



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

VIII. After the affair of Preston. The author's removal, change of life, and resignation to it.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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a month longer. Whenever I go from hence, one of the few reasons to make me regret my home will be, that I shall not have the pleasure of saying to you,

Hic tamen hanc mecum poteris requiescere noctem,

which would have render'd this place more agreeable, than ever it else could be to me; for I protest, it is with the utmost sincerity that I assure you, I am entirely,

Dear Sir,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

June 22, 1717.

IF a regard both to public and private affairs may plead a lawful excuse in behalf of a negligent correspondent, I have really a very good title to it. I cannot say whether 'tis a felicity or unhappiness, that I am obliged at this time to give my whole application to Homer; when without that employment, my thoughts must turn upon what is less agreeable, the violence, madness, and resentment of modern War-makers^a, which are likely to prove (to some

^a This was written in the year of the affair of Preston. P.

people at least) more fatal, than the same qualities in Achilles did to his unfortunate country-men.

Tho' the change of my scene of life, from Windsor-forest to the side of the Thames, be one of the grand *Æra's* of my days, and may be called a notable period in so inconsiderable a history; yet you can scarce imagine any hero passing from one stage of life to another, with so much tranquillity, so easy a transition, and so laudable a behaviour. I am become so truly a citizen of the world (according to Plato's expression) that I look with equal indifference on what I have left, and on what I have gained. The times and amusements past are not more like a dream to me, than those which are present; I lie in a refreshing kind of inaction, and have one comfort at least from obscurity, that the darkness helps me to sleep the better. I now and then reflect upon the enjoyment of my friends, whom, I fancy, I remember much as separate spirits do us, at tender intervals, neither interrupting their own employments, nor altogether careless of ours, but in general constantly wishing us well, and hoping to have us one day in their company.

To grow indifferent to the world is to grow philosophical, or religious (which soever of those turns we chance to take) and indeed the
world

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world is such a thing, as one that thinks pretty much, must either laugh at, or be angry with: but if we laugh at it, they say we are proud; and if we are angry with it, they say we are ill-natur'd. So the most politic way is to seem always better pleas'd than one can be, greater admirers, greater lovers, and in short greater fools, than we really are: so shall we live comfortably with our families, quietly with our neighbours, favoured by our masters, and happy with our mistresses. I have filled my paper, and so adieu.

L E T T E R IX.

Sept. 8, 1717.

I Think your leaving England was like a good man's leaving the world, with the blessed conscience of having acted well in it; and I hope you have received your reward, in being happy where you are. I believe, in the religious country you inhabit, you'll be better pleased to find I consider you in this light, than if I compared you to those Greeks and Romans, whose constancy in suffering pain, and whose resolution in pursuit of a generous end, you would rather imitate than boast of.

But I had a melancholy hint the other day, as if you were yet a martyr to the fatigue your
virtue