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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**

LIV. Two new pieces of the Dean's: Answer to his invitation into England. Advice to write, [et]c.

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FROM DR. SWIFT, etc. 189

LETTER LIV.

Aug. 28, 1731.

YOU and the Duchefs use me very ill, for, I profess, I cannot distinguish the style or the hand-writing of either. I think her Grace writes more like you than herself, and that you write more like her Grace than yourself. I would swear the beginning of your letter writ by the Duchefs, though it is to pass for yours; because there is a cursed lie in it, that she is neither young nor healthy, and besides it perfectly resembles the part she owns. I will likewise swear, that what I must suppose is written by the Duchefs, is your hand; and thus I am puzzled and perplexed between you, but I will go on in the innocency of my own heart. I am got eight miles from our famous metropolis, to a country Parson's, to whom I lately gave a City-living, such as an English Chaplain would leap at. I retired hither for the public good, having two great works in hand: One to reduce the whole politeness, wit, humour, and style of England into a short system, for the use of all persons of quality, and particularly the maids of honour<sup>a</sup>. The other is of

<sup>a</sup> *Wagstaff's Dialogues of Polite Conversation*, published in his life time.

almost

almost equal importance; I may call it the Whole duty of servants, in about twenty several stations, from the steward and waiting-woman down to the scullion and pantry-boy<sup>b</sup>. —I believe no mortal had ever such fair Invitations, as to be happy in the best company of England. I wish I had liberty to print your letter with my own comments upon it. There was a fellow in Ireland, who from a shoe-boy grew to be several times one of the chief governors, wholly illiterate, and with hardly common sense: A Lord Lieutenant told the first King George, that he was the greatest subject he had in both kingdoms; and truly this character was gotten and preserved by his never appearing in England, which was the only wise thing he ever did, except purchasing sixteen thousand pounds a year—Why, you need not stare: it is easily apply'd: I must be absent, in order to preserve my credit with her Grace—Lo here comes in the Duchess again (I know her by her d d's; but am a fool for discovering my Art) to defend herself against my conjecture of what she said—Madam, I will imitate your Grace and write to you upon the same line. I own it is a base un-romantic spirit in me, to suspend the honour of waiting at your

<sup>b</sup> An imperfect thing of this kind, called *Directions to* | *servants in general*, has been published since his death.

Grace's

Grace's feet, till I can finish a paltry law-suit. It concerns indeed almost all my whole fortune; it is equal to half Mr. Pope's, and two thirds of Mr. Gay's, and about six weeks rent of your Grace's. This cursed accident hath drill'd away the whole summer. But, Madam, understand one thing, that I take all your ironical civilities in a literal sense, and whenever I have the honour to attend you, shall expect them to be literally performed: though perhaps I shall find it hard to prove your handwriting in a Court of justice; but that will not be much for your credit. How miserably hath your Grace been mistaken in thinking to avoid Envy by running into exile, where it haunts you more than ever it did even at Court? *Non te civitas, non Regia domus in exilium miserunt, sed tu utrasque.* So says Cicero (as your Grace knows) or so he might have said.

I am told that the Craftsman in one of his papers is offended with the publishers of (I suppose) the last edition of the Dunciad; and I was asked whether you and Mr. Pope were as good friends to the new disgraced person as formerly? This I knew nothing of, but suppose it was the consequence of some mistake. As to writing, I look on you just in the prime of life for it, the very season when judgment and invention draw together. But schemes are perfectly

fectly accidental; some will appear barren of hints and matter, but prove to be fruitful; and others the contrary: And what you say, is past doubt, that every one can best find hints for himself: though it is possible that sometimes a friend may give you a lucky one just suited to your own imagination. But all this is almost past with me: my invention and judgment are perpetually at fifty-cuffs, till they have quite disabled each other; and the meereft trifles I ever wrote are serious philosophical lucubrations, in comparison to what I now busy myself about; as (to speak in the author's phrase) the world may one day see<sup>c</sup>.

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LETTER LV.

September 10, 1731.

**I**F your ramble was on horseback, I am glad of it on account of your health; but I know your arts of patching up a journey between stage-coaches and friends coaches: for you are as arrant a cockney as any hosier in Cheapside. One clean shirt with two cravats, and as many handkerchiefs, make up your equipage; and as for a night-gown, it is clear from Homer,

<sup>c</sup> His ludicrous prediction | very much to his dishonour,  
was, since his death, and | seriously fulfilled.

that