

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1752 eBook

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1752 by Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield

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LETTER CLV

London, January 2, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: Laziness of mind, or inattention, are as great enemies to knowledge as incapacity; for, in truth, what difference is there between a man who will not, and a man who cannot be informed? This difference only, that the former is justly to be blamed, the latter to be pitied. And yet how many there are, very capable of receiving knowledge, who from laziness, inattention, and incuriousness, will not so much as ask for it, much less take the least pains to acquire it!

Our young English travelers generally distinguish themselves by a voluntary privation of all that useful knowledge for which they are sent abroad; and yet, at that age, the most useful knowledge is the most easy to be acquired; conversation being the book, and the best book in which it is contained. The drudgery of dry grammatical learning is over, and the fruits of it are mixed with, and adorned by, the flowers of conversation. How many of our young men have been a year at Rome, and as long at Paris, without knowing the meaning and institution of the Conclave in the former, and of the parliament in the latter? and this merely for want of asking the first people they met with in those several places, who could at least have given them some general notions of those matters.

You will, I hope, be wiser, and omit no opportunity (for opportunities present themselves every hour of the day) of acquainting yourself with all those political and constitutional particulars of the kingdom and government of France. For instance, when you hear people mention le Chancelier, or 'le Garde de Sceaux', is it any great trouble for you to ask, or for others to tell you, what is the nature, the powers, the objects, and the profits of those two employments, either when joined together, as they often are, or when separate, as they are at present? When you hear of a gouverneur, a lieutenant du Roi, a commandant, and an intendant of the same province, is it not natural, is it not becoming, is it not necessary, for a stranger to inquire into their respective rights and privileges? And yet, I dare say, there are very few Englishmen who know the difference between the civil department of the Intendant, and the military powers of the others. When you hear (as I am persuaded you must) every day of the 'Vingtieme', which is one in twenty, and consequently five per cent., inquire upon what that tax is laid, whether upon lands, money, merchandise, or upon all three; how levied, and what it is supposed to produce. When you find in books: (as you will sometimes) allusion to particular laws and customs, do not rest till you have traced them up to their source. To give you two examples: you will meet in some French comedies, 'Cri', or 'Clameur de Haro'; ask what it means, and you will be told that it is a term of the law in Normandy, and



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means citing, arresting, or obliging any person to appear in the courts of justice, either upon a civil or a criminal account; and that it is derived from 'a Raoul', which Raoul was anciently Duke of Normandy, and a prince eminent for his justice; insomuch, that when any injustice was committed, the cry immediately was, 'Venez, a Raoul, a Raoul', which words are now corrupted and jumbled into 'haro'. Another, 'Le vol du Chapon, that is, a certain district of ground immediately contiguous to the mansion-seat of a family, and answers to what we call in English DEMESNES. It is in France computed at about 1,600 feet round the house, that being supposed to be the extent of the capon's flight from 'la basse cour'. This little district must go along with the mansion-seat, however the rest of the estate may be divided.

I do not mean that you should be a French lawyer; but I would not have you unacquainted with the general principles of their law, in matters that occur every day: Such is the nature of their descents, that is, the inheritance of lands: Do they all go to the eldest son, or are they equally divided among the children of the deceased? In England, all lands unsettled descend to the eldest son, as heir-at-law, unless otherwise disposed of by the father's will, except in the county of Kent, where a particular custom prevails, called Gavelkind; by which, if the father dies intestate, all his children divide his lands equally among them. In Germany, as you know, all lands that, are not fiefs are equally divided among all the children, which ruins those families; but all male fiefs of the empire descend unalienably to the next male heir, which preserves those families. In France, I believe, descents vary in different provinces.

The nature of marriage contracts deserves inquiry. In England, the general practice is, the husband takes all the wife's fortune; and in consideration of it settles upon her a proper pin-money, as it is called; that is, an annuity during his life, and a jointure after his death. In France it is not so, particularly at Paris; where 'la communauté des biens' is established. Any married woman at Paris (*if you are acquainted with one*) can inform you of all these particulars.

These and other things of the same nature, are the useful and rational objects of the curiosity of a man of sense and business. Could they only be attained by laborious researches in folio-books, and wormeaten manuscripts, I should not wonder at a young fellow's being ignorant of them; but as they are the frequent topics of conversation, and to be known by a very little degree of curiosity, inquiry and attention, it is unpardonable not to know them.

Thus I have given you some hints only for your inquiries; 'l'Etat de la France, l'Almanach Royal', and twenty other such superficial books, will furnish you with a thousand more. 'Approfondissez.'



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How often, and how justly, have I since regretted negligences of this kind in my youth! And how often have I since been at great trouble to learn many things which I could then have learned without any! Save yourself now, then, I beg of you, that regret and trouble hereafter. Ask questions, and many questions; and leave nothing till you are thoroughly informed of it. Such pertinent questions are far from being illbred or troublesome to those of whom you ask them; on the contrary, they are a tacit compliment to their knowledge; and people have a better opinion of a young man, when they see him desirous to be informed.

I have by last post received your two letters of the 1st and 5th of January, N. S. I am very glad that you have been at all the shows at Versailles: frequent the courts. I can conceive the murmurs of the French at the poorness of the fireworks, by which they thought their king of their country degraded; and, in truth, were things always as they should be, when kings give shows they ought to be magnificent.

I thank you for the 'These de la Sorbonne', which you intend to send me, and which I am impatient to receive. But pray read it carefully yourself first; and inform yourself what the Sorbonne is by whom founded, and for what purposes.

Since you have time, you have done very well to take an Italian and a German master; but pray take care to leave yourself time enough for company; for it is in company only that you can learn what will be much more useful to you than either Italian or German; I mean 'la politesse, les manieres et les graces, without which, as I told you long ago, and I told you true, 'ogni fatica a vana'. Adieu.

Pray make my compliments to Lady Brown.

LETTER CLVI

London, January 6, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend

I recommended to you, in my last, some inquiries into the constitution of that famous society the Sorbonne; but as I cannot wholly trust to the diligence of those inquiries, I will give you here the outlines of that establishment; which may possibly excite you to inform yourself of particulars, which you are more 'a portee' to know than I am.

It was founded by Robert de Sorbon, in the year 1256 for sixteen poor scholars in divinity; four of each nation, of the university of which it made a part; since that it hath been much extended and enriched, especially by the liberality and pride of Cardinal Richelieu; who made it a magnificent building for six-and-thirty doctors of that society to live in; besides which, there are six professors and schools for divinity. This society has long been famous for theological knowledge and exercitations. There unintelligible

points are debated with passion, though they can never be determined by reason. Logical subtleties set common sense at defiance; and mystical refinements disfigure and disguise the native



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beauty and simplicity of true natural religion; wild imaginations form systems, which weak minds adopt implicitly, and which sense and reason oppose in vain; their voice is not strong enough to be heard in schools of divinity. Political views are by no means neglected in those sacred places; and questions are agitated and decided, according to the degree of regard, or rather submission, which the Sovereign is pleased to show the Church. Is the King a slave to the Church, though a tyrant to the laity? The least resistance to his will shall be declared damnable. But if he will not acknowledge the superiority of their spiritual over his temporal, nor even admit their 'imperium in imperio', which is the least they will compound for, it becomes meritorious not only to resist, but to depose him. And I suppose that the bold propositions in the thesis you mention, are a return for the valuation of 'les biens du Clerge'.

I would advise you, by all means, to attend to two or three of their public disputations, in order to be informed both of the manner and the substance of those scholastic exercises. Pray remember to go to all those kind of things. Do not put it off, as one is too apt to do those things which one knows can be done every day, or any day; for one afterward repents extremely, when too late, the not having done them.

But there is another (so-called) religious society, of which the minutest circumstance deserves attention, and furnishes great matter for useful reflections. You easily guess that I mean the society of 'les R. R. P. P. Jesuites', established but in the year 1540, by a Bull of Pope Paul III. Its progress, and I may say its victories, were more rapid than those of the Romans; for within the same century it governed all Europe; and, in the next, it extended its influence over the whole world. Its founder was an abandoned profligate Spanish officer, Ignatius Loyola; who, in the year 1521, being wounded in the leg at the 'siege of Pampeluna, went mad from the smart of his wound, the reproaches of his conscience, and his confinement, during which he read the lives of the Saints. Consciousness of guilt, a fiery temper, and a wild imagination, the common ingredients of enthusiasm, made this madman devote himself to the particular service of the Virgin Mary; whose knight-errant he declared himself, in the very same form in which the old knight-errants in romances used to declare themselves the knights and champions of certain beautiful and incomparable princesses, whom sometimes they had, but oftener had not, seen. For Dulcinea del Toboso was by no means the first princess whom her faithful and valorous knight had never seen in his life. The enthusiast went to the Holy Land, from whence he returned to Spain, where he began to learn Latin and philosophy at three-and-thirty years old, so that no doubt but he made great progress in both. The better to carry on his mad and wicked designs, he chose four disciples, or rather apostles,

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all Spaniards, viz, Laynes, Salmeron, Bobadilla, and Rodriguez. He then composed the rules and constitutions of his order; which, in the year 1547, was called the order of Jesuits, from the church of Jesus in Rome, which was given them. Ignatius died in 1556, aged sixty-five, thirty-five years after his conversion, and sixteen years after the establishment of his society. He was canonized in the year 1609, and is doubtless now a saint in heaven.

If the religious and moral principles of this society are to be detested, as they justly are, the wisdom of their political principles is as justly to be admired. Suspected, collectively as an order, of the greatest crimes, and convicted of many, they have either escaped punishment, or triumphed after it; as in France, in the reign of Henry IV. They have, directly or indirectly, governed the consciences and the councils of all the Catholic princes in Europe; they almost governed China in the reign of Cangghi; and they are now actually in possession of the Paraguay in America, pretending, but paying no obedience to the Crown of Spain. As a collective body they are detested, even by all the Catholics, not excepting the clergy, both secular and regular, and yet, as individuals, they are loved, respected, and they govern wherever they are.

Two things, I believe, contribute to their success. The first, that passive, implicit, unlimited obedience to their General (who always resides at Rome), and to the superiors of their several houses, appointed by him. This obedience is observed by them all to a most astonishing degree; and, I believe, there is no one society in the world, of which so many individuals sacrifice their private interest to the general one of the society itself. The second is the education of youth, which they have in a manner engrossed; there they give the first, and the first are the lasting impressions; those impressions are always calculated to be favorable to the society. I have known many Catholics, educated by the Jesuits, who, though they detested the society, from reason and knowledge, have always remained attached to it, from habit and prejudice. The Jesuits know, better than any set of people in the world, the importance of the art of pleasing, and study it more; they become all things to all men in order to gain, not a few, but many. In Asia, Africa, and America they become more than half pagans, in order to convert the pagans to be less than half Christians. In private families they begin by insinuating themselves as friends, they grow to be favorites, and they end *directors*. Their manners are not like those of any other regulars in the world, but gentle, polite, and engaging. They are all carefully bred up to that particular destination, to which they seem to have a natural turn; for which reason one sees most Jesuits excel in some particular thing. They even breed up some for martyrdom in case of need; as the superior of a Jesuit seminary at Rome told Lord Bolingbroke. 'E abbiamo anche martiri per il martirio, se bisogna'.



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Inform yourself minutely of everything concerning this extraordinary establishment; go into their houses, get acquainted with individuals, hear some of them preach. The finest preacher I ever heard in my life is le Pere Neufville, who, I believe, preaches still at Paris, and is so much in the best company, that you may easily get personally acquainted with him.

If you would know their 'morale' read Pascal's 'Lettres Provinciales', in which it is very truly displayed from their own writings.

Upon the whole, this is certain, that a society of which so little good is said, and so much ill believed, and that still not only subsists, but flourishes, must be a very able one. It is always mentioned as a proof of the superior abilities of the Cardinal Richelieu, that, though hated by all the nation, and still more by his master, he kept his power in spite of both.

I would earnestly wish you to do everything now, which I wish, that I had done at your age, and did not do. Every country has its peculiarities, which one can be much better informed of during one's residence there, than by reading all the books in the world afterward. While you are in Catholic countries, inform yourself of all the forms and ceremonies of that tawdry church; see their converts both of men and women, know their several rules and orders, attend their most remarkable ceremonies; have their terms of art explained to you, their 'tierce, sexte, nones, matines; vepres, complies'; their 'breviaries, rosaires, heures, chapelets, agnus', etc., things that many people talk of from habit, though few people know the true meaning of anyone of them. Converse with, and study the characters of some of those incarcerated enthusiasts. Frequent some 'parloirs', and see the air and manners of those Recluse, who are a distinct nation themselves, and like no other.

I dined yesterday with Mrs. F——d, her mother and husband. He is an athletic Hibernian, handsome in his person, but excessively awkward and vulgar in his air and manner. She inquired much after you, and, I thought, with interest. I answered her as a 'Mezzano' should do: 'Et je pronai votre tendresse, vos soins, et vos soupirs'.

When you meet with any British returning to their own country, pray send me by them any little 'brochures, factums, theses', etc., 'qui font du bruit ou du plaisir a Paris'.
Adieu, child.

LETTER CLVII

London, January 23, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: Have you seen the new tragedy of Varon,—[Written by the Vicomte de Grave; and at that time the general topic of conversation at Paris.]—and what do you



think of it? Let me know, for I am determined to form my taste upon yours. I hear that the situations and incidents are well brought on, and the catastrophe unexpected and surprising, but the verses bad. I suppose it is the subject of all conversations at Paris, where both women and men are judges and critics of all such performances; such conversations, that both form and improve the taste, and whet the judgment; are surely preferable to the conversations of our mixed companies here; which, if they happen to rise above bragg and whist, infallibly stop short of everything either pleasing or instructive.



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I take the reason of this to be, that (as women generally give the 'ton' to the conversation) our English women are not near so well informed and cultivated as the French; besides that they are naturally more serious and silent.

I could wish there were a treaty made between the French and English theatres, in which both parties should make considerable concessions. The English ought to give up their notorious violations of all the unities; and all their massacres, racks, dead bodies, and mangled carcasses, which they so frequently exhibit upon their stage. The French should engage to have more action and less declamation; and not to cram and crowd things together, to almost a degree of impossibility, from a too scrupulous adherence to the unities. The English should restrain the licentiousness of their poets, and the French enlarge the liberty of theirs; their poets are the greatest slaves in their country, and that is a bold word; ours are the most tumultuous subjects in England, and that is saying a good deal. Under such regulations one might hope to see a play in which one should not be lulled to sleep by the length of a monotonical declamation, nor frightened and shocked by the barbarity of the action. The unity of time extended occasionally to three or four days, and the unity of place broke into, as far as the same street, or sometimes the same town; both which, I will affirm, are as probable as four-and-twenty hours, and the same room.

More indulgence too, in my mind, should be shown, than the French are willing to allow, to bright thoughts, and to shining images; for though, I confess, it is not very natural for a hero or a princess to say fine things in all the violence of grief, love, rage, *etc.*, yet, I can as well suppose that, as I can that they should talk to themselves for half an hour; which they must necessarily do, or no tragedy could be carried on, unless they had recourse to a much greater absurdity, the choruses of the ancients. Tragedy is of a nature, that one must see it with a degree of self-deception; we must lend ourselves a little to the delusion; and I am very willing to carry that complaisance a little farther than the French do.

Tragedy must be something bigger than life, or it would not affect us. In nature the most violent passions are silent; in tragedy they must speak, and speak with dignity too. Hence the necessity of their being written in verse, and unfortunately for the French, from the weakness of their language, in rhymes. And for the same reason, Cato the Stoic, expiring at Utica, rhymes masculine and feminine at Paris; and fetches his last breath at London, in most harmonious and correct blank verse.

It is quite otherwise with Comedy, which should be mere common life, and not one jot bigger. Every character should speak upon the stage, not only what it would utter in the situation there represented, but in the same manner in which it would express it. For which reason I cannot allow rhymes in comedy, unless they were put into the mouth, and came out of the mouth of a mad poet. But it is impossible to deceive one's self enough (nor is it the least necessary in comedy) to suppose a dull rogue of an usurer cheating, or 'gross Jean' blundering in the finest rhymes in the world.

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As for Operas, they are essentially too absurd and extravagant to mention; I look upon them as a magic scene, contrived to please the eyes and the ears, at the expense of the understanding; and I consider singing, rhyming, and chiming heroes, and princesses, and philosophers, as I do the hills, the trees, the birds, and the beasts, who amicably joined in one common country dance, to the irresistible turn of Orpheus's lyre. Whenever I go to an opera, I leave my sense and reason at the door with my half guinea, and deliver myself up to my eyes and my ears.

Thus I have made you my poetical confession; in which I have acknowledged as many sins against the established taste in both countries, as a frank heretic could have owned against the established church in either, but I am now privileged by my age to taste and think for myself, and not to care what other people think of me in those respects; an advantage which youth, among its many advantages, hath not. It must occasionally and outwardly conform, to a certain degree, to establish tastes, fashions, and decisions. A young man may, with a becoming modesty, dissent, in private companies, from public opinions and prejudices: but he must not attack them with warmth, nor magisterially set up his own sentiments against them. Endeavor to hear, and know all opinions; receive them with complaisance; form your own with coolness, and give it with modesty.

I have received a letter from Sir John Lambert, in which he requests me to use my interest to procure him the remittance of Mr. Spencer's money, when he goes abroad and also desires to know to whose account he is to place the postage of my letters. I do not trouble him with a letter in answer, since you can execute the commission. Pray make my compliments to him, and assure him that I will do all I can to procure him Mr. Spencer's business; but that his most effectual way will be by Messrs. Hoare, who are Mr. Spencer's cashiers, and who will undoubtedly have their choice upon whom they will give him his credit. As for the postage of the letters, your purse and mine being pretty near the same, do you pay it, over and above your next draught.

Your relations, the Princes B-----, will soon be with you at Paris; for they leave London this week: whenever you converse with them, I desire it may be in Italian; that language not being yet familiar enough to you.

By our printed papers, there seems to be a sort of compromise between the King and the parliament, with regard to the affairs of the hospitals, by taking them out of the hands of the Archbishop of Paris, and placing them in Monsieur d'Argenson's: if this be true, that compromise, as it is called, is clearly a victory on the side of the court, and a defeat on the part of the parliament; for if the parliament had a right, they had it as much to the exclusion of Monsieur d'Argenson as of the Archbishop. Adieu.

LETTER CLVIII



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London, February 6, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: Your criticism of Varon is strictly just; but, in truth, severe. You French critics seek for a fault as eagerly as I do for a beauty: you consider things in the worst light, to show your skill, at the expense of your pleasure; I view them in the best, that I may have more pleasure, though at the expense of my judgment. A 'trompeur trompeur et demi' is prettily said; and, if you please, you may call 'Varon, un Normand', and 'Sostrate, un Manceau, qui vaut un Normand et demi'; and, considering the 'denouement' in the light of trick upon trick, it would undoubtedly be below the dignity of the buskin, and fitter for the sock.

But let us see if we cannot bring off the author. The great question upon which all turns, is to discover and ascertain who Cleonice really is. There are doubts concerning her 'etat'; how shall they be cleared? Had the truth been extorted from Varon (who alone knew) by the rack, it would have been a true tragical 'denouement'. But that would probably not have done with Varon, who is represented as a bold, determined, wicked, and at that time desperate fellow; for he was in the hands of an enemy who he knew could not forgive him, with common prudence or safety. The rack would, therefore, have extorted no truth from him; but he would have died enjoying the doubts of his enemies, and the confusion that must necessarily attend those doubts. A stratagem is therefore thought of to discover what force and terror could not, and the stratagem such as no king or minister would disdain, to get at an important discovery. If you call that stratagem a *trick*, you vilify it, and make it comical; but call that trick a *stratagem*, or a *measure*, and you dignify it up to tragedy: so frequently do ridicule or dignity turn upon one single word. It is commonly said, and more particularly by Lord Shaftesbury, that ridicule is the best test of truth; for that it will not stick where it is not just. I deny it. A truth learned in a certain light, and attacked in certain words, by men of wit and humor, may, and often doth, become ridiculous, at least so far that the truth is only remembered and repeated for the sake of the ridicule. The overturn of Mary of Medicis into a river, where she was half-drowned, would never have been remembered if Madame de Vernuel, who saw it, had not said 'la Reine boit'. Pleasure or malignity often gives ridicule a weight which it does not deserve. The versification, I must confess, is too much neglected and too often bad: but, upon the whole, I read the play with pleasure.

If there is but a great deal of wit and character in your new comedy, I will readily compound for its having little or no plot. I chiefly mind dialogue and character in comedies. Let dull critics feed upon the carcasses of plays; give me the taste and the dressing.



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I am very glad you went to Versailles to see the ceremony of creating the Prince de Conde 'Chevalier de l' Ordre'; and I do not doubt but that upon this occasion you informed yourself thoroughly of the institution and rules of that order. If you did, you were certainly told it was instituted by Henry III. immediately after his return, or rather his flight from Poland; he took the hint of it at Venice, where he had seen the original manuscript of an order of the 'St. Esprit, ou droit desir', which had been instituted in 1352, by Louis d'Anjou, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, and husband to Jane, Queen of Naples, Countess of Provence. This Order was under the protection of St. Nicholas de Bari, whose image hung to the collar. Henry III. found the Order of St. Michael prostituted and degraded, during the civil wars; he therefore joined it to his new Order of the St. Esprit, and gave them both together; for which reason every knight of the St. Esprit is now called Chevalier des Ordres du Roi. The number of the knights hath been different, but is now fixed to *one hundred*, exclusive of the sovereign. There, are many officers who wear the riband of this Order, like the other knights; and what is very singular is, that these officers frequently sell their employments, but obtain leave to wear the blue riband still, though the purchasers of those offices wear it also.

As you will have been a great while in France, people will expect that you should be 'au fait' of all these sort of things relative to that country. But the history of all the Orders of all countries is well worth your knowledge; the subject occurs often, and one should not be ignorant of it, for fear of some such accident as happened to a solid Dane at Paris, who, upon seeing 'L'Ordre du St. Esprit', said, 'Notre St. Esprit chez nous c'est un Elephant'. Almost all the princes in Germany have their Orders too; not dated, indeed, from any important events, or directed to any great object, but because they will have orders, to show that they may; as some of them, who have the 'jus cudendae monetae', borrow ten shillings worth of gold to coin a ducat. However, wherever you meet with them, inform yourself, and minute down a short account of them; they take in all the colors of Sir Isaac Newton's prisms. N. B: When you inquire about them, do not seem to laugh.

I thank you for le Mandement de Monseigneur l'Archevevye; it is very well drawn, and becoming an archbishop. But pray do not lose sight of a much more important object, I mean the political disputes between the King and the parliament, and the King and the clergy; they seem both to be patching up; but, however, get the whole clue to them, as far as they have gone.



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I received a letter yesterday from Madame Monconseil, who assures me you have gained ground 'du cote des manieres', and that she looks upon you to be 'plus qu'a moitie chemin'. I am very glad to hear this, because, if you are got above half way of your journey, surely you will finish it, and not faint in the course. Why do you think I have this affair so extremely at heart, and why do I repeat it so often? Is it for your sake, or for mine? You can immediately answer yourself that question; you certainly have—I cannot possibly have any interest in it. If then you will allow me, as I believe you may, to be a judge of what is useful and necessary to you, you must, in consequence, be convinced of the infinite importance of a point which I take so much pains to inculcate.

I hear that the new Duke of Orleans 'a remercie Monsieur de Melfort, and I believe, 'pas sans raison', having had obligations to him; 'mais il ne l'a pas remercie en mari poli', but rather roughly. Il faut que ce soit un bourru'. I am told, too, that people get bits of his father's rags, by way of relies; I wish them joy, they will do them a great deal of good. See from hence what weaknesses human nature is capable of, and make allowances for such in all your plans and reasonings. Study the characters of the people you have to do with, and know what they are, instead of thinking them what they should be; address yourself generally to the senses, to the heart, and to the weaknesses of mankind, but very rarely to their reason.

Good-night or good-morrow to you, according to the time you shall receive this letter from, Yours.

LETTER CLIX

London, February 14, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: In a month's time, I believe I shall have the pleasure of sending you, and you will have the pleasure of reading, a work of Lord Bolingbroke's, in two volumes octavo, "Upon the Use of History," in several letters to Lord Hyde, then Lord Cornbury. It is now put into the press. It is hard to determine whether this work will instruct or please most: the most material historical facts, from the great era of the treaty of Munster, are touched upon, accompanied by the most solid reflections, and adorned by all that elegance of style which was peculiar to himself, and in which, if Cicero equals, he certainly does not exceed him; but every other writer falls short of him. I would advise you almost to get this book by heart. I think you have a turn to history, you love it, and have a memory to retain it: this book will teach you the proper use of it. Some people load their memories indiscriminately with historical facts, as others do their stomachs with food; and bring out the one, and bring up the other, entirely crude and undigested. You will find in Lord Bolingbroke's book an infallible specific against that epidemical complaint.—[It is important to remember that at this time Lord Bolingbroke's philosophical works had not appeared; which accounts for Lord Chesterfield's

recommending to his son, in this, as well as in some foregoing passages, the study of Lord Bolingbroke's writings.]

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I remember a gentleman who had read history in this thoughtless and undistinguishing manner, and who, having traveled, had gone through the Valtelline. He told me that it was a miserable poor country, and therefore it was, surely, a great error in Cardinal Richelieu to make such a rout, and put France to so much expense about it. Had my friend read history as he ought to have done, he would have known that the great object of that great minister was to reduce the power of the House of Austria; and in order to that, to cut off as much as he could the communication between the several parts of their then extensive dominions; which reflections would have justified the Cardinal to him, in the affair of the Valtelline. But it was easier to him to remember facts, than to combine and reflect.

One observation I hope you will make in reading history; for it is an obvious and a true one. It is, that more people have made great figures and great fortunes in courts by their exterior accomplishments, than by their interior qualifications. Their engaging address, the politeness of their manners, their air, their turn, hath almost always paved the way for their superior abilities, if they have such, to exert themselves. They have been favorites before they have been ministers. In courts, an universal gentleness and 'douceur dans les manieres' is most absolutely necessary: an offended fool, or a slighted valet de chambre, may very possibly do you more hurt at court, than ten men of merit can do you good. Fools, and low people, are always jealous of their dignity, and never forget nor forgive what they reckon a slight: on the other hand, they take civility and a little attention as a favor; remember, and acknowledge it: this, in my mind, is buying them cheap; and therefore they are worth buying. The prince himself, who is rarely the shining genius of his court, esteems you only by hearsay but likes you by his senses; that is, from your air, your politeness, and your manner of addressing him, of which alone he is a judge. There is a court garment, as well as a wedding garment, without which you will not be received. That garment is the 'volto sciolto'; an imposing air, an elegant politeness, easy and engaging manners, universal attention, an insinuating gentleness, and all those 'je ne sais quoi' that compose the *graces*.

I am this moment disagreeably interrupted by a letter; not from you, as I expected, but from a friend of yours at Paris, who informs me that you have a fever which confines you at home. Since you have a fever, I am glad you have prudence enough in it to stay at home, and take care of yourself; a little more prudence might probably have prevented it. Your blood is young, and consequently hot; and you naturally make a great deal by your good stomach and good digestion; you should, therefore, necessarily attenuate and cool it, from time to time, by gentle purges, or by a very low diet, for two or three days together, if you would



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avoid fevers. Lord Bacon, who was a very great physician in both senses of the word, hath this aphorism in his "Essay upon Health," 'Nihil magis ad Sanitatem tribuit quam crebrae et domesticae purgationes'. By 'domesticae', he means those simple uncompounded purgatives which everybody can administer to themselves; such as senna-tea, stewed prunes and senria, chewing a little rhubarb, or dissolving an ounce and a half of manna in fair water, with the juice of a lemon to make it palatable. Such gentle and unconfining evacuations would certainly prevent those feverish attacks to which everybody at your age is subject.

By the way, I do desire, and insist, that whenever, from any indisposition, you are not able to write to me upon the fixed days, that Christian shall; and give me a *true* account how you are. I do not expect from him the Ciceronian epistolary style; but I will content myself with the Swiss simplicity and truth.

I hope you extend your acquaintance at Paris, and frequent variety of companies; the only way of knowing the world; every set of company differs in some particulars from another; and a man of business must, in the course of his life, have to do with all sorts. It is a very great advantage to know the languages of the several countries one travels in; and different companies may, in some degree, be considered as different countries; each hath its distinctive language, customs, and manners: know them all, and you will wonder at none.

Adieu, child. Take care of your health; there are no pleasures without it.

LETTER CLX

London, February 20, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: In all systems whatsoever, whether of religion, government, morals, *etc.*, perfection is the object always proposed, though possibly unattainable; hitherto, at least, certainly unattained. However, those who aim carefully at the mark itself, will unquestionably come nearer it, than those who from despair, negligence, or indolence, leave to chance the work of skill. This maxim holds equally true in common life; those who aim at perfection will come infinitely nearer it than those desponding or indolent spirits, who foolishly say to themselves: Nobody is perfect; perfection is unattainable; to attempt it is chimerical; I shall do as well as others; why then should I give myself trouble to be what I never can, and what, according to the common course of things, I need not be, *perfect*?

I am very sure that I need not point out to you the weakness and the folly of this reasoning, if it deserves the name of reasoning. It would discourage and put a stop to

the exertion of any one of our faculties. On the contrary, a man of sense and spirit says to himself: Though the point of perfection may (considering the imperfection of our nature) be unattainable, my care, my endeavors, my attention, shall not be wanting



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to get as near it as I can. I will approach it every day, possibly, I may arrive at it at last; at least, what I am sure is in my own power, I will not be distanced. Many fools (speaking of you) say to me: What! would you have him perfect? I answer: Why not? What hurt would it do him or me? O, but that is impossible, say they; I reply, I am not sure of that: perfection in the abstract, I admit to be unattainable, but what is commonly called perfection in a character I maintain to be attainable, and not only that, but in every man's power. He hath, continue they, a good head, a good heart, a good fund of knowledge, which would increase daily: What would you have more? Why, I would have everything more that can adorn and complete a character. Will it do his head, his heart, or his knowledge any harm, to have the utmost delicacy of manners, the most shining advantages of air and address, the most endearing attentions, and the most engaging graces? But as he is, say they, he is loved wherever he is known. I am very glad of it, say I; but I would have him be liked before he is known, and loved afterward. I would have him, by his first abord and address, make people wish to know him, and inclined to love him: he will save a great deal of time by it. Indeed, reply they, you are too nice, too exact, and lay too much stress upon things that are of very little consequence. Indeed, rejoin I, you know very little of the nature of mankind, if you take those things to be of little consequence: one cannot be too attentive to them; it is they that always engage the heart, of which the understanding is commonly the bubble. And I would much rather that he erred in a point of grammar, of history, of philosophy, *etc.*, than in point of manners and address. But consider, he is very young; all this will come in time. I hope so; but that time must be when he is young, or it will never be at all; the right 'pli' must be taken young, or it will never be easy or seem natural. Come, come, say they (substituting, as is frequently done, assertion instead of argument), depend upon it he will do very well: and you have a great deal of reason to be satisfied with him. I hope and believe he will do well, but I would have him do better than well. I am very well pleased with him, but I would be more, I would be proud of him. I would have him have lustre as well as weight. Did you ever know anybody that reunited all these talents? Yes, I did; Lord Bolingbroke joined all the politeness, the manners, and the graces of a courtier, to the solidity of a statesman, and to the learning of a pedant. He was 'omnis homo'; and pray what should hinder my boy from being so too, if he 'hath, as I think he hath, all the other qualifications that you allow him? Nothing can hinder him, but neglect of or inattention to, those objects which his own good sense must tell him are, of infinite consequence to him, and which therefore I will not suppose him capable of either neglecting or despising.

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This (to tell you the whole truth) is the result of a controversy that passed yesterday, between Lady Hervey and myself, upon your subject, and almost in the very words. I submit the decision of it to yourself; let your own good sense determine it, and make you act in consequence of that determination. The receipt to make this composition is short and infallible; here I give it to you:

Take variety of the best company, wherever you are; be minutely attentive to every word and action; imitate respectively those whom you observe to be distinguished and considered for any one accomplishment; then mix all those several accomplishments together, and serve them up yourself to others.

I hope your fair, or rather your brown *American* is well. I hear that she makes very handsome presents, if she is not so herself. I am told there are people at Paris who expect, from this secret connection, to see in time a volume of letters, superior to Madame de Graffiny's Peruvian ones; I lay in my claim to one of the first copies.

Francis's *Genie*—[Francis's "Eugenia."]—hath been acted twice, with most universal applause; to-night is his third night, and I am going to it. I did not think it would have succeeded so well, considering how long our British audiences have been accustomed to murder, racks, and poison, in every tragedy; but it affected the heart so much, that it triumphed over habit and prejudice. All the women cried, and all the men were moved. The prologue, which is a very good one, was made entirely by Garrick. The epilogue is old Cibber's; but corrected, though not enough, by Francis. He will get a great deal of, money by it; and, consequently, be better able to lend you sixpence, upon any emergency.

The parliament of Paris, I find by the newspapers, has not carried its point concerning the hospitals, and, though the King hath given up the Archbishop, yet as he has put them under the management and direction 'du Grand Conseil', the parliament is equally out of the question. This will naturally put you upon inquiring into the constitution of the 'Grand Conseil'. You will, doubtless, inform yourself who it is composed of, what things are 'de son ressort', whether or not there lies an appeal from thence to any other place; and of all other particulars, that may give you a clear notion of this assembly. There are also three or four other Conseils in France, of which you ought to know the constitution and the objects; I dare say you do know them already; but if you do not, lose no time in informing yourself. These things, as I have often told you, are best learned in various French companies: but in no English ones, for none of our countrymen trouble their heads about them. To use a very trite image, collect, like the bee, your store from every quarter. In some companies ('parmi les fermiers generaux nommement') you may, by proper inquiries, get a general knowledge, at least, of 'les affaires des finances'.



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When you are with 'des gens de robe', suck them with regard to the constitution, and civil government, and 'sic de caeteris'. This shows you the advantage of keeping a great deal of different French company; an advantage much superior to any that you can possibly receive from loitering and sauntering away evenings in any English company at Paris, not even excepting Lord A-----. Love of ease, and fear of restraint (to both which I doubt you are, for a young fellow, too much addicted) may invite you among your countrymen: but pray withstand those mean temptations, 'et prenez sur vous', for the sake of being in those assemblies, which alone can inform your mind and improve your manners. You have not now many months to continue at Paris; make the most of them; get into every house there, if you can; extend acquaintance, know everything and everybody there; that when you leave it for other places, you may be 'au fait', and even able to explain whatever you may hear mentioned concerning it. Adieu.

LETTER CLXI

London, March 2, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: Whereabouts are you in Ariosto? Or have you gone through that most ingenious contexture of truth and lies, of serious and extravagant, of knights-errant, magicians, and all that various matter which he announces in the beginning of his poem:

Le Donne, I Cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,
Le cortesie, l'audaci impreso io canto.

I am by no means sure that Homer had superior invention, or excelled more in description than Ariosto. What can be more seducing and voluptuous, than the description of Alcina's person and palace? What more ingeniously extravagant, than the search made in the moon for Orlando's lost wits, and the account of other people's that were found there? The whole is worth your attention, not only as an ingenious poem, but as the source of all modern tales, novels, fables, and romances; as Ovid's "Metamorphoses;" was of the ancient ones; besides, that when you have read this work, nothing will be difficult to you in the Italian language. You will read Tasso's 'Gierusalemme', and the 'Decamerone di Boccaccio', with great facility afterward; and when you have read those three authors, you will, in my opinion, have read all the works of invention that are worth reading in that language; though the Italians would be very angry at me for saying so.

A gentleman should know those which I call classical works, in every language; such as Boileau, Corneille, Racine, Moliere, *etc.*, in French; Milton, Dryden, Pope, Swift, *etc.*, in English; and the three authors above mentioned in Italian; whether you have any such



in German I am not quite sure, nor, indeed, am I inquisitive. These sort of books adorn the mind, improve the fancy, are frequently alluded to by, and are often the subjects of conversations of the best companies. As you have languages to read, and memory to retain them, the knowledge of them is very well worth the little pains it will cost you, and will enable you to shine in company. It is not pedantic to quote and allude to them, which it would be with regard to the ancients.



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Among the many advantages which you have had in your education, I do not consider your knowledge of several languages as the least. You need not trust to translations; you can go to the source; you can both converse and negotiate with people of all nations, upon equal terms; which is by no means the case of a man, who converses or negotiates in a language which those with whom he hath to do know much better than himself. In business, a great deal may depend upon the force and extent of one word; and, in conversation, a moderate thought may gain, or a good one lose, by the propriety or impropriety, the elegance or inelegance of one single word. As therefore you now know four modern languages well, I would have you study (and, by the way, it will be very little trouble to you) to know them correctly, accurately, and delicately. Read some little books that treat of them, and ask questions concerning their delicacies, of those who are able to answer you. As, for instance, should I say in French, 'la lettre que je vous ai ECRIT', or, 'la lettre que je vous ai ECRITE'? in which, I think, the French differ among themselves. There is a short French grammar by the Port Royal, and another by Pere Buffier, both which are worth your reading; as is also a little book called 'Les Synonymes Francois'. There are books of that kind upon the Italian language, into some of which I would advise you to dip; possibly the German language may have something of the same sort, and since you already speak it, the more properly you speak it the better; one would, I think, as far as possible, do all one does correctly and elegantly. It is extremely engaging to people of every nation, to meet with a foreigner who hath taken pains enough to speak their language correctly; it flatters that local and national pride and prejudice of which everybody hath some share.

Francis's "Eugenia," which I will send you, pleased most people of good taste here; the boxes were crowded till the sixth night, when the pit and gallery were totally deserted, and it was dropped. Distress, without death, was not sufficient to affect a true British audience, so long accustomed to daggers, racks, and bowls of poison: contrary to Horace's rule, they desire to see Medea murder her children upon the stage. The sentiments were too delicate to move them; and their hearts are to be taken by storm, not by parley.

Have you got the things, which were taken from you at Calais, restored? and, among them, the little packet which my sister gave you for Sir Charles Hotham? In this case, have you forwarded it to him? If you have not had an opportunity, you will have one soon; which I desire you will not omit; it is by Monsieur d'Aillion, whom you will see in a few days at Paris, in his way to Geneva, where Sir Charles now is, and will remain some time. Adieu:

LETTER CLXII

London, March 5, O. S. 1752



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My dear friend: As I have received no letter from you by the usual post, I am uneasy upon account of your health; for, had you been well, I am sure you would have written, according to your engagement and my requisition. You have not the least notion of any care of your health; but though I would not have you be a valetudinarian, I must tell you that the best and most robust health requires some degree of attention to preserve. Young fellows, thinking they have so much health and time before them, are very apt to neglect or lavish both, and beggar themselves before they are aware: whereas a prudent economy in both would make them rich indeed; and so far from breaking in upon their pleasures, would improve, and almost perpetuate them. Be you wiser, and, before it is too late, manage both with care and frugality; and lay out neither, but upon good interest and security.

I will now confine myself to the employment of your time, which, though I have often touched upon formerly, is a subject that, from its importance, will bear repetition. You have it is true, a great deal of time before you; but, in this period of your life, one hour usefully employed may be worth more than four-and-twenty hereafter; a minute is precious to you now, whole days may possibly not be so forty years hence. Whatever time you allow, or can snatch for serious reading (I say snatch, because company and the knowledge of the world is now your chief object), employ it in the reading of some one book, and that a good one, till you have finished it: and do not distract your mind with various matters at the same time. In this light I would recommend to you to read 'tout de suite' Grotius 'de Jure Belli et Pacis', translated by Barbeyrac, and Puffendorff's 'Jus Gentium', translated by the same hand. For accidental quarters of hours, read works of invention, wit and humor, of the best, and not of trivial authors, either ancient or modern.

Whatever business you have, do it the first moment you can; never by halves, but finish it without interruption, if possible. Business must not be sauntered and trifled with; and you must not say to it, as Felix did to Paul, "At a more convenient season I will speak to thee." The most convenient season for business is the first; but study and business in some measure point out their own times to a man of sense; time is much oftener squandered away in the wrong choice and improper methods of amusement and pleasures.

Many people think that they are in pleasures, provided they are neither in study nor in business. Nothing like it; they are doing nothing, and might just as well be asleep. They contract habitudes from laziness, and they only frequent those places where they are free from all restraints and attentions. Be upon your guard against this idle profusion of time; and let every place you go to be either the scene of quick and lively pleasures, or the school of your own improvements;



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let every company you go into either gratify your senses, extend your knowledge, or refine your manners. Have some decent object of gallantry in view at some places; frequent others, where people of wit and taste assemble; get into others, where people of superior rank and dignity command respect and attention from the rest of the company; but pray frequent no neutral places, from mere idleness and indolence. Nothing forms a young man so much as being used to keep respectable and superior company, where a constant regard and attention is necessary. It is true, this is at first a disagreeable state of restraint; but it soon grows habitual, and consequently easy; and you are amply paid for it, by the improvement you make, and the credit it gives you. What you said some time ago was very true, concerning 'le Palais Royal'; to one of your age the situation is disagreeable enough: you cannot expect to be much taken notice of; but all that time you can take notice of others; observe their manners, decipher their characters, and insensibly you will become one of the company.

All this I went through myself, when I was of your age. I have sat hours in company without being taken the least notice of; but then I took notice of them, and learned in their company how to behave myself better in the next, till by degrees I became part of the best companies myself. But I took great care not to lavish away my time in those companies where there were neither quick pleasures nor useful improvements to be expected.

Sloth, indolence, and 'mollesse' are pernicious and unbecoming a young fellow; let them be your 'ressource' forty years hence at soonest. Determine, at all events, and however disagreeable it may to you in some respects, and for some time, to keep the most distinguished and fashionable company of the place you are at, either for their rank, or for their learning, or 'le bel esprit et le gout'. This gives you credentials to the best companies, wherever you go afterward. Pray, therefore, no indolence, no laziness; but employ every minute in your life in active pleasures, or useful employments. Address yourself to some woman of fashion and beauty, wherever you are, and try how far that will go. If the place be not secured beforehand, and garrisoned, nine times in ten you will take it. By attentions and respect you may always get into the highest company: and by some admiration and applause, whether merited or not, you may be sure of being welcome among 'les savans et les beaux esprits'. There are but these three sorts of company for a young fellow; there being neither pleasure nor profit in any other.

My uneasiness with regard to your health is this moment removed by your letter of the 8th N. S., which, by what accident I do not know, I did not receive before.



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I long to read Voltaire's 'Rome Sauvee', which, by the very faults that your *severe* critics find with it, I am sure I shall like; for I will at an any time give up a good deal of regularity for a great deal of brilliant; and for the brilliant surely nobody is equal to Voltaire. Catiline's conspiracy is an unhappy subject for a tragedy; it is too single, and gives no opportunity to the poet to excite any of the tender passions; the whole is one intended act of horror, Crebillon was sensible of this defect, and to create another interest, most absurdly made Catiline in love with Cicero's daughter, and her with him.

I am very glad that you went to Versailles, and dined with Monsieur de St. Contest. That is company to learn 'les bonnes manieres' in; and it seems you had 'les bonnes morceaux' into the bargain. Though you were no part of the King of France's conversation with the foreign ministers, and probably not much entertained with it, do you think that it is not very useful to you to hear it, and to observe the turn and manners of people of that sort? It is extremely useful to know it well. The same in the next rank of people, such as ministers of state, *etc.*, in whose company, though you cannot yet, at your age, bear a part, and consequently be diverted, you will observe and learn, what hereafter it may be necessary for you to act.

Tell Sir John Lambert that I have this day fixed Mr. Spencer's having his credit upon him; Mr. Hoare had also recommended him. I believe Mr. Spencer will set out next month for some place in France, but not Paris. I am sure he wants a great deal of France, for at present he is most entirely English: and you know very well what I think of that. And so we bid you heartily good-night.

LETTER CLXIII

London, March 16, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: How do you go on with the most useful and most necessary of all studies, the study of the world? Do you find that you gain knowledge? And does your daily experience at once extend and demonstrate your improvement? You will possibly ask me how you can judge of that yourself. I will tell you a sure way of knowing. Examine yourself, and see whether your notions of the world are changed, by experience, from what they were two years ago in theory; for that alone is one favorable symptom of improvement. At that age (I remember it in myself) every notion that one forms is erroneous; one hath seen few models, and those none of the best, to form one's self upon. One thinks that everything is to be carried by spirit and vigor; that art is meanness, and that versatility and complaisance are the refuge of pusillanimity and weakness. This most mistaken opinion gives an indelicacy, a 'brusquerie', and a roughness to the manners. Fools, who can never be undeceived, retain them as long as they live: reflection, with a little experience, makes men of sense shake



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them off soon. When they come to be a little better acquainted with themselves, and with their own species, they discover that plain right reason is, nine times in ten, the fettered and shackled attendant of the triumph of the heart and the passions; and, consequently, they address themselves nine times in ten to the conqueror, not to the conquered: and conquerors, you know, must be applied to in the gentlest, the most engaging, and the most insinuating manner. Have you found out that every woman is infallibly to be gained by every sort of flattery, and every man by one sort or other? Have you discovered what variety of little things affect the heart, and how surely they collectively gain it? If you have, you have made some progress. I would try a man's knowledge of the world, as I would a schoolboy's knowledge of Horace: not by making him construe 'Maecenas atavis edite regibus', which he could do in the first form; but by examining him as to the delicacy and 'curiosa felicitas' of that poet. A man requires very little knowledge and experience of the world, to understand glaring, high-colored, and decided characters; they are but few, and they strike at first: but to distinguish the almost imperceptible shades, and the nice gradations of virtue and vice, sense and folly, strength and weakness (of which characters are commonly composed), demands some experience, great observation, and minute attention. In the same cases, most people do the same things, but with this material difference, upon which the success commonly turns: A man who hath studied the world knows when to time, and where to place them; he hath analyzed the characters he applies to, and adapted his address and his arguments to them: but a man, of what is called plain good sense, who hath only reasoned by himself, and not acted with mankind, mistimes, misplaces, runs precipitately and bluntly at the mark, and falls upon his nose in the way. In the common manners of social life, every man of common sense hath the rudiments, the A B C of civility; he means not to offend, and even wishes to please: and, if he hath any real merit, will be received and tolerated in good company. But that is far from being enough; for, though he may be received, he will never be desired; though he does not offend, he will never be loved; but, like some little, insignificant, neutral power, surrounded by great ones, he will neither be feared nor courted by any; but, by turns, invaded by all, whenever it is their interest. A most contemptible situation! Whereas, a man who hath carefully attended to, and experienced, the various workings of the heart, and the artifices of the head; and who, by one shade, can trace the progression of the whole color; who can, at the proper times, employ all the several means of persuading the understanding, and engaging the heart, may and will have enemies; but will and must have friends: he may be opposed, but he will be supported too; his talents may excite the jealousy



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of some, but his engaging arts will make him beloved by many more; he will be considerable; he will be considered. Many different qualifications must conspire to form such a man, and to make him at once respectable and amiable; the least must be joined to the greatest; the latter would be unavailing without the former; and the former would be futile and frivolous, without the latter. Learning is acquired by reading books; but the much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various editions of them. Many words in every language are generally thought to be synonymous; but those who study the language attentively will find, that there is no such thing; they will discover some little difference, some distinction between all those words that are vulgarly called synonymous; one hath always more energy, extent, or delicacy, than another. It is the same with men; all are in general, and yet no two in particular, exactly alike. Those who have not accurately studied, perpetually mistake them; they do not discern the shades and gradations that distinguish characters seemingly alike. Company, various company, is the only school for this knowledge. You ought to be, by this time, at least in the third form of that school, from whence the rise to the uppermost is easy and quick; but then you must have application and vivacity; and you must not only bear with, but even seek restraint in most companies, instead of stagnating in one or two only, where indolence and love of ease may be indulged.

In the plan which I gave you in my last,—[That letter is missing.]—for your future motions, I forgot to tell you; that, if a king of the Romans should be chosen this year, you shall certainly be at that election; and as, upon those occasions, all strangers are excluded from the place of the election, except such as belong to some ambassador, I have already eventually secured you a place in the suite of the King's Electoral Ambassador, who will be sent upon that account to Frankfort, or wherever else the election may be. This will not only secure you a sight of the show, but a knowledge of the whole thing; which is likely to be a contested one, from the opposition of some of the electors, and the protests of some of the princes of the empire. That election, if there is one, will, in my opinion, be a memorable era in the history of the empire; pens at least, if not swords, will be drawn; and ink, if not blood, will be plentifully shed by the contending parties in that dispute. During the fray, you may securely plunder, and add to your present stock of knowledge of the 'jus publicum imperii'. The court of France hath, I am told, appointed le President Ogier, a man of great abilities, to go immediately to Ratisbon, 'pour y souffler la discorde'. It must be owned that France hath always profited skillfully of its having guaranteed the treaty of Munster; which hath given it a constant pretense to thrust itself



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into the affairs of the empire. When France got Alsace yielded by treaty, it was very willing to have held it as a fief of the empire; but the empire was then wiser. Every power should be very careful not to give the least pretense to a neighboring power to meddle with the affairs of its interior. Sweden hath already felt the effects of the Czarina's calling herself Guarantee of its present form of government, in consequence of the treaty of Neustadt, confirmed afterward by that of Abo; though, in truth, that guarantee was rather a provision against Russia's attempting to alter the then new established form of government in Sweden, than any right given to Russia to hinder the Swedes from establishing what form of government they pleased. Read them both, if you can get them. Adieu.

LETTER CLXIV

London, April 73, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: I receive this moment your letter of the 19th, N. S., with the inclosed pieces relative to the present dispute between the King and the parliament. I shall return them by Lord Huntingdon, whom you will soon see at Paris, and who will likewise carry you the piece, which I forgot in making up the packet I sent you by the Spanish Ambassador. The representation of the parliament is very well drawn, 'suaviter in modo, fortiter in re'. They tell the King very respectfully, that, in a certain case, *which they should think it criminal To suppose*, they would not obey him. This hath a tendency to what we call here revolution principles. I do not know what the Lord's anointed, his vicegerent upon earth, divinely appointed by him, and accountable to none but him for his actions, will either think or do, upon these symptoms of reason and good sense, which seem to be breaking out all over France: but this I foresee, that, before the end of this century, the trade of both king and priest will not be half so good a one as it has been. Du Clos, in his "Reflections," hath observed, and very truly, 'qu'il y a un germe de raison qui commence a se developper en France';—a developpement that must prove fatal to Regal and Papal pretensions. Prudence may, in many cases, recommend an occasional submission to either; but when that ignorance, upon which an implicit faith in both could only be founded, is once removed, God's Vicegerent, and Christ's Vicar, will only be obeyed and believed, as far as what the one orders, and the other says, is conformable to reason and to truth.

I am very glad (to use a vulgar expression) that You *make as if you were not well*, though you really are; I am sure it is the likeliest way to keep so. Pray leave off entirely your greasy, heavy pastry, fat creams, and indigestible dumplings; and then you need not confine yourself to white meats, which I do not take to be one jot wholesomer than beef, mutton, and partridge.

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Voltaire sent me, from Berlin, his 'History du Siecle de Louis XIV. It came at a very proper time; Lord Bolingbroke had just taught me how history should be read; Voltaire shows me how it should be written. I am sensible that it will meet with almost as many critics as readers. Voltaire must be criticised; besides, every man's favorite is attacked: for every prejudice is exposed, and our prejudices are our mistresses; reason is at best our wife, very often heard indeed, but seldom minded. It is the history of the human understanding, written by a man of parts, for the use of men of parts. Weak minds will not like it, even though they do not understand it; which is commonly the measure of their admiration. Dull ones will want those minute and uninteresting details with which most other histories are encumbered. He tells me all I want to know, and nothing more. His reflections are short, just, and produce others in his readers. Free from religious, philosophical, political and national prejudices, beyond any historian I ever met with, he relates all those matters as truly and as impartially, as certain regards, which must always be to some degree observed, will allow him; for one sees plainly that he often says much less than he would say, if he might. He hath made me much better acquainted with the times of Lewis XIV., than the innumerable volumes which I had read could do; and hath suggested this reflection to me, which I have never made before— His vanity, not his knowledge, made him encourage all, and introduce many arts and sciences in his country. He opened in a manner the human understanding in France, and brought it to its utmost perfection; his age equalled in all, and greatly exceeded in many things (pardon me, Pedants!) the Augustan. This was great and rapid; but still it might be done, by the encouragement, the applause, and the rewards of a vain, liberal, and magnificent prince. What is much more surprising is, that he stopped the operations of the human mind just where he pleased; and seemed to say, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." For, a bigot to his religion, and jealous of his power, free and rational thoughts upon either, never entered into a French head during his reign; and the greatest geniuses that ever any age produced, never entertained a doubt of the divine right of Kings, or the infallibility of the Church. Poets, Orators, and Philosophers, ignorant of their natural rights, cherished their chains; and blind, active faith triumphed, in those great minds, over silent and passive reason. The reverse of this seems now to be the case in France: reason opens itself; fancy and invention fade and decline.



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I will send you a copy of this history by Lord Huntingdon, as I think it very probable that it is not allowed to be published and sold at Paris. Pray read it more than once, and with attention, particularly the second volume, which contains short, but very clear accounts of many very interesting things, which are talked of by everybody, though fairly understood by very few. There are two very puerile affectations which I wish this book had been free from; the one is, the total subversion of all the old established French orthography; the other is, the not making use of any one capital letter throughout the whole book, except at the beginning of a paragraph. It offends my eyes to see rome, paris, france, Caesar, I henry the fourth, *etc.*, begin with small letters; and I do not conceive that there can be any reason for doing it, half so strong as the reason of long usage is to the contrary. This is an affectation below Voltaire; who, I am not ashamed to say, that I admire and delight in, as an author, equally in prose and in verse.

I had a letter a few days ago from Monsieur du Boccage, in which he says, 'Monsieur Stanhope s'est jete dans la politique, et je crois qu'il y reussira': You do very well, it is your destination; but remember that, to succeed in great things, one must first learn to please in little ones. Engaging manners and address must prepare the way for superior knowledge and abilities to act with effect. The late Duke of Marlborough's manners and address prevailed with the first king of Prussia, to let his troops remain in the army of the Allies, when neither their representations, nor his own share in the common cause could do it. The Duke of Marlborough had no new matter to urge to him; but had a manner, which he could not, nor did not, resist. Voltaire, among a thousand little delicate strokes of that kind, says of the Duke de la Feuillade, 'qu'il etoit l'homme le plus brillant et le plus aimable du royaume; et quoique gendre du General et Ministre, il avoit pour lui la faveur publique'. Various little circumstances of that sort will often make a man of great real merit be hated, if he hath not address and manners to make him be loved. Consider all your own circumstances seriously; and you will find that, of all arts, the art of pleasing is the most necessary for you to study and possess. A silly tyrant said, 'oderint modo timeant'; a wise man would have said, 'modo ament nihil timendum est mihi'. Judge from your own daily experience, of the efficacy of that pleasing 'je ne sais quoi', when you feel, as you and everybody certainly does, that in men it is more engaging than knowledge, in women than beauty.



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I long to see Lord and Lady----- (who are not yet arrived), because they have lately seen you; and I always fancy, that I can fish out something new concerning you, from those who have seen you last: not that I shall much rely upon their accounts, because I distrust the judgment of Lord and Lady-----, in those matters about which I am most inquisitive. They have ruined their own son by what they called and thought loving him. They have made him believe that the world was made for him, not he for the world; and unless he stays abroad a great while, and falls into very good company, he will expect, what he will never find, the attentions and complaisance from others, which he has hitherto been used to from Papa and Mamma. This, I fear, is too much the case of Mr.; who, I doubt, will be run through the body, and be near dying, before he knows how to live. However you may turn out, you can never make me any of these reproaches.

I indulged no silly, womanish fondness for you; instead of inflicting my tenderness upon you, I have taken all possible methods to make you deserve it; and thank God you do; at least, I know but one article, in which you are different from what I could wish you; and you very well know what that is I want: That I and all the world should like you, as well as I love you. Adieu.

LETTER CLXV

London, April 30, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: 'Avoir du monde' is, in my opinion, a very just and happy expression for having address, manners, and for knowing how to behave properly in all companies; and it implies very truly that a man who hath not those accomplishments is not of the world. Without them, the best parts are inefficient, civility is absurd, and freedom offensive. A learned parson, rusting in his cell, at Oxford or Cambridge, will season admirably well upon the nature of man; will profoundly analyze the head, the heart, the reason, the will, the passions, the senses, the sentiments, and all those subdivisions of we know not what; and yet, unfortunately, he knows nothing of man, for he hath not lived with him; and is ignorant of all the various modes, habits, prejudices, and tastes, that always influence and often determine him. He views man as he does colors in Sir Isaac Newton's prism, where only the capital ones are seen; but an experienced dyer knows all their various shades and gradations, together with the result of their several mixtures. Few men are of one plain, decided color; most are mixed, shaded, and blended; and vary as much, from different situations, as changeable silks do from different lights. The man 'qui a du monde' knows all this from his own experience and observation: the conceited, cloistered philosopher knows nothing of it from his own



theory; his practice is absurd and improper, and he acts as awkwardly as a man would dance, who had never seen others dance, nor learned of a dancing-master; but who had only studied the notes

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by which dances are now pricked down as well as tunes. Observe and imitate, then, the address, the arts, and the manners of those 'qui ont du monde': see by what methods they first make, and afterward improve impressions in their favor. Those impressions are much oftener owing to little causes than to intrinsic merit; which is less volatile, and hath not so sudden an effect. Strong minds have undoubtedly an ascendant over weak ones, as Galigai Marachale d'Ancre very justly observed, when, to the disgrace and reproach of those times, she was executed for having governed Mary of Medicis by the arts of witchcraft and magic. But then ascendant is to be gained by degrees, and by those arts only which experience and the knowledge of the world teaches; for few are mean enough to be bullied, though most are weak enough to be bubbled. I have often seen people of superior, governed by people of much inferior parts, without knowing or even suspecting that they were so governed. This can only happen when those people of inferior parts have more worldly dexterity and experience, than those they govern. They see the weak and unguarded part, and apply to it they take it, and all the rest follows. Would you gain either men or women, and every man of sense desires to gain both, 'il faut du monde'. You have had more opportunities than ever any man had, at your age, of acquiring 'ce monde'. You have been in the best companies of most countries, at an age when others have hardly been in any company at all. You are master of all those languages, which John Trott seldom speaks at all, and never well; consequently you need be a stranger nowhere. This is the way, and the only way, of having 'du monde', but if you have it not, and have still any coarse rusticity about you, may not one apply to you the 'rusticus expectat' of Horace?

This knowledge of the world teaches us more particularly two things, both which are of infinite consequence, and to neither of which nature inclines us; I mean, the command of our temper, and of our countenance. A man who has no 'monde' is inflamed with anger, or annihilated with shame, at every disagreeable incident: the one makes him act and talk like a madman, the other makes him look like a fool. But a man who has 'du monde', seems not to understand what he cannot or ought not to resent. If he makes a slip himself, he recovers it by his coolness, instead of plunging deeper by his confusion like a stumbling horse. He is firm, but gentle; and practices that most excellent maxim, 'suaviter in modo, fortiter in re'. The other is the 'volto sciolto a pensieri stretti'. People unused to the world have babbling countenances; and are unskillful enough to show what they have sense enough not to tell. In the course of the world, a man must very often put on an easy, frank countenance, upon very disagreeable occasions; he must seem pleased when he is very much otherwise; he must be able to accost and receive with smiles, those whom he would



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much rather meet with swords. In courts he must not turn himself inside out. All this may, nay must be done, without falsehood and treachery; for it must go no further than politeness and manners, and must stop short of assurances and professions of simulated friendship. Good manners, to those one does not love, are no more a breach of truth, than “your humble servant” at the bottom of a challenge is; they are universally agreed upon and understood, to be things of course. They are necessary guards of the decency and peace of society; they must only act defensively; and then not with arms poisoned by perfidy. Truth, but not the whole truth, must be the invariable principle of every man, who hath either religion, honor, or prudence. Those who violate it may be cunning, but they are not able. Lies and perfidy are the refuge of fools and cowards. Adieu!

P. S. I must recommend to you again, to take your leave of all your French acquaintance, in such a manner as may make them regret your departure, and wish to see and welcome you at Paris again, where you may possibly return before it is very long. This must not be done in a cold, civil manner, but with at least seeming warmth, sentiment, and concern. Acknowledge the obligations you have to them for the kindness they have shown you during your stay at Paris: assure them that wherever you are, you will remember them with gratitude; wish for opportunities of giving them proofs of your ‘plus tendre et respectueux souvenir; beg of them in case your good fortune should carry them to any part of the world where you could be of any the least use to them, that they would employ you without reserve. Say all this, and a great deal more, emphatically and pathetically; for you know ‘si vis me flere’. This can do you no harm, if you never return to Paris; but if you do, as probably you may, it will be of infinite use to you. Remember too, not to omit going to every house where you have ever been once, to take leave and recommend yourself to their remembrance. The reputation which you leave at one place, where you have been, will circulate, and you will meet with it at twenty places where you are to go. That is a labor never quite lost.

This letter will show you, that the accident which happened to me yesterday, and of which Mr. Grevenkop gives you account, hath had no bad consequences. My escape was a great one.

LETTER CLXVI

London, May 11, O. S. 1752.

Dear friend: I break my word by writing this letter; but I break it on the allowable side, by doing more than I promised. I have pleasure in writing to you; and you may possibly have some profit in reading what I write; either of the motives were sufficient for me,

both for you I cannot withstand. By your last I calculate that you will leave Paris upon this day se'nnight; upon that supposition, this letter may still find you there.



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Colonel Perry arrived here two or three days ago, and sent me a book from you; Cassandra abridged. I am sure it cannot be too much abridged. The spirit of that most voluminous work, fairly extracted, may be contained in the smallest duodecimo; and it is most astonishing, that there ever could have been people idle enough to write or read such endless heaps of the same stuff. It was, however, the occupation of thousands in the last century, and is still the private, though disavowed, amusement of young girls, and sentimental ladies. A lovesick girl finds, in the captain with whom she is in love, all the courage and all the graces of the tender and accomplished Oroondates: and many a grown-up, sentimental lady, talks delicate Clelia to the hero, whom she would engage to eternal love, or laments with her that love is not eternal.

“Ah! qu’il est doux d’aimer, si Pon aimoit toujours!
Mais hélas! il’n’est point d’éternelles amours.”

It is, however, very well to have read one of those extravagant works (of all which La Calprenede’s are the best), because it is well to be able to talk, with some degree of knowledge, upon all those subjects that other people talk sometimes upon: and I would by no means have anything, that is known to others, be totally unknown to you. It is a great advantage for any man, to be able to talk or to hear, neither ignorantly nor absurdly, upon any subject; for I have known people, who have not said one word, hear ignorantly and absurdly; it has appeared in their inattentive and unmeaning faces.

This, I think, is as little likely to happen to you as to anybody of your age: and if you will but add a versatility and easy conformity of manners, I know no company in which you are likely to be de trop.

This versatility is more particularly necessary for you at this time, now that you are going to so many different places: for, though the manners and customs of the several courts of Germany are in general the same, yet everyone has its particular characteristic; some peculiarity or other, which distinguishes it from the next. This you should carefully attend to, and immediately adopt. Nothing flatters people more, nor makes strangers so welcome, as such an occasional conformity. I do not mean by this, that you should mimic the air and stiffness of every awkward German court; no, by no means; but I mean that you should only cheerfully comply, and fall in with certain local habits, such as ceremonies, diet, turn of conversation, *etc.* People who are lately come from Paris, and who have been a good while there, are generally suspected, and especially in Germany, of having a degree of contempt for every other place. Take great care that nothing of this kind appear, at least outwardly, in your behavior; but commend whatever deserves any degree of commendation, without comparing it with what you may have left, much better of the same kind, at Paris. As for instance, the German



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kitchen is, without doubt, execrable, and the French delicious; however, never commend the French kitchen at a German table; but eat of what you can find tolerable there, and commend it, without comparing it to anything better. I have known many British Yahoos, who though while they were at Paris conformed to no one French custom, as soon as they got anywhere else, talked of nothing but what they did, saw, and eat at Paris. The freedom of the French is not to be used indiscriminately at all the courts in Germany, though their easiness may, and ought; but that, too, at some places more than others. The courts of Manheim and Bonn, I take to be a little more unbarbarized than some others; that of Mayence, an ecclesiastical one, as well as that of Treves (neither of which is much frequented by foreigners), retains, I conceive, a great deal of the Goth and Vandal still. There, more reserve and ceremony are necessary; and not a word of the French. At Berlin, you cannot be too French. Hanover, Brunswick, Cassel, *etc.*, are of the mixed kind, 'un peu decrottes, mais pas assez'.

Another thing, which I most earnestly recommend to you, not only in Germany, but in every part of the world where you may ever be, is not only real, but seeming attention, to whoever you speak to, or to whoever speaks to you. There is nothing so brutally shocking, nor so little forgiven, as a seeming inattention to the person who is speaking to you: and I have known many a man knocked down, for (in my opinion) a much lighter provocation, than that shocking inattention which I mean. I have seen many people, who, while you are speaking to them, instead of looking at, and attending to you, fix their eyes upon the ceiling or some other part of the room, look out of the window, play with a dog, twirl their snuff-box, or pick their nose. Nothing discovers a little, futile, frivolous mind more than this, and nothing is so offensively ill-bred; it is an explicit declaration on your part, that every the most trifling object, deserves your attention more than all that can be said by the person who is speaking to you. Judge of the sentiments of hatred and resentment, which such treatment must excite in every breast where any degree of self-love dwells; and I am sure I never yet met with that breast where there was not a great deal: I repeat it again and again (for it is highly necessary for you to remember it), that sort of vanity and self-love is inseparable from human nature, whatever may be its rank or condition; even your footmen will sooner forget and forgive a beating, than any manifest mark of slight and contempt. Be therefore, I beg of you, not only really, but seemingly and manifestly attentive to whoever speaks to you; nay, more, take their 'ton', and tune yourself to their unison. Be serious with the serious, gay with the gay, and trifle with the triflers. In assuming these various shapes, endeavor to make each of them seem to sit easy upon you, and even to appear to be your own natural one. This is the true and useful versatility, of which a thorough knowledge of the world at once teaches the utility and the means of acquiring.



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I am very sure, at least I hope, that you will never make use of a silly expression, which is the favorite expression, and the absurd excuse of all fools and blockheads; I *cannot do such A thing*; a thing by no means either morally or physically impossible. I *cannot* attend long together to the same thing, says one fool; that is, he is such a fool that he will not. I remember a very awkward fellow, who did not know what to do with his sword, and who always took it off before dinner, saying that he could not possibly dine with his sword on; upon which I could not help telling him, that I really believed he could without any probable danger either to himself or others. It is a shame and an absurdity, for any man to say that he cannot do all those things, which are commonly done by all the rest of mankind.

Another thing that I must earnestly warn you against is laziness; by which more people have lost the fruit of their travels than, perhaps, by any other thing. Pray be always in motion. Early in the morning go and see things; and the rest of the day go and see people. If you stay but a week at a place, and that an insignificant one, see, however, all that is to be seen there; know as many people, and get into as many houses, as ever you can.

I recommend to you likewise, though probably you have thought of it yourself, to carry in your pocket a map of Germany, in which the postroads are marked; and also some short book of travels through Germany. The former will help to imprint in your memory situations and distances; and the latter will point out many things for you to see, that might otherwise possibly escape you, and which, though they may be in themselves of little consequence, you would regret not having seen, after having been at the places where they were.

Thus warned and provided for your journey, God speed you; 'Felix faustumque sit! Adieu.

LETTER CLXVII

London, May 27, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: I send you the inclosed original from a friend of ours, with my own commentaries upon the text; a text which I have so often paraphrased, and commented upon already, that I believe I can hardly say anything new upon it; but, however, I cannot give it over till I am better convinced, than I yet am, that you feel all the utility, the importance, and the necessity of it; nay, not only feel, but practice it. Your panegyrist allows you, what most fathers would be more than satisfied with, in a son, and chides me for not contenting myself with 'l'essentiellement bon'; but I, who have been in no one respect like other fathers, cannot neither, like them, content myself with 'l'essentiellement bon'; because I know that it will not do your business in the world,

while you want 'quelques couches de vernis'. Few fathers care much for their sons, or, at least, most of them care more



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for their money: and, consequently, content themselves with giving them, at the cheapest rate, the common run of education: that is, a school till eighteen; the university till twenty; and a couple of years riding post through the several towns of Europe; impatient till their boobies come home to be married, and, as they call it, settled. Of those who really love their sons, few know how to do it. Some spoil them by fondling them while they are young, and then quarrel with them when they are grown up, for having been spoiled; some love them like mothers, and attend only to the bodily health and strength of the hopes of their family, solemnize his birthday, and rejoice, like the subjects of the Great Mogul, at the increase of his bulk; while others, minding, as they think, only essentials, take pains and pleasure to see in their heir, all their favorite weaknesses and imperfections. I hope and believe that I have kept clear of all of these errors in the education which I have given you. No weaknesses of my own have warped it, no parsimony has starved it, no rigor has deformed it. Sound and extensive learning was the foundation which I meant to lay—I have laid it; but that alone, I knew, would by no means be sufficient: the ornamental, the showish, the pleasing superstructure was to be begun. In that view, I threw you into the great world, entirely your own master, at an age when others either guzzle at the university, or are sent abroad in servitude to some awkward, pedantic Scotch governor. This was to put you in the way, and the only way of acquiring those manners, that address, and those graces, which exclusively distinguish people of fashion; and without which all moral virtues, and all acquired learning, are of no sort of use in the courts and 'le beau monde': on the contrary, I am not sure if they are not an hindrance. They are feared and disliked in those places, as too severe, if not smoothed and introduced by the graces; but of these graces, of this necessary 'beau vernis', it seems there are still 'quelque couches qui manquent'. Now, pray let me ask you, coolly and seriously, 'pourquoi ces couches manquent-elles'? For you may as easily take them, as you may wear more or less powder in your hair, more or less lace upon your coat. I can therefore account for your wanting them no other way in the world, than from your not being yet convinced of their full value. You have heard some English bucks say, "Damn these finical outlandish airs, give me a manly, resolute manner. They make a rout with their graces, and talk like a parcel of dancing-masters, and dress like a parcel of fops: one good Englishman will beat three of them." But let your own observation undeceive you of these prejudices. I will give you one instance only, instead of an hundred that I could give you, of a very shining fortune and figure, raised upon no other foundation whatsoever, than that of address, manners, and graces. Between you and me (for this example must go no further),



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what do you think made our friend, Lord A——e, Colonel of a regiment of guards, Governor of Virginia, Groom of the Stole, and Ambassador to Paris; amounting in all to sixteen or seventeen thousand pounds a year? Was it his birth? No, a Dutch gentleman only. Was it his estate? No, he had none. Was it his learning, his parts, his political abilities and application? You can answer these questions as easily, and as soon, as I can ask them. What was it then? Many people wondered, but I do not; for I know, and will tell you. It was his air, his address, his manners, and his graces. He pleased, and by pleasing he became a favorite; and by becoming a favorite became all that he has been since. Show me any one instance, where intrinsic worth and merit, unassisted by exterior accomplishments, have raised any man so high. You know the Due de Richelieu, now 'Marechal, Cordon bleu, Gentilhomme de la Chambre', twice Ambassador, *etc.* By what means? Not by the purity of his character, the depth of his knowledge, or any uncommon penetration and sagacity. Women alone formed and raised him. The Duchess of Burgundy took a fancy to him, and had him before he was sixteen years old; this put him in fashion among the beau monde: and the late Regent's oldest daughter, now Madame de Modene, took him next, and was near marrying him. These early connections with women of the first distinction gave him those manners, graces, and address, which you see he has; and which, I can assure you, are all that he has; for, strip him of them, and he will be one of the poorest men in Europe. Man or woman cannot resist an engaging exterior; it will please, it will make its way. You want, it seems, but 'quelques couches'; for God's sake, lose no time in getting them; and now you have gone so far, complete the work. Think of nothing else till that work is finished; unwearied application will bring about anything: and surely your application can never be so well employed as upon that object, which is absolutely necessary to facilitate all others. With your knowledge and parts, if adorned by manners and graces, what may you not hope one day to be? But without them, you will be in the situation of a man who should be very fleet of one leg but very lame of the other. He could not run; the lame leg would check and clog the well one, which would be very near useless.

From my original plan for your education, I meant to make you 'un homme universel'; what depends on me is executed, the little that remains undone depends singly upon you. Do not then disappoint, when you can so easily gratify me. It is your own interest which I am pressing you to pursue, and it is the only return that I desire for all the care and affection of, Yours.

LETTER CLXVIII

London, May 31, O. S. 1752



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My dear friend: The world is the book, and the only one to which, at present, I would have you apply yourself; and the thorough knowledge of it will be of more use to you, than all the books that ever were read. Lay aside the best book whenever you can go into the best company; and depend upon it, you change for the better. However, as the most tumultuous life, whether of business or pleasure, leaves some vacant moments every day, in which a book is the refuge of a rational being, I mean now to point out to you the method of employing those moments (which will and ought to be but few) in the most advantageous manner. Throw away none of your time upon those trivial, futile books, published by idle or necessitous authors, for the amusement of idle and ignorant readers; such sort of books swarm and buzz about one every day; flap them away, they have no sting. 'Certum pete finem', have some one object for those leisure moments, and pursue that object invariably till you have attained it; and then take some other. For instance, considering your destination, I would advise you to single out the most remarkable and interesting eras of modern history, and confine all your reading to that era. If you pitch upon the Treaty of Munster (and that is the proper period to begin with, in the course which I am now recommending), do not interrupt it by dipping and deviating into other books, unrelative to it; but consult only the most authentic histories, letters, memoirs, and negotiations, relative to that great transaction; reading and comparing them, with all that caution and distrust which Lord Bolingbroke recommends to you, in a better manner, and in better words than I can. The next period worth your particular knowledge, is the Treaty of the Pyrenees: which was calculated to lay, and in effect did lay, the succession of the House of Bourbon to the crown of Spain. Pursue that in the same manner, singling, out of the millions of volumes written upon that occasion, the two or three most authentic ones, and particularly letters, which are the best authorities in matters of negotiation. Next come the Treaties of Nimeguen and Ryswick, postscripts in, a manner to those of Munster and the Pyrenees. Those two transactions have had great light thrown upon them by the publication of many authentic and original letters and pieces. The concessions made at the Treaty of Ryswick, by the then triumphant Lewis the Fourteenth, astonished all those who viewed things only superficially; but, I should think, must have been easily accounted for by those who knew the state of the kingdom of Spain, as well as of the health of its King, Charles the Second, at that time. The interval between the conclusion of the peace of Ryswick, and the breaking out of the great war in 1702, though a short, is a most interesting one. Every week of it almost produced some great event. Two partition treaties, the death of the King of Spain, his unexpected will, and the acceptance of it by Lewis



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the Fourteenth, in violation of the second treaty of partition, just signed and ratified by him. Philip the Fifth quietly and cheerfully received in Spain, and acknowledged as King of it, by most of those powers, who afterward joined in an alliance to dethrone him. I cannot help making this observation upon that occasion: That character has often more to do in great transactions, than prudence and sound policy; for Lewis the Fourteenth gratified his personal pride, by giving a Bourbon King to Spain, at the expense of the true interest of France; which would have acquired much more solid and permanent strength by the addition of Naples, Sicily, and Lorraine, upon the footing of the second partition treaty; and I think it was fortunate for Europe that he preferred the will. It is true, he might hope to influence his Bourbon posterity in Spain; he knew too well how weak the ties of blood are among men, and how much weaker still they are among princes. The Memoirs of Count Harrach, and of Las Torres, give a good deal of light into the transactions of the Court of Spain, previous to the death of that weak King; and the Letters of the Marachal d'Harcourt, then the French Ambassador in Spain, of which I have authentic copies in manuscript, from the year 1698 to 1701, have cleared up that whole affair to me. I keep that book for you. It appears by those letters, that the impudent conduct of the House of Austria, with regard to the King and Queen of Spain, and Madame Berlips, her favorite, together with the knowledge of the partition treaty, which incensed all Spain, were the true and only reasons of the will, in favor of the Duke of Anjou. Cardinal Portocarrero, nor any of the Grandees, were bribed by France, as was generally reported and believed at that time; which confirms Voltaire's anecdote upon that subject. Then opens a new scene and a new century; Lewis the Fourteenth's good fortune forsakes him, till the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene make him amends for all the mischief they had done him, by making the allies refuse the terms of peace offered by him at Gertruydenberg. How the disadvantageous peace of Utrecht was afterward brought on, you have lately read; and you cannot inform yourself too minutely of all those circumstances, that treaty 'being the freshest source from whence the late transactions of Europe have flowed. The alterations that have since happened, whether by wars or treaties, are so recent, that all the written accounts are to be helped out, proved, or contradicted, by the oral ones of almost every informed person, of a certain age or rank in life. For the facts, dates, and original pieces of this century, you will find them in Lamberti, till the year 1715, and after that time in Rousset's 'Recueil'.



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I do not mean that you should plod hours together in researches of this kind: no, you may employ your time more usefully: but I mean, that you should make the most of the moments you do employ, by method, and the pursuit of one single object at a time; nor should I call it a digression from that object, if when you meet with clashing and jarring pretensions of different princes to the same thing, you had immediately recourse to other books, in which those several pretensions were clearly stated; on the contrary, that is the only way of remembering those contested rights and claims: for, were a man to read 'tout de suite', Schwederus's 'Theatrum Pretensionum', he would only be confounded by the variety, and remember none of them; whereas, by examining them occasionally, as they happen to occur, either in the course of your historical reading, or as they are agitated in your own times, you will retain them, by connecting them with those historical facts which occasioned your inquiry. For example, had you read, in the course of two or three folios of Pretensions, those, among others, of the two Kings of England and Prussia to Oost Frise, it is impossible, that you should have remembered them; but now, that they are become the debated object at the Diet at Ratisbon, and the topic of all political conversations, if you consult both books and persons concerning them, and inform yourself thoroughly, you will never forget them as long as you live. You will hear a great deal of them on one side, at Hanover, and as much on the other side, afterward, at Berlin: hear both sides, and form your own opinion; but dispute with neither.

Letters from foreign ministers to their courts, and from their courts to them, are, if genuine, the best and most authentic records you can read, as far as they go. Cardinal d'Ossat's, President Jeanin's, D'Estrade's, Sir William Temple's, will not only inform your mind, but form your style; which, in letters of business, should be very plain and simple, but, at the same time, exceedingly clear, correct, and pure.

All that I have said may be reduced to these two or three plain principles: 1st, That you should now read very little, but converse a great deal; 2d, To read no useless, unprofitable books; and 3d, That those which you do read, may all tend to a certain object, and be relative to, and consequential of each other. In this method, half an hour's reading every day will carry you a great way. People seldom know how to employ their time to the best advantage till they have too little left to employ; but if, at your age, in the beginning of life, people would but consider the value of it, and put every moment to interest, it is incredible what an additional fund of knowledge and pleasure such an economy would bring in. I look back with regret upon that large sum of time, which, in my youth, I lavished away idly, without either improvement or pleasure. Take warning betimes, and enjoy every moment; pleasures do not commonly last so long as life, and therefore should not be neglected; and the longest life is too short for knowledge, consequently every moment is precious.



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I am surprised at having received no letter from you since you left Paris. I still direct this to Strasburgh, as I did my two last. I shall direct my next to the post house at Mayence, unless I receive, in the meantime, contrary instructions from you. Adieu. Remember les attentions: they must be your passports into good company.

LETTER CLXIX

London, June, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: Very few celebrated negotiators have been eminent for their learning. The most famous French negotiators (and I know no nation that can boast of abler) have been military men, as Monsieur d'Harcourt, Comte d'Estrades, Marechal d'Uxelles, and others. The late Duke of Marlborough, who was at least as able a negotiator as a general, was exceedingly ignorant of books, but extremely knowing in men, whereas the learned Grotius appeared, both in Sweden and in France, to be a very bungling minister. This is, in my opinion, very easily to be accounted for. A man of very deep learning must have employed the greatest part of his time in books; and a skillful negotiator must necessarily have employed much the greater part of his time with man. The sound scholar, when dragged out of his dusty closet into business, acts by book, and deals with men as he has read of them; not as he has known them by experience: he follows Spartan and Roman precedents, in what he falsely imagines to be similar cases; whereas two cases never were, since the beginning of the world, exactly alike; and he would be capable, where he thought spirit and vigor necessary, to draw a circle round the persons he treated with, and to insist upon a categorical answer before they went out of it, because he had read, in the Roman history, that once upon a time some Roman ambassador, did so. No; a certain degree of learning may help, but no degree of learning will ever make a skillful minister whereas a great knowledge of the world, of the characters, passions, and habits of mankind, has, without one grain of learning, made a thousand. Military men have seldom much knowledge of books; their education does not allow it; but what makes great amends for that want is, that they generally know a great deal of the world; they are thrown into it young; they see variety of nations and characters; and they soon find, that to rise, which is the aim of them all, they must first please: these concurrent causes almost always give them manners and politeness. In consequence of which, you see them always distinguished at courts, and favored by the women. I could wish that you had been of an age to have made a campaign or two as a volunteer. It would have given you an attention, a versatility, and an alertness; all which I doubt you want; and a great want it is.



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A foreign minister has not great business to transact every day; so that his knowledge and his skill in negotiating are not frequently put to the trial; but he has that to do every day, and every hour of the day, which is necessary to prepare and smooth the way for his business; that is, to insinuate himself by his manners, not only into the houses, but into the confidence of the most considerable people of that place; to contribute to their pleasures, and insensibly not to be looked upon as a stranger himself. A skillful minister may very possibly be doing his master's business full as well, in doing the honors gracefully and genteelly of a ball or a supper, as if he were laboriously writing a protocol in his closet. The Marechal d'Harcourt, by his magnificence, his manners, and his politeness, blunted the edge of the long aversion which the Spaniards had to the French. The court and the grandees were personally fond, of him, and frequented his house; and were at least insensibly brought to prefer a French to a German yoke; which I am convinced would never have happened, had Comte d'Harrach been Marechal d'Harcourt, or the Marechal d'Harcourt Comte d'Harrach. The Comte d'Estrades had, by 'ses manieres polies et liantes', formed such connections, and gained such an interest in the republic of the United Provinces, that Monsieur De Witt, the then Pensionary of Holland, often applied to him to use his interest with his friend, both in Holland and the other provinces, whenever he (De Witt) had a difficult point which he wanted to carry. This was certainly not brought about by his knowledge of books, but of men: dancing, fencing, and riding, with a little military architecture, were no doubt the top of his education; and if he knew that 'collegium' in Latin signified college in French, it must have been by accident. But he knew what was more useful: from thirteen years old he had been in the great world, and had read men and women so long, that he could then read them at sight.

Talking the other day, upon this and other subjects, all relative to you, with one who knows and loves you very well, and expressing my anxiety and wishes that your exterior accomplishments, as a man of fashion, might adorn, and at least equal your intrinsic merit as a man of sense and honor, the person interrupted me, and said: Set your heart at rest; that never will or can happen. It is not in character; that gentleness, that 'douceur', those attentions which you wish him to have, are not in his nature; and do what you will, nay, let him do what he will, he can never acquire them. Nature may be a little disguised and altered by care; but can by no means whatsoever be totally forced and changed. I denied this principle to a certain degree; but admitting, however, that in many respects our nature was not to be changed; and asserting, at the same time, that in others it might by care be very much altered and improved, so as in truth to be changed; that I took



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those exterior accomplishments, which we had been talking of, to be mere modes, and absolutely depending upon the will, and upon custom; and that, therefore, I was convinced that your good sense, which must show you the importance of them, would make you resolve at all events to acquire them, even in spite of nature, if nature be in the case. Our dispute, which lasted a great while, ended as Voltaire observes that disputes in England are apt to do, in a wager of fifty guineas; which I myself am to decide upon honor, and of which this is a faithful copy. If you think I shall win it, you may go my halves if you please; declare yourself in time. This I declare, that I would most cheerfully give a thousand guineas to win those fifty; you may secure them me if you please.

I grow very impatient for your future letters from the several courts of Manheim, Bonn, Hanover, *etc.* And I desire that your letters may be to me, what I do not desire they should be to anybody else, I mean full of yourself. Let the egotism, a figure which upon all other occasions I detest, be your only one to me. Trifles that concern you are not trifles to me; and my knowledge of them may possibly be useful to you. Adieu. 'Les graces, les graces, les graces'.

LETTER CLXX

London, June 23, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: I direct this letter to Mayence, where I think it is likely to meet you, supposing, as I do, that you stayed three weeks at Manheim, after the date of your last from thence; but should you have stayed longer at Manheim, to which I have no objection, it will wait for you at Mayence. Mayence will not, I believe, have charms to detain you above a week; so that I reckon you will be at Bonn at the end of July, N. S. There you may stay just as little or as long as you please, and then proceed to Hanover.

I had a letter by the last post from a relation of mine at Hanover, Mr. Stanhope Aspinwall, who is in the Duke of Newcastle's office, and has lately been appointed the King's Minister to the Dey of Algiers; a post which, notwithstanding your views of foreign affairs, I believe you do not envy him. He tells me in that letter, there are very good lodgings to be had at one Mrs. Meyers's, the next door to the Duke of Newcastle's, which he offers to take for you; I have desired him to do it, in case Mrs. Meyers will wait for you till the latter end of August, or the beginning of September, N. S., which I suppose is about the time when you will be at Hanover. You will find this Mr. Aspinwall of great use to you there. He will exert himself to the utmost to serve you; he has been twice or thrice at Hanover, and knows all the allures there: he is very well with the Duke of Newcastle, and will puff you there. Moreover, if you have a mind to work there as a volunteer in that bureau, he will assist and inform you. In short, he is a very honest,



sensible, and informed man; 'mais me paye pas beaucoup de sa figure; il abuse meme du privilege qu'ont les hommes d'etre laids; et il ne sera pas en reste avec les lions et les leopards qu'il trouvera a Alger'.



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As you are entirely master of the time when you will leave Bonn and go to Hanover, so are you master to stay at Hanover as long as you please, and to go from thence where you please; provided that at Christmas you are at Berlin, for the beginning of the Carnival: this I would not have you say at Hanover, considering the mutual disposition of those two courts; but when anybody asks you where you are to go next, say that you propose rambling in Germany, at Brunswick, Cassel, *etc.*, till the next spring; when you intend to be in Flanders, in your way to England. I take Berlin, at this time, to be the politest, the most shining, and the most useful court in Europe for a young fellow to be at: and therefore I would upon no account not have you there, for at least a couple of months of the Carnival. If you are as well received, and pass your time as well at Bonn as I believe you will, I would advise you to remain there till about the 20th of August, N. S., in four days you will be at Hanover. As for your stay there, it must be shorter or longer, according to certain circumstances *which you know of*; supposing them, at the best, then, stay within a week or ten days of the King's return to England; but supposing them at the worst, your stay must not be too short, for reasons which you also know; no resentment must either appear or be suspected; therefore, at worst, I think you must remain there a month, and at best, as long as ever you please. But I am convinced that all will turn out very well for you there. Everybody is engaged or inclined to help you; the ministers, English and German, the principal ladies, and most of the foreign ministers; so that I may apply to you, 'nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia'. Du Perron will, I believe, be back there from Turin much about the time you get there: pray be very attentive to him, and connect yourself with him as much as ever you can; for, besides that he is a very pretty and well-informed man, he is very much in fashion at Hanover, is personally very well with the King and certain ladies; so that a visible intimacy and connection with him will do you credit and service. Pray cultivate Monsieur Hop, the Dutch minister, who has always been very much my friend, and will, I am sure, be yours; his manners, it is true, are not very engaging; he is rough, but he is sincere. It is very useful sometimes to see the things which one ought to avoid, as it is right to see very often those which one ought to imitate, and my friend Hop's manners will frequently point out to you, what yours ought to be by the rule of contraries.

Congreve points out a sort of critics, to whom he says that we are doubly obliged:—

“Rules for good writing they with pains indite,
Then show us what is bad, by what they write.”

It is certain that Monsieur Hop, with the best heart in the world, and a thousand good qualities, has a thousand enemies, and hardly a friend; simply from the roughness of his manners.



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N. B. I heartily wish you could have stayed long enough at Manheim to have been seriously and desperately in love with Madame de Taxis; who, I suppose, is a proud, insolent, fine lady, and who would consequently have expected attentions little short of adoration: nothing would do you more good than such a passion; and I live in hopes that somebody or other will be able to excite such an one in you; your hour may not yet be come, but it will come. Love has not been unaptly compared to the smallpox which most people have sooner or later. Iphigenia had a wonderful effect upon Cimon; I wish some Hanover Iphigenia may try her skill upon you.

I recommend to you again, though I have already done it twice or thrice, to speak German, even affectedly, while you are at Hanover; which will show that you prefer that language, and be of more use to you there with *somebody*, than you can imagine. When you carry my letters to Monsieur Munchausen and Monsieur Schwiegeldt, address yourself to them in German; the latter speaks French very well, but the former extremely ill. Show great attention to Madame, Munchausen's daughter, who is a great favorite; those little trifles please mothers, and sometimes fathers, extremely. Observe, and you will find, almost universally, that the least things either please or displease most; because they necessarily imply, either a very strong desire of obliging, or an unpardonable indifference about it. I will give you a ridiculous instance enough of this truth, from my own experience. When I was Ambassador the first time in Holland, Comte de Wassenaer and his wife, people of the first rank and consideration, had a little boy of about three years old, of whom they were exceedingly fond; in order to make my court to them, I was so too, and used to take the child often upon my lap, and play with him. One day his nose was very dirty, upon which I took out my handkerchief and wiped it for him; this raised a loud laugh, and they called me a very, handy nurse; but the father and mother were so pleased with it, that to this day it is an anecdote in the family, and I never receive a letter from Comte Wassenaer, but he makes me the compliments 'du morveux que j'ai mouche autrefois'; who, by the way, I am assured, is now the prettiest young fellow in Holland. Where one would gain people, remember that nothing is little. Adieu.

LETTER CLXXI

London, June 26, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: As I have reason to fear, from your M last letter of the 18th, N. S., from Manheim, that all, or at least most of my letters to you, since you left Paris, have miscarried; I think it requisite, at all events, to repeat in this the necessary parts of those several letters, as far as they relate to your future motions.



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I suppose that this will either find you, or be but a few days before you at Bonn, where it is directed; and I suppose too, that you have fixed your time for going from thence to Hanover. If things *turn out well at Hanover*, as in my opinion they will, 'Chi sta bene non si muova', stay there till a week or ten days before the King sets out for England; but, should *they turn out ill*, which I cannot imagine, stay, however, a month, that your departure may not seem a step of discontent or peevishness; the very suspicion of which is by all means to be avoided. Whenever you leave Hanover, be it sooner or be it later, where would you go? 'Lei Padrone', and I give you your choice: would you pass the months of November and December at Brunswick, Cassel, *etc.*? Would you choose to go for a couple of months to Ratisbon, where you would be very well recommended to, and treated by the King's Electoral Minister, the Baron de Behr, and where you would improve your 'Jus publicum'? or would you rather go directly to Berlin, and stay there till the end of the Carnival? Two or three months at Berlin are, considering all circumstances, necessary for you; and the Carnival months are the best; 'pour le reste decidez en dernier ressort, et sans appel comme d'abus'. Let me know your decree, when you have formed it. Your good or ill success at Hanover will have a very great influence upon your subsequent character, figure, and fortune in the world; therefore I confess that I am more anxious about it, than ever bride was on her wedding night, when wishes, hopes, fears, and doubts, tumultuously agitate, please, and terrify her. It is your first crisis: the character which you will acquire there will, more or less, be that which will abide by you for the rest of your life. You will be tried and judged there, not as a boy, but as a man; and from that moment there is no appeal for character; it is fixed. To form that character advantageously, you have three objects particularly to attend to: your character as a man of morality, truth, and honor; your knowledge in the objects of your destination, as a man of business; and your engaging and insinuating address, air and manners, as a courtier; the sure and only steps to favor.

Merit at courts, without favor, will do little or nothing; favor, without merit, will do a good deal; but favor and merit together will do everything. Favor at courts depends upon so many, such trifling, such unexpected, and unforeseen events, that a good courtier must attend to every circumstance, however little, that either does, or can happen; he must have no absences, no *distractions*; he must not say, "I did not mind it; who would have thought it?" He ought both to have minded, and to have thought it. A chamber-maid has sometimes caused revolutions in courts which have produced others in kingdoms. Were I to make my way to favor in a court, I would



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neither willfully, nor by negligence, give a dog or a cat there reason to dislike me. Two 'pies grieches', well instructed, you know, made the fortune of De Luines with Lewis XIII. Every step a man makes at court requires as much attention and circumspection, as those which were made formerly between hot plowshares, in the Ordeal, or fiery trials; which, in those times of ignorance and superstition, were looked upon as demonstrations of innocence or guilt. Direct your principal battery, at Hanover, at the D of N 's: there are many very weak places in that citadel; where, with a very little skill, you cannot fail making a great impression. Ask for his orders in everything you do; talk Austrian and Anti-gallican to him; and, as soon as you are upon a foot of talking easily to him, tell him 'en badinant', that his skill and success in thirty or forty elections in England leave you no reason to doubt of his carrying his election for Frankfort; and that you look upon the Archduke as his Member for the Empire. In his hours of festivity and comotation, drop that he puts you in mind of what Sir William Temple says of the Pensionary De Witt,—who at that time governed half Europe,—that he appeared at balls, assemblies, and public places, as if he had nothing else to do or to think of. When he talks to you upon foreign affairs, which he will often do, say that you really cannot presume to give any opinion of your own upon those matters, looking upon yourself at present only as a postscript to the corps diplomatique; but that, if his Grace will be pleased to make you an additional volume to it, though but in duodecimo, you will do your best that he shall neither be ashamed nor repent of it. He loves to have a favorite, and to open himself to that favorite. He has now no such person with him; the place is vacant, and if you have dexterity you may fill it. In one thing alone do not humor him; I mean drinking; for, as I believe, you have never yet been drunk, you do not yourself know how you can bear your wine, and what a little too much of it may make you do or say; you might possibly kick down all you had done before.

You do not love gaming, and I thank God for it; but at Hanover I would have you show, and profess a particular dislike to play, so as to decline it upon all occasions, unless where one may be wanted to make a fourth at whist or quadrille; and then take care to declare it the result of your complaisance, not of your inclinations. Without such precaution you may very possibly be suspected, though unjustly, of loving play, upon account of my former passion for it; and such a suspicion would do you a great deal of hurt, especially with the King, who detests gaming. I must end this abruptly. God bless you!

LETTER CLXXII



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My dear friend: Versatility as a courtier may be almost decisive to you hereafter; that is, it may conduce to, or retard your preferment in your own destination. The first reputation goes a great way; and if you fix a good one at Hanover, it will operate also to your advantage in England. The trade of a courtier is as much a trade as that of a shoemaker; and he who applies himself the most, will work the best: the only difficulty is to distinguish (what I am sure you have sense enough to distinguish) between the right and proper qualifications and their kindred faults; for there is but a line between every perfection and its neighboring imperfection. As, for example, you must be extremely well-bred and polite, but without the troublesome forms and stiffness of ceremony. You must be respectful and assenting, but without being servile and abject. You must be frank, but without indiscretion; and close, without being costive. You must keep up dignity of character, without the least pride of birth or rank. You must be gay within all the bounds of decency and respect; and grave without the affectation of wisdom, which does not become the age of twenty. You must be essentially secret, without being dark and mysterious. You must be firm, and even bold, but with great seeming modesty.

With these qualifications, which, by the way, are all in your own power, I will answer for your success, not only at Hanover, but at any court in Europe. And I am not sorry that you begin your apprenticeship at a little one; because you must be more circumspect, and more upon your guard there, than at a great one, where every little thing is not known nor reported.

When you write to me, or to anybody else, from thence, take care that your letters contain commendations of all that you see and hear there; for they will most of them be opened and read; but, as frequent couriers will come from Hanover to England, you may sometimes write to me without reserve; and put your letters into a very little box, which you may send safely by some of them.

I must not omit mentioning to you, that at the Duke of Newcastle's table, where you will frequently dine, there is a great deal of drinking; be upon your guard against it, both upon account of your health, which would not bear it, and of the consequences of your being flustered and heated with wine: it might engage you in scrapes and frolics, which the King (who is a very sober man himself) detests. On the other hand, you should not seem too grave and too wise to drink like the rest of the company; therefore use art: mix water with your wine; do not drink all that is in the glass; and if detected, and pressed to drink more do not cry out sobriety; but say that you have lately been out of order, that you are subject to inflammatory complaints, and that you must beg to be excused for the present. A young fellow ought to be wiser than he should seem to be; and an old fellow ought to seem wise whether he really be so or not.



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During your stay at Hanover I would have you make two or three excursions to parts of that Electorate: the Hartz, where the silver mines are; Gottingen, for the University; Stade, for what commerce there is. You should also go to Zell. In short, see everything that is to be seen there, and inform yourself well of all the details of that country. Go to Hamburg for three or four days, and know the constitution of that little Hanseatic Republic, and inform yourself well of the nature of the King of Denmark's pretensions to it.

If all things turn out right for you at Hanover, I would have you make it your headquarters, till about a week or ten days before the King leaves it; and then go to Brunswick, which, though a little, is a very polite, pretty court. You may stay there a fortnight or three weeks, as you like it; and from thence go to Cassel, and stay there till you go to Berlin; where I would have you be by Christmas. At Hanover you will very easily get good letters of recommendation to Brunswick and to Cassel. You do not want any to Berlin; however, I will send you one for Voltaire. 'A propos' of Berlin, be very reserved and cautious while at Hanover, as to that King and that country; both which are detested, because feared by everybody there, from his Majesty down to the meanest peasant; but, however, they both extremely deserve your utmost attention and you will see the arts and wisdom of government better in that country, now, than in any other in Europe. You may stay three months at Berlin, if you like it, as I believe you will; and after that I hope we shall meet there again.

Of all the places in the world (I repeat it once more), establish a good reputation at Hanover, 'et faites vous valoir la, autant qu'il est possible, par le brillant, les manieres, et les graces'. Indeed it is of the greatest importance to you, and will make any future application to the King in your behalf very easy. He is more taken by those little things, than any man, or even woman, that I ever knew in my life: and I do not wonder at him. In short, exert to the utmost all your means and powers to please: and remember that he who pleases the most, will rise the soonest and the highest. Try but once the pleasure and advantage of pleasing, and I will answer that you will never more neglect the means.

I send you herewith two letters, the one to Monsieur Munchausen, the other to Monsieur Schweigeldt, an old friend of mine, and a very sensible knowing man. They will both I am sure, be extremely civil to you, and carry you into the best company; and then it is your business to please that company. I never was more anxious about any period of your life, than I am about this, your Hanover expedition, it being of so much more consequence to you than any other. If I hear from thence, that you are liked and loved there, for your air, your manners, and address, as well as esteemed for your knowledge, I shall be the happiest man in the world. Judge then what I must be, if it happens otherwise. Adieu.



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LETTER CLXXIII

London, July 21, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: By my calculation this letter may probably arrive at Hanover three or four days before you; and as I am sure of its arriving there safe, it shall contain the most material points that I have mentioned in my several letters to you since you left Paris, as if you had received but few of them, which may very probably be the case.

As for your stay at Hanover, it must not *in all events* be less than a month; but if things turn out to Your *satisfaction*, it may be just as long as you please. From thence you may go wherever you like; for I have so good an opinion of your judgment, that I think you will combine and weigh all circumstances, and choose the properest places. Would you saunter at some of the small courts, as Brunswick, Cassel, *etc.*, till the Carnival at Berlin? You are master. Would you pass a couple of months at Ratisbon, which might not be ill employed? 'A la bonne heure'. Would you go to Brussels, stay a month or two there with Dayrolles, and from thence to Mr. Yorke, at The Hague? With all my heart. Or, lastly, would you go to Copenhagen and Stockholm? 'Lei e anche Padrone': choose entirely for yourself, without any further instructions from me; only let me know your determination in time, that I may settle your credit, in case you go to places where at present you have none. Your object should be to see the 'mores multorum hominum et urbes'; begin and end it where you please.

By what you have already seen of the German courts, I am sure you must have observed that they are much more nice and scrupulous, in points of ceremony, respect and attention, than the greater courts of France and England. You will, therefore, I am persuaded, attend to the minutest circumstances of address and behavior, particularly during your stay at Hanover, which (I will repeat it, though I have said it often to you already) is the most important preliminary period of your whole life. Nobody in the world is more exact, in all points of good-breeding, than the King; and it is the part of every man's character, that he informs himself of first. The least negligence, or the slightest inattention, reported to him, may do you infinite prejudice: as their contraries would service.

If Lord Albemarle (as I believe he did) trusted you with the secret affairs of his department, let the Duke of Newcastle know that he did so; which will be an inducement to him to trust you too, and possibly to employ you in affairs of consequence. Tell him that, though you are young, you know the importance of secrecy in business, and can keep a secret; that I have always inculcated this doctrine into you, and have, moreover, strictly forbidden you ever to communicate, even to me, any matters of a secret nature, which you may happen to be trusted with in the course of business.



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As for business, I think I can trust you to yourself; but I wish I could say as much for you with regard to those exterior accomplishments, which are absolutely necessary to smooth and shorten the way to it. Half the business is done, when one has gained the heart and the affections of those with whom one is to transact it. Air and address must begin, manners and attention must finish that work. I will let you into one secret concerning myself; which is, that I owe much more of the success which I have had in the world to my manners, than to any superior degree of merit or knowledge. I desired to please, and I neglected none of the means. This, I can assure you, without any false modesty, is the truth: You have more knowledge than I had at your age, but then I had much more attention and good-breeding than you. Call it vanity, if you please, and possibly it was so; but my great object was to make every man I met with like me, and every woman love me. I often succeeded; but why? By taking great pains, for otherwise I never should: my figure by no means entitled me to it; and I had certainly an up-hill game; whereas your countenance would help you, if you made the most of it, and proscribed for ever the guilty, gloomy, and funereal part of it. Dress, address, and air, would become your best countenance, and make your little figure pass very well.

If you have time to read at Hanover, pray let the books you read be all relative to the history and constitution of that country; which I would have you know as correctly as any Hanoverian in the whole Electorate. Inform yourself of the powers of the States, and of the nature and extent of the several judicatures; the particular articles of trade and commerce of Bremen, Harburg, and Stade; the details and value of the mines of the Hartz. Two or three short books will give you the outlines of all these things; and conversation turned upon those subjects will do the rest, and better than books can.

Remember of all things to speak nothing but German there; make it (to express myself pedantically) your vernacular language; seem to prefer it to any other; call it your favorite language, and study to speak it with purity and elegance, if it has any. This will not only make you perfect in it, but will please, and make your court there better than anything. A propos of languages: Did you improve your Italian while you were at Paris, or did you forget it? Had you a master there? and what Italian books did you read with him? If you are master of Italian, I would have you afterward, by the first convenient opportunity, learn Spanish, which you may very easily, and in a very little time do; you will then, in the course of your foreign business, never be obliged to employ, pay, or trust any translator for any European language.



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As I love to provide eventually for everything that can possibly happen, I will suppose the worst that can befall you at Hanover. In that case I would have you go immediately to the Duke of Newcastle, and beg his Grace's advice, or rather orders, what you should do; adding, that his advice will always be orders to you. You will tell him that though you are exceedingly mortified, you are much less so than you should otherwise be, from the consideration that being utterly unknown to his M-----, his objection could not be personal to you, and could only arise from circumstances which it was not in your power either to prevent or remedy; that if his Grace thought that your continuing any longer there would be disagreeable, you entreated him to tell you so; and that upon the whole, you referred yourself entirely to him, whose orders you should most scrupulously obey. But this precaution, I dare say, is 'ex abundantia', and will prove unnecessary; however, it is always right to be prepared for all events, the worst as well as the best; it prevents hurry and surprise, two dangerous, situations in business; for I know no one thing so useful, so necessary in all business, as great coolness, steadiness, and sangfroid: they give an incredible advantage over whoever one has to do with.

I have received your letter of the 15th, N. S., from Mayence, where I find that you have diverted yourself much better than I expected. I am very well acquainted with Comte Cobentzel's character, both of parts and business. He could have given you letters to Bonn, having formerly resided there himself. You will not be so agreeably *electrified* where this letter will find you, as you were both at Manheim and Mayence; but I hope you may meet with a second German Mrs. F-----d, who may make you forget the two former ones, and practice your German. Such transient passions will do you no harm; but, on the contrary, a great deal of good; they will refine your manners and quicken your attention; they give a young fellow 'du brillant', and bring him into fashion; which last is a great article at setting out in the world.

I have wrote, about a month ago, to Lord Albemarle, to thank him for all his kindnesses to you; but pray have you done as much? Those are the necessary attentions which should never be omitted, especially in the beginning of life, when a character is to be established.

That ready wit; which you so partially allow me, and so justly Sir Charles Williams, may create many admirers; but, take my word for it, it makes few friends. It shines and dazzles like the noon-day sun, but, like that too, is very apt to scorch; and therefore is always feared. The milder morning and evening light and heat of that planet soothe and calm our minds. Good sense, complaisance, gentleness of manners, attentions and graces are the only things that truly engage, and durably keep the heart at long run. Never seek for wit; if it presents itself, well and good; but, even in that case, let your judgment interpose; and take care that it be not at the expense of anybody. Pope says very truly:



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“There are whom heaven has blest with store of wit;
Yet want as much again to govern it.”

And in another place, I doubt with too much truth:

“For wit and judgment ever are at strife
Though meant each other’s aid, like man and wife.”

The Germans are very seldom troubled with any extraordinary ebullitions or effervescences of wit, and it is not prudent to try it upon them; whoever does, ‘ofendet solido’.

Remember to write me very minute accounts of all your transactions at Hanover, for they excite both my impatience and anxiety. Adieu!

LETTER CLXXIV

London, August 4, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: I am extremely concerned at the return of your old asthmatic complaint, of which your letter from Cassel of the 28th July, N. S., informs me. I believe it is chiefly owing to your own negligence; for, notwithstanding the season of the year, and the heat and agitation of traveling, I dare swear you have not taken one single dose of gentle, cooling physic, since that which I made you take at Bath. I hope you are now better, and in better hands. I mean in Dr. Hugo’s at Hanover: he is certainly a very skillful physician, and therefore I desire that you will inform him most minutely of your own case, from your first attack in Carniola, to this last at Marpurgh; and not only follow his prescriptions exactly at present, but take his directions, with regard to the regimen that he would have you observe to prevent the returns of this complaint; and, in case of any returns, the immediate applications, whether external or internal, that he would have you make use of. Consider, it is very worth your while to submit at present to any course of medicine or diet, to any restraint or confinement, for a time, in order to get rid, once for all, of so troublesome and painful a distemper; the returns of which would equally break in upon your business or your pleasures. Notwithstanding all this, which is plain sense and reason, I much fear that, as soon as ever you are got out of your present distress, you will take no preventive care, by a proper course of medicines and regimen; but, like most people of your age, think it impossible that you ever should be ill again. However, if you will not be wise for your own sake, I desire you will be so for mine, and most scrupulously observe Dr. Hugo’s present and future directions.

Hanover, where I take it for granted you are, is at present the seat and centre of foreign negotiations; there are ministers from almost every court in Europe; and you have a fine opportunity of displaying with modesty, in conversation, your knowledge of the matters



now in agitation. The chief I take to be the Election of the King of the Romans, which, though I despair of, heartily wish were brought about for two reasons. The first is, that I think it may



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prevent a war upon the death of the present Emperor, who, though young and healthy, may possibly die, as young and healthy people often do. The other is, the very reason that makes some powers oppose it, and others dislike it, who do not openly oppose it; I mean, that it may tend to make the imperial dignity hereditary in the House of Austria; which I heartily wish, together with a very great increase of power in the empire: till when, Germany will never be anything near a match for France. Cardinal Richelieu showed his superior abilities in nothing more, than in thinking no pains or expense too great to break the power of the House of Austria in the empire. Ferdinand had certainly made himself absolute, and the empire consequently formidable to France, if that Cardinal had not piously adopted the Protestant cause, and put the empire, by the treaty of Westphalia, in pretty much the same disjointed situation in which France itself was before Lewis the Eleventh; when princes of the blood, at the head of provinces, and Dukes of Brittany, *etc.*, always opposed, and often gave laws to the crown. Nothing but making the empire hereditary in the House of Austria, can give it that strength and efficiency, which I wish it had, for the sake of the balance of power. For, while the princes of the empire are so independent of the emperor, so divided among themselves, and so open to the corruption of the best bidders, it is ridiculous to expect that Germany ever will, or can act as a compact and well-united body against France. But as this notion of mine would as little please *some of our friends*, as many of our enemies, I would not advise you, though you should be of the same opinion, to declare yourself too freely so. Could the Elector Palatine be satisfied, which I confess will be difficult, considering the nature of his pretensions, the tenaciousness and haughtiness of the court of Vienna (and our inability to do, as we have too often done, their work for them); I say, if the Elector Palatine could be engaged to give his vote, I should think it would be right to proceed to the election with a clear majority of five votes; and leave the King of Prussia and the Elector of Cologne, to protest and remonstrate as much as ever they please. The former is too wise, and the latter too weak in every respect, to act in consequence of these protests. The distracted situation of France, with its ecclesiastical and parliamentary quarrels, not to mention the illness and possibly the death of the Dauphin, will make the King of Prussia, who is certainly no Frenchman in his heart, very cautious how he acts as one. The Elector of Saxony will be influenced by the King of Poland, who must be determined by Russia, considering his views upon Poland, which, by the by, I hope he will never obtain; I mean, as to making that crown hereditary in his family. As for his sons having it by the precarious tenure of election, by which his father now holds it, 'a la bonne heure'. But, should Poland have a good government under hereditary kings, there would be a new devil raised in Europe, that I do not know who could lay. I am sure I would not raise him, though on my own side for the present.



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I do not know how I came to trouble my head so much about politics today, which has been so very free from them for some years: I suppose it was because I knew that I was writing to the most consummate politician of this, and his age. If I err, you will set me right; 'si quid novisti rectius istis, candidus imperti', etc.

I am excessively impatient for your next letter, which I expect by the first post from Hanover, to remove my anxiety, as I hope it will, not only with regard to your health, but likewise to *other things*; in the meantime in the language of a pedant, but with the tenderness of a parent, 'jubeo te bene valere'.

Lady Chesterfield makes you many compliments, and is much concerned at your indisposition.

LETTER CLXXV

To monsieur de Voltaire, now staying at Berlin.

London, August 27, O. S. 1752.

Sir: As a most convincing proof how infinitely I am interested in everything which concerns Mr. Stanhope, who will have the honor of presenting you this letter, I take the liberty of introducing him to you. He has read a great deal, he has seen a great deal; whether or not he has made a proper use of that knowledge, is what I do not know: he is only twenty years of age. He was at Berlin some years ago, and therefore he returns thither; for at present people are attracted toward the north by the same motives which but lately drew them to the south.

Permit me, Sir, to return you thanks for the pleasure and instruction I have received from your 'History of Lewis XIV'. I have as yet read it but four times, because I wish to forget it a little before I read it a fifth; but I find that impossible: I shall therefore only wait till you give us the augmentation which you promised; let me entreat you not to defer it long. I thought myself pretty conversant in the history of the reign of Lewis XIV., by means of those innumerable histories, memoirs, anecdotes, etc., which I had read relative to that period of time. You have convinced me that I was mistaken, and had upon that subject very confused ideas in many respects, and very false ones in others. Above all, I cannot but acknowledge the obligation we have to you, Sir, for the light which you have thrown upon the follies and outrages of the different sects; the weapons you employ against those madmen, or those impostors, are the only suitable ones; to make use of any others would be imitating them: they must be attacked by ridicule, and, punished with contempt. 'A propos' of those fanatics; I send you here inclosed a piece upon that subject, written by the late Dean Swift: I believe you will not dislike it. You will easily guess why it never was printed: it is authentic, and I have the original in

his own handwriting. His Jupiter, at the Day of judgment, treats them much as you do, and as they deserve to be treated.



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Give me leave, Sir, to tell you freely, that I am embarrassed upon your account, as I cannot determine what it is that I wish from you. When I read your last history, I am desirous that you should always write history; but when I read your 'Rome Sauvee' (although ill-printed and disfigured), yet I then wish you never to deviate from poetry; however, I confess that there still remains one history worthy of your pen, and of which your pen alone is worthy. You have long ago given us the history of the greatest and most outrageous madman (I ask your pardon if I cannot say the greatest hero) of Europe; you have given us latterly the history of the greatest king; give us now the history of the greatest and most virtuous man in Europe; I should think it degrading to call him king. To you this cannot be difficult, he is always before your eyes: your poetical invention is not necessary to his glory, as that may safely rely upon your historical candor. The first duty of an historian is the only one he need require from his, 'Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat'. Adieu, Sir! I find that I must admire you every day more and more; but I also know that nothing ever can add to the esteem and attachment with which I am actually, your most humble and most obedient servant, *Chesterfield*.

LETTER CLXXVI

London, September 19, 1752,

My dear friend: Since you have been at Hanover, your correspondence has been both unfrequent and laconic. You made indeed one great effort in folio on the 18th, with a postscript of the 22d August, N. S., and since that, 'vous avez rate in quarto'. On the 31st August, N. S., you give me no informations of what I want chiefly to know; which is, what Dr. Hugo (whom I charged you to consult) said of your asthmatic complaint, and what he prescribed you to prevent the returns of it; and also what is the company that, you keep there, who has been kind and civil to you, and who not.

You say that you go constantly to the parade; and you do very well; for though you are not of that trade, yet military matters make so great a part both of conversation and negotiation, that it is very proper not to be ignorant of them. I hope you mind more than the mere exercise of the troops you see; and that you inform yourself at the same time, of the more material details; such as their pay, and the difference of it when in and out of quarters; what is furnished them by the country when in quarters, and what is allowed them of ammunition, bread, *etc.*, when in the field; the number of men and officers in the several troops and companies, together with the non-commissioned officers, as 'corporals, frey-corporals, anspressades', sergeants, quarter-masters, *etc.*; the clothing how frequent, how good, and how furnished; whether by the colonel, as here in England, from what we call the *off-reckonings*, that is, deductions



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from the men's pay, or by commissaries appointed by the government for that purpose, as in France and Holland. By these inquiries you will be able to talk military with military men, who, in every country in Europe, except England, make at least half of all the best companies. Your attending the parades has also another good effect, which is, that it brings you, of course, acquainted with the officers, who, when of a certain rank and service, are generally very polite, well-bred people, 'et du bon ton'. They have commonly seen a great deal of the world, and of courts; and nothing else can form a gentleman, let people say what they will of sense and learning; with both which a man may contrive to be a very disagreeable companion. I dare say, there are very few captains of foot, who are not much better company than ever Descartes or Sir Isaac Newton were. I honor and respect such superior geniuses; but I desire to converse with people of this world, who bring into company their share, at least, of cheerfulness, good-breeding, and knowledge of mankind. In common life, one much oftener wants small money, and silver, than gold. Give me a man who has ready cash about him for present expenses; sixpences, shillings, half-crowns, and crowns, which circulate easily: but a man who has only an ingot of gold about him, is much above common purposes, and his riches are not handy nor convenient. Have as much gold as you please in one pocket, but take care always to keep change in the other; for you will much oftener have occasion for a shilling than for a guinea. In this the French must be allowed to excel all people in the world: they have 'un certain entregent, un enjouement, un aimable legerete dans la conversation, une politesse aisee et naturelle, qui paroît ne leur rien couter', which give society all its charms. I am sorry to add, but it is too true, that the English and the Dutch are the farthest from this, of all the people in the world; I do by no means except even the Swiss.

Though you do not think proper to inform me, I know from other hands that you were to go to the Gohr with a Comte Schullemburg, for eight or ten days only, to see the reviews. I know also that you had a blister upon your arm, which did you a great deal of good. I know too, you have contracted a great friendship with Lord Essex, and that you two were inseparable at Hanover. All these things I would rather have known from you than from others; and they are the sort of things that I am the most desirous of knowing, as they are more immediately relative to yourself.

I am very sorry for the Duchess of Newcastle's illness, full as much upon your as upon her account, as it has hindered you from being so much known to the Duke as I could have wished; use and habit going a great way with him, as indeed they do with most people. I have known many people patronized, pushed up, and preferred by those who could have given no other reason for it, than that they were used to



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them. We must never seek for motives by deep reasoning, but we must find them out by careful observation and attention, no matter what they should be, but the point is, what they are. Trace them up, step by step, from the character of the person. I have known 'de par le monde', as Brantome says, great effects from causes too little ever to have been suspected. Some things must be known, and can never be guessed.

God knows where this letter will find you, or follow you; not at Hanover, I suppose; but wherever it does, may it find you in health and pleasure! Adieu.

LETTER CLXXVII

London, September 22, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: The day after the date of my last, I received your letter of the 8th. I approve extremely of your intended progress, and am very glad that you go to the Gohr with Comte Schullemburg. I would have you see everything with your own eyes, and hear everything with your own ears: for I know, by very long experience, that it is very unsafe to trust to other people's. Vanity and interest cause many misrepresentations, and folly causes many more. Few people have parts enough to relate exactly and judiciously: and those who have, for some reason or other, never fail to sink, or to add some circumstances.

The reception which you have met with at Hanover, I look upon as an omen of your being well received everywhere else; for to tell you the truth, it was the place that I distrusted the most in that particular. But there is a certain conduct, there are certain 'manieres' that will, and must get the better of all difficulties of that kind; it is to acquire them that you still continue abroad, and go from court to court; they are personal, local, and temporal; they are modes which vary, and owe their existence to accidents, whim, and humor; all the sense and reason in the world would never point them out; nothing but experience, observation, and what is called knowledge of the world, can possibly teach them. For example, it is respectful to bow to the King of England, it is disrespectful to bow to the King of France; it is the rule to courtesy to the Emperor; and the prostration of the whole body is required by eastern monarchs. These are established ceremonies, and must be complied with: but why they were established, I defy sense and reason to tell us. It is the same among all ranks, where certain customs are received, and must necessarily be complied with, though by no means the result of sense and reason. As for instance, the very absurd, though almost universal custom of drinking people's healths. Can there be anything in the world less relative to any other man's health, than my drinking a glass of wine? Common sense certainly never pointed it out; but yet common sense tells me I must conform to it. Good sense bids one be civil

and endeavor to please; though nothing but experience and observation can teach one the means,



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properly adapted to time, place, and persons. This knowledge is the true object of a gentleman's traveling, if he travels as he ought to do. By frequenting good company in every country, he himself becomes of every country; he is no longer an Englishman, a Frenchman, or an Italian; but he is an European; he adopts, respectively, the best manners of every country; and is a Frenchman at Paris, an Italian at Rome, an Englishman at London.

This advantage, I must confess, very seldom accrues to my countrymen from their traveling; as they have neither the desire nor the means of getting into good company abroad; for, in the first place, they are confoundedly bashful; and, in the next place, they either speak no foreign language at all, or if they do, it is barbarously. You possess all the advantages that they want; you know the languages in perfection, and have constantly kept the best company in the places where you have been; so that you ought to be an European. Your canvas is solid and strong, your outlines are good; but remember that you still want the beautiful coloring of Titian, and the delicate, graceful touches of Guido. Now is your time to get them. There is, in all good company, a fashionable air, countenance, manner, and phraseology, which can only be acquired by being in good company, and very attentive to all that passes there. When you dine or sup at any well-bred man's house, observe carefully how he does the honors of his table to the different guests. Attend to the compliments of congratulation or condolence that you hear a well-bred man make to his superiors, to his equals, and to his inferiors; watch even his countenance and his tone of voice, for they all conspire in the main point of pleasing. There is a certain distinguishing diction of a man of fashion; he will not content himself with saying, like John Trott, to a new-married man, Sir, I wish you much joy; or to a man who lost his son, Sir, I am sorry for your loss; and both with a countenance equally unmoved; but he will say in effect the same thing in a more elegant and less trivial manner, and with a countenance adapted to the occasion. He will advance with warmth, vivacity, and a cheerful countenance, to the new-married man, and embracing him, perhaps say to him, "If you do justice to my attachment to you, you will judge of the joy that I feel upon this occasion, better than I can express it," *etc.*; to the other in affliction, he will advance slowly, with a grave composure of countenance, in a more deliberate manner, and with a lower voice, perhaps say, "I hope you do me the justice to be convinced that I feel whatever you feel, and shall ever be affected where you are concerned."



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Your 'abond', I must tell you, was too cold and uniform; I hope it is now mended. It should be respectfully open and cheerful with your superiors, warm and animated with your equals, hearty and free with your inferiors. There is a fashionable kind of *small talk* which you should get; which, trifling as it is, is of use in mixed companies, and at table, especially in your foreign department; where it keeps off certain serious subjects, that might create disputes, or at least coldness for a time. Upon such occasions it is not amiss to know how to parley cuisine, and to be able to dissert upon the growth and flavor of wines. These, it is true, are very little things; but they are little things that occur very often, and therefore should be said 'avec gentillesse et grace'. I am sure they must fall often in your way; pray take care to catch them. There is a certain language of conversation, a fashionable diction, of which every gentleman ought to be perfectly master, in whatever language he speaks. The French attend to it carefully, and with great reason; and their language, which is a language of phrases, helps them out exceedingly. That delicacy of diction is characteristic of a man of fashion and good company.

I could write folios upon this subject, and not exhaust it; but I think, and hope, that to you I need not. You have heard and seen enough to be convinced of the truth and importance of what I have been so long inculcating into you upon these points. How happy am I, and how happy are you, my dear child, that these Titian tints, and Guido graces, are all that you want to complete my hopes and your own character! But then, on the other hand, what a drawback would it be to that happiness, if you should never acquire them? I remember, when I was of age, though I had not near so good an education as you have, or seen a quarter so much of the world, I observed those masterly touches and irresistible graces in others, and saw the necessity of acquiring them myself; but then an awkward 'mauvaise honte', of which I had brought a great deal with me from Cambridge, made me ashamed to attempt it, especially if any of my countrymen and particular acquaintances were by. This was extremely absurd in me: for, without attempting, I could never succeed. But at last, insensibly, by frequenting a great deal of good company, and imitating those whom I saw that everybody liked, I formed myself, 'tant bien que mal'. For God's sake, let this last fine varnish, so necessary to give lustre to the whole piece, be the sole and single object now of your utmost attention. Berlin may contribute a great deal to it if you please; there are all the ingredients that compose it.



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'A Propos' of Berlin, while you are there, take care to seem ignorant of all political matters between the two courts; such as the affairs of Ost Frise, and Saxe Lawemburg, *etc.*, and enter into no conversations upon those points; but, however, be as well at court as you possibly can; live at it, and make one of it. Should General Keith offer you civilities, do not decline them; but return them, however, without being 'enfant de la maison chez lui': say 'des chores flatteuses' of the Royal Family, and especially of his Prussian Majesty, to those who are the most like to repeat them. In short, make yourself well there, without making yourself ill *somewhere else*. Make compliments from me to Algarotti, and converse with him in Italian.

I go next week to the Bath, for a deafness, which I have been plagued with these four or five months; and which I am assured that pumping my head will remove. This deafness, I own, has tried my patience; as it has cut me off from society, at an age when I had no pleasures but those left. In the meantime, I have, by reading and writing, made my eyes supply the defect of my ears. Madame H-----, I suppose, entertained both yours alike; however, I am very glad that you were well with her; for she is a good 'proneuse', and puffs are very useful to a young fellow at his entrance into the world.

If you should meet with Lord Pembroke again, anywhere, make him many compliments from me; and tell him that I should have written to him, but that I knew how troublesome an old correspondent must be to a young one. He is much commended in the accounts from Hanover.

You will stay at Berlin just as long as you like it, and no longer; and from thence you are absolutely master of your own motions, either to The Hague, or to Brussels; but I think that you had better go to The Hague first, because that from thence Brussels will be in your way to Calais, which is a much better passage to England than from Helvoetsluys. The two courts of The Hague and Brussels are worth your seeing; and you will see them both to advantage, by means of Colonel Yorke and Dayrolles. Adieu. Here is enough for this time.

LETTER CLXXVIII

London, September 26, 1752

My dear friend: As you chiefly employ, or rather wholly engross my thoughts, I see every day, with increasing pleasure, the fair prospect which you have before you. I had two views in your education; they draw nearer and nearer, and I have now very little reason to distrust your answering them fully. Those two were, parliamentary and foreign affairs. In consequence of those views, I took care, first, to give you a sufficient stock of sound learning, and next, an early knowledge of the world. Without making a figure in parliament, no man can make any in this country; and eloquence alone enables a man to make a figure in parliament,



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unless, it be a very mean and contemptible one, which those make there who silently vote, and who do 'pedibus ire in sententiam'. Foreign affairs, when skillfully managed, and supported by a parliamentary reputation, lead to whatever is most considerable in this country. You have the languages necessary for that purpose, with a sufficient fund of historical and treaty knowledge; that is to say, you have the matter ready, and only want the manner. Your objects being thus fixed, I recommend to you to have them constantly in your thoughts, and to direct your reading, your actions, and your words, to those views. Most people think only 'ex re nata', and few 'ex professo': I would have you do both, but begin with the latter. I explain myself: Lay down certain principles, and reason and act consequently from them. As, for example, say to yourself, I will make a figure in parliament, and in order to do that, I must not only speak, but speak very well. Speaking mere common sense will by no means do; and I must speak not only correctly but elegantly; and not only elegantly but eloquently. In order to do this, I will first take pains to get an habitual, but unaffected, purity, correctness and elegance of style in my common conversation; I will seek for the best words, and take care to reject improper, inexpressive, and vulgar ones. I will read the greatest masters of oratory, both ancient and modern, and I will read them singly in that view. I will study Demosthenes and Cicero, not to discover an old Athenian or Roman custom, nor to puzzle myself with the value of talents, mines, drachms, and sesterces, like the learned blockheads in us; but to observe their choice of words, their harmony of diction, their method, their distribution, their exordia, to engage the favor and attention of their audience; and their perorations, to enforce what they have said, and to leave a strong impression upon the passions. Nor will I be pedant enough to neglect the modern; for I will likewise study Atterbury, Dryden, Pope, and Bolingbroke; nay, I will read everything that I do read in that intention, and never cease improving and refining my style upon the best models, till at last I become a model of eloquence myself, which, by care, it is in every man's power to be. If you set out upon this principle, and keep it constantly in your mind, every company you go into, and every book you read, will contribute to your improvement, either by showing you what to imitate, or what to avoid. Are you to give an account of anything to a mixed company? or are you to endeavor to persuade either man or woman? This principle, fixed in your mind, will make you carefully attend to the choice of your words, and to the clearness and harmony of your diction.

So much for your parliamentary object; now to the foreign one.



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Lay down first those principles which are absolutely necessary to form a skillful and successful negotiator, and form yourself accordingly. What are they? First, the clear historical knowledge of past transactions of that kind. That you have pretty well already, and will have daily more and more; for, in consequence of that principle, you will read history, memoirs, anecdotes, *etc.*, in that view chiefly. The other necessary talents for negotiation are: the great art of pleasing and engaging the affection and confidence, not only of those with whom you are to cooperate, but even of those whom you are to oppose: to conceal your own thoughts and views, and to discover other people's: to engage other people's confidence by a seeming cheerful frankness and openness, without going a step too far: to get the personal favor of the king, prince, ministers, or mistresses of the court to which you are sent: to gain the absolute command over your temper and your countenance, that no heat may provoke you to say, nor no change of countenance to betray, what should be a secret: to familiarize and domesticate yourself in the houses of the most considerable people of the place, so as to be received there rather as a friend to the family than as a foreigner. Having these principles constantly in your thoughts, everything you do and everything you say will some way or other tend to your main view; and common conversation will gradually fit you for it. You will get a habit of checking any rising heat; you will be upon your guard against any indiscreet expression; you will by degrees get the command of your countenance, so as not to change it upon any the most sudden accident; and you will, above all things, labor to acquire the great art of pleasing, without which nothing is to be done. Company is, in truth, a constant state of negotiation; and, if you attend to it in that view, will qualify you for any. By the same means that you make a friend, guard against an enemy, or gain a mistress; you will make an advantageous treaty, baffle those who counteract you, and gain the court you are sent to. Make this use of all the company you keep, and your very pleasures will make you a successful negotiator. Please all who are worth pleasing; offend none. Keep your own secret, and get out other people's. Keep your own temper and artfully warm other people's. Counterwork your rivals, with diligence and dexterity, but at the same time with the utmost personal civility to them; and be firm without heat. Messieurs d'Avaux and Servien did no more than this. I must make one observation, in confirmation of this assertion; which is, that the most eminent negotiators have allways been the politest and bestbred men in company; even what the women call the *prettiest men*. For God's sake, never lose view of these two your capital objects: bend everything to them, try everything by their rules, and calculate everything for their purposes. What is peculiar to these



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two objects, is, that they require nothing, but what one's own vanity, interest, and pleasure, would make one do independently of them. If a man were never to be in business, and always to lead a private life, would he not desire to please and to persuade? So that, in your two destinations, your fortune and figure luckily conspire with your vanity and your pleasures. Nay more; a foreign minister, I will maintain it, can never be a good man of business if he is not an agreeable man of pleasure too. Half his business is done by the help of his pleasures; his views are carried on, and perhaps best and most unsuspectedly, at balls, suppers, assemblies, and parties of pleasure; by intrigues with women, and connections insensibly formed with men, at those unguarded hours of amusement.

These objects now draw very near you, and you have no time to lose in preparing yourself to meet them. You will be in parliament almost as soon as your age will allow, and I believe you will have a foreign department still sooner, and that will be earlier than ever any other body had one. If you set out well at one-and-twenty, what may you not reasonably hope to be at one-and-forty? All that I could wish you! Adieu.

LETTER CLXXIX

London, September 29, 1752.

My dear friend: There is nothing so necessary, but at the same time there is nothing more difficult (I know it by experience) for you young fellows, than to know how to behave yourselves prudently toward those whom you do not like. Your passions are warm, and your heads are light; you hate all those who oppose your views, either of ambition or love; and a rival, in either, is almost a synonymous term for an enemy. Whenever you meet such a man, you are awkwardly cold to him, at best; but often rude, and always desirous to give him some indirect slap. This is unreasonable; for one man has as good a right to pursue an employment, or a mistress, as another; but it is, into the bargain, extremely imprudent; because you commonly defeat your own purpose by it, and while you are contending with each other, a third often prevails. I grant you that the situation is irksome; a man cannot help thinking as he thinks, nor feeling what he feels; and it is a very tender and sore point to be thwarted and counterworked in one's pursuits at court, or with a mistress; but prudence and abilities must check the effects, though they cannot remove the cause. Both the pretenders make themselves disagreeable to their mistress, when they spoil the company by their pouting, or their sparring; whereas, if one of them has command enough over himself (whatever he may feel inwardly) to be cheerful, gay, and easily and unaffectedly civil to the other, as if there were no manner of competition between them, the lady will certainly like him the best, and his rival will be ten times more humbled and discouraged; for he will look upon such a behavior

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as a proof of the triumph and security of his rival, he will grow outrageous with the lady, and the warmth of his reproaches will probably bring on a quarrel between them. It is the same in business; where he who can command his temper and his countenance the best, will always have an infinite advantage over the other. This is what the French call un 'procede honnete et galant', to *piquer* yourself upon showing particular civilities to a man, to whom lesser minds would, in the same case, show dislike, or perhaps rudeness. I will give you an instance of this in my own case; and pray remember it, whenever you come to be, as I hope you will, in a like situation.

When I went to The Hague, in 1744, it was to engage the Dutch to come roundly into the war, and to stipulate their quotas of troops, *etc.*; your acquaintance, the Abbe de la Ville, was there on the part of France, to endeavor to hinder them from coming into the war at all. I was informed, and very sorry to hear it, that he had abilities, temper, and industry. We could not visit, our two masters being at war; but the first time I met him at a third place, I got somebody to present me to him; and I told him, that though we were to be national enemies, I flattered myself we might be, however, personal friends, with a good deal more of the same kind; which he returned in full as polite a manner. Two days afterward, I went, early in the morning, to solicit the Deputies of Amsterdam, where I found l'Abbe de la Ville, who had been beforehand with me; upon which I addressed myself to the Deputies, and said, smilingly, I am very sorry, Gentlemen, to find my enemy with you; my knowledge of his capacity is already sufficient to make me fear him; we are not upon equal terms; but I trust to your own interest against his talents. If I have not this day had the first word, I shall at least have the last. They smiled: the Abbe was pleased with the compliment, and the manner of it, stayed about a quarter of an hour, and then left me to my Deputies, with whom I continued upon the same tone, though in a very serious manner, and told them that I was only come to state their own true interests to them, plainly and simply, without any of those arts, which it was very necessary for my friend to make use of to deceive them. I carried my point, and continued my 'procede' with the Abbe; and by this easy and polite commerce with him, at third places, I often found means to fish out from him whereabouts he was.

Remember, there are but two 'procedes' in the world for a gentleman and a man of parts; either extreme politeness or knocking down. If a man notoriously and designedly insults and affronts you, knock him down; but if he only injures you, your best revenge is to be extremely civil to him in your outward behavior, though at the same time you counterwork him, and return him the compliment, perhaps with interest. This is not perfidy nor dissimulation; it would be so if you were, at the same time, to make professions



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of esteem and friendship to this man; which I by no means recommend, but on the contrary abhor. But all acts of civility are, by common consent, understood to be no more than a conformity to custom, for the quiet and conveniency of society, the 'agremens' of which are not to be disturbed by private dislikes and jealousies. Only women and little minds pout and spar for the entertainment of the company, that always laughs at, and never pities them. For my own part, though I would by no means give up any point to a competitor, yet I would pique myself upon showing him rather more civility than to another man. In the first place, this 'procede' infallibly makes all 'les rieurs' of your side, which is a considerable party; and in the next place, it certainly pleases the object of the competition, be it either man or woman; who never fail to say, upon such an occasion, that *they must own you have behaved yourself very, handsomely in the whole affair*. The world judges from the appearances of things, and not from the reality, which few are able, and still fewer are inclined to fathom: and a man, who will take care always to be in the right in those things, may afford to be sometimes a little in the wrong in more essential ones: there is a willingness, a desire to excuse him. With nine people in ten, good-breeding passes for good-nature, and they take attentions for good offices. At courts there will be always coldnesses, dislikes, jealousies, and hatred, the harvest being but small in proportion to the number of laborers; but then, as they arise often, they die soon, unless they are perpetuated by the manner in which they have been carried on, more than by the matter which occasioned them. The turns and vicissitudes of courts frequently make friends of enemies, and enemies of friends; you must labor, therefore, to acquire that great and uncommon talent of hating with good-breeding and loving with prudence; to make no quarrel irreconcilable by silly and unnecessary indications of anger; and no friendship dangerous, in case it breaks, by a wanton, indiscreet, and unreserved confidence.

Few, (especially young) people know how to love, or how to hate; their love is an unbounded weakness, fatal to the person they love; their hate is a hot, rash, and imprudent violence, always fatal to themselves.

Nineteen fathers in twenty, and every mother, who had loved you half as well as I do, would have ruined you; whereas I always made you feel the weight of my authority, that you might one day know the force of my love. Now, I both hope and believe, my advice will have the same weight with you from choice that my authority had from necessity. My advice is just eight-and-twenty years older than your own, and consequently, I believe you think, rather better. As for your tender and pleasurable passions, manage them yourself; but let me have the direction of all the others. Your ambition, your figure, and your fortune, will, for some time at least, be rather safer in my keeping than in your own. Adieu.



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LETTER CLXXX

Bath, October 4, 1752

My dear friend: I consider you now as at the court of Augustus, where, if ever the desire of pleasing animated you, it must make you exert all the means of doing it. You will see there, full as well, I dare say, as Horace did at Rome, how states are defended by arms, adorned by manners, and improved by laws. Nay, you have an Horace there as well as an Augustus; I need not name Voltaire, 'qui nil molitur inept?' as Horace himself said of another poet. I have lately read over all his works that are published, though I had read them more than once before. I was induced to this by his 'Siccle de Louis XIV', which I have yet read but four times. In reading over all his works, with more attention I suppose than before, my former admiration of him is, I own, turned into astonishment. There is no one kind of writing in which he has not excelled. You are so severe a classic that I question whether you will allow me to call his 'Henriade' an epic poem, for want of the proper number of gods, devils, witches and other absurdities, requisite for the machinery; which machinery is, it seems, necessary to constitute the 'epopee'. But whether you do or not, I will declare (though possibly to my own shame) that I never read any epic poem with near so much pleasure. I am grown old, and have possibly lost a great deal of that fire which formerly made me love fire in others at any rate, and however attended with smoke; but now I must have all sense, and cannot, for the sake of five righteous lines, forgive a thousand absurd ones.

In this disposition of mind, judge whether I can read all Homer through 'tout de suite'. I admire its beauties; but, to tell you the truth, when he slumbers, I sleep. Virgil, I confess, is all sense, and therefore I like him better than his model; but he is often languid, especially in his five or six last books, during which I am obliged to take a good deal of snuff. Besides, I profess myself an ally of Turnus against the pious Aeneas, who, like many 'soi-disant' pious people, does the most flagrant injustice and violence in order to execute what they impudently call the will of Heaven. But what will you say, when I tell you truly, that I cannot possibly read our countryman Milton through? I acknowledge him to have some most sublime passages, some prodigious flashes of light; but then you must acknowledge that light is often followed by darkness visible, to use his own expression. Besides, not having the honor to be acquainted with any of the parties in this poem, except the Man and the Woman, the characters and speeches of a dozen or two of angels and of as many devils, are as much above my reach as my entertainment. Keep this secret for me: for if it should be known, I should be abused by every tasteless pedant, and every solid divine in England.



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'Whatever I have said to the disadvantage of these three poems, holds much stronger against Tasso's 'Gierusalemme': it is true he has very fine and glaring rays of poetry; but then they are only meteors, they dazzle, then disappear, and are succeeded by false thoughts, poor 'congetti', and absurd impossibilities; witness the Fish and the Parrot; extravagancies unworthy of an heroic poem, and would much better have become Ariosto, who professes 'le coglionerie'.

I have never read the "Lusiade of Camoens," except in prose translation, consequently I have never read it at all, so shall say nothing of it; but the *Henriade* is all sense from the beginning to the end, often adorned by the justest and liveliest reflections, the most beautiful descriptions, the noblest images, and the sublimest sentiments; not to mention the harmony of the verse, in which Voltaire undoubtedly exceeds all the French poets: should you insist upon an exception in favor of Racine, I must insist, on my part, that he at least equals him. What hero ever interested more than Henry the Fourth; who, according to the rules of epic poetry, carries on one great and long action, and succeeds in it at last? What descriptions ever excited more horror than those, first of the Massacre, and then of the Famine at Paris? Was love ever painted with more truth and 'morbidezza' than in the ninth book? Not better, in my mind, even in the fourth of Virgil. Upon the whole, with all your classical rigor, if you will but suppose St. Louis a god, a devil, or a witch, and that he appears in person, and not in a dream, the *Henriade* will be an epic poem, according to the strictest statute laws of the 'epopee'; but in my court of equity it is one as it is.

I could expatiate as much upon all his different works, but that I should exceed the bounds of a letter and run into a dissertation. How delightful is his history of that northern brute, the King of Sweden, for I cannot call him a man; and I should be sorry to have him pass for a hero, out of regard to those true heroes, such as Julius Caesar, Titus, Trajan, and the present King of Prussia, who cultivated and encouraged arts and sciences; whose animal courage was accompanied by the tender and social sentiments of humanity; and who had more pleasure in improving, than in destroying their fellow-creatures. What can be more touching, or more interesting—what more nobly thought, or more happily expressed, than all his dramatic pieces? What can be more clear and rational than all his philosophical letters? and whatever was so graceful, and gentle, as all his little poetical trifles? You are fortunately 'a porte' of verifying, by your knowledge of the man, all that I have said of his works.

Monsieur de Maupertius (whom I hope you will get acquainted with) is, what one rarely meets with, deep in philosophy and, mathematics, and yet 'honnete et aimable homme': Algarotti is young Fontenelle. Such men must necessarily give you the desire of pleasing them; and if you can frequent them, their acquaintance will furnish you the means of pleasing everybody else.



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'A propos' of pleasing, your pleasing Mrs. F----d is expected here in two or three days; I will do all that I can for you with her: I think you carried on the romance to the third or fourth volume; I will continue it to the eleventh; but as for the twelfth and last, you must come and conclude it yourself. 'Non sum qualis eram'.

Good-night to you, child; for I am going to bed, just at the hour at which I suppose you are going to live, at Berlin.

LETTER CLXXXI

Bath, November 11, O. S. 1752

My dear friend: It is a very old and very true maxim, that those kings reign the most secure and the most absolute, who reign in the hearts of their people. Their popularity is a better guard than their army, and the affections of their subjects a better pledge of their obedience than their fears. This rule is, in proportion, full as true, though upon a different scale, with regard to private people. A man who possesses that great art of pleasing universally, and of gaining the affections of those with whom he converses, possesses a strength which nothing else can give him: a strength which facilitates and helps his rise; and which, in case of accidents, breaks his fall. Few people of your age sufficiently consider this great point of popularity; and when they grow older and wiser, strive in vain to recover what they have lost by their negligence. There are three principal causes that hinder them from acquiring this useful strength: pride, inattention, and 'mauvaise honte'. The first I will not, I cannot suspect you of; it is too much below your understanding. You cannot, and I am sure you do not think yourself superior by nature to the Savoyard who cleans your room, or the footman who cleans your shoes; but you may rejoice, and with reason, at the difference that fortune has made in your favor. Enjoy all those advantages; but without insulting those who are unfortunate enough to want them, or even doing anything unnecessarily that may remind them of that want. For my own part, I am more upon my guard as to my behavior to my servants, and others who are called my inferiors, than I am toward my equals: for fear of being suspected of that mean and ungenerous sentiment of desiring to make others feel that difference which fortune has, and perhaps too, undeservedly, made between us. Young people do not enough attend to this; and falsely imagine that the imperative mood, and a rough tone of authority and decision, are indications of spirit and courage. Inattention is always looked upon, though sometimes unjustly, as the effect of pride and contempt; and where it is thought so, is never forgiven. In this article, young people are generally exceedingly to blame, and offend extremely. Their whole attention is engrossed by their particular set of acquaintance; and by some few glaring and exalted objects of rank, beauty, or parts; all the rest they



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think so little worth their care, that they neglect even common civility toward them. I will frankly confess to you, that this was one of my great faults when I was of your age. Very attentive to please that narrow court circle in which I stood enchanted, I considered everything else as bourgeois, and unworthy of common civility; I paid my court assiduously and skillfully enough to shining and distinguished figures, such as ministers, wits, and beauties; but then I most absurdly and imprudently neglected, and consequently offended all others. By this folly I made myself a thousand enemies of both sexes; who, though I thought them very insignificant, found means to hurt me essentially where I wanted to recommend myself the most. I was thought proud, though I was only imprudent. A general easy civility and attention to the common run of ugly women, and of middling men, both which I sillily thought, called, and treated, as odd people, would have made me as many friends, as by the contrary conduct I made myself enemies. All this too was 'a pure perte'; for I might equally, and even more successfully, have made my court, when I had particular views to gratify. I will allow that this task is often very unpleasant, and that one pays, with some unwillingness, that tribute of attention to dull and tedious men, and to old and ugly women; but it is the lowest price of popularity and general applause, which are very well worth purchasing were they much dearer. I conclude this head with this advice to you: Gain, by particular assiduity and address, the men and women you want; and, by an universal civility and attention, please everybody so far as to have their good word, if not their goodwill; or, at least, as to secure a partial neutrality.

'Mauvaise honte' not only hinders young people from making, a great many friends, but makes them a great many enemies. They are ashamed of doing the thing they know to be right, and would otherwise do, for fear of the momentary laugh of some fine gentleman or lady, or of some 'mauvais plaisant'. I have been in this case: and have often wished an obscure acquaintance at the devil, for meeting and taking notice of me when I was in what I thought and called fine company. I have returned their notice shyly, awkwardly, and consequently offensively; for fear of a momentary joke, not considering, as I ought to have done, that the very people who would have joked upon me at first, would have esteemed me the more for it afterward. An example explains a rule best: Suppose you were walking in the Tuileries with some fine folks, and that you should unexpectedly meet your old acquaintance, little crooked Grierson; what would you do? I will tell you what you should do, by telling you what I would now do in that case myself. I would run up to him, and embrace him; say some kind of things to him, and then return to my company. There I should be immediately asked: 'Mais qu'est ce que c'est donc que ce petit Sapajou que vous



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avez embrasse si tendrement? Pour cela, l'accolade a ete charmante'; with a great deal more festivity of that sort. To this I should answer, without being the least ashamed, but en badinant: O je ne vous dirai tas qui c'est; c'est un petit ami que je tiens incognito, qui a son merite, et qui, a force d'etre connu, fait oublier sa figure. Que me donnerez-vous, et je vous le presenterai'? And then, with a little more seriousness, I would add: 'Mais d'ailleurs c'est que je ne desavoue jamais mes connoissances, a cause de leur etat ou de leur figure. Il faut avoir bien peu de sentimens pour le faire'. This would at once put an end to that momentary pleasantry, and give them all a better opinion of me than they had before. Suppose another case, and that some of the finest ladies 'du bon ton' should come into a room, and find you sitting by, and talking politely to 'la vieille' Marquise de Bellefonds, the joke would, for a moment, turn upon that 'tete-a-tete': He bien! avez vous a la fin fixd la belle Marquise? La partie est-elle faite pour la petite maison? Le souper sera galant sans doute: Mais ne faistu donc point scrupule de seduire une jeune et aimable persone comme celle-la'? To this I should answer: 'La partie n'etoit pas encore tout-a fait liee, vous nous avez interrompu; mais avec le tems que fait-on? D'ailleurs moquezvous de mes amours tant qu'il vous plaira, je vous dirai que je respecte tant les jeunes dames, que je respecte meme les vieilles, pour l'avoir ete. Apre cela il y a souvent des liaisons entre les vieilles et les jeunes'. This would at once turn the pleasantry into an esteem for your good sense and your good-breeding. Pursue steadily, and without fear or shame, whatever your reason tells you is right, and what you see is practiced by people of more experience than yourself, and of established characters of good sense and good-breeding.

After all this, perhaps you will say, that it is impossible to please everybody. I grant it; but it does not follow that one should not therefore endeavor to please as many as one can. Nay, I will go further, and admit that it is impossible for any man not to have some enemies. But this truth from long experience I assert, that he who has the most friends and the fewest enemies, is the strongest; will rise the highest with the least envy; and fall, if he does fall, the gentlest, and the most pitied. This is surely an object worth pursuing. Pursue it according to the rules I have here given you. I will add one observation more, and two examples to enforce it; and then, as the parsons say, conclude.

There is no one creature so obscure, so low, or so poor, who may not, by the strange and unaccountable changes and vicissitudes of human affairs, somehow or other, and some time or other, become an useful friend or a trouble-some enemy, to the greatest and the richest. The late Duke of Ormond was almost the weakest but at the same time the best-bred, and most popular man in this kingdom. His education



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in courts and camps, joined to an easy, gentle nature, had given him that habitual affability, those engaging manners, and those mechanical attentions, that almost supplied the place of every talent he wanted; and he wanted almost every one. They procured him the love of all men, without the esteem of any. He was impeached after the death of Queen Anne, only because that, having been engaged in the same measures with those who were necessarily to be impeached, his impeachment, for form's sake, became necessary. But he was impeached without acrimony, and without the lest intention that he should suffer, notwithstanding the party violence of those times. The question for his impeachment, in the House of Commons, was carried by many fewer votes than any other question of impeachment; and Earl Stanhope, then Mr. Stanhope, and Secretary' of State, who impeached him, very soon after negotiated and concluded his accommodation with the late King; to whom he was to have been presented the next day. But the late Bishop of Rochester, Atterbury, who thought that the Jacobite cause might suffer by losing the Duke of Ormond, went in all haste, and prevailed with the poor weak man to run away; assuring him that he was only to be gulled into a disgraceful submission, and not to be pardoned in consequence of it. When his subsequent attainder passed, it excited mobs and disturbances in town. He had not a personal enemy in the world; and had a thousand friends. All this was simply owing to his natural desire of pleasing, and to the mechanical means that his education, not his parts, had given him of doing it. The other instance is the late Duke of Marlborough, who studied the art of pleasing, because he well knew the importance of it: he enjoyed and used it more than ever man did. He gained whoever he had a mind to gain; and he had a mind to gain everybody, because he knew that everybody was more or less worth gaining. Though his power, as Minister and General, made him many political and party enemies, they did not make him one personal one; and the very people who would gladly have displaced, disgraced, and perhaps attainted the Duke of Marlborough, at the same time personally loved Mr. Churchill, even though his private character was blemished by sordid avarice, the most unamiable of all vices. He had wound up and turned his whole machine to please and engage. He had an inimitable sweetness and gentleness in his countenance, a tenderness in his manner of speaking, a graceful dignity in every motion, and an universal and minute attention to the least things that could possibly please the least person. This was all art in him; art of which he well knew and enjoyed the advantages; for no man ever had more interior ambition, pride, and avarice, than he had.

Though you have more than most people of your age, you have yet very little experience and knowledge of the world; now, I wish to inoculate mine upon you, and thereby prevent both the dangers and the marks of youth and inexperience. If you receive the matter kindly, and observe my prescriptions scrupulously, you will secure the future advantages of time and join them to the present inestimable ones of one-and-twenty.



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I most earnestly recommend one thing to you, during your present stay at Paris. I own it is not the most agreeable; but I affirm it to be the most useful thing in the world to one of your age; and therefore I do hope that you will force and constrain yourself to do it. I mean, to converse frequently, or rather to be in company frequently with both men and women much your superiors in age and rank. I am very sensible that, at your age, 'vous y entrez pour peu de chose, et meme souvent pour rien, et que vous y passerez meme quelques mauvais quart-d'heures'; but no matter; you will be a solid gainer by it: you will see, hear, and learn the turn and manners of those people; you will gain premature experience by it; and it will give you a habit of engaging and respectful attentions. Versailles, as much as possible, though probably unentertaining: the Palais Royal often, however dull: foreign ministers of the first rank, frequently, and women, though old, who are respectable and respected for their rank or parts; such as Madame de Pusieux, Madame de Nivernois, Madame d'Aiguillon, Madame Geoffrain, etc. This 'sujetion', if it be one to you, will cost you but very little in these three or four months that you are yet to pass in Paris, and will bring you in a great deal; nor will it, nor ought it, to hinder you from being in a more entertaining company a great part of the day. 'Vous pouvez, si vous le voulez, tirer un grand parti de ces quatre mois'. May God make you so, and bless you! Adieu.

LETTER CLXXXII

Bath, November 16, O. S. 1752.

My dear friend: Vanity, or to call it by a gentler name, the desire of admiration and applause, is, perhaps, the most universal principle of human actions; I do not say that it is the best; and I will own that it is sometimes the cause of both foolish and criminal effects. But it is so much oftener the principle of right things, that though they ought to have a better, yet, considering human nature, that principle is to be encouraged and cherished, in consideration of its effects. Where that desire is wanting, we are apt to be indifferent, listless, indolent, and inert; we do not exert our powers; and we appear to be as much below ourselves as the vainest man living can desire to appear above what he really is.

As I have made you my confessor, and do not scruple to confess even my weaknesses to you, I will fairly own that I had that vanity, that weakness, if it be one, to a prodigious degree; and, what is more, I confess it without repentance: nay, I am glad I had it; since, if I have had the good fortune to please in the world, it is to that powerful and active principle that I owe it. I began the world, not with a bare desire, but with an insatiable thirst, a rage of popularity, applause, and admiration. If this made me do some silly things on one hand, it made me, on the other hand, do almost all the right



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things that I did; it made me attentive and civil to the women I disliked, and to the men I despised, in hopes of the applause of both: though I neither desired, nor would I have accepted the favors of the one, nor the friendship of the other. I always dressed, looked, and talked my best; and, I own, was overjoyed whenever I perceived, that by all three, or by any one of them, the company was pleased with me. To men, I talked whatever I thought would give them the best opinion of my parts and learning; and to women, what I was sure would please them; flattery, gallantry, and love. And, moreover, I will own to you, under the secrecy of confession, that my vanity has very often made me take great pains to make a woman in love with me, if I could, for whose person I would not have given a pinch of snuff. In company with men, I always endeavored to outshine, or at least, if possible, to equal the most shining man in it. This desire elicited whatever powers I had to gratify it; and where I could not perhaps shine in the first, enabled me, at least, to shine in a second or third sphere. By these means I soon grew in fashion; and when a man is once in fashion, all he does is right. It was infinite pleasure to me to find my own fashion and popularity. I was sent for to all parties of pleasure, both of men or women; where, in some measure, I gave the 'ton'. This gave me the reputation of having had some women of condition; and that reputation, whether true or false, really got me others. With the men I was a Proteus, and assumed every shape, in order to please them all: among the gay, I was the gayest; among the grave, the gravest; and I never omitted the least attentions of good-breeding, or the least offices of friendship, that could either please, or attach them to me: and accordingly I was soon connected with all the men of any fashion or figure in town.

To this principle of vanity, which philosophers call a mean one, and which I do not, I owe great part of the figure which I have made in life. I wish you had as much, but I fear you have too little of it; and you seem to have a degree of laziness and listlessness about you that makes you indifferent as to general applause. This is not in character at your age, and would be barely pardonable in an elderly and philosophical man. It is a vulgar, ordinary saying, but it is a very true one, that one should always put the best foot foremost. One should please, shine, and dazzle, wherever it is possible. At Paris, I am sure you must observe 'que chacun se fait valoir autant qu'il est possible'; and La Bruyere observes, very justly, qu'on ne vaut dans ce monde que ce qu'on veut valoir': wherever applause is in question, you will never see a French man, nor woman, remiss or negligent. Observe the eternal attentions and politeness that all people have there for one another. 'Ce n'est pas pour leurs beaux yeux au moins'. No, but for their own sakes, for commendations and applause. Let me then recommend this principle of vanity to you; act upon it 'meo periculo'; I promise you it will turn to your account. Practice all the arts that ever coquette did, to please. Be alert and indefatigable in making every man admire, and every woman in love with you. I can tell you too, that nothing will carry you higher in the world.



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I have had no letter from you since your arrival at Paris, though you must have been long enough there to have written me two or three. In about ten or twelve days I propose leaving this place, and going to London; I have found considerable benefit by my stay here, but not all that I want. Make my compliments to Lord Albemarle.

LETTER CLXXXIII

Bath, November 28, 1752

My dear friend: Since my last to you, I have read Madame Maintenon's "Letters"; I am sure they are genuine, and they both entertained and informed me. They have brought me acquainted with the character of that able and artful lady; whom I am convinced that I now know much better than her directeur the Abby de Fenelon (afterward Archbishop of Cambray) did, when he wrote her the 185th letter; and I know him the better too for that letter. The Abby, though brimful of the divine love, had a great mind to be first minister, and cardinal, in order, *no doubt*, to have an opportunity of doing the more good. His being 'directeur' at that time to Madame Maintenon, seemed to be a good step toward those views. She put herself upon him for a saint, and he was weak enough to believe it; he, on the other hand, would have put himself upon her for a saint too, which, I dare say, she did not believe; but both of them knew that it was necessary for them to appear saints to Lewis the Fourteenth, who they were very sure was a bigot. It is to be presumed, nay, indeed, it is plain by that 185th letter that Madame Maintenon had hinted to her directeur some scruples of conscience, with relation to her commerce with the King; and which I humbly apprehend to have been only some scruples of prudence, at once to flatter the bigot character, and increase the desires of the King. The pious Abbe, frightened out of his wits, lest the King should impute to the 'directeur' any scruples or difficulties which he might meet with on the part of the lady, writes her the above-mentioned letter; in which he not only bids her not tease the King by advice and exhortations, but to have the utmost submission to his will; and, that she may not mistake the nature of that submission, he tells her it is the same that Sarah had for Abraham; to which submission Isaac perhaps was owing. No bawd could have written a more seducing letter to an innocent country girl, than the 'directeur' did to his 'penitente'; who I dare say had no occasion for his good advice. Those who would justify the good 'directeur', alias the pimp, in this affair, must not attempt to do it by saying that the King and Madame Maintenon were at that time privately married; that the directeur knew it; and that this was the meaning of his 'enigme'. That is absolutely impossible; for that private marriage must have removed all scruples between the parties; nay, could not have been contracted upon any other principle, since it was kept private, and consequently



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prevented no public scandal. It is therefore extremely evident that Madame Maintenon could not be married to the King at the time when she scrupled granting, and when the 'directeur' advised her to grant, those favors which Sarah with so much submission granted to Abraham: and what the 'directeur' is pleased to call 'le mystere de Dieu', was most evidently a state of concubinage. The letters are very well worth your reading; they throw light upon many things of those times.

I have just received a letter from Sir William Stanhope, from Lyons; in which he tells me that he saw you at Paris, that he thinks you a little grown, but that you do not make the most of it, for that you stoop still: 'd'ailleurs' his letter was a panegyric of you.

The young Comte de Schullemburg, the Chambellan whom you knew at Hanover, is come over with the King, 'et fait aussi vos eloges'.

Though, as I told you in my last, I have done buying pictures, by way of 'virtu', yet there are some portraits of remarkable people that would tempt me. For instance, if you could by chance pick up at Paris, at a reasonable price, and undoubted originals (whether heads, half lengths, or whole lengths, no matter) of Cardinals Richelieu, Mazarin, and Retz, Monsieur de Turenne, le grand Prince de Condo; Mesdames de Montespan, de Fontanges, de Montbazon, de Sevigne, de Maintenon, de Chevreuse, de Longueville, d'Olonne, *etc.*, I should be tempted to purchase them. I am sensible that they can only be met with, by great accident, at family sales and auctions, so I only mention the affair to you eventually.

I do not understand, or else I do not remember, what affair you mean in your last letter; which you think will come to nothing, and for which, you say, I had once a mind that you should take the road again. Explain it to me.

I shall go to town in four or five days, and carry back with me a little more hearing than I brought; but yet, not half enough for common wants. One wants ready pocket-money much oftener than one wants great sums; and to use a very odd expression, I want to hear at sight. I love every-day senses, every-day wit and entertainment; a man who is only good on holydays is good for very little. Adieu.

LETTER CLXXXIV

Christmas Day, 1752

My dear friend: A tyrant with legions at his command may say, Oderint modo timeant; though he is a fool if he says it, and a greater fool if he thinks it. But a private man who can hurt but few, though he can please many, must endeavor to be loved, for he cannot



be feared in general. Popularity is his only rational and sure foundation. The good-will, the affections, the love of the public, can alone raise him to any considerable height. Should you ask me how he is to acquire them, I will answer, By desiring them. No man ever deserved, who did not desire them; and no man both deserved



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and desired them who had them not, though many have enjoyed them merely by desiring, and without deserving them. You do not imagine, I believe, that I mean by this public love the sentimental love of either lovers or intimate friends; no, that is of another nature, and confined to a very narrow circle; but I mean that general good-will which a man may acquire in the world, by the arts of pleasing respectively exerted according to the rank, the situation, and the turn of mind of those whom he hath to do with. The pleasing impressions which he makes upon them will engage their affections and their good wishes, and even their good offices as far (that is) as they are not inconsistent with their own interests; for further than that you are not to expect from three people in the course of your life, even were it extended to the patriarchal term. Could I revert to the age of twenty, and carry back with me all the experience that forty years more have taught me, I can assure you, that I would employ much the greatest part of my time in engaging the good-will, and in insinuating myself into the predilection of people in general, instead of directing my endeavors to please (as I was too apt to do) to the man whom I immediately wanted, or the woman I wished for, exclusively of all others. For if one happens (and it will sometimes happen to the ablest man) to fail in his views with that man or that woman, one is at a loss to know whom to address one's self to next, having offended in general, by that exclusive and distinguished particular application. I would secure a general refuge in the good-will of the multitude, which is a great strength to any man; for both ministers and mistresses choose popular and fashionable favorites. A man who solicits a minister, backed by the general good-will and good wishes of mankind, solicits with great weight and great probability of success; and a woman is strangely biassed in favor of a man whom she sees in fashion, and hears everybody speak well of. This useful art of insinuation consists merely of various little things. A graceful motion, a significant look, a trifling attention, an obliging word dropped 'a propos', air, dress, and a thousand other undefinable things, all severally little ones, joined together, make that happy and inestimable composition, *the art of pleasing*. I have in my life seen many a very handsome woman who has not pleased me, and many very sensible men who have disgusted me. Why? only for want of those thousand little means to please, which those women, conscious of their beauty, and those men of their sense, have been grossly enough mistaken to neglect. I never was so much in love in my life, as I was with a woman who was very far from being handsome; but then she was made up of graces, and had all the arts of pleasing. The following verses, which I have read in some congratulatory poem prefixed to some work, I have forgot which, express what I mean in favor of what pleases preferably to what is generally called mere solid and instructive:



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“I would an author like a mistress try,
Not by a nose, a lip, a cheek, or eye,
But by some nameless power to give me joy.”

Lady Chesterfield bids me make you many compliments; she showed me your letter of recommendation of La Vestres; with which I was very well pleased: there is a pretty turn in it; I wish you would always speak as genteelly. I saw another letter from a lady at Paris, in which there was a high panegyric paragraph concerning you. I wish it were every word of it literally true; but, as it comes from a very little, pretty, white hand, which is suspected, and I hope justly, of great partiality to you: 'il en faut rabattre quelque chose, et meme en le faisant it y aura toujours d'assez beaux restes'. Adieu.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Art of pleasing is the most necessary
Assenting, but without being servile and abject
Assertion instead of argument
Attacked by ridicule, and, punished with contempt
Bold, but with great seeming modesty
Close, without being costive
Command of our temper, and of our countenance
Company is, in truth, a constant state of negotiation
Consider things in the worst light, to show your skill
Darkness visible
Defended by arms, adorned by manners, and improved by laws
Doing nothing, and might just as well be asleep
Endeavor to hear, and know all opinions
Enjoy all those advantages
Few people know how to love, or how to hate
Fools, who can never be undeceived
Frank, but without indiscretion
Frequently make friends of enemies, and enemies of friends
Grave without the affectation of wisdom
Horace
How troublesome an old correspondent must be to a young one
I cannot do such A thing
Ignorant of their natural rights, cherished their chains
Inattention
Infallibly to be gained by every sort of flattery
Judges from the appearances of things, and not from the reality
Keep your own temper and artfully warm other people's
King's popularity is a better guard than their army
Lay aside the best book



Le mystere de Dieu

Lewis XIV

Made him believe that the world was made for him

Make every man I met with like me, and every woman love me

Man or woman cannot resist an engaging exterior

Man who is only good on holydays is good for very little

Milton

Never seek for wit; if it presents itself, well and good

Not making use of any one capital letter

Notes by which dances are now pricked down as well as tunes

Old fellow ought to seem wise whether he really' be so or not

Please all who are worth pleasing; offend none

Pleasures do not commonly last so long as life

Polite, but without the troublesome forms and stiffness

Prejudices are our mistresses

Quarrel with them when they are grown up, for being spoiled

Read with caution and distrust



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Reason is at best our wife
Ruined their own son by what they called loving him
Secret, without being dark and mysterious
Seeming inattention to the person who is speaking to you
Talent of hating with good-breeding and loving with prudence
The longest life is too short for knowledge
Trifles that concern you are not trifles to me
Truth, but not the whole truth, must be the invariable principle
Useful sometimes to see the things which one ought to avoid
Vanity
Voltaire
Where one would gain people, remember that nothing is little
Wife, very often heard indeed, but seldom minded
Wit may create many admirers but makes few friends
Work there as a volunteer in that bureau
Yahoos
Young fellow ought to be wiser than he should seem to be