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A Sentimental Journey Through France And Italy

Yorick, ...

London, 1768

The Starling. Road to Versailles.

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THE STARLING.

ROAD TO VERSAILLES.

I GOT into my *remise* the hour I propos'd: La Fleur got up behind, and I bid the coachman make the best of his way to Versailles.

As there was nothing in this road, or rather nothing which I look for in travelling, I cannot fill up the blank better than with a short history of this self-same bird, which became the subject of the last chapter.

Whilst the Honourable Mr. **** was waiting for a wind at Dover it had been caught upon the cliffs before it could well fly, by an English lad who was his groom; who not caring to destroy it, had taken it in his breast into the packet—and by course of feeding it, and taking it once under his protection, in a day or two grew fond of it, and got it safe along with him to Paris.

At Paris the lad had laid out a livre in a little cage for the starling, and as he had little to do better the five months his master stay'd there, he taught it in his mother's tongue the four simple words—(and no more)—

D 2 te



to which I own'd myself so much
it's debtor.

Upon his master's going on for
Italy—the lad had given it to the
master of the hotel—But his little
song for liberty, being in an *unknown*
language at Paris—the bird had little
or no store set by him—so La Fleur
bought both him and his cage for
me for a bottle of Burgundy.

In my return from Italy I brought
him with me to the country in whose
language he had learn'd his notes—
and telling the story of him to Lord
A—Lord A begg'd the bird of me—
in a week Lord A gave him to
Lord B—Lord B made a present
of him to Lord C—and Lord's C's
gentle.

gentleman sold him to Lord D's for a shilling—Lord D gave him to Lord E—and so on—half round the alphabet—From that rank he pass'd into the lower house, and pass'd the hands of as many commoners— But as all these wanted to *get in*—and my bird wanted to get out—he had almost as little store set by him in London as in Paris.

It is impossible but many of my readers must have heard of him; and if any by mere chance have ever seen him—I beg leave to inform them, that that bird was my bird—or some vile copy set up to represent him.

I have nothing further to add upon him, but that from that time to this,

D 3

I have



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I have borne this poor starling as the
crest to my arms.—Thus :



— And let the heralds officers
twist his neck about if they dare.

T H E