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LAURENCE STERNE



Sterne and his Family

Original painting by B Wesley Rand

Beaux & Belles of England



Laurence Sterne

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Written by

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LAURENCE STERNE

CHAPTER I.

IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE



AT Paris he had made a friend of a half French, half Irish priest, the Abbé Mackarty, who took immense pains in furnishing him with hints for his journey, kindness which Mr. Sterne thoughtfully acknowledged by commissioning Mrs. Sterne to bring over a watch-chain for him ("’twill be a present worth a kingdom to him," said he). The abbé did not allow his kindness to stop there, but, knowing something of Toulouse, found out a residence for them, and planned all their expenses. Mr. Sterne seems to have been very grateful, and wrote to his friends of these little kindnesses.

They were lodged delightfully, just outside the town, in a stately house, elegant, charmingly fur-

nished, built in the form of a hotel, with a court in front, and opening behind on pretty gardens laid out in serpentine walks, and considered the finest in the place. These grounds were so large and so much admired, that all the ladies and gentlemen of that quarter used to come and promenade there on the autumn evenings, and were made welcome. Inside there were a fine dining-room and a spacious reception-room, "quite as good as Baron d'Holbach's at Paris;" three handsome bedrooms with dressing-rooms, and two good rooms below, dedicated to Yorick, where he wrote his adventures. There were cellars in abundance. Mr. Sterne was in raptures with it all — revelled in his *seigneurie* of such a mansion — thought it only "too good by half for us;" but felt comfort in the wonderfully moderate rent, — only thirty pounds a year! For this modest rent, too, his landlord, M. Sligniac, was to "keep up" the gardens. Nay, there was a pretty country-house not far off — an old château with a pavilion attached to it — where Mr. Sterne used also to write his "Shandys," and which he christened "Don Pringello's," in compliment to one of the Crazy Castle set, and which M. Sligniac allowed him to use, all included in the same modest amount! Something of this is to be

accounted for the cheapness of the times. Even forty years ago such charming retreats on the edge of a French provincial town were to be secured by the economic stranger. But something too, I suspect, must be placed to the account of the tenant's pleasant ways.

The whole establishment was organised in a few days. Mr. Sterne loved to revel in his new house-keeping. They had an excellent cook, a *femme-de-chambre*, and "a good-looking *laquais*." He found out that they could live "for very, very little." Wood was the only thing dear; and, by and by, they found that, keeping a capital table, £250 would be their whole yearly expenditure. He at once put himself on a course of ass's milk three times a day, and began to get strong again.

For the first fortnight or so he missed his Paris friends, and wrote home a little dismally. Some letters, too, from his Epicurean friend Hall set him longing to be back again, and made him maunder out regrets and fears in a lament of worse than his average French. "Ce sera là" (at Crazy Castle) "où reposera ma cendre—et se sera là où mon cousin viendra répondre les pleurs dues a notre amitié." But he soon began to recover his spirits, —talked boastfully "of giving the blue

devils a drubbing," — and, as usual, began to make plenty of friends. He was dining with Mr. Hewit a few days after he arrived, and before long knew everybody. It was gay enough. For the Countess Fumel and M. Bonrepos "received" nearly every night of the week. The old President d'Orbesson kept a hospitable table — "*donne toujours à manger*," wrote the little scandal-mongers of the place, "*et vit toujours avec Madame La Garse*."

About the end of September "an epidemic vile fever" visited Toulouse, and swept away hundreds. Mr. Sterne, just then getting restored, was seized, and was very nearly "journeying on to the other world." It clung to him for six weeks, during which time he was in the hands of the Toulouse faculty, "the errantest of all the charlatans in Europe, or the most ignorant of all pretending fools." They had all but sent him travelling down the valley of the great Shadow, when it occurred to him to dispense altogether with their aid, and leave his cure to "Dame Nature," who, "dear goddess, has saved me fifty different pinching bouts." This impunity, he told the lord of Crazy Castle, was at last beginning to make him think that he was to "leave you all by translation, and

not by fair death." Nothing indeed could damp that wonderful spirit which made up for a miserable constitution, and which made him joyously chant *poculum elevatum* when barely convalescent ; " *et cela etant*," he sings from his pavilion to Hall Stevenson in his incorrigible French, "having a bottle of Frontiniac and glass at my right hand, I drink, dear Antony, to thy health and happiness."

By the middle of October he was "stout and foolish again, as a happy man can wish to be," and had actually finished his next "Shandy" volume. He had dashed in his travels, as it were, at a white heat, and was painting in Uncle Toby's loves with great delight. He was meditating, too, schemes of "other works," — no doubt a dusky hint of the "Sentimental Journey." There is room indeed to suspect that the seventh volume of "Tristram Shandy" was this "other work," — the first portion of a "Sentimental Journey" commenced, and abandoned for the present. It is likely that he began at once with my Uncle Toby's amours, and, being later pressed for copy, had thrown in his unfinished travels as a make-weight. It will be seen at a glance that these travels belong properly to the "Sentimental Journey," and beyond that violent and improbable

introduction of Uncle Toby and Trim into the cathedral at Auxerre—clearly done as a link—have nothing to do with the adventures of “Tristram.”

For the moment, he had got tired of the provincial town. The place was not to his taste, though about as good as any town in the south of France; but he lays his disgust principally to the account of the “eternal platitude” of the French character. He, too, was sick of the local parliament and its wrangles. “If I do not mind,” he said, “I shall grow most stupid and sententious” by mere contagion. His daughter, however, relished her new life much, and, with masters in music, dancing, and French, was rapidly adapting herself to the new country.


Already he was looking forward to leaving as soon as the winter was over. He had said that they should all set out for Baréges or Bagnières, and after taking the waters, of which there can be no question he had serious need, he proposed returning home. Mrs. Sterne, however, wished to stay another year, “to save money;” and this “opposition of wishes,” said Mr. Sterne, “though it will not be as sour as lemon, yet ’twill not be as sweet as sugar candy.” Still he took this opposi-

tion good-humouredly. "My dear wife," he said, "is against all schemes of additional expense, which wicked propensity (though not of despotic power) yet I cannot suffer. But she may talk, I will do my own way, and she will acquiesce without a word of debate upon the subject. Who can say so much in praise of his wife? few, I trow." At the moment this debate was going on there was "bitter cold weather," going on for fourteen days together, which has obliged us to "sit with whole fagots of wood lighted up to our noses." Snow was on the ground, and by the time the winter was over, he was complaining of agues and the moisture. It does therefore seem a little unreasonable in Mrs. Sterne to seek to detain her delicate husband another winter at such a place, even if he deserved pains and penalties for his own act in bringing them there. And it must be borne in mind that the Pyrenees, where was the spot he wished to go to, was actually in sight.

He had an invaluable banker up at Paris, Mr. Foley, of the firm of Panchaud & Foley, who was to him more as a warm friend than a mere banker. This was but the natural operation of Mr. Sterne's delightful art of attaching strangers. M. Brousse was the correspondent at Toulouse, and by and by,

in spite of that marvellous cheapness, Mr. Foley had to remit very frequently through M. Brousse. The banker was the intimate of Baron d'Holbach, their common friend. Down at Toulouse also was a Mrs. M—— (who may have been that Mrs. Meadows who turns up later in England), whom Mr. Foley also knew, with whom Mr. Sterne used to dine. The Hewits were still there; M. Tollot, his Paris friend, was not; but Sterne heartily wished he could lead Sir Charles down. Mr. Woodhouse, "an amiable, worthy man," was also there, on his road to Italy. They had altogether a very pleasant, lively, noisy little coterie, — a sort of "happy society, living together like brothers and sisters." They met every night together, "fiddling, laughing, and singing, and cracking jokes."

Toward Christmas, his friends, the Hewits, came on a visit to him, and the lively host was presently organising a pleasant entertainment suited to the season. "You will scarce believe the news I tell you," he wrote gravely to his friend Foley; "there are a company of English strollers arrived here, who are to act comedies all the Christmas, and are now busy in making dresses and preparing some of our best comedies." He



was, in fact, getting up amateur theatricals with Mrs. M——, his daughter, and others of his society, "to whom," he adds in his mysterious French, "I proposed this scheme *soulagement*." They "did very well." They had "a grand orchestra," and for the first performance Mr. Sterne selected "The Busy Body," and "The Journey to London." Should we not like to see the playbill of those Toulouse theatricals? He spoke of adapting "The Journey to London" to their own adventures, and calling it "The Journey to Toulouse." We can scarcely speculate as to the part he would have chosen for himself in this last play, but in the "Busy Body" Marplot would have fitted him exactly, and he would have played it delightfully.

The winter passed by, and it came to the end of March when he went on a visit to his friend Hewit, who lived in the country not very far away. From that house he wrote to that "honest soul," Mr. Foley, dating his letter from Toulouse. "Though that's a mistake," he begins oddly, "I mean the date of the place." His letters to this gentleman were now pretty regularly pitched in the one key. He was wanting remittances through "Messrs. Brousse & Sons." He had not

“five louis to vapour with in this land of coxcombs. My wife’s compliments.” He is visiting “Messrs. Brousse & Sons” every post day this last fortnight. “When a man has no more than a half-dozen guineas in his pocket, and a thousand miles from home, and in a country where he can as soon raise the Devil as a six livres piece to go to market with, you cannot envy my situation. God bless you; remit me the balance.” “Poverty of spirit,” he wrote again, “is worse than poverty of purse by ten thousand per cent.,” and encloses a draft for a hundred and thirty pounds, which he requires to be cashed by return of post, or he will send “you and all your commissions to the D—l. I don’t hear that they have tasted one fleshy banquet all this Lent. You will make an excellent *grille*. As for Panchaud, they can make nothing of him but *Bouillon*.”

By April he had already settled on leaving for Bagnières. About the beginning of June he was to “decamp like a patriarch” with his whole family, and stay three months. For such an expedition money was wanting, and the raising of these supplies brought about a little misunderstanding between him and his banker which is very characteristic. It was all founded on a mistake, but

shows how much he had attached this "honest soul" to him. "After all," he says at the close, "I heartily forgive you, for you have done me a signal service in mortifying me, and I am determined to grow rich upon it. Adieu, and God send you wealth and happiness."

It turned out to be a misunderstanding. The banker was overwhelmed with business, and had forgotten the application. He wrote back, hurt at the tone of his friend's letter, enclosing the money, and bidding him never scruple to draw on him for any occasion of the kind. Mr. Sterne acknowledged his kindness in a grateful and graceful letter, saying "I was the best friends with you in the world before my letter had got a league." Even in that remote part of the world he had made out friends who could be useful to him in such an emergency; and a "Mr. R.," of Montpellier, whom he had never even seen, had sent him a letter of credit for £200 which he had then in his desk. This good-natured "Mr. R." Smollett helps us to identify as a Mr. Ray, the banker of Montpellier.

Again Mr. Sterne had to write to his archbishop, setting out a catalogue of his sufferings with a pleasant *bonhomie*, and pleading for an

extension of leave, in a style of his own that almost amounts to a fascination. It has been before remarked what an engaging tone he could assume to those who were above him ; and these letters are significant proofs of his cordial relation, in spite of secret enemies and open calumny, with his episcopal superior.

“TOULOUSE, May 7, 1763.

“MY LORD :—Though there is little in this part of the world worth giving you an account of, and of myself, perhaps, the least of anything in it, yet bad as the subject is, it is my duty to say something about it, and your Grace, for that reason, I am sure, will bear with the trouble.

“It was this time twelve months that I thought myself so far recovered, that I was preparing to return home, when the attention to my daughter's health, who had had an increase of an asthma under which she had lingered some time, determined my route otherwise ; as an original weakness of lungs was her case as well as my own, I thought it just to give the daughter the same chance for her life which had saved her father's. Of this I wrote y^r Grace a letter, but had scarce sent it to the post, when (from what cause I know not, except

the extreme weakness of the organ) I broke a vessel in my lungs, w^{ch} could not be closed till I had almost bled to death ; so that to the motives of going with my daughter into the south of France, I had that superadded — my own immediate preservation ; accordingly I have been fixed here with my family these ten months, and by God's blessing it has answered all I wished for, with regard to my daughter ; I cannot say so much for myself, having since the first day of my arrival here been in a continual warfare with agues, fevers, and physicians — the 1st brought my blood to so poor a state, that the physicians found it necessary to enrich it with strong bouillons, and strong bouillons and soups a santé threw me into fevers, and fevers brought on loss of blood, and loss of blood agues — so that as war begets poverty, poverty peace, etc., — has this miserable constitution made all its revolutions ; how many more it may sustain, before its last and great one, God knows — like the rest of my species, I shall fence it off as long as I can. I am advised now to try the virtues of the waters of Banyars, and shall encamp like a patriarch w^h my whole household upon the side of the Pyreneans, this summer and winter at Nice ; from whence in spring I shall

return home, never, I fear, to be of service, at least as a preacher. I have preached too much, my Lord, already; and was my age to be computed either by the number of sermons I have preached, or the infirmities they have brought upon me, I might be truly said to have the claim of a *Miles emeritus*, and was there a Hôtel des Invalides for the reception of such established upon any salutary plain betwixt here and Arabia Felix, I wd beg your Grace's interest to help me into it — as it is, I rest fully assured in my heart of y^r Grace's indulgence to me in my endeavours to add a few quiet years to this fragment of my life — and with my wishes for a long and a happy one to y^r Grace, I am, from the truest veneration of y^r character, — Your most dutiful servant,

“L. STERNE.”

By the middle of June they were all at Bagnières. We have not a single line to record their doings at that watering-place. He expected “much health and much amusement from the concourse of adventurers from all corners of the earth.” But it did not come up to his expectations, for the following year he spoke contemptuously of its pleasures as compared with those of

Scarborough. He had laid out a little expedition from thence over the Pyrenees, and possibly a week in Spain, with a view to materials for his Shandean travels. We know not whether he ever carried out this scheme. We can only regret the loss, for he has been so successful with his French brush: how he would have revelled in the Spanish tints! We have lost chapters that would have been as bright and true in tone as *Gil Blas*.

Later, they went down to Marseilles, and also paid a visit to Aix, neither of which places they liked much. Aix was a "Parliament town," and Toulouse had given him a surfeit of such. And to all these places he took with him Mrs. Sterne and his Lydia. It was now October, and getting on fast to another winter. His chest admonished him it was time to look out for a sheltered retreat; and there can be no question but that he was yearning for England, and would have gladly gone home in the summer. It is not too much to assume that he had to yield to domestic considerations, either of economy or affection; and that Mrs. Sterne, by those silent tactics which he described so pleasantly, had her way. They were determined not to return to Toulouse, and by the

5th of October they were all established at the famous sanatory city of Montpellier.

Montpellier was at this season in high repute for delicate persons, and invalids of all countries fled thither from their own hard winters. It was considered a handsome town, "a magazine of houses;" which were more showy inside than out. Socially it was very gay, it having Courts of Justice, "*cours souverains*," an Intendency, and, above all, the Assembly of the Estates of Languedoc, who met there with all due state. It was, besides, the seat of a military government, and was full of "*gens de condition*." It was, moreover, famous in France for the special attraction of its women. There reigned here the most delightful absence of all restraint. The natives were noted for their pleasant, easy manners; their good humour and wit; and the easy welcome they gave to strangers. It was remarked that even those who were ugly had a certain attraction which it was hard to resist.¹ A dangerous locality, certainly, for Mr. Sterne's inflammable heart. Strangers were very welcome, and English abounded. There were many parties, and much fashionable high play always going forward.

¹ See Madame du Noyer's lively "*Lettres Galantes*," tom. i. p. 114.

Strange to say, Mr. Sterne did not seem to like it. He was pining for home; and actually in the first week after his arrival was laying out departing in February for England, "where my heart has been fled these six months" — then stay a fortnight in Paris — pass on to Brussels — Rotterdam, "for the sake of seeing Holland" (*materiel* for a book of travels)! and "embark from thence to London." This was five or six months before he could hope to depart, and with exactly such castle-building had he entertained himself during his first visit at Toulouse. At this time, too, he was tempted by an offer of going to Italy, in the quality of what he has called "Bear Leader," but he did not like either the terms that were proposed, or the bear he was to lead.

His Toulouse friend, Mr. Hewit, was also at Montpellier. But a very agreeable variety was produced by the arrival of some Paris friends, and that M. Tollot, who he had hoped "would bring Sir Charles" to Toulouse. This gentleman, who seems to have always had a genuine kindness for him, was delighted to meet again "*le bon et agréable* Tristram," as he called him, and stayed nearly a fortnight. They talked together over future plans, and M. Tollot drew a pleasant picture of

future amusements together — how they were to find Mr. Sterne a room at their hotel in Paris — how there was to be a cover regularly laid for him each day — how they were to be joined by Hall Stevenson, and travel home to England together. Mr. Sterne entered into the scheme warmly, and, as will be seen, when passing through Paris, went and stayed with them as proposed.

M. Tollot also talked a good deal with the Hewits, and they told him some particulars about Mr. Sterne's Toulouse life. "*Le bon et agréable Tristram*" with all his lively gifts, was naturally made welcome everywhere ; but poor Mrs. Sterne, perhaps not so *recherché*, would pursue him everywhere. She clung to him tenaciously — "*Elle voulait être de tout,*" says the Frenchman who tells the story. Nothing affords such wicked delight to French society as a nuptial exhibition of this sort — it gives occasion to all manner of smart sayings. But Mr. Sterne accepted his wife's pursuit, which is reported to have made him pass "*d'assez mauvais momens,*" with "the patience of an angel." ¹ This letter is not of much moment, nor indeed of much dignity in a historical sense ; yet still it has some little value, for without disparaging Mrs. Sterne,

¹ Mr. Cooper's "Seven Letters of Sterne."

who, after all, meant well, it shows him as a good-humoured as well as a sensible husband.

That winter nearly passed by. He got over the Christmas in tolerable health, and on the 5th of January was writing a kind, warm letter to his friend Mr. Foley, chiding him for not writing "even a single line, be it only to tell me how your watch goes," which he left unfinished on his desk and then went out for a ride toward Pezenas. Yorick was always destined to be unlucky in his horses. Coming home, his beast broke down and refused to stir. "He was as immovable as Don Quixote's wooden horse, and my arm was dislocated whipping him. 'This,' quoth I, 'is inhuman.' 'No,' says a peasant on foot behind me, 'I'll drive him home.' So he laid on his posteriors, but 'twas needless; as his face was turned toward Montpellier he began to trot." The result was that Mr. Sterne returned home in an aguish fever, which kept him ten days in his bed, and the unfinished letter was not despatched until the 15th. . . . He was low-spirited after this, and seems to have suffered terribly in what he forcibly calls "this scuffle with death." He adds that "unless the spirit of prophecy deceive me, I shall not die, but live," and then breaks into a

very remarkable declaration, — “In the meantime, dear Foley, let us live as merrily but as innocently as we can. It has ever been as good, if not better, than a bishopric to me — and I desire no other.”

About this time he wrote to his publisher Becket, being anxious about the moneys that were due to him.

“I wrote my last letter to you from hence with so much haste, that I forgot the principal thing I had in my Intention, and which I had in a former letter desired you to be so good as to inform me about — I mean what is the real state of our accounts ; or in other words, how many sets of ‘ Shandy ’ you have got off to Booksellers and others since the 7th of last April. I am much obliged to you for your leave to let me draw upon you for the Summ you mentioned — but should be infinitely more easy to know how much you have in your hands of mine. Wherefore dear sir favour me with an exact state of this — for tho’ ’tis more a matter of Curiosity than any Thing else — Yet I would rather have it satisfyed now than 3 months hence when I shall see you and have all things in course settled. . .” etc.¹

¹ It is evidence of the rarity of Sterne autographs, that this letter was priced in the catalogue at £23.

By and by more English arrived. Lord Rochford, passing through on his way to Italy, made him a call, and told him how Mr. Fox — “my worthy friend,” Mr. Sterne calls him — was then, in Paris, and how the gay metropolis was almost full of English. His health was mending slowly, and his physicians, after treating him ineffectually, suddenly informed him, almost to his amusement, “If you stay any longer here, sir, it will be fatal to you.” “And why, good people,” answered the patient, naturally enough, “were you not kind enough to tell me this sooner?”

This treatment was indeed barbarous, and reads like a bit of Molière. Anything more ludicrously inefficient for a consumptive patient cannot be conceived. They almost poisoned him with a succession of what they called *bouillons refraichissants*, the elements of which were “a cock flayed alive, and boiled with poppy seeds, these pounded in a mortar, afterwards passed through a sieve.” There was besides to be present one crawfish, which should be a male one. This was *de rigueur*, a female crawfish being likely to be fatal! This precious composition must have been devised specially for the English, and for that malady of “consumption” which we are told was peculiar to

them. There can be no question but that the physician who prescribed this primitive nostrum for Mr. Sterne was the same M. F—— whom Smollett consulted when he visited Montpellier the following year. It is the most amusing passage in his travels. He was indeed an arrant charlatan, and Mrs. Sterne, comparing notes with the Scotch physician at Toulouse, told him of an unhappy English youth named Oswald, son to a merchant, who had fallen a victim to their caprices. The young man, in the last stage of consumption, took his *bouillons rafraichissants* for above a month with the worst results; and on his complaining was told precisely as Mr. Sterne had been told, — “Sir, the air of this place is too sharp for your lungs.” “Then,” said the other, “you are a sordid villain to have kept me here.” He went to Toulouse, where he died in a few weeks.

Mr. Sterne, when he had received this cheering notice from his physicians, told Mrs. Sterne that he must return home at once; and it is plain that here was a text for another unpleasant matrimonial discussion as to the point of residence; which ended in each party resolving to go their own road. Mrs. Sterne was determined to stay two or three years more in France, in which “I am truly pas-

sive," says he — with the exception that he would rather have his daughter with him in England.

He looked forward with delight to the idea of getting home, for he was heartily tired of provincial France. The States of Languedoc were already met at Montpellier, "a fine raree show, with the usual accompaniments of fiddlers, bears, and puppet-shows;" of which spectacle, too, Miss Knight has left us an admirable photograph; but it had no attraction for him. He will fly from them with alacrity; and, except for grief of losing her whom he calls "my little slut," he will step into his chaise in high spirits. "Every step toward England he fancied will help to put his poor frame to rights." It needed repair sadly. But Mrs. Sterne had her way. The plea was the health of her daughter. He was most earnest in his wish to have them with him; as, indeed, it seems to have been his wish to the last. She selected Montauban for her place of abode, a little town close to Toulouse, which also boasted its "little senate" and provincial "*haute volée*" of the Sword and Gown.

CHAPTER II.

PARIS

MR. STERNE was now back again in Paris. He stayed, as was arranged, at M. Tollot's hotel in the Quartier St. Honoré, where he found "good and generous souls." From Paris he wrote to his "dear Lydia" one of those warm, affectionate letters which are delightful to read. He sends her down a little present of books — *Spectators* and "Metastasio;" "but I beg my girl," writes the father, "to read the former, and only make the latter her amusement." He also sent her a guitar, and tells her good-humouredly not to go on with the drawing, as "you have no genius for it, though you never could be made to believe it." He reminds her of his "last request," which was to make no friendship with the "French women;" not that he thought so badly of them all, but he was afraid of her acquiring the false French manners then in vogue. "Nay, I am so jealous of you," goes on

the fond and careful father, "that I should be miserable were I to see you had the least grain of coquetry in your composition." The fact was, he already did see some few grains, and was fearful lest it should get further developed.

As usual, he found Paris delightful. There were plenty of English, and many Irish and Scotch. Wilkes, staying at the Hôtel de Saxe, Rue Colom-bier, was laughing loudly with D'Holbach, but at the same time was nervously expecting that sentence of expulsion from the House of Commons which came later. The real lion of the hour — just as Garrick had been that of the past year, and Sterne again that of the year before — was David Hume, the new ambassador's secretary — to the amazement of his friends at home, who only knew him as a correct writer and acute thinker. He was heard of in the gayest, the most exclusive *salons*, with the fairest ladies of the capital, sitting, as it were, at his feet, and listening to deism, explained in rude limping French.

With him, as well as with Wilkes, Sterne now became acquainted. Of Hume, he heard that story which so well illustrates the niceties of the French tongue, and which he afterward fitted into his "Sentimental Travels." More likely he him-

self, "at our ambassador's table," had heard "the prompt French marquis" ask the secretary if he was Home the poet. "No," answered the other, mildly. "*Tant pis !*" said the "prompt French marquis," perhaps too promptly. "It is Hume the historian," some one then whispered. "*Tant mieux !*" said the marquis, adroitly, repairing his mistake. "And Mr. Hume, who is a man of an excellent heart, returned thanks for both." Only a Frenchman could have extricated himself so skilfully. It occurred to him again later, when on his Sentimental Travels.

This was the Lord Hertford, who had just returned Wilkes's visit, though the latter was fashionably considered an enemy of king, country, and all good men. He had also just given that wonderful form of attestation as to Wilkes's illness: "In witness whereof, I have affixed my hand and seal," which was amusing all the English in Paris. There were many Jacobites, too, associating with the English travelling Whigs in the greatest harmony, and, among others, the uncle of the lord of Crazy Castle, and the real *de jure* lord of Crazy Castle. This was a Mr. Laurence Trotter, who had left Skelton Castle in the '45 troubles, and had been compelled, like many other

adherents of the fallen cause, to flutter about foreign courts and capitals. He was, however, "eternally joyous and jockundissimus;" and Mr. Sterne met him at houses of every shade of politics. He dined with him at Lord Tavistock's; and, on another occasion, found him at the table of Lord Beauchamp the ambassador's son. Such happy toleration at a season when the bitterness of home politics was extreme, seems extraordinary.

One Sunday Mr. Sterne was invited to preach before the ambassador. On a Sunday in January the little chapel in the Faubourg St. Honoré, "près barrière du Louvre," had echoed the dull utterances of a Doctor Trail, who wearied Wilkes sadly. But now it was filled to overflowing with the most motley crowd. It may be questioned if it ever held such a congregation; there were all nations, believers and unbelievers, Humes, Diderots, D'Holbachs, all gathered to hear famous Parson Yorick. The sermon was worthy of the occasion, and was perhaps the strangest of all his strange sermons. He selected Hezekiah ("an odd subject you and mother will say," he wrote to Lydia)—and giving out the following text—"And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things

that are in mine house have they seen : there is nothing among all my treasures that I have not showed them," — startled the audience with, — "And where was the harm, you'll say, in all this?"

He then proceeded to explain the whole story, in a pleasant discourse, admirable in style, and very practical in tone. Nothing can be more admirable than his remarks on the motive of human actions.

"There is scarce anything which the human heart bears worse than an analysis of this kind.

"We are a strange compound ; and something foreign from what charity would suspect, so eternally twists itself into what we do, that not only in momentous concerns where interest lists under it all the powers of disguise, but even in the most indifferent of our actions not worth a fallacy, by force of habit we continue it. So that whatever a man is about, observe him — he stands armed inside and out with two motives, an ostensible one for the world, and another which he reserves for his own private use ; this, you will say, the world has no concern with — it might have been so ; but by obtruding the wrong motive upon the world, and stealing from it a character, instead of winning one, we give it a right, and a temptation along

with it, to inquire into the affair." He then, with a delicate and dramatic touch, deals with the motives which govern the ordinary hypocrisies of life. La Rochefoucault had preached on the same text before. "Is it that the principles of religion want strength, or that the real passion for which is good and worthy will not carry us high enough? God! thou knowest they carry us too high, — we want not to be, but to seem. Look out of your door, take notice of that man: see what disquieting, intriguing, and shifting he is content to go through, merely to be thought a man of plain dealing! three grains of honesty would save him all this trouble.

"Another, going on almost in the same track. With what an inflexible sanctity of deportment he sustains himself as he advances; every line in his face writes abstain, every stride looks like a check upon his desires; see, I beseech you, how he is cloak'd up with sermons and prayers, etc. Is there no serving God without all this? Must the garb of religion be extended so wide to the danger its of rending? Yes, truly, it will not hide the secret; and what is that? That the saint has no religion at all."

The broken, scattered manner in which it is

printed gives us a hint of the dramatic fashion in which it was delivered. The questions, pauses, and the very look of the preacher must have made it a very original performance ; not one of his little portraits, too, but would have found a counterpart in the great vortex of Parisian society, and touched a chord among his motley audience.

It was altogether a curious homily, and must have entertained the ambassador and his congregation marvellously. Remarkable, too, in another sense. For he had determined it was to be the last occasion of his ascending the pulpit. Either the exertion, or the agitation, or both together, brought on the old attack — a vessel in his lungs gave way once more, and he nearly “bled to death.” This was sufficient. Yet he was to preach once more before he died — not before an ambassador, but before a king.

Again, too, had the sentimental heart of Yorick become enchained ; and a new charmer, of whose name we are in ignorance, restored him once more to that blissful state which, he was persuaded, always secured him against any mean or pitiful action.¹ He tells the whole history with an unre-

¹ Could this be the first appearance of “Eliza ?” She must have come from India to England about this time.

strained confidence, which shows he considered that Mr. Yorick's *amourettes* were fairly the property of the public, and nothing to be ashamed of. "All which being premised," he wrote to his friend Hall, "I have been for eight weeks smitten with the tenderest pains that ever human wight underwent. I wish, dear cousin, thou could'st conceive (perhaps thou can'st, without my wishing it), how deliciously I cantered away with it the first month — two up, two down — always upon my haunches along the street, from my hotel to hers — at first once, then twice, then three times a day — until at length I was within an ace of setting up my hobby-horse in her stable for good and all. I might as well, considering how the enemies of the Lord have blasphemed thereupon. The last three weeks we were every hour upon the doleful ditty of parting — and, my dear cousin, how it altered my gait and air — for I came and went like any condemn'd carl, and did nothing but mix tears and *jouer des sentiments* with her from sun rising to the setting of the same; and now she is gone to the south of France." This affair could not have been very serious, as he was already talking with complacency of his departure for London. They had lived, he owns, "shag-rag

and bob-tail, all of us, a most jolly, nonsensical life of it."

He started on Thursday, about the middle of May, and was in London about the 29th, and put up in John Street, with his friends the Thornhills. He was also a good deal in and about the environs. His friend Foley came to London when he was there, but by some fatality they never met, and were "like the two buckets in a well;" and by the first week in August he was back again in York, after an absence of about two years and four months.

CHAPTER III.

AT HOME AGAIN

HIS archbishop, as we have seen, was indulgent, and seems to have given him unlimited indulgence as to leave of absence. Mr. Sterne was now a little scared about his health, and actually, before he had been home a month, proclaimed to his Paris friends that he was seized with a cough; which if it held him three days, they would certainly see him in Paris the week following — for “now,” he added, “I abandon everything in this world to health and to my friends. So I am altogether an idle man, or rather a free one, which is better.”

Idle as he was, he had taken the trouble of sending money “last post” to his wife,¹ and of re-

¹ From February to November Mrs. Sterne’s “account” seems to have stood thus :

Feby. in hand,	.	.	.	.	£100 0 0
Aug. 6, “	.	.	.	.	20 0 0
Sept. 29, “	.	.	.	.	50 0 0
Nov. 16, “	.	.	.	.	30 0 0

But it is plain from the letters that more was sent than this amount.

mitting more to Mr. Foley. And in that letter he begins a series of remittances and a series of thoughtful directions for ensuring that Mrs. Sterne should be always well supplied with money. Nothing can be more persevering, more ceaseless, than his injunctions on this head, at home or abroad. In the hurry of his travels he never forgets them. "Betwixt this and Ladyday next, Mrs. S. will draw from time to time upon you for about the amount of a hundred louis. . . . But you shall always have money of mine upon hand . . . and she proposes to spend no more than five thousand livres in the year; — but twenty pound this way or that makes no difference between us." From this time forth, all his letters were full of the same injunction — which are not insisted on here as proofs of any unusual affection, but of a careful thoughtfulness quite opposed to the neglectful character that has been made for him.

It will be seen later how marvellous it was, that the distorted tale of the careless, neglectful husband should have ever got abroad. There are a hundred little scraps of evidence, sufficient not merely to refute such a story, but to establish for him — absent as well as present — the character of a kind, careful, thoughtful husband. Even for

the sake of his daughter he would not have neglected her, and tried by that vile, but substantial, test of affection — money, which he was always sadly in need of himself — he comes out triumphantly.

By the first week in September he was still busy with the chronicles of “my Uncle Toby’s amours.” He was getting on but slowly, for the weather was beautiful — and “there is no sitting and cudgelling one’s brains while the sun shines bright.” The dull season of October, which Edgar Poe sang of, was at hand, “and ’twill be all over in six or seven weeks, and there are dismal months enow after, to endure suffocation by a brimstone fireside.” He was lonely enough at his Coxwould hearth ; and he was thinking of leaving “a few poor sheep in the wilderness for fourteen days,” and hurrying off to Scarborough, even then a gay watering-place. He wrote to his friend Stevenson to join him there ; “for a man who makes six tons of alum a week may do anything.”

It will be recollected how, a couple of years before, he had written from Paris to the archbishop in favour of his Coxwould curate, Mr. Kilner. In that letter he was guarded in his testimony, owing to the short time during which he himself had per-

sonal knowledge of the curate's behaviour. Later he seems, with true Shandean carelessness, to have signed some more general testimonial; which covered a period beyond Mr. Sterne's own knowledge. And this appears to have displeased his superior; who yet might have recollected the careful way in which Mr. Sterne had before guarded himself on this very point.

"COXWOULD, Oct. 30, 1764.¹

"MY LORD:—I know not whether I did do right or wrong in signing the testimonial of Mr. Kilner, my curate's, behaviour for three years, during the greatest part of which time I was in another country and could know nothing at all of the matter; but I believed your Grace's good temper would give the only good interpretation it could admit of, and that all I meant was to certify for his morals and good behaviour for the little time I knew him before I went abroad, and for the few months I have been with him since my return. I had this, moreover, to have added that he came well recommended; that his character in this

¹ In 1891 there was sold at Sotheby's, an agreement with a curate of his, Mr. John Walker, who was to "serve" Stillington at £40 a year.

parish is very good, and that the man is well liked as a quiet and an honest man, and withal as a good reader and preacher — I think him so myself — and had it not been impertinent to speak to a point, of which your Grace is this moment going to be a judge, I believe him a good scholar also — I do not say a graceful one — for his bodily presence is mean ; and were he to stand for Ordination before a Popish Bishop, the poor fellow would be disabled by a Canon in a moment.

“I beg a thousand pardons of y^r Grace for taking the liberty of saying a word more upon this than I had strictly occasion for, the whole purport of my letter being simply this — ‘to assure your Grace I had no intent of deceiving you ;’ I am sure I could have no interest, for by long and obstinate coughs, and unaccountable hemorrhages in my lungs, and a thorough relaxation of the organ (or something worse) in consequence of them, I am foretold by the best physicians, both in France and here, that ’twill be fatal to me to preach ; indeed, nature tells me I have no powers, and the last poor experiment I made in preaching at the Ambassador’s chapel at Paris (tho’ no larger than y^r Grace’s dining-room), had liked to have fulfill’d their predictions — for w^{ch} reason, as I cannot dis-

charge my duty myself, 'tis the more incumbent on me to have it unexceptionably done by others.

"I beg pardon, my Lord, once more, for giving you this trouble ;

"And wish your Grace very truly and cordially many many years of good health, without all this anxiety to preserve it.

"I am, with duty and esteem,

"Y^r Grace's most faithful servant,

"LAU. STERNE."

At Scarborough he found Lord Granby, Lord Shelburne, and many more. The races were going on, and he remained to drink the waters for about three weeks. This would have really been of service to his health, did not his "playing the good fellow" with his noble friends impair it as fast as he improved it. Mr. Stevenson had gone to Harrogate with Sir Charles Danvers, and others "of the jolly set," whom Mr. Sterne for a moment thought of joining after his Scarborough campaign. But instead, he returned to his "Philosophical Hut," and sat down steadily to work at "Tris-tram," and have it ready for the winter.

He had just heard from Mrs. Sterne, with an application for money. He wrote to his banker at

once — “as her purse is low, for God’s sake write directly.” She was now at Montauban, and wrote also in much distress about a hint which the Montauban banker had dropped in reference to her “being separated for life” from Mr. Sterne. He, too, was annoyed at such a rumour, for all their sakes (the tattle of an obscure French provincial town could not affect him), and he wrote kindly and earnestly to Mr. Foley: “Now this is not true in the first place, and may give a disadvantageous impression of her.”

By November he had his regular “Tristram” instalment ready for the press. He had also conceived the idea of writing sermons for publication, since he could no longer preach what he published; a step to which the success of Mr. Yorick’s dramatic discourses might well tempt him: for by the year of his death they had “cantered,” as he himself would say, through no less than nine editions. He wrote to his Paris friends in high satisfaction with his work. “You will read as comical a tour through France,” he said to Foley, “as ever was projected or executed by traveller or travel-writers since the world began. Panchaud will enjoy it. I am quite civil to your Parisians, *et pour cause*, you know. I may see them in the spring.” In

the same letter he thinks of Mrs. Sterne: "If she should have occasion before Christmas for fifty Louis, let her not wait a minute." In a few days after, fearful of some mistake or delay through his banker having no funds to his credit, he forwards from York £100. At this time, too, he was very busy, it being "Church militant week," and the old business of enclosing Stillington common having cropped up again, he was much worried by all "the marches and countermarches" ecclesiastical, attendant on this proceeding; but, as usual, found a solace in two young ladies who were staying at the same country house in the neighbourhood — a couple of romping girls (*bien mises et comme il faut*), who would come rushing in upon him, and gave his "judgment many more airings than they wanted." Altogether, he was beginning to be reconciled to his lonely "Philosophical Hut;" but it was more from an anticipation of a London Christmas, and the old notion of a tour in Italy, which he was beginning to turn over in his mind. Soothed by this complacent prospect, he could afford to philosophise over his "sweet retirement; wherever we go we must bring three parts in four of this treat along with us; in short, we must be happy within,

and few things without us make much difference." We need only read M. Tollot's description of this "happy mortal" to see that there was no dreamy speculation, and that no one, in truth, ever so handsomely "brought three parts in four of the treat" with him in return for his entertainment.

As it came close on Christmas he was away to London with his wares. They did not appear until the 26th of January, 1765, when the usual stereotyped advertisements appeared in the *St. James's Chronicle*, the *Public Ledger*, and other journals: "This day were published, price 4s., sewed, vols. 7 & 8 of the 'Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman,' by the author of the former volumes."

They were a very thin instalment, and did not exhibit much industry; and abstracting what I have called his first Sentimental Journey, the rest is devoted entirely to the history of Captain Shandy's love. This episode, more continuous and unbroken than anything he had yet done, might take rank beside any of the best Shandean pictures. It was welcomed with delight, and in spite of some coarse touches here and there, which the perverse infatuation of the author would introduce, will charm generations to come. But the

other portions were disfigured by a burst of more than usual grossness, and a coarse license utterly inexcusable. The old compliment of the English Rabelais, which now in Paris had rung often in his ears, had seduced him into this excess ; and the companionship of such men as Wilkes and Crebillon would not be likely to purify his taste. Even the low jest which supports the "Andouillets" story is said to have been taken from a common French jest-book, and could have been told by any French driver or ostler. And yet it is plain that he was insensible to those improprieties, and to the last believed he was fixing himself more securely in the "easy chair" of the English Rabelais.

But much of the responsibility—as was insisted on before—rests upon the shoulders of that public who bought and read and subscribed. "'Shandy' sells well," was the only shape of protest that found its way to him. But when, a few months later, everything that was aristocratic, brilliant, and intellectual in England rushed to subscribe ; and sermons preached by the man who preached of the Abbess of Andouillets, came "prancing" into the world endorsed literally by the whole peerage of the country : in what light

was such testimony to be accepted, save as encouragement, or at least tacit approval? Even the critical organs remonstrated gently, rather than condemned. And his old enemy, the *Monthly Review*, in a strange, bantering article, cast in the shape of a dialogue, while affecting to reprove, only threw an air of burlesque over all.

As usual, Mr. Sterne flung himself with enthusiasm into the heart of London delights. The old round of "dinners, a fortnight deep," set in with fury. He found a few seconds to write a line or two to Garrick, then being made a "Lion" of at Paris; and to whom, in all his triumphs, have drifted over disquieting stories of the new actor Powell—the young clerk, who stepped from his desk to the stage, and whom all London was rushing to admire. Mr. Sterne had been frequently to see him, and had frequently taken the whole party where he had been dining, to the box which Mr. Garrick's liberality had furnished him. He balanced the account thus: "I am sometimes in my friend Garrick's house, but he is always in Tristram Shandy's;" and truly the heavier obligation was on the actor's side.

Very steady was Mr. Sterne in this friendship. We can see how nervous he was growing about

the danger from the new actor's hold upon the town. Most delicately does he hint to his friend the necessity of his prompt return. "O, how I congratulate you for the anxiety the world continues to be under, for your return. Return, return to the few who love you, and the thousands who admire you. The moment you set your foot upon your stage — mark ! I tell it you — by some magic irresistible power, every fibre about your heart will vibrate afresh. . . . Powell ! good Heaven ! — give me some one with less smoke and more fire. There are who, like the Pharisees, still think they shall be heard for much speaking. Come — come away — my dear Garrick, and teach us another lesson."

He always admired Mrs. Garrick — the beautiful Violette : and the terms in which he used to write to Garrick of his lady, shows what has been insisted on all through this book — that all the world understood him perfectly, and that he had a sort of special privilege to *jouer les sentimens* with any lady he pleased. "My Minerva," he styles her, "full rapturously will I lead her to the temple, — but you may worship with me or not ; 'twill make no difference either in the truth or warmth of my devotion. Still, after all I have

seen, I still maintain her peerless. . . . Adieu. I love you dearly, and your lady better — not hobbi-horsically, but most sentimentally and affectionately.” And Mrs. Garrick, who exercised a strange fascination over all who came within her circle, had “a real regard for him,” and often freely reproved him for his faults.¹

Mr. Cradock, the amateur actor and dramatist, once met him behind the scenes at Drury Lane, and found him in very low spirits. He suggested to him — what any one familiar with the dramatic power of his writings would long to suggest — that he should try his hand at something for the stage — a comedy, for instance. He seemed greatly struck with the idea; but, “with tears in his eyes,” adds Mr. Cradock, professed his utter ignorance of the business of the stage. “That,” said the other, “could easily be supplied.” There is no doubt that this was but a minor difficulty, which Garrick and his many dramatic friends would have helped him over. The idea had already occurred to him; for, in one of his “Shandy’s,” he breaks out into an apostrophe to his friend: “O Garrick, what a rich scene of this would thy exquisite powers make! And how

¹ Cradock’s Memoirs.

gladly would I sit down and write such another to avail myself of thy immortality, and secure my own behind it." But the ease and fluency with which whole "Shandy's" could be reeled off was a different thing from the care and even drudgery which work for the stage entails. This perhaps was the true reason. Others, however, as will be seen later, were found to dramatise what he himself had written.

This Mr. Cradock seems to have known him intimately, and once had the satisfaction of making him "laugh heartily," by telling him a story about Tristram Shandy. Mr. Cradock had lent a matter-of-fact gentleman a dry, philosophical work, well known to the curious as Harris's "Hermes," of which the gentleman read portions very steadily, and then returned it with the remark, "that all these imitations of 'Tristram Shandy' were very poor things, and fell far short of the original."

It might have been about this time that Mr. Sterne found himself in a company where there were several clergymen, and began to tell comic stories of his parochial experiences. How at York, after preaching at the Cathedral, an old woman, whom he had observed sitting on the pulpit steps, stopped him as he came down, and asked

where he would preach the following Sunday. Mr. Sterne told her "where he was to exhibit," says the account; and on that day found her again waiting for him, when she again put the same question. The next sermon was to be at Stillington: and to his great surprise, at Stillington he found her. "On which," said Mr. Sterne, telling the story to the clergymen, "I prepared a sermon specially for the following Sunday, expecting to find my old woman as before, on this text: 'I will grant the request of this poor widow, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" "Why, Sterne," said one of the company, "you have left out the most applicable bit of the whole — 'Though I fear not God, nor regard man.'" It is said the retort silenced Mr. Sterne for the rest of the evening.¹

The jesters of society — specially those who forget the cloth they wear — very often expose themselves to these free personalities. For the clerical Tom Hood, there is always an absence of reverence. Even his friend Mr. Garrick could not resist a severe remark at his expense. Once,

¹ "Adam's Anecdotes." Though no authority is given, the story is so exact in local details, I have no hesitation in accepting it as true.

when Sterne was declaiming loudly against some one who had neglected his wife, and saying he should be hung up at his own door, the actor, thinking of Mrs. Sterne left behind in Yorkshire, said, slyly, "Sterne, you live in lodgings!"¹

By April his London campaigning was over, and he had gone down to Bath to recruit. "'Shandy' sells well," was still his account of the success of his new volumes. But his sermons, with which he was now "taxing the public," were now about going through the press. With these he was trying the now extinct fashion of a subscription list, with which he reckoned would double his gains. A more dazzling army of patrons never ushered book into the world — not even Voltaire's "Henriade." Well might he boast of it as "the largest and most splendid list that ever pranced before a book, since subscriptions came into fashion." This roll represented, besides, £300 in money. This was in addition to the sale of the copyright. So that he had indeed made "a good campaign in the field of the literati," and "with all that contempt of money, which '*ma façon du penser*' has ever imposed on me, I shall be rich

¹ This little anecdote is given in newspapers of the day, but is to be found in many a book of "ana."

in spite of myself." Nor did he forget those who were entitled to share his prosperity, for he sent off £100 to Paris.

It was about this period that he became acquainted with a lady of fashion and influence, "Lady P——," the wife of Lord Percy,¹ who lived near Mount Street. For this lady, who was the daughter of the once omnipotent favourite, Lord Bute. Mr. Sterne conceived one of his sentimental passions. One Tuesday evening he was to dine in Wigmore Street, but starting a little earlier than the dinner hour, strayed into the fashionable Mount Coffee House in Mount Street — called for a sheet of gilt-edged paper, and sat down to write a strangely rapturous letter to this very noble lady who lived close by. The letter has been preserved — a monument of Tristram's infatuation. On his gilt sheet of paper he sets out "what a strange mechanical effect is produced in writing a *billet-doux* within a stone-cast of the lady who engrosses the heart and soul of an innamorato" — that she has made "a dish-clout of a soul" of him. He complains that he is kept at

¹ She is set down in the letters as Lady P——; but there can be no reasonable doubt that it is this Lady Percy who is referred to.

a distance, and despairs of getting one inch nearer; then breaks out into this extravagant rhapsody :

“ Would not any man in his senses run diametrically from you — and as far as his legs could carry him? — rather than thus causelessly, foolishly, and foolhardily expose himself afresh, etc. . . . Why would you tell me you would be glad to see me? Does it give you pleasure to make me more unhappy — or does it add to your triumph that your eyes and lips have turned a man into a fool, whom the rest of the town is courting as a wit? I am a fool — the weakest, the most ductile — the most tender fool that ever woman tried the weakness of — and the most unsettled in my purposes and resolutions of recovering my right mind. It is but an hour ago that I kneeled down and swore I never would come near you — and after saying my Lord’s Prayer for the sake of the close, of not being led into temptation — out I sallied like any Christian hero, ready to take the field against the world, the flesh, and the devil; not doubting but I should finally trample them all down under my feet — and now I am got so near you — within this vile stone’s-

cast of your house — I feel myself drawn into a vortex, that has turned my brain upside downwards, and though I had purchased a box-ticket to carry me to Miss ——'s benefit, yet I know very well, that was a single line directed to me, to let me know Lady —— would be alone at seven, and suffer me to spend the evening with her, she would infallibly see everything verified I have told her. I dine at Mr. C——r's" (Mr. Cowper's?) "in Wigmore Street, in this neighbourhood, where I shall stay till seven, in hopes you purpose to put me to this proof. If I hear nothing by that time I shall conclude you are better disposed of — and shall take a sorry hack, and sorrily jogg on to the play — Curse on the word. I know nothing but sorrow — except this one thing, that I love you (perhaps foolishly, but)

"Most sincerely,

"L. STERNE."

This miserable letter, I think, might be accepted as a picture of the struggle that was going on in his mind all through his life. And it does seem as though some such struggle — ending usually in defeat — was what he suffered from all through. Whether Mr. Sterne spent the evening with the

lady, or went off to the play, used his box ticket, and saw Miss ——, cannot be known now.¹ She was unhappily not likely to be too scrupulous in receiving gentlemen : for we can trace her afterward as the subject of town talk. Many years afterward came a divorce, and after that, scandal about Sheriff Cotes in Newgate, — altogether a discreditable finish.²

By May he was back again at Coxwoud, which he began to find not “a sweet retirement,” but “a solitude.” Thus, when sitting in his summer-house correcting his sermons, he found himself drawn out of “a pensive mood” by a letter from his friend Woodhouse, — and to that gentleman, putting aside his sermons for a moment, he wrote his *New Art of Love*. “In these cases I first endeavour to make the lady believe so — or rather, I begin first to make myself believe that I am in love — but I carry on my affairs quite in the French way, that is, ‘sentimentally.’ ‘*L’amour*,’ say they, ‘*n’est rien sans le sentiment*.’” This, indeed, is the true key to all Mr. Sterne’s affec-

¹ Of course this Lady P. did not furnish a copy of this epistle. As was before noted, Mr. Sterne kept a letter-book with rough drafts of his letters.

² See Selwyn, Walpole, *passim*, and a curious letter in “Nicholl’s Anecdotes.”

tions. When he could write thus tranquilly of such light topics, he had just met with a serious misfortune, which to one of another temper would have been a very heavy blow.

He had long since handed over his parsonage at Sutton to a curate, who took charge of that parish. One night, through the carelessness of this curate, or "of his wife, or his maid, or some one within his gates," it took fire, and was burnt to the ground, with all Mr. Sterne's furniture and Mr. Sterne's books, "a pretty collection." The loss was close on £400. Mr. Sterne goes on with the story: "The poor man and his wife took the wings of the next morning and fled away. This has given me real vexation, for so much was my pity and esteem for him, that as soon as I heard of this disaster, I sent to desire that he would come and take up his abode with me till another habitation was ready to receive him; but he was gone, and, as I am told, through fear of my persecution. Heavens! how little did he know of me, to suppose I was among the number of those which heap misfortune upon misfortune. . . . God, who reads my heart, knows it to be true — that I wish rather to share than to increase the burden of the miserable . . . as for the dirty trash of this world,

I regard it not, the loss of it does not cost me a sigh." This is fresh testimony to his goodness of heart, under a trial that would have tried another man's temper severely; and we can scarcely doubt that solemn appeal. At the moment he wrote, he felt he would be obliged to rebuild the house. "But," he adds, "I lack the means at present, yet I am never happier than when I have not a shilling in my pocket; for when I have, I can never call it my own." The name of this unlucky curate I have discovered. He was a Mr. William Raper, and had been there six years. I find that he stayed with Sterne until the following year, so that his good-natured tolerance of the misfortune was not a mere flourish.¹ In the same key of good spirits he wrote gaily, and with a lively freedom, to a noble friend

¹ It may be worth while in this place following up the history of Sutton Parsonage House. As may be imagined, the rebuilding was put off indefinitely, and Mr. Sterne died before the ruins were disturbed. His successor, Mr. Cheap, tried to get something done by the widow, and has left us the result in an indignant entry in the old Sutton Registry:

"In the year 1764, during the Incumbency of Mr. Laurence Sterne, the Vicarage House was burnt down. Though frequently admonished and required to rebuild the Vicarage House, he found means to evade the Performance of it. He continued Vicar till he died in March, 1768. Andrew Cheap was appointed his successor, and was advised to accept a composition for Dilapidations from the Widow. A suit was instituted for Dilapidations, but,

of his, Lord Effingham, — the same whom that jovial dramatist, Reynolds, knew so intimately. “My good lord,” he began, (“for I believe you from my heart to be so, or my pen would not have belied my opinion of you: and since I have begun articles of belief give me leave to add, and I believe you to have power to be anything — but no thanks to you, etc.). As all this,” he goes on, “is included in a parenthesis, your lordship has a right to leave it out. It will not hurt the sense. I mean your own, for as for mine, the point has been long settled by the world.” He then thanks him for the subscription to the sermons, “as well the *aimable comtesse votre chère mère*, for the honour of her name.” Mr. Hall had left him “bleeding to death at York of a small vessel in my lungs. The deuce take these bellows of mine! I must get ’em stopped, or I shall never have to *persiffler* Lord Effingham again.” He talks of the York races, where he hopes to meet his friend with “Blaquiere and great Scroope.”

after a time (the widow being in indigent circumstances), sixty pounds were accepted.

“In April, 1770, the New House was begun, and finished in May, 1771.

“Total amount of suit and Building the House, £576, 13s., 5d.

“ANDREW CHEAP.”

Just at this time, too, he was much entertained by the arrival of a letter from an elderly French gentleman at Montauban, in reference to his daughter Lydia. The French gentleman did not know him, but got his address at the Bureau de Poste. He then proceeded to announce that he was in love with Miss Sterne, and would be glad to know how much fortune Mr. Sterne was prepared to give her at present and how much at his death. Mr. Sterne took up his pen, and answered him in true Shandean vein: "Sir, I shall give her ten thousand pounds the day of marriage. My calculation is as follows: she is not eighteen, you are sixty-two—there goes five thousand; then, Sir, you at least think her not ugly, and as she has many accomplishments—speaks Italian, etc., I think you will be happy to take her on my terms, for here finishes the account of the ten thousand pounds." It is not known how the elderly French gentleman received this ridicule of his proposal. It is certain, however, that Miss Sterne was not married to him.

His health was again warning him to move; in fact, though unconscious of it, he was fast hurrying into consumption. At the end of July he found his "plaguy cough" gaining ground; "and

it will bring me to my grave, in spite of me. But while I have strength to run away from it I will. I have been wrestling with it, for these twenty years past, and what with laughter and good spirits have prevented its giving me a fall; but my antagonist presses closer than ever upon me." With these forebodings he had already fixed his departure for October. But by September he received significant warnings to hasten his movements. The old enemy, "the most violent spitting of blood mortal man experienced," again seized upon him, and he had to set off for York to try and recruit himself. This was when Mr. Hall had left him "bleeding to death." These constant attacks seemed at times to dispirit him; and he spoke of going to York, not for the sake of society, nor to walk by the side of the muddy "Ouse," but "because I had rather (in case 'tis ordered so) die there than in a postchaise on the road."

Still he was the old fitful Yorick, and was the next moment cheerful as ever. A friend dropped in and stayed many hours, listening with delight to his sallies. Going away, the friend met a local apothecary, who asked him how he did. "Ill, ill," said the friend; "I have been with Sterne, who

has given me such a dose of Attic Salt that I am in a fever." "Attic Salt, sir, Attic Salt," said the apothecary; "I have Glauber Salt in my shop, Epsom Salt — Oh! I suppose 'tis some French salt. I wonder you would trust his report of the medicine; he cares not what he takes himself." Had this incident occurred but a few years before, it might have served to increase the ridicule poured on the head of the unhappy Slop.


As usual, he looked forward with delight to meeting his London and Paris friends again. This thought made him forget all past physical suffering. "I long," he wrote, "to embrace my friends in London." He had finally determined on his long-talked-of scheme, — the tour in Italy, — where he was to spend nine or ten months, call to see his wife and daughter on his road, and be back by the king's birthday. "What a project!" he exclaimed, with rapture. Profit, pleasure, and health were to be all combined in the trip. *En attendant*, he wrote to his friend Mrs. Meadows to come down and see him. "I will give you," he wrote, "a roast fowl for your dinner, and a clean table-cloth every day, and tell you a story by way of dessert. In the heat of the day we will sit in the shade, and in the evening the fairest of all

milkmaids who pass by my gate shall weave a garland for you." This sentimental key, which he was always privileged to assume, quite bears out the view of Mr. Sterne's character we have dwelt on all through this book. It was his regular manner with ladies. He winds up with the more prosaic "God bless you, my dear madam."

At last, about the first week in October, he was up in London once more, and had written to Paris to order a wig — *à bourse* — from Madame Requi-ère, in the Rue St. Sauveur, "for it is a terrible thing to be in Paris without a Perwig to one's head." By the eighth or ninth he had put up the pair of black silk breeches, had taken his place in the Dover stage, and was fairly started on that famous expedition known as the Sentimental Journey. His last thought, however, was careful provision for his family; and, before he started, he paid into Mr. Becket's hands £600, upon which Mrs. Sterne might draw. The packet sailed at nine the next morning, and by three he was sitting down to dinner in M. Dessein's Hôtel, at Calais, — a hotel which, but for that visit, would not have emerged from the ranks of ordinary houses of entertainment.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. STERNE GOES TO OLD CALAIS

N starting on this new Sentimental Tour, Mr. Sterne resolved to be guided by principles wholly opposite to those of the professional travellers who had preceded him. "I pity the man," he wrote in a famous passage, "who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry 'tis all barren." He met Smelfungus, his name for Smollett, in the grand portico of the Pantheon, "'Tis nothing but a huge cockpit," said he." Most justly did Mr. Sterne say that the novelist only wrote an account of "his own miserable feelings."

Calais is, or was, an interesting old town, and always seems redolent of Sterne. Some twenty years ago its yellow walls were standing, the drawbridges down, and, best of all, the old Dessein's Hotel, with its "Sterne's Room," was still shown. It was a pleasant, inviting place, having something of the air of a country-house, having its yellow

archway and large courtyard, around which ran the buildings. There were vines and general greenery, and over the archway little roofed dormer windows. Of a summer's Sunday, when there was a fête going on in the town, it was a pleasant thing to make an excursion over there and join in the genuine French festivity. The old inn, their town museum, was thrown open, and you could wander through its chambers and pause in Sterne's room, still labelled with his name. Behind it were fair gardens of great extent, at the bottom of which stood the theatre, which formerly belonged to the hotel. Now all has been pulled down and levelled to the ground, and a huge communal school erected on the ruins.

On his now famous "Sentimental Journey," the best known of his writings, he had started with a famous compliment to the French, "They order this matter better in France," which is always misquoted, "They manage things better in France." Putting by "half a dozen shirts and a black pair of silk breeches," he got down to Dover; "and the packet sailing at nine, by three I had sat down to a dinner of fricasseed chicken." "After all," wrote Mr. Walpole, "Calais surprised me more than anything I have since seen." The

justness of which impression, every one who recalls the look of his first French town, will acknowledge. Mr. Sterne had walked through the great Place, and owned that nothing struck him more, "though I cannot say 'tis either well-paved or well-built; but 'tis in the heart of the town, and most of the streets, especially those in that quarter, all terminate in it." And the old church tower, too, seems to have attracted him, though not so much as it was to do a later visitor — when a noble artist, and a yet nobler thinker, was to translate its poetry into rich English. "I cannot find words," says the author of "Modern Painters," "to express the intense pleasure I have always felt in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the tower of Calais church. The large neglect, the noble mightiness of it, the record of its years written so vividly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern vastness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds and overgrown with bitter sea-grass. . . . I cannot tell half the strange pleasure and thoughts that come about me at the sight of that old tower." ¹

¹ For myself personally I have the most romantic associations with the old town, from the day I first saw it in past years, when

The English travellers of fashion, disgusted at last by "the particular hardships imposed on Mr. D——," anxiously encouraged the opening of a new hotel, to be called the Hôtel d'Angleterre, under the management of young Dessein. The "Sentimental Journey" did the rest.

Dessein's grew to be a sort of fashion. The proprietor knew all the tide of nobility that flowed through the little town, and was useful in looking after any packages of theirs passing between London and Paris. The inn, meanwhile, was considered to be the most extensive in Europe, and contained squares, gardens, shops of all kinds, workshops, and a handsome theatre. Still, notwithstanding this prosperity, the management broke down, and the famous Dessein went nigh to becoming bankrupt; but it was whispered that, so important was the establishment considered in its international bearings, that the government

I came rumbling into it in an old diligence that had taken nearly the whole day to journey from Boulogne. It was then surrounded by its old walls, and fortifications, and gates — Richelieu's among the rest — and had still a number of refugee English living there. A few years ago the walls and gates were levelled, and the ditches filled up. It has now become a modern town. I recall a Sunday fête here which I went over to see, and was delighted to wander through the old Dessin, or Dessein, Hotel, and peep into Sterne's room.

advanced him a sum of money free of interest, and helped him back to prosperity.

There are many portraits of him, for every traveller made it a point to stay at his inn, and, in addition, was specially anxious to record that he had been there. All these likenesses agree in setting him forth as a smooth, plausible, greedy, money-getting French innkeeper, turning a penny upon his chaises and Louis d'ors, accompanying all his transactions with stately self-abnegation and a parade of noble sentiments. Our traveller had been writing his preface in his *désobligeante*, and was followed to his room by "Monsieur Dessein, the master of the hotel, who had just returned from vespers, and, with his hat under his arm, was most complaisantly following me to put me in mind of my wants." He spoke of the little carriage "with a shrug as if it would no way suit me," and then it occurred to Mr. Sterne that it might have belonged to some traveller who left it to Monsieur Dessein's care to dispose of. Mr. Sterne then reports the dramatic dialogue that ensued: "'Now, was I master of this hotel,' said I, laying the point of my forefinger on Monsieur Dessein's breast, 'I would inevitably make a point of getting rid of this unfortunate *désobligeante* —

it stands swinging reproaches at you every time you pass by it.' 'Mon Dieu!' said Monsieur Dessein; 'I have no interest —' 'Except the interest,' said I, 'which men of a certain turn of mind take in their own sensations. You suffer as much as the machine —' Monsieur Dessein made me a bow. '*C'est bien vrai,*' said he."

At the *remise* door Monsieur Dessein "diabled the key above fifty times before he found out that he had come with the wrong one in his hand."

About a year after Sterne's death the famous inn, or a portion of it, was burnt. The chamber in which the sentimental traveller drank to the King of France, and grew agitated over the *droit d'aubaine*, and the windows from which he had curiously scanned the "Janatones" of Calais (not connected with the fishing interest) tripping across the Place, were all swept away in the conflagration. But M. Dessein was not to suffer. A whole company of English milords and aristocratic travellers — perhaps the most perverse grumblers at his extortions — came forward gallantly with sufficient funds to build him a fine new hostelry.

Many years ago a traveller, halting at Dessein's, was shown "No. Thirty-one," and the Sir Joshua

mezzotint over the chimneypiece, and yet was skeptical. The outside of the house was all overgrown with vine-leaves, and, shrewdly suspecting there might be some record of the date of erection cut on the stone, he sent up a man on a ladder to cut away the vine-leaves, an operation which led to the discovery of a tablet,

A. D. 1770,

just two years too late for the credit of "Sterne's Room." The waiter, however, in no way disconcerted, offered to fix on another room in the house, and call it Sterne's!'

Long after Mr. Sterne had passed away, the monk used to come in asking alms, being preserved as a sort of imperishable institution. Such an one—a gentle, resigned-looking man, almost "mild, pale, and penetrating"—presented himself to the late Mr. Rogers and his friend, as they were sitting over their wine; and the friend, to the gentle poet's annoyance, made some such speech as Mr. Sterne made to his monk. "Il faut travailler," said Mr. Rogers's friend; and the monk, bowing his head, meekly withdrew without

' I am inclined to doubt this story, as the building always looked much later than the date mentioned.

a word. Mrs. Piozzi must have seen this very famous monk, whom she calls Father Felix, and whose "manners and story," she says, struck Doctor Johnson exceedingly when he came through. The great moralist announced that so complete a character could scarcely be found in romance. He had been, like Mr. Sterne's monk, a soldier, knew English, read Addison, and played on the violin. He had been seen there about the year 1772, only five years after the Sentimental Journey, and was remarkable then; so it does seem likely that he was Mr. Sterne's Father Lorenzo. And Mrs. Piozzi was glad to hear that he was alive, and had only gone into Spain.

Dessein had one famous customer, the notorious bigamist, the famous Duchess of Kingston, who was pleased, either with his assistance, his sympathy, or his entertainment, and is actually said to have left him £2,000 in her will. And with this notable connection the grim figure of the one-eyed innkeeper — Mr. Sterne's host — fades out, at what precise date I have not been able to discover. But a traveller, stopping there in 1815, found that it was not then held by any one of the name. It had come down to his son, and the son's daughter, marrying one Quillacq, — a familiar name

in its way, also, — still directed the hotel. Finally came the enthusiastic traveller before described, about the year 1825, who found Quillacq “directing,” and Mr. Sterne’s mezzotint hung up in No. Thirty-one, and the memory of what was reverently styled “the Great Dessein” almost more tenderly cherished. But the traces of the great sentimentalist had faded. All that could be remembered was that a *garçon*, who had personally attended on him, had died a few years before.

Not long since, arriving at the old town at midnight, I walked up along the piers toward the town. Passing through the dark streets, I emerged in the Place, and at that moment the silvery chimes began performing in the picturesque steeple of the Town Hall. Beside it rose the grim old watch-tower, formerly a lighthouse. Passing down a side street, I found myself before the present Dessein’s, formerly Quillacq’s, and which is quite as old as was the old Dessein. A quaint house it is, too, with rather stately, faded chambers, and a grand stair with banisters of flowing design, which ascend to the right and left. A worthy old French lady, Madame Dessein, still presided, and is glad to talk with the sympathetic stranger of the glory of her mansion, of

“*feu* M. Sterne,” and of the sad story of the purchase of the old hotel by the town, M. le Préfet himself coming to wait on her, and to assure her it was for the good and welfare of the place. She was “*trop bonne Calaisienne*,” she said, with tears, to resist such pressure. She told me that the present proprietor was, I think, the great grandson of the original Dessein. Many years ago this advertisement was to be read in “Bradshaw :”

“**C**ALAIS — HOTEL DESSEIN, — L. Dessein, the proprietor, has the honour to inform his numerous Patrons and Travellers in general, that, after the 1st of January, His Establishment will be transferred to the Hôtel Quillacq, which has been entirely new done up, and will take the name of ‘Hôtel Dessein.’ The premises of the old Hôtel having been purchased by the Town of Calais, it ceases to be a Hôtel for Travellers.”

There is a quaint dignity about this proclamation. The “numerous patrons and travellers in general” of that day — it is forty years — pass from the boat to other new and more tempting hotels, and, indeed, do not approach within half a mile of the town. On the night that I paid my midnight visit there was only another traveller besides myself in Dessein’s *en transit*.

Pursuing his road from Calais, the traveller came to Montreuil. All along the journey he spoke his indifferent French, at least if what he spoke be reflected in what he wrote. But he was unconscious of his curious blunders, and did not care to make the common corrections. The original MS. of this journey is still to be seen, carefully and cleanly written out from his rough draught, and as carefully gone over for final alterations. And yet the French blunders are jealously preserved.

The inn at Montreuil where Mr. Sterne put up, though he has not mentioned its name, or its proprietor's, can be discovered—yet with some difficulty. Thirty years ago, in the diligence times, all the inns along the route claimed to be Mr. Sterne's inn, and each had a "Sterne's Room," with the portrait after Sir Joshua over the chimney-piece. In Montreuil there were two claiming the distinction, and the visitor was shown two Sterne's rooms and two pictures. One was the Hôtel de l'Europe, whose claim vanishes in a second; it only dating from the beginning of the present century. But there was another old inn, reputed the oldest in the town, situate on the Green, where the fêtes and merrymakings have

always been held, and where La Fleur danced and played his fiddle, and which bore the name of the Hôtel de la Cour de France. It was kept, thirty years ago, by the family of Varennes; and the Varennes told travellers the inn had been in their family, from father to son, beyond the recollection of men.

The legend in the hotel was, that Sterne had given them the privilege of calling it Sterne's favourite house, and they put into the guest's hand a little card, with the following inscription:

Varennes.

Hôtel de la Cour de France.

A Cote de la Poste au Chevaux,

Montreuil.

Sterne's Favourite House.

We have even a sketch of the landlord, who corrected Mr. Sterne's French, and who came in to tell him "of the clever young fellow who would be proud to serve an Englishman." Doctor Warner rallied him on being "*gros crevé*," and "*bon rieur*." We see his rotund figure standing before Mr. Sterne, and telling him how *un milord Anglais presentoit un écu à la femme-de-chambre*.¹

¹ All through his account Mr. Sterne confounds "a lady's maid" with "a housemaid." The reader need scarcely be

And it was this "tant-mieux" M. Varennes that introduced La Fleur, the most famous of valets. For Mr. Sterne was prepossessed at the first glance with his "genuine look and air," and at once hired him. He had lost his portmanteau from behind his chaise, and got out in the rain, and "up to the knees in dirt," to help the postilion to fasten it on, before he found out that he required a servant. La Fleur was exactly suited to him. He could, indeed, professionally only "make splatter-dashes, and play on the fiddle, beat a drum, and do something on the fife," — but "a Frenchman can do everything." He was just fitted for Mr. Sterne, having a sort of even "festivity of temper," which, through all annoyances and discomforts, never was disturbed. He had, besides, a small cast of a coxcomb, but more a coxcomb of nature than of art; "was always in love;" and, as the landlord remarked, when pointing him out from the inn, taking leave of the village girls, "*C'est un garçon de bonne fortune!*"¹

reminded that *presenter* has not the meaning of giving a present; and that, even if it had, there is a mistake in the grammatical case.

¹ "*Bonnes Fortunes,*" must the landlord have said. To put together a few more of these droll mistakes of Mr. Sterne, La Fleur speaks of his horse as being "*le cheval le plus-opiniâtre*

Then comes the well-known beggar scene, when Mr. Sterne was getting into his chaise ; La Fleur's adventure on the bidet ; and the pathetic picture of "the Dead Ass" before the door of the post-house at Nampont. And the traveller of this day will have to halt "at the foot of the steep hill, about a league from Nampont," where Mr. Sterne was shouting to his postilion — one more bit of testimony to his wonderful accuracy. So he passed on to Amiens, where La Fleur played on his fife while the servants danced, and where Mr. Sterne copied the drummer's letter, and sent it in to Madame Lambert. Before the 20th of October he was in Paris, and had put up at the Hôtel de Modène, Rue Jacob, in the Faubourg St. Germain.

du monde ; " a mysterious adjective, which no Frenchman would ever use in such a sense. " It is not *mal à propos* to take notice here," instead of *hors de propos*. Madame Lambert writes to him that she has been prevented telling her story from some "*penchant*" — another non-natural sense. At the Amiens Hotel there was a *femme de chambre* ; and in the same page, " Madame de Lambert sends her *fille de chambre*."

CHAPTER V.

SECOND VISIT TO PARIS

PARIS at the season of this second visit was very gay, and full of English ; and Mr. Sterne, as he stood at the hotel window in his “dusty black coat,” looking out, seeing “all the world in yellow, blue, and green, running at the ring of pleasure, the old with broken lances, the young in armour bright, which shone like gold,” grew dispirited. But morally, a more striking change had taken place. The taste for amateur philosophy had developed into a *fureur*. Men and women, and fashionable men and women, had all become, or affected to be, philosophers ; and followed out their worship with the stern self-sacrifice of true children of fashion. This craze infected every boudoir, and destroyed every pleasure. Conversation — parties — everything had grown insufferably stupid. There were “swarms of English” in Paris ; but with them he could not bring himself to mix. Among these swarms of English

was Sir James Macdonald, a young Scotch baronet, a great friend of Mr. Sterne's. About this young man, though no more than a mere sketch in literary history, a deep interest seems to hang. He is seen for a moment in Boswell's Tour, and exercised a sort of attraction on every one he met. Here, too, was another friend of Mr. Sterne's, Mr. Crawford, well known as "Fish" Crawford, and brother to "Flesh" Crawford, to whom the weak, elegant Carlisle used to lose large sums. "One of the gayest young gentlemen," says his valet, "and the greatest gambler that ever belonged to Scotland." Here, too, was Lord Ossory, Mr. Fitzmaurice, who had been a pupil of Adam Smith's, and Lord William Gordon, all friends of Mr. Sterne; and here, too, was that blasphemous parson, John Horne Tooke.

Mr. Sterne was not likely to let the laugh languish. In French society he was more popular than ever; and he has given an amusing account of the arts by which he turned the grave, philosophising mania to his own profit. On his first visit he had made friends in all directions. He knew the Count de Bissie, who affected to be reading Shakespeare when he called, the Marquis de Lambert, the old Marshal de Biron, "who had signal-

ised himself by some small feats of chivalry in the Courd'Amour, and many more." The marshal talked of a visit to England and of the English ladies. "Stay where you are, I beseech you, Monsieur le Marquise, Les Messieurs Anglaise (*sic*) can scarce get a kind book from them as it is." The old beau invited him to supper at once. His compliment to the farmer-general, M. Popelinère, at whose concerts we have seen him "assisting," was just as skilful. He was asking about the English taxes; they were considerable, he heard. "If we knew how to collect them," said Mr. Sterne, with a bow. A lady, Madame de V—— (this must have been Madame de Vence, a descendant of Madame de Sévigné), placed Mr. Sterne by her on the sofa to discuss religion. She believed nothing. "There are three epochs," says Mr. Sterne, in one of his most acute observations on society, "in the empire of a Frenchwoman. She is coquette; then deist; then *dévoté*. The empire during these is never lost; she only changes her subjects." Madame de Vence was only vibrating between her first and second. Yorick took her hand and mildly remonstrated with her. There was not a more dangerous thing in the world than for a beauty to be a deist. The restraints of religion

and morality were the outworks which protected her. "We are not adamant," he continued, "and there is need of all restraint, till age in her own time steals in and lays them on us ; but, my dearest lady," said I, kissing her hand, "it is too soon — too soon."

Mr. Sterne had the credit all over Paris of converting Madame de Vence. She told Diderot and the Abbé Morellet, that "in one half-hour I had said more for revealed religion than all their encyclopædia had said against it." She postponed the epoch of her deism two years.

In this fashion he became popular, and heard on all sides such flattering testimonies as "*pardi, ce Monsieur Yorick a d'esprit. C'est un bon enfant,*" and abundance of such praise. But to his credit he grew ashamed of "the dishonest reckoning," though at this price he could have "eaten and drank and been merry all the days of my life at Paris." It seemed to him the gain of a slave. He had the courage to make this honest confession, although he had many French subscribers to his book and of this very coterie.

It is pleasant to follow in Mr. Sterne's footsteps, and we can even track him to his Paris hotel. There were very many Hôtels de Modène in that

time — forty years ago there were ten to be counted — but to Sterne's Hôtel de Modène we find a guide in the famous *femme de chambre* whom he met in the bookseller's shop, buying "Les Egaremens." He had sent for a perruquier to set his hair to rights; and then "taking down the name of the Hôtel de Modène, went forth for a walk from where I lodged," — to have a look at Paris.

It was evening, and he thought he would visit the Opéra Comique — so turning into the glove shop, he asked the way of that "beautiful grisset," who was sitting "on the far side of the shop, facing the door," working a pair of ruffles — a little scene which inspired Newton with a fresh Leslie-like cabinet picture. "'You must turn, monsieur,' said she, going with me to the door of the shop, 'first to your left-hand — *mais prenez garde* — there are two turns, and be so good as to take the second; then go down a little way and you'll see a church, and when you are past it, give yourself the trouble to turn directly to the right, and that brings you to the foot of the Pont Neuf, which you must cross; and there any one will do himself the pleasure to show you.' She repeated her instructions three times over to me, with the

Yorick and the Grisette

Engraved by H. Bourne after G. S. Newton



same good-natured patience the third time as the first," — a trait, as well as that getting up and going to the door, truly French, and consistent with their good-natured politeness to strangers.

Mr. Sterne had forgotten his way home, and he went part of the way with her until he reached the Rue de Nevers, where they were to take different roads. "Is this the way, my dear," said he, "to the Hôtel de Modène?" She said it was, or, "that I might go by the Rue de Guénégaud, which was the next turn." She, herself, was going to the Rue St. Pierre, to which the Rue Guénégaud would also take her; and it would lead Mr. Sterne to the Rue Jacob, and to his hotel. This house was said to be opposite the Rue des Deux Anges, on the side of the Rue des Petits Augustins.¹

He could have stayed scarcely three weeks, and then set out on his Italian tour. He made one of a party and travelled with some "English of distinction." He also took his servant, La Fleur, with him.

¹ These notes are from the *London Magazine*, and were written by Poole of facetious memory. It has been stated (in *Notes and Queries*) that he was all astray here, and that Sterne had confounded the Rue St. Pierre with the Rue des St. Pères, and that there is no Rue St. Pierre on the south side of the river.

This famous valet has a history of his own. After Mr. Sterne's death he often came to England, sometimes as a servant¹ to travelling gentlemen, sometimes "as an express." Friends of Mr. Sterne, who had heard of him, or were glad to meet with him, used to ask him about his deceased master, and the *Sentimental Journey*, and got from him a few facts which crept into the public journals of the day. These valet chronicles² are in most cases suspicious; the "valet-mind" being in its most favourable aspect likely to take a mean and distorted view of domestic events, but more frequently inclined to fill up their meagre recollections with invention. The *La Fleur* narrative, though theatrical in parts, is not trustworthy. He was born in Burgundy, and ran away from his parents to Paris at eight years old. He was found one day on the Pont Neuf by a recruiting sergeant, and enlisted by him as a drummer. For six years he beat the drum, and "made splatterdashes," and in two more would have obtained his discharge;

¹ Not a sergeant, as Sir Walter Scott quotes it.

² A few scraps are to be found in Davis's "*Olio*," and were copied by Sir Walter Scott; but the more important passages were passed over. Mr. Miles has shown in his interesting recollections that these notes are likely to have been the work of Latude, the hero of the escape from the Bastille. Latude claimed to have been *La Fleur*.

but his gipsy temper again prompted him to run away. He came to Montreuil, was engaged by Sterne, "ragged as a colt," and was now, in the first week of November, a most unseasonable time for travelling, setting off with him to Italy. A little farther on we shall take up his life and sham adventures.

Mr. Sterne now set off on his "Grand Tour." He got down to Lyons very pleasantly, having met "Maria" on the road near Moulines. I am inclined to believe that this Maria picture has been much coloured up; and that finding her so admired in his last volume, Mr. Sterne could not resist the temptation of bringing her on again. No doubt he found the hint near Moulines, in some distressed girl sitting on the roadside, who may have moved his compassion. At Lyons, the party halted for some days, and had "a joyous time." The commandant was very hospitable, and had Mr. Sterne to dine and sup every day. He left behind him there Lord F. W——, and about a dozen English. We are able to identify one at least of the "dozen English" who were then at Lyons, and that an Englishman of some mark — John Horne Tooke — who had been in Paris, having flung away his clergyman's gown at Dover,

and was flaunting it, not in a "dusty black coat," but in "a suit of scarlet and gold," or "white and silver," or "blue and silver." He met Sterne at Lyons every day for a week, and planned to meet him again at Sienna during the summer. They often spoke of their common friend, Wilkes. But Tooke remarked that though Mr. Sterne mentioned the famous demagogue "handsomely," yet he never spoke of him with warmth or cordiality. "Forgive my question," wrote that strange clergyman to Wilkes from Montpellier, "and do not be annoyed if I inquire, is there any coldness between you and Sterne?" In the next letter the latter wrote to Paris from Pont Beauvoisin, — he is pointed in his remembrances, — "If Wilkes is at Paris, I send him all kind wishes."

They got on to Pont Beauvoisin,¹ where begin those wonderful Savoy passes which have since become marvellous trophies of engineering; but there they were obliged to stop, for the rough mountain weather suddenly set in.

The voiturin was eight days taking him through that grand mountain scenery. Again at the close of the story of his journey we have delightful little

¹ Mr. Sterne, as usual, mistaking the names of places, calls it Beau Pontvoisin.

French Rustic

Engraved by I. Daumont after the painting by G. Pelouse



glimpses, full of local colour and exquisite pastoral effect. Charming, indeed, that night piece at the hamlet, while he looked on at where the "old man" played the vielle for the dance, and the girls ran to tie up their hair — which makes a perfect pendant to that other picture which he saw in the Bourbonnois, on his first journey. He was delighted with that "poor, patient, quiet, honest people," and was tempted into the false prophecy, that "your poverty will not be envied you by the world, nor will your valleys be invaded by it."

At last he came to the picturesque little town of St. Michel. Late of a wintry evening he was pushing on to Modane, through mountain, wind, and rain — a "tempestuous night" — when the voiturin halted his mules suddenly, and found the road blocked up by a huge fragment of rock which the cataract of the Arc had brought down from the mountains. The rude peasants of the place were hard at work labouring to clear the road; but, late as it was, and long as they had been working, it would take two more hours before the way would be open. The whole is a picture: the darkness, the tumbling cataracts, the wind, the rain; the grand mountains; the peasants labouring by torchlight, and the voiturin and

his mules waiting expectant, with the pale face of Mr. Sterne looking from the window.

We can only regret the infatuation which could have led him to disfigure all with the coarse suggestion which soils the last page of the "Sentimental Journey." Otherwise the scene is admirably graphic and humorous, stamped with a genuine air of truth, and did not need that fatal touch at the end to have been a most ludicrous and Shandean embarrassment. It has been truly remarked that these gross strokes have brought their own heavy penalty; for they have dragged down with them exquisite scenes which would have made his book a delightful drawing-room book, and consigned them for ever to a proscribed corner in the library.¹

But this dramatic adventure did not occur to Mr. Sterne himself. I have been enabled to trace it as "a good thing," which he heard from one of his jovial friends. It was an adventure that befell "John Crawford, Esq., of Errol," better known as "Fish" Crawford, a wild, gambling Scotchman, and one of the March-Carlisle set. Him Mr. Sterne met both in Paris and London; and from

¹ In the guide-books, Modane is usually set out as the locality of "the last scene in the 'Sentimental Journey,'" whereas it took place five miles from that town.

him he must have heard the embarrassment of the lady at the rustic inn, where there was no room.

It was between Verviers and Aix-la-Chapelle that "Fish" Crawford met her. The house was full, and he had got the best bedroom, off which there was a closet. It was a Flemish lady and her maid, instead of a Piedmontese lady, as Mr. Sterne put it. Madame Blond was her name. She sent up her compliments, "Would she be allowed to sit in the gentleman's room until bedtime?" Mr. Crawford was "very complaisant." They played cards together to decide who should have the large bedroom or the little closet inside, and the lady lost. It is very curious, stumbling on this, and, more curious still, hearing it from the mouth of a valet. But though Mr. Sterne tells his version with humour, the delicacy is all on the side of the valet.¹

He reached Turin at last, and was established there by the 15th of November. He was delighted with his first Italian city — just as he had been with Paris; and was "very happy" during the fortnight he stayed. With his usual success, he had been there scarcely a day before he had been

¹ See the "Travels of John Macdonald, a Cadet of the Family of Keppoch," who was servant to "Fish" Crawford.

secured at half a dozen houses of distinction. He was to be presented to the king, and after that ceremonial would have his hands full of engagements. Turin was at that time a gay little capital, though under the tyranny of a strict etiquette, and was very stately in all its manners and observances. He found no English there but his friend Sir James Macdonald and Mr. Ogilvy, so all this festivity was from native families.

After a "joyous fortnight," during which they met with "all kinds of honours," they departed reluctantly. Sir James Macdonald and Mr. Sterne were to travel together through Milan and the smaller Italian cities which dot the "Grand Tour," on to Rome. They would both like to have stayed, "but," said Mr. Sterne, "health on my side, and good sense on his, say 'tis better to be at Rome." As it fell out, it will be seen that these two motives were curiously shifted. From Turin he found time to write to Mrs. Sterne, under cover to his banker, and then entered his chaise. Their next stage was Milan.

Here it was that Mr. Sterne met a little adventure which he tells very pleasantly. He was going to Martini's concert, and was just entering the door of the hall, when he met an Italian lady,

the Marquesina F——, “coming out in a sort of a hurry; she was almost upon me before I saw her. So I gave a spring to one side to let her pass. She had done the same, and on the same side too, so we ran our heads together. She instantly got to the other side to get out. I was just as unfortunate as she had been, for I had sprung to that side, and opposed the passage again—we both flew together to the other side, and then back, and so on; it was ridiculous; we both blushed intolerably; so I did at last the thing I should have done at first. I stood stock-still, and the marquesina had no more difficulty.” After a moment’s hesitation, Mr. Sterne, than whom no one was more skilful in improving an opening, ran after her; and the description of his behaviour is worth quoting, as a specimen of that easy manner which was the secret of his fascination. He first apologised for his awkwardness, saying, “It was my intention to have made her way. She answered she was guided by the same intention toward me, so we reciprocally thanked each other. She was at the top of the stairs, and seeing no *chicesbee* near, I begged to hand her to her coach. So we went down the stairs, stopping at every step to talk of the concert and the adventure.

‘Upon my word, madame,’ said I, when I had handed her in, ‘I made six different attempts to let you go out.’ ‘And I made six efforts,’ replied she, ‘to let you enter.’ ‘I wish to heaven you would make a seventh,’ said I. ‘With all my heart,’ said she, making room. Life is too short to be long about the forms of it. So I instantly stepped in. And the acquaintance that arose out of this little transaction,” Mr. Sterne adds, gave him more pleasure than any one he made in Italy.

The Marquesina F—— seems a name almost hieroglyphical ; but curious to say, we can discover who she was. It is pleasant to know every one who came in contact with Mr. Sterne. Arthur Young passed through Milan some years later, and saw this very lady, but, gifted with less discretion than Mr. Sterne, gave her name. It was the Marquesina Fagniani. Which touches another chord of association ; for this was the very lady who figures so curiously in Selwyn’s life, the mother of little Mie Mie, the little child about whom he made himself almost ridiculous, exciting the smiles and pity of his friends. The whole makes a strange chapter in the history of human absurdity.¹

¹ In an account of Ugo Foscolo’s life it has been stated that one of his ardent attachments was for a daughter of the lady.

From Milan they travelled on to Parma. They travelled "*à la hâte*," and many places they merely passed through. They visited Piacenza and Bologna, halting a short time at each (La Fleur adds the little Duchy of Modena to the list), and having weather all the time "as delicious as a kindly April in England," found themselves suddenly among the deep snows of the Apennines. They were at Florence by the 18th of December, and remained, Mr. Sterne says, but three days, "to dine with the minister (Walpole's Sir Horace Mann, just promoted to be envoy)," where they were to meet Lords Townshend and Cowper;¹ and then they looked forward "to treading the Vatican, and being introduced to all the saints in the Pantheon," within five days. He wrote again from Florence to Mrs. Sterne.

They then passed on to Rome, and hurried down to Naples. There he put up at the Casa di Mansel, and remained several weeks. It seems to have been charming. He revelled in the delightful air of the place, and the meagre figure of Yorick was actually "growing fat, sleek, and well-liking, not improving in stature, but in breadth." He enjoyed himself thoroughly. There were some

¹ Lord C——r, it is given in the letter.

five and twenty English there; but he found his way, as usual, into the best Italian society. He had letters to "Prince Cardito d'Offredo," who behaved to him, according to the quaint and more old-fashioned comprehensiveness of the word, with "great politeness." He was there during the Carnival, which was "jolly — nothing but operas, punchinellos, festinos, and masquerades."

On the 5th of February, "we, that is, *nous autres*, were all dressing out" for a superb entertainment which was to be given by the Princess Francavivalla; and the significance of "*nous autres*" lay in confining it merely to the English, who were to dine with her "exclusive." No wonder he was "happy as a king," and found the "climate heavenly." He discovered "new principles of health" within, and fondly hoped to have added ten years to his life by the journey. In the midst of all this festivity he did not forget those on the other side of the Alps. Three days after the Princess Francavivalla's grand entertainment he wrote to his banker, to desire he would "let Mrs. Sterne have what cash she wants." He explains that he has hardly used any of the letters of credit he had been furnished with, having taken up "no more than about fifty louis at Turin, as

much at Rome"—and as he had a plan for travelling home in the quality of "bear leader," he would draw for little more till his return, "so you will always have enough to spare for my wife. The beginning of March, be so kind as to let her have a hundred pounds to begin the year with."

To his "dear girl" he wrote about the same time, as usual affectionately, and yet with a dash of melancholy, which though the "Princess Francivalla's" masquerade was coming on, was quite characteristic of Yorick. They had been at Tours (Mrs. and Miss Sterne had their little enjoyments too), and were talking of going to Bourges en Bresse. They had made the acquaintance of a Mr. and Mrs. C——, who had been very kind to them. Miss Sterne had attracted a "little French admirer," and a Marquis de ——, who had introduced himself as an intimate friend of Mr. Sterne's, but who proved to be an impostor. "I desire," wrote the father to his "dear girl," "you will get your mother to write to Mr. C——, that I may discharge every debt; and then, my Lydia, if I live, the produce of my pen shall be yours. If fate reserved me not that, the humane and good, part for thy father's sake, part for thy own, will never abandon thee. If your mother's health

will permit her to return to England, your summers I will render as agreeable as I can at Coxwold—your winters at York.” The gay and the heartless are not always thus provident of those at a distance.¹

His friend Sir James Macdonald had gone with him to Naples, and was in the same house; but was suffering from a dreadful attack of ague or rheumatism, which must have been some local malaria fever. Its remains he took with him on to Rome, where he died in the July of the same year, a few weeks after Mr. Sterne left. He was but twenty-five years old; and in an inscription which his friend, Lord Lyttleton, wrote for a memorial tablet, and which Boswell read at Skye, it is stated that, notwithstanding the difference of religion at Rome, “such extraordinary honours were paid to his memory as had never graced that of any other British subject since the death of Sir Philip Sidney.”

Mr. Sterne had posted to Rome to be in time for the Holy Week. He was treated there with

¹It is something to find that Mr. Southey—who was not likely to judge too gently of a character like Sterne's—was struck by these letters from abroad. He owned they refuted the popular notion of neglect and indifference.

great distinction. It is said he used to walk alone and read aloud in the Medici gardens. He had the best introductions to the noble families of Doria, Santa Croce, etc. At Rome, too, he sat for one of the fine portrait busts which, like the Reynolds portrait, seem almost unique for their life and characteristic expression. This was done in terra-cotta. He was reduced to inconvenient straits for want of money, and the "sentimental stranger" used to be pointed at with a sort of pity as he wandered about in deep dejection. It was even insinuated by his valet, that in these difficulties some of the noble families came forward and helped him. The story seems incredible. We see from his own letters that Panchaud had a correspondent at Rome, the Marquis Belloni (mentioned in Wilkes's letters), a great banker, with whom all the English had their accounts, and upon him Mr. Sterne had letters of credit. No Englishman abroad, with friends of distinction, is likely to be refused money at a banker's.

On his first visit he fell in with a "good-hearted young gentleman," a Mr. E——, whom he had met some three years before, and whom he engaged to lead home as "a bear," through "Venice, Vienna, Saxony, Berlin, and so by the Spaw, and

then through Holland to England." This plan could not have been carried out ; for, as it will be seen, he came home by the regular Lyons route.

Altogether, Mr. Sterne enjoyed his travels ; and though he met with a few discomforts and some trifling annoyances, such as "the pistol tinder-box, which was, moreover, filched from me at Sienna, and twice that I payéd five pauls for two hard eggs, once at Ruddi Coffini, and a second time at Capua ;" still, "a journey through France and Italy, provided a man keeps his temper all the way, is not so bad a thing as some people would have you believe." A sly stroke at the sour chronicle of Doctor Smollet. It had been well for that famous humourist if he had got off cheaply with this quiet thrust ; but Mr. Sterne was preparing to find room for him in the "Sentimental Journey," and had devised for him the odious sobriquet of Smelfungus. Excellent is the philosophy of travel given as the result of experience. "'Tis nonsense to imagine they will lend you their voitures to be shaken to pieces for nothing ; and unless you pay twelve sous for greasing your wheels, how should the poor peasant get butter to his bread ? We really expect too much ; and for a livre or two above par for your supper and bed,

who would embroil their philosophy for it? For Heaven's sake pay it!" Valuable and healthful counsel, even in these times, when the "voitures" have been finally shaken to pieces; and there is no greater trial of temper, than a customs examination and a train lost by a few seconds.

Coming up through France he had laid out a plan to leave his regular course, for the long promised pleasure of seeing his wife and girl. But he was to have infinite trouble in finding them. They had been changing their place of abode again and again, and he had literally to track them through half a dozen towns, receiving news of them at each. He found them at the end, in Franche Comté. The meeting after this long absence seems to have been most affectionate. "Poor woman!" said Mr. Sterne, describing it, "she was very cordial, etc." (how Shandean are these "etc.'s"). With his daughter he was delighted, and found her "improved in everything he wished her." But Mrs. Sterne, with her old indiscretion, would not return to England as yet, and was most anxious to stay another year or so. But she remarked a great change in him, and was struck with his look of ill-health, and in fact he left her "most melancholy on that account."

The point was left open, and Mr. Sterne again struck into the regular road that led up to Paris. But at Dijon he was tempted to turn aside to "a delicious château," belonging to a French marquis of his acquaintance, which was at that time full of agreeable company, including seven witty and handsome French ladies. In which pleasant encampment he remained "patriarching it" for a full week. He had not enjoyed himself so much for long. "This is a delicious part of the world: most celestial weather, and we lie all day without damps upon the grass." He was, besides, "inspired twice a day (for her ladyship is not stingy of her wine) with the best Burgundy that grows upon the mountains which terminate our land here."¹ No wonder with such associations that he felt "unaccountably well, and most accountably nonsensical, and full of boisterous spirits," and felt an irrepressible longing to gallop away at once with his pen. "In faith," he says, exuberantly, writing from this charming plaisance, "I think I shall die with it in my hand. But I shall live these ten years, my Antony." A delusive hope, for already his sands were being counted, and the

¹ This sketch recalls a charming picture, extracted by Leigh Hunt from Colonel Pinkney's "Travels in France."

poor gay Shandean had but a year and ten months of life before him.

He tore himself from the château and the seven handsome ladies, intending to post it night and day to Paris; and tarried there only long enough to "wind himself up" to roll on to Calais. He had made a covenant with his Cousin Antony to be home in time to sup with him at Crazy Castle on the king's birthday, and he actually got to Yorkshire before that solemnity came round.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST SERMON

HE had not been home a fortnight, when he was writing to Paris, to make faithful provision for his wife and daughter. They were at Marseilles, and about to move to Chalons, and Mrs. Sterne had fallen sick. He sent them fifty pounds through Mr. Panchaud. "I have," he writes to him, "such entire confidence in my wife that she spends as little as she can, tho' she is confined to no particular sum; her expenses will not exceed three hundred pounds a year, unless by ill-health or a journey, and I am very willing she should have it; and you may rely, in case she should draw for fifty or a hundred pounds extraordinary, that it and every demand shall be punctually paid, and with proper thanks; and for this the whole Shandean family are ready to stand security."

Not long after he wrote again, afraid that the

Rubricado?
Engraved by F. S. Owen. It is the painting by M. C. Hammerstein,
in the possession of the Earl of Onslow.



banker should not have complied with his wishes.¹ He was getting uneasy, too, about Mrs. Sterne's state of health, and was actually negotiating a journey to Paris as "bear leader," to a young nobleman (an odious office, to which he had special aversion), in order that he might with economy fly over to Avignon. A little later he wrote again, adding thirty guineas more to his original order, for Mrs. Sterne was something worse. "Do write to her," he presses on his banker. The illness was, however, not serious for the present, and in a few weeks she grew better.

But this autumn there came a little provincial excitement to make an agreeable break in his solitude. The young King of Denmark was making a progress through England, and was being received everywhere, as the public journals put it, with "great demonstrations of joy." He was now coming to York. The great races were to be on the 18th of August, and he had promised to be present.

That festival was long remembered in York,

¹ For one of Mr. Sterne's reputed laxity in business matters, he seems to have balanced accounts with his Paris banker with wonderful exactness. He was always a little in advance, but only a little, and was sending over drafts to settle his account with great regularity.

where the gathering was considered the grandest ever known. Nearly seven hundred persons of distinction subscribed to the ball at the Assembly Rooms. A splendid retinue of nobility escorted the Duke of York. Sunday intervened, and the august party attended service in the cathedral, where the Danish king was placed in state on the archbishop's throne. There was a sermon — and that sermon was preached by certainly the most famous preacher of the province — the Reverend Mr. Sterne. He had taken his leave of preaching for ever, as he fancied ; but on such an occasion he could scarcely resist. “An excellent discourse,” said the London papers.

He was already at his ninth — and what proved to be the last — volume of “*Tristram* ;” and had laid out that he would write but one that year. His heart was on a new book, on a new plan — “a work of four volumes” — for such was the extent he meditated for his “*Sentimental Journey*.” He grew tired of *Tristram* and his adventures. At the same time he was writing to his friends his philosophical refrain about happiness being independent of situation, and of each man finding it within himself. But this, it is to be feared, was what he himself would call “no bad

rant ;" for no one leaned so little on himself, or changed his stage so often in search of comfort as Yorick.

He worked very hard all the winter at his book, shut up in his solitary parsonage, varying the monotony by a stray letter, written and received. Sometimes a "Crazyite," one of the Stevenson set, would pass by and look in, and him he would charge with a letter for the Castellan. He considered him "as a bank-note in a corner drawer of my bureau. I know it is there — (I wish I did !)" The old Stillington Common cropped up again, and harassed him with what he hated — business : and every moment he had before him the prospect of a rough road and wintry journey through French ice and snows down to Marseilles, where his sick wife was lying.

She, however, grew better, and they determined with the new year to move from Marseilles to a romantic spot near Avignon, a charming place, actually beside the fountain of Vaucluse. Nothing more delightful could be conceived, and it makes a companion picture to the Toulouse mansion. Mr. Sterne could appreciate the associations of Petrarch and Laura, and envied their residence. It was a marvel of cheapness — seven rooms *en*

suite, "half furnished with tapestry, half with blue taffety; the permission to fish and have game; so many partridges a week, etc.; and the price? — guess! sixteen guineas a year!" Well might Mr. Sterne say, "There's for you, Panchaud!"

They were established there by the end of February; and their kind paymaster at home had taken care they should have a hundred louis to enable them to leave Marseilles with credit as soon as the Carnival was over.

At this new residence they made a pleasant acquaintance in the Abbé de Sade, an accomplished scholar, who had written a life of Petrarch, and who was correcting a French translation of Mr. Sterne's "Sermon," made by Miss Lydia Sterne. There they made acquaintances, and found friends — "a marquis" among others, who was rude to the Abbé de Sade. But it is clear these two ladies had scarcely discretion enough to keep them from embarrassment in a foreign country. The proposals made so frequently for Miss Lydia's hand show certain attractions in her; but their fruitless issue in all cases show a want of judgment in Mrs. Sterne as to the quality of the suitors she encouraged for her daughter.

Very delightful, as was remarked before, were

Mr. Sterne's letters to his daughter at this period, — so affectionate, so playful, and so considerate: he seems to alter his tone and style, to become, as it were, her playfellow; he bids her open her heart to him; "to write soon, and write naturally, and then you will write well." She breaks her guitar; and he writes off to Paris: "My daughter begs a present of me, and you know I can deny her nothing. It" — by a characteristic omission, he leaves out the name of the article he wants — "it must be strung with catgut, and of five cords." He sends Mrs. Sterne a fashionable medicine, then largely advertised, "Huxham's Tincture of Bark," a good remedy for the ague. These are not tokens of tremendous weight and significance; yet there is sometimes more delicacy and affection accompanying a small present, and its associations, than in the crude bulk of more costly and substantial tokens. Absence had not sunk him into laziness or indifference.

As usual, Christmas again found him in London; and with the arrival of Mr. Sterne came up, too, the ninth "Shandy." He now chose out new lodgings, to which he always came for the future, at No. 41 Old Bond Street, a very fashionable quarter; on the west side was a bag-wig maker's

and on the first floor of the bag-wig maker's, were Mr. Sterne's rooms. As we now walk down that old-fashioned thoroughfare, we may lift our eyes to Mr. Sterne's windows, but the bag-wig maker has passed away with the bag-wigs he made; a cheesemonger took his place in our time, and finally a firm of picture dealers. Messrs. Agnew have erected a handsome gallery on the site.

"Tristram" had now passed through the press, and on the 29th of January, 1767, the customary advertisement appeared. But a note appended showed how keenly relished had been the new-born loves of Captain Shandy. "* * * This volume contains the amours of my Uncle Toby." There was but one volume, instead of the favourite number, two; and in that one volume there was but half the customary number of pages. The price was only two shillings, "sewed." But a more curious interest attaches to the little volume, for it was the last of the "Shandy" series, and, begun abruptly, it stopped short as abruptly, and remains now, like his other works, a mere fragment. It came out prefaced by a strange dedication. Six years before he had dedicated his first "Tristram" instalment to Mr. Pitt, the great patriot minister. Mr. Pitt was now Lord

Chatham, and to this nobleman he inscribed the last portion. It is in a vein of satirical compliment.¹ "My opinion of Lord ——— is neither better nor worse than it was of Mr. ———. Honours, like impressions upon coin, may give an ideal and local value to a bit of base metal, but not to gold and silver" — a curious anticipation of the often-quoted lines of Burns — "The guinea stamp," etc. It is scarcely in good taste; and if he had the popular aim of dedication in those times in view, it was hardly calculated to rouse the dormant patronage of the great minister.

More "Sermons," too, were ready, and were announced on Saturday, January the 18th. The old title-page device was still kept up. They were the composition of "Mr. Yorick," but were published by the "Rev. Mr. Sterne." The price was five shillings, "sewed;"² and "*.* The nobility and gentry who have honoured Mr. Sterne

¹ He has disguised the name under stars. Lord * * * * * has the right number, but Mr. * * * only three, a curious illustration of Mr. Sterne's failing in spelling.

² "Boards" and "cloth" being as yet unknown, every book came out either in paper covers, like French books, or "whole bound in calf." Immediate binding became a necessity. Those who love, like Mr. Shandy, to *bouquiner* among the stalls, will have remarked the legion of little books of this period, all in the one monotonous livery of a brown old calf.

with their subscriptions" were requested to send for their copies to the publishers. The author spoke boastfully in his letters of that list of "the nobility and gentry," but scarcely with exaggeration. It was a dazzling show, such as must have made many a garreteer's heart burn with envy. There was to be seen in it every name in the titled calendar — dukes, earls, peers in profusion, jostling one another in a disorderly crowd. There was to be seen a cloud of baronets, and a file of names of all that was brilliant and literary. D'Olbach, Crebillon, Diderot, and all his French friends mustered round him thickly; that now half-French Hume, whom he threatened to call deist if he did not subscribe, and gentlemen of the army. Ladies, such as "Mrs. Grosvenor and Miss Eliza Grosvenor," were very strong in numbers. On the roll we read the names of Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Ed. Montagu (Lady Mary's son), Mr. Reynolds, of Leicester Fields (curiously the only one whose address is given), many Pitts, Thomas Townshend, "Walpole, Esquire," and, walking last in the procession, the sardonic looking name, M. de Voltaire. (How did he secure him?) Gentlemen of the gown mustered in crowds; and among them Mr. Sterne saw the

name of the Rev. Doctor Leigh, who was vicar of Halifax when he was at the Free School. Here was grave warning and serious reproof from a moral age.

From Bond Street he wrote to Panchaud, advising him of a hundred guineas paid into Mr. Selwin's hands for the use of Mrs. Sterne.¹ He was full of his book, and anxious that the banker should get him "the honour of a few names of men of science and fashion. 'Tis subscribed for at a great rate." A fortnight later he wrote again, anxious that Mrs. Sterne should have her £100. They had just written over an agreeable piece of news. A Marseilles gentleman, worth twenty thousand livres a year, "and much at his ease," had "offered" for Miss Sterne; and Mr. Sterne wrote gaily to his friends that he supposed "Mademoiselle, with Madame ma Femme, will negotiate the affair." Nothing more, however, was heard of the French monsieur who was so "very much at his ease." Most likely he fancied

¹ This letter, dated February 28th, and not published, is curiously like one in the printed collection, — indeed, is word for word in many sentences. In this last letter he calls Mr. Selwin "Mr. Selvey," and talks of "Merseilles." He also adds how he expected to make a thousand guineas of his new book. Most likely he thought the first had miscarried.

Miss Sterne to be equally very much at her ease, and so, like many others of the lady's proposals, it came to nothing. Mr. Sterne, when details were forwarded to him, interpreted his attentions with the eyes of a man of the world. "As to Mr. ———," he wrote, in a postscript to Miss Lydia, "by your description he is a fat fool ; I beg you will not give up your time to such a being."

Yet he could write, with a charming gaiety, pleasant light letters down to the ladies at Newburgh ; letters addressed, indeed, to his friend, Lord Fauconberg, but stored with London gossip for their amusement. These little "gazettes" unfold the old story of the dinners with the "Duke of York's people," the concerts, and the first of Mrs. Cornely's Soho assemblies. He had also found his way to the acquaintance of the wild Lord March, afterward "old Q." These characteristic epistles will be welcome at full length.¹


"LONDON, Friday.

"MY LORD :—When we got up yesterday morning, the streets were 4 inches deep in snow—it has set in now with the most intense cold. I

¹ The originals are at Newburgh, and I was allowed to use them by the kindness of Sir George Wombwell.

could scarce lay in bed for it, and this morning more snow again. Tho' the roads after all are extreemely good near town, and, I suppose, every where else, the snow has been very deep in Kent.

"No news. I dined yesterday with Lord Marsh and a large company of the duke of York's people, etc., and came away just as wise as I went. The King at 'Cimon,' the new opera last night — nobody at Covent Garden but the citizens' children and apprentices. The Duke of York was to have had a play house of his own, and had studied his part in the 'Fair Penitent,' and made Garrick act it twice on purpose to profit by it ; but the King, 'tis said, has desired the Duke to give up the part and the project with it.

" (all this is for the Ladies) to whom, with all comp^s to the party at Quadrille and Lady Catherine.

"I am, my Lord,

"Y^r most unworthy Gazetteere that ever wrote,

"but most faithfully y^r ever obliged,

"L. STERNE."

"BOND STREET, Jan. 16th, 1767.

"MY LORD :— There is a dead stagnation of everything, and scarce any talk but about the

damages done over the Kingdom by this cruel storm; it began yesterday morning to thaw gently, and has continued going on so till now. I hope it will all get away after the same manner. It was so intensely cold on Sunday, that there were few either at the church or court, but last night it thaw'd; the concert at Soho top full — and was (this is for the ladies) the best assembly and the best concert I ever had the honour to be at. Lady Anne had the goodness to challenge me, or I had not known her, she was so prudently muffled up; Lord Bellasyse, I never saw him look so well; Lady Bellasyse recovers *à marvielle* — and y^r little niece I believe grows like flax.

“We had reports yesterday that the York stage coach wth 14 people in and about it, were drown'd by mistaking a bridge — it was contradicted at night — as are half the morning reports in town.

“The ‘School for Guardians’ (wrote by Murphy) scarce got thro’ the 1st night — ’tis a most miserable affair — Garrick’s Cimon fills his house brim full every night.

“The streets are dirtier than in the town of Coxwould — for they are up to the knees, except on the *trottoire*.

"I beg my best comp^s, my Lord, to Mrs. Bellasyse the Ladies ———; and to S^r Bryan Stapleton, and am

"With unfeigned attachm^{ts}, y^r l^dp'^s faithful,

"L. STERNE."

The thoughtless clergyman was, however, to be troubled with many rude correctives; though he affected to "laugh loudly" at all such protests, he still felt them secretly. To the end of his life he was always spoken of with a coarse freedom in the public journals. It has been mentioned how one of the curious effects of the popularity of "Tristram" was, that it should have become a young ladies' book, and been hidden away in young ladies' pockets; and this feature grew so developed as to be noticed in many contemporary papers and magazines. But it was to receive a yet more curious confirmation. On the morning of Monday, March the 30th, there appeared in the *Public Ledger* a letter, signed "Davus," full of the old scandal and the old complaints; and on the same day some well-meaning persons, struck by the justness of these strictures, sent down from London an anonymous letter, addressed to Mr. Sterne's archbishop. With all his failings,

he might contend against, or, at least, affect to despise, open attack ; but it was hard to struggle against assailants in the dark. Happily it seems to have met with the reception such unaccredited strokes should always meet ; for it does not appear to have injured him with his superiors.¹

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE : —

“Several well wishers to your Grace, and to religion and the cause of virtue, modesty, and decency, think it a duty incumbent on them, consistently with that regard they have for them, as well as order and right conduct, to refer your Grace to a letter, signed ‘Davus,’ in the *Public Ledger* of this day, very justly, as they humbly think, animadverting on the scandal they have long taken and oftener conceived at the works of ‘Tristram Shandy’ as written by a clergyman, and a dignified one, uncensured by his superiors.” They went on to say that they “harboured no peek” against him and were certain that his Grace, “as this gentleman was within his province to censure,” would use all proper means “as shall deter this wanton scandal to his cloth, from proceeding in this lewd, ludicrous manner, as he has

¹ This letter was found among the archbishop’s papers.

long done, to the shame and disgrace of his sacred order and the detriment of society; of which surely many fathers and mothers can testify, whose daughters have not thereby been mended, but most probably corrupted, of which there may be given instances.


"Monday, Mar. 30, 1767."

This grave and striking indictment seems exactly to express the right view of our hero's work, and in a rough way shows how discreditable was the rôle he had taken up. From encouragement and long striving to "spice" his writing with grossness, it is clear he had become quite insensible to the claims of decency, and indifferent as to what was thought of him. There are some letters of his written to a "Dear H——," or Hannah, as I find in the original—written in a too free style, which shows how demoralised he had become, if not quite hardened. In another he writes, "Now be a good dear girl, Hannah, and give these to Fanny, and Fanny will give that w^h. belongs to her sister, herself, and when I see you I'll give you a kiss. Theres for you! But I have something else for you which I am fabricating at a great rate, and that is my journey, which shall

make you cry as much as ever it made me laugh, or I'll give up the business of sentimental writing and write to the body — that is Hannah ! — what I am doing in writing to you, but you are a good body, and that's worth half a score mean souls. Upon mine, I am y^r L. SHANDY."

CHAPTER VII.

YORICK AND ELIZA

HE charge that his writings had done injury to the young was often repeated. It is a sad business altogether,¹ and it must be said that there is something degrading to our literature, and almost unique, to find a writer, who has to earn his wage by pandering to the grosser tastes of his time. At the same time there are signs that, with the decay of his health, he was beginning to have uneasiness and compunctions as to his unworthy office. Unluckily, while making this plea for him, we find him engaged in one of his most sentimental amours, over which the sober must shake their heads and the

¹ It is stranger to find in the sermon read by Trim a description of his own state:—"A man shall be vicious and utterly debauched in his principles, exceptionable in his conduct to the world," etc., etc. "Surely you must think conscience must lead such a man a troubled life. Alas! conscience had something else to do all this time than break in upon him. . . . This dumb god was either talking or pursuing, or was in a journey, or peradventure he slept and could not be awoke."

judicious grieve. All the world knows "Yorick's letters to Eliza," and the French, in particular, have taken a special interest in this episode, which is much "in their line." It is a curious and not uninteresting episode, and I shall now give complete account of the transaction, the first that has yet been presented.

In Bristol Cathedral is to be seen a graceful monument, consisting of two classical figures bending over a shield, one bearing a torch, the other a dove. This is a tribute to the memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, Yorick's "Eliza," and Sterne's friend, "in whom," it records, "genius and benevolence were united." "She died Aug. 3d, 1778, aged 35." "Yorick's letters to Eliza," enjoyed enormous popularity in their day, and are still relished abroad. It was in the year 1766 that he became acquainted with this lady, "by accident" we are told. He was then a rather elderly Lothario of fifty-six, and with considerable art he took care to assume a sort of paternal or clerical tone in keeping with his time of life. She had been born in the country of Anjinga, the farthest English settlement on the Malabar coast, which prompted Raynal's extraordinary burst of rapture about the place in his "History of the Indies."

When treating of the English settlements on the coast of Malabar he suddenly launched out into this super-French piece of bombast: "Territory of Anjinga, you are nothing; but you have given birth to Eliza! One day these commercial establishments founded by Europeans on the coast of Asia will exist no more. The grass will cover them, or the avenged Indian will have built over their ruins; but if my writings have any duration, the name of Anjinga will remain in the memory of men. Those who shall read my works, those whom the winds shall waft to thy shores, will say, 'It is there that Eliza Draper was born;' and if there is a Briton among them, he will hasten to add with pride, 'and she was born of English parents.' . . . From the height of the heavens, thy first and last country, receive, Eliza, my oath—I swear never to write a line by which the world shall not recognise thy friend."

Yet the object of this inflated language was, after all, an average heroine, whose admirers, oddly enough, seem limited to two disorderly clerics, one of whom was virtually unfrocked, and the other pronounced by a bishop to be "an irrevocable scoundrel." According to the candid description of her admirer, she seems to have been

a rather ordinary-looking person, but there was a secret charm about her which it required an intimate friendship to develop. "When I first saw you," he says, "I beheld you as an object of compassion, and a very plain woman. The mode of your dress disfigured you — but nothing now could render you such but the being solicitous to make yourself admired as a handsome one. You are not handsome, Eliza, nor is yours a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders. But you are something more ; for I scruple not to tell you, I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance. A something in your voice and eyes you possess in a degree more persuasive than any woman I ever saw, read, or heard of ; but it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence that men of nice sensibility alone can be touched with."

Mr. Sterne was deeply skilled in the arts of gaining the female heart, and this adroitly calculated depreciation was likely to be more acceptable than an elaborate compliment. Mr. James Forbes, who wrote four portly tomes of Eastern travel, met her in society at Bombay, and was impressed by her "refined taste and elegant accomplishments, which required no panegyric from his pen." Mr. Draper, her husband, we are told, was "much

respected in that quarter of the globe." He was second commissioner at Bombay, and later became chief at Surat. In the voluminous Hastings correspondence we find him offering his compliments and services to that great man, announcing also to him his recall to Bombay. Mr. Sterne insinuates that he was a penurious person, anxious for the wife's return on account of the expense he was put to. It might be thought that he was an elderly or old man, for his signature to the letters is of a singularly tottering and infirm character, as though written by one suffering from paralysis. But the fact is, he was only fifteen years older than her.

The Indian lady had Indian friends in London, who lived in Gerrard Street. These were Commodore James and his wife; the former an officer of some distinction, who had served in many adventurous expeditions on the Indian coast, where sailors had to be as much soldiers as sailors; and whose deeds are fully described by the historian, Orme. In that work, which at that time was just published, the name of Commodore James occurs frequently. They seem to have been kind, excellent, hospitable persons, and warm friends both of Mr. Sterne and of Mrs. Draper; and at their house

in Gerrard Street, it seems more than probable, Yorick first met Eliza. He was to become later Sir William James, and chairman of the East India Company; and the only little fact of his London life that I can discover, shows him befriending the unfortunate Colonel Frederick, who was son to the famous adventurer Theodore, King of Corsica, and calling a private meeting of friends at Gerrard Street, to raise a subscription for his benefit. He seems to have been a brave soldier and a kindly friend.

As usual, and following out his principle of ever having some *Dulcinea* in his head, Mr. Sterne gave full reins to his sentimental passion. As with the Paris lady, he "deliciously cantered away with it, always upon my haunches along the street." He followed it out in many tender phases, with his usual thoughtless, reckless fashion. The public, the ostentatious way in which he brought his grand passion and its incidents before all his friends — before the sober and correct, as well as the more free — and even before the public, shows plainly that he considered himself a privileged sentimentalist. More questionable affairs are not thrust thus into the light of day. By and by Mr. Sterne was inviting all the world to listen to the sorrows

of his sentimental passion. As it was, London society began to talk; and an officious but well-meaning person, flush of English news, passing by Marseilles, where were Mrs. Sterne and her daughter, had the cruelty and bad taste to inform them of the new scandal that was then amusing London.

The sick lady had the spirit to reply "that she wished not to be informed, and urged that he would drop the subject." The young girl herself wrote to her father how uneasy her mother was on the subject. The subject was indeed unsuitable for one of her years. But this was one of the painful complications into which her father's follies led him. He wrote back to her that he honoured Mrs. Sterne for her answer; and then—to his own child—entered on a sort of justification of himself. "'Tis true I have a friendship for her; but not to infatuation. I believe I have judgment enough to discern hers and every woman's 'faults.' " He then heartily wishes "he had her with him to introduce her to his friends, the James's," whose portraits he sketches for her. He "is as worthy a man as I ever met. He possesses every manly virtue—honour and bravery are his characteristics, which have distinguished him nobly in several

instances." Mrs. James "is the most amiable and gentlest of beings," and "of so sweet a disposition that she is too good for the world. Just God!" adds Mr. Sterne, "if all were like her! Heaven, my Lydia, for some wise purpose, has created different beings." An allusion there is no mistaking.

Mrs. James had probably introduced him to their protégée. These worthy people do not appear to have seen any harm in this behaviour, or at least did not interfere, probably accepting the clergyman's interest as semi-paternal or semi-religious. But the affair was beginning to be talked of, and certain friends in the city, in the absent Draper's interest, remonstrated with "the Brahmine" — Mr. Sterne's pet name for her — on her indiscretion. This threw her admirer into a fury. His hatred to these people was indeed extraordinary. He returned again and again to them. "I would not give ninepence," he said, angrily, "for the picture of you they have got executed; it is that of a conceited, made-up coquette. Your eyes and the shape of your face, the latter the most perfect oval I ever saw, which are perfections that must strike the most indifferent judge, because they are equal to any of God's works in a similar way, and finer than any I

beheld in all my travels — are manifestly inspired by the affected leer of the one and strange appearance of the other.”

This combination of animosity and flattery is amusing, and calculated to have telling effect on the mind of a foolish or impressionable heroine. All this, as he confessed later, was an entire fiction; he had invented the whole story because “they used their endeavours with her to break off her friendship with me, for reasons I will not write, but tell you.” Mrs. James knew nothing of their “baseness.” The reasons given by him for this advice to break off her intimacy with them might certainly have been given by Tartuffe. “Forgive my zeal, dear girl, and allow me right, which arises only out of that fund of affection I have, and shall preserve for thee to the hour of my death. I think you a very deserving woman, and that you want nothing but firmness, and a better opinion of yourself, to be the best female character I know.” But his philanthropic efforts did not succeed, and the Brahmine declined to give up her friends.

Presently her health seemed to grow worse, and Daniel Draper was insisting on her returning to him. This was not from any rumours having

reached him — there was not time for that, the intimacy having only lasted a few months. She resolved to set off, prepared for the voyage, on the eve of which Mr. Sterne seems to have begun that characteristic correspondence later known as that of “Yorick and Eliza.” These letters were sent to her up to the time of the sailing, and they are certainly original and characteristic.

He used to write to her at all seasons. On returning from a dinner-party, the artful Lothario, adroitly touching every note of the sympathetic gamut so as to excite an interest in himself, would write thus: “Best of all good girls, the sufferings I sustained last night on account of thine, Eliza, are beyond my powers. Thou hast been bowed down, my child, with every burden that sorrow of heart and pain of body could inflict on a poor being. Fear nothing, my dear; hope everything; and the balm of this passion will shed its influence on thy health, and make thee enjoy a spring of youth and cheerfulness, more than thou hast hardly yet tasted.”

All these evils, of course, were awaiting her on her arrival at Bombay; but the “balm of his passion” (for him, the Reverend Laurence) was to be her solace. He, indeed, rarely omits a judi-

cious stroke at Daniel Draper, Esquire. "Trust my declaration, Eliza, that thy husband (if he is the good feeling man I wish him) will press thee to him with more honest warmth and affection than he would be able to do in the best bloom of thy beauty — and so he ought. I pity him — he must have strange feelings if he knows not the value of such a creature as thou art."

At last the moment came for separation, and the outward-bound Indiaman was about to sail from Deal. Mr. Sterne took great pains in looking after some little comforts for the voyage, screws for her cabin, etc.; writing also to the pilot, Abraham Walker.

She was really ill, but prepared at once for her voyage. She was to leave her children behind, and her passage was taken in the *Earl of Chatham*, which was to sail about the beginning of April. The day of departure came at last, and she had to go down to Deal, off which coast the vessel was lying, to wait until the signal for embarkation should be given. Mr. Sterne then began to write those famous love-letters which have been translated into nearly every European language; and continued to write them until the *Earl of Chatham* weighed anchor and stood out to sea.

He wrote a curious letter to his daughter just after her departure which offers an odd jumble of feelings.

“BOND STREET, April 9, 1767.

“This letter, my dear Lydia, will distress thy good heart, for from the beginning thou wilt perceive no entertaining strokes of humour in it—I cannot be chearful when a thousand melancholy ideas surround me—I have met with a loss of near fifty pounds, which I was taken in for in an extraordinary manner—but what is that loss in comparison of one I may experience?—Friendship is the balm and cordial of life, and without it, ’tis a heavy load not worth sustaining.—I am unhappy—thy mother and thyself at a distance from me, and what can compensate for such a destitution?—For God’s sake persuade her to come and fix in England, for life is too short to waste in separation—and whilst she lives in one country, and I in another, many people will suppose it proceeds from choice—besides I want thee near me, thou child and darling of my heart!—I am in a melancholy mood, and my Lydia’s eyes will smart with weeping when I tell her the cause that now affects me.—I am apprehensive the dear friend I mentioned in my last letter is

going into a decline — I was with her two days ago, and I never beheld a being so altered — she has a tender frame, and looks like a drooping lily, for the roses are fled from her cheeks — I can never see or talk to this incomparable woman without bursting into tears — I have a thousand obligations to her, and I owe her more than her whole sex, if not all the world put together. — She has a delicacy in her way of thinking that few possess — our conversations are of the most interesting nature, and she talks to me of quitting this world with more composure than others think of living in it. — I have wrote an epitaph, of which I send thee a copy. — 'Tis expressive of her modest worth — but may heav'n restore her! and may she live to write mine.

“Columns, and labour'd urns but vainly shew,
An idle scene of decorated woe.
The sweet companion, and the friend sincere,
Need no mechanic help to force the tear.
In heart-felt numbers, never meant to shine,
'Twill flow eternal o'er a hearse like thine;
'Twill flow, whilst gentle goodness has one friend,
Or kindred tempers have a tear to lend.”

Mrs. Draper was now writing details about the ship and her fellow-passengers. There was a Miss

Light going with her,—a lady who afterward married “George Stratton, Esquire.” She was taking out her pianoforte and a guitar; and Mr. Sterne, a known musician himself, went to Zumpe’s, a maker of the period, and obtained some directions from him in reference to the tuning of both instruments. Down at York, the Rev. Mr. Mason had a “Zumpe” also, which he lent to Gray, the high notes of which were “somewhat dry and sticky.” This instrument Mr. Sterne must have seen. He got her a hammer and pliers to twist her wire with, and “may every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to thy hopes.” He also got her “ten handsome brass screws to hang your necessities upon.” There were twelve originally, but he stole a couple from “you to put up in my own cabin at Cox-would. I shall never hang or take my hat off one of them but I shall think of you.” He also wrote “Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal,” to receive all those articles on the arrival of the Deal machine, and bid him look out for a serviceable armchair in that town, and send it on board.

He continues to write steadily every day—sometimes in a strain of simplicity that provokes a smile, and suggests the mixture of sentiment

and "bread and butter" in Goethe's "Charlotte." Thus he dwells at length on the painting of her cabin. "O! I grieve for your cabin; and fresh painting will be enough to destroy every nerve about thee. Take care of yourself, my dear girl, and sleep not in it too soon; 'twill be enough to give you a stroke of epilepsy." And later he asks, "Why may not clean washing and rubbing do?"

He promised to write every post until she finally set sail. He bids her put all his letters "into some order." The first eight or nine were numbered,¹ but the rest she will be able to arrange "by the day or hour which, I hope, I have generally prefixed."

Among the passengers, too, was a young soldier, whom Mrs. Draper described as "susceptible of tender impressions." Mr. Sterne would seem to have been uneasy on the score of this "young soldier," and was disturbed by the way his approaches were received; though he admits "there was no shutting the door against him either in politeness or humanity." In a sort of apologetic fashion, Eliza had hinted that "before Miss Light

¹ There are only, properly speaking, four given previous to this letter, so a good many must have been lost.

had sailed a fortnight, he will be in love with her.” “But,” says Mr. Sterne, “five months with Eliza, and in the same room, and with an amorous son of Mars!” And then thinking of some negro character at the theatre, adds, “It can no be Masser.” “But thy discretion, thy wisdom, thy honour — the spirit of thy honour.”

As the day for sailing drew near, Mrs. Draper’s illness increased, and her friends became alarmed. Mr. Sterne pressed upon her the necessity of putting off her voyage; he was sure her husband, when he knew the true state of the case, could not object. Her physician had indeed ordered her “the pure southern air of France, or milder Naples;” so that the country to which she was hurrying was scarcely a suitable residence. But there was “a Mr. B——” standing by, — an Indian, it is to be presumed, — who seems to have drawn a not very encouraging picture of Mr. Draper’s impatience. Mr. Sterne was afraid that this gentleman “had exaggerated matters.” He did not like his face, “it is absolutely killing; should evil befall thee, what will he have not to answer for.” He again pressed her to delay her journey. “If thou art so very ill, put off all thoughts of returning to India this year; write to

your husband; tell him the truth of your case. If he is the generous, humane man you describe him to be, he cannot but applaud your conduct."

Speaking of her cabin friends, who he is afraid "are only genteel by comparison with the contrasted crew with which she must behold them," he returns again to the obnoxious city people. "So was you know who, from the same fallacy that was put upon the judgment — but I will not mortify you." It has been assumed that this was a sneer at Daniel Draper, Esq., Councilor at Bombay, and who was so much respected "in that quarter of the globe."

Mr. Thackeray was very bitter on this "you know who," also assuming that the reference was to her husband. It will be seen he was referring to the persons whom he had warned her against, and that "strange infatuation" the "fallacy that had been put upon her judgment" by the

Mr. Sterne follows up his proposition: "'Tis true I am ninety-five in constitution, and you but twenty-five — rather too great a disparity this! but what I want in youth I will make up in wit and good humour. Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharissa,

as I will love and sing thee, my wife elect. All these names, eminent as they were, shall give place to thine, Eliza.

“Tell me in answer to this that you approve and honour the proposal; and that you would (like the Spectator’s mistress) have more joy in putting on an old man’s slipper, than in associating with the gay, the voluptuous, the young. Adieu! my Simplicia. Yours, TRISTRAM.”

At this moment of departure he threw out some mysterious promises and declarations. “May poverty, distress, anguish, and shame be my portion if ever I give thee reason to repent the knowledge of me.” “With this asservation, made in the presence of a just God, I pray to Him that so it may speed with me as I deal candidly and honourably with thee. Remember that, while I have life and power, whatever is mine you may style and think yours; though sorry should I be if ever my friendship was put to the test thus, for your own delicacy’s sake” — an amusing qualification of generosity.

“I will live for thee and my Lydia, be rich for the dear children of my heart, gain wisdom, gain fame and happiness, to share them with thee and her in my old age. Once for all, adieu; preserve

thy life steadily, pursue the ends we proposed, and let nothing rob thee of those powers Heaven has given thee for thy well-being." This seems to point to a future marriage. He had already jocularly hinted at it. "Talking of widows," he writes, in a significant passage, "if ever you are such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob, because I design to marry you myself. My wife cannot live long, and I know not any one I should like so well for her substitute as yourself." Mrs. Sterne was at the time in wretched health, and often within measurable distance of death, so that this amiable suggestion was not merely Utopian.

"But, Eliza, if thou art so very ill, still put off all thoughts of returning to India this year. Write to your husband; tell him the truth of your case. If he is the generous, humane man you describe him to be, he cannot but applaud your conduct. I am creditably informed that his repugnance to your living in England arises only from the dread which has entered his brain that thou mayest run him into debt beyond thy appointments, and that he must discharge them. That such a creature should be sacrificed for the paltry consideration of a few hundreds is too, too hard! Oh! my child, that I could with propriety indemnify him

for every charge, even to the last mite, that thou hast been of to him ! With joy would I give him my whole subsistence — nay, sequester my livings, and trust to the treasures Heaven has furnished my head with for a future subsistence." This seems plain speaking enough. He would send for his wife and daughter, and they would all travel together on the Continent — "fish on the banks of the Arno," which suggests Shelley, who made exactly the same suggestion to his wife when he eloped with Mary Godwin. He would prescribe for her gratis, the rogue ! "You are not the first woman by many I have done so for with success !"

On Eliza's departure from London, Mr. Sterne began to keep a journal of his doings in London, specially written to amuse her, and which he sent in portions to her. This was described as a vivacious and entertaining record, though it has never been published. It was shown to Mr. Thackeray by its possessor, Mr. Gibbs, of Bath, who also showed it to the present writer. It was curious to hold in one's hand this substantial record, and look at the crowded and faded characters, written on huge sheets of foolscap. "Upon the death of my father," says Mr. Gibbs, "when I was eleven

years old, a pile of old account-books, letters, commonplace books, and other papers of no documentary value, was set aside as waste, and placed in a room where I used to play. I looked through the papers, and found the journal and letters. An early fondness for reading had made me acquainted with the well-known extracts from the writings of Sterne, — ‘The Sword,’ ‘The Monk,’ ‘Le Fevre,’ and a small book containing the ‘Letters of Yorick and Eliza,’ — and, finding these names in the letters and book, I took all I could find, and obtained permission to preserve them, and they have been in my possession ever since. How they came into the hands of my father, who was a great reader and had a large collection of old books, I never had any means of knowing.” He added the curious incident that it was discovered in a plate-warmer! The journal is full of extraordinary incident, and, from a hurried perusal, or snatch of perusal, it can be seen that it was written in Sterne’s most characteristic manner.

“I have found,” Mr. Gibbs writes to me, “some difficulty in looking over Sterne’s journal in selecting a few extracts characteristic of him, for they are all characteristic, in the true Shandean style. I have copied the enclosed for you, preserving the

original spelling, capital letters, and punctuation, and hope you will be pleased with the specimen. The lot was given me to cut up into spills to light candles with ; but as I had read of Yorick and Eliza I looked over and kept these. The journal is a continuation of one begun when Eliza sailed for India, and of which the former portion was, it appears, sent to her. I wonder what became of it."

It is strange that Thackeray should have made no use of it. Mr. Gibbs is "the gentleman of Bath" alluded to in the lectures on "The Four Georges," and in a pleasing paper, marked by sound critical instinct and research, addressed to a literary society, he furnished some interesting extracts from this curious record. "It consists," he says, "of assurances of his most fervent attachment ; reiterated hopes for her return to England, and for the reestablishment of their health, and for their eventual union. With these are blended recitals of his frequent illnesses, the bursting of blood-vessels in the lungs, complaints of his wife's unceasing efforts to get all the money she could from him, with incidents of his journey and visits." It shows that the luckless clergyman was really suffering from his hopeless passion, which he did not attempt to control. It begins :

"April 13. — Wrote the last Farewell to Eliza by Mr. Watts, who sails this Day for Bombay — inclosed her likewise th journl kept from th day we parted, to this — so from hence continue it till th time we meet again — Eliza does th same, so we shall have mutual testimonies to deliver hereafter to each other; That the Sun has not more constantly rose & set upon th earth than we have thought of, & remembered what is more cheering than life itself — Eternal Sunshine! Eliza, dark to me is all this world without thee & most heavily will every hour pass over my head, till that is come which brings thee, dear Woman, back to Albion!

"Dined with Hall &c at the Brawn's Head. the whole Pandemonium assembled. — supp'd together at Hall's — worn out both in body & mind & paid a severe reckoning all the night.

"A day dedicated to Abstinence & Reflection — & what object will employ the greatest part of mine, full well does my Eliza know.

"May 22. — Left Bond St & London this morning.

"23. — Bear my journey badly. — ill & dispirited all th way — staid two days on the road at the A — Bishop of York's — shewd his Grace &

his Lady & sisters your Portrait with a short but interesting story of my friendship for the Original — kindly nursed & honor'd by both — Arrived at my Thatched Cottage, the 28th of May."

This archbishop was always friendly to him, and perhaps felt indulgently toward his follies, wishing perhaps to hold some control over him. It may be doubted, however, if he were as tolerant as he is represented in this little scene.

When he reached home he became a prey to the most overpowering dejection, and his state was truly pitiable. The mercurial Yorick, it will be seen, could only turn for relief to his favourite distraction, Eliza.

"*July 12.* — Am ill all day with th Impressions of yesterdy's accout — can neithr eat or drink or sit still & write or read. I walk like a disturbed spirit abt my garden calling up Heaven & thee to come to my succour. Couldst thou but write one word to me it would be worth half the world to me — my friends write me millions — and evry one writes me to flee from my solitude and come to them — I obey th commands of my friend Hall who has sent over on purpose to fetch me — or else will come himself for me. So I set off to-morrow to take sanctuary in Crazy Castle — The

Newspapers have sent me there already by putting in the following paragraph :

“‘ We hear from Yorkshire that Skelton Castle is the present Rendezvous of the most brilliant wits of the age — the admired Author of “Tristram,” Mr. Garrick, &c., being there; and Mr. Coleman and many other men of wit & learning being every day expected.’

“When I get there, which will be to-morrow night, my Eliza will hear from her Yorick.”

Mr. Sterne now tells his Brahmine that he is expecting a visit from his wife and daughter, but he complains bitterly that they were coming “to fleece and pillage him.” A settlement was to be made on Mrs. Sterne; an estate was to be sold, but they were to settle themselves in France.

“I’m truly acquiescent,” he adds, “tho’ I lose the contingency of surviving them — but ’tis no matter — I shall have enough — and a hundred or two hundred pounds for Eliza whenever She will honour me with putting her hand into my Purse.”

In the midst of his probably genuine grief at the loss of the Brahmine, he would condescend to some devices that cause a smile, and which he little dreamed would one day be revealed to the world. As we have hinted before, it turns out

that some of the most impassioned portions of the letters sent to her were literal copies of his own love-letters addressed to Mrs. Sterne thirty years before ! It is said that the second Mrs. Sheridan made a mortifying discovery of the same kind. The following passage is the same in both, almost word for word :

“I have just been eating my chicking, Sitting over it with tears a bitter sauce Eliza ” (“my L.” in the first copy). “When Molly (Fanny) spread the table cloth, my heart fainted within me — one solitary plate, one knife, one fork, one glass, &c.” After giving a “thousand pensive penetrating looks” at the armchair (in the case of both the ladies), “I laid down my knife and fork, took out my handkerchief, clap’t it across my face, and wept like a child ” — which is all verbatim with the old text. A female sympathising friend, Fanny, becomes Mrs. James in the new version, who is represented as comforting and holding out hopes of a speedy union. This was not warrantable, and was only one of his many fictions as to Mrs. James, who, he knew, had great influence with his inamorata. It was probably the discovery of this and other tricks, with perhaps the failure of his undertaking to leave her money in his will,

that excited the bitter animosity of Mrs. Draper, expressed after his death.

He was always attached to his daughter, and her visit seems to have had the effect of softening him, even to her mother. He writes of her to Eliza: "Never — has she vowed — will she give me another sorrowful or discontented hour. I have conquer'd her as I would every one else by humanity and generosity, & she leaves me more than half in love with me. She goes into the South of France, her health being insupportable in England and her age — as she now confesses ten years more than I thought — 'an adroit stroke this' being on the edge of sixty. So God Bless & make the remainder of her life happy."

The last words in this curious journal are :

"What can I say — of what can I write, but the yearnings of a heart wasted with looking & wishing for your return."

Mr. Sterne's parting utterances were of what must be called rather a "canting" sort.

"I probably shall never see you more; yet flatter myself you will sometimes think of me with pleasure, because you must be convinced I love you; and so interest myself in your rectitude, that I had rather hear of any evil befalling you, than

any want of reverence for yourself." He makes these assertions "in the presence of a just God." "May the God of kindness be kind to, and approve himself thy protector; and for thy daily comfort bear in mind this truth, that whatever measure of sorrow and dulness is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in full measure of happiness by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for thy eternal friend."

He concludes another of his letters in this way: "What can I add more in the agitation of mind I am in, and within five minutes of the last post-man's bell, but to recommend thee to Heaven, and recommend myself to Him with thee, in the same fervent ejaculation? That we may be happy and meet again — if not in this world, in the next."

His last words to her were of the same character, "Adieu! adieu! and with my adieus let me give thee one straight rule of conduct that thou hast heard from my lips in a thousand forms, but I centre it in one word: Reverence thyself. I shall probably never see you more!" This he must have known was the probability, as indeed it proved the certainty. About this time he was being visited with forebodings of his own approaching end, and those fatal consumptive tokens which had clung to him now for so many years, and were

becoming more prominent every day, must have been significant warnings. Mrs. Draper, too, was in miserable health, and scarcely seemed likely to survive the voyage. A voyage to India, too, at this date was a serious undertaking, very costly and tedious. A furlough to Europe was a rare pleasure, and the mere travelling home and out again in the lumbering Indiamen of the day covered a serious span of human life. When therefore was Mrs. Draper to think of visiting England and seeing Yorick again?

A plain, prosaic newspaper scrap — an extract from the shipping news of the day, contains the last scene in this little history: “*Deal, April 3*, wind N. E., came down and sailed with his Majesty’s ship *Tweed*, *Merlin* sloop, and all the outward-bound, *Lord Chatham* East Indiaman, *Susannah Hays*, for Cadiz, and *Beaver Hamstrom*, for Venice.”

In the following year, when Sterne died in a lonely, miserable way at his Bond Street lodgings, and thus his complacent anticipations of outliving Daniel Draper, his own wife, and Mrs. Draper herself were completely falsified, “Eliza’s” adventures began. She soon discovered, either from letters from England or from what she heard at

Bombay, that the admirer of whom she had been the idol was, after all, only of clay. Writing to a friend, in 1772 — and I have seen this voluminous document of five or six folio sheets, a “ship letter,” in short — she makes this confession : “I believed Sterne, implicitly I believed him ; I had no motive to do otherwise than believe him just, generous, and unhappy — till his death gave me to know that he was tainted with the vices of injustice, meanness, and folly.” She was thinking of his solemn asseveration made so profanely “in the presence of God.” And again : “I was almost an idolator of his worth, while I fancied him the mild, generous, good Yorick we had so often thought him to be.”

What could have been the revelation which thus opened Eliza’s eyes? Had she learned from the Jameses of that ingenious untruth — of his “falsity” in reference to his city friends? Yet this would have been rather flattering to her vanity. Or had certain communications been made to Mr. Daniel Draper by the humourist? — for a draft letter which Mr. Gibbs found seems to show that Yorick, in his anxiety to propitiate the husband, was inclined to slight the wife. “The draft remains unfinished,” Mr. Gibbs says, “and most

probably the letter was never sent . . . it has been much altered, and left in some places without connection, and is (as nearly as it can be copied) as follows :

“ I own it, sir, that the writing a letter to a gentleman I have not the honour to be known to : a letter likewise upon no kind of business (in the ideas of the world) is a little out of the common course of things ; but I’m so myself, and the impulse which makes me take up my pen is out of the common way, too, — for it arises from the honest pain I should feel in having so great esteem and friendship as I bear for Mrs. Draper, if I did not wish to hope and extend it to Mr. Draper also. I am really, dear sir, in love with your wife ; but ’tis a love you would honour me for, for ’tis so like that I bear my own daughter, who is a good creature, that I scarce distinguish a difference betwixt it — the moment I had would have been the last.

“ I wish it had been in my power to have been of true use to Mrs. Draper at this distance from her best protector. I have bestowed a great deal of pains (or rather, I should say, pleasure) upon her head — her heart needs none — and her head as little as any daughter of Eve’s, and indeed less

than any it has been my fate to converse with for some years. I wish I could make myself of any service to Mrs. D. whilst she is in India, and I in the world — for worldly affairs I would be of none. I wish you, dear sir, many years' happiness. 'Tis a part of my litany to pray for her health and life. She is too good to be lost, and I would out of pure zeal take a pilgrimage to Mecca to seek a medicine."

But it would seem more likely that Eliza's hostility was produced by some communication from the widow and daughter with whom she was presently at strife. The widow and neglected wife, a cross invalid, was likely to feel bitterly toward her. There was no love, certainly, lost between them.

Now there was a letter of her father's in Lydia's possession in which he speaks of an accusation of Mrs. Sterne's, that in case of his death he intended leaving his daughter to the care of Mrs. Draper, a rumour he disposed of indignantly. "She could know little of my feelings. No, my Lydia, 'tis a lady whose virtues I wish thee to imitate that I shall entrust my girl to — nor will she put my Lydia under the painful necessity to fly to India for protection." Mrs. Draper seems to have had some idea that he contemplated this arrangement

by her offer to receive Lydia. However this may be, nothing is more likely than that the widow took care to tell her now this indiscreet and too candid opinion of her late husband in reference to his "Brahmine."

"Her violence of temper (indeed, I wish not to recriminate or be severe just now) and the hatefulness of her character were strongly urged to me as the cause of his indifferent health, the whole of his misfortunes, and the evils that would probably shorten his life. The visit Mrs. Sterne meditated some time antecedent to his death he most pathetically lamented, as an adventure that would wound his peace and greatly embarrass his circumstances, — the former on account of the eye-witness he should be to his child's affections having been alienated from him by the artful misrepresentations of her mother, under whose tutorage she had ever been, and the latter from the rapacity of her disposition, for 'well do I know,' says he, 'that the sole intent of her visit is to fleece me. Had I money enough, I would buy off her journey, as I have done several others, but till my sentimental work is published I shall not have a single sou more than will indemnify people for my immediate expenses.'"

We may interrupt her letter to quote one of Mr. Sterne's to his daughter, which shows Yorick's duplicity: "I am unhappy. Thy mother and thyself are at a distance from me, and what can compensate for such a destitution? For God's sake, persuade her to come and fix in England, for life is too short to waste in separation!"

Mrs. Draper's letter goes on: "The very first ship which left us afterward" (*i. e.* after Sterne's death) "I wrote to Miss Sterne by, and with all the freedom which my intimacy with her father and his communications warranted. How could I with any kind of delicacy mention a person who was hateful to my departed friend, when for the sake of that very friend I wished to confer a kindness on his daughter, and to enhance the value of it solicited her society and consent to share my prospects, as the highest favour which could be shown to myself? Indeed, I know not, but Mrs. Sterne, from the description I had received of her, might be no more, or privately confined, if in being, owing to a malady which I have been told the violence of her temper subjects her to." She, assisted by a Colonel Campbell, set on foot a subscription for the family at Bombay; and, as he was about to visit England, she recom-

mended him as an eligible suitor for Miss Lydia's hand.

Some years passed by, and Mrs. Draper was alarmed by other symptoms of hostility. As Yorick had written to her in a warm strain so had she responded, and she now discovered that her letters had not been destroyed, and were in the possession of Mrs. Sterne. That these were of a compromising kind, and not likely to make her position comfortable in reference to Commissioner Draper, is evident from her genuine alarm, and the efforts she made to prevent their publication. As she wrote to the Jameses: "To add to my regret for his loss, his widow had my letters in her power (I never entertained a good opinion of her), and meant to subject me to disgrace and inconvenience by the publication of them. You know not the contents of these letters, and it was natural for you to form the worst judgment of them when those who had seen 'em reported them unfavourably, and were disposed to dislike me on that account. My dear girl, had I not cause to feel humbled so circumstanced, and can you wonder at my sensations communicating themselves to my pen?"

"I have heard some anecdotes extremely disadvantageous to the characters of the widow and

daughter, and that from persons who said they had been personally acquainted with them both in France and England. . . . Some part of their intelligence corroborated what I had a thousand times heard from the lips of Yorick, almost invariably repeated. . . . The secret of my letters, being in her hands, had somehow become extremely public; it was noticed to me by almost every acquaintance I had in the English ships or at this settlement. This alarmed me, for at that time I had never communicated the circumstance, and could not suspect you of acting by me in any manner which I would not have acted in by myself. One gentleman in particular told me that both you and I should be deceived if we had the least reliance on the honour or principles of Mrs. Sterne, for that, when she had secured as much as she could for suppressing the correspondence, she was capable of selling it to a bookseller afterward — by either refusing to restore it to you, or taking copies of it without our knowledge — and therefore he advised me, if I was averse to its publication, to take every means in my power of suppressing it. This influenced me to write to Becket and promise him a reward equal to his expectations if he would deliver the letters to you."

The efforts of her kind friends appear to have succeeded, for the letters have never seen the light, though a sort of spurious catchpenny publication was impudently issued in her name, written, it is to be believed, by that notorious fabricator, Coombe.

It will be seen so far that Eliza was something of an *intriguante*, no doubt owing to her Eastern birth and associations. The escapade that next followed in her career rather enfeebles the purely Platonic colour of the Yorick and Eliza episode ; yet had he not enjoined her, " Reverence thyself ? "

Douglas, a " writer," in Bombay, tells us that Mr. Draper was a regular Indian, having been born in one of the Company's factories near Cape Commorin. He was appointed assistant paymaster.. In 1762, he went with his wife to England.¹ The writer describes him as " a very noble and good-humoured man, so dastardly forsaken in the elopement from Mazagon." Daniel Draper, after being promoted to be chief of the factory at Surat, about 1772 had returned once more to Bombay, where he lived at Belvedere

¹ The death of poor Draper took place in March, 1805, at St. James Street. He was seventy-seven years old when he was Second Counsellor at Bombay.

House, a handsome residence, remarkable — as Major Wallace describes it, who has written a pleasant book of Indian travels — “for its fine situation, close to the bay, and for the grand prospect.” This situation was unfortunate, in one sense, for the owner. It was well known that Mr. Draper was unhappy in not being the object of his wife’s love. A writer in the “Times of India” many years ago told what followed, collected from well-known traditions of the place :

“There lay off Mazagon a king’s cutter or sloop of war, commanded by a captain of the royal navy. Whether the captain had been a frequent visitor at the counsellor’s bungalow tradition does not tell ; but it is plain there had been communications between the ship and that no doubt most hospitable mansion, so ruthlessly destroyed only a few years back. It is said that one day, whilst Daniel was securely taking his *siesta*, ‘his custom of an afternoon,’ his spouse stepped to the water side, where a boat from the king’s ship awaited her, and to that stronghold of the waters she was taken.”

Major Wallace, however, gives her story a more romantic cast. “Having persuaded,” he says, “a gallant captain in the navy to convey her to Eng-

land on board his vessel, she was so closely watched that she had to escape by means of a ladder of ropes suspended from her bedchamber veranda, which enabled her at once to jump into the boat and into the arms of her new protector." Douglas gives the name of the captain — Sir J. Clarke. And thus Yorick's beautiful and sentimental teaching bore fruit.

It is said that Mr. Draper "proceeded to put in force every available resource for pursuit of the fair fugitive, issuing a proclamation against the captain, and ordering one or more of the Indian navy ships to scour the seas and pursue after the buccaneer." About 1874 Belvedere House, the scene of this escapade, was pulled down, owing to the ground being wanted for local improvements.

It is not surprising to find that the vanity of our heroine was such that in course of time she became eager to let her connection with Sterne be known, and she allowed copies of her famous correspondence to be taken by friends. A certain Captain I——, who was acquainted with her in India, used to relate how he succeeded in obtaining a copy of these famous letters. "Being a woman," he says, "of a lively disposition and engaging manners, her society was much esteemed

and eagerly sought after, though she usually confined herself to a fixed circle." He one day mentioned to her that copies of a correspondence between her and Sterne had been shown to him in England, and that he thought that hers were as good as Sterne's. Mrs. Draper replied that no letters had passed between them. On which the captain confessed that when sailing for India he had gone to see Abraham Walker, the Deal pilot, who showed him Sterne's letter, recommending Eliza to his care, but he would not sell it nor allow a copy to be taken. She replied, laughingly, "You deserve to know a secret for the pains you take to discover it." She then gave him a copy of the correspondence, assuring him that the motive of her denial was to protect herself from too curious inquiries. The captain took the letters with him to England, but they were destroyed in a curious way, some one having poured an acid into his desk with a view of destroying some important legal documents.

No doubt this exhibition of anxiety to secure her letters tickled the vanity of the heroine, and tempted her into this indiscretion. The next step was to print them. The lady came to England, and a publisher issued them, from whose state-

ment it would appear that she had formally authorised this publication.

"It is very much to be lamented," he says, "that Eliza's modesty was invincible to all the publisher's endeavours to obtain her answers to those letters; her wit, penetration, and judgment, her happiness in the epistolary style, so rapturously commended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish a rich entertainment for the public." The publisher could not help telling her that he wished to God she really was possessed of that vanity with which she was charged: to which she replied that she was so far from acquitting herself of vanity, that she suspected that to be the cause why she could not prevail on herself to submit her letters to the public eye; for although Mr. Sterne was partial to everything of hers, she could not hope that the world would be so, too.

Mr. Wilkes was one of her friends, — and, perhaps, admirers, — and this may have been one of the reasons that interfered with his undertaking his life. We have this rather sensible letter of hers to "the patriot":

"I thank you for the French volume, Mr. Wilkes, and I really feel myself obliged for the

English pages; tho' the Eulogium which accompanied them makes me half afraid of indulging in something which I presume to call taste for the pleasure of wit and conversation, as there is nothing which I ought to be more apprehensive of than Praise from distinguished persons because it ever has had too powerful an effect on my imagination to render me capable of aspiring to merit in capital instances. I say not this with a view to disqualify and extort refinements in flattery, but from such a consciousness of my own imbecility as makes me very serious when reduced to the necessity of self-examination. If, therefore, you have the generosity which I take you to have, you will rather endeavour to correct my *foiblesse* than to add to it by your encomiums. I request my compliments, if you please, to Miss Wilkes, and am your much obliged and most obedient,

“ELIZA DRAPER.

“*Sunday Afternoon, Mar. 22.*”

There is another letter of hers, signed “your grateful child,” eight pages long,—a regular “ship’s letter,”—and which is written in a quiet, sensible strain. I give some portions of it.

“He (Draper) has lost his two clerks, and if I was not capable of assisting & maintaining his correspondence for him, I know not what he would do at this juncture. I only fulfil my duty, & have not the least merit in it — as a good Purvoo, that thoroughly understood English, and spelled properly, would answer his views still better. Louisa is very advantageously married to the Commander of our Forces, a Colonel Pemble: he is handsome, amiable, and magnificent in his temper: his income amounts to 30,000 Rupees a year: but I fear they stand little chance of saving a fortune, as they are gay, extravagant, & fond of company, but I know not if it signifies much, as they love India, are healthy, admired, and esteemed here, and not very desirous of exchanging affluence in the Eastern clime. They are on no terms with the Governor, neither visiting or being visited by him. . . . I hope to be favoured with long and interesting letters from Europe by our next ship. England, which was always dear to me, was never so much so as now! The welfare of my dear children sits very near my heart, & I cannot help feeling great anxiety on their account, tho’ I am confident of Mrs. Whitehall’s care & best attention to their true interest. God pre-

serve the poor Babes. May they live to give satisfaction to their parents, and reflect honor on their amiable Protectors. I hope you had an agreeable summer in the society of my friend & little (?) by presenting my compliments to him, & best wishes for his health enjoyment of England. We now wish him our head again. Would to heaven he had not left us a prey to the foolish policy and low cunning of a Hodges. The wish is entirely general — not a moist eye or grave countenance will be visible on his departure. O, he is gloriously hated and, I prognosticate, ever will be so, even by the wife of his bosom, if he is dotard enough with his jealous propensities & selfish particularities to make a second choice. But no — his avarice will prevent his marrying again; for a good woman would loathe his wealth with such an incumbrance as himself — and a bad one . . . happy — prays your ever grateful child . . .

“ELIZA DRAPER.

“*Tellicherry, Ap. 1769.*”

“P. S. — Mr. Draper presents his most respectful compliments, with the sincerest assurances of his doing everything in his power for Stephen, if you send him to Bombay.”

It was during her residence in England that Eliza became acquainted with the Abbé Raynal, who celebrates her charms and merits, as we have seen, in some extraordinary raptures. "Men declared," he says, "that no woman ever possessed so many graces, and even her own sex, which was rare, joined in their praise." Yet she was "only good-looking — not very good-looking." She it was who inspired all his works, a statement not warranted by the facts, for the encomium is not found in their first edition, nor can we accept his statement that on her death-bed Eliza's thoughts were occupied with him.

She said, it seems, "This muse now looking down upon you is the Muse of History. This divinity floating in the air is Fame, who has brought me you." In return he registered a solemn vow that he would never write a line "in which the world should not recognise his friend."


Eliza died, as her tomb records, on August 3, 1778, aged only 35. "Genius and benevolence," says the inscription, "were united in her," but, as her admirer admitted, she was sadly deficient in the first; while Daniel Draper and Mrs. Sterne, the widow, could most sincerely testify to her

benevolence. She left two daughters, whom Walker, an Irish antiquarian, once met at Harrogate and found agreeable.

Such is the story of Yorick and Eliza.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOSING IN

 HIS agitating episode and his late fit of illness left him very low in spirits and weak in body. He was beginning to find that his methods of life were unsubstantial, and offered but poor solace. He was estranged from his wife, who, it is probably the truth, could not live with him, while the public was beginning to look askance at him.

“I am unhappy,” he wrote; “thy mother and thyself at a distance from me, and what can compensate for such a destitution? For God’s sake, persuade her to come and fix in England, for life is too short to waste in separation, besides, I want thee near me, thou child and darling of my heart.” He added, too, as a motive that might influence Mrs. Sterne, that people would naturally say their separation was from choice and not necessity. This piteous appeal from the hopeless Shandean — writing in his Bond Street lodgings, ill in mind,

broken down in body, at last seems to have produced an effect.

Presently he had a relapse. He used to dine with his friends in Gerard Street on Sundays, and he was foolish enough to venture out on a cold Sunday after taking a "James' Powder" — one of those fatal James' Powders which brought on Goldsmith's end. The results were, "bad nights and much feverish agitation," and the remedies were of the usual Sangrado order — bleeding two days in succession, leaving him "almost dead." He wrote to his friends from his bed an affectionate letter, full of gratitude. The physician, he said, told him his illness arose from his catching cold after the James' Powder; "but he is mistaken," said Mr. Sterne, gracefully and affectionately, "for I am certain that whatever bears that name must have efficacy with me. This friendly inquiry from Gerrard Street has poured balm into what blood I have left. . . . If I continue mending, it will yet be some time before I have strength enough to get out in a carriage. My first visit will be on a visit of true gratitude. I leave my kind friends to guess where. A thousand blessings go along with this, and may Heaven preserve you both. Adieu, my dear sir, and dear lady."

He presently concluded that country air was the fitting restorative — and that it would be well for him to exchange Bond Street for Coxwold as speedily as he could. By May the 1st he was well again, and possibly “merry and as mischievous as a monkey.” What this being as “merry and mischievous as a monkey” meant in Mr. Sterne’s mind, it is not difficult to guess from his letter to the “Hannah,” before quoted, and which was written about this time. Nay, in this very letter to Mrs. James, he gives an account of a strange Shandean adventure that befell him, and which it is extraordinary that any one should think of writing to a correct and modest lady. He had fixed his departure for the first of May, but could not resist an invitation from Lord and Lady Spencer, who had made up a party to dine and sup — expressly for him. He had not lost his hold upon his fashionable friends. An earl heard of his illness at Bath, and wrote up eagerly to inquire after him. To him Mr. Sterne imparted a few sound reflections which had suggested themselves while he lay sick and broken in Bond Street; the “few treacherous supports” the mind leans on in the world, “the feigned compassion of one — the flattery of a second — the civilities of a

third — they all deceive.” In these latter days of his life, light of this sort seems to have been breaking in upon him — strange whispers, which came to him when he lay exhausted with his sunk and beaten chest and bloodless frame, and found a second to think over his gay, wild racket of an existence.

Thus the next morning — a Friday — when his chaise was at the door “to take and convey this poor body to its legal settlement,” he wrote a hasty line to an Irish gentleman of fashion, — “J. Dillon, Esquire,” one of the March, Selwyn, and Gilly Williams coterie. “I am ill — very ill,” he said ; “I am sick, both soul and body — it is a cordial to me to hear it is different with you. I am glad you are in a fair road to happiness ; enjoy it long, my dear Dillon, whilst I — no matter what —” He concludes : “You rogue ! you have locked up my boots, and I go bootless home, and fear I shall go bootless all my life.”

He travelled slowly, and was until Monday morning reaching Newark, where he arrived much exhausted. “Conveyed thus far,” as he wrote from the hotel to Stevenson, “like a bale of cadaverous goods consigned to Pluto and Company, lying at the bottom of my chair upon a large

pillow, which I had the *prévoyance* to purchase before I set out ;” and there is something like pathos in his complaint. He goes on : “ I am worn out. . . . I know not what is the matter with me ; but some *dérangement* presses hard upon this machine ; still I think it will not be over at this bout. My love to Lee. We shall all meet from the east and from the south, and (as at last) be happy together. My kind respects to a few. I am, dear Hall, truly yours, etc.”

There is a sad quaintness in these few sentences very simple and natural. But his friend could readily have told him what was the *dérangement* that pressed upon the poor machine. That imprudent dinner and supper at Lord Spencer’s, which he rose from his bed to go to, was but one more instance of the old Yorick folly. On the road, near Doncaster, he was so exhausted, that he had to stop at the archbishop’s, with whom he remained two days. His Grace, therefore, had not been affected by the remonstrance that had been addressed to him.

When Mr. Sterne was again established at Coxwold, having been conveyed thither in his post-chaise “ a bale of cadaverous goods,” his health began to improve. The “ good air, a quiet retreat

and quiet reflection along with it, with an ass to milk and another to ride out upon, all do wonders." And here, in this letter, we trace more of that altered and subdued tone which visited him during these latter months of his life, — foreshadowings, as it were, of a final issue, — with doubts as to whether his had been exactly the sort of life he could look back on without disquiet. "I shall live this year, at least, I hope," he wrote, "be it but to give the world, before I quit it, as good impressions of me as you have," so he wrote to the black Sancho. "I would only covenant for just so much health and spirits as are sufficient to carry my pen through the task I have set it this summer. But I am a resigned being, Sancho, and take health and sickness just as the light and darkness, or the vicissitudes of the seasons, that is, just as it pleases God to send them." This task which he hoped to be spared to finish, was his "Sentimental Journey." It seems as though he may have intended to atone for past offences against decency, by his treatment of men and manners in this book; and it is curiously corroborative of this view, that the first volume does not contain a line offensive to morals, and is, on the contrary, pervaded with a gentle and subdued tone

of sympathy, quite in harmony with the key in which he was writing. At this time, too, — possibly because some of his cloth were looking coldly on him — he seems to have been inclined to deal with them less indulgently ; for he had made Mr. Shandy and the Captain take a ride to “save a beautiful wood which the Dean and Chapter were hewing down to give to the poor,” and then added a sarcastic note to the effect that Mr. Shandy “must mean the poor in spirit, inasmuch as they divided the money amongst themselves” — a personal allusion to a Dean and Chapter very near him, who had, perhaps, insisted on sacrificing some pretty wood near Coxwould. He also introduced his former patron, the Bishop of Gloucester. “For what has this book done,” he said, alluding to his “Tristram,” “more than the ‘Legation of Moses,’ or the ‘Tale of a Tub,’ that it may not swim down the gutter of Time along with them?”

He had begun to find an inexpressible relish in his place at Coxwould. He enjoyed his country associates, and felt as “happy as a prince.” A shower of letters poured in upon him, all calling him to Scarborough, where the “jolly set,” *i. e.*, “Lord Granby and Co.,” were expecting him impatiently. Whether from being engaged with

his books, or from some more wholesome feeling, he resisted the temptation. He described his new pastoral life to his friend Lee in a very tempting picture, like all his pictures: "'Tis a land of plenty; I sit down alone to venison, fish, and wild fowl, or a couple of fowls or ducks, with curds, and strawberries and cream, and all the simple plenty which a rich valley under Hamilton Hills can produce; with a clean cloth on my table, and a bottle of wine on my right hand to drink your health. I have a hundred hens and chickens about my yard; and not a parishioner catches a hare, or a rabbit, or a trout but he brings it as an offering to me." This last is a little testimony of popularity. His friend had been unsuccessful in some sentimental attachment, and Mr. Sterne adds, that he would give him an invitation to Coxwold, "for absence could lessen no attachment which virtue inspires!" He did not write to inquire about the lady, "for," he adds, "even How d'yes to invalids, or to those who had been lately so, either call to mind what is past, or what may return; at least I find it so."

He had now got a post-chaise of his own, with "two long-tailed horses," in which he took airings every day. He had many pastoral enjoyments,

but he owned, sadly, that he had "what was worst of all, a disquieted heart to reason with." To his friend, Hall Stevenson, a week or so later, he opened his soul, with the same dispiriting, and almost despairing confession. "As you are so well," he said in August, "rejoice, therefore, and let your heart be merry; mine ought upon the same score, for I have never been so well since I left college, and should be a marvellous happy man, but for some reflections which bow down my spirits; but if I live but even three or four years, I will acquit myself with honour; and—no matter! We will talk this over when we meet."

To his kind friends, the Jameses, he wrote very much in the same dejected tone. All his letters to them were of the same genuine affectionate pattern.

"It is with as much true gratitude as ever heart felt, that I sit down to thank my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. James, for the continuation of their attention to me; but for this last instance of their humanity and politeness to me, I must ever be their debtor—I never can thank you enough, my dear friends, and yet I thank you from my soul—and for the single day's happiness your goodness

would have sent me, I wish I could send you back thousands — I cannot, but they will come of themselves — and to God bless you. — I am now got perfectly well, but was a month after my arrival in the country in but a poor state — my body has got the start, and is at present more at ease than my mind — but this world is a school of trials, and so heaven's will be done! — I hope you have both enjoyed all that I have wanted — and to complete your joy, that your little lady flourishes like a vine at your table, to which I hope to see her preferred by next winter. I am now beginning to be truly busy with my 'Sentimental Journey' — the pains and sorrows of this life having retarded its progress — but I shall make up my leeway, and overtake everybody in a very short time.

"What can I send you that Yorkshire produces? tell me — I want to be of use to you, for I am, my dear friends, with the truest value and esteem,

"Your ever obliged,

"L. STERNE."

Mrs. Sterne, as we have seen, had now settled to come to England; she had at last yielded to

her husband's importunities, and announced her intention; but, by some fatality, about half a dozen of Mr. Sterne's letters to her had gone astray, which gave him a good deal of concern, "as it wore the aspect of unkindness, which she by no means merits from me." This was to his friends the Jameses.

It was now the beginning of August. In June he was "in high spirits: care never enters his cottage." But now the spirits had fallen to zero. He sat moping in his vicarage, with no other company than his cat. "I long to return to you," he wrote, to Crazy Castle; "but I sit here alone as solitary and sad as a tom-cat, which, by the bye, is all the company I keep; he follows me from the parlour to the kitchen, into the garden, and every place. I wish I had a dog. My daughter will bring me one."

We have a sketch of his dog in a letter to his daughter about this time; and again we must remark the gentle, simple tone he was gradually falling into. "My pleasures are few in compass. My poor cat sits purring beside me. Your lively French dog shall have his place on the other side of my fire; but if he is as devilish as when I first saw him, I must tutor him, for I will not have my

cat abused. In short, I will have nothing devilish about me."


About this time he lost the use of his chaise and "long-tail'd horses," from an accident to his postilion. One of Mr. Sterne's pistols had gone off in his hand—a mishap which, told by his master, becomes Shandean. "He instantly fell on his knees," wrote Mr. Sterne, "and said Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name,—at which, like a good Christian, he stopped, not remembering any more of it. The affair was not so bad as he at first thought, for it has only bursten two of his fingers (he says)."

By the end of this month, too, he was "bad again." The old spitting of blood visited him once more. As he lay weak and exhausted upon his back, some neighbour made his way up-stairs to see him. "That unfeeling brute . . .," says Mr. Sterne, in his odd way, "came and drew my curtains, and with a voice like a trumpet, halloed in my ear, 'Z—ds, what a fine kettle of fish you have brought yourself to.' In a faint voice I bade him leave me, for comfort sure was never administered in so rough a manner." This little scene, short as it is, is very graphic and ludicrous. In fact, all the little sketches that turn up in his let-

ters show plainly that his humour of Tristram came naturally to him, and broke out on other occasions than when he was at his desk writing for the press.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST LONDON VISIT

T the beginning of September he was tempted to go to Scarborough for some sea-bathing. He remained but ten days, and during that time was the guest of an Irish bishop, — “one of the best of our bishops,” — most likely Dr. Jemmatt Browne, Bishop of Cork.¹ “His household consisted of a gentleman and two ladies, which, with the good bishop and myself, made so good a party, that we kept much to ourselves.”

His “mitred host” took a great fancy to him, and tried to tempt him over to Ireland by a living. They left Scarborough together, and, being fifteen miles “off,” the bishop and his family went on to London, and Mr. Sterne returned home. His friends, the Jameses, heard that he had actually gone up to London with the episcopal party, and

¹ This is the only Irish bishop's name we find in the list of subscribers to his “Sentimental Journey.”

were a little wounded at his not coming to them. "This, I suppose, was the reason assigned for my being there. Charity," adds Mr. Sterne, bitterly, thinking of the old calumnies that persecuted Yorick, "would add a little to the account, and give out that 'twas on the score of one, and perhaps both of the ladies."

The Avignon ladies were now at length starting for England. There was a little gaiety and a little business to be got through before they were to leave. The gaieties were a series of *fêtes champêtres*, given by the Marquis de Sade, a relation of his friend the abbé of the same name. The Dowager Lady Carlisle met the abbé later, and thought him "the liveliest little old man" she had ever met. The business was the drawing on Mr. Sterne for forty louis, a draft he at once took measures to provide for. Mrs. Sterne, who had a little estate of her own, was consulting the Paris banker on purchasing a little annuity for her daughter; and Mr. Sterne knowing, perhaps, that advice from him might be accepted doubtfully, advised her to insure her life. For, as he truly said, if Mrs. Sterne died before his daughter, the latter would suffer seriously.

He was still desponding. To a "Sir William,"

another of his roystering friends, who was pressing him to come back to Scarborough, and bantering him freely, he wrote a little banter in return: "Enough of such nonsense. The past is over, and I can justify myself unto myself — can you do as much? No, faith! 'You can feel.' Ay, so can my cat . . . but caterwauling disgusts me. I had rather raise a gentle flame than have a different one raised on me. Now, I take Heaven to witness, after all this badinage, my heart is innocent; and the sporting of my pen is equal — just equal to what I did in my boyish days, when I got astride of a stick and galloped away. The truth is this, — that my pen governs me, not me my pen." And though there is a reckless, half-defiant tone in this declaration, still, taking it with what he has said so lately, and the gaiety of the man to whom it is spoken, we may possibly accept it as a genuine and sincere profession of the spirit that guided him when he wrote his strange, rambling "Shandy" olla podrida.

To the same gentleman he spoke of the new work then fast advancing, which was to convince him and others "that my feelings are from the heart; and then that heart is not of the worst of moulds. Praised be God for my sensibility!

Though it has often made me wretched, yet I would not exchange it for all the pleasures the grossest sensualist ever felt."

On the last day of September the travellers got to York ; and going in with his chaise Mr. Sterne met his wife and darling daughter once more. With the latter he was in raptures ; and the fond father, writing to his friends, could not contain his delight at her manners, mind, figure, and everything about her. She had come back "an elegant, accomplished little slut." "Nature, my dear Panchaud" — the banker had overpowered them with civilities as they passed through Paris — "breathes in all her composition, and except a little vivacity, which is a fault in the world we live in, I am fully content with her mother's care of her ; for she is as accomplished a slut as France can produce." Charming, indeed, are all his letters wherein this favoured child figures ; and for the sake of this affection — so true, so simple, so natural — much may be forgiven him. A cold, professional sentimentalist, hawking about his tears and sham sorrows, could not have found room for so homely a thing as mere paternal affection.

To the Jameses he described her in the same fond terms some six weeks afterward, when the

sense of surprise and novelty might have worn off. "She is a dear, good creature, affectionate, and most elegant in body and mind ; she is all Heaven could give me in a daughter, but like other blessings, not given but lent ; for her mother loves France, and this dear part of me must be torn from my arms to follow the mother, who seems inclined to establish her in France, where she has had many advantageous offers. Do not smile at my weakness, when I say I don't wonder at it."

With Coxwould now repeopled, he pushed on steadily with his new book, and "spurred on his Pegasus," in order to have it ready for the customary Christmas offering. He found it an agreeable labour, and "suited to the frame of mind I have been in for some time past ;" but later on he admitted to a noble friend that he had "worn out both my spirits and my body with the 'Sentimental Journey,' " and had "torn my whole frame into pieces by my feelings." There was no doubt but that his nerves were giving way, and he was laying out his favourite remedy, — a visit to London, at Christmas, with his new wares — a visit in which his wish to see his friends, the Jameses, again had some share. "I long sadly to see you," he wrote to them. "With what pleasure shall I

embrace your little pledge, whom I hope to see every hour increasing in stature and favour both with God and man. I kiss all your hands with a most devout and friendly heart. No man can wish you more good than your meagre friend does — few so much, for I am with infinite cordiality, gratitude, and honest affection, etc.” That he was thinking of them with a sincere regard at a distance, is plain from a postscript to an earl of his acquaintance. “If your lordship is in town this spring, I should be happy if you became acquainted with my friends in Gerrard Street; you would esteem the husband and honour the wife. She is the reverse of most of her sex: they have various pursuits; she but one, that of pleasing her husband.”

By the beginning of December he and Mrs. Sterne had their plans finally arranged. She was determined to return to France with her daughter in the spring, but in the meantime a house “ready furnished” had been hired in York, where they might spend the winter and have some gaiety. Mr. Sterne was to go up to London in January with his book and stay a month or two there. Surely this was considerate on the part of the father, who did not wish in his absence to con-

sign them to the solitude of Coxwould. Nor must it be supposed that these expeditions of his were without direct profit to all their interests. Already another Irish bishop, the Bishop of Ross, was making him offers, and an advantageous exchange of livings had been proposed to him — to give up Sutton and Stillington, for £350 a year in Surrey, and only thirty miles from London. But he rejected the rich offer and the Surrey preferment. If his wife and daughter would have gone with him he might have been tempted. "With her sweet light burden in my arms," he wrote of his Lydia, "I could get fast up the hill of preferment if I chose it, but without my Lydia, if a mitre were offered me it would sit uneasily upon my brow." These episcopal dreams were unsubstantial enough. Though it "hailed mitres," not a single one was to fall on Yorick's head; but it is clear that he was now on the road to some smaller preferment.

When they had completed their arrangements and moved into York, his spirits began to sink again. Every day was bringing him nearer that separation. "My heart bleeds, Lee," he wrote with true pathos, "when I think of parting with my child — 'twill be like the separation of soul

and body . . . and equal to nothing but what passes at that tremendous moment: and like it in one respect — for she will be in one kingdom whilst I am in another. You will laugh at my weakness," he goes on, "but I can't help it — for she is a dear, disinterested girl." And then he tells with pride of a little trait of character, how he had put ten guineas into her hand for her "private expenses" at York, and how she had refused this present on the plea that their journey home had already "straitened him," and that she would rather put a hundred guineas in his pocket "than take ten out of it."

But now on the eve of his departure he was once more seized with the old shape of illness — "cast down by a fever and bleeding at the lungs," which kept him in bed three weeks. But he struggled through — the last time he was to struggle through — and rose "worn down to a shadow," and weak as a child. In this state he was comforted by a letter from his friends, the Jameses, and wrote them a letter which reflects the tone of his mind.¹ "I had the favour of yours," he says, "which till to-day I have not

¹ I venture to quote more of these letters to the Jameses than of any others, as they are important testimonies to his character.

been able to thank you both kindly for, as I now cordially do, as well as for all your professions and proofs of good-will to me. I will not and have not balanced accounts with you in this. All I know is that I honour and value you more than I do any good creatures upon earth. . . . And that I would not wish your happiness, and the success of whatever conduces to it, more than I do, was I your brother. . . . I thank you, my dear friend, for what you say so kindly about my daughter — it shows your good heart; for as she is a stranger 'tis a free gift in you, but when she is known to you, shall win it fairly, but, alas! when this event is to happen is in the clouds.

“What a sad scratch of a letter! but I am weak, my dear friends, both in body and mind — so God bless you. You will see me enter like a ghost, so I tell you beforehand not to be frightened. I am, my dear friends, with the truest attachment and esteem, ever yours, etc.”¹

After Christmas Day, he started with his friend

¹ He was able, too, at this time, to sit for his bust — a vigorous and characteristic head by Nollekins. There are two of these busts now in existence. The original is at Skelton Castle, and was perhaps done at the request of Mr. Hall; the other is in the Yarborough collection. There is, besides, the terra-cotta bust done at Rome.

Hall for town. It was to be his last journey. He was still ill, and had scarcely shaken off his fever; travelling under such circumstances was hardly prudent. Still, if he had remained, his restless mind would have been chafing at the restraint. He embraced his wife and daughter, and for the last time was to look upon the Lydia he so idolised. No doubt the separation was "like the parting of soul and body." He had done for ever with his "sweet retirement" of Coxwold, his cathedral stall.

Mrs. Sterne and her daughter remained behind at York, in the house which he had hired for them. They engaged in the York gaieties. Miss Lydia Sterne must have been possessed of unusual attractions, with a certain piquancy reflected from her father — heightened too by a French education and "that vivacity" which he thought present in too extreme a degree. Making every allowance for Mr. Sterne's partial admiration, she must have been attractive. Some time ago there was to be seen a portrait of a young girl and spaniel, "The French Dog," done by a French artist — Charpentier — a very graceful portrait, and always accepted as that of Mr. Sterne's daughter.

In addition to the vivacity she had brought

home, she had also contracted a little French vanity, and perhaps a little French folly. The letters she wrote after her father's death exhibit a curious mixture of flippancy and childishness. She was coming home with all the toilet glories of rouge-pots and cosmetics, which her father, thinking perhaps of that luckless Irish belle — the beautiful Coventry — who had killed herself with white lead, sternly insisted should be flung into the *Sorgue* before she set out. "I will have no rouge put on in England," was his firm decision, and perhaps the harshest thing he ever wrote to her. She was left behind for the gay York winter: certain of the admiration which her natural charms and French manners were sure to attract; certain, at least, of being pointed to with interest and curiosity, as the lively daughter of quaint Tristram. The father of Mr. Waterton, the pleasant traveller and skilful naturalist, used to tell his son how he had been introduced to Miss Lydia Sterne at the great York balls in Lord Burlington's Assembly Rooms, and had often stood up with her for a minuet.

Mr. Sterne was again at his old Bond Street lodgings, and already found his health a little better. "I continue to mend," he wrote to his

friends in Gerrard Street upon the first day of the new year, "and doubt not but this, with all other evils and uncertainties of life, will end for the best." It was a wet morning and he was afraid to go out, so he writes to send all compliments and best wishes to the firesides. He was "half engaged or more" for the Sunday, but would try hard to get off; if unsuccessful, he would "glide like a shadow uninvited to Gerrard Street some day this week, that we may eat our bread and meat in love and peace together. God bless you both." But with all this jealous care of himself he could not resist the old seductions, and before long was mortgaged heavily, weeks in advance, to the old fatal round of parties and entertainments, "tyed down," as he put it, "neck and heels twice over." Yet it seems to have been more a feeling of inability to resist, than a sense of enjoyment; for he complains with weariness of the invasion of his rooms in Bond Street by streams of company, who came in the morning and did not leave until dinner-time. After these levees a sense of utter prostration used to come upon him.

It is Northcote who picked up a curious and in part improbable story about Sterne's conversation, the date of which may be about this time. Sir

Joshua had a dinner-party, at which the well-known Mrs. Carter, a pious lady of the day, was a guest; and it is said that during the dinner she attacked Mr. Sterne for his free conversation with such wit and severity that he never recovered this sharp public reprimand. It is improbable that one who had seen so much of the world could have been so sensitive, but we may be inclined to suspect, if the story be true, that with that subdued feeling and sense of the hopelessness of his recovery which was now weighing on his mind, he may have shown a depression at the reproof, which those who were present might have imputed to the lady's powers of reproach. There was quite enough in the state of his health at that time to account reasonably for his death.¹

¹ I feel some delicacy in touching on the subject of two anecdotes relating to Sterne's speech and manners in society; but an impartial biographer could not pass them by. Doctor Johnson told Sir John Hawkins that the only occasion he had been in Sterne's society, the latter had exhibited a very indecent print; and Doctor Dibdin mentions having heard of a copy of the "Sentimental Journey," illustrated by Sterne himself with very gross pictures. Testimony of this sort, coming from two such distinct quarters, does, indeed, seem of weight. To the last anecdote, however, there is quite a convincing answer. The "Journey" appeared about a week before his last illness — in fact, at a time when he was already physically helpless and in the grasp of death. In the tone and temper he was then, and with the consciousness that his end was not far away, it seems utterly

While in Bond Street, he received from America a present of a rather odd sort. A Doctor Eustace had come into possession of a curiously carved walking-stick which had belonged to "Governor Dobbs." This "piece of Shandean statuary" Mrs. Dobbs presented to Doctor Eustace, and he forwarded it to the author of "Tristram," hoping "it might prove so ample a field for meditation, as a button-hole or a broom-stick." Mr. Sterne acknowledged the compliment gratefully, and on February the 9th, about six weeks before his death, wrote to the American gentleman what may be accepted as his final profession and last protest against what he considered the misconstruction that had been put upon his books. Reading it so near to his death, it does, indeed, seem almost like Yorick's protest. "Your walking-stick is in no sense more Shandaick than in that of its having more handles than one; the parallel breaks only in this, that in using the stick every one will take

improbable that he could have had time or opportunity for such an outrage. It may be said that it was the MS. of the book, written many months before, that was so adorned; but this I have seen, and there are no such illustrations. As to what Doctor Johnson saw, we must remember his violent prejudices against "the man Sterne," and that the house and host whom Johnson honoured with his company was not likely to be the house or host to whom such an exhibition would be acceptable.

the handle which suits his convenience: in 'Tristram Shandy' the handle is taken which suits the passions—their ignorance or their sensibility. There is so little true feeling in the herd of the world, that I wish I could have got an Act of Parliament when the books first appeared that none but wise men should look unto them." He then adds that all the people of genius in the country, "a few hypocrites and Tartuffes excepted," had come round to his side, and he says that it has had a wonderful reception in France, Germany, and Italy. Thus we see to the very end he strangely believed that he was a sort of victim to the prejudices of a faction, and to the last, with a perversion not in the least unnatural, supposed what he had written to be harmless.

At this time the entertainments of the notorious Mrs. Cornely, at the Soho Rooms, were the fashionable *fureurs* of the moment. This was owing not so much to the amusement itself, as to an artful rigour in the issuing of tickets. During the first days of this new year, one of these select festivals was to be celebrated.¹

¹ There was an advertisement in the papers to this effect: "Mrs. Cornely begs leave to acquaint the Nobility and Gentry, Subscribers to the Society in Soho Square, that the Second

Mr. and Mrs. James were wishing to get a ticket for this important festival, and though they knew Lord Upper Ossory, and other persons of fashion, they turned to Mr. Sterne to help them in their necessity. Most likely they wanted it not for themselves, but for "Miss Ascough, the wise ;" "Miss Pigot, the witty ;" or some other young lady of their circle. Mr. Sterne was not a subscriber this year, which, like a straw as it is upon the surface, shows that he had in some degree forsworn frivolity. But he sent about diligently to one after another of his "Soho friends." If he failed he hoped they would do him the justice to believe him "truly miserable."

The next day, ill as he was, he hurried over the town, posted to the secretary of state, to Sir George Macartney, — now to be a new peer, — to Mr. Lascelles, to Mr. Fitz-Maurice, begging, importuning, for one of these coveted tickets — but he said truly, he "could as soon get a place at court."

Mrs. James had just been sitting to West, the painter, who, in Mr. Sterne's opinion, had made an

Meeting will be on Thursday next. The Tickets are this year transferable either to ladies or gentlemen — the same as they were the winter before last."

admirable likeness. It was not finished, and on Sunday, the 7th of March, Mr. Sterne was to "tread the old pleasing road from Bond to Gerrard Street," and be there before four, so as to have "a little time and a little daylight to see Mrs. James's picture." To West, Lydia Sterne was to sit a little later. Mrs. James herself was something of an artist, and Mr. Sterne sent her as a present a box of water-colours, and gave a few lessons. He borrowed some sketches touched with chalk, from a gentleman who had travelled in Italy, as subjects for her to copy. This gentleman had sent him a set of prints, which Mr. Sterne promised himself to hang up in his study — "if," he added, with but too faithful a foreboding, "I recover from my state of health, and live to revisit Coxwold this summer."

Mr. Sterne's friend also was to dine in Gerrard Street on the following Sunday, and it was settled that they should go together at the same time, a little earlier than usual, so as to have light to see West's picture. But even on that Sunday, he could not be free or at rest ; for Mr. Beauclerk — Boswell's Beauclerk — had engaged him to breakfast, and a nobleman had secured the reversion of his company for an hour at least, after the break-

fast. So to the end, the old racket was in his ears, the old din and hurly-burly of society was echoing about him.

This Sunday dinner at Gerrard Street was to be Yorick's last festival. It is something to think that when he made his bow to society he passed from the quiet, pure atmosphere of that good and virtuous family.

The new book was now all but ready, and in a note dated Thursday, which he wrote to his "dear friends" jointly, excusing himself for a mistake of Saturday for Sunday, the old dining day: "I am astonished I could make any mistake in a card wrote by Mrs. James, in which my friend is as unrivalled as in a hundred greater excellencies." He promises that his book will be out on the Thursday following, but possibly on the Wednesday afternoon. They did not appear until the latter of these days, which was the 27th of February. The price was the usual one of five shillings for the two pretty volumes, and subscribers were respectfully requested to send for their copies to Messrs. Becket and P. de Hondt, in the Strand. The work itself was announced as "Vol. 1 and 2, of a 'Sentimental Journey through France and Italy,'" showing that this, too, was an idea

which he would have expanded, like "Tristram," through many volumes. He at first had laid out a change in the shape of publication, and thought ambitiously of a stately quarto, with handsome margin, the price to be half a guinea. But wisely he returned to the favourite "Shandy" size — the compact little pocket volumes, which were now so familiar to the public. How much has the world lost — how many charming pictures of Italian life and character — by the sudden relaxing of those thin fingers and the busy pen they held !

This was now at hand. About the second week of the next month, being still "tied down neck and heels with engagements," he was seized with a chest attack, which he took for influenza, but which clung to him with more than usual obstinacy. He struggled with it, and seemed to think he would, as usual, come off victorious. Just at that time a letter came to him from his daughter, which must have had a chilling, dispiriting effect, notwithstanding that it set out with news of "The Journey" being read and admired in York by every one.

He seems to have been much agitated by what the mother had told her daughter, that it was his intention to bequeath the care of his Lydia to the

Indian lady, whom the world knew as Eliza. "The subject of thy letter," wrote Mr. Sterne, with some agitation, "has astonished me. She could know but little of my feelings to tell thee that I should bequeath thee as a legacy to Mrs. (Draper)." He then reassures her, and tells her how Mrs. James will watch over her — "the friend whom I have so often talked and wrote about; from her you will learn to be an affectionate wife, a tender mother, and a sincere friend." He then alludes to the success of his book; "but what is the gratification of my feelings on this occasion — the want of health bows me down — this vile influenza — be not alarmed, I think I shall get the better of it, and shall be with you both the first of May; and if I escape, 'twill not be for a long period, my child, unless a quiet retreat and peace of mind can restore me."

Nothing can be more tenderly delicate than that hurried correction of himself, "be not alarmed, I think I shall get the better of it," and the gentle way — almost artful — in which he goes on to prepare his daughter's mind for the worst. "If I escape, 'twill not be for a long period, my child. But I think, my Lydia, thy mother will survive me — do not deject her spirits with thy affections on

my account." He sends them both a present of a necklace and buckles. "I am never alone," he goes on, "the kindness of my friends is ever the same. I wish, though, I had thee to nurse me; but I am deny'd that. Write to me twice a week at least. God bless thee, my child; and believe me ever, ever thy affectionate father, L. S."

"If I ever revisit Coxwould!" He was hurrying fast from that "sweet retirement." What he took for a "vile influenza" became a pleurisy; and on the Thursday following (March 10th) he was bled three times, and on the next day blistered. He was prostrate and exhausted for several days after this violent treatment; but, as he lay there, the thought of the child he loved so dearly came upon him, and with a feeble hand he was just able to write a few tottering characters to his friend, Mrs. James. So piteous and touching an appeal has rarely come from a death-bed: it was the poor, broken, gasping, dying Yorick's last letter. In it we seem to hear a humble acknowledgment of errors, and a cry for pardon for "follies which my heart, not my head, betrayed me into!" — a declaration we may accept as genuine, and which is the true key to all his Shandean sins, errors, mistakes, and follies.

“15th March, Tuesday.

“Your poor friend is scarce able to write — he has been at death’s door this week with a pleurisy — I was bled three times on Thursday, and blister’d on Friday — The physician says I am better — God knows, for I feel myself sadly wrong, and shall, if I recover, be a long while of gaining strength. — Before I have gone thro’ half this letter, I must stop to rest my weak hand above a dozen times — Mr. James was so good to call upon me yesterday. I felt emotions not to be described at the sight of him, and he overjoy’d me by talking a great deal of you. — Do, dear Mrs. James, entreat him to come to-morrow, or next day, for perhaps I have not many days, or hours, to live — I want to ask a favour of him, if I find myself worse — that I shall beg of you, if in this wrestling I come off conqueror — my spirits are fled — ’tis a bad omen — do not weep, my dear Lady — your tears are too precious to shed for me — bottle them up, and may the cork never be drawn. — Dearest, kindest, gentlest, and best of women! may health, peace, and happiness prove your handmaids. — If I die, cherish the remembrance of me, and forget the follies which you so often condemn’d — which my heart, not my head, betray’d

me into. Should my child, my Lydia, want a mother, may I hope you will (if she is left parentless) take her to your bosom? — You are the only woman on earth I can depend upon for such a benevolent action. — I wrote to her a fortnight ago, and told her what, I trust, she will find in you — Mr. James will be a father to her — he will protect her from every insult, for he wears a sword which he has served his country with, and which he would know how to draw out of the scabbard in defence of innocence. — Commend me to him — as I now commend you to that Being who takes under his care the good and kind part of the world. — Adieu! all grateful thanks to you and Mr. James.

“Your poor affectionate friend,

“L. STERNE.”

This was Tuesday. Friday was the last day of his life. He seems to have been left there, at Bond Street, — alone, deserted, and entirely dependent (scarcely in the sense he had wished) on the hired offices of a lodging-house servant.¹

¹ M. Janin, with an eye to a bit of ghastly sentimentality wholly indefensible, transforms this person into “Mad. — de —, sa belle et aimable garde-malade,” and makes the dying Yorick place her hand upon his heart.

But little is known of his last moments. Toward four o'clock in the afternoon he complained of cold in his feet, and asked the attendant to chafe them. This suggests the end of Falstaff. It seemed to relieve him; but presently he said the cold was mounting yet higher; and while she was striving to kindle a warmth in his feet and ankles, which a more awful power was driving away, some one knocked at the hall door, and the landlady opening it, found it was a footman sent to inquire after Mr. Sterne's health. In Clifford Street close by, "Fish" Crawford was having a grand dinner-party, served by his "French cook," and most of the guests at table were friends of the dying humourist. Of the company were the Dukes of Grafton and Roxburghe, the Earls of March and Ossory; Mr. Garrick, Mr. Hume, and Mr. James. Some one having mentioned his illness — Mr. James most probably — it was proposed to send to know how he was, and the footman, whose name has been preserved, was despatched to New Bond Street to inquire.

The landlady was not able, or did not care, to give him the latest news, but bade him go up and inquire of the attendant. He did so, and entered the room just as the deserted Shandean was ex-

piring. He stood by and waited to see the end; he noted how the wasted arm was suddenly raised, as if to ward off something, caught a murmur of "Now it is come!" and then saw his frame relax in death.¹

Such was Yorick's end — a footman, and a sick nurse watching his agonies! The footman went his way back to the merry party of gentlemen in Clifford Street, and told what he had seen. The gentlemen, he says, were all very sorry, and lamented him very much. We can almost hear the after-dinner panegyric: Hume and Garrick could have told of his freaks in Paris, and bewailed with convivial grief how Yorick had been no one's enemy but his own. Mr. James could have said something about his good heart. Then, as of course, the claret went around, and Lord March went back again to the praises of "the Rena," or the "Zamperini."

So Yorick passed away, lonely, abandoned. Not in this sense, truly, did he mean that poor bald scrap of philosophy which he had set down in his "Tristram," to be interpreted, — when he wished to die in an inn, and to have the cold, hired offices

¹ Such is the account given by James Macdonald, the Scotch footman, in his "Memoirs."

David Garrick

Engraved in mezzotint by F. McArdell after the painting
by Liotard



of strangers to soothe his last moments. This was a poor bit of Shandyism, set down to startle the crowd. Perhaps it came back on him, when he saw the footman standing in the doorway, and felt a hand stripping him of his ornaments. For it was said, that while one hired hand was chafing the poor Shandean's icy limbs, the other was busy plundering him of his gold sleeve-buttons.¹ But, as will be seen, a still more horrid mystery — like the *feu follet* of a graveyard — was destined to overshadow what remained of Yorick.

“Died yesterday,” said the journals of Saturday, “at his lodgings, in Bond Street, the Rev. Mr. Sterne, author of ‘Tristram Shandy,’ some volumes of ‘Sermons,’ and the ‘Sentimental Journey.’” Others added, “Alas! Poor Yorick!” Poor Yorick indeed! when the very bookseller's hack, who made profit out of the new edition of his works, could prefix to it so cruel and so illogical a statement as the following: “Mr. Sterne died as he lived, the same indifferent, careless creature; as a day or two before his death, he seemed not in the least affected by his approaching dissolution.”

In the Bayswater Road, not very far from Ty-

¹ This was told to Doctor Ferrier.

burn Gate, a new burying-ground had been opened, attached to that church in Hanover Square, where the more fashionable marriage-rites are celebrated. We can readily find our way to it now, for it is notorious among the neglected graveyards of London, and is useful as a sort of huge pit for the rubbish of the ruinous houses that hem it in closely all around. Weeds rioting in their impurity, yawning graves, headstones staggering over, dirt, neglect, and a squalid-looking dead-house, all soiled and grimed, with a belfry and a bell — this is now, or was until lately, the condition of the graveyard where Sterne is supposed to lie. It was then “the new burying-ground, near Tyburn;” and to this spot, on the day of his interment, at twelve o’clock noon, came a single mourning coach, with “two gentlemen inside.” One of them is known to have been Becket, his publisher; the other we fairly assume to have been his friend Mr. James. Elia’s Sam Salt told Smith that he also was of the party. The bell, over the soiled and grimed dead-house, was not allowed to ring. And in this “private” manner (a privacy almost amounting to shame) was the body of the great humourist consigned to earth. The “two gentlemen” represented the splendid roll of nobility and gentry that

“pranced” before his sermons! One more instance of that fatal blight of desertion that seems to attend on the jesters of society at their grave.

Now follows that strange and ghastly scene, at which the meagre figure of poor Yorick, upon which he and others were so often merry, was to make a last appearance.

When the “two gentlemen” were seeing the earth laid upon their friend’s remains, there were other and more profane eyes watching from the road, and marking the spot. At that time the tribe of resurrection men pursued their calling as lawlessly as highwaymen did theirs upon the road. And this “new Tyburn burying-ground” had already acquired a notoriety, as being the scene of constant outrages of this kind. Only a few months before, it had become necessary to place regular watchers there, and a large mastiff dog; in spite of which precautions, the infamous spoliation continued.¹

Two nights after, on the 24th, the men came, dug up the body, placed it in a case, and sent it away down to Cambridge.

“Mr. Collignon, B. M.,” of Trinity, was then professor of anatomy, and it had been disposed of to

¹ See *St. James’s Chronicle*, Nov., 1767.

him. These aids to medical science being costly, and procured with difficulty, Mr. Collignon invited some friends to see him illustrate anatomy on the body that had been sent down to him from London; and an old friend of Mr. Sterne, who was of the party, was inexpressibly shocked at recognising the familiar features, and fainted away on the spot. It was too late, unfortunately, to save the body from the knife, for the dissection had nearly been completed.

What a close to Yorick's strange career, which began in wanderings, and brought him back thus finally to his old university! There is even a grim, lurid Shandyism over the scene, a charnel-house humour in that recognition of the strange, lean. Yorick features — more lean in death — upon the dissecting-table.

But the evidence on which the story is founded seems too convincing not to be accepted. There had been many indistinct shapes of the statement — some improbable — but all pointing the same way. Mr. Allan Cunningham had heard that the body had been sold by the landlady in discharge of her rent; a few months later it was stated that "the body of the late Mr. Sterne" had been "anatomised." The story was accepted at the

time as true, and was in the newspapers. The late Mr. Malone said that he had actually spoken with the gentleman who was present at the dissection and who had recognised the features ; and an unknown note-maker has written on his fly-leaf of an old copy of the " Sentimental Journey " — the first edition — that " the Rev. Mr. Green told me that, being at Cambridge a short time after, he saw the skeleton, and had the story confirmed to him by the professor." ¹ At the time it was notorious that the graveyard was nightly plundered by the " resurrection men," while the mean funeral indicated that it was a person of humble rank. This seems to confirm the hideous tale. For this reason it was natural that no monument has been erected to mark the spot where he had been interred. A poetical epitaph by Garrick, of indifferent merit, went round and was admired ; but it was felt, perhaps, that the circumstances were too painful, and that a memorial would only revive the recollection. Long after, two persons — Freemasons — noted the absence of a monument, and set up a headstone, with an inscription beginning, " Near this place is interred," etc., which is yet a further confirmation of the story, as it shows that

¹ Willis's " Current Notes."

the spot could not be pointed out. The headstone with its inscription, is, indeed, a memorial, not of Sterne, but of these masons' vanity and bad taste.¹

¹ "Near to this Place
 Lies the Body of
 The Reverend Laurence Sterne, A. M.,
 Died September 13th, 1768,
 Aged 53 years.
' Ah ! molliter ossa quiescant.'

"If a sound Head, warm Heart, and Breast humane,
 Unsullied Worth, and Soul without a stain;
 If mental Powers could ever justly claim
 The well-won Tribute of immortal Fame,
 Sterne was the Man, who, with gigantic Stride,
 Mowed down luxuriant Follies far and wide.
 Yet what, though keenest Knowledge of Mankind
 Unseal'd to him the Springs that move the Mind;
 What did it cost him? ridicul'd, abus'd,
 By Fools insulted, and by Prudes accus'd,
 In his, mild reader, view thy future Fate,
 Like him despise, what 'twere a sin to hate.

"This monumental stone was erected by two brother masons; for although he did not live to be a member of their society, yet as his all incomparable performances evidently prove him to have acted by rule and square, they rejoice in this opportunity of perpetuating his high and irreproachable character to after ages.

W. & S."

Both Sir Walter Scott and the "Brother Masons" were mistaken as to the month of his death. It is to the honour of a clergyman of the parish — a Mr. Potter — that a few years back he made a shilling subscription to have this headstone cleaned and repaired.


It is strange to think that there were people who might have taken the skull of a second Yorick into their hand, as the Prince of Denmark did that of the first, and have moralised over it sadly. They might have thought of his life, weighed his character, not too partially, but with allowance — as I — and have summed up all, something after this fashion: He was more or less weak, vain, careless, idle, and given to pleasure. He was free of pen and speech — profane sometimes — and did no honour to the gown he wore — these were the general scandals of his time, which seized on him like a contagion. He had the one redeeming gift of a kind, fatherly affection, a careful consideration (wonderful in a careless being) for the pecuniary interests of those for whom it was his duty to provide, a genial humour, and, strange as it may seem, a sort of natural piety.

He was unfortunate in his marriage — unfortunate in his friends — unfortunate in the age, which seemed to strive how it should turn his head with flatteries; and unfortunate in a frame that was always ailing. His were, in short, as he said over and over again so pathetically, follies of the head and not of the heart. These things

should be kept in view; and, when we would anticipate the task of the Recording Angel, should prompt us — not to blot out the entry for ever, but be as indulgent as we can.

CHAPTER X.

MR. STERNE'S WIDOW AND DAUGHTER

T turned out that the widow and daughter were left in straitened circumstances. Yorick was to be no exception to the long roll of pleasant men who set tables in a roar, but who die and leave not a shilling. His debts £1,100 — upon which must be reckoned that burnt-down vicarage of Sutton, whose rebuilding had been put off until too late. There was no will — which was to be expected. The widow took out administration — just as Roger Sterne's widow had — on June the 4th: and Doctor Topham, the hero of the "Good Warm Watch Coat," was the official who received the fees from her.

As a first step, everything at Coxwold was sold. The books — the same I suppose which he got "dirt-cheap" many years before — were sent to Messrs. Todd & Sotheran, of York, booksellers, who had succeeded Hillyard in Stonegate, and the

auction catalogue of those gentlemen, containing "the valuable library of the late Rev. Mr. Sterne, author of 'Tristram Shandy,'" turned up at a public sale not long since. But, taken together, his "effects" did not produce more than £400. Creditors began to press. Mrs. Sterne had a little estate of forty pounds a year settled on herself; and out of this pittance they undertook to honour Mr. Sterne's memory and discharge the balance of seven hundred. A well-meant but unmeaning tribute, as any business friend could have told them. The Rev. Mr. Cheap began to press them about the burnt-down parsonage, and instituted a suit for dilapidations — which they had to compromise. This was brought on them by the carelessness of Mr. Sterne's curate, and should, in fairness, be deducted from his own proper liabilities; which leaves his personal debts at a not very extravagant figure.

But the Yorkshire people, hearing of their distress, and perhaps as a tribute to the late Mr. Yorick, came generously to their assistance; and at the great York races in the August of the same year, a handsome collection was made, amounting to £800. Even in the shape of this last tribute to his memory, there was something Shandean. The

appeal is made upon a race-ground, and to the crowd that spreads over a race-ground !

This aid set them a little at their ease, and at last enabled them to go up to London, where they had lodgings in Gerrard Street, Soho, at Mr. Williams's, paper merchant. They had brought a bundle of Mr. Sterne's old sermons, most likely those "sweepings of his study" he had put aside as least worthy of publication. Becket had given them "a trifle" for the copyright, but they hoped by getting subscriptions, which would come to them exclusively, to make up a handsome sum.

Mr. Wilkes was now in London, and Miss Lydia wrote to him from Gerrard Street a quiet, humble letter, asking his patronage and influence with distinguished friends. It began : "Mrs. and Miss Sterne's compliments wait on Mr. Wilkes. They intend doing themselves the honour of calling upon him if not disagreeable. . . . They would not intrude, but they should be happy to see a person whom they honour, and whom Mr. Sterne greatly admired. Not to have a melancholy story to tell when they meet, Miss Sterne begs leave to tell it now in a few words." A very simple and artless letter, and this last stroke was unconsciously very happily suited to a man of Wilkes's rough and busy

character, who would not like to look forward to a dismal interview.

He saw them, promised them his aid, and took up the project with enthusiasm. He undertook to write the life of his departed friend. They were to give him all letters and materials. So had he undertaken the life of his dear friend Churchill. Hall Stevenson was also written to, and agreed to join in the undertaking. A work of this kind, as Miss Sterne wrote later, by "two men of such genius," was certain to sell. All this being arranged, and having promised Mr. Wilkes, who seems to have been interested in Miss Sterne, to write to him, they left London for France, the country they both liked.

Wilkes had received them cordially, and with that "effusion" and lavish fund of promises which was his characteristic. He would do everything. That a daughter should have been anxious that her father's career should have been set forth by the pens of two such professed debauchees and writers of scandalous works shows a want of discretion amounting to folly. The promise, however, was to be as vain as the performance would have been eccentric. Wilkes went into details, and suggested that the daughter should ornament the work with

drawings. It was also intended to add his letters; and though she felt that these were not of a description that ought to be given to the public, as they would do no credit to his memory, Miss Lydia flippantly announced that if the publisher seemed cool as to the whole project, he was to be tempted by the offer of the correspondence.

The ladies set off for France, and fixed themselves at Angoulême. Lydia wrote to her new patron from that city in a strain that contrasts curiously with her previous obsequiousness. Her whole character as "an accomplished little slut" seems to be revealed in this communication, and there is a pertness and affectation of smartness which does not predispose us in her favour. But not a word from Mr. Wilkes. She wrote from M. Bologne's, in the Rue Cordeliers, on July 22, 1769. Nothing can be more subdued and humble than the curiously jumbled topics :

"DEAR SIR :—'Tis with the greatest pleasure I take my pen to fulfil the promise I made you the last time I had the pleasure of seeing you. I mean that of writing to you, and to give you an account of us and of our situation. A correspondent like

Mr. Wilkes gives your humble servant more vanity than I thought I was capable of. I am an inch taller to-day than I was yesterday. I wish the French may not find a difference in my behaviour — *ce sera bien pire*. When I receive a letter from you, they will certainly say, '*Peste ! que cette fille est aujourd'hui dans ces grands airs ! Décampons au plus vite.*' This is supposing you will favour me with an answer, else I have done wrong to style you 'correspondent ;' but I know you are polite, and never want what the French call *égards pour les femmes : encore moins, je m'imagine, vis-à-vis les filles*.

" You expected an English letter, and not a *pot pourri*. I will not write one word more of French. I know not why I do, for I am no very great admirer of the language : 'tis better calculated for nonsense than my own ; and consequently suits me better to write, though not Mr. Wilkes to read. Thank my stars, you promised me not to show my letters to any one, not even to your confessor — remember that.

" Now, as to our journey, — nothing either agreeable in it or diverting, I promise you. A journey through France (that is to say, the post-part of it) cannot be a Sentimental one ; for it

is one continued squabble with inn-keepers and postilions! yet not like Smelfungus, who never kept his temper; for we kept ours, and laughed whilst we scolded. How much the French have the advantage over us! They give themselves ease by swearing; which, you know, is talking bawdy. We English women do not know how to set about it; yet, as archbishops in France swear as well as their neighbours (for I have heard them, to my edification), I cannot see why we women may not follow their example. The French women, however, do it *sans façon*. Again! — scratch out the words *sans façon* yourself, and put an English one in the place, which I will hereafter adopt.

“Angoulême is a pretty town; the country most delightful, and from the principal walk there is a very fine prospect; a serpentine river, which joins the Garonne at Bordeaux, has a very good effect; trees in the middle of it, which form little islands, where the inhabitants go and take the *fresco*, — in short, ’tis a most pleasant prospect; and I know no greater pleasure than sitting by the side of the river, reading Milton or Shakespeare to my mother. Sometimes I take my guitar and sing to her. Thus do the hours slide away imper-

ceptibly ; with reading, writing, drawing, and music.

“ ‘ Thus wisely careless, innocently gay,
We play the trifle life away.’ ”

Yet, dear sir, often do we wish ourselves in England. Necessity sent us hither ; may Fortune bring us back !

“ We receive much civility from the people here. We had letters of recommendation, which I would advise every English person to procure wherever he goes in France. We have visitors, even more than we wish — as we ever found the French in general very insipid. I would rather choose to converse with people much superior to me in understanding (that I grant I can easily do, so you need not smile). With the one I can have no improvement, but with people of sense I am sure of learning something every hour ; as being intimate with a person of an excellent heart, and sensible feelings mends sometimes one’s own.

“ ’Tis now time to remind Mr. Wilkes of his kind promise — to exhort him to fulfil it. If you knew, dear sir, how much we are straitened as to our income, you would not neglect it. We should be truly happy to be so much obliged to you that we may join, to our admiration of Mr. Wilkes in

his public character, tears of gratitude whenever we hear his name mentioned, for the peculiar service he has rendered us. Much shall we owe to Mr. Hall for that and many other favours; but to you do we owe the kind intention which we beg you to put in practice. As I know Mr. Hall is somewhat lazy, as you were the promoter, write to him yourself; he will be more attentive to what you say. . . .

“I fear I have wore out your patience. Forgive me, 'twas a pleasing occupation to write to you. I know not whether it is impertinent to ask you if your affairs go on equal to the wishes of your friends? That they may, believe me, is the sincere wish of,

“Dear sir,

“Your most faithful, obliged friend,

“L. STERNE.

“P. S. — We flatter ourselves you are well. My mother joins in most cordial wishes for your welfare and happiness. May everything you wish be granted you! as I am sure you will grant us ours; nay, you even prevented it.

“Once more, adieu!

“Our best compliments wait on Miss Wilkes.”

Mr. Wilkes had, however, sufficient on his hands. He was harassed with difficulties and shut up in the King's Bench Prison. But then he had, at least, leisure and opportunity to have replied. Some three months went by. No reply came, and Lydia again appealed to him :

"How long have I waited" (she wrote in October) "for a letter from Mr. Wilkes in answer to that I wrote him. I fear he is not well ; I fear his own affairs have not allowed him time to answer me ; in short, I am full of fears. 'Hope deferred makes the heart sick.' Three lines, with a promise of writing Tristram's life, for the benefit of his widow and daughter, would make us happy. A promise, did I say ? that I already have ; but a second assurance. Indeed, my dear sir, since I last wrote we stand more in need of such an act of kindness. Panchaud's failure has hurt us considerably ; we have, I fear, lost more than, in our circumstances, we could afford to lose. Do not, I beseech you, disappoint us ; let me have a single line from you, 'I will perform my promise,' and joy will take place of our sorrow. I trust you will write to Hall ; in pity, do.

"Adieu, dear sir ! May you enjoy all the

happiness you deserve! may every wish of yours be granted, as I am sure you will grant my request! My mother joins in best compliments. Our most cordial wishes attend you and the amiable Miss Wilkes. Believe me, most truly, your faithful friend, and obedient, humble servant,
" L. STERNE."

Again no answer was returned to this appeal. At the same time she addressed a reminder to the proposed coadjutor, Mr. Hall Stevenson, who also took no notice. Six months went by, and, despairing of hearing from Wilkes, she wrote again to Stevenson :

"If you ever felt" (she says) "what hope deferred occasions, you would not have put us under that painful situation; from whom the neglect arises I know not, but surely a line from you, dear sir, would not have cost you much trouble. Tax me not with boldness for using the word neglect : as you both promised, out of the benevolence of your hearts, to write my father's 'Life' for the benefit of his widow and daughter, and as I myself look on a promise as sacred, and I doubt not but you think as I do; in that case the word is not

improper. In short, dear sir, I ask but this of you; to tell me by a very short letter, whether we may depend on yours and Mr. Wilkes's promise, or if we must renounce the pleasing expectation. But, dear sir, consider that the fulfilling of it may put £400 into our pockets; and that the declining would be unkind, after having made us hope and depend upon that kindness. Let this plead my excuse.

"If you do not choose to take the trouble to wait on Mr. Wilkes, send him my letter, and let me know the *oui ou le non*. Still let me urge, press, and entreat Mr. Hall to be as good as his word: if he will interest himself in our behalf, 'twill be but acting consistent with his character; 'twill prove that Eugenius was the friend of Yorick—nothing can prove it stronger than befriending his widow and daughter. Adieu, dear sir! Believe me your most obliged, humble servant,

L. STERNE.

"My mother joins in best compliments."

As was to be expected, neither of the gentlemen performed what they had undertaken to do. Indeed it may be doubted if they had the gifts for

such a task. So a rather pretty edition of the works appeared, and without a life.

Thus left to their own resources, the daughter proceeded to arrange her father's letters, and published them in due course. Nothing could be more indiscreet than the editing, though there is an apparent attempt at suppressing names, etc. Two or three of the letters, as we have seen, are fatally damaging to Sterne's reputation, and drove, as it were, the last nail into its coffin. But they are curious from another point of view.

It has been mentioned that Sterne kept a letter-book, but it will be interesting here to show how the artful humourist studied and prepared and recast his letters before sending them forth :

“P. S. — I have just received as a present from a right Honble. a most elegant gold snuff-box — fabricated for me at Paris — I wish Eliza was here — I would lay it at her feet — however, I will enrich my gold Box with her picture — and if the Donor does not approve of such an acquisition to his pledge of friendship — I will send him his Box again.

“May I presume to enclose you the letter I write to Mrs. Draper? I know you will write

yourself, and my letter may have the honour to chaperon yours to India. Mrs. Sterne and my daughter are coming to stay a couple of months with, as far as from Avignon — and then return — Here's Complaisance for you — I went five hundred miles the last spring out of my way to pay my wife a week's visit — and she is at the expense of coming post a thousand miles to return it! What a happy pair! however, en passant she takes back sixteen hundred pds. into France with her, and will do me the honour likewise to strip me of everything I have — except Eliza's Picture — adieu.

“To Mrs. James, in Gerard Street,
“Free Fauconberg. Soho, London.”

The published version is as follows :

“P. S. — I have just received, as a present from a man I shall ever love, a most elegant gold snuff-box, fabricated for me at Paris — 'tis not the first pledge I have received of his friendship. May I presume to enclose you a letter of chit-chat which I shall write to Eliza? I know you will write yourself, and my letter may have the honour to chaperon yours to India — they will neither of

them be the worse received for going together in company, but I fear they will get late in the year to their destined port, as they go first to Bengal."

The postscript of the published letter is certainly tame and colourless as compared with Mr. Gibbs's version. It was quite excusable in the "sprightly" Lydia, as editor of her father's correspondence, to omit the sarcastic allusion to his wife and daughter's impending visit, or to cut out the dedication of its golden shrine to Eliza's miniature. Yet why the "Rt. Honble.," probably Sir G. Macartney, should be sentimentalised into "a man I shall ever love," one cannot quite discover.

And again: An undated draft letter from Sterne in Bond Street to Mr. and Mrs. James. This rough copy letter seems to have been expanded into the published letter to Mr. and Mrs. James, written from Old Bond Street, and dated April 21st, 176 (No. 93). This last is too long to quote at length, but we may compare its more material portion:

"I fell ill the moment I got to my lodgings — he (the physician) says it is owing to my taking James's Powder, and venturing out on so cold a

day as Sunday — but he is mistaken, for I am certain whatever bears the name must have efficacy with me.”

Now for Mr. Gibbs’s draft, which runs in the third person :

“Mr. Sterne’s kindest and most friendly compliments to Mrs. James, with his most sentimental thanks for her obliging enquiry after his health — he fell ill the moment he got to his lodgings, and has been attended by a physician ever since. He says ’tis owing to Mr. Sterne’s taking James’s Powder, and venturing out on so cold a day — but Mr. Sterne could give a truer account. He is almost dead, yet still hopes to glide like a shadow to Gerard Street in a few days, to thank his good friend for her good will. All compliments to Mr. James, and all comfort to his good lady.”

Observe here that the punning compliment on the name James did not strike Sterne till he was making his second copy of the note.

These and other such details were communicated by Mr. Gibbs to the editor of the *Athenæum*.

Sterne, as we have seen, took the trouble of

keeping an elaborate journal to amuse his Eliza. When writing this account of Sterne, I was struck by Mr. Thackeray's allusion — in one of his "Roundabout Papers" to "the gentleman of Bath," who offered to show him Sterne's private journal kept for Eliza. Strange to say, the novelist thought this curious record of slight importance, and made no use of it. A literary friend of his and my own was kind enough to ask him about this matter, to whom he wrote this explanation :

"PALACE GARDENS, KENSINGTON, W.

"Mar. 9, 1863.

"I forget the name of the Bath Gentleman who lent me Sterne's lying MS. journal to Mrs. Draper. He writes to Eliza that he was dreadfully ill, had so much blood taken from him, but nevertheless was ever and ever his Eliza's. In the printed letters — this is one — (a plague on the people. I have been looking a $\frac{1}{4}$ hour in vain for my Sterne) — addressed from the Mount Coffee House to a Lady P—— without any date — he makes tremendous love to her, blasphemes about the Lord and being led into temptation, and winds up by saying if she would let him come to drink tea he will go to Miss C.'s benefit that night. I looked

out in the Theatrical Register (pardon forgetting date, name, and so forth) on what day in 176 — what d'ye callem — a Miss C—— had a benefit. I found it was on the very day when Sterne was writing to Mrs. Draper to say he was dreadfully ill.

“Then there is the lie in Duten's ‘Memoirs,’ which I quoted in a Roundabout Paper. All which didn't prevent the scamp from being a great man.”

Three years later we find mother and daughter settled at Alby, an old town in Languedoc, probably seeking a still cheaper manner of living. M. Stapfer, who has written with much critical sagacity on Sterne's works and character, has discovered that here they moved in the best society of the place, and were well appreciated.

At this point, the accounts of Lydia's history usually end, there being no more known of her, save a dim tradition that she married a Frenchman, and was one of the victims of the Revolution. It is now ascertained that at Alby she became acquainted with a young man of the name of Alexander Anne Medalle, a son of a “Receveur des Décimes” in the Customs. From the “Acts” of the town it appears that on April 28, 1772, she


abjured the Protestant religion in the private chapel of the provost's house, and on the same day was married to the young man, who was a year younger than herself — her mother being too ill to be present.

In the registers is a most remarkable entry which invites speculation. "The marriage was imperative (*forcé*) and urgent;" on which, in the *Inventaire des Archives d'Alby*, is found this gloss: "For at that period the law authorised *la recherche de la paternité*." The first impression from this would be unfavourable to Miss Lydia's character, and Lord Howden (in a letter to the *Athenæum*) quotes the altered rule from the Code Napoléon in support of this view; but it seems too harsh and ungracious a conclusion to be accepted on such evidence. The following solution is not improbable. Mrs. Sterne was ill, probably in danger of death, for she died a few months later. In case of her death, the difficulty of proving consent of parents and guardians would be increased, and the countries being at war, the *recherche de la paternité* would be impossible. The French law is, or used to be, very strict in requiring such formalities. There is certainly obscurity in the matter, and we must not condemn Lydia too hastily.

Mrs. Sterne died in January, 1773, at a Doctor Lioncière's house in the town, No. 9 Rue St. Antoine. It must be said that during her somewhat troubled course, she carried out, in an ungracious way perhaps, correct and respectable principles of conduct. That publication of the letters which her daughter had once hinted at, was not attempted during her lifetime. In June, 1775, Mrs. de Medalle was in London for the purpose of publishing these papers, in which her father confesses that he "was more sick of his wife than ever," with other indecorous confessions. Such is the story of Sterne and his daughter.

APPENDIX A

YORICK'S JOURNAL (page 136.)

OME further extracts from this strange record — which I believe it is intended to publish — will be interesting. I am afraid it must be said that the journal leaves our humourist with scarcely a shred of character ; it is a pitiful, undignified display of meanness, deception, and disloyalty to his wife. His only excuse is that he was in such a state of infatuation as to be scarcely conscious of what he was writing.

He was not, too, above turning his amatory sorrows to purposes of profit, and, it would seem from the introduction, actually designed publishing the strange incoherent “screed.” It opens :

“This journal, wrote under the fictitious names of Yorick and Eliza, and sometimes of the Branin and the Branine, but 'tis a diary of the miserable feelings of a person separated from a Lady, for whose society he languished. The real names are foreign, and the account a copy from a French

Mans^t. in Mrs. S.'s hands — but wrote as it is to cast a Viel (Veil) over them. There is a counterpart, which is the lady's account of what transactions daily happened, and what pursuits occupied her mind during this separation from her Admirer — these are worth reading ; the translators cannot say so much in favour of Yorick's, which seem to have little merit beyond their truth." In other words, Mr. Sterne was about to "make copy" of his agonies, passing it off as a translation from the French. To soothe his feelings he kept this confidential journal day by day. The fragment begins on Monday, April 13th, and the lady sailed on the 23d. He is "worn out with fevers of all kinds, but most by that fever of the heart with which I am eternally wasting and shall waste, till I see Eliza again."

His only comfort was, "to sit and talk with het worthy James."

"They sank my heart with an infamous account of Draper and his detested character at Bombay. For what a wretch art thou hazarding thy life . . . thou wilt be repaid with injuries and insults." Then he heightened the picture with his own poignant sufferings and ailments. "Poor, sick-headed, sick-hearted Yorick ! Eliza has made a

shadow of thee ; I am absolutely good for nothing." He was bled, but the bandage got loose. "I half bled to death in bed before I felt it, Eliza — fare-well to thee — I am going." He did not "go," however — got better, and Mrs. James comforted him in this way, — "Tears ran down her cheeks when she saw how pale and wan I was. 'I beseech you, good soul,' she said, 'not to regard either difficulties, or expences, but to fly to Eliza directly. I see you will dye without her . . . save yourself for her.' 'Tell her, my dear friend, that I will meet her in a better world. . . . Tell Eliza, my dear friend, that I dyed broken-hearted.' She burst into a most pathetic flood of tears. You never beheld so affecting a scene. I had like to have fainted ; it was with difficulty I could reach the street door." All which was but part of the series of inventions and deceptions with which he strove to work on Eliza's feelings. The James's were not persons likely to say such things about the poor, absent Daniel Draper.

Mr. Sterne was, no doubt, in bad health, but instead of moping despondingly, as he described himself, he was engaged in a racket of dissipation, having on one occasion, as he boasted, forty invitations ! The letter to Lady P., of which Mr.

Thackeray made so much, was likely enough to have been written about this time.

As we have seen, his wife and daughter were menacing him with a return, the very thought of which caused him almost ludicrous annoyance and misery. "Pity my embarrassment — my wife with me every moment of the summer. Think what a restraint upon a Fancy that should sport in all points at its ease," — an ingenious author's plea. "It will be by stealth, if I am able to go on with my journal at all. You cannot conceive how much and how universally I am pitied. My friends think it will kill me." His only chance of escape was to buy them off. By June he was negotiating to sell "my little estate to purchase peace to myself, and a certainty of never being interrupted by Mrs. Sterne, who, when she is sensible I have given her all I can part with, she will be at rest herself." This bit of property was certainly Mrs. Sterne's own, which she had settled on him at their marriage. "Nature," he adds later, "is turned upside down; for we have now wives going to visit their husbands, and taking long journies, out of ill will. I wish you was with him (Draper), for the same reason that I wish my wife was at Coxwold, that she might sooner depart in peace." It will be

seen that Mr. Sterne does not disguise his aspirations. These grow with his dementia, and presently take grosser shape. With an incredible folly and lack of decency, he reminds his flame that Mrs. Sterne had recently a paralytic stroke. Here was prospect of release. Growing bolder and more reckless, he now began to make some artful suggestions to Eliza. He drew up a fanciful paragraph, which might appear in the papers. "Mr. D——, dying in the year 17—, this lady returned to England, and Yorick, the year after becoming a widower, they were married, and retiring to one of his livings in Yorkshire, where was a most romantic situation, they lived and died happy."

Still news of the threatening visitors was delayed. "I sit in dread of to-morrow's post, which is to bring me an account when madame is to arrive." He was in torture and was "pitied by every soul in proportion as her character is detested and her errand known." The sum that was to secure the absence of the pair, was to be an annuity of £300, the £2,000 for Lydia. But his friend Hall suggested that £1,500 would be sufficient. "The advice is well enough if I can get her off with it. I'll summon up the husband,

if I can, and keep the £500 for emergencies. Who knows, Eliza, what sort of emergencies may cry out for it? I conceive some; you, Eliza, may conceive others." (A Shandean turn it may be presumed.) "Soothe me, calm me, pour thy healing balm into the sorest of hearts. I have a restless, unreasonable wife. She wants £400. Bad woman!"

Enlivened by this prospect, he proposes a little plan. "What say you, Eliza? Shall we join our little capitals together? Well, if Mr. Draper gives us leave, we may safely. If your virtue and honour are only concerned, 'twould be safe in Yorick's hands as in a Brother's."


With this hopeful speculation, he lays out all kinds of plans. There should be new rooms built at the parsonage. He would meet her on the beach, on her arrival from Bombay, when he "hoped to have everything planned that depends on me properly, and for what depends upon Him who orders every event for us, I leave and trust it." This Stiggins-like sanctimoniousness is painful to read. The folly of the scheme was patent, for even were Mrs. Sterne removed out of the way there still remained Daniel Draper. By an odd retribution the planner himself was the first of the

quartette concerned to depart this life, or, in his own phrase, "this bale of cadaverous goods was consigned to Pluto."

He supplies pictures of himself with "a 100 hens and chickens about him," and sitting down to venison and cards. "I want you to be at the other side of my little table." He was ever to be "such as my honour, my engagements, and promises and desires have fixed me."

APPENDIX B

SUPPOSED PLAGIARISMS

OCTOR FERRIER proved that many of the strange and almost grotesque theories and speculations found in "Tristram" — the ludicrous maunderings of Mr. Shandy, his plans, his conceits and reflections, which had excited so much laughter and astonishment — were all drawn from Rabelais, Montaigne, Bouchet, Beroalde, Scarron, and, above all, Burton, whose works had served him as text-books. From Burton's strange book, known as the "Anatomy of Melancholy," whole paragraphs had been taken, which, when placed side by side with the original, did not differ by a single word. The grief of Mr. Shandy over his son, and his dismal reflections, the "Lady Baussiere's" inattention to the importunate beggar, and much more, are all to be read, with a few trifling changes, in the "Anatomy." And yet, though this has been the most insisted on of all Mr.

Sterne's pilferings, it really amounts almost to nothing, for those familiar with Burton know well that he himself is nothing but a patchwork — a mere "cento" of quotations, and the richest storehouse of scraps and gatherings from every quarter that is known; therefore, when Mr. Sterne helped himself in this quarter, he did not take Burton, but merely what Burton had taken. Half a dozen pages would exhaust these pilferings.

The odd learning upon noses, and the allusion to that feature and its significance, must have struck one of Mr. Sterne's tone of mind; and when he alludes to the supposed origin of "soft noses" he had in his mind the grotesque conversation between Gargantua Grangousier and the monk in Rabelais. The point of Mr. Shandy's remark to Obadiah, when tasking him with the failure of his "favourite mare," is an old jest from the "*Moyen de Parvenir*." The black page after Yorick's death is to be seen in Fludd's great "*History of the World*;" and the shower of dashes over many pages had been tried before; but to the wrong paging, the "marbled pages," and the flourish of Trim's stick, I believe he has the undisputed title. These were poor tricks, of which he was fully rich enough to have been independent.

It seemed almost as though he meant to have a sly Shandean joke at some of the detectives, who he knew would be presently on his track, when he worked a passage from Burton into "Tristram Shandy," which dwelt on the fashion in which new writers help themselves from the old. "As apothecaries," said Burton, "we make new mixtures every day, pour out of one vessel into another ;" and again, "we twist the same rope again and again." "Shall we for ever," said Sterne, "make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring out of one vessel into another? Are we for ever to be twisting and untwisting the same rope?"

Much stress, too, was laid on his adoption of the affecting passage from Burnet, as to the choice of an inn as a place to die in. But it should be remembered that Burnet reports it of Archbishop Leighton, and that Cicero had uttered the same wish before ; and that it is an idea, which, under various shapes, has occurred to many who have found delight and comfort in an inn parlour. After all, there can be no copyright in ideas.

But the truth is, in all the Shandean classics there is a family likeness—they have virtually but the one stock in trade. All these French

humourists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had common forms, as it were, of thought, and traditional jokes, which were passed on from one to the other. Their humour was of the grotesque and extravagant, — a limited range; and they seemed never to be tired of telling the same story with little variations of shape. As an instance, jesting on the nose was a favourite pastime; and odd speculations as to its relation to character, and what influences determined its length in some men, its breadth in others, gave scope to the strangest and most comic theories. The department relating to noses, the satires, essays, and burlesque disquisitions, in Latin, French, and Italian, fill a large shelf in the macaronic library.

The idea of an eccentric father debating over the education of his son, and laying out Utopian schemes and odd plans for the formation of his mind, may be traced to Martinus Scriblerus, from Scriblerus to Montaigne, and from Montaigne back to Pantagruel. We have the crotchets of Mr. Shandy imported into real life, in the curious theories of the father of Miss Edgeworth.

Lovers of Sterne will, however, regret that at least three of his most charming thoughts should not have been his own. We must give up Uncle

Toby's fly — the pretty bit of consolation to Maria, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb"¹ — and what is the greatest sacrifice, Captain Shandy's famous recording angel. The fly, according to Balzac, was originally put out of the window by James the First of England, who made a remark exactly the same as that of Uncle Toby. His "shorn lamb" is found in a Languedoc proverb, and there is a very similar thought in the "'Outlandish Proverbs,' selected by Mr. G. H., 1640," "To a close-shorne sheepe God gives wind by measure." And the famous recording angel has a parallel in a MS. by a monk Alberic, who lived about the year 1100. "A demon holds a book in which are written the sins of a particular man, and an angel drops on it from a phial a tear which the sinner had shed in doing a good action, and his sins are washed out." Sterne's thought is exquisitely artistic, both in brevity, dramatic effect, and music. Mr. Moore worked the idea into his "Peri" without scruple.

"Black as the damned drops that fall
From the denouncing Angel's pen
Ere Mercy weeps them out again."

¹ Many pious persons have supposed that this is to be found in the Scripture, and a clergyman is said to have actually preached a sermon upon that text.

We may track him, however, successfully in another direction, where it is no discredit for him to be found out. I have mentioned that he must have found the names of Trim, Toby, Eugenia, Diego, and Obadiah in Shadwell's plays. Mr. Jackson discovered the names of Maronette, Batarelle, and Giol, characters in the "Dissertation on Whiskers" in the Girard-Cadière process — a common book on the stalls,¹ and a book exactly in Sterne's "line." The name La Fleur, and a trait of his character, is to be found in Bayle.² But while the originality of "Tristram Shandy" is in the main secure, I am afraid, in the case of the "Sermons," he seems to have cast away all notions of literary morality. His depredations stretched in all directions. From Burnet's "Safe Way to Happiness" he took a passage in his twenty-eighth sermon, and from the same author's "Nature and Grace" he helped himself to a large passage in his thirty-first sermon. From Norris he took many passages, as also from Bishop Hall; and in one of Bentley's sermons is to be found almost word for word the picture of the Inquisition. The most daring, however, of his plagiarisms, was that of some passages in his seventh posthumous ser-

¹ Jackson's "Four Ages."² Ibid.

mon which were literally transferred wholesale, from Leighton's twelve sermons, the author of which was an obscure prebendary, not likely to attract notice.¹

He is even to be found copying from himself, and to save himself trouble sometimes reproduced a whole passage from an old sermon in a new one.² The idea of the "hobby-horse" is to be found in "Don Guzman d'Olfarache."

In the "Sentimental Journey," too, it has been said that there is great resemblance to the tone of Marivaux and Crebillon. This, however, is far too wide a field to make such a charge of any serious weight. The influence of Marivaux and his style was felt more widely in French literature than is now supposed; and his peculiar manner

¹ We must even refuse the extenuation allowed him by Doctor Ferrier, in the case of the grotesque openings to his "Sermons" (e. g., "That I deny!" after the text was delivered), prototypes for which are to be found in the odd Shandean book called "Friar Gerund." Doctor Ferrier says Sterne could not have seen this curious production, as it appeared after the publication of "Tristram Shandy." The truth is, it was published before it, and was just the book to have found its way to the Skelton library. Still, one like Sterne, familiar with the *ana*, must have met numbers of droll preaching stories of this class.

² See the passage on David cutting off the skirt of Saul's robe, in the sermon "On Self-Knowledge," to be found, almost word for word, in a previous sermon.

for a time leavened and refined a vast deal of the lighter literature of his day. "Marivauder" even became a French word. For Crebillon, Sterne made no secret of his admiration: he put his "Egarements" into the hands of the French soubrette he met on the Quai Conti; and I dare say, if one were inclined to search these questionable and once fashionable romances, some hints for the scenes in the "Sentimental Journey" might be lighted on.

LETTERS FROM YORICK TO ELIZA

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



R. FITZGERALD, in his comments upon the character of Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, refers to an exceedingly rare edition of the ten famous "Yorick and Eliza Letters," with her answers to these letters. The almost equally famous replies were never again reprinted, and wishing to satisfy the interest of the reader, the publishers have included in the present volume this edition of 1775, as originally issued.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD APSLEY,
LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR
OF ENGLAND,

My Lord, — The editor of the following Letters is so far from having tasted your Lordship's bounty, that he is, and perhaps ever must remain, a stranger to your person, consequently no adulation is to be apprehended from him.

He leaves it to the weak and oppressed, the widow and orphan, to proclaim your Lordship's virtues in your public capacity; that which he would celebrate is of a private nature, namely, your filial affection, which is so conspicuous, that he flatters himself a Volume of Letters written by such a person as Mr. Sterne, in which your noble father is placed in a light so truly amiable, cannot fail of engaging your Lordship's gracious acceptance and protection — in this hope, and upon this

foundation, he presumes to dedicate these papers to your Lordship, and to have the honour of subscribing himself,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

THE EDITOR.

PREFACE



HE foul and infamous traffic between dishonest booksellers and profligate scribblers, which has subsisted for more than a century, has justly brought posthumous publications under suspicion, in England, France, and more especially in Holland : ministers of state in every European court, great generals, royal mistresses, authors of established reputation, in a word, all such as have had the misfortune to advance themselves to eminence, have been obliged to leave behind them parcels of letters, and other memoirs, of the most secret and important transactions of their times, in which every fact beyond the information of a newspaper, or coffee-house chat, is so faithfully misrepresented, every character delineated with such punctual deviation from the truth, and causes and effects which have no possible relation are with such amazing effrontery obtruded upon the public, that it is no wonder if men of sense, who read for instruction as well as entertainment, generally condemn them in the

lump, never, or very rarely, affording them the honour of a perusal. The publisher of these letters, however, has not the smallest apprehension that any part of this well-grounded censure can fall to his share ; he deals not in surprising events to astonish the reader, nor in characters (one excepted) which have figured on the great theatre of the world ; he purposely waives all proofs which might be drawn concerning their authenticity, from the character of the gentleman who had the perusal of the originals, and, with Eliza's permission, faithfully copied them at Bombay in the East Indies ; from the testimony of many reputable families in this city, who knew and loved Eliza, caressed and admired Mr. Sterne, and were well acquainted with the tender friendship between them ; from many curious anecdotes in the letters themselves, any one of which were fully sufficient to authenticate them ; and submits his reputation to the taste and discernment of the commonest reader, who must, in one view, perceive that these letters are genuine, beyond any possibility of doubt. As the public is unquestionably entitled to every kind of information concerning the characters contained in these letters which consists with the duties of humanity and a good citizen, that is,

a minute acquaintance with those of whom honourable mention is made, or the publisher is furnished with authorities to vindicate from Mr. Sterne's censures, which, as a man of warm temper and lively imagination, he was perhaps sometimes hurried into without due reflection, he persuades himself that no party concerned will or can be offended with this publication, especially if it is considered that without such information it would be cold and unentertaining; that by publishing their merits he cannot be understood to intend them any injury, and without it, it would in himself fail in his duty to the public. Eliza, the lady to whom these letters are addressed, is Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, wife of Daniel Draper, Esq., counsellor at Bombay, and at present chief of the English factory at Surat, a gentleman very much respected in that quarter of the globe. She is by birth an East Indian; but the circumstance of being born in the country not proving sufficient to defend her delicate frame against the heats of that burning climate, she came to England for the recovery of her health, when by accident she became acquainted with Mr. Sterne. He immediately discovered in her a mind so congenial with his own, so enlightened, so refined, and so tender,

that their mutual attraction presently joined them in the closest union that purity could possibly admit of ; he loved her as his friend, and prided in her as his pupil ; all her concerns became presently his ; her health, her circumstances, her reputation, her children, were his ; his fortune, his time, his country, were at her disposal, so far as the sacrifice of all or any of these might, in his opinion, contribute to her real happiness. If it is asked whether the glowing heat of Mr. Sterne's affection never transported him to a flight beyond the limits of pure Platonism, the publisher will not take upon him absolutely to deny it ; but this he thinks, so far from leaving any stain upon that gentleman's memory, that it perhaps includes his fairest encomium ; since to cherish the seeds of piety and chastity in a heart which the passions are interested to corrupt, must be allowed to be the noblest effort of a soul fraught and fortified with the justest sentiments of religion and virtue. Mr. and Mrs. James, so frequently and honourably mentioned in these letters, are the worthy heads of an opulent family in this city ; their character is too well established to need the aid of the publisher in securing the estimation they so well deserve, and universally possess, yet he cannot

restrain one observation: that to have been respected and beloved by Mr. Sterne and Mrs. Draper is no inconsiderable testimony of their merit, and such as it cannot be displeasing to them to see published to the world. Miss Light, now Mrs. Stratton, is on all accounts a very amiable young lady — she was accidentally a passenger on the same ship with Eliza, and instantly engaged her friendship and esteem; but being mentioned in one of Mrs. Draper's letters to Mr. Sterne, in somewhat of a comparative manner with herself, his partiality for her, as she modestly expressed it, took the alarm, and betrayed him into some expressions, the coarseness of which cannot be excused. Mrs. Draper declares that this lady was entirely unknown to him, and infinitely superior to his idea of her; she has been lately married to George Stratton, Esq., counsellor at Madras. The manner in which Mr. Sterne's acquaintance with the celebrated Lord Bathurst, the friend and companion of Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, and all the finest wits of the last age, commenced, cannot fail to attract the attention of the curious reader: here, that great man is social and unreserved, unshackled with that sedulity in supporting a feigned character which exposes most of his

rank to the contempt of wise men, and the ridicule of their *valets de chambre* ; here he appears the same as in his hours of festivity and happiness with Swift and Addison, superior to forms and ceremonies, and, in his eighty-fifth year, abounding in wit, vivacity, and humanity : methinks, the pleasure of such a gentleman's acquaintance resembles that of conversing with superior beings ; but it is not fit to dwell longer on this pleasing topic, lest it should anticipate the reader's pleasure in perusing the letter itself. One remark, however, it suggests, which may be useful to old men in general, namely, that it appears by his Lordship's example, the sour contracted spirit observable in old age is not specifically an effect of years, altho' they are commonly pleaded in its excuse. Old men would therefore do well to correct this odious quality in themselves ; or, if that must not be, to invent a better apology for it. It is very much to be lamented, that Eliza's modesty was invincible to all the publisher's endeavours to obtain her answers to these letters : her wit, penetration, and judgment, her happiness in the epistolary style, so rapturously recommended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish a rich entertainment for the public. The publisher could not help telling her,

that he wished to God she was really possessed of that vanity with which she was charged ; to which she replied, that she was so far from acquitting herself of vanity, that she suspected that to be the cause why she could not prevail on herself to submit her letters to the public eye ; for altho' Mr. Sterne was partial to everything of her's, she could not hope that the world would be so, too. With this answer he was obliged to be contented ; yet cannot reflect without deep concern, that this elegant accomplishment, so peculiarly adapted to the refined and delicate understandings of ladies, should be yet so rare, that we can boast of only one Lady Wortley Montagu among us ; and that Eliza, in particular, could not be prevailed upon to follow the example of that admired lady. The reader will remark that these letters have various signatures ; sometimes he signs Sterne, sometimes Yorick, and to one or two he signs Her Bramin. Altho' it is pretty generally known who the Bramins are, yet lest anybody should be at a loss, it may not be amiss to observe, that the principal cast or tribe among the idolatrous Indians are the Bramins, and out of the chief class of this cast comes the priests so famous for their austerities, and the shocking torments, and frequently death,

they voluntarily expose themselves to, on a religious account. Now, as Mr. Sterne was a clergyman, and Eliza an Indian by birth, it was customary with her to call him her Bramin, which he accordingly, in his pleasant moods, uses as a signature.

It remains only to take some notice of the family, marked with dashes, on whom Mr. Sterne has thought proper to shed the bitterest gall of his pen. It is however evident, even from some passages in the letters themselves, that Mrs. Draper could not be easily prevailed on to see this family in the same odious light in which they appeared to her perhaps overzealous friend. He, in the heat, or, I may say, hurry of his affection, might have accepted suspicious circumstances as real evidences of guilt, or listened too unguardedly to the insinuations of their enemies.

Be that as it may, as the publisher is not furnished with sufficient authorities to exculpate them, he chooses to drop the ungrateful subject, heartily wishing that this family may not only be innocent of the shocking treachery with which they are charged, but may be able to make their innocence appear clearly to the world; otherwise, that no person may be industrious enough to make known their name.

LETTERS FROM YORICK TO ELIZA

LETTER I.

ELIZA will receive my books with this. The sermons came all hot from the heart : I wish that I could give them any title to be offered to yours. — The others came from the head — I am more indifferent about their reception.

I know not how it comes about, but I am half in love with you. — I ought to be wholly so ; for I never valued (or saw more good qualities to value) or thought more of one of your sex than of you ; so adieu. Yours faithfully,

If not affectionately,

L. STERNE.

LETTER II.

I CANNOT rest, Eliza, though I shall call on you at half-past twelve, till I know how you do — May thy dear face smile, as thou risest, like the sun of this morning. I was much grieved to hear of your alarming indisposition yesterday; and disappointed, too, at not being let in. — Remember, my dear, that a friend has the same right as a physician. The etiquettes of this town (you'll say) say otherwise. — No matter! Delicacy and propriety do not always consist in observing their frigid doctrines.

I am going out to breakfast, but shall be at my lodgings by eleven; when I hope to read a single line under thy own hand, that thou art better, and wilt be glad to see thy Bramin.

9 o'clock.

LETTER III.

I GOT thy letter last night, Eliza, on my return from Lord Bathurst's, where I dined, and where I was heard (as I talked of thee an hour without intermission) with so much pleasure and attention, that the good old lord toasted your health three different times; and now he is in his eighty-fifth year, says he hopes to live long enough to be introduced as a friend to my fair Indian disciple, and to see her eclipse all other nabobesses as much in wealth, as she does already in exterior and (what is far better) in interior merit. I hope so too. This nobleman is an old friend of mine. — You know he was always the protector of men of wit and genius; and has had those of the last century, Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, Prior, &c., &c., always at his table. — The manner in which his notice began of me, was as singular as it was polite. — He came up to me, one day, as I was at the Princess of Wales's court. "I want to know you, Mr. Sterne; but it is fit you should know, also, who

it is that wishes this pleasure. You have heard," continued he, "of an old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Popes and Swifts have sung and spoken so much : I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast ; but have survived them, and, despairing ever to find their equals, it is some years since I have closed my accounts, and shut up my books, with thoughts of never opening them again ; but you have kindled a desire in me of opening them once more before I die ; which I now do ; so go home and dine with me." — This nobleman, I say, is a prodigy ; for at eighty-five he has all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty. A disposition to be pleased, and a power to please others beyond whatever I knew : added to which, man of learning, courtesy, and feeling.

He heard me talk of thee, Eliza, with uncommon satisfaction ; — for there was only a third person, and of sensibility, with us. — And a most sentimental afternoon, till nine o'clock, have we passed ! But thou, Eliza, wert the star that conducted and enliven'd the discourse. — And when I talked not of thee, still did'st thou fill my mind, and warmed every thought I uttered, for I am not ashamed to acknowledge I greatly miss thee. — Best of all good girls ! the sufferings I have sustained the

whole night on account of thine, Eliza, are beyond my power of words. — Assuredly does Heaven give strength proportioned to the weight he lays upon us! Thou hast been bowed down, my child, with every burden that sorrow of heart, and pain of body, could inflict upon a poor being; and still thou tellest me thou art beginning to get ease; — thy fever gone, thy sickness, the pain in thy side vanishing also. — May every evil so vanish that thwarts Eliza's happiness, or but wakens thy fears for a moment! — Fear nothing, my dear! — Hope everything; and the balm of this passion will shed its influence on thy health, and make thee enjoy a spring of youth and cheerfulness, more than thou hast hardly yet tasted.

And so thou hast fixed thy Bramin's portrait over thy writing-desk and wilt consult it in all doubts and difficulties. — Grateful and good girl! Yorick smiles contentedly over all thou dost; his picture does not do justice to his own complacency.

Thy sweet little plan and distribution of thy time — how worthy of thee! Indeed, Eliza, thou leavest me nothing to direct thee in; thou leavest me nothing to require, nothing to ask — but a continuation of that conduct which won

my esteem, and has made me thy friend for ever.

May the roses come quick back to thy cheeks, and the rubies to thy lips ! But trust my declaration, Eliza, that thy husband (if he is the good, feeling man I wish him) will press thee to him with more honest warmth and affection, and kiss thy pale, poor dejected face, with more transport, than he would be able to do, in the best bloom of all thy beauty ;—and so he ought, or I pity him. He must have strange feelings, if he knows not the value of such a creature as thou art !

I am glad Miss Light goes with you. She may relieve you from many anxious moments. I am glad your ship-mates are friendly beings. You could least dispense with what is contrary to your own nature, which is soft and gentle, Eliza. — It would civilise savages. — Though pity were it thou shouldst be tainted with the office ! How canst thou make apologies for thy last letter ? 'tis most delicious to me, for the very reason you excuse it. Write to me, my child, only such. Let them speak the easy carelessness of a heart that opens itself, any how, and every how, to a man you ought to esteem and trust. Such, Eliza, I write to thee,—and so I should ever live with thee,

most artlessly, most affectionately, if Providence permitted thy residence in the same section of the globe:—for I am, all that honour and affection can make me,

THY BRAMIN.

LETTER IV.

I WRITE this, Eliza, at Mr. James's, whilst he is dressing, and the dear girl, his wife, is writing, beside me, to thee. — I got your melancholy billet before we sat down to dinner. 'Tis melancholy indeed, my dear, to hear so piteous an account of thy sickness! Thou art encountered with evils enow, without that additional weight! I fear it will sink thy poor soul, and body with it, past recovery — Heaven supply thee with fortitude! We have talked of nothing but thee, Eliza, and of thy sweet virtues, and endearing conduct, all the afternoon. Mrs. James, and thy Bramer, have mixed their tears a hundred times, in speaking of thy hardships, thy goodness, thy graces. — The ——'s, by heavens, are worthless! I have heard enough to tremble at the articulation of the name. — How could you, Eliza, leave them (or suffer them to leave you rather) with impressions the least favourable? I have told thee enough to plant disgust against their treachery to thee, to the last hour of thy life!

Yet still thou toldest Mrs. James at last, that thou believest they affectionately love thee. — Her delicacy to my Eliza, and true regard to her ease of mind, have saved thee from hearing more glaring proofs of their baseness — For God's sake, write not to them ; nor foul thy fair character with such polluted hearts — *They* love thee ! What proof ? Is it their actions that say so ? or their zeal for those attachments, which do thee honour, and make thee happy ? or their tenderness for thy fame ? No — but they *weep* and say *tender things*. — Adieu to all such for ever. Mrs. James's honest heart revolts against the idea of ever returning them one visit. — I honour her, and I honour thee, for almost every act of thy life, but this blind partiality for an unworthy being.

Forgive my zeal, dear girl, and allow me a right which arises only out of that fund of affection I have, and shall preserve for thee to the hour of my death ! Reflect, Eliza, what are my motives for perpetually advising thee ? think whether I can have any, but what proceed from the cause I have mentioned ! I think you are a very deserving woman ; and that you want nothing but firmness and a better opinion of yourself to be the best female character I know. I wish I could

LETTER V.

TO whom should Eliza apply in her distress, but to her friend who loves her? why then, my dear, do you apologise for employing me? Yorick would be offended, and with reason, if you ever sent commissions to another, which he could execute. I have been with Zumps; and your piano fort  must be tuned from the brass middle string of your guitar, which is C. — I have got you a hammer too, and a pair of plyers to twist your wire with; and may every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to my hopes! I have brought you ten handsome brass screws, to hang your necessities upon: I purchased twelve; but stole a couple from you to put up in my own cabin, at Coxwould — I shall never hang, or take my hat off one of them, but I shall think of you. I have bought thee, moreover, a couple of iron screws, which are more to be depended on than brass, for the globes.

I have written, also, to Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal, that I had dispatched these in a

packet, directed to his care; which I desired he would seek after, the moment the Deal machine arrived. I have, moreover, given him directions, what sort of an arm-chair you would want, and have directed him to purchase the best that Deal could afford, and take it, with the parcel, in the first boat that went off. Would I could, Eliza, so supply all thy wants, and all thy wishes! It would be a state of happiness to me.—The journal is as it should be—all but its contents. Poor, dear, patient being! I do more than pity you; for I think I lose both firmness and philosophy, as I figure to myself your distresses. Do not think I spoke last night with too much asperity of ——; there was cause; and besides, a good heart ought not to love a bad one; and, indeed, cannot. But, adieu to the ungrateful subject.

I have been this morning to see Mrs. James—She loves thee tenderly, and unfeignedly.—She is alarmed for thee—She says thou look'st most ill and melancholy on going away. She pities thee. I shall visit her every Sunday, while I am in town. As this may be my last letter, I earnestly bid thee farewell.—May the God of Kindness be kind to thee, and approve himself thy protector, now thou art defenceless! And, for thy daily comfort, bear

in thy mind this truth, that whatever measure of sorrow and distress is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in a full measure of happiness, by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for thy eternal friend.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza ! whilst I live, count upon me as the most warm and disinterested of earthly friends.

YORICK.

LETTER VI.

To Eliza

My dearest Eliza : —

I BEGAN a new journal this morning ; you shall see it ; for if I live not till your return to England, I will leave it you as a legacy. 'Tis a sorrowful page : but I will write cheerful ones ; and could I write letters to thee, they should be cheerful ones too ; but few, I fear, will reach thee ! However, depend upon receiving something of the kind by every post ; till then, thou wavest thy hand, and bid'st me write no more.

Tell me how you are ; and what sort of fortitude Heaven inspires you with. How are you accommodated, my dear ? Is all right ? Scribble away, anything, and every thing to me. Depend upon seeing me at Deal, with the James's, should you be detained there by contrary winds. — Indeed, Eliza, I should with pleasure fly to you, could I be the means of rendering you any service, or doing



you kindness. Gracious and merciful God ! consider the anguish of a poor girl. — Strengthen and preserve her in all the shocks her frame must be exposed to. She is now without a protector, but thee ! Save her from all accidents of a dangerous element, and give her comfort at the last.

My prayer, Eliza, I hope, is heard ; for the sky seems to smile upon me, as I look up to it. I am just returned from our dear Mrs. James's, where I have been talking of thee for three hours. — She has got your picture, and likes it : but Marriot, and some other judges, agree that mine is the better, and expressive of a sweeter character. But what is that to the original ? yet I acknowledge that hers is a picture for the world, and mine is calculated only to please a very sincere friend, or sentimental philosopher. — In the one, you are dressed in smiles, and with all the advantages of silks, pearls, and erminie ; — in the other, simple as a vestal — appearing the good girl nature made you ; — which, to me, conveys an idea of more unaffected sweetness, than Mrs. Draper, habited for conquest, in a birth-day suit, with her countenance animated, and her dimples visible. — If I remember right, Eliza, you endeavored to collect every charm of your person into your face, with

more than *common* care, the day you sat for Mrs. James. — Your colour, too, brightened ; and your eyes shone with more than usual brilliancy. I then requested you to come simple and unadorned when you sat for me — knowing (as I see with *unprejudiced* eyes) that you could receive no addition from the silk-worm's aid, or jeweller's polish. Let me now tell you a truth, which, I believe, I have uttered before. — When I first saw you, I beheld you as an object of compassion, and as a very plain woman. The mode of your dress (tho' fashionable) disfigured you. — But nothing now could render you such, but the being solicitous to make yourself admired as a handsome one. — You are not handsome, Eliza, nor is yours a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders, — but are something more ; for I scruple not to tell you, I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance ; nor was there (nor ever will be) that man of sense, tenderness, and feeling, in your company three hours, that was not (or will not be) your admirer, or friend, in consequence of it ; that is, if you assume, or assumed no character foreign to your own, but appeared the artless being nature designed you for. A something in your eyes, and voice, you possess in a

degree more persuasive than any woman I ever saw, read, or heard of. But it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence, that men of nice sensibility alone can be touched with.

Were your husband in England, I would freely give him five hundred pounds (if money could purchase the acquisition), to let you only sit by me two hours in a day, while I wrote my "Sentimental Journey." I am sure the work would sell so much better for it, that I should be reimbursed the sum more than seven times told. — I would not give nine pence for the picture of you the Newnhams have got executed — It is the resemblance of a conceited, made-up coquette. Your eyes, and the shape of your face (the latter the most perfect oval I ever saw), which are perfections that must strike the most indifferent judge, because they are equal to any of God's works in a similar way, and finer than any I beheld in all my travels, are manifestly injured by the affected leer of the one, and strange appearance of the other; owing to the attitude of the head, which is a proof of the artist's, or your friend's false taste. The ——'s, who verify the character I once gave of teasing, or sticking like pitch, or birdlime, sent a card that they would wait on

Mrs. ——— on Friday. — She sent back, she was engaged. Then to meet at Ranelagh, to-night. — She answered, she did not go. — She says, if she allows the least footing, she never shall get rid of the acquaintance ; which she is resolved to drop at once. She knows them. She knows they are not her friends, nor yours ; and the first use they would make of being with her, would be to sacrifice you to her (if they could) a second time. Let her not, then ; let her not, my dear, be a greater friend to thee, than thou art to thyself. She begs I will reiterate my request to you, that you will not write to them. It will give her, and thy Bramin, inexpressible pain. Be assured, all this is not without a reason on her side. I have my reasons too ; the first of which is, that I should grieve to excess, if Eliza wanted that fortitude her Yorick has built so high upon. I said I never more would mention the name to thee ; and had I not received it, as a kind of charge, from a dear woman that loves you, I should not have broke my word. I will write again to-morrow to thee, thou best and most endearing of girls ! A peaceful night to thee. My spirit will be with thee through every watch of it. Adieu.

LETTER VII.

I THINK you could act no otherwise than you did with the young soldier. There was no shutting the door against him, either in politeness or humanity. Thou tellest me he seems susceptible of tender impressions: and that before Miss Light has sailed a fortnight, he will be in love with her. — Now I think it a thousand times more likely that he attaches himself to thee, Eliza; because thou art a thousand times more amiable. Five months with Eliza; and in the same room; and an amorous son of Mars besides! “*It can no be, masser.*” The sun, if he could avoid it, would not shine upon a dung-hill; but his rays are so pure, Eliza, and celestial, — I never heard that they were polluted by it. Just such will thine be, dearest child, in this, and every such situation you will be exposed to, till thou art fixed for life. But thy discretion, thy wisdom, thy honour, the spirit of thy Yorick, and thy own

spirit, which is equal to it, will be thy ablest counsellors.

Surely, by this time, something is doing for thy accommodation. But why may not clean washing and rubbing do instead of painting your cabin, as it is to be hung? Paint is so pernicious, both to your nerves and lungs, and will keep you so much longer too, out of your apartment; where, I hope, you will pass some of your happiest hours. —

I fear the best of your shipmates are only genteel by comparison with the contrasted crew, with which thou must behold them. So was — you know who! — from the same fallacy that was put upon the judgment, when — but I will not mortify you. If they are decent, and distant, it is enough; and as much as is to be expected. If any of them are more, I rejoice; — thou wilt want every aid; and 'tis thy due to have them: Be cautious only, my dear, of intimacies. Good hearts are open and fall naturally into them. Heaven inspire thine with fortitude, in this, and every deadly trial. Best of God's works, farewell! Love me, I beseech thee; and remember me forever!

I am, my Eliza, and will ever be, in the most comprehensive sense, thy friend

YORICK.

P. S. — Probably you will have an opportunity of writing to me by some Dutch or French ship, or from the Cape de Verd Islands — it will reach me somehow.

LETTER VIII.

My dear Eliza: —

O H! I grieve for your cabin. — And the fresh painting will be enough to destroy every nerve about thee. Nothing so pernicious as white lead. Take care of yourself, dear girl; and sleep not in it too soon. It will be enough to give you a stroke of an epilepsy. I hope you will have left the ship; and that my letters may meet, and greet you, as you get out of your post-chaise, at Deal. — When you have got them all, put them, my dear, into some order. — The first eight or nine are numbered: but I wrote the rest without that direction to thee; but thou wilt find them out, by the day or hour, which, I hope, I have generally prefixed to them. When they are got together, in chronological order, sew them together under a cover. I trust they will be a perpetual refuge to thee, from time to time; and that thou wilt (when weary of fools, and uninter-

esting discourse) retire, and converse an hour with them, and me.

I have not had power, or the heart, to aim at enlivening any one of them, with a single stroke of wit or humour; but they contain something better; and what you will feel more suited to your situation — a long detail of much advice, truth, and knowledge. I hope, too, you will perceive loose touches of an honest heart, in every one of them; which speaks more than the most studied periods; and will give thee more ground of trust and reliance upon Yorick, than all that laboured eloquence could supply. Lean then thy whole weight, Eliza, upon them and upon me. “May poverty, distress, anguish, and shame, be my portion, if ever I give thee reason to repent the knowledge of me!” — With this asseveration, made in the presence of a just God, I pray to him, that so it may speed with me, as I deal candidly, and honourably with thee! I would not mislead thee, Eliza; I would not injure thee, in the opinion of a single individual, for the richest crown the proudest monarch wears.

Remember, that while I have life and power, whatever is mine, you may style, and think, yours. — Though sorry should I be, if ever my friendship

was put to the test thus, for your own delicacy's sake. Money and counters are of equal use, in my opinion ; they both serve to set up with.

I hope you will answer me this letter ; but if thou art debarred by the elements, which hurry thee away, I will write one for thee ; and knowing it is such a one as thou would'st have written, I will regard it as my Eliza's.

Honour, and happiness, and health, and comforts of every kind, sail along with thee, thou most worthy of girls ! I will live for thee, and my Lydia — be rich for the dear children of my heart — gain wisdom, gain fame, and happiness, to share with them — with thee — and her, in my old age. — Once for all, adieu. — Preserve thy life ; steadily pursue the ends we proposed ; and let nothing rob thee of those powers Heaven has given for thy well-being.

What can I add more, in the agitation of mind I am in, and within five minutes of the last post-man's bell, but recommend thee to Heaven, and recommend myself to Heaven with thee, in the same fervent ejaculation, "that we may be happy, and meet again ; if not in this world, in the next." — Adieu, — I am thine, Eliza, affectionately, and everlastingly,

YORICK.

LETTER IX.

I WISH to God, Eliza, it was possible to postpone the voyage to India, for another year. — For I am firmly persuaded within my own heart, that thy husband could never limit thee with regard to time.

I fear that Mr. B—— has exaggerated matters. — I like not his countenance. It is absolute killing. Should evil befall thee, what will he not have to answer for? I know not the being that will be deserving of so much pity, or that I shall hate more. He will be an outcast, alien — In which case I will be a father to thy children, my good girl! — therefore take no thought about them. —

But, Eliza, if thou art so very ill, still put off all thoughts of returning to India this year. — Write to your husband — tell him the truth of your case. — If he is the generous, humane man you describe him to be, he cannot but applaud your conduct. — I am credibly informed, that his repugnance to your living in England arises only from the dread, which has entered his brain, that thou mayst run

him in debt, beyond thy appointments, and that he must discharge them — that such a creature should be sacrificed for the paltry consideration of a few hundreds, is too, too hard! Oh! my child! that I could, with propriety, indemnify him for every charge, even to the last mite, that thou hast been of to him! With joy would I give him my whole subsistence — nay, sequester my livings, and trust the treasures Heaven has furnished my head with, for a future subsistence.

You owe much, I allow, to your husband, — you owe something to appearances, and the opinion of the world; but, trust me, my dear, you owe much likewise to yourself. — Return, therefore, from Deal if you continue ill. — I will prescribe for you, gratis. — You are not the first woman, by many, I have done so for, with success. I will send for my wife and daughter, and they shall carry you in pursuit of health, to Montpellier, the wells of Bançois, the Spa, or whither thou wilt. Thou shalt direct them, and make parties of pleasure in what corner of the world fancy points out to thee. We shall fish upon the banks of Arno, and lose ourselves in the sweet labyrinths of its vallies. — And then thou should'st warble to us, as I have once or twice heard thee, — “I'm lost, I'm lost”

— but we should find thee again, my Eliza. — Of a similar nature to this, was your physician's prescription : "Use gentle exercise, the pure southern air of France, or milder Naples — with the society of friendly, gentle beings." Sensible man ! He certainly entered into your feelings. He knew the fallacy of medicine to a creature, whose *illness has arisen from the affliction of her mind*. Time only, my dear, I fear you may trust to, and have your reliance on ; may it give you the health so enthusiastic a votary to the charming goddess deserves !

I honour you, Eliza, for keeping secret some things, which, if explained, had been a panegyric on yourself. There is a dignity in venerable affliction which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity or redress. Well have you supported that character, my amiable, philosophic friend ! And, indeed, I begin to think you have as many virtues as my Uncle Toby's widow. — I don't mean to insinuate, hussey, that *my* opinion is no better founded than his was of Mrs. Wadman ; nor do I conceive it possible for any *Trim* to convince me it is equally fallacious. — I am sure, while I have my reason, it is not. — Talking of widows — pray, Eliza, if ever you are such, do not

think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob — because I design to marry you myself. — My wife cannot live long — she has sold all the provinces in France already — and I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself. — 'Tis true, I am ninety-five in constitution, and you but twenty-five — rather too great a disparity this ! — but what I want in youth, I will make up in wit and good humour. — Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharissa, as I will love and sing thee, my wife elect ! All those names, eminent as they were, shall give place to thine, Eliza. Tell me, in answer to this, that you approve and honour the proposal, and that you would (like the Spectator's mistress) have more joy in putting on an old man's slipper, than associating with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young. — Adieu, my Simplicitia !

Yours,

TRISTRAM.

LETTER X.

My dear Eliza : —

I HAVE been within the verge of the gates of death. — I was ill the last time I wrote to you, and apprehensive of what would be the consequence. — My fears were but too well founded ; for, in ten minutes after I dispatched my letter, this poor, fine-spun frame of Yorick's gave way, and I broke a vessel in my breast, and could not stop the loss of blood till four this morning. I have filled all thy India handkerchiefs with it. — It came, I think, from my heart ! I fell asleep through weakness. At six I awoke, with the bosom of my shirt steeped in tears. I dreamt I was sitting under the canopy of Indolence, and that thou camest into the room, with a shawl in thy hand, and told me, my spirit had flown to thee in the Downs, with tidings of my fate ; and that you were come to administer what consolation filial affection could bestow, and to

receive my parting breath and blessing. — With that you folded the shawl about my waist, and, kneeling, supplicated my attention. I awoke; but in what a frame! O my God! “But thou wilt number my tears and put them all into thy bottle.” — Dear girl! I see thee, — thou art forever present to my fancy, — embracing my feeble knees, and raising thy fine eyes to bid me be of comfort: and when I talk to Lydia, the words of Esau, as uttered by thee, perpetually ring in my ears — “Bless *me* even also, my father!” — Blessing attend thee, thou child of my heart!

My bleeding is quite stopped, and I feel the principle of life strong within me; so be not alarmed, Eliza — I know I shall do well. I have eat my breakfast with hunger; and I write to thee with a pleasure arising from that prophetic impression in my imagination, that “all will terminate to our heart’s content.” Comfort thyself eternally with this persuasion, “that the best of beings (as thou has sweetly expressed it) could not, by a combination of accidents, produce such a chain of events, merely to be the source of misery to the leading person engaged in them.” The observation was very applicable, very good, and very elegantly expressed. I wish my memory

did justice to the wording of it. — Who taught you the art of writing so sweetly, Eliza? — You have absolutely exalted it to a science! — When I am in want of ready cash, and ill health will not permit my genius to exert itself, I shall print your letters, as finished essays, “by an unfortunate Indian lady.” The style is new; and would almost be a sufficient recommendation for their selling well, without merit — but their sense, natural ease, and spirit, is not to be equalled, I believe, in this section of the globe; nor, I will answer for it, by any of your country-women in yours. — I have shewn your letter to Mrs. B——, and to half the literati in town. — You shall not be angry with me for it, because I meant to do you honour by it. — You cannot imagine how many admirers your epistolary productions have gained you, that never viewed your external merits. I only wonder where thou could'st acquire thy graces, thy goodness, thy accomplishments — so connected! so educated! Nature has surely studied to make thee her peculiar care — for thou art (and not in my eyes alone) the best and fairest of all her works. —

And so this is the last letter thou art to receive from me; because the *Earl of Chatham* (I read in

the papers) is got to the Downs ; and the wind, I find, is fair. If so — blessed woman ! take my last, last farewell ! — Cherish the remembrance of me ; think how I esteem, nay how affectionately I love thee, and what a price I set upon thee ! Adieu, adieu ! and with my adieu — let me give thee one straight rule of conduct, that thou hast heard from my lips in a thousand forms — but I concentre it in one word,

REVERENCE THYSELF.

Adieu, once more, Eliza ! May no anguish of heart plant a wrinkle upon thy face, till I behold it again ! May no doubt or misgivings disturb the serenity of thy mind, or awaken a painful thought about thy children — for they are Yorick's — and Yorick is thy friend for ever ! — Adieu, adieu, adieu !

P. S. — Remember, that Hope shortens all journies, by sweetening them — so sing my little stanza on the subject, with the devotion of an hymn, every morning when thou arisest, and thou wilt eat thy breakfast with more comfort for it.

Blessings, rest, and Hygeia go with thee ! May'st thou soon return, in peace and affluence,

to illume my night! I am, and shall be, the last to deplore thy loss, and will be the first to congratulate and hail thy return. —

FARE THEE WELL!

LETTERS FROM ELIZA TO YORICK

PREFACE



THE editor of the elegant and pathetic letters, from Yorick to Eliza, which have lately made their appearance in the world, says, "It is very much to be lamented, that Eliza's modesty was invincible to all the publisher's endeavours to obtain her answers to these letters.

"Her wit, penetration, and judgment ; her happiness in the epistolary style, so rapturously commended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish a rich entertainment for the public—the publisher could not help telling her, that he wished to God, she was really possessed of that vanity with which she was charged."

We should as sincerely lament Eliza's invincible modesty, as the editor of those letters, if we thought her sensibility, in that respect, would preclude the publication of such valuable compositions ; or if we imagined that her too scrupulous partiality for her particular friends, or in the most enlarged idea, the circle of her acquaintance,

ought in justice to impede the more general gratification of that *public* who by means of Yorick's letters, addressed to her, must of course become her admirers.

Nor ought Eliza to blame us—the delicate mind is frequently too severe to itself, and abridges its own merit of that fame, which is justly its due.

It is therefore incumbent on the friends of such a being, to break through such partial restrictions, and disobey those orders, which are the effects of a too timorous sensibility.

To disobey the self-denying rigor of such commands, to put a negative on such *bashful delicacy*, if I may be allowed the expression, is not only friendly, but even meritorious.

Real merit is always modest, it seeks solitude, would pine in secret, and sink unnoticed into oblivion.

Then surely that person is deserving of applause, or at least the thanks of the public, who draws it from its retirement, brings it to the light for public benefit, and places it in that point of view in which it ought to be conspicuously seen, and to shine for general imitation, and improvement.

Eliza's only objection to the publication of her letters, was, That she thought, "Although Mr. Sterne was partial to every thing of her's, she could not hope that the world would be so too."

But we will venture to affirm, that the world will not think this argument ought to be deemed sufficiently strong, to deprive them of such a valuable entertainment :

For the excellency of the epistles themselves, and the great deference which should be paid to the judgment of Mr. Sterne, are reasons more than sufficient to overturn the objection—And that once fallen, not a syllable can be justly advanced against this publication.

For a character of Eliza's letters, take Mr. Sterne's own words,

"Who taught you the art of writing so sweetly, Eliza? You absolutely have exalted it to a science.

"When I am in want of ready cash, and ill health will not permit my genius to exert itself, I shall print your letters as *finished essays*, by an *unfortunate Indian Lady*.

"The style is new, and would be almost a sufficient recommendation for their selling well, without merit :

“But their sense, natural ease, and spirit, are not to be equalled, I believe, in this section of the globe — nor I will answer for it, by any of your country-women in yours.”

Then what a crime would the possessor of such literary jewels, such a mental treasure, have been guilty of, in secluding it from the public, and, like the miser, locking that from the light, which, generously diffused, must be pleasing and useful to all.

Nothing but her native diffidence could have induced Eliza to have entertained the least idea of being^d so unkind, or of wishing her friends to be so selfish.

The curiosity of the public is raised by the publication of Yorick's letters — it ought to be gratified with the counterpart.

Nay, the lady's *fame* is concerned — it is necessary that her answers should be published — it is necessary to secure her reputation from the smallest shadow of censure, to evince before the face of the world, that her ideas were not less pure than her *Bramin's*.

The publication of the following letters will prove, that her expressions, tho' as animated, were no less scrupulously delicate than her Yorick's :

And likewise, that Platonism, so much ridiculed, so long thought a chimera, may exist, and even with the strongest sensibility, and warmest imagination.

Though Eliza was too diffident of her abilities, or nice in her ideas, to oblige the public with her letters to Yorick, yet she indulged many of her friends with copies of them — these again gratified many within the circle of their acquaintance with the same favour.

And thus they, in fact, became published ; unless the word signifies nothing, without being applied to what issues from the press only.

Thus we can only claim the merit of giving a more fair, convenient, and general edition of these elegant epistles, of which we received correct copies from a lady, not more dignified by her rank in life, than elevated by her understanding.

She gave us leave, if we thought proper, to use her name — but we declined it, thinking the letters sufficient to recommend themselves, and the best testimonies in their own favour.

Agreeable to Mr. Sterne's opinion, concerning Eliza's picture, "I requested (says he) that you would come simple and unadorned, when you sat for me, knowing, as I see with unprejudiced eyes,

that you could receive no addition from the silk-worm's aid, or jeweller's polish."

Thus we send Eliza's answers to Yorick's epistles into the world, without any recommendation, except their own intrinsic merit.

LETTERS FROM ELIZA TO YORICK

LETTER I.

My Bramin:—

I RECEIVED your Sentimental Journey — your imagination hath strange powers — it has awakened feelings in my heart, which I never knew I possessed — You make me vain — you make me in love with my own sensibility —

I bedewed your pathetic pages with tears — but they were tears of pleasure — my heart flowed through my eyes — every particle of tenderness in my whole frame was awakened. —

You take the surest method to improve the understanding — you convince the reason, by touching the soul. —

Sure the greatest compliments an author can

receive, are the sighs and tears of his readers — such sincere applause I amply gave you.

I beg, if you value me, that you will not flatter me — I am already too vain — and praise from a man of sense is dangerous.

I am in the utmost extent of the word, your
Cordial friend,

ELIZA.

LETTER II.

My Bramin:—

IT is with pleasure I inform you, that I am better — because I believe it will give you pleasure.

You tell me, “A friend has the same right as a physician.”

Then you may claim a double right — you are my friend, and physician, the most valuable of physicians, the physi — of my mind — come then, and bring the best of cordials — the cordial of sentiment — if thy conversation does not eradicate my disorder entirely — it will make me forget that I am ill — I shall feel no pain while you are present.

To wish to see you — you find is the interest, as well as desire of,

ELIZA.

Ten o'clock.

LETTER III.

Kind Yorick : —

I PERUSED your epistle, as I always do, with infinite pleasure — I am charmed with your account of that worthy nobleman, lord Bathurst — half a score of such as him would make old age amiable, redeem it from the character of moroseness, and render it the most desirable period of life.

The company his lordship has kept, and the friendships he has courted, sufficiently evidence his understanding — the manner of his introducing himself to you, at the Princess of Wales's Court, is enough to render his name respectable. —

I am obliged to his lordship for his good opinion of me, though I only shone like the moon with borrowed light — I cannot merit his encomiums — they are not due to myself ; but to my picture, as drawn by your brilliant imagination — your kind fancy was the sun, that gave me the light, which his lordship admired. —

You speak with seraphic truth, when you say, heaven gives us strength, proportioned to the weight it lays upon us — I have experienced it — for I found fortitude encrease with my illness — and as my health decayed, my dependance upon providence grew stronger. —

But I am better — thank heaven — you bid me hope everything — I do — hope is the balm of my soul, the kind soother of my anguish upon all occasions. —

The time approaches for my departure from England — I could wish you to be of the voyage — your conversation would shorten the tedious hours, and smooth the rugged bosom of the deep. I should find no terrors from the wavering elements, nor dread the dangers that surrounded my floating prison. —

Yet why should I wish to call you from your peaceful retirement, and domestic happiness — to trust the precarious elements, and seek an inclement sky — cruel thought Eliza, be content to bear thy Yorick's image in thy mind — and to treasure his instructions in thy heart — then thou wilt be properly sustained against the changes of torture, and dangers of the deep — then thou wilt be in the true sense of the expression, Yorick's ELIZA.

LETTER IV.

Kind Yorick: —

MY nerves are so weak, and my hand trembles so much, that I am afraid this scrawl will hardly be intelligible — I am extremely ill — indeed I am. —

I am obliged to exert myself to write this — present my kind respects to Mr. and Mrs. James — they are in my heart — they occupy a share of my cordial friendship, with my Bramin — may heaven preserve you all from experiencing the anguish my poor weak being is oppressed with. —

But think not Yorick that I complain — no —

Bountiful heaven, I thank thee for my afflictions — thou chastiseth me for my good — my poor vain heart had wandered from the thoughts of futurity — thou hast brought it back, and fixed its attention to the point where it ought to dwell — O keep me from the sin of repining, and give me strength to bear my afflictions with patience.

The family of the ———s have been with me —

they are truly amiable beings — I admire them greatly — they were extremely afflicted at my situation — I believe they felt for me — I am sure they regard me.

I am taken with a strange dizziness — I can say no more, adieu.

ELIZA.

LETTER V.

My Bramin :—

I FIND myself rather better to-day, my head is easier.

Accept my grateful thanks—make them acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. James—for the concern you have all had upon my account—my overflowing heart thanks ye—though my expressions are too weak to describe its feelings.

You have certainly been misinformed—I cannot think the —— family really merit the asperity with which you mention it—I cannot think ill of any being, without having had some occasion—I would not wish to live a slave to suspicion—that were to be miserable indeed—I am sensible, my Bramin would not conceive a hard opinion of any one, without some grounds—but he may have been deceived—his good heart may have been too open to the designing—and the —— misrepresented.

I must be exceedingly troublesome to you—I

want your assistance to execute a few commissions — excuse your Eliza — she cannot take that freedom — she cannot trust any person else.

I must intreat, that you would procure directions from Mr. Zumpe, in what manner I am to time my piano-forte — as I design it to be my harmonious companion, during the voyage.

I should be glad of about a dozen brass screws, to put up in my cabin, as conveniences to hang any thing upon.

I must have a proper journal book, to amuse myself, in minuting the particulars of my voyage.

An arm chair will likewise be useful to me.

Be kind enough to send any parcel for me to the address of Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal.

Though my health improves, I am not intirely at ease in my mind — but let me not give pain to the heart that feels too much for me.

My warmest affections to Mrs. James, — she is a dear creature — my respects to Mr. James — heaven bless them both — may the smiles of health and prosperity attend them.

God is my external friend, to him I look for protection, and while I breathe the air of mortality, my regards are on you — you are my adviser —

my monitor — my better genius — may our reciprocal affections continue pure and unchanged, till the dissolution of our frail beings — and if an intercourse is allowed between the spirits of the departed, may we enjoy that exalted — that refined, ethereal rapture — which the ardent seraphim know, while glowing with the emanations of their eternal Creator.

Mayest thou enjoy uninterrupted happiness, till
the angel of death wings thee to the regions of
bliss,

Adieu,

ELIZA.

LETTER VI.

Dear Bramin :—

THIS is my birth day—I am twenty five years of age—yet years, when past, seem but as so many hours—the moments of anguish are the only portions of time, which we can count—we feel their weight—they pass tediously by—we blame them for being tardy, tho' their speed continually takes from the space of our existance—But how fleeting are the moments in which we enjoy ourselves—they steal unperceived away, and all our pleasures are but short-lived dreams.

To the mind debased by vice, or clouded by doubts, how dreadful must the rapidity of time appear—when every minute tales from their much-loved existance, and leads them to be

“They know not what, they know not where—or what is worse, sinks them into nothing! Yet even that nothing appears terrible.” Such is the Sceptic's situation.

But to a soul fond of virtue, and secured by faith, time's swift wings give not a moment's anguish — The good wish to get rid of the incumbrance of clay, and the pains of mortality, they pant for a dissolution — time seems an enemy, who bars their speedy passage to that desirable felicity, which is only to be found in the regions of *bliss*.

The time I have past is nothing — it is now not mine — it is but a blank just stamped upon the memory.

Then let me prize what yet remains behind — let me learn foresight from past miscarriages, and rise to future virtues from former follies — may each revolving sun see me encrease in wisdom, and shine on ripening virtues, till I am fitted for that state which is all purity.

I bow before my afflictions with resignation, and thank the bountiful Author of nature, for sending me such useful monitors.

“Virtue rejoice, tho' heaven may frown awhile,
That frown is but an earnest of a smile ;
One day of tears presages years of joy,
Misfortunes only mend us, not destroy ;
Who feel the lashes of an adverse hour,
Find them but means to waft them into pow'r.”

May heaven bless my friends and enemies, and
give me peace of mind.

ELIZA.

The above letter was either never answered, or
the answer is lost.

LETTER VII.

LET me see your journal, at least send a copy of it, before I leave England — for far, far, far off be the time destined for its descending to me as a legacy — I shall be happy to peruse the sorrowful pages, they humanize the heart — I feel as you felt, when I read what you pen — and that is to feel with the most refined sensibility.

The sympathy of Sentiments bestows most inexpressible pleasures — such sorrows are sorrows to be coveted — when your page compels the tears from my eyes, and makes my heart throb — I will say, Here my Bramin wept — when he penn'd this passage, he wept — let me catch the pleasing contagion from each heart-felt sentence, and bedew the leaf with mutual streaming sorrows. —

Then will I turn to the chearful effusions of thy imagination — then will I revel in the bright sallies of thy wit, and calm the pathetic perturbations of my soul with thy inimitable humour — the big tear shall no longer tremble in my eye — the



tender anguish shall no longer heave my heart, but Yorick shall heal the sorrows the Bramin gave.

Such delectable amusements shall gild the tedious hours of my passage—and by Yorick's assistance, I shall fancy India but half the distance from England that it really is.

A kindly something you promise, by every post—then be assured I shall never wave my hand to stop the silent messenger, but with open arms receive it.

I am considerably better; and, thank heaven, am inspired with a fortitude, which I hope renders me worthy of the name of your disciple, of your friend.

My accommodations are tolerable—I cannot complain.

You say you shall see me at Deal with the James's, should I be detained there by contrary winds.

It has been my Petition, ever since to the supreme Being, to interest the elements in my behalf, that I may once more be indulged with the sight of my friends.

Thus while the captain, the crew, and the other passengers, are wishing for a favourable gale, I am importuning the heavens to deny their prayer, and

still to detain the vessel from her proceeding on her destined voyage.

I will not give my opinion concerning my resemblance on canvas, in the various styles, desired by my friends — I sat to oblige them — and would not on any account obtrude a dissenting stricture on their judgment.

But of this they may rest assured, that however the pictures may appear, the original is their's.

You say, when you first saw me, the mode of my dress (the fashionable) disfigured me.

I thought so myself — but wore it in compliance with the reigning taste — there is no pride so strong as that which is couched under an affected singularity.

Above all things, I would not wish to appear singular; that is, to be essentially absurd.

When I consider the distinguished friendship, with which you honour me, and reflect on that purity of affection which hath interested you in my most trivial concerns, and engaged you to devote your precious moments to my service — I cannot but glory in the compliment you pay me — in saying, “You are not handsome Eliza — nor is yours a face that will please a tenth part of your beholders.”

How happy am I not to owe your attachment to frail and fading beauty — but to sentiment alone.

The compliment is the strongest I ever in my life received, or wish to receive — it is not composed of common place flattery, nor paid to the simple features of a face — it is genuine applause — it is paid to the head — to the heart.

Yet I must not indulge any vanity, so far as to take it in its full force to myself — you rather draw me as you are prejudiced in my favour, and partial to my defects.

Yet will I often look on my picture as finished by your hand — I am persuaded it is what I ought to be — I will strive to come up to the colouring, in order to be as perfect as my nature will admit, or perhaps as Providence designed I should be, during this sublunary probation.

You mention my husband, that dear name has made the tide of my blood ebb tumultuously towards my heart — I turn my imagination towards India — sigh at the distance, and could almost unsay all that I have said in the former part of my letter.

But why should I revoke a single sentence, or wish to recall one sentiment — are not love and

friendship equally sacred — then learn, Eliza, to keep them both inviolate — to be worthy of such a husband — such a friend !

Yes, my Yorick, my husband could grant thee my company — if it could be of service to thee, whilst thou wast continuing thy sentimental journey — he would not deprive mankind of the improvement and pleasure thou art capable of giving them, by denying thee anything.

Say no more of the —s — I yield to your ardency — I give up every thing to your friendship — but quit the ingrateful subject — I will not write to them any more.

I shall impatiently expect your promised letter to-morrow.

Farewell, thou best of men, and sincerest friend — may heaven protect thy busy hours, and guard thy more secluded moments,

Adieu.

Eight o'clock, Morn.

LETTER VIII.

DEAL.

My Bramin:—

I HAVE received the box—you have taken a deal of trouble—my heart feels your kindness, and overflows with gratitude.

The ship I am to sail with is extremely neat—my cabin is convenient, but small—it is to be painted white—so I shall be obliged to land, in order to accommodate myself with a lodging.—I shall therefore expect, by every post, a continuance of the happiness which the effusions of my Bramin's fancy, and his preceptive sentiments always give me.

May heaven continue your health for the benefit of mankind, and to bless Eliza, since the effusions of a friendship, at once so delicate and rational, are the most salutary pleasures that can be felt by the sensibility of

ELIZA.

LETTER IX.

Kind Yorick:—

I AM very happy in the company of Miss L——t, she is an amiable and deserving young lady. — I am thoroughly satisfied that she is to sail with me.

There is to be of the voyage a military officer in the company's service. He yesterday intruded upon us to tea — I did not chuse to show any resentment — I rallied him, I told him, That boldness was certainly one of the principal requisites in a soldier.

He excused his incivility, without confessing it with a good grace.

He seems to be greatly taken with Miss L——t, — I dare engage that before we have sailed together the space of a fortnight, he will be in love with her.

The passengers I am to sail with are genteel people, and the officers behave with politeness and decorum.

My Yorick, my friend, divides my thoughts with the dear name that duty binds me to. — I often dream of you — remember me in your prayers — think of me waking, and let me like an illusion, steal through your fancy, while you sleep — I am yours — I am yours. Adieu, adieu.

ELIZA.

P. S. As my stay will be so short, at least in all probability, take every opportunity to write to me — adieu.

LETTER X.

My Yorick: —

I HOPE your fears, respecting my health, on account of my cabin being new painted, will prove groundless. — But as it will give my Yorick pleasure — I promise to take care of myself, particular care for his sake.

I have received your letters with heart-felt satisfaction — I received them, and have arranged them in chronological order, as you directed me — I found no difficulty in doing it, as the dates supplied any deficiency in the numbering.

I have put them under a cover — I will wear them next my heart — they shall, indeed, be my refuge — my kind silent monitors — I will peruse them with reverence, and obey them with respect — I have already treasured them in my memory, and experienced their efficacy.

While they are animated by knowledge and truth, thy honest heart appears in every line, and makes them glow with sensibility. — Mine rever-

berates to every sentence, and sympathizes with thine. — I return thy asservation with equal sincerity, and imprecate the same wrath, if my candour is not equal to thine.

You say, "If thou art debarred by the elements, which hurry thee away, I will write one (a letter) for thee, and knowing it is such an one, as thou wouldst have written — I will regard it as my Eliza's."

Do, my Yorick, when I have left the British shore — while I am combating the uncertainty of the boisterous elements — when I can no longer behold the white cliffs of thy native land, a land happy in thy birth, do write a letter for thy Eliza — stretch thy imagination to its utmost extent — fancy all that is tender, delicate, kind and pure — fancy the most seraphic affection, and believe the powers of thy imagination cannot exceed the dictates of my heart.

You ejaculate, "May we be happy, and meet again — if not in this world, in the next."

I extend the petition, "May we again meet, both here and hereafter."

ELIZA.

LETTER XI.

My Tristram:—

I WOULD oblige you in anything practicable —with anything within the line of my duty—but it is impossible to postpone my voyage—my orders are irrevocable—I must submit.

Mr. B—— did not exaggerate—but I am better—my children I therefore hope will not be orphans—but I thank thee, however, for the generosity of thy idea concerning them—it was exalted.

Indeed you have been misinformed concerning my husband's temper—he is not of that parsimonious disposition which you imagine.—If my expenses only were in question, I might continue to breathe the air of Europe—but more tender considerations urge him to press my return to India—I am not made a pecuniary sacrifice.

You allow I owe much to my husband—I follow but the dictates of my duty to discharge

that debt — the most sacred debt of which we know, and contracted in the most solemn manner.

I confess much is due to appearances, and the opinion of the world, yet not to wrong those appearances, and that opinion — not to take from what is due to myself, I would, if circumstances permitted, I would indeed turn from Deal to pay what is due to friendship.

You should prescribe for me — but not corporeally — let those do it whose business it is — let them have their perquisites, and fatten on the anguish of the valetudinary, while my Yorick assumed to himself the nobler task of prescribing to the mind, and eradicating the disorders of the soul — that is the task he can perform unrivalled, and for which heaven peculiarly designed him, and lent his talents to benefit an unfeeling — a depraved world.

May thy wife and daughters be better employed, than in administering to the anguish of thy Indian — may they be the means and partakers of thy domestic happiness — if they felt as I feel, they would think every toil a pleasure which gave thee comfort.

I cannot think, let physicians prescribe as they please, that change of place could relieve me — I

have tried it from one side of the globe to the other, without success — therefore Britain, and thy converse would certainly prove as efficacious, as the air of France and Naples — but my continuance here will be impossible.

Anguish of mind, as you justly intimate, perhaps, proceeding from too great a degree of sensibility, and being constitutionally ailing, will, in my case, baffle the prescriptions of art, and the experience of the most able physicians.

You say, "There is a dignity in venerable affliction, which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity or redress." — You speak from my heart, you have taken my sentiment — oh! may I never be compelled to seek redress from the world, or be so unfortunate as to merit indiscriminate pity.

If I am pitied — let it be by thee! — Yet I would not wish thee to pity anything.

Thy worthy heart is so tender, that I am sensible, shouldst thou have occasion to pity any one, that thy anguish would be more severe than that felt by the object of thy sensibility. — I would wish none but the flinty breasted to feel pity, and they are incapable of it.

But you grow merry — you ask, If ever I

should become a widow (heaven avert the hour!) whether I would marry again? Whether I would give my hand to some rich Nabob.

I think I never should give my hand again — as I am afraid my heart would not go with it. — But as to Nabobs, I despise them all — those who pretend to be Christians, I mean.

Have they not depopulated towns — laid waste villages, and desolated the plains of my native country? — Alas! they have fertilized the immense fields of India, with the blood of its inhabitants — they have sacrificed the lives of millions of my countrymen to their insatiable avarice — rivers of blood stream for vengeance against them — widows and orphans supplicate heaven for revenge.

Then can those spirits, who have waded through blood, to gain riches and power, be congenial with the soul of Eliza — could Yorick's hapless Indian bear the idea of an union with the murderers of her countrymen — no — shame and poverty be first my portion.

Riches, as the origin of luxury, and support of the gaudy trappings of pride, I condemn. — Gold is beneficial only in the hands of virtue, when the benevolent hand is extended to petitionary distress

—or when soft-eyed humanity seeks the cottage of affliction to

“ Shine its superfluity away ”—

to diffuse its blessings around, and bid the big tear of joy start from the eye of sorrow, and trickle down the woe-wan cheeks that begin to glow with the warmth of gratitude.

Yes, my Bramin, were I a widow — and thou a widower — I think I would give my hand to thee, preferable to any man existing — I would unite in the purity of heart, with my moniter — I would wed thy soul — my mind should adopt thy sentiments, and become congenial with thy own, and

“ My rough genius should at length refine,
Acquiring worth by imitating thine;
With thee I'd wander o'er the historic page,
And view the changing scenes of every age.
Or led by thee, the latest tracts explore
Of grave philosophy's extensive lore;
Or now reclin'd in the Sylvean bow'r,
With peaceful bards, enjoy the blissful hour.”

What matter disparity of years, respecting the mortal part; the soul, that ray of immortality, is always young; and I am certain, thy soul is more vigorous than what the generality of mankind can boast.

If any part of thee is old, it is the most insignificant. — The most valuable part is in all the vernal bloom of youthful prime.

A great poet says,

“For love no certain cause can be assign’d,
’Tis in no face, but in the lover’s mind.”

And may not I improve the idea — may not I say,

Why should one thought on years unequal waste,
Love’s not in age but in the lover’s taste;
If time toward the grave the body bring,
The soul shines forth in all the charms of spring.
Then let not frail corruption touch my heart,
I claim the soul, and love th’ immortal part.

But rhapsody aside — I hope Mrs. St—ne will out-live every idea of such an union — you say, She has sold all the provinces in France — I am glad of it — that she may the sooner purchase the fee simple of her health in her native air.

However, I honour thy slipper, and really prefer it to any association with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young — but I would not have Mrs. S—ne put it off too soon, for the sake of thy domestic happiness.

Without joking, I am seriously, and with sin-

cerity, in the utmost purity of affection, thine most
unalterably.

ELIZA.

P. S. My heart will beat with impatience for an
answer — be expeditious to ease its throbbings.

ELIZA.

LETTER XII.

My Bramin :—

THIS is the last letter thou wilt receive from me, while I am within the sight of the British shore—the land of freedom, and benevolence—the land which to its own glory be it spoken, gave my Yorick being.

I was terrified when I opened your last letter—your illness gave me the most genuine concern.

To break a blood vessel in thy breast—dreadful!—I was alarmed at the intelligence, and my blood thrilled in my veins, and curdled near my heart, when I read it.

O that my India handkerchiefs had been styptic, to give thee ease.—I was happy to read you had slept—but your dream—heaven render it prophetic—heaven keep me from the painful office of administering to your dissolution.

Thy tears I will treasure in my bottle, or at least, I will weep for thee—fill it with my tears,

and call them thine, as they are unfeignedly shed upon thy account.

Your imagination images to my feelings — you behold me in fancy in the very supplicating posture I should assume, were I near you — I should embrace! embrace! your knees, and look as if I bade you be of comfort — for I should only look — I should be unable to speak.

I join with thee in blessing the child of thy heart — thy Lydia.

And all praise be given to that bountiful Being, who has healed thy disorder, and stopped thy bleeding — who bade thee again “feel the principle of life strong within thee.”

All will certainly terminate to our hearts content — to think otherwise, is to entertain an ill opinion of an omnipotent Being — who is all wise — all merciful, and all good, whose benignity is equal to his power, and both are unbounded.

You may inquire, who taught me the art of writing — it was even my Yorick! — if I have any claim to merit — if my style is, as you are pleased to say, new — if the ease and spirit of my compositions are not to be equalled — the praise is entirely due to yourself.

I have taken the utmost pains to steal your sen-

timents — your manner — the delicacy of your expressions — the easy flow of your thoughts — the purity of your diction — in fine, I have in my writings aimed as much as possible to be Yorick.

But I cannot think my style equal to what your prejudice in my favour persuades you it is — I can perceive manifest faults in my compositions myself — I am not laying a trap for future plaudits, indeed I am not. — I beg that our correspondence may be from the heart, not of the heart — therefore no compliments.

I must, however, chide — I must, my Yorick — for shewing my letters — you tell me, You have shewn them to Mrs. B——, and to half the literati in town — indeed you have been to blame — so to expose your Eliza's weakness.

She bares her heart to thee — she lays it entirely open — but she would not have it shewn so naked to every one in the fullness of her sincerity — many things may slip from her unsuspecting pen, which she would not have known to any one, who could not, like thee, make great allowances in her favor — and pardon the weakness of her nature.

You say, "You cannot imagine how many admirers your epistolary productions have gained you."

False flattery — their encomiums are illusive — it is to you their compliments are paid — they find you are blind to my errors — they perceive you implicitly admire all that come from me — they pretend to coincide with your opinion, not to give you any uneasiness — they admire — they reverence you — they will not mortify you, by declaring that any being you are pleased to think perfect, is not so.

It is the respect due to the merits of my Yorick, that occasions the many compliments paid to the trifling deserts of his Eliza.

We are in the Downs — the wind is fair — we shall sail this evening — the captain has just informed me so — I therefore took this opportunity to pour the effusions of my heart to thee in haste.

Farewell, worthiest of men — feeling being, thou art all sentiment — farewell — I will — I will cherish the remembrance of thee — you tell me how you esteem me — how affectionately you love me — what a price you set upon me.

I esteem thee with equal ardor — I love thee with equal affection — I prize thee as ardently — let me be ever dear to thy heart — and an inhabitant of thy memory.

I will *reverence myself* for my Yorick's sake —
I will, my Yorick, who is my friend for ever.

I will sing thy little stanza to Hope in my
matin, and evening orisons — yet I cannot help
deploring our separation.

Farewell, my Bramin — my faithful monitor,
Farewell.

May prosperity attend thee, and peace crown
thy days with felicity.

Thine affectionately,

Thine everlastingly,

Adieu, adieu, adieu,

ELIZA.

P. S. I will, if possible, write by some ship
bound to England.

THE END.



