



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

XXV. On the death of his daughter.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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distance from it, it will be in the same manner as Virgil describes the expiring Peloponnesian,

Sternitur,

et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.

Do I still live in the memory of my friends, as they certainly do in mine? I have read a good many of your paper-squabbles about me, and am glad to see such free concessions on that head, tho' made with no view of doing me a pleasure, but merely of loading another.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXV.

From the Bishop of ROCHESTER.

On the Death of his Daughter.

Montpelier, Nov. 20, 1729.

I Am not yet Master enough of myself, after the late wound I have receiv'd, to open my very heart to you, and am not content with less than that, whenever I converse with you. My thoughts are at present vainly, but pleasingly employ'd, on what I have lost, and can never recover. I know well I ought, for that reason, to call them off to other subjects, but hitherto I have not been able to do it. By giving
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ing them the rein a little, and suffering them to spend their force, I hope in some time to check and subdue them. *Multis fortunæ vulneribus percussus, huic uni me imparem sensi, et pene succubui.* This is weakness, not wisdom, I own; and on that account fitter to be trusted to the bosom of a friend, where I may safely lodge all my infirmities. As soon as my mind is in some measure corrected and calm'd, I will endeavour to follow your advice, and turn it to something of use and moment; if I have still life enough left to do any thing that is worth reading and preserving. In the mean time I shall be pleas'd to hear that you proceed in what you intend, without any such melancholy interruption as I have met with. Your mind is as yet unbroken by age and ill accidents, your knowledge and judgment are at the height: use them in writing somewhat that may teach the present and future times, and if not gain equally the applause of both, may yet raise the envy of the one, and secure the admiration of the other. Employ not your precious moments, and great talents, on little men and little things; but chuse a subject every way worthy of you, and handle it as you can, in a manner which no-body else can equal or imitate. As for me, my abilities, if I ever had any,

are not what they were: and yet I will endeavour to recollect and employ them.

gelidus tardante senecta

Sanguis hebet, frigentque effæto in corpore vires.

However, I should be ingrateful to this place, if I did not own that I have gained upon the gout in the south of France, much more than I did at Paris: tho' even there I sensibly improved. I believe my cure had been perfected, but the earnest desire of meeting One I dearly loved, called me abruptly to Montpellier; where after continuing two months, under the cruel torture of a sad and fruitless expectation, I was forced at last to take a long journey to Toulouse; and even there I had miss'd the person I sought, had she not, with great spirit and courage, ventured all night up the Garonne to see me, which she above all things desired to do before she died. By that means she was brought where I was, between seven and eight in the morning, and liv'd twenty hours afterwards, which time was not lost on either side, but pass'd in such a manner as gave great satisfaction to both, and such as on her part, every way became her circumstances and character. For she had her senses to the very last gasp, and exerted them to give me, in those few hours, greater marks of Duty and Love than she had done in all her life time, tho' she had never
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been wanting in either. The last words she said to me were the kindest of all; a reflection on the goodness of God, which had allow'd us in this manner to meet once more, before we parted for ever. Not many minutes after that, she laid herself on her pillow, in a sleeping posture,

placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.

Judge you, Sir, what I felt, and still feel on this occasion, and spare me the trouble of describing it. At my Age, under my Infirmities, among utter Strangers, how shall I find out proper reliefs and supports? I can have none, but those with which Reason and Religion furnish me, and those I lay hold on, and grasp as fast as I can. I hope that He, who laid the burthen upon me (for wise and good purposes no doubt) will enable me to bear it, in like manner as I have born others, with some degree of fortitude and firmness.

You see how ready I am to relapse into an argument which I had quitted once before in this letter. I shall probably again commit the same fault, if I continue to write; and therefore I stop short here, and with all sincerity, affection, and esteem, bid you adieu! till we meet either in this world, if God pleases, or else in another.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R