



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

XII. Praise of country life. Concern for the separation of friends. The comforts of integrity and independency.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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triumph to the Ring. The poor distressed Roman Catholicks, now un-hors'd and unchariot-ed, cry out with the Psalmist, *Some in Chariots and some in Horses, but we will invoke the name of the Lord.*

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

THE weather is too fine for any one that loves the country to leave it at this season; when every smile of the sun, like the smile of a coy lady, is as dear as it is uncommon: and I am so much in the taste of rural pleasures, I had rather see the sun than any thing he can shew me, except yourself. I despise every fine thing in town, not excepting your new gown, till I see you dress'd in it, (which by the way I don't like the better for the red; the leaves, I think, are very pretty.) I am growing fit, I hope, for a better world, of which the light of the sun is but a shadow: for I doubt not but God's works here, are what come nearest to his works there; and that a true relish of the beauties of nature is the most easy preparation and gentlest transition to an enjoyment of those of heaven: as on the contrary, a true town-life of hurry, confusion,

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noise,

noise, slander, and dissension, is a sort of apprenticeship to hell and its furies. I'm endeavouring to put my mind into as quiet a situation as I can, to be ready to receive that stroke which, I believe, is coming upon me, and have fully resign'd myself to yield to it. The separation of my soul and body is what I could think of with less pain; for I am very sure he that made it will take care of it, and in whatever state he pleases it shall be, that state must be right: But I cannot think without tears of being separated from my friends, when their condition is so doubtful, that they may want even such assistance as mine. Sure, it is more merciful to take from us after death all memory of what we lov'd or pursued here: for else what a torment would it be to a spirit, still to love those creatures it is quite divided from? Unless we suppose, that in a more exalted life, all that we esteemed in this imperfect state will affect us no more, than what we lov'd in our infancy concerns us now.

This is an odd way of writing to a lady, and, I'm sensible, would throw me under a great deal of ridicule, were you to show this letter among your acquaintance. But perhaps you may not yourself be quite a stranger to this way of thinking. I heartily wish your life may be so long and so happy, as never to let you think
quite

quite so far as I am now led to do ; but, to think *a little towards it*, is what will make you the happier, and the easier at all times.

There are no pleasures or amusements that I don't wish you, and therefore 'tis no small grief to me that I shall for the future be less able to partake with you in them. But let fortune do her worst, whatever she makes us lose, as long as she never makes us lose our honesty and our independance ; I despise from my heart whoever parts with the first, and I pity from my soul whoever quits the latter.

I am grieved at Mr. G—'s condition in this last respect of dependance. He has Merit, Good-nature, and Integrity, three qualities, that I fear are too often lost upon great men ; or at least are not all three a match for that one which is oppos'd to them, Flattery. I wish it may not soon or late displace him from the favour he now possesses, and seems to like. I'm sure his late action deserves eternal favour and esteem : Lord Bathurst was charm'd with it, who came hither to see me before his journey. He ask'd and spoke very particularly of you. To-morrow Mr. Fortescue comes to me from London about B—'s suit in *forma pauperis*. That poor man looks starved : he tells me you have been charitable to him. Indeed 'tis wanted ; the poor creature can scarce stir or speak ; and

I apprehend he will die, just as he gets something to live upon. Adieu.

L E T T E R X I I I .

THIS is a day of wishes for you, and I hope you have long known, there is not one good one which I do not form in your behalf. Every year that passes, I wish some things more for my friends, and some things less for myself. Yet were I to tell you what I wish for you in particular, it would be only to repeat in prose, what I told you last year in rhyme (so sincere is my poetry :) I can only add, that as I then wish'd you a friend^a, I now wish that friend were Mrs. —

Absence is a short kind of death; and in either, one can only wish, that the friends we are separated from, may be happy with those that are left them. I am therefore very solicitous that you may pass much agreeable time together: I am sorry to say I envy you no other companion; tho' I hope you have others that you like; and I am always pleas'd in that hope, when it is not attended with any fears on your own account.

^a *To Mrs. — on her Birth-day.*

“ O be thou blest with all that heav'n can send,

“ Long health, long life, long pleasure, and a *friend*.”

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