

up and clapping my hands, "I don't understand Rommany, don't I? You shall see; here's the answer to your gillie —

"The Rommany chi
And the Rommany chal
Love Luripen
And dukkeripen,
And hokkeripen,
And every pen
But Lachipen
And tatchipen."

The girl, who had given a slight start when I began, remained for some time after I had concluded the song, standing motionless as a statue, with the kettle in her hand. At length she came towards me, and stared me full in the face. "Gray, tall, and talks Rommany," said she to herself. In her countenance there was an expression which I had not seen before — an expression which struck me as being composed of fear, curiosity, and the deepest hate. It was momentary, however, and was succeeded by one smiling, frank, and open. "Ha, ha, brother," said she, "well, I like you all the better for talking Rommany; it is a sweet language, isn't it? especially as you sing it. How did you pick it up? But you picked it up upon the roads, no doubt? Ha, it was funny in you to pretend not to know it, and you so flush with it all the time; it was not kind in you, however, to frighten the poor person's child so by screaming out, but it was kind in you to give the rikkeni kekaubi to the child of the poor person. She will be grateful to you; she will bring you her little dog to show you, her pretty juggal; the poor person's child will come and see you again; you are not going away to-day, I hope, or to-morrow, pretty brother, gray-haired brother — you are not going away to-morrow, I hope?"

"Nor the next day," said I, "only to take a stroll to see if I can sell a kettle; good by, little sister, Rommany sister, dingy sister."

"Good by, tall brother," said the girl, as she departed, singing

"The Rommany chi," etc.

"There's something about that girl that I don't understand," said I to myself; "something mysterious. However, it is nothing to me, she knows not who I am, and if she did, what then?"

Late that evening as I sat on the shaft of my cart in deep meditation, with my arms folded, I thought I heard a rustling in the bushes over against me. I turned my eyes in that direction,

but saw nothing. "Some bird," said I; "an owl, perhaps;" and once more I fell into meditation; my mind wandered from one thing to another — musing now on the structure of the Roman tongue — now on the rise and fall of the Persian power — and now on the powers vested in recorders at quarter sessions. I was thinking what a fine thing it must be to be a recorder of the peace, when lifting up my eyes, I saw right opposite, not a culprit at the bar, but, staring at me through a gap in the bush, a face wild and strange, half covered with gray hair; I only saw it a moment, the next it had disappeared.

CHAPTER LXXI

The next day at an early hour, I harnessed my little pony, and, putting my things in my cart, I went on my projected stroll. Crossing the moor, I arrived in about an hour at a small village, from which, after a short stay, I proceeded to another, and from thence to a third. I found that the name of Slingsby was well known in these parts.

"If you are a friend of Slingsby you must be an honest lad," said an ancient crone; "you shall never want for work whilst I can give it you. Here, take my kettle, the bottom came out this morning, and lend me that of yours till you bring it back. I'm not afraid to trust you — not I. Don't hurry yourself, young man, if you don't come back for a fortnight I shan't have the worse opinion of you."

I returned to my quarters at evening, tired but rejoiced at heart; I had work before me for several days, having collected various kekaubies which required mending, in place of those which I left behind — those which I had been employed upon during the last few days. I found all quiet in the lane or glade, and, unharnessing my little horse, I once more pitched my tent in the old spot beneath the ash, lighted my fire, ate my frugal meal, and then, after looking for some time at the heavenly bodies, and more particularly at the star Jupiter, I entered my tent, lay down upon my pallet, and went to sleep.

Nothing occurred on the following day which requires any particular notice, nor indeed on the one succeeding that. It was about noon on the third day that I sat beneath the shade of the ash tree; I was not at work, for the weather was particularly hot, and I felt but little inclination to make any exertion. Leaning my back against the tree, I was not

long in falling into a slumber; I particularly remember that slumber of mine beneath the ash tree, for it was about the sweetest that I ever enjoyed; how long I continued in it I do not know; I could almost have wished that it had lasted to the present time. All of a sudden it appeared to me that a voice cried in my ear, "Danger! danger! danger!" Nothing seemingly could be more distinct than the words which I heard; then an uneasy sensation came over me, which I strove to get rid of, and at last succeeded, for I awoke. The gipsy girl was standing just opposite to me, with her eyes fixed upon my countenance; a singular kind of little dog stood beside her.

"Ha!" said I, "was it you that cried danger? What danger is there?"

"Danger, brother, there is no danger; what danger should there be? I called to my little dog, but that was in the wood; my little dog's name is not danger, but stranger; what danger should there be, brother?"

"What, indeed, except in sleeping beneath a tree; what is that you have got in your hand?"

"Something for you," said the girl, sitting down and proceeding to untie a white napkin; "a pretty manricli, so sweet, so nice; when I went home to my people I told my grandbeebie how kind you had been to the poor person's child, and when my grandbeebie saw the kekaubi, she said, 'Hir mi devlis, it won't do for the poor people to be ungrateful; by my God, I will bake a cake for the young harko mes-cro.'"

"But there are two cakes."

"Yes, brother, two cakes, both for you; my grandbeebie meant them both for you — but list, brother, I will have one of them for bringing them. I know you will give me one, pretty brother, gray-haired brother — which shall I have, brother?"

In the napkin were two round cakes, seemingly made of rich and costly compounds, and precisely similar in form, each weighing about half a pound.

"Which shall I have, brother?" said the gipsy girl.

"Whichever you please."

"No, brother, no, the cakes are yours, not mine, it is for you to say."

"Well, then, give me the one nearest you, and take the other."

"Yes, brother, yes," said the girl; and taking the cakes, she flung them into the air two or three times, catching them as they fell, and

singing the while. "Pretty brother, gray-haired brother — here, brother," said she, "here is your cake, this other is mine."

"Are you sure," said I, taking the cake, "that this is the one I chose?"

"Quite sure, brother; but if you like you can have mine; there's no difference, however — shall I eat?"

"Yes, sister, eat."

"See, brother, I do; now, brother, eat, pretty brother, gray-haired brother."

"I am not hungry."

"Not hungry! well, what then — what has being hungry to do with the matter? It is my grandbeebie's cake which was sent because you were kind to the poor person's child; eat, brother, eat, and we shall be like the children in the wood that the gorgios speak of."

"The children in the wood had nothing to eat."

"Yes, they had hips and haws; we have better. Eat, brother."

"See, sister, I do," and I ate a piece of the cake.

"Well, brother, how do you like it?" said the girl, looking fixedly at me.

"It is very rich and sweet, and yet there is something strange about it; I don't think I shall eat any more."

"Fie, brother, fie, to find fault with the poor person's cake; see, I have nearly eaten mine."

"That's a pretty little dog."

"Is it not, brother? that's my juggal, my little sister, as I call her."

"Come here, juggal," said I to the animal.

"What do you want with my juggal?" said the girl.

"Only to give her a piece of cake," said I, offering the dog a piece which I had just broken off.

"What do you mean?" said the girl, snatching the dog away; "my grandbeebie's cake is not for dogs."

"Why, I just now saw you give the animal a piece of yours."

"You lie, brother, you saw no such thing; but I see how it is, you wish to affront the poor person's child. I shall go to my house."

"Keep still, and don't be angry; see, I have eaten the piece which I offered the dog. I meant no offence. It is a sweet cake after all."

"Isn't it, brother? I am glad you like it. Offence! brother, no offence at all! I am so glad you like my grandbeebie's cake, but she will be wanting me at home. Eat one piece more of grandbeebie's cake and I will go."

"I am not hungry, I will put the rest by."
"One piece more before I go, handsome brother, gray-haired brother."

"I will not eat any more, I have already eaten more than I wished to oblige you; if you must go, good day to you."

The girl rose upon her feet, looked hard at me, then at the remainder of the cake which I held in my hand, and then at me again, and then stood for a moment or two, as if in deep thought; presently an air of satisfaction came over her countenance, she smiled and said, "Well, brother, well, do as you please, I merely wished you to eat because you have been so kind to the poor person's child. She loves you so, that she could have wished to have seen you eat it all; good by, brother, I dare say when I am gone you will eat some more of it, and if you don't I dare say you have eaten enough to — to — show your love for us. After all it was a poor person's cake, a Rommany manricli, and all you gorgios are somewhat gorgious. Farewell, brother, pretty brother, gray-haired brother. Come, juggal."

I remained under the ash tree seated on the grass for a minute or two, and endeavoured to resume the occupation in which I had been engaged before I fell asleep, but I felt no inclination for labour. I then thought I would sleep again, and once more reclined against the tree, and slumbered for some little time, but my sleep was more agitated than before. Something appeared to bear heavy on my breast, I struggled in my sleep, fell on the grass, and awoke; my temples were throbbing, there was a burning in my eyes, and my mouth felt parched; the oppression about the chest which I had felt in my sleep still continued. "I must shake off these feelings," said I, "and get upon my legs." I walked rapidly up and down upon the green sward; at length, feeling my thirst increase, I directed my steps down the narrow path to the spring which ran amidst the bushes; arriving there, I knelt down and drank of the water, but on lifting up my head I felt thirstier than before; again I drank, but with the like results; I was about to drink for the third time, when I felt a dreadful qualm which instantly robbed me of nearly all my strength. What can be the matter with me, thought I; but I suppose I have made myself ill by drinking cold water. I got up and made the best of my way back to my tent; before I reached it the qualm had seized me again, and I was deadly sick. I flung myself on my pallet, qualm succeeded qualm, but in the inter-

vals my mouth was dry and burning, and I felt a frantic desire to drink, but no water was at hand, and to reach the spring once more was impossible: the qualms continued, deadly pains shot through my whole frame; I could bear my agonies no longer, and I fell into a trance or swoon. How long I continued therein I know not; on recovering, however, I felt somewhat better, and attempted to lift my head off my couch; the next moment, however, the qualms and pains returned, if possible, with greater violence than before. I am dying, thought I, like a dog, without any help; and then methought I heard a sound at a distance like people singing, and then once more I relapsed into my swoon.

I revived just as a heavy blow sounded, upon the canvas of the tent. I started, but my condition did not permit me to rise; again the same kind of blow sounded upon the canvas; I thought for a moment of crying out and requesting assistance, but an inexplicable something chained my tongue, and now I heard a whisper on the outside of the tent. "He does not move, bebee," said a voice which I knew. "I should not wonder if it has done for him already; however, strike again with your ran;" and then there was another blow, after which another voice cried aloud in a strange tone, "Is the gentleman of the house asleep, or is he taking his dinner?" I remained quite silent and motionless, and in another moment the voice continued, "What, no answer? what can the gentleman of the house be about that he makes no answer? perhaps the gentleman of the house may be darning his stockings?" Thereupon a face peered into the door of the tent, at the farther extremity of which I was stretched. It was that of a woman, but owing to the posture in which she stood, with her back to the light, and partly owing to a large straw bonnet, I could distinguish but very little of the features of her countenance. I had, however, recognised her voice; it was that of my old acquaintance, Mrs. Herne. "Ho, ho, sir!" said she, "here you are. Come here, Leonora," said she to the gipsy girl, who pressed in at the other side of the door; "here is the gentleman, not asleep, but only stretched out after dinner. Sit down on your ham, child, at the door, I shall do the same. There — you have seen me before, sir, have you not?"

"The gentleman makes no answer, bebee; perhaps he does not know you."

"I have known him of old, Leonora," said Mrs. Herne; "and, to tell you the truth, though

I spoke to him just now, I expected no answer."

"It's a way he has, bebee, I suppose?"

"Yes, child, it's a way he has."

"Take off your bonnet, bebee, perhaps he cannot see your face."

"I do not think that will be of much use, child; however, I will take off my bonnet — there — and shake out my hair — there — you have seen this hair before, sir, and this face —"

"No answer, bebee."

"Though the one was not quite so gray, nor the other so wrinkled."

"How came they so, bebee?"

"All along of this gorgio, child."

"The gentleman in the house, you mean, bebee."

"Yes, child, the gentleman in the house. God grant that I may preserve my temper. Do you know, sir, my name? My name is Herne, which signifies a hairy individual, though neither gray-haired nor wrinkled. It is not the nature of the Hernes to be gray or wrinkled, even when they are old, and I am not old."

"How old are you, bebee?"

"Sixty-five years, child — an inconsiderable number. My mother was a hundred and one — a considerable age — when she died, yet she had not one gray hair, and not more than six wrinkles — an inconsiderable number."

"She had no griefs, bebee?"

"Plenty, child, but not like mine."

"Not quite so hard to bear, bebee?"

"No, child, my head wanders when I think of them. After the death of my husband, who came to his end untimely, I went to live with a daughter of mine, married out among certain Romans who walk about the eastern counties, and with whom for some time I found a home and pleasant society, for they lived right Romanly, which gave my heart considerable satisfaction, who am a Roman born, and hope to die so. When I say right Romanly, I mean that they kept to themselves, and were not much given to blabbing about their private matters in promiscuous company. Well, things went on in this way for some time, when one day my son-in-law brings home a young gorgio of singular and outrageous ugliness, and, without much preamble, says to me and to mine, 'This is my pal, a'n't he a beauty? fall down and worship him.' 'Hold,' said I, 'I for one will never consent to such foolishness.'"

"That was right, bebee, I think I should have done the same."

"I think you would, child; but what was the profit of it? The whole party makes an almighty of this gorgio, lets him into their ways, says prayers of his making, till things come to such a pass that my own daughter says to me, 'I shall buy myself a veil and fan, and treat myself to a play and sacrament.' 'Don't,' says I; says she, 'I should like for once in my life to be courtied to as a Christian gentlewoman.'"

"Very foolish of her, bebee."

"Wasn't it, child? Where was I? At the fan and sacrament; with a heavy heart I put seven score miles between us, came back to the hairy ones, and found them over-given to gorgious companions; said I, 'foolish manners is catching, all this comes of that there gorgio.' Answers the child Leonora, 'Take comfort, bebee, I hate the gorgios as much as you do.'"

"And I say so again, bebee, as much or more."

"Time flows on, I engage in many matters, in most miscarry. Am sent to prison; says I to myself, I am become foolish. Am turned out of prison, and go back to the hairy ones, who receive me not over courteously; says I, for their unkindness, and my own foolishness, all the thanks to that gorgio. Answers to me the child, 'I wish I could set my eyes upon him, bebee.'"

"I did so, bebee; go on."

"How shall I know him, bebee?" says the child. 'Young and gray, tall, and speaks Romanly.' Runs to me the child, and says, 'I've found him, bebee.' 'Where, child?' says I. 'Come with me, bebee,' says the child. 'That's he,' says I, as I looked at my gentleman through the hedge."

"Ha, ha! bebee, and here he lies, poisoned like a hog."

"You have taken drows, sir," said Mrs. Herne; "do you hear, sir? drows; tip him a stave, child, of the song of poison."

And thereupon the girl clapped her hands, and sang —

"The Rommany churl
And the Rommany girl,
To-morrow shall hie
To poison the sty,
And bewitch on the mead
The farmer's steed."

"Do you hear that, sir?" said Mrs. Herne; "the child has tipped you a stave of the song of

poison: that is, she has sung it Christianly, though perhaps you would like to hear it Romanly; you were always fond of what was Roman. Tip it him Romanly, child."

"He has heard it Romanly already, bebee; 'twas by that I found him out, as I told you."

"Halloo, sir, are you sleeping? you have taken drows; the gentleman makes no answer. God give me patience!"

"And what if he doesn't, bebee; isn't he poisoned like a hog? Gentleman! indeed, why call him gentleman? if he ever was one he's broke, and is now a tinker, and a worker of blue metal."

"That's his way, child, to-day a tinker, to-morrow something else; and as for being drabbed, I don't know what to say about it."

"Not drabbed! what do you mean, bebee? but look there, bebee; ha, ha, look at the gentleman's motions."

"He is sick, child, sure enough. Ho, ho! sir, you have taken drows; what, another throe! writhe, sir, writhe, the hog died by the drow of gipsies; I saw him stretched at evening. That's yourself, sir. There is no hope, sir, no help, you have taken drows; shall I tell you your fortune, sir, your dukkerin? God bless you, pretty gentleman, much trouble will you have to suffer, and much water to cross; but never mind, pretty gentleman, you shall be fortunate at the end, and those who hate shall take off their hats to you."

"Hey, bebee!" cried the girl; "what is this? what do you mean? you have blessed the gorgio!"

"Blessed him! no, sure; what did I say? Oh, I remember, I'm mad; well, I can't help it, I said what the dukkerin dook told me; woe's me, he'll get up yet."

"Nonsense, bebee! Look at his motions, he's drabbed, spite of dukkerin."

"Don't say so, child; he's sick, 'tis true, but don't laugh at dukkerin, only folks do that that know no better. I, for one, will never laugh at the dukkerin dook. Sick again; I wish he was gone."

"He'll soon be gone, bebee; let's leave him. He's as good as gone; look there, he's dead."

"No, he's not, he'll get up — I feel it; can't we hasten him?"

"Hasten him! yes, to be sure; set the dog upon him. Here, juggal, look in there, my dog."

The dog made its appearance at the door of the tent, and began to bark and tear up the ground.

"At him, juggal, at him; he wished to poison, to drab you. Halloo!"

The dog barked violently, and seemed about to spring at my face, but retreated.

"The dog won't fly at him, child; he flashed at the dog with his eye, and scared him. He'll get up."

"Nonsense, bebee! you make me angry; how should he get up?"

"The dook tells me so, and, what's more, I had a dream. I thought I was at York, standing amidst a crowd to see a man hung, and the crowd shouted 'There he comes!' and I looked, and, lo! it was the tinker; before I could cry with joy I was whisked away, and I found myself in Ely's big church, which was chock full of people to hear the dean preach, and all eyes were turned to the big pulpit; and presently I heard them say, 'There he mounts!' and I looked up to the big pulpit, and lo! the tinker was in the pulpit, and he raised his arm and began to preach. Anon, I found myself at York again, just as the drop fell, and I looked up, and I saw, not the tinker, but my own self hanging in the air."

"You are going mad, bebee; if you want to hasten him, take your stick and poke him in the eye."

"That will be of no use, child, the dukkerin tells me so; but I will try what I can do. Halloo, tinker! you must introduce yourself into a quiet family, and raise confusion — must you? You must steal its language, and, what was never done before, write it down Christianly — must you? Take that — and that;" and she stabbed violently with her stick towards the end of the tent.

"That's right, bebee, you struck his face; now once more, and let it be in the eye. Stay, what's that? get up, bebee."

"What's the matter, child?"

"Some one is coming, come away."

"Let me make sure of him, child; he'll be up yet." And thereupon Mrs. Herne, rising, leaned forward into the tent, and supporting herself against the pole, took aim in the direction of the farther end. "I will thrust out his eye," said she; and, lunging with her stick, she would probably have accomplished her purpose had not at that moment the pole of the tent given way, whereupon she fell to the ground, the canvas falling upon her and her intended victim.

"Here's a pretty affair, bebee," screamed the girl.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)

THE ENGLISH HUMOURISTS

STERNE

Roger Sterne, Sterne's father, was the second son of a numerous race, descendants of Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York, in the reign of Charles II.; and children of Simon Sterne and Mary Jaques, his wife, heiress of Elvington, near York. Roger was an ensign in Colonel Hans Hamilton's regiment, and engaged in Flanders in Queen Anne's wars. He married the daughter of a noted sutler. "N. B., he was in debt to him," his son writes, pursuing the paternal biography — and marched through the world with his companion; she following the regiment and bringing many children to poor Roger Sterne. The Captain was an irascible but kind and simple little man, Sterne says, and he informs us that his sire was run through the body at Gibraltar, by a brother officer, in a duel which arose out of a dispute about a goose. Roger never entirely recovered from the effects of this rencontre, but died presently at Jamaica, whither he had followed the drum.

Laurence, his second child, was born at Clonmel, in Ireland, in 1713, and travelled for the first ten years of his life, on his father's march, from barrack to transport, from Ireland to England.

One relative of his mother's took her and her family under shelter for ten months at Mullingar; another collateral descendant of the Archbishop's housed them for a year at his castle near Carrickfergus. Larry Sterne was put to school at Halifax in England, finally was adopted by his kinsman of Elvington, and parted company with his father, the Captain, who marched on his path of life till he met the fatal goose which closed his career. The most picturesque and delightful parts of Laurence Sterne's writings we owe to his recollections of the military life. Trim's montero cap, and Le Fevre's sword, and dear Uncle Toby's roquelaure are doubtless reminiscences of the boy, who had lived with the followers of William and Marlborough, and had beat time with his little feet to the fifes of Ramillies in Dublin barrack-yard, or played with the torn flags and halberds of Malplaquet on the parade-ground at Clonmel.

Laurence remained at Halifax school till

"He'll get up yet," said Mrs. Herne, from beneath the canvas.

"Get up! — get up yourself; where are you? where is your — Here, there, bebee, here's the door; there, make haste, they are coming."

"He'll get up yet," said Mrs. Herne, recovering her breath, "the dook tells me so."

"Never mind him or the dook; he is drabbed; come away, or we shall be grabbed — both of us."

"One more blow, I know where his head lies."

"You are mad, bebee; leave the fellow — gorgio avella."

And thereupon the females hurried away.

A vehicle of some kind was evidently drawing nigh; in a little time it came alongside of the place where lay the fallen tent, and stopped suddenly. There was a silence for a moment, and then a parley ensued between two voices, one of which was that of a woman. It was not in English, but in a deep guttural tongue.

"Peth yw hono sydd yn gorwedd yna ar y ddaear?" said a masculine voice.

"Yn wirionedd — I do not know what it can be," said the female voice, in the same tongue.

"Here is a cart, and there are tools; but what is that on the ground?"

"Something moves beneath it; and what was that — a groan?"

"Shall I get down?"

"Of course, Peter, some one may want your help."

"Then I will get down, though I do not like this place, it is frequented by Egyptians, and I do not like their yellow faces, nor their clibberity clabber, as Master Ellis Wyn says. Now I am down. It is a tent, Winifred, and see, here is a boy beneath it. Merciful father! what a face!"

A middle-aged man, with a strongly marked and serious countenance, dressed in sober-coloured habiliments, had lifted up the stifling folds of the tent and was bending over me.

"Can you speak, my lad?" said he in English, "what is the matter with you? if you could but tell me, I could perhaps help you —"

"What is it that you say? I can't hear you. I will kneel down;" and he flung himself on the ground, and placed his ear close to my mouth. "Now speak if you can. Hey! what! no, sure, God forbid!" then starting up, he cried to a female who sat in the cart, anxiously looking on — "Gwenwyn! gwenwyn! yw y gwas wedi ei gwenwynaw. The oil! Winifred, the oil!"

he was eighteen years old. His wit and cleverness appear to have acquired the respect of his master here; for when the usher whipped Laurence for writing his name on the newly whitewashed schoolroom ceiling, the pedagogue in chief rebuked the understrapper, and said that the name should never be effaced, for Sterne was a boy of genius, and would come to preferment.

His cousin, the Squire of Elvington, sent Sterne to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he remained some years, and, taking orders, got, through his uncle's interest, the living of Sutton and a prebendal stall at York. Through his wife's connections he got the living of Stillington. He married her in 1741, having ardently courted the young lady for some years previously. It was not until the young lady fancied herself dying, that she made Sterne acquainted with the extent of her liking for him. One evening when he was sitting with her, with an almost broken heart to see her so ill (the Reverend Mr. Sterne's heart was a good deal broken in the course of his life), she said — "My dear Laurey, I never can be yours, for I verily believe I have not long to live; but I have left you every shilling of my fortune;" a generosity which overpowered Sterne. She recovered: and so they were married, and grew heartily tired of each other before many years were over. "Nescio quid est materia cum me," Sterne writes to one of his friends (in dog-Latin, and very sad dog-Latin too); "sed sum fatigatus et aegrotus de mea uxore plus quam unquam:" which means, I am sorry to say, "I don't know what is the matter with me; but I am more tired and sick of my wife than ever."

This to be sure was five-and-twenty years after Laurey had been overcome by her generosity, and she by Laurey's love. Then he wrote to her of the delights of marriage, saying, "We will be as merry and as innocent as our first parents in Paradise, before the arch-fiend entered that indescribable scene. The kindest affections will have room to expand in our retirement: let the human tempest and hurricane rage at a distance, the desolation is beyond the horizon of peace. My L. has seen a polyanthus blow in December? — Some friendly wall has sheltered it from the biting wind. No planetary influence shall reach us but that which presides and cherishes the sweetest flowers. The gloomy family of care and distrust shall be banished from our dwelling, guarded by thy kind and tutelary deity.

We will sing our choral songs of gratitude and rejoice to the end of our pilgrimage. Adieu, my L. Return to one who languishes for thy society! — As I take up my pen, my poor pulse quickens, my pale face glows, and tears are trickling down on my paper as I trace the word L."

And it is about this woman, with whom he finds no fault but that she bores him, that our philanthropist writes, "Sum fatigatus et aegrotus" — *Sum mortaliter in amore* with somebody else! That fine flower of love, that polyanthus over which Sterne snivelled so many tears, could not last for a quarter of a century!

Or rather it could not be expected that a gentleman with such a fountain at command should keep it to *arroser* one homely old lady, when a score of younger and prettier people might be refreshed from the same gushing source. It was in December 1767, that the Reverend Laurence Sterne, the famous Shandean, the charming Yorick, the delight of the fashionable world, the delicious divine for whose sermons the whole polite world was subscribing, the occupier of Rabelais's easy-chair, only fresh stuffed and more elegant than when in possession of the cynical old curate of Meudon, — the more than rival of the Dean of Saint Patrick's, wrote the above-quoted respectable letter to his friend in London: and it was in April of the same year that he was pouring out his fond heart to Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, wife of "Daniel Draper, Esquire, Councillor of Bombay, and, in 1775, chief of the factory of Surat — a gentleman very much respected in that quarter of the globe."

"I got thy letter last night, Eliza," Sterne writes, "on my return from Lord Bathurst's, where I dined" — (the letter has this merit in it, that it contains a pleasant reminiscence of better men than Sterne, and introduces us to a portrait of a kind old gentleman) — "I got thy letter last night, Eliza, on my return from Lord Bathurst's; and where I was heard — as I talked of thee an hour without intermission — with so much pleasure and attention, that the good old Lord toasted your health three different times; and now he is in his 85th year, says he hopes to live long enough to be introduced as a friend to my fair Indian disciple, and to see her eclipse all other Nabobesses as much in wealth as she does already in exterior and, what is far better" (for Sterne is nothing without his morality), "in interior merit. This nobleman is an old friend of mine. You know he was

always the protector of men of wit and genius, and has had those of the last century, Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, Prior, &c., always at his table. The manner in which his notice began of me was as singular as it was polite. He came up to me one day as I was at the Princess of Wales's Court, and said, 'I want to know you, Mr. Sterne, but it is fit you also should know who it is that wishes this pleasure. You have heard of an old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Popes and Swifts have sung and spoken so much? I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast; but have survived them; and, despairing ever to find their equals, it is some years since I have shut up my books and closed my accounts; but you have kindled a desire in me of opening them once more before I die: which I now do: so go home and dine with me.' This nobleman, I say, is a prodigy, for he has all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty; a disposition to be pleased, and a power to please others, beyond whatever I knew; added to which a man of learning, courtesy, and feeling.

"He heard me talk of thee, Eliza, with uncommon satisfaction — for there was only a third person, *and of sensibility*, with us: and a most sentimental afternoon, till nine o'clock have we passed! But thou, Eliza, wert the star that conducted and enlivened the discourse! And when I talked not of thee, still didst thou fill my mind, and warm every thought I uttered, for I am not ashamed to acknowledge I greatly miss thee. Best of all good girls! the sufferings I have sustained all night in consequence of thine, Eliza, are beyond the power of words. . . . And so thou hast fixed thy Bramin's portrait over thy writing-desk, and wilt consult it in all doubts and difficulties? — Grateful and good girl! Yorick smiles contentedly over all thou dost: his picture does not do justice to his own complacency. I am glad your shipmates are friendly beings" (Eliza was at Deal, going back to the Councillor at Bombay, and indeed it was high time she should be off). "You could least dispense with what is contrary to your own nature, which is soft and gentle, Eliza; it would civilise savages — though pity were it thou shouldst be tainted with the office. Write to me, my child, thy delicious letters. Let them speak the easy carelessness of a heart that opens itself anyhow, everyhow. Such, Eliza, I write to thee!" (The artless rogue, of course he did!) "And so I should ever love thee, most artlessly, most affectionately, if Providence permitted thy resi-

dence in the same section of the globe: for I am all that honour and affection can make me 'Thy Bramin.'"

The Bramin continues addressing Mrs. Draper until the departure of the *Earl of Chatham* Indiaman from Deal, on the 3rd of April 1767. He is amiably anxious about the fresh paint for Eliza's cabin; he is uncommonly solicitous about her companions on board: —

"I fear the best of your shipmates are only genteel by comparison with the contrasted crew with which thou beholdest them. So was — you know who — from the same fallacy which was put upon your judgment when — but I will not mortify you!"

"You know who" was, of course, Daniel Draper, Esquire, of Bombay — a gentleman very much respected in that quarter of the globe, and about whose probable health our worthy Bramin writes with delightful candour:

"I honour you, Eliza, for keeping secret some things which, if explained, had been a panegyric on yourself. There is a dignity in venerable affliction which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity or redress. Well have you supported that character, my amiable, my philosophic friend! And, indeed, I begin to think you have as many virtues as my Uncle Toby's widow. Talking of widows — pray, Eliza, if ever you are such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy Nabob, because I design to marry you myself. My wife cannot live long, and I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself. 'Tis true I am ninety-five in constitution, and you but twenty-five; but what I want in youth, I will make up in wit and good-humour. Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Saccharissa. Tell me, in answer to this, that you approve and honour the proposal."

Approve and honour the proposal! The coward was writing gay letters to his friends this while, with sneering allusions to this poor foolish *Bramine*. Her ship was not out of the Downs and the charming Sterne was at the "Mount Coffee-house," with a sheet of gilt-edged paper before him, offering that precious treasure his heart to Lady P —, asking whether it gave her pleasure to see him unhappy? whether it added to her triumph that her eyes and lips had turned a man into a fool? — quoting the Lord's Prayer, with a horrible baseness of blasphemy, as a proof that he had desired not to be led into temptation, and swearing

himself the most tender and sincere fool in the world. It was from his home at Coxwold, that he wrote the Latin Letter, which, I suppose, he was ashamed to put into English. I find in my copy of the Letters that there is a note of, I can't call it admiration, at Letter 112, which seems to announce that there was a No. 3 to whom the wretched worn-out old scamp was paying his addresses; and the year after, having come back to his lodgings in Bond Street, with his "Sentimental Journey" to launch upon the town, eager as ever for praise and pleasure — as vain, as wicked, as witty, as false as he had ever been, death at length seized the feeble wretch, and on the 18th of March 1768, that "bale of cadaverous goods," as he calls his body, was consigned to Pluto. In his last letter there is one sign of grace — the real affection with which he entreats a friend to be a guardian to his daughter Lydia. All his letters to her are artless, kind, affectionate, and *not* sentimental; as a hundred pages in his writings are beautiful, and full, not of surprising humour merely, but of genuine love and kindness. A perilous trade, indeed, is that of a man who has to bring his tears and laughter, his recollections, his personal griefs and joys, his private thoughts and feelings to market, to write them on paper, and sell them for money. Does he exaggerate his grief, so as to get his reader's pity for a false sensibility? feign indignation, so as to establish a character for virtue? elaborate repartees, so that he may pass for a wit? steal from other authors, and put down the theft to the credit side of his own reputation for ingenuity and learning? feign originality? affect benevolence or misanthropy? appeal to the gallery gods with claptraps and vulgar baits to catch applause?

How much of the pain and emphasis is necessary for the fair business of the stage, and how much of the rant and rouge is put on for the vanity of the actors? His audience trusts him: can he trust himself? How much was deliberate calculation and imposture — how much was false sensibility — and how much true feeling? Where did the lie begin, and did he know where? and where did the truth end in the art and scheme of this man of genius, this actor, this quack? Some time since, I was in the company of a French actor who began after dinner, and at his own request, to sing French songs of the sort called *des chansons grivoises*, and which he performed admirably, and to the dissatisfaction of most persons present. Having finished these, he commenced

a sentimental ballad — it was so charmingly sung that it touched all persons present, and especially the singer himself, whose voice trembled, whose eyes filled with emotion, and who was snivelling and weeping quite genuine tears by the time his own ditty was over. I suppose Sterne had this artistical sensibility; he used to blubber perpetually in his study, and finding his tears infectious, and that they brought him a great popularity, he exercised the lucrative gift of weeping: he utilised it, and cried on every occasion. I own that I don't value or respect much the cheap dribble of those fountains. He fatigues me with his perpetual disquiet and his uneasy appeals to my risible or sentimental faculties. He is always looking in my face, watching his effect, uncertain whether I think him an impostor or not; posture-making, coaxing, and imploring me. "See what sensibility I have — own now that I'm very clever — do cry now, you can't resist this." The humour of Swift and Rabelais, whom he pretended to succeed, poured from them as naturally as song does from a bird; they lose no manly dignity with it, but laugh their hearty great laugh out of their broad chests as nature bade them. But this man — who can make you laugh, who can make you cry too — never lets his reader alone, or will permit his audience repose: when you are quiet, he fancies he must rouse you, and turns over head and heels, or sidles up and whispers a nasty story. The man is a great jester, not a great humourist. He goes to work systematically and of cold blood; paints his face, puts on his ruff and motley clothes, and lays down his carpet and tumbles on it.

For instance, take the "Sentimental Journey," and see in the writer the deliberate propensity to make points and seek applause. He gets to "Dessein's Hotel," he wants a carriage to travel to Paris, he goes to the inn-yard, and begins what the actors call "business" at once. There is that little carriage (the *désobligeante*).

"Four months had elapsed since it had finished its career of Europe in the corner of Monsieur Dessein's coach-yard, and having sallied out thence but a vamped-up business at first, though it had been twice taken to pieces on Mont Cenis, it had not profited much by its adventures, but by none so little as the standing so many months unpitied in the corner of Monsieur Dessein's coach-yard. Much, indeed, was not to be said for it — but something might — and when a few words will rescue

misery out of her distress, I hate the man who can be a churl of them."

Le tour est fait! Paillasse has tumbled! Paillasse has jumped over the *désobligeante*, cleared it, hood and all, and bows to the noble company. Does anybody believe that this is a real Sentiment? that this luxury of generosity, this gallant rescue of Misery — out of an old cab, is genuine feeling? It is as genuine as the virtuous oratory of Joseph Surface when he begins, "The man who," etc., etc., and wishes to pass off for a saint with his credulous, good-humoured dupes.

Our friend purchases the carriage: after turning that notorious old monk to good account, and effecting (like a soft and good-natured Paillasse as he was, and very free with his money when he had it) an exchange of snuff-boxes with the old Franciscan, jogs out of Calais; sets down in immense figures on the credit side of his account the sous he gives away to the Montreuil beggars; and, at Nampont, gets out of the chaise and whimpers over that famous dead donkey, for which any sentimentalist may cry who will. It is agreeably and skilfully done — that dead jackass: like Monsieur de Soubise's cook on the campaign, Sterne dresses it, and serves it up quite tender and with a very piquant sauce. But tears and fine feelings, and a white pocket-handkerchief, and funeral sermon, and horses and feathers, and a procession of mutes, and a hearse with a dead donkey inside! Psha, mountebank! I'll not give thee one penny more for that trick, donkey and all!

This donkey had appeared once before with signal effect. In 1765, three years before the publication of the "Sentimental Journey," the seventh and eighth volumes of "Tristram Shandy" were given to the world, and the famous Lyons donkey makes his entry in those volumes (pp. 315, 316): —

"'Twas by a poor ass, with a couple of large panniers at his back, who had just turned in to collect eleemosynary turnip-tops and cabbage-leaves, and stood dubious, with his two forefeet at the inside of the threshold, and with his two hinder feet towards the street, as not knowing very well whether he was to go in or no.

"Now 'tis an animal (be in what hurry I may) I cannot bear to strike: there is a patient endurance of suffering wrote so unaffectedly in his looks and carriage which pleads so mightily for him, that it always disarms me, and to that degree that I do not like to speak

unkindly to him: on the contrary, meet him where I will, whether in town or country, in cart or under panniers, whether in liberty or bondage, I have ever something civil to say to him on my part; and, as one word begets another (if he has as little to do as I), I generally fall into conversation with him; and surely never is my imagination so busy as in framing responses from the etchings of his countenance; and where those carry me not deep enough, in flying from my own heart into his, and seeing what is natural for an ass to think — as well as a man, upon the occasion. In truth, it is the only creature of all the classes of beings below me with whom I can do this. . . . With an ass I can commune forever.

"Come, Honesty," said I, seeing it was impracticable to pass betwixt him and the gate, 'art thou for coming in or going out?'

"The ass twisted his head round to look up the street.

"Well!" replied I, 'we'll wait a minute for thy driver.'

"He turned his head thoughtfully about, and looked wistfully the opposite way.

"I understand thee perfectly," answered I: 'if thou takest a wrong step in this affair, he will cudgel thee to death. Well! a minute is but a minute; and if it saves a fellow-creature a drubbing, it shall not be set down as ill spent.'

"He was eating the stem of an artichoke as this discourse went on, and, in the little peevish contentions between hunger and unsavouriness, had dropped it out of his mouth half-a-dozen times, and had picked it up again. 'God help thee, Jack!' said I, 'thou hast a bitter breakfast on't — and many a bitter day's labour, and many a bitter blow, I fear, for its wages! 'Tis all, all bitterness to thee — whatever life is to others! And now thy mouth, if one knew the truth of it, is as bitter, I dare say, as soot' (for he had cast aside the stem), 'and thou hast not a friend perhaps in all this world that will give thee a macaroon.' In saying this, I pulled out a paper of 'em, which I had just bought, and gave him one; and at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit of seeing *how* an ass would eat a macaroon than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act.

"When the ass had eaten his macaroon, I pressed him to come in. The poor beast was heavy loaded — his legs seemed to tremble under him — he hung rather backwards, and, as I pulled at his halter, it broke in my hand.

He looked up pensive in my face: 'Don't thrash me with it; but if you will you may.' 'If I do,' said I, 'I'll be d—.'

A critic who refuses to see in this charming description wit, humour, pathos, a kind nature speaking, and a real sentiment, must be hard indeed to move and to please. A page or two farther we come to a description not less beautiful—a landscape and figures, deliciously painted by one who had the keenest enjoyment and the most tremulous sensibility:—

"'Twas in the road between Nismes and Lunel, where is the best Muscatto wine in all France: the sun was set, they had done their work: the nymphs had tied up their hair afresh, and the swains were preparing for a carousal. My mule made a dead point. 'Tis the pipe and tambourine,' said I—'I never will argue a point with one of your family as long as I live;' so leaping off his back, and kicking off one boot into this ditch and t'other into that, 'I'll take a dance,' said I, 'so stay you here.'

"A sunburnt daughter of labour rose up from the group to meet me as I advanced towards them; her hair, which was of a dark chestnut approaching to a black, was tied up in a knot, all but a single tress.

"'We want a cavalier,' said she, holding out both her hands, as if to offer them. 'And a cavalier you shall have,' said I, taking hold of both of them. 'We could not have done without you,' said she, letting go one hand, with self-taught politeness, and leading me up with the other.

"A lame youth, whom Apollo had recompensed with a pipe, and to which he had added a tambourine of his own accord, ran sweetly over the prelude, as he sat upon the bank. 'Tie me up this tress instantly,' said Nannette, putting a piece of string into my hand. It taught me to forget I was a stranger. The whole knot fell down—we had been seven years acquainted. The youth struck the note upon the tambourine, his pipe followed, and off we bounded.

"The sister of the youth—who had stolen her voice from heaven—sang alternately with her brother. 'Twas a Gascoigne roundelay: 'Viva la joia, fidon la tristessa.' The nymphs joined in unison, and their swains an octave below them.

"Viva la joia was in Nannette's lips, viva la joia in her eyes. A transient spark of amity shot across the space betwixt us. She looked amiable. Why could I not live and end my

days thus? 'Just Disposer of our joys and sorrows!' cried I, 'why could not a man sit down in the lap of content here, and dance, and sing, and say his prayers, and go to heaven with this nut-brown maid?' Capriciously did she bend her head on one side, and dance up insidiously. 'Then 'tis time to dance off,' quoth I."

And with this pretty dance and chorus, the volume artfully concludes. Even here one can't give the whole description. There is not a page in Sterne's writing but has something that were better away, a latent corruption—a hint, as of an impure presence.

Some of that dreary *double entendre* may be attributed to freer times and manners than ours, but not all. The foul satyr's eyes leer out of the leaves constantly: the last words the famous author wrote were bad and wicked—the last lines the poor stricken wretch penned were for pity and pardon. I think of these past writers and of one who lives amongst us now, and am grateful for the innocent laughter and the sweet and unsullied page which the author of "David Copperfield" gives to my children.

VANITY FAIR

CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH LORD STEYNE SHOWS HIMSELF IN A MOST AMIABLE LIGHT

When Lord Steyne was benevolently disposed, he did nothing by halves, and his kindness towards the Crawley family did the greatest honour to his benevolent discrimination. His lordship extended his good-will to little Rawdon: he pointed out to the boy's parents the necessity of sending him to a public school: that he was of an age now when emulation, the first principles of the Latin language, pugilistic exercises, and the society of his fellow-boys would be of the greatest benefit to the boy. His father objected that he was not rich enough to send the child to a good public school; his mother, that Briggs was a capital mistress for him, and had brought him on (as indeed was the fact) famously in English, the Latin rudiments, and in general learning: but all these objections disappeared before the generous perseverance of the Marquis of Steyne. His lordship was one of the governors of that famous old collegiate institution called the Whitefriars. It had been a Cistercian Convent in old days, when the Smithfield, which is contiguous to it,

was a tournament ground. Obstinate heretics used to be brought thither convenient for burning hard by. Henry VIII., the Defender of the Faith, seized upon the monastery and its possessions, and hanged and tortured some of the monks who could not accommodate themselves to the pace of his reform. Finally, a great merchant bought the house and land adjoining, in which, and with the help of other wealthy endowments of land and money, he established a famous foundation hospital for old men and children. An extern school grew round the old almost monastic foundation, which subsists still, with its middle-age costume and usages: and all Cistercians pray that it may long flourish.

Of this famous house, some of the greatest noblemen, prelates, and dignitaries in England are governors: and as the boys are very comfortably lodged, fed, and educated, and subsequently inducted to good scholarships at the University and livings in the Church, many little gentlemen are devoted to the ecclesiastical profession from their tenderest years, and there is considerable emulation to procure nominations for the foundation. It was originally intended for the sons of poor and deserving clerics and laics; but many of the noble governors of the Institution, with an enlarged and rather capricious benevolence, selected all sorts of objects for their bounty. To get an education for nothing, and a future livelihood and profession assured, was so excellent a scheme that some of the richest people did not disdain it; and not only great men's relations, but great men themselves, sent their sons to profit by the chance—Right Reverend Prelates sent their own kinsmen or the sons of their clergy, while, on the other hand, some great noblemen did not disdain to patronise the children of their confidential servants,—so that a lad entering this establishment had every variety of youthful society wherewith to mingle.

Rawdon Crawley, though the only book which he studied was the Racing Calendar, and though his chief recollections of polite learning were connected with the floggings which he received at Eton in his early youth, had that decent and honest reverence for classical learning which all English gentlemen feel, and was glad to think that his son was to have a provision for life, perhaps, and a certain opportunity of becoming a scholar. And although his boy was his chief solace and companion, and endeared to him by a thousand small ties, about which he did not care to speak to his wife,

who had all along shown the utmost indifference to their son, yet Rawdon agreed at once to part with him, and to give up his own greatest comfort and benefit for the sake of the welfare of the little lad. He did not know how fond he was of the child until it became necessary to let him go away. When he was gone, he felt more sad and downcast than he cared to own—far sadder than the boy himself, who was happy enough to enter a new career, and find companions of his own age. Becky burst out laughing once or twice, when the colonel, in his clumsy, incoherent way, tried to express his sentimental sorrows at the boy's departure. The poor fellow felt that his dearest pleasure and closest friend was taken from him. He looked often and wistfully at the little vacant bed in his dressing-room, where the child used to sleep. He missed him sadly of mornings, and tried in vain to walk in the Park without him. He did not know how solitary he was until little Rawdon was gone. He liked the people who were fond of him; and would go and sit for long hours with his good-natured sister Lady Jane, and talk to her about the virtues, and good looks, and hundred good qualities of the child.

Young Rawdon's aunt, we have said, was very fond of him, as was her little girl, who wept copiously when the time for her cousin's departure came. The elder Rawdon was thankful for the fondness of mother and daughter. The very best and honestest feelings of the man came out in these artless out-pourings of paternal feeling in which he indulged in their presence, and encouraged by their sympathy. He secured not only Lady Jane's kindness, but her sincere regard, by the feelings which he manifested, and which he could not show to his own wife. The two kinswomen met as seldom as possible. Becky laughed bitterly at Jane's feelings and softness; the other's kindly and gentle nature could not but revolt at her sister's callous behaviour.

It estranged Rawdon from his wife more than he knew or acknowledged to himself. She did not care for the estrangement. Indeed, she did not miss him or anybody. She looked upon him as her errand-man and humble slave. He might be ever so depressed or sulky, and she did not mark his demeanour, or only treated it with a sneer. She was busy thinking about her position, or her pleasures, or her advancement in society; she ought to have held a great place in it, that is certain.

It was honest Briggs who made up the little