



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

XV. Description of a journey to Oxford, and manner of life there.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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LETTER XV.

Nothing could have more of that melancholy which once used to please me, than my last day's journey; for after having pass'd through my favourite woods in the forest, with a thousand reveries of past pleasures, I rid over hanging hills, whose tops were edged with groves, and whose feet water'd with winding rivers, listening to the falls of cataracts below, and the murmuring of the winds above: The gloomy verdure of Stonor succeeded to these; and then the shades of the evening overtook me. The moon rose in the clearest sky I ever saw, by whose solemn light I paced on slowly, without company, or any interruption to the range of my thoughts. About a mile before I reach'd Oxford, all the bells toll'd in different notes; the clocks of every college answered one another, and sounded forth (some in a deeper, some a softer tone) that it was eleven at night. All this was no ill preparation to the life I have led since, among those old walls, venerable galleries, stone portico's, studious walks, and solitary scenes of the University. I wanted nothing but a black gown and a salary, to be as mere a bookworm as any there. I conform'd myself to the college hours, was roll'd up in
books,

books, lay in one of the most ancient, dusky parts of the University, and was as dead to the world as any hermit of the desert. If any thing was alive or awake in me, it was a little vanity, such as even those good men us'd to entertain, when the monks of *their own order* extoll'd their piety and abstraction. For I found myself receiv'd with a sort of respect, which this idle part of mankind, the Learned, pay to their own species; who are as considerable here, as the busy, the gay, and the ambitious are in your world.

Indeed I was treated in such a manner, that I could not but sometimes ask myself in my mind, what college I was founder of, or what library I had built? Methinks, I do very ill to return to the world again, to leave the only place where I make a figure, and, from seeing myself seated with dignity on the most conspicuous shelves of a library, put myself into the abject posture of lying at a lady's feet in St. James's square.

I will not deny, but that, like Alexander, in the midst of my glory I am wounded, and find myself a mere man. To tell you from whence the dart comes, is to no purpose, since neither of you will take the tender care to draw it out of my heart, and suck the poison with your lips.

Here,

SEVERAL LADIES. 187

Here, at my Lord H——'s, I see a creature nearer an angel than a woman (tho' a woman be very near as good as an angel;) I think you have formerly heard me mention Mrs. T— as a credit to the Maker of angels; she is a relation of his lordship's, and he gravely propos'd her to me for a wife; being tender of her interests, and knowing (what is a shame to Providence) that she is less indebted to fortune than I. I told him, 'twas what he could never have thought of, if it had not been his misfortune to be blind; and what I never could think of, while I had eyes to see both her and myself.

I must not conclude without telling you, that I will do the utmost in the affair you desire. It would be an inexpressible joy to me if I could serve you, and I will always do all I can to give myself pleasure. I wish as well for you as for myself; I am in love with you both, as much as I am with myself, for I find myself most so with either, when I least suspect it.

LETTER XVI.

THE chief cause I have to repent my leaving the town, is the uncertainty I am in every day of your sister's state of health. I real-

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