



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

IV. To the same.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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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.