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A Sentimental Journey Through France And Italy

Yorick, ...

London, 1768

The Passport. Versailles.

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THE PASSPORT.

VERSAILLES.

I COULD not conceive why the Count de B**** had gone so abruptly out of the room, any more than I could conceive why he had put the Shakespear into his pocket—*Mysteries which must explain themselves, are not worth the loss of time, which a conjecture about them takes up:* 'twas better to read Shakespear; so taking up, "*Much Ado about Nothing,*" I transported myself instantly from the chair I sat in to Messina in Sicily, and got so busy with Don Pedro and Benedick

nedick and Beatrice, that I thought
not of Versailles, the Count, or the
Passport.

Sweet pliability of man's spirit,
that can at once surrender itself to
illusions, which cheat expectation and
sorrow of their weary moments!—
—long—long since had ye number'd
out my days, had I not trod so great
a part of them upon this enchanted
ground: when my way is too rough
for my feet, or too steep for my
strength, I get off it, to some smooth
velvet path which fancy has scattered
over with rose-buds of delights; and
having taken a few turns in it, come
back strengthen'd and refresh'd—
When evils press sore upon me, and
there

there is no retreat from them in this world, then I take a new course—I leave it—and as I have a clearer idea of the elysian fields than I have of heaven, I force myself, like Eneas, into them—I see him meet the pensive shade of his forsaken Dido—and wish to recognize it—I see the injured spirit wave her head, and turn off silent from the author of her miseries and dishonours—I lose the feelings for myself in hers—and in those affections which were wont to make me mourn for her when I was at school.

Surely this is not walking in a vain shadow—nor does man disquiet himself in vain, by it—he oftener does so in trusting

trusting the issue of his commotions to reason only.—I can safely say for myself, I was never able to conquer any one single bad sensation in my heart so decisively, as by beating up as fast as I could for some kindly and gentle sensation, to fight it upon its own ground.

When I had got to the end of the third act, the Count de B**** entered with my Passport in his hand. Monf. le Duc de C****, said the Count, is as good a prophet, I dare say, as he is a statesman—*Un homme qui rit*, said the duke, *ne sera jamais dangereux*.—Had it been for any one but the king's jester, added the Count, I could

could not have got it these two hours.—*Pardonnez moi*, Monf. Le Compte, said I—I am not the king's jester.—But you are Yorick?—Yes.—*Et vous plaisez?*—I answered, Indeed I did jest—but was not paid for it—'twas entirely at my own expence.

We have no jester at court, Monf. Le Compte, said I, the last we had was in the licentious reign of Charles the II^d—since which time our manners have been so gradually refining, that our court at present is so full of patriots, who wish for *nothing* but the honours and wealth of their country—and our ladies are all so chaste, so spotless, so good, so devout
—there



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—there is nothing for a jester to make
a jest of—

Voila un persiflage! cried the
Count.

THE

