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A Sentimental Journey Through France And Italy

Yorick, ...

London, 1768

The Captive. Paris.

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THE CAPTIVE.

P A R I S.

THE bird in his cage pursued me into my room; I sat down close to my table, and leaning my head upon my hand, I began to figure to myself the miseries of confinement. I was in a right frame for it, and so I gave full scope to my imagination.

I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow creatures born to no inheritance but slavery; but finding, however affecting the picture was, that I could not bring it
near

near me, and that the multitude of
of sad groups in it did but distract
me. —

—I took a single captive, and hav-
ing first shut him up in his dungeon,
I then look'd through the twilight of
his grated door to take his picture.

I beheld his body half wasted away
with long expectation and confine-
ment, and felt what kind of sickness of
the heart it was which arises from hope
deferr'd. Upon looking nearer I saw
him pale and feverish: in thirty years
the western breeze had not once fann'd
his blood—he had seen no sun, no
moon in all that time—nor had the
voice

voice of friend or kinsman breathed
through his lattice—his children—

—But here my heart began to bleed
—and I was forced to go on with
another part of the portrait.

He was sitting upon the ground
upon a little straw, in the furthest
corner of his dungeon, which was
alternately his chair and bed : a little
calender of small sticks were laid at the
head notch'd all over with the dismal
days and nights he had pass'd there—
he had one of these little sticks in his
hand, and with a rusty nail he was
etching another day of misery to add
to the heap. As I darkened the little
light he had, he lifted up a hopeless
eye

eye towards the door, then cast it down—shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turn'd his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle—He gave a deep sigh—I saw the iron enter into his soul—I burst into tears—I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn—I startled up from my chair, and calling La Fleur, I bid him bespeak me a *remise*, and have it ready at the door of the hotel by nine in the morning.

—I'll go directly, said I, myself to Monsieur Le Duke de Choiseul.

La

La Fleur would have put me to bed; but not willing he should see any thing upon my cheek, which would cost the honest fellow a heart ache—I told him I would go to bed by himself—and bid him go do the same.

