



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

XXVII. The author's bad health, complaints of of absence, and some advice to this friend.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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my next, make use of real names instead of fictitious ones. I am,

My Lord,
Your most Affectionate, &c.

L E T T E R X X V I I ^a.

Cirencester.

IT is a true saying, that misfortunes alone prove one's friendships; they show us not only that of other people for us, but our own for them. We hardly know ourselves any otherwise. I feel my being forced to this Bath-journey as a misfortune; and to follow my own welfare preferably to those I love, is indeed a new thing to me: my health has not usually got the better of my tenderesses and affections. I set out with a heavy heart, wishing I had done this thing the last season; for every day I defer it, the more I am in danger of that accident which I dread the most, my Mother's death (especially should it happen while I am away.) And another Reflection pains me, that I have never, since I knew you, been so long separated from you, as I now must be. Methinks we live to be more and more strangers, and every year teaches you to live without me:

^a To Mrs. B.

This

This absence may, I fear, make my return less welcome and less wanted to you, than once it seem'd, even after but a fortnight. Time ought not in reason to diminish friendship, when it confirms the truth of it by experience.

The journey has a good deal disorder'd me, notwithstanding my resting place at Lord Bathurst's. My Lord is too much for me, he walks, and is in spirits all day long; I rejoice to see him so. It is a right distinction, that I am happier in seeing my friends so many degrees above me, be it in fortune, health, or pleasures, than I can be in sharing either with them: for in these sort of enjoyments I cannot keep pace with them, any more than I can walk with a stronger man. I wonder to find I am a companion for none but old men, and forget that I am not a young fellow myself. The worst is, that reading and writing, which I have still the greatest relish for, are growing painful to my eyes. But if I can preserve the good opinion of one or two friends, to such a degree, as to have their indulgence to my weakneses, I will not complain of life: And if I could live to see you consult your ease and quiet, by becoming independent on those who will never help you to either, I doubt not of finding the latter part of my life pleasanter than the former, or present. My uneasinesses of body I can bear;

my chief uneasiness of mind is in your regard. You have a temper that would make you *easy* and *beloved* (which is all the happiness one needs to wish in this world) and content with moderate things. All your point is not to lose that temper by sacrificing yourself to others, out of a mistaken tenderness, which hurts you, and profits not them. And this you must do soon, or it will be too late: Habit will make it as hard for you to live independent, as for L— to live out of a Court.

You must excuse me for observing what I think any defect in you: You grow too indolent, and give things up too easily: which would be otherwise, when you found and felt yourself your own: Spirits would come in, as ill-usage went out. While you live under a kind of perpetual dejection and oppression, nothing at all belongs to you, not your own *Humour*, nor your own *Sense*.

You can't conceive how much you would find resolution rise, and chearfulness grow upon you, if you'd once try to live independent for two or three months. I never think tenderly of you but this comes across me, and therefore excuse my repeating it, for whenever I do not, I dissemble half that I think of you: Adieu, pray write, and be particular about your health.