



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

XVII. On the season of Christmas: Customs of hospitality: Charity and good works, where they are yet subsisting.

Nutzungsbedingungen

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55314](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55314)

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.

L E T T E R 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. |
|--|--|

degree