



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

VI. Consolations under persecution: The duty of mutual assistance: Universal Charity. The author leaving Windsor-Forest.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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FROM EDW. BLOUNT, Esq. 17

fied for Lictors to Procrustes, when he converted refractory members with the rack. In a word, I can only repeat to you what, I think, I have formerly said; that I as little fear God will damn a man who has Charity, as I hope that any Priest can save him without it.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

March 20, 1715-16.

I Find that a real concern is not only a hindrance to speaking, but to writing too: the more time we give ourselves to think over one's own or a friend's unhappiness, the more unable we grow to express the grief that proceeds from it. It is as natural to delay a letter, at such a season as this, as to retard a melancholy visit to a person one cannot relieve. One is ashamed in that circumstance, to pretend to entertain people with trifling, insignificant affectations of sorrow on the one hand, or unseasonable and forced gaieties on the other. 'Tis a kind of profanation of things sacred, to treat so solemn a matter as a generous voluntary suffering, with compliments, or heroic gallantries. Such a mind as your's has no need of being spirited up into honour, or like
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a weak woman, praised into an opinion of its own virtue. 'Tis enough to do and suffer what we ought; and men should know, that the noble power of suffering bravely is as far above that of enterprizing greatly, as an unblemish'd conscience and inflexible resolution are above an accidental flow of spirits, or a sudden tide of blood. If the whole religious business of mankind be included in resignation to our Maker, and charity to our fellow creatures, there are now some people who give us as good an opportunity of practising the one, as themselves have given an instance of the violation of the other. Whoever is really brave, has always this comfort when he is oppress'd, that he knows himself to be superior to those who injure him: for the greatest power on earth can no sooner do him that injury, but the brave man can make himself greater by forgiving it.

If it were generous to seek for alleviating consolations in a calamity of so much glory, one might say, that to be ruin'd thus in the gross, with a whole people, is but like perishing in the general conflagration, where nothing we can value is left behind us.

Methinks, the most heroic thing we are left capable of doing, is to endeavour to lighten each other's load, and (oppress'd as we are) to succour such as are yet more oppress'd. If there
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are too many who cannot be assisted but by what we cannot give, our money ; there are yet others who may be relieved by our counsel, by our countenance, and even by our chearfulness. The misfortunes of private families, the misunderstandings of people whom distresses make suspicious, the coldnesses of relations whom change of religion may disunite, or the necessities of half-ruin'd estates render unkind to each other ; these at least may be softened in some degree, by a general well-managed humanity among ourselves ; if all those who have your principles of belief, had also your sense and conduct. But indeed most of them have given lamentable proofs of the contrary ; and 'tis to be apprehended that they who want sense, are only religious through weakness, and good-natured thro' shame. These are narrow-minded creatures that never deal in essentials, their faith never looks beyond ceremonials, nor their charity beyond relations. As poor as I am, I would gladly relieve any distressed, conscientious French refugee at this instant : what must my concern then be, when I perceive so many anxieties now tearing those hearts, which I have desired a place in, and clouds of melancholy rising on those faces, which I have long look'd upon with affection ? I begin already to feel both what some apprehend, and what others

are yet too stupid to apprehend. I grieve with the old, for so many additional inconveniencies and chagrins, more than their small remain of life seem'd destined to undergo; and with the young, for so many of those gaieties and pleasures (the portion of youth) which they will by this means be deprived of. This brings into my mind one or other of those I love best, and among them the widow and fatherless, late of —. As I am certain no people living had an earlier and truer sense of others misfortunes, or a more generous resignation as to what might be their own, so I earnestly wish that whatever part they must bear, may be render'd as supportable to them, as it is in the power of any friend to make it.

But I know you have prevented me in this thought, as you always will in any thing that is good, or generous: I find by a letter of your lady's (which I have seen) that their ease and tranquillity is part of your care. I believe there's some fatality in it, that you should always, from time to time, be doing those particular things that make me enamour'd of you.

I write this from Windsor-Forest, of which I am come to take my last look. We here bid our neighbours adieu, much as those who go to be hang'd do their fellow-prisoners, who are condemn'd to follow them a few weeks after.

FROM EDW. BLOUNT, Esq. 21

ter. I parted from honest Mr. D* with tenderness; and from old Sir William Trumbull as from a venerable prophet, foretelling with lifted hands the miseries to come, from which he is just going to be remov'd himself.

Perhaps, now I have learnt so far as

Nos dulcia linquimus arva,

my next lesson may be

Nos Patriam fugimus.

Let that, and all else be as Heaven pleases! I have provided just enough to keep me a man of honour. I believe you and I shall never be ashamed of each other. I know I wish my Country well, and, if it undoes me, it shall not make me wish it otherwise.

L E T T E R VII.

From Mr. BLOUNT.

March 24, 1715-16.

YOUR letters give me a gleam of satisfaction, in the midst of a very dark and cloudy situation of thoughts, which it would be more than human to be exempt from at this time, when our homes must either be left, or