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A Sentimental Journey Through France And Italy

Yorick, ...

London, 1768

The Fragment. Paris.

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THE FRAGMENT.

P A R I S.

LA Fleur had left me something to amuse myself with for the day more than I had bargain'd for, or could have enter'd either into his head or mine.

He had brought the little print of butter upon a currant leaf; and as the morning was warm, and he had a good step to bring it, he had begg'd a sheet of waste paper to put betwixt the currant leaf and his hand — As that was plate sufficient, I bad him lay it upon the table as it was,

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and

and as I resolv'd to stay within all day I order'd him to call upon the *traiteur* to bespeak my dinner, and leave me to breakfast by myself.

When I had finish'd the butter, I threw the currant leaf out of the window, and was going to do the same by the waste paper—but stopping to read a line first, and that drawing me on to a second and third—I thought it better worth; so I shut the window, and drawing a chair up to it, I sat down to read it.

It was in the old French of Rabelais's time, and for ought I know might have been wrote by him—it was moreover in a Gothic letter, and that

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so



so faded and gone off by damps and length of time, it cost me infinite trouble to make any thing of it— I threw it down; and then wrote a letter to Eugenius—then I took it up again, and embroiled my patience with it afresh—and then to cure that, I wrote a letter to Eliza.—Still it kept hold of me; and the difficulty of understanding it increased but the desire.

I got my dinner; and after I had enlightened my mind with a bottle of Burgundy, I at it again—and after two or three hours poring upon it, with almost as deep attention as ever Gruter or Jacob Spon did upon a nonsensical inscription, I thought I
made

made sense of it; but to make sure of it, the best way, I imagined, was to turn it into English, and see how it would look then—so I went on leisurely, as a trifling man does, sometimes writing a sentence—then taking a turn or two—and then looking how the world went, out of the window; so that it was nine o'clock at night before I had done it—I then began and read it as follows.

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