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**A Sentimental Journey Through France And Italy**

**Yorick, ...**

**London, 1768**

The Case of Delicacy.

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## THE CASE OF DELICACY.

WHEN you have gained the top of mount Taurira, you run presently down to Lyons— adieu then to all rapid movements! 'Tis a journey of caution; and it fares better with sentiments, not to be in a hurry with them; so I contracted with a Voiturin to take his time with a couple of mules, and convey me in my own chaise safe to Turin through Savoy.

Poor, patient, quiet, honest people! fear not; your poverty, the treasury of your simple virtues, will

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not



not be envied you by the world,  
 nor will your vallies be invaded by  
 it.—Nature! in the midst of thy dis-  
 orders, thou art still friendly to the  
 scantiness thou hast created—with  
 all thy great works about thee, little  
 hast thou left to give, either to the  
 scithe or to the sickle—but to that  
 little, thou grantest safety and protec-  
 tion; and sweet are the dwellings  
 which stand so shelter'd.

Let the way-worn traveller vent his  
 complaints upon the sudden turns and  
 dangers of your roads—your rocks  
 —your precipices—the difficulties of  
 getting up—the horrors of getting  
 down—mountains impracticable—  
 and cataracts, which roll down great  
 stones



stones from their summits, and block his up road.—The peafants had been all day at work in removing a fragment of this kind between St. Michael and Madane; and by the time my Voiturin got to the place, it wanted full two hours of compleating before a passage could any how be gain'd: there was nothing but to wait with patience—'twas a wet and tempestuous night; so that by the delay, and that together, the Voiturin found himself obliged to take up five miles short of his stage at a little decent kind of an inn by the road side.

I forthwith took possession of my bed-chamber—got a good fire—order'd



der'd supper; and was thanking heaven it was no worse—when a voiture arrived with a lady in it and her servant-maid.

As there was no other bed-chamber in the house, the hostess, without much nicety, led them into mine, telling them, as she usher'd them in, that there was no body in it but an English gentleman—that there were two good beds, in it and a closet within the room which held another—the accent in which she spoke of this third bed did not say much for it—however, she said, there were three beds, and but three people—and she durst say, the gentleman would do  
any



any thing to accommodate matters.—  
I left not the lady a moment to make  
a conjecture about it—so instantly  
made a declaration I would do any  
thing in my power.

As this did not amount to an ab-  
solute surrender of my bed-chamber,  
I still felt myself so much the pro-  
prietor, as to have a right to do the  
honours of it—so I desired the lady to  
sit down—pressed her into the warmest  
seat—call'd for more wood—desired  
the hostess to enlarge the plan of the  
supper, and to favour us with the very  
best wine.

The lady had scarce warm'd her-  
self five minutes at the fire, before



she began to turn her head back, and give a look at the beds; and the oftener she cast her eyes that way, the more they return'd perplex'd — I felt for her—and for myself; for in a few minutes, what by her looks, and the case itself, I found myself as much embarrassed as it was possible the lady could be herself.

That the beds we were to lay in were in one and the same room, was enough simply by itself to have excited all this — but the position of them, for they stood parallel, and so very close to each other as only to allow space for a small wicker chair betwixt them, render'd the affair still



still more oppressive to us—they were fixed up moreover near the fire, and the projection of the chimney on one side, and a large beam which cross'd the room on the other, form'd a kind of recess for them that was no way favourable to the nicety of our sensations — if any thing could have added to it, it was, that the two beds were both of 'em so very small, as to cut us off from every idea of the lady and the maid lying together; which in either of them, could it have been feasible, my lying besides them, tho' a thing not to be wish'd, yet there was nothing in it so terrible which the imagination might not have pass'd over without torment.





As for the little room within, it offer'd little or no consolation to us; 'twas a damp cold closet, with a half dismantled window shutter, and with a window which had neither glass or oil paper in it to keep out the tempest of the night. I did not endeavour to stifle my cough when the lady gave a peep into it; so it reduced the case in course to this alternative — that the lady should sacrifice her health to her feelings, and take up with the closet herself, and abandon the bed next mine to her maid — or that the girl should take the closet, &c. &c.

The lady was a Piedmontese of about thirty, with a glow of health  
in

in her cheeks.—The maid was a Lyonoise of twenty, and as brisk and lively a French girl as ever moved.— There were difficulties every way— and the obstacle of the stone in the road, which brought us into the distress, great as it appeared whilst the peasants were removing it, was but a pebble to what lay in our ways now—I have only to add, that it did not lessen the weight which hung upon our spirits, that we were both too delicate to communicate what we felt to each other upon the occasion.

We sat down to supper; and had we not had more generous wine to it than a little inn in Savoy could have furnish'd,





furnish'd, our tongues had been tied up, till necessity herself had set them at liberty—but the lady having a few bottles of Burgundy in her voiture sent down her Fille de Chambre for a couple of them; so that by the time supper was over, and we were left alone, we felt ourselves inspired with a strength of mind sufficient to talk, at least, without reserve upon our situation. We turn'd it every way, and debated and considered it in all kind of lights in the course of a two hours negociation; at the end of which the articles were settled finally betwixt us, and stipulated for in form and manner of a treaty of peace—and I believe with as much religion



religion and good faith on both sides, as in any treaty which as yet had the honour of being handed down to posterity.

They were as follows :

First. As the right of the bed-chamber is in Monsieur — and he thinking the bed next to the fire to be the warmest, he insists upon the concession on the lady's side of taking up with it.

Granted, on the part of Madame ; with a proviso, That as the curtains of that bed are of a flimsy transparent cotton, and appear likewise too scanty to draw close, that the  
Fille

Fille de Chambre, shall fasten up the opening, either by corking pins, or needle and thread, in such manner as shall be deemed a sufficient barrier on the side of Monsieur.

2dly. It is required on the part of Madame, that Monsieur shall lay the whole night through in his robe de chambre.

Rejected: inasmuch Monsieur is not worth a robe de chambre; he having nothing in his portmanteau but six shirts and a black silk pair of breeches.

The mentioning the silk pair of breeches made an entire change of the article—for the breeches were accepted



cepted as an equivalent for the robe de chambre, and so it was stipulated and agreed upon that I should lay in my black silk breeches all night.

3dly. It was insisted upon, and stipulated for by the lady, that after Monsieur was got to bed, and the candle and fire extinguished, that Monsieur should not speak one single word the whole night.

Granted; provided Monsieur's saying his prayers might not be deem'd an infraction of the treaty.

There was but one point forgot in this treaty, and that was the manner in which the lady and myself should



be obliged to undress and get to bed—there was but one way of doing it, and that I leave to the reader to devise; protesting as I do it, that if it is not the most delicate in nature, 'tis the fault of his own imagination—against which this is not my first complaint.

Now when we were got to bed, whether it was the novelty of the situation, or what it was, I know not; but so it was, I could not shut my eyes; I tried this side and that, and turn'd and turn'd again, till a full hour after midnight; when Nature and patience both wearing out—O my God! said I—

—You have broke the treaty, Monsieur, said the lady, who had no

more slept than myself.—I begg'd a thousand pardons—but insisted it was no more than an ejaculation—the maintain'd 'twas an entire infraction of the treaty—I maintain'd it was provided for in the clause of the third article.

The lady would by no means give up her point, tho' she weakened her barrier by it; for in the warmth of the dispute, I could hear two or three corking pins fall out of the curtain to the ground.

Upon my word and honour, Madame, said I—stretching my arm out of bed, by way asseveration—

—(I was



—(I was going to have added, that I would not have trespass'd against the remotest idea of decorum for the world)—

—But the Fille de Chambre hearing there were words between us, and fearing that hostilities would ensue in course, had crept silently out of her closet, and it being totally dark, had stolen so close to our beds, that she had got herself into the narrow passage which separated them, and had advanc'd so far up as to be in a line betwixt her mistress and me—

So that when I stretch'd out my hand, I caught hold of the Fille de Chambre's

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