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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

Being The Third of his Letters

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

CXVI. Desires his friend to correct the Essay on Homer.

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LETTER XX.

June 5.

I Wish that, instead of writing to you once in two months, I could do you some service as often ; for I am arrived to an age when I am as sparing of words as most old men are of money, though I daily find less occasion for any. But I live in a time when benefits are not in the power of an honest man to bestow ; nor indeed of an honest man to receive, considering on what terms they are generally to be had. It is certain you have a full right to any I could do you, who not only monthly, but weekly of late, have loaded me with favours of that kind, which are most acceptable to veteran Authors ; those garlands which a Commentator weaves to hang about his Poet, and which are flowers both of his own gathering and painting too ; not blossoms springing from the dry Author.

It is very unreasonable after this, to give you a second trouble in revising the ^a *Essay on Homer*. But I look upon you as one sworn to suffer no errors in me : and tho' the common way with a Commentator be to erect them into beauties, the best office of a Critic is to correct and amend

^a The Editor did revise and correct it as it now stands in the last edition.

them.

them. There being a new edition coming out of *Homer*, I would willingly render it a little less defective, and the bookseller will not allow me time to do so myself.—

Lord B. returns to France very speedily, and it is possible I may go for three weeks or a month to Mr. Allen's in the summer; of which I will not fail to advertise you, if it suits your conveniency to be there and drink the waters more beneficially.

Forgive my scribbling so hastily and so ill. My eyes are at least as bad as my head: and it is with my heart only that I can pretend to be, to any real purpose,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXI.

July 18.

YOU may well expect letters from me of thanks: but the kind attention you shew to every thing that concerns me is so manifest, and so repeated, that you cannot but tell yourself how necessarily I must pay them in my heart, which makes it almost impertinent to say so. Your alterations to the Preface and Essay^a are just; and none more obliging to me than where you prove your concern, that my notions in my first writings should not be repug-

^a Prefix'd to his *Homer's Iliad*.