



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

XXIX. To the same.

Nutzungsbedingungen

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-56122](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-56122)

FROM MR. CONGREVE. 307

others, but suffered much even from his own party in the point of character, nor (I believe) received any amends in that of interest, as yet, whatever may be his prospects for the future.

This Gentleman, among a thousand others, is a great instance of the fate of all who are carried away by party-spirit, of any side. I wish all violence may succeed as ill: but am really amazed that so much of that sour and pernicious quality should be joined with so much natural good humour as, I think, Mr. Steele is possessed of.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

TO MR. CONGREVE.

April 7, 1715.

MR. Pope is going to Mr. Jervas's, where Mr. Addison is sitting for his picture; in the mean time amidst clouds of Tobacco at a coffee-house I write this letter. There is a grand revolution at Will's; Morice has quitted for a coffee-house in the city, and Titcomb is restored, to the great joy of Cromwell, who was at a great loss for a person to converse with upon the fathers and church-history; the

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know-

knowledge I gain from him, is entirely in painting and poetry; and Mr. Pope owes all his skill in astronomy to him and Mr. Whiston, so celebrated of late for his discovery of the longitude in an extraordinary copy of verses^a. Mr. Rowe's Jane Gray is to be play'd in Easter-week, when Mrs. Oldfield is to personate a character directly opposite to female nature; for what woman ever despised Sovereignty? You know Chaucer has a tale where a knight saves his head, by discovering it was the thing which all women most coveted. Mr. Pope's Homer is retarded by the great rains that have fallen of late, which causes the sheets to be long a drying: this gives Mr. Lintot great uneasiness, who is now endeavouring to corrupt the Curate of his parish to pray for fair weather, that his work may go on. There is a six-penny Criticism lately published upon the tragedy of the What-d'ye-call it, wherein he with much judgment and learning calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave. His grand charge is against the Pilgrim's Progress being read, which, he says, is directly levell'd at Cato's reading Plato; to back this censure, he goes on to tell you, that the Pilgrim's Progress being mentioned to be the eighth edition, makes the

^a Call'd, *An Ode on the Longitude*, in Swift and Pope's Miscellanies. P.

reflection evident, the Tragedy of Cato having just eight times (as he quaintly expresses it) visited the press. He has also endeavoured to show, that every particular passage of the play alludes to some fine part of tragedy, which, he says, I have injudiciously and profanely abused^b. Sir Samuel Garth's poem upon my Lord Clare's house, I believe, will be published in the Easter-week.

Thus far Mr. Gay, who has in his letter forestall'd all the subjects of diversion; unless it should be one to you to say, that I sit up till two a clock over Burgundy and Champagne; and am become so much a rake, that I shall be ashamed in a short time to be thought to do any sort of business. I fear I must get the gout by drinking; purely for a fashionable pretence to sit still long enough to translate four books of Homer. I hope you'll by that time be up again, and I may succeed to the bed and couch of my predecessor: pray cause the stuffing to be repaired, and the crutches shorten'd for me. The calamity of your gout is what all your friends, that is to say, all that know you, must share in; we desire you in your turn to condole

^b This curious piece was written by one Griffin a Player, assisted by Lewis Theobald. P.

with us, who are under a persecution, and much afflicted with a distemper which proves mortal to many poets, a Criticism. We have indeed some relieving intervals of laughter (as you know there are in some diseases) and it is the opinion of divers good guessers, that the last fit will not be more violent than advantageous; for poets assail'd by critics, are like men bitten by Tarantula's, they dance on so much the faster.

Mr. Thomas Burnet hath play'd the precursor to the coming of Homer, in a treatise called *Homerides*. He has since risen very much in his criticisms, and, after assailing Homer, made a daring attack upon the ° What-d'ye-call it. Yet is there not a Proclamation issued for the burning of Homer and the Pope by the common hangman; nor is the What-d'ye-call it yet silenced by the Lord chamberlain.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXX.

Mr. CONGREVE to Mr. POPE.

May 6.

I Have the pleasure of your very kind letter. I have always been obliged to you for your

° In one of his papers called *The Grumbler*. P.

friendship