



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

XVI. Concerning some misunderstandings.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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LETTER XVI.

TO MR. ADDISON.

OCT. 10, 1714.

I Have been acquainted by ^a one of my friends, who omits no opportunities of gratifying me, that you have lately been pleas'd to speak of me in a manner which nothing but the real respect I have for you can deserve. May I hope that some late malevolencies have lost their effect? indeed it is neither for me, nor my enemies, to pretend to tell you whether I am your friend or not; but if you would judge by probabilities, I beg to know which of your poetical acquaintance has so little interest in pretending to be so? Methinks no man should question the real friendship of one who desires no real service. I am only to get as much from the Whigs, as I got from the Tories, that is to say, Civility; being neither so proud as to be insensible of any good office, nor so humble, as not to dare heartily to despise any man who does me an injustice.

I will not value myself upon having ever guarded all the degrees of respect for you: for

^a See two Letters, from Mr. Jervas, and the Answer to it. N^o 22, 23. P.

(to say the truth) all the world speaks well of you, and I should be under a necessity of doing the same, whether I car'd for you or not.

As to what you have said of me, I shall never believe that the author of Cato can speak one thing and think another. As a proof that I account you sincere, I beg a favour of you : It is, that you would look over the two first books of my translation of Homer, which are in the hands of my Lord Hallifax. I am sensible how much the reputation of any poetical work will depend upon the character you give it : 'tis therefore some evidence of the trust I repose in your good-will, when I give you this opportunity of speaking ill of me with justice ; and yet expect you will tell me your truest thoughts, at the same time that you tell others your most favourable ones.

I have a farther request, which I must press with earnestness. My bookseller is reprinting the Essay on Criticism, to which you have done too much honour in your Spectator of N^o 253. The period in that paper, where you say, " I " have admitted some strokes of ill-nature into " that Essay," is the only one I could wish omitted of all you have written ; but I would not desire it should be so, unless I had the merit of removing your objection. I beg you but
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to point out those strokes to me, and, you may be assured, they shall be treated without mercy.

Since we are upon proofs of sincerity (which I am pretty confident will turn to the advantage of us both in each other's opinion) give me leave to name another passage in the same Spectator, which I wish you would alter. It is where you mention an observation upon Homer's Verses of Sisyphus's Stone, as ^a never having been made before by any of the Critics: I happened to find the same in Dionysius of Halicarnassus's Treatise, *Περὶ σωθέσεως ὀνομάτων*, who treats very largely upon these verses. I know you will think fit to soften your expression, when you see the passage; which you must needs have read, though it be since slipped out of your memory. I am, with the utmost esteem,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XVII.

To the Honourable —

June 8, 1714.

THE question you ask in relation to Mr. Addison and Philips, I shall answer in a

^a These words are since left out in Mr. Tickel's Edition, but were extant in all during Mr. Addison's life. P.
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