

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1753-54 eBook

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1753-54 by Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield

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LETTER CLXXXV

London, New Years' Day, 1753

My dear friend: It is now above a fortnight since I have received a letter from you. I hope, however, that you are well, but engrossed by the business of Lord Albemarle's 'bureau' in the mornings, and by business of a genteeler nature in the evenings; for I willingly give up my own satisfaction to your improvement, either in business or manners.

Here have been lately imported from Paris two gentlemen, who, I find, were much acquainted with you there Comte Zinzendorf, and Monsieur Clairant the Academician. The former is a very pretty man, well-bred, and with a great deal of useful knowledge; for those two things are very consistent. I examined him about you, thinking him a competent judge. He told me, 'que vous parliez l'Allemand comme un Allemand; que vous saviez le droit public de l'empire parfaitement bien; que vous aviez le gout sur, et des connoissances fort etendues'. I told him that I knew all this very well; but that I wanted to know whether you had l'air, les manieres, les attentions, en fin le brillant d'un honnete homme': his answer was, 'Mais oui en verite, c'est fort bien'. This, you see, is but cold in comparison of what I do wish, and of what you ought to wish. Your friend Clairant interposed, and said, 'Mais je vous assure qu'il est fort poli'; to which I answered, 'Je le crois bien, vis-a-vis des Lapons vos amis; je vous recuse pour juge, jusqu'a ce que vous ayez ete delaponne, au moins dix ans, parmi les honnetes gens'. These testimonies in your favor are such as perhaps you are satisfied with, and think sufficient; but I am not; they are only the cold depositions of disinterested and unconcerned witnesses, upon a strict examination. When, upon a trial, a man calls witnesses to his character, and that those witnesses only say that they never heard, nor do not know any ill of him, it intimates at best a neutral and insignificant, though innocent character. Now I want, and you ought to endeavor, that 'les agrements, les graces, les attentions', etc., should be a distinguishing part of your character, and specified of you by people unasked. I wish to hear people say of you, 'Ah qu'il est aimable! Quelles manieres, quelles graces, quel art de Claire!' Nature, thank God, has given you all the powers necessary; and if she has not yet, I hope in God she will give you the will of exerting them.

I have lately read with great pleasure Voltaire's two little histories of 'Les Croisades', and 'l'Esprit Humain'; which I recommend to your perusal, if you have not already read them. They are bound up with a most poor performance called 'Micromegas', which is said to be Voltaire's too, but I cannot believe it, it is so very unworthy of him; it consists only of thoughts stolen from Swift, but miserably mangled and disfigured. But his history of the 'Croisades' shows, in a

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very short and strong light, the most immoral and wicked scheme that was ever contrived by knaves, and executed by madmen and fools, against humanity. There is a strange but never-failing relation between honest madmen and skillful knaves; and whenever one meets with collected numbers of the former, one may be very sure that they are secretly directed by the latter. The popes, who have generally been both the ablest and the greatest knaves in Europe, wanted all the power and money of the East; for they had all that was in Europe already. The times and the minds favored their design, for they were dark and uniformed; and Peter the Hermit, at once a knave and a madman, was a fine papal tool for so wild and wicked an undertaking. I wish we had good histories of every part of Europe, and indeed of the world, written upon the plan of Voltaire's 'de l'Esprit Humain'; for, I own, I am provoked at the contempt which most historians show for humanity in general: one would think by them that the whole human species consisted but of about a hundred and fifty people, called and dignified (commonly very undeservedly too) by the titles of emperors, kings, popes, generals, and ministers.

I have never seen in any of the newspapers any mention of the affairs of the Cevennes, or Grenoble, which you gave me an account of some time ago; and the Duke de Mirepoix pretends, at least, to know nothing of either. Were they false reports? or does the French court choose to stifle them? I hope that they are both true, because I am very willing that the cares of the French government should be employed and confined to themselves.

Your friend, the Electress Palatine, has sent me six wild boars' heads, and other 'pieces de sa chasse', in return for the fans, which she approved of extremely. This present was signified to me by one Mr. Harold, who wrote me a letter in very indifferent English; I suppose he is a Dane who has been in England.

Mr. Harte came to town yesterday, and dined with me to-day. We talked you over; and I can assure you, that though a parson, and no member 'du beau monde', he thinks all the most shining accomplishments of it full as necessary for you as I do. His expression was, *that is all that he wants; but if he wants that, considering his situation and destination, he might as well want everything else.*

This is the day when people reciprocally offer and receive the kindest and the warmest wishes, though, in general, without meaning them on one side, or believing them on the other. They are formed by the head, in compliance with custom, though disavowed by the heart, in consequence of nature. His wishes upon this occasion are the best that are the best turned; you do not, I am sure, doubt the truth of mine, and therefore I will express them with a Quaker-like simplicity. May this new year be a very new one indeed to you; may you put off the old, and put on the new man! but I mean the

outward, not the, inward man. With this alteration, I might justly sum up all my wishes for you in these words:



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Dii tibi dent annos, de to nam caetera sumes.

This minute, I receive your letter of the 26th past, which gives me a very disagreeable reason for your late silence. By the symptoms which you mention of your illness, I both hope and believe that it was wholly owing to your own want of care. You are rather inclined to be fat, you have naturally a good stomach, and you eat at the best tables; which must of course make you plethoric: and upon my word you will be very subject to these accidents, if you will not, from time to time, when you find yourself full, heated, or your head aching, take some little, easy, preventative purge, that would not confine you; such as chewing a little rhubarb when you go to bed at night; or some senna tea in the morning. You do very well to live extremely low, for some time; and I could wish, though I do not expect it, that you would take one gentle vomit; for those giddinesses and swimings in the head always proceed from some foulness of the stomach. However, upon the whole, I am very glad that your old complaint has not mixed itself with this, which I am fully convinced arises simply from your own negligence. Adieu.

I am sorry for Monsieur Kurze, upon his sister's account.

LETTER CLXXXVI

London, January 15, 1753

My dear friend: I never think my time so well employed, as when I think it employed to your advantage. You have long had the greatest share of it; you now engross it. The moment is now decisive; the piece is going to be exhibited to the public; the mere outlines and the general coloring are not sufficient to attract the eyes and to secure applause; but the last finishing, artful, and delicate strokes are necessary. Skillful judges will discern and acknowledge their merit; the ignorant will, without knowing why, feel their power. In that view, I have thrown together, for your perusal, some maxims; or, to speak more properly, observations on men and things; for I have no merit as to the invention: I am no system monger; and, instead of giving way to my imagination, I have only consulted my memory; and my conclusions are all drawn from facts, not from fancy. Most maxim mongers have preferred the prettiness to the justness of a thought, and the turn to the truth; but I have refused myself to everything that my own experience did not justify and confirm. I wish you would consider them seriously, and separately, and recur to them again 'pro re nata' in similar cases. Young men are as apt to think themselves wise enough, as drunken men are to think themselves sober enough. They look upon spirit to be a much better thing than experience; which they call coldness. They are but half mistaken; for though spirit, without experience, is dangerous, experience, without spirit, is languid and defective. Their union, which is very rare, is perfection; you may join them, if you please; for all my experience is



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at your service; and I do not desire one grain of your spirit in return. Use them both, and let them reciprocally animate and check each other. I mean here, by the spirit of youth, only the vivacity and presumption of youth, which hinder them from seeing the difficulties or dangers of an undertaking, but I do not mean what the silly vulgar call spirit, by which they are captious, jealous of their rank, suspicious of being undervalued, and tart (as they call it) in their repartees, upon the slightest occasions. This is an evil, and a very silly spirit, which should be driven out, and transferred to an herd of swine. This is not the spirit of a man of fashion, who has kept good company. People of an ordinary, low education, when they happen to fall into good company, imagine themselves the only object of its attention; if the company whispers, it is, to be sure, concerning them; if they laugh, it is at them; and if anything ambiguous, that by the most forced interpretation can be applied to them, happens to be said, they are convinced that it was meant at them; upon which they grow out of countenance first, and then angry. This mistake is very well ridiculed in the "Stratagem," where Scrub says, *I am sure they talked of me for they laughed consumedly*. A well-bred man seldom thinks, but never seems to think himself slighted, undervalued, or laughed at in company, unless where it is so plainly marked out, that his honor obliges him to resent it in a proper manner; 'mais les honnetes gens ne se boudent jamais'. I will admit that it is very difficult to command one's self enough, to behave with ease, frankness, and good-breeding toward those, who one knows dislike, slight, and injure one, as far as they can, without personal consequences; but I assert that it is absolutely necessary to do it: you must embrace the man you hate, if you cannot be justified in knocking him down; for otherwise you avow the injury which you cannot revenge. A prudent cuckold (and there are many such at Paris) pockets his horns when he cannot gore with them; and will not add to the triumph of his maker by only butting with them ineffectually. A seeming ignorance is very often a most necessary part of worldly knowledge. It is, for instance, commonly advisable to seem ignorant of what people offer to tell you; and when they say, Have you not heard of such a thing? to answer No, and to let them go on; though you know it already. Some have a pleasure in telling it, because they think that they tell it well; others have a pride in it, as being the sagacious discoverers; and many have a vanity in showing that they have been, though very undeservedly, trusted; all these would be disappointed, and consequently displeased, if you said Yes. Seem always ignorant (unless to one's most intimate friend) of all matters of private scandal and defamation, though you should hear them a thousand times; for the parties affected always look upon the receiver

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to be almost as bad as the thief: and, whenever they become the topic of conversation seem to be a skeptic, though you are really a serious believer; and always take the extenuating part. But all this seeming ignorance should be joined to thorough and extensive private informations: and, indeed, it is the best method of procuring them; for most people have such a vanity in showing a superiority over others, though but for a moment, and in the merest trifles, that they will tell you what they should not, rather than not show that they can tell what you did not know; besides that such seeming ignorance will make you pass for incurious and consequently undesigning. However, fish for facts, and take pains to be well informed of everything that passes; but fish judiciously, and not always, nor indeed often, in the shape of direct questions, which always put people upon their guard, and, often repeated, grow tiresome. But sometimes take the things that you would know for granted; upon which somebody will, kindly and officiously, set you right: sometimes say that you have heard so and so; and at other times seem to know more than you do, in order to know all that you want; but avoid direct questioning as much as you can. All these necessary arts of the world require constant attention, presence of mind, and coolness. Achilles, though invulnerable, never went to battle but completely armed. Courts are to be the theatres of your wars, where you should be always as completely armed, and even with the addition of a heel-piece. The least inattention, the least *distraction*, may prove fatal. I would fain see you what pedants call 'omnis homo', and what Pope much better calls *all-accomplished*: you have the means in your power; add the will; and you may bring it about. The vulgar have a coarse saying, of *spoiling A Ship for A halfpenny worth of tar*; prevent the application by providing the tar: it is very easily to be had in comparison with what you have already got.

The fine Mrs. Pitt, who it seems saw you often at Paris, speaking of you the other day, said, in French, for she speaks little English, . . . whether it is that you did not pay the homage due to her beauty, or that it did not strike you as it does others, I cannot determine; but I hope she had some other reason than truth for saying it. I will suppose that you did not care a pin for her; but, however, she surely deserved a degree of propitiatory adoration from you, which I am afraid you neglected. Had I been in your case, I should have endeavored, at least, to have supplanted Mr. Mackay in his office of nocturnal reader to her. I played at cards, two days ago, with your friend Mrs. Fitzgerald, and her most sublime mother, Mrs. Seagrave; they both inquired after you; and Mrs. Fitzgerald said, she hoped you went on with your dancing; I said, Yes, and that you assured me, you had made such considerable improvements in it, that you had now learned to stand still, and even upright. Your 'virtuosa', la Signora Vestri, sung here the other day, with great applause: I presume you are *intimately* acquainted with her merit. Good night to you, whoever you pass it with.



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I have this moment received a packet, sealed with your seal, though not directed by your hand, for Lady Hervey. No letter from you! Are you not well?

LETTER CLXXXVII

London, May 27, O. S. 1753.

My dear friend: I have this day been tired, jaded, nay, tormented, by the company of a most worthy, sensible, and learned man, a near relation of mine, who dined and passed the evening with me. This seems a paradox, but is a plain truth; he has no knowledge of the world, no manners, no address; far from talking without book, as is commonly said of people who talk sillily, he only talks by book; which in general conversation is ten times worse. He has formed in his own closet from books, certain systems of everything, argues tenaciously upon those principles, and is both surprised and angry at whatever deviates from them. His theories are good, but, unfortunately, are all impracticable. Why? because he has only read and not conversed. He is acquainted with books, and an absolute stranger to men. Laboring with his matter, he is delivered of it with pangs; he hesitates, stops in his utterance, and always expresses himself inelegantly. His actions are all ungraceful; so that, with all his merit and knowledge, I would rather converse six hours with the most frivolous tittle-tattle woman who knew something of the world, than with him. The preposterous notions of a systematical man who does not know the world, tire the patience of a man who does. It would be endless to correct his mistakes, nor would he take it kindly: for he has considered everything deliberately, and is very sure that he is in the right. Impropropriety is a characteristic, and a never-failing one, of these people. Regardless, because ignorant, of customs and manners, they violate them every moment. They often shock, though they never mean to offend: never attending either to the general character, or the particular distinguishing circumstances of the people to whom, or before whom they talk; whereas the knowledge of the world teaches one, that the very same things which are exceedingly right and proper in one company, time and place, are exceedingly absurd in others. In short, a man who has great knowledge, from experience and observation, of the characters, customs, and manners of mankind, is a being as different from, and as superior to, a man of mere book and systematical knowledge, as a well-managed horse is to an ass. Study, therefore, cultivate, and frequent men and women; not only in their outward, and consequently, guarded, but in their interior, domestic, and consequently less disguised, characters and manners. Take your notions of things, as by observation and experience you find they really are, and not as you read that they are or should be; for they never are quite what they should be. For this purpose do not content yourself with general and common acquaintance; but



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wherever you can, establish yourself, with a kind of domestic familiarity, in good houses. For instance, go again to Orli, for two or three days, and so at two or three 'reprises'. Go and stay two or three days at a time at Versailles, and improve and extend the acquaintance you have there. Be at home at St. Cloud; and, whenever any private person of fashion invites you to, pass a few days at his country-house, accept of the invitation. This will necessarily give you a versatility of mind, and a facility to adopt various manners and customs; for everybody desires to please those in whose house they are; and people are only to be pleased in their own way. Nothing is more engaging than a cheerful and easy conformity to people's particular manners, habits, and even weaknesses; nothing (to use a vulgar expression) should come amiss to a young fellow. He should be, for good purposes, what Alcibiades was commonly for bad ones, a Proteus, assuming with ease, and wearing with cheerfulness, any shape. Heat, cold, luxury, abstinence, gravity, gayety, ceremony, easiness, learning, trifling, business, and pleasure, are modes which he should be able to take, lay aside, or change occasionally, with as much ease as he would take or lay aside his hat. All this is only to be acquired by use and knowledge of the world, by keeping a great deal of company, analyzing every character, and insinuating yourself into the familiarity of various acquaintance. A right, a generous ambition to make a figure in the world, necessarily gives the desire of pleasing; the desire of pleasing points out, to a great degree, the means of doing it; and the art of pleasing is, in truth, the art of rising, of distinguishing one's self, of making a figure and a fortune in the world. But without pleasing, without the graces, as I have told you a thousand times, 'ogni fatica e vana'. You are now but nineteen, an age at which most of your countrymen are illiberally getting drunk in port, at the university. You have greatly got the start of them in learning; and if you can equally get the start of them in the knowledge and manners of the world, you may be very sure of outrunning them in court and parliament, as you set out much earlier than they. They generally begin but to see the world at one-and-twenty; you will by that age have seen all Europe. They set out upon their travels unlicked cubs: and in their travels they only lick one another, for they seldom go into any other company. They know nothing but the English world, and the worst part of that too, and generally very little of any but the English language; and they come home, at three or four-and-twenty, refined and polished (as is said in one of Congreve's plays) like Dutch skippers from a whale-fishing. The care which has been taken of you, and (to do you justice) the care that you have taken of yourself, has left you, at the age of nineteen only, nothing to acquire but the knowledge of the world, manners, address, and



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those exterior accomplishments. But they are great and necessary acquisitions, to those who have sense enough to know their true value; and your getting them before you are one-and-twenty, and before you enter upon the active and shining scene of life, will give you such an advantage over all your contemporaries, that they cannot overtake you: they must be distanced. You may probably be placed about a young prince, who will probably be a young king. There all the various arts of pleasing, the engaging address, the versatility of manners, the brilliant, the graces, will outweigh, and yet outrun all solid knowledge and unpolished merit. Oil yourself, therefore, and be both supple and shining, for that race, if you would be first, or early at the goal. Ladies will most probably too have something to say there; and those who are best with them will probably be best *somewhere else*. Labor this great point, my dear child, indefatigably; attend to the very smallest parts, the minutest graces, the most trifling circumstances, that can possibly concur in forming the shining character of a complete gentleman, 'un galant homme, un homme de cour', a man of business and pleasure; 'estime des hommes, recherche des femmes, aime de tout le monde'. In this view, observe the shining part of every man of fashion, who is liked and esteemed; attend to, and imitate that particular accomplishment for which you hear him chiefly celebrated and distinguished: then collect those various parts, and make yourself a mosaic of the whole. No one body possesses everything, and almost everybody possesses some one thing worthy of imitation: only choose your models well; and in order to do so, choose by your ear more than by your eye. The best model is always that which is most universally allowed to be the best, though in strictness it may possibly not be so. We must take most things as they are, we cannot make them what we would, nor often what they should be; and where moral duties are not concerned, it is more prudent to follow than to attempt to lead. Adieu.

LETTER CLXXXVIII

Bath, October 3, 1753

My dear friend: You have set out well at The Hague; you are in love with Madame Munter, which I am very glad of: you are in the fine company there, and I hope one of it: for it is not enough, at your age, to be merely in good company; but you should, by your address and attentions, make that good company think you one of them. There is a tribute due to beauty, even independently of further views; which tribute I hope you paid with alacrity to Madame Munter and Madame Degenfeldt: depend upon it, they expected it, and were offended in proportion as that tribute seemed either unwillingly or scantily paid. I believe my friend Kreuningen admits nobody now to his table, for fear of their communicating the plague to him, or at least the bite of a mad dog.



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Pray profit of the entrees libres that the French Ambassador has given you; frequent him, and *speak* to him. I think you will not do amiss to call upon Mr. Burrish, at Aix-la-Chapelle, since it is so little out of your way; and you will do still better, if you would, which I know you will not, drink those waters for five or six days only, to scour your stomach and bowels a little; I am sure it would do you a great deal of good Mr. Burrish can, doubtless, give you the best letters to Munich; and he will naturally give you some to Comte Preysing, or Comte Sinsheim, and such sort of grave people; but I could wish that you would ask him for some to young fellows of pleasure, or fashionable coquettes, that, you may be 'dans l'honnete debauches de Munich'. A propos of your future motions; I leave you in a great measure the master of them, so shall only suggest my thoughts to you upon that subject.

You have three electoral courts in view, Bonn, Munich, and Manheim. I would advise you to see two of them rather cursorily, and fix your tabernacle at the third, whichever that may be, for a considerable time. For instance, should you choose (as I fancy you will), to make Manheim the place of your residence, stay only ten or twelve days at Bonn, and as long at Munich, and then go and fix at Manheim; and so, vice versa, if you should like Bonn or Munich better than you think you would Manheim, make that the place of your residence, and only visit the other two. It is certain that no man can be much pleased himself, or please others much, in any place where he is only a bird of passage for eight or ten days; neither party thinking it worth while to make an acquaintance, still less to form any connection, for so short a time; but when months are the case, a man may domesticate himself pretty well, and very soon not be looked upon as a stranger. This is the real utility of traveling, when, by contracting a familiarity at any place, you get into the inside of it, and see it in its undress. That is the only way of knowing the customs, the manners, and all the little characteristical peculiarities that distinguish one place from another; but then this familiarity is not to be brought about by cold, formal visits of half an hour: no; you must show a willingness, a desire, an impatience of forming connections, 'il faut s'y preter, et y mettre du liant, du desir de plaire. Whatever you do approve, you must be lavish in your praises of; and you must learn to commend what you do not approve of, if it is approved of there. You are not much given to praise, I know; but it is because you do not yet know how extremely people are engaged by a seeming sanction to their own opinions, prejudices, and weaknesses, even in the merest trifles. Our self-love is mortified when we think our opinions, and even our tastes, customs, and dresses, either arraigned or condemned; as on the contrary, it is tickled and flattered by approbation. I will give you a remarkable instance of this kind.



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The famous Earl of Shaftesbury, in the flagitious reign of Charles the Second, while he was Chancellor, had a mind to be a favorite, as well as a minister of the King; in order, therefore, to please his Majesty, whose prevailing passion was women, my Lord kept a w—e, whom he had no occasion for, and made no manner of use of. The King soon heard of it, and asked him if it was true; he owned it was; but that, though he kept that one woman, he had several others besides, for he loved variety. A few days afterward, the King, at his public levee, saw Lord Shaftesbury at some distance, and said in the circle, "One would not think that that little, weak man is the greatest whore-master in England; but I can assure you that he is." Upon Lord Shaftesbury's coming into the circle, there was a general smile; the King said, "This is concerning you, my Lord."—"Me, sir?" answered the Chancellor, with some surprise. "Yes, you," answered the King; "for I had just said that you were the greatest whore-master in England! Is it not true?"—"Of a *subject*, Sir," replied Lord Shaftesbury, "perhaps I am." It is the same in everything; we think a difference of opinion, of conduct, of manners, a tacit reproach, at least, upon our own; we must therefore use ourselves to a ready conformity to whatever is neither criminal nor dishonorable. Whoever differs from any general custom, is supposed both to think, and proclaim himself wiser than the rest of the world: which the rest of the world cannot bear, especially in a young man. A young fellow is always forgiven and often applauded, when he carries a fashion to an excess; but never if he stops short of it. The first is ascribed to youth and fire; but the latter is imputed to an affectation of singularity or superiority. At your age, one is allowed to 'outré' fashion, dress, vivacity, gallantry, *etc.*, but by no means to be behindhand in any one of them. And one may apply to youth in this case, 'Si non errasset, fecerat ille minus'. Adieu.

LETTER CLXXXIX

Bath, October 19, 1753

My dear friend: Of all the various ingredients that compose the useful and necessary art of pleasing, no one is so effectual and engaging as that gentleness, that 'douceur' of countenance and manner, to which you are no stranger, though (God knows why) a sworn enemy. Other people take great pains to conceal or disguise their natural imperfections; some by the make of their clothes and other arts, endeavor to conceal the defects of their shape; women, who unfortunately have natural bad complexions, lay on good ones; and both men and women upon whom unkind nature has inflicted a surliness and ferocity of countenance, do at least all they can, though often without success, to soften and mitigate it; they affect 'douceur', and aim at smiles, though often in the attempt, like the Devil in Milton, they *grin horribly A ghastly smile*. But you



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are the only person I ever knew in the whole course of my life, who not only disdain, but absolutely reject and disguise a great advantage that nature has kindly granted. You easily guess I mean *countenance*; for she has given you a very pleasing one; but you beg to be excused, you will not accept it; but on the contrary, take singular pains to put on the most 'funeste', forbidding, and unpleasing one that can possibly be imagined. This one would think impossible; but you know it to be true. If you imagine that it gives you a manly, thoughtful, and decisive air, as some, though very few of your countrymen do, you are most exceedingly mistaken; for it is at best the air of a German corporal, part of whose exercise is to look fierce, and to 'blasemeer-op'. You will say, perhaps, What, am I always to be studying my countenance, in order to wear this 'douceur'? I answer, No; do it but for a fortnight, and you never will have occasion to think of it more. Take but half the pains to recover the countenance that nature gave you, that you must have taken to disguise and deform it as you have, and the business will be done. Accustom your eyes to a certain softness, of which they are very capable, and your face to smiles, which become it more than most faces I know. Give all your motions, too, an air of 'douceur', which is directly the reverse of their present celerity and rapidity. I wish you would adopt a little of 'l'air du Couvent' (you very well know what I mean) to a certain degree; it has something extremely engaging; there is a mixture of benevolence, affection, and unction in it; it is frequently really sincere, but is almost always thought so, and consequently pleasing. Will you call this trouble? It will not be half an hour's trouble to you in a week's time. But suppose it be, pray tell me, why did you give yourself the trouble of learning to dance so well as you do? It is neither a religious, moral, or civil duty. You must own, that you did it then singly to please, and you were, in the right on't. Why do you wear fine clothes, and curl your hair? Both are troublesome; lank locks, and plain flimsy rags are much easier. This then you also do in order to please, and you do very right. But then, for God's sake, reason and act consequentially; and endeavor to please in other things too, still more essential; and without which the trouble you have taken in those is wholly thrown away. You show your dancing, perhaps six times a year, at most; but you show your countenance and your common motions every day, and all day. Which then, I appeal to yourself, ought you to think of the most, and care to render easy, graceful, and engaging? Douceur of countenance and gesture can alone make them so. You are by no means ill-natured; and would you then most unjustly be reckoned so? Yet your common countenance intimates, and would make anybody who did not know you, believe it. 'A propos' of this, I must tell you what was said the other day to a fine lady whom you know, who is



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very good-natured in truth, but whose common countenance implies ill-nature, even to brutality. It was Miss H——n, Lady M—y's niece, whom you have seen both at Blackheath and at Lady Hervey's. Lady M—y was saying to me that you had a very engaging countenance when you had a mind to it, but that you had not always that mind; upon which Miss H——n said, that she liked your countenance best, when it was as glum as her own. Why then, replied Lady M—y, you two should marry; for while you both wear your worst countenances, nobody else will venture upon either of you; and they call her now Mrs. Stanhope. To complete this 'douceur' of countenance and motions, which I so earnestly recommend to you, you should carry it also to your expressions and manner of thinking, 'mettez y toujours de l'affectueux de l'onction'; take the gentle, the favorable, the indulgent side of most questions. I own that the manly and sublime John Trott, your countryman, seldom does; but, to show his spirit and decision, takes the rough and harsh side, which he generally adorns with an oath, to seem more formidable. This he only thinks fine; for to do John justice, he is commonly as good-natured as anybody. These are among the many little things which you have not, and I have, lived long enough in the world to know of what infinite consequence they are in the course of life. Reason then, I repeat it again, within yourself, *consequentially*; and let not the pains you have taken, and still take, to please in some things be a 'pure perte', by your negligence of, and inattention to others of much less trouble, and much more consequence.

I have been of late much engaged, or rather bewildered, in Oriental history, particularly that of the Jews, since the destruction of their temple, and their dispersion by Titus; but the confusion and uncertainty of the whole, and the monstrous extravagances and falsehoods of the greatest part of it, disgusted me extremely. Their Talmud, their Mischna, their Targums, and other traditions and writings of their Rabbins and Doctors, who were most of them Cabalists, are really more extravagant and absurd, if possible, than all that you have read in Comte de Gabalis; and indeed most of his stuff is taken from them. Take this sample of their nonsense, which is transmitted in the writings of one of their most considerable Rabbins: "One Abas Saul, a man of ten feet high, was digging a grave, and happened to find the eye of Goliah, in which he thought proper to bury himself, and so he did, all but his head, which the Giant's eye was unfortunately not quite deep enough to receive." This, I assure you, is the most modest lie of ten thousand. I have also read the Turkish history which, excepting the religious part, is not fabulous, though very possibly not true. For the Turks, having no notion of letters and being, even by their religion, forbid the use of them, except for reading and transcribing the Koran, they have no historians of their own, nor any authentic



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records nor memorials for other historians to work upon; so that what histories we have of that country are written by foreigners; as Platina, Sir Paul Rycout, Prince Cantimer, *etc.*, or else snatches only of particular and short periods, by some who happened to reside there at those times; such as Busbequius, whom I have just finished. I like him, as far as he goes, much the best of any of them: but then his account is, properly, only an account of his own Embassy, from the Emperor Charles the Fifth to Solyman the Magnificent. However, there he gives, episodically, the best account I know of the customs and manners of the Turks, and of the nature of that government, which is a most extraordinary one. For, despotic as it always seems, and sometimes is, it is in truth a military republic, and the real power resides in the Janissaries; who sometimes order their Sultan to strangle his Vizir, and sometimes the Vizir to depose or strangle his Sultan, according as they happen to be angry at the one or the other. I own I am glad that the capital strangler should, in his turn, be *strangle-able*, and now and then strangled; for I know of no brute so fierce, nor no criminal so guilty, as the creature called a Sovereign, whether King, Sultan, or Sophy, who thinks himself, either by divine or human right, vested with an absolute power of destroying his fellow-creatures; or who, without inquiring into his right, lawlessly exerts that power. The most excusable of all those human monsters are the Turks, whose religion teaches them inevitable fatalism. A propos of the Turks, my Loyola, I pretend, is superior to your Sultan. Perhaps you think this impossible, and wonder who this Loyola is. Know then, that I have had a Barbet brought me from France, so exactly like the Sultan that he has been mistaken for him several times; only his snout is shorter, and his ears longer than the Sultan's. He has also the acquired knowledge of the Sultan; and I am apt to think that he studied under the same master at Paris. His habit and his white band show him to be an ecclesiastic; and his begging, which he does very earnestly, proves him to be of a mendicant order; which, added to his flattery and insinuation, make him supposed to be a Jesuit, and have acquired him the name of Loyola. I must not omit too, that when he breaks wind he smells exactly like the Sultan.

I do not yet hear one jot the better for all my bathings and pumpings, though I have been here already full half my time; I consequently go very little into company, being very little fit for any. I hope you keep company enough for us both; you will get more by that, than I shall by all my reading. I read simply to amuse myself and fill up my time, of which I have too much; but you have two much better reasons for going into company, pleasure and profit. May you find a great deal of both in a great deal of company! Adieu.

LETTER CXC



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London, November 20, 1753

My dear friend: Two mails are now due from Holland, so that I have no letter from you to acknowledge; but that, you know, by long experience, does not hinder my writing to you. I always receive your letters with pleasure; but I mean, and endeavor, that you should receive mine with some profit; preferring always your advantage to my own pleasure.

If you find yourself well settled and naturalized at Manheim, stay there some time, and do not leave a certain for an uncertain good; but if you think you shall be as well, or better established at Munich, go there as soon as you please; and if disappointed, you can always return to Manheim I mentioned, in a former letter, your passing the Carnival at Berlin, which I think may be both useful and pleasing to you; however, do as you will; but let me know what you resolve: That King and that country have, and will have, so great a share in the affairs of Europe, that they are well worth being thoroughly known.

Whether, where you are now, or ever may be hereafter, you speak French, German, or English most, I earnestly recommend to you a particular attention to the propriety and elegance of your style; employ the best words you can find in the language, avoid cacophony, and make your periods as harmonious as you can. I need not, I am sure, tell you what you must often have felt, how much the elegance of diction adorns the best thoughts, and palliates the worst. In the House of Commons it is almost everything; and, indeed, in every assembly, whether public or private. Words, which are the dress of thoughts, deserve surely more care than clothes, which are only the dress of the person, and which, however, ought to have their share of attention. If you attend to your style in any one language, it will give you a habit of attending to it in every other; and if once you speak either French or German very elegantly, you will afterward speak much the better English for it. I repeat it to you again, for at least the thousandth time, exert your whole attention now in acquiring the ornamental parts of character. People know very little of the world, and talk nonsense, when they talk of plainness and solidity unadorned: they will do in nothing; mankind has been long out of a state of nature, and the golden age of native simplicity will never return. Whether for the better or the worse, no matter; but we are refined; and plain manners, plain dress, and plain diction, would as little do in life, as acorns, herbage, and the water of the neighboring spring, would do at table. Some people are just come, who interrupt me in the middle of my sermon; so good-night.

LETTER CXCI

London, November 26, 1753

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Dear friend: Fine doings at Manheim! If one may give credit to the weekly histories of Monsieur Roderigue, the finest writer among the moderns; not only 'des chasses brillantes et nombreuses des operas ou les acteurs se surpassent les jours des Saints de L. L. A. A. E. E. serenissimes celebres; en grand gala'; but to crown the whole, Monsieur Zuchmantel is happily arrived, and Monsieur Wartenslebeu hourly expected. I hope that you are 'pars magna' of all these delights; though, as Noll Bluff says, in the "Old Bachelor," *That rascally gazetteer takes no more notice of you than if you were not in the Land of the living.* I should think that he might at least have taken notice that in these rejoicings you appeared with a rejoicing, and not a gloomy countenance; and you distinguished yourself in that numerous and shining company, by your air, dress, address, and attentions. If this was the case, as I will both hope and suppose it was, I will, if you require it, have him written to, to do you justice in his next 'supplement'. Seriously, I am very glad that you are whirled in that 'tourbillon' of pleasures; they smooth, polish, and rub off rough corners: perhaps too, you have some particular *collision*, which is still more effectual.

Schannat's "History of the Palatinate" was, I find, written originally in German, in which language I suppose it is that you have read it; but, as I must humbly content myself with the French translation, Vaillant has sent for it for me from Holland, so that I have not yet read it. While you are in the Palatinate, you do very well to read everything relative to it; you will do still better if you make that reading the foundation of your inquiries into the more minute circumstances and anecdotes of that country, whenever you are in company with informed and knowing people.

The Ministers here, intimidated on the absurd and groundless clamors of the mob, have, very weakly in my mind, repealed, this session, the bill which they had passed in the last for rendering Jews capable of being naturalized by subsequent acts of parliament. The clamorers triumph, and will doubtless make further demands, which, if not granted, this piece of complaisance will soon be forgotten. Nothing is truer in politics, than this reflection of the Cardinal de Retz, 'Que le peuple craint toujours quand on ne le craint pas'; and consequently they grow unreasonable and insolent, when they find that they are feared. Wise and honest governors will never, if they can help it, give the people just cause to complain; but then, on the other hand, they will firmly withstand groundless clamor. Besides that this noise against the Jew bill proceeds from that narrow mobspirit of INTOLERATION in religious, and inhospitality in civil matters; both which all wise governments should oppose.



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The confusion in France increases daily, as, no doubt, you are informed where you are. There is an answer of the clergy to the remonstrances of the parliament, lately published, which was sent me by the last post from France, and which I would have sent you, inclosed in this, were it not too bulky. Very probably you may see it at Manheim, from the French Minister: it is very well worth your reading, being most artfully and plausibly written, though founded upon false principles; the 'jus divinum' of the clergy, and consequently their supremacy in all matters of faith and doctrine are asserted; both which I absolutely deny. Were those two points allowed the clergy of any country whatsoever, they must necessarily govern that country absolutely; everything being, directly or indirectly, relative to faith or doctrine; and whoever is supposed to have the power of saving and damning souls to all eternity (which power the clergy pretend to), will be much more considered, and better obeyed, than any civil power that forms no pretensions beyond this world. Whereas, in truth, the clergy in every country are, like all other subjects, dependent upon the supreme legislative power, and are appointed by that power under whatever restrictions and limitations it pleases, to keep up decency and decorum in the church, just as constables are to keep peace in the parish. This Fra Paolo has clearly proved, even upon their own principles of the Old and New Testament, in his book 'de Beneficiis', which I recommend to you to read with attention; it is short. Adieu.

LETTER CXCII

London, December 25, 1753

My dear friend: Yesterday again I received two letters at once from you, the one of the 7th, the other of the 15th, from Manheim.

You never had in your life so good a reason for not writing, either to me or to anybody else, as your sore finger lately furnished you. I believe it was painful, and I am glad it is cured; but a sore finger, however painful, is a much less evil than laziness, of either body or mind, and attended by fewer ill consequences.

I am very glad to hear that you were distinguished at the court of Manheim from the rest of your countrymen and fellow-travelers: it is a sign that you had better manners and address than they; for take it for granted, the best-bred people will always be the best received wherever they go. Good manners are the settled medium of social, as specie is of commercial life; returns are equally expected for both; and people will no more advance their civility to a bear, than their money to a bankrupt. I really both hope and believe, that the German courts will do you a great deal of good; their ceremony and restraint being the proper correctives and antidotes for your negligence and inattention. I believe they would not greatly relish your weltering in your own laziness, and an easy chair; nor take it very kindly, if, when they spoke to you or you to them, you looked another way, as much as to say, kiss my b——h. As they give, so they require attention;

and, by the way, take this maxim for an undoubted truth, That no young man can possibly improve in any company, for which he has not respect enough to be under some degree of restraint.



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I dare not trust to Meyssonier's report of his Rhenish, his Burgundy not having answered either his account or my expectations. I doubt, as a wine merchant, he is the 'perfidus caupo', whatever he may be as a banker. I shall therefore venture upon none of his wine; but delay making my provision of Old Hock, till I go abroad myself next spring: as I told you in the utmost secrecy, in my last, that I intend to do; and then probably I may taste some that I like, and go upon sure ground. There is commonly very good, both at Aix-la-Chapelle and Liege, where I formerly got some excellent, which I carried with me to Spa, where I drank no other wine.

As my letters to you frequently miscarry, I will repeat in this that part of my last which related to your future motions. Whenever you shall be tired of Berlin, go to Dresden; where Sir Charles Williams will be, who will receive you with open arms. He dined with me to-day, and sets out for Dresden in about six weeks. He spoke of you with great kindness and impatience to see you again. He will trust and employ you in business (and he is now in the whole secret of importance) till we fix our place to meet in: which probably will be Spa. Wherever you are, inform yourself minutely of, and attend particularly to the affairs of France; they grow serious, and in my opinion will grow more and more so every day. The King is despised and I do not wonder at it; but he has brought it about to be hated at the same time, which seldom happens to the same man. His ministers are known to be as disunited as incapable; he hesitates between the Church and the parliaments, like the ass in the fable, that starved between two hampers of hay: too much in love with his mistress to part with her, and too much afraid of his soul to enjoy her; jealous of the parliaments, who would support his authority; and a devoted bigot to the Church, that would destroy it. The people are poor, consequently discontented; those who have religion, are divided in their notions of it; which is saying that they hate one another. The clergy never do forgive; much less will they forgive the parliament; the parliament never will forgive them. The army must, without doubt, take, in their own minds at last, different parts in all these disputes, which upon occasion would break out. Armies, though always the supporters and tools of absolute power for the time being, are always the destroyers of it, too, by frequently changing the hands in which they think proper to lodge it. This was the case of the Praetorian bands, who deposed and murdered the monsters they had raised to oppress mankind. The Janissaries in turkey, and the regiments of guards in Russia, do the same now. The French nation reasons freely, which they never did before, upon matters of religion and government, and begin to be 'sprejudicati'; the officers do so too; in short, all the symptoms, which I have ever met with in history previous to great changes and revolutions in government, now exist, and daily increase,



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in France. I am glad of it; the rest of Europe will be the quieter, and have time to recover. England, I am sure, wants rest, for it wants men and money; the Republic of the United Provinces wants both still more; the other Powers cannot well dance, when neither France, nor the maritime powers, can, as they used to do, pay the piper. The first squabble in Europe, that I foresee, will be about the Crown of Poland, should the present King die: and therefore I wish his Majesty a long life and a merry Christmas. So much for foreign politics; but 'a propos' of them, pray take care, while you are in those parts of Germany, to inform yourself correctly of all the details, discussions, and agreements, which the several wars, confiscations, bans, and treaties, occasioned between the Bavarian and Palatine Electorates; they are interesting and curious.

I shall not, upon the occasion of the approaching new year, repeat to you the wishes which I continue to form for you; you know them all already, and you know that it is absolutely in your power to satisfy most of them. Among many other wishes, this is my most earnest one: That you would open the new year with a most solemn and devout sacrifice to the Graces; who never reject those that supplicate them with fervor; without them, let me tell you, that your friend Dame Fortune will stand you in little stead; may they all be your friends! Adieu.

LETTER CXCIII

London, January 15, 1754

My dear friend: I have this moment received your letter of the 26th past from Munich. Since you are got so well out of the distress and dangers of your journey from Manheim, I am glad that you were in them:

“Condisce i diletta
Memorie di pene,
Ne sa che sia bene
Chi mal non soffri.”

They were but little samples of the much greater distress and dangers which you must expect to meet within your great, and I hope, long journey through life. In some parts of it, flowers are scattered, with profusion, the road is smooth, and the prospect pleasant: but in others (and I fear the greater number) the road is rugged, beset with thorns and briars, and cut by torrents. Gather the flowers in your way; but, at the same time, guard against the briars that are either mixed with them, or that most certainly succeed them.

I thank you for your wild boar; who, now he is dead, I assure him, 'se laissera bien manger malgre qu'il en ait'; though I am not so sure that I should have had that personal



valor which so successfully distinguished you in single combat with him, which made him bite the dust like Homer's heroes, and, to conclude my period sublimely, put him into that *Pickle*, from which I propose eating him. At the same time that I applaud your valor, I must do justice to your modesty; which candidly admits that you were not overmatched, and that your adversary was about your own age and size. A Maracassin, being under a year old, would have been below your indignation. 'Bete de compagne', being under two years old, was still, in my opinion, below your glory; but I guess that your enemy was 'un Ragot', that is, from two to three years old; an age and size which, between man and boar, answer pretty well to yours.



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If accidents of bad roads or waters do not detain you at Munich, I do not fancy that pleasures will: and I rather believe you will seek for, and find them, at the Carnival at Berlin; in which supposition, I eventually direct this letter to your banker there. While you are at Berlin (I earnestly recommend it to you again and again) pray *care* to see, hear, know, and mind, everything there. *The ablest prince in Europe* is surely an object that deserves attention; and the least thing that he does, like the smallest sketches of the greatest painters, has its value, and a considerable one too.

Read with care the Code Frederick, and inform yourself of the good effects of it in those parts of, his dominions where it has taken place, and where it has banished the former chicanes, quirks, and quibbles of the old law. Do not think any detail too minute or trifling for your inquiry and observation. I wish that you could find one hour's leisure every day, to read some good Italian author, and to converse in that language with our worthy friend Signor Angelo Cori; it would both refresh and improve your Italian, which, of the many languages you know, I take to be that in which you are the least perfect; but of which, too, you already know enough to make yourself master of, with very little trouble, whenever you please.

Live, dwell, and grow at the several courts there; use them so much to your face, that they may not look upon you as a stranger. Observe, and take their 'ton', even to their affectations and follies; for such there are, and perhaps should be, at all courts. Stay, in all events, at Berlin, till I inform you of Sir Charles Williams's arrival at Dresden; where I suppose you would not care to be before him, and where you may go as soon after him as ever you please. Your time there will neither be unprofitably nor disagreeably spent; he will introduce you into all the best company, though he can introduce you to none so good as his own. He has of late applied himself very seriously to foreign affairs, especially those of Saxony and Poland; he knows them perfectly well, and will tell you what he knows. He always expresses, and I have good reason to believe very sincerely, great kindness and affection for you.

The works of the late Lord Bolingbroke are just published, and have plunged me into philosophical studies; which hitherto I have not been much used to, or delighted with; convinced of the futility of those researches; but I have read his "Philosophical Essay" upon the extent of human knowledge, which, by the way, makes two large quartos and a half. He there shows very clearly, and with most splendid eloquence, what the human mind can and cannot do; that our understandings are wisely calculated for our place in this planet, and for the link which we form in the universal chain of things; but that they are by no means capable of that degree of knowledge, which our curiosity makes us search after, and which our vanity makes us often believe we arrive at. I shall not recommend to you the reading of that work; but, when you return hither, I shall recommend to your frequent and diligent perusal all his tracts that are relative to our history and constitution; upon which he throws lights, and scatters graces, which no other writer has ever done.



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Reading, which was always a pleasure to me, in the time even of my greatest dissipation, is now become my only refuge; and, I fear, I indulge it too much at the expense of my eyes. But what can I do? I must do something; I cannot bear absolute idleness; my ears grow every day more useless to me, my eyes consequently more necessary; I will not hoard them like a miser, but will rather risk the loss, than not enjoy the use of them.

Pray let me know all the particulars, not only of your reception at Munich, but also at Berlin; at the latter, I believe, it will be a good one; for his Prussian Majesty knows, that I have long been *an admirer and respecter of his great and various talents*. Adieu.

LETTER CXCIV

London, February 1, 1754

My dear friend: I received, yesterday, yours of the 12th, from Munich; in consequence of which, I direct this to you there, though I directed my three last to Berlin, where I suppose you will find them at your arrival. Since you are not only domesticated, but 'niche' at Munich, you are much in the right to stay there. It is not by seeing places that one knows them, but by familiar and daily conversations with the people of fashion. I would not care to be in the place of that prodigy of beauty, whom you are to drive 'dans la course de Traineaux'; and I am apt to think you are much more likely to break her bones, than she is, though ever so cruel, to break your heart. Nay, I am not sure but that, according to all the rules of gallantry, you are obliged to overturn her on purpose; in the first place, for the chance of seeing her backside; in the next, for the sake of the contrition and concern which it would give you an opportunity of showing; and, lastly, upon account of all the 'gentilleses et epigrammes', which it would naturally suggest. Voiture has made several stanzas upon an accident of that kind, which happened to a lady of his acquaintance. There is a great deal of wit in them, rather too much; for, according to the taste of those times, they are full of what the Italians call 'conchetti spiritosissimi'; the Spaniards 'agudeze'; and we, affectation and quaintness. I hope you have endeavored to suit your 'Traineau' to the character of the fair-one whom it is to contain. If she is of an irascible, impetuous disposition (as fine women can sometimes be), you will doubtless place her in the body of a lion, a tiger, a dragon, or some tremendous beast of prey and fury; if she is a sublime and stately beauty, which I think more probable (for unquestionably she is 'hohg gebohrne'), you will, I suppose, provide a magnificent swan or proud peacock for her reception; but if she is all tenderness and softness, you have, to be sure, taken care amorous doves and wanton sparrows should seem to flutter round her. Proper mottos, I take it for granted, that you have eventually prepared; but if not, you may find a great many ready-made ones in 'Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugene, sur les Devises', written by Pere Bouhours, and worth your reading at any time. I will not say to you, upon this occasion, like the father in Ovid,



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“Parce, puer, stimulis, et fortius utere loris.”

On the contrary, drive on briskly; it is not the chariot of the sun that you drive, but you carry the sun in your chariot; consequently, the faster it goes, the less it will be likely to scorch or consume. This is Spanish enough, I am sure.

If this finds you still at Munich, pray make many compliments from me to Mr. Burrish, to whom I am very much obliged for all his kindness to you; it is true, that while I had power I endeavored to serve him; but it is as true too, that I served many others more, who have neither returned nor remembered those services.

I have been very ill this last fortnight, of your old Carniolian complaint, the ‘arthritis vaga’; luckily, it did not fall upon my breast, but seized on my right arm; there it fixed its seat of empire; but, as in all tyrannical governments, the remotest parts felt their share of its severity. Last post I was not able to hold a pen long enough to write to you, and therefore desired Mr. Grevenkop to do it for me; but that letter was directed to Berlin. My pain is now much abated, though I have still some fine remains of it in my shoulder, where I fear it will tease me a great while. I must be careful to take Horace’s advice, and consider well, ‘Quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recusent’.

Lady Chesterfield bids me make you her compliments, and assure you that the music will be much more welcome to her with you, than without you.

In some of my last letters, which were directed to, and will, I suppose, wait for you at Berlin, I complimented you, and with justice, upon your great improvement of late in the epistolary way, both with regard to the style and the turn of your letters; your four or five last to me have been very good ones, and one that you wrote to Mr. Harte, upon the new year, was so pretty a one, and he was so much and so justly pleased with it, that he sent it me from Windsor the instant he had read it. This talent (and a most necessary one it is in the course of life) is to be acquired by resolving, and taking pains to acquire it; and, indeed, so is every talent except poetry, which is undoubtedly a gift. Think, therefore, night and day, of the turn, the purity, the correctness, the perspicuity, and the elegance of whatever you speak or write; take my word for it, your labor will not be in vain, but greatly rewarded by the harvest of praise and success which it will bring you. Delicacy of turn, and elegance of style, are ornaments as necessary to common sense, as attentions, address, and fashionable manners, are to common civility; both may subsist without them, but then, without being of the least use to the owner. The figure of a man is exactly the same in dirty rags, or in the finest and best chosen clothes; but in which of the two he is the most likely to please, and to be received in good company, I leave to you to determine.

Both my arm and my paper hint to me, to bid you good-night.



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LETTER CXCV

London, February 12, 1754.

My dear friend: I take my aim, and let off this letter at you at Berlin; I should be sorry it missed you, because I believe you will read it with as much pleasure as I write it. It is to inform you, that, after some difficulties and dangers, your seat in the new parliament is at last absolutely secured, and that without opposition, or the least necessity of your personal trouble or appearance. This success, I must further inform you, is in a great degree owing to Mr. Eliot's friendship to us both; for he brings you in with himself at his surest borough. As it was impossible to act with more zeal and friendship than Mr. Eliot has acted in this whole affair, I desire that you will, by the very next post, write him a letter of thanks, warm and young thanks, not old and cold ones. You may inclose it in yours to me, and, I will send it to him, for he is now in Cornwall.

Thus, sure of being a senator, I dare say you do not propose to be one of the 'pedarii senatores, et pedibus ire in sententiam; for, as the House of Commons is the theatre where you must make your fortune and figure in the world, you must resolve to be an actor, and not a 'persona muta', which is just equivalent to a candle snuffer upon other theatres. Whoever does not shine there, is obscure, insignificant and contemptible; and you cannot conceive how easy it is for a man of half your sense and knowledge to shine there if he pleases. The receipt to make a speaker, and an applauded one too, is short and easy.—Take of common sense 'quantum sufficit', add a little application to the rules and orders of the House, throw obvious thoughts in a new light, and make up the whole with a large quantity of purity, correctness, and elegance of style. Take it for granted, that by far the greatest part of mankind do neither analyze nor search to the bottom; they are incapable of penetrating deeper than the surface. All have senses to be gratified, very few have reason to be applied to. Graceful utterance and action please their eyes, elegant diction tickles their ears; but strong reason would be thrown away upon them. I am not only persuaded by theory, but convinced by my experience, that (supposing a certain degree of common sense) what is called a good speaker is as much a mechanic as a good shoemaker; and that the two trades are equally to be learned by the same degree of application. Therefore, for God's sake, let this trade be the principal object of your thoughts; never lose sight of it. Attend minutely to your style, whatever language you speak or write in; seek for the best words, and think of the best turns. Whenever you doubt of the propriety or elegance of any word, search the dictionary or some good author for it, or inquire of somebody, who is master of that language; and, in a little time, propriety and elegance of diction will become so habitual



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to you, that they will cost you no more trouble. As I have laid this down to be mechanical and attainable by whoever will take the necessary pains, there will be no great vanity in my saying, that I saw the importance of the object so early, and attended to it so young, that it would now cost me more trouble to speak or write ungrammatically, vulgarly, and inelegantly, than ever it did to avoid doing so. The late Lord Bolingbroke, without the least trouble, talked all day long, full as elegantly as he wrote. Why? Not by a peculiar gift from heaven; but, as he has often told me himself, by an early and constant attention to his style. The present Solicitor-General, Murray, —[Created Lord Mansfield in the year 1756.]—has less law than many lawyers, but has more practice than any; merely upon account of his eloquence, of which he has a never-failing stream. I remember so long ago as when I was at Cambridge, whenever I read pieces of eloquence (and indeed they were my chief study) whether ancient or modern, I used to write down the shining passages, and then translate them, as well and as elegantly as ever I could; if Latin or French, into English; if English, into French. This, which I practiced for some years, not only improved and formed my style, but imprinted in my mind and memory the best thoughts of the best authors. The trouble was little, but the advantage I have experienced was great. While you are abroad, you can neither have time nor opportunity to read pieces of English or parliamentary eloquence, as I hope you will carefully do when you return; but, in the meantime, whenever pieces of French eloquence come in your way, such as the speeches of persons received into the Academy, 'oraisons funebres', representations of the several parliaments to the King, *etc.*, read them in that view, in that spirit; observe the harmony, the turn and elegance of the style; examine in what you think it might have been better; and consider in what, had you written it yourself; you might have done worse. Compare the different manners of expressing the same thoughts in different authors; and observe how differently the same things appear in different dresses. Vulgar, coarse, and ill-chosen words, will deform and degrade the best thoughts as much as rags and dirt will the best figure. In short, you now know your object; pursue it steadily, and have no digressions that are not relative to, and connected with, the main action. Your success in parliament will effectually remove all *other objections*; either a foreign or a domestic destination will no longer be refused you, if you make your way to it through Westminster.

I think I may now say, that I am quite recovered from my late illness, strength and spirits excepted, which are not yet restored. Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa will, I believe, answer all my purposes.

I long to hear an account of your reception at Berlin, which I fancy will be a most gracious one. Adieu.



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LETTER CXCVI

London, February 15, 1754

My dear friend: I can now with great truth apply your own motto to you, 'Nullum numen abest, si sit Prudentia'. You are sure of being, as early as your age will permit, a member of that House; which is the only road to figure and fortune in this country. Those, indeed, who are bred up to, and distinguish themselves in particular professions, as the army, the navy, and the law, may, by their own merit, raise themselves to a certain degree; but you may observe too, that they never get to the top, without the assistance of parliamentary talents and influence. The means of distinguishing yourself in parliament are, as I told you in my last, much more easily attained than I believe you imagine. Close attendance to the business of the House will soon give you the parliamentary routine; and strict attention to your style will soon make you, not only a speaker, but a good one. The vulgar look upon a man, who is reckoned a fine speaker, as a phenomenon, a supernatural being, and endowed with some peculiar gift of heaven; they stare at him, if he walks in the Park, and cry, *that is he*. You will, I am sure, view him in a juster light, and 'nulla formidine'. You will consider him only as a man of good sense, who adorns common thoughts with the graces of elocution, and the elegance of style. The miracle will then cease; and you will be convinced, that with the same application, and attention to the same objects, you may most certainly equal, and perhaps surpass, this prodigy. Sir W----Y-----, with not a quarter of your parts, and not a thousandth part of your knowledge, has, by a glibness of tongue simply, raised him successively to the best employments of the kingdom; he has been Lord of the Admiralty, Lord of the Treasury, Secretary at War, and is now Vice-Treasurer of Ireland; and all this with a most sullied, not to say blasted character. Represent the thing to yourself, as it really is, easily attainable, and you will find it so. Have but ambition enough passionately to desire the object, and spirit enough to use the means, and I will be answerable for your success. When I was younger than you are, I resolved within myself that I would in all events be a speaker in parliament, and a good one too, if I could. I consequently never lost sight of that object, and never neglected any of the means that I thought led to it. I succeeded to a certain degree; and, I assure you, with great ease, and without superior talents. Young people are very apt to overrate both men and things, from not being enough acquainted with them. In proportion as you come to know them better, you will value them less. You will find that reason, which always ought to direct mankind, seldom does; but that passions and weaknesses commonly usurp its seat, and rule in its stead. You will find that the ablest have their weak sides too, and



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are only comparatively able, with regard to the still weaker herd: having fewer weaknesses themselves, they are able to avail themselves of the innumerable ones of the generality of mankind: being more masters of themselves, they become more easily masters of others. They address themselves to their weaknesses, their senses, their passions; never to their reason; and consequently seldom fail of success. But then analyze those great, those governing, and, as the vulgar imagine, those perfect characters, and you will find the great Brutus a thief in Macedonia, the great Cardinal Richelieu a jealous poetaster, and the great Duke of Marlborough a miser. Till you come to know mankind by your own experience, I know no thing, nor no man, that can in the meantime bring you so well acquainted with them as le Duc de la Rochefoucault: his little book of "Maxims," which I would advise you to look into, for some moments at least, every day of your life, is, I fear, too like, and too exact a picture of human nature.

I own, it seems to degrade it; but yet my experience does not convince me that it degrades it unjustly.

Now, to bring all this home to my first point. All these considerations should not only invite you to attempt to make a figure in parliament, but encourage you to hope that you shall succeed. To govern mankind, one must not overrate them: and to please an audience, as a speaker, one must not overvalue it. When I first came into the House of Commons, I respected that assembly as a venerable one; and felt a certain awe upon me, but, upon better acquaintance, that awe soon vanished; and I discovered, that, of the five hundred and sixty, not above thirty could understand reason, and that all the rest were 'people'; that those thirty only required plain common sense, dressed up in good language; and that all the others only required flowing and harmonious periods, whether they conveyed any meaning or not; having ears to hear, but not sense enough to judge. These considerations made me speak with little concern the first time, with less the second, and with none at all the third. I gave myself no further trouble about anything, except my elocution, and my style; presuming, without much vanity, that I had common sense sufficient not to talk nonsense. Fix these three truths strongly in your mind: First, that it is absolutely necessary for you to speak in parliament; secondly, that it only requires a little human attention, and no supernatural gifts; and, thirdly, that you have all the reason in the world to think that you shall speak well. When we meet, this shall be the principal subject of our conversations; and, if you will follow my advice, I will answer for your success.



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Now from great things to little ones; the transition is to me easy, because nothing seems little to me that can be of any use to you. I hope you take great care of your mouth and teeth, and that you clean them well every morning with a sponge and tepid water, with a few drops of arquebusade water dropped into it; besides washing your mouth carefully after every meal, I do insist upon your never using those sticks, or any hard substance whatsoever, which always rub away the gums, and destroy the varnish of the teeth. I speak this from woeful experience; for my negligence of my teeth, when I was younger than you are, made them bad; and afterward, my desire to have them look better, made me use sticks, irons, *etc.*, which totally destroyed them; so that I have not now above six or seven left. I lost one this morning, which suggested this advice to you.

I have received the tremendous wild boar, which your still more tremendous arm slew in the immense deserts of the Palatinate; but have not yet tasted of it, as it is hitherto above my low regimen. The late King of Prussia, whenever he killed any number of wild boars, used to oblige the Jews to buy them, at a high price, though they could eat none of them; so they defrayed the expense of his hunting. His son has juster rules of government, as the Code Frederick plainly shows.

I hope, that, by this time, you are as well 'ancre' at Berlin as you was at Munich; but, if not, you are sure of being so at Dresden. Adieu.

LETTER CXCVII

London, February 26, 1754.

My dear friend: I have received your letters of the 4th, from Munich, and of the 11th from Ratisbon; but I have not received that of the 31st January, to which you refer in the former. It is to this negligence and uncertainty of the post, that you owe your accidents between Munich and Ratisbon: for, had you received my letters regularly, you would have received one from me before you left Munich, in which I advised you to stay, since you were so well there. But, at all events, you were in the wrong to set out from Munich in such weather and such roads; since you could never imagine that I had set my heart so much upon your going to Berlin, as to venture your being buried in the snow for it. Upon the whole, considering all you are very well off. You do very well, in my mind, to return to Munich, or at least to keep within the circle of Munich, Ratisbon, and Manheim, till the weather and the roads are good: stay at each or any of those places as long as ever you please; for I am extremely indifferent about your going to Berlin.



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As to our meeting, I will tell you my plan, and you may form your own accordingly. I propose setting out from hence the last week in April, then drinking the Aix-la-Chapelle waters for a week, and from thence being at Spa about the 15th of May, where I shall stay two months at most, and then return straight to England. As I both hope and believe that there will be no mortal at Spa during my residence there, the fashionable season not beginning till the middle of July, I would by no means have you come there at first, to be locked up with me and some few Capucins, for two months, in that miserable hole; but I would advise you to stay where you like best, till about the first week in July, and then to come and pick me up at Spa, or meet me upon the road at Liege or Brussels. As for the intermediate time, should you be weary of Manheim and Munich, you may, if you please, go to Dresden, to Sir Charles Williams, who will be there before that time; or you may come for a month or six weeks to The Hague; or, in short, go or stay wherever you like best. So much for your motions.

As you have sent for all the letters directed to you at Berlin, you will receive from thence volumes of mine, among which you will easily perceive that some were calculated for a supposed perusal previous to your opening them. I will not repeat anything contained in them, excepting that I desire you will send me a warm and cordial letter of thanks for Mr. Eliot; who has, in the most friendly manner imaginable, fixed you at his own borough of Liskeard, where you will be elected jointly with him, without the least opposition or difficulty. I will forward that letter to him into Cornwall, where he now is.

Now that you are to be soon a man of business, I heartily wish that you would immediately begin to be a man of method; nothing contributing more to facilitate and dispatch business, than method and order. Have order and method in your accounts, in your reading, in the allotment of your time; in short, in everything. You cannot conceive how much time you will save by it, nor how much better everything you do will be done. The Duke of Marlborough did by no means spend, but he slatterned himself into that immense debt, which is not yet near paid off. The hurry and confusion of the Duke of Newcastle do not proceed from his business, but from his want of method in it. Sir Robert Walpole, who had ten times the business to do, was never seen in a hurry, because he always did it with method. The head of a man who has business, and no method nor order, is properly that *'rudis indigestaque moles quam dixere chaos'*. As you must be conscious that you are extremely negligent and slatternly, I hope you will resolve not to be so for the future. Prevail with yourself, only to observe good method and order for one fortnight; and I will venture to assure you that you will never neglect them afterward, you will find such conveniency and advantage arising from them. Method is the



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great advantage that lawyers have over other people, in speaking in parliament; for, as they must necessarily observe it in their pleadings in the courts of justice, it becomes habitual to them everywhere else. Without making you a compliment, I can tell you with pleasure, that order, method, and more activity of mind, are all that you want, to make, some day or other, a considerable figure in business. You have more useful knowledge, more discernment of characters, and much more discretion, than is common at your age; much more, I am sure, than I had at that age. Experience you cannot yet have, and therefore trust in the meantime to mine. I am an old traveler; am well acquainted with all the bye as well as the great roads; I cannot misguide you from ignorance, and you are very sure I shall not from design.

I can assure you, that you will have no opportunity of subscribing yourself my Excellency's, *etc.* Retirement and quiet were my choice some years ago, while I had all my senses, and health and spirits enough to carry on business; but now that I have lost my hearing, and that I find my constitution declining daily, they are become my necessary and only refuge. I know myself (no common piece of knowledge, let me tell you), I know what I can, what I cannot, and consequently what I ought to do. I ought not, and therefore will not, return to business when I am much less fit for it than I was when I quitted it. Still less will I go to Ireland, where, from my deafness and infirmities, I must necessarily make a different figure from that which I once made there. My pride would be too much mortified by that difference. The two important senses of seeing and hearing should not only be good, but quick, in business; and the business of a Lord-lieutenant of Ireland (if he will do it himself) requires both those senses in the highest perfection. It was the Duke of Dorset's not doing the business himself, but giving it up to favorites, that has occasioned all this confusion in Ireland; and it was my doing the whole myself, without either Favorite, Minister, or Mistress, that made my administration so smooth and quiet. I remember, when I named the late Mr. Liddel for my Secretary, everybody was much surprised at it; and some of my friends represented to me, that he was no man of business, but only a very genteel, pretty young fellow; I assured them, and with truth, that that was the very reason why I chose him; for that I was resolved to do all the business myself, and without even the suspicion of having a minister; which the Lord-lieutenant's Secretary, if he is a man of business, is always supposed, and commonly with reason, to be. Moreover, I look upon myself now to be emeritus in business, in which I have been near forty years together; I give it up to you: apply yourself to it, as I have done, for forty years, and then I consent to your leaving it for a philosophical retirement among your friends and your books. Statesmen and beauties are very rarely sensible of



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the gradations of their decay; and, too often sanguinely hoping to shine on in their meridian, often set with contempt and ridicule. I retired in time, 'uti conviva satur'; or, as Pope says still better, *Ere tittering youth shall Shove you from the Stage*. My only remaining ambition is to be the counsellor and minister of your rising ambition. Let me see my own youth revived in you; let me be your Mentor, and, with your parts and knowledge, I promise you, you shall go far. You must bring, on your part, activity and attention; and I will point out to you the proper objects for them. I own I fear but one thing for you, and that is what one has generally the least reason to fear from one of your age; I mean your laziness; which, if you indulge, will make you stagnate in a contemptible obscurity all your life. It will hinder you from doing anything that will deserve to be written, or from writing anything that may deserve to be read; and yet one or other of those two objects should be at least aimed at by every rational being.

I look upon indolence as a sort of *suicide*; for the man is effectually destroyed, though the appetites of the brute may survive. Business by no means forbids pleasures; on the contrary, they reciprocally season each other; and I will venture to affirm, that no man enjoys either in perfection, that does not join both. They whet the desire for each other. Use yourself, therefore, in time to be alert and diligent in your little concerns; never procrastinate, never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day; and never do two things at a time; pursue your object, be it what it will, steadily and indefatigably; and let any difficulties (if surmountable) rather animate than slacken your endeavors. Perseverance has surprising effects.

I wish you would use yourself to translate, every day, only three or four lines, from any book, in any language, into the correctest and most elegant English that you can think of; you cannot imagine how it will insensibly form your style, and give you an habitual elegance; it would not take you up a quarter of an hour in a day. This letter is so long, that it will hardly leave you that quarter of an hour, the day you receive it. So good-night.

LETTER CXCVIII

London, March 8, 1754

My dear friend: A great and unexpected event has lately happened in our ministerial world. Mr. Pelham died last Monday of a fever and mortification, occasioned by a general corruption of his whole mass of blood, which had broke out into sores in his back. I regret him as an old acquaintance, a pretty near relation, and a private man, with whom I have lived many years in a social and friendly way. He meant well to the public; and was incorrupt in a post where corruption is commonly contagious. If he was no shining, enterprising minister, he was a safe one,



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which I like better. Very shining ministers, like the sun, are apt to scorch when they shine the brightest: in our constitution, I prefer the milder light of a less glaring minister. His successor is not yet, at least publicly, 'designatus'. You will easily suppose that many are very willing, and very few able, to fill that post. Various persons are talked of, by different people, for it, according as their interest prompts them to wish, or their ignorance to conjecture. Mr. Fox is the most talked of; he is strongly supported by the Duke of Cumberland. Mr. Legge, the Solicitor-General, and Dr. Lee, are likewise all spoken of, upon the foot of the Duke of Newcastle's, and the Chancellor's interest. Should it be any one of the last three, I think no great alterations will ensue; but should Mr. Fox prevail, it would, in my opinion, soon produce changes by no means favorable to the Duke of Newcastle. In the meantime, the wild conjectures of volunteer politicians, and the ridiculous importance which, upon these occasions, blockheads always endeavor to give themselves, by grave looks, significant shrugs, and insignificant whispers, are very entertaining to a bystander, as, thank God, I now am. One *knows something*, but is not yet at liberty to tell it; another has heard something from a very good hand; a third congratulates himself upon a certain degree of intimacy, which he has long had with everyone of the candidates, though perhaps he has never spoken twice to anyone of them. In short, in these sort of intervals, vanity, interest, and absurdity, always display themselves in the most ridiculous light. One who has been so long behind the scenes as I have is much more diverted with the entertainment, than those can be who only see it from the pit and boxes. I know the whole machinery of the interior, and can laugh the better at the silly wonder and wild conjectures of the uninformed spectators. This accident, I think, cannot in the least affect your election, which is finally settled with your friend Mr. Eliot. For, let who will prevail, I presume, he will consider me enough, not to overturn an arrangement of that sort, in which he cannot possibly be personally interested. So pray go on with your parliamentary preparations. Have that object always in your view, and pursue it with attention.

I take it for granted that your late residence in Germany has made you as perfect and correct in German, as you were before in French, at least it is worth your while to be so; because it is worth every man's while to be perfectly master of whatever language he may ever have occasion to speak. A man is not himself, in a language which he does not thoroughly possess; his thoughts are degraded, when inelegantly or imperfectly expressed; he is cramped and confined, and consequently can never appear to advantage. Examine and analyze those thoughts that strike you the most, either in conversation or in books; and you will find that they owe at least half their merit to the turn and expression of them. There is nothing truer than that old saying, 'Nihil dictum quod non prins dictum'. It is only the manner of saying or writing it that makes it appear new. Convince yourself that manner is almost everything, in everything; and study it accordingly.



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I am this moment informed, and I believe truly, that Mr. Fox—[Henry Fox, created Lord Holland, Baron of Foxley, in the year 1763]—is to succeed Mr. Pelham as First Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; and your friend, Mr. Yorke, of The Hague, to succeed Mr. Fox as Secretary at War. I am not sorry for this promotion of Mr. Fox, as I have always been upon civil terms with him, and found him ready to do me any little services. He is frank and gentleman-like in his manner: and, to a certain degree, I really believe will be your friend upon my account; if you can afterward make him yours, upon your own, 'tan mieux'. I have nothing more to say now but Adieu.

LETTER CXCIX

London, March 15, 1754

My dear friend: We are here in the midst of a second winter; the cold is more severe, and the snow deeper, than they were in the first. I presume, your weather in Germany is not much more gentle and, therefore, I hope that you are quietly and warmly fixed at some good town: and will not risk a second burial in the snow, after your late fortunate resurrection out of it. Your letters, I suppose, have not been able to make their way through the ice; for I have received none from you since that of the 12th of February, from Ratisbon. I am the more uneasy at this state of ignorance, because I fear that you may have found some subsequent inconveniences from your overturn, which you might not be aware of at first.

The curtain of the political theatre was partly drawn up the day before yesterday, and exhibited a scene which the public in general did not expect; the Duke of Newcastle was declared First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, Mr. Fox Secretary of State in his room, and Mr. Henry Legge Chancellor of the Exchequer: The employments of Treasurer of the Navy, and Secretary at War, supposed to be vacant by the promotion of Mr. Fox and Mr. Legge, were to be kept 'in petto' till the dissolution of this parliament, which will probably be next week, to avoid the expense and trouble of unnecessary re-elections; but it was generally supposed that Colonel Yorke, of The Hague, was to succeed Mr. Fox; and George Greenville, Mr. Legge. This scheme, had it taken place, you are, I believe aware, was more a temporary expedient, for securing the elections of the new parliament, and forming it, at its first meeting, to the interests and the inclinations of the Duke of Newcastle and the Chancellor, than a plan of administration either intended or wished to be permanent. This scheme was disturbed yesterday: Mr. Fox, who had sullenly accepted the seals the day before, more sullenly refused them yesterday. His object was to be First Commissioner of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and consequently to have a share in the election of the new parliament, and a much greater in the management of it when chosen.



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This necessary consequence of his view defeated it; and the Duke of Newcastle and the Chancellor chose to kick him upstairs into the Secretaryship of State, rather than trust him with either the election or the management of the new parliament. In this, considering their respective situations, they certainly acted wisely; but whether Mr. Fox has done so, or not, in refusing the seals, is a point which I cannot determine. If he is, as I presume he is, animated with revenge, and I believe would not be over scrupulous in the means of gratifying it, I should have thought he could have done it better, as Secretary of State, with constant admission into the closet, than as a private man at the head of an opposition. But I see all these things at too great a distance to be able to judge soundly of them. The true springs and motives of political measures are confined within a very narrow circle, and known to a very few; the good reasons alleged are seldom the true ones: The public commonly judges, or rather guesses, wrong, and I am now one of that public. I therefore recommend to you a prudent Pyrrhonism in all matters of state, until you become one of the wheels of them yourself, and consequently acquainted with the general motion, at least, of the others; for as to all the minute and secret springs, that contribute more or less to the whole machine, no man living ever knows them all, not even he who has the principal direction of it. As in the human body, there are innumerable little vessels and glands that have a good deal to do, and yet escape the knowledge of the most skillful anatomist; he will know more, indeed, than those who only see the exterior of our bodies, but he will never know all. This bustle, and these changes at court, far from having disturbed the quiet and security of your election, have, if possible, rather confirmed them; for the Duke of Newcastle (I must do him justice) has, in the kindest manner imaginable to you, wrote a letter to Mr. Eliot, to recommend to him the utmost care of your election.

Though the plan of administration is thus unsettled, mine, for my travels this summer, is finally settled; and I now communicate it to you that you may form your own upon it. I propose being at Spa on the 10th or 12th of May, and staying there till the 10th of July. As there will be no mortal there during my stay, it would be both unpleasant and unprofitable to you to be shut up *tete-a-fete* with me the whole time; I should therefore think it best for you not to come to me there till the last week in June. In the meantime, I suppose, that by the middle of April, you will think that you have had enough of Manheim, Munich, or Ratisbon, and that district. Where would you choose to go then? For I leave you absolutely your choice. Would you go to Dresden for a month or six weeks? That is a good deal out of your way, and I am not sure that Sir Charles will be there by that time. Or would you rather take Bonn in your way, and pass the time till we meet at The Hague? From Manheim you may have a great many good letters of recommendation to the court of Bonn; which court, and it's Elector, in one light or another, are worth your seeing.



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From thence, your journey to The Hague will be but a short one; and you would arrive there at that season of the year when The Hague is, in my mind, the most agreeable, smiling scene in Europe; and from The Hague you would have but three very easy days journey to me at Spa. Do as you like; for, as I told you before, 'Ella e assolutamente padrone'. But lest you should answer that you desire to be determined by me, I will eventually tell you my opinion. I am rather inclined to the latter plan; I mean that of your coming to Bonn, staying there according as you like it, and then passing the remainder of your time, that is May and June, at The Hague. Our connection and transactions with the, Republic of the United Provinces are such, that you cannot be too well acquainted with that constitution, and with those people. You have established good acquaintances there, and you have been 'fetoie' round by the foreign ministers; so that you will be there 'en pais connu'. Moreover, you have not seen the Stadtholder, the 'Gouvernante', nor the court there, which 'a bon compte' should be seen. Upon the whole, then, you cannot, in my opinion, pass the months of May and June more agreeably, or more usefully, than at The Hague. But, however, if you have any other, plan that you like better, pursue it: Only let me know what you intend to do, and I shall most cheerfully agree to it.

The parliament will be dissolved in about ten days, and the writs for the election of the new one issued out immediately afterward; so that, by the end of next month, you may depend upon being 'Membre de la chambre basse'; a title that sounds high in foreign countries, and perhaps higher than it deserves. I hope you will add a better title to it in your own, I mean that of a good speaker in parliament: you have, I am sure, all, the materials necessary for it, if you will but put them together and adorn them. I spoke in parliament the first month I was in it, and a month before I was of age; and from the day I was elected, till the day that I spoke. I am sure I thought nor dreamed of nothing but speaking. The first time, to say the truth, I spoke very indifferently as to the matter; but it passed tolerably, in favor of the spirit with which I uttered it, and the words in which I had dressed it. I improved by degrees, till at last it did tolerably well. The House, it must be owned, is always extremely indulgent to the two or three first attempts of a young speaker; and if they find any degree of common sense in what he says, they make great allowances for his inexperience, and for the concern which they suppose him to be under. I experienced that indulgence; for had I not been a young member, I should certainly have been, as I own I deserved, reprimanded by the House for some strong and indiscreet things that I said. Adieu! It is indeed high time.

LETTER CC

London, March 26, 1754



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My dear friend: Yesterday I received your letter of the 15th from Manheim, where I find you have been received in the usual gracious manner; which I hope you return in a *graceful* one. As this is a season of great devotion and solemnity in all Catholic countries, pray inform yourself of, and constantly attend to, all their silly and pompous church ceremonies; one ought to know them. I am very glad that you wrote the letter to Lord-----, which, in every different case that can possibly be supposed, was, I am sure, both a decent and a prudent step. You will find it very difficult, whenever we meet, to convince me that you could have any good reasons for not doing it; for I will, for argument's sake, suppose, what I cannot in reality believe, that he has both said and done the worst he could, of and by you; What then? How will you help yourself? Are you in a situation to hurt him? Certainly not; but he certainly is in a situation to hurt you. Would you show a sullen, pouting, impotent resentment? I hope not; leave that silly, unavailing sort of resentment to women, and men like them, who are always guided by humor, never by reason and prudence. That pettish, pouting conduct is a great deal too young, and implies too little knowledge of the world, for one who has seen so much of it as you have. Let this be one invariable rule of your conduct,—Never to show the least symptom of resentment which you cannot to a certain degree gratify; but always to smile, where you cannot strike. There would be no living in courts, nor indeed in the world if one could not conceal, and even dissemble, the just causes of resentment, which one meets with every day in active and busy life. Whoever cannot master his humor enough, 'pour faire bonne mine a mauvais jeu', should leave the world, and retire to some hermitage, in an unfrequented desert. By showing an unavailing and sullen resentment, you authorize the resentment of those who can hurt you and whom you cannot hurt; and give them that very pretense, which perhaps they wished for, of breaking with, and injuring you; whereas the contrary behavior would lay them under, the restraints of decency at least; and either shackle or expose their malice. Besides, captiousness, sullenness, and pouting are most exceedingly illiberal and vulgar. 'Un honnete homme ne les connoit point'.

I am extremely glad to hear that you are soon to have Voltaire at Manheim: immediately upon his arrival, pray make him a thousand compliments from me. I admire him most exceedingly; and, whether as an epic, dramatic, or lyric poet, or prose-writer, I think I justly apply to him the 'Nil molitur inepte'. I long to read his own correct edition of 'Les Annales de l'Empire', of which the 'Abrege Chronologique de l'Histoire Universelle', which I have read, is, I suppose, a stolen and imperfect part; however, imperfect as it is, it has explained to me that chaos of history, of seven hundred years



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more clearly than any other book had done before. You judge very rightly that I love 'le style le r et fleuri'. I do, and so does everybody who has any parts and taste. It should, I confess, be more or less 'fleuri', according to the subject; but at the same time I assert that there is no subject that may not properly, and which ought not to be adorned, by a certain elegance and beauty of style. What can be more adorned than Cicero's Philosophical Works? What more than Plato's? It is their eloquence only that has preserved and transmitted them down to us through so many centuries; for the philosophy of them is wretched, and the reasoning part miserable. But eloquence will always please, and has always pleased. Study it therefore; make it the object of your thoughts and attention. Use yourself to relate elegantly; that is a good step toward speaking well in parliament. Take some political subject, turn it in your thoughts, consider what may be said both for and against it, then put those arguments into writing, in the most correct and elegant English you can. For instance, a standing army, a place bill, *etc.*; as to the former, consider, on one side, the dangers arising to a free country from a great standing military force; on the other side, consider the necessity of a force to repel force with. Examine whether a standing army, though in itself an evil, may not, from circumstances, become a necessary evil, and preventive of greater dangers. As to the latter, consider, how far places may bias and warp the conduct of men, from the service of their country, into an unwarrantable complaisance to the court; and, on the other hand, consider whether they can be supposed to have that effect upon the conduct of people of probity and property, who are more solidly interested in the permanent good of their country, than they can be in an uncertain and precarious employment. Seek for, and answer in your own mind, all the arguments that can be urged on either side, and write them down in an elegant style. This will prepare you for debating, and give you an habitual eloquence; for I would not give a farthing for a mere holiday eloquence, displayed once or twice in a session, in a set declamation, but I want an every-day, ready, and habitual eloquence, to adorn extempore and debating speeches; to make business not only clear but agreeable, and to please even those whom you cannot inform, and who do not desire to be informed. All this you may acquire, and make habitual to you, with as little trouble as it cost you to dance a minuet as well as you do. You now dance it mechanically and well without thinking of it.

I am surprised that you found but one letter for me at Manheim, for you ought to have found four or five; there are as many lying for you at your banker's at Berlin, which I wish you had, because I always endeavored to put something into them, which, I hope, may be of use to you.



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When we meet at Spa, next July, we must have a great many serious conversations; in which I will pour out all my experience of the world, and which, I hope, you will trust to, more than to your own young notions of men and things. You will, in time, discover most of them to have been erroneous; and, if you follow them long, you will perceive your error too late; but if you will be led by a guide, who, you are sure, does not mean to mislead you, you will unite two things, seldom united, in the same person; the vivacity and spirit of youth, with the caution and experience of age.

Last Saturday, Sir Thomas Robinson, who had been the King's Minister at Vienna, was declared Secretary of State for the southern department, Lord Holderness having taken the northern. Sir Thomas accepted it unwillingly, and, as I hear, with a promise that he shall not keep it long. Both his health and spirits are bad, two very disqualifying circumstances for that employment; yours, I hope, will enable you, some time or other, to go through with it. In all events, aim at it, and if you fail or fall, let it at least be said of you, 'Magnis tamen excidit ausis'. Adieu.

LETTER CCI

London, April 5, 1754

My dear friend: I received yesterday your letter of the 20th March, from Manheim, with the inclosed for Mr. Eliot; it was a very proper one, and I have forwarded it to him by Mr. Harte, who sets out for Cornwall tomorrow morning.

I am very glad that you use yourself to translations; and I do not care of what, provided you study the correctness and elegance of your style. The "Life of Sextus Quintus" is the best book of the innumerable books written by Gregorio Leti, whom the Italians, very justly, call 'Leti caca libro'. But I would rather that you chose some pieces of oratory for your translations, whether ancient or modern, Latin or French, which would give you a more oratorical train of thoughts and turn of expression. In your letter to me you make use of two words, which though true and correct English, are, however, from long disuse, become inelegant, and seem now to be stiff, formal, and in some degree scriptural; the first is the word *namely*, which you introduce thus, *you inform me of A very agreeable piece of NEWS, namely, that my election is secured*. Instead of *namely*, I would always use *which is*, or *that is*, that my-election is secured. The other word is, *mine own inclinations*: this is certainly correct before a subsequent word that begins with a vowel; but it is too correct, and is now disused as too formal, notwithstanding the hiatus occasioned by *my own*. Every language has its peculiarities; they are established by usage, and whether right or wrong, they must be complied



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with. I could instance many very absurd ones in different languages; but so authorized by the 'jus et norma loquendi', that they must be submitted to. *Namely*, and *to wit*, are very good words in themselves, and contribute to clearness more than the relatives which we now substitute in their room; but, however, they cannot be used, except in a sermon or some very grave and formal compositions. It is with language as with manners they are both established by the usage of people of fashion; it must be imitated, it must be complied with. Singularity is only pardonable in old age and retirement; I may now be as singular as I please, but you may not. We will, when we meet, discuss these and many other points, provided you will give me attention and credit; without both which it is to no purpose to advise either you or anybody else.

I want to know your determination, where you intend to (if I may use that expression) *while* away your time till the last week in June, when we are to meet at Spa; I continue rather in the opinion which I mentioned to you formerly, in favor of The Hague; but however, I have not the least objection to Dresden, or to any other place that you may like better. If you prefer the Dutch scheme, you take Treves and Coblenz in your way, as also Dusseldorp: all which places I think you have not yet seen. At Manheim you may certainly get good letters of recommendation to the courts of the two Electors of Treves and Cologne, whom you are yet unacquainted with; and I should wish you to know them all; for, as I have often told you, 'olim haec meminisse juvabit'. There is an utility in having seen what other people have seen, and there is a justifiable pride in having seen what others have not seen. In the former case, you are equal to others; in the latter, superior. As your stay abroad will not now be very long, pray, while it lasts, see everything and everybody you can, and see them well, with care and attention. It is not to be conceived of what advantage it is to anybody to have seen more things, people, and countries, than other people in general have; it gives them a credit, makes them referred to, and they become the objects of the attention of the company. They are not out in any part of polite conversation; they are acquainted with all the places, customs, courts, and families that are likely to be mentioned; they are, as Monsieur de Maupertuis justly observes, 'de tous les pays, comme les savans, sont de tous les tems'. You have, fortunately, both those advantages: the only remaining point is 'de savoir les faire valoir', for without that one may as well not have them. Remember that very true maxim of La Bruyere's, 'Qu'on ne vaut dans se monde que ce qu'on veut valoir'. The knowledge of the world will teach you to what degree you ought to show 'que vous valez'. One must by no means, on one hand, be indifferent about it; as, on the other, one must not display it with affectation, and in an overbearing manner, but, of the two, it is better to show too much than too little. Adieu.



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LETTER CCII

Bath, November 27, 1754

My dear friend: I heartily congratulate you upon the loss of your political maidenhead, of which I have received from others a very good account. I hear that you were stopped for some time in your career; but recovered breath, and finished it very well. I am not surprised, nor indeed concerned, at your accident; for I remember the dreadful feeling of that situation in myself; and as it must require a most uncommon share of impudence to be unconcerned upon such an occasion, I am not sure that I am not rather glad you stopped. You must therefore now think of hardening yourself by degrees, by using yourself insensibly to the sound of your own voice, and to the act (trifling as it seems) of rising up and sitting down. Nothing will contribute so much to this as committee work of elections at night, and of private bills in the morning. There, asking short questions, moving for witnesses to be called in, and all that kind of small ware, will soon fit you to set up for yourself. I am told that you are much mortified at your accident, but without reason; pray, let it rather be a spur than a curb to you. Persevere, and, depend upon it, it will do well at last. When I say persevere, I do not mean that you should speak every day, nor in every debate. Moreover, I would not advise you to speak again upon public matters for some time, perhaps a month or two; but I mean, never lose view of that great object; pursue it with discretion, but pursue it always. 'Pelotez en attendant partie'. You know I have always told you that speaking in public was but a knack, which those who apply to the most will succeed in the best. Two old members, very good judges, have sent me compliments upon this occasion; and have assured me that they plainly find it will do; though they perceived, from that natural confusion you were in, that you neither said all, nor perhaps what you intended. Upon the whole, you have set out very well, and have sufficient encouragement to go on. Attend; therefore, assiduously, and observe carefully all that passes in the House; for it is only knowledge and experience that can make a debater. But if you still want comfort, Mrs.-----I hope, will administer it to you; for, in my opinion she may, if she will, be very comfortable; and with women, as with speaking in parliament, perseverance will most certainly prevail sooner or later.

What little I have played for here, I have won; but that is very far from the considerable sum which you heard of. I play every evening, from seven till ten, at a crown whist party, merely to save my eyes from reading or writing for three hours by candle-light. I propose being in town the week after next, and hope to carry back with me much more health than I brought down here. Good-night.

[Mr. Stanhope being returned to England, and seeing his father almost every day, is the occasion of an interruption of two years in their correspondence.]



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ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

According as their interest prompts them to wish
Acquainted with books, and an absolute stranger to men
Affectation of singularity or superiority
All have senses to be gratified
Bolingbroke
Business by no means forbids pleasures
Clamorers triumph
Doing anything that will deserve to be written
Ears to hear, but not sense enough to judge
Ere tittering youth shall Shove you from the Stage
Frederick
Good manners are the settled medium of social life
Good reasons alleged are seldom the true ones
Holiday eloquence
I know myself (no common piece of knowledge, let me tell you)
Indolence
INTOLERATION in religious, and inhospitality in civil matters
Kick him upstairs
King Louis XIV
Look upon indolence as a sort of *suicide*
Manner is almost everything, in everything
Many are very willing, and very few able
Perseverance has surprising effects
Pettish, pouting conduct is a great deal too young
Reason, which always ought to direct mankind, seldom does
Rendering Jews capable of being naturalized
Rochefoucault
Singularity is only pardonable in old age
Smile, where you cannot strike
To govern mankind, one must not overrate them
Too like, and too exact a picture of human nature
Vanity, interest, and absurdity, always display
Warm and young thanks, not old and cold ones
Writing anything that may deserve to be read
Young men are as apt to think themselves wise enough
Young people are very apt to overrate both men and things