

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1756-58 eBook

Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman, 1756-58 by Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield

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LETTER CCIII

Bath, November 15, 1756

My dear friend: I received yours yesterday morning together with the Prussian, papers, which I have read with great attention. If courts could blush, those of Vienna and Dresden ought, to have their falsehoods so publicly, and so undeniably exposed. The former will, I presume, next year, employ an hundred thousand men, to answer the accusation; and if the Empress of the two Russias is pleased to argue in the same cogent manner, their logic will be too strong for all the King of Prussia's rhetoric. I well remember the treaty so often referred to in those pieces, between the two Emperesses, in 1746. The King was strongly pressed by the Empress Queen to accede to it. Wassenaer communicated it to me for that purpose. I asked him if there were no secret articles; suspecting that there were some, because the ostensible treaty was a mere harmless, defensive one. He assured me that there were none. Upon which I told him, that as the King had already defensive alliances with those two Emperesses, I did not see of what use his accession to this treaty, if merely a defensive one, could be, either to himself or the other contracting parties; but that, however, if it was only desired as an indication of the King's good will, I would give him an act by which his Majesty should accede to that treaty, as far, but no further, as at present he stood engaged to the respective Emperesses by the defensive alliances subsisting with each. This offer by no means satisfied him; which was a plain proof of the secret articles now brought to light, and into which the court of Vienna hoped to draw us. I told Wassenaer so, and after that I heard no more of his invitation.

I am still bewildered in the changes at Court, of which I find that all the particulars are not yet fixed. Who would have thought, a year ago, that Mr. Fox, the Chancellor, and the Duke of Newcastle, should all three have quitted together? Nor can I yet account for it; explain it to me if you can. I cannot see, neither, what the Duke of Devonshire and Fox, whom I looked upon as intimately united, can have quarreled about, with relation to the Treasury; inform me, if you know. I never doubted of the prudent versatility of your Vicar of Bray: But I am surprised at O'Brien Windham's going out of the Treasury, where I should have thought that the interest of his brother-in-law, George Grenville, would have kept him.

Having found myself rather worse, these two or three last days, I was obliged to take some ipecacuanha last night; and, what you will think odd, for a vomit, I brought it all up again in about an hour, to my great satisfaction and emolument, which is seldom the case in restitutions.

You did well to go to the Duke of Newcastle, who, I suppose, will have no more levees; however, go from time to time, and leave your name at his door, for you have obligations to him. Adieu.



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LETTER CCIV

Bath, December 14, 1756.

My dear friend: What can I say to you from this place, where *every day is still but as the first*, though by no means so agreeably passed, as Anthony describes his to have been? The same nothings succeed one another every day with me, as, regularly and uniformly as the hours of the day. You will think this tiresome, and so it is; but how can I help it? Cut off from society by my deafness, and dispirited by my ill health, where could I be better? You will say, perhaps, where could you be worse? Only in prison, or the galleys, I confess. However, I see a period to my stay here; and I have fixed, in my own mind, a time for my return to London; not invited there by either politics or pleasures, to both which I am equally a stranger, but merely to be at home; which, after all, according to the vulgar saying, is home, be it ever so homely.

The political settlement, as it is called, is, I find, by no means settled; Mr. Fox, who took this place in his way to his brother's, where he intended to pass a month, was stopped short by an express, which he received from his connection, to come to town immediately; and accordingly he set out from hence very early, two days ago. I had a very long conversation with him, in which he was, seemingly at least, very frank and communicative; but still I own myself in the dark. In those matters, as in most others, half knowledge (and mine is at most that) is more apt to lead one into error, than to carry one to truth; and our own vanity contributes to the seduction. Our conjectures pass upon us for truths; we will know what we do not know, and often, what we cannot know: so mortifying to our pride is the bare suspicion of ignorance!

It has been reported here that the Empress of Russia is dying; this would be a fortunate event indeed for the King of Prussia, and necessarily produce the neutrality and inaction, at least, of that great power; which would be a heavy weight taken out of the opposite scale to the King of Prussia. The 'Augustissima' must, in that case, do all herself; for though France will, no doubt, promise largely, it will, I believe, perform but scantily; as it desires no better than that the different powers of Germany should tear one another to pieces.

I hope you frequent all the courts: a man should make his face familiar there. Long habit produces favor insensibly; and acquaintance often does more than friendship, in that climate where 'les beaux sentimens' are not the natural growth.

Adieu! I am going to the ball, to save my eyes from reading, and my mind from thinking.



LETTERS TO HIS SON

LETTER CCV

Bath, January 12, 1757



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My dear friend: I waited quietly, to see when either your leisure, or your inclinations, would allow you to honor me with a letter; and at last I received one this morning, very near a fortnight after you went from hence. You will say, that you had no news to write me; and that probably may be true; but, without news, one has always something to say to those with whom one desires to have anything to do.

Your observation is very just with regard to the King of Prussia, whom the most august House of Austria would most unquestionably have poisoned a century or two ago. But now that 'terras Astraea reliquit', kings and princes die of natural deaths; even war is pusillanimously carried on in this degenerate age; quarter is given; towns are taken, and the people spared: even in a storm, a woman can hardly hope for the benefit of a rape. Whereas (such was the humanity of former days) prisoners were killed by thousands in cold blood, and the generous victors spared neither man, woman, nor child. Heroic actions of this kind were performed at the taking of Magdebourg. The King of Prussia is certainly now in a situation that must soon decide his fate, and make him Caesar or nothing. Notwithstanding the march of the Russians, his great danger, in my mind, lies westward. I have no great notions of Apraxin's abilities, and I believe many a Prussian colonel would out-general him. But Brown, Piccolomini, Lucchese, and many other veteran officers in the Austrian troops, are respectable enemies.

Mr. Pitt seems to me to have almost as many enemies to encounter as his Prussian Majesty. The late Ministry, and the Duke's party, will, I presume, unite against him and his Tory friends; and then quarrel among themselves again. His best, if not his only chance of supporting himself would be, if he had credit enough in the city, to hinder the advancing of the money to any administration but his own; and I have met with some people here who think that he has.

I have put off my journey from hence for a week, but no longer. I find I still gain some strength and some flesh here, and therefore I will not cut while the run is for me.

By a letter which I received this morning from Lady Allen, I observe that you are extremely well with her; and it is well for you to be so, for she is an excellent and warm puff.

'A propos' (an expression which is commonly used to introduce whatever is unrelative to it) you should apply to some of Lord Holderness's people, for the perusal of Mr. Cope's letters. It would not be refused you; and the sooner you have them the better. I do not mean them as models for your manner of writing, but as outlines of the matter you are to write upon.

If you have not read Hume's "Essays" read them; they are four very small volumes; I have just finished, and am extremely pleased with them. He thinks impartially, deep, often new; and, in my mind, commonly just. Adieu.



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LETTER CCVI

Blackheath, September 17, 1757

My dear friend: Lord Holderness has been so kind as to communicate to me all the letters which he has received from you hitherto, dated the 15th, 19th, 23d, and 26th August; and also a draught of that which he wrote to you the 9th instant. I am very well pleased with all your letters; and, what is better, I can tell you that the King is so too; and he said, but three days ago, to Monsieur Munchausen, *he* (meaning you) *sets out very well, and I like his letters; provided that, like most of my English ministers abroad, he does not grow idle hereafter.* So that here is both praise to flatter, and a hint to warn you. What Lord Holderness recommends to you, being by the King's order, intimates also a degree of approbation; for the *Blacker ink, and the Larger character*, show, that his Majesty, whose eyes are grown weaker, intends to read all your letters himself. Therefore, pray do not neglect to get the blackest ink you can; and to make your secretary enlarge his hand, though 'd'ailleurs' it is a very good one.

Had I been to wish an advantageous situation for you, and a good debut in it, I could not have wished you either better than both have hitherto proved. The rest will depend entirely upon yourself; and I own I begin to have much better hopes than I had; for I know, by my own experience, that the more one works, the more willing one is to work. We are all, more or less, 'des animaux d'habitude'. I remember very well, that when I was in business, I wrote four or five hours together every day, more willingly than I should now half an hour; and this is most certain, that when a man has applied himself to business half the day, the other half, goes off the more cheerfully and agreeably. This I found so sensibly, when I was at The Hague, that I never tasted company so well nor was so good company myself, as at the suppers of my post days. I take Hamburg now to be 'le centre du refuge Allemand'. If you have any Hanover 'refugies' among them, pray take care to be particularly attentive to them. How do you like your house? Is it a convenient one? Have the 'Casserolles' been employed in it yet? You will find 'les petits soupers fins' less expensive, and turn to better account, than large dinners for great companies.

I hope you have written to the Duke of Newcastle; I take it for granted that you have to all your brother ministers of the northern department. For God's sake be diligent, alert, active, and indefatigable in your business. You want nothing but labor and industry to be, one day, whatever you please, in your own way.



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We think and talk of nothing here but Brest, which is universally supposed to be the object of our great expedition. A great and important object it is. I suppose the affair must be brusque, or it will not do. If we succeed, it will make France put some water to its wine. As for my own private opinion, I own I rather wish than hope success. However, should our expedition fail, 'Magnis tamen excidit ausis', and that will be better than our late languid manner of making war.

To mention a person to you whom I am very indifferent about, I mean myself, I vegetate still just as I did when we parted; but I think I begin to be sensible of the autumn of the year; as well as of the autumn of my own life. I feel an internal awkwardness, which, in about three weeks, I shall carry with me to the Bath, where I hope to get rid of it, as I did last year. The best cordial I could take, would be to hear, from time to time, of your industry and diligence; for in that case I should consequently hear of your success. Remember your own motto, 'Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia'. Nothing is truer. Yours.

LETTER CCVII

Blackheath, September 23, 1757

My dear friend: I received but the day before yesterday your letter of the 3d, from the headquarters at Selsingen; and, by the way, it is but the second that I have received from you since your arrival at Hamburg. Whatever was the cause of your going to the army, I approve of the effect; for I would have you, as much as possible, see everything that is to be seen. That is the true useful knowledge, which informs and improves us when we are young, and amuses us and others when we are old; 'Olim haec meminisse juvabit'. I could wish that you would (but I know you will not) enter in a book, a short note only, of whatever you see or hear, that is very remarkable: I do not mean a German *album* stuffed with people's names, and Latin sentences; but I mean such a book, as, if you do not keep now, thirty years hence you would give a great deal of money to have kept. 'A propos de bottes', for I am told he always wears his; was his Royal Highness very gracious to you, or not? I have my doubts about it. The neutrality which he has concluded with Marechal de Richelieu, will prevent that bloody battle which you expected; but what the King of Prussia will say to it is another point. He was our only ally; at present, probably we have not one in the world. If the King of Prussia can get at Monsieur de Soubize's, and the Imperial army, before other troops have joined them, I think he will beat them but what then? He has three hundred thousand men to encounter afterward. He must submit; but he may say with truth, 'Si Pergama dextra defendi potuissent'. The late action between the Prussians and Russians has only thinned the human species, without giving either party a victory; which is plain by each party's claiming it. Upon my word, our species will pay very dear for the quarrels and ambition of a few, and those by no means the most valuable part of it. If the many

were wiser than they are, the few must be quieter, and would perhaps be juster and better than they are.



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Hamburg, I find, swarms with Grafs, Graffins, Fursts, and Furstins, Hocheits, and Durchlaughticheits. I am glad of it, for you must necessarily be in the midst of them; and I am still more glad, that, being in the midst of them, you must necessarily be under some constraint of ceremony; a thing which you do not love, but which is, however, very useful.

I desired you in my last, and I repeat it again in this, to give me an account of your private and domestic life.

How do you pass your evenings? Have they, at Hamburg, what are called at Paris 'des Maisons', where one goes without ceremony, sups or not, as one pleases? Are you adopted in any society? Have you any rational brother ministers, and which? What sort of things are your operas? In the tender, I doubt they do not excel; for 'mein lieber schatz', and the other tendernesses of the Teutonic language, would, in my mind, sound but indifferently, set to soft music; for the bravura parts, I have a great opinion of them; and 'das, der donner dich erschlage', must no doubt, make a tremendously fine piece of 'recitativo', when uttered by an angry hero, to the rumble of a whole orchestra, including drums, trumpets, and French horns. Tell me your whole allotment of the day, in which I hope four hours, at least, are sacred to writing; the others cannot be better employed than in *Liberal* pleasures. In short, give me a full account of yourself, in your un-ministerial character, your incognito, without your 'fiocchi'. I love to see those, in whom I interest myself, in their undress, rather than in gala; I know them better so. I recommend to you, 'etiam atque etiam', method and order in everything you undertake. Do you observe it in your accounts? If you do not, you will be a beggar, though you were to receive the appointments of a Spanish Ambassador extraordinary, which are a thousand pistoles a month; and in your ministerial business, if you have no regular and stated hours for such and such parts of it, you will be in the hurry and confusion of the Duke of N-----, doing everything by halves, and nothing well, nor soon. I suppose you 'have been feasted through the Corps diplomatique at Hamburg, excepting Monsieur Champeaux; with whom, however, I hope you live 'poliment et galamment', at all third places.

Lord Loudon is much blamed here for his 'retraite des dix milles', for it is said that he had above that number, and might consequently have acted offensively, instead of retreating; especially as his retreat was contrary to the unanimous opinion (as it is now said) of the council of war. In our Ministry, I suppose, things go pretty quietly, for the D. of N. has not plagued me these two months. When his Royal Highness comes over, which I take it for granted he will do very soon, the great push will, I presume, be made at his Grace and Mr. Pitt; but without effect if they agree, as it is visibly their interest to do; and, in that case, their parliamentary strength



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will support them against all attacks. You may remember, I said at first, that the popularity would soon be on the side of those who opposed the popular Militia Bill; and now it appears so with a vengeance, in almost every county in England, by the tumults and insurrections of the people, who swear that they will not be enlisted. That silly scheme must therefore be dropped, as quietly as may be. Now that I have told you all that I know, and almost all that I think, I wish you a good supper and a good-night.

LETTER CCVIII

Blackheath, September 30, 1757

My dear friend: I have so little to do, that I am surprised how I can find time to write to you so often. Do not stare at the seeming paradox; for it is an undoubted truth, that the less one has to do, the less time one finds to do it in. One yawns, one procrastinates, one can do it when one will, and therefore one seldom does it at all; whereas those who have a great deal of business, must (to use a vulgar expression) buckle to it; and then they always find time enough to do it in. I hope your own experience has by this time convinced you of this truth.

I received your last of the 8th. It is now quite over with a very great man, who will still be a very great man, though a very unfortunate one. He has qualities of the mind that put him above the reach of these misfortunes; and if reduced, as perhaps he may, to the 'marche' of Brandenburg, he will always find in himself the comfort, and with all the world the credit, of a philosopher, a legislator, a patron, and a professor of arts and sciences. He will only lose the fame of a conqueror; a cruel fame, that arises from the destruction of the human species. Could it be any satisfaction to him to know, I could tell him, that he is at this time the most popular man in this kingdom; the whole nation being enraged at that neutrality which hastens and completes his ruin. Between you and me, the King was not less enraged at it himself, when he saw the terms of it; and it affected his health more than all that had happened before. Indeed it seems to me a voluntary concession of the very worst that could have happened in the worst event. We now begin to think that our great and secret expedition is intended for Martinico and St. Domingo; if that be true, and we succeed in the attempt, we shall recover, and the French lose, one of the most valuable branches of commerce—I mean sugar. The French now supply all the foreign markets in Europe with that commodity; we only supply ourselves with it. This would make us some amends for our ill luck, or ill conduct in North America; where Lord Loudon, with twelve thousand men, thought himself no match for the French with but seven; and Admiral Holborne, with seventeen ships of the line, declined attacking the French, because they had eighteen, and a greater weight of *Metal*, according to the new sea-phrase, which

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was unknown to Blake. I hear that letters have been sent to both with very severe reprimands. I am told, and I believe it is true, that we are negotiating with the Corsican, I will not say rebels, but asserters of their natural rights; to receive them, and whatever form of government they think fit to establish, under our protection, upon condition of their delivering up to us Port Ajaccio; which may be made so strong and so good a one, as to be a full equivalent for the loss of Port Mahon. This is, in my mind, a very good scheme; for though the Corsicans are a parcel of cruel and perfidious rascals, they will in this case be tied down to us by their own interest and their own danger; a solid security with knaves, though none with fools. His Royal Highness the Duke is hourly expected here: his arrival will make some bustle; for I believe it is certain that he is resolved to make a push at the Duke of N., Pitt and Co.; but it will be ineffectual, if they continue to agree, as, to my *certain knowledge*, they do at present. This parliament is theirs, 'caetera quis nescit'?

Now that I have told you all that I know or have heard, of public matters, let us talk of private ones that more nearly and immediately concern us. Admit me to your fire-side, in your little room; and as you would converse with me there, write to me for the future from thence. Are you completely 'nippe' yet? Have you formed what the world calls connections? that is, a certain number of acquaintances whom, from accident or choice, you frequent more than others: Have you either fine or well-bred women there? 'Y a-t-il quelque bon ton'? All fat and fair, I presume; too proud and too cold to make advances, but, at the same time, too well-bred and too warm to reject them, when made by 'un honnete homme avec des manieres'.

Mr.-----is to be married, in about a month, to Miss-----. I am very glad of it; for, as he will never be a man of the world, but will always lead a domestic and retired life, she seems to have been made on purpose for him. Her natural turn is as grave and domestic as his; and she seems to have been kept by her aunts 'a la grace', instead of being raised in a hot bed, as most young ladies are of late. If, three weeks hence, you write him a short compliment of congratulation upon the occasion, he, his mother, and 'tutti quanti', would be extremely pleased with it. Those attentions are always kindly taken, and cost one nothing but pen, ink, and paper. I consider them as draughts upon good-breeding, where the exchange is always greatly in favor of the drawer. 'A propos' of exchange; I hope you have, with the help of your secretary, made yourself correctly master of all that sort of knowledge—Course of Exchange, 'Agie, Banco, Reiche-Thalers', down to 'Marien Groschen'. It is very little trouble to learn it; it is often of great use to know it.



Good-night, and God bless you!

LETTER CCIX



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Blackheath, October 10, 1757

My dear friend: It is not without some difficulty that I snatch this moment of leisure from my extreme idleness, to inform you of the present lamentable and astonishing state of affairs here, which you would know but imperfectly from the public papers, and but partially from your private correspondents. 'Or sus' then—Our invincible Armada, which cost at least half a million, sailed, as you know, some weeks ago; the object kept an inviolable secret: conjectures various, and expectations great. Brest was perhaps to be taken; but Martinico and St. Domingo, at least. When lo! the important island of Aix was taken without the least resistance, seven hundred men made prisoners, and some pieces of cannon carried off. From thence we sailed toward Rochfort, which it seems was our main object; and consequently one should have supposed that we had pilots on board who knew all the soundings and landing places there and thereabouts: but no; for General M-----t asked the Admiral if he could land him and the troops near Rochfort? The Admiral said, with great ease. To which the General replied, but can you take us on board again? To which the Admiral answered, that, like all naval operations, will depend upon the wind. If so, said the General, I'll e'en go home again. A Council of War was immediately called, where it was unanimously resolved, that it was *advisable* to return; accordingly they are returned. As the expectations of the whole nation had been raised to the highest pitch, the universal disappointment and indignation have arisen in proportion; and I question whether the ferment of men's minds was ever greater. Suspicions, you may be sure, are various and endless, but the most prevailing one is, that the tail of the Hanover neutrality, like that of a comet, extended itself to Rochfort. What encourages this suspicion is, that a French man of war went unmolested through our whole fleet, as it lay near Rochfort. Haddock's whole story is revived; Michel's representations are combined with other circumstances; and the whole together makes up a mass of discontent, resentment, and even fury, greater than perhaps was ever known in this country before. These are the facts, draw your own conclusions from them; for my part, I am lost in astonishment and conjectures, and do not know where to fix. My experience has shown me, that many things which seem extremely probable are not true: and many which seem highly improbable are true; so that I will conclude this article, as Josephus does almost every article of his history, with saying, *but of this every man will believe as he thinks proper*. What a disgraceful year will this be in the annals of this country! May its good genius, if ever it appears again, tear out those sheets, thus stained and blotted by our ignominy!

Our domestic affairs are, as far as I know anything of them, in the same situation as when I wrote to you last; but they will begin to be in motion upon the approach of the session, and upon the return of the Duke, whose arrival is most impatiently expected by the mob of London; though not to strew flowers in his way.



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I leave this place next Saturday, and London the Saturday following, to be the next day at Bath. Adieu.

LETTER CCX

London, October 17, 1757.

My dear friend: Your last, of the 30th past, was a very good letter; and I will believe half of what you assure me, that you returned to the Landgrave's civilities. I cannot possibly go farther than half, knowing that you are not lavish of your words, especially in that species of eloquence called the adulatory. Do not use too much discretion in profiting of the Landgrave's naturalization of you; but go pretty often and feed with him. Choose the company of your superiors, whenever you can have it; that is the right and true pride. The mistaken and silly pride is, to *Primer* among inferiors.

Hear, O Israel! and wonder. On Sunday morning last, the Duke gave up his commission of Captain General and his regiment of guards. You will ask me *why?* I cannot tell you, but I will tell you the causes assigned; which, perhaps, are none of them the true ones. It is said that the King reproached him with having exceeded his powers in making the Hanover Convention, which his R. H. absolutely denied, and threw up thereupon. This is certain, that he appeared at the drawing-room at Kensington, last Sunday, after having quitted, and went straight to Windsor; where, his people say, that he intends to reside quietly, and amuse himself as a private man. But I conjecture that matters will soon be made up again, and that he will resume his employments. You will easily imagine the speculations this event has occasioned in the public; I shall neither trouble you nor myself with relating them; nor would this sheet of paper, or even a quire more, contain them. Some refine enough to suspect that it is a concerted quarrel, to justify *somebody to somebody*, with regard to the Convention; but I do not believe it.

His R. H.'s people load the Hanover Ministers, and more particularly our friend Munchausen here, with the whole blame; but with what degree of truth I know not. This only is certain, that the whole negotiation of that affair was broached and carried on by the Hanover Ministers and Monsieur Stemberg at Vienna, absolutely unknown to the English Ministers, till it was executed. This affair combined (for people will combine it) with the astonishing return of our great armament, not only '*re infecta*', but even '*intentata*', makes such a jumble of reflections, conjectures, and refinements, that one is weary of hearing them. Our Tacituses and Machiavels go deep, suspect the worst, and, perhaps, as they often do, overshoot the mark. For my own part, I fairly confess that I am bewildered, and have not certain '*postulata*' enough, not only to found any opinion, but even to form conjectures upon: and this is the language which I think you should hold to all who speak to you, as to be sure



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all will, upon that subject. Plead, as you truly may, your own ignorance; and say, that it is impossible to judge of those nice points, at such a distance, and without knowing all circumstances, which you cannot be supposed to do. And as to the Duke's resignation; you should, in my opinion, say, that perhaps there might be a little too much vivacity in the case, but that, upon the whole, you make no doubt of the thing's being soon set right again; as, in truth, I dare say it will. Upon these delicate occasions, you must practice the ministerial shrugs and 'persiflage'; for silent gesticulations, which you would be most inclined to, would not be sufficient: something must be said, but that something, when analyzed, must amount to nothing. As for instance, 'Il est vrai qu'on s'y perd, mais que voulez-vous que je vous dise?—il y a bien du pour et du contre; un petit Resident ne voit gueres le fond du sac.—Il faut attendre.—Those sort of expletives are of infinite use; and nine people in ten think they mean something. But to the Landgrave of Hesse I think you would do well to say, in seeming confidence, that you have good reason to believe that the principal objection of his Majesty to the convention was that his Highness's interests, and the affair of his troops, were not sufficiently considered in it. To the Prussian Minister assert boldly that you know 'de science certaine', that the principal object of his Majesty's and his British Ministry's intention is not only to perform all their present engagements with his Master, but to take new and stronger ones for his support; for this is true—*at least at present*.

You did very well in inviting Comte Bothmar to dine with you. You see how minutely I am informed of your proceedings, though not from yourself. Adieu.

I go to Bath next Saturday; but direct your letters, as usual, to London.

LETTER CCXI

Bath, October 26, 1757.

My dear friend: I arrived here safe, but far from sound, last Sunday. I have consequently drunk these waters but three days, and yet I find myself something better for them. The night before I left London. I was for some hours at Newcastle House, where the letters, which came that morning, lay upon the table: and his Grace singled out yours with great approbation, and, at the same time, assured me of his Majesty's approbation, too. To these two approbations I truly add my own, which, 'sans vanite', may perhaps be near as good as the other two. In that letter you venture 'vos petits raisonnemens' very properly, and then as properly make an excuse for doing so. Go on so, with diligence, and you will be, what I began to despair of your ever being, *somebody*. I am persuaded, if you would own the truth, that you feel yourself now much better satisfied with yourself than you were while you did nothing.



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Application to business, attended with approbation and success, flatters and animates the mind: which, in idleness and inaction, stagnates and putrefies. I could wish that every rational man would, every night when he goes to bed, ask himself this question, What have I done to-day? Have I done anything that can be of use to myself or others? Have I employed my time, or have I squandered it? Have I lived out the day, or have I dozed it away in sloth and laziness? A thinking being must be pleased or confounded, according as he can answer himself these questions. I observe that you are in the secret of what is intended, and what Munchausen is gone to Stade to prepare; a bold and dangerous experiment in my mind, and which may probably end in a second volume to the "History of the Palatinate," in the last century. His Serene Highness of Brunswick has, in my mind, played a prudent and saving game; and I am apt to believe that the other Serene Highness, at Hamburg, is more likely to follow his example than to embark in the great scheme.

I see no signs of the Duke's resuming his employments; but on the contrary I am assured that his Majesty is coolly determined to do as well as he can without him. The Duke of Devonshire and Fox have worked hard to make up matters in the closet, but to no purpose. People's self-love is very apt to make them think themselves more necessary than they are: and I shrewdly suspect, that his Royal Highness has been the dupe of that sentiment, and was taken at his word when he least suspected it; like my predecessor, Lord Harrington, who when he went into the closet to resign the seals, had them not about him: so sure he thought himself of being pressed to keep them.

The whole talk of London, of this place, and of every place in the whole kingdom, is of our great, expensive, and yet fruitless expedition; I have seen an officer who was there, a very sensible and observing man: who told me that had we attempted Rochfort, the day after we took the island of Aix, our success had been infallible; but that, after we had sauntered (God knows why) eight or ten days in the island, he thinks the attempt would have been impracticable, because the French had in that time got together all the troops in that neighborhood, to a very considerable number. In short, there must have been some secret in that whole affair that has not yet transpired; and I cannot help suspecting that it came from Stade. We had not been successful there; and perhaps we were not desirous that an expedition, in which we had neither been concerned nor consulted, should prove so; M——t was *our* creature, and a word to the wise will sometimes go a great way. M——t is to have a public trial, from which the public expects great discoveries—Not I.



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Do you visit Soltikow, the Russian Minister, whose house, I am told, is the great scene of pleasures at Hamburg? His mistress, I take for granted, is by this time dead, and he wears some other body's shackles. Her death comes with regard to the King of Prussia, 'comme la moutarde apres diner'. I am curious to see what tyrant will succeed her, not by divine, but by military right; for, barbarous as they are now, and still more barbarous as they have been formerly, they have had very little regard to the more barbarous notion of divine, indefeasible, hereditary right.

The Praetorian bands, that is, the guards, I presume, have been engaged in the interests of the Imperial Prince; but still I think that little John of Archangel will be heard upon this occasion, unless prevented by a quieting draught of hemlock or nightshade; for I suppose they are not arrived to the politer and genteeler poisons of Acqua Tufana, —[Acqua Tufana, a Neapolitan slow poison, resembling clear water, and invented by a woman at Naples, of the name of Tufana.]—sugar-plums, *etc.*

Lord Halifax has accepted his old employment, with the honorary addition of the Cabinet Council. And so we heartily wish you a goodnight.

LETTER CCXII

Bath, November 4, 1757

My dear friend: The Sons of Britain, like those of Noah, must cover their parent's shame as well as they can; for to retrieve its honor is now too late. One would really think that our ministers and generals were all as drunk as the Patriarch was. However, in your situation, you must not be Cham; but spread your cloak over our disgrace, as far as it will go. M——t calls aloud for a public trial; and in that, and that only, the public agree with him. There will certainly be one, but of what kind is not yet fixed. Some are for a parliamentary inquiry, others for a martial one; neither will, in my opinion, discover the true secret; for a secret there most unquestionably is. Why we stayed six whole days in the island of Aix, mortal cannot imagine; which time the French employed, as it was obvious they would, in assembling their troops in the neighborhood of Rochfort, and making our attempt then really impracticable. The day after we had taken the island of Aix, your friend, Colonel Wolf, publicly offered to do the business with five hundred men and three ships only. In all these complicated political machines there are so many wheels, that it is always difficult, and sometimes impossible, to guess which of them gives direction to the whole. Mr. Pitt is convinced that the principal wheels, or, if you will, the spoke in his wheel, came from Stade. This is certain, at least that M——t was the man of confidence with that person. Whatever be the truth of the case, there is, to be sure, hitherto an 'hiatus valde deflendus'.



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The meeting of the parliament will certainly be very numerous, were it only from curiosity: but the majority on the side of the Court will, I dare say, be a great one. The people of the late Captain-general, however inclined to oppose, will be obliged to concur. Their commissions, which they have no desire to lose, will make them tractable; for those gentlemen, though all men of honor, are of Sosia's mind, 'que le vrai Amphitryon est celui ou l'on dine'. The Tories and the city have engaged to support Pitt; the Whigs, the Duke of Newcastle; the independent and the impartial, as you well know, are not worth mentioning. It is said that the Duke intends to bring the affair of his Convention into parliament, for his own justification; I can hardly believe it; as I cannot conceive that transactions so merely electoral can be proper objects of inquiry or deliberation for a British parliament; and, therefore, should such a motion be made, I presume it will be immediately quashed. By the commission lately given to Sir John Ligonier, of General and Commander-in-chief of all his Majesty's forces in Great Britain, the door seems to be not only shut, but bolted, against his Royal Highness's return; and I have good reason to be convinced that that breach is irreparable. The reports of changes in the Ministry, I am pretty sure, are idle and groundless. The Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pitt really agree very well; not, I presume, from any sentimental tenderness for each other, but from a sense that it is their mutual interest: and, as the late Captain-general's party is now out of the question, I do not see what should produce the least change.

The visit made lately to Berlin was, I dare say, neither a friendly nor an inoffensive one. The Austrians always leave behind them pretty lasting monuments of their visits, or rather visitations: not so much, I believe, from their thirst of glory, as from their hunger of prey.

This winter, I take for granted, must produce a piece of some kind or another; a bad one for us, no doubt, and yet perhaps better than we should get the year after. I suppose the King of Prussia is negotiating with France, and endeavoring by those means to get out of the scrape with the loss only of Silesia, and perhaps Halberstadt, by way of indemnification to Saxony; and, considering all circumstances, he would be well off upon those terms. But then how is Sweden to be satisfied? Will the Russians restore Memel? Will France have been at all this expense 'gratis'? Must there be no acquisition for them in Flanders? I dare say they have stipulated something of that sort for themselves, by the additional and secret treaty, which I know they made, last May, with the Queen of Hungary. Must we give up whatever the French please to desire in America, besides the cession of Minorca in perpetuity? I fear we must, or else raise twelve millions more next year, to as little purpose as we did this, and have consequently



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a worse peace afterward. I turn my eyes away, as much as I can, from this miserable prospect; but, as a citizen and member of society, it recurs to my imagination, notwithstanding all my endeavors to banish it from my thoughts. I can do myself nor my country no good; but I feel the wretched situation of both; the state of the latter makes me better bear that of the former; and, when I am called away from my station here, I shall think it rather (as Cicero says of Crassus) 'mors donata quam vita erepta'.

I have often desired, but in vain, the favor of being admitted into your private apartment at, Hamburg, and of being informed of your private life there. Your mornings, I hope and believe, are employed in business; but give me an account of the remainder of the day, which I suppose is, and ought to be, appropriated to amusements and pleasures. In what houses are you domestic? Who are so in yours? In short, let me in, and do not be denied to me.

Here I am, as usual, seeing few people, and hearing fewer; drinking the waters regularly to a minute, and am something the better for them. I read a great deal, and vary occasionally my dead company. I converse with grave folios in the morning, while my head is clearest and my attention strongest: I take up less severe quartos after dinner; and at night I choose the mixed company and amusing chit-chat of octavos and duodecimos. 'Ye tire parti de tout ce gue je puis'; that is my philosophy; and I mitigate, as much as I can, my physical ills by diverting my attention to other objects.

Here is a report that Admiral Holborne's fleet is destroyed, in a manner, by a storm: I hope it is not true, in the full extent of the report; but I believe it has suffered. This would fill up the measure of our misfortunes. Adieu.

LETTER CCXIII

Bath, November 20, 1757

My dear friend: I write to you now, because I love to write to you; and hope that my letters are welcome to you; for otherwise I have very little to inform you of. The King of Prussia's late victory you are better informed, of than we are here. It has given infinite joy to the unthinking public, who are not aware that it comes too late in the year and too late in the war, to be attended with any very great consequences. There are six or seven thousand of the human species less than there were a month ago, and that seems to me to be all. However, I am glad of it, upon account of the pleasure and the glory which it gives the King of Prussia, to whom I wish well as a man, more than as a king. And surely he is so great a man, that had he lived seventeen or eighteen hundred years ago, and his life been transmitted to us in a language that we could not very well

understand—I mean either Greek or Latin—we should have talked of him as we do now of your Alexanders, your Caesars, and others; with whom, I believe, we have but a very

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slight acquaintance. 'Au reste', I do not see that his affairs are much mended by this victory. The same combination of the great Powers of Europe against him still subsists, and must at last prevail. I believe the French army will melt away, as is usual, in Germany; but this army is extremely diminished by battles, fatigues, and desertion: and he will find great difficulties in recruiting it from his own already exhausted dominions. He must therefore, and to be sure will, negotiate privately with the French, and get better terms that way than he could any other.

The report of the three general officers, the Duke of Marlborough, Lord George Sackville, and General Waldegrave, was laid before the King last Saturday, after their having sat four days upon M——t's affair: nobody yet knows what it is; but it is generally believed that M——t will be brought to a court-martial. That you may not mistake this matter, as *most* people here do, I must explain to you, that this examination before the three above-mentioned general officers, was by no means a trial; but only a previous inquiry into his conduct, to see whether there was, or was not, cause to bring him to a regular trial before a court-martial. The case is exactly parallel to that of a grand jury; who, upon a previous and general examination, find, or do not find, a bill to bring the matter before the petty jury; where the fact is finally tried. For my own part, my opinion is fixed upon that affair: I am convinced that the expedition was to be defeated; and nothing that can appear before a court-martial can make me alter that opinion. I have been too long acquainted with human nature to have great regard for human testimony; and a very great degree of probability, supported by various concurrent circumstances, conspiring in one point, will have much greater weight with me, than human testimony upon oath, or even upon honor; both which I have frequently seen considerably warped by private views.

The parliament, which now stands prorogued to the first of next month, it is thought will be put off for some time longer, till we know in what light to lay before it the state of our alliance with Prussia, since the conclusion of the Hanover neutrality; which, if it did not quite break it, made at least a great flaw in it.

The birth-day was neither fine nor crowded; and no wonder, since the King was that day seventy-five. The old Court and the young one are much better together since the Duke's retirement; and the King has presented the Prince of Wales with a service of plate.

I am still *unwell*, though I drink these waters very regularly. I will stay here at least six weeks longer; where I am much quieter than I should be allowed to be in town. When things are in such a miserable situation as they are at present, I desire neither to be concerned nor consulted, still less quoted. Adieu!

LETTER CCXIV



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Bath, November 26, 1757

My dear friend: I received by the last mail your short account of the King of Prussia's victory; which victory, contrary to custom, turns out more complete than it was at first reported to be. This appears by an intercepted letter from Monsieur de St. Germain to Monsieur d'Affry, at The Hague, in which he tells him, 'Cette arme est entierement fondue', and lays the blame, very strongly, upon Monsieur de Soubize. But, be it greater or be it less, I am glad of it; because the King of Prussia (whom I honor and almost adore) I am sure is. Though 'd'ailleurs', between you and me, 'ou est-ce que cela mene'? To nothing, while that formidable union of three great Powers of Europe subsists against him, could that be any way broken, something might be done; without which nothing can. I take it for granted that the King of Prussia will do all he can to detach France. Why should not we, on our part, try to detach Russia? At least, in our present distress, 'omnia tentanda', and sometimes a lucky and unexpected hit turns up. This thought came into my head this morning; and I give it to you, not as a very probable scheme, but as a possible one, and consequently worth trying. The year of the Russian subsidies (nominally paid by the Court of Vienna, but really by France) is near expired. The former probably cannot, and perhaps the latter will not, renew them. The Court of Petersburg is beggarly, profuse, greedy, and by no means scrupulous. Why should not we step in there, and out-bid them? If we could, we buy a great army at once; which would give an entire new turn to the affairs of that part of the world at least. And if we bid handsomely, I do not believe the 'bonne foi' of that Court would stand in the way. Both our Court and our parliament would, I am very sure, give a very great sum, and very cheerfully, for this purpose. In the next place, Why should not you wriggle yourself, if possible, into so great a scheme? You are, no doubt, much acquainted with the Russian Resident, Soltikow; Why should you not sound him, as entirely from yourself, upon this subject? You may ask him, What, does your Court intend to go on next year in the pay of France, to destroy the liberties of all Europe, and throw universal monarchy into the hands of that already great and always ambitious Power? I know you think, or at least call yourselves, the allies of the Empress Queen; but is it not plain that she will be, in the first place, and you in the next, the dupes of France? At this very time you are doing the work of France and Sweden: and that for some miserable subsidies, much inferior to those which I am sure you might have, in a better cause, and more consistent with the true interest of Russia. Though not empowered, I know the manner of thinking of my own Court so well upon this subject, that I will venture to promise you much better terms than those you have now, without the least apprehensions of being disavowed. Should



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he listen to this, and what more may occur to you to say upon this subject, and ask you, 'En ecrirai je d ma cour? Answer him, 'Ecrivez, ecrivex, Monsieur hardiment'. Je prendrai tout cela sur moi'. Should this happen, as perhaps, and as I heartily wish it may, then write an exact relation of it to your own Court. Tell them that you thought the measure of such great importance, that you could not help taking this little step toward bringing it about; but that you mentioned it only as from yourself, and that you have not in the least committed them by it. If Soltikow lends himself in any degree to this, insinuate that, in the present situation of affairs, and particularly of the King's Electoral dominions, you are very sure that his Majesty would have 'une reconnoissance sans bornes' for *all* those by whose means so desirable a revival of an old and long friendship should be brought about. You will perhaps tell me that, without doubt, Mr. Keith's instructions are to the same effect: but I will answer you, that you can, *if you please*, do it better than Mr. Keith; and in the next place that, be all that as it will, it must be very advantageous to you at home, to show that you have at least a contriving head, and an alertness in business.

I had a letter by the last post, from the Duke of Newcastle, in which he congratulates me, in his own name and in Lord Hardwicke's, upon the approbation which your dispatches give, not only to them two, but to *others*. This success, so early, should encourage your diligence and rouse your ambition if you have any; you may go a great way, if you desire it, having so much time before you.

I send you here inclosed the copy of the Report of the three general officers, appointed to examine previously into the conduct of General M——t; it is ill written, and ill spelled, but no matter; you will decipher it. You will observe, by the tenor of it, that it points strongly to a court-martial; which, no doubt, will soon be held upon him. I presume there will be no shooting in the final sentence; but I do suppose there will be breaking, *etc.*

I have had some severe returns of my old complaints last week, and am still unwell; I cannot help it.

A friend of yours arrived here three days ago; she seems to me to be a serviceable strong-bodied bay mare, with black mane and tail; you easily guess who I mean. She is come with mamma, and without 'caro sposo'.

Adieu! my head will not let me go on longer.

LETTER CCXV

Bath, December 31, 1757

My dear friend: I have this moment received your letter of the 18th, with the inclosed papers. I cannot help observing that, till then, you never acknowledged the receipt of any one of my letters.

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I can easily conceive that party spirit, among your brother ministers at Hamburg, runs as high as you represent it, because I can easily believe the errors of the human mind; but at the same time I must observe, that such a spirit is the spirit of little minds and subaltern ministers, who think to atone by zeal for their want of merit and importance. The political differences of the several courts should never influence the personal behavior of their several ministers toward one another. There is a certain 'procede noble et galant', which should always be observed among the ministers of powers even at war with each other, which will always turn out to the advantage of the ablest, who will in those conversations find, or make, opportunities of throwing out, or of receiving useful hints. When I was last at The Hague, we were at war with both France and Spain; so that I could neither visit, nor be visited by, the Ministers of those two Crowns; but we met every day, or dined at third places, where we embraced as personal friends, and trifled, at the same time, upon our being political enemies; and by this sort of badinage I discovered some things which I wanted to know. There is not a more prudent maxim than to live with one's enemies as if they may one day become one's friends; as it commonly happens, sooner or later, in the vicissitudes of political affairs.

To your question, which is a rational and prudent one, Whether I was authorized to give you the hints concerning Russia by any people in power here, I will tell you that I was not: but, as I had pressed them to try what might be done with Russia, and got Mr. Keith to be dispatched there some months sooner than otherwise, I dare say he would, with the proper instructions for that purpose. I wished that, by the hints I gave you, you might have got the start of him, and the merit, at least, of having 'entame' that matter with Soltikow. What you have to do with him now, when you meet with him at any third place, or at his own house (where you are at liberty to go, while Russia has a Minister in London, and we a Minister at Petersburg), is, in my opinion, to say to him, in an easy cheerful manner, 'He bien, Monsieur, je me flatte que nous serons bientot amis publics, aussi bien qu'amis personels'. To which he will probably ask, Why, or how? You will reply, Because you know that Mr. Keith is gone to his Court with instructions, which you think must necessarily be agreeable there. And throw out to him that nothing but a change of their present system can save Livonia to Russia; for that he cannot suppose that, when the Swedes shall have recovered Pomerania they will long leave Russia in quiet possession of Livonia.

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If he is so much a Frenchman as you say, he will make you some weak answers to this; but, as you will have the better of the argument on your side, you may remind him of the old and almost uninterrupted connection between France and Sweden, the inveterate enemy of Russia. Many other arguments will naturally occur to you in such a conversation, if you have it. In this case, there is a piece of ministerial art, which is sometimes of use; and that is, to sow jealousies among one's enemies, by a seeming preference shown to some one of them. Monsieur Hecht's reveries are reveries indeed. How should his Master have made the *Golden arrangements* which he talks of, and which are to be forged into shackles for General Fermor? The Prussian finances are not in a condition now to make such expensive arrangements. But I think you may tell Monsieur Hecht, in confidence, that you hope the instructions with which you know that Mr. Keith is gone to Petersburg, may have some effect upon the measures of that Court.

I would advise you to live with that same Monsieur Hecht in all the confidence, familiarity, and connection, which prudence will allow. I mean it with regard to the King of Prussia himself, by whom I could wish you to be known and esteemed as much as possible. It may be of use to you some day or other. If man, courage, conduct, constancy, can get the better of all the difficulties which the King of Prussia has to struggle with, he will rise superior to them. But still, while his alliance subsists against him, I dread 'les gros escadrons'. His last victory, of the 5th, was certainly the completest that has been heard of these many years. I heartily wish the Prince of Brunswick just such a one over Monsieur de Richelieu's army; and that he may take my old acquaintance the Marechal, and send him over here to polish and perfume us.

I heartily wish you, in the plain, home-spun style, a great number of happy new years, well employed in forming both your mind and your manners, to be useful and agreeable to yourself, your country, and your friends! That these wishes are sincere, your secretary's brother will, by the time of your receiving this, have remitted you a proof, from Yours.

LETTERS TO HIS SON

LETTER CCXVI

London, February 8, 1758.

My dear friend: I received by the same post your two letters of the 13th and 17th past; and yesterday that of the 27th, with the Russian manifesto inclosed, in which her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias has been pleased to give every reason, except the true one, for the march of her troops against the King of Prussia. The true one, I take it to be, that she has just received a very great sum of money from France, or the

Empress queen, or both, for that purpose. 'Point d'argent, point de Russe', is now become a maxim.

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Whatever may be the motive of their march, the effects must be bad; and, according to my speculations, those troops will replace the French in Hanover and Lower Saxony; and the French will go and join the Austrian army. You ask me if I still despond? Not so much as I did after the battle of Colen: the battles of Rosbach and Lissa were drams to me, and gave me some momentary spirits: but though I do not absolutely despair, I own I greatly distrust. I readily allow the King of Prussia to be 'nec pluribus impar'; but still, when the 'plures' amount to a certain degree of plurality, courage and abilities must yield at last. Michel here assures me that he does not mind the Russians; but, as I have it from the gentleman's own mouth, I do not believe him. We shall very soon send a squadron to the Baltic to entertain the Swedes; which I believe will put an end to their operations in Pomerania; so that I have no great apprehensions from that quarter; but Russia, I confess, sticks in my stomach.

Everything goes smoothly in parliament; the King of Prussia has united all our parties in his support; and the Tories have declared that they will give Mr. Pitt unlimited credit for this session; there has not been one single division yet upon public points, and I believe will not. Our American expedition is preparing to go soon; the disposition of that affair seems to me a little extraordinary. Abercrombie is to be the sedantary, and not the acting commander; Amherst, Lord Howe, and Wolfe, are to be the acting, and I hope the active officers. I wish they may agree. Amherst, who is the oldest officer, is under the influence of the same great person who influenced Mordaunt, so much to honor and advantage of this country. This is most certain, that we have force enough in America to eat up the French alive in Canada, Quebec, and Louisburg, if we have but skill and spirit enough to exert it properly; but of that I am modest enough to doubt.

When you come to the egotism, which I have long desired you to come to with me, you need make no excuses for it. The egotism is as proper and as satisfactory to one's friends, as it is impertinent and misplaced with strangers. I desire to see you in your every-day clothes, by your fireside, in your pleasures; in short, in your private life; but I have not yet been able to obtain this. Whenever you condescend to do it, as you promise, stick to truth; for I am not so uninformed of Hamburg as perhaps you may think.

As for myself, I am very *unwell*, and very weary of being so; and with little hopes, at my age, of ever being otherwise. I often wish for the end of the wretched remnant of my life; and that wish is a rational one; but then the innate principle of self-preservation, wisely implanted in our natures for obvious purposes, opposes that wish, and makes us endeavor to spin out our thread as long as we can, however decayed and rotten it may be; and, in defiance of common sense, we seek on for that chymic gold, which beggars us when old.

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Whatever your amusements, or pleasures, may be at Hamburg, I dare say you taste them more sensibly than ever you did in your life, now that you have business enough to whet your appetite to them. Business, one-half of the day, is the best preparation for the pleasures of the other half. I hope, and believe, that it will be with you as it was with an apothecary whom I knew at Twickenham. A considerable estate fell to him by an unexpected accident; upon which he thought it decent to leave off his business; accordingly he generously gave up his shop and his stock to his head man, set up his coach, and resolved to live like a gentleman; but, in less than a month, the man, used to business, found, that living like a gentleman was dying of ennui; upon which he bought his shop and stock, resumed his trade, and lived very happily, after he had something to do. Adieu.

LETTER CCXVII

London, February 24, 1758

My dear friend: I received yesterday your letter of the 2d instant, with the inclosed; which I return you, that there may be no chasm in your papers. I had heard before of Burrish's death, and had taken some steps thereupon; but I very soon dropped that affair, for ninety-nine good reasons; the first of which was, that nobody is to go in his room, and that, had he lived, he was to have been recalled from Munich. But another reason, more flattering for you, was, that you could not be spared from Hamburg. Upon the whole, I am not sorry for it, as the place where you are now is the great entrepot of business; and, when it ceases to be so, you will necessarily go to some of the courts in the neighborhood (Berlin, I hope and believe), which will be a much more desirable situation than to rush at Munich, where we can never have any business beyond a subsidy. Do but go on, and exert yourself were you are, and better things will soon follow.

Surely the inaction of our army at Hanover continues too long. We expected wonders from it some time ago, and yet nothing is attempted. The French will soon receive reinforcements, and then be too strong for us; whereas they are now most certainly greatly weakened by desertion, sickness, and deaths. Does the King of Prussia send a body of men to our army or not? or has the march of the Russians cut him out work for all his troops? I am afraid it has. If one body of Russians joins the Austrian army in Moravia, and another body the Swedes in Pomerania, he will have his hands very full, too full, I fear. The French say they will have an army of 180,000 men in Germany this year; the Empress Queen will have 150,000; if the Russians have but 40,000, what can resist such a force? The King of Prussia may say, indeed, with more justice than ever any one person could before him, 'Moi. Medea superest'.



You promised the some egotism; but I have received none yet. Do you frequent the Landgrave? 'Hantex vous les grands de la terre'? What are the connections of the evening? All this, and a great deal more of this kind, let me know in your next.



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The House of Commons is still very unanimous. There was a little popular squib let off this week, in a motion of Sir John Glynné's, seconded by Sir John Philips, for annual parliaments. It was a very cold scent, and put an end to by a division of 190 to 70.

Good-night. Work hard, that you may divert yourself well.

LETTER CCXVIII

London, March 4, 1758.

My dear friend: I should have been much more surprised at the contents of your letter of the 17th past, if I had not happened to have seen Sir C. W., about three or four hours before I received it. I thought he talked in an extraordinary manner; he engaged that the King of Prussia should be master of Vienna in the month of May; and he told me that you were very much in love with his daughter. Your letter explained all this to me; and next day, Lord and Lady E----gave me innumerable instances of his frenzy, with which I shall not trouble you. What inflamed it the more (if it did not entirely occasion it) was a great quantity of cantharides, which, it seems, he had taken at Hamburgh, to recommend himself, I suppose, to Mademoiselle John. He was let blood four times on board the ship, and has been let blood four times since his arrival here; but still the inflammation continues very high. He is now under the care of his brothers, who do not let him go abroad. They have written to this same Mademoiselle John, to prevent if they can, her coming to England, and told her the case; which, when she hears she must be as mad as he is, if she takes the journey. By the way, she must be 'une dame aventuriere', to receive a note for 10,000 roubles from a man whom she had known but three days! to take a contract of marriage, knowing he was married already; and to engage herself to follow him to England. I suppose this is not the first adventure of the sort which she has had.

After the news we received yesterday, that the French had evacuated Hanover, all but Hamel, we daily expect much better. We pursue them, we cut them off 'en detail', and at last we destroy their whole army. I wish it may happen; and, moreover, I think it not impossible.

My head is much out of order, and only allows me to wish you good-night.

LETTER CCXIX

London, March 22, 1758

My dear friend: I have now your letter of the 8th lying before me, with the favorable account of our progress in Lower Saxony, and reasonable prospect of more decisive success. I confess I did not expect this, when my friend Munchausen took his leave of



me, to go to Stade, and break the neutrality; I thought it at least a dangerous, but rather a desperate undertaking; whereas, hitherto, it has proved a very fortunate one. I look upon the French army as 'fondue'; and, what with desertion, deaths, and epidemical distempers, I dare say not a third of it will ever return to France. The great object is now, what the Russians can or will do; and whether the King of Prussia can hinder their junction with the Austrians, by beating either, before they join. I will trust him for doing all that can be done.



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Sir C. W. is still in confinement, and, I fear, will always be so, for he seems 'cum ratione insanire'; the physicians have collected all he has said and done that indicated an alienation of mind, and have laid it before him in writing; he has answered it in writing too, and justifies himself in the most plausible arguments than can possibly be urged. He tells his brother, and the few who are allowed to see him, that they are such narrow and contracted minds themselves, that they take those for mad who have a great and generous way of thinking; as, for instance, when he determined to send his daughter over to you in a fortnight, to be married, without any previous agreement or settlements, it was because he had long known you, and loved you as a man of sense and honor; and therefore would not treat with you as with an attorney. That as for Mademoiselle John, he knew her merit and her circumstances; and asks, whether it is a sign of madness to have a due regard for the one, and a just compassion for the other. I will not tire you with enumerating any more instances of the poor man's frenzy; but conclude this subject with pitying him, and poor human nature, which holds its reason by so precarious a tenure. The lady, who you tell me is set out, 'en sera pour la seine et les fraix du voyage', for her note is worth no more than her contract. By the way, she must be a kind of 'aventuriere', to engage so easily in such an adventure with a man whom she had not known above a week, and whose 'debut' of 10,000 roubles showed him not to be in his right senses.

You will probably have seen General Yorke, by this time, in his way to Berlin or Breslau, or wherever the King of Prussia may be. As he keeps his commission to the States General, I presume he is not to stay long with his Prussian Majesty; but, however, while he is there, take care to write to him very constantly, and to give all the information you can. His father, Lord Hardwicke, is your great puff: he commends your office letters, exceedingly. I would have the Berlin commission your object, in good time; never lose view of it. Do all you can to recommend yourself to the King of Prussia on your side of the water, and to smooth your way for that commission on this; by the turn which things have taken of late, it must always be the most important of all foreign commissions from hence.

I have no news to send you, as things here are extremely quiet; so, good-night.

LETTER CCXX

London, April 25, 1758.

Dear friend: I am now two letters in your debt, which I think is the first time that ever I was so, in the long course of our correspondence. But, besides that my head has been very much out of order of late, writing is by no means that easy thing that it was to me formerly. I find by experience, that the mind and the body are more than married, for they are most intimately united; and when the one suffers, the other sympathizes. 'Non sum qualis eram': neither my memory nor my invention are now what they formerly

were. It is in a great measure my own fault; I cannot accuse Nature, for I abused her; and it is reasonable I should suffer for it.



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I do not like the return of the impression upon your lungs; but the rigor of the cold may probably have brought it upon you, and your lungs not in fault. Take care to live very cool, and let your diet be rather low.

We have had a second winter here, more severe than the first, at least it seemed so, from a premature summer that we had, for a fortnight, in March; which brought everything forward, only to be destroyed. I have experienced it at Blackheath, where the promise of fruit was a most flattering one, and all nipped in the bud by frost and snow, in April. I shall not have a single peach or apricot.

I have nothing to tell you from hence concerning public affairs, but what you read in the newspapers. This only is extraordinary: that last week, in the House of Commons, above ten millions were granted, and the whole Hanover army taken into British pay, with but one single negative, which was Mr. Viner's.

Mr. Pitt gains ground in the closet, and yet does not lose it in the public. That is new.

Monsieur Kniphausen has dined with me; he is one of the prettiest fellows I have seen; he has, with a great deal of life and fire, 'les manieres d'un honnete homme, et le ton de la Parfaitement bonne compagnie'. You like him yourself; try to be like him: it is in your power.

I hear that Mr. Mitchel is to be recalled, notwithstanding the King of Prussia's instances to keep him. But why, is a secret that I cannot penetrate.

You will not fail to offer the Landgrave, and the Princess of Hesse (who I find are going home), to be their agent and commissioner at Hamburg.

I cannot comprehend the present state of Russia, nor the motions of their armies. They change their generals once a week; sometimes they march with rapidity, and now they lie quiet behind the Vistula. We have a thousand stories here of the interior of that government, none of which I believe. Some say, that the Great Duke will be set aside.

Woronzoff is said to be entirely a Frenchman, and that Monsieur de l'Hopital governs both him and the court. Sir C. W. is said, by his indiscretions, to have caused the disgrace of Bestuchef, which seems not impossible. In short, everything of every kind is said, because, I believe, very little is truly known. 'A propos' of Sir C. W.; he is out of confinement, and gone to his house in the country for the whole summer. They say he is now very cool and well. I have seen his Circe, at her window in Pall-Mall; she is painted, powdered, curled, and patched, and looks 'l'aventure'. She has been offered, by Sir C. W——'s friends, L500 in full of all demands, but will not accept of it. 'La comtesse veut plaider', and I fancy 'faire autre chose si elle peut. Jubeo to bene valere.



LETTER CCXXI

Blackheath, May 18, O. S. 1758.



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My dear friend: I have your letter of the 9th now before me, and condole with you upon the present solitude and inaction of Hamburg. You are now shrunk from the dignity and importance of a consummate minister, to be but, as it were, a common man. But this has, at one time or another, been the case of most great men; who have not always had equal opportunities of exerting their talents. The greatest must submit to the capriciousness of fortune; though they can, better than others, improve the favorable moments. For instance, who could have thought, two years ago, that you would have been the Atlas of the Northern Pole; but the Good Genius of the North ordered it so; and now that you have set that part of the globe right, you return to 'otium cum dignitate'. But to be serious: now that you cannot have much office business to do, I could tell you what to do, that would employ you, I should think, both usefully and agreeably. I mean, that you should write short memoirs of that busy scene, in which you have been enough concerned, since your arrival at Hamburg, to be able to put together authentic facts and anecdotes. I do not know whether you will give yourself the trouble to do it or not; but I do know, that if you will, 'olim hęc meminisse juvabit'. I would have them short, but correct as to facts and dates.

I have told Alt, in the strongest manner, your lamentations for the loss of the House of Cassel, 'et il en fera rapport a son Serenissime Maitre'. When you are quite idle (as probably you may be, some time this summer), why should you not ask leave to make a tour to Cassel for a week? which would certainly be granted you from hence, and which would be looked upon as a 'bon procede' at Cassel.

The King of Prussia is probably, by this time, at the gates of Vienna, making the Queen of Hungary really do what Monsieur de Bellisle only threatened; sign a peace upon the ramparts of her capital. If she is obstinate, and will not, she must fly either to Presburg or to Inspruck, and Vienna must fall. But I think he will offer her reasonable conditions enough for herself; and I suppose, that, in that case, Caunitz will be reasonable enough to advise her to accept of them. What turn would the war take then? Would the French and Russians carry it on without her? The King of Prussia, and the Prince of Brunswick, would soon sweep them out of Germany. By this time, too, I believe, the French are entertained in America with the loss of Cape Breton; and, in consequence of that, Quebec; for we have a force there equal to both those undertakings, and officers there, now, that will execute what Lord L-----never would so much as attempt. His appointments were too considerable to let him do anything that might possibly put an end to the war. Lord Howe, upon seeing plainly that he was resolved to do nothing, had asked leave to return, as well as Lord Charles Hay.



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We have a great expedition preparing, and which will soon be ready to sail from the Isle of Wight; fifteen thousand good troops, eighty battering cannons, besides mortars, and every other thing in abundance, fit for either battle or siege. Lord Anson desired, and is appointed, to command the fleet employed upon this expedition; a proof that it is not a trifling one. Conjectures concerning its destination are infinite; and the most ignorant are, as usual, the boldest conjecturers. If I form any conjectures, I keep them to myself, not to be disproved by the event; but, in truth, I form none: I might have known, but would not.

Everything seems to tend to a peace next winter: our success in America, which is hardly doubtful, and the King of Prussia's in Germany, which is as little so, will make France (already sick of the expense of the war) very tractable for a peace. I heartily wish it: for though people's heads are half turned with the King of Prussia's success, and will be quite turned, if we have any in America, or at sea, a moderate peace will suit us better than this immoderate war of twelve millions a year.

Domestic affairs go just as they did; the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pitt jog on like man and wife; that is, seldom agreeing, often quarreling; but by mutual interest, upon the whole, not parting. The latter, I am told, gains ground in the closet; though he still keeps his strength in the House, and his popularity in the public; or, perhaps, because of that.

Do you hold your resolution of visiting your dominions of Bremen and Lubeck this summer? If you do, pray take the trouble of informing yourself correctly of the several constitutions and customs of those places, and of the present state of the federal union of the Hanseatic towns: it will do you no harm, nor cost you much trouble; and it is so much clear gain on the side of useful knowledge.

I am now settled at Blackheath for the summer; where unseasonable frost and snow, and hot and parching east winds, have destroyed all my fruit, and almost my fruit-trees. I vegetate myself little better than they do; I crawl about on foot and on horseback; read a great deal, and write a little; and am very much yours.

LETTER CCXXII

Blackheath, May 30, 1758.

My dear friend: I have no letter from you to answer, so this goes to you unprovoked. But 'a propos' of letters; you have had great honor done you, in a letter from a fair and royal hand, no less than that of her Royal Highness the Princess of Cassel; she has written your panegyric to her sister, Princess Amelia, who sent me a compliment upon it. This has likewise done you no harm with the King, who said gracious things upon that occasion. I suppose you had for her Royal Highness those attentions which I wish to God you would have, in due proportions, for everybody. You see, by this instance,

the effects of them; they are always repaid with interest. I am more confirmed by this in thinking, that, if you can conveniently, you should ask leave to go for a week to Cassel, to return your thanks for all favors received.



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I cannot expound to myself the conduct of the Russians. There must be a trick in their not marching with more expedition. They have either had a sop from the King of Prussia, or they want an animating dram from France and Austria. The King of Prussia's conduct always explains itself by the events; and, within a very few days, we must certainly hear of some very great stroke from that quarter. I think I never in my life remember a period of time so big with great events as the present: within two months the fate of the House of Austria will probably be decided: within the same space of time, we shall certainly hear of the taking of Cape Breton, and of our army's proceeding to Quebec within a few days we shall know the good or ill success of our great expedition; for it is sailed; and it cannot be long before we shall hear something of the Prince of Brunswick's operations, from whom I also expect good things. If all these things turn out, as there is good reason to believe they will, we may once, in our turn, dictate a reasonable peace to France, who now pays seventy per cent insurance upon its trade, and seven per cent for all the money raised for the service of the year.

Comte Bothmar has got the small-pox, and of a bad kind. Kniphausen diverts himself much here; he sees all places and all people, and is ubiquity itself. Mitchel, who was much threatened, stays at last at Berlin, at the earnest request of the King of Prussia. Lady is safely delivered of a son, to the great joy of that noble family. The expression, of a woman's having brought her husband a son, seems to be a proper and cautious one; for it is never said from whence.

I was going to ask you how you passed your time now at Hamburg, since it is no longer the seat of strangers and of business; but I will not, because I know it is to no purpose. You have sworn not to tell me.

Sir William Stanhope told me that you promised to send him some Old Hock from Hamburg, and so you did not. If you meet with any superlatively good, and not else, pray send over a 'foudre' of it, and write to him. I shall have a share in it. But unless you find some, either at Hamburg or at Bremen, uncommonly and almost miraculously good, do not send any. Dixi. Yours.

LETTER CCXXIII

Blackheath, June 13, 1758.

My dear friend: The secret is out: St. Malo is the devoted place. Our troops began to land at the Bay of Cancale the 5th, without any opposition. We have no further accounts yet, but expect some every moment. By the plan of it, which I have seen, it is by no means a weak place; and I fear there will be many hats to be disposed of, before it is taken. There are in the port above thirty privateers; about sixteen of their own, and about as many taken from us. 237



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Now for Africa, where we have had great success. The French have been driven out of all their forts and settlements upon the Gum coast, and upon the river Senegal. They had been many years in possession of them, and by them annoyed our African trade exceedingly; which, by the way, 'toute proportion gardee', is the most lucrative trade we have. The present booty is likewise very considerable, in gold dust, and gum Seneca; which is very valuable, by being a very necessary commodity, for all our stained and printed linens.

Now for America. The least sanguine people here expect, the latter end of this month or the beginning of the next, to have the account of the taking of Cape Breton, and of all the forts with hard names in North America.

Captain Clive has long since settled Asia to our satisfaction; so that three parts of the world look very favorable for us. Europe, I submit to the care of the King of Prussia and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick; and I think they will give a good account of it. France is out of luck, and out of courage; and will, I hope, be enough out of spirits to submit to a reasonable peace. By reasonable, I mean what all people call reasonable in their own case; an advantageous one for us.

I have set all right with Munchausen; who would not own that he was at all offended, and said, as you do, that his daughter did not stay long enough, nor appear enough at Hamburg, for you possibly to know that she was there. But people are always ashamed to own the little weaknesses of self-love, which, however, all people feel more or less. The excuse, I saw, pleased.

I will send you your quadrille tables by the first opportunity, consigned to the care of Mr. Mathias here. 'Felices faustaeque sint! May you win upon them, when you play with men; and when you play with women, either win or know why you lose.

Miss-----marries Mr.-----next week. *Who Proffers love, Proffers death*, says Weller to a dwarf: in my opinion, the conclusion must instantly choak the little lady. Admiral marries Lady; there the danger, if danger is, will be on the other side. The lady has wanted a man so long, that she now compounds for half a one. Half a loaf—

I have been worse since my last letter; but am now, I think, recovering; 'tant va la cruche a l'eau';—and I have been there very often.

Good-night. I am faithfully and truly yours.



LETTER CCXXIV

Blackheath, June 27, 1758.

My dear friend: You either have received already, or will very soon receive, a little case from Amsterdam, directed to you at Hamburg. It is for Princess Ameba, the King of Prussia's sister, and contains some books which she desired Sir Charles Hotham to procure her from England, so long ago as when he was at Berlin: he sent for them immediately; but, by I do not know what puzzle,



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they were recommended to the care of Mr. Selwyn, at Paris, who took such care of them, that he kept them near three years in his warehouse, and has at last sent them to Amsterdam, from whence they are sent to you. If the books are good for anything, they must be considerably improved, by having seen so much of the world; but, as I believe they are English books, perhaps they may, like English travelers, have seen nobody, but the several bankers to whom they were consigned: be that as it will, I think you had best deliver them to Monsieur Hecht, the Prussian Minister at Hamburg, to forward to her Royal Highness, with a respectful compliment from you, which you will, no doubt, turn in the best manner, and 'selon le bon ton de la parfaitement bonne compagnie'.

You have already seen, in the papers, all the particulars of our St. Malo's expedition, so I say no more of that; only that Mr. Pitt's friends exult in the destruction of three French ships of war, and one hundred and thirty privateers and trading ships; and affirm that it stopped the march of threescore thousand men, who were going to join the Comte de Clermont's army. On the other hand, Mr. Fox and company call it breaking windows with guineas; and apply the fable of the Mountain and the Mouse. The next object of our fleet was to be the bombarding of Granville, which is the great 'entrepot' of their Newfoundland fishery, and will be a considerable loss to them in that branch of their trade. These, you will perhaps say, are no great matters, and I say so too; but, at least, they are signs of life, which we had not given them for many years before; and will show the French, by our invading them, that we do not fear their invading us. Were those invasions, in fishing-boats from Dunkirk, so terrible as they were artfully represented to be, the French would have had an opportunity of executing them, while our fleet, and such a considerable part of our army, were employed upon their coast. *But my Lord Ligonier does not want an army at home.*

The parliament is prorogued by a most gracious speech neither by nor from his Majesty, who was *too ill* to go to the House; the Lords and Gentlemen are, consequently, most of them, gone to their several counties, to do (to be sure) all the good that is recommended to them in the speech. London, I am told, is now very empty, for I cannot say so from knowledge. I vegetate wholly here. I walk and read a great deal, ride and scribble a little, according as my lead allows, or my spirits prompt; to write anything tolerable, the mind must be in a natural, proper disposition; provocatives, in that case, as well as in another, will only produce miserable, abortive performances.



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Now that you have (as I suppose) full leisure enough, I wish you would give yourself the trouble, or rather pleasure, to do what I hinted to you some time ago; that is, to write short memoirs of those affairs which have either gone through your hands, or that have come to your certain knowledge, from the inglorious battle of Hastenbeck, to the still more scandalous Treaty of Neutrality. Connect, at least, if it be by ever so short notes, the pieces and letters which you must necessarily have in your hands, and throw in the authentic anecdotes that you have probably heard. You will be glad when you have done it: and the reviving past ideas, in some order and method, will be an infinite comfort to you hereafter. I have a thousand times regretted not having done so; it is at present too late for me to begin; this is the right time for you, and your life is likely to be a busy one. Would young men avail themselves of the advice and experience of their old friends, they would find the utility in their youth, and the comfort of it in their more advanced age; but they seldom consider that, and you, less than anybody I ever knew. May you soon grow wiser! Adieu.

LETTER CCXXV

Blackheath, June 30, 1758.

My dear friend: This letter follows my last very close; but I received yours of the 15th in the short interval. You did very well not to buy any Rhenish, at the exorbitant price you mention, without further directions; for both my brother and I think the money better than the wine, be the wine ever so good. We will content our selves with our stock in hand of humble Rhenish, of about three shillings a-bottle. However, 'pour la rarity du fait, I will lay out twelve ducats', for twelve bottles of the wine of 1665, by way of an eventual cordial, if you can obtain a 'senatus consultum' for it. I am in no hurry for it, so send it me only when you can conveniently; well packed up 's'entend'.

You will, I dare say, have leave to go to Cassel; and if you do go, you will perhaps think it reasonable, that I, who was the adviser of the journey, should pay the expense of it. I think so too; and therefore, if you go, I will remit the L100 which you have calculated it at. You will find the House of Cassel the house of gladness; for Hanau is already, or must be soon, delivered of its French guests.

The Prince of Brunswick's victory is, by all the skillful, thought a 'chef d'oeuvre', worthy of Turenne, Conde, or the most illustrious human butchers. The French behaved better than at Rosbach, especially the Carabiniers Royaux, who could not be 'entames'. I wish the siege of Olmutz well over, and a victory after it; and that, with good news from America, which I think there is no reason to doubt of, must procure us a good peace at the end of the year. The Prince of Prussia's death is no public misfortune: there was a jealousy and alienation between the King and him, which could never have been made up between the possessor of the crown and the next heir to it. He will make something

of his nephew, 's'il est du bois don't on en fait'. He is young enough to forgive, and to be forgiven, the possession and the expectative, at least for some years.



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Adieu! I am *unwell*, but affectionately yours.

LETTER CCXXVI

Blackheath, July 18, 1758.

My dear friend: Yesterday I received your letter of the 4th; and my last will have informed you that I had received your former, concerning the Rhenish, about which I gave you instructions. If 'vinum Mosellanum est omni tempore sanum', as the Chapter of Treves asserts, what must this 'vinum Rhenanum' be, from its superior strength and age? It must be the universal panacea.

Captain Howe is to sail forthwith somewhere or another, with about 8,000 land forces on board him; and what is much more, Edward the White Prince. It is yet a secret where they are going; but I think it is no secret, that what 16,000 men and a great fleet could not do, will not be done by 8,000 men and a much smaller fleet. About 8,500 horse, foot, and dragoons, are embarking, as fast as they can, for Embden, to reinforce Prince Ferdinand's army; late and few, to be sure, but still better than never, and none. The operations in Moravia go on slowly, and Olmutz seems to be a tough piece of work; I own I begin to be in pain for the King of Prussia; for the Russians now march in earnest, and Marechal Dann's army is certainly superior in number to his. God send him a good delivery!

You have a Danish army now in your neighborhood, and they say a very fine one; I presume you will go to see it, and, if you do, I would advise you to go when the Danish Monarch comes to review it himself; 'pour prendre langue de ce Seigneur'. The rulers of the earth are all worth knowing; they suggest moral reflections: and the respect that one naturally has for God's vicegerents here on earth, is greatly increased by acquaintance with them.

Your card-tables are gone, and they inclose some suits of clothes, and some of these clothes inclose a letter.

Your friend Lady-----is gone into the country with her Lord, to negotiate, coolly and at leisure, their intended separation. My Lady insists upon my Lord's dismissing the-----, as ruinous to his fortune; my Lord insists, in his turn, upon my Lady's dismissing Lord-----; my Lady replies, that that is unreasonable, since Lord creates no expense to the family, but rather the contrary. My Lord confesses that there is some weight in this argument: but then pleads sentiment: my Lady says, a fiddlestick for sentiment, after having been married so long. How this



matter will end, is in the womb of time, 'nam fuit ante Helenam'.

You did very well to write a congratulatory letter to Prince Ferdinand; such attentions are always right, and always repaid in some way or other.

I am glad you have connected your negotiations and anecdotes; and, I hope, not with your usual laconism. Adieu! Yours.

LETTER CCXXVII



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Blackheath, August 1, 1758

My dear friend: I think the Court of Cassel is more likely to make you a second visit at Hamburg, than you are to return theirs at Cassel; and therefore, till that matter is clearer, I shall not mention it to Lord Holderness.

By the King of Prussia's disappointment in Moravia, by the approach of the Russians, and the intended march of Monsieur de Soubize to Hanover, the waters seem to me to be as much troubled as ever. 'Je vois tres noir actuellement'; I see swarms of Austrians, French, Imperialists, Swedes, and Russians, in all near four hundred thousand men, surrounding the King of Prussia and Prince Ferdinand, who have about a third of that number. Hitherto they have only buzzed, but now I fear they will sting.

The immediate danger of this country is being drowned; for it has not ceased raining these three months, and withal is extremely cold. This neither agrees with me in itself, nor in its consequences; for it hinders me from taking my necessary exercise, and makes me very unwell. As my head is always the part offending, and is so at present, I will not do, like many writers, write without a head; so adieu.

LETTER CCXXVIII

Blackheath, August 29, 1758.

My dear friend: Your secretary's last letter brought me the good news that the fever had left you, and I will believe that it has: but a postscript to it, of only two lines, under your own hand, would have convinced me more effectually of your recovery. An intermitting fever, in the intervals of the paroxysms, would surely have allowed you to have written a few lines with your own hand, to tell me how you were; and till I receive a letter (as short as you please) from you yourself, I shall doubt of the exact truth of any other accounts.

I send you no news, because I have none; Cape Breton, Cherbourg, *etc.*, are now old stories; we expect a new one soon from Commodore Howe, but from whence we know not. From Germany we hope for good news: I confess I do not, I only wish it. The King of Prussia is marched to fight the Russians, and I believe will beat them, if they stand; but what then? What shall he do next, with the three hundred and fourscore thousand men now actually at work upon him? He will do all that man can do, but at last 'il faut succomber'.

Remember to think yourself less well than you are, in order to be quite so; be very regular, rather longer than you need; and then there will be no danger of a relapse. God bless you.

LETTER CCXXIX

Blackheath, September 5, 1758



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My dear friend: I received, with great pleasure, your letter of the 22d August; for, by not having a line from you in your secretary's two letters, I suspect that you were worse than he cared to tell me; and so far I was in the right, that your fever was more malignant than intermitting ones generally are, which seldom confines people to their bed, or at most, only the days of the paroxysms. Now that, thank God, you are well again, though weak, do not be in too much haste to be better and stronger: leave that to nature, which, at your age, will restore both your health and strength as soon as she should. Live cool for a time, and rather low, instead of taking what they call heartening things: Your manner of making presents is noble, 'et sent la grandeur d'ame d'un preux Chevalier'. You depreciate their value to prevent any returns; for it is impossible that a wine which has counted so many Syndicks, that can only be delivered by a 'senatus consultum', and is the *panacea* Of the North, should be sold for a ducat a bottle. The 'sylphium' of the Romans, which was stored up in the public magazines, and only distributed by order of the magistrate, I dare say, cost more; so that I am convinced, your present is much more valuable than you would make it.

Here I am interrupted, by receiving your letter of the 25th past. I am glad that you are able to undertake your journey to Bremen: the motion, the air, the new scene, the everything, will do you good, provided you manage yourself discreetly.

Your bill for fifty pounds shall certainly be accepted and paid; but, as in conscience I think fifty pounds is too little, for seeing a live Landgrave, and especially at Bremen, which this whole nation knows to be a very dear place, I shall, with your leave, add fifty more to it. By the way, when you see the Princess Royal of Cassel, be sure to tell her how sensible you are of the favorable and too partial testimony, which you know she wrote of you to Princess Amelia.

The King of Prussia has had the victory, which you in some measure foretold; and as he has taken 'la caisse militaire', I presume 'Messieurs les Russes sont hors de combat pour cette campagne'; for 'point d'argent, point de Suisse', is not truer of the laudable Helvetic body, than 'point d'argent, point de Russe', is of the savages of the Two Russias, not even excepting the Autocratrice of them both. Serbelloni, I believe, stands next in his Prussian Majesty's list to be beaten; that is, if he will stand; as the Prince de Soubize does in Prince Ferdinand's, upon the same condition. If both these things happen, which is by no means improbable, we may hope for a tolerable peace this winter; for, 'au bout du compte', the King of Prussia cannot hold out another year; and therefore he should make the best of these favorable events, by way negotiation.

I think I have written a great deal, with an actual giddiness of head upon me. So adieu.



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I am glad you have received my letter of the Ides of July.

LETTER CCXXX

Blackheath, September 8, 1758.

My dear friend: This letter shall be short, being only an explanatory note upon my last; for I am not learned enough, nor yet dull enough, to make my comment much longer than my text. I told you then, in my former letter, that, with your leave (which I will suppose granted), I would add fifty pounds to your draught for that sum; now, lest you should misunderstand this, and wait for the remittance of that additional fifty from hence, know then my meaning was, that you should likewise draw upon me for it when you please; which I presume, will be more convenient to you.

Let the pedants, whose business it is to believe lies, or the poets, whose trade it is to invent them, match the King of Prussia With a hero in ancient or modern story, if they can. He disgraces history, and makes one give some credit to romances. Calprenede's Juba does not now seem so absurd as formerly.

I have been extremely ill this whole summer; but am now something better. However, I perceive, 'que l'esprit et le corps baissent'; the former is the last thing that anybody will tell me; or own when I tell it them; but I know it is true. Adieu.

LETTER CCXXXI

Blackheath, September 22, 1758

My dear friend: I have received no letter from you since you left Hamburg; I presume that you are perfectly recovered, but it might not have been improper to have told me so. I am very far from being recovered; on the contrary, I am worse and worse, weaker and weaker every day; for which reason I shall leave this place next Monday, and set out for Bath a few days afterward. I should not take all this trouble merely to prolong the fag end of a life, from which I can expect no pleasure, and others no utility; but the cure, or at least the mitigation, of those physical ills which make that life a load while it does last, is worth any trouble and attention.

We are come off but scurvily from our second attempt upon St. Malo; it is our last for this season; and, in my mind, should be our last forever, unless we were to send so great a sea and land force as to give us a moral certainty of taking some place of great importance, such as Brest, Rochefort, or Toulon.

Monsieur Munchausen embarked yesterday, as he said, for Prince Ferdinand's army; but as it is not generally thought that his military skill can be of any great use to that



prince, people conjecture that his business must be of a very different nature, and suspect separate negotiations, neutralities, and what not. Kniphausen does not relish it in the least, and is by no means satisfied with the reasons that have been given him for it. Before he can arrive there, I reckon that something decisive will have



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passed in Saxony; if to the disadvantage of the King of Prussia, he is crushed; but if, on the contrary, he should get a complete victory (and he does not get half victories) over the Austrians, the winter may probably produce him and us a reasonable peace. I look upon Russia as 'hors de combat' for some time; France is certainly sick of the war; under an unambitious King, and an incapable Ministry, if there is one at all: and, unassisted by those two powers, the Empress Queen had better be quiet. Were any other man in the situation of the King of Prussia, I should not hesitate to pronounce him ruined; but he is such a prodigy of a man, that I will only say, I fear he will be ruined. It is by this time decided.

Your Cassel court at Bremen is, I doubt, not very splendid; money must be wanting: but, however, I dare say their table is always good, for the Landgrave is a gourmand; and as you are domestic there, you may be so too, and recruit your loss of flesh from your fever: but do not recruit too fast. Adieu.

LETTER CCXXXII

London, September 26, 1758

My dear friend: I am sorry to find that you had a return of your fever; but to say the truth, you in some measure deserved it, for not carrying Dr. Middleton's bark and prescription with you. I foresaw that you would think yourself cured too soon, and gave you warning of it; but *bygones* are *bygones*, as Chartres, when he was dying, said of his sins; let us look forward. You did very prudently to return to Hamburg, to good bark, and, I hope, a good physician. Make all sure there before you stir from thence, notwithstanding the requests or commands of all the princesses in Europe: I mean a month at least, taking the bark even to supererogation, that is, some time longer than Dr. Middleton requires; for, I presume, you are got over your childishness about tastes, and are sensible that your health deserves more attention than your palate. When you shall be thus re-established, I approve of your returning to Bremen; and indeed you cannot well avoid it, both with regard to your promise, and to the distinction with which you have been received by the Cassel family.

Now to the other part of your letter. Lord Holderness has been extremely civil to you, in sending you, all under his own hand, such obliging offers of his service. The hint is plain, that he will (in case you desire it) procure you leave to come home for some time; so that the single question is, whether you should desire it or not, *now*. It will be two months before you can possibly undertake the journey, whether by sea or by land, and either way it would be a troublesome and dangerous one for a convalescent in the rigor of the month of November; you could drink no mineral waters here in that season, nor are any mineral waters proper in your case, being all of them heating, except Seltzer's;

then, what would do you more harm than all medicines could do you good, would be the pestilential vapors of the House of Commons, in long and crowded days, of which there will probably be many this session; where your attendance, if here, will necessarily be required. I compare St. Stephen's Chapel, upon those days, to 'la Grotta del Cane'.



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Whatever may be the fate of the war now, negotiations will certainly be stirring all the winter, and of those, the northern ones, you are sensible, are not the least important; in these, if at Hamburg, you will probably have your share, and perhaps a meritorious one. Upon the whole, therefore, I would advise you to write a very civil letter to Lord Holderness; and to tell him that though you cannot hope to be of any use to his Majesty's affairs anywhere, yet, in the present unsettled state of the North, it is possible that unforeseen accidents may throw in your way to be of some little service, and that you would not willingly be out of the way of those accidents; but that you shall be most extremely obliged to his Lordship, if he will procure you his Majesty's gracious permission to return for a few months in the spring, when probably affairs will be more settled one way or another. When things tend nearer to a settlement, and that Germany, from the want of money or men, or both, breathes peace more than war, I shall solicit Burrish's commission for you, which is one of the most agreeable ones in his Majesty's gift; and I shall by no means despair of success. Now I have given you my opinion upon this affair, which does not make a difference of above three months, or four at most, I would not be understood to mean to force your own, if it should happen to be different from mine; but mine, I think, is more both for your health and your interest. However, do as you please: may you in this, and everything else, do for the best! So God bless you!

LETTER CCXXXIII

Bath, October 18, 1758.

My dear friend: I received by the same post your two letters of the 29th past, and of the 3d instant.

The last tells me that you are perfectly recovered; and your resolution of going to Bremen in three or four days proves it; for surely you would not undertake that journey a second time, and at this season of the year, without feeling your health solidly restored; however, in all events, I hope you have taken a provision of good bark with you. I think your attention to her Royal Highness may be of use to you here; and indeed all attentions, to all sorts, of people, are always repaid in some way or other; though real obligations are not. For instance, Lord Titchfield, who has been with you at Hamburg, has written an account to the Duke and Duchess of Portland, who are here, of the civilities you showed him, with which he is much pleased, and they delighted. At this rate, if you do not take care, you will get the unmanly reputation of a well-bred man; and your countryman, John Trott, will disown you.

I have received, and tasted of your present; which is a 'tres grand vin', but more cordial to the stomach than pleasant to the palate. I keep it as a physic, only to take occasionally, in little disorders of my stomach; and in those cases, I believe it is wholsomer than stronger cordials.



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I have been now here a fortnight; and though I am rather better than when I came, I am still far from well.

My head is giddier than becomes a head of my age; and my stomach has not recovered its retentive faculty. Leaning forward, particularly to write, does not at present agree with, Yours.

LETTER CCXXXIV

Bath, October 28, 1758.

My dear friend: Your letter has quieted my alarms; for I find by it, that you are as well recovered as you could be in so short a time. It is your business now to keep yourself well by scrupulously following Dr. Middleton's directions. He seems to be a rational and knowing man. Soap and steel are, unquestionably, the proper medicines for your case; but as they are alteratives, you must take them for a very long time, six months at least; and then drink chalybeate waters. I am fully persuaded, that this was your original complaint in Carniola, which those ignorant physicians called, in their jargon, 'Arthritis vaga', and treated as such. But now that the true cause of your illness is discovered, I flatter myself that, with time and patience on your part, you will be radically cured; but, I repeat it again, it must be by a long and uninterrupted course of those alterative medicines above mentioned. They have no taste; but if they had a bad one, I will not now suppose you such a child, as to let the frowardness of your palate interfere in the least with the recovery or enjoyment of health. The latter deserves the utmost attention of the most rational man; the former is the only proper object of the care of a dainty, frivolous woman.

The run of luck, which some time ago we were in, seems now to be turned against us. Oberg is completely routed; his Prussian Majesty was surprised (which I am surprised at), and had rather the worst of it. I am in some pain for Prince Ferdinand, as I take it for granted that the detachment from Marechal de Contade's army, which enabled Prince Soubize to beat Oberg, will immediately return to the grand army, and then it will be infinitely superior.

Nor do I see where Prince Ferdinand can take his winter quarters, unless he retires to Hanover; and that I do not take to be at present the land of Canaan. Our second expedition to St. Malo I cannot call so much an unlucky, as an ill-conducted one; as was also Abercrombie's affair in America. 'Mais il n'y a pas de petite perte qui revient souvent': and all these accidents put together make a considerable sum total.

I have found so little good by these waters, that I do not intend to stay here above a week longer; and then remove my crazy body to London, which is the most convenient place either to live or die in.



I cannot expect active health anywhere; you may, with common care and prudence, effect it everywhere; and God grant that you may have it! Adieu.

LETTER CCXXXV



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London, November 21, 1758.

My dear friend: You did well to think of Prince Ferdinand's ribband, which I confess I did not; and I am glad to find you thinking so far beforehand. It would be a pretty commission, and I will 'accingere me' to procure it to you. The only competition I fear, is that of General Yorke, in case Prince Ferdinand should pass any time with his brother at The Hague, which is not unlikely, since he cannot go to Brunswick to his eldest brother, upon account of their simulated quarrel.

I fear the piece is at an end with the King of Prussia, and he may say 'ilicet'; I am sure he may personally say 'plaudite'. Warm work is expected this session of parliament, about continent and no continent; some think Mr. Pitt too continent, others too little so; but a little time, as the newspapers most prudently and truly observe, will clear up these matters.

The King has been ill; but his illness is terminated in a good fit of the gout, with which he is still confined. It was generally thought that he would have died, and for a very good reason; for the oldest lion in the Tower, much about the King's age, died a fortnight ago. This extravagancy, I can assure you, was believed by many above people. So wild and capricious is the human mind!

Take care of your health as much as you can; for, *To be, or not To be*, is a question of much less importance, in my mind, than to be or not to be well. Adieu.

LETTER CCXXXVI

London, December 15, 1758.

My dear friend: It is a great while since I heard from you, but I hope that good, not ill health, has been the occasion of this silence: I will suppose you have been, or are still at Bremen, and engrossed by your Hessian friends.

Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick is most certainly to have the Garter, and I think I have secured you the honor of putting it on. When I say *secured*, I mean it in the sense in which that word should always be understood at courts, and that is, *insecurely*; I have a promise, but that is not 'caution bourgeoise'. In all events, do not mention it to any mortal, because there is always a degree of ridicule that attends a disappointment, though often very unjustly, if the expectation was reasonably grounded; however, it is certainly most prudent not to communicate, prematurely, one's hopes or one's fears. I cannot tell you when Prince Ferdinand will have it; though there are so many candidates for the other two vacant Garters, that I believe he will have his soon, and by himself; the others must wait till a third, or rather a fourth vacancy. Lord Rockingham and Lord Holderness are secure. Lord Temple pushes strongly, but, I believe, is not secure.

This commission for dubbing a knight, and so distinguished a one, will be a very agreeable and creditable one for you, 'et



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il faut vous en acquitter galamment'. In the days of ancient chivalry, people were very nice who they would be knighted by and, if I do not mistake, Francis the First would only be knighted by the Chevalier Bayard, 'qui etoit preux Chevalier et sans reproche'; and no doubt but it will be recorded, 'dans les archives de la Maison de Brunswick', that Prince Ferdinand received the honor of knighthood from your hands.

The estimates for the expenses of the year 1759 are made up; I have seen them; and what do you think they amount to? No less than twelve millions three hundred thousand pounds: a most incredible sum, and yet already subscribed, and even more offered! The unanimity in the House of Commons, in voting such a sum, and such forces, both by sea and land, is not the less astonishing. This is Mr. Pitt's doing, *and it is marvelous in our eyes*.

The King of Prussia has nothing more to do this year; and, the next, he must begin where he has left off. I wish he would employ this winter in concluding a separate peace with the Elector of Saxony; which would give him more elbowroom to act against France and the Queen of Hungary, and put an end at once to the proceedings of the Diet, and the army of the empire; for then no estate of the empire would be invaded by a co-estate, and France, the faithful and disinterested guarantee of the Treaty of Westphalia, would have no pretense to continue its armies there. I should think that his Polish Majesty, and his Governor, Comte Bruhl, must be pretty weary of being fugitives in Poland, where they are hated, and of being ravaged in Saxony. This reverie of mine, I hope will be tried, and I wish it may succeed. Good-night, and God bless you!

ETEXT EDITORS BOOKMARKS:

Am still unwell; I cannot help it
Apt to make them think themselves more necessary than they are
but of this every man will believe as he thinks proper
Conjectures pass upon us for truths
Despair of your ever being, *somebody*
Enemies as if they may one day become one's friends
Have I employed my time, or have I squandered it?
Home, be it ever so homely
Jog on like man and wife; that is, seldom agreeing
Josephus
Less one has to do, the less time one finds to do it in
Many things which seem extremely probable are not true
More one works, the more willing one is to work
Most ignorant are, as usual, the boldest conjecturers
Nipped in the bud



No great regard for human testimony
Not to communicate, prematurely, one's hopes or one's fears
Person to you whom I am very indifferent about, I mean myself
Petty jury
Something must be said, but that something must be nothing
Sow jealousies among one's enemies
Think to atone by zeal for their want of merit and importance
Think yourself less well than you are, in order to be quite so
What have I done to-day?
Will pay very dear for the quarrels and ambition of a few