

An accident one night at the theatre at Paris placed him in the company of an English gentleman. They became intimate, and from this gentleman he obtained some knowledge of the English language; which he afterwards improved by a residence in London.

He had received a regular classical education, and acquired, by strict application, a tolerable knowledge of the German, Italian, and Spanish languages, sufficient to consult the authors who have written in those languages. On his arrival at Paris his first study was jurisprudence, with an intention of becoming an advocate in parliament. No science however escaped his attention. He attended lectures and experiments in every branch of science; wherein his active genius found ample exercise. Chymistry was his favourite object of pursuit; but his circumstances were too limited to indulge much in it. The small patrimony which he inherited from his father did not exceed forty pounds per annum.

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