



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

XXII. From Mr. Wycherley. His desire of his company; and request to proceed in correcting his papers.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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

must confess, he must be no ordinary genius, or little friend, who can find out any thing to commend in me seriously; who have given no sign of my judgment but my opinion of yours, nor mark of my wit, but my leaving off writing to the public now you are beginning to shew the world what you can do by yours: whose wit is as spiritual as your judgment infallible: in whose judgment I have an implicit faith, and shall always subscribe to it to save my works, in this world, from the flames and damnation.—Pray, present my most humble service to Sir William Trumbull; for whom and whose judgment I have so profound a respect, that his example had almost made me marry, more than my Nephew's ill carriage to me; having once resolv'd to have revenged myself upon him by my marriage, but now am resolv'd to make my revenge greater upon him by His marriage.

L E T T E R XXII.

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

April 1, 1710.

I Have had yours of the 30th of the last month, which is kinder than I desire it should be, since it tells me you cou'd be better pleas'd to be

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be sick again in Town in my company, than to be well in the Country without it ; and that you are more impatient to be depriv'd of happiness than of health. Yet, my dear friend, set raillery or compliment aside, I can bear your absence (which procures your health and ease) better than I can your company when you are in pain : for I cannot see you so without being so too. Your love to the Country I do not doubt, nor do you (I hope) my love to it or you, since there I can enjoy your company without seeing you in pain to give me satisfaction and pleasure ; there I can have you without rivals or disturbers ; without the too civil, or the too rude : without the noise of the loud, or the censure of the silent : and wou'd rather have you abuse me there with the truth, than at this distance with your compliment : since now, your business of a friend, and kindness to a friend, is by finding fault with his faults, and mending them by your obliging severity. I hope (in point of your goodness) you will have no cruel charity for those papers of mine, you are so willing to be troubled with ; which I take most infinitely kind of you, and shall acknowledge with gratitude, as long as I live. No friend can do more for his friend than preserving his reputation (nay, not by preserving his life) since by preserving his

his life he can only make him live about three-score or fourscore years; but by preserving his reputation, he can make him live as long as the world lasts; so save him from damning, when he is gone to the devil. Therefore, I pray, condemn me in private, as the Thieves do their accomplices in Newgate, to save them from condemnation by the public. Be most kindly unmerciful to my poetical faults, and do with my papers, as you country-gentlemen do with your trees, slash, cut, and lop off the excrescencies and dead parts of my wither'd bays, that the little remainder may live the longer, and increase the value of them by diminishing the number. I have troubled you with my papers rather to give you pain than pleasure, notwithstanding your compliment, which says you take the trouble kindly: such is your generosity to your friends, that you take it kindly to be desired by them to do them a kindness; and you think it done to you, when they give you an opportunity to do it them. Wherefore you may be sure to be troubled with my letters out of interest, if not kindness; since mine to you will procure yours to me: so that I write to you more for my own sake than yours; less to make you think I write well, than to learn from you to write better. Thus you see interest in my kindness, which is like

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FROM MR. WYCHERLEY. 49

the friendship of the world, rather to make a friend than be a friend ; but I am yours, as a true Plain-dealer.

L E T T E R XXIII.

From Mr. WYCHERLEY.

April 11, 1710.

I F I can do part of my business at Shrewsbury in a fortnight's time (which I propose to do) I will be soon after with you, and trouble you with my company, for the remainder of the summer : in the mean time I beg you to give yourself the pains of altering, or leaving out what you think superfluous in my papers, that I may endeavour to print such a number of them as you and I shall think fit, about Michaelmas next. In order to which (my dear friend) I beg you to be so kind to me, as to be severe to them ; that the critics may be less so ; for I had rather be condemn'd by my friend in private, than expos'd to my foes in public, the critics, or common judges, who are made such by having been old offenders themselves. Pray, believe I have as much faith in your friendship and sincerity, as I have deference to your judgment ; and as the best mark

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