

PREFACE.

I was made to observe at Rome some vestiges of an ancient custom very proper in those days — it was the parading of the streets by a set of people called *Preciæ*, who went some minutes before the *Flamen Dialis* to bid the inhabitants leave work or play, and attend wholly to the procession; but if ill omens prevented the pageants from passing, or if the occasion of the show was deemed scarcely worthy its celebration, these *Preciæ* stood a chance of being ill-treated by the spectators. A Prefatory introduction to a work like this, can hope little better usage from the Public than they had; it proclaims the approach of what has often passed by before, adorned most certainly with greater splendour, perhaps conducted too with greater regularity and skill: Yet will I not despair of giving at least a momentary amusement to my countrymen in general, while their entertainment shall serve as a vehicle for conveying expressions of particular kindness to those foreign individuals, whose tenderness softened the sorrows of absence, and who eagerly endeavoured by unmerited attentions to supply the loss of their company on whom nature and habit had given me stronger claims.

That I should make some reflections, or write down some observations, in the course of a long journey, is not strange; that I should present them before the Public is I hope not too daring: the presumption grew up out of their acknowledged favour, and if too kind culture has encouraged a coarse plant till it runs to seed, a little coldness from the same quarter will soon prove sufficient to kill it. The flattering partiality of private partisans sometimes induces authors to venture forth, and stand a public decision; but it is often found to betray them too; not to be tossed by waves of perpetual contention, but rather to sink in the silence of total neglect. What wonder! He who swims in oil must be buoyant indeed, if he escapes falling certainly, though gently, to the bottom; while he who commits his safety to the bosom of the wide-embracing ocean, is sure to be strongly supported, or at worst thrown upon the shore.

On this principle it has been still my study to obtain from a humane and generous Public that shelter their protection best affords from the poisoned arrows of private malignity; for though it is not

difficult to despise the attempts of petty malice, I will not say with the Philosopher, that I mean to build a monument to my fame with the stones thrown at me to break my bones; nor yet pretend to the art of Swift's German Wonder-doer, who promised to make them fall about his head like so many pillows. Ink, as it resembles Styx in its colour, should resemble it a little in its operation too; whoever has been once *dipt* should become *invulnerable*: But it is not so; the irritability of authors has long been enrolled among the comforts of ill-nature, and the triumphs of stupidity; such let it long remain! Let me at least take care in the worst storms that may arise in public or in private life, to say with Lear,

—I'm one
More sinn'd against, than sinning.

For the book—I have not thrown my thoughts into the form of private letters; because a work of which truth is the best recommendation, should not above all others begin with a lie. My old acquaintance rather chose to amuse themselves with conjectures, than to flatter me with tender inquiries during my absence; our correspondence then would not have been any amusement to the Public, whose treatment of me deserves every possible acknowledgment; and more than those acknowledgments will I not add—to a work, which, such as it is, I submit to their candour, resolving to think as little of the event as I can help; for the labours of the press resemble those of the toilette, both should be attended to, and finished with care; but once complete, should take up no more of our attention; unless we are disposed at evening to destroy all effect of our morning's study.

OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

MADE IN A JOURNEY THROUGH

France, Italy, and Germany.

FRANCE

CALAIS.

September 7, 1784.

Of all pleasure, I see much may be destroyed by eagerness of anticipation: I had told my female companion, to whom travelling was new, how she would be surprized and astonished, at the difference found in crossing the narrow sea from England to France, and now she is not astonished at all; why should she? We have lingered and loitered six and twenty hours from port to port, while sickness and fatigue made her feel as if much more time still had elapsed since she quitted the opposite shore. The truth is, we wanted wind exceedingly; and the flights of shaggs, and shoals of maycril, both beautiful enough, and both uncommon too at this season, made us very little amends for the tediousness of a night passed on ship-board.

Seeing the sun rise and set, however, upon an unobstructed horizon, was a new idea gained to me, who never till now had the opportunity. It confirmed the truth of that maxim which tells us, that the human mind must have something left to supply for itself on the sight of all sublunary objects. When my eyes have watched the rising or setting sun through a thick crowd of intervening trees, or seen it sink gradually behind a hill which obstructed my closer observation, fancy has always painted the full view finer than at last I found it; and if the sun itself cannot satisfy the cravings of a thirsty imagination, let it at least convince us that nothing on this side Heaven can satisfy them, and *set our affections* accordingly.

Pious reflections remind one of monks and nuns; I enquired of the Franciscan friar who attended us at the inn, what was become of Father Felix, who did the duties of the quête; as it is called, about a dozen years ago, when I recollect minding that his manners and story struck Dr. Johnson exceedingly, who said that so complete a character could scarcely be found in romance. He had been a soldier, it seems, and was no incompetent or mean scholar: the books we found open in his cell, shewed he had not neglected modern or colloquial knowledge; there was a translation of Addison's Specta-

tors, and Rapin's Dissertation on the contending Parties of England called Whig and Tory. He had likewise a violin, and some printed music, for his entertainment. I was glad to hear he was well, and travelling to Barcelona on foot by orders of the superior.

After dinner we set out to see Miss Grey, at her convent of Dominican Nuns; who, I hoped, would have remembered me, as many of the ladies there had seized much of my attention when last abroad; they had however all forgotten me, nor could call to mind how much they had once admired the beauty of my eldest daughter, then a child, which I thought impossible to forget: one is always more important in one's own eyes than in those of others; but no one is of importance to a Nun, who is and ought to be employed in other speculations.

When the Great Mogul showed his splendour to a travelling dervise, who expressed his little admiration of it—"Shall you not often be thinking of me in future?" said the monarch. "Perhaps I might," replied the religieus, "if I were not always thinking upon God."

The women spinning at their doors here, or making lace, or employing themselves in some manner, is particularly consolatory to a British eye; yet I do not recollect it struck me last time I was over: industry without bustle, and some appearance of gain without fraud, comfort one's heart; while all the profits of commerce scarcely can be said to make immediate compensation to a delicate mind, for the noise and brutality observed in an English port. I looked again for the chapel, where the model of a ship, elegantly constructed, hung from the top, and found it in good preservation: some scrupulous man had made the ship, it seems, and thought, perhaps justly too, that he had spent a greater portion of time and care on the workmanship than he ought to have done; so resolving no longer to indulge his vanity or fondness, fairly hung it up in the convent chapel, and made a solemn vow to look on it no more. I remember a much stronger instance of self-denial practised by a pretty young lady of Paris once, who was enjoined by her confessor to wring off the neck of her favourite bullfinch, as a penance for having passed too much time in teaching him to pipe tunes, peck from her hand,

&c.—She obeyed; but never could be prevailed on to see the priest again.

We are going now to leave Calais, where the women in long white camblet clokes, soldiers with whiskers, girls in neat slippers, and short petticoats contrived to show them, who wait upon you at the inn;—postillions with greasy night-caps, and vast jack-boots, driving your carriage harnessed with ropes, and adorned with sheep-skins, can never fail to strike an Englishman at his first going abroad:—But what is our difference of manners, compared to that prodigious effect produced by the much shorter passage from Spain to Africa; where an hour's time, and sixteen miles space only, carries you from Europe, from civilization, from Christianity. A gentleman's description of his feelings on that occasion rushes now on my mind, and makes me half ashamed to sit here, in Dessein's parlour, writing remarks, in good time!—upon places as well known as Westminster-bridge to almost all those who cross it at this moment; while the custom-house officers intrusion puts me the less out of humour, from the consciousness that, if I am disturbed, I am disturbed from doing *nothing*.

CHANTILLY.

Our way to this place lay through Boulogne; the situation of which is pleasing, and the fish there excellent. I was glad to see Boulogne, though I can scarcely tell why; but one is always glad to see something new, and talk of something old: for example, the story I once heard of Miss Ashe, speaking of poor Dr. James, who loved profligate conversation dearly,—"That man should set up his quarters across the water," said she; "why Boulogne would be a seraglio to him."

The country, as far as Montreuil, is a coarse one; *thin herbage in the plains and fruitless fields*. The cattle too are miserably poor and lean; but where there is no grass, we can scarcely expect them to be fat: they must not feed on wheat, I suppose, and cannot digest tobacco. Herds of swine, not flocks of sheep, meet one's eye upon the hills; and the very few gentlemen's feats that we have passed by, seem out of repair, and deserted. The French do not reside much in private houses, as the English do; but while those of narrower fortunes

flock to the country towns within their reach, those of ampler purses repair to Paris, where the rent of their estate supplies them with pleasures at no very enormous expence. The road is magnificent, like our old-fashioned avenue in a nobleman's park, but wider, and paved in the middle: this convenience continued on for many hundred miles, and all at the king's expence. Every man you meet, politely pulls off his hat *en passant*; and the gentlemen have commonly a good horse under them, but certainly a dressed one.

Sporting season is not come in yet, but, I believe the idea of sporting seldom enters any head except an English one: here is prodigious plenty of game, but the familiarity with which they walk about and sit by our road-side, shews they feel no apprehensions.

Harvest, even in France, is extremely backward this year, I see; no crops are yet got in, nor will reaping be likely to pay its own charges. But though summer is come too late for profit, the pleasure it brings is perhaps enhanced by delay: like a life, the early part of which has been wasted in sickness, the possessor finds too little time remaining for work, when health *does* come; and spends all that he has left, naturally enough, in enjoyment.

The pert vivacity of *La Fille* at Montreuil was all we could find there worth remarking: it filled up my notions of French flippancy agreeably enough; as no English wench would so have answered one to be sure. She had complained of our *avant-coureur's* behaviour. "*Il parle sur le bant ton, mademoiselle*" (said I), "*mais il à le coeur bon* [A]:" "*Ouydâ*" (replied she, smartly), "*mais c'est le ton qui fait le chanson* [B]."

FOOTNOTES:

[A] He sets his talk to a sounding tune, my dear, but he is an honest fellow.

[B] But I always thought it was the tune which made the musick.

The cathedral at Amiens made ample amends for the country we passed through to see it; the *Nef d'Amiens* deserves the fame of a first-rate structure: and the ornaments of its high altar seem particularly well chosen, of an excellent taste, and very capital execution. The vineyards from thence hither shew, that either the climate, or season, or both, improve upon one: the grapes climbing up some

not very tall golden-pippin trees, and mingling their fruits at the top, have a mighty pleasing effect; and I observe the rage for Lombardy poplars is in equal force here as about London: no tolerable house have I passed without seeing long rows of them; all young plantations, as one may perceive by their size. Refined countries always are panting for speedy enjoyment: the maxim of *carpe diem* [Seize the present moment.] came into Rome when luxury triumphed there; and poets and philosophers lent their assistance to decorate and dignify her gaudy car. Till then we read of no such haste to be happy; and on the same principle, while Americans contentedly wait the slow growth of their columnal chesnut, our hot-bed inhabitants measure the slender poplar with canes, anxiously admiring its quick growth and early elegance; yet are often cut down themselves, before their youthful favourite can afford them either pleasure or advantage.

This charming palace and gardens were new to neither of us, yet lovely to both: the tame fish, I remember so well to have fed from my hand eleven or twelve years ago, are turned almost all white; can it be with age I wonder? the naturalists must tell. I once saw a carp which weighed six pounds and an half taken out of a pond in Hertfordshire, where the owners knew it had resided forty years at least; and it was not white, but of the common colour: Quere, how long will they live? and when will they begin to change? The stables struck me as more magnificent this time than the last I saw them; the hounds were always dirtily and ill kept; but hunting is not the taste of any nation now but ours; none but a young English heir says to his estate as Goliah did to David, *Come to me, and I will give thee to the beasts of the field, and to the fowls of the air*; as some of our old books of piety reproach us. Every trick that money can play with the most lavish abundance of water is here exhibited; nor is the sight of a *jet d'eau*, or the murmur of an artificial cascade, undelightful in a hot day, let the Nature-mongers say what they please. The prince's cabinet, for a private collection, is not a mean one; but I was sorry to see his quadrant rusted to the globe almost, and the poor planetarium out of all repair. The great stuffed dog is a curiosity however; I never saw any of the canine species so large, and withal so beautiful, living or dead.

The theatre belonging to the house is a lovely one; and the truly princely possessor, when he heard once that an English gentleman, travelling for amusement, had called at Chantilly too late to enjoy the diversion, instantly, though past twelve o'clock at night, ordered a new representation, that his curiosity might be gratified. This is the same Prince of Condè, who going from Paris to his country-seat here for a month or two, when his eldest son was nine years old, left him fifty louis d'ors as an allowance during his absence. At his return to town, the boy produced his purse, crying "*Papa! here's all the money safe, I have never touched it once*"—The Prince, in reply, took him gravely to the window, and opening it, very quietly poured all the louis d'ors into the street; saying, "Now, if you have neither virtue enough to give away your money, nor spirit enough to spend it, always *do this* for the future, do you hear; that the poor may at least have a *chance for it*."

PARIS.

The fine paved road to this town has many inconveniencies, and jars the nerves terribly with its perpetual rattle; the approach however always strikes one as very fine, I think, and the boulevards and guingettes look always pretty too: as wine, beer, and spirits are not permitted to be sold there, one sees what England does not even pretend to exhibit, which is gaiety without noise, and a crowd without a riot. I was pleased to go over the churches again too, and re-experience that particular sensation which the disposition of St. Rocque's altars and ornaments alone can give. In the evening we looked at the new square called the Palais Royal, whence the Duc de Chartres has removed a vast number of noble trees, which it was a sin and shame to profane with an axe, after they had adorned that spot for so many centuries. — The people were accordingly as angry, I believe, as Frenchmen can be, when the folly was first committed: the court, however, had wit enough to convert the place into a sort of Vauxhall, with tents, fountains, shops, full of frippery, brilliant at once and worthless, to attract them; with coffeehouses surrounding it on every side; and now they are all again *merry* and *happy*, synonymous terms at Paris, though often disunited in London; and *Vive le Duc de Chartres!*

The French are really a contented race of mortals;—precluded almost from possibility of adventure, the low Parisian leads a gentle humble life, nor envies that greatness he never can obtain; but either wonders delightedly, or diverts himself philosophically with the sight of splendours which seldom fail to excite serious envy in an Englishman, and sometimes occasion even suicide, from disappointed hopes, which never could take root in the heart of these unambitious people. Reflections of this cast are suggested to one here in every shop, where the behaviour of the matter at first sight contradicts all that our satirists tell us of the *supple Gaul*, &c. A mercer in this town shews you a few silks, and those he scarcely opens; *vous devez choisir* [Chuse what you like.], is all he thinks of saying, to invite your custom; then takes out his snuff-box, and yawns in your face, fatigued by your inquiries. For my own part, I find my natural disgust of such behaviour greatly repelled, by the recollection that the man I am speaking to is no inhabitant of

A happy land, where circulating pow'r
Flows thro' each member of th'embodied state—

S. Johnson.

and I feel well-inclined to respect the peaceful tenor of a life, which likes not to be broken in upon, for the sake of obtaining riches, which when gotten must end only in the pleasure of counting them. A Frenchman who should make his fortune by trade tomorrow, would be no nearer advancement in society or situation: why then should he solicit, by arts he is too lazy to delight in the practice of, that opulence which would afford so slight an improvement to his comforts? He lives as well as he wishes already; he goes to the Boulevards every night, treats his wife with a glass of lemonade or ice, and holds up his babies by turns, to hear the jokes of *Jean Potage*. Were he to recommend his goods, like the Londoner, with studied eloquence and attentive flattery, he could not hope like him that the eloquence he now bestows on the decorations of a hat, or the varnish of an equipage, may one day serve to torment a minis-

ter, and obtain a post of honour for his son; he could not hope that on some future day his flattery might be listened to by some lady of more birth than beauty, or riches perhaps, when happily employed upon a very different subject, and be the means of lifting himself into a state of distinction, his children too into public notoriety.

Emulation, ambition, avarice, however, must in all arbitrary governments be confined to the great; the *other* set of mortals, for there are none there of *middling* rank, live, as it should seem, like eunuchs in a seraglio; feel themselves irrevocably doomed to promote the pleasure of their superiors, nor ever dream of sighing for enjoyments from which an irremeable boundary divides them. They see at the beginning of their lives how that life must necessarily end, and trot with a quiet, contented, and unaltered pace down their long, straight, and shaded avenue; while we, with anxious solicitude, and restless hurry, watch the quick turnings of our serpentine walk; which still presents, either to sight or expectation, some changes of variety in the ever-shifting prospect, till the unthought-of, unexpected end comes suddenly upon us, and finishes at once the fluctuating scene. Reflections must now give way to facts for a moment, though few English people want to be told that every hotel here, belonging to people of condition, is shut out from the street like our Burlington-house, which gives a general gloom to the look of this city so famed for its gaiety: the streets are narrow too, and ill-paved; and very noisy, from the echo made by stone buildings drawn up to a prodigious height, many of the houses having seven, and some of them even eight stories from the bottom. The contradictions one meets with every moment likewise strike even a cursory observer—a countess in a morning, her hair dressed, with diamonds too perhaps, a dirty black handkerchief about her neck, and a flat silver ring on her finger, like our ale-wives; a *femme publique*, dressed avowedly for the purposes of alluring the men, with not a very small crucifix hanging at her bosom;—and the Virgin Mary's sign at an alehouse door, with these words,

Je suis la mere de mon Dieu,
Et la gardienne de ce lieu [C].

[C]

The mother of my God am I,
And keep this house right carefully.

I have, however, borrowed Bocage's Remarks upon the English nation, which serve to damp my spirit of criticism exceedingly: She had more opportunities than I for observation, not less quickness of discernment surely; and her stay in London was longer than mine in Paris. — Yet, how was she deceived in many points!

I will tell nothing that I did not *see*; and among the objects one would certainly avoid seeing if it were possible, is the deformity of the poor. — Such various modes of warping the human figure could hardly be observed in England by a surgeon in high practice, as meet me about this country incessantly. — I have seen them in the galleries and outer-courts even of the palace itself, and am glad to turn my eyes for relief on the Duke of Orleans's pictures; a glorious collection! The Italian noblemen, in whose company we saw it, acknowledged with candour the good taste of the selection; and I was glad to see again what had delighted me so many years before: particularly, the three Marys, by Annibale Caracci; and Rubens's odd conceit of making Juno's Peacock peck Paris's leg, for having refused the apple to his mistress.

The manufacture at the Gobelins seems exceedingly improved; the colouring less inharmonious, the drawing more correct; but our Parisians are not just now thinking about such matters; they are all wild for love of a new comedy, written by Mons. de Beaumarchais, and called, "Le Mariage de Figaro," full of such wit as we were fond of in the reign of Charles the Second, indecent merriment, and gross immorality; mixed, however, with much acrimonious satire, as if Sir George Etherege and Johnny Gay had clubbed their powers of ingenuity at once to divert and to corrupt their auditors; who now carry the verses of this favourite piece upon their fans, pocket-handkerchiefs, &c. as our women once did those of the Beggar's Opera.

We have enjoyed some very agreeable society here in the company of Comte Turconi, a Milanese Nobleman who, desirous to escape all the frivolous, and petty distinction which birth alone bestows, has long fixed his residence in Paris, where talents find their influence, and where a great city affords that unobserved freedom of thought and action which can scarcely be expected by a man of high rank in a smaller circle; but which, when once tasted, will not seldom be preferred to the attentive watchfulness of more confined society.

The famous Venetian too, who has written so many successful comedies, and is now employed upon his own Memoirs, at the age of eighty-four, was a delightful addition to our Coterie, *Goldoni*. He is garrulous, good-humoured, and gay; resembling the late James Harris of Salisbury in person not manner, and seems justly esteemed, and highly, by his countrymen.

The conversation of the Marquis Trotti and the Abate Bucchetti is likewise particularly pleasing; especially to me, who am naturally desirous to live as much as possible among Italians of general knowledge, good taste, and polished manners, before I enter their country, where the language will be so very indispensable. Mean time I have stolen a day to visit my old acquaintance the English Austin Nuns at the Fossée, and found the whole community alive and cheerful; they are many of them agreeable women, and having seen Dr. Johnson with me when I was last abroad, enquired much for him: Mrs. Fermor, the Prioress, niece to Belinda in the Rape of the Lock, taking occasion to tell me, comically enough, "That she believed there was but little comfort to be found in a house that harboured *poets*; for that she remembered Mr. Pope's praise made her aunt very troublesome and conceited, while his numberless caprices would have employed ten servants to wait on him; and he gave one" (said she) "no amends by his talk neither, for he only sate dozing all day, when the sweet wine was out, and made his verses chiefly in the night; during which season he kept himself awake by drinking coffee, which it was one of the maids business to make for him, and they took it by turns."

These ladies really live here as comfortably for aught I see as peace, quietness, and the certainty of a good dinner every day can

make them. Just so much happier than as many old maids who inhabit Milman Street and Chapel Row, as they are sure not to be robbed by a treacherous, or insulted by a favoured, servant in the decline of life, when protection is grown hopeless and resistance vain; and as they enjoy at least a moral certainty of never living worse than they do to-day: while the little knot of unmarried females turned fifty round Red Lion Square *may* always be ruined by a runaway agent, a bankrupted banker, or a roguish steward; and even the petty pleasures of six-penny quadrille may become by that misfortune too costly for their income.—*Aureste*, as the French say, the difference is small: both coteries sit separate in the morning, go to prayers at noon, and read the chapters for the day: change their neat dress, eat their little dinner, and play at small games for small sums in the evening; when recollection tires, and chat runs low.

But more adventurous characters claim my present attention. All Paris I think, myself among the rest, assembled to see the valiant brothers, Robert and Charles, mount yesterday into the air, in company with a certain Pilâtre de Rosier, who conducted them in the new-invented flying chariot fastened to an air-balloon. It was from the middle of the Tuilleries that they set out, a place very favourable and well-contrived for such public purposes. But all was so nicely managed, so cleverly carried on somehow, that the order and decorum of us who remained on firm ground, struck me more than even the very strange sight of human creatures floating in the wind: but I have really been witness to ten times as much bustle and confusion at a crowded theatre in London, than what these peaceable Parisians made when the whole city was gathered together. Nobody was hurt, nobody was frightened, nobody could even pretend to feel themselves incommoded. Such are among the few comforts that result from a despotic government.

My republican spirit, however, boiled up a little last Monday, when I had to petition Mons. de Calonne for the restoration of some trifles detained in the custom-house at Calais. His politeness, indeed, and the sight of others performing like acts of humiliation, reconciled me in some measure to the drudgery of running from subaltern to subaltern, intreating, in pathetic terms, the remission of a law which is at last either just or unjust; if just, no felicitation

should, methinks, be permitted to change it; if unjust, what can be so grating as the obligation to solicit?

We mean to quit Paris to-morrow; I therefore enquired this evening, what was become of our aërial travellers. A very grave man replied, "*Je crois, Madame, qu'ils sont déjà arrivés ces Messieurs là, au lieu où les vents se forment* [D]."

[D] I fancy, Ma'am, the gentlemen are gone to see the place where all the winds blow from.

LYONS.

Sept. 25, 1784.

We left the capital at our intended time, and put into the carriage, for amusement, a book seriously recommended by Mr. Goldoni; but which diverted me only by the fanfaronades that it contained. The author has, however, got the premium by this performance, which the Academy of Berlin promised to whoever wrote best this year on any Belles Lettres subject. This gentleman judiciously chose to give reasons for the universality of the French language, and has been so gaily insolent to every other European nation in his flimsy pamphlet, that some will probably praise, many reply to, all read, and all forget it. I will confess myself so seized on by his sprightly impertinence, that I wished for leisure to translate, and wit to answer him at first, but the want of one solid thought by which to recollect his existence has cured me; and I now find that he was deliciously cool and sharp, like the ordinary wine of the country we are passing through, which having *no body*, can neither keep its little power long, nor even use it while fresh to any sensible effect.

The country is really beautiful; but descriptions are *so* fallacious, one half despairs of communicating one's ideas as they are: for either well-chosen words do not present themselves, or being well-chosen they detain the reader, and fix his mind on *them*, instead of the things described. Certain it is that I had formed no adequate notion of the fine river called the Yonne, with cattle grazing on its fertile banks: those banks not clothed indeed with our soft verdure, but with royal purple, proceeding from an autumnal daisy of that colour that enamels every meadow at this season. Here small enclosures seem unknown to the inhabitants, who are strewed up and