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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

LXX. Concern for his absence. Of a libel against him. Reflections on the behaviour of a worthless man.

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LETTER LXX.

Jan. 6, 1734.

I Never think of you and can never write to you, now, without drawing many of those short sighs of which we have formerly talk'd: The reflection both of the friends we have been depriv'd of by Death, and of those from whom we are separated almost as eternally by Absence, checks me to that degree that it takes away in a manner the pleasure (which yet I feel very sensibly too) of thinking I am now conversing with you. You have been silent to me as to your Works; whether those printed here are, or are not genuine? but one, I am sure, is yours; and your method of concealing your self puts me in mind of the Indian bird I have read of, who hides his head in a hole, while all his feathers and tail stick out. You'll have immediately by several franks (even before 'tis here publish'd) my Epistle to Lord Cobham, part of my *Opus Magnum*, and the last Essay on Man, both which, I conclude, will be grateful to your bookseller, on whom you please to bestow them so early. There is a woman's war declar'd against me by a certain Lord; his weapons are the same which women and children use, a pin to scratch, and a squirt to bespatter:

spatter : I writ a sort of answer, but was ashamed to enter the lists with him, and after shewing it to some people, suppress'd it: otherwise it was such as was worthy of him and worthy of me^a. I was three weeks this autumn with Lord Peterborow, who rejoices in your doings, and always speaks with the greatest affection of you. I need not tell you who else do the same; you may be sure almost all those whom I ever see, or desire to see. I wonder not that B— paid you no sort of civility while he was in Ireland: he is too much a half-wit to love a true wit, and too much half-honest, to esteem any entire merit. I hope and think he hates me too, and I will do my best to make him: he is so insupportably insolent in his civility to me when he meets me at one third place, that I must affront him to be rid of it. That strict neutrality as to public parties, which I have constantly observ'd in all my writings, I think gives me the more title to attack such men, as slander and belye my character in private, to those who know me not. Yet even this is a liberty I will never take, unless at the same time they are Pests of private society, or mischievous members of the public, that is to say, unless they are enemies to all men as

^a It is printed, in this edition, at the end of the second Volume of Letters.

well

well as to me. — Pray write to me when you can : If ever I can come to you, I will : if not, may Providence be our friend and our guard thro' this fimple world, where nothing is valuable, but fenfe and friendship. Adieu, dear Sir, may health attend your years, and then may many years be added to you.

P. S. I am juft now told, a very curious Lady intends to write to you to pump you about fome poems faid to be yours. Pray tell her, that you have not answered me on the fame questions, and that I fhall take it as a thing never to be forgiven from you, if you tell another what you have conceal'd from me.

L E T T E R LXXI.

Sept. 15, 1734.

I Have ever thought you as fenfible as any man I knew, of all the delicacies of friendship, and yet I fear (from what Lord B. tells me you faid in your laft letter) that you did not quite underftand the reafon of my late filence. I affure you it proceeded wholly from the tender kindnefs I bear you. When the heart is full, it is angry at all words that cannot come up to it ; and you are now the man in all
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