



## **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 The First of his Letters

**Pope, Alexander**

**London, 1751**

II. From Mr. Wycherley.

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Nutzungsbedingungen

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## L E T T E R   I I.

From Mr. W Y C H E R L E Y.

Jan. 25, 1704-5.

**I** Have been so busy of late in correcting and transcribing some of my madrigals for a great man or two who desired to see them, that I have (with your pardon) omitted to return you an answer to your most ingenious letter: so scriblers to the public, like bankers to the public, are profuse in their voluntary loans to it, whilst they forget to pay their more private and particular, as more just debts, to their best and nearest friends. However, I hope, you who have as much good-nature as good sense (since they generally are companions<sup>a</sup>) will have patience with a debtor who has an inclination to pay you his obligations, if he had wherewithal ready about him; and in the mean time should consider, when you have obliged me beyond my present power of returning the favour, that a debtor may be an honest man, if he but intends to be just when he is able, tho' late. But I should be less just to you, the more I thought I could make a return to so much profuseness of Wit and Humanity together; which tho' they seldom accompany each other in other men<sup>a</sup>, are

<sup>a</sup> Good-nature and good sense generally are companions, yet wit and humanity seldom accompany each other.



in you so equally met, I know not in which you most abound. But so much for my opinion of you, which is, that your Wit and Ingenuity is equalled by nothing but your Judgment, or Modesty, which (tho' it be to please myself) I must no more offend, than I can do either right.

Therefore I will say no more now of them; than that your good wit never forfeited your good judgment, but in your partiality to me and mine; so that if it were possible for a hardened scribler to be vainer than he is, what you write of me would make me more conceited than what I scribble myself: yet, I must confess, I ought to be more humbled by your praise than exalted, which commends my little sense with so much more of yours, that I am disparaged and disheartened by your commendations; who give me an example of your wit in the first part of your letter, and a definition of it in the last; to make writing well (that is, like you) more difficult to me than ever it was before. Thus the more great and just your example and definition of wit are, the less I am capable to follow them. Then the best way of shewing my judgment, after having seen how you write, is to

But they might keep com- | pleased, for the Author was  
pany or not, just as they | gone in search of Witticisms.



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leave off writing; and the best way to shew my friendship to you, is to put an end to your trouble, and to conclude

Yours, &c.

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L E T T E R III.

March 25, 1705.

**W**HEN I write to you, I foresee a long letter, and ought to beg your patience before-hand; for if it proves the longest, it will be of course the worst I have troubled you with. Yet to express my gratitude at large for your obliging letter, is not more my duty than my interest; as some people will abundantly thank you for one piece of kindness, to put you in mind of bestowing another. The more favourable you are to me, the more distinctly I see my faults: Spots and blemishes, you know, are never so plainly discovered as in the brightest sunshine. Thus I am mortified by those commendations which were designed to encourage me: for praise to a young wit, is like rain to a tender flower; if it be moderately bestowed, it cheers and revives; but if too lavishly, overcharges and depresses him. Most men in years, as they are generally discouragers of youth, are like old trees, that, being past bearing