

# ON HIS NEW BOOK

William (1628–1699), Baronet Temple

to Cosimo III (1642–1723), Grand Duke of Tuscany (1670–1723)

*Sir William Temple undertook various diplomatic missions for King Charles II throughout Europe, including negotiating the marriage of Princess Mary to the Prince of Orange. By the late 1660s, Temple had largely retired from active service and began writing his Observations Upon the United Provinces. Temple met the Grand Duke of Tuscany during the latter's 1669 visit to England.*

Dublin, 20 May 1673 [NS]

The letter of 15 February which Your Most Serene Highness did me the honour to write found me in Ireland, whither the necessary care of my family affairs had carried me, and obliged me to continue for three months. The matters to be settled before I made this voyage took up so much time that I have but just compassed it; and this has brought upon me a necessity of returning my most humble thanks much later than I could wish, but yet  
5 with all due esteem and devotion.

Your Highness does me the justice to regard me as one entirely belonging to you; and in this view it is that Your Highness' judgment concerning my papers has shown itself altogether partial to them. However, I will not presume to gainsay it, and thereby Your Highness will have afresh assurance that, like your will and pleasure,  
10 your judgment is with me incontestable.

When Your Highness signifies that reading my writings gave you any the least satisfaction, it gives me the greatest opinion of my own glory; and while I possess the letter you have honoured me with on this occasion, I have the greatest sense of my own riches. Methinks I have just made a voyage to the Indies and have purchased gold and precious stones for toys and trifles. Even in the dark and dull climate I am now in, I have light enough to discover  
15 most clearly that every line of Your Highness has a far greater lustre than the most excellent compositions that such a country as yours can produce, and appears like a touch from the hand of Raphael, infinitely superior to the confused designs of our English painters.

I did intend to send Your Highness the book entire, of which you have seen a small part with so much indulgence. But the bookseller at London being in such haste as to publish it in my absence, I found so many faults in the print that I was ashamed even to own it for mine and therefore omitted sending to Your Highness the first copy, which I stood obliged to do both by promise and duty. But by the good luck of the bookseller and through the humour of the present times, which at present are mighty inquisitive after anything that relates to Holland, the  
25 first impression has had so quick a sale that a second is now printing, and almost finished. I have myself taken care of the correcting of this edition. And, though I am upon my return to England, yet I have sent to my bookseller an express order by this post to deliver into Monsieur Tiviessi's hands the two first copies, to be sent to Your Most Serene Highness.

Had I a capacity to do it, I would have translated it into Italian and have begged leave to dedicate it to Your Highness, the honour of so great a name being the only means to protect so mean and weak a discourse. But as it was owing to the favour only which Your Highness has the goodness to show to the English tongue that I presumed to send you the pattern at first of this discourse. I send you the rest of it likewise, in the mean and ordinary dress of its own country, rather than adorned with the rich habit of a foreign one, which would ill  
30 become the simplicity of its birth as well as the meanness of its condition.

What remains but to entreat Your Highness to receive it as the proper effect of your own commands, as well as a testimony of that particular zeal and passion with which I am, and shall be all my life, Your Most Serene Highness' most humble, etc.