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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**

XLI. Dr. Swift's answer. The misfortunes attending great talents: Concerning fame, and the desire of it.

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My wife desires not to be forgotten by you ; she's faithfully your servant, and zealously your admirer. She will be concerned and disappointed not to find you in this Island at her return, which hope both she and I had been made to entertain before I went abroad.

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L E T T E R X L I .

Dr. SWIFT to Lord BOLINGBROKE.

Dublin, Oct. 31, 1729.

I Receiv'd your Lordship's travelling letter of several dates, at several stages, and from different nations, languages, and religions. Neither could any thing be more obliging than your kind remembrance of me in so many places. As to your ten Lustres, I remember, when I complain'd in a letter to Prior, that I was fifty years old, he was half angry in jest, and answered me out of Terence, *ista commemoratio est quasi exprobratio*. How then ought I to rattle you, when I have a dozen years more to answer for, all monastically pass'd in this Country of liberty and delight, and money, and good company ! I go on answering your letter ; It is you were my Hero, but the other <sup>a</sup> never was ; yet if he were, it was your own fault, who taught me to love him, and often vindi-

<sup>a</sup> L. Ox.

cated

cated him, in the beginning of your ministry, from my accusations. But I granted he had the greatest inequalities of any man alive, and his whole scene was fifty times more a What-d'ye-call it, than yours: for, I declare, yours was *unie*, and I wish you would so order it, that the world may be as wise as I upon that article: Mr. Pope wishes it too, and I believe there is not a more honest man in England, even without wit. But you regard us not. — I was<sup>b</sup> forty seven years old when I began to think of death, and the reflections upon it now begin when I wake in the morning, and end when I am going to sleep. — I writ to Mr. Pope and not to you. My birth, although from a family not undistinguished in its time, is many degrees inferior to your's; all my pretensions from person and parts infinitely so; I a younger son of younger sons; you born to a great fortune: yet I see you with all your advantages, sunk to a degree that you could never have been without them: But yet I see you as much esteemed, as much beloved, as much dreaded, and perhaps more (though it be almost impossible) than ever you were in your highest exaltation — only I grieve like an Alderman that you are not so rich. And yet, my Lord, I pretend to value money as little as you,

<sup>b</sup> The Year of Queen Anne's Death.

and I will call five hundred witnesses (if you will take Irish witnesses) to prove it. I renounce your whole philosophy, because it is not your practice. By the *figure of living*, (if I used that expression to Mr. Pope) I do not mean the parade, but a suitability to your mind; and as for the *pleasure of giving*, I know your soul suffers when you are debarr'd of it. Could you, when your own generosity and contempt of outward things (be not offended, it is no Ecclesiastical but an Epictetian phrase) could you, when these have brought you to it, come over and live with Mr. Pope and me at the Deanery? I could almost wish the experiment were tried—No, God forbid, that ever such a scoundrel as Want should dare to approach you. But, in the mean time, do not brag, Retrenchments are not your talent. But, as old Weymouth said to me in his Lordly Latin, *Philosophia verba, ignava opera*; I wish you could learn Arithmetic, that three and two make five, and will never make more. My philosophical spectacles which you advise me to, will tell me that I can live on 50 *l.* a year (wine excluded, which my bad health forces me to) but I cannot endure that *Otium* should be *sine dignitate*. — My Lord, what I would have said of Fame is meant of fame which a man enjoys in his life; because I cannot be a great Lord, I would acquire

acquire what is a kind of *subsidium*, I would endeavour that my betters should seek me by the merit of something distinguishable, instead of my seeking them. The desire of enjoying it in after-times is owing to the spirit and folly of youth: but with age we learn to know the house is so full, that there is no room for above one or two at most in an age, through the whole world. My Lord, I hate and love to write to you, it gives me pleasure, and kills me with melancholy. The D— take stupidity, that it will not come to supply the want of philosophy.

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L E T T E R XLII,

From Dr. SWIFT.

Oct. 31, 1729.

YOU were so careful of sending me the Dunciad, that I have received five of them, and have pleased four friends. I am one of every body who approve every part of it, Text and Comment; but am one abstracted from every body, in the happiness of being recorded your friend, while wit, and humour, and politeness shall have any memorial among us. As for your octavo edition, we know nothing

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