



## **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**

VI. From Mr. Gay at Bath; on the remarkable death of two lovers by lightning, with their epitaph.

---

---

**Nutzungsbedingungen**

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55314](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55314)

has much out-shin'd all the French ladies, as she did the English before: I am sorry for it, because it will be detrimental to our holy religion, if heretical women should eclipse those Nuns and orthodox Beauties, in whose eyes alone lie all the hopes we can have, of gaining such fine gentlemen as you to our church.

Your, &c.

I wish you joy of the birth of the young prince, because he is the only prince we have, from whom you have had no expectations and no disappointments.

## LETTER VI.

From Mr. GAY to Mr. F—.

Stanton Harcourt, Aug. 9, 1718.

**T**HE only news that you can expect to have from me here, is news from heaven, for I am quite out of the world, and there is scarce any thing can reach me except the noise of thunder, which undoubtedly you have heard too. We have read in old authors of high towers levell'd by it to the ground, while the humble valleys have escap'd: the only thing that is proof against it is the laurel, which, however,

ever, I take to be no great security to the brains of modern authors. But to let you see that the contrary to this often happens, I must acquaint you, that the highest and most extravagant heap of towers in the universe, which is in this neighbourhood, stands still undefaced, while a cock of barley in our next field has been consumed to ashes. Would to God that this heap of barley had been all that had perished! for unhappily beneath this little shelter sate two much more constant Lovers than ever were found in Romance under the shade of a beech-tree. John Hewet was a well-set man of about five and twenty, Sarah Drew might be rather called comely than beautiful, and was about the same age. They had pass'd thro' the various labours of the year together, with the greatest satisfaction; if she milk'd, 'twas his morning and evening care, to bring the cows to her hand; it was but last fair that he bought her a present of green silk for her straw hat, and the posie on her silver ring was of his chusing. Their love was the talk of the whole neighbourhood; for scandal never affirm'd, that they had any other views than the lawful possession of each other in marriage. It was that very morning that he had obtain'd the consent of her parents, and it was but till the next week that they were to wait to be happy. Perhaps in  
the

the intervals of their work they were now talking of the wedding cloaths, and John was suiting several sorts of poppies and field flowers to her complexion, to chuse her a knot for the wedding-day. While they were thus busied, (it was on the last of July between two or three in the afternoon) the clouds grew black, and such a storm of lightning and thunder ensued, that all the labourers made the best of their way to what shelter the trees and hedges afforded. Sarah was frightened, and fell down in a swoon on a heap of barley. John, who never separated from her, sat down by her side, having raked together two or three heaps, the better to secure her from the storm. Immediately there was heard so loud a crack, as if heaven had split asunder; every one was now solicitous for the safety of his neighbour, and called to one another throughout the field: No answer being returned to those who called to our Lovers, they stept to the place where they lay; they perceived the barley all in a smoke, and then spied this faithful pair: John with one arm about Sarah's neck, and the other held over her, as to skreen her from the lightning. They were struck dead, and stiffer'd in this tender posture. Sarah's left eye-brow was sing'd, and there appeared a black spot on her breast: her lover was all over black, but not the

the least signs of life were found in either. Attended by their melancholy companions, they were convey'd to the town, and the next day were interr'd in Stanton-Harcourt Church-yard. My Lord Harcourt, at Mr. Pope's and my request, has caused a stone to be placed over them, upon condition that we furnish'd the Epitaph, which is as follows;

*When Eastern lovers feed the fun'ral fire,  
On the same pile the faithful pair expire:  
Here pitying Heav'n that virtue mutual found,  
And blasted both, that it might neither wound.  
Hearts so sincere th' Almighty saw well pleas'd,  
Sent his own lightning, and the victims seiz'd.*

But my Lord is apprehensive the country people will not understand this, and Mr. Pope says he'll make one with something of Scripture in it, and with as little of poetry as Hopkins and Sternhold<sup>a</sup>.  
Your, &c.

<sup>a</sup> The Epitaph was this,

Near this place lie the bodies of  
JOHN HEWET and MARY DREW,  
an industrious young Man  
and Virtuous Maiden of this Parish;  
Who being at Harvest-Work  
(with several others)

were in one instant killed by Lightning  
the last day of July 1718.

Think not, by rig'rous Judgment seiz'd,  
A Pair so faithful could expire;  
Victims so pure Heav'n saw well pleas'd,  
And snatch'd them in celestial fire.

Live