

THE ROYAL SOCIETY & THE ACADEMIE MONTMOR
RELATION OF COL. [SAMUEL] TUKE TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON
CA. 12 JUNE 1661 OS
TRANSCRIBED BY ROBERT A. HATCH
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MR. PRESIDENT,

Being very sensible of the great obligation, which I lately received from this learned assembly, by my admission into your society, I did excogitate the means, which might best express my just esteem for your persons, my zeal for the advancement of your worthy deigns, and my gratitude for the unmerited favour, which you have been pleased to confer upon me.

And conceiving, that there is nothing, which does more increase the force of the commonwealth of letters than a correspondency with the learned men of other nations, and all little enough to withstand the rude assaults of the ignorant multitudes, who wanting the virtuous industry to improve their natural light, do endeavour (by decrying all acquired knowledge in others) to make their own lazy ignorance pass for judgment: from this reflection I did presume that it might be an agreeable service to this illustrious assembly, to inform myself, when I was lately in Paris, what friends we had in that flourishing city and to this end I sought out an old acquaintance of mine, one Monsieur de Roberval, a learned and judicious gentleman, who possesses the chair of the king's professor of the mathematics in Paris, from whom I received this account:

That there were several assemblies of learned men in Paris, of which the most considerable was the French academy, formerly instituted by cardinal de Richelieu, and since protected by Monsieur de Séguier, chancellor of France, at whose house they did use to meet, but were now very much declined by the barrenness of the subject of their entertainment, which was only the embellishing of their style and polishing of verse; but especially by a new institution of an assembly of learned men, whose business is to advance the

knowledge of nature by conferences and experiments; into which society many, that were formerly of the French academy, are now entered.

Finding by Monsieur de Roberval's discourse, that the entertainment of this society had a near resemblance to the design of those, who assemble here, some few days before I left Paris, I went along with Monsieur le Comte d'Albonee, a person of eminent quality, and a great lover of learning, to Monsieur de Montmor's house, the patron and president of this society, where they assemble every Tuesday in the afternoon; who received us very civilly. And he being informed by Monsieur le Comte d'Albonne, that I had the honour to have a place in this assembly, after he had shewed me his pictures and his medals, and his garden of flowers, in all which he is very curious, he brought me into the hall, where those of the society do assemble. There I found near twenty persons, sitting in a semicircle about a table; at which the president sat, and did me the honour to place me by him.

As soon as we were seated, Monsieur de Sorbière, secretary to the assembly, addressing to the president, told him, that Monsieur Quillet, who should that day have entertained them with a discourse of comets, had sent to let him know, that he was indisposed, and desired their excuse. So they fell upon the discourse of an experiment, which they had lately made. Which being ended, Monsieur de Montmor, the president, informed the society, that I had the honour to be of your number; and desired me that I would report to them the subject of your conferences, and the forms of your institutions which I did as well as I was able.

After they had had the patience to hear so unpolished a relation, the president, Monsieur de Montmor, replied, that he was overjoyed to hear of the growth of so noble a design, of whose birth they had been advertised by letters from Monsieur Oldenburg. And he said, they did not doubt but that the success would answer the expectations of all the lovers of learning; being convinced by many modern pieces, that had been written by our countrymen, that the genius of our nation was very well fitted for the advancement of all forms of learning. And then he mentioned Gilbert, Bacon, Harvey, Hobbes, Digby, Glisson, Charlton and divers others, whose names do not occur to my memory. Then he deplored the unhappy condition of the nobility and gentry of their nation, who not being able to furnish the profusion of their expences from their patrimonies, were forced,

as soon as they were capable of business, to pursue their fortunes either in the court, armies, or governments in the provinces, that they had not the leisure to cultivate their minds by letters. This occasioned a gross ignorance amongst the persons of quality, and consequently a disregard to all sorts of sciences.

I told them, that the noblemen and gentlemen of our country, having plentiful revenues in land, and their expences being proportioned to their estates, they had both time and means to acquire knowledge: and that we were so happy as to be governed by a king, who, amongst other illustrious qualities, was a great favourer of learning: and that we promised ourselves from the prudence of his government so much peace and plenty, as we did not doubt to see the arts and sciences flourish in our country. This confirmed their belief, which was expressed by many eulogies, both of his majesty and our nation, by divers of the assembly; and they concluded with their earnest desires of a correspondence with us, as the best means to increase our common light, to render our lives more pleasant by our mutual commerce, and to strengthen the republic of learning.

I assured them, that as soon as I arrived, I would not fail to communicate their design to our society; who were not such strangers to the reputation of their illustrious assembly, as not to embrace this overture of commerce with great respect and satisfaction.

Then Monsieur le Comte d'Albonne acquainted them with a relation, which I made to him of Mr. Boyle's engine, and of divers experiments concerning the extension of air; with which they seemed very much delighted, and desired me to send them Mr. Boyle's book upon this subject; with this promise, that if they made any discoveries worthy of our knowledge, they would freely impart them to us.

The next day the president, Monsieur de Montmor, came to my lodging at Palais Royal, and carried me to one Monsieur de Rohault's house, who is of their society, from whom I heard a very ingenious lecture of the nature of the load-stone, and his hypothesis made out by diverse curious experiments.

The day following Monsieur de Sorbière, secretary to their society, did me the honour to visit me, who told me, that he was commanded by the

president and the rest of the society to make me a compliment, and to remind me of my promise of endeavouring to establish a commerce between them and this honourable society; and then he presented me with that book, which I produced at my first appearance in this learned circle.

This is a summary account of the relation, which I lately made in this place more at large.

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