



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

XIII. On the same, and further proposals for correcting them.

Nutzungsbedingungen

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-56122](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-56122)

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

L E T T E R X I I I .

Nov. 20, 1707.

MR. Englefyld 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. Englefyld 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.
such

such thing from me; and I give you this warning besides, that tho' yourself should say I had any ways assisted you, I am notwithstanding resolv'd to deny it.

The method of the copy I send you is very different from what it was, and much more regular: for the better help of your memory, I desire you to compare it by the figures in the margin, answering to the same in this letter. The poem is now divided into four parts, mark'd with the literal figures 1. 2. 3. 4. The first contains the Praise of Dulness, and shews how upon several suppositions it passeth for 1. religion. 2. philosophy. 3. example. 4. wit. and 5. the cause of wit, and the end of it. The second part contains the Advantages of Dulness; 1st, in business; and 2dly, at Court; where the similitudes of the Byass of a bowl, and the Weights of a clock, are directly tending to the subject, tho' introduced before in a place where there was no mention made of those advantages (which was your only objection to my adding them.) The third contains the Happiness of Dulness in all stations, and shews in a great many particulars, that it is so fortunate as to be esteem'd some good quality or other in all sorts of people; that it is thought quiet, sense, caution, policy, prudence, majesty, valour, circumspection, honesty, &c. The fourth

fourth part I have wholly added, as a climax which fums up all the praise, advantage, and happiness of Dulness in a few words, and strengthens them by the opposition of the disgrace, disadvantage, and unhappiness of Wit, with which it concludes ^b.

Tho' the whole be as short again as at first, there is not one thought omitted, but what is a repetition of something in your first volume, or in this very paper: some thoughts are contracted, where they seem'd encompass'd with too many words; and some new express'd, or added, where I thought there wanted heightning, (as you'll see particularly in the Simile of the clock-weights^c) and the versification through-

^b This is totally omitted in the present Edition: Some of the lines are these:

- “ Thus Dulness, the safe opiate of the mind,
- “ The last kind refuge weary wit can find;
- “ Fit for all stations, and in each content,
- “ Is satisfy'd, secure, and innocent;
- “ No pains it takes, and no offence it gives,
- “ Unfear'd, unhated, undisturb'd it lives, &c.

^c It was originally thus express'd:

“ As Clocks run fastest when most lead is on.”

in a Letter of Mr. Pope to Mr. Wycherley, dated April 3, 1705, and in a paper of verses of his, To the Author of a poem call'd Successio, which got out in a Miscellany

in 1712, three years before Mr. Wycherley died, and two after he had laid aside the whole design of publishing any poems. P.

These two similes of the

out

FROM MR. WYCHERLEY. 31

out is, I believe, such as no body can be shock'd at. The repeated permissions you give me of dealing freely with you, will (I hope) excuse what I have done: for if I have not spar'd you when I thought severity would do you a kindness, I have not mangled you where I thought there was no absolute need of amputation. As to particulars, I can satisfy you better when we meet; in the mean time pray write to me when you can, you cannot too often.

L E T T E R XIV.

From Mr. WYCHERLEY.

Nov. 22, 1707.

YOU may see by my style, I had the happiness and satisfaction to receive yesterday, by the hands of Mr. Englesyld, your extreme kind and obliging letter of the 20th of this month; which, like all the rest of yours, did at once mortify me, and make me vain; since it tells me with so much more wit, sense, and kindness than mine can express, that my letters

Bias of a Bowl, and the Weights of a Clock were at length put into the first book of the *Dunciad*. And thus we

have the history of their birth, fortunes, and final establishment.

are