

*Imitations of Horace*  
Alexander Pope

From *The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope. With life.* ([1737] 1886)

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While you, great patron of mankind, sustain  
The balanc'd world, and open all the main;  
Your country, chief, in arms abroad defend,  
At home, with morals, arts, and laws amend;  
How shall the Muse, from such a monarch steal  
An hour, and not defraud the public weal?

Edward and Henry, now the boast of fame,  
And virtuous Alfred, a more sacred name,  
After a life of gen'rous toils endur'd,  
The Gaul subdu'd, or property secur'd,  
Ambition humbled, mighty cities storm'd,  
Or laws establish'd, and the world reform'd;  
Clos'd their long glories with a sigh, to find  
Th' unwilling gratitude of base mankind!  
All human virtue, to its latest breath  
Finds envy never conquer'd, but by death.  
The great Alcides, ev'ry labour past,  
Had still this monster to subdue at last.  
Sure fate of all, beneath whose rising ray  
Each star of meaner merit fades away!  
Oppress'd we feel the beam directly beat,  
Those suns of glory please not till they set.