



## **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 Second of his Letters

**Pope, Alexander**

**London, 1751**

III. Concerning painting; Mr. Gay's poem of the Fan.

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**Nutzungsbedingungen**

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I shall see you this winter with much greater pleasure than I could the last; and, I hope, as much of your time, as your attendance on the Duchefs<sup>b</sup> will allow you to spare to any friend, will not be thought lost upon one who is as much so as any man. I must also put you in mind, tho' you are now secretary to this Lady, that you are likewise secretary to nine other Ladies, and are to write sometimes for them too. He who is forced to live wholly upon those Ladies favours is indeed in as precarious a condition as any He who does what Chaucer says for sustenance; but they are very agreeable companions, like other Ladies, when a man only passes a night or so with them at his leisure, and away. I am,

Your, &c.

## L E T T E R III.

Aug. 23, 1713.

**J**UST as I receiv'd yours, I was set down to write to you, with some shame that I had so long deferred it. But I can hardly repent my neglect, when it gives me the knowledge how little you insist upon ceremony, and

<sup>a</sup> Duchefs of Monmouth, to whom he was just then made Secretary.

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how

how much a greater share in your memory I have, than I deserve. I have been near a week in London, where I am like to remain, till I become, by Mr. Jervas's help, *Elegans Formarum Spectator*. I begin to discover beauties that were till now imperceptible to me. Every corner of an eye, or turn of a nose or ear, the smallest degree of light or shade on a cheek, or in a dimple, have charms to distract me. I no longer look upon Lord Plausible as ridiculous, for admiring a Lady's fine tip of an ear and pretty elbow (as the *Plain-Dealer* has it) but am in some danger even from the ugly and disagreeable, since they may have their retired beauties, in one trait or other about them. You may guess in how uneasy a state I am, when every day the performances of others appear more beautiful and excellent, and my own more despicable. I have thrown away three Dr. Swifts, each of which was once my vanity, two Lady Bridgwaters, a Duchess of Montague, besides half a dozen Earls, and one knight of the garter. I have crucified Christ over again in effigie, and made a Madona as old as her mother St. Anne. Nay, what is yet more miraculous, I have rivall'd St. Luke himself in painting, and as, 'tis said, an angel came and finish'd his piece, so, you would swear, a devil put the last hand to mine, 'tis so begrim'd and smutt'd.

However

However I comfort myself with a Christian reflection, that I have not broken the commandment, for my pictures are not the likenesses of any thing in heaven above, or in earth below, or in the water under the earth. Neither will any body adore or worship them, except the Indians should have a sight of them, who, they tell us, worship certain idols purely for their ugliness.

I am very much recreated and refreshed with the news of the advancement of the *Fan*<sup>a</sup>, which, I doubt not, will delight the eye and sense of the fair, as long as that agreeable machine shall play in the hands of posterity. I am glad your fan is mounted so soon, but I would have you varnish and glaze it at your leisure, and polish the sticks as much as you can. You may then cause it to be borne in the hands of both sexes, no less in Britain, than it is in China; where it is ordinary for a Mandarin to fan himself cool after a debate, and a Statesman to hide his face with it when he tells a grave lie.

I am, &c.

<sup>a</sup> A Poem of Mr. Gay's, so intitled.