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William Beckford

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William Beckford : The Consummate Collector: William Beckford's Letters to His Bookseller before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Consummate Collector: William Beckford's Letters to His Bookseller:

This collection of over 350 letters written by William Beckford to his bookseller George Clarke over the years 1830 to 1834, gives a vivid picture of the insatiable connoisseur in the act of gathering the books and prints that ultimately became part of the library of the Duke of Hamilton, sold in 1882. This correspondence, with the addition of Clarke's own letters to Beckford, constitutes the most complete documentary record of Beckford's collecting habits and literary pursuits in existence. They are significant as historical documents that guide the reader into the golden age of the London book trade with its array of wealthy collectors, publishing houses, auction firms, book and print dealers. They also shed light on the negotiations with the publisher Richard Bentley for the publication of Italy; with Sketches of Spain and Portugal and trace the anxiety Beckford experienced in his fruitless efforts to sell the Episodes of Vathek. The editor's explanatory notes are comprehensive, revealing Beckford's enthusiasms and the fury of his attack against competitors in the field. The Consummate Collector will be warmly received by bibliophiles, historians, and readers interested in one of the most fascinating men of his time.

About the Author Robert J. Gemmett, Professor Emeritus of the State University of New York, is an acknowledged expert on the life and works of William Beckford. He is the author of *William Beckford*, a critical study of his literary works, and *Beckford's Fonthill: The Rise of a Romantic Icon*. He has also published editions of Beckford's *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters*, *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents*, *Modern Novel Writing* and *Azemia* and edited volume 3 of *Sale Catalogues of Libraries of Eminent Persons*, devoted to Beckford's book sales.