



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

V. On the fate of the South-Sea.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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FROM DR. ATTERBURY. 89

jesties: You see, my Lord, I end like a preacher: this is *Sermo ad Clerum*, not *ad Populum*. Believe me, with infinite obligation and sincere thanks, ever

Your, &c.

L E T T E R V.

Sept. 23, 1720.

I Hope you have some time ago receiv'd the Sulphur, and the two volumes of Mr. Gay, as instances (how small ones soever) that I wish you both health and diversion. What I now send for your perusal, I shall say nothing of; not to forestall by a single word what you promis'd to say upon that subject. Your Lordship may criticise from Virgil to these Tales; as Solomon wrote of every thing from the cedar to the hyssop. I have some cause, since I last waited on you at Bromley, to look upon you as a prophet in that retreat, from whom oracles are to be had, were mankind wise enough to go thither to consult you: The fate of the South-sea Scheme has, much sooner than I expected, verify'd what you told me. Most people thought the time would come, but no man prepared for it; no man consider'd it would come *like a Thief in the Night*, exactly as it happens

happens in the case of our death. Methinks God has punish'd the avaritious, as he often punishes sinners, in their own way, in the very sin itself: the thirst of gain was their crime, that thirst continued became their punishment and ruin. As for the few who have the good fortune, to remain with half of what they imagined they had (among whom is your humble servant) I would have them sensible of their felicity, and convinced of the truth of old Hesiod's maxim, who, after half his estate was swallowed by the *Directors* of those days, resolv'd, that *half* to be *more than the whole*.

Does not the fate of these people put you in mind of two passages, one in Job, the other from the Psalmist?

Men shall groan out of the CITY, and hiss them out of their PLACE.

They have dreamed out their dream, and awaking have found nothing in their hands.

Indeed the universal poverty, which is the consequence of universal avarice, and which will fall hardest upon the guiltless and industrious part of mankind, is truly lamentable. The universal deluge of the S. Sea, contrary to the old deluge, has drowned all except a few *Unrighteous* men: but it is some comfort to me that I am not one of them, even tho' I were to survive and rule the world by it. I am much
pleas'd

pleas'd with a thought of Dr. Arbuthnot's; he says the Government and South-sea company have only lock'd up the money of the people, upon conviction of their Lunacy (as is usual in the case of Lunaticks) and intend to restore them as much as may be fit for such people, as fast as they shall see them return to their senses.

The latter part of your letter does me so much honour, and shews me so much kindness, that I must both be proud and pleas'd, in a great degree; but I assure you, my Lord, much more the last than the first. For I certainly know, and feel, from my own heart which truly respects you, that there may be a ground for your partiality, one way; but I find not the least symptoms in my head, of any foundation for the other. In a word, the best reason I know for my being pleas'd, is, that you continue your favour toward me; the best I know for being proud, would be that you might cure me of it; for I have found you to be such a physician as does not only *repair*, but *improve*. I am, with the sincerest esteem, and most grateful acknowledgiment,

Your, &c.

LETTER