



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

II. From Sir William Trumbull. Of his first translation of Homer.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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Wootton, but because you had commended them; and give me leave to tell you, that I know no body so like to equal him, even at the age he wrote most of them, as yourself. Only do not afford more cause of complaints against you, that you suffer nothing of yours to come abroad; which in this age, wherein wit and true sense is more scarce than money, is a piece of such cruelty as your best friends can hardly pardon. I hope you will repent and amend; I could offer many reasons to this purpose, and such as you cannot answer with any sincerity; but that I dare not enlarge, for fear of ingaging in a style of Compliment, which has been so abused by fools and knaves, that it is become almost scandalous. I conclude therefore with an assurance which shall never vary, of my being ever, &c.

L E T T E R II.

Sir WILLIAM TRUMBULL to Mr. POPE.

April 9, 1708.

I Have this moment received the favour of yours of the 8th instant; and will make you a true excuse (tho' perhaps no very good one) that I deferred the troubling you with a letter, when

when I sent back your papers, in hopes of seeing you at Binfield before this time. If I had met with any fault in your performance, I should freely now (as I have done too presumptuously in conversation with you) tell you my opinion; which I have frequently ventured to give you, rather in compliance with your desires than that I could think it reasonable. For I am not yet satisfied upon what grounds I can pretend to judge of poetry, who never have been practised in the art. There may possibly be some happy genius's, who may judge of some of the natural beauties of a poem, as a man may of the proportions of a building, without having read Vitruvius, or knowing any thing of the rules of architecture: but this, tho' it may sometimes be in the right, must be subject to many mistakes, and is certainly but a superficial knowledge; without entering into the art, the methods, and the particular excellencies of the whole composition, in all the parts of it.

Besides my want of skill, I have another reason why I ought to suspect myself, by reason of the great affection I have for you; which might give too much bias to be kind to every thing that comes from you. But after all, I must say (and I do it with an old-fashioned sincerity) that I entirely approve of your

translation of those pieces of Homer, both as to the versification and the true sense that shines thro' the whole: Nay I am confirmed in my former application to you, and give me leave to renew it upon this occasion, that you would proceed in translating that incomparable Poet, to make him speak good English, to dress his admirable characters in your proper, significant, and expressive conceptions, and to make his works as useful and instructive to this degenerate age, as he was to our friend Horace, when he read him at *Præneste*: *Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non, &c.* I break off with that *quid non?* with which I confess I am charm'd.

Upon the whole matter I intreat you to send this presently to be added to the Miscellanies, and, I hope, it will come time enough for that purpose.

I have nothing to say of my Nephew B.'s observations, for he sent them to me so late, that I had not time to consider them; I dare say he endeavour'd very faithfully (though, he told me, very hastily) to execute your commands.

All I can add is, that if your excess of modesty should hinder you from publishing this Essay, I shall only be sorry that I have no more credit with you, to persuade you to oblige

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FROM SIR W. TRUMBULL. 213

the public, and very particularly, dear Sir,
Your, &c.

LETTER III.

SIR WILLIAM TRUMBULL to Mr. POPE.

March 6, 1713.

I Think a hasty scribble shows more what flows from the heart, than a letter after Balzac's manner in studied phrases; therefore I will tell you as fast as I can, that I have received your favour of the 26th past, with your kind present of *The Rape of the Lock*. You have given me the truest satisfaction imaginable not only in making good the just opinion I have ever had of your reach of thought, and my Idea of your comprehensive genius; but likewise in that pleasure I take as an Englishman to see the French, even Boileau himself in his *Lutrin*, out-done in your poem: for you descend, *leviore plectro*, to all the nicer touches, that your own observation and wit furnish, on such a subject as requires the finest strokes and the liveliest imagination. But I must say no more (tho' I could a great deal) on what pleases me so much: and henceforth, I hope, you will never condemn me of partiality, since I only swim

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