

[To] Mr [George] Cumberland, Bishopsgate,
Windsor Great Park
Hercules Buildings, Lambeth. Augst 26. 1799
Dear Cumberland

I ought long ago to have written to you to thank you for your kind recommendation to Dr Trusler which tho it has faild of success is not the less to be rememberd by me with Gratitude--

I have made him a Drawing in my best manner he has sent it back with a Letter full of Criticisms in which he says it accords not with his Intentions which are to Reject all Fancy from his Work. How far he Expects to please I cannot tell. But as I cannot paint Dirty rags & old Shoes where I ought to place Naked Beauty or simple ornament. I despair of Ever pleasing one Class of Men--Unfortunately our authors of books are among this Class how soon we Shall have a change for the better I cannot Prophecy. Dr Trusler says

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"Your Fancy from what I have seen of it. & I have seen variety at Mr Cumberlands seems to be in the other world or the World of Spirits. which accords not with my Intentions. which whilst living in This World Wish to follow the Nature of it" I could not help Smiling at the difference between the doctrines of Dr Trusler & those of Christ. But however for his own sake I am sorry that a Man should be so enamourd of Rowlandsons caricatures as to call them copies from life & manners or fit Things for a Clergyman to write upon

Pray let me intreat you to persevere in your Designing it is the only source of Pleasure all your other pleasures depend upon It. It is the Tree Your Pleasures are the Fruit. Your Inventions of Intellectual Visions are the Stamina of every thing you value. Go on if not for your own sake yet for ours who love & admire your works. but above all For the Sake of the Arts. Do not throw aside for any long time the honour intended you by Nature to revive the Greek workmanship. I study your outlines as usual just as if they were antiques.

As to Myself about whom you are so kindly Interested. I live by Miracle. I am Painting small Pictures from the Bible. For as to Engraving in which art I cannot reproach myself with any neglect yet I am laid by in a corner as if I did not Exist & Since my Youngs Night Thoughts have been publishd Even Johnson & Fuseli have discarded my Graver. But as I know that He who Works & has his health cannot starve. I laugh at Fortune & Go on & on. I think I foresee better Things than I have ever seen. My Work pleases my employer & I have an order for Fifty small Pictures at One Guinea each which is Something better than mere copying after another artist. But above all I feel myself happy & contented let what will come having passed now near twenty years in ups & downs I am used to them & perhaps a little practise in them may turn out to benefit. It is now Exactly Twenty years since I was upon the ocean of business & Tho I laugh at Fortune I am perswaded that She Alone is the Governor of Worldly Riches. & when it is Fit She will call on me till then I wait with Patience in hopes that She is busied among my Friends.

With Mine & My Wifes best compliments to Mrs Cumberland I remain

Yours sincerely
WILLm BLAKE