



## **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. Of the Version of Homer: Party animosity.

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**Nutzungsbedingungen**

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mite may perform in his kingdom of a grain of dust, within his life of some minutes; and of how much less consideration than even this, is the life of man in the sight of God, who is from ever, and for ever?

Who that thinks in this train, but must see the world and its contemptible grandeurs, lessen before him at every thought? 'Tis enough to make one remain stupify'd in a poize of inaction, void of all desires, of all designs, of all friendships.

But we must return (thro' our very condition of being) to our narrow selves, and those things that affect ourselves: our passions, our interests flow in upon us, and unphilosophize us into mere mortals. For my part, I never return so much into myself, as when I think of you, whose friendship is one of the best comforts I have for the insignificancy of myself. I am

Your, &c.

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LETTER XV.

To Mr. ADDISON.

Jan. 30, 1713-14.

YOUR letter found me very busy in my grand undertaking, to which I must wholly

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ly give myself up for some time, unless when I snatch an hour to please myself with a distant conversation with you and a few others, by writing. 'Tis no comfortable prospect to be reflecting, that so long a siege as that of Troy lies upon my hands, and the campagne above half over, before I have made any progress. Indeed the Greek fortification upon a nearer approach does not appear so formidable as it did, and I am almost apt to flatter myself, that Homer secretly seems inclined to a correspondence with me, in letting me into a good part of his intentions. There are, indeed, a sort of underling auxiliars to the difficulty of a work, call'd Commentators and Critics, who would frighten many people by their number and bulk, and perplex our progress under pretence of fortifying their author. These lie very low in the trenches and ditches they themselves have digged, encompassed with dirt of their own heaping up; but, I think, there may be found a method of coming at the main works by a more speedy and gallant way than by mining under ground, that is, by using the poetical engines, wings, and flying over their heads<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> There is a strange confusion in this long continued metaphor: sometimes the *fortifications* spoken of are to

keep the ignorant out, sometimes to let them in, and sometimes only to quibble with, as in the words [*un-*

While



While I am engaged in the fight, I find you are concerned how I shall be paid, and are solicitous that I may not have the ill fate of many discarded Generals, to be first envied and malign'd, then perhaps prais'd, and lastly neglected. The former (the constant attendant upon all great and laudable enterprizes) I have already experienced. Some have said I am not a master in the Greek, who either are so themselves or are not: if they are not, they can't tell; and if they are, they can't without having catechiz'd me. But if they can read (for, I know, some critics can, and others cannot) there are fairly lying before them some specimens of my translation from this Author in the Miscellanies, which they are heartily welcome to. I have met with as much malignity another way, some calling me a Tory, because the heads of that party have been distinguishingly favourable to me; some a Whig, because I have been favoured with yours, Mr. Congreve's, and Mr. Craggs's friendship, and of late with my lord Hallifax's patronage. How much more natural a conclusion might be formed, by any good-natured man, that a person who has been well used by all sides, has

*der pretence of fortifying their  
author.] But it is no matter.  
The Critics and Commenta-*

tors are to be abused, and  
any thing serves to do that.



been offensive to none. This miserable age is so sunk between animosities of Party and those of Religion, that I begin to fear, most men have Politics enough to make (thro' violence) the best scheme of government a bad one: and Belief enough to hinder their own salvation. I hope for my own part never to have more of either than is consistent with common Justice and Charity, and always as much as becomes a Christian and honest man. Tho' I find it an unfortunate thing to be bred a Papist here, where one is obnoxious to four parts in five as being so too much or too little; I shall yet be easy under both their mistakes, and be what I more than seem to be, for I suffer for it. God is my witness that I no more envy you Protestants your places and possessions, than I do our Priests, their charity or learning. I am ambitious of nothing but the good opinion of good men, on both sides; for I know that one virtue of a free spirit is worth more than all the virtues put together of all the narrow-soul'd people in the world. I am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R