



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 Second of his Letters

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Letter I. Of the geography of Homer, a map done by the author. The State of the times: the siege of Barcelona, the Queen's death, the condition of the English Roman-Catholics: Wishes for the peace of ...

Nutzungsbedingungen

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LETTERS

TO AND FROM

EDWARD BLOUNT, Esq.

From 1714 to 1725.

LETTER I.

Mr. POPE to EDWARD BLOUNT, Esq.

August 27, 1714.

WHatever studies on the one hand, or amusements on the other, it shall be my fortune to fall into, I shall be equally incapable of forgetting you in any of them. The task I undertook^a, though of weight enough in itself, has had a voluntary increase by the inlarging my design of the *Notes*^b; and the necessity of consulting a num-

^a The Translation of Homer's Iliad.

^b The notes on the Iliad were his own: Those on the

Odyssey were Dr. Broome's. —But they speak their respective Authors.

ber of books has carry'd me to Oxford: but, I fear, thro' my Lord Harcourt's and Dr. Clarke's means, I shall be more conversant with the pleasures and company of the place, than with the books and manuscripts of it.

I find still more reason to complain of the negligence of the Geographers in their Maps of old Greece, since I look'd upon two or three more noted names in the public libraries here. But with all the care I am capable of, I have some cause to fear the engraver will prejudice me in a few situations. I have been forced to write to him in so high a style, that, were my epistle intercepted, it would raise no small admiration in an ordinary man. There is scarce an order in it of less importance, than to remove such and such mountains, alter the course of such and such rivers, place a large city on such a coast, and raze another in another country. I have set bounds to the sea, and said to the land, Thus far shalt thou advance, and no further^c. In the mean time, I, who talk and command at this rate, am in danger of losing my horse, and stand in some fear of a country Justice^d. To disarm me indeed may be but prudential, con-

^c This relates to the Map of ancient Greece, laid down by our Author in his observations on the second Iliad. P.

^d Some of the Laws were, at this time, put in force against the Papists.

sidering

considering what Armies I have at present on foot, and in my service; a hundred thousand Grecians are no contemptible body; for all that I can tell, they may be as formidable as four thousand Priests; and they seem proper forces to send against those in Barcelona. That siege deserves as fine a poem as the Iliad, and the machining part of poetry would be the juster in it, as, they say, the inhabitants expect Angels from heaven to their assistance. May I venture to say who am a Papist, and say to you who are a Papist, that nothing is more astonishing to me, than that people so greatly warm'd with a sense of Liberty, should be capable of harbouring such weak superstition^e, and that so much bravery and so much folly can inhabit the same breasts?

I could not but take a trip to London on the death of the Queen, mov'd by the common curiosity of mankind, who leave their own business to be looking upon other mens. I thank God, that, as for myself, I am below all the accidents of state-changes, by my circumstances, and above them by my philosophy. Common charity of man to man, and universal good-will

^e Were not the old Romans as *warm'd* and as *weak*?
And could a man, inflamed
with the love of civil Liberty,

which he sees falling a prey
to Tyranny, imagine a cause
more worthy the interposi-
tion of Heaven?

to all, are the points I have most at heart ; and, I am sure, those are not to be broken for the sake of any governors, or government. I am willing to hope the best, and what I more wish than my own or any particular man's advancement, is, that this turn may put an end entirely to the divisions of Whig and Tory ; that the parties may love each other as well as I love them both, or at least hurt each other as little as I would either : and that our own people may live as quietly as we shall certainly let theirs ; that is to say, that want of power itself in us may not be a surer prevention of harm, than want of will in them. I am sure, if all Whigs and all Tories had the spirit of one Roman Catholic that I know, it would be well for all Roman Catholics ; and if all Roman Catholics had always had that spirit, it had been well for all others ; and we had never been charged with so wicked a spirit as that of Persecution.

I agree with you in my sentiments of the state of our nation since this change : I find myself just in the same situation of mind you describe as your own, heartily wishing the good, that is, the quiet of my Country, and hoping a total end of all the unhappy divisions of mankind by party-spirit, which at best is but the madness of many for the gain of a few.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R