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978-1-108-06797-3 - Letters on the Improvement of the Mind: Addressed to a Young Lady

Hester Chapone

Frontmatter

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Letters on the Improvement of the Mind

Originally published in 1773 in two volumes, and now reissued here together in one, this work by the writer Hester Chapone (1727–1801), a renowned proponent of female education, contains advice delivered in the form of letters to her niece. The first volume deals primarily with matters of religion and morality, while the second volume addresses questions of behaviour and schooling. Unusually for self-improvement books of this era, Chapone recommends that a young woman should have a rigorous education in a wide variety of subjects, including ancient history and geography, as well as instruction in ladylike deportment and mastery of household matters. She exhorts young ladies to avoid vanity and other vices through devoted study of scripture, and writes of the importance of choosing worthy and sensible friends who can be trusted to offer good advice. Chapone's posthumously published works, in two volumes, are also reissued in this series.

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LETTERS
ON THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF THE
MIND.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

I CONSIDER AN HUMAN SOUL WITHOUT EDUCATION, LIKE MARBLE IN THE QUARRY, WHICH SHEWS NONE OF ITS INHERENT BEAUTIES TILL THE SKILL OF THE POLISHER FETCHES OUT THE COLOURS, MAKES THE SURFACE SHINE, AND DISCOVERS EVERY ORNAMENTAL CLOUD, SPOT AND VEIN THAT RUNS THRO' THE BODY OF IT. EDUCATION, AFTER THE SAME MANNER, WHEN IT WORKS UPON A NOBLE MIND, DRAWS OUT TO VIEW EVERY LATENT VIRTUE AND PERFECTION, WHICH WITHOUT SUCH HELPS ARE NEVER ABLE TO MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE.

ADDISON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

DUBLIN:

Printed for J. EXSHAW, H. SAUNDERS, W. SLEATER, J. POTTS, D. CHAMBERLAINE, J. WILLIAMS, and R. MONCRIEFFE.

MDCCLXXIII.

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T O

Mrs. MONTAGU.

MADAM,

I Believe, you are persuaded that I never entertained a thought of appearing in public, when the desire of being useful to one dear child, in whom I take the tenderest interest, induced me to write the following Letters:—perhaps it was the partiality of friendship, which

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so far biaſſed your judgment, as
to make you think them capable
of being more extenſively uſeful,
and warmly to recommend the
publication of them. — Though
this partiality could alone prevent
your judgment from being confi-
dered as deciſive in favour of the
work it is more flattering to the
writer than any literary fame;
if, however, you will allow me
to add, that ſome ſtrokes of
your elegant pen have corrected
theſe Letters, I may hope, they
will be received with an attention,
which

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which will ensure a candid judgement from the reader, and perhaps will enable them to make some useful impressions on those, to whom they are now particularly offered.

They only, who know how your hours are employed, and of what important value they are to the good and happiness of individuals, as well as to the delight and improvement of the public, can justly estimate my obligation to you for the time and consideration you have bestowed on this little work.—
As *you* have drawn it forth, I may
claim

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vi DEDICATION.

claim a sort of right to the ornament and protection of your name, and to the privilege of publicly professing myself, with the highest esteem,

MADAM,

your much obliged friend,
and most obedient
humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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