

LAURENCE STERNE

A SENTIMENTAL
JOURNEY THROUGH
FRANCE AND ITALY

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Through France and Italy

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Through France and Italy

CALAIS

When I had fished my dinner, and drank the King of France's health, to satisfy my mind that I bore him no spleen, but, on the contrary, high honour for the humanity of his temper,—I rose up an inch taller for the accommodation.

—No—said I—the Bourbon is by no means a cruel race: they may be misled, like other people; but there is a mildness in their blood. As I acknowledged this, I felt a suffusion of a finer kind upon my cheek—more warm and friendly to man, than what Burgundy (at least of two livres a bottle, which was such as I had been drinking) could have produced.

—Just God! said I, kicking my portmanteau aside, what is there in this world's goods which should sharpen our spirits, and make so many kind-hearted brethren of us fall out so cruelly as we do by the way?

When man is at peace with man, how much lighter than a feather is the heaviest of metals in his hand! he pulls out his purse, and holding it airily and uncompressed, looks round him,

as if he sought for an object to share it with.—In doing this, I felt every vessel in my frame dilate,—the arteries beat all cheerily together, and every power which sustained life, performed it with so little friction, that 'twould have confounded the most *physical précieuse* in France; with all her materialism, she could scarce have called me a machine.—

I'm confident, said I to myself, I should have overset her creed.

The accession of that idea carried nature, at that time, as high as she could go;—I was at peace with the world before, and this finish'd the treaty with myself.—

—Now, was I King of France, cried I—what a moment for an orphan to have begg'd his father's portmanteau of me!

THE MONK

CALAIS

I had scarce uttered the words, when a poor monk of the order of St. Francis came into the room to beg something for his convent. No man cares to have his virtues the sport of contingencies—or one man may be generous, as another is puissant;—*sed non quoad hanc*—or be it as it may,—for there is no regular reasoning upon the ebbs and flows of our humours; they may depend upon the same causes, for aught I know, which influence the tides themselves: 'twould oft be no discredit to us, to suppose it was so: I'm sure at least for myself, that in many a case I should be more highly satisfied, to have it said by the world, "I had had an affair with the moon, in which there was neither sin nor shame," than have it pass altogether as my own act and deed, wherein there was so much of both.

—But, be this as it may,—the moment I cast my eyes upon him, I was predetermined not to give him a single sous; and, accordingly, I put my purse into my pocket—buttoned it—set myself a little more upon my centre, and advanced up gravely to him; there was something, I fear, forbidding in my look: I have his figure this moment before my eyes, and think there was that

in it which deserved better.

The monk, as I judged by the break in his tonsure, a few scattered white hairs upon his temples, being all that remained of it, might be about seventy;—but from his eyes, and that sort of fire which was in them, which seemed more temper'd by courtesy than years, could be no more than sixty:—Truth might lie between—He was certainly sixty-five; and the general air of his countenance, notwithstanding something seem'd to have been planting-wrinkles in it before their time, agreed to the account.

It was one of those heads which Guido has often painted, —mild, pale—penetrating, free from all commonplace ideas of fat contented ignorance looking downwards upon the earth;—it look'd forwards; but look'd as if it look'd at something beyond this world.—How one of his order came by it, heaven above, who let it fall upon a monk's shoulders best knows: but it would have suited a Bramin, and had I met it upon the plains of Indostan, I had revered it.

The rest of his outline may be given in a few strokes; one might put it into the hands of any one to design, for 'twas neither elegant nor otherwise, but as character and expression made it so: it was a thin, spare form, something above the common size, if it lost not the distinction by a bend forward in the figure,—but it was the attitude of Intreaty; and, as it now stands presented to my imagination, it gained more than it lost by it.

When he had entered the room three paces, he stood still; and laying his left hand upon his breast (a slender white staff with

which he journey'd being in his right)—when I had got close up to him, he introduced himself with the little story of the wants of his convent, and the poverty of his order;—and did it with so simple a grace,—and such an air of deprecation was there in the whole cast of his look and figure,—I was bewitch'd not to have been struck with it.

—A better reason was, I had predetermined not to give him a single sous.

THE MONK

CALAIS

—'Tis very true, said I, replying to a cast upwards with his eyes, with which he had concluded his address;—'tis very true, —and heaven be their resource who have no other but the charity of the world, the stock of which, I fear, is no way sufficient for the many *great claims* which are hourly made upon it.

As I pronounced the words *great claims*, he gave a slight glance with his eye downwards upon the sleeve of his tunic:—I felt the full force of the appeal—I acknowledge it, said I:—a coarse habit, and that but once in three years with meagre diet,—are no great matters; and the true point of pity is, as they can be earn'd in the world with so little industry, that your order should wish to procure them by pressing upon a fund which is the property of the lame, the blind, the aged and the infirm;—the captive who lies down counting over and over again the days of his afflictions, languishes also for his share of it; and had you been of the *order of mercy*, instead of the order of St. Francis, poor as I am, continued I, pointing at my portmanteau, full cheerfully should it have been open'd to you, for the ransom of the unfortunate. —The monk made me a bow.—But of all others, resumed I,

the unfortunate of our own country, surely, have the first rights; and I have left thousands in distress upon our own shore.—The monk gave a cordial wave with his head,—as much as to say, No doubt there is misery enough in every corner of the world, as well as within our convent—But we distinguish, said I, laying my hand upon the sleeve of his tunic, in return for his appeal—we distinguish, my good father! betwixt those who wish only to eat the bread of their own labour—and those who eat the bread of other people's, and have no other plan in life, but to get through it in sloth and ignorance, *for the love of God*.

The poor Franciscan made no reply: a hectic of a moment pass'd across his cheek, but could not tarry—Nature seemed to have done with her resentments in him;—he showed none:—but letting his staff fall within his arms, he pressed both his hands with resignation upon his breast, and retired.

THE MONK

CALAIS

My heart smote me the moment he shut the door—Psha! said I, with an air of carelessness, three several times—but it would not do: every ungracious syllable I had utter'd crowded back into my imagination: I reflected, I had no right over the poor Franciscan, but to deny him; and that the punishment of that was enough to the disappointed, without the addition of unkind language.—I consider'd his gray hairs—his courteous figure seem'd to re-enter and gently ask me what injury he had done me?—and why I could use him thus?—I would have given twenty livres for an advocate.—I have behaved very ill, said I within myself; but I have only just set out upon my travels; and shall learn better manners as I get along.

THE DESOBLIGEANT

CALAIS

When a man is discontented with himself, it has one advantage however, that it puts him into an excellent frame of mind for making a bargain. Now there being no travelling through France and Italy without a chaise,—and nature generally prompting us to the thing we are fittest for, I walk'd out into the coach-yard to buy or hire something of that kind to my purpose: an old *désobligeant*¹ in the furthest corner of the court, hit my fancy at first sight, so I instantly got into it, and finding it in tolerable harmony with my feelings, I ordered the waiter to call Monsieur Dessein, the master of the hotel:—but Monsieur Dessein being gone to vespers, and not caring to face the Franciscan, whom I saw on the opposite side of the court, in conference with a lady just arrived at the inn,—I drew the taffeta curtain betwixt us, and being determined to write my journey, I took out my pen and ink and wrote the preface to it in the *désobligeant*.

¹ A chaise, so called, in France, from its holding but one person.

PREFACE

IN THE DESOBLIGEANT

It must have been observed by many a peripatetic philosopher, That nature has set up by her own unquestionable authority certain boundaries and fences to circumscribe the discontent of man; she has effected her purpose in the quietest and easiest manner by laying him under almost insuperable obligations to work out his ease, and to sustain his sufferings at home. It is there only that she has provided him with the most suitable objects to partake of his happiness, and bear a part of that burden which in all countries and ages has ever been too heavy for one pair of shoulders. 'Tis true, we are endued with an imperfect power of spreading our happiness sometimes beyond *her* limits, but 'tis so ordered, that, from the want of languages, connections, and dependencies, and from the difference in education, customs, and habits, we lie under so many impediments in communicating our sensations out of our own sphere, as often amount to a total impossibility.

It will always follow from hence, that the balance of sentimental commerce is always against the expatriated adventurer: he must buy what he has little occasion for, at their

own price;—his conversation will seldom be taken in exchange for theirs without a large discount,—and this, by the by, eternally driving him into the hands of more equitable brokers, for such conversation as he can find, it requires no great spirit of divination to guess at his party—

This brings me to my point; and naturally leads me (if the see-saw of this *désobligeant* will but let me get on) into the efficient as well as final causes of travelling—

Your idle people that leave their native country, and go abroad for some reason or reasons which may be derived from one of these general causes:—

Infirmity of body,
Imbecility of mind, or
Inevitable necessity.

The first two include all those who travel by land or by water, labouring with pride, curiosity, vanity, or spleen, subdivided and combined *ad infinitum*.

The third class includes the whole army of peregrine martyrs; more especially those travellers who set out upon their travels with the benefit of the clergy, either as delinquents travelling under the direction of governors recommended by the magistrate;—or young gentlemen transported by the cruelty of parents and guardians, and travelling under the direction of governors recommended by Oxford, Aberdeen, and Glasgow.

There is a fourth class, but their number is so small that they would not deserve a distinction, were it not necessary in a work of

this nature to observe the greatest precision and nicety, to avoid a confusion of character. And these men I speak of, are such as cross the seas and sojourn in a land of strangers, with a view of saving money for various reasons and upon various pretences: but as they might also save themselves and others a great deal of unnecessary trouble by saving their money at home,—and as their reasons for travelling are the least complex of any other species of emigrants, I shall distinguish these gentlemen by the name of

Simple Travellers

Thus the whole circle of travellers may be reduced to the following *heads*:—

Idle Travellers,
Inquisitive Travellers,
Lying Travellers,
Proud Travellers,
Vain Travellers,
Splenetic Travellers.

Then follow:

The Travellers of Necessity,
The Delinquent and Felonious Traveller,
The Unfortunate and Innocent Traveller,
The Simple Traveller,

And last of all (if you please) The Sentimental Traveller,

(meaning thereby myself) who have travell'd, and of which I am now sitting down to give an account,—as much out of *Necessity*, and the *besoin de Voyager*, as any one in the class.

I am well aware, at the same time, as both my travels and observations will be altogether of a different cast from any of my forerunners, that I might have insisted upon a whole nitch entirely to myself;—but I should break in upon the confines of the *Vain Traveller*, in wishing to draw attention towards me, till I have some better grounds for it than the mere *Novelty of my Vehicle*.

It is sufficient for my reader, if he has been a traveller himself, that with study and reflection hereupon he may be able to determine his own place and rank in the catalogue;—it will be one step towards knowing himself; as it is great odds but he retains some tincture and resemblance, of what he imbibed or carried out, to the present hour.

The man who first transplanted the grape of Burgundy to the Cape of Good Hope (observe he was a Dutchman) never dreamt of drinking the same wine at the Cape, that the same grape produced upon the French mountains,—he was too phlegmatic for that—but undoubtedly he expected to drink some sort of vinous liquor; but whether good or bad, or indifferent,—he knew enough of this world to know, that it did not depend upon his choice, but that what is generally called *choice*, was to decide his success: however, he hoped for the best; and in these hopes, by an intemperate confidence in the fortitude of his head, and the

depth of his discretion, *Mynheer* might possibly oversee both in his new vineyard; and by discovering his nakedness, become a laughing stock to his people.

Even so it fares with the Poor Traveller, sailing and posting through the politer kingdoms of the globe, in pursuit of knowledge and improvements.

Knowledge and improvements are to be got by sailing and posting for that purpose; but whether useful knowledge and real improvements is all a lottery;—and even where the adventurer is successful, the acquired stock must be used with caution and sobriety, to turn to any profit:—but, as the chances run prodigiously the other way, both as to the acquisition and application, I am of opinion, That a man would act as wisely, if he could prevail upon himself to live contented without foreign knowledge or foreign improvements, especially if he lives in a country that has no absolute want of either;—and indeed, much grief of heart has it oft and many a time cost me, when I have observed how many a foul step the Inquisitive Traveller has measured to see sights and look into discoveries; all which, as Sancho Panza said to Don Quixote, they might have seen dry-shod at home. It is an age so full of light, that there is scarce a country or corner in Europe whose beams are not crossed and interchanged with others.—Knowledge in most of its branches, and in most affairs, is like music in an Italian street, whereof those may partake who pay nothing.—But there is no nation under heaven—and God is my record (before whose tribunal I

must one day come and give an account of this work)—that I do not speak it vauntingly,—but there is no nation under heaven abounding with more variety of learning,—where the sciences may be more fitly woo'd, or more surely won, than here,—where art is encouraged, and will so soon rise high,—where Nature (take her altogether) has so little to answer for,—and, to close all, where there is more wit and variety of character to feed the mind with:—Where then, my dear countrymen, are you going?—

We are only looking at this chaise, said they.—Your most obedient servant, said I, skipping out of it, and pulling off my hat.—We were wondering, said one of them, who, I found was an *Inquisitive Traveller*,—what could occasion its motion.—'Twas the agitation, said I, coolly, of writing a preface.—I never heard, said the other, who was a *Simple Traveller*, of a preface wrote in a *désobligeant*.—It would have been better, said I, in a *vis-a-vis*.

—As an *Englishman does not travel to see Englishmen*, I retired to my room.

CALAIS

I perceived that something darken'd the passage more than myself, as I stepp'd along it to my room; it was effectually Mons. Dessein, the master of the hôtel, 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. I had wrote myself pretty well out of conceit with the *désobligeant*, and Mons. Dessein speaking of it, with a shrug, as if it would no way suit me, it immediately struck my fancy that it belong'd to some *Innocent Traveller*, who, on his return home, had left it to Mons. Dessein's honour to make the most of. Four months had elapsed since it had finished its career of Europe in the corner of Mons. Dessein's coach-yard; and having sallied out from thence but a vampt-up business at the first, though it had been twice taken to pieces on Mount Sennis, it had not profited much by its adventures,—but by none so little as the standing so many months unpitied in the corner of Mons. Dessein's coach-yard. Much indeed was not to be said for it,—but something might;—and when a few words will rescue misery out of her distress, I hate the man who can be a churl of them.

—Now was I the master of this hôtel, said I, laying the point of my fore-finger on Mons. Dessein's breast, I would inevitably make a point of getting rid of this unfortunate *désobligeant*;—it stands swinging reproaches at you every time you pass by it.

Mon Dieu! said Mons. Dessein,—I have no interest—Except the interest, said I, which men of a certain turn of mind take, Mons. Dessein, in their own sensations,—I'm persuaded, to a man who feels for others as well as for himself, every rainy night, disguise it as you will, must cast a damp upon your spirits:—You suffer, Mons. Dessein, as much as the machine—

I have always observed, when there is as much *sour* as *sweet* in a compliment, that an Englishman is eternally at a loss within himself, whether to take it, or let it alone: a Frenchman never is: Mons. Dessein made me a bow.

C'est bien vrai, said he.—But in this case I should only exchange one disquietude for another, and with loss: figure to yourself, my dear Sir, that in giving you a chaise which would fall to pieces before you had got half-way to Paris,—figure to yourself how much I should suffer, in giving an ill impression of myself to a man of honour, and lying at the mercy, as I must do, *d'un homme d'esprit*.

The dose was made up exactly after my own prescription; so I could not help tasting it,—and, returning Mons. Dessein his bow, without more casuistry we walk'd together towards his Remise, to take a view of his magazine of chaises.

IN THE STREET

CALAIS

It must needs be a hostile kind of a world, when the buyer (if it be but of a sorry post-chaise) cannot go forth with the seller thereof into the street to terminate the difference betwixt them, but he instantly falls into the same frame of mind, and views his conventionist with the same sort of eye, as if he was going along with him to Hyde-park corner to fight a duel. For my own part, being but a poor swordsman, and no way a match for Monsieur Dessein, I felt the rotation of all the movements within me, to which the situation is incident;—I looked at Monsieur Dessein through and through—eyed him as he walk'd along in profile,—then, *en face*;—thought like a Jew,—then a Turk,—disliked his wig,—cursed him by my gods,—wished him at the devil.—

—And is all this to be lighted up in the heart for a beggarly account of three or four louis d'ors, which is the most I can be overreached in?—Base passion! said I, turning myself about, as a man naturally does upon a sudden reverse of sentiment,—base, ungentle passion! thy hand is against every man, and every man's hand against thee.—Heaven forbid! said she, raising her hand up to her forehead, for I had turned full in front upon the lady whom

I had seen in conference with the monk:—she had followed us unperceived.—Heaven forbid, indeed! said I, offering her my own;—she had a black pair of silk gloves, open only at the thumb and two fore-fingers, so accepted it without reserve,—and I led her up to the door of the Remise.

Monsieur Dessein had *diabled* the key above fifty times before he had found out he had come with a wrong one in his hand: we were as impatient as himself to have it opened; and so attentive to the obstacle that I continued holding her hand almost without knowing it: so that Monsieur Dessein left us together with her hand in mine, and with our faces turned towards the door of the Remise, and said he would be back in five minutes.

Now a colloquy of five minutes, in such a situation, is worth one of as many ages, with your faces turned towards the street: in the latter case, 'tis drawn from the objects and occurrences without;—when your eyes are fixed upon a dead blank,—you draw purely from yourselves. A silence of a single moment upon Mons. Dessein's leaving us, had been fatal to the situation—she had infallibly turned about;—so I begun the conversation instantly.—

—But what were the temptations (as I write not to apologize for the weaknesses of my heart in this tour,—but to give an account of them)—shall be described with the same simplicity with which I felt them.

THE REMISE DOOR

CALAIS

When I told the reader that I did not care to get out of the *désobligeant*, because I saw the monk in close conference with a lady just arrived at the inn—I told him the truth,—but I did not tell him the whole truth; for I was as full as much restrained by the appearance and figure of the lady he was talking to.

Suspicion crossed my brain and said, he was telling her what had passed: something jarred upon it within me,—I wished him at his convent.

When the heart flies out before the understanding, it saves the judgment a world of pains.—I was certain she was of a better order of beings;—however, I thought no more of her, but went on and wrote my preface.

The impression returned upon my encounter with her in the street; a guarded frankness with which she gave me her hand, showed, I thought, her good education and her good sense; and as I led her on, I felt a pleasurable ductility about her, which spread a calmness over all my spirits—

—Good God! how a man might lead such a creature as this round the world with him!—

I had not yet seen her face—'twas not material: for the drawing was instantly set about, and long before we had got to the door of the Remise, *Fancy* had finished the whole head, and pleased herself as much with its fitting her goddess, as if she had dived into the Tiber for it;—but thou art a seduced, and a seducing slut, and albeit thou cheatest us seven times a day with thy pictures and images, yet with so many charms dost thou do it, and thou deckest out thy pictures in the shapes of so many angels of light, 'tis a shame to break with thee.

When we had got to the door of the Remise, she withdrew her hand from across her forehead, and let me see the original:—it was a face of about six-and-twenty,—of a clear transparent brown, simply set off without rouge or powder;—it was not critically handsome, but there was that in it, which, in the frame of mind I was in, attached me much more to it,—it was interesting: I fancied it wore the characters of a widow'd look, and in that state of its declension, which had passed the two first paroxysms of sorrow, and was quietly beginning to reconcile itself to its loss;—but a thousand other distresses might have traced the same lines; I wish'd to know what they had been—and was ready to inquire, (had the same *bon ton* of conversation permitted, as in the days of Esdras)—“*What ailleh thee? and why art thou disquieted? and why is thy understanding troubled?*”—In a word, I felt benevolence for her; and resolv'd some way or other to throw in my mite of courtesy,—if not of service.

Such were my temptations;—and in this disposition to give

way to them, was I left alone with the lady with her hand in mine, and with our faces both turned closer to the door of the Remise than what was absolutely necessary.

THE REMISE DOOR

CALAIS

This certainly, fair lady, said I, raising her hand up little lightly as I began, must be one of Fortune's whimsical doings; to take two utter strangers by their hands,—of different sexes, and perhaps from different corners of the globe, and in one moment place them together in such a cordial situation as Friendship herself could scarce have achieved for them, had she projected it for a month.

—And your reflection upon it shows how much, Monsieur, she has embarrassed you by the adventure—

When the situation is what we would wish, nothing is so ill-timed as to hint at the circumstances which make it so: you thank Fortune, continued she—you had reason—the heart knew it, and was satisfied; and who but an English philosopher would have sent notice of it to the brain to reverse the judgment?

In saying this, she disengaged her hand with a look which I thought a sufficient commentary upon the text.

It is a miserable picture which I am going to give of the weakness of my heart, by owning, that it suffered a pain, which worthier occasions could not have inflicted.—I was mortified

with the loss of her hand, and the manner in which I had lost it carried neither oil nor wine to the wound: I never felt the pain of a sheepish inferiority so miserably in my life.

The triumphs of a true feminine heart are short upon these discomfitures. In a very few seconds she laid her hand upon the cuff of my coat, in order to finish her reply; so, some way or other, God knows how, I regained my situation.

—She had nothing to add.

I forthwith began to model a different conversation for the lady, thinking from the spirit as well as moral of this, that I had been mistaken in her character; but upon turning her face towards me, the spirit which had animated the reply was fled,—the muscles relaxed, and I beheld the same unprotected look of distress which first won me to her interest:—melancholy! to see such sprightliness the prey of sorrow,—I pitied her from my soul; and though it may seem ridiculous enough to a torpid heart,—I could have taken her into my arms, and cherished her, though it was in the open street, without brushing.

The pulsations of the arteries along my fingers pressing across hers, told her what was passing within me: she looked down—a silence of some moments followed.

I fear in this interval, I must have made some slight efforts towards a closer compression of her hand, from a subtle sensation I felt in the palm of my own,—not as if she was going to withdraw hers—but as if she thought about it;—and I had infallibly lost it a second time, had not instinct more than reason directed me to

the last resource in these dangers,—to hold it loosely, and in a manner as if I was every moment going to release it, of myself; so she let it continue, till Monsieur Dessein returned with the key; and in the mean time I set myself to consider how I should undo the ill impressions which the poor monk's story, in case he had told it her, must have planted in her breast against me.

THE SNUFF BOX

CALAIS

The good old monk was within six paces of us, as the idea of him crossed my mind; and was advancing towards us a little out of the line, as if uncertain whether he should break in upon us or no.—He stopp'd, however, as soon as he came up to us, with a world of frankness: and having a horn snuff box in his hand, he presented it open to me.—You shall taste mine—said I, pulling out my box (which was a small tortoise one) and putting it into his hand.—'Tis most excellent, said the monk. Then do me the favour, I replied, to accept of the box and all, and when you take a pinch out of it, sometimes recollect it was the peace offering of a man who once used you unkindly, but not from his heart.

The poor monk blush'd as red as scarlet. *Mon Dieu!* said he, pressing his hands together—you never used me unkindly.—I should think, said the lady, he is not likely. I blush'd in my turn; but from what movements, I leave to the few who feel, to analyze.—Excuse me, Madame, replied I,—I treated him most unkindly; and from no provocations.—'Tis impossible, said the lady.—My God! cried the monk, with a warmth of asseveration which seem'd not to belong to him—the fault was in me, and in the

indiscretion of my zeal.—The lady opposed it, and I joined with her in maintaining it was impossible, that a spirit so regulated as his, could give offence to any.

I knew not that contention could be rendered so sweet and pleasurable a thing to the nerves as I then felt it.—We remained silent, without any sensation of that foolish pain which takes place, when, in such a circle, you look for ten minutes in one another's faces without saying a word. Whilst this lasted, the monk rubbed his horn box upon the sleeve of his tunic; and as soon as it had acquired a little air of brightness by the friction—he made me a low bow, and said, 'twas too late to say whether it was the weakness or goodness of our tempers which had involved us in this contest—but be it as it would,—he begg'd we might exchange boxes.—In saying this, he presented his to me with one hand, as he took mine from me in the other, and having kissed it,—with a stream of good nature in his eyes, he put it into his bosom,—and took his leave.

I guard this box, as I would the instrumental parts of my religion, to help my mind on to something better: in truth, I seldom go abroad without it; and oft and many a time have I called up by it the courteous spirit of its owner to regulate my own, in the justlings of the world: they had found full employment for his, as I learnt from his story, till about the forty-fifth year of his age, when upon some military services ill requited, and meeting at the same time with a disappointment in the tenderest of passions, he abandoned the sword and the sex

together, and took sanctuary not so much in his convent as in himself.

I feel a damp upon my spirits, as I am going to add, that in my last return through Calais, upon enquiring after Father Lorenzo, I heard he had been dead near three months, and was buried, not in his convent, but, according to his desire, in a little cemetery belonging to it, about two leagues off: I had a strong desire to see where they had laid him,—when, upon pulling out his little horn box, as I sat by his grave, and plucking up a nettle or two at the head of it, which had no business to grow there, they all struck together so forcibly upon my affections, that I burst into a flood of tears:—but I am as weak as a woman; and I beg the world not to smile, but to pity me.

THE REMISE DOOR

CALAIS

I had never quitted the lady's hand all this time, and had held it so long, that it would have been indecent to have let it go, without first pressing it to my lips: the blood and spirits, which had suffered a revulsion from her, crowded back to her as I did it.

Now the two travellers, who had spoke to me in the coach-yard, happening at that crisis to be passing by, and observing our communications, naturally took it into their heads that we must be *man and wife* at least; so, stopping as soon as they came up to the door of the Remise, the one of them who was the Inquisitive Traveller, ask'd us, if we set out for Paris the next morning?—I could only answer for myself, I said; and the lady added, she was for Amiens.—We dined there yesterday, said the Simple Traveller.—You go directly through the town, added the other, in your road to Paris. I was going to return a thousand thanks for the intelligence, *that Amiens was in the road to Paris*, but, upon pulling out my poor monk's little horn box to take a pinch of snuff, I made them a quiet bow, and wishing them a good passage to Dover.—They left us alone.—

—Now where would be the harm, said I to myself, if I were to

beg of this distressed lady to accept of half of my chaise?—and what mighty mischief could ensue?

Every dirty passion, and bad propensity in my nature took the alarm, as I stated the proposition.—It will oblige you to have a third horse, said Avarice, which will put twenty livres out of your pocket;—You know not what she is, said Caution;—or what scrapes the affair may draw you into, whisper'd Cowardice.—

Depend upon it, Yorick! said Discretion, 'twill be said you went off with a mistress, and came by assignation to Calais for that purpose;—

—You can never after, cried Hypocrisy aloud, show your face in the world;—or rise, quoth Meanness, in the church;—or be any thing in it, said Pride, but a lousy prebendary.

But 'tis a civil thing, said I;—and as I generally act from the first impulse, and therefore seldom listen to these cabals, which serve no purpose, that I know of, but to encompass the heart with adamant—I turned instantly about to the lady.—

—But she had glided off unperceived, as the cause was pleading, and had made ten or a dozen paces down the street, by the time I had made the determination; so I set off after her with a long stride, to make her the proposal, with the best address I was master of: but observing she walk'd with her cheek half resting upon the palm of her hand,—with the slow short-measur'd step of thoughtfulness,—and with her eyes, as she went step by step, fixed upon the ground, it struck me she was trying the same cause herself.—God help her! said I, she has some mother-in-law, or

tartufish aunt, or nonsensical old woman, to consult upon the occasion, as well as myself: so not caring to interrupt the process, and deeming it more gallant to take her at discretion than by surprise, I faced about and took a short turn or two before the door of the Remise, whilst she walk'd musing on one side.

IN THE STREET

CALAIS

Having, on the first sight of the lady, settled the affair in my fancy “that she was of the better order of beings;”—and then laid it down as a second axiom, as indisputable as the first, that she was a widow, and wore a character of distress,—I went no further; I got ground enough for the situation which pleased me;—and had she remained close beside my elbow till midnight, I should have held true to my system, and considered her only under that general idea.

She had scarce got twenty paces distant from me, ere something within me called out for a more particular enquiry;—it brought on the idea of a further separation:—I might possibly never see her more:—The heart is for saving what it can; and I wanted the traces through which my wishes might find their way to her, in case I should never rejoin her myself; in a word, I wished to know her name,—her family’s—her condition; and as I knew the place to which she was going, I wanted to know from whence she came: but there was no coming at all this intelligence; a hundred little delicacies stood in the way. I form’d a score different plans.—There was no such thing as a man’s asking her

directly;—the thing was impossible.

A little French *débonnaire* captain, who came dancing down the street, showed me it was the easiest thing in the world: for, popping in betwixt us, just as the lady was returning back to the door of the Remise, he introduced himself to my acquaintance, and before he had well got announced, begg'd I would do him the honour to present him to the lady.—I had not been presented myself;—so turning about to her, he did it just as well, by asking her if she had come from Paris? No: she was going that route, she said.—*Vous n'êtes pas de Londres?*—She was not, she replied.—Then Madame must have come through Flanders.—*Apparemment vous êtes Flammande?* said the French captain.—The lady answered, she was.—*Peut être de Lisle?* added he.—She said, she was not of Lisle.—Nor Arras?—nor Cambray?—nor Ghent?—nor Brussels?—She answered, she was of Brussels.

He had had the honour, he said, to be at the bombardment of it last war;—that it was finely situated, *pour cela*,—and full of noblesse when the Imperialists were driven out by the French (the lady made a slight courtesy)—so giving her an account of the affair, and of the share he had had in it,—he begg'd the honour to know her name,—so made his bow.

—*Et Madame a son Mari?*—said he, looking back when he had made two steps,—and, without staying for an answer—danced down the street.

Had I served seven years apprenticeship to good breeding, I could not have done as much.

THE REMISE

CALAIS

As the little French captain left us, Mons. Dessein came up with the key of the Remise in his hand, and forthwith let us into his magazine of chaises.

The first object which caught my eye, as Mons. Dessein open'd the door of the Remise, was another old tatter'd *désobligeant*; and notwithstanding it was the exact picture of that which had hit my fancy so much in the coach-yard but an hour before,—the very sight of it stirr'd up a disagreeable sensation within me now; and I thought 'twas a churlish beast into whose heart the idea could first enter, to construct such a machine; nor had I much more charity for the man who could think of using it.

I observed the lady was as little taken with it as myself: so Mons. Dessein led us on to a couple of chaises which stood abreast, telling us, as he recommended them, that they had been purchased by my lord A. and B. to go the grand tour, but had gone no further than Paris, so were in all respects as good as new.—They were too good;—so I pass'd on to a third, which stood behind, and forthwith begun to chaffer for the price.—But 'twill scarce hold two, said I, opening the door and getting in.—Have

the goodness, Madame, said Mons. Dessein, offering his arm, to step in.—The lady hesitated half a second, and stepped in; and the waiter that moment beckoning to speak to Mon. Dessein, he shut the door of the chaise upon us, and left us.

THE REMISE

CALAIS

C'est bien comique, 'tis very droll, said the lady, smiling, from the reflection that this was the second time we had been left together by a parcel of nonsensical contingencies,—*c'est bien comique*, said she.—

—There wants nothing, said I, to make it so but the comic use which the gallantry of a Frenchman would put it to,—to make love the first moment, and an offer of his person the second.

'Tis their *fort*, replied the lady.

It is supposed so at least;—and how it has come to pass, continued I, I know not; but they have certainly got the credit of understanding more of love, and making it better than any other nation upon earth; but, for my own part, I think them arrant bunglers, and in truth the worst set of marksmen that ever tried Cupid's patience.

—To think of making love by *sentiments*!

I should as soon think of making a genteel suit of clothes out of remnants:—and to do it—pop—at first sight, by declaration—is submitting the offer, and themselves with it, to be sifted with all their *pours* and *contres*, by an unheated mind.

The lady attended as if she expected I should go on.

Consider then, Madame, continued I, laying my hand upon hers:—

That grave people hate love for the name's sake;—

That selfish people hate it for their own;—

Hypocrites for heaven's;—

And that all of us, both old and young, being ten times worse frightened than hurt by the very *report*,—what a want of knowledge in this branch of commence a man betrays, whoever lets the word come out of his lips, till an hour or two, at least, after the time that his silence upon it becomes tormenting. A course of small, quiet attentions, not so pointed as to alarm,—nor so vague as to be misunderstood—with now and then a look of kindness, and little or nothing said upon it,—leaves nature for your mistress, and she fashions it to her mind.—

Then I solemnly declare, said the lady, blushing, you have been making love to me all this while.

THE REMISE

CALAIS

Monsieur Dessein came back to let us out of the chaise, and acquaint the lady, the count de L—, her brother, was just arrived at the hotel. Though I had infinite good will for the lady, I cannot say that I rejoiced in my heart at the event—and could not help telling her so;—for it is fatal to a proposal, Madame, said I, that I was going to make to you—

—You need not tell me what the proposal was, said she, laying her hand upon both mine, as she interrupted me.—A man my good Sir, has seldom an offer of kindness to make to a woman, but she has a presentiment of it some moments before.—

Nature arms her with it, said I, for immediate preservation.—But I think, said she, looking in my face, I had no evil to apprehend,—and, to deal frankly with you, had determined to accept it.—If I had—(she stopped a moment)—I believe your good will would have drawn a story from me, which would have made pity the only dangerous thing in the journey.

In saying this, she suffered me to kiss her hand twice, and with a look of sensibility mixed with concern, she got out of the chaise,—and bid adieu.

IN THE STREET

CALAIS

I never finished a twelve guinea bargain so expeditiously in my life: my time seemed heavy, upon the loss of the lady, and knowing every moment of it would be as two, till I put myself into motion,—I ordered post horses directly, and walked towards the hotel.

Lord! said I, hearing the town clock strike four, and recollecting that I had been little more than a single hour in Calais,—

—What a large volume of adventures may be grasped within this little span of life by him who interests his heart in every thing, and who, having eyes to see what time and chance are perpetually holding out to him as he journeyeth on his way, misses nothing he can *fairly* lay his hands on!

—If this won't turn out something,—another will;—no matter, —'tis an assay upon human nature—I get my labour for my pains,—'tis enough;—the pleasure of the experiment has kept my senses and the best part of my blood awake, and laid the gross to sleep.

I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and

cry, 'Tis all barren;—and so it is: and so is all the world to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers. I declare, said I, clapping my hands cheerily together, that were I in a desert, I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections:—if I could not do better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect myself to;—I would court their shade, and greet them kindly for their protection.—I would cut my name upon them, and swear they were the loveliest trees throughout the desert: if their leaves wither'd, I would teach myself to mourn; and, when they rejoiced, I would rejoice along with them.

The learned Smelfungus travelled from Boulogne to Paris,—from Paris to Rome,—and so on;—but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he pass'd by was discoloured or distorted.—He wrote an account of them, but 'twas nothing but the account of his miserable feelings.

I met Smelfungus in the grand portico of the Pantheon:—he was just coming out of it.—'*Tis nothing but a huge cockpit,*² said he:—I wish you had said nothing worse of the Venus of Medicis, replied I;—for in passing through Florence, I had heard he had fallen foul upon the goddess, and used her worse than a common strumpet, without the least provocation in nature.

I popp'd upon Smelfungus again at Turin, in his return home; and a sad tale of sorrowful adventures had he to tell, "wherein he spoke of moving accidents by flood and field, and

² Vide S—'s Travels: [*i.e.* Dr. Smollett's "Travels through France and Italy."—Ed.]

of the cannibals that each other eat: the Anthropophagi:”—he had been flayed alive, and bedevil’d, and used worse than St. Bartholomew, at every stage he had come at.—

—I’ll tell it, cried Smelfungus, to the world. You had better tell it, said I, to your physician.

Mundungus, with an immense fortune, made the whole tour; going on from Rome to Naples,—from Naples to Venice,—from Venice to Vienna,—to Dresden, to Berlin, without one generous connection or pleasurable anecdote to tell of; but he had travell’d straight on, looking neither to his right hand nor his left, lest Love or Pity should seduce him out of his road.

Peace be to them! if it is to be found; but heaven itself, were it possible to get there with such tempers, would want objects to give it; every gentle spirit would come flying upon the wings of Love to hail their arrival.—Nothing would the souls of Smelfungus and Mundungus hear of, but fresh anthems of joy, fresh raptures of love, and fresh congratulations of their common felicity.—I heartily pity them; they have brought up no faculties for this work; and, were the happiest mansion in heaven to be allotted to Smelfungus and Mundungus, they would be so far from being happy, that the souls of Smelfungus and Mundungus would do penance there to all eternity!

MONTREUIL

I had once lost my portmanteau from behind my chaise, and twice got out in the rain, and one of the times up to the knees in dirt, to help the postilion to tie it on, without being able to find out what was wanting.—Nor was it till I got to Montreuil, upon the landlord's asking me if I wanted not a servant, that it occurred to me, that that was the very thing.

A servant! That I do most sadly, quoth I.—Because, Monsieur, said the landlord, there is a clever young fellow, who would be very proud of the honour to serve an Englishman.—But why an English one, more than any other?—They are so generous, said the landlord.—I'll be shot if this is not a livre out of my pocket, quoth I to myself, this very night.—But they have wherewithal to be so, Monsieur, added he.—Set down one livre more for that, quoth I.—It was but last night, said the landlord, *qu'un milord Anglois présentoit un écu à la fille de chambre.*—*Tant pis pour Mademoiselle Janatone*, said I.

Now Janatone, being the landlord's daughter, and the landlord supposing I was young in French, took the liberty to inform me, I should not have said *tant pis*—but, *tant mieux. Tant mieux, toujours, Monsieur*, said he, when there is any thing to be got—*tant pis*, when there is nothing. It comes to the same thing, said I. *Pardonnez-moi*, said the landlord.

I cannot take a fitter opportunity to observe, once for all, that

tant pis and *tant mieux*, being two of the great hinges in French conversation, a stranger would do well to set himself right in the use of them, before he gets to Paris.

A prompt French marquis at our ambassador's table demanded of Mr. H—, if he was H— the poet? No, said Mr. H—, mildly.—*Tant pis*, replied the marquis.

It is H— the historian, said another,—*Tant mieux*, said the marquis. And Mr. H—, who is a man of an excellent heart, return'd thanks for both.

When the landlord had set me right in this matter, he called in La Fleur, which was the name of the young man he had spoke of,—saying only first, That as for his talents he would presume to say nothing,—Monsieur was the best judge what would suit him; but for the fidelity of La Fleur he would stand responsible in all he was worth.

The landlord deliver'd this in a manner which instantly set my mind to the business I was upon;—and La Fleur, who stood waiting without, in that breathless expectation which every son of nature of us have felt in our turns, came in.

MONTREUIL

I am apt to be taken with all kinds of people at first sight; but never more so than when a poor devil comes to offer his service to so poor a devil as myself; and as I know this weakness, I always suffer my judgment to draw back something on that very account,—and this more or less, according to the mood I am in, and the case;—and I may add, the gender too, of the person I am to govern.

When La Fleur entered the room, after every discount I could make for my soul, the genuine look and air of the fellow determined the matter at once in his favour; so I hired him first,—and then began to enquire what he could do: But I shall find out his talents, quoth I, as I want them,—besides, a Frenchman can do every thing.

Now poor La Fleur could do nothing in the world but beat a drum, and play a march or two upon the fife. I was determined to make his talents do; and can't say my weakness was ever so insulted by my wisdom as in the attempt.

La Fleur had set out early in life, as gallantly as most Frenchmen do, with *serv'ing* for a few years; at the end of which, having satisfied the sentiment, and found, moreover, That the honour of beating a drum was likely to be its own reward, as it open'd no further track of glory to him,—he retired *à ses terres*, and lived *comme il plaisoit à Dieu*;—that is to say, upon nothing.

—And so, quoth Wisdom, you have hired a drummer to attend you in this tour of yours through France and Italy!—Psha! said I, and do not one half of our gentry go with a humdrum *compagnon du voyage* the same round, and have the piper and the devil and all to pay besides? When man can extricate himself with an *équivoque* in such an unequal match,—he is not ill off.—But you can do something else, La Fleur? said I.—*O qu’oui!* he could make spatterdashes, and play a little upon the fiddle.—Bravo! said Wisdom.—Why, I play a bass myself, said I;—we shall do very well. You can shave, and dress a wig a little, La Fleur?—He had all the dispositions in the world.—It is enough for heaven! said I, interrupting him,—and ought to be enough for me.—So, supper coming in, and having a frisky English spaniel on one side of my chair, and a French valet, with as much hilarity in his countenance as ever Nature painted in one, on the other,—I was satisfied to my heart’s content with my empire; and if monarchs knew what they would be at, they might be as satisfied as I was.

MONTREUIL

As La Fleur went the whole tour of France and Italy with me, and will be often upon the stage, I must interest the reader a little further in his behalf, by saying, that I had never less reason to repent of the impulses which generally do determine me, than in regard to this fellow;—he was a faithful, affectionate, simple soul as ever trudged after the heels of a philosopher; and, notwithstanding his talents of drum beating and spatterdash-making, which, though very good in themselves, happened to be of no great service to me, yet was I hourly recompensed by the festivity of his temper;—it supplied all defects:—I had a constant resource in his looks in all difficulties and distresses of my own—I was going to have added of his too; but La Fleur was out of the reach of every thing; for, whether 'twas hunger or thirst, or cold or nakedness, or watchings, or whatever stripes of ill luck La Fleur met with in our journeyings, there was no index in his physiognomy to point them out by,—he was eternally the same; so that if I am a piece of a philosopher, which Satan now and then puts it into my head I am,—it always mortifies the pride of the conceit, by reflecting how much I owe to the complexional philosophy of this poor fellow, for shaming me into one of a better kind. With all this, La Fleur had a small cast of the coxcomb,—but he seemed at first sight to be more a coxcomb of nature than of art; and, before I had been three days in Paris

with him,—he seemed to be no coxcomb at all.

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