

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

A Sentimental Journey Through France And Italy

Yorick, ...

London, 1768

The Letter. Amiens.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-1876

THE LETTER.

AMIENS.

FORTUNE had not smil'd ²⁹
 upon La Fleur; for he had been
 unsuccessful in his feats of chivalry
 —and not one thing had offer'd to
 signalize his zeal for my service from
 the time he had enter'd into it, which
 was almost four and twenty hours.
 The poor soul burn'd with impa-
 tience; and the Count de L***'s
 servant's coming with the letter, be-
 ing the first practicable occasion which
 offered, La Fleur had laid hold of
 it; and in order to do honour to his
 master,

master, had taken him into a back parlour in the Auberge, and treated him with a cup or two of the best wine in Picardy; and the Count de L***'s servant in return, and not to be behind hand in politeness with La Fleur, had taken him back with him to the Count's hôtel. La Fleur's *prevenancy* (for there was a passport in his very looks) soon set every servant in the kitchen at ease with him; and as a Frenchman, whatever be his talents, has no sort of prudery in shewing them, La Fleur, in less than five minutes, had pull'd out his fife, and leading off the dance himself with the first note, set the *fille de chambre*, the *maitre d'hotel*, the cook,

the

the scullion, and all the household, dogs and cats, besides an old monkey, a-dancing: I suppose there never was a merrier kitchen since the flood.

Madame de L***, in passing from her brother's apartments to her own, hearing so much jollity below stairs, rung up her *fille de chambre* to ask about it; and hearing it was the English gentleman's servant who had set the whole house merry with his pipe, she order'd him up.

As the poor fellow could not present himself empty, he had loaden'd himself in going up stairs with a thousand compliments to Madame de L***, on the part of his master—
added

added a long apocrypha of inquiries after Madame de L***'s health—told her, that Monsieur his master was *au deſeſpoir* for her re-eſtabliſhment from the fatigues of her journey—and, to cloſe all, that Monsieur had received the letter which Madame had done him the honour——And he has done me the honour, ſaid Madame de L***, interrupting La Fleur, to ſend a billet in return.

Madame de L*** had ſaid this with ſuch a tone of reliance upon the fact, that La Fleur had not power to diſappoint her expectations—he trembled for my honour—and poſſibly might not altogether be unconcerned

cerned for his own, as a man capable of being attach'd to a master who could be a wanting *en egards vis a vis d'une femme*; so that when Madame de L.*** asked La Fleur if he had brought a letter—*O qu'oui*, said La Fleur: so laying down his hat upon the ground, and taking hold of the flap of his right side pocket with his left hand, he began to search for the letter with his right—then contrary-wise—*Diable!*—then sought every pocket—pocket by pocket, round, not forgetting his fob—*Peste!*—then La Fleur emptied them upon the floor—pulled out a dirty cravat—a handkerchief—a comb—a whip lash—a night-cap—then gave a peep
into

into his hat—*Quelle etourderie!* He had left the letter upon the table in the Auberge—he would run for it, and be back with it in three minutes.

I had just finished my supper when La Fleur came in to give me an account of his adventure: he told the whole story simply as it was; and only added, that if Monsieur had forgot (*par hazard*) to answer Madame's letter, the arrangement gave him an opportunity to recover the *faux pas*—and if not, that things were only as they were.

Now I was not altogether sure of my *etiquette*, whether I ought to have wrote or no; but if I had—a devil
 6 himself

himself could not have been angry : 'twas but the officious zeal of a well-meaning creature for my honour ; and however he might have mistook the road—or embarrassed me in so doing—his heart was in no fault—I was under no necessity to write—and what weighed more than all—he did not look as if he had done amiss.

—'Tis all very well, La Fleur, said I.—'Twas sufficient. La Fleur flew out of the room like lightning, and return'd with pen, ink, and paper, in his hand ; and coming up to the table, laid them close before me, with such a delight in his countenance, that I could not help taking up the pen.

VOL. I.

I.

I



I begun and begun again; and though I had nothing to say, and that nothing might have been express'd in half a dozen lines, I made half a dozen different beginnings, and could no way please myself.

In short, I was in no mood to write.

La Fleur stepp'd out and brought a little water in a glass to dilute my ink—then fetch'd sand and seal-wax—It was all one: I wrote, and blotted, and tore off, and burnt, and wrote again—*Le Diable l'emporte!* said I half to myself—I cannot write this self-same letter; throwing the pen down despairingly as I said it.

As

As soon as I had cast down the pen, La Fleur advanced with the most respectful carriage up to the table, and making a thousand apologies for the liberty he was going to take, told me he had a letter in his pocket wrote by a drummer in his regiment to a corporal's wife, which, he durst say, would suit the occasion.

I had a mind to let the poor fellow have his humour—Then prithee, said I, let me see it.

La Fleur instantly pull'd out a little dirty pocket-book cramm'd full of small letters and billet-doux in a sad condition, and laying it upon the table, and then untying the string

L 2 which



which held them all together, run them over one by one, till he came to the letter in question—*La voila!* said he, clapping his hands: so unfolding it first, he laid it before me, and retired three steps from the table whilst I read it.