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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 XLIII. From Lord B. That the sense of friendship increases with increase of years. Concerning a history of his own times, and Mr. P's moral poem.

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not have them glad to be rid of you; and I shall take care that none but my enemies will be glad to get rid of me. You have embroiled me with Lord B—— about the figure of living, and the pleasure of giving. I am under the necessity of some little paultry figure in the station I am; but I make it as little as possible. As to the other part you are base, because I thought myself as great a giver as ever was of my ability; and yet in proportion you exceed, and have kept it till now a secret even from me, when I wondred how you were able to live with your whole little revenue.

Adieu.

L E T T E R XLIII.

Lord BOLINGBROKE to Dr. SWIFT.

Nov. 19, 1729.

I Find that you have laid aside your project of building in Ireland, and that we shall see you in this island *cum zephyris, et hirundine prima*. I know not whether the love of fame increases as we advance in age; sure I am that the force of friendship does. I lov'd you almost twenty years ago, I thought of you as well as I do now, better was beyond the power

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of conception, or, to avoid an equivoque, beyond the extent of my ideas. Whether you are more obliged to me for loving you as well when I knew you less, or for loving you as well after loving you so many years, I shall not determine. What I would say is this: whilst my mind grows daily more independant of the world, and feels less need of leaning on external objects, the ideas of friendship return oftner, they busy me, they warm me more: Is it that we grow more tender as the moment of our great separation approaches? or is it that they who are to live together in another state, (for *vera amicitia non nisi inter bonos*) begin to feel more strongly that divine sympathy which is to be the great band of their future society? There is no one thought which sooths my mind like this: I encourage my imagination to pursue it, and am heartily afflicted when another faculty^a of the intellect comes boisterously in,

^a Viz. Reason. Tully (or, what is much the same, his Disciple) observes something like this on the like occasion, where, speaking of Plato's famous book of the Soul, he says, *Nescio quomodo, dum lego, adsentior: cum posui librum, et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum ceepi cogitare, q̄ sensio illa omnis etal. i. r.* Cicero, seems to

have had but a confused notion of the *cause*, which the Letter-writer has here explained, namely, that the *imagination* is always ready to indulge so flattering an idea, but severer *reason* corrects and disclaims it. As to RELIGION, that is out of the question; for Tully wrote to his few philosophic friends.

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and wakes me from so pleasing a dream, if it be a dream. I will dwell no more on Oeconomics than I have done in my former letter. Thus much only I will say, that *otium cum dignitate* is to be had with 500 *l.* a year as well as with 5000: the difference will be found in the value of the man, and not in that of the estate. I do assure you, that I have never quitted the design of collecting, revising, improving, and extending several materials which are still in my power; and I hope that the time of setting myself about this last work of my life is not far off. Many papers of much curiosity and importance are lost, and some of them in a manner which would surprize and anger you. However I shall be able to convey several great truths to posterity, so clearly and so authentically, that the Burnets and the Oldmixons of another age may rail, but not be able to deceive. Adieu, my friend. I have taken up more of this paper than belongs to me, since Pope is to write to you; no matter, for, upon recollection, the rules of proportion are not broken; he will say as much to you in one page, as I have said in three. Bid him talk to you of the work he is about, I hope in good earnest; it is a fine one; and will be, in his hands, an original^b. His sole complaint is, that he finds it too easy in the

^b *Essay on Man.*

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execution. This flatters his laziness, it flatters my judgment, who always thought that (universal as his talents are) this is eminently and peculiar his, above all the writers I know living or dead; I do not except Horace.

Adieu.

LETTER XLIV.

Nov. 28, 1729.

THIS letter (like all mine) will be a Rhapsody; it is many years ago since I wrote as a Wit^a. How many occurrences or informations must one omit, if one determin'd to say nothing that one could not say prettily? I lately receiv'd from the widow of one dead correspondent, and the father of another, several of my own letters of about fifteen and twenty years old; and it was not unentertaining to myself to observe, how and by what degrees I ceas'd to be a witty writer; as either my experience grew on the one hand, or my affection to my correspondents on the other. Now as I love you better than most I have ever met with in the world, and esteem you too the more, the longer I have compar'd you with the rest of the world; so inevitably I write to you more negligently, that is, more openly, and what

^a He us'd to value himself on this particular.

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