



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 Second of his Letters

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

IV. An account of the death of Mr. Wycherley.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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FROM EDW. BLOUNT, Esq. II

friends welcome. You shall here worship the Echo at your ease; indeed we are forced to do so, because we can't hear the first report, and therefore are obliged to listen to the second; which, for security sake, I do not always believe neither.

'Tis a great many years since I fell in love with the character of Pomponius Atticus: I long'd to imitate him a little, and have contriv'd hitherto, to be, like him, engaged in no party, but to be a faithful friend to some in both: I find myself very well in this way hitherto, and live in a certain peace of mind by it, which, I am persuaded, brings a man more content than all the perquisites of wild ambition. I with pleasure join with you in wishing, nay I am not ashamed to say, in praying for the welfare temporal and eternal of all mankind. How much more affectionately then shall I do so for you, since I am in a most particular manner, and with all sincerity, Your, &c.

L E T T E R I V .

Jan. 21, 1715-16.

I Know of nothing that will be so interesting to you at present, as some circumstances of the last act of that eminent comic poet, and
our

our friend, Wycherley. He had often told me, as I doubt not he did all his acquaintance, that he would marry as soon as his life was despair'd of: Accordingly a few days before his death he underwent the ceremony; and join'd together those two sacraments which, wise men say, should be the last we receive; for, if you observe, Matrimony is placed after Extreme unction in our Catechism, as a kind of hint of the order of time in which they are to be taken. The old man then lay down, satisfy'd in the conscience of having by this one act paid his just debts, obliged a woman, who (he was told) had merit, and shewn an heroic resentment of the ill usage of his next heir. Some hundred pounds which he had with the Lady, discharged those debts; a jointure of four hundred a year made her a recompence; and the nephew he left to comfort himself as well as he could, with the miserable remains of a mortgaged estate. I saw our friend twice after this was done, less peevish in his sickness than he used to be in his health; neither much afraid of dying, nor (which in him had been more likely) much ashamed of marrying. The evening before he expired, he called his young wife to the bedside, and earnestly entreated her not to deny him one request, the last he should make. Upon her assurances of consenting to

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it,

it, he told her, "My dear, it is only this, that
 "you will never marry an old man again." I
 cannot help remarking, that sickness, which of-
 ten destroys both wit and wisdom, yet seldom
 has power to remove that talent which we call
 humour: Mr. Wycherley shew'd his, even in
 this last compliment; tho' I think his request
 a little hard, for why should he bar her from
 doubling her Jointure on the same easy terms?

So trivial as these circumstances are, I should
 not be displeas'd myself to know such trifles,
 when they concern or characterise any eminent
 person. The wisest and wittiest of men are
 seldom wiser or wittier than others in these so-
 ber moments: At least, our friend ended much
 in the character he had lived in: and Horace's
 rule for a play, may as well be apply'd to him
 as a play-wright,

Servetur ad imum

Qualis ab inceptu processerit, et sibi constet.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

Feb. 10, 1715-16.

I Am just return'd from the country, whither
 Mr. Rowe accompanied me, and pass'd a
 week in the forest. I need not tell you how
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