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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 LXXIX. From the same. His kindness for Mr. P. and his own infirm condition.

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FROM DR. SWIFT, etc. 277

dency last against the temptations of future Ministers, and future Kings.—As to the new Lord Lieutenant, I never knew any of the family; so that I shall not be able to get any job done by him for any deserving friend.

L E T T E R LXXIX.

From Dr. SWIFT.

Feb. 7, 1735-6.

IT is some time since I dined at the bishop of Derry's, where Mr. Secretary Cary told me with great concern, that you were taken very ill. I have heard nothing since, only I have continued in great pain of mind, yet for my own sake and the world's more than for yours; because I well know how little you value life both as a Philosopher and a Christian, particularly the latter, wherein hardly one in a million of us heretics can equal you. If you are well recovered, you ought to be reproached for not putting me especially out of pain, who could not bear the loss of you; although we must be for ever distant as much as if I were in the grave, for which my years and continual indisposition are preparing me every season. I have staid too long from pressing you to give

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me some ease by an account of your health; pray do not use me so ill any more. I look upon you as an estate from which I receive my best annual rents, although I am never to see it. Mr. Tickel was at the same meeting under the same real concern; and so were a hundred others of this town who had never seen you.

I read to the Bishop of Derry the paragraph in your letter which concerned him, and his Lordship express'd his thankfulness in a manner that became him. He is esteemed here as a person of learning and conversation and humanity, but he is beloved by all people.

I have no-body now left but you: Pray, be so kind to out-live me, and then die as soon as you please, but without pain; and let us meet in a better place, if my Religion will permit, but rather my Virtue, although much unequal to yours. Pray, let my Lord Bathurst know how much I love him; I still insist on his remembering me, although he is too much in the world to honour an absent friend with his letters. My state of health is not to boast of; my giddiness is more or less too constant; I sleep ill, and have a poor appetite. I can as easily write a Poem in the Chinese-language as my own: I am as fit for Matrimony as invention; and yet I have daily schemes for innumerable

merable Essays in prose, and proceed sometimes to no less than half a dozen lines, which the next morning become waste paper. What vexes me most is, that my female friends, who could bear me very well a dozen years ago, have now forsaken me, although I am not so old in proportion to them, as I formerly was: which I can prove by Arithmetic, for then I was double their age, which now I am not. Pray, put me out of fear as soon as you can, about that ugly report of your illness; and let me know who this Cheselden is, that hath so lately sprung up in your favour? Give me also some account of your neighbour who writ to me from Bath: I hear he resolves to be strenuous for taking off the Test; which grieves me extremely, from all the unprejudiced Reasons I ever was able to form, and against the maxims of all wise Christian governments^a, which always had some establish'd Religion, leaving at best a toleration to others.

Farewel, my dearest friend! ever, and upon every account that can create friendship and esteem.

^a The Author of the *Dissertation on parties* appears to be of the same opinion.