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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

XXVI. From Mr. Gay. Raillery: What employment was offered him at court, and why he refused it.

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will have your coming inscribed on my Tomb, and recorded in never-dying verse.

I thank Mrs. Pope for her prayers, but I know the mystery. A person of my acquaintance, who used to correspond with the last Great Duke of Tuscany, shewing one of the Duke's letters to a friend, and professing great sense of his Highness's friendship, read this passage out of the letters, *I would give one of my fingers to procure your real good.* The Person to whom this was read, and who knew the Duke well, said, the meaning of *real good* was only that the other might turn a good Catholic. Pray ask Mrs. Pope whether this story is applicable to her and me? I pray God bless her, for I am sure she is a good Christian, and (which is almost as rare) a good Woman.

Adieu.

L E T T E R XXVI.

Mr. GAY to Dr. SWIFT.

Oct. 22, 1727.

THE Queen's family is at last settled, and in the list I was appointed Gentleman-usher to the Princess Louisa, the youngest Princess; which, upon account that I am so far advanced in life, I have declin'd accepting;

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and have endeavour'd, in the best manner I could, to make my excuses by a letter to her Majesty. So now all my expectations are vanish'd; and I have no prospect, but in depending wholly upon myself, and my own conduct. As I am us'd to disappointments, I can bear them; but as I can have no more hopes, I can no more be disappointed, so that I am in a blessed condition.—You remember you were advising me to go into Newgate to finish my scenes the more correctly—I now think I shall, for I have no attendance to hinder me; but my Opera is already finish'd. I leave the rest of this paper to Mr. Pope.

Gay is a Free-man, and I writ him a long Congratulatory Letter upon it. Do you the same: It will mend him, and make him a better man than a Court could do. Horace might keep his coach in Augustus's time, if he pleas'd; but I won't in the time of our Augustus. My Poem (which it grieves me that I dare not send you a copy of, for fear of the Curl's and Dennis's of Ireland, and still more for fear of the worst of Traytors, our Friends and Admirers) my Poem, I say, will shew what a distinguishing age we lived in? Your name is in it, with some others, under a mark of such ignominy
as

FROM DR. SWIFT, etc. 99

as you will not much grieve to wear in that company. Adieu, and God bless you, and give you health and spirits,

*Whether thou chuse Cervantes' serious air,
Or laugh and shake in Rab'lais' easy chair,
Or in the graver Gown instruct mankind,
Or, silent, let thy morals tell thy mind.*

These two verses are over and above what I've said of you in the Poem. Adieu.

L E T T E R XXVII.

Dr. SWIFT to Mr. GAY.

Dublin, Nov. 23, 1727.

I Entirely approve your refusal of that employment, and your writing to the Queen. I am perfectly confident you have a keen enemy in the Ministry. God forgive him, but not till he puts himself in a state to be forgiven. Upon reasoning with myself, I should hope they are gone too far to discard you quite, and that they will give you something; which, although much less than they ought, will be (as far as it is worth) better circumstantiated: And since you already just live, a middling help will make you just tolerable. Your lateness in life (as you so soon call it) might be improper to begin the world with, but almost the eldest men

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