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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 XXXV. From Dr. Swift. His manner of living with a friend in the country. The death of Mr. Congreve. Character of an indolent friend.

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great a mind to have more Wit than we, win it and wear it. Give us but ease, health, peace, and fair weather! I think it is the best wish in the world, and you know whose it was. If I liv'd in Ireland, I fear the wet climate wou'd indanger more than my life; my humour, and health; I am so Atmospherical a creature.

I must not omit acquainting you, that what you heard of the words spoken of you in the Drawing-room, was not true. The sayings of Princes are generally as ill related as the sayings of Wits. To such reports little of our regard should be given, and less of our conduct influenc'd by them.

L E T T E R X X X V .

From Dr. S W I F T .

Dublin, Feb. 13, 1728.

I Liv'd very easily in the country: Sir A. is a man of sense, and a scholar, has a good voice, and my Lady a better; she is perfectly well bred, and desirous to improve her understanding, which is very good, but cultivated too much like a fine Lady. She was my pupil there, and severely chid when she read wrong; with that, and walking, and making
twenty

twenty little amusing improvements, and writing family verses of mirth by way of libels on my Lady, my time past very well and in very great order; infinitely better than here, where I see no creature but my servants and my old Presbyterian house-keeper, denying myself to every body, till I shall recover my ears.

The account of another Lord Lieutenant was only in a common news-paper, when I was in the country; and if it should have happen'd to be true, I would have desired to have had access to him as the situation I am in requires. But this renews the grief for the death of our friend Mr. Congreve, whom I loved from my youth, and who surely, besides his other talents, was a very agreeable companion. He had the misfortune to squander away a very good constitution in his younger days; and I think a man of sense and merit like him, is bound in conscience to preserve his health for the sake of his friends, as well as of himself. Upon his own account I could not much desire the continuance of his life, under so much pain, and so many infirmities. Years have not yet hardened me; and I have an addition of weight on my spirits since we lost him; tho' I saw him so seldom, and possibly, if he had liv'd on, should never have seen him more. I do not only wish as you ask me, that I was unacquainted

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acquainted with any deserving person, but almost that I never had a friend. Here is an ingenious good-humour'd Physician, a fine gentleman, an excellent scholar, easy in his fortunes, kind to every body, hath abundance of friends, entertains them often and liberally, they pass the evening with him at cards, with plenty of good meat and wine, eight or a dozen together; he loves them all, and they him. He has twenty of these at command; if one of them dies, it is no more than poor Tom! he gets another, or takes up with the rest, and is no more mov'd than at the loss of his cat; he offends no-body, is easy with every body — Is not this the true happy man? I was describing him to my Lady A—, who knows him too, but she hates him mortally by my character, and will not drink his health: I would give half my fortune for the same temper, and yet I cannot say I love it, for I do not love my Lord — who is much of the Doctor's nature. I hear Mr. Gay's second Opera, which you mention, is forbid; and then he will be once more fit to be advised, and reject your advice. Adieu.

L E T T E R