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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

LXI. From Dr. Swift to Mr. Pope. An account of several little pieces or tracts published as his: which were, or were not genuine?

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things to me in the same style, and also with regard to the gentleman at your elbow when you writ, whose Dupe he was, as well as of her Waiting-woman; but they were both arrant knaves, as I told him and a third friend, though they will not believe it to this day. I desire to present my most humble respects to my Lord Duke, and with my heartiest prayer for the prosperity of the whole family, remain your Grace's, &c.

L E T T E R L X I.

To Mr. P O P E.

Dublin, June 12, 1732.

I Doubt, habit hath little power to reconcile us with sickness attended by pain. With me, the lowness of spirits hath a most unhappy effect; I am grown less patient with solitude, and harder to be pleas'd with company; which I could formerly better digest, when I could be easier without it than at present. As to sending you any thing that I have written since I left you (either verse or prose) I can only say, that I have order'd by my Will, that all my Papers of any kind shall be deliver'd you to dispose of as you please. I have several things
that

that I have had schemes to finish, or to attempt, but I very foolishly put off the trouble, as sinners do their repentance : for I grow every day more averse from writing, which is very natural, and, when I take a pen, say to myself a thousand times, *non est tanti*. As to those papers of four or five years past, that you are pleas'd to require soon ; they consist of little accidental things writ in the country ; family amusements, never intended further than to divert ourselves and some neighbours : or some effects of anger on Public Grievances here, which would be insignificant out of this kingdom. Two or three of us had a fancy, three years ago, to write a Weekly paper, and call it an Intelligencer. But it continued not long ; for the whole Volume (it was re-printed in London, and, I find, you have seen it) was the work only of two, myself and Dr. Sheridan. If we could have got some ingenious young man to have been the manager, who should have published all that might be sent to him, it might have continued longer, for there were hints enough. But the Printer here could not afford such a young man one farthing for his trouble, the sale being so small, and the price one half-penny ; and so it dropt. In the Volume you saw (to answer your questions) the 1, 3, 5, 7, were mine. Of the 8th I writ only the Verses,
 (very

(very uncorrect, but against a fellow we all hated) the 9th mine, the 10th only the Verses, and of those not the four last slovenly lines; the 15th is a Pamphlet of mine printed before with Dr. Sh—'s Preface, merely for laziness not to disappoint the town; and so was the 19th, which contains only a parcel of facts relating purely to the miseries of Ireland, and wholly useless and unentertaining. As to other things of mine since I left you; there are in prose a View of the State of Ireland; a Project for eating Children; and a Defence of Lord Carteret; in verse a Libel on Dr. D—— and Lord Carteret; a Letter to Dr. D—— on the Libels writ against him; the Barrack (a stolen Copy) the Lady's Journal; the Lady's Dressing-room (a stolen Copy) the Plea of the Damn'd (a stolen Copy;) all these have been printed in London. (I forgot to tell you that the Tale of Sir Ralph was sent from England.) Besides these there are five or six (perhaps more) Papers of Verses writ in the North, but perfect Family-things, two or three of which may be tolerable; the rest but indifferent, and the humour only local, and some that would give offence to the times. Such as they are, I will bring them, tolerable or bad, if I recover this lameness, and live long enough to see you either here or there. I forget again to tell you,
that

that the Scheme of paying Debts by a Tax on Vices, is not one syllable mine, but of a young Clergy-man whom I countenance; he told me it was built upon a passage in Gulliver, where a Projector hath something upon the same Thought. This young Man is the most hopeful we have: a book of his Poems was printed in London; Dr. D—— is one of his Patrons: he is marry'd and has children, and makes up about 100 *l.* a year, on which he lives decently. The utmost stretch of his ambition is, to gather up as much superfluous money as will give him a sight of you, and half an hour of your presence; after which he will return home in full satisfaction, and in proper time die in peace.

My poetical fountain is drain'd, and I profess, I grow gradually so dry, that a Rhime with me is almost as hard to find as a Guinea; and even Prose speculations tire me almost as much. Yet I have a thing in prose, begun above twenty-eight years ago, and almost finish'd. It will make a four-shilling Volume, and is such a perfection of folly, that you shall never hear of it till it is printed, and then you shall be left to guess^a. Nay I have another of the same age, which will require a long time to perfect, and is worse than the former, in which I will serve

^a Polite Conversation.

you

you the same way. I heard lately from Mr. —, who promises to be less lazy in order to mend his fortune. But women who live by their beauty, and men by their wit, are seldom provident enough to consider that both Wit and Beauty will go off with years, and there is no living upon the credit of what is past.

I am in great concern to hear of my Lady Bolingbroke's ill health returned upon her, and, I doubt, my Lord will find Dawley too solitary without her. In that, neither he nor you are companions young enough for me, and, I believe, the best part of the reason why men are said to grow children when they are old, is because they cannot entertain themselves with thinking; which is the very case of little boys and girls, who love to be noisy among their play-fellows. I am told Mrs. Pope is without pain, and I have not heard of a more gentle decay, without uneasiness to herself or friends; yet I cannot but pity you, who are ten times the greater sufferer, by having the person you most love, so long before you, and dying daily; and I pray God it may not affect your mind or your health.

LETTER