



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

VIII. Mr. Pope to --- the author building and planting: Death of several friends, and particularly of Dr. Garth.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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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 raised, 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.