for him, — Mrs. Wadman silently sallied forth from her arbour, replaced the pin in her mob, passed the wicker-gate, and advanced slowly towards my uncle Toby's sentry-box: the disposition which Trim had made in my uncle Toby's mind was too favourable a crisis to be let slip——

— The attack was determined upon: it was facilitated still more by my uncle Toby's having ordered the Corporal to wheel off the pioneer's shovel, the spade, the pick-axe, the picquets, and other military stores which lay scattered upon the ground where Dunkirk stood. — The Corporal had marched; — the field was clear.

Now, consider, Sir, what nonsense it is, either in fighting, or writing, or anything else (whether in rhyme to it or not), which a man has occasion to do, — to act by plan: for if ever Plan, independent of all circumstances, deserved registering in letters of gold (I mean in the archives of Gotham) — it was certainly the plan of Mrs. Wadman's attack of my uncle Toby in his sentry-box, *by Plan*. Now, the plan hanging up in it at this juncture, being the Plan of Dunkirk, — and the tale of Dunkirk a tale of relaxation, it opposed every impression she could make: and, besides, could she have gone upon it, — the manœuvre of fingers and hands in the attack of the sentry-box was so outdone by that of the fair Beguine's, in Trim's story, — that just then, that particular attack, however successful before — became the most heartless attack that could be made.

O! let woman alone for this. Mrs. Wadman had scarce opened the wicker-gate, when her genius sported with the change of circumstances.

She formed a new attack in a moment.

Chapter XXIV

— I am half distracted, Captain Shandy, said Mrs. Wadman, holding up her cambric-handkerchief to her left eye, as she approached the door of my uncle Toby's sentry-box; a mote, — or sand, — or something, — I know not what, has got into this eye of mine; — do look into it: — it is not in the white. —

In saying which, Mrs. Wadman edged herself close in beside my uncle Toby and squeezing herself down upon the corner of his bench, she gave him an opportunity of doing it without rising up. . . . Do look into it, said she.

Honest soul! thou didst look into it with as much innocency of heart as ever child looked into a raree-show-box; and 'twere as much a sin to have hurt thee.

If a man will be peeping of his own accord into things of that nature, I've nothing to say to it.

My uncle Toby never did: and I will answer for him that he would have sat quietly upon a sofa from June to January (which, you know, takes in both the hot and cold months), with an eye as fine as the Thracian Rhodope's beside him, without being able to tell whether it was a black or a blue one.

The difficulty was to get my uncle Toby to look at one at all.

'Tis surmounted. And

I see him yonder, with his pipe pendulous in his hand, and the ashes falling out of it, — looking, — and looking, — then rubbing his eyes, — and looking again, with twice the good-nature that ever Galileo looked for a spot in the sun.

In vain! for, by all the powers which animate the organ — Widow Wadman's left eye shines this moment as lucid as her right; — there is neither mote, nor sand, nor dust, nor chaff, nor speck, nor particle of opaque matter floating in it. — There is nothing, my dear paternal uncle! but one lambent delicious fire, furtively shooting out from every part of it, in all directions into thine.

If thou lookest, uncle Toby, in search of this mote one moment longer, thou art undone.

Chapter XXV

An eye is, for all the world, exactly like a cannon, in this respect, that it is not so much the eye or the cannon, in themselves, as it is the carriage of the eye — and the carriage of the cannon; by which both the one and the other are enabled to do so much execution. I don't think the comparison a bad one: however, as 'tis made and placed at the head of the chapter, as much for use as ornament; all I desire in return is that, whenever I speak of Mrs. Wadman's eyes (except once in the next period) that you keep it in your fancy.

I protest, Madam, said my uncle Toby, I can see nothing whatever in your eye.

. . . It is not in the white, said Mrs. Wadman. — My uncle Toby looked with might and main into the pupil.

Now, of all the eyes which ever were created, from your own, Madam, up to those of Venus herself, which certainly were as venereal a pair of eyes as ever stood in a head, there never was an eye of them all so fitted to rob my uncle Toby of his repose as the very eye at which he was looking; — it was not, Madam, a rolling eye, — a romping, or a wanton one; — nor was it an eye sparkling, petulant, or imperious — of high claims and terrifying exactions, which would have curdled at once that milk of human nature of which my uncle Toby was made up; — but 'twas an eye full of gentle salutations, — and soft responses, — speaking, — not like the trumpet-stop of some ill-made organ, in which many an eye I talk to, holds coarse converse, but whispering soft, — like the last low accents of an expiring saint, — "How can you live comfortless, Captain Shandy, and alone, without a bosom to lean your head on, — or trust your cares to?"

It was an eye —

But I shall be in love with it myself, if I say another word about it.

It did my uncle Toby's business.

Chapter XXVI

There is nothing shows the characters of my father and my uncle Toby in a more entertaining light than their different manner of deportment under the same accident; — for I call not love a misfortune, from a persuasion that a man's heart is ever the better for it. — Great God! what must my uncle Toby's have been, when 'twas all benignity without it! —

My father, as appears from many of his papers, was very subject to this passion before he married; — but, from a little subacid kind of drollish impatience in his nature, whenever it befell him, he would never submit to it like a Christian; but would pish, and huff, and bounce, and kick, and play the Devil, and write the bitterest Philippics against the eye that ever man wrote: — there is one in verse upon somebody's eye or other, that for two or three nights together, had put him by his rest; which, in his first transport of resentment against it, he begins thus: —

> "A Devil 'tis — and mischief such doth work
> As never yet did Pagan, Jew, or Turk."

In short, during the whole paroxysm, my father was all abuse and foul language, approaching rather towards malediction; — only he did not do it with as much method as Ernulphus; he was too impetuous; nor with Ernulphus's policy; — for tho' my father, with the most intolerant spirit, would curse both this and that, and everything under Heaven, which was either aiding or abetting to his love, — yet he never concluded his chapter, curses upon it, without cursing himself into the bargain, as one of the most egregious fools and coxcombs, he would say, that ever was let loose in the world.

My uncle Toby, on the contrary, took it like a lamb, — sat still, and let the poison work in his veins without resistance: — in the sharpest exacerbations of his wound (like that on his groin) he never dropped one fretful or discontented word, — he blamed neither heaven nor earth, — nor thought, nor spoke an injurious thing of any body, nor any part of it; he sat solitary and pensive with his pipe, — looking at his lame leg, — then whiffing out a sentimental heigh-ho! which, mixing, with the smoke, incommoded no one mortal.

He took it like a lamb, I say.

In truth, he had mistook it at first; for, having taken a ride with my father that very morning, to save, if possible, a beautiful wood, which the dean and chapter were hewing down to give to the poor; which said wood being in full view of my uncle Toby's house, and of singular service to him in his description of the battle of Wynendale, — by trotting on too hastily to save it, upon an uneasy saddle, worse horse, etc., etc. — it had so happened that the serous part of the blood had got betwixt the two skins in the nethermost part of my uncle Toby, — the first shootings of which (as my uncle Toby had no experience of love) he had taken for a part of the passion, till the blister breaking in the one case, and the other remaining, my uncle Toby was presently convinced that his wound was not a skin-deep wound, but that it had gone to his heart.

Chapter XXVII

The world is ashamed of being virtuous. — My uncle Toby knew little of the world; and therefore, when he felt he was in love with Widow Wadman, he had no conception that the thing was any more to be made a mystery of than if Mrs. Wadman had given him a cut with a gapp'd knife across his finger. Had it been otherwise, — yet, as he ever looked upon Trim as a humble friend, and saw fresh reasons every day of his life to treat him as such, — it would have made no variation in the manner in which he informed him of the affair.

"I am in love, Corporal!" quoth my uncle Toby.

Chapter XXVIII

In love! — said the Corporal, — your Honour was very well the day before yesterday, when I was telling your Honour the story of the King of Bohemia . . . Bohemia! said my uncle Toby — musing a long time — What became of that story, Trim?

. . . We lost it, an' please your Honour, somehow betwixt us; but your Honour was as free from love then as I am. . . . 'Twas just as thou went'st off with the wheelbarrow, — with Mrs. Wadman, quoth my uncle Toby. — She has left a ball here, added my uncle Toby, pointing to his breast.

. . . She can no more, an' please your Honour, stand a siege than she could fly, cried the Corporal.

. . . But, as we are neighbours, Trim, the best way, I think, is to let her know it civilly at first, quoth my uncle Toby.

. . . Now, if I might presume, said the Corporal, to differ from your Honour. . . .

. . . Why else do I talk to thee, Trim? said my uncle Toby, mildly. . . .

. . . Then I would begin, an' please your Honour, making a good thundering attack upon her, in return, — and telling her civilly afterwards; — for if she knows anything of your Honour's being in love, beforehand. . . . L—d help her! — she knows no more at present of it, Trim, said my uncle Toby, — than the child unborn.

Precious souls! —

Mrs. Wadman had told it, with all its circumstances, to Mrs. Bridget, twenty-four hours before; and was at that very moment sitting in council with her, touching some slight misgivings with regard to the issue of the affairs, which the Devil, who never lies dead in a ditch, had put into her head, — before he would allow half time to get quietly through her *Te Deum*.

I am terribly afraid, said Widow Wadman, in case I should marry him, Bridget, — that the poor Captain will not enjoy his health, with the monstrous wound upon his groin.

. . . It may not, Madam, be so very large, replied Bridget, as you think; — and I believe, besides, added she, — that 'tis dried up.

. . . I could like to know, — merely for his sake, said Mrs. Wadman.

. . . We'll know the long and the broad of it in ten days, answered Mrs. Bridget; for whilst the Captain is paying his addresses to you, I'm confident Mr. Trim will be for making love to me; — and I'll let him as much as he will, added Bridget, to get it all out of him.

The measures were taken at once; — and my uncle Toby and the Corporal went on with theirs.

Now, quoth the Corporal, setting his left hand a-kimbo, and giving such a flourish with his right as just promised success — and no more, — if your Honour will give me leave to lay down the plan of this attack. . . .

Thou wilt please me by it, Trim, said my uncle Toby, exceedingly: — and, as I foresee thou must act in it as my *aide-de-camp*, here's a crown, Corporal, to begin with, to steep thy commission.

. . . Then, an' please your Honour, said the Corporal (making a bow first for his commission) — we will begin by getting your Honour's laced clothes out of the great campaign-trunk, to be well aired, and have the blue and gold taken up at the sleeves; — and I'll put your white Ramallie-wig fresh into pipes; — and send for a tailor to have your Honour's thin scarlet breeches turned. . . .

I had better take the red plush ones, quoth my uncle Toby. . . . They will be too clumsy, said the Corporal.

Chapter XXIX

. . . Thou wilt get a brush and a little chalk to my sword. . . .

'Twill be only in your Honour's way, replied Trim.

Chapter XXX

. . . But your Honour's two razors shall be new set — and I will get my Montero-cap furbished up, and put on poor Lieutenant Le Fevre's regimental coat, which your Honour gave me to wear for his sake; — and as soon as your Honour is clean shaved, — and has got your clean shirt on, with your blue and gold or your fine scarlet, — sometimes one and sometimes t'other, — and everything is ready for the attack, — we'll march up boldly, as if it was to the face of a bastion; and whilst your Honour engages Mrs. Wadman in the parlour, to the right, — I'll attack Mrs. Bridget in the kitchen to the left; and having seized the pass, I'll answer for it, said the Corporal, snapping his fingers over his head, — that the day is our own.

. . . I wish I may but manage it right, said my uncle Toby; — but I declare, Corporal, I had rather march up to the very edge of a trench.

. . . A woman is quite a different thing, said the Corporal.

. . . I suppose so, quoth my uncle Toby.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT (1721–1771)

From HUMPHRY CLINKER

To Sir Watkin Phillips, of Jesus College, Oxon

Edinburgh, August 8.

Dear Phillips,

If I stay much longer at Edinburgh, I shall be changed into a downright Caledonian. My uncle observes that I have already acquired something of the country accent. The people here are so social and attentive in their civilities to strangers, that I am insensibly sucked into the channel of their manners and customs, although they are in fact much more different from ours than you can imagine. That difference, however, which struck me very much at my first arrival, I now hardly perceive, and my ear is perfectly reconciled to the Scotch accent, which I find even agreeable in the mouth of a pretty woman. It is a sort of Doric dialect, which gives an idea of amiable simplicity. You cannot imagine how we have been caressed and feasted in the good town of Edinburgh, of which we are become free denizens and guild-brothers, by the special favour of the magistracy.

I had a whimsical commission from Bath to a citizen of this metropolis. Quin, understanding our intention to visit Edinburgh, pulled out a guinea, and desired the favour I would drink it at a tavern, with a particular friend and bottle companion of his, one Mr. R. C——, a lawyer of this city. I charged myself with the commission, and taking the guinea, "You see," said I, "I have pocketed your bounty." — "Yes," replied Quin, laughing, "and a headache into the bargain, if you drink fair." I made use of this introduction to Mr. C——, who received me with open arms, and gave me the rendezvous, according to the cartel. He had provided a company of jolly fellows, among whom I found myself extremely happy, and did Mr. C—— and Quin all the justice in my power; but, alas! I was no more than a tyro among a troop of veterans, who had compassion on my youth, and conveyed me home in the morning, by what means I know not. Quin was mistaken, however, as to the headache; the claret was too good to treat me so roughly.

While Mr. Bramble holds conferences with the graver literati of the place, and our females are entertained at visits by the Scotch ladies, who are the best and kindest creatures on earth, I pass my time among the bucks of Edinburgh, who, with a great share of spirit and vivacity, have a certain shrewdness and self-command that is not often found among their neighbours in the heyday of youth and exultation. Not a hint escapes a Scotchman that can be interpreted into offence by any individual of the company; and national reflections are never heard. In this particular, I must own, we are both unjust and ungrateful to the Scotch; for, as far as I am able to judge, they have a real esteem for the natives of South Britain; and never mention our country but with expressions of regard. Nevertheless, they are far from being servile imitators of our modes and fashionable vices. All their customs and regulations of public and private economy, of business and diversion, are in their own style. This remarkably predominates in their looks, their dress, and manner, their music, and even their cookery. Our squire declares, that he knows not another people on earth so strongly marked with a national character. Now we are on the article of cookery, I must own some of their dishes are savoury, and even delicate; but I am not yet Scotchman enough to relish their singed sheep's-head and haggis, which were provided at our request one day at Mr. Mitchelson's, where we dined. The first put me in mind of the history of Congo, in which I read of negroes' heads sold publicly in the markets; the last, being a mess of minced lights, livers, suet, oatmeal, onions, and pepper, enclosed in a sheep's stomach, had a very sudden effect on mine, and the delicate Mrs. Tabby changed colour; when the cause of our disgust was instantaneously removed at the nod of our entertainer. The Scotch in general are attached to this composition, with a sort of national fondness, as well as to their oatmeal bread; which is presented at every table, in thin triangular cakes, baked on a plate of iron, called a girdle; and these many of the natives, even in the higher ranks of life, prefer to wheaten bread, which they have here in perfection. You know we used to vex poor Murray, of Balliol College, by asking, if there was really no fruit but turnips in Scotland! Sure enough I have seen turnips make their appearance, not as a dessert, but by way of *hors d'œuvres*, or whets, as radishes are served up betwixt more substantial dishes in France

and Italy; but it must be observed, that the turnips of this country are as much superior in sweetness, delicacy, and flavour, to those of England, as a musk-melon is to the stock of a common cabbage. They are small and conical, of a yellowish colour, with a very thin skin; and over and above their agreeable taste, are valuable for their antiscorbutic quality. As to the fruit now in season, such as cherries, gooseberries, and currants, there is no want of them at Edinburgh; and in the gardens of some gentlemen who live in this neighbourhood, there is now a very favourable appearance of apricots, peaches, nectarines, and even grapes; nay, I have seen a very fine show of pine-apples within a few miles of this metropolis. Indeed, we have no reason to be surprised at these particulars, when we consider how little difference there is, in fact, betwixt this climate and that of London.

All the remarkable places in the city and its avenues, for ten miles around, we have visited, much to our satisfaction. In the castle are some royal apartments, where the sovereign occasionally resided; and here are carefully preserved the regalia of the kingdom, consisting of a crown, said to be of great value, a sceptre, and a sword of state, adorned with jewels. Of these symbols of sovereignty the people are exceedingly jealous. A report being spread, during the sitting of the union parliament, that they were removed to London, such a tumult arose, that the lord commissioner would have been torn in pieces if he had not produced them for the satisfaction of the populace.

The palace of Holyrood-house is an elegant piece of architecture, but sunk in an obscure, and, as I take it, unwholesome bottom, where one would imagine it had been placed on purpose to be concealed. The apartments are lofty, but unfurnished; and as for the pictures of the Scottish kings, from Fergus I to King William, they are paltry daubings, mostly by the same hand, painted either from the imagination, or porters hired to sit for the purpose. All the diversions of London we enjoy at Edinburgh in a small compass. Here is a well-conducted concert, in which several gentlemen perform on different instruments. The Scots are all musicians. Every man you meet plays on the flute, the violin, or violoncello; and there is one nobleman whose compositions are universally admired. Our company of actors is very tolerable; and a subscription is now on foot for building a new theatre: but their assemblies please me above all other public exhibitions.

We have been at the hunters' ball, where I was really astonished to see such a number of fine women. The English, who have never crossed the Tweed, imagine, erroneously, that the Scotch ladies are not remarkable for personal attractions; but I can declare with a safe conscience I never saw so many handsome females together as were assembled on this occasion. At the Leith races, the best company comes hither from the remoter provinces; so that, I suppose, we had all the beauty of the kingdom concentrated as it were into one focus; which was indeed so vehement, that my heart could hardly resist its power. Between friends, it has sustained some damage from the bright eyes of the charming Miss R——, whom I had the honour to dance with at the ball. The countess of Melville attracted all eyes, and the admiration of all present. She was accompanied by the agreeable Miss Grieve, who made many conquests: nor did my sister Liddy pass unnoticed in the assembly. She is become a toast at Edinburgh, by the name of the Fair Cambrian, and has already been the occasion of much wine-shed; but the poor girl met with an accident at the ball, which has given us great disturbance.

A young gentleman, the express image of that rascal Wilson, went up to ask her to dance a minuet; and his sudden appearance shocked her so much, that she fainted away. I call Wilson a rascal, because if he had been really a gentleman, with honourable intentions, he would have ere now appeared in his own character. I must own, my blood boils with indignation when I think of that fellow's presumption; and Heaven confound me if I don't — but I won't be so womanish as to rail — time will perhaps furnish occasion — thank God, the cause of Liddy's disorder remains a secret. The lady-directress of the ball, thinking she was overcome by the heat of the place, had her conveyed to another room, where she soon recovered so well, as to return and join in the country dances, in which the Scotch lasses acquit themselves with such spirit and agility, as put their partners to the height of their mettle. I believe our aunt, Mrs. Tabitha, had entertained hopes of being able to do some execution among the cavaliers at this assembly. She had been several days in consultation with milliners and mantua-makers, preparing for the occasion, at which she made her appearance in a full suit of damask, so thick and heavy,

that the sight of it alone, at this season of the year, was sufficient to draw drops of sweat from any man of ordinary imagination. She danced one minuet with our friend Mr. Mitchelson, who favoured her so far, in the spirit of hospitality and politeness; and she was called out a second time by the young laird of Balymawhaple, who, coming in by accident, could not readily find any other partner; but as the first was a married man, and the second paid no particular homage to her charms, which were also overlooked by the rest of the company, she became dissatisfied and censorious. At supper, she observed that the Scotch gentlemen made a very good figure, when they were a little improved by travelling; and, therefore, it was pity they did not all take the benefit of going abroad. She said the women were awkward, masculine creatures; that, in dancing, they lifted their legs like so many colts; that they had no idea of graceful motion; and put on their clothes in a frightly manner: but if the truth must be told, Tabby herself was the most ridiculous figure, and the worst dressed, of the whole assembly. The neglect of the male sex rendered her malcontent and peevish; she now found fault with everything at Edinburgh, and teased her brother to leave the place, when she was suddenly reconciled to it on a religious consideration. There is a sect of fanatics, who have separated themselves from the established kirk, under the name of Seceders. They acknowledge no earthly head of the church, reject lay patronage, and maintain the Methodist doctrines of the new birth, the new light, the efficacy of grace, the insufficiency of works, and the operations of the spirit. Mrs. Tabitha, attended by Humphry Clinker, was introduced to one of their conventicles, where they both received much edification; and she has had the good fortune to become acquainted with a pious Christian, called Mr. Moffat, who is very powerful in prayer, and often assists her in private exercises of devotion.

I never saw such a concourse of genteel company at any races in England, as appeared on the course of Leith. Hard by, in the fields called the Links, the citizens of Edinburgh divert themselves at a game called golf, in which they use a curious kind of bats tipped with horn, and small elastic balls of leather, stuffed with feathers, rather less than tennis-balls, but of a much harder consistence. This they strike with such force and dexterity from one hole to another, that they will fly to an incredible distance. Of this diversion the Scots are so fond, that when the weather will permit, you may see a multitude of all ranks, from the senator of justice to the lowest tradesman, mingled together, in their shirts, and following the balls with the utmost eagerness. Among others, I was shown one particular set of golfers, the youngest of whom was turned of fourscore. They were all gentlemen of independent fortunes, who had amused themselves with this pastime for the best part of a century, without having ever felt the least alarm from sickness or disgust; and they never went to bed, without having each the best part of a gallon of claret in his belly. Such uninterrupted exercise, coöperating with the keen air from the sea, must, without all doubt, keep the appetite always on edge, and steel the constitution against all the common attacks of distemper.

The Leith races gave occasion to another entertainment of a very singular nature. There is at Edinburgh a society or corporation of errand-boys called cawdies, who ply in the streets at night with paper lanterns, and are very serviceable in carrying messages. These fellows, though shabby in their appearance, and rudely familiar in their address, are wonderfully acute, and so noted for fidelity, that there is no instance of a cawdy's having betrayed his trust. Such is their intelligence, that they know not only every individual of the place, but also every stranger, by the time he has been four-and-twenty hours in Edinburgh; and no transaction, even the most private, can escape their notice. They are particularly famous for their dexterity in executing one of the functions of Mercury; though, for my own part, I never employed them in this department of business. Had I occasion for any service of this nature, my own man, Archy M'Alpine, is as well qualified as e'er a cawdy in Edinburgh; and I am much mistaken, if he has not been heretofore of their fraternity. Be that as it may, they resolved to give a dinner and a ball at Leith, to which they formally invited all the young noblemen and gentlemen that were at the races; and this invitation was reinforced by an assurance, that all the celebrated ladies of pleasure would grace the entertainment with their company. I received a card on this occasion, and went thither with half a dozen of my acquaintance. In a large hall, the cloth was laid on a long range of tables joined together, and here the company seated themselves, to the number of about fourscore, lords and lairds and other gentlemen, courtesans and cawdies,

mingled together, as the slaves and their masters were in the time of the Saturnalia in ancient Rome. The toastmaster, who sat at the upper end, was one cawdy Fraser, a veteran pimp, distinguished for his humour and sagacity, well known and much respected in his profession by all the guests, male and female, that were here assembled. He had bespoke the dinner and the wine: he had taken care that all his brethren should appear in decent apparel and clean linen; and he himself wore a periwig with three tails, in honour of the festival. I assure you the banquet was both elegant and plentiful, and seasoned with a thousand sallies, that promoted a general spirit of mirth and good humour. After the dessert, Mr. Fraser proposed the following toasts, which I don't pretend to explain: "The best in Christendom" — "Gibb's contract" — "The beggar's benison" — "King and kirk" — "Great Britain and Ireland." Then, filling a bumper, and turning to me, — "Mester Malford," said he, "may a' unkindness cease betwixt John Bull and his sister Moggy." The next person he singled out was a nobleman who had been long abroad. "Ma lord," cried Fraser, "here is a bumper to a' those noblemen who have virtue enough to spend their rents in their ain countray." He afterwards addressed himself to a member of parliament in these words: "Mester ——, I'm sure ye'll ha' nae objection to my drinking, Disgrace and dool to ilka Scot, that sells his conscience and his vote." He discharged a third sarcasm at a person very gaily dressed, who had risen from small beginnings and made a considerable fortune at play. Filling his glass, and calling him by name, — "Lang life," said he, "to the wylie loon that gangs a-field with the toom poke at his lunzie, and comes hame with a sackful o' siller." All these toasts being received with loud bursts of applause, Mr. Fraser called for pint glasses, and filled his own to the brim: then standing up, and all his brethren following his example, — "Ma lords and gentlemen," cried he, "here is a cup of thanks for the great and undeserved honour you have done your poor errand-boys this day." So saying, he and they drank off their glasses in a trice, and quitting their seats, took their station each behind one of the other guests, exclaiming — "Noo we're your honours' cawdies again."

The nobleman who had borne the first brunt of Mr. Fraser's satire objected to his abdication. He said, as the company was assembled by invitation from the cawdies, he expected they were to be entertained at their expense. "By no means, my lord," cried Fraser; "I wad na be guilty of sic presumption for the wide warld. I never affronted a gentleman since I was born; and sure, at this age, I wonnot offer an indignity to sic an honourable convention." — "Well," said his lordship, "as you have expended some wit, you have a right to save your money. You have given me good counsel, and I take it in good part. As you have voluntarily quitted your seat, I will take your place, with the leave of the good company, and think myself happy to be hailed, 'Father of the feast.'" He was forthwith elected into the chair, and complimented in a bumper on his new character.

The claret continued to circulate without interruption, till the glasses seemed to dance on the table; and this, perhaps, was a hint to the ladies to call for music. At eight in the evening the ball began in another apartment: at midnight we went to supper; but it was broad day before I found the way to my lodgings; and, no doubt, his lordship had a swinging bill to discharge.

In short, I have lived so riotously for some weeks, that my uncle begins to be alarmed on the score of my constitution, and very seriously observes, that all his own infirmities are owing to such excesses indulged in his youth. Mrs. Tabitha says it would be more for the advantage of my soul as well as body, if, instead of frequenting these scenes of debauchery, I would accompany Mr. Moffat and her to hear a sermon of the Reverend Mr. M'Corkendale. Clinker often exhorts me, with a groan, to take care of my precious health; and even Archy M'Alpine, when he happens to be overtaken (which is oftener the case than I could wish), reads me a long lecture on temperance and sobriety: and is so very wise and sententious, that, if I could provide him with a professor's chair, I would willingly give up the benefit of his admonitions and service together; for I was tutor-sick at alma mater.

I am not, however, so much engrossed by the gaieties of Edinburgh, but that I find time to make parties in the family way. We have not only seen all the villas and villages within ten miles of the capital, but we have also crossed the Frith, which is an arm of the sea, seven miles broad, that divides Lothian from the shire, or, as the Scots call it, "the kingdom of Fife." There is a number of large open-sea boats that ply on this passage from Leith to Kinghorn, which is a borough on the other side. In one

of these our whole family embarked three days ago, excepting my sister, who, being exceedingly fearful of the water, was left to the care of Mrs. Mitchelson. We had an easy and quick passage into Fife, where we visited a number of poor towns on the sea-side, including St. Andrews, which is the skeleton of a venerable city, but we were much better pleased with some noble and elegant seats and castles, of which there is a great number in that part of Scotland. Yesterday we took boat again, on our return to Leith, with a fair wind and agreeable weather; but we had not advanced half way, when the sky was suddenly overcast, and the wind changing, blew directly in our teeth; so that we were obliged to turn, or tack the rest of the way. In a word, the gale increased to a storm of wind and rain, attended with such a fog, that we could not see the town of Leith, to which we were bound, nor even the castle of Edinburgh, notwithstanding its high situation. It is not to be doubted but that we were all alarmed on this occasion; and, at the same time, most of the passengers were seized with a nausea that produced violent retchings. My aunt desired her brother to order the boatmen to put back to Kinghorn; and this expedient he actually proposed; but they assured him there was no danger. Mrs. Tabitha, finding them obstinate, began to scold, and insisted on my uncle's exerting his authority as a justice of the peace. Sick and peevish as he was, he could not help laughing at this wise proposal, telling her that his commission did not extend so far, and if it did, he should let the people take their own way; for he thought it would be great presumption in him to direct them in the exercise of their own profession. Mrs. Winifred Jenkins made a general clearance, with the assistance of Mr. Humphry Clinker, who joined her both in prayer and ejaculation. As he took it for granted that we should not be long in this world, he offered some spiritual consolation to Mrs. Tabitha, who rejected it with great disgust, bidding him keep his sermons for those who had leisure to hear such nonsense. My uncle sat, recollected in himself, without speaking. My man Archy had recourse to a brandy-bottle, with which he made so free, that I imagined he had sworn to die of drinking anything rather than sea-water; but the brandy had no more effect on him in the way of intoxication, than if it had been sea-water in good earnest. As for myself, I was too much engrossed by the sickness at my stomach to think of anything else. Meanwhile the sea swelled mountains high; the boat pitched with such violence, as if it had been going to pieces; the cordage rattled, the wind roared, the lightning flashed, the thunder bellowed, and the rain descended in a deluge. Every time the vessel was put about, we shipped a sea that drenched us all to the skin. When, by dint of turning, we thought to have cleared the pier-head, we were driven to leeward, and then the boatmen themselves began to fear that the tide would fail before we should fetch up our lee-way; the next trip, however, brought us into smooth water, and we were safely landed on the quay about one o'clock in the afternoon. "To be sure," cried Tabby, when she found herself on *terra firma*, "we must all have perished, if we had not been the particular care of Providence." — "Yes," replied my uncle; "but I am much of the honest Highlander's mind; after he had made such a passage as this, his friend told him he was much indebted to Providence. 'Certainly,' said Donald; 'but, by my saul, mon, Is'e ne'er trouble Providence again so long as the brig of Stirling stands.'" You must know the brig, or bridge, of Stirling stands above twenty miles up the river Forth, of which this is the outlet. I don't find that our squire has suffered in his health from this adventure: but poor Liddy is in a peaking way. I'm afraid this unfortunate girl is uneasy in her mind; and this apprehension distracts me, for she is really an amiable creature.

We shall set out to-morrow or next day for Stirling and Glasgow; and we propose to penetrate a little way into the Highlands before we turn our course to the southward. In the meantime, commend me to all our friends round Carfax, and believe me to be ever yours,

J. Melford.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

LETTERS FROM A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD TO HIS FRIENDS IN THE EAST

LETTER XXI

The Chinese goes to see a Play

The English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by daylight, they by the

blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively; an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the playhouse, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behaviour of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The rich in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted; those who were undermost all the day, now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below: to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself. They were chiefly employed, during this period of expectation, in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste; appearing to labour under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me, that not one in a hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur, became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement; these, rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show — not a courtesy or nod, that was not all the result of art; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for, my companion observed, that blindness was of late become fashionable; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burned for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill a heart that sympathises at human happiness with inexpressible serenity.

The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived; the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in curtseying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England; the manner is absurd, but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still kept its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows.

Her lamentations grew loud; comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound: she bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who, seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears, or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

"Truly," said I to my companion, "these kings and queens are very much disturbed at no very great misfortune: certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common sense." I had scarcely finished this observation, when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace, and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted, and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once more.

"Now," says my companion, "you perceive the king to be a man of spirit; he feels at every pore: one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees; but the king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero; this moment they embrace, and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period."

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object; a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. "To what purpose," cried I, "does this unmeaning figure make his appearance? is he a part of the plot?" — "Unmeaning do you call him?" replied my friend in black; "this is one of the most important characters of the whole play; nothing pleases the people more than seeing a straw balanced: there is a good deal of meaning in the straw: there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune."

The third act now began with an actor who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show strange things before all was over. He was joined by another who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he: their intrigues continued through this whole division. "If that be a villain," said I, "he must be a very stupid one to tell his secrets without being asked; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China."

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarines infinite satisfaction. "I am sorry," said I, "to see the pretty creature so early learning so very bad a trade; dancing being, I presume, as contemptible here as in China." — "Quite the reverse," interrupted my companion; "dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times before he comes to the ground, may have three hundred a year; he who flourishes them four times, gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers, too, are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing; and it is a cant word amongst them, that she deserves most who shows highest. But the fourth act is begun; let us be attentive."

In the fourth act the queen finds her long lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts and great qualifications; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveller. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress: he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves, therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity, is frantic with rage, and at length, overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops, and the act is concluded.

"Observe the art of the poet," cries my companion. "When the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy! We feel it in every nerve: take my word for it, that fits are the true *aposiopesis* of modern tragedy."

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, demons, daggers, racks, and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over, I could not avoid observing, that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last. "How is it possible," said I, "to sympathise with them through five long acts? Pity is but a short lived passion. I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles. Neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes, affect me, unless there be cause: after I have been once or twice deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet; all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater; if the actor, therefore, exclaims upon every occasion, in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause."

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all departed; wherefore, mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street, where, essaying a hundred obstacles from coach-wheels and palanquin poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. Adieu.

LETTER XXVI

The Character of the Man in Black; with Some Instances of his Inconsistent Conduct

Though fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The man in black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies, and he may be justly termed a humourist in a nation of humourists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates, in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it, in some measure, encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences: let me assure you, Sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain, earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession, to support a dying wife, and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the man in black; I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive, that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before; he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate, hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggarmen. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend looking wishfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask; he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired, in a surly tone, to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollected himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here, master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase: he assured me, that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice, that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding: his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion, his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

LETTER XXVII

The History of the Man in Black

As there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be his motives for thus concealing virtues which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to act under continual restraint, and whose benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

It was not, however, till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. "If you are fond," says he, "of hearing hairbreadth 'scapes, my history must certainly please; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them, they returned an equivalent in praise; and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army, influenced my father at the head of his table. He told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy in the sedan-chair, was sure to set the table in a roar. Thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

"As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it; he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross; he was resolved they should have learning; for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose, he undertook to instruct us himself; and took as much pains to form our morals, as to improve our understanding. We were told, that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard the 'human face divine' with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress: in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing.

"I cannot avoid imagining, that thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which nature had given me, I resembled, upon my