



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

Containing His Moral Essays

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Prudence in the Application of Wit and Ridicule, whose Province is, not to explore unknown, but to enforce known Truths

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55032](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55032)

With rage retorted, wing the deadly dart;
And empty all its poyson in thy heart. 190

With caution next, the dang'rous pow'r apply;
An eagle's talon asks an eagle's eye:
Let SATIRE then her proper object know,
And ere she strike, be sure she strike a foe.
Nor fondly deem the real fool confest, 195
Because blind *Ridicule* conceives a jest:
Before whose altar Virtue oft hath bled,
And oft a destin'd Victim shall be led:

Lo, *Shaft/b'ry* rears her high on Reason's throne,
And loads the Slave with honours not her own:
Big-swoln with folly, as her smiles provoke, 201
Prophaneness spawns, pert Dunces nurse the joke!
Come, let us join a while this tittering crew,
And own the *Idiot Guide* for once is true;
Deride our weak forefather's musty rule, 205
Who *therefore* smil'd, *because* they saw a Fool;
Sublimer logic now adorns our isle,
We *therefore* see a Fool, *because* we smile.

Truth in her gloomy Cave why fondly seek?
Lo, gay she sits in Laughter's dimpled cheek:
Contemns each surly Academic foe, 211
And courts the spruce Freethinker and the Beau.

Dædalian arguments but few can trace,
 But all can read the Language of grimace.
 Hence mighty Ridicule's all-conqu'ring hand 215
 Shall work *Herculean* wonders thro' the Land:
 Bound in the magic of her cobweb chain,
 'YOU, mighty WARBURTON, shall rage in vain,
 In vain the trackless maze of Truth YOU scan,
 And lend th' informing Clue to erring Man: 220
 No more shall Reason boast her pow'r divine,
 Her Base eternal shook by Folly's mine!
 Truth's sacred Fort th' exploded laugh shall win;
 And Coxcombs vanquish BERKLEY by a grin.

But you, more sage, reject th' inverted rule, 225
 That truth is e'er explor'd by Ridicule:
 On truth, on falsehood let her colours fall,
 She throws a dazzling glare alike on all;
 As the gay Prism but mocks the flatter'd eye,
 And gives to ev'ry object ev'ry dye. 230
 Beware the mad Advent'rer: bold and blind
 She hoists her sail, and drives with ev'ry wind;
 Deaf as the Storm to sinking Virtue's groan,
 Nor heeds a Friend's destruction, or her own.

Let clear-ey'd Reason at the helm preside, 235
 Bear to the wind, or stem the furious tide;
Then Mirth may urge, when Reason can explore,
This point the way, *that* waft us glad to shore.

Tho' distant Times may rise in SATIRE's page,
 Yet chief 'tis Her's to draw the *present Age*: 240
 With Wisdom's lustre, Folly's shade contrast,
 And judge the reigning Manners by the past:
 Bid *Britain's* Heroes (awful Shades!) arise,
 And ancient Honour beam on modern Vice:
 Point back to minds ingenuous, actions fair, 245
 Till the Sons blush at what their Fathers were:
 Ere yet 'twas beggary the great to trust;
 Ere yet 'twas quite a folly to be just;
 When *low-born* Sharpers only dar'd a lie,
 Or falsify'd the card, or cogg'd the dye; 250
 Ere Lewdness the stain'd garb of Honour wore,
 Or Chastity was carted for the Whore;
 Vice flutter'd, in the plumes of Freedom dress'd;
 Or public Spirit was the public jest.

Be ever, in a just expression, bold,
 Yet ne'er degrade fair SATIRE to a Scold: