I will tell you who you are

Tell stories very seldom

Tenderness and affection with which, while you deserve them

The best have something bad, and something little

The worst have something good, and sometimes something great

Thin veil of Modesty drawn before Vanity

Thoroughly, not superficially

To know people's real sentiments, I trust much more to my eyes

Unopened, because one title in twenty has been omitted

Value of moments, when cast up, is immense

Vanity, that source of many of our follies

Weaknesses

What displeases or pleases you in others

What you feel pleases you in them

When well dressed for the day think no more of it afterward

Will not so much as hint at our follies

Witty without satire or commonplace

Women

Wrongs are often forgiven; but contempt never is

You had much better hold your tongue than them

Your merit and your manners can alone raise you