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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**

XXXVI. Dr. Swift to Lord Bolingbroke. Exhortation to him to write history. The Dean's temper, his present amusements, and disposition.

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LETTER XXXVI.

Dr. SWIFT to Lord BOLINGBROKE.

Dublin, March 21, 1729.

YOU tell me you have not quitted the design of collecting, writing, &c. This is the answer of every sinner who defers his repentance. I wish Mr. Pope were as great an urger as I, who long for nothing more than to see truth under your hands, laying all detraction in the dust — I find myself disposed every year, or rather every month, to be more angry and revengeful; and my rage is so ignoble, that it descends even to resent the folly and baseness of the enslav'd people among whom I live. I knew an old Lord in Leicestershire, who amused himself with mending pitchforks and spades for his Tenants *gratis*. Yet I have higher ideas left, if I were nearer to objects on which I might employ them; and contemning my private fortune, would gladly cross the channel and stand by, while my betters were driving the Boars out of the garden, if there be any probable expectation of such an endeavour. When I was of your age I often thought of death, but now after a dozen years more, it is never out of my mind, and terrifies me less. I  
conclude

conclude that Providence hath order'd our fears to decrease with our spirits; and yet I love *la bagatelle* better than ever: for finding it troublesome to read at night, and the company here growing tasteless, I am always writing bad prose, or worse verses, either of rage or raillery, whereof some few escape to give offence, or mirth, and the rest are burnt.

They print some Irish trash in London, and charge it on me, which you will clear me of to my friends, for all are spurious except one<sup>a</sup> paper, for which Mr. Pope very lately chid me. I remember your Lordship us'd to say, that a few good speakers would in time carry any point that was right; and that the common method of a majority, by calling, To the question, would never hold long when reason was on the other side. Whether politics do not change like gaming by the invention of new tricks, I am ignorant? but I believe in your time you would never, as a Minister, have suffer'd an Act to pass thro' the H. of C——s, only because you were sure of a majority in the H. of L——s to throw it out; because it would be unpopular, and consequently a loss of reputation. Yet this we are told hath been the case in the qualification-bill relating to Pen-

<sup>a</sup> Entitled, *A Libel on Dr. Delany, and a certain great Lord.*

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tioners. It should seem to me, that Corruption, like avarice, hath no bounds. I had opportunities to know the proceedings of your ministry better than any other man of my rank; and having not much to do, I have often compar'd it with these last sixteen years of a profound peace all over Europe, and we running seven millions in debt. I am forc'd to play at small game, to set the beasts here a madding, meerly for want of better game, *Tentanda via est qua me quoque possim, &c.* — The D— take those politics, where a Dunce might govern for a dozen years together. I will come in person to England, if I am provok'd, and send for the Dictator from the plough. I disdain to say, *O mihi præteritos*— but *cruda deo viridisque senectus*. Pray, my Lord, how are the Gardens? have you taken down the mount, and remov'd the yew hedges? Have you not bad weather for the spring-corn? Has Mr. Pope gone farther in his Ethic Poems? and is the head-land sown with wheat? and what says Polybius? and how does my Lord St. John? which last question is very material to me, because I love Burgundy, and riding between Twickenham and Dawley. — I built a wall five years ago, and when the masons play'd the knaves, nothing delighted me so much as to stand by, while my  
servants

servants threw down what was amiss: I have likewise seen a Monkey overthrow all the dishes and plates in a kitchen, merely for the pleasure of seeing them tumble and hearing the clatter they made in their fall. I wish you would invite me to such another entertainment; but you think, as I ought to think, that it is time for me to have done with the world, and so I would if I could get into a better before I was called into the best, and not die here in a rage, like a poison'd rat in a hole. I wonder you are not ashamed to let me pine away in this kingdom while you are out of power.

I come from looking over the *Melange* above-written, and declare it to be a true copy of my present disposition, which must needs please you, since nothing was ever more displeasing to myself. I desire you to present my most humble respects to my Lady.

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L E T T E R XXXVII.

Dr. SWIFT to Lord BOLINGBROKE.

Dublin, April 5, 1729.

**I** Do not think it could be possible for me to hear better news than that of your getting over your scurvy suit, which always hung as a dead  
 dead