



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

Containing The First of his Letters

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

XIII. After an illness. The obscurity of a country life.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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FROM H. CROMWELL, Esq. 109

Aulus Gellius somewhere out of your way, for a month or so. Who knows, but travelling and long airing in an open field, may contribute more successfully to the cooling a critic's severity, than it did to the assuaging of Mr. Cheek's anger, of old? In these fields, you will be secure of finding no enemy, but the most faithful and affectionate of your friends, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

May 17, 1710.

AFTER I had recover'd from a dangerous illness which was first contracted in town, about a fortnight after my coming hither I troubled you with a letter, and^a paper inclos'd, which you had been so obliging as to desire a sight of when last I saw you, promising me in return some translations of yours from Ovid. Since when, I have not had a syllable from your hands, so that 'tis to be fear'd that tho' I have escap'd death, I have not oblivion. I should at least have expected you to have finish'd that elegy upon me, which, you told me, you was upon the point of beginning when I was sick in London; if you will but do so much for me

^a Verses on Silence, in | chester's poem on Nothing;
imitation of the Earl of Ro- | done at fourteen years old. P.

first,

first, I will give you leave to forget me afterwards; and for my own part will die at discretion, and at my leisure. But I fear I must be forced, like many learned authors, to write my own epitaph, if I would be remember'd at all. Monsieur de la Fontaine's would fit me to a hair, but it is a kind of sacrilege (do you think it is not?) to steal epitaphs. In my present, living dead condition, nothing would be properer than *Oblitusque meorum, obliviscendus & illis*, but that unluckily I can't forget my friends, and the civilities I received from yourself, and some others. They say indeed 'tis one quality of generous minds to forget the obligations they have conferr'd, and perhaps too it may be so to forget those on whom they conferr'd 'em: Then indeed I must be forgotten to all intents and purposes! I am, it must be own'd, dead in a natural capacity, according to Mr. Bickerstaff; dead in a poetical capacity, as a damn'd author; and dead in a civil capacity as a useles member of the Commonwealth. But reflect, dear Sir, what melancholy effects may ensue, if dead men are not civil to one another! If he who has nothing to do himself, will not comfort and support another in his idleness: If those who are to die themselves, will not now and then pay the charity of visiting a tomb and a dead friend, and strowing a few flowers over him:

In

FROM H. CROMWELL, Esq. 111

In the shades where I am, the Inhabitants have a mutual compassion for each other; being all alike Inanes; we saunter to one another's habitations, and daily assist each other in doing nothing at all. This I mention for your edification and example, that all alive as you are, you may not sometimes disdain—*desipere in loco*. Tho' you are no Papist, and have not so much regard to the dead as to address yourself to them (which I plainly perceive by your silence) yet I hope you are not one of those heterodox, who hold them to be totally insensible of the good offices and kind wishes of their living friends, and to be in a dull state of sleep, without one dream of those they left behind them. If you are, let this letter convince you to the contrary, which assures you, I am still, tho' in a state of separation, Your, &c.

P. S. This letter of deaths, puts me in mind of poor Mr. Betterton's; over whom I would have this sentence of Tully for an epitaph, which will serve him as well in his Moral, as his Theatrical capacity.

Vitæ bene actæ jucundissima est recordatio.

LETTER