



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

Letters to and from the Honourable Robert Digby. From 1717 to 1724.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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LETTERS

To and from the

Hon. ROBERT DIGBY.

From 1717 to 1724.

LETTER I.

To the Hon. ROBERT DIGBY.

June 2, 1717.

I Had pleas'd myself sooner in writing to you, but that I have been your successor in a fit of sickness, and am not yet so much recovered, but that I have thoughts of using your^a physicians. They are as grave persons as any of the faculty, and (like the ancients) carry their own medicaments about with them. But indeed the moderns are such lovers of raillery, that nothing is grave enough to escape them.

^a Affes.

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Let them laugh, but people will still have their opinions: as they think our Doctors asses to them, we'll think them asses to our Doctors.

I am glad you are so much in a better state of health, as to allow me to jest about it. My concern, when I heard of your danger, was so very serious, that I almost take it ill Dr. Evans should tell you of it, or you mention it. I tell you fairly, if you and a few more such people were to leave the world, I would not give sixpence to stay in it.

I am not so much concerned as to the point whether you are to live fat or lean: most men of wit or honesty are usually decreed to live very lean, so I am inclined to the opinion that 'tis decreed you shall; however be comforted, and reflect, that you'll make the better Busto for it.

'Tis something particular in you, not to be satisfied with sending me your own books, but to make your acquaintance continue the frolic. Mr. Wharton forced me to take Gorboduc, which has since done me great credit with several people, as it has done Dryden and Oldham some dis-kindness, in shewing there is as much difference between their Gorboduc and this, as between Queen Anne, and King George. It is truly a scandal, that men should write with contempt of a piece which they never once saw, as those two Poets did, who were ignorant

rant even of the sex, as well as sense, of Gorboduc^b.

Adieu ! I am going to forget you : this minute you took up all my mind ; the next I shall think of nothing but the reconciliation with Agamemnon, and the recovery of Briseis. I shall be Achilles's humble servant these two months (with the good leave of all my friends.) I have no ambition so strong at present, as that noble one of Sir Salathiel Lovel, recorder of London, to furnish out a decent and plentiful execution, of Greeks and Trojans. It is not be express'd how heartily I wish the death of all Homer's heroes, one after another. The Lord preserve me in the day of battle, which is just approaching ! join in your prayers for me, and know me to be always

Your, &c.

L E T T E R II.

London, March 31, 1718.

TO convince you how little pain I give myself in corresponding with men of good nature and good understanding, you see I omit to answer your letters till a time, when another

^b There is a correct edition of it in that valuable collection of old Plays published by Doddsley.

man would be ashamed to own, he had received them. If therefore you are ever moved on my account by that spirit, which I take to be as familiar to you as a quotidian ague, I mean the spirit of goodness, pray never stint it, in any fear of obliging me to a civility beyond my natural inclination. I dare trust you, Sir, not only with my folly when I write, but with my negligence when I do not; and expect equally your pardon for either.

If I knew how to entertain you thro' the rest of this paper, it should be spotted and diversified with conceits all over; you should be put out of breath with laughter at each sentence, and pause at each period, to look back over how much wit you have pass'd. But I have found by experience that people now-a-days regard writing as little as they do preaching: the most we can hope is to be heard just with decency and patience, once a week, by folks in the country. Here in town we hum over a piece of fine writing, and we whistle at a sermon. The stage is the only place we seem alive at; there indeed we stare, and roar, and clap hands for K. George, and the government. As for all other virtues but this loyalty, they are an obsolete train, so ill-dress'd, that men, women, and children hiss them out of all good company. Humility knocks so
sneakingly

sneakingly at the door that every footman outraps it, and makes it give way to the free entrance of pride, prodigality, and vain-glory.

My Lady Scudamore, from having rusticated in your company too long, really behaves herself scandalously among us: she pretends to open her eyes for the sake of seeing the sun, and to sleep because it is night; drinks tea at nine in the morning, and is thought to have said her prayers before; talks, without any manner of shame, of good books, and has not seen Cibber's play of the Non-juror. I rejoiced the other day to see a libel on her toilette, which gives me some hope that you have, at least, a taste of scandal left you, in defect of all other vices.

Upon the whole matter, I heartily wish you well; but as I cannot entirely desire the ruin of all the joys of this city, so all that remains is to wish you would keep your happiness to yourselves, that the happiest here may not die with envy at a bliss which they cannot attain to.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER III.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Colehill, April 17, 1718.

I Have read your letter over and over with delight. By your description of the town, I imagine it to lie under some great enchantment, and am very much concerned for you and all my friends in it. I am the more afraid, imagining, since you do not fly those horrible monsters, rapine, diffimulation, and luxury, that a magic circle is drawn about you, and you cannot escape. We are here in the country in quite another world, surrounded with blessings and pleasures, without any occasion of exercising our irascible faculties; indeed we cannot boast of good-breeding and the art of life, but yet we don't live unpleasantly in primitive simplicity and good-humour. The fashions of the town affect us but just like a raree-show, we have a curiosity to peep at them, and nothing more. What you call pride, prodigality, and vain-glory, we cannot find in pomp and splendor at this distance; it appears to us a fine glittering scene, which if we don't envy you, we think you happier than we are, in your enjoying it. Whatever you may think to persuade us of the humility of Virtue, and her appearing
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in rags amongst you, we can never believe: our uninform'd minds represent her so noble to us, that we necessarily annex splendor to her: and we could as soon imagine the order of things inverted, and that there is no man in the moon, as believe the contrary. I can't forbear telling you we indeed read the spoils of Rapine as boys do the English rogue, and hug ourselves full as much over it; yet our roses are not without thorns. Pray give me the pleasure of hearing (when you are at leisure) how soon I may expect to see the next volume of Homer.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R I V.

May 1, 1720.

YOU'll think me very full of myself, when after long silence (which however, to say truth, has rather been employed to contemplate of you, than to forget you) I begin to talk of my own works. I find it is in the finishing a book, as in concluding a session of Parliament, one always thinks it will be very soon, and finds it very late. There are many unlook'd-for incidents to retard the clearing any public account, and so I see it is in mine. I have plagued myself, like great ministers, with undertaking too much for one man; and with a desire

of doing more than was expected from me, have done less than I ought.

For having design'd four very laborious and uncommon sort of Indexes to Homer, I'm forc'd, for want of time, to publish two only; the design of which you will own to be pretty, tho' far from being fully executed. I've also been obliged to leave unfinish'd in my desk the heads of two Essays, one on the Theology and Morality of Homer, and another on the Oratory of Homer and Virgil. So they must wait for future editions, or perish: and (one way or other, no great matter which) *dabit Deus his quoque finem*. I think of you every day, I assure you, even without such good memorials of you as your sisters, with whom I sometimes talk of you, and find it one of the most agreeable of all subjects to them. My Lord Digby must be perpetually remember'd by all who ever knew him, or knew his children. There needs no more than an acquaintance with your family, to make all elder sons wish they had fathers to their lives end.

I can't touch upon the subject of filial love, without putting you in mind of an old woman, who has a sincere, hearty, old-fashion'd respect for you, and constantly blames her son for not having writ to you oftener to tell you so.

I very much wish (but what signifies my wishing? my lady Scudamore wishes, your sisters wish) that you were with us, to compare the beautiful contrast this season affords us, of the town and the country. No ideas you could form in the winter can make you imagine what Twickenham is (and what your friend Mr. Johnson of Twickenham is) in this warmer season. Our river glitters beneath an unclouded sun, at the same time that its banks retain the verdure of showers: our gardens are offering their first nosegays; our trees, like new acquaintance brought happily together, are stretching their arms to meet each other, and growing nearer and nearer every hour; the birds are paying their thanksgiving songs for the new habitations I have made them; my building rises high enough to attract the eye and curiosity of the passenger from the river, where, upon beholding a mixture of beauty and ruin, he enquires what house is falling, or what church is rising? So little taste have our common Tritons of Vitruvius; whatever delight the poetical gods of the river may take, in reflecting on their streams, my Tuscan Porticos, or Ionic Pillars.

But to (descend from all this pomp of style) the best account of what I am building, is, that
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FROM MR. DIGBY. 51

It will afford me a few pleasant rooms for such a friend as yourself, or a cool situation for an hour or two for Lady Scudamore, when she will do me the honour (at this public house on the road) to drink her own cyder.

The moment I am writing this, I am surprized with the account of the death of a friend of mine; which makes all I have here been talking of, a mere jest! Building, gardens, writings, pleasures, works, of whatever stuff man can raise! none of them (God knows) capable of advantaging a creature that is mortal, or of satisfying a soul that is immortal! Dear Sir,
I am, &c.

L E T T E R V.

From Mr. DIGBY.

May 21, 1720.

YOUR letter, which I had two posts ago, was very medicinal to me; and I heartily thank you for the relief it gave me. I was sick of the thoughts of my not having in all this time given you any testimony of the affection I owe you, and which I as constantly indeed feel as I think of you. This indeed was a troublesome ill to me, till, after reading your letter,
E 2 I found

I found it was a most idle weak imagination to think I could so offend you. Of all the impressions you have made upon me, I never receiv'd any with greater joy than this of your abundant good-nature, which bids me be assured of some share of your affections.

I had many other pleasures from your letter; that your mother remembers me is a very sincere joy to me; I cannot but reflect how alike you are; from the time you do any one a favour, you think yourselves obliged as those that have received one. This is indeed an old-fashioned respect, hardly to be found out of your house. I have great hopes however, to see many old-fashioned virtues revive, since you have made our age in love with Homer; I heartily wish you, who are as good a citizen as a poet, the joy of seeing a reformation from your works. I am in doubt whether I should congratulate your having finished Homer, while the two essays you mention are not completed; but if you expect no great trouble from finishing these, I heartily rejoice with you.

I have some faint notion of the beauties of Twickenham from what I here see round me. The verdure of showers is poured upon every tree and field about us; the gardens unfold variety of colours to the eye every morning, the hedges breath is beyond all perfume, and the
song,

song of birds we hear as well as you. But tho' I hear and see all this, yet I think they would delight me more if you was here. I found the want of these at Twickenham while I was there with you, by which I guess what an increase of charms it must now have. How kind is it in you to wish me there, and how unfortunate are my circumstances that allow me not to visit you? If I see you, I must leave my Father alone, and this uneasy thought would disappoint all my proposed pleasures; the same circumstance will prevent my prospect of many happy hours with you in Lord Bathurst's wood, and I fear of seeing you till winter, unless Lady Scudamore comes to Sherburne, in which case I shall press you to see Dorsetshire, as you proposed. May you have a long enjoyment of your new favourite Portico.

Your, &c.

LETTER VI.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Sherburne, July 9, 1720.

THE London language and conversation is, I find, quite changed since I left it, tho' it is not above three or four months ago. No violent change in the natural world ever astonished

nished a Philosopher so much as this does me. I hope this will calm all Party-rage, and introduce more humanity than has of late obtained in conversation. All scandal will sure be laid aside, for there can be no such disease any more as Spleen in this new golden age. I am pleased with the thoughts of seeing nothing but a general good humour when I come up to town; I rejoice in the universal riches I hear of, in the thought of their having this effect. They tell me you was soon content; and that you cared not for such an increase as others wished you. By this account I judge you the richest man in the South-sea, and congratulate you accordingly. I can wish you only an increase of health, for of riches and fame you have enough.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R V I I .

July 20, 1720.

YOUR kind desire to know the state of my health had not been unsatisfied so long, had not that ill state been the impediment. Nor should I have seem'd an unconcerned party in the joys of your family, which I heard of from lady Scudamore, whose short Eschantillon of a letter (of a quarter of a page) I value as the
short

short glympse of a vision afforded to some devout hermit; for it includes (as those revelations do) a promise of a better life in the Elysian groves of Cirencester, whither, I could say almost in the style of a sermon, the Lord bring us all, &c. Thither may we tend, by various ways, to one blisful bower: thither may health, peace, and good humour wait upon us as associates: thither may whole cargoes of nectar (liquor of life and longævity!) by mortals call'd spaw-water, be convey'd; and there (as Milton has it) may we, like the deities,

*On flow'rs repos'd, and with fresh garlands crown'd,
Quaff immortality and joy.*

When I speak of garlands, I should not forget the green vestments and scarfs which your sisters promis'd to make for this purpose: I expect you too in green, with a hunting-horn by your side and a green hat, the model of which you may take from Osborne's description of King James the first.

What words, what numbers, what oratory, or what poetry, can suffice, to express how infinitely I esteem, value, love, and desire you all, above all the great ones of this part of the world; above all the Jews, jobbers, bubblers, subscribers, projectors, directors, governors, treasureurs, &c. &c. &c. *in secula seculorum.*

Turn your eyes and attention from this miserable mercenary period; and turn yourself, in a just contempt of these sons of Mammon, to the contemplation of books, gardens, and marriage: in which I now leave you, and return (wretch that I am!) to water-gruel and Palladio.
I am, &c.

L E T T E R V I I I .

From Mr. D I G B Y .

Sherburne, July 30.

I Congratulate you, dear Sir, on the return of the Golden-age, for sure this must be such, in which money is shower'd down in such abundance upon us. I hope this overflowing will produce great and good fruits, and bring back the figurative moral golden-age to us. I have some omens to induce me to believe it may; for when the Muses delight to be near a Court, when I find you frequently with a First-minister, I can't but expect from such an intimacy an encouragement and revival of the polite arts. I know, you desire to bring them into honour, above the golden Image which is set up and worshiped, and, if you cannot effect it, adieu to all such hopes. You seem to intimate
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in yours another face of things from this inundation of wealth, as if beauty, wit, and valour would no more engage our passions in the pleasurable pursuit of them, tho' assisted by this encrease: if so, and if monsters only as various as those of Nile arise from this abundance, who that has any spleen about him will not haste to town to laugh? What will become of the play-house? who will go thither, while there is such entertainment in the streets? I hope we shall neither want good Satire nor Comedy; if we do, the age may well be thought barren of genius's, for none has ever produced better subjects.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Coleshill, Nov. 12, 1720.

I Find in my heart that I have a taint of the corrupt age we live in. I want the public Spirit so much admired in old Rome, of sacrificing every thing that is dear to us to the common-wealth. I even feel a more intimate concern for my friends who have suffered in the S. Sea, than for the public, which is said to be
undone

undone by it. But, I hope, the reason is, that I do not see so evidently the ruin of the public to be a consequence of it, as I do the loss of my friends. I fear there are few besides yourself that will be persuaded by old Hesiod, that *half is more than the whole*. I know not whether I do not rejoice in your Sufferings^a; since they have shewn me your mind is principled with such a sentiment, I assure you I expect from it a performance greater still than Homer. I have an extreme joy from your communicating to me this affection of your mind;

Quid voveat dulci Nutricula majus alumno?

Believe me, dear Sir, no equipage could shew you to my eye in so much splendor. I would not indulge this fit of philosophy so far as to be tedious to you, else I could prosecute it with pleasure.

I long to see you, your Mother, and your Villa; till then I will say nothing of Lord Bathurst's wood, which I saw in my return hither. Soon after Christmas I design for London, where I shall miss Lady Scudamore very much, who intends to stay in the country all winter. I am angry with her, as I am like to suffer by this resolution, and would fain blame

^a See Note on § 139. of the second Satire, ii. Book of Horace.

her,

her, but cannot find a cause. The man is cursed that has a longer letter than this to write with as bad a pen, yet I can use it with pleasure to send my services to your good mother, and to write myself

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X.

Sept. 1, 1722.

DOCTOR Arbuthnot is going to Bath, and will stay there a fortnight or more: perhaps you would be comforted to have a sight of him, whether you need him or not. I think him as good a Doctor as any man for one that is ill, and a better Doctor for one that is well. He would do admirably for Mrs. Mary Digby: she needed only to follow his hints, to be in eternal business and amusement of mind, and even as active as she could desire. But indeed I fear she would out-walk him; for (as Dean Swift observ'd to me the very first time I saw the Doctor) "He is a man that can do every thing but walk." His brother, who is lately come into England, goes also to the Bath; and is a more extraordinary man than he, worth your going thither on purpose to know him. The spirit of Philanthropy, so long dead to our world,

world, is reviv'd in him: he is a philosopher all of fire; so warmly, nay so wildly in the right, that he forces all others about him to be so too, and draws them into his own Vortex. He is a star that looks as if it were all fire, but is all benignity, all gentle and beneficial influence. If there be other men in the world that would serve a friend, yet he is the only one, I believe, that could make even an enemy serve a friend.

As all human life is chequer'd and mixed with acquisitions and losses (tho' the latter are more certain and irremediable, than the former lasting or satisfactory) so at the time I have gain'd the acquaintance of one worthy man I have lost another, a very easy, humane, and gentlemanly neighbour, Mr. Stonor. 'Tis certain the loss of one of this character puts us naturally upon setting a greater value on the few that are left, tho' the degree of our esteem may be different. Nothing, says Seneca, is so melancholy a circumstance in human life, or so soon reconciles us to the thought of our own death, as the reflection and prospect of one friend after another dropping round us! Who would stand alone, the sole remaining ruin, the last tottering column of all the fabric of friendship; once so large, seemingly so strong, and yet so suddenly sunk and buried?

I am, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER XI.

I Have belief enough in the goodness of your whole family, to think you will all be pleas'd that I am arriv'd in safety at Twickenham; tho' it is a sort of earnest that you will be troubled again with me, at Sherburne, or Colehill; for however I may like one of your places, it may be in that as in liking one of your family; when one sees the rest, one likes them all. Pray make my services acceptable to them; I wish them all the happiness they may want, and the continuance of all the happiness they have; and I take the latter to comprize a great deal more than the former. I must separate Lady Scudamore from you, as, I fear, she will do herself before this letter reaches you: so I wish her a good journey, and I hope one day to try if she lives as well as you do: tho' I much question if she can live as quietly: I suspect the Bells will be ringing at her arrival, and on her own and Miss Scudamore's birth-days, and that all the Clergy in the country come to pay respects; both the Clergy and their Bells expecting from her, and from the young Lady, further business and further employment. Besides all this, there dwells on the one side of her the Lord Conningsby, and on the other Mr. W*. Yet I shall, when the days and the years come about, adventure upon all this for her sake.

I beg

I beg my Lord Digby to think me a better man than to content myself with thanking him in the common way. I am in as sincere a sense of the word, his servant, as you are his son, or he your father.

I must in my turn insist upon hearing how my last fellow-travellers got home from Clarendon, and desire Mr. Philips to remember me in his Cyder, and to tell Mr. W* that I am dead and buried.

I wish the young Ladies, whom I almost robb'd of their good name, a better name in return (even that very name to each of them, which they shall like best, for the sake of the man that bears it.)

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X I I .

1722.

YOUR making a sort of apology for your not writing, is a very genteel reproof to me. I know I was to blame, but I know I did not intend to be so, and (what is the happiest knowledge in the world) I know you will forgive me: for sure nothing is more satisfactory than to be certain of such a friend as will overlook one's failings, since every such instance is a conviction of his kindness.

If

If I am all my life to dwell in intentions, and never to rise to actions, I have but too much need of that gentle disposition which I experience in you. But I hope better things of myself, and fully purpose to make you a visit this summer at Sherburne. I'm told you are all upon removal very speedily, and that Mrs. Mary Digby talks in a letter to Lady Scudamore, of seeing my Lord Bathurst's wood in her way. How much I wish to be her guide thro' that enchanted forest, is not to be exprest: I look upon myself as the magician appropriated to the place, without whom no mortal can penetrate into the recesses of those sacred shades. I could pass whole days, in only describing to her the future, and as yet visionary beauties, that are to rise in those scenes: the palace that is to be built, the pavillions that are to glitter, the colonades that are to adorn them: nay more, the meeting of the Thames and the Severn, which (when the noble owner has finer dreams than ordinary) are to be led into each other's embraces thro' secret caverns of not above twelve or fifteen miles, till they rise and celebrate their marriage in the midst of an immense amphitheatre, which is to be the admiration of posterity, a hundred years hence. But till the destin'd time shall arrive that is to manifest these wonders, Mrs. Digby must content herself with seeing

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ing what is at present no more than the finest wood in England.

The objects that attract this part of the world, are of a quite different nature. Women of quality are all turn'd followers of the camp in Hyde-Park this year, whither all the town resort to magnificent entertainments given by the officers, &c. The Scythian Ladies that dwelt in the waggons of war, were not more closely attached to the luggage. The matrons, like those of Sparta, attend their sons to the field, to be the witnesses of their glorious deeds; and the maidens with all their charms display'd, provoke the spirit of the Soldiers: Tea and Coffee supply the place of Lacedemonian black broth. This Camp seems crown'd with perpetual victory, for every sun that rises in the thunder of cannon, sets in the musick of violins. Nothing is yet wanting but the constant presence of the Princess, to represent the *Mater Exercitus*.

At Twickenham the world goes otherwise. There are certain old people who take up all my time, and will hardly allow me to keep any other company. They were introduced here by a man of their own sort, who has made me perfectly rude to all contemporaries, and won't so much as suffer me to look upon them. The person I complain of is the Bishop of Rochester.

Yet

Yet he allows me (from something he has heard of your character and that of your family, as if you were of the old sect of moralists) to write three or four sides of paper to you, and to tell you (what these sort of people never tell but with truth and religious sincerity) that I am, and ever will be,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

THE same reason that hinder'd your writing, hinder'd mine, the pleasing expectation to see you in town. Indeed since the willing confinement I have lain under here with my mother (whom it is natural and reasonable I should rejoice with, as well as grieve) I could the better bear your absence from London, for I could hardly have seen you there; and it would not have been quite reasonable to have drawn you to a sick room hither from the first embraces of your friends. My mother is now (I thank God) wonderfully recovered, tho' not so much as yet to venture out of her chamber, but enough to enjoy a few particular friends, when they have the good nature to look upon her. I may recommend to you the room we sit in, upon one (and that a favourite) account,

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that

that it is the very warmest in the house; we and our fires will equally smile upon your face. There is a Persian proverb that says (I think very prettily) "The conversation of a friend brightens the eyes." This I take to be a splendor still more agreeable than the fires you so delightfully describe.

That you may long enjoy your own fire-side in the metaphorical sense, that is, all those of your family who make it pleasing to sit and spend whole wintry months together (a far more rational delight, and better felt by an honest heart, than all the glaring entertainments, numerous lights, and false splendors, of an Assembly of empty heads, aking hearts, and false faces.) This is my sincere wish to you and yours.

You say you propose much pleasure in seeing some few faces about town of my acquaintance. I guess you mean Mrs. Howard's and Mrs. Blount's. And I assure you, you ought to take as much pleasure in their hearts, if they are what they sometimes express with regard to you.

Believe me, dear Sir, to you all, a very faithful servant.

LETTER XIV.

From Mr. DIGBY.

Sherburne, Aug. 14, 1723.

I Can't return from so agreeable an entertainment as yours in the country, without acknowledging it. I thank you heartily for the new agreeable idea of life you there gave me; it will remain long with me, for it is very strongly impressed upon my imagination. I repeat the memory of it often, and shall value that faculty of the mind now more than ever, for the power it gives me of being entertained in your villa, when absent from it. As you are possessed of all the pleasures of the country, and, as I think, of a right mind, what can I wish you but health to enjoy them? This I so heartily do, that I should be even glad to hear your good old mother might lose all her present pleasures in her unwearied care of you, by your better health convincing them it is unnecessary.

I am troubled and shall be so till I hear you have received this letter: for you gave me the greatest pleasure imaginable in yours, and I am impatient to acknowledge it. If I any ways deserve that friendly warmth and affection with

which you write, it is, that I have a heart full of love and esteem for you : so truly, that I should lose the greatest pleasure of my life if I lost your good opinion. It rejoices me very much to be reckoned by you in the class of honest men ; for tho' I am not troubled overmuch about the opinion most may have of me, yet, I own, it would grieve me not to be thought well of, by you and some few others. I will not doubt my own strength, yet I have this further security to maintain my integrity, that I cannot part with that, without forfeiting your esteem with it.

Perpetual disorder and ill health have for some years so disguised me, that, I sometimes fear I do not to my best friends enough appear what I really am. Sickness is a great oppressor ; it does great injury to a zealous heart, stifling its warmth, and not suffering it to break out in action. But, I hope, I shall not make this complaint much longer. I have other hopes that please me too, tho' not so well grounded ; these are, that you may yet make a journey westward with Lord Bathurst ; but of the probability of this I do not venture to reason, because I would not part with the pleasure of that belief. It grieves me to think how far I am removed from you, and from that excellent Lord, whom I love ! Indeed I remember him, as one
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that has made sickness easy to me, by bearing with my infirmities in the same manner that you have always done. I often too consider him in other lights that make him valuable to me. With him, I know not by what connection, you never fail to come into my mind, as if you were inseparable. I have, as you guess, many philosophical reveries in the shades of Sir Walter Raleigh, of which you are a great part. You generally enter there with me, and like a good Genius, applaud and strengthen all my sentiments that have honour in them. This good office which you have often done me unknowingly, I must acknowledge now, that my own breast may not reproach me with ingratitude, and disquiet me when I would muse again in that solemn scene. I have not room now left to ask you many questions I intended about the *Odyssy*. I beg I may know how far you have carried *Ulysses* on his journey, and how you have been entertained with him on the way? I desire I may hear of your health, of Mrs. Pope's, and of every thing else that belongs to you.

How thrive your garden plants? how look the trees? how spring the Brocoli and the Fenchio? hard names to spell! how did the poppies bloom? and how is the great room approved? what parties have you had of pleasure?

sure? what in the grotto? what upon the Thames? I would know how all your hours pass, all you say, and all you do; of which I should question you yet farther, but my paper is full and spares you. My brother Ned is wholly yours, so my father desires to be, and every soul here whose name is Digby. My sister will be yours in particular. What can I add more? I am, &c.

L E T T E R X V .

October 10.

I Was upon the point of taking a much greater journey than to Bermudas, even to that *undiscover'd country, from whose bourn No traveller returns!*

A fever carried me on the high gallop towards it for six or seven days — But here you have me now, and that is all I shall say of it: since which time an impertinent lameness kept me at home twice as long; as if fate should say (after the other dangerous illness) “ You shall neither go into the other world, nor any where you like in this.” Else who knows but I had been at Hom-lacy?

I conspire in your sentiments, emulate your pleasures, wish for your company. You are
all

all of one heart and one soul, as was said of the primitive Christians: 'tis like the kingdom of the just upon earth; not a wicked wretch to interrupt you, but a set of try'd, experienced friends, and fellow-comforters, who have seen evil men and evil days, and have by a superior rectitude of heart set yourselves above them, and reap your reward. Why will you ever, of your own accord, end such a millenary year in London? transmigrate (if I may so call it) into other creatures, in that scene of folly militant, when you may reign for ever at Hom-lacy in sense and reason triumphant? I appeal to a third Lady in your family, whom I take to be the most innocent, and the least warp'd by idle fashion and custom of you all; I appeal to her, if you are not every soul of you better people, better companions, and happier, where you are? I desire her opinion under her hand in your next letter, I mean Miss Scudamore's^a. I am confident if she would or durst speak her sense, and employ that reasoning which God has given her, to infuse more thoughtfulness into you all; those arguments could not fail to put you to the blush, and keep you out of town, like people sensible of your own felicities. I am not without hopes, if she

^a Afterwards Duchess of Beaufort, at this time very young. P.

can detain a parliament man and a lady of quality from the world one winter, that I may come upon you with such irresistible arguments another year, as may carry you all with me to Bermudas^b, the seat of all earthly happiness, and the new Jerusalem of the righteous.

Don't talk of the decay of the year, the season is good where the people are so: 'tis the best time of the year for a painter; there is more variety of colours in the leaves, the prospects begin to open, thro' the thinner woods, over the valleys; and thro' the high canopies of trees to the higher arch of heaven: the dews of the morning impearl every thorn, and scatter diamonds on the verdant mantle of the earth; the frosts are fresh and wholesome: what would you have? the Moon shines too, tho' not for Lovers these cold nights, but for Astronomers.

Have ye not reflecting Telescopes^c, whereby ye may innocently magnify her spots and blemishes? Content yourselves with them, and do not come to a place where your own eyes become reflecting Telescopes, and where those of

^b About this time the Rev. Dean Berkley conceived his project of erecting a settlement in Bermudas for the Propagation of the Christian

faith, and introduction of Sciences into America. P.

^c These instruments were just then brought to perfection. P.

all others are equally such upon their neighbours. Stay you at least (for what I've said before relates only to the ladies: don't imagine I'll write about any Eyes but theirs) stay, I say, from that idle, busy-looking Sanhedrin, where wisdom or no wisdom is the eternal debate, not (as it lately was in Ireland) an accidental one.

If, after all, you will despise good advice, and resolve to come to London, here you will find me, doing just the things I should not, living where I should not, and as worldly, as idle, in a word as much an Anti-Bermudanist as any body. Dear Sir, make the ladies know I am their servant, you know I am

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XVI.

Aug. 12.

I Have been above a month strolling about in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, from garden to garden, but still returning to Lord Cobham's with fresh satisfaction. I should be sorry to see my Lady Scudamore's, till it has had the full advantage of Lord B* improvements; and then I will expect something like the waters of Risksin, and the woods of Oakley together, which (without flattery) would be at least as good as any thing in our world:

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For as to the hanging gardens of Babylon, the Paradise of Cyrus, and the Sharawaggi's of China, I have little or no ideas of them, but, I dare say, Lord B* has, because they were certainly both very great, and very wild. I hope Mrs. Mary Digby is quite tired of his Lordship's *Extravagante Bergerie*: and that she is just now sitting, or rather reclining on a bank, fatigued with over much dancing and singing at his unwearied request and instigation. I know your love of ease so well, that you might be in danger of being too quiet to enjoy quiet, and too philosophical to be a philosopher; were it not for the ferment Lord B. will put you into. One of his Lordship's maxims is, that a total abstinence from intemperance or business, is no more philosophy, than a total confinement of the senses is repose; one must feel enough of its contrary to have a relish of either. But, after all, let your temper work, and be as sedate and contemplative as you will, I'll engage you shall be fit for any of us, when you come to town in the winter. Folly will laugh you into all the customs of the company here; nothing will be able to prevent your conversion to her, but indisposition, which, I hope, will be far from you. I am telling the worst that can come of you; for as to vice, you are safe; but folly is many an honest man's, nay every
every

every good-humour'd man's lot : nay, it is the seasoning of life ; and fools (in one sense) are the salt of the earth : a little is excellent, tho' indeed a whole mouthful is justly call'd the Devil.

So much for your diversions next winter, and for mine. I envy you much more at present, than I shall then ; for if there be on earth an image of paradise, it is in such perfect Union and Society as you all possess. I would have my innocent envies and wishes of your state known to you all ; which is far better than making you compliments, for it is inward approbation and esteem. My Lord Digby has in me a sincere servant, or would have, were there any occasion for me to manifest it.

L E T T E R XVII.

Decemb. 28, 1724.

IT is now the season to wish you a good end of one year, and a happy beginning of another : but both these you know how to make yourself, by only continuing such a life as you have been long accustomed to lead. As for good works, they are things I dare not name, either to those that do them, or to those that do them not ; the first are too modest, and the latter

latter too selfish, to bear the mention of what are become either too old-fashion'd, or too private, to constitute any part of the vanity or reputation of the present age. However, it were to be wish'd people would now and then look upon good works as they do upon old wardrobes, merely in case any of them should by chance come into fashion again; as ancient fardingales revive in modern hoop'd petticoats, (which may be properly compared to charities, as they cover a multitude of sins.)

They tell me that at Colehill certain antiquated charities, and obsolete devotions are yet subsisting: that a thing called Christian chearfulness (not incompatible with Christmas-pyes and plum-broth) whereof frequent is the mention in old sermons and almanacks, is really kept alive and in practice: that feeding the hungry, and giving alms to the poor, do yet make a part of good house-keeping, in a latitude not more remote from London than fourscore miles: and lastly, that prayers and roast-beef actually make some people as happy, as a whore and a bottle. But here in town, I assure you, men, women, and children have done with these things. Charity not only begins, but ends, at home. Instead of the four cardinal virtues, now reign four courtly ones: we have cunning for prudence, rapine for justice, time-serving

erving for fortitude, and luxury for temperance. Whatever you may fancy where you live in a state of ignorance, and see nothing but quiet, religion, and good-humour, the case is just as I tell you where people understand the world, and know how to live with credit and glory.

I wish that Heaven would open the eyes of men, and make them sensible which of these is right; whether, upon a due conviction, we are to quit faction, and gaming, and high-feeding, and all manner of luxury, and take to your country way? or you to leave prayers, and almsgiving, and reading, and exercise, and come into our measures? I wish (I say) that this matter were as clear to all men, as it is to

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

DEAR SIR,

April 21, 1726.

I Have a great inclination to write to you, tho' I cannot by writing, any more than I could by words, express what part I bear in your sufferings. Nature and Esteem in you are join'd to aggravate your affliction: the latter I have in a

Mr. Digby died in the year 1726, and is buried in the church of Sherburne in	Dorsetshire, with an Epitaph written by the Author. P.
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degree

degree equal even to yours, and a tie of friendship approaches near to the tenderness of nature: yet, God knows, no man living is less fit to comfort you, as no man is more deeply sensible than myself of the greatness of the loss. That very virtue, which secures his present state from all the sorrows incident to ours, does but aggrandise our sensation of its being remov'd from our sight, from our affection, and from our imitation; for the friendship and society of good Men does not only make us happier, but it makes us better. Their Death does but complete their felicity before our own, who probably are not yet arrived to that degree of perfection which merits an immediate reward. That your dear brother and my dear friend was so, I take his very removal to be a proof; Providence would certainly lend virtuous men to a world that so much wants them, as long as in its justice to them it could spare them to us. May my soul be with those who have meant well, and have acted well to that meaning! and, I doubt not, if this prayer be granted, I shall be with him. Let us preserve his memory in the way he would best like, by recollecting what his behaviour would have been, in every incident of our lives to come, and doing in each just as we think he would have done; so we shall have him always before our eyes, and in
our

our minds, and (what is more) in our lives and manners. I hope when we shall meet him next, we shall be more of a piece with him, and consequently not to be evermore separated from him. I will add but one word that relates to what remains of yourself and me, since so valued a part of us is gone; it is to beg you to accept, as yours by inheritance, of the vacancy he has left in a heart, which (while he could fill it with such hopes, wishes, and affections for him as suited a mortal creature) was truly and warmly his; and shall (I assure you in the sincerity of sorrow for my own loss) be faithfully at your service while I continue to love his memory, that is, while I continue to be myself.