



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

XII. From Mr. Wycherley.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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my best to brush you up like your neighbours*. But I can no more pretend to the merit of the production, than a midwife to the virtues and good qualities of the child she helps into the light.

The few things I have entirely added, you will excuse; you may take them lawfully for your own, because they are no more than sparks lighted up by your fire: and you may omit them at last, if you think them but squibs in your triumphs.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X I I .

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

Nov. 11, 1707.

I Receiv'd yours of the 9th yesterday, which has (like the rest of your letters) at once pleas'd and instructed me; so that, I assure you, you can no more write too much to your absent friends, than speak too much to the present. This is a truth that all men own who have either seen your writings, or heard your dis-

* Several of Mr. Pope's lines, very easy to be distinguished, may be found in the Posthumous Editions of

Wycherley's Poems: particularly in those *on Solitude*, *on the Public*, and *on the Mixed life*.

course;

course; enough to make others show their judgment, in ceasing to write or talk, especially to you, or in your company. However, I speak or write to you, not to please you, but myself; since I provoke your answers; which whilst they humble me, give me vanity; tho' I am lessen'd by you even when you commend me: since you commend my little sense with so much more of yours, that you put me out of countenance, whilst you would keep me in it. So that you have found a way (against the custom of great wits) to shew even a great deal of good nature with a great deal of good sense.

I thank you for the book you promis'd me, by which I find you would not only correct my lines, but my life.

As to the damn'd verses I entrusted you with, I hope you will let them undergo your purgatory, to save them from other people's damning them: since the critics, who are generally the first damn'd in this life, like the damn'd below, never leave to bring those above them under their own circumstances. I beg you to peruse my papers, and select what you think best or most tolerable, and look over them again; for I resolve suddenly to print some of them, as a harden'd old gamester will (in spite of all former ill usage by fortune) push on an ill hand in expectation of recovering himself; especially

cially since I have such a *Croupier* or Second to stand by me as Mr. Pope.

L E T T E R XIII.

Nov. 20, 1707.

MR. Englesfild being upon his journey to London, tells me I must write to you by him, which I do, not more to comply with his desire, than to gratify my own; tho' I did it so lately by the messenger you sent hither: I take it too as an opportunity of sending you the fair copy of the poem^a on Dulness, which was not then finish'd, and which I should not care to hazard by the common post. Mr. Englesfild is ignorant of the contents, and I hope your prudence will let him remain so, for my sake no less than your own: since if you should reveal any thing of this nature, it would be no wonder reports should be rais'd, and there are those (I fear) who would be ready to improve them to my disadvantage. I am sorry you told the great man, whom you met in the court of requests, that your papers were in my hands: no man alive shall ever know any

^a The original of it in blots, and with figures of the References from copy to copy, in Mr. Pope's hand, is yet extant, among other such Brouillons of Mr. Wycherley's poems, corrected by him.

P.
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