



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

II. Excuse for writing carelessly: The humour of the town.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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rant even of the sex, as well as sense, of Gorboduc^b.

Adieu! I am going to forget you: this minute you took up all my mind; the next I shall think of nothing but the reconciliation with Agamemnon, and the recovery of Briseis. I shall be Achilles's humble servant these two months (with the good leave of all my friends.) I have no ambition so strong at present, as that noble one of Sir Salathiel Lovel, recorder of London, to furnish out a decent and plentiful execution, of Greeks and Trojans. It is not be express'd how heartily I wish the death of all Homer's heroes, one after another. The Lord preserve me in the day of battle, which is just approaching! join in your prayers for me, and know me to be always

Your, &c.

L E T T E R II.

London, March 31, 1718.

TO convince you how little pain I give myself in corresponding with men of good nature and good understanding, you see I omit to answer your letters till a time, when another

^b There is a correct edition of it in that valuable collection of old Plays published by Doddsley.

man would be ashamed to own, he had received them. If therefore you are ever moved on my account by that spirit, which I take to be as familiar to you as a quotidian ague, I mean the spirit of goodness, pray never stint it, in any fear of obliging me to a civility beyond my natural inclination. I dare trust you, Sir, not only with my folly when I write, but with my negligence when I do not; and expect equally your pardon for either.

If I knew how to entertain you thro' the rest of this paper, it should be spotted and diversified with conceits all over; you should be put out of breath with laughter at each sentence, and pause at each period, to look back over how much wit you have pass'd. But I have found by experience that people now-a-days regard writing as little as they do preaching: the most we can hope is to be heard just with decency and patience, once a week, by folks in the country. Here in town we hum over a piece of fine writing, and we whistle at a sermon. The stage is the only place we seem alive at; there indeed we stare, and roar, and clap hands for K. George, and the government. As for all other virtues but this loyalty, they are an obsolete train, so ill-dress'd, that men, women, and children hiss them out of all good company. Humility knocks so
sneakingly

sneakingly at the door that every footman outraps it, and makes it give way to the free entrance of pride, prodigality, and vain-glory.

My Lady Scudamore, from having rusticated in your company too long, really behaves herself scandalously among us: she pretends to open her eyes for the sake of seeing the sun, and to sleep because it is night; drinks tea at nine in the morning, and is thought to have said her prayers before; talks, without any manner of shame, of good books, and has not seen Cibber's play of the Non-juror. I rejoiced the other day to see a libel on her toilette, which gives me some hope that you have, at least, a taste of scandal left you, in defect of all other vices.

Upon the whole matter, I heartily wish you well; but as I cannot entirely desire the ruin of all the joys of this city, so all that remains is to wish you would keep your happiness to yourselves, that the happiest here may not die with envy at a bliss which they cannot attain to.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R