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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**

XXXIII. From Dr. Swift. Advice how to publish the Dunciad: Concerning Lord B. and Mr. Gay.

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I desire you to read over the Text, and make a few in any way you like best<sup>a</sup>, whether dry raillery, upon the style and way of commenting of trivial Critics; or humourous, upon the authors in the poem; or historical, of persons, places, times; or explanatory; or collecting the parallel passages of the Ancients. Adieu. I am pretty well, my Mother not ill, Dr. Arbuthnot vex'd with his fever by intervals; I am afraid he declines, and we shall lose a worthy man: I am troubled about him very much.

I am, &c.

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LETTER XXXIII.

From DR. SWIFT.

July 16, 1728.

I Have often run over the *Dunciad* in an Irish edition (I suppose full of faults) which a gentleman sent me. The notes I could wish to be very large, in what relates to the persons concern'd; for I have long observ'd that twenty miles from London no-body understands hints, initial letters, or town-facts and passages; and in a few years not even those who

<sup>a</sup> Dr. Swift did so.



live in London. I would have the names of those scriblers printed indexically at the beginning or end of the Poem, with an account of their works, for the reader to refer to. I would have all the Parodies (as they are call'd) referred to the author they imitate—When I began this long paper, I thought I should have fill'd it with setting down the several passages I had mark'd in the edition I had; but I find it unnecessary, so many of them falling under the same rule. After twenty times reading the whole, I never in my opinion saw so much good satire, or more good sense, in so many lines. How it passes in Dublin I know not yet; but I am sure it will be a great disadvantage to the poem, that the persons and facts will not be understood, till an explanation comes out, and a very full one. I imagine it is not to be published till towards winter, when folks begin to gather in town. Again I insist, you must have your Asterisks fill'd up with some real names of real Dunces.

I am now reading your preceding letter, of June 28, and find that all I have advis'd above is mention'd there. I would be glad to know whether the quarto edition is to come out anonymously, as published by the Commentator, with all his pomp of prefaces, &c. and among many complaints of spurious editions? I am  
 thinking



thinking whether the Editor should not follow the old style of, This excellent author, &c. and refine in many places when you meant no refinement; and into the bargain take all the load of naming the dunces, their qualities, histories, and performances?

As to your self, I doubt you want a spurrier-on to exercise and to amusements; but to talk of decay at your season of life is a jest. But you are not so regular as I. You are the most temperate man God-ward, and the most intemperate your self-ward, of most I have known. I suppose Mr. Gay will return from the Bath with twenty pounds more flesh, and two hundred less in money: Providence never design'd him to be above two and twenty, by his thoughtlessness and Cullibility. He hath as little foresight of age, sickness, poverty, or loss of admirers, as a girl at fifteen. By the way, I must observe, that my Lord Bolingbroke (from the effects of his kindness to me) argues most sophistically: The fall from a million to an hundred-thousand pounds is not so great, as from eight hundred pounds a year to one: Besides, he is a controller of Fortune, and Poverty dares not look a great Minister in the face, under his lowest declension. I never knew him live so great and expensively as he hath done since his return from Exile; such mortals have resources



that others are not able to comprehend. But God bless You, whose great genius has not so transported you as to leave you to the courtesy of mankind ; for wealth is liberty, and liberty is a blessing fittest for a Philosopher—and Gay is a Slave just by two thousand pounds too little.—And Horace was of my mind, and let my Lord contradict him, if he dares.—

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L E T T E R XXXIV.

Bath, Nov. 12, 1728.

**I** Have past six weeks in quest of health, and found it not ; but I found the folly of solicitude about it in a hundred instances ; the contrariety of opinions and practices, the inability of physicians, the blind obedience of some patients, and as blind rebellion of others. I believe at a certain time of life, men are either fools, or physicians for themselves, and zealots, or divines for themselves.

It was much in my hopes that you intended us a winter's visit, but last week I repented that wish, having been alarm'd with a report of your lying ill on the road from Ireland ; from which I am just reliev'd by an assurance that you are still at Sir A—'s planting and building ; two things that I envy you for, besides a third, which