



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

Letters to Several Persons. From the year 1714 to 1721.

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LETTERS

TO AND FROM

SEVERAL PERSONS.

From 1714, to 1721.

LETTER I.

The Rev. Dean BERKLEY to Mr. POPE.

Leghorn, May 1, 1714.

AS I take ingratitude to be a greater crime than impertinence, I chuse rather to run the risque of being thought guilty of the latter, than not to return you my thanks for a very agreeable entertainment you just now gave me. I have accidentally met with your Rape of the Lock here, having never seen it before. Style, painting, judgment, spirit, I had already admired in other of your writings; but in this I am charm'd with the magic of your invention, with all those images, allusions, and inexplicable

explicable beauties, which you raise so surprisingly, and at the same time so naturally, out of a trifle. And yet I cannot say that I was more pleas'd with the reading of it, than I am with the pretext it gives me to renew in your thoughts, the remembrance of one who values no happiness beyond the friendship of men of wit, learning, and good-nature.

I remember to have heard you mention some half-form'd design of coming to Italy. What might we not expect from a Muse that sings so well in the bleak climate of England, if she felt the same warm sun and breathed the same air with Virgil and Horace?

There are here an incredible number of Poets, that have all the inclination, but want the genius, or perhaps the art, of the Ancients. Some among them, who understand English, begin to relish our Authors; and I am informed, that at Florence they have translated Milton into Italian verse. If one who knows so well how to write like the old Latin poets, came among them; it would probably be a means to retrieve them from their cold, trivial conceits, to an imitation of their predecessors.

As merchants, antiquaries, men of pleasure, &c. have all different views in travelling; I know not whether it might not be worth a
Poet's

Poet's while, to travel, in order to store his mind with strong images of Nature.

Green fields and groves, flowery meadows and purling streams are no where in such perfection as in England: but if you would know lightsome days, warm suns, and blue skies, you must come to Italy: and to enable a man to describe rocks and precipices, it is absolutely necessary that he pass the Alps.

You will easily perceive that it is self-interest makes me so fond of giving advice to one who has no need of it. If you came into these parts I should fly to see you. I am here (by the favour of my good friend the Dean of St. Patrick's) in quality of Chaplain to the Earl of Peterborough; who about three months since left the greatest part of his family in this town. God knows how long we shall stay here.

I am, Your, &c.

LETTER II.

Mr. POPE to Mr. JERVAS in Ireland.

July 9, 1716.

TH O', as you rightly remark, I pay my tax but once in half a year, yet you shall see by this letter upon the neck of my last, that
I pay

I pay a double tax, as we non-jurors ought to do. Your acquaintance on this side of the sea are under terrible apprehensions from your long stay in Ireland, that you may grow too polite for them; for we think (since the great success of such a play as the Non-juror) that politeness is gone over the water. But others are of opinion it has been longer among you, and was introduced much about the same time with Frogs, and with equal success. Poor Poetry! the little that is left of it here longs to cross the seas, and leave Eusden in full and peaceable possession of the British laurel: and we begin to wish you had the singing of our poets, as well as the croaking of our frogs, to yourselves, *in secula seculorum*. It would be well in exchange, if Parnelle, and two or three more of your Swans would come hither, especially that Swan, who, like a true modern one, does not sing at all, Dr. Swift. I am (like the rest of the world) a sufferer by his idleness. Indeed I hate that any man should be idle, while I must translate and comment; and I may the more sincerely wish for good poetry from others because I am become a person out of the question; for a Translator is no more a poet, than a Taylor is a man.

You are, doubtless, persuaded of the validity of that famous verse,

'Tis

'Tis Expectation makes a Blessing dear :

but why would you make your friends fonder of you than they are? There is no manner of need of it. We begin to expect you no more than Anti-christ; a man that hath absented himself so long from his friends, ought to be put into the Gazettee.

Every body here has great need of you. Many faces have died for want of your pencil, and blooming Ladies have wither'd in expecting your return. Even Frank and Betty (that constant pair) cannot console themselves for your absence; I fancy they will be forced to make their own picture in a pretty babe, before you come home: 'twill be a noble subject for a family piece. Come then, and having peopled Ireland with a world of beautiful shadows, come to us, and see with that eye (which, like the eye of the world, creates beauties by looking on them) see, I say, how England has alter'd the airs of all its heads in your absence: and with what sneaking city attitudes our most celebrated personages appear, in the mere mortal works of our painters.

Mr. Fortescue is much yours; Gay commemorates you; and lastly (to climb by just steps and degrees) my Lord Burlington desires you may be put in mind of him. His gardens flourish,

rish, his structures rise, his pictures arrive, and (what is far more valuable than all) his own good qualities daily extend themselves to all about him : of whom I the meanest (next, to some Italian Fiddlers, and English Bricklayers) am a living instance. Adieu.

L E T T E R III.

To the same.

Nov. 14, 1716.

IF I had not done my utmost to lead my life so pleasantly as to forget all misfortunes, I should tell you I reckoned your absence no small one ; but I hope you have also had many good and pleasant reasons to forget your friends on this side the world. If a wish could transport me to you and your present companions, I could do the same. Dr. Swift, I believe, is a very good landlord, and a chearful host at his own table : I suppose he has perfectly learnt himself, what he has taught so many others, *rupta non insanire lagena* : else he would not make a proper host for your humble servant, who (you know) tho' he drinks a glass as seldom as any man, contrives to break one as often. But 'tis a consolation to me, that I can do this, and many other enormities, under my own roof.

I

But

But that you and I are upon equal terms, in all friendly laziness, and have taken an inviolable oath to each other, always to do what we will; I should reproach you for so long a silence. The best amends you can make for saying nothing to me, is by saying all the good you can of me, which is, that I heartily love and esteem the Dean and Dr. Parnelle.

Gay is yours and theirs. His spirit is awakened very much in the cause of the Dean, which has broke forth in a courageous couplet or two upon Sir Richard Blackmore: He has printed it with his name to it, and bravely assigns no other reason, than that the said Sir Richard has abused Dr. Swift. I have also suffered in the like cause, and shall suffer more: unless Parnelle sends me his Zoilus and Bookworm (which the Bishop of Clogher, I hear, greatly extols) it will be shortly, *concurrere Bellum atque Virum*—I love you all, as much as I despise most wits in this dull country. Ireland has turned the tables upon England; and if I have no poetical friend in my own nation, I'll be as proud as Scipio, and say (since I am reduced to skin and bone) *Ingrata patria, ne ossa quidem habeas*.

L E T T E R I V.

To the same.

Nov. 29, 1716.

THAT you have not heard from me of late, ascribe not to the usual laziness of your correspondent, but to a ramble to Oxford, where your name is mentioned with honour, even in a land flowing with Tories. I had the good fortune there to be often in the conversation of Doctor Clarke: He entertain'd me with several drawings, and particularly with the original designs of Inigo Jones's Whitehall. I there saw and revered some of your first pieces; which future painters are to look upon as we Poets do on the Culex of Virgil and Batrachom. of Homer.

Having named this latter piece, give me leave to ask what is become of Dr. Parnelle and his Frogs^a? *Oblitusque meorum, obliviscendus et illis*, might be Horace's wish, but will never be mine while I have such *meorum*s as Dr. Parnelle and Dr. Swift. I hope the Spring will restore you to us, and with you all the beauties and colours of nature. Not but I congratulate you

^a He translated the Batrachom. of Homer, which is printed amongst his Poems.

on the pleasure you must take in being admir'd in your own country, which so seldom happens to Prophets and Poets: but in this you have the advantage of Poets; you are master of an art that must prosper and grow rich, as long as people love, or are proud of themselves, or their own persons. However, you have stay'd long enough, methinks, to have painted all the numberless Histories of old Ogygia. If you have begun to be historical, I recommend to your hand the story which every pious Irishman ought to begin with, that of St. Patrick; to the end you may be obliged (as Dr. P. was, when he translated the *Batrachomomachia*) to come into England, to copy the Frogs, and such other vermine as were never seen in that land since the time of that Confessor.

I long to see you a History painter. You have already done enough for the private, do something for the public; and be not confined, like the rest, to draw only such silly stories as our own faces tell of us. The Ancients too expect you should do them right; those Statues from which you learned your beautiful and noble Ideas, demand it as a piece of gratitude from you, to make them truly known to all nations, in the account you intend to write of their Characters. I hope

Y

you

you think more warmly than ever of that design^b.

As to your enquiry about your house, when I come within the walls, they put me in mind of those of Carthage, where your friend, like the wandring Trojan,

animum Pictura pascit inani.

For the spacious mansion, like a Turkish Caravanferah, entertains the vagabonds with only bare lodging. I rule the family very ill, keep bad hours, and lend out your pictures about the town. See what it is to have a poet in your house! Frank indeed does all he can in such a circumstance; for, considering he has a wild beast in it, he constantly keeps the door chain'd: Every time it is open'd, the links rattle, the rusty hinges roar. The house seems so sensible that you are its support, that it is ready to drop in your absence; but I still trust myself under its roof, as depending that Providence will preserve so many Raphael's, Titian's, and Guido's, as are lodged in your Cabinet. Surely the fins

^b Mr. Pope used to say he had had an acquaintance with three eminent Painters, none of which had common sense. Instead of valuing themselves on their performances in that art, where they all had merit; the one was

deep in military Architecture, without a line of Mathematics; the other in the doctrine of Fate, without a principle of Philosophy; and the third in the translation of Don Quixote without a word of Spanish.

of

of one Poet can hardly be so heavy, as to bring an old house over the heads of so many Painters. In a word, your house is falling; but what of that? I am only a lodger^c.

L E T T E R V.

The Hon. Mr. CRAGGS to Mr. POPE.

Paris, Sept. 2, 1716.

L A S T post brought me the favour of your letter of the 10th Aug. O. S. It would be taking too much upon me to decide, that it was a witty one; I never pretend to more judgment than to know what pleases me, and can assure you, it was a very agreeable one. The proof I can give you of my sincerity in this opinion, is, that I hope and desire you would not stop at this, but continue more of them.

I am in a place where pleasure is continually flowing. The Princes set the example, and the subjects follow at a distance. The Ladies are of all parties^d, by which means the conversation of the men is very much softened and fashioned from those blunt disputes on Politics, and rough jests, we are so guilty of; while the

^c Alluding to the story of the Irishman.

^d i. e. In all companies.

freedom of the women takes away all formality and constraint. I must own, at the same time, these Beauties are a little too artificial for my taste: you have seen a French picture, the Original is more painted, and such a crust of powder and essence in their hair, that you can see no difference between black and red. By disusing Stays and indulging themselves at table, they run out of all shape; but as to that, they may give a good reason, they prefer Conveniency to Parade, and are, by this means, as ready, as they are generally willing, to be charitable.

I am surpriz'd to find I have wrote so much scandal; I fancy I am either setting up for a wit, or imagine I must write in this style to a wit; I hope you'll prove a good-natur'd one, and not only let me hear from you sometimes, but forgive the small encouragement you meet with. I won't trouble myself to finish finely; a true compliment is better than a good one, and I can assure you without any, that I am very sincerely,

Sir, Yours, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER VI.

TO MR. FENTON.

S I R,

May 5.

I Had not omitted answering yours of the 18th of last month, but out of a desire to give you some certain and satisfactory account, which way, and at what time, you might take your journey. I am now commissioned to tell you, that Mr. Craggs will expect you on the rising of the Parliament, which will be as soon as he can receive you in the manner he would receive a man *de belles Lettres*, that is, in tranquillity and full leisure. I dare say your way of life (which, in my taste, will be the best in the world, and with one of the best men in the world) must prove highly to your contentment. And, I must add, it will be still the more a joy to me, as I shall reap a peculiar advantage from the good I shall have done in bringing you together^a, by seeing it in my own neighbour-

^a Mr Craggs had had no learned education: he wanted to improve himself in knowledge of that kind, and desired Mr. Pope to chuse him out a polite scholar, by whose conversation and in-

struction he might improve himself in letters. Mr. Pope recommended Mr. Fenton: but Mr Craggs' untimely death prevented both from receiving the benefits of this connexion.

hood. Mr. Craggs has taken a house close by mine, whither he proposes to come in three weeks : In the mean time I heartily invite you to live with me ; where a frugal and philosophical diet, for a time, may give you a higher relish of that elegant way of life you will enter into after. I desire to know by the first post how soon I may hope for you ?

I am a little scandalized at your complaint that your time lies heavy on your hands, when the Muses have put so many good materials into your head to employ them. As to your question, What I am doing ? I answer, Just what I have been doing some years, my duty ; secondly, relieving myself with necessary amusements, or exercises, which shall serve me instead of physic as long as they can ; thirdly, reading till I am tired ; and lastly, writing when I have no other thing in the world to do, or no friend to entertain in company.

My mother is, I thank God, the easier, if not the better, for my cares ; and I am the happier in that regard, as well as in the consciousness of doing my best. My next felicity is in retaining the good opinion of honest men, who think me not quite undeserving of it ; and in finding no injuries from others hurt me, as long as I know myself. I will add the sincerity with which I act towards ingenious and undesigning

signing men, and which makes me always (even by a natural bond) their friend; therefore believe me very affectionately

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

Rev. Dean^a BERKLEY, to Mr. POPE.

Naples, Oct. 22. N. S. 1717.

I Have long had it in my thoughts to trouble you with a letter, but was discouraged for want of something that I could think worth sending fifteen hundred miles. Italy is such an exhausted subject, that, I dare say, you'd easily forgive my saying nothing of it; and the imagination of a Poet is a thing so nice and delicate, that it is no easy matter to find out images capable of giving pleasure to one of the few, who (in any age) have come up to that character. I am nevertheless lately returned from an island, where I passed three or four months; which, were it set out in its true colours, might, methinks, amuse you agreeably enough for a minute or two. The island Inarime is an epi-

^a Afterwards Bishop of Cloyne in Ireland, Author of the Dialogues of Hylas | and Philonous, the Minute Philosopher, &c. P.

tome of the whole earth, containing within the compass of eighteen miles, a wonderful variety of hills, vales, ragged rocks, fruitful plains, and barren mountains, all thrown together in a most romantic confusion. The air is in the hottest season constantly refreshed by cool breezes from the sea. The vales produce excellent wheat and Indian corn, but are mostly covered with vineyards, intermix'd with fruit-trees. Besides the common kinds, as cherries, apricots, peaches, &c. they produce oranges, limes, almonds, pomegranates, figs, water-melons, and many other fruits unknown to our climates, which lie every where open to the passenger. The hills are the greater part covered to the top with vines, some with chesnut groves, and others with thickets of myrtle and lentiscus. The fields in the northern side are divided by hedge-rows of myrtle. Several fountains and rivulets add to the beauty of this landscape, which is likewise set off by the variety of some barren spots, and naked rocks. But that which crowns the scene, is a large mountain, rising out of the middle of the island (once a terrible Volcano, by the ancients called Mons Epomeus) its lower parts are adorned with vines, and other fruits; the middle affords pasture to flocks of goats and sheep; and the top is a sandy pointed rock, from which you
have

have the finest prospect in the world, surveying at one view, besides several pleasant islands lying at your feet, a tract of Italy about three hundred miles in length, from the promontory of Antium to the cape of Palinurus: the greater part of which hath been sung by Homer and Virgil, as making a considerable part of the travels and adventures of their two Heroes. The Islands Caprea, Prochyta, and Parthenope, together with Cajeta, Cumæ, Monte Miseno, the habitations of Circe, the Syrens, and the Læstrigones, the bay of Naples, the promontory of Minerva, and the whole Campagna felice, make but a part of this noble landscape; which would demand an imagination as warm, and numbers as flowing as your own, to describe it. The inhabitants of this delicious isle, as they are without riches and honours, so are they without the vices and follies that attend them; and were they but as much strangers to revenge, as they are to avarice and ambition, they might in fact answer the poetical notions of the golden age. But they have got, as an alloy to their happiness, an ill habit of murdering one another on slight offences. We had an instance of this the second night after our arrival, a youth of eighteen being shot dead by our door: and yet by the sole secret of minding our own business, we found a means of living securely among
these

these dangerous people. Would you know how we pass the time at Naples? Our chief entertainment is the devotion of our neighbours: besides the gaiety of their Churches (where folks go to see what they call *una bella Devotione* (i. e.) a sort of religious opera) they make fireworks almost every week, out of devotion; the streets are often hung with arras, out of devotion; and (what is still more strange) the ladies invite gentlemen to their houses and treat them with music and sweatmeats, out of devotion; in a word, were it not for this devotion of its inhabitants, Naples would have little else to recommend it, beside the air and situation. Learning is in no very thriving state here, as indeed no where else in Italy; however, among many pretenders, some men of taste are to be met with. A friend of mine told me not long since, that, being to visit Salvini at Florence, he found him reading your Homer: he liked the notes extremely, and could find no other fault with the version, but that he thought it approached too near a paraphrase; which shews him not to be sufficiently acquainted with our language. I wish you health to go on with that noble work, and when you have that, I need not wish you success. You will do me the justice to believe, that whatever relates to your welfare is sincerely wished by

Your, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER VIII.

Mr. POPE to ***

Dec. 12, 1718.

THE old project of a Window in the bosom, to render the Soul of man visible, is what every honest friend has manifold reason to wish for^a; yet even that would not do in our case, while you are so far separated from me, and so long. I begin to fear you'll die in Ireland, and that Denunciation will be fulfilled upon you, *Hibernus es, et in Hiberniam reverteris*. I should be apt to think you in Sancho's case; some Duke has made you Governor of an island, or wet place, and you are administering laws to the wild Irish. But I must own, when you talk of Building and Planting, you touch my string; and I am as apt to pardon you, as the fellow that thought himself Jupiter would have pardon'd the other madman who call'd himself his brother Neptune. Alas, Sir, do you know whom you talk to? one that has

^a Our Author had a better reason, than he was at that time aware of, to wish for this window: not that his Friends might see his heart, to save him the trouble of professions; but that he

might see theirs to save himself the mortification of being so oft deceived, and his surviving Enemies the malignant pleasure of finding how he had been bubbled.

been

been a Poet, was degraded to a Translator, and at last, thro' mere dulness, is turned an Architect. You know Martial's censure, *Præconem facito vel Architectum*. However, I have one way left, to plan, to elevate, and to surprize, (as Bays says) the next news you may expect to hear, is that I am in debt.

The history of my Transplantation and settlement which you desire, would require a volume, were I to enumerate the many projects, difficulties, vicissitudes, and various fates attending that important part of my life: much more, should I describe the many Draughts, Elevations, Profiles, Perspectives, &c. of every Palace and Garden propos'd, intended, and happily rais'd, by the strength of that faculty wherein all great Genius's excel, Imagination. At last, the Gods and fate have fix'd me on the borders of the Thames, in the districts of Richmond and Twickenham: It is here I have pass'd an entire year of my life, without any fix'd abode in London, or more than casting a transitory glance (for a day or two at most in a month) on the pomps of the Town. It is here I hope to receive you, Sir, returned from eternizing the Ireland of this age. For you my structures rise; for you my Colonades extend their wings; for you my groves aspire, and roses bloom. And, to say truth, I hope posterity
(which

(which, no doubt, will be made acquainted with all these things) will look upon it as one of the principal motives of my Architecture, that it was a mansion prepar'd to receive you, against your own should fall to dust, which is destin'd to be the tomb of poor Frank and Betty, and the immortal monument of the Fidelity of two such Servants, who have excell'd in constancy the very Rats of your family.

What more can I tell you of myself? so much, and yet all put together so little, that I scarce care or know, how to do it. But the very reasons that are against putting it upon paper, are as strong for telling it you in person; and I am uneasy to be so long denied the satisfaction of it.

At present I consider you bound in by the Irish Sea, like the ghosts in Virgil,

Tristi palus inamabilis unda

Alligat, et novies Styx circumfusa coercet!

and I can't express how I long to renew our old intercourse and conversation, our morning conferences in bed in the same room, our evening walks in the park, our amusing voyages on the water, our philosophical suppers, our lectures, our dissertations, our gravities, our reveries, our fooleries, our what not? — This awakens the memory of some of those who have made a part
in

in all these. Poor Parnelle, Garth, Rowe! You justly reprove me for not speaking of the death of the last: Parnelle was too much in my mind, to whose memory I am erecting the best Monument I can. What he gave me to publish, was but a small part of what he left behind him; but it was the best, and I will not make it worse by enlarging it. I'd fain know if he be buried at Chester, or Dublin; and what care has been, or is to be taken for his Monument, &c. Yet I have not neglected my devoirs to Mr. Rowe; I am writing this very day his Epitaph for Westminster-Abbey—After these, the best natur'd of Men, Sir Samuel Garth, has left me in the truest concern for his loss. His death was very heroical, and yet unaffected enough to have made a Saint or a Philosopher famous. But ill tongues, and worse hearts have branded even his last moments, as wrongfully as they did his life, with Irreligion. You must have heard many tales on this subject; but if ever there was a good Christian without knowing himself to be so^a, it was Dr. Garth.

Your, &c.

^a This supposes rather an absolute *ignorance* of Christianity than a *rejection* of it.

LETTER IX.

To Mr. ****

Sept. 17.

THE gaiety of your letter proves you not so studious of Wealth as many of your profession are, since you can derive matter of mirth from want of business. You are none of those Lawyers who deserve the motto of the devil, *Circuit quærens quem devoret*. But your *Circuit* will at least procure you one of the greatest of temporal blessings, Health. What an advantageous circumstance is it, for one that loves rambling so well, to be a grave and reputable Rambler? while (like your fellow Circuiteer, the Sun) you travel the round of the earth and behold all the iniquities under the heavens? You are much a superior genius to me in rambling; you, like a Pigeon (to which I would sooner compare a Lawyer than to a Hawk) can fly some hundred leagues at a pitch; I, like a poor squirrel, am continually in motion indeed, but it is about a cage of three foot: my little excursions are but like those of a shopkeeper, who walks every day a mile or two before his own door, but minds his business all the while. Your letter of the Cause lately be-
fore

fore you, I could not but communicate to some ladies of your acquaintance. I am of opinion, if you continued a correspondence of the same sort during a whole Circuit, it could not fail to please the sex, better than half the novels they read; there would be in them what they love above all things, a most happy union of Truth and Scandal. I assure you the Bath affords nothing equal to it: It is on the contrary full of *grave and sad* men, Mr. Baron S. Lord chief Justice A. Judge P. and Counsellor B. who has a large pimple on the tip of his nose, but thinks it inconsistent with his gravity to wear a patch, notwithstanding the precedent of an eminent judge. I am, dear Sir, Your, &c.

L E T T E R X.

To the Earl of BURLINGTON.

MY LORD,

IF your Mare could speak, she would give an account of what extraordinary company she had on the road; which since she cannot do, I will.

It was the enterprizing Mr. Lintott, the redoubtable rival of Mr. Tonson, who, mounted on a stone-horse (no disagreeable companion to
your

your Lordship's mare) overtook me in Wind-for-forest. He said, he heard I design'd for Oxford, the seat of the Muses, and would, as my bookseller, by all means, accompany me thither.

I ask'd him where he got his horse? He answer'd, he got it of his Publisher: "For that
 "rogue my Printer (said he) disappointed me:
 "I hoped to put him in good-humour by a
 "treat at the tavern, of a brown fricassée of
 "rabbits, which cost two shillings, with two
 "quarts of wine, besides my conversation. I
 "thought myself cocksure of his horse, which
 "he readily promis'd me, but said that Mr.
 "Tonson had just such another design of going
 "to Cambridge, expecting there the copy of
 "a new kind of Horace from Dr.—, and if Mr.
 "Tonson went, he was preingaged to attend
 "him, being to have the printing of the said
 "copy.

"So in short, I borrow'd this stonehorse of
 "my publisher, which he had of Mr. Oldmixon
 "for a debt; he lent me too the pretty boy you
 "see after me: he was a smutty dog yesterday,
 "and cost me near two hours to wash the ink
 "off his face; but the Devil is a fair-condition'd
 "Devil, and very forward in his Catechise: if
 "you have any more baggs, he shall carry
 "them."

Z

I thought

I thought Mr. Lintot's civility not to be neglected, so gave the boy a small bag, containing three shirts and an Elzevir Virgil; and mounting in an instant proceeded on the road, with my man before, my courteous stationer beside, and the aforesaid devil behind.

Mr. Lintot began in this manner. "Now damn them! what if they should put it into the news-paper, how you and I went together to Oxford? what would I care? If I should go down into Suffex, they would say I was gone to the Speaker. But what of that? If my son were but big enough to go on with the business, by G—d I would keep as good company as old Jacob."

Hereupon I enquir'd of his son. "The lad (says he) has fine parts, but is somewhat sickly, much as you are—I spare for nothing in his Education at Westminster. Pray, don't you think Westminster to be the best school in England? most of the late Ministry came out of it, so did many of this Ministry; I hope the boy will make his fortune."

Don't you design to let him pass a year at Oxford? "To what purpose? (said he) the Universities do but make Pedants, and I intend to breed him a man of business."

As Mr. Lintot was talking, I observ'd he sat uneasy on his saddle, for which I express'd some

some sollicitude : Nothing, says he, I can bear it well enough ; but since we have the day before us, methinks it would be very pleasant for you to rest a-while under the woods. When we were alighted, “ See here, what a mighty “ pretty Horace I have in my pocket ! what if “ you amus’d yourself in turning an ode, till “ we mount again ? Lord ! if you pleas’d, what “ a clever Miscellany might you make at leisure “ hours ? ” Perhaps I may, said I, if we ride on ; the motion is an aid to my fancy, a round trot very much awakens my spirits : then jog on a pace, and I’ll think as hard as I can.

Silence ensued for a full hour ; after which Mr. Lintot lugg’d the reins, stop’d short, and broke out, “ Well, Sir, how far have you gone ? “ I answer’d, Seven miles. Z—ds, Sir, said “ Lintot, I thought you had done seven stanza’s. Oldsworth, in a ramble round Wimbleton-hill, would translate a whole ode in half this time. I’ll say that for Oldsworth (tho’ I lost by his Timothy’s) he translates an ode of Horace the quickest of any man in England. I remember Dr. King would write verses in a tavern three hours after he could not speak : and there’s Sir Richard, in that rumbling old chariot of his, between Fleet-ditch and St. Giles’s pound, shall make you half a Job.”

Pray, Mr. Lintot (said I) now you talk of Translators, what is your method of managing them? " Sir (reply'd he) those are the saddest
 " pack of rogues in the world: in a hungry
 " fit, they'll swear they understand all the lan-
 " guages in the universe: I have known one of
 " them take down a Greek book upon my
 " counter and cry, Ay, this is Hebrew, I must
 " read it from the latter end. By G—d I can
 " never be sure in these fellows, for I neither
 " understand Greek, Latin, French, nor Italian
 " myself. But this is my way; I agree with
 " them for ten shillings per sheet, with a pro-
 " viso, that I will have their doings corrected
 " by whom I please; so by one or other they
 " are led at last to the true sense of an author;
 " my judgment giving the negative to all my
 " translators." But how are you secure those
 " correctors may not impose upon you? " Why
 " I get any civil gentleman, (especially any
 " Scotchman) that comes into my shop, to
 " read the original to me in English; by this
 " I know whether my first translator be defi-
 " cient, and whether my corrector merits his
 " money or not?

" I'll tell you what happen'd to me last
 " month: I bargain'd with S* for a new ver-
 " sion of Lucretius to publish against Tonson's;
 " agreeing to pay the author so many shillings
 " at

“ at his producing so many lines. He made a
 “ great progress in a very short time, and I
 “ gave it to the corrector to compare with the
 “ Latin ; but he went directly to Creech’s trans-
 “ lation, and found it the same word for word,
 “ all but the first page. Now, what d’ye think I
 “ did? I arrested the translator for a cheat ; nay,
 “ and I stopt the corrector’s pay too, upon this
 “ proof that he had made use of Creech instead
 “ of the original.”

Pray tell me next how you deal with the
 Critics? “ Sir (said he) nothing more easy. I
 “ can silence the most formidable of them : the
 “ rich ones for a sheet a piece of the blotted ma-
 “ nuscript, which costs me nothing ; they’ll
 “ go about with it to their acquaintance, and
 “ pretend they had it from the author, who
 “ submitted to their correction : this has given
 “ some of them such an air, that in time they
 “ come to be consulted with, and dedicated to,
 “ as the top Critics of the town.—As for the
 “ poor critics, I’ll give you one instance of my
 “ management, by which you may guess at
 “ the rest. A lean man, that look’d like a very
 “ good scholar, came to me t’other day ; he
 “ turn’d over your Homer, shook his head,
 “ shrug’d up his shoulders, and pish’d at every
 “ line of it : One would wonder (says he) at
 “ the strange presumption of some men ; Ho-

“mer is no such easy task, that every stripling,
 “every versifier—He was going on, when my
 “wife call’d to dinner: Sir, said I, will you
 “please to eat a piece of beef with me? Mr.
 “Lintot, said he, I am sorry you should
 “be at the expence of this great book, I am
 “really concern’d on your account—Sir, I am
 “much obliged to you: if you can dine upon
 “a piece of beef, together with a slice of pud-
 “ding—Mr. Lintot, I do not say but Mr.
 “Pope, if he would condescend to advise with
 “men of learning—Sir, the pudding is upon
 “the table, if you please to go in—My critic
 “complies, he comes to a taste of your poetry,
 “and tells me in the same breath, that the
 “book is commendable, and the pudding ex-
 “cellent.

“Now, Sir, (concluded Mr. Lintot) in return
 “to the frankness I have shewn, pray tell me,
 “Is it the opinion of your friends at court that
 “my Lord Lansdown will be brought to the
 “bar or not?” I told him I heard he would
 not, and I hop’d it, my Lord being one I had
 particular obligations to, “That may be (re-
 “ply’d Mr. Lintot) but by G-d if he is not,
 “I shall lose the printing of a very good
 “Trial.”

These, my Lord, are a few traits by which
 you may discern the genius of Mr. Lintot,
 which

which I have chosen for the subject of a letter. I dropt him as soon as I got to Oxford, and paid a visit to my Lord Carleton at Middleton.

The conversations I enjoy here are not to be prejudiced by my pen, and the pleasures from them only to be equal'd when I meet your Lordship. I hope in a few days to cast myself from your horse at your feet.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X I.

To the Duke of BUCKINGHAM.

(In answer to a Letter in which he inclosed the Description of Buckingham-house, written by him to the D. of Sh.)

PLINY was one of those few author, who had a warm house over his heads nay two houses, as appears by two of his epistles. I believe, if any of his contemporary authors durst have inform'd the public where they lodged, we should have found the garrets of Rome as well inhabited, as those of Fleet-street; but 'tis dangerous to let creditors into such a secret, therefore we may presume that then, as well as now-a-days, no body knew where they lived but their Booksellers.

It seems, that when Virgil came to Rome, he had no lodging at all : he first introduc'd himself to Augustus by an epigram, beginning *Nocte pluit tota* — an observation which probably he had not made, unless he had lain all night in the street.

Where Juvenal lived we cannot affirm ; but in one of his satyrs he complains of the excessive price of lodgings ; neither do I believe he would have talk'd so feelingly of Codrus's bed, if there had been room for a bedfellow in it.

I believe, with all the ostentation of Pliny, he would have been glad to have changed both his houses for your Grace's one ; which is a country-house in the summer, and a town-house in the winter, and must be owned to be the properest habitation for a wise man, who sees all the world change every season without ever changing himself.

I have been reading the description of Pliny's house with an eye to yours, but, finding they will bear no comparison, will try if it can be matched by the large country seat I inhabit at present, and see what figure it may make by the help of a florid description.

You must expect nothing regular in my description, any more than in the house ; the whole vast edifice is so disjointed, and the several
parts

parts of it so detach'd one from the other, and yet so joining again, one cannot tell how, that, in one of my poetical fits, I imagined it had been a village in Amphion's time, where the cottages having taken a country dance together, had been all out, and stood stone-still with amazement ever since.

You must excuse me, if I say nothing of the Front; indeed I don't know which it is. A stranger would be grievously disappointed, who endeavour'd to get into this house the right way. One would reasonably expect after the entry through the Porch to be let into the hall: alas nothing less! you find yourself in the house of office. From the parlour you think to step into the drawing-room, but upon opening the iron-nail'd door, you are convinced by a flight of birds about your ears, and a cloud of dust in your eyes, that it is the Pigeon-house. If you come into the chapel, you find its altars, like those of the Ancients, continually smoaking, but it is with the steams of the adjoining kitchen.

The great hall within is high and spacious, flank'd on one side with a very long table, a true image of ancient hospitality: the walls are all over ornamented with monstrous horns of animals, about twenty broken pikes, ten or a dozen blunderbusses, and a rusty matchlock musquet

musquet or two, which we were inform'd had ferv'd in the civil wars. Here is one vast arch'd window beautifully darken'd with divers scutcheons of painted glass: one shining pane in particular bears date 1286, which alone preserves the memory of a Knight whose iron armour is long since perished with rust, and whose alabaster nose is moulder'd from his monument. The face of dame Eleanor in another piece owes more to that single pane than to all the glasses she ever consulted in her life. After this, who can say that glass is frail, when it is not half so frail as human beauty, or glory! and yet I can't but sigh to think that the most authentic record of so ancient a family should lie at the mercy of every infant who flings a stone. In former days there have dined in this hall garter'd Knights, and courtly Dames, attended by ushers, sewers, and seneschals; and yet it was but last night, that an owl flew hither and mistook it for a barn.

This hall lets you (up and down) over a very high threshold into the great parlour. Its contents are a broken-belly'd virginal, a couple of crippled velvet chairs, with two or three mildew'd pictures of mouldy ancestors, who look as dismally as if they came fresh from hell with all their brimstone about them; these are carefully set at the farther corner, for the windows being

being every where broken make it so convenient a place to dry poppies and mustard seed, that the room is appropriated to that use.

Next this parlour, as I said before, lies the pigeon-house, by the side of which runs an entry, which lets you on one hand and t'other into a bed-chamber, a buttery, and a small hole call'd the chaplain's study: then follow a brew-house, a little green and gilt parlour, and the great stairs, under which is the dairy; a little farther on the right the servants hall, and by the side of it up six steps, the old lady's closet for her private devotions; which has a lettice into the hall, intended (as we imagine) that at same time as she pray'd, she might have an eye on the men and maids. There are upon the ground-floor in all twenty six apartments, among which I must not forget a chamber which has in it a large Antiquity of timber, that seems to have been either a bedstead, or a cyder-press.

The kitchen is built in form of the Rotunda, being one vast vault to the top of the House; where one overture serves to let out the smoke, and let in the light. By the blackness of the walls, the circular fires, vast cauldrons, yawning mouths of ovens and furnaces, you would think it either the forge of Vulcan, the cave of Polypheme, or the temple of Moloch. The
horror

horror of this place has made such an impression on the country people, that they believe the Witches keep their Sabbath here, and that once a year the Devil treats them with infernal venison, a roasted Tiger stuff'd with ten-penny nails.

Above stairs we have a number of rooms: you never pass out of one into another but by the ascent or descent of two or three stairs. Our best room is very long and low, of the exact proportion of a Band-box. In most of these rooms there are hangings of the finest work in the world, that is to say, those which Arachne spins from her own bowels. Were it not for this only furniture, the whole would be a miserable scene of naked walls, flaw'd cieling, broken windows, and rusty locks. The roof is so decay'd, that after a favourable shower we may expect a crop of mushrooms between the chinks of our floors. All the doors are as little and low as those to the cabbins of Packet-boats. These rooms have for many years had no other inhabitants than certain rats, whose very age renders them worthy of this Seat, for the very rats of this venerable house are grey: since these have not yet quitted it, we hope at least that this ancient mansion may not fall during the small remnant these poor animals have to live, who are now too infirm to remove to another. There
is

is yet a small subsistence left them in the few remaining books of the Library.

We had never seen half what I had described, but for a starch'd grey-headed Steward, who is as much an antiquity as any in this place, and looks like an old family picture walked out of its frame. He entertain'd us as we pass'd from room to room with several relations of the family; but his observations were particularly curious when we came to the cellar: he inform'd us where stood the triple rows of butts of sack, and where were ranged the bottles of tent, for toasts in a morning; he pointed to the stands that supported the iron-hoop'd hogsheds of strong beer; then stepping to a corner, he lugg'd out the tatter'd fragments of an unframed picture; "This (says he, with tears) was poor Sir Thomas! once master of all this drink. He had two sons, poor young masters! who never arrived to the age of his beer; they both fell ill in this very room, and never went out on their own legs." He could not pass by a heap of broken bottles without taking up a piece, to show us the Arms of the family upon it. He then led us up the Tower by dark winding stone steps, which landed us into several little rooms one above another. One of these was nail'd up, and our guide whisper'd to us as a secret the occasion of it: It seems the course of
this

this noble blood was a little interrupted about two centuries ago, by a freak of the lady Frances, who was here taken in the fact with a neighbouring Prior, ever since which the room has been nailed up, and branded with the name of the Adultery-Chamber. The ghost of lady Frances is supposed to walk there, and some prying maids of the family report that they have seen a lady in a fardingale through the key-hole; but this matter is husht up, and the servants are forbid to talk of it.

I must needs have tired you by this long description: but what engaged me in it, was a generous principle to preserve the memory of that, which itself must soon fall into dust, nay perhaps part of it, before this letter reaches your hands.

Indeed we owe this old house the same kind of gratitude that we do to an old friend, who harbours us in his declining condition, nay even in his last extremities. How fit is this retreat for uninterrupted study, where no one that passes by can dream there is an inhabitant, and even those who would dine with us dare not stay under our roof! Any one that sees it will own I could not have chosen a more likely place to converse with the dead in. I had been mad indeed if I had left your Grace for any one but Homer. But when I return to the living, I shall have the

the sense to endeavour to converse with the best of them, and shall therefore as soon as possible tell you in person how much I am, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

The D. of BUCKINGHAM to Mr. POPE.

YOU desire my opinion as to the late dispute in France concerning Homer: And I think it excusable (at an age alas! of not much pleasure) to amuse myself a little in taking notice of a controversy, than which nothing is at present more remarkable (even in a nation who value themselves so much upon the Belles Lettres) both on account of the illustrious subject of it, and of the two persons engaged in the quarrel.

The one is extraordinary in all the Lyric kind of Poetry, even in the opinion of his very adversary. The other a Lady (and of more value for being so) not only of great Learning, but with a Genius admirably turn'd to that sort of it which most becomes her Sex for softness, genteelness, and promoting of virtue; and such as (one would think) is not so liable as other parts of scholarship, to rough disputes, or violent animosity.

Yet

Yet it has so happen'd, that no writers, even about Divinity itself, have been more outrageous or uncharitable than these two polite authors ; by suffering their judgments to be a little warped (if I may use that expression) by the heat of their eager inclinations, to attack or defend so great an Author under debate. I wish for the sake of the public, which is now so well entertained by their quarrel, it may not end at last in their agreeing to blame a third man who is so presumptuous as to censure both, if they should chance to hear of it.

To begin with matter of fact. M. D'Acier has well judg'd, that the best of all Poets certainly deserved a better translation, at least into French prose, because to see it done in verse was despair'd of: I believe indeed, from a defect in that language, incapable of mounting to any degree of excellence suitable to so very great an undertaking.

She has not only perform'd this task as well as prose can do it, (which is indeed but as the wrong side of tapestry is able to represent the right ^a) she has added to it also many learned and useful annotations. With all which she most obligingly delighted not only her own sex, but most of ours, ignorant of the Greek, and

^a A thought of Cervantes.

consequently

consequently her adversary himself, who frankly acknowledges that ignorance.

'Tis no wonder therefore, if, in doing this, she is grown so enamour'd of that unspeakably-charming Author, as to have a kind of horror at the least mention of a man bold enough to blame him.

Now as to M. de la Motte, he being already deservedly famous for all sorts of Lyric poetry, was so far introduced by her into those beauties of the Epic kind (tho' but in that way of translation) as not to resist the pleasure and hope of reputation, by attempting that in verse, which had been applauded so much for the difficulty of doing it even in prose; knowing how this, well executed, must extremely transcend the other.

But, as great Poets are a little apt to think they have an ancient right of being excus'd for vanity on all occasions, he was not content to out-do M. D'Acier, but endeavour'd to out-do Homer himself, and all that ever in any age or nation went before him in the same enterprize; by leaving out, altering, or adding whatever he thought best.

Against this presumptuous attempt, Homer has been in all times so well defended, as not to need my small assistance; yet, I must needs say, his excellencies are such, that for their sakes

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he deserves a much gentler touch for his seeming errors. These if M. de la Motte had translated as well as the rest, with an apology for having retain'd them only out of meer veneration; his judgment, in my opinion, would have appear'd much greater than by the best of his alterations, though I admit them to be written very finely. I join with M. de la Motte in wondering at some odd things in Homer, but 'tis chiefly because of his sublime ones, I was about to say his divine ones, which almost surprize me at finding him any where in the fallible condition of human nature.

And now we are wondering, I am in a difficulty to guess what can be the reason of these exceptions against Homer, from one who has himself translated him, contrary to the general custom of translators. Is there not a little of that in it? I mean to be singular, in getting above the title of a Translator, tho' sufficiently honourable in this case. For such an ambition no body has less occasion, than one who is so fine a Poet in other kinds; and who must have too much wit to believe, any alteration of another can intitle him to the denomination of an *Epic Poet* himself: tho' no man in this age seems more capable of being a good one, if the French tongue would bear it. Yet in his translation he has done too well, to leave any doubt
(with

(with all his faults) that her's can be ever parallel'd with it.

Besides he could not be ignorant, that finding faults is the most easy and vulgar part of a critic; whereas nothing shews so much skill and taste both, as the being thoroughly sensible of the sublimest excellencies.

What can we say in excuse of all this? *Humanum est errare*: Since as good a Poet as, I believe, the French language is capable of, and as sharp a Critic as any nation can produce, has by too much censuring Homer subjected a translation to censure, that would have otherwise stood the test of the severest adversary.

But since he would needs chuse that wrong way of criticism, I wonder he miss'd a stone so easy to be thrown against Homer, not for his filling the Iliad with so much slaughter (for that is to be excused, since a War is not capable of being described without it) but with so many various particulars of wounds and horror, as shew the writer (I am afraid) so delighted that way himself, as not the least to doubt his reader being so also. Like Spanioletta, whose dismal pictures are the more disagreeable for being always so very movingly painted. Even Hector's last parting from his son and Andromache hardly makes us amends for his body's being dragg'd thrice round the town. M. de la Motte in his

strongest objection about that dismal combat, has sufficient cause to blame his enraged adversary; who here gives an instance that it is impossible to be violent without committing some mistake; her passion for Homer blinding her too much to perceive the very grossest of his failings. By which warning I am become a little more capable of impartiality, though in a dispute about that very Poet for whom I have the greatest veneration.

M. D'Acier might have consider'd a little, that whatever were the motives of M. de la Motte to so bold a proceeding, it could not darken that fame which I am sure she thinks shines securely even after the vain attempts of Plato himself against it: caus'd only perhaps by a like reason with that of Madam D'Acier's anger against M. de la Motte, namely, the finding that in prose his genius (great as it was) could not be capable of the sublime heights of poetry, which therefore he banish'd out of his common-wealth.

Nor were these objections to Homer any more lessening of her merit in translating him as well as that way is capable of, viz. fully, plainly, and elegantly, than the most admirable verses can be any disparagement to as excellent prose.

The

The best excuse for all this violence is, its being in a cause which gives a kind of reputation even to suffering, notwithstanding ever so ill a management of it.

The worst of defending even Homer in such a passionate manner, is its being more a proof of her weakness, than of his being liable to none. For what is it can excuse Homer any more than Hector, for flying at the first sight of Achilles? whose terrible aspect sure needed not such an inexcusable fright to set it off; and methinks all that account of Minerva's restoring his dart to Achilles, comes a little too late, for excusing Hector's so terrible apprehension at the very first.

LETTER XIII.

To the Duke of BUCKINGHAM.

Sept. 1, 1718.

I Am much honour'd by your Grace's compliance with my request, in giving me your opinion of the French dispute concerning Homer. And I shall keep my word, in fairly telling wherein I disagree from you. It is but in two or three very small points, not so much of the dispute, as of the parties concern'd in it. I

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cannot

cannot think quite so highly of the Lady's learning, tho' I respect it very much. It is great complaisance in that polite nation, to allow her to be a Critic of equal rank with her husband. To instance no further, his remarks on Horace shew more good Sense, Penetration, and a better Taste of his author, and those upon Aristotle's Art of poetry more Skill and Science, than any of her's on any author whatever^a. In truth, they are much more slight, dwell more in generals, and are, besides, for the most part less her own; of which her Remarks upon Homer are an example, where Eustathius is transcribed ten times for once that he is quoted. Nor is there at all more depth of learning in those upon Terence, Plautus, (or where they were most wanted) upon Aristophanes, only the Greek scholia upon the latter are some of the best extant.

Your Grace will believe me, that I did not search to find defects in a Lady; my employment upon the Iliad forced me to see them; yet I have had so much of the French complaisance as to conceal her thefts; for wherever I have found her notes to be wholly another's (which is the case in some hundreds) I have barely quoted the true Proprietor without observing upon it. If Madam Dacier has ever seen my

^a This is a just Character of that excellent Critic.

observations, she will be sensible of this conduct, but what effect it may have upon a Lady, I will not answer for.

In the next place, as to M. de la Motte, I think your Grace hardly does him right, in supposing he could have no Idea of the beauties of Homer's Epic Poetry, but what he learn'd from Madam Dacier's Prose-translation. There had been a very elegant Prose-translation before, that of Monsieur de la Valterie; so elegant, that the style of it was evidently the original and model of the famous *Telemaque*. Your Grace very justly animadvertes against the too great disposition of finding faults, in the one; and of confessing none in the other: But doubtless, as to Violence, the Lady has infinitely the better of the Gentleman. Nothing can be more polite, dispassionate, or sensible, than M. de la Motte's manner of managing the dispute: and so much as I see your Grace admires the beauty of his verse (in which you have the suffrage too of the Archbishop of Cambray) I will venture to say, his prose is full as good. I think therefore when you say, no disputants even in Divinity could be more outrageous and uncharitable than these two authors, you are a little too hard upon M. de la Motte. Not but that (with your Grace) I doubt as little of the zeal of Commentators as of the zeal of Divines, and am as ready to be-

lieve of the passions and pride of mankind in general, that (did but the same interests go along with them) they would carry the learned world to as violent extremes, animosities, and even persecutions, about variety of opinions in Criticism, as ever they did about Religion: and that, in defect of Scripture to quarrel upon, we should have French, Italian, and Dutch Commentators ready to burn one another about Homer, Virgil, Terence, and Horace.

I do not wonder your Grace is shock'd at the flight of Hector upon the first appearance of Achilles in the twenty-second Iliad. However (to shew myself a true Commentator, if not a true Critic) I will endeavour to excuse, if not to defend it in my Notes on that book. And to save myself what trouble I can, instead of doing it in this letter, I will draw up the substance of what I have to say for it in a separate paper, which I'll shew your Grace when next we meet. I will only desire you to allow me, that Hector was in an absolute certainty of death, and depress'd over and above with the conscience of being in an ill cause. If your heart be so great, as not to grant the first of these will sink the spirit of a Hero, you'll at least be so good, as to allow the second may. But, I can tell your Grace, no less a Hero than my Lord Peterborow, when a person complimented

mented him for never being afraid, made this answer; "Sir, shew me a danger that I think
"an imminent and real one, and I promise you
"I'll be as much afraid as any of you."

I am your Grace's, &c.

LETTER XIV.

From Dr. ARBUTHNOT.

London, Sept. 7, 1714.

I Am extremely obliged to you for taking notice of a poor old distressed courtier, commonly the most despiseable thing in the world. This blow has so rous'd *Scriblerus* that he has recover'd his senses, and thinks and talks like other men. From being frolicksome and gay he is turn'd grave and morose. His lucubrations lie neglected among old news-papers, cases, petitions, and abundance of unanswerable letters. I wish to God they had been among the papers of a noble Lord sealed up. Then might *Scriblerus* have pass'd for the Pretender, and it would have been a most excellent and laborious work for the Flying Post or some such author, to have allegoriz'd all his adventures into a plot, and found out mysteries somewhat like the Key to the Lock. Martin's
office

office is now the second door on the left hand in Dover-street, where he will be glad to see Dr. Parnelle, Mr. Pope, and his old friends, to whom he can still afford a half pint of claret. It is with some pleasure that he contemplates the world still busy, and all mankind at work for him. I have seen a letter from Dean Swift; he keeps up his noble spirit, and tho' like a man knock'd down, you may behold him still with a stern countenance, and aiming a blow at his adversaries. I will add no more, being in haste, only that I will never forgive you if you don't use my aforesaid house in Dover-street with the same freedom as you did that in St. James's; for as our friendship was not begun upon the relation of a courtier, so I hope it will not end with it. I will always be proud to be reckon'd amongst the number of your friends and humble servants.

L E T T E R XV.

To Dr. ARBUTHNOT.

Sept. 10.

I Am glad your Travels delighted you; improve you, I am sure, they could not; you are not so much a youth as that, tho' you run about with a King of sixteen, and (what makes him

him still more a child) a King of Frenchmen. My own time has been more melancholy, spent in an attendance upon death, which has seized one of our family: my mother is something better, though at her advanced age every day is a climacteric. There was joined to this an indisposition of my own, which I ought to look upon as a slight one compared with my mother's because my life is not of half the consequence to any body that her's is to me. All these incidents have hinder'd my more speedy reply to your obliging letter.

The article you enquire of, is of as little concern to me as you desire it should; namely the railing papers about the *Odyssey*. If the book has merit, it will extinguish all such nasty scandal; as the Sun puts an end to stinks, merely by coming out.

I wish I had nothing to trouble me more; an honest mind is not in the power of any dishonest one. To break its peace, there must be some guilt or consciousness, which is inconsistent with its own principles. Not but malice and injustice have their day, like some poor short-lived vermine that die in shooting their own stings. Falshood is Folly (says Homer) and liars and calumniators at last hurt none but themselves, even in this world: in the next, 'tis charity to say, God have mercy on them! they were

were the devil's vicegerents upon earth, who is the father of lies, and, I fear, has a right to dispose of his children.

I've had an occasion to make these reflections of late more justly than from any thing that concerns my writings, for it is one that concerns my morals, and (which I ought to be as tender of as my own) the good character of another very innocent person, who I'm sure shares your friendship no less than I do. No creature has better natural dispositions, or would act more rightly or reasonably in every duty, did she act by herself, or from herself; but you know it is the misfortune of that family to be governed like a ship, I mean the Head guided by the Tail, and that by every wind that blows in it.

L E T T E R X V I.

Mr. P O P E to the Earl of O X F O R D.

M Y L O R D,

O c t. 21, 1721.

YO U R Lordship may be surpriz'd at the liberty I take in writing to you; tho' you will allow me always to remember, that you once permitted me that honour, in conjunction with some others who better deserved it. I
hope

hope you will not wonder I am still desirous to have you think me your grateful and faithful servant ; but, I own, I have an ambition yet farther, to have others think me so, which is the occasion I give your Lordship the trouble of this. Poor Parnell, before he died, left me the charge of publishing these few remains of his : I have a strong desire to make them, their author, and their publisher, more considerable, by addressing and dedicating them all to you. There is a pleasure in bearing testimony to truth, and a vanity perhaps, which at least is as excusable as any vanity can be. I beg you, my Lord, to allow me to gratify it in prefixing this paper of honest verses to the book. I send the book itself, which, I dare say, you'll receive more satisfaction in perusing, than you can from any thing written upon the subject of yourself. Therefore I am a good deal in doubt, whether you will care for such an addition to it. All I shall say for it is, that 'tis the only dedication I ever writ, and shall be the only one, whether you accept of it or not : for I will not bow the knee to a less man than my Lord Oxford, and I expect to see no greater in my time.

After all, if your Lordship will tell my Lord Harley that I must not do this, you may depend upon a suppression of these verses (the
only

only copy whereof I send you) but you never shall suppress that great, sincere, and entire respect, with which I am always,

My Lord,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XVII.

The Earl of OXFORD to Mr. POPE.

S I R, Bramton Castle, Nov. 6, 1721.

I Received your packet, which could not but give me great pleasure, to see you preserve an old friend in your memory; for it must needs be very agreeable to be remember'd by those we highly value. But then how much shame did it cause me, when I read your very fine verses enclos'd? my mind reproach'd me how far short I came of what your great friendship and delicate pen would partially describe me. You ask my consent to publish it: to what streights doth this reduce me? I look back indeed to those evenings I have usefully and pleasantly spent, with Mr. Pope, Mr. Parnel, Dean Swift, the Doctor, &c. I should be glad the world knew You admitted me to your friendship, and since your affection is too hard for your judgment, I am contented to let the world

FROM SEVERAL PERSONS. 367

world know how well Mr. Pope can write upon a barren subject. I return you an exact copy of the verses, that I may keep the Original, as a testimony of the only error you have been guilty of. I hope very speedily to embrace you in London, and to assure you of the particular esteem and friendship wherewith I am

Your, &c.

OXFORD.



FROM SEVERAL PERSONS. 307

would know how well Mr. Pons can write up
on a given subject. I return you an exact
copy of the verses that I may keep the Ode
just, as a testimony of the only error you
have been guilty of. I hope very possibly to
contact you in London, and to share you of
the particular esteem and friendship which will

I am

Yours, &c.

OXFORD.