



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

XIX.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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FROM H. CROMWELL, Esq. 123

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

I

pretty

pretty indifferent for the future, provided he can but be easy, by intervals, for the present. He will be content to compound for his quiet only, and leave all the circumstantial part and pomp of life to those, who have a health vigorous enough to enjoy all the mistresses of their desires. I thank God, there is nothing out of myself which I would be at the trouble of seeking, except a friend; a happiness I once hop'd to have possess'd in Mr. Wycherley; but—*Quantum mutatus ab illo!*—I have for some years been employ'd much like children that build houses with cards, endeavouring very busily and eagerly to raise a friendship, which the first breath of any ill-natur'd by-stander could puff away.—But I will trouble you no farther with writing, nor myself with thinking, of this subject.

I was mightily pleas'd to perceive by your quotation from Voiture, that you had track'd me so far as France. You see 'tis with weak heads as with weak stomachs, they immediately throw out what they received last; and what they read, floats upon the surface of the mind, like oil upon water, without incorporating. This, I think, however can't be said of the love-verses I last troubled you with, where all (I am afraid) is so puerile and so like the author, that no body will suspect any thing to be borrow'd.

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borrow'd. Yet you (as a friend, entertaining a better opinion of them) it seems, search'd in Waller, but search'd in vain. Your judgment of them is (I think) very right,—for it was my own opinion before. If you think 'em not worth the trouble of correcting, pray tell me so freely, and it will save me a labour; if you think the contrary, you would particularly oblige me by your remarks on the several thoughts as they occur. I long to be nibbling at your verses, and have not forgot who promis'd me Ovid's elegy *Ad Amicam navigantem*. Had Ovid been as long composing it, as you in sending it, the lady might have sail'd to Gades, and receiv'd it at her return. I have really a great itch of criticism upon me, but want matter here in the country; which I desire you to furnish me with, as I do you in the town,

Sic servat studii fœdera quisque sui.

I am obliged to Mr. Caryl (whom, you tell me you, met at Epsom) for telling you truth, as a man is in these days to any one that will tell truth to his advantage; and I think none is more to mine, than what he told you, and I should be glad to tell all the world, that I have an extreme affection and esteem for you.

*Tecum etenim longos memini consumere soles,
Et tecum primas epulis decerpere noctes;*

Unum

*Unum opus & requiem pariter disponimus ambo,
Atque verecunda laxamus seria mensa.*

By these *Epulæ*, as I take it, Persius meant the Portugal snuff and burnt Claret, which he took with his master Cornutus; and the *verecunda mensa* was, without dispute, some coffee-house table of the ancients.—I will only observe, that these four lines are as elegant and musical as any in Persius, not excepting those six or seven which Mr. Dryden quotes as the only such in all that author.—I could be heartily glad to repeat the satisfaction describ'd in them, being truly

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XX.

October 28, 1710.

I Am glad to find by your last letter that you write to me with the freedom of a friend, setting down your thoughts as they occur, and dealing plainly with me in the matter of my own trifles, which, I assure you, I never valued half so much as I do that sincerity in you which they were the occasion of discovering to me; and which while I am happy in, I may be trusted with that dangerous weapon, Poetry; since
I shall