

# TOBIAS SMOLLETT

TRAVELS THROUGH  
FRANCE AND ITALY

Tobias Smollett

**Travels through France and Italy**

«Public Domain»

**Smollett T.**

Travels through France and Italy / T. Smollett — «Public Domain»,

## Содержание

INTRODUCTION By Thomas Seccombe	5
I	5
II	8
III	12
IV	16
V	18
VI	22
VII	26
LETTER I	33
LETTER II	37
LETTER III	39
LETTER IV	43
LETTER V	48
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	53

# **T. Smollett**

## **Travels through France and Italy**

### **INTRODUCTION By Thomas Seccombe**

#### **I**

Many pens have been burnished this year of grace for the purpose of celebrating with befitting honour the second centenary of the birth of Henry Fielding; but it is more than doubtful if, when the right date occurs in March 1921, anything like the same alacrity will be shown to commemorate one who was for many years, and by such judges as Scott, Hazlitt, and Charles Dickens, considered Fielding's complement and absolute co-equal (to say the least) in literary achievement. Smollett's fame, indeed, seems to have fallen upon an unprosperous curve. The coarseness of his fortunate rival is condoned, while his is condemned without appeal. Smollett's value is assessed without discrimination at that of his least worthy productions, and the historical value of his work as a prime modeller of all kinds of new literary material is overlooked. Consider for a moment as not wholly unworthy of attention his mere versatility as a man of letters. Apart from Roderick Random and its successors, which gave him a European fame, he wrote a standard history, and a standard version of Don Quixote (both of which held their ground against all comers for over a century). He created both satirical and romantic types, he wrote two fine-spirited lyrics, and launched the best Review and most popular magazine of his day. He was the centre of a literary group, the founder to some extent of a school of professional writers, of which strange and novel class, after the "Great Cham of Literature," as he called Dr. Johnson, he affords one of the first satisfactory specimens upon a fairly large scale. He is, indeed, a more satisfactory, because a more independent, example of the new species than the Great Cham himself. The late Professor Beljame has shown us how the milieu was created in which, with no subvention, whether from a patron, a theatre, a political paymaster, a prosperous newspaper or a fashionable subscription-list, an independent writer of the mid-eighteenth century, provided that he was competent, could begin to extort something more than a bare subsistence from the reluctant coffers of the London booksellers. For the purpose of such a demonstration no better illustration could possibly be found, I think, than the career of Dr. Tobias Smollett. And yet, curiously enough, in the collection of critical monographs so well known under the generic title of "English Men of Letters"—a series, by the way, which includes Nathaniel Hawthorne and Maria Edgeworth—no room or place has hitherto been found for Smollett any more than for Ben Jonson, both of them, surely, considerable Men of Letters in the very strictest and most representative sense of the term. Both Jonson and Smollett were to an unusual extent centres of the literary life of their time; and if the great Ben had his tribe of imitators and adulators, Dr. Toby also had his clan of sub-authors, delineated for us by a master hand in the pages of Humphry Clinker. To make Fielding the centre-piece of a group reflecting the literature of his day would be an artistic impossibility. It would be perfectly easy in the case of Smollett, who was descried by critics from afar as a Colossus bestriding the summit of the contemporary Parnassus.

Whatever there may be of truth in these observations upon the eclipse of a once magical name applies with double force to that one of all Smollett's books which has sunk farthest in popular disesteem. Modern editors have gone to the length of excommunicating Smollett's Travels altogether from the fellowship of his Collective Works. Critic has followed critic in denouncing the book as that of a "splenetic" invalid. And yet it is a book for which all English readers have cause to be grateful, not only as a document on Smollett and his times, not only as being in a sense the *raison d'être* of the

Sentimental Journey, and the precursor in a very special sense of Humphry Clinker, but also as being intrinsically an uncommonly readable book, and even, I venture to assert, in many respects one of Smollett's best. Portions of the work exhibit literary quality of a high order: as a whole it represents a valuable because a rather uncommon view, and as a literary record of travel it is distinguished by a very exceptional veracity.

I am not prepared to define the differentia of a really first-rate book of travel. Sympathy is important; but not indispensable, or Smollett would be ruled out of court at once. Scientific knowledge, keen observation, or intuitive power of discrimination go far. To enlist our curiosity or enthusiasm or to excite our wonder are even stronger recommendations. Charm of personal manner, power of will, anthropological interest, self-effacement in view of some great objects—all these qualities have made travel-books live. One knows pretty nearly the books that one is prepared to re-read in this department of literature. Marco Polo, Herodotus, a few sections in Hakluyt, Dampier and Defoe, the early travellers in Palestine, Commodore Byron's Travels, Curzon and Lane, Doughty's Arabia Deserta, Mungo Park, Dubois, Livingstone's Missionary Travels, something of Borrow (fact or fable), Hudson and Cunningham, Graham, Bent, Bates and Wallace, The Crossing of Greenland, Eothen, the meanderings of Modestine, The Path to Rome, and all, or almost all, of E. F. Knight. I have run through most of them at one breath, and the sum total would not bend a moderately stout bookshelf. How many high-sounding works on the other hand, are already worse than dead, or, should we say, better dead? The case of Smollett's Travels, there is good reason to hope, is only one of suspended animation.

To come to surer ground, it is a fact worth noting that each of the four great prose masters of the third quarter of the eighteenth century tried his hand at a personal record of travel. Fielding came first in 1754 with his *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*. Twelve years later was published Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*. Then, in 1768, Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*; followed in 1775 by Johnson's *Journey to the Hebrides*. Each of the four—in which beneath the apparel of the man of letters we can discern respectively the characteristics of police magistrate, surgeon, confessor, and moralist—enjoyed a fair amount of popularity in its day. Fielding's *Journal* had perhaps the least immediate success of the four. Sterne's *Journey* unquestionably had the most. The tenant of "Shandy Hall," as was customary in the first heyday of "Anglomaniā," went to Paris to ratify his successes, and the resounding triumph of his naughtiness there, by a reflex action, secured the vote of London. Posterity has fully sanctioned this particular "judicium Paridis." The *Sentimental Journey* is a book *sui generis*, and in the reliable kind of popularity, which takes concrete form in successive reprints, it has far eclipsed its eighteenth-century rivals. The fine literary aroma which pervades every line of this small masterpiece is not the predominant characteristic of the Great Cham's *Journey*. Nevertheless, and in spite of the malignity of the "Ossianite" press, it fully justified the assumption of the booksellers that it would prove a "sound" book. It is full of sensible observations, and is written in Johnson's most scholarly, balanced, and dignified style. Few can read it without a sense of being repaid, if only by the portentous sentence in which the author celebrates his arrival at the shores of Loch Ness, where he reposes upon "a bank such as a writer of romance might have delighted to feign," and reflects that a "uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller; that it is easy to sit at home and conceive rocks and heath and waterfalls; and that these journeys are useless labours, which neither impregnate the imagination nor enlarge the understanding." Fielding's contribution to geography has far less solidity and importance, but it discovers to not a few readers an unfeigned charm that is not to be found in the pages of either Sterne or Johnson. A thoughtless fragment suffices to show the writer in his true colours as one of the most delightful fellows in our literature, and to convey just unmistakably to all good men and true the rare and priceless sense of human fellowship.

There remain the *Travels through France and Italy*, by T. Smollett, M.D., and though these may not exhibit the marmoreal glamour of Johnson, or the intimate fascination of Fielding, or the essential literary quality which permeates the subtle dialogue and artful vignette of Sterne, yet I shall

endeavour to show, not without some hope of success among the fair-minded, that the Travels before us are fully deserving of a place, and that not the least significant, in the quartette.

The temporary eclipse of their fame I attribute, first to the studious depreciation of Sterne and Walpole, and secondly to a refinement of snobbishness on the part of the travelling crowd, who have an uneasy consciousness that to listen to common sense, such as Smollett's, in matters of connoisseurship, is tantamount to confessing oneself a Galilean of the outermost court. In this connection, too, the itinerant divine gave the travelling doctor a very nasty fall. Meeting the latter at Turin, just as Smollett was about to turn his face homewards, in March 1765, Sterne wrote of him, in the famous Journey of 1768, thus:

"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 passed by was discoloured or distorted. He wrote an account of them, but 'twas nothing but the account of his miserable feelings." "I met Smelfungus," he wrote later on, "in the grand portico of the Pantheon—he was just coming out of it. 'Tis nothing but a huge cockpit,' said he—I wish you had said nothing worse of the Venus de Medici," 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 of the cannibals which 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.'"

To counteract the ill effects of "spleen and jaundice" and exhibit the spirit of genteel humour and universal benevolence in which a man of sensibility encountered the discomforts of the road, the incorrigible parson Laurence brought out his own Sentimental Journey. Another effect of Smollett's book was to whet his own appetite for recording the adventures of the open road. So that but for Travels through France and Italy we might have had neither a Sentimental Journey nor a Humphry Clinker. If all the admirers of these two books would but bestir themselves and look into the matter, I am sure that Sterne's only too clever assault would be relegated to its proper place and assessed at its right value as a mere boutade. The borrowed contempt of Horace Walpole and the coterie of superficial dilettanti, from which Smollett's book has somehow never wholly recovered, could then easily be outflanked and the Travels might well be in reasonable expectation of coming by their own again.



## II

In the meantime let us look a little more closely into the special and somewhat exceptional conditions under which the Travel Letters of Smollett were produced. Smollett, as we have seen, was one of the first professional men of all work in letters upon a considerable scale who subsisted entirely upon the earnings of his own pen. He had no extraneous means of support. He had neither patron, pension, property, nor endowment, inherited or acquired. Yet he took upon himself the burden of a large establishment, he spent money freely, and he prided himself upon the fact that he, Tobias Smollett, who came up to London without a stiver in his pocket, was in ten years' time in a position to enact the part of patron upon a considerable scale to the crowd of inferior denizens of Grub Street. Like most people whose social ambitions are in advance of their time, Smollett suffered considerably on account of these novel aspirations of his. In the present day he would have had his motor car and his house on Hindhead, a seat in Parliament and a brief from the Nation to boot as a Member for Humanity. Voltaire was the only figure in the eighteenth century even to approach such a flattering position, and he was for many years a refugee from his own land. Smollett was energetic and ambitious enough to start in rather a grand way, with a large house, a carriage, menservants, and the rest. His wife was a fine lady, a "Creole" beauty who had a small dot of her own; but, on the other hand, her income was very precarious, and she herself somewhat of a silly and an incapable in the eyes of Smollett's old Scotch friends. But to maintain such a position—to keep the bailiffs from the door from year's end to year's end—was a truly Herculean task in days when a newspaper "rate" of remuneration or a well-wearing copyright did not so much as exist, and when Reviews sweated their writers at the rate of a guinea per sheet of thirty-two pages. Smollett was continually having recourse to loans. He produced the eight (or six or seven) hundred a year he required by sheer hard writing, turning out his History of England, his Voltaire, and his Universal History by means of long spells of almost incessant labour at ruinous cost to his health. On the top of all this cruel compiling he undertook to run a Review (The Critical), a magazine (The British), and a weekly political organ (The Briton). A charge of defamation for a paragraph in the nature of what would now be considered a very mild and pertinent piece of public criticism against a faineant admiral led to imprisonment in the King's Bench Prison, plus a fine of £100. Then came a quarrel with an old friend, Wilkes—not the least vexatious result of that forlorn championship of Bute's government in The Briton. And finally, in part, obviously, as a consequence of all this nervous breakdown, a succession of severe catarrhs, premonitory in his case of consumption, the serious illness of the wife he adored, and the death of his darling, the "little Boss" of former years, now on the verge of womanhood. To a man of his extraordinarily strong affections such a series of ills was too overwhelming. He resolved to break up his establishment at Chelsea, and to seek a remedy in flight from present evils to a foreign residence. Dickens went to hibernate on the Riviera upon a somewhat similar pretext, though fortunately without the same cause, as far as his health was concerned.

Now note another very characteristic feature of these Travel Letters. Smollett went abroad not for pleasure, but virtually of necessity. Not only were circumstances at home proving rather too much for him, but also, like Stevenson, he was specifically "ordered South" by his physicians, and he went with the deliberate intention of making as much money as possible out of his Travel papers. In his case he wrote long letters on the spot to his medical and other friends at home. When he got back in the summer of 1765 one of his first cares was to put the Letters together. It had always been his intention carefully to revise them for the press. But when he got back to London he found so many other tasks awaiting him that were so far more pressing, that this part of his purpose was but very imperfectly carried out. The Letters appeared pretty much as he wrote them. Their social and documentary value is thereby considerably enhanced, for they were nearly all written close down to the facts. The original intention had been to go to Montpellier, which was still, I suppose, the most popular



health resort in Southern Europe. The peace of 1763 opened the way. And this brings us to another feature of distinction in regard to Smollett's Travels. Typical Briton, perfervid Protestant of Britain's most Protestant period, and insular enrage though he doubtless was, Smollett had knocked about the world a good deal and had also seen something of the continent of Europe. He was not prepared to see everything *couleur de rose* now. His was quite unlike the frame of mind of the ordinary holiday-seeker, who, partly from a voluntary optimism, and partly from the change of food and habit, the exhilaration caused by novel surroundings, and timidity at the unaccustomed sounds he hears in his ears, is determined to be pleased with everything. Very temperamental was Smollett, and his frame of mind at the time was that of one determined to be pleased with nothing. We know little enough about Smollett intime. Only the other day I learned that the majority of so-called Smollett portraits are not presentments of the novelist at all, but ingeniously altered plates of George Washington. An interesting confirmation of this is to be found in the recently published Letters of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe to Robert Chambers. "Smollett wore black cloaths—a tall man—and extreamly handsome. No picture of him is known to be extant—all that have been foisted on the public as such his relations disclaim—this I know from my aunt Mrs. Smollett, who was the wife of his nephew, and resided with him at Bath." But one thing we do know, and in these same letters, if confirmation had been needed, we observe the statement repeated, namely, that Smollett was very peevish. A sardonic, satirical, and indeed decidedly gloomy mood or temper had become so habitual in him as to transform the man. Originally gay and debonnair, his native character had been so overlaid that when he first returned to Scotland in 1755 his own mother could not recognise him until he "gave over glooming" and put on his old bright smile. [A pleasant story of the Doctor's mother is given in the same Letters to R. Chambers (1904). She is described as an ill-natured-looking woman with a high nose, but not a bad temper, and very fond of the cards. One evening an Edinburgh bailie (who was a tallow chandler) paid her a visit. "Come awa', bailie," said she, "and tak' a trick at the cards." "Troth madam, I hae nae siller!" "Then let us play for a pound of candles."] His was certainly a nervous, irritable, and rather censorious temper. Like Mr. Brattle, in *The Vicar of Bulhampton*, he was thinking always of the evil things that had been done to him. With the pawky and philosophic Scots of his own day (Robertson, Hume, Adam Smith, and "Jupiter" Carlyle) he had little in common, but with the sour and mistrustful James Mill or the cross and querulous Carlyle of a later date he had, it seems to me, a good deal. What, however, we attribute in their case to bile or liver, a consecrated usage prescribes that we must, in the case of Smollett, accredit more particularly to the spleen. Whether dyspeptic or "splenetic," this was not the sort of man to see things through a veil of pleasant self-generated illusion. He felt under no obligation whatever to regard the Grand Tour as a privilege of social distinction, or its discomforts as things to be discreetly ignored in relating his experience to the stay-at-home public. He was not the sort of man that the Tourist Agencies of to-day would select to frame their advertisements. As an advocatus diaboli on the subject of Travel he would have done well enough. And yet we must not infer that the magic of travel is altogether eliminated from his pages. This is by no means the case: witness his intense enthusiasm at Nimes, on sight of the *Maison Carree* or the *Pont du Gard*; the passage describing his entry into the Eternal City; [Ours "was the road by which so many heroes returned with conquest to their country, by which so many kings were led captive to Rome, and by which the ambassadors of so many kingdoms and States approached the seat of Empire, to deprecate the wrath, to solicit the friendship, or sue for the protection of the Roman people."] or the enviable account of the *alfresco* meals which the party discussed in their coach as described in Letter VIII.

As to whether Smollett and his party of five were exceptionally unfortunate in their road-faring experiences must be left an open question at the tribunal of public opinion. In cold blood, in one of his later letters, he summarised his Continental experience after this wise: inns, cold, damp, dark, dismal, dirty; landlords equally disobliging and rapacious; servants awkward, sluttish, and slothful; postillions lazy, lounging, greedy, and impertinent. With this last class of delinquents after much experience he was bound to admit the following dilemma:—If you chide them for lingering, they will contrive to

delay you the longer. If you chastise them with sword, cane, cudgel, or horsewhip (he defines the correctives, you may perceive, but leaves the expletives to our imagination) they will either disappear entirely, and leave you without resource, or they will find means to take vengeance by overturning your carriage. The only course remaining would be to allow oneself to become the dupe of imposition by tipping the postillions an amount slightly in excess of the authorized gratification. He admits that in England once, between the Devizes and Bristol, he found this plan productive of the happiest results. It was unfortunate that, upon this occasion, the lack of means or slenderness of margin for incidental expenses should have debarred him from having recourse to a similar expedient. For threepence a post more, as Smollett himself avows, he would probably have performed the journey with much greater pleasure and satisfaction. But the situation is instructive. It reveals to us the disadvantage under which the novelist was continually labouring, that of appearing to travel as an English Milord, en grand seigneur, and yet having at every point to do it "on the cheap." He avoided the common conveyance or diligence, and insisted on travelling post and in a berline; but he could not bring himself to exceed the five-sou pourboire for the postillions. He would have meat upon maigre days, yet objected to paying double for it. He held aloof from the thirty-sou table d'hôte, and would have been content to pay three francs a head for a dinner a part, but his worst passions were roused when he was asked to pay not three, but four. Now Smollett himself was acutely conscious of the false position. He was by nature anything but a curmudgeon. On the contrary, he was, if I interpret him at all aright, a high-minded, open-hearted, generous type of man. Like a majority, perhaps, of the really open-handed he shared one trait with the closefisted and even with the very mean rich. He would rather give away a crown than be cheated of a farthing. Smollett himself had little of the traditional Scottish thriftiness about him, but the people among whom he was going—the Languedocians and Ligurians—were notorious for their nearness in money matters. The result of all this could hardly fail to exacerbate Smollett's mood and to aggravate the testiness which was due primarily to the bitterness of his struggle with the world, and, secondarily, to the complaints which that struggle engendered. One capital consequence, however, and one which specially concerns us, was that we get this unrivalled picture of the seamy side of foreign travel—a side rarely presented with anything like Smollett's skill to the student of the grand siècle of the Grand Tour. The rubs, the rods, the crosses of the road could, in fact, hardly be presented to us more graphically or magisterially than they are in some of these chapters. Like Prior, Fielding, Shenstone, and Dickens, Smollett was a connoisseur in inns and innkeepers. He knew good food and he knew good value, and he had a mighty keen eye for a rogue. There may, it is true, have been something in his manner which provoked them to exhibit their worst side to him. It is a common fate with angry men. The trials to which he was subjected were momentarily very severe, but, as we shall see in the event, they proved a highly salutary discipline to him.

To sum up, then, Smollett's *Travels* were written hastily and vigorously by an expert man of letters. They were written ad vivum, as it were, not from worked-up notes or embellished recollections. They were written expressly for money down. They were written rather en noir than couleur de rose by an experienced, and, we might almost perhaps say, a disillusioned traveller, and not by a naïf or a naïs. The statement that they were to a certain extent the work of an invalid is, of course, true, and explains much. The majority of his correspondents were of the medical profession, all of them were members of a group with whom he was very intimate, and the letters were by his special direction to be passed round among them. [We do not know precisely who all these correspondents of Smollett were, but most of them were evidently doctors and among them, without a doubt, John Armstrong, William Hunter, George Macaulay, and above all John Moore, himself an authority on European travel, Governor on the Grand Tour of the Duke of Hamilton (Son of "the beautiful Duchess"), author of *Zeluco*, and father of the famous soldier. Smollett's old chum, Dr. W. Smellie, died 5th March 1763.] In the circumstances (bearing in mind that it was his original intention to prune the letters considerably before publication) it was only natural that he should say a good deal about the state of his health. His letters would have been unsatisfying to these good people had he not

referred frequently and at some length to his spirits and to his symptoms, an improvement in which was the primary object of his journey and his two years' sojourn in the South. Readers who linger over the diary of Fielding's dropsy and Mrs. Fielding's toothache are inconsistent in denouncing the luxury of detail with which Smollett discusses the matter of his imposthume.

What I claim for the present work is that, in the first place, to any one interested in Smollett's personality it supplies an unrivalled key. It is, moreover, the work of a scholar, an observer of human nature, and, by election, a satirist of no mean order. It gives us some characteristic social vignettes, some portraits of the road of an unsurpassed freshness and clearness. It contains some historical and geographical observations worthy of one of the shrewdest and most sagacious publicists of the day. It is interesting to the etymologist for the important share it has taken in naturalising useful foreign words into our speech. It includes (as we shall have occasion to observe) a respectable quantum of wisdom fit to become proverbial, and several passages of admirable literary quality. In point of date (1763-65) it is fortunate, for the writer just escaped being one of a crowd. On the whole, I maintain that it is more than equal in interest to the *Journey to the Hebrides*, and that it deserves a very considerable proportion of the praise that has hitherto been lavished too indiscriminately upon the *Voyage to Lisbon*. On the force of this claim the reader is invited to constitute himself judge after a fair perusal of the following pages. I shall attempt only to point the way to a satisfactory verdict, no longer in the spirit of an advocate, but by means of a few illustrations and, more occasionally, amplifications of what Smollett has to tell us.

### III

As was the case with Fielding many years earlier, Smollett was almost broken down with sedentary toil, when early in June 1763 with his wife, two young ladies ("the two girls") to whom she acted as chaperon, and a faithful servant of twelve years' standing, who in the spirit of a Scots retainer of the olden time refused to leave his master (a good testimonial this, by the way, to a temper usually accredited with such a splenetic sourness), he crossed the straits of Dover to see what a change of climate and surroundings could do for him.

On other grounds than those of health he was glad to shake the dust of Britain from his feet. He speaks himself of being traduced by malice, persecuted by faction, abandoned by false patrons, complaints which will remind the reader, perhaps, of George Borrow's "Jeremiad," to the effect that he had been beslavered by the venomous foam of every sycophantic lacquey and unscrupulous renegade in the three kingdoms. But Smollett's griefs were more serious than what an unkind reviewer could inflict. He had been fined and imprisoned for defamation. He had been grossly caricatured as a creature of Bute, the North British favourite of George III., whose tenure of the premiership occasioned riots and almost excited a revolution in the metropolis. Yet after incurring all this unpopularity at a time when the populace of London was more inflamed against Scotsmen than it has ever been before or since, and having laboured severely at a paper in the ministerial interest and thereby aroused the enmity of his old friend John Wilkes, Smollett had been unceremoniously thrown over by his own chief, Lord Bute, on the ground that his paper did more to invite attack than to repel it. Lastly, he and his wife had suffered a cruel bereavement in the loss of their only child, and it was partly to supply a change from the scene of this abiding sorrow, that the present journey was undertaken.

The first stages and incidents of the expedition were not exactly propitious. The Dover Road was a byword for its charges; the Via Alba might have been paved with the silver wrung from reluctant and indignant passengers. Smollett characterized the chambers as cold and comfortless, the beds as "paultry" (with "frowsy," a favourite word), the cookery as execrable, wine poison, attendance bad, publicans insolent, and bills extortion, concluding with the grand climax that there was not a drop of tolerable malt liquor to be had from London to Dover. Smollett finds a good deal to be said for the designation of "a den of thieves" as applied to that famous port (where, as a German lady of much later date once complained, they "boot ze Bible in ze bedroom, but ze devil in ze bill"), and he grizzles lamentably over the seven guineas, apart from extras, which he had to pay for transport in a Folkestone cutter to Boulogne Mouth.

Having once arrived at Boulogne, Smollett settled down regularly to his work as descriptive reporter, and the letters that he wrote to his friendly circle at home fall naturally into four groups. The first Letters from II. to V. describe with Hogarthian point, prejudice and pungency, the town and people of Boulogne. The second group, Letters VI.-XII., deal with the journey from Boulogne to Nice by way of Paris, Lyon, Nimes, and Montpellier. The third group, Letters XIII.-XXIV., is devoted to a more detailed and particular delineation of Nice and the Nicois. The fourth, Letters XXV.-XLI., describes the Italian expedition and the return journey to Boulogne en route for England, where the party arrive safe home in July 1765.

Smollett's account of Boulogne is excellent reading, it forms an apt introduction to the narrative of his journey, it familiarises us with the milieu, and reveals to us in Smollett a man of experience who is both resolute and capable of getting below the surface of things. An English possession for a short period in the reign of the Great Harry, Boulogne has rarely been less in touch with England than it was at the time of Smollett's visit. Even then, however, there were three small colonies, respectively, of English nuns, English Jesuits, and English Jacobites. Apart from these and the English girls in French seminaries it was estimated ten years after Smollett's sojourn there that there were twenty-

four English families in residence. The locality has of course always been a haunting place for the wandering tribes of English. Many well-known men have lived or died here both native and English. Adam Smith must have been there very soon after Smollett. So must Dr. John Moore and Charles Churchill, one of the enemies provoked by the Briton, who went to Boulogne to meet his friend Wilkes and died there in 1764. Philip Thicknesse the traveller and friend of Gainsborough died there in 1770. After long search for a place to end his days in Thomas Campbell bought a house in Boulogne and died there, a few months later, in 1844. The house is still to be seen, Rue St. Jean, within the old walls; it has undergone no change, and in 1900 a marble tablet was put up to record the fact that Campbell lived and died there. The other founder of the University of London, Brougham, by a singular coincidence was also closely associated with Boulogne. [Among the occupants of the English cemetery will be found the names of Sir Harris Nicolas, Basil Montagu, Smithson Pennant, Sir William Ouseley, Sir William Hamilton, and Sir C. M. Carmichael. And among other literary celebrities connected with the place, apart from Dickens (who gave his impressions of the place in *Household Words*, November 1854) we should include in a brief list, Charles Lever, Horace Smith, Wilkie Collins, Mrs. Henry Wood, Professor York Powell, the Marquis of Steyne (Lord Seymour), Mrs. Jordan, Clark Russell, and Sir Conan Doyle. There are also memorable associations with Lola Montes, Heinrich Heine, Becky Sharpe, and above all Colonel Newcome. My first care in the place was to discover the rampart where the Colonel used to parade with little Clive. Among the native luminaries are Daunou, Duchenne de Boulogne, one of the foremost physiologists of the last century, an immediate predecessor of Charcot in knowledge of the nervous system, Aug. Mariette, the Egyptologist, Aug. Angellier, the biographer of Burns, Sainte-Beuve, Prof. Morel, and "credibly," Godfrey de Bouillon, of whom Charles Lamb wrote "poor old Godfrey, he must be getting very old now." The great Lesage died here in 1747.] The antiquaries still dispute about Gessoriacum, Godfrey de Bouillon, and Charlemagne's Tour. Smollett is only fair in justifying for the town, the older portions of which have a strong medieval suggestion, a standard of comparison slightly more distinguished than Wapping. He never lets us forget that he is a scholar of antiquity, a man of education and a speculative philosopher. Hence his references to Celsus and Hippocrates and his ingenious etymologies of wheatear and samphire, more ingenious in the second case than sound. Smollett's field of observation had been wide and his fund of exact information was unusually large. At Edinburgh he had studied medicine under Monro and John Gordon, in company with such able and distinguished men as William Hunter, Cullen, Pitcairn, Gregory, and Armstrong—and the two last mentioned were among his present correspondents. As naval surgeon at Carthage he had undergone experience such as few literary men can claim, and subsequently as compiler, reviewer, party journalist, historian, translator, statistician, and lexicographer, he had gained an amount of miscellaneous information such as falls to the lot of very few minds of his order of intelligence. He had recently directed the compilation of a large *Universal Geography or Gazetteer*, the Carton or Vivien de St. Martin if those days—hence his glib references to the manners and customs of Laplanders, Caffres, Kamskatchans, and other recondite types of breeding. His imaginative faculty was under the control of an exceptionally strong and retentive memory. One may venture to say, indeed, without danger of exaggeration that his testimonials as regards habitual accuracy of statement have seldom been exceeded. Despite the doctor's unflattering portraits of Frenchmen, M. Babeau admits that his book is one written by an observer of facts, and a man whose statements, whenever they can be tested, are for the most part "singularly exact." Mr. W. J. Prouse, whose knowledge of the Riviera district is perhaps almost unequalled out of France, makes this very remarkable statement. "After reading all that has been written by very clever people about Nice in modern times, one would probably find that for exact precision of statement, Smollett was still the most trustworthy guide," a view which is strikingly borne out by Mr. E. Schuyler, who further points out Smollett's shrewd foresight in regard to the possibilities of the Corniche road, and of Cannes and San Remo as sanatoria." Frankly there

is nothing to be seen which he does not recognise." And even higher testimonies have been paid to Smollett's topographical accuracy by recent historians of Nice and its neighbourhood.

The value which Smollett put upon accuracy in the smallest matters of detail is evinced by the corrections which he made in the margin of a copy of the 1766 edition of the *Travels*. These corrections, which are all in Smollett's own and unmistakably neat handwriting, may be divided into four categories. In the first place come a number of verbal emendations. Phrases are turned, inverted and improved by the skilful "twist of the pen" which becomes a second nature to the trained corrector of proofs; there are moreover a few topographical corrigenda, suggested by an improved knowledge of the localities, mostly in the neighbourhood of Pisa and Leghorn, where there is no doubt that these corrections were made upon the occasion of Smollett's second visit to Italy in 1770. [Some not unimportant errata were overlooked. Thus Smollett's representation of the *droit d'aubaine* as a monstrous and intolerable grievance is of course an exaggeration. (See *Sentimental Journey*; J. Hill Burton, *The Scot Abroad*, 1881, p. 135; and Luchaire, *Instit. de France*.) On his homeward journey he indicates that he travelled from Beaune to Chalons and so by way of Auxerre to Dijon. The right order is Chalons, Beaune, Dijon, Auxerre. As further examples of the zeal with which Smollett regarded exactitude in the record of facts we have his diurnal register of weather during his stay at Nice and the picture of him scrupulously measuring the ruins at Cimiez with packthread.] In the second place come a number of English renderings of the citations from Latin, French, and Italian authors. Most of these from the Latin are examples of Smollett's own skill in English verse making. Thirdly come one or two significant admissions of overboldness in matters of criticism, as where he retracts his censure of Raphael's Parnassus in Letter XXXIII. Fourthly, and these are of the greatest importance, come some very interesting additional notes upon the buildings of Pisa, upon Sir John Hawkwood's tomb at Florence, and upon the congenial though recondite subject of antique Roman hygiene. [Cf. the Dinner in the manner of the Ancients in *Peregrine Pickle*, (xliv.) and Letters IX. to XL in *Humphry Clinker*.]

After Smollett's death his books were for the most part sold for the benefit of his widow. No use was made of his corrigenda. For twenty years or so the *Travels* were esteemed and referred to, but as time went on, owing to the sneers of the fine gentlemen of letters, such as Walpole and Sterne, they were by degrees disparaged and fell more or less into neglect. They were reprinted, it is true, either in collective editions of Smollett or in various collections of travels; [For instance in Baldwin's edition of 1778; in the 17th vol. of Mayor's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, published by Richard Phillips in twenty-eight vols., 1809; and in an abbreviated form in John Hamilton Moore's *New and Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels* (folio, Vol. 11. 938-970).] but they were not edited with any care, and as is inevitable in such cases errors crept in, blunders were repeated, and the text slightly but gradually deteriorated. In the last century Smollett's own copy of the *Travels* bearing the manuscript corrections that he had made in 1770, was discovered in the possession of the Telfer family and eventually came into the British Museum. The second volume, which affords admirable specimens of Smollett's neatly written marginalia, has been exhibited in a show-case in the King's Library.

The corrections that Smollett purposed to make in the *Travels* are now for the second time embodied in a printed edition of the text. At the same time the text has been collated with the original edition of 1766, and the whole has been carefully revised. The old spelling has been, as far as possible, restored. Smollett was punctilious in such matters, and what with his histories, his translations, his periodicals, and his other compilations, he probably revised more proof-matter for press than any other writer of his time. His practice as regards orthography is, therefore, of some interest as representing what was in all probability deemed to be the most enlightened convention of the day.

To return now to the Doctor's immediate contemplation of Boulogne, a city described in the *Itineraries* as containing rien de remarquable. The story of the Capuchin [On page 21. A Capuchin of the same stripe is in *Pickle*, ch. III. sq.] is very racy of Smollett, while the vignette of the shepherd at the beginning of Letter V. affords a first-rate illustration of his terseness. Appreciate the keen

and minute observation concentrated into the pages that follow, [Especially on p. 34 to p. 40.] commencing with the shrewd and economic remarks upon smuggling, and ending with the lively description of a Boulonnais banquet, very amusing, very French, very life-like, and very Smollettian. In Letter V. the Doctor again is very much himself. A little provocation and he bristles and stabs all round. He mounts the hygienic horse and proceeds from the lack of implements of cleanliness to the lack of common decency, and "high flavoured instances, at which even a native of Edinburgh would stop his nose." [This recalls Johnson's first walk up the High Street, Edinburgh, on Bozzy's arm. "It was a dusky night: I could not prevent his being assailed by the evening effluvia of Edinburgh. . . . As we marched along he grumbled in my ear, 'I smell you in the dark!'" ] And then lest the southrons should escape we have a reference to the "beastly habit of drinking from a tankard in which perhaps a dozen filthy mouths have slabbered as is the custom in England." With all his coarsenesses this blunt Scot was a pioneer and fugleman of the niceties. Between times most nations are gibbeted in this slashing epistle. The ingenious boasting of the French is well hit off in the observation of the chevalier that the English doubtless drank every day to the health of the Marquise de Pompadour. The implication reminded Smollett of a narrow escape from a duello (an institution he reprobates with the utmost trenchancy in this book) at Ghent in 1749 with a Frenchman who affirmed that Marlborough's battles were purposely lost by the French generals in order to mortify Mme. de Maintenon. Two incidents of some importance to Smollett occurred during the three months' sojourn at Boulogne. Through the intervention of the English Ambassador at Paris (the Earl of Hertford) he got back his books, which had been impounded by the Customs as likely to contain matter prejudicial to the state or religion of France, and had them sent south by shipboard to Bordeaux. Secondly, he encountered General Paterson, a friendly Scot in the Sardinian service, who confirmed what an English physician had told Smollett to the effect that the climate of Nice was infinitely preferable to that of Montpellier "with respect to disorders of the breast." Smollett now hires a berline and four horses for fourteen louis, and sets out with rather a heavy heart for Paris. It is problematic, he assures his good friend Dr. Moore, whether he will ever return. "My health is very precarious."



## IV

The rapid journey to Paris by way of Montreuil, Amiens, and Clermont, about one hundred and fifty-six miles from Boulogne, the last thirty-six over a paved road, was favourable to superficial observation and the normal corollary of epigram. Smollett was much impressed by the mortifying indifference of the French innkeepers to their clients. "It is a very odd contrast between France and England. In the former all the people are complaisant but the publicans; in the latter there is hardly any complaisance but among the publicans." [In regard to two exceptional instances of politeness on the part of innkeepers, Smollett attributes one case to dementia, the other, at Lerici, to mental shock, caused by a recent earthquake.] Idleness and dissipation confront the traveller, not such a good judge, perhaps, as was Arthur Young four-and-twenty years later. "Every object seems to have shrunk in its dimensions since I was last in Paris." Smollett was an older man by fifteen years since he visited the French capital in the first flush of his success as an author. The dirt and gloom of French apartments, even at Versailles, offend his English standard of comfort. "After all, it is in England only where we must look for cheerful apartments, gay furniture, neatness, and convenience. There is a strange incongruity in the French genius. With all their volatility, prattle, and fondness for bons mots they delight in a species of drawling, melancholy, church music. Their most favourite dramatic pieces are almost without incident, and the dialogue of their comedies consists of moral insipid apophthegms, entirely destitute of wit or repartee." While amusing himself with the sights of Paris, Smollett drew up that caustic delineation of the French character which as a study in calculated depreciation has rarely been surpassed. He conceives the Frenchman entirely as a *petit-maitre*, and his view, though far removed from Chesterfield's, is not incompatible with that of many of his cleverest contemporaries, including Sterne. He conceives of the typical Frenchman as regulating his life in accordance with the claims of impertinent curiosity and foppery, gallantry and gluttony. Thus:

"If a Frenchman is capable of real friendship, it must certainly be the most disagreeable present he can possibly make to a man of a true English character. You know, madam, we are naturally taciturn, soon tired of impertinence, and much subject to fits of disgust. Your French friend intrudes upon you at all hours; he stuns you with his loquacity; he teases you with impertinent questions about your domestic and private affairs; he attempts to meddle in all your concerns, and forces his advice upon you with the most unwearied importunity; he asks the price of everything you wear, and, so sure as you tell him, undervalues it without hesitation; he affirms it is in a bad taste, ill contrived, ill made; that you have been imposed upon both with respect to the fashion and the price; that the marquis of this, or the countess of that, has one that is perfectly elegant, quite in the *bon ton*, and yet it cost her little more than you gave for a thing that nobody would wear.

"If a Frenchman is admitted into your family, and distinguished by repeated marks of your friendship and regard, the first return he makes for your civilities is to make love to your wife, if she is handsome; if not, to your sister, or daughter, or niece. If he suffers a repulse from your wife, or attempts in vain to debauch your sister, or your daughter, or your niece, he will, rather than not play the traitor with his gallantry, make his addresses to your grandmother; and ten to one but in one shape or another he will find means to ruin the peace of a family in which he has been so kindly entertained. What he cannot accomplish by dint of compliment and personal attendance, he will endeavour to effect by reinforcing these with *billets-doux*, songs, and verses, of which he always makes a provision for such purposes. If he is detected in these efforts of treachery, and reproached with his ingratitude, he impudently declares that what he had done was no more than simple gallantry, considered in France as an indispensable duty on every man who pretended to good breeding. Nay, he will even affirm that his endeavours to corrupt your wife, or deflower your daughter, were the most genuine proofs he could give of his particular regard for your family.

"If there were five hundred dishes at table, a Frenchman will eat of all of them, and then complain he has no appetite—this I have several times remarked. A friend of mine gained a considerable wager upon an experiment of this kind; the *petit-maitre* ate of fourteen different plates, besides the dessert, then disparaged the cook, declaring he was no better than a *marmiton*, or *turnspit*."

The gross unfairness, no less than the consummate cleverness, of this caricature compels us to remember that this was written in the most insular period of our manners, and during a brief lull in a century of almost incessant mutual hostility between the two nations. Aristocrats like Walpole, Gibbon, and Chesterfield could regard France from a cosmopolitan point of view, as leading the comite of nations. But to sturdy and true-born patriots, such as Hogarth and Smollett, reciprocal politeness appeared as grotesque as an exchange of amenities would be between a cormorant and an ape. Consequently, it was no doubt with a sense of positive relief to his feelings that Smollett could bring himself to sum up the whole matter thus. "A Frenchman lays out his whole revenue upon *taudry* suits of cloaths, or in furnishing a magnificent *repas* of fifty or a hundred dishes, one-half of which are not eatable or intended to be eaten. His wardrobe goes to the *fripier*, his dishes to the dogs, and himself to the devil."

These trenchant passages were written partly, it may be imagined, to suit the English taste of the day. In that object they must have succeeded, for they were frequently transcribed into contemporary periodicals. In extenuation of Smollett's honesty of purpose, however, it may be urged that he was always a thoroughgoing patriot, [Witness his violently anti-French play, the *Reprisal of 1757*.] and that, coming from a Calvinistic country where a measure of *Tartufism* was a necessary condition of respectability, he reproduces the common English error of ignoring how apt a Frenchman is to conceal a number of his best qualities. Two other considerations deserve attention. The race-portrait was in Smollett's day at the very height of its disreputable reign. Secondly, we must remember how very profoundly French character has been modified since 1763, and more especially in consequence of the cataclysms of 1789 and 1870.

Smollett's *vis comica* is conspicuous in the account of the *coiffure* of the period and of the superstitious reverence which a Frenchman of that day paid to his hair. In tracing the origin of this superstition he exhibits casually his historical learning. The *crine profuso* and *barba demissa* of the *reges crinitos*, as the Merovingians were called, are often referred to by ancient chroniclers. Long hair was identified with right of succession, as a mark of royal race, and the maintenance of ancient tradition. A *tondu* signified a slave, and even under the Carolingians to shave a prince meant to affirm his exclusion from the succession.

## V

A general improvement in English roads, roadside inns, and methods of conveyance commenced about 1715. The continental roads lagged behind, until when Arthur Young wrote in 1788-89 they had got badly into arrears. The pace of locomotion between Rome and England changed very little in effect from the days of Julius Caesar to those of George III. It has been said with point that Trajan and Sir Robert Peel, travelling both at their utmost speed achieved the distance between Rome and London in an almost precisely similar space of time. Smollett decided to travel post between Paris and Lyons, and he found that the journey lasted full five days and cost upwards of thirty guineas. [One of the earliest printed road books in existence gives the posts between Paris and Lyons. This tiny duodecimo, dated 1500, and more than worth its weight in gold has just been acquired by the British Museum. On the old Roman routes, see Arnold's Lectures on Modern History, 1842.] Of roads there was a choice between two. The shorter route by Nevers and Moulins amounted to just about three hundred English miles. The longer route by Auxerre and Dijon, which Smollett preferred extended to three hundred and thirty miles. The two roads diverged after passing Fontainebleau, the shorter by Nemours and the longer by Moret. The first road was the smoother, but apart from the chance of seeing the Vendange the route de Burgoyne was far the more picturesque. Smollett's portraiture of the peasantry in the less cultivated regions prepares the mind for Young's famous description of those "gaunt emblems of famine." In Burgundy the Doctor says, "I saw a peasant ploughing the ground with a jackass, a lean cow, and a he-goat yoked together." His vignette of the fantastic petit-maitre at Sens, and his own abominable rudeness, is worthy of the master hand that drew the poor debtor Jackson in the Marshalsea in Roderick Random.

His frank avowal of ill temper at the time deprives our entertainment of the unamiable tinge of which it would otherwise have partaken. "The truth is, I was that day more than usually peevish, from the bad weather as well as from the dread of a fit of asthma, with which I was threatened. And I daresay my appearance seemed as uncouth to him as his travelling dress appeared to me. I had a grey, mourning frock under a wide greatcoat, a bob-wig without powder, a very large laced hat, and a meagre, wrinkled, discontented countenance."

From Lyons the traveller secured a return berline going back to Avignon with three mules and a voiturier named Joseph. Joseph, though he turned out to be an ex-criminal, proved himself the one Frenchman upon whose fidelity and good service Smollett could look back with unfeigned satisfaction. The sight of a skeleton dangling from a gibbet near Valence surprised from this droll knave an ejaculation and a story, from which it appeared only too evident that he had been first the comrade and then the executioner of one of the most notorious brigands of the century. The story as told by Smollett does not wholly agree with the best authenticated particulars. The Dick Turpin of eighteenth century France, Mandrin has engendered almost as many fables as his English congener. [See Maignien's *Bibliographie des Ecrits relatifs a Mandrin*.] As far as I have been able to discover, the great freebooter was born at St. Etienne in May 1724. His father having been killed in a coining affair, Mandrin swore to revenge him. He deserted from the army accordingly, and got together a gang of contrebandiers, at the head of which his career in Savoy and Dauphine almost resembles that of one of the famous guerilla chieftains described in Hardman's *Peninsular Scenes and Sketches*. Captured eventually, owing to the treachery of a comrade, he was put to death on the wheel at Valence on 26th May 1755. Five comrades were thrown into jail with him; and one of these obtained his pardon on condition of acting as Mandrin's executioner. Alas, poor Joseph!

Three experiences Smollett had at this season which may well fall to the lot of road-farers in France right down to the present day. He was poisoned with garlic, surfeited with demi-roasted small birds, and astonished at the solid fare of the poorest looking travellers. The summer weather, romantic scenery, and occasional picnics, which Smollett would have liked to repeat every summer

under the arches of the Pont du Gard—the monument of antiquity which of all, excepting only the Maison Carree at Nimes, most excited his enthusiastic admiration, all contributed to put him into an abnormally cheerful and convalescent humour. . . .

Smollett now bent his steps southwards to Montpellier. His baggage had gone in advance. He was uncertain as yet whether to make Montpellier or Nice his headquarters in the South. Like Toulouse and Tours, and Turin, Montpellier was for a period a Mecca to English health and pleasure seekers abroad. A city of no great antiquity, but celebrated from the twelfth century for its schools of Law and Physic, it had been incorporated definitely with France since 1382, and its name recurs in French history both as the home of famous men in great number and as, before and after the brief pre-eminence of La Rochelle, the rival of Nimes as capital of Protestantism in the South. Evelyn, Burnet, the two Youngs, Edward and Arthur, and Sterne have all left us an impression of the city. Prevented by snow from crossing the Mont Cenis, John Locke spent two winters there in the days of Charles II. (1675-77), and may have pondered a good many of the problems of Toleration on a soil under which the heated lava of religious strife was still unmistakeable. And Smollett must almost have jostled en route against the celebrated author of *The Wealth of Nations*, who set out with his pupil for Toulouse in February 1764. A letter to Hume speaks of the number of English in the neighbourhood just a month later. Lomenie de Brienne was then in residence as archbishop. In the following November, Adam Smith and his charge paid a visit to Montpellier to witness a pageant and memorial, as it was supposed, of a freedom that was gone for ever, the opening of the States of Languedoc. Antiquaries and philosophers went to moralise on the spectacle in the spirit in which Freeman went to Andorra, Byron to the site of Troy, or De Tocqueville to America. It was there that the great economist met Horne Tooke.

Smollett's more practical and immediate object in making this pilgrimage was to interview the great lung specialist, known locally to his admiring compatriots as the Boerhaave of Montpellier, Dr. Fizes. The medical school of Montpellier was much in evidence during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and for the history of its various branches there are extant numerous *Memoires pour Servir*, by Prunelle, Astruc, and others. Smollett was only just in time to consult the reigning oracle, for the "illustrious" Dr. Fizes died in the following year. He gives us a very unfavourable picture of this "great lanthorn of medicine," who, notwithstanding his prodigious age, his stoop, and his wealth, could still scramble up two pairs for a fee of six livres. More than is the case with most medical patients, however, should we suspect Smollett of being unduly captious. The point as to how far his sketch of the French doctor and his diagnosis was a true one, and how far a mere caricature, due to ill health and prejudice, has always piqued my curiosity. But how to resolve a question involving so many problems not of ordinary therapeutic but of historical medicine! In this difficulty I bethought me most fortunately of consulting an authority probably without a rival in this special branch of medical history, Dr. Norman Moore, who with his accustomed generosity has given me the following most instructive diagnosis of the whole situation.

"I have read Smollett's account of his illness as it appears in several passages in his travels and in the statement which he drew up for Professor 'F.' at Montpellier.

"Smollett speaks of his pulmonic disorder, his 'asthmatical disorder,' and uses other expressions which show that his lungs were affected. In his statement he mentions that he has cough, shortness of breath, wasting, a purulent expectoration, loss of appetite at times, loss of strength, fever, a rapid pulse, intervals of slight improvement and subsequent exacerbations.

"This shortness of breath, he says, has steadily increased. This group of symptoms makes it certain that he had tuberculosis of the lungs, in other words, was slowly progressing in consumption.

"His darting pains in his side were due to the pleurisy which always occurs in such an illness.

"His account shows also the absence of hopelessness which is a characteristic state of mind in patients with pulmonary tuberculosis.

"I do not think that the opinion of the Montpellier professor deserves Smollett's condemnation. It seems to me both careful and sensible and contains all the knowledge of its time. Smollett, with an inconsistency not uncommon in patients who feel that they have a serious disease, would not go in person to the Professor, for he felt that from his appearance the Professor would be sure to tell him he had consumption. He half hoped for some other view of the written case in spite of its explicit statements, and when Professor F— wrote that the patient had tubercles in his lungs, this was displeasing to poor Smollett, who had hoped against hope to receive—some other opinion than the only possible one, viz., that he undoubtedly had a consumption certain to prove fatal."

The cruel truth was not to be evaded. Smollett had tuberculosis, though not probably of the most virulent kind, as he managed to survive another seven years, and those for the most part years of unremitting labour. He probably gained much by substituting Nice for Montpellier as a place to winter in, for although the climate of Montpellier is clear and bright in the highest degree, the cold is both piercing and treacherous. Days are frequent during the winter in which one may stand warmly wrapped in the brilliant sun and feel the protection of a greatcoat no more than that of a piece of gauze against the icy and penetrating blast that comes from "the roof of France."

Unable to take the direct route by Arles as at present, the eastward-bound traveller from Montpellier in 1764 had to make a northerly detour. The first stone bridge up the Rhone was at Avignon, but there was a bridge of boats connecting Beaucaire with Tarascon. Thence, in no very placable mood, Smollett set out in mid-November by way of Orgon [Aix], Brignolles and le Muy, striking the Mediterranean at Frejus. En route he was inveigled into a controversy of unwonted bitterness with an innkeeper at le Muy. The scene is conjured up for us with an almost disconcerting actuality; no single detail of the author's discomfiture is omitted. The episode is post-Flaubertian in its impersonal detachment, or, as Coleridge first said, "aloofness." On crossing the Var, the sunny climate, the romantic outline of the Esterelles, the charms of the "neat village" of Cannes, and the first prospect of Nice began gradually and happily to effect a slight mitigation in our patient's humour. Smollett was indubitably one of the pioneers of the Promenade des Anglais. Long before the days of "Dr. Antonio" or Lord Brougham, he described for his countrymen the almost incredible dolcezza of the sunlit coast from Antibes to Lerici. But how much better than the barren triumph of being the unconscious fugleman of so glittering a popularity must have been the sense of being one of the first that ever burst from our rude island upon that secluded little Piedmontese town, as it then was, of not above twelve thousand souls, with its wonderful situation, noble perspective and unparalleled climate. Well might our travel-tost doctor exclaim, "When I stand on the rampart and look around I can scarce help thinking myself enchanted." It was truly a garden of Armida for a native of one of the dampest corners of North Britain.

"Forty or fifty years ago, before the great transformation took place on the French Riviera, when Nizza, Villafranca, and Mentone were antique Italian towns, and when it was one of the eccentricities of Lord Brougham, to like Cannes, all that sea-board was a delightful land. Only a hundred years ago Arthur Young had trouble to get an old woman and a donkey to carry his portmanteau from Cannes to Antibes. I can myself remember Cannes in 1853, a small fishing village with a quiet beach, and Mentone, a walled town with mediaeval gates and a castle, a few humble villas and the old Posta to give supper to any passing traveller. It was one of the loveliest bits of Italy, and the road from Nizza to Genoa was one long procession for four days of glorious scenery, historic remnants, Italian colour, and picturesque ports. From the Esterelles to San Remo this has all been ruined by the horde of northern barbarians who have made a sort of Trouville, Brighton, or Biarritz, with American hotels and Parisian boulevards on every headland and bay. First came the half underground railway, a long tunnel with lucid intervals, which destroyed the road by blocking up its finest views and making it practically useless. Then miles of unsightly caravanserais high walls, pompous villas, and Parisian grandes rues crushed out every trace of Italy, of history, and pictorial charm." So writes Mr. Frederic Harrison of this delectable coast, [In the Daily Chronicle, 15th March 1898.] as it was, at a period

within his own recollection—a period at which it is hardly fanciful to suppose men living who might just have remembered Smollett, as he was in his last days, when he returned to die on the Riviera di Levante in the autumn of 1771. Travel had then still some of the elements of romance. Rapidity has changed all that. The trouble is that although we can transport our bodies so much more rapidly than Smollett could, our understanding travels at the same old pace as before. And in the meantime railway and tourist agencies have made of modern travel a kind of mental postcard album, with grand hotels on one side, hotel menus on the other, and a faint aroma of continental trains haunting, between the leaves as it were. Our real knowledge is still limited to the country we have walked over, and we must not approach the country we would appreciate faster than a man may drive a horse or propel a bicycle; or we shall lose the all-important sense of artistic approach. Even to cross the channel by time-table is fatal to that romantic spirit (indispensable to the true magic of travel) which a slow adjustment of the mind to a new social atmosphere and a new historical environment alone can induce. Ruskin, the last exponent of the Grand Tour, said truly that the benefit of travel varies inversely in proportion to its speed. The cheap rapidity which has made our *villes de plaisir* and *cotes d'azur* what they are, has made unwieldy boroughs of suburban villages, and what the rail has done for a radius of a dozen miles, the motor is rapidly doing for one of a score. So are we sped! But we are to discuss not the psychology of travel, but the immediate causes and circumstances of Smollett's arrival upon the territory of Nice.

## VI

Smollett did not interpret the ground-plan of the history of Nice particularly well. Its colonisation from Massilia, its long connection with Provence, its occupation by Saracens, its stormy connection with the house of Anjou, and its close fidelity to the house of Savoy made no appeal to his admiration. The most important event in its recent history, no doubt, was the capture of the city by the French under Catinat in 1706 (Louis XIV. being especially exasperated against what he regarded as the treachery of Victor Amadeus), and the razing to the ground of its famous citadel. The city henceforth lost a good deal of its civic dignity, and its morale was conspicuously impaired. In the war of the Austrian succession an English fleet under Admiral Matthews was told off to defend the territory of the Nicois against the attentions of Toulon. This was the first close contact experienced between England and Nice, but the impressions formed were mutually favourable. The inhabitants were enthusiastic about the unaccustomed English plan of paying in full for all supplies demanded. The British officers were no less delighted with the climate of Nice, the fame of which they carried to their northern homes. It was both directly and indirectly through one of these officers that the claims of Nice as a sanatorium came to be put so plainly before Smollett. [Losing its prestige as a *ville forte*, Nice was henceforth rapidly to gain the new character of a *ville de plaisir*. In 1763, says one of the city's historians, Smollett, the famous historian and novelist, visited Nice. "Arriving here shattered in health and depressed in spirits, under the genial influence of the climate he soon found himself a new man. His notes on the country, its gardens, its orange groves, its climate without a winter, are pleasant and just and would seem to have been written yesterday instead of more than a hundred years ago. . . . His memory is preserved in the street nomenclature of the place; one of the thoroughfares still bears the appellation of Rue Smollett." (James Nash, *The Guide to Nice*, 1884, p. 110.)]

Among other celebrated residents at Nice during the period of Smollett's visit were Edward Augustus, Duke of York, the brother of George III., who died at Monaco a few years later, and Andre Massena, a native of the city, then a lad of six.

Before he left Montpellier Smollett indulged in two more seemingly irresistible tirades against French folly: one against their persistent hero-worship of such a stuffed doll as Louis le Grand, and the second in ridicule of the immemorial French panacea, a *bouillon*. Now he gets to Nice he feels a return of the craving to take a hand's turn at depreciatory satire upon the nation of which a contemporary hand was just tracing the deservedly better-known delineation, commencing

Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,  
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please. . . .

Such inveteracy (like Dr. Johnson's against Swift) was not unnaturally suspected by friends in England of having some personal motive. In his fifteenth letter home, therefore, Smollett is assiduous in disclaiming anything of the kind. He begins by attempting an *amende honorable*, but before he has got well away from his exordium he insensibly and most characteristically diverges into the more congenial path of censure, and expands indeed into one of his most eloquent passages—a disquisition upon the French punctilio (conceived upon lines somewhat similar to Mercutio's address to Benvolio), to which is appended a satire on the *duello* as practised in France, which glows and burns with a radiation of good sense, racy of Smollett at his best.

To eighteenth century lovers the discussion on duelling will recall similar talks between Boswell and Johnson, or that between the lieutenant and Tom in the Seventh Book of *Tom Jones*, but, more particularly, the sermon delivered by Johnson on this subject a propos of General Oglethorpe's story of how he avoided a duel with Prince Eugene in 1716. "We were sitting in company at table, whence the Prince took up a glass of wine and by a fillip made some of it fly in Oglethorpe's face. Here was



a nice dilemma. To have challenged him instantly might have fixed a quarrelsome character upon the young soldier: to have taken no notice of it might have been counted as cowardice. Ogleshorpe, therefore, keeping his eye on the Prince, and smiling all the time, as if he took what His Highness had done in jest, said, "Mon Prince" (I forget the French words he used), "that's a good joke; but we do it much better in England," and threw a whole glass of wine in the Prince's face. An old general who sat by said, "Il a bien fait, mon Prince, vous l'avez commence," and thus all ended in good humour."

In Letter XIII. Smollett settles down to give his correspondents a detailed description of the territory and people of Nice. At one time it was his intention to essay yet another branch of authorship and to produce a monograph on the natural history, antiquities, and topography of the town as the capital of this still unfamiliar littoral; with the late-born modesty of experience, however, he recoils from a task to which he does not feel his opportunities altogether adequate. [See p. 152.] A quarter of Smollett's original material would embarrass a "Guide"-builder of more recent pattern.

Whenever he got near a coast line Smollett could not refrain from expressing decided views. If he had lived at the present day he would infallibly have been a naval expert, better informed than most and more trenchant than all; but recognizably one of the species, artist in words and amateur of ocean-strategy. [Smollett had, of course, been surgeon's mate on H.M.S. Cumberland, 1740-41.] His first curiosity at Nice was raised concerning the port, the harbour, the galleys moored within the mole, and the naval policy of his Sardinian Majesty. His advice to Victor Amadeus was no doubt as excellent and as unregarded as the advice of naval experts generally is. Of more interest to us is his account of the slave-galleys. Among the miserable slaves whom "a British subject cannot behold without horror and compassion," he observes a Piedmontese count in Turkish attire, reminding the reader of one of Dumas' stories of a count among the forcats. To learn that there were always volunteer oarsmen among these poor outcasts is to reflect bitterly upon the average happiness of mankind. As to whether they wore much worse off than common seamen in the British navy of the period (who were only in name volunteers and had often no hope of discharge until they were worn out) under such commanders as Oakum or Whiffle [In Roderick Random.] is another question. For confirmation of Smollett's account in matters of detail the reader may turn to Aleman's *Guzman d'Afarache*, which contains a first-hand description of the life on board a Mediterranean slave galley, to Archenholtz's *Tableau d'Italie* of 1788, to Stirling Maxwell's *Don John of Austria* (1883, i. 95), and more pertinently to passages in the *Life of a Galley Slave* by Jean Marteilhe (edited by Miss Betham-Edwards in 1895). After serving in the docks at Dunkirk, Marteilhe, as a confirmed protestant, makes the journey in the chain-gang to Marseilles, and is only released after many delays in consequence of the personal interest and intervention of Queen Anne. If at the peace of Utrecht in 1713 we had only been as tender about the case of our poor Catalan allies! Nice at that juncture had just been returned by France to the safe-keeping of Savoy, so that in order to escape from French territory, Marteilhe sailed for Nice in a tartane, and not feeling too safe even there, hurried thence by Smollett's subsequent route across the Col di Tende. Many Europeans were serving at this time in the Turkish or Algerine galleys. But the most pitiable of all the galley slaves were those of the knights of St. John of Malta. "Figure to yourself," wrote Jacob Houblon [*The Houblon Family*, 1907 ii. 78. The accounts in Evelyn and Goldsmith are probably familiar to the reader.] about this year, "six or seven hundred dirty half-naked Turks in a small vessel chained to the oars, from which they are not allowed to stir, fed upon nothing but bad biscuit and water, and beat about on the most trifling occasion by their most inhuman masters, who are certainly more Turks than their slaves."

After several digressions, one touching the ancient Cemenelion, a subject upon which the Jonathan Oldbucks of Provence without exception are unconscionably tedious, Smollett settles down to a capable historical summary preparatory to setting his palette for a picture of the Nissards "as they are." He was, as we are aware, no court painter, and the cheerful colours certainly do not predominate. The noblesse for all their exclusiveness cannot escape his censure. He can see that they are poor (they are unable to boast more than two coaches among their whole number), and he feels sure that

they are depraved. He attributes both vices unhesitatingly to their idleness and to their religion. In their singularly unemotional and coolly comparative outlook upon religion, how infinitely nearer were Fielding and Smollett than their greatest successors, Dickens and Thackeray, to the modern critic who observes that there is "at present not a single credible established religion in existence." To Smollett Catholicism conjures up nothing so vividly as the mask of comedy, while his native Calvinism stands for the corresponding mask of tragedy. [Walpole's dictum that Life was a comedy to those who think, a tragedy for those who feel, was of later date than this excellent mot of Smollett's.] Religion in the sunny spaces of the South is a "never-failing fund of pastime." The mass (of which he tells a story that reminds us of Lever's Micky Free) is just a mechanism invented by clever rogues for an elaborate system of petty larceny. And what a ferocious vein of cynicism underlies his strictures upon the perverted gallantry of the Mariolaters at Florence, or those on the two old Catholics rubbing their ancient gums against St. Peter's toe for toothache at Rome. The recurring emblems of crosses and gibbets simply shock him as mementoes of the Bagne.

At Rome he compares a presentment of St. Laurence to "a barbecued pig." "What a pity it is," he complains, "that the labours of painting should have been employed on such shocking objects of the martyrology," floggings, nailings, and unnailings... "Peter writhing on the cross, Stephen battered with stones, Sebastian stuck full of arrows, Bartholomew flayed alive," and so on. His remarks upon the famous Pieta of Michael Angelo are frank to the point of brutality. The right of sanctuary and its "infamous prerogative," unheard of in England since the days of Henry VII., were still capable of affording a lesson to the Scot abroad. "I saw a fellow who had three days before murdered his wife in the last month of pregnancy, taking the air with great composure and serenity, on the steps of a church in Florence." Smollett, it is clear, for all his philosophy, was no degenerate representative of the blind, unreasoning seventeenth-century detestation of "Popery and wooden shoes."

Smollett is one of the first to describe a "conversazione," and in illustration of the decadence of Italian manners, it is natural that he should have a good deal to tell us about the Cicisbeatura. His account of the cicisbeo and his duties, whether in Nice, Florence, or Rome, is certainly one of the most interesting that we have. Before Smollett and his almost contemporary travel correspondent, Samuel Sharp, it would probably be hard to find any mention of the cicisbeo in England, though the word was consecrated by Sheridan a few years later. Most of the "classic" accounts of the usage such as those by Mme. de Stael, Stendhal, Parini, Byron and his biographers date from very much later, when the institution was long past its prime if not actually moribund. Now Smollett saw it at the very height of its perfection and at a time when our decorous protestant curiosity on such themes was as lively as Lady Mary Montagu had found it in the case of fair Circassians and Turkish harems just thirty years previously. [A cicisbeo was a dangler. Hence the word came to be applied punningly to the bow depending from a clouded cane or ornamental crook. In sixteenth-century Spain, home of the sedan and the caballero galante, the original term was bracciere. In Venice the form was cavaliere servente. For a good note on the subject, see Sismondi's Italian Republics, ed. William Boulting, 1907, p. 793.] Like so much in the shapes and customs of Italy the cicisbeatura was in its origin partly Gothic and partly Oriental. It combined the chivalry of northern friendship with the refined passion of the South for the seclusion of women. As an experiment in protest against the insipidity which is too often an accompaniment of conjugal intercourse the institution might well seem to deserve a more tolerant and impartial investigation than it has yet received at the hands of our sociologists. A survival so picturesque could hardly be expected to outlive the bracing air of the nineteenth century. The north wind blew and by 1840 the cicisbeatura was a thing of the past.

Freed from the necessity of a systematic delineation Smollett rambles about Nice, its length and breadth, with a stone in his pouch, and wherever a cockshy is available he takes full advantage of it. He describes the ghetto (p. 171), the police arrangements of the place which he finds in the main highly efficient, and the cruel punishment of the strappado. The garrucha or strappado and the garrotes, combined with the water-torture and the rack, represented the survival of the fittest in

the natural selection of torments concerning which the Holy Office in Italy and Spain had such a vast experience. The strappado as described by Smollett, however, is a more severe form of torture even than that practised by the Inquisition, and we can only hope that his description of its brutality is highly coloured. [See the extremely learned disquisition on the whole subject in Dr. H. C. Lea's *History of the Inquisition in Spain*, 1907, vol. iii. book vi chap. vii.] Smollett must have enjoyed himself vastly in the market at Nice. He gives an elaborate and epicurean account of his commissariat during the successive seasons of his sojourn in the neighbourhood. He was not one of these who live solely "below the diaphragm"; but he understood food well and writes about it with a catholic gusto and relish (156-165). He laments the rarity of small birds on the Riviera, and gives a highly comic account of the chase of this species of gibier. He has a good deal to say about the sardine and tunny fishery, about the fruit and scent traffic, and about the wine industry; and he gives us a graphic sketch of the silkworm culture, which it is interesting to compare with that given by Locke in 1677. He has something to say upon the general agriculture, and more especially upon the olive and oil industry. Some remarks upon the numerous "mummeries" and festas of the inhabitants lead him into a long digression upon the *feriae* of the Romans. It is evident from this that the box of books which he shipped by way of Bordeaux must have been plentifully supplied with classical literature, for, as he remarks with unaffected horror, such a thing as a bookseller had not been so much as heard of in Nice. Well may he have expatiated upon the total lack of taste among the inhabitants! In dealing with the trade, revenue, and other administrative details Smollett shows himself the expert compiler and statistician a London journalist in large practice credits himself with becoming by the mere exercise of his vocation. In dealing with the patois of the country he reveals the curiosity of the trained scholar and linguist. Climate had always been one of his hobbies, and on learning that none of the local practitioners was in a position to exact a larger fee than sixpence from his patients (*quantum mutatus* the Nice physician of 1907!) he felt that he owed it to himself to make this the subject of an independent investigation. He kept a register of the weather during the whole of his stay, and his remarks upon the subject are still of historical interest, although with Teyssie's minutely exact *Monograph on the Climatology of Nice* (1881) at his disposal and innumerable commentaries thereon by specialists, the inquirer of to-day would hardly go to Smollett for his data. Then, as now, it is curious to find the rumour current that the climate of Nice was sadly deteriorating. "Nothing to what it was before the war!" as the grumbler from the South was once betrayed into saying of the August moon. Smollett's *esprit chagrin* was nonplussed at first to find material for complaint against a climate in which he admits that there was less rain and less wind than in any other part of the world that he knew. In these unwonted circumstances he is constrained to fall back on the hard water and the plague of cousins or gnats as affording him the legitimate grievance, in whose absence the warrior soul of the author of the *Ode to Independence* could never be content.

## VII

For his autumn holiday in 1764 Smollett decided on a jaunt to Florence and Rome, returning to Nice for the winter; and he decided to travel as far as Leghorn by sea. There was choice between several kinds of small craft which plied along the coast, and their names recur with cheerful frequency in the pages of Marryat and other depicitors of the Mediterranean. There was the felucca, an open boat with a tilt over the stern large enough to freight a post-chaise, and propelled by ten to twelve stout mariners. To commission such a boat to Genoa, a distance of a hundred miles, cost four louis. As alternative, there was the tartane, a sailing vessel with a lateen sail. Addison sailed from Marseilles to Genoa in a tartane in December 1699: a storm arose, and the patron alarmed the passengers by confessing his sins (and such sins!) loudly to a Capuchin friar who happened to be aboard. Smollett finally decided on a gondola, with four rowers and a steersman, for which he had to pay nine sequins (4 1/2 louis). After adventures off Monaco, San Remo, Noli, and elsewhere, the party are glad to make the famous phones on the Torre della Lanterna, of which banker Rogers sings in his mediocre verse:

Thy pharos Genoa first displayed itself  
 Burning in stillness on its rocky seat;  
 That guiding star so oft the only one,  
 When those now glowing in the azure vault  
 Are dark and silent

Smollett's description of Genoa is decidedly more interesting. He arrived at a moment specially propitious to so sardonic an observer, for the Republic had fallen on evil times, having escaped from the clutches of Austria in 1746 by means of a popular riot, during which the aristocracy considerably looked the other way, only to fall into an even more embarrassed and unheroic position vis-a-vis of so diminutive an opponent as Corsica. The whole story is a curious prototype of the nineteenth century imbroglio between Spain and Cuba. Of commonplaces about the palaces fruitful of verbiage in Addison and Gray, who says with perfect truth, "I should make you sick of marble were I to tell you how it is lavished here," Smollett is sparing enough, though he evidently regards the inherited inclination of Genoese noblemen to build beyond their means as an amiable weakness. His description of the proud old Genoese nobleman, who lives in marble and feeds on scraps, is not unsympathetic, and suggests that the "deceit of the Ligurians," which Virgil censures in the line

Haud Ligurum extremus, dum fallere fata sinebant

may possibly have been of this Balderstonian variety. But Smollett had little room in his economy for such vapouring speculations. He was as unsentimental a critic as Sydney Smith or Sir Leslie Stephen. He wants to know the assets of a place more than its associations. Facts, figures, trade and revenue returns are the data his shrewd mind requires to feed on. He has a keen eye for harbours suitable for an English frigate to lie up in, and can hardly rest until his sagacity has collected material for a political horoscope.

Smollett's remarks upon the mysterious dispensations of Providence in regard to Genoa and the retreat of the Austrians are charged to the full with his saturnine spirit. His suspicions were probably well founded. Ever since 1685 Genoa had been the more or less humiliated satellite of France, and her once famous Bank had been bled pretty extensively by both belligerents. The Senate was helpless before the Austrian engineers in 1745, and the emancipation of the city was due wholly to a popular emeute. She had relapsed again into a completely enervated condition. Smollett thought she would have been happier under British protection. But it is a vicious alternative for a nation to

choose a big protector. It was characteristic of the Republic that from 1790 to 1798 its "policy" was to remain neutral. The crisis in regard to Corsica came immediately after Smollett's visit, when in 1765, under their 154th doge Francesco Maria Rovere, the Genoese offered to abandon the island to the patriots under Paoli, reserving only the possession of the two loyal coast-towns of Bonifazio and Calvi. [See Boswell's *Corsica*, 1766-8.] At Paoli's instance these conciliatory terms were refused. Genoa, in desperation and next door to bankruptcy, resolved to sell her rights as suzerain to France, and the compact was concluded by a treaty signed at Versailles in 1768. Paoli was finally defeated at Ponte Novo on 9th May 1769, and fled to England. On 15th August the edict of "Reunion" between France and Corsica was promulgated. On the same day Napoleon Buonaparte was born at Ajaccio.

After a week at Genoa Smollett proceeded along the coast to Lerici. There, being tired of the sea, the party disembarked, and proceeded by chaise from Sarzano to Cercio in Modenese territory, and so into Tuscany, then under the suzerainty of Austria. His description of Pisa is of an almost sunny gaiety and good humour. Italy, through this portal, was capable of casting a spell even upon a traveller so case-hardened as Smollett. The very churches at Pisa are "tolerably ornamented." The Campo Santo and Tower fall in no way short of their reputation, while the brass gates so far excel theirs that Smollett could have stood a whole day to examine and admire them. These agremens may be attributable in some measure to "a very good inn." In stating that galleys were built in the town, Smollett seems to have fallen a victim, for once, to guide-book information. Evelyn mentions that galleys were built there in his time, but that was more than a hundred years before. The slips and dock had long been abandoned, as Smollett is careful to point out in his manuscript notes, now in the British Museum. He also explains with superfluous caution that the Duomo of Pisa is not entirely Gothic. Once arrived in the capital of Tuscany, after admitting that Florence is a noble city, our traveller is anxious to avoid the hackneyed ecstasies and threadbare commonplaces, derived in those days from Vasari through Keyser and other German commentators, whose genius Smollett is inclined to discover rather "in the back than in the brain."

The two pass-words for a would-be connoisseur, according to Goldsmith, were to praise Perugino, and to say that such and such a work would have been much better had the painter devoted more time and study to it. With these alternatives at hand one might pass with credit through any famous continental collection. Smollett aspired to more independence of thought and opinion, though we perceive at every turn how completely the Protestant prejudice of his "moment" and "milieu" had obtained dominion over him. To his perception monks do not chant or intone, they bawl and bellow their litanies. Flagellants are hired peasants who pad themselves to repletion with women's bodices. The image of the Virgin Mary is bejewelled, hooped, painted, patched, curled, and frizzled in the very extremity of the fashion. No particular attention is paid by the mob to the Crucified One, but as soon as his lady-mother appeared on the shoulders of four lusty friars the whole populace fall upon their knees in the dirt. We have some characteristic criticism and observation of the Florentine nobles, the opera, the improvisatori, [For details as to the eighteenth-century improvisatore and *commedia delle arte* the reader is referred to Symonds's *Carlo Gozzi*. See also the *Travel Papers* of Mrs. Piozzi; Walpole's *Letters to Sir Horace Mann*, and *Doran's Mann and Manners at the Court of Florence*. (Vide Appendix A, p. 345)] the buildings, and the *cicisbei*. Smollett nearly always gives substantial value to his notes, however casual, for he has an historian's eye, and knows the symptoms for which the inquirer who comes after is likely to make inquisition.

Smollett's observations upon the state of Florence in Letters XXVII and XXVIII are by no means devoid of value. The direct rule of the Medici had come to an end in 1737, and Tuscany (which with the exception of the interlude of 1798-1814 remained in Austrian hands down to 1860) was in 1764 governed by the Prince de Craon, viceroy of the Empress Maria Theresa. Florence was, indeed, on the threshold of the sweeping administrative reforms instituted by Peter Leopold, the archduke for whom Smollett relates that they were preparing the Pitti Palace at the time of his stay. This Prince governed the country as Grand Duke from 1765 to 1790, when he succeeded his brother as Emperor,

and left a name in history as the ill-fated Leopold. Few more active exponents of paternal reform are known to history. But the Grand Duke had to deal with a people such as Smollett describes. Conservative to the core, subservient to their religious directors, the "stupid party" in Florence proved themselves clever enough to retard the process of enlightenment by methods at which even Smollett himself might have stood amazed. The traveller touches an interesting source of biography when he refers to the Englishman called Acton, formerly an East India Company captain, now commander of the Emperor's Tuscan Navy, consisting of "a few frigates." This worthy was the old commodore whom Gibbon visited in retirement at Leghorn. The commodore was brother of Gibbon's friend, Dr. Acton, who was settled at Besancon, where his noted son, afterwards Sir John Acton, was born in 1736. Following in the footsteps of his uncle the commodore, who became a Catholic, Smollett tells us, and was promoted Admiral of Tuscany, John Acton entered the Tuscan Marine in 1775.

[Sir John Acton's subsequent career belongs to history. His origin made him an expert on naval affairs, and in 1776 he obtained some credit for an expedition which he commanded against the Barbary pirates. In 1778 Maria Carolina of Naples visited her brother Leopold at Florence, and was impressed by Acton's ugliness and reputation for exceptional efficiency. Her favourite minister, Prince Caramanico, persuaded the Grand Duke, Leopold, to permit Acton to exchange into the Neapolitan service, and reorganize the navy of the southern kingdom. This actually came to pass, and, moreover, Acton played his cards so well that he soon engrossed the ministries of War and Finance, and after the death of Caracciolo, the elder, also that of Foreign Affairs. Sir William Hamilton had a high opinion of the "General," soon to become Field-Marshal. He took a strong part in resistance to revolutionary propaganda, caused to be built the ships which assisted Nelson in 1795, and proved himself one of the most capable bureaucrats of the time. But the French proved too strong, and Napoleon was the cause of his disgrace in 1804. In that year, by special dispensation from the Pope, he married his niece, and retired to Palermo, where he died on 12th August 1811.]

Let loose in the Uffizi Gallery Smollett shocked his sensitive contemporaries by his freedom from those sham ecstasies which have too often dogged the footsteps of the virtuosi. Like Scott or Mark Twain at a later date Smollett was perfectly ready to admire anything he could understand; but he expressly disclaims pretensions to the nice discernment and delicate sensibility of the connoisseur. He would never have asked to be left alone with the Venus de Medicis as a modern art-critic is related to have asked to be left alone with the Venus of Rokeby. He would have been at a loss to understand the state of mind of the eminent actor who thought the situation demanded that he should be positively bereft of breath at first sight of the Apollo Belvedere, and panting to regain it, convulsively clutched at the arm of his companion, with difficulty articulating, "I breathe." Smollett refused to be hypnotized by the famous Venus discovered at Hadrian's villa, brought from Tivoli in 1680, and then in the height of its renown; the form he admired, but condemned the face and the posture. Personally I disagree with Smollett, though the balance of cultivated opinion has since come round to his side. The guilt of Smollett lay in criticizing what was above criticism, as the contents of the Tribuna were then held to be. And in defence of this point of view it may at least be said that the Uffizi was then, with the exception of the Vatican, the only gallery of first-rate importance open to the travelling public on the Grand Tour. Founded by Cosimo I, built originally by George Vasari, and greatly enlarged by Francis I, who succeeded to the Grand Duchy in 1574, the gallery owed most perhaps to the Cardinal, afterwards Ferdinand I, who constructed the Tribuna, and to Cardinal Leopold, an omnivorous collector, who died in 1675. But all the Medici princes added to the rarities in the various cabinets, drawing largely upon the Villa Medici at Rome for this purpose, and the last of them, John Gaston (1723-1737), was one of the most liberal as regards the freedom of access which he allowed to his accumulated treasures. Among the distinguished antiquaries who acted as curators and cicerones were Sebastiano Bianchi, Antonio Cocchi, Raymond Cocchi, Joseph Bianchi, J. B. Pelli, the Abbe Lanzi, and Zacchiroli. The last three all wrote elaborate descriptions of the Gallery during the last decades of the eighteenth century. There was unhappily an epidemic

of dishonesty among the custodians of gems at this period, and, like the notorious Raspe, who fled from Cassel in 1775, and turned some of his old employers to ridicule in his *Baron Munchausen*, Joseph Bianchi was convicted first of robbing his cabinet and then attempting to set it on fire, for which exploit the "learned and judicious Bianchi," as Smollett called him in his first edition, was sent to prison for life. The Arrotino which Smollett so greatly admired, and which the delusive Bianchi declared to be a representation of the Augur Attus Naevis, is now described as "A Scythian whetting his knife to flay Marsyas."

Kinglake has an amusingly cynical passage on the impossibility of approaching the sacred shrines of the Holy Land in a fittingly reverential mood. Exactly the same difficulty is experienced in approaching the sacred shrines of art. Enthusiasm about great artistic productions, though we may readily understand it to be justifiable, is by no means so easily communicable. How many people possessing a real claim to culture have felt themselves puzzled by their insensibility before some great masterpiece! Conditions may be easily imagined in which the inducement to affect an ecstasy becomes so strong as to prove overpowering. Many years ago at Florence the loiterers in the Tribuna were startled by the sudden rush into the place of a little man whose literary fame gave him high claims to intuitive taste. He placed himself with high clasped hand before the chief attraction in that room of treasures. "There," he murmured, "is the Venus de Medicis, and here I must stay—for ever and for ever." He had scarcely uttered these words, each more deeply and solemnly than the preceding, when an acquaintance entered, and the enthusiast, making a hasty inquiry if Lady So-and-So had arrived, left the room not to return again that morning. Before the same statue another distinguished countryman used to pass an hour daily. His acquaintance respected his raptures and kept aloof; but a young lady, whose attention was attracted by sounds that did not seem expressive of admiration, ventured to approach, and found the poet sunk in profound, but not silent, slumber. From such absurdities as these, or of the enthusiast who went into raptures about the head of the Elgin Iliissos (which is unfortunately a headless trunk), we are happily spared in the pages of Smollett. In him complete absence of gush is accompanied by an independent judgement, for which it may quite safely be claimed that good taste is in the ascendant in the majority of cases.

From Florence Smollett set out in October 1764 for Siena, a distance of forty-two miles, in a good travelling coach; he slept there, and next day, seven and a half miles farther on, at Boon Convento, hard by Montepulciano, now justly celebrated for its wine, he had the amusing adventure with the hostler which gave occasion for his vivid portrait of an Italian *uffiziale*, and also to that irresistible impulse to cane the insolent hostler, from the ill consequences of which he was only saved by the underling's precipitate flight. The night was spent at Radicofani, five and twenty miles farther on. A clever postilion diversified the route to Viterbo, another forty-three miles. The party was now within sixteen leagues, or ten hours, of Rome. The road from Radicofani was notoriously bad all the way, but Smollett was too excited or too impatient to pay much attention to it. "You may guess what I felt at first sight of the city of Rome."

"When you arrive at Rome," he says later, in somewhat more accustomed vein, "you receive cards from all your country folk in that city. They expect to have the visit returned next day, when they give orders not to be at home, and you never speak to one another in the sequel. This is a refinement in hospitality and politeness which the English have invented by the strength of their own genius without any assistance either from France, Italy, or Lapland." It is needless to recapitulate Smollett's views of Rome. Every one has his own, and a passing traveller's annotations are just about as nourishing to the imagination as a bibliographer's note on the Bible. Smollett speaks in the main judiciously of the Castle of St. Angelo, the Piazza and the interior of St. Peter's, the Pincian, the Forum, the Coliseum, the Baths of Caracalla, and the other famous sights of successive ages. On Roman habits and pastimes and the gullibility of the English cognoscente he speaks with more spice of authority. Upon the whole he is decidedly modest about his virtuoso vein, and when we reflect upon the way in which standards change and idols are shifted from one pedestal to another, it seems a pity that such modesty has not



more votaries. In Smollett's time we must remember that Hellenic and primitive art, whether antique or medieval, were unknown or unappreciated. The reigning models of taste in ancient sculpture were copies of fourth-century originals, Hellenistic or later productions. Hence Smollett's ecstasies over the Laocoon, the Niobe, and the Dying Gladiator. Greek art of the best period was hardly known in authentic examples; antiques so fine as the Torso of Hercules were rare. But while his failures show the danger of dogmatism in art criticism, Smollett is careful to disclaim all pretensions to the nice discernment of the real connoisseur. In cases where good sense and sincere utterance are all that is necessary he is seldom far wrong. Take the following description for example:—

"You need not doubt but that I went to the church of St. Peter in Montorio, to view the celebrated Transfiguration by Raphael, which, if it was mine, I would cut in two parts. The three figures in the air attract the eye so strongly that little or no attention is paid to those below on the mountain. I apprehend that the nature of the subject does not admit of that keeping and dependence which ought to be maintained in the disposition of the lights and shadows in a picture. The groups seem to be entirely independent of each other. The extraordinary merit of this piece, I imagine, consists not only in the expression of divinity on the face of Christ, but also in the surprising lightness of the figure that hovers like a beautiful exhalation in the air."

Smollett's remarks about the "Last Judgement" of Michael Angelo, (that it confuses the eye as a number of people speaking at once confounds the ear; and that while single figures are splendid, the whole together resembles a mere mob, without subordination, keeping, or repose) will probably be re-echoed by a large proportion of the sightseers who gaze upon it yearly. But his description of the "Transfiguration" displays an amount of taste and judgement which is far from being so widely distributed. For purposes of reproduction at the present day, I may remind the reader that the picture is ordinarily "cut in two," and the nether portion is commonly attributed to Raphael's pupils, while the "beautiful exhalation," as Smollett so felicitously terms it, is attributed exclusively to the master when at the zenith of his powers. His general verdict upon Michael Angelo and Raphael has much in it that appeals to a modern taste. Of Raphael, as a whole, he concludes that the master possesses the serenity of Virgil, but lacks the fire of Homer; and before leaving this same Letter XXXIII, in which Smollett ventures so many independent critical judgements, I am tempted to cite yet another example of his capacity for acute yet sympathetic appreciation. "In the Palazzo Altieri I admired a picture, by Carlo Maratti, representing a saint calling down lightning from heaven to destroy blasphemers. It was the figure of the saint I admired, merely as a portrait. The execution of the other parts was tame enough; perhaps they were purposely kept down in order to preserve the importance of the principal figure. I imagine Salvator Rosa would have made a different disposition on the same subject—that amidst the darkness of a tempest he would have illuminated the blasphemer with the flash of lightning by which he was destroyed. This would have thrown a dismal gleam upon his countenance, distorted by the horror of his situation as well as by the effects of the fire, and rendered the whole scene dreadfully picturesque."

Smollett confuses historical and aesthetic grandeur. What appeals to him most is a monument of a whole past civilization, such as the Pont du Gard. His views of art, too, as well as his views of life, are profoundly influenced by his early training as a surgeon. He is not inclined by temperament to be sanguine. His gaze is often fixed, like that of a doctor, upon the end of life; and of art, as of nature, he takes a decidedly pathological view. Yet, upon the whole, far from deriding his artistic impressions, I think we shall be inclined rather to applaud them, as well for their sanity as for their undoubted sincerity.

For the return journey to Florence Smollett selected the alternative route by Narni, Terni, Spoleto, Foligno, Perugia, and Arezzo, and, by his own account, no traveller ever suffered quite so much as he did from "dirt," "vermin," "poison," and imposture. At Foligno, where Goethe also, in his travels a score of years or so later, had an amusing adventure, Smollett was put into a room recently occupied by a wild beast (bestia), but the bestia turned out on investigation to be no more or no less

than an "English heretic." The food was so filthy that it might have turned the stomach of a muleteer; their coach was nearly shattered to pieces; frozen with cold and nearly devoured by rats. Mrs. Smollett wept in silence with horror and fatigue; and the bugs gave the Doctor a whooping-cough. If Smollett anticipated a violent death from exhaustion and chagrin in consequence of these tortures he was completely disappointed. His health was never better,—so much so that he felt constrained in fairness to drink to the health of the Roman banker who had recommended this nefarious route. [See the Doctor's remarks at the end of Letter XXXV.] By Florence and Lerici he retraced his steps to Nice early in 1765, and then after a brief jaunt to Turin (where he met Sterne) and back by the Col di Tende, he turned his face definitely homewards. The journey home confirmed his liking for Pisa, and gives an opening for an amusing description of the Britisher abroad (Letter XXXV). We can almost overhear Thackeray, or the author of *Eothen*, touching this same topic in Letter XLI. "When two natives of any other country chance to meet abroad, they run into each other's embrace like old friends, even though they have never heard of one another till that moment; whereas two Englishmen in the same situation maintain a mutual reserve and diffidence, and keep without the sphere of each other's attraction, like two bodies endowed with a repulsive power." Letter XXXVI gives opportunity for some discerning remarks on French taxation. Having given the French king a bit of excellent advice (that he should abolish the *fermiers generaux*), Smollett proceeds, in 1765, to a forecast of probabilities which is deeply significant and amazingly shrewd. The fragment known as Smollett's Dying Prophecy of 1771 has often been discredited. Yet the substance of it is fairly adumbrated here in the passage beginning, "There are undoubtedly many marks of relaxation in the reins of French government," written fully six years previously. After a pleasing description of Grasse, "famous for its pomatum, gloves, wash-balls, perfumes, and toilette boxes lined with bergamot," the homeward traveller crossed the French frontier at Antibes, and in Letter XXXIX at Marseille, he compares the galley slaves of France with those of Savoy. At Bath where he had gone to set up a practice, Smollett once astonished the faculty by "proving" in a pamphlet that the therapeutic properties of the waters had been prodigiously exaggerated. So, now, in the south of France he did not hesitate to pronounce solemnly that "all fermented liquors are pernicious to the human constitution." Elsewhere he comments upon the immeasurable appetite of the French for bread. The Frenchman will recall the story of the peasant-persecuting baron whom Louis XII. provided with a luxurious feast, which the lack of bread made uneatable; he may not have heard a story told me in Liege at the Hotel Charlemagne of the Belgian who sought to conciliate his French neighbour by remarking, "Je vois que vous etes Français, monsieur, parceque vous mangez beaucoup de pain," and the Frenchman's retort, "Je vois que vous etes lye monsieur, parceque vous mangez beaucoup de tout!" From Frejus Smollett proceeds to Toulon, repeating the old epigram that "the king of France is greater at Toulon than at Versailles." The weather is so pleasant that the travellers enjoy a continual concert of "nightingales" from Vienne to Fontainebleau. The "douche" of Aix-les-Bains having been explained, Smollett and his party proceeded agreeably to Avignon, where by one of the strange coincidences of travel he met his old voiturier Joseph "so embrowned by the sun that he might have passed for an Iroquois." In spite of Joseph's testimonial the "plagues of posting" are still in the ascendant, and Smollett is once more generous of good advice. Above all, he adjures us when travelling never to omit to carry a hammer and nails, a crowbar, an iron pin or two, a large knife, and a bladder of grease. Why not a lynch pin, which we were so carefully instructed how to inquire about in Murray's *Conversation for Travellers*?

But—the history of his troublous travels is drawing to an end. From Lyons the route is plain through Macon, Chalons, Dijon, Auxerre, Sells, and Fontainebleau—the whole itinerary almost exactly anticipates that of Talfourd's Vacation Tour one hundred and ten years later, except that on the outward journey Talfourd sailed down the Rhone.

Smollett's old mental grievances and sores have been shifted and to some extent, let us hope, dissipated by his strenuous journeyings, and in June 1765, after an absence of two years, he is once more enabled to write,

"You cannot imagine what pleasure I feel while I survey the white cliffs of Dover at this distance [from Boulogne]. Not that I am at all affected by the *nescio qua dulcedine natalis soli* of Horace.

"That seems to be a kind of fanaticism, founded on the prejudices of education, which induces a Laplander to place the terrestrial paradise among the snows of Norway, and a Swiss to prefer the barren mountains of Soleure to the fruitful plains of Lombardy. I am attached to my country, because it is the land of liberty, cleanliness, and convenience; but I love it still more tenderly, as the scene of all my interesting connections, as the habitation of my friends, for whose conversation, correspondence, and esteem I wish alone to live."

For the time being it cannot be doubted that the hardships Smollett had to undergo on his Italian journey, by sea and land, and the violent passions by which he was agitated owing to the conduct of refractory postilions and extortionate innkeepers, contributed positively to brace up and invigorate his constitution. He spoke of himself indeed as "mended by ill-treatment" not unlike Tavernier, the famous traveller,—said to have been radically cured of the gout by a Turkish aga in Egypt, who gave him the bastinado because he would not look at the head of the bashaw of Cairo. But Fizes was right after all in his swan-prescription, for poor Smollett's cure was anything but a radical one. His health soon collapsed under the dreary round of incessant labour at Chelsea. His literary faculty was still maturing and developing. His genius was mellowing, and a later work might have eclipsed *Clinker*. But it was not to be. He had a severe relapse in the winter. In 1770 he had once more to take refuge from overwork on the sunny coast he had done so much to popularize among his countrymen, and it was near Leghorn that he died on 17th September 1771.

ANNO AETATIS 51.

EHEV! QVAM PROCVL A PATRIA!

PROPE LIBVRNI PORTVM, IN ITALIA

JACET SEPVLTVS.

THOMAS SECCOMBE. ACTON, May 1907.

## LETTER I

*BOULOGNE SUR MER, June 23, 1763.*

DEAR SIR,—You laid your commands upon me at parting, to communicate from time to time the observations I should make in the course of my travels and it was an injunction I received with pleasure. In gratifying your curiosity, I shall find some amusement to beguile the tedious hours, which, without some such employment, would be rendered insupportable by distemper and disquiet.

You knew, and pitied my situation, traduced by malice, persecuted by faction, abandoned by false patrons, and overwhelmed by the sense of a domestic calamity, which it was not in the power of fortune to repair.

You know with what eagerness I fled from my country as a scene of illiberal dispute, and incredible infatuation, where a few worthless incendiaries had, by dint of perfidious calumnies and atrocious abuse, kindled up a flame which threatened all the horrors of civil dissension.

I packed up my little family in a hired coach, and attended by my trusty servant, who had lived with me a dozen of years, and now refused to leave me, took the road to Dover, in my way to the South of France, where I hoped the mildness of the climate would prove favourable to the weak state of my lungs.

You advised me to have recourse again to the Bath waters, from the use of which I had received great benefit the preceding winter: but I had many inducements to leave England. My wife earnestly begged I would convey her from a country where every object served to nourish her grief: I was in hopes that a succession of new scenes would engage her attention, and gradually call off her mind from a series of painful reflections; and I imagined the change of air, and a journey of near a thousand miles, would have a happy effect upon my own constitution. But, as the summer was already advanced, and the heat too excessive for travelling in warm climates, I proposed staying at Boulogne till the beginning of autumn, and in the mean time to bathe in the sea, with a view to strengthen and prepare my body for the fatigues of such a long journey.

A man who travels with a family of five persons, must lay his account with a number of mortifications; and some of these I have already happily overcome. Though I was well acquainted with the road to Dover, and made allowances accordingly, I could not help being chagrined at the bad accommodation and impudent imposition to which I was exposed. These I found the more disagreeable, as we were detained a day extraordinary on the road, in consequence of my wife's being indisposed.

I need not tell you this is the worst road in England with respect to the conveniences of travelling, and must certainly impress foreigners with an unfavourable opinion of the nation in general. The chambers are in general cold and comfortless, the beds paucity, the cookery execrable, the wine poison, the attendance bad, the publicans insolent, and the bills extortion; there is not a drop of tolerable malt liquor to be had from London to Dover.

Every landlord and every waiter harangued upon the knavery of a publican in Canterbury, who had charged the French ambassador forty pounds for a supper that was not worth forty shillings. They talked much of honesty and conscience; but when they produced their own bills, they appeared to be all of the same family and complexion. If it was a reproach upon the English nation, that an innkeeper should pillage strangers at that rate; it is a greater scandal, that the same fellow should be able to keep his house still open. I own, I think it would be for the honour of the kingdom to reform the abuses of this road; and in particular to improve the avenue to London by the way of Kent-Street, which is a most disgraceful entrance to such an opulent city. A foreigner, in passing through this beggarly and ruinous suburb, conceives such an idea of misery and meanness, as all the wealth and magnificence of London and Westminster are afterwards unable to destroy. A friend of mine, who

brought a Parisian from Dover in his own post-chaise, contrived to enter Southwark after it was dark, that his friend might not perceive the nakedness of this quarter. The stranger was much pleased with the great number of shops full of merchandize, lighted up to the best advantage. He was astonished at the display of riches in Lombard-Street and Cheapside. The badness of the pavement made him find the streets twice as long as they were. They alighted in Upper Brook-Street by Grosvenor-Square; and when his conductor told him they were then about the middle of London, the Frenchman declared, with marks of infinite surprize, that London was very near as long as Paris.

On my arrival at Dover I payed off my coachman, who went away with a heavy heart. He wanted much to cross the sea, and endeavoured to persuade me to carry the coach and horses to the other side. If I had been resolved to set out immediately for the South, perhaps I should have taken his advice. If I had retained him at the rate of twenty guineas per month, which was the price he demanded, and begun my journey without hesitation, I should travel more agreeably than I can expect to do in the carriages of this country; and the difference of the expence would be a mere trifle. I would advise every man who travels through France to bring his own vehicle along with him, or at least to purchase one at Calais or Boulogne, where second-hand berlins and chaises may be generally had at reasonable rates. I have been offered a very good berlin for thirty guineas: but before I make the purchase, I must be better informed touching the different methods of travelling in this country.

Dover is commonly termed a den of thieves; and I am afraid it is not altogether without reason, it has acquired this appellation. The people are said to live by piracy in time of war; and by smuggling and fleecing strangers in time of peace: but I will do them the justice to say, they make no distinction between foreigners and natives. Without all doubt a man cannot be much worse lodged and worse treated in any part of Europe; nor will he in any other place meet with more flagrant instances of fraud, imposition, and brutality. One would imagine they had formed a general conspiracy against all those who either go to, or return from the continent. About five years ago, in my passage from Flushing to Dover, the master of the packet-boat brought to all of a sudden off the South Foreland, although the wind was as favourable as it could blow. He was immediately boarded by a customhouse boat, the officer of which appeared to be his friend. He then gave the passengers to understand, that as it was low water, the ship could not go into the harbour; but that the boat would carry them ashore with their baggage.

The custom-house officer demanded a guinea for this service, and the bargain was made. Before we quitted the ship, we were obliged to gratify the cabin-boy for his attendance, and to give drink-money to the sailors. The boat was run aground on the open beach; but we could not get ashore without the assistance of three or four fellows, who insisted upon being paid for their trouble. Every parcel and bundle, as it was landed, was snatched up by a separate porter: one ran away with a hat-box, another with a wig-box, a third with a couple of shirts tied up in a handkerchief, and two were employed in carrying a small portmanteau that did not weigh forty pounds. All our things were hurried to the custom-house to be searched, and the searcher was paid for disordering our cloaths: from thence they were removed to the inn, where the porters demanded half-a-crown each for their labour. It was in vain to expostulate; they surrounded the house like a pack of hungry bounds, and raised such a clamour, that we were fain to comply. After we had undergone all this imposition, we were visited by the master of the packet, who, having taken our fares, and wished us joy of our happy arrival in England, expressed his hope that we would remember the poor master, whose wages were very small, and who chiefly depended upon the generosity of the passengers. I own I was shocked at his meanness, and could not help telling him so. I told him, I could not conceive what title he had to any such gratification: he had sixteen passengers, who paid a guinea each, on the supposition that every person should have a bed; but there were no more than eight beds in the cabin, and each of these was occupied before I came on board; so that if we had been detained at sea a whole week by contrary winds and bad weather, one half of the passengers must have slept upon the boards, howsoever their

health might have suffered from this want of accommodation. Notwithstanding this check, he was so very abject and importunate, that we gave him a crown a-piece, and he retired.

The first thing I did when I arrived at Dover this last time, was to send for the master of a packet-boat, and agree with him to carry us to Boulogne at once, by which means I saved the expence of travelling by land from Calais to this last place, a journey of four-and-twenty miles. The hire of a vessel from Dover to Boulogne is precisely the same as from Dover to Calais, five guineas; but this skipper demanded eight, and, as I did not know the fare, I agreed to give him six. We embarked between six and seven in the evening, and found ourselves in a most wretched hovel, on board what is called a Folkstone cutter. The cabin was so small that a dog could hardly turn in it, and the beds put me in mind of the holes described in some catacombs, in which the bodies of the dead were deposited, being thrust in with the feet foremost; there was no getting into them but end-ways, and indeed they seemed so dirty, that nothing but extreme necessity could have obliged me to use them. We sat up all night in a most uncomfortable situation, tossed about by the sea, cold, arid cramped and weary, and languishing for want of sleep. At three in the morning the master came down, and told us we were just off the harbour of Boulogne; but the wind blowing off shore, he could not possibly enter, and therefore advised us to go ashore in the boat. I went upon deck to view the coast, when he pointed to the place where he said Boulogne stood, declaring at the same time we were within a short mile of the harbour's mouth. The morning was cold and raw, and I knew myself extremely subject to catch cold; nevertheless we were all so impatient to be ashore, that I resolved to take his advice. The boat was already hoisted out, and we went on board of it, after I had paid the captain and gratified his crew. We had scarce parted from the ship, when we perceived a boat coming towards us from the shore; and the master gave us to understand, it was coming to carry us into the harbour. When I objected to the trouble of shifting from one boat to another in the open sea, which (by the bye) was a little rough; he said it was a privilege which the watermen of Boulogne had, to carry all passengers ashore, and that this privilege he durst not venture to infringe. This was no time nor place to remonstrate. The French boat came alongside half filled with water, and we were handed from the one to the other. We were then obliged to lie upon our oars, till the captain's boat went on board and returned from the ship with a packet of letters. We were afterwards rowed a long league, in a rough sea, against wind and tide, before we reached the harbour, where we landed, benumbed with cold, and the women excessively sick: from our landing-place we were obliged to walk very near a mile to the inn where we purposed to lodge, attended by six or seven men and women, bare-legged, carrying our baggage. This boat cost me a guinea, besides paying exorbitantly the people who carried our things; so that the inhabitants of Dover and of Boulogne seem to be of the same kidney, and indeed they understand one another perfectly well. It was our honest captain who made the signal for the shore-boat before I went upon deck; by which means he not only gratified his friends, the watermen of Boulogne, but also saved about fifteen shillings portage, which he must have paid had he gone into the harbour; and thus he found himself at liberty to return to Dover, which he reached in four hours. I mention these circumstances as a warning to other passengers. When a man hires a packet-boat from Dover to Calais or Boulogne, let him remember that the stated price is five guineas; and let him insist upon being carried into the harbour in the ship, without paying the least regard to the representations of the master, who is generally a little dirty knave. When he tells you it is low water, or the wind is in your teeth, you may say you will stay on board till it is high water, or till the wind comes favourable. If he sees you are resolute, he will find means to bring his ship into the harbour, or at least to convince you, without a possibility of your being deceived, that it is not in his power. After all, the fellow himself was a loser by his finesse; if he had gone into the harbour, he would have had another fare immediately back to Dover, for there was a Scotch gentleman at the inn waiting for such an opportunity.

Knowing my own weak constitution, I took it for granted this morning's adventure would cost me a fit of illness; and what added to my chagrin, when we arrived at the inn, all the beds were

occupied; so that we were obliged to sit in a cold kitchen above two hours, until some of the lodgers should get up. This was such a bad specimen of French accommodation, that my wife could not help regretting even the inns of Rochester, Sittingbourn, and Canterbury: bad as they are, they certainly have the advantage, when compared with the execrable auberges of this country, where one finds nothing but dirt and imposition. One would imagine the French were still at war with the English, for they pillage them without mercy.

Among the strangers at this inn where we lodged, there was a gentleman of the faculty, just returned from Italy. Understanding that I intended to winter in the South of France, on account of a pulmonic disorder, he strongly recommended the climate of Nice in Provence, which, indeed, I had often heard extolled; and I am almost resolved to go thither, not only for the sake of the air, but also for its situation on the Mediterranean, where I can have the benefit of bathing; and from whence there is a short cut by sea to Italy, should I find it necessary to try the air of Naples.

After having been ill accommodated three days at our inn, we have at last found commodious lodgings, by means of Mrs. B-, a very agreeable French lady, to whom we were recommended by her husband, who is my countryman, and at present resident in London. For three guineas a month we have the greatest part of a house tolerably furnished; four bed-chambers on the first floor, a large parlour below, a kitchen, and the use of a cellar.

These, I own, are frivolous incidents, scarce worth committing to paper; but they may serve to introduce observations of more consequence; and in the mean time I know nothing will be indifferent to you, that concerns—Your humble servant.



## LETTER II

*BOULOGNE SUR MER, July 15, 1763.*

DEAR SIR,—The custom-house officers at Boulogne, though as alert, are rather more civil than those on your side of the water. I brought no plate along with me, but a dozen and a half of spoons, and a dozen teaspoons: the first being found in one of our portmanteaus, when they were examined at the bureau, cost me seventeen livres entree; the others being luckily in my servant's pocket, escaped duty free. All wrought silver imported into France, pays at the rate of so much per mark: therefore those who have any quantity of plate, will do well to leave it behind them, unless they can confide in the dexterity of the shipmasters; some of whom will undertake to land it without the ceremony of examination. The ordonnances of France are so unfavourable to strangers, that they oblige them to pay at the rate of five per cent. for all the bed and table linen which they bring into the kingdom, even though it has been used. When my trunks arrived in a ship from the river Thames, I underwent this ordeal: but what gives me more vexation, my books have been stopped at the bureau; and will be sent to Amiens at my expence, to be examined by the chambre syndicale; lest they should contain something prejudicial to the state, or to the religion of the country. This is a species of oppression which one would not expect to meet with in France, which piques itself on its politeness and hospitality: but the truth is, I know no country in which strangers are worse treated with respect to their essential concerns. If a foreigner dies in France, the king seizes all his effects, even though his heir should be upon the spot; and this tyranny is called the *droit d'aubaine* founded at first upon the supposition, that all the estate of foreigners residing in France was acquired in that kingdom, and that, therefore, it would be unjust to convey it to another country. If an English protestant goes to France for the benefit of his health, attended by his wife or his son, or both, and dies with effects in the house to the amount of a thousand guineas, the king seizes the whole, the family is left destitute, and the body of the deceased is denied christian burial. The Swiss, by capitulation, are exempted from this despotism, and so are the Scots, in consequence of an ancient alliance between the two nations. The same *droit d'aubaine* is exacted by some of the princes in Germany: but it is a great discouragement to commerce, and prejudices every country where it is exercised, to ten times the value of what it brings into the coffers of the sovereign.

I am exceedingly mortified at the detention of my books, which not only deprives me of an amusement which I can very ill dispense with; but, in all probability, will expose me to sundry other inconveniencies. I must be at the expence of sending them sixty miles to be examined, and run the risque of their being condemned; and, in the mean time, I may lose the opportunity of sending them with my heavy baggage by sea to Bourdeaux, to be sent up the Garonne to Tholouse, and from thence transmitted through the canal of Languedoc to Cette, which is a sea-port on the Mediterranean, about three or four leagues from Montpellier.

For the recovery of my books, I had recourse to the advice of my landlord, Mons. B—. He is a handsome young fellow, about twenty-five years of age, and keeps house with two maiden sisters, who are professed devotees. The brother is a little libertine, good natured and obliging; but a true Frenchman in vanity, which is undoubtedly the ruling passion of this volatile people. He has an inconsiderable place under the government, in consequence of which he is permitted to wear a sword, a privilege which he does not fail to use. He is likewise receiver of the tythes of the clergy in this district, an office that gives him a command of money, and he, moreover, deals in the wine trade. When I came to his house, he made a parade of all these advantages: he displayed his bags of money, and some old gold which his father had left him. He described his chateau in the country; dropped hints of the fortunes that were settled upon mademoiselles his sisters; boasted of his connexions at court; and assured me it was not for my money that he let his lodgings, but altogether with a view to

enjoy the pleasure of my company. The truth, when stript of all embellishments, is this: the sieur B — is the son of an honest bourgeois lately dead, who left him the house, with some stock in trade, a little money, and a paltry farm: his sisters have about three thousand livres (not quite 140 L) apiece; the brother's places are worth about fifty pounds a year, and his connexions at court are confined to a commis or clerk in the secretary's office, with whom he corresponds by virtue of his employment. My landlord piques himself upon his gallantry and success with the fair-sex: he keeps a *fille de joye*, and makes no secret of his amours. He told miss C— the other day, in broken English, that, in the course of the last year, he had made six bastards. He owned, at the same time, he had sent them all to the hospital; but, now his father is dead, he would himself take care of his future productions. This, however, was no better than a gasconade. Yesterday the house was in a hot alarm, on account of a new windfall of this kind: the sisters were in tears; the brother was visited by the cure of the parish; the lady in the straw (a sempstress) sent him the bantling in a basket, and he transmitted it by the carriers to the *Enfans trouves* at Paris.

But to return from this digression: Mr. B— advised me to send a *requete* or petition to the chancellor of France, that I might obtain an order to have my books examined on the spot, by the president of Boulogne, or the *procureur du roy*, or the sub-delegate of the intendance. He recommended an advocat of his acquaintance to draw up the *memoire*, and introduced him accordingly; telling me at the same time, in private, that if he was not a drunkard, he would be at the head of his profession. He had indeed all the outward signs of a sot; a sleepy eye, a rubicund face, and carbuncled nose. He seemed to be a little out at elbows, had marvellous foul linen, and his breeches were not very sound: but he assumed an air of importance, was very courteous, and very solemn. I asked him if he did not sometimes divert himself with the muse: he smiled, and promised, in a whisper, to shew me some *chansonnettes de sa facon*. Meanwhile he composed the *requete* in my name, which was very pompous, very tedious, and very abject. Such a stile might perhaps be necessary in a native of France; but I did not think it was at all suitable to a subject of Great-Britain. I thanked him for the trouble he had taken, as he would receive no other gratification; but when my landlord proposed to send the *memoire* to his correspondent at Paris, to be delivered to the chancellor, I told him I had changed my mind, and would apply to the English ambassador. I have accordingly taken the liberty to address myself to the earl of H—; and at the same time I have presumed to write to the duchess of D—, who is now at Paris, to entreat her grace's advice and interposition. What effect these applications may have, I know not: but the sieur B— shakes his head, and has told my servant, in confidence, that I am mistaken if I think the English ambassador is as great a man at Paris as the chancellor of France.

I ought to make an apology for troubling you with such an unentertaining detail, and consider that the detention of my books must be a matter of very little consequence to any body, but to—  
Your affectionate humble servant.

## LETTER III

*BOULOGNE, August 15, 1763.*

SIR—I am much obliged to you for your kind enquiries after my health, which has been lately in a very declining condition. In consequence of a cold, caught a few days after my arrival in France, I was seized with a violent cough, attended with a fever, and stitches in my breast, which tormented me all night long without ceasing. At the same time I had a great discharge by expectoration, and such a dejection of spirits as I never felt before. In this situation I took a step which may appear to have been desperate. I knew there was no imposthume in my lungs, and I supposed the stitches were spasmodical. I was sensible that all my complaints were originally derived from relaxation. I therefore hired a chaise, and going to the beach, about a league from the town, plunged into the sea without hesitation. By this desperate remedy, I got a fresh cold in my head: but my stitches and fever vanished the very first day; and by a daily repetition of the bath, I have diminished my cough, strengthened my body, and recovered my spirits. I believe I should have tried the same experiment, even if there had been an abscess in my lungs, though such practice would have been contrary to all the rules of medicine: but I am not one of those who implicitly believe in all the dogmata of physic. I saw one of the guides at Bath, the stoutest fellow among them, who recovered from the last stage of a consumption, by going into the king's bath, contrary to the express injunction of his doctor. He said, if he must die, the sooner the better, as he had nothing left for his subsistence. Instead of immediate death, he found instant ease, and continued mending every day, till his health was entirely re-established. I myself drank the waters of Bath, and bathed, in diametrical opposition to the opinion of some physicians there settled, and found myself better every day, notwithstanding their unfavourable prognostic. If I had been of the rigid fibre, full of blood, subject to inflammation, I should have followed a different course. Our acquaintance, doctor C—, while he actually spit up matter, and rode out every day for his life, led his horse to water, at the pond in Hyde-Park, one cold frosty morning, and the beast, which happened to be of a hot constitution, plunged himself and his master over head and ears in the water. The poor doctor hastened home, half dead with fear, and was put to bed in the apprehension of a new imposthume; instead of which, he found himself exceedingly recruited in his spirits, and his appetite much mended. I advised him to take the hint, and go into the cold bath every morning; but he did not chuse to run any risque. How cold water comes to be such a bugbear, I know not: if I am not mistaken, Hippocrates recommends immersion in cold water for the gout; and Celsus expressly says, in omni tussi utilis est natatio: in every cough swimming is of service.

I have conversed with a physician of this place, a sensible man, who assured me he was reduced to meer skin and bone by a cough and hectic fever, when he ordered a bath to be made in his own house, and dipped himself in cold water every morning. He at the same time left off drinking and swallowing any liquid that was warm. He is now strong and lusty, and even in winter has no other cover than a single sheet. His notions about the warm drink were a little whimsical: he imagined it relaxed the tone of the stomach; and this would undoubtedly be the case if it was drank in large quantities, warmer than the natural temperature of the blood. He alledged the example of the inhabitants of the Ladrone islands, who never taste any thing that is not cold, and are remarkably healthy. But to balance this argument I mentioned the Chinese, who scarce drink any thing but warm tea; and the Laplanders, who drink nothing but warm water; yet the people of both these nations are remarkably strong, healthy, and long-lived.

You desire to know the fate of my books. My lord H—d is not yet come to France; but my letter was transmitted to him from Paris; and his lordship, with that generous humanity which is peculiar to his character, has done me the honour to assure me, under his own hand, that he has directed Mr. N—Ile, our resident at Paris, to apply for an order that my books may be restored.

I have met with another piece of good fortune, in being introduced to general Paterson and his lady, in their way to England from Nice, where the general has been many years commandant for the king of Sardinia. You must have heard of this gentleman, who has not only eminently distinguished himself, by his courage and conduct as an officer; but also by his probity and humanity in the exercise, of his office, and by his remarkable hospitality to all strangers, especially the subjects of Great-Britain, whose occasions called them to the place where he commanded. Being pretty far advanced in years, he begged leave to resign, that he might spend the evening of his days in his own country; and his Sardinian majesty granted his request with regret, after having honoured him with very particular marks of approbation and esteem. The general talks so favourably of the climate of Nice, with respect to disorders of the breast, that I am now determined to go thither. It would have been happy for me had he continued in his government. I think myself still very fortunate, in having obtained of him a letter of recommendation to the English consul at Nice, together with directions how to travel through the South of France. I propose to begin my journey some time next month, when the weather will be temperate to the southward; and in the wine countries I shall have the pleasure of seeing the vintage, which is always a season of festivity among all ranks of people.

You have been very much mis-informed, by the person who compared Boulogne to Wapping: he did a manifest injustice to this place which is a large agreeable town, with broad open streets, excellently paved; and the houses are of stone, well built and commodious. The number of inhabitants may amount to sixteen thousand. You know this was generally supposed to be the portus Itius, and Gessoriacum of the antients: though it is now believed that the portus Itius, from whence Caesar sailed to Britain, is a place called Whitsand, about half way between this place and Calais. Boulogne is the capital of the Boulonnois, a district extending about twelve leagues, ruled by a governor independent of the governor of Picardy; of which province, however, this country forms a part. The present governor is the duc d'Aumout. The town of Boulogne is the see of a bishop suffragan of Rheims, whose revenue amounts to about four-and-twenty thousand livres, or one thousand pounds sterling. It is also the seat of a seneschal's court, from whence an appeal lies to the parliament of Paris; and thither all condemned criminals are sent, to have their sentence confirmed or reversed. Here is likewise a bailiwick, and a court of admiralty. The military jurisdiction of the city belongs to a commandant appointed by the king, a sort of sinecure bestowed upon some old officer. His appointments are very inconsiderable: he resides in the Upper Town, and his garrison at present consists of a few hundreds of invalids.

Boulogne is divided into the Upper and Lower Towns. The former is a kind of citadel, about a short mile in circumference, situated on a rising ground, surrounded by a high wall and rampart, planted with rows of trees, which form a delightful walk. It commands a fine view of the country and Lower Town; and in clear weather the coast of England, from Dover to Folkstone, appears so plain, that one would imagine it was within four or five leagues of the French shore. The Upper Town was formerly fortified with outworks, which are now in ruins. Here is a square, a town-house, the cathedral, and two or three convents of nuns; in one of which there are several English girls, sent hither for their education. The smallness of the expence encourages parents to send their children abroad to these seminaries, where they learn scarce any thing that is useful but the French language; but they never fail to imbibe prejudices against the protestant religion, and generally return enthusiastic converts to the religion of Rome. This conversion always generates a contempt for, and often an aversion to, their own country. Indeed it cannot reasonably be expected that people of weak minds, addicted to superstition, should either love or esteem those whom they are taught to consider as reprobated heretics. Ten pounds a year is the usual pension in these convents; but I have been informed by a French lady who had her education in one of them, that nothing can be more wretched than their entertainment.

The civil magistracy of Boulogne consists of a mayor and echevins; and this is the case in almost all the towns of France.

The Lower Town is continued from the gate of the Upper Town, down the slope of a hill, as far as the harbour, stretching on both sides to a large extent, and is much more considerable than the Upper, with respect to the beauty of the streets, the convenience of the houses, and the number and wealth of the inhabitants. These, however, are all merchants, or bourgeoisie, for the noblesse or gentry live all together in the Upper Town, and never mix with the others. The harbour of Boulogne is at the mouth of the small river, or rather rivulet Liane, which is so shallow, that the children wade through it at low water. As the tide makes, the sea flows in, and forms a pretty extensive harbour, which, however, admits nothing but small vessels. It is contracted at the mouth by two stone jetties or piers, which seem to have been constructed by some engineer, very little acquainted with this branch of his profession; for they are carried out in such a manner, as to collect a bank of sand just at the entrance of the harbour. The road is very open and unsafe, and the surf very high when the wind blows from the sea. There is no fortification near the harbour, except a paltry fort mounting about twenty guns, built in the last war by the prince de Cruy, upon a rock about a league to the eastward of Boulogne. It appears to be situated in such a manner, that it can neither offend, nor be offended. If the depth of water would admit a forty or fifty gun ship to lie within cannon-shot of it, I apprehend it might be silenced in half an hour; but, in all probability, there will be no vestiges of it at the next rupture between the two crowns. It is surrounded every day by the sea, at high water; and when it blows a fresh gale towards the shore, the waves break over the top of it, to the terror and astonishment of the garrison, who have been often heard crying piteously for assistance. I am persuaded, that it will one day disappear in the twinkling of an eye. The neighbourhood of this fort, which is a smooth sandy beach, I have chosen for my bathing place. The road to it is agreeable and romantic, lying through pleasant cornfields, skirted by open downs, where there is a rabbit warren, and great plenty of the birds so much admired at Tunbridge under the name of wheat-ears. By the bye, this is a pleasant corruption of white-a-se, the translation of their French name cul-blanc, taken from their colour for they are actually white towards the tail.

Upon the top of a high rock, which overlooks the harbour, are the remains of an old fortification, which is indiscriminately called, Tour d'ordre, and Julius Caesar's fort. The original tower was a light-house built by Claudius Caesar, denominated Turris ardens, from the fire burned in it; and this the French have corrupted into Tour d'ordre; but no vestiges of this Roman work remain; what we now see, are the ruins of a castle built by Charlemagne. I know of no other antiquity at Boulogne, except an old vault in the Upper Town, now used as a magazine, which is said to be part of an antient temple dedicated to Isis.

On the other side of the harbour, opposite to the Lower Town, there is a house built, at a considerable expence, by a general officer, who lost his life in the late war. Never was situation more inconvenient, unpleasant, and unhealthy. It stands on the edge of an ugly morass formed by the stagnant water left by the tide in its retreat: the very walks of the garden are so moist, that, in the driest weather, no person can make a tour of it, without danger of the rheumatism. Besides, the house is altogether inaccessible, except at low water, and even then the carriage must cross the harbour, the wheels up to the axle-tree in mud: nay, the tide rushes in so fast, that unless you seize the time to a minute, you will be in danger of perishing. The apartments of this house are elegantly fitted up, but very small; and the garden, notwithstanding its unfavourable situation, affords a great quantity of good fruit. The ooze, impregnated with sea salt, produces, on this side of the harbour, an incredible quantity of the finest samphire I ever saw. The French call it *passe-pierre*; and I suspect its English name is a corruption of *sang-pierre*. It is generally found on the faces of bare rocks that overhang the sea, by the spray of which it is nourished. As it grew upon a naked rock, without any appearance of soil, it might be naturally enough called *sang du pierre*, or *sangpierre*, blood of the rock; and hence the name samphire. On the same side of the harbour there is another new house, neatly built, belonging to a gentleman who has obtained a grant from the king of some ground which was always overflowed at high water. He has raised dykes at a considerable expence, to exclude the tide, and if he can bring

his project to bear, he will not only gain a good estate for himself, but also improve the harbour, by increasing the depth at high-water.

In the Lower Town of Boulogne there are several religious houses, particularly a seminary, a convent of Cordeliers, and another of Capuchins. This last, having fallen to decay, was some years ago repaired, chiefly by the charity of British travellers, collected by father Graeme, a native of North-Britain, who had been an officer in the army of king James II. and is said to have turned monk of this mendicant order, by way of voluntary penance, for having killed his friend in a duel. Be that as it may, he was a well-bred, sensible man, of a very exemplary life and conversation; and his memory is much revered in this place. Being superior of the convent, he caused the British arms to be put up in the church, as a mark of gratitude for the benefactions received from our nation. I often walk in the garden of the convent, the walls of which are washed by the sea at high-water. At the bottom of the garden is a little private grove, separated from it by a high wall, with a door of communication; and hither the Capuchins retire, when they are disposed for contemplation. About two years ago, this place was said to be converted to a very different use. There was among the monks one pere Charles, a lusty friar, of whom the people tell strange stories. Some young women of the town were seen mounting over the wall, by a ladder of ropes, in the dusk of the evening; and there was an unusual crop of bastards that season. In short, pere Charles and his companions gave such scandal, that the whole fraternity was changed; and now the nest is occupied by another flight of these birds of passage. If one of our privateers had kidnapped a Capuchin during the war, and exhibited him, in his habit, as a shew in London, he would have proved a good prize to the captors; for I know not a more uncouth and grotesque animal, than an old Capuchin in the habit of his order. A friend of mine (a Swiss officer) told me, that a peasant in his country used to weep bitterly, whenever a certain Capuchin mounted the pulpit to hold forth to the people. The good father took notice of this man, and believed he was touched by the finger of the Lord. He exhorted him to encourage these accessions of grace, and at the same time to be of good comfort, as having received such marks of the divine favour. The man still continued to weep, as before, every time the monk preached; and at last the Capuchin insisted upon knowing what it was, in his discourse or appearance, that made such an impression upon his heart "Ah, father! (cried the peasant) I never see you but I think of a venerable goat, which I lost at Easter. We were bred up together in the same family. He was the very picture of your reverence—one would swear you were brothers. Poor Baudouin! he died of a fall—rest his soul! I would willingly pay for a couple of masses to pray him out of purgatory."

Among other public edifices at Boulogne, there is an hospital, or workhouse, which seems to be established upon a very good foundation. It maintains several hundreds of poor people, who are kept constantly at work, according to their age and abilities, in making thread, all sorts of lace, a kind of catgut, and in knitting stockings. It is under the direction of the bishop; and the see is at present filled by a prelate of great piety and benevolence, though a little inclining to bigotry and fanaticism. The churches in this town are but indifferently built, and poorly ornamented. There is not one picture in the place worth looking at, nor indeed does there seem to be the least taste for the liberal arts.

In my next, I shall endeavour to satisfy you in the other articles you desire to know. Meanwhile, I am ever—Yours.

## LETTER IV

*BOULOGNE, September 1, 1763.*

SIR,—I am infinitely obliged to D. H— for the favourable manner in which he has mentioned me to the earl of H— I have at last recovered my books, by virtue of a particular order to the director of the douane, procured by the application of the English resident to the French ministry. I am now preparing for my long journey; but, before I leave this place, I shall send you the packet I mentioned, by Meriton. Mean-while I must fulfil my promise in communicating the observations I have had occasion to make upon this town and country.

The air of Boulogne is cold and moist, and, I believe, of consequence unhealthy. Last winter the frost, which continued six weeks in London, lasted here eight weeks without intermission; and the cold was so intense, that, in the garden of the Capuchins, it split the bark of several elms from top to bottom. On our arrival here we found all kinds of fruit more backward than in England. The frost, in its progress to Britain, is much weakened in crossing the sea. The atmosphere, impregnated with saline particles, resists the operation of freezing. Hence, in severe winters, all places near the sea-side are less cold than more inland districts. This is the reason why the winter is often more mild at Edinburgh than at London. A very great degree of cold is required to freeze salt water. Indeed it will not freeze at all, until it has deposited all its salt. It is now generally allowed among philosophers, that water is no more than ice thawed by heat, either solar, or subterranean, or both; and that this heat being expelled, it would return to its natural consistence. This being the case, nothing else is required for the freezing of water, than a certain degree of cold, which may be generated by the help of salt, or spirit of nitre, even under the line. I would propose, therefore, that an apparatus of this sort should be provided in every ship that goes to sea; and in case there should be a deficiency of fresh water on board, the seawater may be rendered potable, by being first converted into ice.

The air of Boulogne is not only loaded with a great evaporation from the sea, increased by strong gales of wind from the West and South-West, which blow almost continually during the greatest part of the year; but it is also subject to putrid vapours, arising from the low marshy ground in the neighbourhood of the harbour, which is every tide overflowed with seawater. This may be one cause of the scrofula and rickets, which are two prevailing disorders among the children in Boulogne. But I believe the former is more owing to the water used in the Lower Town, which is very hard and unwholesome. It curdles with soap, gives a red colour to the meat that is boiled in it, and, when drank by strangers, never fails to occasion pains in the stomach and bowels; nay, sometimes produces dysenteries. In all appearance it is impregnated with nitre, if not with something more mischievous: we know that mundic, or pyrites, very often contains a proportion of arsenic, mixed with sulphur, vitriol, and mercury. Perhaps it partakes of the acid of some coal mine; for there are coal works in this district. There is a well of purging water within a quarter of a mile of the Upper Town, to which the inhabitants resort in the morning, as the people of London go to the Dog-and-duck, in St. George's fields. There is likewise a fountain of excellent water, hard by the cathedral, in the Upper Town, from whence I am daily supplied at a small expence. Some modern chemists affirm, that no saline chalybeate waters can exist, except in the neighbourhood of coal damp; and that nothing can be more mild, and gentle, and friendly to the constitution, than the said damp; but I know that the place where I was bred stands upon a zonic of coal; that the water which the inhabitants generally use is hard and brackish; and that the people are remarkably subject to the king's evil and consumption. These I would impute to the bad water, impregnated with the vitriol and brine of coal, as there is nothing in the constitution of the air that should render such distempers endemial. That the air of Boulogne encourages putrefaction, appears from the effect it has upon butcher's meat, which, though the season is remarkably cold, we can hardly keep four-and-twenty hours in the coolest part of the house.

Living here is pretty reasonable; and the markets are tolerably supplied. The beef is neither fat nor firm; but very good for soup, which is the only use the French make of it. The veal is not so white, nor so well fed, as the English veal; but it is more juicy, and better tasted. The mutton and pork are very good. We buy our poultry alive, and fatten them at home. Here are excellent turkies, and no want of game: the hares, in particular, are very large, juicy, and high-flavoured. The best part of the fish caught on this coast is sent post to Paris, in *chasse-marines*, by a company of contractors, like those of Hastings in Sussex. Nevertheless, we have excellent soles, skaite, flounders and whittings, and sometimes mackarel. The oysters are very large, coarse, and rank. There is very little fish caught on the French coast, because the shallows run a great way from the shore; and the fish live chiefly in deep water: for this reason the fishermen go a great way out to sea, sometimes even as far as the coast of England. Notwithstanding all the haste the contractors can make, their fish in the summer is very often spoiled before it arrives at Paris; and this is not to be wondered at, considering the length of the way, which is near one hundred and fifty miles. At best it must be in such a mortified condition, that no other people, except the negroes on the coast of Guinea, would feed upon it.

The wine commonly drank at Boulogne comes from Auxerre, is very small and meagre, and may be had from five to eight sols a bottle; that is, from two-pence halfpenny to fourpence. The French inhabitants drink no good wine; nor is there any to be had, unless you have recourse to the British wine-merchants here established, who deal in Bourdeaux wines, brought hither by sea for the London market. I have very good claret from a friend, at the rate of fifteen-pence sterling a bottle; and excellent small beer as reasonable as in England. I don't believe there is a drop of generous Burgundy in the place; and the aubergistes impose upon us shamefully, when they charge it at two livres a bottle. There is a small white wine, called *preniac*, which is very agreeable and very cheap. All the brandy which I have seen in Boulogne is new, fiery, and still-burnt. This is the trash which the smugglers import into England: they have it for about ten-pence a gallon. Butcher's meat is sold for five sols, or two-pence halfpenny a pound, and the pound here consists of eighteen ounces. I have a young turkey for thirty sols; a hare for four-and-twenty; a couple of chickens for twenty sols, and a couple of good soles for the same price. Before we left England, we were told that there was no fruit in Boulogne; but we have found ourselves agreeably disappointed in this particular. The place is well supplied with strawberries, cherries, gooseberries, corinths, peaches, apricots, and excellent pears. I have eaten more fruit this season, than I have done for several years. There are many well-cultivated gardens in the skirts of the town; particularly one belonging to our friend Mrs. B—, where we often drink tea in a charming summer-house built on a rising ground, which commands a delightful prospect of the sea. We have many obligations to this good lady, who is a kind neighbour, an obliging friend, and a most agreeable companion: she speaks English prettily, and is greatly attached to the people and the customs of our nation. They use wood for their common fuel, though, if I were to live at Boulogne, I would mix it with coal, which this country affords. Both the wood and the coal are reasonable enough. I am certain that a man may keep house in Boulogne for about one half of what it will cost him in London; and this is said to be one of the dearest places in France.

The adjacent country is very agreeable, diversified with hill and dale, corn-fields, woods, and meadows. There is a forest of a considerable extent, that begins about a short league from the Upper Town: it belongs to the king, and the wood is farmed to different individuals.

In point of agriculture, the people in this neighbourhood seem to have profited by the example of the English. Since I was last in France, fifteen years ago, a good number of inclosures and plantations have been made in the English fashion. There is a good many tolerable country-houses, within a few miles of Boulogne; but mostly empty. I was offered a compleat house, with a garden of four acres well laid out, and two fields for grass or hay, about a mile from the town, for four hundred livres, about seventeen pounds a year: it is partly furnished, stands in an agreeable situation, with a fine prospect of the sea, and was lately occupied by a Scotch nobleman, who is in the service of France.



To judge from appearance, the people of Boulogne are descended from the Flemings, who formerly possessed this country; for, a great many of the present inhabitants have fine skins, fair hair, and florid complexions; very different from the natives of France in general, who are distinguished by black hair, brown skins, and swarthy faces. The people of the Boulonnois enjoy some extraordinary privileges, and, in particular, are exempted from the gabelle or duties upon salt: how they deserved this mark of favour, I do not know; but they seem to have a spirit of independence among them, are very ferocious, and much addicted to revenge. Many barbarous murders are committed, both in the town and country; and the peasants, from motives of envy and resentment, frequently set their neighbours' houses on fire. Several instances of this kind have happened in the course of the last year. The interruption which is given, in arbitrary governments, to the administration of justice, by the interposition of the great, has always a bad effect upon the morals of the common people. The peasants too are often rendered desperate and savage, by the misery they suffer from the oppression and tyranny of their landlords. In this neighbourhood the labouring people are ill lodged and wretchedly fed; and they have no idea of cleanliness. There is a substantial burgher in the High Town, who was some years ago convicted of a most barbarous murder. He received sentence to be broke alive upon the wheel; but was pardoned by the interposition of the governor of the county, and carries on his business as usual in the face of the whole community. A furious abbe, being refused orders by the bishop, on account of his irregular life, took an opportunity to stab the prelate with a knife, one Sunday, as he walked out of the cathedral. The good bishop desired he might be permitted to escape; but it was thought proper to punish, with the utmost severity, such an atrocious attempt. He was accordingly apprehended, and, though the wound was not mortal, condemned to be broke. When this dreadful sentence was executed, he cried out, that it was hard he should undergo such torments, for having wounded a worthless priest, by whom he had been injured, while such-a-one (naming the burgher mentioned above) lived in ease and security, after having brutally murdered a poor man, and a helpless woman big with child, who had not given him the least provocation.

The inhabitants of Boulogne may be divided into three classes; the noblesse or gentry, the burghers, and the canaille. I don't mention the clergy, and the people belonging to the law, because I shall occasionally trouble you with my thoughts upon the religion and ecclesiastics of this country; and as for the lawyers, exclusive of their profession, they may be considered as belonging to one or other of these divisions. The noblesse are vain, proud, poor, and slothful. Very few of them have above six thousand livres a year, which may amount to about two hundred and fifty pounds sterling; and many of them have not half this revenue. I think there is one heiress, said to be worth one hundred thousand livres, about four thousand two hundred pounds; but then her jewels, her cloaths, and even her linen, are reckoned part of this fortune. The noblesse have not the common sense to reside at their houses in the country, where, by farming their own grounds, they might live at a small expence, and improve their estates at the same time. They allow their country houses to go to decay, and their gardens and fields to waste; and reside in dark holes in the Upper Town of Boulogne without light, air, or convenience. There they starve within doors, that they may have wherewithal to purchase fine cloaths, and appear dressed once a day in the church, or on the rampart. They have no education, no taste for reading, no housewifery, nor indeed any earthly occupation, but that of dressing their hair, and adorning their bodies. They hate walking, and would never go abroad, if they were not stimulated by the vanity of being seen. I ought to except indeed those who turn devotees, and spend the greatest part of their time with the priest, either at church or in their own houses. Other amusements they have none in this place, except private parties of card-playing, which are far from being expensive. Nothing can be more parsimonious than the oeconomy of these people: they live upon soupe and bouille, fish and sallad: they never think of giving dinners, or entertaining their friends; they even save the expence of coffee and tea, though both are very cheap at Boulogne. They presume that every person drinks coffee at home, immediately after dinner, which is always over by one o'clock; and, in lieu of tea in the afternoon, they treat with a glass of sherbet, or capillaire. In a word, I

know not a more insignificant set of mortals than the noblesse of Boulogne; helpless in themselves, and useless to the community; without dignity, sense, or sentiment; contemptible from pride. and ridiculous from vanity. They pretend to be jealous of their rank, and will entertain no correspondence with the merchants, whom they term plebeians. They likewise keep at a great distance from strangers, on pretence of a delicacy in the article of punctilio: but, as I am informed, this stateliness is in a great measure affected, in order to conceal their poverty, which would appear to greater disadvantage, if they admitted of a more familiar communication. Considering the vivacity of the French people, one would imagine they could not possibly lead such an insipid life, altogether unanimated by society, or diversion. True it is, the only profane diversions of this place are a puppet-show and a mountebank; but then their religion affords a perpetual comedy. Their high masses, their feasts, their processions, their pilgrimages, confessions, images, tapers, robes, incense, benedictions, spectacles, representations, and innumerable ceremonies, which revolve almost incessantly, furnish a variety of entertainment from one end of the year to the other. If superstition implies fear, never was a word more misapplied than it is to the mummery of the religion of Rome. The people are so far from being impressed with awe and religious terror by this sort of machinery, that it amuses their imaginations in the most agreeable manner, and keeps them always in good humour. A Roman catholic longs as impatiently for the festival of St. Suaire, or St. Croix, or St. Veronique, as a schoolboy in England for the representation of punch and the devil; and there is generally as much laughing at one farce as at the other. Even when the descent from the cross is acted, in the holy week, with all the circumstances that ought naturally to inspire the gravest sentiments, if you cast your eyes among the multitude that croud the place, you will not discover one melancholy face: all is prattling, tittering, or laughing; and ten to one but you perceive a number of them employed in hissing the female who personates the Virgin Mary. And here it may not be amiss to observe, that the Roman catholics, not content with the infinite number of saints who really existed, have not only personified the cross, but made two female saints out of a piece of linen. Veronique, or Veronica, is no other than a corruption of vera icon, or vera effigies, said to be the exact representation of our Saviour's face, impressed upon a piece of linen, with which he wiped the sweat from his forehead in his way to the place of crucifixion. The same is worshipped under the name of St. Suaire, from the Latin word sudarium. This same handkerchief is said to have had three folds, on every one of which was the impression: one of these remains at Jerusalem, a second was brought to Rome, and a third was conveyed to Spain. Baronius says, there is a very antient history of the sancta facies in the Vatican. Tillemont, however, looks upon the whole as a fable. Some suppose Veronica to be the same with St. Haemorrhossa, the patroness of those who are afflicted with the piles, who make their joint invocations to her and St. Fiacre, the son of a Scotch king, who lived and died a hermit in France. The troops of Henry V. of England are said to have pillaged the chapel of this Highland saint; who, in revenge, assisted his countrymen, in the French service, to defeat the English at Bauge, and afterwards afflicted Henry with the piles, of which he died. This prince complained, that he was not only plagued by the living Scots, but even persecuted by those who were dead.

I know not whether I may be allowed to compare the Romish religion to comedy, and Calvinism to tragedy. The first amuses the senses, and excites ideas of mirth and good-humour; the other, like tragedy, deals in the passions of terror and pity. Step into a conventicle of dissenters, you will, ten to one, hear the minister holding forth upon the sufferings of Christ, or the torments of hell, and see many marks of religious horror in the faces of the hearers. This is perhaps one reason why the reformation did not succeed in France, among a volatile, giddy, unthinking people, shocked at the mortified appearances of the Calvinists; and accounts for its rapid progress among nations of a more melancholy turn of character and complexion: for, in the conversion of the multitude, reason is generally out of the question. Even the penance imposed upon the catholics is little more than mock mortification: a murderer is often quit with his confessor for saying three prayers extraordinary; and these easy terms, on which absolution is obtained, certainly encourage the repetition of the

most enormous crimes. The pomp and ceremonies of this religion, together with the great number of holidays they observe, howsoever they may keep up the spirits of the commonalty, and help to diminish the sense of their own misery, must certainly, at the same time, produce a frivolous taste for frippery and shew, and encourage a habit of idleness, to which I, in a great measure, ascribe the extreme poverty of the lower people. Very near half of their time, which might be profitably employed in the exercise of industry, is lost to themselves and the community, in attendance upon the different exhibitions of religious mummary.

But as this letter has already run to an unconscionable length, I shall defer, till another occasion, what I have further to say on the people of this place, and in the mean time assure you, that I am always—Yours affectionately.

## LETTER V

*BOULOGNE, September 12, 1763.*

DEAR SIR,—My stay in this place now draws towards a period. 'Till within these few days I have continued bathing, with some advantage to my health, though the season has been cold and wet, and disagreeable. There was a fine prospect of a plentiful harvest in this neighbourhood. I used to have great pleasure in driving between the fields of wheat, oats, and barley; but the crop has been entirely ruined by the rain, and nothing is now to be seen on the ground but the tarnished straw, and the rotten spoils of the husbandman's labour. The ground scarce affords subsistence to a few flocks of meagre sheep, that crop the stubble, and the intervening grass; each flock under the protection of its shepherd, with his crook and dogs, who lies every night in the midst of the fold, in a little thatched travelling lodge, mounted on a wheel-carriage. Here he passes the night, in order to defend his flock from the wolves, which are sometimes, especially in winter, very bold and desperate.

Two days ago we made an excursion with Mrs. B— and Capt. L— to the village of Samers, on the Paris road, about three leagues from Boulogne. Here is a venerable abbey of Benedictines, well endowed, with large agreeable gardens prettily laid out. The monks are well lodged, and well entertained. Tho' restricted from flesh meals by the rules of their order, they are allowed to eat wild duck and teal, as a species of fish; and when they long for a good bouillon, or a partridge, or pullet, they have nothing to do but to say they are out of order. In that case the appetite of the patient is indulged in his own apartment. Their church is elegantly contrived, but kept in a very dirty condition. The greatest curiosity I saw in this place was an English boy, about eight or nine years old, whom his father had sent hither to learn the French language. In less than eight weeks, he was become captain of the boys of the place, spoke French perfectly well, and had almost forgot his mother tongue. But to return to the people of Boulogne.

The burghers here, as in other places, consist of merchants, shop-keepers, and artisans. Some of the merchants have got fortunes, by fitting out privateers during the war. A great many single ships were taken from the English, notwithstanding the good look-out of our cruisers, who were so alert, that the privateers from this coast were often taken in four hours after they sailed from the French harbour; and there is hardly a captain of an armateur in Boulogne, who has not been prisoner in England five or six times in the course of the war. They were fitted out at a very small expence, and used to run over in the night to the coast of England, where they hovered as English fishing smacks, until they kidnapped some coaster, with which they made the best of their way across the Channel. If they fell in with a British cruiser, they surrendered without resistance: the captain was soon exchanged, and the loss of the proprietor was not great: if they brought their prize safe into harbour, the advantage was considerable. In time of peace the merchants of Boulogne deal in wine brandies, and oil, imported from the South, and export fish, with the manufactures of France, to Portugal, and other countries; but the trade is not great. Here are two or three considerable houses of wine merchants from Britain, who deal in Bourdeaux wine, with which they supply London and other parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The fishery of mackarel and herring is so considerable on this coast, that it is said to yield annually eight or nine hundred thousand livres, about thirty-five thousand pounds sterling.

The shop-keepers here drive a considerable traffic with the English smugglers, whose cutters are almost the only vessels one sees in the harbour of Boulogne, if we except about a dozen of those flat-bottomed boats, which raised such alarms in England, in the course of the war. Indeed they seem to be good for nothing else, and perhaps they were built for this purpose only. The smugglers from the coast of Kent and Sussex pay English gold for great quantities of French brandy, tea, coffee, and small wine, which they run from this country. They likewise buy glass trinkets, toys, and coloured

prints, which sell in England, for no other reason, but that they come from France, as they may be had as cheap, and much better finished, of our own manufacture. They likewise take off ribbons, laces, linen, and cambrics; though this branch of trade is chiefly in the hands of traders that come from London and make their purchases at Dunkirk, where they pay no duties. It is certainly worth while for any traveller to lay in a stock of linen either at Dunkirk or Boulogne; the difference of the price at these two places is not great. Even here I have made a provision of shirts for one half of the money they would have cost in London. Undoubtedly the practice of smuggling is very detrimental to the fair trader, and carries considerable sums of money out of the kingdom, to enrich our rivals and enemies. The custom-house officers are very watchful, and make a great number of seizures: nevertheless, the smugglers find their account in continuing this contraband commerce; and are said to indemnify themselves, if they save one cargo out of three. After all, the best way to prevent smuggling, is to lower the duties upon the commodities which are thus introduced. I have been told, that the revenue upon tea has encreased ever since the duty upon it was diminished. By the bye, the tea smuggled on the coast of Sussex is most execrable stuff. While I stayed at Hastings, for the conveniency of bathing, I must have changed my breakfast, if I had not luckily brought tea with me from London: yet we have as good tea at Boulogne for nine livres a pound, as that which sells at fourteen shillings at London.

The bourgeois of this place seem to live at their ease, probably in consequence of their trade with the English. Their houses consist of the ground-floor, one story above, and garrets. In those which are well furnished, you see pier-glasses and marble slabs; but the chairs are either paultry things, made with straw bottoms, which cost about a shilling a-piece, or old-fashioned, high-backed seats of needle-work, stuffed, very clumsy and incommodious. The tables are square fir boards, that stand on edge in a corner, except when they are used, and then they are set upon cross legs that open and shut occasionally. The king of France dines off a board of this kind. Here is plenty of table-linen however. The poorest tradesman in Boulogne has a napkin on every cover, and silver forks with four prongs, which are used with the right hand, there being very little occasion for knives; for the meat is boiled or roasted to rags. The French beds are so high, that sometimes one is obliged to mount them by the help of steps; and this is also the case in Flanders. They very seldom use feather-beds; but they lie upon a pailleasse, or bag of straw, over which are laid two, and sometimes three mattresses. Their testers are high and old-fashioned, and their curtains generally of thin bays, red, or green, laced with taudry yellow, in imitation of gold. In some houses, however, one meets with furniture of stamped linen; but there is no such thing as a carpet to be seen, and the floors are in a very dirty condition. They have not even the implements of cleanliness in this country. Every chamber is furnished with an armoire, or clothes-press, and a chest of drawers, of very clumsy workmanship. Every thing shews a deficiency in the mechanic arts. There is not a door, nor a window, that shuts close. The hinges, locks, and latches, are of iron, coarsely made, and ill contrived. The very chimnies are built so open, that they admit both rain and sun, and all of them smoke intolerably. If there is no cleanliness among these people, much less shall we find delicacy, which is the cleanliness of the mind. Indeed they are utter strangers to what we call common decency; and I could give you some high-flavoured instances, at which even a native of Edinburgh would stop his nose. There are certain mortifying views of human nature, which undoubtedly ought to be concealed as much as possible, in order to prevent giving offence: and nothing can be more absurd, than to plead the difference of custom in different countries, in defence of these usages which cannot fail giving disgust to the organs and senses of all mankind. Will custom exempt from the imputation of gross indecency a French lady, who shifts her frowsy smock in presence of a male visitant, and talks to him of her lavement, her medecine, and her bidet! An Italian signora makes no scruple of telling you, she is such a day to begin a course of physic for the pox. The celebrated reformer of the Italian comedy introduces a child befouling itself, on the stage, OE, NO TI SENTI? BISOGNA DESFASSARLO, (fa cenno che sentesi mal odore). I have known a lady handed to the house of office by her admirer, who stood at the door, and entertained her with bons mots all the time she was within. But I should be glad to know,

whether it is possible for a fine lady to speak and act in this manner, without exciting ideas to her own disadvantage in the mind of every man who has any imagination left, and enjoys the entire use of his senses, howsoever she may be authorised by the customs of her country? There is nothing so vile or repugnant to nature, but you may plead prescription for it, in the customs of some nation or other. A Parisian likes mortified flesh: a native of Legiboli will not taste his fish till it is quite putrefied: the civilized inhabitants of Kamschatka get drunk with the urine of their guests, whom they have already intoxicated: the Nova Zemblans make merry on train-oil: the Groenlanders eat in the same dish with their dogs: the Caffres, at the Cape of Good Hope, piss upon those whom they delight to honour, and feast upon a sheep's intestines with their contents, as the greatest dainty that can be presented. A true-bred Frenchman dips his fingers, imbrowned with snuff, into his plate filled with ragout: between every three mouthfuls, he produces his snuff-box, and takes a fresh pinch, with the most graceful gesticulations; then he displays his handkerchief, which may be termed the flag of abomination, and, in the use of both, scatters his favours among those who have the happiness to sit near him. It must be owned, however, that a Frenchman will not drink out of a tankard, in which, perhaps, a dozen of filthy mouths have flabbered, as is the custom in England. Here every individual has his own gobelet, which stands before him, and he helps himself occasionally with wine or water, or both, which likewise stand upon the table. But I know no custom more beastly than that of using water-glasses, in which polite company spirt, and squirt, and spue the filthy scourings of their gums, under the eyes of each other. I knew a lover cured of his passion, by seeing this nasty cascade discharged from the mouth of his mistress. I don't doubt but I shall live to see the day, when the hospitable custom of the antient Egyptians will be revived; then a conveniency will be placed behind every chair in company, with a proper provision of waste paper, that individuals may make themselves easy without parting company. I insist upon it, that this practice would not be more indelicate than that which is now in use. What then, you will say, must a man sit with his chops and fingers up to the ears and knuckles in grease? No; let those who cannot eat without defiling themselves, step into another room, provided with basons and towels: but I think it would be better to institute schools, where youth may learn to eat their victuals, without daubing themselves, or giving offence to the eyes of one another.

The bourgeois of Boulogne have commonly soup and bouilli at noon, and a roast, with a sallad, for supper; and at all their meals there is a dessert of fruit. This indeed is the practice all over France. On meagre days they eat fish, omelettes, fried beans, fricassees of eggs and onions, and burnt cream. The tea which they drink in the afternoon is rather boiled than infused; it is sweetened all together with coarse sugar, and drank with an equal quantity of boiled milk.

We had the honour to be entertained the other day by our landlord, Mr. B—, who spared no cost on this banquet, exhibited for the glory of France. He had invited a newmarried couple, together with the husband's mother and the lady's father, who was one of the noblesse of Montreuil, his name Mons. L—y. There were likewise some merchants of the town, and Mons. B—'s uncle, a facetious little man, who had served in the English navy, and was as big and as round as a hogshead; we were likewise favoured with the company of father K—, a native of Ireland, who is vicaire or curate of the parish; and among the guests was Mons. L—y's son, a pretty boy, about thirteen or fourteen years of age. The repas served up in three services, or courses, with entrees and hors d'oeuvres, exclusive of the fruit, consisted of about twenty dishes, extremely well dressed by the rotisseur, who is the best cook I ever knew, in France, or elsewhere; but the plates were not presented with much order. Our young ladies did not seem to be much used to do the honours of the table. The most extraordinary circumstance that I observed on this occasion—as, that all the French who were present ate of every dish that appeared; and I am told, that if there had been an hundred articles more, they would have had a trial of each. This is what they call doing justice to the founder. Mons. L—y was placed at the head of the table and indeed he was the oracle and orator of the company; tall, thin, and weather-beaten, not unlike the picture of Don Quixote after he had lost his teeth. He had been garde du corps, or life-guardman at Versailles; and by virtue of this office he was perfectly well acquainted with the

persons of the king and the dauphin, with the characters of the ministers and grandees, and, in a word, with all the secrets of state, on which he held forth with equal solemnity and elocution. He exclaimed against the jesuits, and the farmers of the revenue, who, he said, had ruined France. Then, addressing himself to me, asked, if the English did not every day drink to the health of madame la marquise? I did not at first comprehend his meaning; but answered in general, that the English were not deficient in complaisance for the ladies. "Ah! (cried he) she is the best friend they have in the world. If it had not been for her, they would not have such reason to boast of the advantages of the war." I told him the only conquest which the French had made in the war, was atchieved by one of her generals: I meant the taking of Mahon. But I did not choose to prosecute the discourse, remembering that in the year 1749, I had like to have had an affair with a Frenchman at Ghent, who affirmed, that all the battles gained by the great duke of Marlborough were purposely lost by the French generals, in order to bring the schemes of madame de Maintenon into disgrace. This is no bad resource for the national vanity of these people: though, in general, they are really persuaded, that theirs is the richest, the bravest, the happiest, and the most powerful nation under the sun; and therefore, without some such cause, they must be invincible. By the bye, the common people here still frighten their wayward children with the name of Marlborough. Mr. B—'s son, who was nursed at a peasant's house, happening one day, after he was brought home, to be in disgrace with his father, who threatened to correct him, the child ran for protection to his mother, crying, "Faites sortir ce vilaine Malbroug," "Turn out that rogue Marlborough." It is amazing to hear a sensible Frenchman assert, that the revenues of France amount to four hundred millions of livres, about twenty millions sterling, clear of all incumbrances, when in fact their clear revenue is not much above ten. Without all doubt they have reason to inveigh against the fermiers generaux, who oppress the people in raising the taxes, not above two-thirds of which are brought into the king's coffers: the rest enriches themselves, and enables them to bribe high for the protection of the great, which is the only support they have against the remonstrances of the states and parliaments, and the suggestions of common sense; which will ever demonstrate this to be, of all others, the most pernicious method of supplying the necessities of government.

Mons. L—y seasoned the severity of his political apothegms with intermediate sallies of mirth and gallantry. He ogled the venerable gentlewoman his commere, who sat by him. He looked, sighed, and languished, sung tender songs, and kissed the old lady's hand with all the ardour of a youthful admirer. I unfortunately congratulated him on having such a pretty young gentleman to his son. He answered, sighing, that the boy had talents, but did not put them to a proper use—"Long before I attained his age (said he) I had finished my rhetoric." Captain B—, who had eaten himself black in the face, and, with the napkin under his chin, was no bad representation of Sancho Panza in the suds, with the dishclout about his neck, when the duke's scullions insisted upon shaving him; this seawit, turning to the boy, with a waggish leer, "I suppose (said he) you don't understand the figure of amplification so well as Monsieur your father." At that instant, one of the nieces, who knew her uncle to be very ticklish, touched him under the short ribs, on which the little man attempted to spring up, but lost the centre of gravity. He overturned his own plate in the lap of the person that sat next to him, and falling obliquely upon his own chair, both tumbled down upon the floor together, to the great discomposure of the whole company; for the poor man would have been actually strangled, had not his nephew loosed his stock with great expedition. Matters being once more adjusted, and the captain condoled on his disaster, Mons. L—y took it in his head to read his son a lecture upon filial obedience. This was mingled with some sharp reproof, which the boy took so ill that he retired. The old lady observed that he had been too severe: her daughter-in-law, who was very pretty, said her brother had given him too much reason; hinting, at the same time, that he was addicted to some terrible vices; upon which several individuals repeated the interjection, ah! ah! "Yes (said Mons. L—y, with a rueful aspect) the boy has a pernicious turn for gaming: in one afternoon he lost, at billiards, such a sum as gives me horror to think of it." "Fifty sols in one afternoon," (cried the sister). "Fifty sols! (exclaimed the mother-in-law, with marks of astonishment) that's too much—that's too much!"

—he's to blame— he's to blame! but youth, you know, Mons. L—y—ah! vive la jeunesse!"—"et l'amour!" cried the father, wiping his eyes, squeezing her hand, and looking tenderly upon her. Mr. B — took this opportunity to bring in the young gentleman, who was admitted into favour, and received a second exhortation. Thus harmony was restored, and the entertainment concluded with fruit, coffee, and liqueurs.

When a bourgeois of Boulogne takes the air, he goes in a one-horse chaise, which is here called cabriolet, and hires it for half-a-crown a day. There are also travelling chaises, which hold four persons, two seated with their faces to the horses, and two behind their backs; but those vehicles are all very ill made, and extremely inconvenient. The way of riding most used in this place is on assback. You will see every day, in the skirts of the town, a great number of females thus mounted, with the feet on either side occasionally, according as the wind blows, so that sometimes the right and sometimes the left hand guides the beast: but in other parts of France, as well as in Italy, the ladies sit on horseback with their legs astride, and are provided with drawers for that purpose.



## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.