

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Byron Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall  
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis  
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac  
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman  
Darwin Thoreau Twain  
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott  
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte  
London Descartes Cervantes Wells Hesse  
Poe Aristotle James Hastings Voltaire Cooke  
Hale Shakespeare Bunner Chambers Irving  
Richter Chekhov da Shaw Benedict Alcott  
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**Letters to His Son on the Art of  
Becoming a Man of the World and  
a Gentleman, 1766-71**

Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield

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**LETTERS TO HIS SON**

1766-71

By the EARL OF CHESTERFIELD

**on the Fine Art of becoming a**

**MAN OF THE WORLD**

**And**

**A GENTLEMAN**



## LETTER CCLXXXIV

LONDON, February 11, 1766

MY DEAR FRIEND: I received two days ago your letter of the 25th past; and your former, which you mention in it, but ten days ago; this may easily be accounted for from the badness of the weather, and consequently of the roads. I hardly remember so severe a winter; it has occasioned many illnesses here. I am sure it pinched my crazy carcass so much that, about three weeks ago, I was obliged to be let blood twice in four days, which I found afterward was very necessary, by the relief it gave to my head and to the rheumatic pains in my limbs; and from the execrable kind of blood which I lost.

Perhaps you expect from me a particular account of the present state of affairs here; but if you do you will be disappointed; for no man living (and I still less than anyone) knows what it is; it varies, not only daily, but hourly.

Most people think, and I among the rest, that the date of the present Ministers is pretty near out; but how soon we are to have a new style, God knows. This, however, is certain, that the Ministers had a contested election in the House of Commons, and got it but by eleven votes; too small a majority to carry anything; the next day they lost a question in the House of Lords, by three. The question in the House of Lords was, to enforce the execution of the Stamp-act in the colonies 'vi et armis'. What conclusions you will draw from these premises, I do not know; but I protest I draw none; but only stare at the present undecipherable state of affairs, which, in fifty years' experience, I have never seen anything like. The Stamp-act has proved a most pernicious measure; for, whether it is repealed or not, which is still very doubtful, it has given such terror to the Americans, that our trade with them will not be, for some years, what it used to be; and great numbers of our manufacturers at home will be turned a starving for want of that employment which our

very profitable trade to America found them: and hunger is always the cause of tumults and sedition.

As you have escaped a fit of the gout in this severe cold weather, it is to be hoped you may be entirely free from it, till next winter at least.

P. S. Lord having parted with his wife, now, keeps another w—e, at a great expense. I fear he is totally undone.

## LETTER CCLXXXV

LONDON, March 17, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND: You wrong me in thinking me in your debt; for I never receive a letter of yours, but I answer it by the next post, or the next but one, at furthest: but I can easily conceive that my two last letters to you may have been drowned or frozen in their way; for portents and prodigies of frost, snow, and inundations, have been so frequent this winter, that they have almost lost their names.

You tell me that you are going to the baths of BADEN; but that puzzles me a little, so I recommend this letter to the care of Mr. Larpent, to forward to you; for Baden I take to be the general German word for baths, and the particular ones are distinguished by some epithet, as Weissbaden, Carlsbaden, etc. I hope they are not cold baths, which I have a very ill opinion of, in all arthritic or rheumatic cases; and your case I take to be a compound of both, but rather more of the latter.

You will probably wonder that I tell you nothing of public matters; upon which I shall be as secret as Hotspur's gentle Kate, who would not tell what she did not know; but what is singular, nobody seems to know any more of them than I do. People gape, stare, conjecture, and refine. Changes of the Ministry, or in the Ministry at least, are daily reported and foretold, but of what kind, God only knows. It is also very doubtful whether Mr. Pitt will come into the Administration or not; the two present Secretaries are extremely desirous that he should; but the others think of the horse that called the man to its assistance. I will say nothing to you about American affairs, because I have not pens, ink, or paper enough to give you an intelligible account of them. They have been the subjects of warm and acrimonious debates, both in the Lords and Commons, and in all companies.

The repeal of the Stamp-act is at last carried through. I am glad of it, and gave my proxy for it, because I saw many more inconveniences from the enforcing than from the repealing it.

Colonel Browne was with me the other day, and assured me that he left you very well. He said he saw you at Spa, but I did not remember him; though I remember his two brothers, the Colonel and the ravisher, very well. Your Saxon colonel has the brogue exceedingly. Present my respects to Count Flemming; I am very sorry for the Countess's illness; she was a most well-bred woman.

You would hardly think that I gave a dinner to the Prince of Brunswick, your old acquaintance. I glad it is over; but I could not avoid it. 'Il m'avait tabli de politesses'. God bless you!

## LETTER CCLXXXVI

BLACKHEATH, June 13, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I received yesterday your letter of the 30th past. I waited with impatience for it, not having received one from you in six weeks; nor your mother neither, who began to be very sure that you were dead, if not buried. You should write to her once a week, or at least once a fortnight; for women make no allowance either for business or laziness; whereas I can, by experience, make allowances for both: however, I wish you would generally write to me once a fortnight.

Last week I paid my midsummer offering, of five hundred pounds, to Mr. Larpent, for your use, as I suppose he has informed you. I am punctual, you must allow.

What account shall I give you of ministerial affairs here? I protest I do not know: your own description of them is as exact a one as any I, who am upon the place, can give you. It is a total dislocation and 'derangement'; consequently a total inefficiency. When the Duke of Grafton quitted the seals, he gave that very reason for it, in a speech in the House of Lords: he declared, "that he had no objection to the persons or the measures of the present Ministers; but that he thought they wanted strength and efficiency to carry on proper measures with success; and that he knew but one man MEANING, AS YOU WILL EASILY SUPPOSE, MR. PITT who could give them strength and solidity; that, under this person, he should be willing to serve in any capacity, not only as a General Officer, but as a pioneer; and would take up a spade and a mattock." When he quitted the seals, they were offered first to Lord Egmont, then to Lord Hardwicke; who both declined them, probably for the same reasons that made the Duke of Grafton resign them; but after their going a-begging for some time, the Duke of — — — begged them, and has them 'faute de mieux'. Lord Mountstuart was never thought of for Vienna, where Lord Stormont returns in three months; the former is going to be married to one of the Miss Windsors, a great fortune. To

tell you the speculations, the reasonings, and the conjectures, either of the uninformed, or even of the best-informed public, upon the present wonderful situation of affairs, would take up much more time and paper than either you or I can afford, though we have neither of us a great deal of business at present.

I am in as good health as I could reasonably expect, at my age, and with my shattered carcass; that is, from the waist upward; but downward it is not the same: for my limbs retain that stiffness and debility of my long rheumatism; I cannot walk half an hour at a time. As the autumn, and still more as the winter approaches, take care to keep yourself very warm, especially your legs and feet.

Lady Chesterfield sends you her compliments, and triumphs in the success of her plaster. God bless you!

## LETTER CCLXXXVII

BLACKHEATH, July 11, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND: You are a happy mortal, to have your time thus employed between the great and the fair; I hope you do the honors of your country to the latter. The Emperor, by your account, seems to be very well for an emperor; who, by being above the other monarchs in Europe, may justly be supposed to have had a proportionably worse education. I find, by your account of him, that he has been trained up to homicide, the only science in which princes are ever instructed; and with good reason, as their greatness and glory singly depend upon the numbers of their fellow-creatures which their ambition exterminates. If a sovereign should, by great accident, deviate into moderation, justice, and clemency, what a contemptible figure would he make in the catalogue of princes! I have always owned a great regard for King Log. From the interview at Torgaw, between the two monarchs, they will be either a great deal better or worse together; but I think rather the latter; for our namesake, Philip de Co mines, observes, that he never knew any good come from l'abouchement des Rois. The King of Prussia will exert all his perspicacity to analyze his Imperial Majesty; and I would bet upon the one head of his black eagle, against the two heads of the Austrian eagle; though two heads are said, proverbially, to be better than one. I wish I had the direction of both the monarchs, and they should, together with some of their allies, take Lorraine and Alsace from France. You will call me l'Abbe de St. Pierre'; but I only say what I wish; whereas he thought everything that he wished practicable.

Now to come home. Here are great bustles at Court, and a great change of persons is certainly very near. You will ask me, perhaps, who is to be out, and who is to be in? To which I answer, I do not know. My conjecture is that, be the new settlement what it will, Mr. Pitt will be at the head of it. If he is, I presume, 'qu'il aura mis de l'eau dans son vin par rapport a Mylord B— —; when that shall come to be known, as known it certainly will soon be, he may bid

adieu to his popularity. A minister, as minister, is very apt to be the object of public dislike; and a favorite, as favorite, still more so. If any event of this kind happens, which (if it happens at all) I conjecture will be some time next week, you shall hear further from me.

I will follow your advice, and be as well as I can next winter, though I know I shall never be free from my flying rheumatic pains, as long as I live; but whether that will be more or less, is extremely indifferent to me; in either case, God bless you!

## LETTER CCLXXXVIII

BLACKHEATH, August 1, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND: The curtain was at last drawn up, the day before yesterday, and discovered the new actors, together with some of the old ones. I do not name them to you, because to-morrow's Gazette will do it full as well as I could. Mr. Pitt, who had *carte blanche* given him, named everyone of them: but what would you think he named himself for? Lord Privy Seal; and (what will astonish you, as it does every mortal here) Earl of Chatham. The joke here is, that he has had A FALL UP STAIRS, and has done himself so much hurt, that he will never be able to stand upon his leg's again. Everybody is puzzled how to account for this step; though it would not be the first time that great abilities have been duped by low cunning. But be it what it will, he is now certainly only Earl of Chatham; and no longer Mr. Pitt, in any respect whatever. Such an event, I believe, was never read nor heard of. To withdraw, in the fullness of his power and in the utmost gratification of his ambition, from the House of Commons (which procured him his power, and which could alone insure it to him), and to go into that hospital of incurables, the House of Lords, is a measure so unaccountable, that nothing but proof positive could have made me believe it: but true it is. Hans Stanley is to go Ambassador to Russia; and my nephew, Ellis, to Spain, decorated with the red riband. Lord Shelburne is your Secretary of State, which I suppose he has notified to you this post, by a circular letter. Charles Townshend has now the sole management of the House of Commons; but how long he will be content to be only Lord Chatham's vicegerent there, is a question which I will not pretend to decide. There is one very bad sign for Lord Chatham, in his new dignity; which is, that all his enemies, without exception, rejoice at it; and all his friends are stupefied and dumb-founded. If I mistake not much, he will, in the course of a year, enjoy perfect 'otium cum dignitate'. Enough of politics.

Is the fair, or at least the fat, Miss C — — with you still? It must be confessed that she knows the arts of courts, to be so received at Dresden, and so connived at in Leicester-fields.

There never was so wet a summer as this has been, in the memory of man; we have not had one single day, since March, without some rain; but most days a great deal. I hope that does not affect your health, as great cold does; for, with all these inundations, it has not been cold. God bless you!

## LETTER CCLXXXIX

BLACKHEATH, August 14, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I received yesterday your letter of the 30th past, and I find by it that it crossed mine upon the road, where they had no time to take notice of one another.

The newspapers have informed you, before now, of the changes actually made; more will probably follow, but what, I am sure, I cannot tell you; and I believe nobody can, not even those who are to make them: they will, I suppose, be occasional, as people behave themselves. The causes and consequences of Mr. Pitt's quarrel now appear in print, in a pamphlet published by Lord T— —; and in a refutation of it, not by Mr. Pitt himself, I believe, but by some friend of his, and under his sanction. The former is very scurrilous and scandalous, and betrays private conversation. My Lord says, that in his last conference, he thought he had as good a right to nominate the new Ministry as Mr. Pitt, and consequently named Lord G— —, Lord L— —, etc., for Cabinet Council employments; which Mr. Pitt not consenting to, Lord T— —broke up the conference, and in his wrath went to Stowe; where I presume he may remain undisturbed a great while, since Mr. Pitt will neither be willing nor able to send for him again. The pamphlet, on the part of Mr. Pitt, gives an account of his whole political life; and, in that respect, is tedious to those who were acquainted with it before; but, at the latter end, there is an article that expresses such supreme contempt of Lord T— —, and in so pretty a manner, that I suspect it to be Mr. Pitt's own: you shall judge yourself, for I here transcribe the article: "But this I will be bold to say, that had he (Lord T— —) not fastened himself into Mr. Pitt's train, and acquired thereby such an interest in that great man, he might have crept out of life with as little notice as he crept in; and gone off with no other degree of credit, than that of adding a single unit to the bills of mortality" I wish I could send you all the pamphlets and half-sheets that swarm here upon this occasion; but that is impossible; for every week would make a ship's cargo. It is certain, that Mr. Pitt has, by his dignity of Earl, lost the

greatest part of his popularity, especially in the city; and I believe the Opposition will be very strong, and perhaps prevail, next session, in the House of Commons; there being now nobody there who can have the authority and ascendant over them that Pitt had.

People tell me here, as young Harvey told you at Dresden, that I look very well; but those are words of course, which everyone says to everybody. So far is true, that I am better than at my age, and with my broken constitution, I could have expected to be. God bless you!

## LETTER CCXC

BLACKHEATH, September 12, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I have this moment received your letter of the 27th past. I was in hopes that your course of waters this year at Baden would have given you a longer reprieve from your painful complaint. If I do not mistake, you carried over with you some of Dr. Monsey's powders. Have you taken any of them, and have they done you any good? I know they did me a great deal. I, who pretend to some skill in physic, advise a cool regimen, and cooling medicines.

I do not wonder, that you do wonder, at Lord C—-'s conduct. If he was not outwitted into his peerage by Lord B—, his accepting it is utterly inexplicable. The instruments he has chosen for the great office, I believe, will never fit the same case. It was cruel to put such a boy as Lord G—-over the head of old Ligonier; and if I had been the former, I would have refused that commission, during the life of that honest and brave old general. All this to quiet the Duke of R— to a resignation, and to make Lord B— Lieutenant of Ireland, where, I will venture to prophesy, that he will not do. Ligonier was much pressed to give up his regiment of guards, but would by no means do it; and declared that the King might break him if he pleased, but that he would certainly not break himself.

I have no political events to inform you of; they will not be ripe till the meeting of the parliament. Immediately upon the receipt of this letter, write me one, to acquaint me how you are.

God bless you; and, particularly, may He send you health, for that is the greatest blessing!

