



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

The character of Katharine late Duchess of Buckinghamshire and Norbandy.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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[We find by Letter xix. that the Duchess of Buckinghamshire would have had Mr. Pope to draw her husband's Character. But though he refused this office, yet in his Epistle, *on the Characters of Women*, these lines,

*To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
Or wanders, heav'n-directed, to the poor.*

are supposed to mark her out in such a manner as not to be mistaken for another; and having said of himself, that *he held a lye in prose and verse to be the same*: All this together gave a handle to his enemies, since his death, to publish the following Paper (intituled *The Character of Katharine, &c.*) as written by him. To which (in vindication of the deceased Poet) we have subjoined a Letter to a friend, that will let the Reader fully into the history of the *writing and publication* of this extraordinary CHARACTER.]

The CHARACTER of
KATHARINE,

L A T E

Duchess of *Buckinghamshire* and *Normanby*.

By the late Mr. P O P E.

SHE was the daughter of James the second, and of the countess of Dorchester, who inherited the Integrity and Virtue of her father with happier fortune. She was married
first

first to James earl of Anglesey; and secondly, to John Sheffield duke of Buckinghamshire and Normanby; with the former she exercised the virtues of *Patience* and *Suffering*, as long as there was any hopes of doing good by either; with the latter all other *Conjugal virtues*. The man of finest sense and sharpest discernment, she had the happiness to please; and in that, found her only pleasure. When he died, it seemed as if his spirit was only breathed into her, to fulfill what he had begun, to perform what he had concerted, and to preserve and watch over what he had left, *his only son*; in the care of whose Health, the forming of whose Mind, and the improvement of whose Fortune, she acted with the conduct and sense of the Father, soften'd, but not overcome, with the tenderness of the Mother. Her Understanding was such as must have made a figure, had it been in a man; but the Modesty of her sex threw a veil over its lustre, which nevertheless suppress'd only the expression, not the exertion of it; for her sense was not superior to her Resolution, which, when once she was in the right, preserv'd her from making it only a transition to the wrong, the frequent weakness even of the best women. She often followed wise counsel, but sometimes went before it, always with success. She was possessed of a spirit,

which assisted her to get the better of those accidents which admitted of any redress, and enabled her to support outwardly, with decency and dignity, those which admitted of none; yet melted inwardly, through almost her whole life, at a succession of melancholy and affecting objects, the loss of all her Children, the misfortunes of *Relations and Friends, public and private*, and the death of those who were dearest to her. Her Heart was as compassionate as it was great: her Affections warm even to sollicitude: her Friendship not violent or jealous, but rational and persevering: her Gratitude equal and constant to the living; to the dead boundless and heroical. What person soever she found worthy of her esteem, she would not give up for any power on earth; and the greatest on earth whom she could not esteem, obtain'd from her no farther tribute than Decency. Her Good-will was wholly directed by merit, not by accident; not measured by the regard they profess'd for her own desert, but by her idea of theirs: And as there was no merit which she was not able to imitate, there was none which she could envy: therefore her Conversation was as free from detraction, as her Opinions from prejudice or prepossession. As her Thoughts were her own, so were her Words; and she was as sincere in uttering her judgment,

judgment, as impartial in forming it. She was a safe Companion, many were serv'd, none ever suffered by her acquaintance: inoffensive, when unprovoked; when provoked, not stupid: But the moment her enemy ceased to be hurtful, she could cease to act as an enemy. She was therefore not a bitter but consistent enemy: (tho' indeed, when forced to be so, the more a finish'd one for having been long a making.) And her proceeding with ill people was more in a calm and steady course, like Justice, than in quick and passionate onsets, like Revenge. As for those of whom she only thought ill, she considered them not so much as once to wish them ill; of such, her Contempt was great enough to put a stop to all other passions that could hurt them. Her Love and Aversion, her Gratitude and Resentment, her Esteem and Neglect were equally open and strong, and alterable only from the alteration of the persons who created them. Her Mind was too noble to be insincere, and her Heart too honest to stand in need of it; so that she never found cause to repent her conduct either to a friend or an enemy. There remains only to speak of her Person, which was most amiably majestic, the nicest eye could find no fault in the outward lineaments of her Face or proportion of her Body; it was such, as pleas'd wherever she had

had a desire it should ; yet she never envied that of any other, which might better please in general : In the same manner, as being content that her merits were esteemed where she desired they should, she never depreciated those of any other that were esteemed or preferred elsewhere. For she aimed not at a general love or a general esteem where she was not known ; it was enough to be possess'd of both wherever she was. Having lived to the age of Sixty-two years ; not courting Regard, but receiving it from all who knew her ; not loving Business, but discharging it fully wheresoever duty or friendship engaged her in it ; not following Greatness, but not declining to pay respect, as far as was due from independency and disinterest ; having honourably absolv'd all the parts of life, she forsook this World, where she had left no act of duty or virtue undone, for that where alone such acts are rewarded, on the 13th Day of March, 1742-3^a.

^a “ The above Character was written by Mr. Pope some years before her Grace's Death.” So the printed Edition.

Mr. POPE to JAMES MOYSER, of
Beverly, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

Bath, July 11, 1743.

I Am always glad to hear of you, and where I can, I always enquire of you. But why have you omitted to tell me one word of your own health? The account of our Friend's^a is truly melancholy, added to the circumstance of his being detained (I fear, without much hope) in a foreign country, from the comfort of seeing (what a good man most desires and best deserves to see to the last hour) his Friends about him. The public news^b indeed gives every Englishman a reasonable joy, and I truly feel it with you, as a national joy, not a party one; nay as a general joy to all nations where bloodshed and misery must have been introduced, had the ambition and perfidy of — prevail'd.

I come now to answer your friend's question. The whole of what he has heard of my writing the Character of the old^c Duke of Buckingham is untrue. I do not remember ever to have seen it in MS. nor have I ever

^a Mr. Bethel.

^b The Victory at Dettingen.

^c He says *the old Duke*, because he wrote a very fine Epitaph for the Son.

seen

seen the pedigree he mentions, otherwise than after the Duchefs had printed it with the Will, and sent one to me, as, I suppose, she did to all her acquaintance. I do not wonder it should be reported I writ that Character, after a story which I will tell you in your ear, and to yourself only. There was another *Character written of her Grace* by herself (with what help, I know not) but she shewed it me in her blots, and pressed me, by all the adjurations of Friendship, to give her my sincere opinion of it. I acted honestly and did so. She seemed to take it patiently, and, upon many exceptions which I made, engaged me to take the whole, and to select out of it just as much as I judged might stand, and return her the Copy. I did so. Immediately she picked a quarrel with me, and we never saw each other in five or six years. In the mean time, she shewed this Character (as much as was extracted of it in my hand-writing) as a composition of my own, in her praise. And very probably it is *now in the hands of Lord Harvey*. Dear Sir, I sincerely wish you, and your whole family (whose welfare is so closely connected) the best health and truest happiness; and am (as is also the Master of this place)

Your, &c.

A L E T-

A LETTER^a to a NOBLE LORD.

On occasion of some Libels written and propagated
at Court, in the Year 1732-3.

MY LORD,

Nov. 30, 1733.

YOUR Lordship's ^b Epistle has been published some days, but I had not the pleasure and pain of seeing it till yesterday: Pain, to think your Lordship should attack me at all; Pleasure, to find that you can attack me so weakly. As I want not the humility, to think myself in every way but *one* your inferiour, it seems but reasonable that I should take the only method either of self-defence or retaliation,

^a This Letter bears the same place in our Author's prose that the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot does in his poetry. They are both Apologetical, repelling the libelous slanders on his Reputation: (with this difference, that the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, his friend, was chiefly directed against *Grub-Street Writers*, and this Letter to the Noble Lord, his enemy, against *Court-Scriblers*. For the rest, they are both Master-pieces in their kinds; *That* in verse, more grave, moral, and sub-

lime; *This* in prose, more lively, critical, and pointed; but equally conducive to what he had most at heart, the vindication of his Moral Character: the only thing he thought worth his care in literary altercations; and the first thing he would expect from the good offices of a surviving Friend.

^b Entitled, *An Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton-Court, Aug. 28, 1733*, and printed the November following for J. Roberts. Fol.

that

that is left me, against a person of your quality and power. And as by your choice of this weapon, your pen, you generously (and modestly too, no doubt) meant to put yourself upon a level with me; I will as soon believe that your Lordship would give a wound to a man unarm'd, as that you would deny me the use of it in my own defence.

I presume you will allow me to take the same liberty, in my answer to so *candid, polite,* and *ingenious* a Nobleman, which your Lordship took in yours, to so *grave, religious,* and *respectable* a Clergyman^c: As you answered his *Latin* in *English*, permit me to answer your *Verse* in *Prose*. And tho' your Lordship's reasons for not writing in *Latin*, might be stronger than mine for not writing in *Verse*, yet I may plead *Two good* ones, for this conduct: the one that I want the Talent of spinning *a thousand lines in a Day*^d (which, I think, is as much *Time* as this subject deserves) and the other, that I take your Lordship's *Verse* to be as much *Prose* as this letter. But no doubt it was your choice, in writing to a friend, to renounce all the pomp of Poetry, and give us this excellent model of the familiar.

^c Dr. S.

^d And Pope with justice of such lines may say,
His Lordship spins a thousand in a day. Epist. p. 6.

When

When I consider the *great difference* betwixt the rank your *Lordship* holds in the *World*, and the rank which your *writings* are like to hold in the *learned world*, I presume that distinction of style is but necessary, which you will see observ'd thro' this letter. When I speak of *you*, my Lord, it will be with all the deference due to the inequality which Fortune has made between you and myself: but when I speak of your *writings*, my Lord, I must, I can do nothing but trifle.

I should be obliged indeed to lessen this *Respect*, if all the Nobility (and especially the elder brothers) are but so many hereditary fools^e, if the privilege of Lords be to want brains^f, if noblemen can hardly write or read^g, if all their business is but to dress and vote^h, and all their employment in court, to tell lies, flatter in public, slander in private, be false to each other, and follow nothing but self-interestⁱ. Bless me,

^e *That to good blood by old prescriptive rules
Gives right hereditary to be Fools.*

^f *Nor wonder that my Brain no more affords,
But recollect the privilege of Lords.*

^g *And when you see me fairly write my name;
For England's sake wish all could do the same.*

^h *Whilst all our bus'ness is to dress and vote.* ibid.

ⁱ *Courts are only larger families,
The growth of each, few truths, and many lies:
in private satyrize, in publick flatter.*

*Few to each other, all to one point true;
Which one I sha'n't, nor need explain. Adieu.* p ult.

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my Lord, what an account is this you give of them? and what would have been said of me, had I immolated, in this manner, the whole body of the Nobility, at the stall of a well-fed Prebendary?

Were it the mere *Excess* of your Lordship's *Wit*, that carried you thus triumphantly over all the bounds of decency, I might consider your Lordship on your *Pegasus*, as a sprightly hunter on a mettled horse; and while you were trampling down all our works, patiently suffer the injury, in pure admiration of the *Noble Sport*. But should the case be quite otherwise, should your Lordship be only like a *Boy* that is *run away with*; and run away with by a *Very Foal*; really common charity, as well as respect for a noble family, would oblige me to stop your career, and to *help you down from this Pegasus*.

Surely the little praise of a *Writer* should be a thing below your ambition: You, who were no sooner born, but in the lap of the Graces; no sooner at school, but in the arms of the Muses; no sooner in the World, but you practis'd all the skill of it; no sooner in the Court, but you possess'd all the art of it! Unrivall'd as you are, in making a figure, and in making a speech, methinks, my Lord, you may well give up the poor talent of turning a Distich. And why this
fondness

fondness for Poetry? Prose admits of the two excellencies you most admire, Diction and Fiction: It admits of the talents you chiefly possess, a most fertile invention, and most florid expression; it is with prose, nay the plainest prose, that you best could teach our nobility to vote, which, you justly observe, is half at least of their business^k: And, give me leave to prophesy, it is to your talent in prose, and not in verse, to your speaking, not your writing, to your art at court, not your art of poetry, that your Lordship must owe your future figure in the world.

My Lord, whatever you imagine, this is the advice of a Friend, and one who remembers he formerly had the honour of some profession of Friendship from you: Whatever was his *real share* in it, whether small or great, yet as your Lordship could never have had the least *Loss* by continuing it, or the least *Interest* by withdrawing it; the misfortune of losing it, I fear, must have been owing to his own *deficiency* or *neglect*. But as to any *actual fault* which deserved to forfeit it in such a degree, he protests he is to this day guiltless and ignorant. It could at most be but a fault of *omission*; but indeed by omissions, men of your Lordship's uncommon

^k *All their bus'ness is to dress, and vote.*

merit may sometimes think themselves so injur'd, as to be capable of an inclination to injure another; who, tho' very much below their quality, may be above the injury.

I never heard of the least displeasure you had conceived against me, till I was told that an imitation I had made of ¹ *Horace* had offended some persons, and among them your Lordship. I could not have apprehended that a few *general strokes* about a *Lord scribbling carelessly*^m, a *Pimp*, or a *Spy* at Court, a *Sbarper* in a gilded chariot, &c. that these, I say, should be ever applied as they have been, by *any malice* but that which is the greatest in the world, *the Malice of Ill people to themselves*.

Your Lordship so well knows (and the whole Court and town thro' your means so well know) how far the resentment was carried upon that imagination, not only in the *Nature* of the *Libel*ⁿ you propagated against me, but in the extraordinary *manner, place, and presence* in which it was propagated^o; that I shall only say, it

¹ The first Satire of the second Book, printed in 1732.

^m He should have added, that he called this Nobleman, who scribbled so carelessly, *Lord Fanny*.

ⁿ *Verses to the Imitator of Horace*, afterwards printed by J. Roberts 1732. fol.

^o It was for this reason that this Letter, as soon as it was printed, was communicated to the Q.

seem'd

seem'd to me to exceed the bounds of justice, common sense, and decency.

I wonder yet more, how a *Lady*, of great wit, beauty, and fame for her poetry (between whom and your Lordship there is a *natural*, a *just*, and a *well-grounded esteem*) could be prevail'd upon to take a part in that proceeding. Your resentments against me indeed might be equal, as my offence to you both was the same; for neither had I the least misunderstanding with that Lady, till after I was the *Author* of my own misfortune in discontinuing her acquaintance. I may venture to own a truth, which cannot be unpleasing to either of you; I assure you my reason for so doing, was merely that you had both *too much wit* for me^p; and that I could not do, with *mine*, many things which you could with *yours*. The injury done you in withdrawing myself could be but small, if the value you had for me was no greater than you have been pleas'd since to profess. But surely, my Lord, one may say, neither the Revenge, nor the Language you held, bore any *proportion* to the pretended offence: The appellations of ¹ *Foe to humankind*, an *Enemy* like the *Devil* to

^p Once, and but once, his heedless youth was bit,
And lik'd that dang'rous thing a female Wit.

See the Letter to Dr. Arbuthnot amongst the Variations.

¹ See the aforesaid Verses to the Imitator of Horace.

all that have *Being*; *ungrateful*, *unjust*, deserving to be *whipt*, *blanketed*, *kicked*, nay *killed*; a *Monster*, an *Assassin*, whose conversation every man ought to *skun*, and against whom *all doors* should be shut; I beseech you, my Lord, had you the least right to give, or to encourage or justify any other in giving such language as this to me? Could I be treated in terms more strong or more atrocious, if, during my acquaintance with you, I had been a *Betrayer*, a *Backbiter*, a *Whisperer*, an *Eves-dropper*, or an *Informer*? Did I in all that time ever throw a *false Dye*, or palm a *foul Card* upon you? Did I ever *borrow*, *steal*, or accept, either *Money*, *Wit*, or *Advice* from you? Had I ever the honour to join with either of you in one *Ballad*, *Satire*, *Pamphlet*, or *Epigram*, on any person *living* or *dead*? Did I ever do you so great an injury as to put off *my own Verses* for *yours*, especially on *those Persons* whom they might *most offend*? I am confident you cannot answer in the affirmative; and I can truly affirm, that, ever since I lost the happiness of your conversation I have not published or written, one syllable of, or to either of you; never hitch'd your *names* in a *Verse*, or trifled with your *good names* in *company*. Can I be honestly charged with any other crime but an *Omission* (for the word *Neglect*, which I us'd before, slip'd my pen unguardedly) to continue
my

my admiration of you all my life, and still to contemplate, face to face, your many excellencies and perfections? I am persuaded you can reproach me truly with no great *Faults*, except my *natural ones*, which I am as ready to own, as to do all justice to the contrary *Beauties* in you. It is true, my Lord, I am short, not well shap'd, generally ill-dress'd, if not sometimes dirty: Your Lordship and Ladyship are still in bloom; your Figures such, as rival the *Apollo* of *Belvedere*, and the *Venus* of *Medicis*; and your faces so finish'd, that neither sickness nor passion can deprive them of *Colour*; I will allow your own in particular to be the finest that ever *Man* was blest with: preserve it, my Lord, and reflect, that to be a Critic, would cost it too many *frowns*, and to be a Statesman, too many *wrinkles*! I further confess, I am now somewhat old; but so your Lordship and this excellent Lady, with all your beauty, will (I hope) one day be. I know your Genius and hers so perfectly *tally*, that you cannot but join in admiring each other, and by consequence in the contempt of all such as myself. You have both, in my regard, been like — (your Lordship, I know, loves a *Simile*, and it will be one suitable to your *Quality*) you have been like *Two Princes*, and I like a *poor Animal* sacrificed between them to cement a lasting League: I hope

I have not bled in vain ; but that such an amity may endure for ever ! For tho' it be what common *understandings* would hardly conceive, Two *Wits* however may be persuaded, that it is in Friendship as in Enmity, The more *danger*, the more *honour*.

Give me the liberty, my Lord, to tell you, why I never replied to those *Verses* on the *Imitator* of *Horace* ? They regarded nothing but my *Figure*, which I set no value upon ; and my *Morals*, which, I knew, needed no defence : Any honest man has the pleasure to be conscious, that it is out of the power of the *Wittiest*, nay the *Greatest Person* in the kingdom, to lessen him *that way*, but at the expence of his own *Truth, Honour, or Justice*.

But tho' I declined to explain myself just at the time when I was sillily threaten'd, I shall now give your Lordship a frank account of the offence you imagined to be meant to you. *Fanny* (my Lord) is the plain English of *Fannius*, a real person, who was a foolish Critic, and an enemy of *Horace* : perhaps a Noble one, for so (if your Latin be gone in earnest^r) I must acquaint you, the word *Beatus* may be construed.

^r all I learn'd from Dr. Freind at school,
Has quite deserted this poor John Trot head,
And left plain native English in its stead. Epist. p. 2.

Beatus

*Beatus Fannius ! ultra
Delatis capsis et imagine.*

This *Fannius* was, it seems, extremely fond both of his *Poetry* and his *Person*, which appears by the pictures and *Statues* he caused to be made of himself, and by his great diligence to propagate *bad Verses* at *Court*, and get them admitted into the library of *Augustus*. He was moreover of a delicate or *effeminate complexion*, and constant at the *Assemblies* and *Opera's* of those days, where he took it into his head to *slander poor Horace*.

Ineptus

Fannius, Hermogenis lædat conviva Tigelli.

till it provoked him at last just to *name* him, give him a *lash*, and send him whimpering to the *Ladies*.

Discipularum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

So much for *Fanny*, my Lord. The word *spins* (as *Dr. Freind* or even *Dr. Sherwin* could assure you) was the literal translation of *deduci*; a metaphor taken from a *Silk-worm*, my Lord, to signify any *slight, silken*, or (as your Lordship and the *Ladies* call it) ^s *flimzy* piece of work. I presume your Lordship has enough of this, to convince you there was nothing *personal* but to

^s *Weak texture of his flimzy brain.* p. 6.

that Fannius, who (with all his fine accomplishments) had never been heard of, but for *that Horace* he injur'd.

In regard to the right honourable Lady, your Lordship's friend, I was far from designing a person of her condition by a name so derogatory to her, as that of *Sappho*; a name prostituted to every infamous Creature that ever wrote Verses or Novels. I protest I never *apply'd* that name to her in any verse of mine, *public* or *private*; and (I firmly believe) not in any *Letter* or *Conversation*. Whoever could invent a Falsehood to support an accusation, I pity; and whoever can believe such a Character to be theirs, I pity still more. God forbid the Court or Town should have the complaisance to *join* in that opinion! Certainly I meant it only of such modern *Sappho's*, as imitate much more the *Lewdness* than the *Genius* of the ancient one; and upon whom their wretched brethren frequently bestow both the *Name* and the *Qualification* there mentioned †.

There was another reason why I was silent as to that paper—I took it for a *Lady's* (on the printer's word in the title page) and thought it too presuming, as well as indecent, to con-

† From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
Pox'd by her love, or libell'd by her hate.

1 Sat. B. ii. HOR.

tend with one of that *Sex* in *altercation* : For I never was so mean a creature as to commit my Anger against a *Lady* to *paper*, tho' but in a *private Letter*. But soon after, her denial of it was brought to me by a Noble person of *real Honour* and *Truth*. Your Lordship indeed said you had it from a *Lady*, and the *Lady* said it was your Lordship's; some thought the beautiful by-blow had *Two Fathers*, or (if one of them will hardly be allow'd a man) *Two Mothers*; indeed I think *both Sexes* had a share in it, but which was *uppermost*, I know not: I pretend not to determine the exact method of this *Witty Fornication*: and, if I call it *Yours*, my Lord, 'tis only because, whoever got it, you brought it forth.

Here, my Lord, allow me to observe the different proceeding of the *Ignoble poet*, and his *Noble Enemies*. What he has written of *Fanny*, *Adonis*, *Sappho*, or who you will, he own'd he publish'd, he set his name to: What they have publish'd of him, they have deny'd to have written; and what they have written of him, they have denied to have publish'd. One of these was the case in the past Libel, and the other in the present. For tho' the parent has own'd it to a few choice friends, it is such as he has been obliged to deny in the most particular terms, to the great Person whose opinion concern'd him most.

Yet,

Yet, my Lord, this Epistle was a piece not written in *haste*, or in a *passion*, but many months after all pretended provocation; when you was at *full leisure* at Hampton-Court, and I the object *singled*, like a *Deer out of Season*, for so ill-timed, and ill-placed a diversion. It was a *deliberate* work, directed to a *Reverend Person*^v, of the most *serious* and *sacred* character, with whom you are known to cultivate a *strict correspondence*, and to whom it will not be doubted, but you open your *secret Sentiments*, and deliver your *real judgment* of men and things. This, I say, my Lord, with submission, could not but awaken all my *Reflection* and *Attention*. Your Lordship's opinion of me as a *Poet*, I cannot help; it is yours, my Lord, and that were enough to mortify a poor man; but it is not yours *alone*, you must be content to share it with the *Gentlemen* of the *Dunciad*, and (it may be) with many *more innocent* and *ingenious men*. If your Lordship destroys my *poetical* character, *they* will claim their part in the glory; but, give me leave to say, if my *moral* character be ruin'd, it must be *wholly* the work of *your Lordship*; and will be hard even for you to do, unless I *myself co-operate*.

How can you talk (my most worthy Lord) of all *Pope's Works* as so many *Libels*, affirm,

^v Dr. S.

that

that he has no invention but in *Defamation*^{*}, and charge him with *selling another man's labours printed with his own name*[†]? Fye, my Lord, you forget yourself. He printed not his name before a line of the person's you mention; that person himself has told you and all the world in the book itself, what part he had in it, as may be seen at the conclusion of his notes to the *Odyssy*. I can only suppose your Lordship (not having at that time *forgot your Greek*) despis'd to look upon the *Translation*; and ever since entertain'd too mean an Opinion of the Translator to cast an eye upon it. Besides, my Lord, when you said he *sold* another man's works, you ought in justice to have added that he *bought* them, which very much *alters the Case*. What he gave him was five hundred pounds: his receipt can be produced to your Lordship. I dare not affirm he was as *well paid* as *some Writers* (much his inferiors) have been since; but your Lordship will reflect that I am no man of *Quality*, either to *buy* or *sell* scribbling so high: and that I have neither *Place*, *Pension*, nor *Power* to reward for *secret Services*. It cannot be, that one of your rank can have

^{*} to his eternal shame,

Prov'd he can ne'er invent but to defame.

[†] *And sold Broom's labours printed with Pope's Name.*

P. 7.

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the least *Envy* to such an author as I: but were that *possible*, it were much better gratify'd by employing *not your own*, but some of *those low and ignoble pens* to do you this *mean office*. I dare engage you'll have them for less than I gave Mr. Broom, if your friends have not rais'd the market: Let them drive the bargain for you, my Lord; and you may depend on seeing, every day in the week, as many (and now and then as pretty) Verses, as these of your Lordship.

And would it not be full as well, that my poor person should be abus'd by them, as by one of your rank and quality? Cannot *Curl* do the same? nay has he not done it before your Lordship, in the same *kind of Language*, and almost the *same words*? I cannot but think, the worthy and *discreet Clergyman* himself will agree, it is *improper*, nay *unchristian*, to expose the *personal* defects of our brother: that both such perfect forms as yours, and such unfortunate ones as mine, proceed from the hand of the same *Maker*; who *fashioneth his Vessels* as he pleaseth, and that it is not from their *shape* we can tell whether they are made for *honour* or *dishonour*. In a word, he would teach you Charity to your greatest enemies; of which number, my Lord, I cannot be reckon'd, since, tho' a Poet, I was never your flatterer.

I

Next,

Next, my Lord, as to the *Obscurity*^a of my *Birth* (a reflection copy'd also from Mr. *Curl* and his brethren) I am sorry to be obliged to such a presumption as to name my *Family* in the same leaf with your Lordship's: but my Father had the honour in one instance to resemble you, for he was a *younger Brother*. He did not indeed think it a Happiness to bury his *elder Brother*, tho' he had one, who wanted some of those good qualities which *yours* possess. How sincerely glad could I be, to pay to that young Nobleman's memory the debt I ow'd to his friendship, whose early death depriv'd your family of as much *Wit* and *Honour* as he left behind him in any branch of it. But as to my Father, I could assure you, my Lord, that he was no Mechanic (neither a hatter, nor, which might please your Lordship yet better, a Cobler) but in truth, of a very tolerable family: And my Mother of an ancient one, as well born and educated as that *Lady*, whom your Lordship made choice of to be the *Mother of your own Children*; whose merit, beauty, and vivacity (if transmitted to your posterity) will be a *better present* than even the noble blood they derive *only from you*. A Mother, on whom I was never oblig'd so far to reflect, as to say,

^a *Hard as thy Heart, and as thy Birth obscure.*

she *spoiled me*^b. And a Father, who never found himself oblig'd to say of me, that he *disapprov'd my Conduct*. In a word, my Lord, I think it enough, that my Parents, such as they were, never cost me a *Blush*; and that their Son, such as he is, never cost them a *Tear*.

I have purposely omitted to consider your Lordship's Criticisms on my *Poetry*. As they are exactly the same with those of the *foremention'd Authors*, I apprehend they would justly charge me with partiality, if I gave to *you* what belongs to *them*; or paid more distinction to the *same things* when they are in your mouth, than when they were in theirs. It will be shewing both them and you (my Lord) a *more particular respect*, to observe how much they are honour'd by *your Imitation of them*, which indeed is carried thro' your whole Epistle. I have read somewhere at *School* (tho' I make it no *Vanity* to have forgot where) that *Tully* naturaliz'd a few phrases at the instance of some of his friends. Your Lordship has done more in honour of these Gentlemen; you have authoriz'd not only their *Assertions*, but their *Style*. For example, *A Flow that wants skill to restrain its ardour*, — a Dictionary

^b *A noble Father's heir spoil'd by his Mother.*

His Lordship's account of himself, p. 7.

that

that gives us nothing at its own expence. —As luxuriant branches bear but little fruit, so Wit unprun'd is but raw fruit — While you rehearse ignorance, you still know enough to do it in Verse—Wits are but glittering ignorance.—The account of how we pass our time—and, The weight on Sir R. W—'s brain. You can ever receive from no head more than such a head (as no head) has to give: Your Lordship would have said never receive instead of ever, and any head instead of no head: but all this is perfectly new, and has greatly enrich'd our language.

You are merry, my Lord, when you say, *Latin and Greek*

*Have quite deserted your poor John Trot-head,
And left plain native English in their stead,*

for (to do you justice) this is nothing less than *plain English*. And as for your *John Trot-head*, I can't conceive why you should give it that name; for by some ^e papers I have seen sign'd with that name, it is certainly a head *very different* from your Lordship's.

Your Lordship seems determined to fall out with every thing you have learn'd at school: you complain next of a *dull Dictionary*,

^e See some Treatises printed in the Appendix to the *Craftsman*, about that time.

That

*That gives us nothing at its own expence,
But a few modern words for ancient Sense.*

Your Lordship is the first man that ever carried the love of Wit so far, as to expect a *witty Dictionary*. A Dictionary that gives us *any thing but words*, must not only be an *expensive* but a very *extravagant Dictionary*^d. But what does your Lordship mean by its giving us but *a few modern words for ancient Sense*? If by *Sense* (as I suspect) you mean *words* (a mistake not unusual) I must do the Dictionary the justice to say, that it gives us *just as many modern words as ancient ones*. Indeed, my Lord, you have more need to complain of a bad Grammar, than of a dull Dictionary.

Doctor *Freind*, I dare answer for him, never taught you to talk

of Sapphic, Lyric, and Iambic Odes.

Your Lordship might as well bid your present Tutor, your Taylor, make you a *Coat, Suit of Cloaths, and Breeches*; for you must have forgot your Logic, as well as Grammar, not to know, that Sapphic and Iambic are both included in Lyric; that being the *Genus*, and those the *Species*.

^d Yet we have seen many of these *extravagant Dictionaries*, and are likely to

see many more, in an age so abounding in science.

For

*For all cannot invent who can translate,
No more than those who cloath us, can create.*

Here your Lordship seems in labour for a meaning. Is it that you would have Translations, *Originals*? for 'tis the common opinion, that the *business* of a Translator is to *translate*, and not to *invent*, and of a Taylor to *cloath*, and not to *create*. But why should you, my Lord, of all mankind, abuse a Taylor? not to say *blaspheme* him; if he can (as some think) at least go halves with God Almighty in the formation of a *Beau*. Might not Doctor *Sherwin* rebuke you for this, and bid you *Remember your Creator in the days of your Youth*?

From a *Taylor*, your Lordship proceeds (by a beautiful gradation) to a *Silkman*.

Thus P—pe we find

The gaudy Hinchcliff of a beauteous mind.

Here too is some ambiguity. Does your Lordship use *Hinchcliff* as a *proper name*? or as the Ladies say a *Hinckcliff* or a *Colmar*, for a *Silk* or a *Fan*? I will venture to affirm, no Critic can have a perfect taste of your Lordship's works, who does not understand both your *Male Phrase* and your *Female Phrase*.

Your Lordship, to finish your Climax, advances up to a *Hatter*; a Mechanic, whose Employment, you inform us, is not (as was generally imagined) to *cover people's heads*, but

to *dress their brains*^e. A most useful Mechanic indeed! I can't help wishing to have been one, for some people's sake. — But this too may be only another *Lady-Phrase*: Your Lordship and the Ladies may take a *Head-dress* for a *Head*, and understand, that to *adorn the Head* is the same thing as to *dress the Brains*.

Upon the whole, I may thank your Lordship for this high Panegyric: For if I have but *dress'd up Homer*, as your *Taylor*, *Silkman*, and *Hatter* have *equip'd your Lordship*, I must be own'd to have *dress'd him marvellously indeed*, and no wonder if he is *admir'd by the Ladies*^f.

After all, my Lord, I really wish you would learn your *Grammar*. What if you put yourself awhile under the Tuition of your Friend *W——m*? May not I with all respect say to you, what was said to *another Noble Poet* by Mr. Cowley, *Pray, Mr. Howard*^g, *if you did read your Grammar, what harm would it do you?* You yourself wish all Lords would *learn to write*^h; tho' I don't see of what use it could be, if their whole business is to *give their*

^e For this *Mechanic's*, like the *Hatter's* pains,
Are but for dressing other people's brains.

^f by *Girls admir'd*. p. 6.

^g The Honourable Mr. Edward Howard, celebrated for his poetry.

^h And when you see me fairly write my name,
For England's sake wish all Lords did the same.

*Votes*ⁱ: It could only be serviceable in *signing their Protests*. Yet surely this small portion of learning might be indulged to your Lordship, without any Breach of that *Privilege*^k you so generously assert to all those of your rank, or too great an Infringement of that *Right*^l which you claim as *Hereditary*, and for which, no doubt, your noble Father will thank you. Surely, my Lord, no Man was ever so bent upon depreciating himself!

All your Readers have observ'd the following Lines :

*How oft we hear some Witling pert and dull,
By fashion Coxcomb, and by nature Fool,
With hackney Maxims, in dogmatic strain,
Scoffing Religion and the Marriage chain?
Then from his Common-place-book he repeats,
The Lawyers all are rogues, and Parsons cheats,
That Vice and Virtue's nothing but a jest,
And all Morality Deceit well drest;
That Life itself is like a wrangling game, &c.*

The whole Town and Court (my good Lord) have heard *this Witling*; who is so much every body's acquaintance but his own, that I'll engage *they all name the same Person*. But to hear you say, that this is only — *of whipt Cream*

ⁱ — *All our bus'ness is to dress and vote.* p. 4.

^k *The want of brains.* *ibid.*

^l *To be fools.* *ibid.*

a *frotby Store*, is a sufficient proof, that never mortal was endued with so humble an opinion both of himself and his own Wit, as your Lordship: For, I do assure you, these are by much the best Verses in your whole Poem.

How unhappy is it for me, that a Person of your Lordship's *Modesty* and *Virtue*, who manifests so tender a regard to *Religion*, *Matrimony*, and *Morality*; who, tho' an Ornament to the Court, cultivate an exemplary Correspondence with the *Clergy*; nay, who disdain not charitably to converse with, and even assist, some of the very worst of Writers (so far as to cast a few *Conceits*, or drop a few *Antitheses* even among the *Dear Joys* of the *Courant*) that you, I say, should look upon Me alone as reprobate and unamendable! Reflect what *I was*, and what *I am*. I am even *Annilated* by your Anger: For in these Verses you have robbed me of *all power to think*^m, and, in your others, of the very *name* of a *Man*! Nay, to shew that this is wholly your own doing, you have told us that before I wrote my *last Epistles* (that is, before I unluckily mention'd *Fanny* and *Adonis*, whom, I protest, I knew not to be your Lordship's Relations) *I might have lived and died in glory*ⁿ.

^m P—e, *who ne'er cou'd think*. p. 7.

ⁿ *In glory then he might have liv'd and dy'd.* *ibid.*

What

What would I not do to be well with your Lordship? Tho', you observe, I am a mere *Imitator* of *Homer*, *Horace*, *Boileau*, *Garth*, &c. (which I have the less cause to be ashamed of, since they were *Imitators of one another*) yet what if I should solemnly engage never to imitate *your* Lordship? May it not be one step towards an accommodation, that while you remark my *Ignorance in Greek*, you are so good as to say, you have *forgot your own*? What if I should confess I translated from *D'Acier*? That surely could not but oblige your Lordship, who are known to prefer *French* to all the learned Languages. But allowing that in the space of *twelve years* acquaintance with *Homer*, I might unhappily contract as much *Greek*, as your Lordship did in *Two* at the University, why may I not forget it again, as happily?

Till such a reconciliation take effect, I have but one thing to intreat of your Lordship. It is, that you will not decide of my *Principles* on the same grounds as you have done of my *Learning*: Nor give the same account of my *Want of Grace*, after you have lost all acquaintance with my *Person*, as you do of my *Want of Greek*, after you have confessedly lost all acquaintance with the *Language*. You are too generous, my Lord, to follow the *Gentlemen of the Dunciad* quite so far, as to seek my ut-
ter

ter Perdition; as *Nero* once did *Lucan's*, merely for presuming to be a *Poet*, while one of so much greater quality was a *Writer*. I therefore make this humble request to your Lordship, that the next time you please to write of me, speak of me, or even whisper of me^o, you will will recollect it is full eight Years since I had the honour of any conversation or correspondence with your Lordship, except just half an hour in a Lady's Lodgings at Court, and then I had the happiness of her being present all the time. It would therefore be difficult even for your Lordship's penetration to tell, to what, or from what Principles, Parties, or Sentiments, Moral, Political, or Theological, I may have been converted, or perverted, in all that time. I beseech your Lordship to consider, the Injury a Man of your high Rank and Credit may do to a private Person, under Penal Laws and many other disadvantages, not for want of honesty or conscience, but merely perhaps for having too weak a head, or too tender a heart^p. It is by these alone I have hitherto liv'd excluded from all posts of Profit or Trust: As I can interfere with the Views of no man, do not deny me, my Lord, all that is left, a little Praise, or the com-

^o The whisper, that, to greatness still too near,
Perhaps yet vibrates on his Sov'reign's ear.

Epist. to Dr. Arbuthnot.

^p See Letter to Bishop Atterbury, Lett. iv.

mon Encouragement due, if not to my *Genius*, at least to my *Industry*.

Above all, your Lordship will be careful not to wrong my *Moral Character*, with THOSE³ under whose *Protection* I live, and thro' whose *Lenity* alone I can live with Comfort. Your Lordship, I am confident, upon consideration will think, you inadvertently went a little *too far* when you recommended to THEIR perusal, and strengthened by the weight of your Approbation, a *Libel*, mean in its reflections upon my poor *figure*, and scandalous in those on my *Honour* and *Integrity*: wherein I was represented as “ an
“ *Enemy* to Human Race, a *Murderer* of Re-
“ putations, and a *Monster* mark'd by God like
“ *Cain*, deserving to wander accurs'd thro' the
“ World.”

A strange Picture of a Man, who had the good fortune to enjoy many friends, who will be always remember'd as the first Ornaments of their Age and Country; and no Enemies that ever contriv'd to be heard of, except Mr. *John Dennis*, and your Lordship: A Man, who never wrote a Line in which the *Religion* or *Government* of his Country, the *Royal Family*, or their *Ministry* were disrespectfully mentioned; the Animosity of any one Party gratify'd at the expence of another; or any Censure past, but upon *known*

³ The K. and Q.

Vice, acknowledg'd Folly, or aggressing Impertinence. It is with infinite pleasure he finds, that *some Men* who seem *asham'd* and *afraid* of *nothing else*, are so very sensible of *his Ridicule*: And 'tis for that very reason he resolves (by the grace of God, and your Lordship's good leave)

*That, while he breathes, no rich or noble knave
Shall walk the world in credit to his grave.*

This, he thinks, is rendering the best Service he can to the Publick, and even to the good Government of his Country; and for this, at least, he may deserve some Countenance, even from the GREATEST PERSONS in it. Your Lordship knows OF WHOM I speak. Their NAMES I should be as sorry, and as much asham'd, to place near *yours*, on such an occasion, as I should be to see *You*, my Lord, placed so near *their PERSONS*, if you could ever make so ill an Use of their Ear^r as to asperse or misrepresent any one innocent Man.

This is all I shall ever ask of your Lordship, except your pardon for this tedious Letter. I have the honour to be, with equal *Respect* and *Concern*,

My Lord,

Your truly devoted Servant,

A. POPE.

† Close at the ear of Eve. *Ep. to Dr. Arbuth.*

