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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

XVIII. From Mr. Gay and Mr. Pope. An account of the reception of Gulliver's Travels in England.

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FROM DR. SWIFT, etc. 75

“ abide out: yet to me, those that are in shall
“ be as those that are out, and those that are
“ out shall be as those that are in.”

I am indifferent as to all those matters, but
I miss you as much as I did the first day, when
(with a short sigh) I parted. Wherever you
are, (or on the mountains of Wales, or on the
coast of Dublin,

*Tu mihi, seu magni superas jam saxa Timavi,
Sive oram Illyrici legis æquoris—)*

I am, and ever shall be Yours, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. GAY to Dr. SWIFT.

Nov. 17, 1726.

ABout ten days ago a Book was publish'd
here of the Travels of one Gulliver,
which hath been the conversation of the whole
town ever since: The whole impression sold in
a week; and nothing is more diverting than to
hear the different opinions people give of it,
though all agree in liking it extremely. 'Tis
generally said that you are the Author; but I
am told, the Bookseller declares, he knows not
from what hand it came. From the highest

to

to the lowest it is universally read, from the Cabinet-council to the Nursery. The Politicians to a man agree, that it is free from particular reflections, but that the Satire on general societies of men is too severe. Not but we now and then meet with people of greater perspicuity, who are in search for particular applications in every leaf; and 'tis highly probable we shall have keys publish'd to give light into Gulliver's design. Lord —— is the person who least approves it, blaming it as a design of evil consequence to depreciate human nature, at which it cannot be wondered that he takes most offence, being himself the most accomplish'd of his species, and so losing more than any other of that praise which is due both to the dignity and virtue of a man^a. Your friend, my Lord Harcourt, commends it very much, though he thinks in some places the matter too far carried. The Duchess Dowager of Marlborough is in raptures at it; she says she can dream of nothing else since she read it: she declares, that she hath now found out, that her whole life hath been lost in caressing the worst part of mankind, and treating the best as her

^a It is no wonder a man of worth should *condemn* a satire on his species; as it injures Virtue and violates Truth: And, as little, that a very corrupt reader should *approve* it, because it justifies his principles and tends to excuse his practice.

foes;

foes; and that if she knew Gulliver, tho' he had been the worst enemy she ever had, she would give up her present acquaintance for his friendship. You may see by this, that you are not much injur'd by being suppos'd the Author of this piece. If you are, you have oblig'd us, and two or three of your best friends, in not giving us the least hint of it while you were with us; and in particular Dr. Arbuthnot, who says it is ten thousand pities he had not known it, he could have added such abundance of things upon every subject. Among Lady-critics, some have found out that Mr. Gulliver had a particular malice to Maids of honour. Those of them who frequent the Church, say, his design is impious, and that it is depreciating the works of the Creator. Notwithstanding, I am told the Princess hath read it with great pleasure. As to other Critics, they think the flying island is the least entertaining; and so great an opinion the town have of the impossibility of Gulliver's writing at all below himself, 'tis agreed that part was not writ by the same hand, tho' this hath its defenders too. It hath pass'd Lords and Commons, *nemine contradicente*; and the whole town, men, women, and children are quite full of it.

Perhaps

Perhaps I may all this time be talking to you of a Book you have never seen, and which hath not yet reach'd Ireland ; if it hath not, I believe what we have said will be sufficient to recommend it to your reading, and that you will order me to send it to you.

But it will be much better to come over your self, and read it here, where you will have the pleasure of variety of commentators, to explain the difficult passages to you.

We all rejoice that you have fix'd the precise time of your coming to be *cum hirundine prima* ; which we modern naturalists pronounce, ought to be reckon'd, contrary to Pliny, in this northern latitude of fifty-two degrees, from the end of February, Styl. Greg. at farthest. But to us your friends, the coming of such a black swallow as you, will make a summer in the worst of seasons. We are no less glad at your mention of Twickenham and Dawley ; and in town you know you have a lodging at Court.

The Princess is cloath'd in Irish silk ; pray give our service to the Weavers. We are strangely surpriz'd to hear that the Bells in Ireland ring without your money. I hope you do not write the thing that is not. We are afraid that B— hath been guilty of that crime, that you (like Honynhnm) have treated him as a
Yahoo,

Yahoo, and discarded him your service. I fear you do not understand these modish terms, which every creature now understands but your self.

You tell us your Wine is bad, and that the Clergy do not frequent your house, which we look upon to be tautology. The best advice we can give you is, to make them a present of Your wine, and come away to better.

You fancy we envy you, but you are mistaken; we envy those you are with, for we cannot envy the man we love. Adieu.

LETTER XIX.

Nov. 16, 1726.

I Have resolved to take time; and in spite of all misfortunes and demurs, which sickness, lameness, or disability of any kind can throw in my way, to write you (at intervals) a long letter. My two least fingers of one hand hang impediments to the others^a, like useles depend-

^a This was occasioned by a bad accident as he was returning home in a friends Chariot; which in passing a bridge was overturned, and thrown with the horses into the River. The glasses being up, and Mr. Pope unable to break them, he was

in immediate danger of drowning, when the postillion, who had just recovered himself, beat the glass, which lay uppermost to pieces: a fragment of which cut one of Mr. Pope's hands very desperately.

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