



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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

Being The Third of his Letters

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Letters To Ralph Allen, Esq.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54342](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-54342)

LETTERS

TO

RALPH ALLEN, Esq.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Mr. POPE to Mr. ALLEN.

Twitnam, April 30, 1736.

I Saw Mr. M. yesterday who has readily allowed Mr. V. to copy the Picture. I have enquired for the best Originals of those two subjects, which, I found, were favorite ones with you, and well deserve to be so, the Discovery of Joseph to his Brethren, and the Resignation of the Captive by Scipio. Of the latter, my Lord Burlington has a fine one done by Ricci, and I am promised the other in a good Print from one of the chief Italian Painters. That of Scipio is of the exact size one would wish for a Basso Relievo, in which manner, in my opinion, you would best ornament your Hall, done in Chiaro oscuro.

A man not only shews his Taste, but his
Virtue

Virtue, in the choice of such ornaments: And whatever example most strikes us, we may reasonably imagine, may have an influence upon others. So that the History itself, if well chosen, upon a rich man's walls, is very often a better lesson than any he could teach by his conversation. In this sense, the Stones may be said to speak when Men cannot, or will not. I can't help thinking (and I know you'll join with me, you who have been making an Altar-piece) that the zeal of the first Reformers was ill placed, in removing *pictures* (that is to say, examples) out of Churches; and yet suffering *Epitaphs* (that is to say, flatteries and false history) to be the burthen of Church walls, and the shame, as well as derision, of all honest men.

I have heard little yet of the subscription^a. I intend to make a visit for a fortnight from home to Lady Peterborow at Southampton, about the middle of May. After my return I will inquire what has been done; and I really believe, what I told you will prove true, and I shall be honourably acquitted of a task I am not fond of^b. I have run out my leaf, and will only add my sincere wishes for your happiness of all kinds. I am, &c.

^a For his own Edit. of the 1st Vol. of his letters; undertaken at Mr. Allen's request.

^b The printing his letters by subscription.

LETTER XC.

Mr. POPE to Mr. ALLEN.

Southampton, June 5, 1736.

I Need not say I thank you for a Letter, which proves so much friendship for me. I have much more to say upon it than I can, till we meet. But, in a word, I think your notion of the value of those things ^a is greatly too high, as to any service they can do to the public; and, as to any advantage they may do to my own Character, I ought to be content with what they have done already. I assure you, I do not think it the least of those advantages that they have occasioned me the good-will (in so great a degree) of so worthy a man ^b. I fear (as I must rather retrench than add to their number, unless I would publish my own commendations) that the common run of Subscribers would think themselves injured by not having every thing, which discretion must suppress; and this, they (without any other consideration than as buyers of a book) would call giving them an imperfect collection; whereas the only use to my own character, as

^a His Letters.

^b Mr. Allen's friendship with the Author was contracted on the sight of his

Letters, which gave the former the highest opinion of the other's general benevolence and goodness of heart.

an Author, of such a publication, would be the suppression of many things: and as to my character as a Man, it would be but just where it is; unless I could be so vain, for it could not be virtuous, to add more and more honest sentiments; which, when done *to be printed*, would surely be wrong and weak also.

I do grant it would be some pleasure to me to expunge several idle passages, which will otherwise, if not go down to the next age, pass, at least, in this, for mine; altho' many of them were not, and, God knows, none of them are my present sentiments, but, on the contrary, wholly disapproved by me.

And I do not flatter you when I say, that pleasure would be increased to me, in knowing I should do what would please *you*. But I cannot persuade myself to let the whole burden, even tho' it were a public good, lie upon you, much less to serve my private fame entirely at another's expence^c.

But, understand me rightly: Did I believe half so well of them as you do, I would not scruple your assistance; because I am sure, that to occasion you to contribute to a real good would be the greatest benefit I could oblige you in. And I hereby promise you, if ever I

^c Mr. A. offered to print the Letters at his own expence.

am so happy as to find any just occasion where your generosity and goodness may unite for such a worthy end, I will not scruple to draw upon you for any sum to effect it.

As to the present affair ; that you may be convinced what weight your opinion and your desires have with me, I will do what I have not yet done : I will tell my Friends I am as willing to publish this book as to let it alone. And, rather than suffer you to be taxed at your own rate, will publish, in the News, next winter, the Proposals, &c.

I tell you all these particulars to shew you how willing I am to follow your advice, nay, to accept your assistance in any moderate degree. But I think you should reserve so great a proof of your benevolence to a better occasion.

Since I wrote last, I have found, on further inquiry, that there is another fine picture on the subject of Scipio and the Captive, by Pietro da Cortona, which Sir Paul Methuen has a sketch of : and, I believe, is more expressive than that of Ricci, as Pietro is famous for expression. I have also met with a fine Print of the discovery of Joseph to his Brethren, a design, which, I fancy, is of La Sueur, and will do perfectly well.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER XCI.

Mr. POPE to Mr. ALLEN.

Nov. 6, 1736.

I Do not write too often to you for many reasons; but one, which I think a good one, is, that Friends should be left to think of one another for certain intervals without too frequent memorandums: it is an exercise of their friendship, and a trial of their memory: and moreover to be perpetually repeating assurances, is both a needless and suspicious kind of treatment with such as are sincere: not to add the tautology one must be guilty of, who can make out so many idle words as to fill pages with saying one thing. For all is said in this word, *I am truly yours.*

I am now as busy in planting for myself as I was lately in planting for another. And I thank God for every wet Day and for every Fog, that gives me the head-ach, but prospers my works. They will indeed outlive me (if they do not die in their Travels from place to place; for my Garden, like my Life, seems, to me, every day to want correction, I hope, at least, for the better) but I am pleased to think my Trees will afford shade and fruit to others, when I shall want them no more. And it is no sort of grief to me, that those others will
not

not be Things of my own poor body: But it is enough, they are Creatures of the same Species, and made by the same hand that made me. I wish (if a wish would transport me) to see you in the same employment: and it is no partiality even to you, to say it would be as pleasing to the full to me, if I could improve your works as my own.

Talking of works, mine in prose are above three quarters printed, and will be a book of fifty and more sheets in quarto. As I find, what I imagined, the slowness of subscribers, I will do all I can to disappoint *you* in particular, and intend to publish in January, when the Town fills, an Advertisement, that the book will be delivered by Lady-day, to oblige all that will subscribe, to do it. In the mean time, I have printed Receipts, which put an end to any persons delaying upon pretence of *doubt*, by determining that time. I send you a few that you may see I am in earnest, endeavouring all I can to save your money, at the same time that nothing can lessen the obligation to me.

I thank God for your health and for my own, which is better than usual.

I am, &c.

LETTER

FROM DR. SWIFT, etc. 317.

LETTER XCII.

Mr. POPE to Mr. ALLEN.

June 8, 1737.

I Was very sorry to hear how much concern your humanity and friendship betrayed you into upon the false report which occasioned your grief. I am now so well, that I ought not to conceal it from you, as the just reward of your goodness which made you suffer for me. Perhaps when a Friend is really dead (if he knows our concern for him) he knows us to be as much mistaken in our sorrow as you now were: so that, what we think a real evil is, to such spirits as see things truly, no more of moment than a meer imaginary one. It is equally as God pleases; let us think or call it good or evil.

I wish the world would let me give myself more to such people in it as I like, and discharge me of half the honours which persons of higher rank bestow on me; and for which one generally pays a little too much of what they cannot bestow, Time and Life. Were I arrived to that happier circumstance, you would see me at Widcombe, and not at Bath. But whether it will be as much in my power as in my wish, God knows. I can only say, I think of it with the pleasure and sincerity becoming one who is, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XCIII.

Mr. POPE to Mr. ALLEN.

Nov. 24, 1737.

THE event^a of this week or fortnight has filled every body's mind and mine so much, that I could not get done what you desired as to Dr. P. but as soon as I can get home, where my books lie, I will send them to Mr. K. The death of great persons is such a sort of surprize to *all*, as every one's death is to himself, tho' both should equally be expected and prepared for. We begin to esteem and commend our superiors, at the time that we pity them, because then they seem not above ourselves. The Queen shewed, by the confession of all about her, the utmost firmness and temper to her last moments, and thro' the course of great torments. What character historians will allow her, I do not know; but all her domestic servants, and those nearest her, give her the best testimony, that of sincere tears. But the Public is always hard; rigid at best, even when just, in its opinion of any one. The only pleasure which any one, either of high or low rank, must depend upon receiving, is in the candour or partiality of friends, and that small circle we are conversant in: and it is therefore the greatest satisfaction to such as wish us well,

^a The Queen's death.

FROM DR. SWIFT, etc. 319

to know we enjoy that. I therefore thank you particularly for telling me of the continuance, or rather increase of those blessings which make your domestic life happy. I have nothing so good to add, as to assure you I pray for it, and am always faithfully and affectionately, &c.

L E T T E R XCIV.

Mr. POPE to Mr. ALLEN.

Twickenham, April 28, 1738.

IT is a pain to me to hear your old complaint so troublesome to you; and the share I have borne, and still bear too often, in the same complaint, gives me a very feeling sense of it. I hope we agree in every other sensation besides this; for your *heart* is always right, whatever your body may be. I will venture too to say, my body is the worst part of me, or God have mercy on my soul. I can't help telling you the rapture you accidentally gave the poor woman (for whom you left a Guinea, on what I told you of my finding her at the end of my garden) I had no notion of her want being so great, as I then told you, when I gave her half a one. But I find I have a pleasure to come, for I will allow her something yearly, and that may be but one year, for, I think, by her looks she is not less than eighty. I am determin'd to
take

take this charity out of your hands, which, I know, you'll think hard upon you. But so it shall be.

Pray tell me if you have any objection to my putting your name into a poem of mine (incidentally, not at all going out of the way for it) provided I say something of you, which most people would take ill, for example, that you are no man of high birth or quality? You must be perfectly free with me on this, as on any, nay, on every other occasion.

I have nothing to add but my wishes for your health: every other enjoyment you will provide for yourself, which becomes a reasonable man. Adieu.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X C V .

Mr. P O P E to Mr. A L L E N .

Jan. 20.

I Ought sooner to have acknowledged yours; but I have been severely handled by my Asthma, and, at the same time, hurried by business that gave an increase to it by catching cold. I am truly sorry to find that neither yours nor Mrs. A.'s disorder is totally removed: but God forbid your pain should continue to return every day, which is worse by much than

than I expected to hear. I hope your next will give me a better account. Poor Mr. Bethel too is very ill in Yorkshire. And, I do assure you, there are no two men I wish better to. I have known and esteemed him for every moral virtue these twenty years and more. He has all the charity, without any of the weakness of — ; and, I firmly believe, never said a thing he did not think, nor did a thing he could not tell. I am concerned he is in so cold and remote a place, as in the Wolds of Yorkshire, at a hunting-seat. If he lives till spring, he talks of returning to London, and, if I possibly can, I would get him to lye out of it at Twickenham, tho' we went backward and forward every day in a warm coach, which would be the properest exercise for both of us, since he is become so weak as to be deprived of riding a horse.

L. Bolingbroke stays a month yet, and I hope Mr. Warburton will come to town before he goes. They will both be pleased to meet each other; and nothing, in all my life, has been so great a pleasure to my nature, as to bring deserving and knowing men together. It is the greatest favour that can be done, either to great genius's or useful men. I wish too, he were a while in town, if it were only to lye a little in the way of some proud and power-

Y

ful

ful persons, to see if they have any of the best sort of pride left, namely, to serve learning and merit, and by that means distinguish themselves from their predecessors.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X C V I .

Mr. P O P E to Mr. A L L E N .

March 6.

I Thank you very kindly for yours. I am sure we shall meet with the same hearts we ever met; and I could wish it were at Twickenham, tho' only to see you and Mrs. Allen twice there instead of once. But, as matters have turned out, a decent obedience to the government has since obliged me to reside here, ten miles out of the capital; and therefore I must see you here or no where. Let that be an additional reason for your coming and staying what time you can.

The utmost I can do, I will venture to tell you in your ear. I may slide along the Surrey side (where no Middlesex justice can pretend any cognizance) to Battersea, and thence cross the water for an hour or two, in a close chair, to dine with you, or so. But to be in town, I
fear,

fear, will be imprudent, and thought insolent. At least, hitherto, all comply with the proclamation ^a.

I write thus early, that you may let me know if your day continues, and I will have every room in my house as warm for you as the owner always would be. It may possibly be, that I shall be taking the secret flight I speak of to Battersea, before you come, with Mr. Warburton, whom I have promised to make known to the only great man in Europe, who knows as much as He. And from thence we may return the 16th, or any day, hither, and meet you, without fail, if you fix your day.

I would not make ill health come into the scale, as to keeping me here (tho', in truth, it now bears very hard upon me again, and the least accident of cold, or motion almost, throws me into a very dangerous and suffering condition.) God send you long life, and an easier enjoyment of your breath than I now can expect, I fear, &c.

^a On the Invasion, at that time threatened from France and the Pretender.