



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

XVII. Criticisms about an elegy of Ovid.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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celestial orb; which expresses in some sort the *Sidus Castoris in parte cæli*—How trees can enjoy, let the naturalists determine; but the poets make them sensitive, lovers, batchelors, and married. Virgil in his *Georgics*, lib. ii. Horace Ode xv. lib. ii. *Platanus cælebs evincet ulmos*. Epod ii. *Ergo aut adulta vitium propagine Altas maritat populos*. Your critique is a very *Dolce-piccante*; for after the many faults you justly find, you smooth your rigour: but an obliging thing is owing (you think) to one who so much esteems and admires you, and who shall ever be

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X V I I I .

August 21, 1710.

YOUR Letters are a perfect charity to a man in retirement, utterly forgotten of all his friends but you; for since Mr. Wycherley left London, I have not heard a word from him; tho' just before, and once since, I writ to him, and tho' I know myself guilty of no offence but of doing sincerely just what he^a bid me—*Hoc mihi libertas, hoc pia lingua dedit!* But the greatest injury he does me is the keep-

^a Correcting his verses. | the following years, of Mr.
See the letters in 1706, and | Wycherley and Mr. Pope. P.

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ing me in ignorance of his welfare, which I am always very sollicitous for, and very uneasy in the fear of any indisposition that may befall him. In what I sent you some time ago, you have not verse enough to be severe upon, in revenge for my last criticism: In one point I must persist, that is to say, my dislike of your Paradise, in which I take no pleasure; I know very well that in Greek 'tis not only us'd by Xenophon, but is a common word for any garden; but in English it bears the signification and conveys the Idea of Eden, which alone is (I think) a reason against making Ovid use it; who will be thought to talk too much like a Christian in your version at least, whatever it might have been in Latin or Greek. As for all the rest of my remarks, since you do not laugh at them as at this, I can be so civil as not to lay any stress upon them (as, I think, I told you before) and in particular in the point of *trees enjoying*, you have, I must own, fully satisfied me that the expression is not only defensible, but beautiful. I shall be very glad to see your translation of the elegy, *Ad Amicam navigantem*, as soon as you can; for (without a compliment to you) every thing you write, either in verse or prose, is welcome to me; and you may be confident, (if my opinion can be of any sort of consequence in any thing) that I will never
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be unsincere, tho' I may be often mistaken. To use sincerity with you is but paying you in your own coin, from whom I have experienced so much of it; and I need not tell you, how much I really esteem you, when I esteem nothing in the world so much as that quality. I know, you sometimes say civil things to me in your epistolary style, but those I am to make allowance for, as particularly when you talk of *admiring*; 'tis a word you are so us'd to in conversation of Ladies, that it will creep into your discourse, in spite of you, even to your friends. But as women, when they think themselves secure of admiration, commit a thousand negligences, which show them so much at disadvantage and off their guard, as to lose the little real love they had before: so when men imagine others entertain some esteem for their abilities, they often expose all their imperfections and foolish works, to the disparagement of the little wit they were thought masters of. I am going to exemplify this to you, in putting into your hands (being encouraged by so much indulgence) some verses of my youth, or rather childhood; which (as I was a great admirer of Waller) were intended in imitation of his manner; ^a and are, perhaps, such imitations, as those

^a One or two of these | other Imitations done in his
were since printed among | youth. P.

you

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you see in awkward country dames, of the fine and well-bred ladies of the court. If you will take them with you into Lincolnshire, they may save you one hour from the conversation of the country gentlemen and their tenants (who differ but in dress and name) which, if it be there as bad as here, is even worse than my poetry. I hope your stay there will be no longer than (as Mr. Wycherley calls it) to rob the country, and run away to London with your money. In the mean time I beg the favour of a line from you, and am (as I will never cease to be)

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XIX.

Oct. 12, 1710.

I Deferr'd answering your last, upon the advice I receiv'd, that you were leaving the town for some time, and expected your return with impatience, having then a design of seeing my friends there, among the first of which I have reason to account yourself. But my almost continual illnesses prevent that, as well as most other satisfactions of my life: However, I may say one good thing of sickness, that it is the best cure in nature for ambition, and designs upon the world or fortune: It makes a man

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