



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

IX. To General Anthony Hamilton, on his having translated the Essay on Criticism into French verse.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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LETTER IX.

To General ANTHONY HAMILTON^a

Upon his having translated into French Verse the
Essay on Criticism.

Oct. 10, 1713.

IF I could as well express, or (if you will allow me to say it) translate the sentiments of my heart as you have done those of my head, in your excellent version of my *Essay*; I should not only appear the best writer in the world, but, what I much more desire to be thought, the most your servant of any man living. 'Tis an advantage very rarely known, to receive at once a great honour and a great improvement. This, Sir, you have afforded me, having at the same time made others take my sense, and taught me to understand my own; if I may call that my own which is indeed more properly yours. Your verses are no more a translation of mine, than Virgil's are of Homer's; but are, like his, the justest imitation and the noblest Commentary.

In putting me into a French dress, you have not only adorned my outside, but mended my shape; and, if I am now a good figure, I must

^a Author of the *Memoirs* of the Count de Grammont, | *Contas*, and other pieces of note in French.

consider you have naturaliz'd me into a country which is famous for making every man a fine gentleman. It is by your means, that (contrary to most young travellers) I am come back much better than I went out.

I cannot but wish we had a bill of commerce for translation established the next parliament; we could not fail of being gainers by that, nor of making ourselves amends for any thing we have lost by the war. Nay, tho' we should insist upon the demolishing of Boileau's works, the French, as long as they have writers of your form, might have as good an equivalent.

Upon the whole, I am really as proud, as our ministers ought to be, of the terms I have gain'd from abroad; and I design, like them, to publish speedily to the world the benefits accruing from them; for I cannot resist the temptation of printing your admirable translation here^b; to which if you will be so obliging to give me leave to prefix your name, it will be the only addition you can make to the honour already done me. I am, Your, &c.

^b This was never done, for the two printed French versions are neither of this hand. The one was done by Monsieur Roboton, private secretary to king George the first, printed in quarto at Amsterdam, and at London 1717. The other by the Abbé Resnel, in octavo, with a large preface and notes, at Paris, 1730. P.