

# **Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1751 eBook**

## **Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1751 by Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield**

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# Page 1

## LETTER CXXVI

London, January 8, O.S. 1751

*My dear friend:* By your letter of the 5th, N. S., I find that your 'debut' at Paris has been a good one; you are entered into good company, and I dare say you will, not sink into bad. Frequent the houses where you have been once invited, and have none of that shyness which makes most of your countrymen strangers, where they might be intimate and domestic if they pleased. Wherever you have a general invitation to sup when you please, profit of it, with decency, and go every now and then. Lord Albemarle will, I am sure, be extremely kind to you, but his house is only a dinner house; and, as I am informed, frequented by no French people. Should he happen to employ you in his bureau, which I much doubt, you must write a better hand than your common one, or you will get no credit by your manuscripts; for your hand is at present an illiberal one; it is neither a hand of business nor of a gentleman, but the hand of a school-boy writing his exercise, which he hopes will never be read.

Madame de Monconseil gives me a favorable account of you; and so do Marquis de Matignon and Madame du Boccage; they all say that you desire to please, and consequently promise me that you will; and they judge right; for whoever really desires to please, and has (as you now have) the means of learning how, certainly will please and that is the great point of life; it makes all other things easy. Whenever you are with Madame de Monconseil, Madame du Boccage, or other women of fashion, with whom you are tolerably free, say frankly and naturally: "I know little of the world; I am quite a novice in it; and although very desirous of pleasing, I am at a loss for the means. Be so good, Madame, as to let me into your secret of pleasing everybody. I shall owe my success to it, and you will always have more than falls to your share." When, in consequence of this request, they shall tell you of any little error, awkwardness, or impropriety, you should not only feel, but express the warmest acknowledgment. Though nature should suffer, and she will at first hearing them, tell them, that you will look upon the most severe criticisms as the greatest proof of their friendship. Madame du Boccage tells me, particularly, to inform you: "I shall always, receive the honor of his visits with pleasure; it is true, that at his age the pleasures of conversation are cold; but I will endeavor to make him acquainted with young people," etc.

Make use of this invitation, and as you live, in a manner, next door to her, step in and out there frequently. Monsieur du Boccage will go with you, he tells me, with great pleasure, to the plays, and point out to you whatever deserves your knowing there. This is worth your acceptance too; he has a very good taste. I have not yet heard from Lady Hervey upon your subject; but as you inform me that you have already supped with

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her once, I look upon you as adopted by her; consult her in all your little matters; tell her any difficulties that may occur to you; ask her what you should do or say in such or such cases; she has 'l'usage du monde en perfection', and will help you to acquire it. Madame de Berkenrode 'est paitrie de graces', and your quotation is very applicable to her. You may be there, I dare say, as often as you please, and I would advise you to sup there once a week.

You say, very justly, that as Mr. Harte is leaving you, you shall want advice more than ever; you shall never want mine; and as you have already had so much of it, I must rather repeat than add to what I have already given you; but that I will do, and add to it occasionally, as circumstances may require. At present I shall only remind you of your two great objects, which you should always attend to; they are parliament and foreign affairs. With regard to the former, you can do nothing while abroad but attend carefully to the purity, correctness, and elegance of your diction; the clearness and gracefulness of your utterance, in whatever language you speak. As for the parliamentary knowledge, I will take care of that when you come home. With regard to foreign affairs, everything you do abroad may and ought to tend that way. Your reading should be chiefly historical; I do not mean of remote, dark, and fabulous history, still less of jimcrack natural history of fossils, minerals, plants, etc., but I mean the useful, political, and constitutional history of Europe, for these last three centuries and a half. The other thing necessary for your foreign object, and not less necessary than either ancient or modern knowledge, is a great knowledge of the world, manners, politeness, address, and 'le ton de la bonne compagnie'. In that view, keeping a great deal of good company, is the principal point to which you are now to attend. It seems ridiculous to tell you, but it is most certainly true, that your dancing-master is at this time the man in all Europe of the greatest importance to you. You must dance well, in order to sit, stand, and walk well; and you must do all these well in order to please. What with your exercises, some reading, and a great deal of company, your day is, I confess, extremely taken up; but the day, if well employed, is long enough for everything; and I am sure you will not slattern away one moment of it in inaction. At your age, people have strong and active spirits, alacrity and vivacity in all they do; are 'impigri', indefatigable, and quick. The difference is, that a young fellow of parts exerts all those happy dispositions in the pursuit of proper objects; endeavors to excel in the solid, and in the showish parts of life; whereas a silly puppy, or a dull rogue, throws away all his youth and spirit upon trifles, where he is serious or upon disgraceful vices, while he aims at pleasures. This I am sure will not be your case; your good sense and your good conduct hitherto are your guarantees with me for the future. Continue only at Paris as you have begun, and your stay there will make you, what I have always wished you to be, as near perfection as our nature permits.

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Adieu, my dear; remember to write to me once a-week, not as to a father, but, without reserve, as to a friend.

### LETTER CXXVII

*London, January 14, O. S. 1751*

*My dear friend:* Among the many good things Mr. Harte has told me of you, two in particular gave me great pleasure. The first, that you are exceedingly careful and jealous of the dignity of your character; that is the sure and solid foundation upon which you must both stand and rise. A man's moral character is a more delicate thing than a woman's reputation of chastity. A slip or two may possibly be forgiven her, and her character may be clarified by subsequent and continued good conduct: but a man's moral character once tainted is irreparably destroyed. The second was, that you had acquired a most correct and extensive knowledge of foreign affairs, such as the history, the treaties, and the forms of government of the several countries of Europe. This sort of knowledge, little attended to here, will make you not only useful, but necessary, in your future destination, and carry you very far. He added that you wanted from hence some books relative to our laws and constitution, our colonies, and our commerce; of which you know less than of those of any other part of Europe. I will send you what short books I can find of that sort, to give you a general notion of those things: but you cannot have time to go into their depths at present—you cannot now engage with new folios; you and I will refer the constitutional part of this country to our meeting here, when we will enter seriously into it, and read the necessary books together. In the meantime, go on in the course you are in, of foreign matters; converse with ministers and others of every country, watch the transactions of every court, and endeavor to trace them up to their source. This, with your physics, your geometry, and your exercises, will be all that you can possibly have time for at Paris; for you must allow a great deal for company and pleasures: it is they that must give you those manners, that address, that 'tournure' of the 'beau monde', which will qualify you for your future destination. You must first please, in order to get the confidence, and consequently the secrets, of the courts and ministers for whom and with whom you negotiate.

I will send you by the first opportunity a short book written by Lord Bolingbroke, under the name of Sir John Oldcastle, containing remarks upon the history of England; which will give you a clear general notion of our constitution, and which will serve you, at the same time, like all Lord Bolingbroke's works, for a model of eloquence and style. I will also send you Sir Josiah Childe's little book upon trade, which may properly be called the "Commercial Grammar." He lays down the true principles of commerce, and his conclusions from them are generally very just.



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Since you turn your thoughts a little toward trade and commerce, which I am very glad you do, I will recommend a French book to you, which you will easily get at Paris, and which I take to be the best book in the world of that kind: I mean the 'Dictionnaire de Commerce de Savory', in three volumes in folio; where you will find every one thing that relates to trade, commerce, specie, exchange, *etc.*, most clearly stated; and not only relative to France, but to the whole world. You will easily suppose, that I do not advise you to read such a book 'tout de suite'; but I only mean that you should have it at hand, to have recourse to occasionally.

With this great stock of both useful and ornamental knowledge, which you have already acquired, and which, by your application and industry, you are daily increasing, you will lay such a solid foundation of future figure and fortune, that if you complete it by all the accomplishments of manners, graces, *etc.*, I know nothing which you may not aim at, and in time hope for. Your great point at present at Paris, to which all other considerations must give way, is to become entirely a man of fashion: to be well-bred without ceremony, easy without negligence, steady and intrepid with modesty, genteel without affectation, insinuating without meanness, cheerful without being noisy, frank without indiscretion, and secret without mysteriousness; to know the proper time and place for whatever you say or do, and to do it with an air of condition all this is not so soon nor so easily learned as people imagine, but requires observation and time. The world is an immense folio, which demands a great deal of time and attention to be read and understood as it ought to be; you have not yet read above four or five pages of it; and you will have but barely time to dip now and then in other less important books.

Lord Albemarle has, I know, wrote {It is a pleasure for an ordinary mortal to find Lord Chesterfield in gramatical error—and he did it again in the last sentence of this paragraph—but this was 1751? D.W.} to a friend of his here, that you do not frequent him so much as he expected and desired; that he fears somebody or other has given you wrong impressions of him; and that I may possibly think, from your being seldom at his house, that he has been wanting in his attentions to you. I told the person who told me this, that, on the contrary, you seemed, by your letters to me, to be extremely pleased with Lord Albemarle's behavior to you: but that you were obliged to give up dining abroad during your course of experimental philosophy. I guessed the true reason, which I believe was, that, as no French people frequent his house, you rather chose to dine at other places, where you were likely to meet with better company than your countrymen and you were in the right of it. However, I would have you show no shyness to Lord Albemarle, but go to him, and dine with him oftener than it may be you

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would wish, for the sake of having him speak well of you here when he returns. He is a good deal in fashion here, and his *puffing* you (to use an awkward expression) before you return here, will be of great use to you afterward. People in general take characters, as they do most things, upon trust, rather than be at the trouble of examining them themselves; and the decisions of four or five fashionable people, in every place, are final, more particularly with regard to characters, which all can hear, and but few judge of. Do not mention the least of this to any mortal; and take care that Lord Albemarle do not suspect that you know anything of the matter.

Lord Huntingdon and Lord Stormount are, I hear, arrived at Paris; you have, doubtless, seen them. Lord Stormount is well spoken of here; however, in your connections, if you form any with them, show rather a preference to Lord Huntingdon, for reasons which you will easily guess.

Mr. Harte goes this week to Cornwall, to take possession of his living; he has been installed at Windsor; he will return here in about a month, when your literary correspondence with him will be regularly carried on. Your mutual concern at parting was a good sign for both.

I have this moment received good accounts of you from Paris. Go on 'vous etes en bon train'. Adieu.

## LETTER CXXVIII

*London*, January 21, O. S.. 1751

*My dear friend:* In all my letters from Paris, I have the pleasure of finding, among many other good things, your docility mentioned with emphasis; this is the sure way of improving in those things, which you only want. It is true they are little, but it is as true too that they are necessary things. As they are mere matters of usage and mode, it is no disgrace for anybody of your age to be ignorant of them; and the most compendious way of learning them is, fairly to avow your ignorance, and to consult those who, from long usage and experience, know them best. Good sense and good-nature suggest civility in general; but, in good-breeding there are a thousand little delicacies, which are established only by custom; and it is these little elegances of manners which distinguish a courtier and a man of fashion from the vulgar. I am assured by different people, that your air is already much improved; and one of my correspondents makes you the true French compliment of saying, 'F'ose vous promettre qu'il sera bientot comme un de nos autres'. However unbecoming this speech may be in the mouth of a Frenchman, I am very glad that they think it applicable to you; for I would have you not only adopt, but rival, the best manners and usages of the place you are at, be they what they will; that

is the versatility of manners which is so useful in the course of the world. Choose your models well at Paris, and then rival them in their own way. There are fashionable

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words, phrases, and even gestures, at Paris, which are called 'du bon ton'; not to mention 'certaines Petites politesses et attentions, qui ne sont rien en elle-memes', which fashion has rendered necessary. Make yourself master of all these things; and to such a degree, as to make the French say, 'qu'on diroit que c'est un Francois'; and when hereafter you shall be at other courts, do the same thing there; and conform to the fashionable manners and usage of the place; that is what the French themselves are not apt to do; wherever they go, they retain their own manners, as thinking them the best; but, granting them to be so, they are still in the wrong not to conform to those of the place. One would desire to please, wherever one is; and nothing is more innocently flattering than an approbation, and an imitation of the people one converses with.

I hope your colleges with Marcel go on prosperously. In these ridiculous, though, at the same time, really important lectures, pray attend, and desire your professor also to attend, more particularly to the chapter of the arms. It is they that decide of a man's being genteel or otherwise, more than any other part of the body. A twist or stiffness in the wrist, will make any man in Europe look awkward. The next thing to be attended to is, your coming into a room, and presenting yourself to a company. This gives the first impression; and the first impression is often a lasting one. Therefore, pray desire Professor Marcel to make you come in and go out of his room frequently, and in the supposition of different companies being there; such as ministers, women, mixed companies, *etc.* Those who present themselves well, have a certain dignity in their air, which, without the least seeming mixture of pride, at once engages, and is respected.

I should not so often repeat, nor so long dwell upon such trifles, with anybody that had less solid and valuable knowledge than you have. Frivolous people attend to those things, 'par preference'; they know nothing else; my fear with you is, that, from knowing better things, you should despise these too much, and think them of much less consequence than they really are; for they are of a great deal, and more especially to you.

Pleasing and governing women may, in time, be of great service to you. They often please and govern others. 'A propos', are you in love with Madame de Berkenrode still, or has some other taken her place in your affections? I take it for granted, that 'qua to cumque domat Venus, non erubescendis adurit ignibus. Un arrangement honnete sied bien a un galant homme'. In that case I recommend to you the utmost discretion, and the profoundest silence. Bragging of, hinting at, intimating, or even affectedly disclaiming and denying such an arrangement will equally discredit you among men and women. An unaffected silence upon that subject is the only true medium.

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In your commerce with women, and indeed with men too, 'une certaine douceur' is particularly engaging; it is that which constitutes that character which the French talk of so much, and so justly value, I mean 'l'aimable'. This 'douceur' is not so easily described as felt. It is the compound result of different things; a complaisance, a flexibility, but not a servility of manners; an air of softness in the countenance, gesture, and expression, equally whether you concur or differ with the person you converse with. Observe those carefully who have that 'douceur' that charms you and others; and your own good sense will soon enable you to discover the different ingredients of which it is composed. You must be more particularly attentive to this 'douceur', whenever you are obliged to refuse what is asked of you, or to say what in itself cannot be very agreeable to those to whom you say it. It is then the necessary gilding of a disagreeable pill. 'L'aimable' consists in a thousand of these little things aggregately. It is the 'suaviter in modo', which I have so often recommended to you. The respectable, Mr. Harte assures me, you do not want, and I believe him. Study, then, carefully; and acquire perfectly, the 'Aimable', and you will have everything.

Abbe Guasco, who is another of your panegyrists, writes me word that he has taken you to dinner at Marquis de St. Germain's; where you will be welcome as often as you please, and the oftener the better. Profit of that, upon the principle of traveling in different countries, without changing places. He says, too, that he will take you to the parliament, when any remarkable cause is to be tried. That is very well; go through the several chambers of the parliament, and see and hear what they are doing; join practice and observation to your theoretical knowledge of their rights and privileges. No Englishman has the least notion of them.

I need not recommend you to go to the bottom of the constitutional and political knowledge of countries; for Mr. Harte tells me that you have a peculiar turn that way, and have informed yourself most correctly of them.

I must now put some queries to you, as to a 'juris publici peritus', which I am sure you can answer me, and which I own I cannot answer myself; they are upon a subject now much talked of.

1st. Are there any particular forms requisite for the election of a King of the Romans, different from those which are necessary for the election of an Emperor?

2d. Is not a King of the Romans as legally elected by the votes of a majority of the electors, as by two-thirds, or by the unanimity of the electors?

3d. Is there any particular law or constitution of the empire, that distinguishes, either in matter or in, form, the election of a King of the Romans from that of an Emperor? And is not the golden bull of Charles the Fourth equally the rule for both?

4th. Were there not, at a meeting of a certain number of the electors (I have forgotten when), some rules and limitations agreed upon concerning the election of a King of the Romans? And were those restrictions legal, and did they obtain the force of law?

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How happy am I, my dear child, that I can apply to you for knowledge, and with a certainty of being rightly informed! It is knowledge, more than quick, flashy parts, that makes a man of business. A man who is master of his matter, twill, with inferior parts, be too hard in parliament, and indeed anywhere else, for a man of-better parts, who knows his subject but superficially: and if to his knowledge he joins eloquence and elocution, he must necessarily soon be at the head of that assembly; but without those two, no knowledge is sufficient.

Lord Huntingdon writes me word that he has seen you, and that you have renewed your old school-acquaintance.

Tell me fairly your opinion of him, and of his friend Lord Stormount: and also of the other English people of fashion you meet with. I promise you inviolable secrecy on my part. You and I must now write to each other —as friends, and without the least reserve; there will for the future be a thousand-things in my letters, which I would not have any mortal living but yourself see or know. Those you will easily distinguish, and neither show nor repeat; and I will do the same by you.

To come to another subject (for I have a pleasure in talking over every subject with you): How deep are you in Italian? Do you understand Ariosto, Tasso, Boccaccio and Machiavelli? If you do, you know enough of it and may know all the rest, by reading, when you have time. Little or no business is written in Italian, except in Italy; and if you know enough of it to understand the few Italian letters that may in time come in your way, and to speak Italian tolerably to those very few Italians who speak no French, give yourself no further trouble about that language till you happen to have full leisure to perfect yourself in it. It is not the same with regard to German; your speaking and writing it well, will particularly distinguish you from every other man in England; and is, moreover, of great use to anyone who is, as probably you will be, employed in the Empire. Therefore, pray cultivate them sedulously, by writing four or five lines of German every day, and by speaking it to every German you meet with.

You have now got a footing in a great many good houses at Paris, in which I advise you to make yourself domestic. This is to be done by a certain easiness of carriage, and a decent familiarity. Not by way of putting yourself upon the frivolous footing of being 'sans consequence', but by doing in some degree, the honors of the house and table, calling yourself 'en badinant le galopin d'ici', saying to the masters or mistress, 'ceci est de mon departement; je m'en charge; avouez, que je m'en acquitte a merveille.' This sort of 'badinage' has something engaging and 'liant' in it, and begets that decent familiarity, which it is both agreeable and useful to establish in good houses and with people of fashion. Mere formal visits, dinners, and suppers, upon formal invitations, are not the thing; they add to no connection nor information; but it is the easy, careless ingress and egress at all hours, that forms the pleasing and profitable commerce of life.

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The post is so negligent, that I lose some letters from Paris entirely, and receive others much later than I should. To this I ascribe my having received no letter from you for above a fortnight, which to my impatience seems a long time. I expect to hear from you once a-week. Mr. Harte is gone to Cornwall, and will be back in about three weeks. I have a packet of books to send you by the first opportunity, which I believe will be Mr. Yorke's return to Paris. The, Greek books come from Mr. Harte, and the English ones from your humble servant. Read Lord Bolingbroke's with great attention, as well to the style as to the matter. I wish you could form yourself such a style in every language. Style is the dress of thoughts; and a well-dressed thought, like a well-dressed man, appears to great advantage. Yours. Adieu.

### LETTER CXXIX

*London, August 28, O. S. 1751*

*My dear friend:* A bill for ninety pounds sterling was brought me the other day, said to be drawn upon me by you: I scrupled paying it at first, not upon account of the sum, but because you had sent me no letter of advice, which is always done in those transactions; and still more, because I did not perceive that you had signed it. The person who presented it, desired me to look again, and that I should discover your name at the bottom: accordingly I looked again, and, with the help of my magnifying glass, did perceive that what I had first taken only for somebody's mark, was, in truth, your name, written in the worst and smallest hand I ever saw in my life.

However, I paid it at a venture; though I would almost rather lose the money, than that such a signature should be yours. All gentlemen, and all men of business, write their names always in the same way, that their signature may be so well known as not to be easily counterfeited; and they generally sign in rather larger character than their common hand; whereas your name was in a less, and a worse, than your common writing. This suggested to me the various accidents which may very probably happen to you, while you write so ill. For instance, if you were to write in such a character to the Secretary's office, your letter would immediately be sent to the decipherer, as containing matters of the utmost secrecy, not fit to be trusted to the common character. If you were to write so to an antiquarian, he (knowing you to be a man of learning) would certainly try it by the Runic, Celtic, or Sclavonian alphabet, never suspecting it to be a modern character. And, if you were to send a 'poulet' to a fine woman, in such a hand, she would think that it really came from the 'poulailler'; which, by the bye, is the etymology of the word 'poulet'; for Henry the Fourth of France used to send billets-doux to his mistresses by his 'poulailler', under pretense of sending them chickens; which gave the name of poulets to those short, but expressive



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manuscripts. I have often told you that every man who has the use of his eyes and of his hand, can write whatever hand he pleases; and it is plain that you can, since you write both the Greek and German characters, which you never learned of a writing-master, extremely well, though your common hand, which you learned of a master, is an exceedingly bad and illiberal one; equally unfit for business or common use. I do not desire that you should write the labored, stiff character of a writing-master: a man of business must write quick and well, and that depends simply upon use. I would therefore advise you to get some very good writing-master at Paris, and apply to it for a month only, which will be sufficient; for, upon my word, the writing of a genteel plain hand of business is of much more importance than you think. You will say, it may be, that when you write so very ill, it is because you are in a hurry, to which I answer, Why are you ever in a hurry? A man of sense may be in haste, but can never be in a hurry, because he knows that whatever he does in a hurry, he must necessarily do very ill. He may be in haste to dispatch an affair, but he will care not to let that haste hinder his doing it well. Little minds are in a hurry, when the object proves (as it commonly does) too big for them; they run, they hare, they puzzle, confound, and perplex themselves: they want to do everything at once, and never do it at all. But a man of sense takes the time necessary for doing the thing he is about, well; and his haste to dispatch a business only appears by the continuity of his application to it: he pursues it with a cool steadiness, and finishes it before he begins any other. I own your time is much taken up, and you have a great many different things to do; but remember that you had much better do half of them well and leave the other half undone, than do them all indifferently. Moreover, the few seconds that are saved in the course of the day, by writing ill instead of well, do not amount to an object of time by any means equivalent to the disgrace or ridicule of writing the scrawl of a common whore. Consider, that if your very bad writing could furnish me with matter of ridicule, what will it not do to others who do not view you in that partial light that I do? There was a pope, I think it was Cardinal Chigi, who was justly ridiculed for his attention to little things, and his inability in great ones: and therefore called maximus in minimis, and minimus in maximis. Why? Because he attended to little things when he had great ones to do. At this particular period of your life, and at the place you are now in, you have only little things to do; and you should make it habitual to you to do them well, that they may require no attention from you when you have, as I hope you will have, greater things to mind. Make a good handwriting familiar to you now, that you may hereafter have nothing but your matter to think of, when you have occasion to write to kings and ministers. Dance, dress, present yourself, habitually well now, that you may have none of those little things to think of hereafter, and which will be all necessary to be done well occasionally, when you will have greater things to do.

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As I am eternally thinking of everything that can be relative to you, one thing has occurred to me, which I think necessary to mention to you, in order to prevent the difficulties which it might otherwise lay you under; it is this as you get more acquaintances at Paris, it will be impossible for you to frequent your first acquaintances so much as you did, while you had no others. As, for example, at your first 'debut', I suppose you were chiefly at Madame Monconseil's, Lady Hervey's, and Madame du Boccage's. Now, that you have got so many other houses, you cannot be at theirs so often as you used; but pray take care not to give them the least reason to think that you neglect, or despise them, for the sake of new and more dignified and shining acquaintances; which would be ungrateful and imprudent on your part, and never forgiven on theirs. Call upon them often, though you do not stay with them so long as formerly; tell them that you are sorry you are obliged to go away, but that you have such and such engagements, with which good-breeding obliges you to comply; and insinuate that you would rather stay with them. In short, take care to make as many personal friends, and as few personal enemies, as possible. I do not mean, by personal friends, intimate and confidential friends, of which no man can hope to have half a dozen in the whole course of his life; but I mean friends, in the common acceptation of the word; that is, people who speak well of you, and who would rather do you good than harm, consistently with their own interest, and no further. Upon the whole, I recommend to you, again and again, 'les Graces'. Adorned by them, you may, in a manner, do what you please; it will be approved of; without them, your best qualities will lose half their efficacy. Endeavor to be fashionable among the French, which will soon make you fashionable here. Monsieur de Matignon already calls you 'le petit Francois'. If you can get that name generally at Paris, it will put you 'a la mode'. Adieu, my dear child.

## LETTER CXXX

*London*, February 4, O. S. 1751

*My dear friend:* The accounts which I receive of you from Paris grow every day more and more satisfactory. Lord Albemarle has wrote a sort of panegyric of you, which has been seen by many people here, and which will be a very useful forerunner for you. Being in fashion is an important point for anybody anywhere; but it would be a very great one for you to be established in the fashion here before you return. Your business will be half done by it, as I am sure you would not give people reason to change their favorable presentiments of you. The good that is said of you will not, I am convinced, make you a coxcomb; and, on the other hand, the being thought still to want some little accomplishments, will, I am persuaded, not mortify you, but only animate you to acquire them: I will, therefore, give you both fairly, in the following extract of a letter which I lately received from an impartial and discerning friend:—

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“Permit me to assure you, Sir, that Mr. Stanhope will succeed. He has a great fund of knowledge, and an uncommonly good memory, although he does not make any parade of either the one or the other. He is desirous of pleasing, and he will please. He has an expressive countenance; his figure is elegant, although little. He has not the least awkwardness, though he has not as yet acquired all the graces requisite; which Marcel and the ladies will soon give him. In short, he wants nothing but those things, which, at his age, must unavoidably be wanting; I mean, a certain turn and delicacy of manners, which are to be acquired only by time, and in good company. Ready as he is, he will soon learn them; particularly as he frequents such companies as are the most proper to give them.”

By this extract, which I can assure you is a faithful one, you and I have both of us the satisfaction of knowing how much you have, and how little you want. Let what you have give you (if possible) rather more *seeming* modesty, but at the same time more interior firmness and assurance; and let what you want, which you see is very attainable, redouble your attention and endeavors to acquire it. You have, in truth, but that one thing to apply to and a very pleasing application it is, since it is through pleasures you must arrive at it. Company, suppers, balls, spectacles, which show you the models upon which you should form yourself, and all the little usages, customs, and delicacies, which you must adopt and make habitual to you, are now your only schools and universities; in which young fellows and fine women will give you the best lectures.

Monsieur du Boccage is another of your panegyrists; and he tells me that Madame Boccage ‘a pris avec vous le ton de mie et de bonne’; and that you like it very well. You are in the right of it; it is the way of improving; endeavor to be upon that footing with every woman you converse with; excepting where there may be a tender point of connection; a point which I have nothing to do with; but if such a one there is, I hope she has not ‘de mauvais ni de vilains bras’, which I agree with you in thinking a very disagreeable thing.

I have sent you, by the opportunity of Pollok the courier, who was once my servant, two little parcels of Greek and English books; and shall send you two more by Mr. Yorke: but I accompany them with this caution, that as you have not much time to read, you should employ it in reading what is the most necessary, and that is, indisputably modern historical, geographical, chronological, and political knowledge; the present constitution, maxims, force, riches, trade, commerce, characters, parties, and cabals of the several courts of Europe. Many who are reckoned good scholars, though they know pretty accurately the governments of Athens and Rome, are totally ignorant of the constitution of any one country now in Europe, even of their own. Read just Latin and Greek enough to keep up your classical

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learning, which will be an ornament to you while young, and a comfort to you when old. But the true useful knowledge, and especially for you, is the modern knowledge above mentioned. It is that must qualify you both for domestic and foreign business, and it is to that, therefore, that you should principally direct your attention; and I know, with great pleasure, that you do so. I would not thus commend you to yourself, if I thought commendations would have upon you those ill effects, which they frequently have upon weak minds. I think you are much above being a vain coxcomb, overrating your own merit, and insulting others with the superabundance of it. On the contrary, I am convinced that the consciousness of merit makes a man of sense more modest, though more firm. A man who displays his own merit is a coxcomb, and a man who does not know it is a fool. A man of sense knows it, exerts it, avails himself of it, but never boasts of it; and always *seems* rather to under than over value it, though in truth, he sets the right value upon it. It is a very true maxim of La Bruyere's (an author well worth your studying), 'qu'on ne vaut dans ce monde, que ce que l'on veut valoir'. A man who is really diffident, timid, and bashful, be his merit what it will, never can push himself in the world; his despondency throws him into inaction; and the forward, the bustling, and the petulant, will always get the better of him. The manner makes the whole difference. What would be impudence in one manner, is only a proper and decent assurance in another. A man of sense, and of knowledge in the world, will assert his own rights, and pursue his own objects, as steadily and intrepidly as the most impudent man living, and commonly more so; but then he has art enough to give an outward air of modesty to all he does. This engages and prevails, while the very same things shock and fail, from the overbearing or impudent manner only of doing them. I repeat my maxim, 'Suaviter in modo, sed fortiter in re'. Would you know the characters, modes and manners of the latter end of the last age, which are very like those of the present, read La Bruyere. But would you know man, independently of modes, read La Rochefoucault, who, I am afraid, paints him very exactly.

Give the inclosed to Abbe Guasco, of whom you make good use, to go about with you, and see things. Between you and me, he has more knowledge than parts. 'Mais un habile homme sait tirer parti de tout', and everybody is good for something. President Montesquieu is, in every sense, a most useful acquaintance. He has parts, joined to great reading and knowledge of the world. 'Puisse dans cette source tant que vous pourrez'.

Adieu. May the Graces attend you! for without them 'ogni fatica e vana'. If they do not come to you willingly, ravish them, and force them to accompany you in all you think, all you say, and all you do.

## LETTER CXXXI

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London, February 11, O. S. 1751

*My dear friend:* When you go to the play, which I hope you do often, for it is a very instructive amusement, you must certainly have observed the very different effects which the several parts have upon you, according as they are well or ill acted. The very best tragedy of, Corneille's, if well spoken and acted, interests, engages, agitates, and affects your passions. Love, terror, and pity alternately possess you. But, if ill spoken and acted, it would only excite your indignation or your laughter. Why? It is still Corneille's; it is the same sense, the same matter, whether well or ill acted. It is, then, merely the manner of speaking and acting that makes this great difference in the effects. Apply this to yourself, and conclude from it, that if you would either please in a private company, or persuade in a public assembly, air, looks, gestures, graces, enunciation, proper accents, just emphasis, and tuneful cadences, are full as necessary as the matter itself. Let awkward, ungraceful, inelegant, and dull fellows say what they will in behalf of their solid matter and strong reasonings; and let them despise all those graces and ornaments which engage the senses and captivate the heart; they will find (though they will possibly wonder why) that their rough, unpolished matter, and their unadorned, coarse, but strong arguments, will neither please nor persuade; but, on the contrary, will tire out attention, and excite disgust. We are so made, we love to be pleased better than to be informed; information is, in a certain degree, mortifying, as it implies our previous ignorance; it must be sweetened to be palatable.

To bring this directly to you: know that no man can make a figure in this country, but by parliament. Your fate depends upon your success there as a speaker; and, take my word for it, that success turns much more upon manner than matter. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Murray the solicitor-general, uncle to Lord Stormount, are, beyond comparison, the best speakers; why? only because they are the best orators. They alone can inflame or quiet the House; they alone are so attended to, in that numerous and noisy assembly, that you might hear a pin fall while either of them is speaking. Is it that their matter is better, or their arguments stronger, than other people's? Does the House expect extraordinary informations from them? Not, in the least: but the House expects pleasure from them, and therefore attends; finds it, and therefore approves. Mr. Pitt, particularly, has very little parliamentary knowledge; his matter is generally flimsy, and his arguments often weak; but his eloquence is superior, his action graceful, his enunciation just and harmonious; his periods are well turned, and every word he makes use of is the very best, and the most expressive, that can be used in that place. This, and not his matter, made him Paymaster, in spite of both king and ministers. From this draw the obvious

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conclusion. The same thing holds full as true in conversation; where even trifles, elegantly expressed, well looked, and accompanied with graceful action, will ever please, beyond all the homespun, unadorned sense in the world. Reflect, on one side, how you feel within yourself, while you are forced to suffer the tedious, muddy, and ill-turned narration of some awkward fellow, even though the fact may be interesting; and, on the other hand, with what pleasure you attend to the relation of a much less interesting matter, when elegantly expressed, genteelly turned, and gracefully delivered. By attending carefully to all these agremens in your daily conversation, they will become habitual to you, before you come into parliament; and you will have nothing then, to do, but to raise them a little when you come there. I would wish you to be so attentive to this object, that I, would not have you speak to your footman, but in the very best words that the subject admits of, be the language what it will. Think of your words, and of their arrangement, before you speak; choose the most elegant, and place them in the best order. Consult your own ear, to avoid cacophony, and, what is very near as bad, monotony. Think also of your gesture and looks, when you are speaking even upon the most trifling subjects. The same things, differently expressed, looked, and delivered, cease to be the same things. The most passionate lover in the world cannot make a stronger declaration of love than the 'Bourgeois gentilhomme' does in this happy form of words, 'Mourir d'amour me font belle Marquise vos beaux yeux'. I defy anybody to say more; and yet I would advise nobody to say that, and I would recommend to you rather to smother and conceal your passion entirely than to reveal it in these words. Seriously, this holds in everything, as well as in that ludicrous instance. The French, to do them justice, attend very minutely to the purity, the correctness, and the elegance of their style in conversation and in their letters. 'Bien narrer' is an object of their study; and though they sometimes carry it to affectation, they never sink into inelegance, which is much the worst extreme of the two. Observe them, and form your French style upon theirs: for elegance in one language will reproduce itself in all. I knew a young man, who, being just elected a member of parliament, was laughed at for being discovered, through the keyhole of his chamber-door, speaking to himself in the glass, and forming his looks and gestures. I could not join in that laugh; but, on the contrary, thought him much wiser than those who laughed at him; for he knew the importance of those little graces in a public assembly, and they did not. Your little person (which I am told, by the way, is not ill turned), whether in a laced coat or a blanket, is specifically the same; but yet, I believe, you choose to wear the former, and you are in the right, for the sake of pleasing more. The worst-bred man in Europe, if a lady



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let fall her fan, would certainly take it up and give it her; the best-bred man in Europe could do no more. The difference, however, would be considerable; the latter would please by doing it gracefully; the former would be laughed at for doing it awkwardly. I repeat it, and repeat it again, and shall never cease repeating it to you: air, manners, graces, style, elegance, and all those ornaments, must now be the only objects of your attention; it is now, or never, that you must acquire them. Postpone, therefore, all other considerations; make them now your serious study; you have not one moment to lose. The solid and the ornamental united, are undoubtedly best; but were I reduced to make an option, I should without hesitation choose the latter.

I hope you assiduously frequent Marcell—[At that time the most celebrated dancing-master at Paris.]—and carry graces from him; nobody had more to spare than he had formerly. Have you learned to carve? for it is ridiculous not to carve well. A man who tells you gravely that he cannot carve, may as well tell you that he cannot blow his nose: it is both as necessary, and as easy.

Make my compliments to Lord Huntingdon, whom I love and honor extremely, as I dare say you do; I will write to him soon, though I believe he has hardly time to read a letter; and my letters to those I love are, as you know by experience, not very short ones: this is one proof of it, and this would have been longer, if the paper had been so. Good night then, my dear child.

### LETTER CXXXII

*London*, February 28, O. S. 1751.

*My dear friend*: This epigram in Martial—

“Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare;  
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te”—

[Or: “I do not love thee Dr. Fell The reason why I cannot tell. But this I know and know full well: I do not love thee Dr. Fell.” D.W.]

has puzzled a great many people, who cannot conceive how it is possible not to love anybody, and yet not to know the reason why. I think I conceive Martial's meaning very clearly, though the nature of epigram, which is to be short, would not allow him to explain it more fully; and I take it to be this: O Sabidis, you are a very worthy deserving man; you have a thousand good qualities, you have a great deal of learning; I esteem, I respect, but for the soul of me I cannot love you, though I cannot particularly say why. You are not aimable: you have not those engaging manners, those pleasing attentions,

those graces, and that address, which are absolutely necessary to please, though impossible to define. I cannot say it is this or that particular thing that hinders me from loving you; it is the whole together; and upon the whole you are not agreeable.



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How often have I, in the course of my life, found myself in this situation, with regard to many of my acquaintance, whom I have honored and respected, without being able to love. I did not know why, because, when one is young, one does not take the trouble, nor allow one's self the time, to analyze one's sentiments and to trace them up to their source. But subsequent observation and reflection have taught me why. There is a man, whose moral character, deep learning, and superior parts, I acknowledge, admire, and respect; but whom it is so impossible for me to love, that I am almost in a fever whenever I am in his company. His figure (without being deformed) seems made to disgrace or ridicule the common structure of the human body. His legs and arms are never in the position which, according to the situation of his body, they ought to be in, but constantly employed in committing acts of hostility upon the Graces. He throws anywhere, but down his throat, whatever he means to drink, and only mangles what he means to carve. Inattentive to all the regards of social life, he mistimes or misplaces everything. He disputes with heat, and indiscriminately, mindless of the rank, character, and situation of those with whom he disputes; absolutely ignorant of the several gradations of familiarity or respect, he is exactly the same to his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, absurd to two of the three. Is it possible to love such a man? No. The utmost I can do for him, is to consider him as a respectable Hottentot.—[This 'mot' was aimed at Dr. Johnson in retaliation for his famous letter.]

I remember, that when I came from Cambridge, I had acquired, among the pedants of that illiberal seminary, a sauciness of literature, a turn to satire and contempt, and a strong tendency to argumentation and contradiction. But I had been but a very little while in the world, before I found that this would by no means do; and I immediately adopted the opposite character; I concealed what learning I had; I applauded often, without approving; and I yielded commonly without conviction. 'Suaviter in modo' was my law and my prophets; and if I pleased (between you and me) it was much more owing to that, than to any superior knowledge or merit of my own. Apropos, the word *pleasing* puts one always in mind of Lady Hervey; pray tell her, that I declare her responsible to me for your pleasing; that I consider her as a pleasing Falstaff, who not only pleases, herself, but is the cause of pleasing in others; that I know she can make anything of anybody; and that, as your governess, if she does not make you please, it must be only because she will not, and not because she cannot. I hope you are 'dubois don't on en fait'; and if so, she is so good a sculptor, that I am sure she can give you whatever form she pleases. A versatility of manners is as necessary in social, as a versatility of parts is in political life. One must often yield, in order to prevail; one must humble one's self, to be exalted; one must, like St. Paul, become all things to all men, to gain some; and, by the way, men are taken by the same means, 'mutatis mutandis', that women are gained—by gentleness, insinuation, and submission: and these lines of Mr. Dryden will hold to a minister as well as to a mistress:

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"The prostrate lover, when he lowest lies,  
But stoops to conquer, and but kneels to rise."

In the course of the world, the qualifications of the chameleon are often necessary; nay, they must be carried a little further, and exerted a little sooner; for you should, to a certain degree, take the hue of either the man or the woman that you want, and wish to be upon terms with. 'A propos', have you yet found out at Paris, any friendly and hospitable Madame de Lursay, 'qui veut bien se charger du soin de vous eduquer'? And have you had any occasion of representing to her, 'qu'elle faisoit donc des noeuds'? But I ask your, pardon, Sir, for the abruptness of the question, and acknowledge that I am meddling with matters that are out of my department. However, in matters of less importance, I desire to be 'de vos secrets le fidele depositaire'. Trust me with the general turn and color of your amusements at Paris. Is it 'le fracas du grand monde, comedies, bals, operas, cour,' etc.? Or is it 'des petites societes, moins bruyantes, mais pas pour cela moins agreables'? Where are you the most 'etabli'? Where are you 'le petit Stanhope? Voyez vous encore jour, a quelque arrangement honnete? Have you made many acquaintances among the young Frenchmen who ride at your Academy; and who are they? Send to me this sort of chit-chat in your letters, which, by the bye, I wish you would honor me with somewhat oftener. If you frequent any of the myriads of polite Englishmen who infest Paris, who are they? Have you finished with Abbe Nolet, and are you 'au fait' of all the properties and effects of air? Were I inclined to quibble, I would say, that the effects of air, at least, are best to be learned of Marcel. If you have quite done with l'Abbes Nolet, ask my friend l'Abbe Sallier to recommend to you some meagre philomath, to teach you a little geometry and astronomy; not enough to absorb your attention and puzzle your intellects, but only enough not to be grossly ignorant of either. I have of late been a sort of 'astronome malgre moi', by bringing in last Monday into the House of Lords a bill for reforming our present Calendar and taking the New Style. Upon which occasion I was obliged to talk some astronomical jargon, of which I did not understand one word, but got it by heart, and spoke it by rote from a master. I wished that I had known a little more of it myself; and so much I would have you know. But the great and necessary knowledge of all is, to know, yourself and others: this knowledge requires great attention and long experience; exert the former, and may you have the latter! Adieu!

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P. S. I have this moment received your letters of the 27th February, and the 2d March, N. S. The seal shall be done as soon as possible. I am, glad that you are employed in Lord Albemarle's bureau; it will teach you, at least, the mechanical part of that business, such as folding, entering, and docketing letters; for you must not imagine that you are let into the 'fin fin' of the correspondence, nor indeed is it fit that you should, at, your age. However, use yourself to secrecy as to the letters you either read or write, that in time you may be trusted with *secret, very secret, separate, apart, etc.* I am sorry that this business interferes with your riding; I hope it is seldom; but I insist upon its not interfering with your dancing-master, who is at this time the most useful and necessary of all the masters you have or can have.

### LETTER CXXXIII

*My dear friend:* I mentioned to you, some time ago a sentence which I would most earnestly wish you always to retain in your thoughts, and observe in your conduct. It is 'suaviter in modo, fortiter in re' [gentleness of manners, with firmness of mind D.W.]. I do not know any one rule so unexceptionably useful and necessary in every part of life. I shall therefore take it for my text to-day, and as old men love preaching, and I have some right to preach to you, I here present you with my sermon upon these words. To proceed, then, regularly and PULPITICALLY, I will first show you, my beloved, the necessary connection of the two members of my text 'suaviter in modo: fortiter in re'. In the next place, I shall set forth the advantages and utility resulting from a strict observance of the precept contained in my text; and conclude with an application of the whole. The 'suaviter in modo' alone would degenerate and sink into a mean, timid complaisance and passiveness, if not supported and dignified by the 'fortiter in re', which would also run into impetuosity and brutality, if not tempered and softened by the 'suaviter in modo': however, they are seldom united.

The warm, choleric man, with strong animal spirits, despises the 'suaviter in modo', and thinks to, carry all before him by the 'fortiter in re'. He may, possibly, by great accident, now and then succeed, when he has only weak and timid people to deal with; but his general fate will be, to shock offend, be hated, and fail. On the other hand, the cunning, crafty man thinks to gain all his ends by the 'suaviter in modo' only; *he becomes all things to all men*; he seems to have no opinion of his own, and servilely adopts the present opinion of the present person; he insinuates himself only into the esteem of fools, but is soon detected, and surely despised by everybody else. The wise man (who differs as much from the cunning, as from the choleric man) alone joins the 'suaviter in modo' with the 'fortiter in re'. Now to the advantages arising from the strict observance of this precept:

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If you are in authority, and have a right to command, your commands delivered 'suaviter in modo' will be willingly, cheerfully, and consequently well obeyed; whereas, if given only 'fortiter', that is brutally, they will rather, as Tacitus says, be interrupted than executed. For my own part, if I bid my footman bring me a glass of wine, in a rough insulting manner, I should expect that, in obeying me, he would contrive to spill some of it upon me: and I am sure I should deserve it. A cool, steady resolution should show that where you have a right to command you will be obeyed; but at the same time, a gentleness in the manner of enforcing that obedience should make it a cheerful one, and soften as much as possible the mortifying consciousness of inferiority. If you are to ask a favor, or even to solicit your due, you must do it 'suaviter in modo', or you will give those who have a mind to refuse you, either a pretense to do it, by resenting the manner; but, on the other hand, you must, by a steady perseverance and decent tenaciousness, show the 'fortiter in re'. The right motives are seldom the true ones of men's actions, especially of kings, ministers, and people in high stations; who often give to importunity and fear, what they would refuse to justice or to merit. By the 'suaviter in modo' engage their hearts, if you can; at least prevent the pretense of offense but take care to show enough of the 'fortiter in re' to extort from their love of ease, or their fear, what you might in vain hope for from their justice or good-nature. People in high life are hardened to the wants and distresses of mankind, as surgeons are to their bodily pains; they see and hear of them all day long, and even of so many simulated ones, that they do not know which are real, and which not. Other sentiments are therefore to be applied to, than those of mere justice and humanity; their favor must be captivated by the 'suaviter in modo'; their love of ease disturbed by unwearied importunity, or their fears wrought upon by a decent intimation of implacable, cool resentment; this is the true 'fortiter in re'. This precept is the only way I know in the world of being loved without being despised, and feared without being hated. It constitutes the dignity of character which every wise man must endeavor to establish.

Now to apply what has been said, and so conclude.

If you find that you have a hastiness in your temper, which unguardedly breaks out into indiscreet sallies, or rough expressions, to either your superiors, your equals, or your inferiors, watch it narrowly, check it carefully, and call the 'suaviter in modo' to your assistance: at the first impulse of passion, be silent till you can be soft. Labor even to get the command of your countenance so well, that those emotions may not be read in it; a most unspeakable advantage in business! On the other hand, let no complaisance, no gentleness of temper, no weak desire of pleasing on your part,—no wheedling,

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coaxing, nor flattery, on other people's,—make you recede one jot from any point that reason and prudence have bid you pursue; but return to the charge, persist, persevere, and you will find most things attainable that are possible. A yielding, timid meekness is always abused and insulted by the unjust and the unfeeling; but when sustained by the 'fortiter in re', is always respected, commonly successful. In your friendships and connections, as well as in your enmities, this rule is particularly useful; let your firmness and vigor preserve and invite attachments to you; but, at the same time, let your manner hinder the enemies of your friends and dependents from becoming yours; let your enemies be disarmed by the gentleness of your manner, but let them feel, at the same time, the steadiness of your just resentment; for there is a great difference between bearing malice, which is always ungenerous, and a resolute self-defense, which is always prudent and justifiable. In negotiations with foreign ministers, remember the 'fortiter in re'; give up no point, accept of no expedient, till the utmost necessity reduces you to it, and even then, dispute the ground inch by inch; but then, while you are contending with the minister 'fortiter in re', remember to gain the man by the 'suaviter in modo'. If you engage his heart, you have a fair chance for imposing upon his understanding, and determining his will. Tell him, in a frank, gallant manner, that your ministerial wrangles do not lessen your personal regard for his merit; but that, on the contrary, his zeal and ability in the service of his master, increase it; and that, of all things, you desire to make a good friend of so good a servant. By these means you may, and will very often be a gainer: you never can be a loser. Some people cannot gain upon themselves to be easy and civil to those who are either their rivals, competitors, or opposers, though, independently of those accidental circumstances, they would like and esteem them. They betray a shyness and an awkwardness in company with them, and catch at any little thing to expose them; and so, from temporary and only occasional opponents, make them their personal enemies. This is exceedingly weak and detrimental, as indeed is all humor in business; which can only be carried on successfully by, unadulterated good policy and right reasoning. In such situations I would be more particularly and 'noblement', civil, easy, and frank with the man whose designs I traversed: this is commonly called generosity and magnanimity, but is, in truth, good sense and policy. The manner is often as important as the matter, sometimes more so; a favor may make an enemy, and an injury may make a friend, according to the different manner in which they are severally done. The countenance, the address, the words, the enunciation, the Graces, add great efficacy to the 'suaviter in modo', and great dignity to the 'fortiter in re', and consequently they deserve the utmost attention.

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From what has been said, I conclude with this observation, that gentleness of manners, with firmness of mind, is a short, but full description of human perfection on this side of religious and moral duties. That you may be seriously convinced of this truth, and show it in your life and conversation, is the most sincere and ardent wish of, Yours.

### LETTER CXXXIV

*London, March 11, O. S. 1751.*

*My dear friend:* I received by the last post a letter from Abbe Guasco, in which he joins his representations to those of Lord Albemarle, against your remaining any longer in your very bad lodgings at the Academy; and, as I do not find that any advantage can arise to you from being 'interne' in an academy which is full as far from the riding-house and from all your other masters, as your lodgings will probably be, I agree to your removing to an 'hotel garni'; the Abbe will help you to find one, as I desire him by the inclosed, which you will give him. I must, however, annex one condition to your going into private lodgings, which is an absolute exclusion of English breakfasts and suppers at them; the former consume the whole morning, and the latter employ the evenings very ill, in senseless toasting a l'Angloise in their infernal claret. You will be sure to go to the riding-house as often as possible, that is, whenever your new business at Lord Albemarle's does not hinder you. But, at all events, I insist upon your never missing Marcel, who is at present of more consequence to you than all the bureaux in Europe; for this is the time for you to acquire 'tous ces petits riens', which, though in an arithmetical account, added to one another 'ad infinitum', they would amount to nothing, in the account of the world amount to a great and important sum. 'Les agrements et les graces', without which you will never be anything, are absolutely made up of all those 'riens', which are more easily felt than described. By the way, you may take your lodgings for one whole year certain, by which means you may get them much cheaper; for though I intend to see you here in less than a year, it will be but for a little time, and you will return to Paris again, where I intend you shall stay till the end of April twelvemonth, 1752, at which time, provided you have got all 'la politesse, les manieres, les attentions, et les graces du beau monde', I shall place you in some business suitable to your destination.

I have received, at last, your present of the cartoon, from Dominichino, by Planchet. It is very finely done, it is pity that he did not take in all the figures of the original. I will hang it up, where it shall be your own again some time or other.

Mr. Harte is returned in perfect health from Cornwall, and has taken possession of his prebendal house at Windsor, which is a very pretty one. As I dare say you will always feel, I hope you will always express, the strongest sentiments of gratitude and friendship for him. Write to him frequently, and attend to the letters you receive from him. He shall

be with us at Blackheath, alias BABIOLE, all the time that I propose you shall be there, which I believe will be the month of August next.



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Having thus mentioned to you the probable time of our meeting, I will prepare you a little for it. Hatred; jealousy, or envy, make, most people attentive to discover the least defects of those they do not love; they rejoice at every new discovery they make of that kind, and take care to publish it. I thank God, I do not know what those three ungenerous passions are, having never felt them in my own breast; but love has just the same effect upon me, except that I conceal, instead of publishing, the defeats which my attention makes me discover in those I love. I curiously pry into them; I analyze them; and, wishing either to find them perfect, or to make them so, nothing escapes me, and I soon discover every the least gradation toward or from that perfection. You must therefore expect the most critical 'examen' that ever anybody underwent. I shall discover your least, as well as your greatest defects, and I shall very freely tell you of them, 'Non quod odio habeam sed quod amem'. But I shall tell them you 'tete-a-tete', and as MICIO not as DEMEA; and I will tell them to nobody else. I think it but fair to inform you beforehand, where I suspect that my criticisms are likely to fall; and that is more upon the outward, than upon the inward man; I neither suspect your heart nor your head; but to be plain with you, I have a strange distrust of your air, your address, your manners, your 'tournure', and particularly of your *enunciation* and elegance of style. These will be all put to the trial; for while you are with me, you must do the honors of my house and table; the least inaccuracy or inelegance will not escape me; as you will find by a *look* at the time, and by a remonstrance afterward when we are alone. You will see a great deal of company of all sorts at BABIOLE, and particularly foreigners. Make, therefore, in the meantime, all these exterior and ornamental qualifications your peculiar care, and disappoint all my imaginary schemes of criticism. Some authors have criticised their own works first, in hopes of hindering others from doing it afterward: but then they do it themselves with so much tenderness and partiality for their own production, that not only the production itself, but the preventive criticism is criticised. I am not one of those authors; but, on the contrary, my severity increases with my fondness for my work; and if you will but effectually correct all the faults I shall find, I will insure you from all subsequent criticisms from other quarters.

Are you got a little into the interior, into the constitution of things at Paris? Have you seen what you have seen thoroughly? For, by the way, few people see what they see, or hear what they hear. For example, if you go to les Invalides, do you content yourself with seeing the building, the hall where three or four hundred cripples dine, and the galleries where they lie? or do you inform yourself of the numbers, the conditions of their admission, their allowance,



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the value and nature of the fund by which the whole is supported? This latter I call seeing, the former is only starting. Many people take the opportunity of 'les vacances', to go and see the, empty rooms where the several chambers of the parliament did sit; which rooms are exceedingly like all other large rooms; when you go there, let it be when they are full; see and hear what is doing in them; learn their respective constitutions, jurisdictions, objects, and methods of proceeding; hear some causes tried in every one of the different chambers; 'Approfondissez les choses'.

I am glad to hear that you are so well at Marquis de St. Germain's, —[At that time Ambassador from the King of Sardinia at the Court of France.]—of whom I hear a very good character. How are you with the other foreign ministers at Paris? Do you frequent the Dutch Ambassador or Ambassadress? Have you any footing at the Nuncio's, or at the Imperial and Spanish ambassadors? It is useful. Be more particular in your letters to me, as to your manner of passing your time, and the company you keep. Where do you dine and sup oftenest? whose house is most your home? Adieu. 'Les Graces, les Graces'.

### LETTER CXXXV

*London, March 18, O. S. 1751.*

*My dear friend:* I acquainted you in a former letter, that I had brought a bill into the House of Lords for correcting and reforming our present calendar, which is the Julian, and for adopting the Gregorian. I will now give you a more particular account of that affair; from which reflections will naturally occur to you that I hope may be useful, and which I fear you have not made. It was notorious, that the Julian calendar was erroneous, and had overcharged the solar year with eleven days. Pope Gregory the Thirteenth corrected this error; his reformed calendar was immediately received by all the Catholic powers of Europe, and afterward adopted by all the Protestant ones, except Russia, Sweden, and England. It was not, in my opinion, very honorable for England to remain, in a gross and avowed error, especially in such company; the inconveniency of it was likewise felt by all those who had foreign correspondences, whether political or mercantile. I determined, therefore, to attempt the reformation; I consulted the best lawyers and the most skillful astronomers, and we cooked up a bill for that purpose. But then my difficulty began: I was to bring in this bill, which was necessarily composed of law jargon and astronomical calculations, to both which I am an utter stranger. However, it was absolutely necessary to make the House of Lords think that I knew something of the matter; and also to make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them as astronomy, and they would have understood me full as well: so I resolved to do better than speak to

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the purpose, and to please instead of informing them. I gave them, therefore, only an historical account of calendars, from the Egyptian down to the Gregorian, amusing them now and then with little episodes; but I was particularly attentive to the choice of my words, to the harmony and roundness of my periods, to my elocution, to my action. This succeeded, and ever will succeed; they thought I informed, because I pleased them; and many of them said that I had made the whole very clear to them; when, God knows, I had not even attempted it. Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in forming the bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterward with infinite knowledge, and all the clearness that so intricate a matter would admit of: but as his words, his periods, and his utterance, were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me. This will ever be the case; every numerous assembly is *mob*, let the individuals who compose it be what they will. Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob; their passions, their sentiments, their senses, and their seeming interests, are alone to be applied to. Understanding they have collectively none, but they have ears and eyes, which must be flattered and seduced; and this can only be done by eloquence, tuneful periods, graceful action, and all the various parts of oratory.

When you come into the House of Commons, if you imagine that speaking plain and unadorned sense and reason will do your business, you will find yourself most grossly mistaken. As a speaker, you will be ranked only according to your eloquence, and by no means according to your matter; everybody knows the matter almost alike, but few can adorn it. I was early convinced of the importance and powers of eloquence; and from that moment I applied myself to it. I resolved not to utter one word, even in common conversation, that should not be the most expressive and the most elegant that the language could supply me with for that purpose; by which means I have acquired such a certain degree of habitual eloquence, that I must now really take some pains, if, I would express myself very inelegantly. I want to inculcate this known truth into you, which, you seem by no means to be convinced of yet, that ornaments are at present your only objects. Your sole business now is to shine, not to weigh. Weight without lustre is lead. You had better talk trifles elegantly to the most trifling woman, than coarse in elegant sense to the most solid man; you had better, return a dropped fan genteelly, than give a thousand pounds awkwardly; and you had better refuse a favor gracefully, than to grant it clumsily. Manner is all, in everything: it is by manner only that you can please, and consequently rise. All your Greek will never advance you from secretary to envoy, or from envoy to ambassador; but your address, your manner, your air, if good, very probably may. Marcel can be of much more use to you than Aristotle. I would, upon my word, much rather that you had Lord Bolingbroke's style and eloquence in speaking and writing, than all the learning of the Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society, and the two Universities united.

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Having mentioned Lord Bolingbroke's style, which is, undoubtedly, infinitely superior to anybody's, I would have you read his works, which you have, over and-over again, with particular attention to his style. Transcribe, imitate, emulate it, if possible: that would be of real use to you in the House of Commons, in negotiations, in conversation; with that, you may justly hope to please, to persuade, to seduce, to impose; and you will fail in those articles, in proportion as you fall short of it. Upon the whole, lay aside, during your year's residence at Paris, all thoughts of all that dull fellows call solid, and exert your utmost care to acquire what people of fashion call shining. 'Prenez l'eclat et le brillant d'un galant homme'.

Among the commonly called little things, to which you, do not attend, your handwriting is one, which is indeed shamefully bad and illiberal; it is neither the hand of a man of business, nor of a gentleman, but of a truant school-boy; as soon, therefore, as you have done with Abbe Nolet, pray get an excellent writing-master (since you think that you cannot teach yourself to write what hand you please), and let him teach you to write a genteel, legible, liberal hand, and quick; not the hand of a procureur or a writing-master, but that sort of hand in which the first 'Commis' in foreign bureaus commonly write; for I tell you truly, that were I Lord Albemarle, nothing should remain in my bureau written in your present hand. From hand to arms the transition is natural; is the carriage and motion of your arms so too? The motion of the arms is the most material part of a man's air, especially in dancing; the feet are not near so material. If a man dances well from the waist upward, wears his hat well, and moves his head properly, he dances well. Do the women say that you dress well? for that is necessary too for a young fellow. Have you 'un gout vif', or a passion for anybody? I do not ask for whom: an Iphigenia would both give you the desire, and teach you the means to please.

In a fortnight or three weeks you will see Sir Charles Hotham at Paris, in his way to Toulouse, where he is to stay a year or two. Pray be very civil to him, but do not carry him into company, except presenting him to Lord Albemarle; for, as he is not to stay at Paris above a week, we do not desire that he should taste of that dissipation: you may show him a play and an opera. Adieu, my dear child.

## LETTER CXXXVI

*London*, March 25, O. S. 1751.

*My dear friend:* What a happy period of your life is this? Pleasure is now, and ought to be, your business. While you were younger, dry rules, and unconnected words, were the unpleasant objects of your labors. When you grow older, the anxiety, the vexations, the disappointments inseparable from public business, will require the greatest share of your time and attention; your pleasures may, indeed,

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conduce to your business, and your business will quicken your pleasures; but still your time must, at least, be divided: whereas now it is wholly your own, and cannot be so well employed as in the pleasures of a gentleman. The world is now the only book you want, and almost the only one you ought to read: that necessary book can only be read in company, in public places, at meals, and in 'ruelles'. You must be in the pleasures, in order to learn the manners of good company. In premeditated, or in formal business, people conceal, or at least endeavor to conceal, their characters: whereas pleasures discover them, and the heart breaks out through the guard of the understanding. Those are often propitious moments for skillful negotiators to improve. In your destination particularly, the able conduct of pleasures is of infinite use; to keep a good table, and to do the honors of it gracefully, and 'sur le ton de la bonne compagnie', is absolutely necessary for a foreign minister. There is a certain light table chit-chat, useful to keep off improper and too serious subjects, which is only to be learned in the pleasures of good company. In truth it may be trifling; but, trifling as it is, a man of parts and experience of the world will give an agreeable turn to it. 'L'art de badiner agreeablement' is by no means to be despised.

An engaging address, and turn to gallantry, is often of very great service to foreign ministers. Women have, directly or indirectly; a good deal to say in most courts. The late Lord Strafford governed, for a considerable time, the Court of Berlin and made his own fortune, by being well with Madame de Wartenberg, the first King of Prussia's mistress. I could name many other instances of that kind. That sort of agreeable 'caquet de femmes', the necessary fore-runners of closer conferences, is only to be got by frequenting women of the first fashion, 'et, qui donnent le ton'. Let every other book then give way to this great and necessary book, the world, of which there are so many various readings, that it requires a great deal of time and attention to understand it well: contrary to all other books, you must not stay home, but go abroad to read it; and when you seek it abroad, you will not find it in booksellers' shops and stalls, but in courts, in hotels, at entertainments, balls, assemblies, spectacles, etc. Put yourself upon the footing of an easy, domestic, but polite familiarity and intimacy in the several French houses to which you have been introduced: Cultivate them, frequent them, and show a desire of becoming 'enfant de la maison'. Get acquainted as much as you can with 'les gens de cour'; and observe, carefully, how politely they can differ, and how civilly they can hate; how easy and idle they can seem in the multiplicity of their business; and how they can lay hold of the proper moments to carry it on, in the midst of their pleasures. Courts, alone, teach versatility and politeness; for

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there is no living there without them. Lord Albermarle has, I hear, and am very glad of it, put you into the hands of Messieurs de Bissy. Profit of that, and beg of them to let you attend them in all the companies of Versailles and Paris. One of them, at least, will naturally carry you to Madame de la Valiores, unless he is discarded by this time, and Gelliot—[A famous opera-singer at Paris.]—retaken. Tell them frankly, 'que vous cherchez a vous former, que vous etes en mains de maitres, s'ils veulent bien s'en donner la peine'. Your profession has this agreeable peculiarity in it, which is, that it is connected with, and promoted by pleasures; and it is the only one in which a thorough knowledge of the world, polite manners, and an engaging address, are absolutely necessary. If a lawyer knows his law, a parson his divinity, and a financier his calculations, each may make a figure and a fortune in his profession, without great knowledge of the world, and without the manners of gentlemen. But your profession throws you into all the intrigues and cabals, as well as pleasures, of courts: in those windings and labyrinths, a knowledge of the world, a discernment of characters, a suppleness and versatility of mind, and an elegance of manners, must be your clue; you must know how to soothe and lull the monsters that guard, and how to address and gain the fair that keep, the golden fleece. These are the arts and the accomplishments absolutely necessary for a foreign minister; in which it must be owned, to our shame, that most other nations outdo the English; and, 'caeteris paribus', a French minister will get the better of an English one at any third court in Europe. The French have something more 'liant', more insinuating and engaging in their manner, than we have. An English minister shall have resided seven years at a court, without having made any one personal connection there, or without being intimate and domestic in any one house. He is always the English minister, and never naturalized. He receives his orders, demands an audience, writes an account of it to his Court, and his business is done. A French minister, on the contrary, has not been six weeks at a court without having, by a thousand little attentions, insinuated himself into some degree of favor with the Prince, his wife, his mistress, his favorite, and his minister. He has established himself upon a familiar and domestic footing in a dozen of the best houses of the place, where he has accustomed the people to be not only easy, but unguarded, before him; he makes himself at home there, and they think him so. By these means he knows the interior of those courts, and can almost write prophecies to his own, from the knowledge he has of the characters, the humors, the abilities, or the weaknesses of the actors. The Cardinal d'Ossat was looked upon at Rome as an Italian, and not as a French cardinal; and Monsieur d'Avaux, wherever he went, was never considered as a foreign minister, but as a native, and a personal friend. Mere plain truth, sense, and knowledge, will by no means do alone in courts; art and ornaments must come to their assistance. Humors must be flattered; the 'mollia tempora' must be studied and known: confidence acquired by seeming frankness, and profited of by silent skill. And, above all; you must gain and engage the heart, to betray the understanding to you. 'Ha tibi erunt artes'.

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The death of the Prince of Wales, who was more beloved for his affability and good-nature than esteemed for his steadiness and conduct, has given concern to many, and apprehensions to all. The great difference of the ages of the King and Prince George presents the prospect of a minority; a disagreeable prospect for any nation! But it is to be hoped, and is most probable, that the King, who is now perfectly recovered of his late indisposition, may live to see his grandson of age. He is, seriously, a most hopeful boy: gentle and good-natured, with good sound sense. This event has made all sorts of people here historians, as well as politicians. Our histories are rummaged for all the particular circumstances of the six minorities we have had since the Conquest, viz, those of Henry III., Edward III., Richard II., Henry VI., Edward V., and Edward VI.; and the reasonings, the speculations, the conjectures, and the predictions, you will easily imagine, must be innumerable and endless, in this nation, where every porter is a consummate politician. Dr. Swift says, very humorously, that "Every man knows that he understands religion and politics, though he never learned them; but that many people are conscious that they do not understand many other sciences, from having never learned them." Adieu.

### LETTER CXXXVII

*London, April 7, O. S. 1751*

*My dear friend:* Here you have, altogether, the pocketbooks, the compasses, and the patterns. When your three Graces have made their option, you need only send me, in a letter small pieces of the three mohairs they fix upon. If I can find no way of sending them safely and directly to Paris, I will contrive to have them left with Madame Morel, at Calais, who, being Madame Monconseil's agent there, may find means of furthering them to your three ladies, who all belong to your friend Madame Monconseil. Two of the three, I am told, are handsome; Madame Polignac, I can swear, is not so; but, however, as the world goes, two out of three is a very good composition.

You will also find in the packet a compass ring set round with little diamonds, which I advise you to make a present of to Abbe Guasco, who has been useful to you, and will continue to be so; as it is a mere bauble, you must add to the value of it by your manner of giving it him. Show it him first, and, when he commends it, as probably he will, tell him that it is at his service, 'et que comme il est toujours par vole et par chemins, il est absolument necessaire qu'il ale une boussole'. All those little gallantries depend entirely upon the manner of doing them; as, in truth, what does not? The greatest favors may be done so awkwardly and bunglingly as to offend; and disagreeable things may be done so agreeably as almost to oblige. Endeavor to acquire this great secret; it exists, it is to be found, and is worth a great deal more than the grand secret of



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the alchemists would be if it were, as it is not, to be found. This is only to be learned in courts, where clashing views, jarring opinions, and cordial hatreds, are softened and kept within decent bounds by politeness and manners. Frequent, observe, and learn courts. Are you free of that of St. Cloud? Are you often at Versailles? Insinuate and wriggle yourself into favor at those places. L'Abbe de la Ville, my old friend, will help you at the latter; your three ladies may establish you in the former. The good-breeding 'de la ville et de la cour' [of the city and of the court] are different; but without deciding which is intrinsically the best, that of the court is, without doubt, the most necessary for you, who are to live, to grow, and to rise in courts. In two years' time, which will be as soon as you are fit for it, I hope to be able to plant you in the soil of a *young court* here: where, if you have all the address, the suppleness and versatility of a good courtier, you will have a great chance of thriving and flourishing. Young favor is easily acquired if the proper means are employed; and, when acquired, it is warm, if not durable; and the warm moments must be snatched and improved. 'Quitte pour ce qui en pent arriver apres'. Do not mention this view of mine for you to any one mortal; but learn to keep your own secrets, which, by the way, very few people can do.

If your course of experimental philosophy with Abbe Nolot is over, I would have you apply to Abbe Sallier, for a master to give you a general notion of astronomy and geometry; of both of which you may know as much, as I desire you should, in six months' time. I only desire that you should have a clear notion of the present planetary system, and the history of all the former systems. Fontenelle's 'Pluralites des Mondes' will almost teach you all you need know upon that subject. As for geometry, the seven first books of Euclid will be a sufficient portion of it for you. It is right to have a general notion of those abstruse sciences, so as not to appear quite ignorant of them, when they happen, as sometimes they do, to be the topics of conversation; but a deep knowledge of them requires too much time, and engrosses the mind too much. I repeat it again and again to you, Let the great book of the world be your principal study. 'Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna'; which may be rendered thus in English: Turn Over *men by day, and women by night*. I mean only the best editions.

Whatever may be said at Paris of my speech upon the bill for the reformation of the present calendar, or whatever applause it may have met with here, the whole, I can assure you, is owing to the words and to the delivery, but by no means to the matter; which, as I told you in a former letter, I was not master of. I mention this again, to show you the importance of well-chosen words, harmonious periods, and good

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delivery; for, between you and me, Lord Macclefield's speech was, in truth, worth a thousand of mine. It will soon be printed, and I will send it you. It is very instructive. You say, that you wish to speak but half as well as I did; you may easily speak full as well as ever I did, if you will but give the same attention to the same objects that I did at your age, and for many years afterward; I mean correctness, purity, and elegance of style, harmony of periods, and gracefulness of delivery. Read over and over again the third book of 'Cicero de Oratore', in which he particularly treats of the ornamental parts of oratory; they are indeed properly oratory, for all the rest depends only upon common sense, and some knowledge of the subject you speak upon. But if you would please, persuade, and prevail in speaking, it must be by the ornamental parts of oratory. Make them therefore habitual to you; and resolve never to say the most common things, even to your footman, but in the best words you can find, and with the best utterance. This, with 'les manieres, la tournure, et les usages du beau monde', are the only two things you want; fortunately, they are both in your power; may you have them both! Adieu.

### LETTER CXXXVIII

*London, April 15, O. S. 1751*

*My dear friend:* What success with the graces, and in the accomplishments, elegancies, and all those little nothings so indispensably necessary to constitute an amiable man? Do you take them, do you make a progress in them? The great secret is the art of pleasing; and that art is to be attained by every man who has a good fund of common sense. If you are pleased with any person, examine why; do as he does; and you will charm others by the same things which please you in him. To be liked by women, you must be esteemed by men; and to please men, you must be agreeable to women. Vanity is unquestionably the ruling passion in women; and it is much flattered by the attentions of a man who is generally esteemed by men; when his merit has received the stamp of their approbation, women make it current, that is to say, put him in fashion. On the other hand, if a man has not received the last polish from women, he may be estimable among men, but will never be amiable. The concurrence of the two sexes is as necessary to the perfection of our being, as to the formation of it. Go among women with the good qualities of your sex, and you will acquire from them the softness and the graces of theirs. Men will then add affection to the esteem which they before had for you. Women are the only refiners of the merit of men; it is true, they cannot add weight, but they polish and give lustre to it. 'A propos', I am assured, that Madame de Blot, although she has no great regularity of features, is, notwithstanding, excessively pretty; and that, for all that, she has as yet been scrupulously constant to her husband, though she has now been married above a year. Surely she does not reflect, that woman wants polishing. I would have you polish one another reciprocally. Force, assiduities, attentions, tender looks, and passionate declarations, on your side



will produce some irresolute wishes, at least, on hers; and when even the slightest wishes arise, the rest will soon follow.

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As I take you to be the greatest 'juris peritus' and politician of the whole Germanic body, I suppose you will have read the King of Prussia's letter to the Elector of Mayence, upon the election of a King of the Romans; and on the other side, a memorial entitled, *impartial representation of what is just with regard to the election of A king of the Romans, etc.* The first is extremely well written, but not grounded upon the laws and customs of the empire. The second is very ill written (at least in French), but well grounded. I fancy the author is some German, who has taken into his head that he understands French. I am, however, persuaded that the elegance and delicacy of the King of Prussia's letter will prevail with two-thirds of the public, in spite of the solidity and truth contained in the other piece. Such is the force of an elegant and delicate style!

I wish you would be so good as to give me a more particular and circumstantial account of the method of passing your time at Paris. For instance, where it is that you dine every Friday, in company with that amiable and respectable old man, Fontenelle? Which is the house where you think yourself at home? For one always has such a one, where one is better established, and more at ease than anywhere else. Who are the young Frenchmen with whom you are most intimately connected? Do you frequent the Dutch Ambassador's. Have you penetrated yet into Count Caunitz's house? Has Monsieur de Pignatelli the honor of being one of your humble servants? And has the Pope's nuncio included you in the jubilee? Tell me also freely how you are with Lord Huntingdon: Do you see him often? Do you connect yourself with him? Answer all these questions circumstantially in your first letter.

I am told that Du Clos's book is not in vogue at Paris, and that it is violently criticised: I suppose that is because one understands it; and being intelligible is now no longer the fashion. I have a very great respect for fashion, but a much greater for this book; which is, all at once, true, solid, and bright. It contains even epigrams; what can one wish for more?

Mr.-----will, I suppose, have left Paris by this time for his residence at Toulouse. I hope he will acquire manners there; I am sure he wants them. He is awkward, he is silent, and has nothing agreeable in his address,—most necessary qualifications to distinguish one's self in business, as well as in the *polite world*! In truth, these two things are so connected, that a man cannot make a figure in business, who is not qualified to shine in the great world; and to succeed perfectly in either the one or the other, one must be in 'utrumque paratus'. May you be that, my dear friend! and so we wish you a good night.

P. S. Lord and Lady Blessington, with their son Lord Mountjoy, will be at Paris next week, in their way to the south of France; I send you a little packet of books by them.



Pray go wait upon them, as soon as you hear of their arrival, and show them all the attentions you can.

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### LETTER CXXXIX

*London, April 22, O. S. 1751*

*My dear friend:* I apply to you now, as to the greatest virtuoso of this, or perhaps any other age; one whose superior judgment and distinguishing eye hindered the King of Poland from buying a bad picture at Venice, and whose decisions in the realms of 'virtu' are final, and without appeal. Now to the point. I have had a catalogue sent me, 'd'une Trente a l'aimable de Tableaux des plus Grands Maitres, appartenans au Sieur Araignon Aperen, valet de chambre de la Reine, sur le quai de la Megisserie, au coin de Arche Marion'. There I observe two large pictures of Titian, as described in the inclosed page of the catalogue, No. 18, which I should be glad to purchase upon two conditions: the first is, that they be undoubted originals of Titian, in good preservation; and the other that they come cheap. To ascertain the first (but without disparaging your skill), I wish you would get some undoubted connoisseurs to examine them carefully: and if, upon such critical examination, they should be unanimously allowed to be undisputed originals of Titian, and well preserved, then comes the second point, the price: I will not go above two hundred pounds sterling for the two together; but as much less as you can get them for. I acknowledge that two hundred pounds seems to be a very small sum for two undoubted Titians of that size; but, on the other hand, as large Italian pictures are now out of fashion at Paris, where fashion decides of everything, and as these pictures are too large for common rooms, they may possibly come within the price above limited. I leave the whole of this transaction (the price excepted, which I will not exceed) to your consummate skill and prudence, with proper advice joined to them. Should you happen to buy them for that price, carry them to your own lodgings, and get a frame made to the second, which I observe has none, exactly the same with the other frame, and have the old one new gilt; and then get them carefully packed up, and sent me by Rouen.

I hear much of your conversing with 'les beaux esprits' at Paris: I am very glad of it; it gives a degree of reputation, especially at Paris; and their conversation is generally instructive, though sometimes affected. It must be owned, that the polite conversation of the men and women of fashion at Paris, though not always very deep, is much less futile and frivolous than ours here. It turns at least upon some subject, something of taste, some point of history, criticism, and even philosophy; which, though probably not quite so solid as Mr. Locke's, is, however, better, and more becoming rational beings, than our frivolous dissertations upon the weather, or upon whist. Monsieur du Clos observes, and I think very justly, 'qu'il y a a present en France une fermentation universelle de la raison qui tend a se developper'. Whereas, I am

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sorry to say, that here that fermentation seems to have been over some years ago, the spirit evaporated, and only the dregs left. Moreover, 'les beaux esprits' at Paris are commonly well-bred, which ours very frequently are not; with the former your manners will be formed; with the latter, wit must generally be compounded for at the expense of manners. Are you acquainted with Marivaux, who has certainly studied, and is well acquainted with the heart; but who refines so much upon its 'plis et replis', and describes them so affectedly, that he often is unintelligible to his readers, and sometimes so, I dare say, to himself? Do you know 'Crebillon le fils'? He is a fine painter and a pleasing writer; his characters are admirable and his reflections just. Frequent these people, and be glad, but not proud of frequenting them: never boast of it, as a proof of your own merit, nor insult, in a manner, other companies by telling them affectedly what you, Montesquieu and Fontenelle were talking of the other day; as I have known many people do here, with regard to Pope and Swift, who had never been twice in company with either; nor carry into other companies the 'ton' of those meetings of 'beaux esprits'. Talk literature, taste, philosophy, *etc.*, with them, 'a la bonne heure'; but then, with the same ease, and more 'enjouement', talk 'pom-pons, moires', *etc.*, with Madame de Blot, if she requires it. Almost every subject in the world has its proper time and place; in which no one is above or below discussion. The point is, to talk well upon the subject you talk upon; and the most trifling, frivolous subjects will still give a man of parts an opportunity of showing them. 'L'usage du grand monde' can alone teach that. That was the distinguishing characteristic of Alcibiades, and a happy one it was, that he could occasionally, and with so much ease, adopt the most different, and even the most opposite habits and manners, that each seemed natural to him. Prepare yourself for the great world, as the 'athletae' used to do for their exercises: oil (if I may use that expression) your mind and your manners, to give them the necessary suppleness and flexibility; strength alone will not do, as young people are too apt to think.

How do your exercises go on? Can you manage a pretty vigorous 'sauteur' between the pillars? Are you got into stirrups yet? 'Faites-vous assaut aux armes? But, above all, what does Marcel say of you? Is he satisfied? Pray be more particular in your accounts of yourself, for though I have frequent accounts of you from others, I desire to have your own too. Adieu. Yours, truly and friendly.

## LETTER CXL

London, May 2, O. S. 1751

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*Dear friend:* Two accounts, which I have very lately received of you, from two good judges, have put me into great spirits, as they have given me reasonable hopes that you will soon acquire all that I believe you want: I mean the air, the address; the graces, and the manners of a man of fashion. As these two pictures of you are very unlike that which I received, and sent you some months ago, I will name the two painters: the first is an old friend and acquaintance of mine, Monsieur d'Aillon. His picture is, I hope, like you; for it is a very good one: Monsieur Tollot's is still a better, and so advantageous a one, that I will not send you a copy of it, for fear of making you too vain. So far only I will tell you, that there was but one *but* in either of their accounts; and it was this: I gave d'Aillon the question ordinary and extraordinary, upon the important article of manners; and extorted this from him: "But, since you will know it, he still wants that last beautiful varnish, which raises the colors, and gives brilliancy to the piece. Be persuaded that he will acquire it: he has too much sense not to know its value; and if I am not greatly mistaken, more persons than one are now endeavoring to give it him. Monsieur Tollot says: "In order to be exactly all that you wish him, he only wants those little nothings, those graces in detail, and that amiable ease, which can only be acquired by usage of the great world. I am assured that he is, in that respect, in good hands. I do not know whether that does not rather imply in fine arms." Without entering into a nice discussion of the last question, I congratulate you and myself upon your being so near that point at which I so anxiously wish you to arrive. I am sure that all your attention and endeavors will be exerted; and, if exerted, they will succeed. Mr. Tollot says, that you are inclined to be fat, but I hope you will decline it as much as you can; not by taking anything corrosive to make you lean, but by taking as little as you can of those things that would make you fat. Drink no chocolate; take your coffee without cream: you cannot possibly avoid suppers at Paris, unless you avoid company too, which I would by no means have you do; but eat as little at supper as you can, and make even an allowance for that little at your dinners. Take occasionally a double dose of riding and fencing; and now that summer is come, walk a good deal in the Tuileries. It is a real inconvenience to anybody to be fat, and besides it is ungraceful for a young fellow. 'A propos', I had like to have forgot to tell you, that I charged Tollot to attend particularly to your utterance and diction; two points of the utmost importance. To the first he says: "His enunciation is not bad, but it is to be wished that it were still better; and he expresses himself with more fire than elegance. Usage of good company will instruct him likewise in that." These, I allow, are all little things, separately; but aggregately,

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they make a most important and great article in the account of a gentleman. In the House of Commons you can never make a figure without elegance of style, and gracefulness of utterance; and you can never succeed as a courtier at your own Court, or as a minister at any other, without those innumerable 'petite riens dans les manieres, et dans les attentions'. Mr. Yorke is by this time at Paris; make your court to him, but not so as to disgust, in the least, Lord Albemarle, who may possibly dislike your considering Mr. Yorke as the man of business, and him as only 'pour orner la scene'. Whatever your opinion may be upon *that point*, take care not to let it appear; but be well with them both by showing no public preference to either.

Though I must necessarily fall into repetitions by treating the same subject so often, I cannot help recommending to you again the utmost attention to your air and address. Apply yourself now to Marcel's lectures, as diligently as you did formerly to Professor Mascow's; desire him to teach you every genteel attitude that the human body can be put into; let him make you go in and out of his room frequently, and present yourself to him, as if he were by turns different persons; such as a minister, a lady, a superior, an equal, and inferior, *etc.* Learn to seat genteelly in different companies; to loll genteelly, and with good manners, in those companies where you are authorized to be free, and to sit up respectfully where the same freedom is not allowable. Learn even to compose your countenance occasionally to the respectful, the cheerful, and the insinuating. Take particular care that the motions of your hands and arms be easy and graceful; for the genteelness of a man consists more in them than in anything else, especially in his dancing. Desire some women to tell you of any little awkwardness that they observe in your carriage; they are the best judges of those things; and if they are satisfied, the men will be so too. Think now only of the decorations. Are you acquainted with Madame Geoffrain, who has a great deal of wit; and who, I am informed, receives only the very best company in her house? Do you know Madame du Pin, who, I remember, had beauty, and I hear has wit and reading? I could wish you to converse only with those who, either from their rank, their merit, or their beauty, require constant attention; for a young man can never improve in company where he thinks he may neglect himself. A new bow must be constantly kept bent; when it grows older, and has taken the right turn, it may now and then be relaxed.

I have this moment paid your draft of L89 75s.; it was signed in a very good hand; which proves that a good hand may be written without the assistance of magic. Nothing provokes me much more, than to hear people indolently say that they cannot do, what is in everybody's power to do, if it be but in their will. Adieu.

## LETTER CXLI

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London, May 6, O. S. 1751.

*My dear friend:* The best authors are always the severest critics of their own works; they revise, correct, file, and polish them, till they think they have brought them to perfection. Considering you as my work, I do not look upon myself as a bad author, and am therefore a severe critic. I examine narrowly into the least inaccuracy or inelegance, in order to correct, not to expose them, and that the work may be perfect at last. You are, I know, exceedingly improved in your air, address, and manners, since you have been at Paris; but still there is, I believe, room for further improvement before you come to that perfection which I have set my heart upon seeing you arrive at; and till that moment I must continue filing and polishing. In a letter that I received by last post, from a friend of yours at Paris, there was this paragraph: "I have the honor to assure you, without flattery, that Mr. Stanhope succeeds beyond what might be expected from a person of his age. He goes into very good company; and that kind of manner, which was at first thought to be too decisive and peremptory, is now judged otherwise; because it is acknowledged to be the effect of an ingenuous frankness, accompanied by politeness, and by a proper deference. He studies to please, and succeeds. Madame du Puisieux was the other day speaking of him with complacency and friendship. You will be satisfied with him in all respects." This is extremely well, and I rejoice at it: one little circumstance only may, and I hope will, be altered for the better. Take pains to undeceive those who thought that 'petit ton un peu delcide et un peu brusque'; as it is not meant so, let it not appear so. Compose your countenance to an air of gentleness and 'douceur', use some expressions of diffidence of your own opinion, and deference to other people's; such as, "If I might be permitted to say—I should think—Is it not rather so? At least I have the greatest reason to be diffident of myself." Such mitigating, engaging words do by no means weaken your argument; but, on the contrary, make it more powerful by making it more pleasing. If it is a quick and hasty manner of speaking that people mistake 'pour decide et brusque', prevent their mistakes for the future by speaking more deliberately, and taking a softer tone of voice; as in this case you are free from the guilt, be free from the suspicion, too. Mankind, as I have often told you, are more governed by appearances than by realities; and with regard to opinion, one had better be really rough and hard, with the appearance of gentleness and softness, than just the reverse. Few people have penetration enough to discover, attention enough to observe, or even concern enough to examine beyond the exterior; they take their notions from the surface, and go no deeper: they commend, as the gentlest and best-natured man in the world, that man who has the most engaging exterior manner, though possibly they have been but



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once in his company. An air, a tone of voice, a composure of countenance to mildness and softness, which are all easily acquired, do the business: and without further examination, and possibly with the contrary qualities, that man is reckoned the gentlest, the modestest, and the best-natured man alive. Happy the man, who, with a certain fund of parts and knowledge, gets acquainted with the world early enough to make it his bubble, at an age when most people are the bubbles of the world! for that is the common case of youth. They grow wiser when it is too late; and, ashamed and vexed at having been bubbles so long, too often turn knaves at last. Do not therefore trust to appearances and outside yourself, but pay other people with them; because you may be sure that nine in ten of mankind do, and ever will trust to them. This is by no means a criminal or blamable simulation, if not used with an ill intention. I am by no means blamable in desiring to have other people's good word, good-will, and affection, if I do not mean to abuse them. Your heart, I know, is good, your sense is sound, and your knowledge extensive. What then remains for you to do? Nothing, but to adorn those fundamental qualifications, with such engaging and captivating manners, softness, and gentleness, as will endear you to those who are able to judge of your real merit, and which always stand in the stead of merit with those who are not. I do not mean by this to recommend to you 'le fade doucereux', the insipid softness of a gentle fool; no, assert your own opinion, oppose other people's when wrong; but let your manner, your air, your terms, and your tone of voice, be soft and gentle, and that easily and naturally, not affectedly. Use palliatives when you contradict; such as *I may be mistaken, I am not sure, but I believe, I should rather think, etc.* Finish any argument or dispute with some little good-humored pleasantry, to show that you are neither hurt yourself, nor meant to hurt your antagonist; for an argument, kept up a good while, often occasions a temporary alienation on each side. Pray observe particularly, in those French people who are distinguished by that character, 'cette douceur de moeurs et de manieres', which they talk of so much, and value so justly; see in what it consists; in mere trifles, and most easy to be acquired, where the heart is really good. Imitate, copy it, till it becomes habitual and easy to you. Without a compliment to you, I take it to be the only thing you now want: nothing will sooner give it you than a real passion, or, at least, 'un gout vif', for some woman of fashion; and, as I suppose that you have either the one or the other by this time, you are consequently in the best school. Besides this, if you were to say to Lady Hervey, Madame Monconseil, or such others as you look upon to be your friends, It is said that I have a kind of manner which is rather too decisive

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and too peremptory; it is not, however, my intention that it should be so; I entreat you to correct, and even publicly to punish me whenever I am guilty. Do not treat me with the least indulgence, but criticise to the utmost. So clear-sighted a judge as you has a right to be severe; and I promise you that the criminal will endeavor to correct himself. Yesterday I had two of your acquaintances to dine with me, Baron B. and his companion Monsieur S. I cannot say of the former, 'qu'il est paitri de graces'; and I would rather advise him to go and settle quietly at home, than to think of improving himself by further travels. 'Ce n'est pas le bois don't on en fait'. His companion is much better, though he has a strong 'tocco di tedesco'. They both spoke well of you, and so far I liked them both. How go you on with the amiable little Blot? Does she listen to your Battering tale? Are you numbered among the list of her admirers? Is Madame-----your Madame de Lursay? Does she sometimes knot, and are you her Meilcour? They say she has softness, sense, and engaging manners; in such an apprenticeship much may be learned.—[This whole passage, and several others, allude to Crebillon's 'Egaremens du Coeur et de l'Esprit', a sentimental novel written about that time, and then much in vogue at Paris.]

A woman like her, who has always pleased, and often been pleased, can best teach the art of pleasing; that art, without which, 'ogni fatica vana'. Marcel's lectures are no small part of that art: they are the engaging forerunner of all other accomplishments. Dress is also an article not to be neglected, and I hope you do not neglect it; it helps in the 'premier abord', which is often decisive. By dress, I mean your clothes being well made, fitting you, in the fashion and not above it; your hair well done, and a general cleanliness and spruceness in your person. I hope you take infinite care of your teeth; the consequences of neglecting the mouth are serious, not only to one's self, but to others. In short, my dear child, neglect nothing; a little more will complete the whole. Adieu. I have not heard from you these three weeks, which I think a great while.

## LETTER CXLII

*London, May 10, O. S. 1751.*

*My dear friend:* I received yesterday, at the same time, your letters of the 4th and 11th, N. S., and being much more careful of my commissions than you are of yours, I do not delay one moment sending you my final instructions concerning the pictures. The man you allow to be a Titian, and in good preservation; the woman is an indifferent and a damaged picture; but as I want them for furniture for a particular room, companions are necessary; and therefore I am willing to take the woman for better for worse, upon account of the man; and if she is not too much damaged, I can have her tolerably repaired, as many a fine woman is, by a skillful hand here; but then I expect that

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the lady should be, in a manner, thrown into the bargain with the man; and, in this state of affairs, the woman being worth little or nothing, I will not go above fourscore Louis for the two together. As for the Rembrandt you mention, though it is very cheap, if good, I do not care for it. I love 'la belle nature'; Rembrandt paints caricatures. Now for your own commissions, which you seem to have forgotten. You mention nothing of the patterns which you received by Monsieur Tollot, though I told you in a former letter, which you must have had before the date of your last, that I should stay till I received the patterns pitched upon by your ladies; for as to the instructions which you sent me in Madame Monconseil's hand, I could find no mohairs in London that exactly answered that description; I shall, therefore, wait till you send me (which you may easily do in a letter) the patterns chosen by your three graces.

I would, by all means, have you go now and then, for two or three days, to Marechal Coigny's, at Orli; it is but a proper civility to that family, which has been particularly civil to you; and, moreover, I would have you familiarize yourself with, and learn the interior and domestic manners of, people of that rank and fashion. I also desire that you will frequent Versailles and St. Cloud, at both of which courts you have been received with distinction. Profit of that distinction, and familiarize yourself at both. Great courts are the seats of true good-breeding; you are to live at courts, lose no time in learning them. Go and stay sometimes at Versailles for three or four days, where you will be domestic in the best families, by means of your friend Madame de Puisieux; and mine, l'Abbe de la Ville. Go to the King's and the Dauphin's levees, and distinguish yourself from the rest of your countrymen, who, I dare say, never go there when they can help it. Though the young Frenchmen of fashion may not be worth forming intimate connections with, they are well worth making acquaintance of; and I do not see how you can avoid it, frequenting so many good French houses as you do, where, to be sure, many of them come. Be cautious how you contract friendships, but be desirous, and even industrious, to obtain a universal acquaintance. Be easy, and even forward, in making new acquaintances; that is the only way of knowing manners and characters in general, which is, at present, your great object. You are 'enfant de famille' in three ministers' houses; but I wish you had a footing, at least, in thirteen and that, I should think, you might easily bring about, by that common chain, which, to a certain degree, connects those you do not with those you do know.

For instance, I suppose that neither Lord Albemarle, nor Marquis de St. Germain, would make the least difficulty to present you to Comte Caunitz, the Nuncio, etc. 'Il faut etre rompu du monde', which can only be done by an extensive, various, and almost universal acquaintance.

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When you have got your emaciated Philomath, I desire that his triangles, rhomboids, *etc.*, may not keep you one moment out of the good company you would otherwise be in. Swallow all your learning in the morning, but digest it in company in the evenings. The reading of ten new characters is more your business now, than the reading of twenty old books; showish and shining people always get the better of all others, though ever so solid. If you would be a great man in the world when you are old, shine and be showish in it while you are young, know everybody, and endeavor to please everybody, I mean exteriorly; for fundamentally it is impossible. Try to engage the heart of every woman, and the affections of almost every man you meet with. Madame Monconseil assures me that you are most surprisingly improved in your air, manners, and address: go on, my dear child, and never think that you are come to a sufficient degree of perfection; 'Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum'; and in those shining parts of the character of a gentleman, there is always something remaining to be acquired. Modes and manners vary in different places, and at different times; you must keep pace with them, know them, and adopt them, wherever you find them. The great usage of the world, the knowledge of characters, the brilliant dun 'galant homme,' is all that you now want. Study Marcel and the 'beau monde' with great application, but read Homer and Horace only when you have nothing else to do. Pray who is 'la belle Madame de Case', whom I know you frequent? I like the epithet given her very well: if she deserves it, she deserves your attention too. A man of fashion should be gallant to a fine woman, though he does not make love to her, or may be otherwise engaged. On 'lui doit des politesses, on fait l'eloge de ses charmes, et il n'en est ni plus ni moins pour cela': it pleases, it flatters; you get their good word, and you lose nothing by it. These 'gentillesses' should be accompanied, as indeed everything else should, with an air: 'un air, un ton de douceur et de politesse'. Les graces must be of the party, or it will never do; and they are so easily had, that it is astonishing to me that everybody has them not; they are sooner gained than any woman of common reputation and decency. Pursue them but with care and attention, and you are sure to enjoy them at last: without them, I am sure, you will never enjoy anybody else. You observe, truly, that Mr.-----is gauche; it is to be hoped that will mend with keeping company; and is yet pardonable in him, as just come from school. But reflect what you would think of a man, who had been any time in the world, and yet should be so awkward. For God's sake, therefore, now think of nothing but shining, and even distinguishing yourself in the most polite courts, by your air, your address, your manners, your politeness, your 'douceur', your graces. With those advantages (and not without them) take my word for it, you will get the better of all rivals, in business as well as in 'ruelles'. Adieu. Send me your patterns, by the next post, and also your instructions to Grevenkop about the seal, which you seem to have forgotten.

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### LETTER CXLIII

*London, May 16, O. S. 1751.*

*My dear friend:* In about three months from this day, we shall probably meet. I look upon that moment as a young woman does upon her bridal night; I expect the greatest pleasure, and yet cannot help fearing some little mixture of pain. My reason bids me doubt a little, of what my imagination makes me expect. In some articles I am very sure that my most sanguine wishes will not be disappointed; and those are the most material ones. In others, I fear something or other, which I can better feel than describe. However, I will attempt it. I fear the want of that amiable and engaging 'je ne sais quoi', which as some philosophers have, unintelligibly enough, said of the soul, is all in all, and all in every part; it should shed its influence over every word and action. I fear the want of that air, and first 'abond', which suddenly lays hold of the heart, one does not know distinctly how or why. I fear an inaccuracy, or, at least, inelegance of diction, which will wrong, and lower, the best and justest matter. And, lastly, I fear an ungraceful, if not an unpleasant utterance, which would disgrace and vilify the whole. Should these fears be at present founded, yet the objects of them are (thank God) of such a nature, that you may, if you please, between this and our meeting, remove everyone of them. All these engaging and endearing accomplishments are mechanical, and to be acquired by care and observation, as easily as turning, or any mechanical trade. A common country fellow, taken from the plow, and enlisted in an old corps, soon lays aside his shambling gait, his slouching air, his clumsy and awkward motions: and acquires the martial air, the regular motions, and whole exercise of the corps, and particularly of his right and left hand man. How so? Not from his parts; which were just the same before as after he was enlisted; but either from a commendable ambition of being like, and equal to those he is to live with; or else from the fear of being punished for not being so. If then both or either of these motives change such a fellow, in about six months' time, to such a degree, as that he is not to be known again, how much stronger should both these motives be with you, to acquire, in the utmost perfection, the whole exercise of the people of fashion, with whom you are to live all your life? Ambition should make you resolve to be at least their equal in that exercise, as well as the fear of punishment; which most inevitably will attend the want of it. By that exercise, I mean the air, the manners, the graces, and the style of people of fashion. A friend of yours, in a letter I received from him by the last post, after some other commendations of you, says, "It is surprising that, thinking with so much solidity as he does, and having so true and refined a taste, he should express himself with so little elegance and delicacy. He even totally neglects the choice of words and turn of phrases."

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This I should not be so much surprised or concerned at, if it related only to the English language; which hitherto you have had no opportunity of studying, and but few of speaking, at least to those who could correct your inaccuracies. But if you do not express yourself elegantly and delicately in French and German, (both which languages I know you possess perfectly and speak eternally) it can be only from an unpardonable inattention to what you most erroneously think a little object, though, in truth, it is one of the most important of your life. Solidity and delicacy of thought must be given us: it cannot be acquired, though it may be improved; but elegance and delicacy of expression may be acquired by whoever will take the necessary care and pains. I am sure you love me so well; that you would be very sorry when we meet, that I should be either disappointed or mortified; and I love you so well, that I assure you I should be both, if I should find you want any of those exterior accomplishments which are the indispensably necessary steps to that figure and fortune, which I so earnestly wish you may one day make in the world.

I hope you do not neglect your exercises of riding, fencing, and dancing, but particularly the latter: for they all concur to 'degourdir', and to give a certain air. To ride well, is not only a proper and graceful accomplishment for a gentleman, but may also save you many a fall hereafter; to fence well, may possibly save your life; and to dance well, is absolutely necessary in order to sit, stand, and walk well. To tell you the truth, my friend, I have some little suspicion that you now and then neglect or omit your exercises, for more serious studies. But now 'non est his locus', everything has its time; and this is yours for your exercises; for when you return to Paris I only propose your continuing your dancing; which you shall two years longer, if you happen to be where there is a good dancing-master. Here I will see you take some lessons with your old master Desnoyers, who is our Marcel.

What says Madame du Pin to you? I am told she is very handsome still; I know she was some few years ago. She has good parts, reading, manners, and delicacy: such an arrangement would be both creditable and advantageous to you. She will expect to meet with all the good-breeding and delicacy that she brings; and as she is past the glare and 'eclat' of youth, may be the more willing to listen to your story, if you tell it well. For an attachment, I should prefer her to 'la petite Blot'; and, for a mere gallantry, I should prefer 'la petite Blot' to her; so that they are consistent, et 'l'un n'empêche pas l'autre'. Adieu. Remember 'la douceur et les graces'.

## LETTER CXLIV

*London, May 23, O. S. 1751.*

*My dear friend:* I have this moment received your letter of the 25th N. S., and being rather something more attentive to my commissions than you are to yours, return you this immediate answer to the question you ask me about the two pictures: I will not give

one livre more than what I told you in my last; having no sort of occasion for them, and not knowing very well where to put them if I had them.



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I wait with impatience for your final orders about the mohairs; the mercer persecuting me every day for three pieces which I thought pretty, and which I have kept by me eventually, to secure them in case your ladies should pitch upon them.

If I durst! what should hinder you from daring? One always dares if there are hopes of success; and even if there are none, one is no loser by daring. A man of fashion knows how, and when, to dare. He begins his approaches by distant attacks, by assiduities, and by attentions. If he is not immediately and totally repulsed, he continues to advance. After certain steps success is infallible; and none but very silly fellows can then either doubt, or not attempt it. Is it the respectable character of Madame de la Valiere which prevents your daring, or are you intimidated at the fierce virtue of Madame du Pin? Does the invincible modesty of the handsome Madame Case discourage, more than her beauty invites you? Fie, for shame! Be convinced that the most virtuous woman, far from being offended at a declaration of love, is flattered by it, if it is made in a polite and agreeable manner. It is possible that she may not be propitious to your vows; that is to say, if she has a liking or a passion for another person. But, at all events, she will not be displeased with you for it; so that, as there is no danger, this cannot even be called daring. But if she attends, if she listens, and allows you to repeat your declaration, be persuaded that if you do not dare all the rest, she will laugh at you. I advise you to begin rather by Madame du Pin, who has still more than beauty enough for such a youngster as you. She has, besides, knowledge of the world, sense, and delicacy. As she is not so extremely young, the choice of her lovers cannot be entirely at her option. I promise you, she will not refuse the tender of your most humble services. Distinguish her, then, by attentions and by tender looks. Take favorable opportunities of whispering that you wish esteem and friendship were the only motives of your regard for her; but that it derives from sentiments of a much more tender nature: that you made not this declaration without pain; but that the concealing your passion was a still greater torment.

I am sensible, that in saying this for the first time, you will look silly, abashed, and even express yourself very ill. So much the better; for, instead of attributing your confusion to the little usage you have of the world, particularly in these sort of subjects, she will think that excess of love is the occasion of it. In such a case, the lover's best friend is self-love. Do not then be afraid; behave gallantly. Speak well, and you will be heard. If you are not listened to the first time, try a second, a third, and a fourth. If the place is not already taken, depend upon it, it may be conquered.



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I am very glad you are going to Orli, and from thence to St. Cloud; go to both, and to Versailles also, often. It is that interior domestic familiarity with people of fashion, that alone can give you 'l'usage du monde, et les manieres aisees'. It is only with women one loves, or men one respects, that the desire of pleasing exerts itself; and without the desire of pleasing no man living can please. Let that desire be the spring of all your words and actions. That happy talent, the art of pleasing, which so few do, though almost all might possess, is worth all your learning and knowledge put together. The latter can never raise you high without the former; but the former may carry you, as it has carried thousands, a great way without the latter.

I am glad that you dance so well, as to be reckoned by Marcel among his best scholars; go on, and dance better still. Dancing well is pleasing 'pro tanto', and makes a part of that necessary whole, which is composed of a thousand parts, many of them of 'les infiniment petits quoi qu'infiniment necessaires'.

I shall never have done upon this subject which is indispensably necessary toward your making any figure or fortune in the world; both which I have set my heart upon, and for both which you now absolutely want no one thing but the art of pleasing; and I must not conceal from you that you have still a good way to go before you arrive at it. You still want a thousand of those little attentions that imply a desire of pleasing: you want a 'douceur' of air and expression that engages: you want an elegance and delicacy of expression, necessary to adorn the best sense and most solid matter: in short, you still want a great deal of the 'brillant' and the 'poli'. Get them at any rate: sacrifice hecatombs of books to them: seek for them in company, and renounce your closet till you have got them. I never received the letter you refer to, if ever you wrote it. Adieu, et bon soir, Monseigneur.

## LETTER CXLV

*Greenwich*, June 6, O. S. 1751.

*My dear friend:* Solicitous and anxious as I have ever been to form your heart, your mind, and your manners, and to bring you as near perfection as the imperfection of our natures will allow, I have exhausted, in the course of our correspondence, all that my own mind could suggest, and have borrowed from others whatever I thought could be useful to you; but this has necessarily been interruptedly and by snatches. It is now time, and you are of an age to review and to weigh in your own mind all that you have heard, and all that you have read, upon these subjects; and to form your own character, your conduct, and your manners, for the rest of your life; allowing for such improvements as a further knowledge of the world will naturally give you. In this view I would recommend to you to read, with the greatest attention, such books as treat particularly of those subjects; reflecting seriously upon them, and then comparing the speculation with the practice.

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For example, if you read in the morning some of La Rochefoucault's maxims; consider them, examine them well, and compare them with the real characters you meet with in the evening. Read La Bruyere in the morning, and see in the evening whether his pictures are like. Study the heart and the mind of man, and begin with your own. Meditation and reflection must lay the foundation of that knowledge: but experience and practice must, and alone can, complete it. Books, it is true, point out the operations of the mind, the sentiments of the heart, the influence of the passions; and so far they are of previous use: but without subsequent practice, experience, and observation, they are as ineffectual, and would even lead you into as many errors in fact, as a map would do, if you were to take your notions of the towns and provinces from their delineations in it. A man would reap very little benefit by his travels, if he made them only in his closet upon a map of the whole world. Next to the two books that I have already mentioned, I do not know a better for you to read, and seriously reflect upon, than 'Avis d'une Mere d'un Fils, par la Marquise de Lambert'. She was a woman of a superior understanding and knowledge of the world, had always kept the best company, was solicitous that her son should make a figure and a fortune in the world, and knew better than anybody how to point out the means. It is very short, and will take you much less time to read, than you ought to employ in reflecting upon it, after you have read it. Her son was in the army, she wished he might rise there; but she well knew, that, in order to rise, he must first please: she says to him, therefore, With regard to those upon whom you depend, the chief merit is to please. And, in another place, in subaltern employments, the art of pleasing must be your support. Masters are like mistresses: whatever services they may be indebted to you for, they cease to love when you cease to be agreeable. This, I can assure you, is at least as true in courts as in camps, and possibly more so. If to your merit and knowledge you add the art of pleasing, you may very probably come in time to be Secretary of State; but, take my word for it, twice your merit and knowledge, without the art of pleasing, would, at most, raise you to the *important post* of Resident at Hamburgh or Ratisbon. I need not tell you now, for I often have, and your own discernment must have told you, of what numberless little ingredients that art of pleasing is compounded, and how the want of the least of them lowers the whole; but the principal ingredient is, undoubtedly, 'la douceur dans le manieres': nothing will give you this more than keeping company with your superiors. Madame Lambert tells her son, Let your connections be with people above you; by that means you will acquire a habit of respect and politeness. With one's equals, one is apt to become negligent, and the mind grows torpid. She advises him, too, to frequent

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those people, and to see their inside; In order to judge of men, one must be intimately connected; thus you see them without, a veil, and with their mere every-day merit. A happy expression! It was for this reason that I have so often advised you to establish and domesticate yourself, wherever you can, in good houses of people above you, that you may see their *every-day* character, manners, habits, *etc.* One must see people undressed to judge truly of their shape; when they are dressed to go abroad, their clothes are contrived to conceal, or at least palliate the defects of it: as full-bottomed wigs were contrived for the Duke of Burgundy, to conceal his hump back. Happy those who have no faults to disguise, nor weaknesses to conceal! there are few, if any such; but unhappy those who know little enough of the world to judge by outward appearances. Courts are the best keys to characters; there every passion is busy, every art exerted, every character analyzed; jealousy, ever watchful, not only discovers, but exposes, the mysteries of the trade, so that even bystanders 'y apprennent a deviner'. There too the great art of pleasing is practiced, taught, and learned with all its graces and delicacies. It is the first thing needful there: It is the absolutely necessary harbinger of merit and talents, let them be ever so great. There is no advancing a step without it. Let misanthropes and would-be philosophers declaim as much as they please against the vices, the simulation, and dissimulation of courts; those invectives are always the result of ignorance, ill-humor, or envy. Let them show me a cottage, where there are not the same vices of which they accuse courts; with this difference only, that in a cottage they appear in their native deformity, and that in courts, manners and good-breeding make them less shocking, and blunt their edge. No, be convinced that the good-breeding, the 'tournure, la douceur dans les manieres', which alone are to be acquired at courts, are not the showish trifles only which some people call or think them; they are a solid good; they prevent a great deal of real mischief; they create, adorn, and strengthen friendships; they keep hatred within bounds; they promote good-humor and good-will in families, where the want of good-breeding and gentleness of manners is commonly the original cause of discord. Get then, before it is too late, a habit of these 'mitiores virtutes': practice them upon every, the least occasion, that they may be easy and familiar to you upon the greatest; for they lose a great degree of their merit if they seem labored, and only called in upon extraordinary occasions. I tell you truly, this is now the only doubtful part of your character with me; and it is for that reason that I dwell upon it so much, and inculcate it so often. I shall soon see whether this doubt of mine is founded; or rather I hope I shall soon see that it is not.

This moment I receive your letter of the 9th N. S. I am sorry to find that you have had, though ever so slight a return of your Carniolan disorder; and I hope your conclusion will prove a true one, and that this will be the last. I will send the mohairs by the first opportunity. As for the pictures, I am already so full, that I am resolved not to buy one more, unless by great accident I should meet with something surprisingly good, and as surprisingly cheap.

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I should have thought that Lord-----, at his age, and with his parts and address, need not have been reduced to keep an opera w—e, in such a place as Paris, where so many women of fashion generously serve as volunteers. I am still more sorry that he is in love with her; for that will take him out of good company, and sink him into bad; such as fiddlers, pipers, and ‘id genus omne’; most unedifying and unbecoming company for a man of fashion!

Lady Chesterfield makes you a thousand compliments. Adieu, my dear child.

### LETTER CXLVI

*Greenwich*, June 10, O. S. 1751

*My dear friend:* Your ladies were so slow in giving their specific orders, that the mohairs, of which you at last sent me the patterns, were all sold. However, to prevent further delays (for ladies are apt to be very impatient, when at last they know their own minds), I have taken the quantities desired of three mohairs which come nearest to the description you sent me some time ago, in Madame Monconseil's own hand; and I will send them to Calais by the first opportunity. In giving ‘la petite Blot’ her piece, you have a fine occasion of saying fine things, if so inclined.

Lady Hervey, who is your puff and panegyrist, writes me word that she saw you lately dance at a ball, and that you dance very genteelly. I am extremely glad to hear it; for (by the maxim, that ‘omne majus continet in se minus’), if you dance genteelly, I presume you walk, sit, and stand genteelly too; things which are much more easy, though much more necessary, than dancing well. I have known many very genteel people, who could not dance well; but I never knew anybody dance very well, who was not genteel in other things. You will probably often have occasion to stand in circles, at the levees of princes and ministers, when it is very necessary ‘de payer de sa personne, et d’être bien plante’, with your feet not too near nor too distant from each other. More people stand and walk, than sit genteelly. Awkward, ill-bred people, being ashamed, commonly sit bolt upright and stiff; others, too negligent and easy, ‘se vautrent dans leur fauteuil’, which is ungraceful and ill-bred, unless where the familiarity is extreme; but a man of fashion makes himself easy, and appears so by leaning gracefully instead of lolling supinely; and by varying those easy attitudes instead of that stiff immobility of a bashful booby. You cannot conceive, nor can I express, how advantageous a good air, genteel motions, and engaging address are, not only among women, but among men, and even in the course of business; they fascinate the affections, they steal a preference, they play about the heart till they engage it. I know a man, and so do you, who, without a grain of merit, knowledge, or talents, has raised himself millions of

degrees above his level, simply by a good air and engaging manners; insomuch that the very Prince who raised him so high, calls him, 'mon aimable vaut-rien';—[The Marichal de Richelieu.]—but of this do not open your lips, 'pour cause'. I give you this secret as the strongest proof imaginable of the efficacy of air, address, 'tournure, et tout ces Petits riens'.

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Your other puff and panegyrist, Mr. Harte, is gone to Windsor in his way to Cornwall, in order to be back soon enough to meet you here: I really believe he is as impatient for that moment as I am, 'et c'est tout dire': but, however, notwithstanding my impatience, if by chance you should then be in a situation, that leaving Paris would cost your heart too many pangs, I allow you to put off your journey, and to tell me, as Festus did Paul, *at A more convenient Season I will speak to thee*. You see by this that I eventually sacrifice my sentiments to yours, and this in a very uncommon object of paternal complaisance. Provided always, and be it understood (as they say in acts of Parliament), that 'quae te cumque domat Venus, non erubescendis adurit ignibus'. If your heart will let you come, bring with you only your valet de chambre, Christian, and your own footman; not your valet de place, whom you may dismiss for the time, as also your coach; but you had best keep on your lodgings, the intermediate expense of which will be but inconsiderable, and you will want them to leave your books and baggage in. Bring only the clothes you travel in, one suit of black, for the mourning for the Prince will not be quite out by that time, and one suit of your fine clothes, two or three of your laced shirts, and the rest plain ones; of other things, as bags, feathers, *etc.*, as you think proper. Bring no books, unless two or three for your' amusement upon the road; for we must apply simply to English, in which you are certainly no 'puriste'; and I will supply you sufficiently with the proper English authors. I shall probably keep you here till about the middle of October, and certainly not longer; it being absolutely necessary for you to pass the next winter at Paris; so that; should any fine eyes shed tears for your departure, you may dry them by the promise of your return in two months.

Have you got a master for geometry? If the weather is very hot, you may leave your riding at the 'manege' till you return to Paris, unless you think the exercise does you more good than the heat can do you harm; but I desire you will not leave off Marcel for one moment; your fencing likewise, if you have a mind, may subside for the summer; but you will do well to resume it in the winter and to be adroit at it, but by no means for offense, only for defense in case of necessity. Good night. Yours.

P. S. I forgot to give you one commission, when you come here; which is, not to fail bringing the *graces* along with you.

## LETTER CXLVII

*Greenwich*, June 13, O. S. 1751.

*My dear friend*: 'Les bienséances'—[This single word implies decorum, good-breeding, and propriety]—are a most necessary part of the knowledge of the world. They consist in the relations of persons, things, time, and place; good sense points them out, good company perfects them ( supposing always an attention and a desire to please), and good policy recommends them.

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Were you to converse with a king, you ought to be as easy and unembarrassed as with your own valet de chambre; but yet, every look, word and action, should imply the utmost respect. What would be proper and well-bred with others, much your superiors, would be absurd and ill-bred with one so very much so. You must wait till you are spoken to; you must receive, not give, the subject of conversation; and you must even take care that the given subject of such conversation do not lead you into any impropriety. The art would be to carry it, if possible, to some indirect flattery; such as commending those virtues in some other person, in which that prince either thinks he does, or at least would be thought by others to excel. Almost the same precautions are necessary to be used with ministers, generals, *etc.*, who expect to be treated with very near the same respect as their masters, and commonly deserve it better. There is, however, this difference, that one may begin the conversation with them, if on their side it should happen to drop, provided one does not carry it to any subject upon which it is improper either for them to speak, or be spoken to. In these two cases, certain attitudes and actions would be extremely absurd, because too easy, and consequently disrespectful. As, for instance, if you were to put your arms across in your bosom, twirl your snuff-box, trample with your feet, scratch your head, *etc.*, it would be shockingly ill-bred in that company; and, indeed, not extremely well-bred in any other. The great difficulty in those cases, though a very surmountable one by attention and custom, is to join perfect inward ease with perfect outward respect.

In mixed companies with your equals (for in mixed companies all people are to a certain degree equal), greater ease and liberty are allowed; but they too have their bounds within 'bienseance'. There is a social respect necessary: you may start your own subject of conversation with modesty, taking great care, however, 'de ne jamais parler de cordes dans la maison d'un pendu.—[Never to mention a rope in the family of a man who has been hanged]—Your words, gestures, and attitudes, have a greater degree of latitude, though by no means an unbounded one. You may have your hands in your pockets, take snuff, sit, stand, or occasionally walk, as you like; but I believe you would not think it very 'bienseant' to whistle, put on your hat, loosen your garters or your buckles, lie down upon a couch, or go to bed, and welter in an easychair. These are negligences and freedoms which one can only take when quite alone; they are injurious to superiors, shocking and offensive to equals, brutal and insulting to inferiors. That easiness of carriage and behavior, which is exceedingly engaging, widely differs from negligence and inattention, and by no means implies that one may do whatever one pleases; it only means that one is not to be stiff, formal, embarrassed, disconcerted, and ashamed, like country



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bumpkins, and, people who have never been in good company; but it requires great attention to, and a scrupulous observation of 'les bienséances': whatever one ought to do, is to be done with ease and unconcern; whatever is improper must not be done at all. In mixed companies also, different ages and sexes are to be differently addressed. You would not talk of your pleasures to men of a certain age, gravity, and dignity; they justly expect from young people a degree of deference and regard. You should be full as easy with them as with people of your own years: but your manner must be different; more respect must be implied; and it is not amiss to insinuate that from them you expect to learn. It flatters and comforts age for not being able to take a part in the joy and titter of youth. To women you should always address yourself with great outward respect and attention, whatever you feel inwardly; their sex is by long prescription entitled to it; and it is among the duties of 'bienséance'; at the same time that respect is very properly and very agreeably mixed with a degree of 'enjouement', if you have it; but then, that badinage must either directly or indirectly tend to their praise, and even not be liable to a malicious construction to their disadvantage. But here, too, great attention must be had to the difference of age, rank, and situation. A 'marechale' of fifty must not be played with like a young coquette of fifteen; respect and serious 'enjouement', if I may couple those two words, must be used with the former, and mere 'badinage, zeste meme d'un peu de polissonerie', is pardonable with the latter.

Another important point of 'les bienséances', seldom enough attended to, is, not to run your own present humor and disposition indiscriminately against everybody, but to observe, conform to, and adopt them. For example, if you happened to be in high good humor and a flow of spirits, would you go and sing a 'pont neuf',—[a ballad]—or cut a caper, to la Marechale de Coigny, the Pope's nuncio, or Abbe Sallier, or to any person of natural gravity and melancholy, or who at that time should be in grief? I believe not; as, on the other hand, I suppose, that if you were in low spirits or real grief, you would not choose to bewail your situation with 'la petite Blot'. If you cannot command your present humor and disposition, single out those to converse with, who happen to be in the humor the nearest to your own.

Loud laughter is extremely inconsistent with 'les bienséances', as it is only the illiberal and noisy testimony of the joy of the mob at some very silly thing. A gentleman is often seen, but very seldom heard to laugh. Nothing is more contrary to 'les bienséances' than horse-play, or 'jeux de main' of any kind whatever, and has often very serious, sometimes very fatal consequences. Romping, struggling, throwing things at one another's head, are the becoming pleasantries of the mob, but degrade a gentleman: 'giuoco di mano, giuoco di villano', is a very true saying, among the few true sayings of the Italians.



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Peremptoriness and decision in young people is 'contraire aux bienséances', and they should seldom seem to assert, and always use some softening mitigating expression; such as, 's'il m'est permis de le dire, je croirais plutôt, si j'ose m'expliquer', which softens the manner, without giving up or even weakening the thing. People of more age and experience expect, and are entitled to, that degree of deference.

There is a 'bienséance' also with regard to people of the lowest degree: a gentleman observes it with his footman—even with the beggar in the street. He considers them as objects of compassion, not of insult; he speaks to neither 'd'un ton brusque', but corrects the one coolly, and refuses the other with humanity. There is one occasion in the world in which 'le ton brusque' is becoming a gentleman. In short, 'les bienséances' are another word for *manners*, and extend to every part of life. They are propriety; the Graces should attend, in order to complete them; the Graces enable us to do, genteelly and pleasingly, what 'les bienséances' require to be done at all. The latter are an obligation upon every man; the former are an infinite advantage and ornament to any man. May you unite both!

Though you dance well, do not think that you dance well enough, and consequently not endeavor to dance still better. And though you should be told that you are genteel, still aim at being genteeler. If Marcel should, do not you be satisfied. Go on, court the Graces all your lifetime; you will find no better friends at court: they will speak in your favor, to the hearts of princes, ministers, and mistresses.

Now that all tumultuous passions and quick sensations have subsided with me, and that I have no tormenting cares nor boisterous pleasures to agitate me, my greatest joy is to consider the fair prospect you have before you, and to hope and believe you will enjoy it. You are already in the world, at an age when others have hardly heard of it. Your character is hitherto not only unblemished in its mortal part, but even unsullied by any low, dirty, and ungentleman-like vice; and will, I hope, continue so. Your knowledge is sound, extensive and avowed, especially in everything relative to your destination. With such materials to begin with, what then is wanting! Not fortune, as you have found by experience. You have had, and shall have, fortune sufficient to assist your merit and your industry; and if I can help it, you never shall have enough to make you negligent of either. You have, too, 'mens sana in corpore sano', the greatest blessing of all. All, therefore, that you want is as much in your power to acquire, as to eat your breakfast when set before you; it is only that knowledge of the world, that elegance of manners, that universal politeness, and those graces which keeping good company, and seeing variety of places and characters, must inevitably, with the least attention on your part, give you. Your foreign destination leads to the greatest things, and your parliamentary situation will facilitate your progress. Consider, then, this pleasing prospect as attentively for yourself as I consider it for you. Labor on your part to realize it, as I will on mine to assist, and enable you to do it. 'Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia'.

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Adieu, my dear child! I count the days till I have the pleasure of seeing you; I shall soon count the hours, and at last the minutes, with increasing impatience.

P. S. The mohairs are this day gone from hence for Calais, recommended to the care of Madame Morel, and directed, as desired, to the Comptroller-general. The three pieces come to six hundred and eighty French livres.

### LETTER CXLVIII

*Greenwich, June 20, O. S. 1751*

*My dear friend:* So very few people, especially young travelers, see what they see, or hear what they hear, that though I really believe it may be unnecessary with you, yet there can be no harm in reminding you, from time to time, to see what you see, and to hear what you hear; that is, to see and hear as you should do. Frivolous, futile people, who make at least three parts in four of mankind, only desire to see and hear what their frivolous and futile precursors have seen and heard: as St. Peter's, the Pope, and High Mass, at Rome; Notre Dame, Versailles, the French King, and the French Comedy, in France. A man of parts sees and hears very differently from these gentlemen, and a great deal more. He examines and informs himself thoroughly of everything he sees or hears; and, more particularly, as it is relative to his own profession or destination. Your destination is political; the object, therefore, of your inquiries and observations should be the political interior of things; the forms of government, laws, regulations, customs, trade, manufactures, *etc.*, of the several nations of Europe. This knowledge is much better acquired by conversation with sensible and well-informed people, than by books, the best of which upon these subjects are always imperfect. For example, there are "Present States" of France, as there are of England; but they are always defective, being published by people uninformed, who only copy one another; they are, however, worth looking into because they point out objects for inquiry, which otherwise might possibly never have occurred to one's mind; but an hour's conversation with a sensible president or 'conseiller' will let you more into the true state of the parliament of Paris, than all the books in France. In the same manner, the 'Almanack Militaire' is worth your having; but two or three conversations with officers will inform you much better of their military regulations. People have, commonly, a partiality for their own professions, love to talk of them, and are even flattered by being consulted upon the subject; when, therefore, you are with any of those military gentlemen (and you can hardly be in any company without some), ask them military questions, inquire into their methods of discipline, quartering, and clothing their men; inform yourself of their pay, their perquisites, 'lours montres, lours etapes', *etc.* Do the same as to the marine, and make yourself particularly master of that detail; which has, and always will have, a great relation to the affairs of England; and, in proportion as you get good informations, take minutes of them in writing.

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The regulations of trade and commerce in France are excellent, as appears but too plainly for us, by the great increase of both, within these thirty years; for not to mention their extensive commerce in both the East and West Indies, they have got the whole trade of the Levant from us; and now supply all the foreign markets with their sugars, to the ruin almost of our sugar colonies, as Jamaica, Barbadoes, and the Leeward Islands. Get, therefore, what informations you can of these matters also.

Inquire too into their church matters; for which the present disputes between the court and the clergy give you fair and frequent opportunities. Know the particular rights of the Gallican church, in opposition to the pretensions of the See of Rome. I need not recommend ecclesiastical history to you, since I hear that you study 'Du Pin' very assiduously.

You cannot imagine how much this solid and useful knowledge of other countries will distinguish you in your own (where, to say the truth, it is very little known or cultivated), besides the great use it is of in all foreign negotiations; not to mention that it enables a man to shine in all companies. When kings and princes have any knowledge, it is of this sort, and more particularly; and therefore it is the usual topic of their levee conversations, in which it will qualify you to bear a considerable part; it brings you more acquainted with them; and they are pleased to have people talk to them on a subject in which they think to shine.

There is a sort of chit-chat, or *small talk*, which is the general run of conversation at courts, and in most mixed companies. It is a sort of middling conversation, neither silly nor edifying; but, however, very necessary for you to become master of. It turns upon the public events of Europe, and then is at its best; very often upon the number, the goodness or badness, the discipline, or the clothing of the troops of different princes; sometimes upon the families, the marriages, the relations of princes, and considerable people; and sometimes 'sur le bon chere', the magnificence of public entertainments, balls, masquerades, *etc.* I would wish you to be able to talk upon all these things better, and with more knowledge than other people; insomuch that upon those occasions, you should be applied to, and that people should say, *I dare say Mr. Stanhope can tell us.*

Second-rate knowledge and middling talents carry a man further at courts, and in the busy part of the world, than superior knowledge and shining parts. Tacitus very justly accounts for a man's having always kept in favor and enjoyed the best employments under the tyrannical reigns of three or four of the very worst emperors, by saying that it was not 'propter aliquam eximiam artem, sed quia par negotiis neque supra erat'. Discretion is the great article; all these things are to be learned, and only learned by keeping a great deal of the best company. Frequent those good houses where you have already a footing, and wriggle yourself somehow or other into every other. Haunt the courts particularly in order to get that *routine*.

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This moment I receive yours of the 18th N. S. You will have had some time ago my final answers concerning the pictures; and, by my last, an account that the mohairs were gone to Madame Morel, at Calais, with the proper directions.

I am sorry that your two sons-in-law [?? D.W.], the Princes B——, are such boobies; however, as they have the honor of being so nearly related to you, I will show them what civilities I can.

I confess you have not time for long absences from Paris, at present, because of your various masters, all which I would have you apply to closely while you are now in that capital; but when you return thither, after the visit you intend me the honor of, I do not propose your having any master at all, except Marcel, once or twice a week. And then the courts will, I hope, be no longer strange countries to you; for I would have you run down frequently to Versailles and St. Cloud, for three or four days at a time. You know the Abbe de la Ville, who will present you to others, so that you will soon be 'faufille' with the rest of the court. Court is the soil in which you are to grow and flourish; you ought to be well acquainted with the nature of it; like all other soil, it is in some places deeper, in others lighter, but always capable of great improvement by cultivation and experience.

You say that you want some hints for a letter to Lady Chesterfield; more use and knowledge of the world will teach you occasionally to write and talk genteelly, 'sup des riens', which I can tell you is a very useful part upon worldly knowledge; for in some companies, it would be imprudent to talk of anything else; and with very many people it is impossible to talk of anything else; they would not understand you. Adieu.

## LETTER CXLIX

*London, June 24, O. S. 1751*

*My dear friend:* Air, address, manners, and graces are of such infinite advantage to whoever has them, and so peculiarly and essentially necessary for you, that now, as the time of our meeting draws near, I tremble for fear I should not find you possessed of them; and, to tell you the truth, I doubt you are not yet sufficiently convinced for their importance. There is, for instance, your intimate friend, Mr. H-----, who with great merit, deep knowledge, and a thousand good qualities, will never make a figure in the world while he lives. Why? Merely for want of those external and showish accomplishments, which he began the world too late to acquire; and which, with his studious and philosophical turn, I believe he thinks are not worth his attention. He may, very probably, make a figure in the republic of letters, but he had ten thousand times better make a figure as a man of the world and of business in the republic of the United Provinces, which, take my word for it, he never will.

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As I open myself, without the least reserve, whenever I think that my doing so can be of any use to you, I will give you a short account of myself. When I first came into the world, which was at the age you are of now, so that, by the way, you have got the start of me in that important article by two or three years at least,—at nineteen I left the University of Cambridge, where I was an absolute pedant; when I talked my best, I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and I was not without thoughts of wearing the ‘toga virilis’ of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns. With these excellent notions I went first to The Hague, where, by the help of several letters of recommendation, I was soon introduced into all the best company; and where I very soon discovered that I was totally mistaken in almost every one notion I had entertained. Fortunately, I had a strong desire to please (the mixed result of good-nature and a vanity by no means blamable), and was sensible that I had nothing but the desire. I therefore resolved, if possible, to acquire the means, too. I studied attentively and minutely the dress, the air, the manner, the address, and the turn of conversation of all those whom I found to be the people in fashion, and most generally allowed to please. I imitated them as well as I could; if I heard that one man was reckoned remarkably genteel, I carefully watched his dress, motions and attitudes, and formed my own upon them. When I heard of another, whose conversation was agreeable and engaging, I listened and attended to the turn of it. I addressed myself, though ‘de tres mauvaise grace’, to all the most fashionable fine ladies; confessed, and laughed with them at my own awkwardness and rawness, recommending myself as an object for them to try their skill in forming. By these means, and with a passionate desire of pleasing everybody, I came by degrees to please some; and, I can assure you, that what little figure I have made in the world, has been much more owing to that passionate desire of pleasing universally than to any intrinsic merit or sound knowledge I might ever have been master of. My passion for pleasing was so strong (and I am very glad it was so), that I own to you fairly, I wished to make every woman I saw in love with me, and every man I met with admire me. Without this passion for the object, I should never have been so attentive to the means; and I own I cannot conceive how it is possible for any man of good-nature and good sense to be without this passion. Does not good-nature incline us to please all those we converse with, of whatever rank or station they may be? And does not good sense and common observation, show of what infinite use it is to please? Oh!

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but one may please by the good qualities of the heart, and the knowledge of the head, without that fashionable air, address and manner, which is mere tinsel. I deny it. A man may be esteemed and respected, but I defy him to please without them. Moreover, at your age, I would not have contented myself with barely pleasing; I wanted to shine and to distinguish myself in the world as a man of fashion and gallantry, as well as business. And that ambition or vanity, call it what you please, was a right one; it hurt nobody, and made me exert whatever talents I had. It is the spring of a thousand right and good things.

I was talking you over the other day with one very much your friend, and who had often been with you, both at Paris and in Italy. Among the innumerable questions which you may be sure I asked him concerning you, I happened to mention your dress (for, to say the truth, it was the only thing of which I thought him a competent judge) upon which he said that you dressed tolerably well at Paris; but that in Italy you dressed so ill, that he used to joke with you upon it, and even to tear your clothes. Now, I must tell you, that at your age it is as ridiculous not to be very well dressed, as at my age it would be if I were to wear a white feather and red-heeled shoes. Dress is one of various ingredients that contribute to the art of pleasing; it pleases the eyes at least, and more especially of women. Address yourself to the senses, if you would please; dazzle the eyes, soothe and flatter the ears of mankind; engage their hearts, and let their reason do its worst against you. 'Suaviter in modo' is the great secret. Whenever you find yourself engaged insensibly, in favor of anybody of no superior merit nor distinguished talents, examine, and see what it is that has made those impressions upon you: and you will find it to be that 'douceur', that gentleness of manners, that air and address, which I have so often recommended to you; and from thence draw this obvious conclusion, that what pleases you in them, will please others in you; for we are all made of the same clay, though some of the lumps are a little finer, and some a little coarser; but in general, the surest way to judge of others, is to examine and analyze one's self thoroughly. When we meet I will assist you in that analysis, in which every man wants some assistance against his own self-love. Adieu.

## LETTER CL

*Greenwich*, June 30, O. S. 1751.

*My dear friend:* Pray give the inclosed to our friend the Abbe; it is to congratulate him upon his 'Canonicat', which I am really very glad of, and I hope it will fatten him up to Boileau's 'Chanoine'; at present he is as meagre as an apostle or a prophet. By the way, has he ever introduced you to la Duchesse d'Aiguillon? If he has not, make him present you; and if he has, frequent her, and make her many compliments from me. She has uncommon, sense



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and knowledge for a woman, and her house is the resort of one set of 'les beaux esprits'. It is a satisfaction and a sort of credit to be acquainted with those gentlemen; and it puts a young fellow in fashion. 'A propos des beaux esprits', you have 'les entrees' at Lady Sandwich's; who, old as she was, when I saw her last, had the strongest parts of any woman I ever knew in my life? If you are not acquainted with her, either the Duchesse d'Aiguillon or Lady Hervey can, and I dare say will; introduce you. I can assure you, it is very well worth your while, both upon her own account, and for the sake of the people of wit and learning who frequent her. In such companies there is always something to be learned as well as manners; the conversation turns upon something above trifles; some point of literature, criticism, history, *etc.*, is discussed with ingenuity and good manners; for I must do the French people of learning justice; they are not bears, as most of ours are: they are gentlemen.

Our Abbe writes me word that you were gone to Compiègne: I am very glad of it; other courts must form you for your own. He tells me too, that you have left off riding at the 'manège'; I have no objection to that, it takes up a great deal of the morning; and if you have got a genteel and firm seat on horseback, it is enough for you, now that tilts and tournaments are laid aside. I suppose you have hunted at Compiègne. The King's hunting there, I am told, is a fine sight. The French manner of hunting is gentlemanlike; ours is only for bumpkins and boobies. The poor beasts are here pursued and run down by much greater beasts than themselves, and the true British fox-hunter is most undoubtedly a species appropriated and peculiar to this country, which no other part of the globe produces.

I hope you apply the time you have saved from the riding-house to useful more than to learned purposes; for I can assure you they are very different things. I would have you allow but one hour a-day for Greek; and that more to keep what you have than to increase it: by Greek, I mean useful Greek books, such as Demosthenes, Thucydides, *etc.*, and not the poets, with whom you are already enough acquainted. Your Latin will take care of itself. Whatever more time you may have for reading, pray bestow it upon those books which are immediately relative to your destination; such as modern history, in the modern languages, memoirs, anecdotes, letters, negotiations, *etc.* Collect also, if you can, authentically, the present state of all the courts and countries in Europe, the characters of the kings and princes, their wives, their ministers, and their w——s; their several views, connections, and interests; the state of their *finances*, their military force, their trade, manufactures, and commerce. That is the useful, the necessary knowledge for you, and indeed for every gentleman. But with all this, remember, that living books are much better than dead

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ones; and throw away no time (for it is thrown away) with the latter, which you can employ well with the former; for books must now be your only amusement, but, by no means your business. I had much rather that you were passionately in love with some determined coquette of condition (who would lead you a dance, fashion, supple, and polish you), than that you knew all Plato and Aristotle by heart: an hour at Versailles, Compiègne, or St. Cloud, is now worth more to you than three hours in your closet, with the best books that ever were written.

I hear the dispute between the court and the clergy is made up amicably, both parties have yielded something; the king being afraid of losing more of his soul, and the clergy more of their revenue. Those gentlemen are very skillful in making the most of the vices and the weaknesses of the laity. I hope you have read and informed yourself fully of everything relative to that affair; it is a very important question, in which the priesthood of every country in Europe is highly concerned. If you would be thoroughly convinced that their tithes are of divine institution, and their property the property of God himself, not to be touched by any power on earth, read Fra Paolo De Beneficiis, an excellent and short book; for which, and some other treatises against the court of Rome, he was stilettoed; which made him say afterward, upon seeing an anonymous book written against him by order of the Pope, 'Conosco bene to stile Romano'.

The parliament of Paris, and the states of Languedoc, will, I believe, hardly scramble off; having only reason and justice, but no terrors on their side. Those are political and constitutional questions that well deserve your attention and inquiries. I hope you are thoroughly master of them. It is also worth your while to collect and keep all the pieces written upon those subjects.

I hope you have been thanked by your ladies, at least, if not paid in money, for the mohairs, which I sent by a courier to Paris, some time ago, instead of sending them to Madame Morel, at Calais, as I told you I should. Do they like them; and do they like you the better for getting them? 'Le petite Blot devoit au moins payer de sa personne'. As for Madame de Polignac, I believe you will very willingly hold her excused from personal payment.

Before you return to England, pray go again to Orli, for two or three days, and also to St. Cloud, in order to secure a good reception there at your return. Ask the Marquis de Matignon too, if he has any orders for you in England, or any letters or packets for Lord Bolingbroke. Adieu! Go on and prosper.

## LETTER CLI

*Greenwich, July 8, O. S. 1751.*



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*My dear friend:* The last mail brought me your letter of the 3d July, N. S. I am glad that you are so well with Colonel Yorke, as to be let into secret correspondences. Lord Albemarle's reserve to you is, I believe, more owing to his secretary than to himself; for you seem to be much in favor with him; and possibly too *he has no very secret letters* to communicate. However, take care not to discover the least dissatisfaction upon this score: make the proper acknowledgments to Colonel Yorke, for what he does show you; but let neither Lord Albemarle nor his people perceive the least coldness on your part, upon account of what they do not show you. It is very often necessary, not to manifest all one feels. Make your court to, and connect yourself as much as possible with Colonel Yorke; he may be of great use to you hereafter; and when you take leave, not only offer to bring over any letters or packets, by way of security; but even ask, as a favor, to be the carrier of a letter from him to his father, the Chancellor. 'A propos' of your coming here; I confess that I am weakly impatient for it, and think a few days worth getting; I would, therefore, instead of the 25th of next month, N. S., which was the day that I some time ago appointed for your leaving Paris, have you set out on Friday the 20th of August, N. S.; in consequence of which you will be at Calais some time on the Sunday following, and probably at Dover within four-and-twenty hours afterward. If you land in the morning, you may, in a postchaise, get to Sittingborne that day; if you come on shore in the evening, you can only get to Canterbury, where you will be better lodged than at Dover. I will not have you travel in the night, nor fatigue and overheat yourself by running on fourscore miles the moment you land. You will come straight to Blackheath, where I shall be ready to meet you, and which is directly upon the Dover road to London; and we will go to town together, after you have rested yourself a day or two here. All the other directions, which I gave you in my former letter, hold still the same. But, notwithstanding this regulation, should you have any particular reasons for leaving Paris two or three days sooner or later, than the above mentioned, 'vous etes maitre'. Make all your arrangements at Paris for about a six weeks stay in England at farthest.

I had a letter the other day from Lord Huntingdon, of which one-half at least was your panegyric; it was extremely welcome to me from so good a hand. Cultivate that friendship; it will do you honor and give you strength. Connections, in our mixed parliamentary government, are of great use.

I send you here inclosed the particular price of each of the mohairs; but I do not suppose that you will receive a shilling for anyone of them. However, if any of your ladies should take an odd fancy to pay, the shortest way, in the course of business, is for you to keep the money, and to take so much less from Sir John Lambert in your next draught upon him.

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I am very sorry to hear that Lady Hervey is ill. Paris does not seem to agree with her; she used to have great health here. 'A propos' of her; remember, when you are with me, not to mention her but when you and I are quite alone, for reasons which I will tell you when we meet: but this is only between you and me; and I desire that you will not so much as hint it to her, or to anybody else.

If old Kurzay goes to the valley of Jehoshaphat, I cannot help it; it will be an ease to our friend Madame Montconseil, who I believe maintains her, and a little will not satisfy her in any way.

Remember to bring your mother some little presents; they need not be of value, but only marks of your affection and duty for one who has always been tenderly fond of you. You may bring Lady Chesterfield a little Martin snuffbox of about five Louis; and you need bring over no other presents; you and I not wanting 'les petits presens pour entretenir l'amitee'.

Since I wrote what goes before, I have talked you over minutely with Lord Albemarle, who told me, that he could very sincerely commend you upon every article but one; but upon that one you were often joked, both by him and others. I desired to know what that was; he laughed and told me it was the article of dress, in which you were exceedingly negligent. Though he laughed, I can assure you that it is no laughing matter for you; and you will possibly be surprised when I assert (but, upon my word, it is literally true), that to be very well dressed is of much more importance to you, than all the Greek you know will, be of these thirty years. Remember that the world is now your only business; and that you must adopt its customs and manners, be they silly or be they not. To neglect your dress, is an affront to all the women you keep company with; as it implies that you do not think them worth that attention which everybody else doth; they mind dress, and you will never please them if you neglect yours; and if you do not please the women, you will not please half the men you otherwise might. It is the women who put a young fellow in fashion even with the men. A young fellow ought to have a certain fund of coquetry; which should make him try all the means of pleasing, as much as any coquette in Europe can do. Old as I am, and little thinking of women, God knows, I am very far from being negligent of my dress; and why? From conformity to custom, and out of decency to men, who expect that degree of complaisance. I do not, indeed, wear feathers and red heels, which would ill suit my age; but I take care to have my clothes well made, my wig well combed and powdered, my linen and person extremely clean. I even allow my footman forty shillings a year extraordinary, that they may be spruce and neat. Your figure especially, which from its stature cannot be very majestic and interesting, should be the more attended to in point of dress as it cannot be 'imposante', it should be 'gentile, aimable, bien mise'. It will not admit of negligence and carelessness.

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I believe Mr. Hayes thinks that you have slighted him a little of late, since you have got into so much other company. I do not by any means blame you for not frequenting his house so much as you did at first, before you had got into so many other houses more entertaining and more instructing than his; on the contrary, you do very well; but, however, as he was extremely civil to you, take care to be so to him, and make up in manner what you omit in matter. See him, dine with him before you come away, and ask his commands for England.

Your triangular seal is done, and I have given it to an English gentleman, who sets out in a week for Paris, and who will deliver it to Sir John Lambert for you.

I cannot conclude this letter without returning again to the showish, the ornamental, the shining parts of your character; which, if you neglect, upon my word you will render the solid ones absolutely useless; nay, such is the present turn of the world, that some valuable qualities are even ridiculous, if not accompanied by the genteeler accomplishments. Plainness, simplicity, and quakerism, either in dress or manners, will by no means do; they must both be laced and embroidered; speaking, or writing sense, without elegance and turn, will be very little persuasive; and the best figure in the world, without air and address, will be very ineffectual. Some pedants may have told you that sound sense and learning stand in, need of no ornaments; and, to support that assertion, elegantly quote the vulgar proverb, that *good wine Needs no Bush*; but surely the little experience you have already had of the world must have convinced you that the contrary of that assertion is true. All those accomplishments are now in your power; think of them, and of them only. I hope you frequent La Foire St. Laurent, which I see is now open; you will improve more by going there with your mistress, than by staying at home and reading Euclid with your geometry master. Adieu. 'Divertissez-vous, il n'y a rien de tel'.

## LETTER CLII

Greenwich, July 15, O. S. 1751

*My dear friend:* As this is the last, or last letter but one, that I think I shall write before I have the pleasure of seeing you here, it may not be amiss to prepare you a little for our interview, and for the time we shall pass together. Before kings and princes meet, ministers on each side adjust the important points of precedence, arm chairs, right hand and left, *etc.*, so that they know previously what they are to expect, what they have to trust to; and it is right they should; for they commonly envy or hate, but most certainly distrust each other. We shall meet upon very different terms; we want no such preliminaries: you know my tenderness, I know your affection. My only object, therefore, is to make your short stay with me as useful as I can to you; and yours, I hope, is

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to co-operate with me. Whether, by making it wholesome, I shall make it pleasant to you, I am not sure. Emetics and cathartics I shall not administer, because I am sure you do not want them; but for alteratives you must expect a great many; and I can tell you that I have a number of NOSTRUMS, which I shall communicate to nobody but yourself. To speak without a metaphor, I shall endeavor to assist your youth with all the experience that I have purchased, at the price of seven and fifty years. In order to this, frequent reproofs, corrections, and admonitions will be necessary; but then, I promise you, that they shall be in a gentle, friendly, and secret manner; they shall not put you out of countenance in company, nor out of humor when we are alone. I do not expect that, at nineteen, you should have that knowledge of the world, those manners, that dexterity, which few people have at nine-and-twenty. But I will endeavor to give them you; and I am sure you will endeavor to learn them, as far as your youth, my experience, and the time we shall pass together, will allow. You may have many inaccuracies (and to be sure you have, for who has not at your age?) which few people will tell you of, and some nobody can tell you of but myself. You may possibly have others, too, which eyes less interested, and less vigilant than mine, do not discover; all those you shall hear of from one whose tenderness for you will excite his curiosity and sharpen his penetration. The smallest inattention or error in manners, the minutest inelegance of diction, the least awkwardness in your dress and carriage, will not escape my observation, nor pass without amicable correction. Two, the most intimate friends in the world, can freely tell each other their faults, and even their crimes, but cannot possibly tell each other of certain little weaknesses; awkwardnesses, and blindnesses of self-love; to authorize that unreserved freedom, the relation between us is absolutely necessary. For example, I had a very worthy friend, with whom I was intimate enough to tell him his faults; he had but few; I told him of them; he took it kindly of me, and corrected them. But then, he had some weaknesses that I could never tell him of directly, and which he was so little sensible of himself, that hints of them were lost upon him. He had a scrag neck, of about a yard long; notwithstanding which, bags being in fashion, truly he would wear one to his wig, and did so; but never behind him, for, upon every motion of his head, his bag came forward over one shoulder or the other. He took it into his head too, that he must occasionally dance minuets, because other people did; and he did so, not only extremely ill, but so awkward, so disjointed, slim, so meagre, was his figure, that had he danced as well as ever Marcel did, it would have been ridiculous in him to have danced at all. I hinted these things to him as plainly as friendship would allow, and to no purpose; but to have told him the whole, so as to cure him,

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I must have been his father, which, thank God, I am not. As fathers commonly go, it is seldom a misfortune to be fatherless; and, considering the general run of sons, as seldom a misfortune to be childless. You and I form, I believe, an exception to that rule; for, I am persuaded that we would neither of us change our relation, were it in our power. You will, I both hope and believe, be not only the comfort, but the pride of my age; and, I am sure, I will be the support, the friend, the guide of your youth. Trust me without reserve; I will advise you without private interest, or secret envy. Mr. Harte will do so too; but still there may be some little things proper for you to know, and necessary for you to correct, which even his friendship would not let him tell you of so freely as I should; and some, of which he may not possibly be so good a judge of as I am, not having lived so much in the great world.

One principal topic of our conversation will be, not only the purity but the elegance of the English language; in both which you are very deficient. Another will be the constitution of this country, of which, I believe, you know less than of most other countries in Europe. Manners, attentions, and address, will also be the frequent subjects of our lectures; and whatever I know of that important and necessary art, the art of pleasing. I will unreservedly communicate to you. Dress too (which, as things are, I can logically prove, requires some attention) will not always escape our notice. Thus, my lectures will be more various, and in some respects more useful than Professor Mascow's, and therefore, I can tell you, that I expect to be paid for them; but, as possibly you would not care to part with your ready money, and as I do not think that it would be quite handsome in me to accept it, I will compound for the payment, and take it in attention and practice.

Pray remember to part with all your friends, acquaintances, and mistresses, if you have any at Paris, in such a manner as may make them not only willing but impatient to see you there again. Assure them of your desire of returning to them; and do it in a manner that they may think you in earnest, that is 'avec onction et une espece d'attendrissement'. All people say, pretty near the same things upon those occasions; it is the manner only that makes the difference; and that difference is great. Avoid, however, as much as you can, charging yourself with commissions, in your return from hence to Paris; I know, by experience, that they are exceedingly troublesome, commonly expensive, and very seldom satisfactory at last, to the persons who gave them; some you cannot refuse, to people to whom you are obliged, and would oblige in your turn; but as to common fiddle-faddle commissions, you may excuse yourself from them with truth, by saying that you are to return to Paris through Flanders, and see all those great towns; which I intend you shall do, and stay a week or ten days at Brussels. Adieu! A good journey to you, if this is my last; if not, I can repeat again what I shall wish constantly.

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### LETTER CLIII

*London*, December 19, O. S. 1751—[Note the date, which indicates that the sojourn with the author has ended.]

*My dear friend:* You are now entered upon a scene of business, where I hope you will one day make a figure. Use does a great deal, but care and attention must be joined to it. The first thing necessary in writing letters of business, is extreme clearness and perspicuity; every paragraph should be so clear and unambiguous, that the dullest fellow in the world may not be able to mistake it, nor obliged to read it twice in order to understand it. This necessary clearness implies a correctness, without excluding an elegance of style. Tropes, figures, antitheses, epigrams, *etc.*, would be as misplaced and as impertinent in letters of business, as they are sometimes (if judiciously used) proper and pleasing in familiar letters, upon common and trite subjects. In business, an elegant simplicity, the result of care, not of labor, is required. Business must be well, not affectedly dressed; but by no means negligently. Let your first attention be to clearness, and read every paragraph after you have written it, in the critical view of discovering whether it is possible that any one man can mistake the true sense of it: and correct it accordingly.

Our pronouns and relatives often create obscurity or ambiguity; be therefore exceedingly attentive to them, and take care to mark out with precision their particular relations. For example, Mr. Johnson acquainted me that he had seen Mr. Smith, who had promised him to speak to Mr. Clarke, to return him (Mr. Johnson) those papers, which he (Mr. Smith) had left some time ago with him (Mr. Clarke): it is better to repeat a name, though unnecessarily, ten times, than to have the person mistaken once. *Who*, you know, is singly relative to persons, and cannot be applied to things; *which* and *that* are chiefly relative to things, but not absolutely exclusive of persons; for one may say, the man *that* robbed or killed such-a-one; but it is better to say, the man *who* robbed or killed. One never says, the man or the woman *which*. *Which* and *that*, though chiefly relative to things, cannot be always used indifferently as to things, and the 'euoovca' must sometimes determine their place. For instance, the letter *which* I received from you, *which* you referred to in your last, *which* came by Lord Albemarle's messenger *which* I showed to such-a-one; I would change it thus—The letter *that* I received from you; *which* you referred to in your last, *that* came by Lord Albemarle's messenger, and *which* I showed to such-a-one.

Business does not exclude (as possibly you wish it did) the usual terms of politeness and good-breeding; but, on the contrary, strictly requires them: such as, *I have the honor to acquaint your Lordship; permit me to assure you; if I may be allowed to give my opinion, etc.* For the minister abroad, who writes to the minister at home, writes to his superior; possibly to his patron, or at least to one who he desires should be so.



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Letters of business will not only admit of, but be the better for *certain graces*—but then, they must be scattered with a sparing and skillful hand; they must fit their place exactly. They must decently adorn without encumbering, and modestly shine without glaring. But as this is the, utmost degree of perfection in letters of business, I would not advise you to attempt those embellishments, till you have first laid your foundation well.

Cardinal d'Ossat's letters are the true letters of business; those of Monsieur d'Avaux are excellent; Sir William Temple's are very pleasing, but, I fear, too affected. Carefully avoid all Greek or Latin quotations; and bring no precedents from the *virtuous SPARTANS, the polite Athenians, and the Brave Romans*. Leave all that to futile pedants. No flourishes, no declamation. But (I repeat it again) there is an elegant simplicity and dignity of style absolutely necessary for good letters of business; attend to that carefully. Let your periods be harmonious, without seeming to be labored; and let them not be too long, for that always occasions a degree of obscurity. I should not mention correct orthography, but that you very often fail in that particular, which will bring ridicule upon you; for no man is allowed to spell ill. I wish too that your handwriting were much better; and I cannot conceive why it is not, since every man may certainly write whatever hand he pleases. Neatness in folding up, sealing, and directing your packets, is by no means to be neglected; though, I dare say, you think it is. But there is something in the exterior, even of a packet, that may please or displease; and consequently worth some attention.

You say that your time is very well employed; and so it is, though as yet only in the outlines, and first *routine* of business. They are previously necessary to be known; they smooth the way for parts and dexterity. Business requires no conjuration nor supernatural talents, as people unacquainted with it are apt to think. Method, diligence, and discretion, will carry a man, of good strong common sense, much higher than the finest parts, without them, can do. 'Par negotiis, neque supra', is the true character of a man of business; but then it implies ready attention and no *absences*, and a flexibility and versatility of attention from one object to another, without being engrossed by anyone.

Be upon your guard against the pedantry and affectation of business which young people are apt to fall into, from the pride of being concerned in it young. They look thoughtful, complain of the weight of business, throw out mysterious hints, and seem big with secrets which they do not know. Do you, on the contrary, never talk of business but to those with whom you are to transact it; and learn to seem vacuus and idle, when you have the most business. Of all things, the 'volte sciollo', and the 'pensieri stretti', are necessary. Adieu.



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### LETTER CLIV

London, December 30, O. S. 1751

*My dear friend:* The parliaments are the courts of justice of France, and are what our courts of justice in Westminster-Hall are here. They used anciently to follow the court, and administer justice in presence of the King. Philip le Bel first fixed it at Paris, by an edict of 1302. It consisted then of but one chambre, which was called 'la Chambre des Prelats', most of the members being ecclesiastics; but the multiplicity of business made it by degrees necessary to create several other chambres. It consists now of seven chambres:

'La Grande Chambre', which is the highest court of justice, and to which appeals lie from the others.

'Les cinq Chambres des Enquetes', which are like our Common Pleas, and Court of Exchequer.

'La Tournelle', which is the court for criminal justice, and answers to our Old Bailey and King's Bench.

There are in all twelve parliaments in France: 1. Paris 2. Toulouse 3. Grenoble 4. Bourdeaux 5. Dijon 6. Rouen 7. Aix en Provence 8. Rennes en Bretagne 9. Pau en Navarre 10. Metz 11. Dole en Franche Comte 12. Douay

There are three 'Conseils Souverains', which may almost be called parliaments; they are those of:

Perpignan Arras Alsace

For further particulars of the French parliaments, read 'Bernard de la Rochefavin des Parlemens de France', and other authors, who have treated that subject constitutionally. But what will be still better, converse upon it with people of sense and knowledge, who will inform you of the particular objects of the several chambres, and the businesses of the respective members, as, 'les Presidens, les Presidens a Mortier' (these last so called from their black velvet caps laced with gold), 'les Maitres tres des Requetes, les Greffiers, le Procureur General, les Avocats Generaux, les Conseillers', etc. The great point in dispute is concerning the powers of the parliament of Paris in matters of state, and relatively to the Crown. They pretend to the powers of the States-General of France when they used to be assembled (which, I think, they have not been since the reign of Lewis the Thirteenth, in the year 1615). The Crown denies those pretensions, and considers them only as courts of justice. Mezeray seems to be on the side of the parliament in this question, which is very well worth your inquiry. But, be that as it will, the parliament of Paris is certainly a very respectable body, and much

regarded by the whole kingdom. The edicts of the Crown, especially those for levying money on the subjects, ought to be registered in parliament; I do not say to have their effect, for the Crown would take good care of that; but to have a decent appearance, and to procure a willing acquiescence in the nation. And the Crown itself, absolute as it is, does not

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love that strong opposition, and those admirable remonstrances, which it sometimes meets with from the parliaments. Many of those detached pieces are very well worth your collecting; and I remember, a year or two ago, a remonstrance of the parliament of Douay, upon the subject, as I think, of the 'Vingtieme', which was in my mind one of the finest and most moving compositions I ever read. They owned themselves, indeed, to be slaves, and showed their chains: but humbly begged of his Majesty to make them a little lighter, and less galling.

*The states of France* were general assemblies of the three states or orders of the kingdom; the Clergy, the Nobility, and the 'Tiers Etat', that is, the people. They used to be called together by the King, upon the most important affairs of state, like our Lords and Commons in parliament, and our Clergy in convocation. Our parliament is our states, and the French parliaments are only their courts of justice. The Nobility consisted of all those of noble extraction, whether belonging to the *Sword* or to the *robe*, excepting such as were chosen (which sometimes happened) by the Tiers Etat as their deputies to the States-General. The Tiers Etat was exactly our House of Commons, that is, the people, represented by deputies of their own choosing. Those who had the most considerable places, 'dans la robe', assisted at those assemblies, as commissioners on the part of the Crown. The States met, for the first time that I can find (I mean by the name of 'les etats'), in the reign of Pharamond, 424, when they confirmed the Salic law. From that time they have been very frequently assembled, sometimes upon important occasions, as making war and peace, reforming abuses, *etc.*; at other times, upon seemingly trifling ones, as coronations, marriages, *etc.* Francis the First assembled them, in 1526, to declare null and void his famous treaty of Madrid, signed and sworn to by him during his captivity there. They grew troublesome to the kings and to their ministers, and were but seldom called after the power of the Crown grew strong; and they have never been heard of since the year 1615. Richelieu came and shackled the nation, and Mazarin and Lewis the Fourteenth riveted the shackles.

There still subsist in some provinces in France, which are called 'pais d etats', an humble local imitation, or rather mimicry, of the great 'etats', as in Languedoc, Bretagne, *etc.* They meet, they speak, they grumble, and finally submit to whatever the King orders.

Independently of the intrinsic utility of this kind of knowledge to every man of business, it is a shame for any man to be ignorant of it, especially relatively to any country he has been long in. Adieu.

## ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:



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A favor may make an enemy, and an injury may make a friend  
Affectation of business  
Applauded often, without approving  
At the first impulse of passion, be silent till you can be soft  
Avoid cacophony, and, what is very near as bad, monotony  
Be silent till you can be soft  
Being intelligible is now no longer the fashion  
Better refuse a favor gracefully, than to grant it clumsily  
Bolingbroke  
Bruyere  
Business must be well, not affectedly dressed  
Business now is to shine, not to weigh  
But stoops to conquer, and but kneels to rise  
Cease to love when you cease to be agreeable  
Chit-chat, useful to keep off improper and too serious subjects  
Committing acts of hostility upon the Graces  
Concealed what learning I had  
Consciousness of merit makes a man of sense more modest  
Disagreeable things may be done so agreeably as almost to oblige  
Disputes with heat  
Dr Fell  
Easy without negligence  
Elegance in one language will reproduce itself in all  
Every man knows that he understands religion and politics  
Every numerous assembly is *mob*  
Everybody is good for something  
Expresses himself with more fire than elegance  
Frank without indiscretion  
Full-bottomed wigs were contrived for his humpback  
Gentleness of manners, with firmness of mind  
German, who has taken into his head that he understands French  
Grow wiser when it is too late  
Habitual eloquence  
Hand of a school-boy  
Hardened to the wants and distresses of mankind  
Have you learned to carve?  
If free from the guilt, be free from the suspicion, too  
Inclined to be fat, but I hope you will decline it  
Indolently say that they cannot do  
Information implies our previous ignorance; it must be sweetened  
Information is, in a certain degree, mortifying  
Insinuates himself only into the esteem of fools  
It is a real inconvenience to anybody to be fat



Know, yourself and others  
Knowing how much you have, and how little you want  
Last beautiful varnish, which raises the colors  
Learn to keep your own secrets  
Loved without being despised, and feared without being hated  
Man of sense may be in haste, but can never be in a hurry  
Mangles what he means to carve  
Mazarin and Lewis the Fourteenth riveted the shackles  
Meditation and reflection  
Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob  
Mistimes or misplaces everything  
Mitigating, engaging words do by no means weaken your argument  
*mob*: Understanding they have collectively none  
Often necessary, not to manifest all one feels  
One must often yield, in order to prevail  
Only because she will not, and not because she cannot  
Our frivolous dissertations upon the weather, or upon whist  
Outward air of modesty to all he does  
Richelieu came and shackled the nation  
Rochefoucault  
Rochefoucault, who, I am afraid, paints man very exactly

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See what you see, and to hear what you hear  
Seems to have no opinion of his own  
Seldom a misfortune to be childless  
She has uncommon, sense and knowledge for a woman  
Speaking to himself in the glass  
Style is the dress of thoughts  
Success turns much more upon manner than matter  
Swift  
Tacitus  
Take characters, as they do most things, upon trust  
They thought I informed, because I pleased them  
Unaffected silence upon that subject is the only true medium  
Unintelligible to his readers, and sometimes to himself  
Use palliatives when you contradict  
We love to be pleased better than to be informed  
Woman like her, who has always pleased, and often been pleased  
Women are the only refiners of the merit of men  
Yielded commonly without conviction