



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

XXVI. The last advice about his papers, to turn them into select Maxims
and Reflections, which Mr. Wycherley agreed to and begun before his
death.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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I think it a charity and an obligation; which I shall always acknowledge, with all sort of gratitude to you for it; who am, &c.

All the news I have to send you, is, that poor Mr. Betterton is going to make his Exit from the stage of this world, the Gout being gotten up into his head, and (as the Physicians say) will certainly carry him off suddenly.

L E T T E R XXVI.

May 2, 1710.

I Am sorry you persist to take ill my not accepting your invitation, and to find (if I mistake not) your exception not unmix'd with some suspicion. Be certain I shall most carefully observe your request, not to cross over, or deface the copy of your papers for the future, and only to mark in the margin the Repetitions. But as this can serve no further than to get rid of those repetitions, and no way rectify the Method, nor connect the Matter, nor improve the Poetry in expression or numbers, without further blotting, adding, and altering; so it really is my opinion and desire, that you should take your papers out of my hands into your own, and that no alterations may be made but when both us are present; when you may be satisfied with every blot, as well as

every addition, and nothing be put upon the papers but what you shall give your own sanction and assent to, at the same time.

Do not be so unjust, as to imagine from hence that I would decline any part of this task; on the contrary you know, I have been at the pains of transcribing some pieces, at once to comply with your desire of not defacing the copy, and yet to lose no time in proceeding upon the correction. I will go on the same way, if you please; tho' truly it is (as I have often told you) my sincere opinion, that the greater part would make a much better figure as Single Maxims and Reflections in prose, after the manner of your favourite Rochefoucault, than in verse^a: And this, when nothing more is done but marking the repetitions in the margin, will be an easy task to proceed upon, notwithstanding the bad Memory you complain of. I am unfeignedly, dear Sir, Your, &c.

A. POPE.

^a Mr. Wycherley lived five years after, to December, 1715, but little progress was made in this design, thro' his Old age, and the increase of his infirmities. However, some of the Verses, which had been touch'd by Mr. P. with

cccviii of these Maxims in Prose were found among his papers, which having the misfortune to fall into the hands of a Mercenary, were published in 1728 in octavo, under the Title of The Posthumous Works of William Wycherley, Esq. P.

LETTERS