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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.

— Now as the notary's wife disputed the point with the notary with too much heat—I wish, said the notary, throwing down the parchment, that there was another notary here only to set down and attest all this—

— And what would you do then, Monsieur? said she, rising hastily up—the notary's wife was a little fume of a woman, and the notary thought it well

well to avoid a hurricane by a mild
 reply—I would go, answer'd he, to
 bed.—You may go to the devil,
 answer'd the notary's wife.

Now there happening to be but
 one bed in the house, the other two
 rooms being unfurnish'd, as is the
 custom at Paris, and the notary not
 caring to lie in the same bed with a
 woman who had but that moment
 sent him pell-mell to the devil, went
 forth with his hat and cane and short
 cloak, the night being very windy,
 and walk'd out ill at ease towards the
pont neuf.

Of all the bridges which ever were
 built, the whole world who have

K 3

pass'd



pass'd over the *pont neuf*, must own,
 that it is the noblest—the finest—the
 grandest—the lightest—the longest—
 the broadest that ever conjoin'd land
 and land together upon the face of
 the terraqueous globe——

*By this, it seems, as if the author of
 the fragment had not been a French-
 man.*

The worst fault which divines and
 the doctors of the Sorbonne can al-
 lege against it, is, that if there is
 but a cap-full of wind in or about
 Paris, 'tis more blasphemously *sacre
 Dieu'd* there than in any other aper-
 ture of the whole city—and with rea-
 son,

son, good and cogent Messieurs; for it comes against you without crying *garde d'eau*, and with such unpremeditable puffs, that of the few who cross it with their hats on, not one in fifty but hazards two livres and a half, which is its full worth.

The poor notary, just as he was passing by the sentry, instinctively clapp'd his cane to the side of it, but in raising it up the point of his cane catching hold of the loop of the sentinel's hat hoisted it over the spikes of the ballustrade clear into the Seine—

—'Tis an ill wind, said a boatman, who catch'd it, *which blows no body any good.*

The fentry being a gascon incontinently twirl'd up his whiskers, and levell'd his harquebuss.

Harquebusses in those days went off with matches; and an old woman's paper lanthorn at the end of the bridge happening to be blown out, she had borrow'd the fentry's match to light it—it gave a moment's time for the gascon's blood to run cool, and turn the accident better to his advantage—'Tis an ill wind, said he, catching off the notary's castor, and
legi-

legitimating the capture with the
boatman's adage.

The poor notary cross'd the
bridge, and passing along the rue
de Dauphine into the fauxbourgs of
St. Germain, lamented himself as
he walk'd along in this manner:

Luckless man! that I am, said
the notary, to be the sport of hurri-
canes all my days—to be born to
have the storm of ill language le-
vell'd against me and my profession
wherever I go—to be forced into
marriage by the thunder of the
church to a tempest of a woman—to
be driven forth out of my house by
domestic

domestic winds, and despoil'd of my
 castor by pontific ones—to be here,
 bare-headed, in a windy night at the
 mercy of the ebbs and flows of acci-
 dents—where I am to lay my head?—
 miserable man! what wind in the two-
 and-thirty points of the whole com-
 pass can blow unto thee, as it does
 to the rest of thy fellow creatures,
 good!

As the notary was passing on by a
 dark passage, complaining in this
 sort, a voice call'd out to a girl, to
 bid her run for the next notary—now
 the notary being the next, and avail-
 ing himself of his situation, walk'd
 up the passage to the door, and pass-
 ing

ing through an old sort of a saloon, was usher'd into a large chamber dismantled of every thing but a long military pike—a breast plate—a rusty old sword, and bandoleer, hung up equi-distant in four different places against the wall.

An old personage, who had heretofore been a gentleman, and unless decay of fortune taints the blood along with it was a gentleman at that time, lay supporting his head upon his hand in his bed; a little table with a taper burning was set close beside it, and close by the table was placed a chair—the notary sat him down in it; and pulling out his ink-horn and a sheet or two of paper which he had in his pocket,



pocket, he placed them before him, and dipping his pen in his ink, and leaning his breast over the table, he disposed every thing to make the gentleman's last will and testament.

Alas! Monsieur le Notaire, said the gentleman, raising himself up a little, I have nothing to bequeath which will pay the expence of bequeathing, except the history of myself, which, I could not die in peace unless I left it as a legacy to the world; the profits arising out of it, I bequeath to you for the pains of taking it from me—it is a story so uncommon, it must be read by all
 4 man-

mankind—it will make the fortunes of your house—the notary dipp'd his pen into his ink-horn—Almighty director of every event in my life! said the old gentleman, looking up earnestly and raising his hands towards heaven — thou whose hand has led me on through such a labyrinth of strange passages down into this scene of desolation, assist the decaying memory of an old, infirm, and broken-hearted man—direct my tongue, by the spirit of thy eternal truth, that this stranger may set down naught but what is written in that Book, from whose records, said he, clasping his hands together, I am to be condemn'd or acquitted!—the notary held up the

the point of his pen betwixt the taper
and his eye—

—It is a story, Monsieur le No-
taire, said the gentleman, which will
rouse up every affection in nature—
it will kill the humane, and touch
the heart of cruelty herself with
pity—

—The notary was inflamed with
a desire to begin, and put his pen
a third time into his ink-horn—
and the old gentleman turning a
little more towards the notary,
began to dictate his story in these
words—

— And

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— And where is the rest of it,
La Fleur? said I, as he just then en-
ter'd the room.

THE

