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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

XXIX. Of a true Jonathan Gulliver in New-England: The Dunciad, and the Treatise of the Bathos. Reflections on mortality and decay: What ist desirable in the decline of life.

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

account. I have been in a worse condition of health than ever, and think my immortality is very near out of my enjoyment: so it must be in you, and in posterity, to make me what amends you can for dying young. Adieu. While I am, I am yours. Pray love me, and take care of yourself.

LETTER XXIX.

March 23, 1727-8.

I Send you a very odd thing, a paper printed in Boston in New-England, wherein you'll find a real person, a member of their Parliament, of the name of Jonathan Gulliver. If the fame of that Traveller has travel'd thither, it has travel'd very quick, to have folks christen'd already by the name of the supposed Author. But if you object, that no child so lately christen'd could be arrived at years of maturity to be elected into Parliament, I reply (to solve the Riddle) that the person is an *Anabaptist*, and not christen'd till full age, which sets all right. However it be, the accident is very singular, that these two names should be united.

Mr,

Mr. Gay's Opera has been acted near forty days running, and will certainly continue the whole season. So he has more than a fence about his thousand pound^a: he'll soon be thinking of a fence about his two thousand. Shall no one of us live as we would wish each other to live? Shall he have no annuity, you no settlement on this side, and I no prospect of getting to you on the other? This world is made for Cæsar — as Cato said, for ambitious, false, or flattering people to domineer in: Nay they would not, by their good will, leave us our very books, thoughts, or words, in quiet. I despise the world yet, I assure you, more than either Gay or you, and the Court more than all the rest of the world. As for those Scriblers for whom you apprehend I would suppress my *Dulness* (which by the way, for the future, you are to call by a more pompous name, *The Dunceiad*) how much that nest of Hornets are my regard,

^a Before Mr. Gay had fenced this thousand pounds, he had a consultation with his friends about the disposal of it. Mr. L. advised him to intrust it to the funds, and live upon the interest: Dr. Arbuthnot, to intrust it to Providence, and live upon

the principal; and Mr. Pope was for purchasing an annuity for life. In this uncertainty he could only say with the old man in Terence, *fecistis probe: Incertior sum multo, quam dudum.*

will

will easily appear to you when you read the Treatise of the Bathos.

At all adventures, yours and my name shall stand linked as friends to posterity, both in verse and prose, and (as Tully calls it) in *consuetudine Studiorum*. Would to God our persons could but as well, and as surely, be inseparable! I find my other Tyes dropping from me: some worn off, some torn off, others relaxing daily: My greatest, both by duty, gratitude, and humanity, Time is shaking every moment, and it now hangs but by a thread! I am many years the older, for living so much with one so old; much the more helpless, for having been so long help'd and tended by her; much the more considerate and tender, for a daily commerce with one who requir'd me justly to be both to her; and consequently the more melancholy and thoughtful; and the less fit for others, who want only in a companion or a friend, to be amused or entertained. My constitution too has had its share of decay, as well as my spirits, and I am as much in the decline at forty as you at sixty. I believe we should be fit to live together, cou'd I get a little more health, which might make me not quite insupportable: Your Deafness wou'd agree with my Dulness; you would not want me to speak when
you

you could not hear. But God forbid you shou'd be as destitute of the social comforts of life, as I must when I lose my mother; or that ever you shou'd lose your more useful acquaintance so utterly, as to turn your thoughts to such a broken reed as I am, who could so ill supply your wants. I am extremely troubled at the returns of your deafness; you cannot be too particular in the accounts of your health to me; every thing you do or say in this kind obliges me, nay, delights me, to see the justice you do me in thinking me concern'd in all your concerns; so that though the pleasanterest thing you can tell me be that you are better or easier; next to that it pleases me, that you make me the person you would complain to.

As the obtaining the love of valuable men is the happiest end I know of this life, so the next felicity is to get rid of fools and scoundrels; which I can't but own to you was one part of my design in falling upon these Authors, whose incapacity is not greater than their insincerity, and of whom I have always found (if I may quote myself)

That each bad Author is as bad a Friend.

This Poem will rid me of those insects,

*Cedite, Romani Scriptores, cedite, Graii;
Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade.*

I mean.

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I mean than *my Iliad*; and I call it *Nescio quid*, which is a degree of modesty; but however if it silence these fellows ^b, it must be something greater than any Iliad in Christendom.

Adieu.

LETTER XXX.

From Dr. SWIFT.

Dublin, May 10, 1728.

I Have with great pleasure shewn the New-England News-paper with the two names Jonathan Gulliver, and I remember Mr. Fortescue sent you an account from the assizes, of one Lemuel Gulliver who had a Cause there, and lost it on his ill reputation of being a liar. These are not the only observations I have made upon odd strange accidents in trifles, which in things of great importance would have been matter for Historians. Mr. Gay's Opera hath been acted here twenty times, and my Lord Lieutenant tells me, it is very well perform'd; he hath seen it often, and approves it much.

You give a most melancholy account of yourself, and which I do not approve. I reckon

^b It did, in a little time, effectually silence them.

that