Letter from John Donne to Sir Thomas Egerton, 1601/1602 March 1: autograph manuscript signed, Papers of the More family of Loseley Park, Surrey. Transcription by Early Modern Manuscripts Online (EMMO). MS L.b.533, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.

leaf 1 recto

That offence wch was to god in this Matter, his Mercy hath assurd
my Conscience, ys pardoned. The Commission^{ers} who minister his An=
ger and Mercy encline also to remitt yt. Sr George More, of
whose learning and wisdome, I haue good knowledge, and therfore
good hope of his Moderac̄on, hath sayd, before his last goinge, y^{t}
he was so far from being any Cause or Mouer of my punishment
or disgrace that if yt fitted his reputac̄on, he would be a sutor
to y^{r} lp for my restoringe. All these Irons are knoed of; yett
I perish in as heavy fetters, as euer, whilst I languish vnder y^{r}
lps Anger. How soone my History is dispatchd! I was care=
fully and honestly bred; enioyd an indifferent fortune; I had,
(and I had vnderstandinge inough to valew yt) the sweetnes
and security of a freedome and indeꝑency; wthowt markinge
owt to my hopes, any place of profitt, I had a desire to be y^{r}
l̄ps seruant; by the fauor which y^{r} good Sonns loue to me, ob=
teind, I was 4 years yor l̄ps Secretary, not dishonest, nor gredy.
The sicknes of wch I dyed, ys, that I begonne in yor l̄ps house, y^{is}
loue. Wher I shalbe buried, I know not. It ys late now, for me
(but y^{t} Necessity, as yt hath continually an Autumne and a wytheringe,
so yt hath euer a springe, and must put forthe) to beginne that
Course, wch some years past, I purposd, to trauaile; though I could
now do yt, not much disaduantadgeably. But I haue some bri=
dle vpon me now, more then then, by my Marriadge of this
gentlewoman: in prouiding for whom, I can and wyll show mymy
self very honest, though not so fortunate. To seek p^{r}ferm^{t}
here, wth any but yor l̄p were a Madnes. Euery great Man, to
whom I shall address any such suite, wyll silently dispute the
Case, and say, would my L: keeper so disgraciously haue impri-
sond him, and flung him away, if he had not donne some other
great fault, of wch wee hear not? So that to the burden of
my true weaknesses, I shall haue this Addic̄on, of a very p^{r}iudi-
ciall suspicion, that I ame worse, then, I hope, yor l̄p dothe
think me, or would that the world should thinke. I haue

leaf 1 verso

therfore no way before me; but must turn back to yor l̄p, who
knowes, that Redemtion was no less worke then Creation. I know
my fault so well, and so well acknowledge yt, that I protest
I haue not so much as inwardly grudgd, nor startled at the
punishm^{t}. I know yor l̄ps disposic̄on so well, as though in course
of Iustice, yt be of proofe against clamors of Offendors, yet yt
ys not strong inough to resist yt selfe, and I know yt selfe

naturally enclines yt to pitty. I know myne own necessity owt of wch I humbly beg, that yor $\overline{\text{lp}}$ wyll so much entender yor hart towards me, as to giue me leaue to come into yor p^{r}sence. Affliction, Misery, and destruction are not there; and euery where els, wher I ame, they are.

1° Martii 160i.
Yo^{r} $\overline{\text{lps}}$
most poore and
most penitent
serunt
I: Donne.

leaf 2 recto

leaf 2 verso

To the right honorable
my very good L: and
Master, Sr Thomas Eger=
ton knight, L keeper of
the great Seal of En=
gland.