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### **The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.**

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Being The Third of his Letters

**Pope, Alexander**

**London, 1751**

Letter VII. Mr. Pope to Dr. Swift, occasioned by the former: An account of his conduct and maxims in general.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54342](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54342)

FROM DR. SWIFT, etc. 37

Court, and the Successors; and by the force of too much honesty or too little sublunary wisdom, you fell between two stools. Take care of your health and money; be less modest and more active; or else turn Parson and get a Bishoprick here: Would to God they would send us as good ones from your side!

I am ever, &c.

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LETTER VII.

Mr. POPE to Dr. SWIFT.

Jan. 12, 1723.

I Find a rebuke in a late Letter of yours, that both stings and pleaseth me extremely. Your saying that I ought to have writ a Postscript to my friend Gay's, makes me not content to write less than a whole Letter; and your seeming to take his kindly, gives me hopes you will look upon this as a sincere effect of Friendship. Indeed as I cannot but own the Laziness with which you tax me, and with which I may equally charge you, for both of us have had (and one of us hath both had and given<sup>i</sup>) a Surfeit of writing; so I

<sup>i</sup> Alluding to his large work on Homer.



really thought you would know your self to be so certainly intitled to my Friendship, that it was a possession you could not imagine stood in need of any further Deeds or Writings to assure you of it.

Whatever you seem to think of your withdrawn and separate state at this distance, and in this Absence, Dean Swift lives still in England, in every place and company where he would chuse to live, and I find him in all the Conversations I keep, and in all the Hearts in which I desire any share.

We have never met these many years without mention of you. Besides my old Acquaintance, I have found that all my friends of a later date are such as were yours before: Lord Oxford, Lord Harcourt, and Lord Harley may look upon me as one entailed upon them by you: Lord Bolingbroke is now returned (as I hope) to take Me with all his other Hereditary Rights: and, indeed, he seems grown so much a Philosopher, as to set his heart upon some of them as little, as upon the Poet you gave him. It is sure my ill fate, that all those I most loved, and with whom I most lived, must be banished: After both of you left England, my constant Host was the Bishop of<sup>k</sup> Rochester. Sure this is a nation that is cursedly

<sup>k</sup> Dr. Atterbury.

afraid



afraid of being over-run with too much Politeness, and cannot regain one great Genius, but at the expence of another <sup>1</sup>. I tremble for my Lord Peterborow (whom I now lodge with) he has too much Wit, as well as Courage, to make a solid General <sup>m</sup>: and if he escapes being banished by others, I fear he will banish himself. This leads me to give you some account of the manner of my life and Conversation, which has been infinitely more various and dissipated, than when you knew me and cared for me; and among all Sexes, Parties, and Professions. A Glut of Study and Retirement in the first part of my life cast me into this; and this, I begin to see, will throw me again into Study and Retirement.

<sup>1</sup> The Bishop of Rochester thought this to be indeed the case; and that the price agreed on for Lord B.'s return was his banishment: an imagination, which so strongly possessed him when he went abroad, that all, which his friends could say or do, could not convince him of the folly of it.

<sup>m</sup> This Mr. Walsb seriously thought to be the case, where, in a letter to Mr. Pope, he says—"When we were in the North, my

“ Lord Wharton shew'd  
 “ me a letter he had received from a certain  
 “ great General in Spain;  
 “ [Lord Peterb.] I told  
 “ him, I would by all means  
 “ have that General recalled, and set to writing  
 “ here at home, for it was  
 “ impossible that a man  
 “ with so much wit as he  
 “ shewed, could be fit to  
 “ command an army or do  
 “ any other business.” *Let.*  
 V. *Sep.* 9. 1706.



The Civilities I have met with from opposite Setts of people, have hinder'd me from being violent or sour to any Party; but at the same time the Observations and Experiences I cannot but have collected, have made me less fond of, and less surprized at, any: I am therefore the more afflicted and the more angry at the Violences and Hardships I see practised by either. The merry Vein you knew me in, is sunk into a Turn of Reflection, that has made the world pretty indifferent to me; and yet I have acquired a Quietness of mind which by fits improves into a certain degree of Chearfulness, enough to make me just so good humour'd as to wish that world well. My Friendships are encreased by new ones, yet no part of the warmth I felt for the old is diminished. Aversions I have none, but to Knaves (for Fools I have learned to bear with) and such I cannot be commonly civil to; for I think those men are next to Knaves who converse with them. The greatest Man in power of this sort shall hardly make me bow to him, unless I had a personal obligation, and that I will take care not to have. The top pleasure of my life is one I learned from you both how to gain and how to use; the Freedom of Friendship with men much my Superiors. To have pleased great men, according to Horace, is a praise; but not to  
have



have flattered them and yet not have displeas'd them, is a greater. I have carefully avoided all Intercourse with Poets and Scriblers, unless where by great chance I have found a modest one. By these means I have had no quarrels with any personally; none have been Enemies, but who were also Strangers to me; and as there is no great need of an Eclaircisment with such, whatever they writ or said I never retaliated, not only never seeming to know, but often really never knowing, any thing of the matter. There are very few things that give me the Anxiety of a Wish; the strongest I have would be to pass my days with you, and a few such as you: But Fate has dispersed them all about the world; and I find to wish it is as vain, as to wish to see the Millennium and the Kingdom of the Just upon earth.

If I have sinned in my long silence, consider there is one to whom you yourself have been as great a sinner. As soon as you see his hand, you will learn to do me justice, and feel in your heart how long a man may be silent to those he truly loves and respects.

LETTER