



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

XV. On the approach of winter, hospitality, and a cheerful family.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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*Hujus Nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis,
 Dormio, dum blandæ sentio murmur aquæ.
 Parce meum, quisquis tangis cava marmora,
 somnum
 Rumpere; si bibas, sive lavere, tace.*

Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep,
 And to the murmur of these waters sleep;
 Ah spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave!
 And drink in silence, or in silence lave!

You'll think I have been very poetical in this description, but it is pretty near the truth^a. I wish you were here to bear testimony how little it owes to Art, either the place itself, or the image I give of it. I am, &c.

L E T T E R X V .

Sept. 13, 1725.

I Should be ashamed to own the receipt of a very kind of letter from you, two whole months from the date of this; if I were not

^a He had greatly enlarged and improved this Grotto not long before his death: and, by incrusting it about with a vast number of ores and minerals of the richest and rarest kinds, had made it one of the most elegant and romantic retirements that was any where to be seen. He has made it the subject of a very pretty poem of a singular cast and composition.

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more ashamed to tell a lye, or to make an excuse, which is worse than a lye (for being built upon some probable circumstance, it makes use of a degree of truth to falsify with, and is a lye guarded.) Your letter has been in my pocket in constant wearing, till that, and the pocket, and the suit, are worn out; by which means I have read it forty times, and I find by so doing that I have not enough considered and reflected upon many others you have obliged me with; for true friendship, as they say of good writing, will bear reviewing a thousand times, and still discover new beauties.

I have had a fever, a short one, but a violent: I am now well; so it shall take up ~~no~~ more of this paper.

I begin now to expect you in town to make the winter to come more tolerable to us both. The summer is a kind of heaven, when we wander in a paradisaical scene among groves and gardens; but at this season, we are, like our poor first parents, turn'd out of that agreeable though solitary life, and forced to look about for more people to help to bear our labours, to get into warmer houses, and live together in cities.

I hope you are long since perfectly restor'd, and risen from your gout, happy in the delights of a contented family, smiling at storms, laugh-
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ing at greatness, merry over a christmas-fire, and exercising all the functions of an old Patriarch in charity and hospitality. I will not tell Mrs. B* what I think she is doing; for I conclude it is her opinion, that he only ought to know it for whom it is done; and she will allow herself to be far enough advanced above a fine lady, not to desire to shine before men.

Your daughters perhaps may have some other thoughts, which even their mother must excuse them for, because she is a mother. I will not however suppose those thoughts get the better of their devotions, but rather excite them and assist the warmth of them; while their prayer may be, that they may raise up and breed as irreproachable a young family as their parents have done. In a word, I fancy you all well, easy, and happy, just as I wish you; and next to that, I wish you all with me.

Next to God, is a good Man: next in dignity, and next in value. *Minuisti eum paullo minus ab angelis.* If therefore I wish well to the good and the deserving, and desire they only should be my companions and correspondents, I must very soon and very much think of you. I want your company, and your example. Pray make haste to town, so as not again to leave
us :

FROM EDW. BLOUNT, Esq. 41

us : discharge the load of earth that lies on you, like one of the mountains under which, the poets say, the giants (the men of the earth) are whelmed : leave earth, to the sons of the earth, your conversation is in heaven. Which that it may be accomplish'd in us all, is the prayer of him who maketh this short Sermon; value (to you) three-pence. Adieu.

Mr. Blount died in London the following Year, 1726. P.

LETTERS