

Laurence Sterne
The Life and Opinions of
Tristram Shandy,
Gentleman

Abridged



This abridgement Copyright © Emma Laybourn 2016

Introduction

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman was first published between 1759 and 1767 in nine volumes. It was highly popular at the time, and ever since has been regarded as one of the landmarks of English literature, as well as an influence on many later writers, from James Joyce to the Monty Python team.

Tristram Shandy is not so much a novel as an entertainment – and sometimes a chaotic one. Supposedly an autobiography, it quickly becomes apparent that this is nothing of the sort. The narrator never gets much beyond his own birth, apart from a brief diversion into his adult travels in France. Instead, the book is a rambling, zigzagging bundle of anecdotes, snippets, thoughts, sketches and asides.

The leading characters are Tristram's father Walter, his Uncle Toby and their servants and associates. Walter and Toby Shandy are marked by their love of their 'Hobby-Horses' – obsessive enthusiasms which steer their lives. Uncle Toby's hobby-horse is military fortifications, while Walter's is proving his eccentric hypotheses on such things as the importance of noses.

Tristram's own chief hobby-horse could be said to be his writing. An eager recorder of minute detail, he loves to show off his learning: so the book is full of scholarly name-dropping and philosophical diversions, as he leapfrogs from one scene and subject to another, frequently despairing of fitting everything in.

An abridgement, of course, cannot fit everything in, and some of Tristram's prolixity has had to go. So have his quotations in Greek, and long Latin sections in Book III and Book IV (in each case, Sterne supplied an English translation.) A French passage in Book I remains; but a summary in English follows it.

In all, this version of *Tristram Shandy* has been distilled to about two-thirds of the original length. Although no chapters have been omitted, many passages have been shortened and simplified to clarify their meaning; and any bafflingly obscure jokes and references have been cut.

The aim is to make the book more comprehensible to the modern reader, without losing its eighteenth century style. So, while some vocabulary has been modernised, archaic forms have been left where they are easily understood. In particular, *quoth* (for *said*) has been retained, as has the use of *thee* and *thou* between members of the Shandy family, and between Uncle Toby and his faithful servant Trim; where it is a mark not just of familiarity but of tender affection.

For affection is what the book is woven from. With all its tangled knots of erudition, and abundance of loose ends, its most consistent thread is Tristram Shandy's love for his unworldly uncle Toby.

If you are studying *Tristram Shandy* for academic purposes, this abridgement is best used as an introduction to the full text. This version is based on the 1781 edition, which can be downloaded free from Project Gutenberg and elsewhere.

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Book 1](#)

[Book 2](#)

[Book 3](#)

[Book 4](#)

[Book 5](#)

[Book 6](#)

[Book 7](#)

[Book 8](#)

[Book 9](#)

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman

By Laurence Sterne

Abridged Edition

BOOK 1

CHAPTER 1

I wish either my father or my mother, or indeed both, had minded what they were about when they begot me. Had they considered how much depended upon what they were doing; – that not only the production of a rational Being was concerned, but the happy formation of his body and the very cast of his mind – for all they knew, the fortunes of his whole house might depend on the humours which were uppermost in them at the time of conception – had they duly weighed all this, and proceeded accordingly, I should have made a quite different figure in the world.

–Believe me, good folks, this is not so slight a thing as you may think.

You have all, I dare say, heard of the animal spirits, and how they are transfused from father to son in the act of procreation, &c., &c. –Well, you may take my word, that nine parts in ten of a man’s sense or his nonsense, his successes and failures, depend upon those spirits’ activity, and the different paths you put them into, so that when they are once set a-going, whether right or wrong, away they go clattering like hey-go mad; and by treading the same steps over and over, they make a road as smooth as a garden-walk, which the Devil himself shall not be able to drive them off it.

‘Pray, my Dear,’ quoth my mother, ‘have you not forgot to wind up the clock?’

‘Good G__!’ cried my father, taking care to keep his voice down. –‘Did ever woman, since the creation of the world, interrupt a man with such a silly question?’

Pray, what was your father saying when she interrupted?

Saying? –Nothing.

CHAPTER 2

Then, there is nothing in the question that I can see, either good or bad.

–Then, let me tell you, Sir, it was a very badly-timed question, because it scattered the animal spirits, who should have escorted and gone hand in hand with the Homunculus, the newly created little being: and have conducted him safe to the place destined for his reception.

The Homunculus, Sir, however ludicrous he may appear to the eye of folly or prejudice; – to the eye of scientific reason, he is a Being with rights. Philosophers show us that the Homunculus consists as we do, of skin, hair, fat, flesh, veins, arteries, nerves, bones, marrow, brains, glands, genitals and humours; – that he is as truly our fellow-creature as the Lord Chancellor of England. In a word, he has all the rights of humanity, as laid down by Tully, Pullendorf and the best ethic writers.

Now, dear Sir, what if any accident had befallen him in his way! Or if, through terror, my little Gentleman had got to his journey's end miserably spent; his strength and virility worn down to a thread; his own animal spirits ruffled beyond description, – and that in this sad disordered state of nerves, he had lain a prey to fear and melancholy for nine long, long months together. I tremble to think what a foundation would have been laid for a thousand weaknesses of body and mind, which could never afterwards be set to rights.

CHAPTER 3

I owe the preceding anecdote to my uncle Mr. Toby Shandy, to whom my father had oft and heavily complained of the injury. Once, particularly, as my uncle Toby remembered – upon my father's observing a most unaccountable slant in my manner of setting up my spinning-top, the old gentleman shook his head, and in a sorrowful tone said his heart had all along foreboded that I should neither think nor act like any other child.

'Alas!' continued he, wiping a tear from his cheeks, 'my Tristram's misfortunes began nine months before ever he came into the world.'

My mother, who was sitting by, looked up, but she knew no more than her backside what my father meant. However, my uncle, Mr. Toby Shandy, who had been often informed of the affair, understood him very well.

CHAPTER 4

I know there are readers who find themselves ill at ease unless they are let into the whole secret, from first to last, of everything which concerns you.

It is in order not to disappoint them that I have been so very particular already. As my life and opinions are likely to make some noise in the world, and will be no less read than the *Pilgrim's Progress* itself, I must beg pardon for going on a little further in the same way. Right glad I am, that I have begun the history of myself like this; tracing everything, as Horace says, *ab Ovo*, or from the Egg.

Horace, I know, does not recommend this fashion altogether: but he is speaking of an epic poem or a tragedy (I forget which); – besides, begging Mr. Horace's pardon, I shall confine myself neither to his rules, nor to any other man's.

To those, however, who do not choose to go so far back, I can only advise that they skip over the rest of this chapter; for 'tis wrote only for the curious and inquisitive.

-----Shut the door. -----

I was begot in the night betwixt the first Sunday and the first Monday of March, 1718. I am positive I was, owing to another small anecdote known only in our family, but now made public to clear up this point.

My father, you must know, who was originally a Turkey merchant trading with the Levant, had left off business for some years, in order to retire to his estate in the country.

He was, I believe, one of the most regular men that ever lived in everything he did, whether business, or amusement. For example, he had made it a rule for many years, on the first Sunday-night of every month, to wind up a large clock which we had standing on the back-stairs. And being somewhere between fifty and sixty years of age at the time, he had likewise gradually brought some other little marital concerns to the same day – in order, as he would often say to my uncle Toby, to get them all out of the way at the same time, and be no more plagued and pestered with them the rest of the month.

The arrangement brought with it one misfortune, the effects of which I fear I shall carry with me to my grave; namely, that from an unhappy association of ideas, at length my poor mother could never hear the said clock being wound up, without the thoughts of some other things unavoidably popping into her head – and *vice versa*.

Now it appears by a memorandum in my father's pocket-book, which now lies upon the table, that on the 25th of the month in which I was conceived, my father set out to London with my elder brother Bobby, to fix him at Westminster school; and, as it appears from the same book that he did not return to his wife and family till the second week in May, it makes the thing almost certain. However, what follows in the beginning of the next chapter, puts it beyond all doubt.

– But pray, Sir, What was your father doing all December, January, and February?

– Why, Madam, he was all that time afflicted with a Sciatica.

CHAPTER 5

On the fifth day of November, 1718, which was as near nine months as any husband could reasonably expect, I, Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, was brought forth into this scurvy and disastrous world of ours.

– I wish I had been born on the Moon, or in any of the planets, for it could not have fared worse with me than it has in this vile, dirty planet of ours, which I take to be made up of the shreds and clippings of the rest.

This planet is well enough, if a man is born to a great title or a great estate; or has employment of dignity or power; but that is not my case; and so I say again it is one of the vilest worlds that ever was made; for truly, from the first hour I drew my breath, to now, when I can scarce draw breath at all, because of an asthma I got in skating against the wind in Flanders, I have been the continual plaything of Fortune. Though I cannot say she has ever done me any great evil, yet I affirm that in every stage of my life, and at every turn and corner where she could get at me, the ungracious duchess has pelted me with a set of as pitiful misadventures and cross accidents as ever small Hero sustained.

CHAPTER 6

In the beginning of the last chapter, I informed you exactly *when* I was born; but I did not inform you *how*. That is reserved for a chapter by itself; – besides, Sir, as you and I are perfect strangers, it would not be proper to let you into too many circumstances relating to me all at once. You must have a little patience.

I have undertaken, you see, to write not only my life, but my opinions also; hoping and expecting that your knowledge of the one will give you a better relish for the other. As you proceed farther with me, the slight acquaintance, which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and, unless one of us is in fault, will terminate in friendship. O famous day! – then nothing which has touched me will be thought trifling or tedious.

Therefore, my dear friend and companion, bear with me, and let me tell my story my own way. Or, if I should seem now and then to trifle upon the road – or should sometimes put on a fool's cap with a bell to it – don't fly off, but rather give me credit for a little more wisdom than appears upon my outside; and as we jog on, either laugh with me, or at me, or in short, do anything, only keep your temper.

CHAPTER 7

In the village where my father and my mother dwelt, lived a thin, upright, motherly, good old body of a midwife, who, with the help of a little plain good sense, and some years employment in her business, in which she trusted little to her own efforts, and a great deal to those of dame Nature, had acquired a reputation in the world: – by the word *world*, I mean a small circle of about four English miles diameter, with the good old woman's cottage at its centre.

She had been left a widow in distress, with three or four small children, in her forty-seventh year; and as she was a grave and decent woman of few words, the parson's wife pitied her; and having often lamented that there was no midwife within seven long miles riding – which was more like fourteen in dark nights and dismal roads, our countryside being all deep clay – it came into her head, that it would be doing a kindness to the whole parish and the poor creature herself, to get her instructed in the business, and set her up in it.

The parson cheerfully paid the fees for the midwife's licence, amounting to eighteen shillings and four pence; so that betwixt them both, the good woman was fully invested in the real and corporal possession of her office, together with all its rights, members, and appurtenances whatsoever.

These last words, you must know, were not according to the old form in which such licences usually ran. But they follow a neat Formula devised by Didius, who having a particular turn for taking apart and re-framing all kind of instruments, not only hit upon this dainty amendment, but coaxed many of the old licensed matrons in the neighbourhood to open their faculties afresh, in order to have this wham-wham of his inserted.

I own I never could envy Didius his fancies. But every man to his own taste. Did not Dr. Kunastrokius, that great man, at his leisure hours, take the greatest delight in combing asses' tails, and plucking the dead hairs out with his teeth?

Nay, Sir, have not the wisest men in all ages, even Solomon himself – have they not had their Hobby-Horses; – for example, their race-horses, their coins and cockle-shells, their drums and trumpets, their fiddles, their palettes, their maggots and their butterflies? So long as a man rides his Hobby-Horse peaceably along the King's highway, and compels neither you nor me to get up behind him – pray, Sir, what have you or I to do with it?

CHAPTER 8

De gustibus non est disputandum; that is, there is no arguing with Hobby-Horses. For my part, I seldom do; nor could I with any grace, since I happen, at certain phases of the moon, to be both fiddler and painter. Indeed, I keep a couple of nags myself, upon which (and I do not care who knows it) I frequently ride out and take the air; though sometimes on longer journeys than a wise man would think right. But the truth is, I am not a wise man; – and besides am of so little consequence, it does not matter what I do: so I seldom fret about it.

Nor does it much disturb my rest, when I see great Lords and tall Personages, such as my Lords A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, and so on, all of a row, mounted upon their hobby-horses; – some with large stirrups, stepping gravely; others scampering it away like so many little party-coloured devils astride a mortgage, as if they were resolved to break their necks. So much the better, say I; for if the worst should happen, the world will manage excellently well without them; and for the rest, why, let them ride on; for if their lordships were unhorsed this very night, ten to one they would be worse mounted before tomorrow morning.

None of these instances disturbs me. But there is an instance, which I own puts me off my guard, and that is, when I see one born for great actions – such a one, my Lord, as yourself, whose principles and conduct are as generous and noble as his blood – when I see such a one, my Lord, mounted, then I cease to be a philosopher, and with honest impatience I wish the Hobby-Horse at the Devil.

‘My Lord,

‘I maintain this to be a dedication, despite its unusual matter, form, and place: I beg, therefore, you will accept it as such, and that you will permit me to lay it, with the most respectful humility, at your Lordship’s feet – when you are upon them, which you can be when you please – and that is, my Lord, whenever there is occasion for it. I have the honour to be,

My Lord,
Your Lordship’s most obedient,
and most devoted,
and most humble servant,
TRISTRAM SHANDY.

CHAPTER 9

I solemnly declare that the above dedication was made for no one Prince, Pope, or Potentate, Duke, Marquis, Earl, or Baron, of this, or any other Realm; nor has it yet been hawked about, or offered to any person; but is honestly a true Virgin-Dedication untried upon any soul living.

I make this point merely to remove any objection which might arise against the use I propose to make of it; – which is to put it up for public sale; as I now do.

As I hate bargaining and haggling for a few guineas in a dark entry, I resolved, from the very beginning, to deal openly with your Great Folks in this affair, and see whether I should not come off the better by it.

If therefore there is any Duke, Marquis, Earl, or Baron, in this land, who stands in need of a tight, genteel dedication, and whom the above will suit, it is at his service for fifty guineas; – which I am positive is twenty guineas less than it ought to cost.

My Lord, if you examine it again, it is far from being a gross piece of daubing, as some dedications are. The design, your Lordship sees, is good, the colouring transparent, the drawing not amiss; – or to speak more like a man of science, and to measure my piece in the painter's scale, divided into 20 – I believe, my Lord, the outlines will turn out as 12, the composition as 9, the colouring as 6, the expression 13 and a half, and the design – if I may be allowed, my Lord, to understand my own design, and supposing absolute perfection to be 20, – I think it cannot fall short of 19. Besides all this, the dark strokes in the Hobby-Horse (which is a kind of background to the whole) give great force to your own figure, and make it come off wonderfully; and there is an air of originality in the whole arrangement.

Be pleased, my good Lord, to order the sum to be paid to Mr. Dodsley, for the benefit of the author; and in the next edition care shall be taken that this chapter be removed, and your Lordship's titles, distinctions, coat of arms, and good actions, be placed at the front of the preceding chapter – all of which, from the words, *De gustibus non est disputandum*, and whatever else in this book relates to Hobby-Horses, but no more, shall stand dedicated to your Lordship.

The rest I dedicate to the Moon, who of all Patrons or Matrons has most power to set my book a-going, and make the world run mad after it.

Bright Goddess,

If thou art not too busy with Candid and Miss Cunegund's affairs – take Tristram Shandy's under thy protection also.

CHAPTER 10

Whatever merit that benign act to the midwife might have, at first sight seems not very relevant to this history; it was certain, however, that the parson's wife gained all of it. And yet I cannot help thinking that the parson himself – though he did not hit upon the idea, yet heartily agreed with it, and as heartily parted with his money to see it carried out – had a claim to some share of the honour.

The world at that time was pleased to decide otherwise.

Lay down the book, and I will allow you half a day to guess at the reason for this.

Be it known then, that about five years before the date of the midwife's licence, this very parson had made himself the talk of the country by a breach of all decorum – which he had committed by appearing mounted upon a lean, sorry, jack-ass of a horse, value about one pound fifteen shillings; who was full brother to Rosinante, Don Quixote's old nag. He matched his description in everything, except that I do not remember that Rosinante was broken-winded; and, moreover, Rosinante was undoubtedly a horse at all points. The parson's horse was as lean, and as lank, and as sorry a jade, as Humility herself could have ridden.

Now, the parson owned a very handsome demi-peaked saddle, quilted with green plush, garnished with a double row of silver-headed studs, and a noble pair of shining brass stirrups; with a housing of grey superfine cloth, an edging of black lace and a black silk fringe, – all which he had purchased in the pride and prime of his life, together with a grand embossed bridle. But he had hung all these up behind his study door: and, instead, he used just such a bridle and saddle as his steed truly deserved.

In riding about his parish, the parson never could enter a village without catching the attention of both old and young. Work ceased as he passed – the bucket hung suspended in the middle of the well – the spinning-wheel forgot its round – even chuck-farthing and shuffle-cap players stood gaping till he rode out of sight; and as his movement was not quick, he had time to hear the groans of the serious, and the laughter of the light-hearted; all which he bore with excellent tranquillity. He loved a jest – and as he saw himself as ridiculous, he would say he could not be angry with others for seeing him in the same light.

So to his friends, he chose rather to join in the laugh against himself; and since he was as thin as his beast, he would sometimes insist that the horse was as good as the rider deserved; that they were, centaur-like, both of a piece.

At other times, and in other moods, he would say that he found himself going off fast in a consumption; and, with great gravity, would pretend he could not bear the sight of a fat horse; and that he had chosen the lean one to keep himself in spirits.

At different times he would give fifty humorous reasons for riding a meek-spirited, broken-winded horse: that on such a one he could sit and meditate; that he could spend his time, as he rode slowly along, as usefully as in his study; that he could draw up a long argument in his sermon that brisk trotting would not allow. Upon his steed he could compose his sermon, and even compose himself to sleep.

In short, the parson would name any cause but the true one, which he withheld out of modesty.

But the true story was this: in the gentleman's youth, when he bought the superb saddle and bridle, it had been his manner, or vanity, or call it what you will, to go to the opposite extreme. He was said to have loved a good horse, and generally had one

of the best in the whole parish in his stable. As the nearest midwife, as I told you, lived seven miles distant from the village, every week the poor gentleman received some piteous application for his beast; and as he was not unkind, he had never the heart to refuse.

The upshot generally was, that his horse was either clapped, or spavined, or lamed; or he was twitter-boned, or broken-winded, or something or other; so that the parson had every nine or ten months a bad horse to get rid of, and a good horse to buy in his stead.

Despite the cost of this, the honest gentleman bore it for many years without a murmur, till at length, after repeated ill accidents of this kind, he found it necessary to consider the matter. Upon weighing up the whole, he found it so heavy a cost as to disable him from any other act of generosity in his parish. He considered that with half the sum thus galloped away, he could do ten times as much good; but as it was, it confined all charity into the child-bearing part of his parish, where he fancied it was least needed; leaving nothing for the aged, or poor, or sick.

There appeared but two possible ways to extricate him from this expense; either to make it a rule to never lend out his steed again – or else to be content to ride the last poor devil, with all his aches and infirmities, to the very end of the chapter.

He cheerfully took this second path; and though he could easily have explained it with honour, yet out of humility he chose rather to bear the contempt of his enemies, and the laughter of his friends, than tell the story.

I have the highest idea of the sentiments of this reverend gentleman from this stroke in his character, which I think comes up to any of the honest refinements of Don Quixote himself, whom, by the bye, with all his follies, I love more, and would actually have gone farther to have paid a visit to than the greatest hero of antiquity.

But this is not the moral of my story. I wished to show the nature of the world in this affair. For so long as this explanation would have done the parson credit, nobody could find it out. But no sooner did he bestir himself on behalf of the midwife, and pay the expenses of her licence, than the whole secret came out; every horse he had lost was distinctly remembered.

The story ran like wild-fire – ‘The parson had been seized by a fit of pride, and he was going to be well mounted once again; and he would pocket the expense of the licence ten times over, the very first year.’ The opinions of other people concerning this often disturbed his rest. But about ten years ago this gentleman had the good fortune to be made entirely easy upon that score, and stands accountable to a Judge of whom he will have no cause to complain.

There is a fatality attends the actions of some men: order them as they will, they become twisted from their true directions. Of this, the parson was a painful example.

But to know how this came to pass, I insist that you read the two following chapters, which contain such a sketch of his life and conversation as will prove its moral. – When this is done, if nothing stops us in our way, we will go on with the midwife.

CHAPTER 11

Yorick was this parson's name, and, what is very remarkable (as appears from an ancient account of the family, wrote upon strong vellum, and in perfect preservation) it had been spelt exactly so for near – I almost said nine hundred years; but I would not risk my credit in telling an improbable truth, however indisputable; – and therefore I shall only say – it had been exactly so spelt for I do not know how long; which is more than I would venture to say of half of the best surnames in the kingdom, which, through the years, have generally undergone as many chops and changes as their owners. A villainous affair it is, that no one can stand up and swear, 'That his own great grandfather was the man who did this or that.'

This evil had been fenced against by the prudent care of Yorick's family, and their religious preservation of these records, which farther inform us that the family was originally of Danish extraction, and had come to England in the reign of Horwendillus, king of Denmark, in whose court, it seems, an ancestor of Mr. Yorick's held an important post. Of what nature this post was, this record says not. It only adds that for two centuries, it had been totally abolished, as unnecessary in every court of the Christian world.

It has often come into my head, that this post could be no other than that of the king's Jester; and that Hamlet's Yorick, in our Shakespeare, many of whose plays, you know, are founded upon facts, was certainly the very man.

I have not the time to look into Saxo-Grammaticus's Danish history, to be certain of this; but if you have leisure, and can easily get at the book, you may do it as well yourself.

In my travels through Denmark with Mr. Noddy's eldest son, whom, in 1741, I accompanied as tutor, riding with him at a prodigious rate through Europe, and of which journey a most delectable narrative will be given in the progress of this work – in my travels I proved the truth of an observation made by one who had stayed long in Denmark; namely, 'That nature was neither lavish nor stingy in her gifts of genius to its inhabitants; but, like a discreet parent, was moderately kind to them all; distributing her favours so equally as to bring them pretty level with each other; so that you will meet with few instances of refinement in that kingdom; but a great deal of good plain household understanding amongst all ranks of people;' which is, I think, very right.

With us, you see, the case is quite different: – we are all ups and downs; you are a great genius; – or 'tis fifty to one, Sir, you are a great dunce and a blockhead. Not that there is a total lack of steps in between; – but the two extremes are more common in this unsettled island, where nature is whimsical and capricious in her gifts.

This is all that shook my faith in regard to Yorick's ancestry – for he seemed not to have one single drop of phlegmatic blood in his body; in nine hundred years, it might have all run out. Instead of that cold phlegm and sense you would have looked for in one of Danish extraction, he was, on the contrary, mercurial, with as much life and whim and gaiety as the kindest climate could have engendered.

With all this sail, poor Yorick carried not one ounce of ballast; he was utterly unpractised in the world; and, at the age of twenty-six, knew as much about it as a romping, unsuspecting girl of thirteen. So the brisk gale of his spirits, as you will imagine, ran him foul of somebody ten times in a day; and as the grave and more

slow-paced were oftenest in his way, 'twas with such he had generally the ill luck to get the most entangled.

To speak the truth, Yorick had an invincible dislike and opposition to gravity – not to gravity as such, for where gravity was needed, he would be the most grave of men – but he hated the affectation of it, and declared open war against it when it was a cloak for ignorance or folly.

Sometimes, in his wild way of talking, he would say that Gravity was a sly and dangerous scoundrel; and that more honest people were bubbled out of their goods and money by it in one year, than by pocket-picking and shop-lifting in seven. He would say, there was no danger in merriment: whereas the very essence of gravity was deceit; 'twas a trick to gain credit for more sense and knowledge than a man was worth. A French wit called gravity 'A mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind'; which, Yorick would say, deserved to be wrote in letters of gold.

But, in truth, he was a man unpractised in the world, and was altogether as indiscreet and foolish on every subject. Yorick would express himself bluntly, without considering either person, time, or place; so that if mention was made of an ungenerous proceeding, he never gave himself time to reflect who was the hero of the piece, what his position was, or how far the man had power to hurt him hereafter; – but if it was a dirty action, he called the man a dirty fellow – and so on.

As his comments were usually enlivened with humour, it gave wings to Yorick's indiscretion. Although he never sought occasions for speaking out, he had too many temptations of scattering his wit and his jests. They were not lost on his audience.

What were the consequences, and what was Yorick's catastrophe thereupon, you will read in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 12

The Mortgager and the Jester differ in this: the one raises a sum, and the other a laugh at your expense, and they think no more about it. Interest, however, still runs on in both cases; the periodical or accidental payments of it just serving to keep the memory of the affair alive; till, at length, in some evil hour – pop comes the creditor upon each, demanding full payment on the spot.

As the reader (for I hate your *ifs*) has a thorough knowledge of human nature, I need not say more than that my Hero, Yorick, had some slight experience of this. He had wantonly involved himself in a multitude of small debts of this sort, which, despite Eugenius's frequent advice, he disregarded; thinking that as his jests had been made not through any malignancy, but, on the contrary, from honesty and jocund humour, he would not be held to account for them.

Eugenius would often tell him sorrowfully that one day or other he would certainly be reckoned with. To which Yorick, with his usual carelessness, would answer with a *pshaw!* – and if the subject was started in the fields, with a hop, skip, and a jump at the end of it. But if pent up in the social chimney-corner, where he was barricaded in with a table and a couple of armchairs, and could not escape, Eugenius would then lecture him in this way:

'Trust me, dear Yorick, this jesting will sooner or later bring thee into scrapes and difficulties, from which thy wit will not rescue thee. A person laughed at, considers himself an injured man; and when he counts up his friends, family, and allies, 'tis no extravagance to say that for every ten jokes, thou hast got an hundred enemies; yet till thou hast raised a swarm of wasps about thine ears, and art half stung to death, thou wilt never be convinced it is so.

'I know that there is no ill-will in your jests – I believe them to be honest and playful. But consider, my dear lad, that fools cannot distinguish this, and that knaves will not: and depend upon it, they will wage war in such a manner against thee, my dear friend, as to make thee heartily sick of it, and of thy life too.

'Revenge from some baneful corner shall tell a tale of dishonour about thee, which no innocence of heart or integrity of conduct shall set right. The fortunes of thy house shall totter – thy character shall bleed: thy faith questioned, thy works belied, thy wit forgotten, thy learning trampled on. Cruelty and Cowardice, twin ruffians, hired and set on by Malice in the dark, shall strike together at thy weaknesses. Trust me, Yorick, when it is decided that an innocent creature shall be sacrificed, 'tis easy to pick up enough sticks from any thicket where it has strayed, to make a fire to burn it on.'

Yorick scarce ever heard this sad lecture without fear and promises to act more soberly. But, alas, too late! – A grand confederacy, with ***** and ***** at its head, was already formed. The plan of the attack, just as Eugenius had foreboded, was put in execution with so little mercy on the side of the allies, and so little suspicion in Yorick of what was going on, that when he thought, good easy man! that surely preferment was ripening – they cut him down at root, and then he fell.

Yorick fought gallantly for some time; till, overpowered by numbers, and worn out, he threw down the sword; and though he kept up his spirits in appearance to the last, he died, it seems, quite broken-hearted.

What inclined Eugenius to think this was as follows:

A few hours before Yorick breathed his last, Eugenius took his final farewell of him. Upon his drawing Yorick's curtain, and asking how he felt, Yorick looked up in his face and grasped his hand. After thanking him for the many tokens of his friendship, Yorick told him he was within a few hours of giving his enemies the slip for ever.

'I hope not,' answered Eugenius tenderly, with tears trickling down his cheeks.

Yorick replied only with a look and a gentle squeeze of Eugenius's hand, which cut him to the heart.

'Come, come, Yorick,' said he, 'my dear lad, be comforted, let not thy fortitude forsake thee now; who knows what the power of God may yet do for thee?'

Yorick gently shook his head.

Eugenius continued, crying bitterly, 'I know not, Yorick, how to part with thee. I hope that thou mayst still live long enough to be made a bishop.'

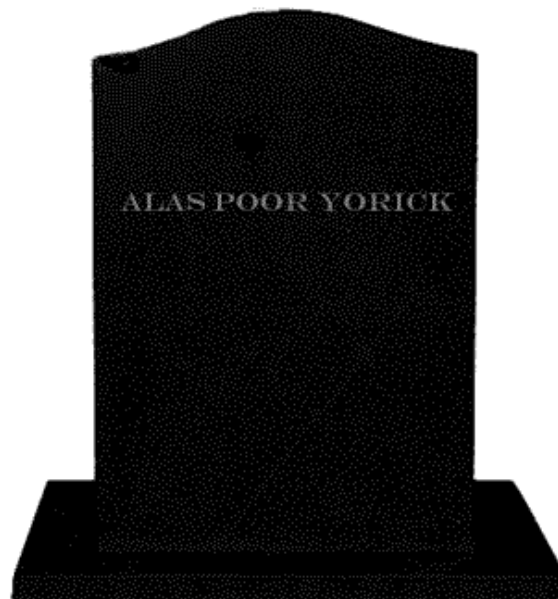
'I beseech thee, Eugenius,' said Yorick, taking off his night-cap with his left hand, his right still grasping that of Eugenius, 'I beseech thee to take a view of my head.'

'I see nothing wrong with it.'

'Alas! my friend,' said Yorick, ''tis so bruised and mis-shapen with the blows which ***** and ***** have given me in the dark, that I might say with Sancho Panza, that should I recover, and bishops' mitres "rain down from heaven as thick as hail, not one of them would fit."'

Yorick's last breath was hanging upon his trembling lips as he uttered this: yet still it was said with something of a Cervantick tone; and as he spoke, Eugenius perceived a fire light up for a moment in his eyes; a faint reflection of those flashes of his spirit, which (as Shakespeare said of his ancestor) were wont to set the table in a roar!

Eugenius was convinced from this, that his friend's heart was broken: he squeezed his hand, and then walked softly out of the room, weeping. Yorick followed Eugenius with his eyes to the door: he then closed them, and never opened them more.



He lies buried in the corner of his churchyard, in the parish of ____, under a plain marble slab, which his friend Eugenius laid upon his grave, with no more than these three words of inscription serving both for his epitaph and elegy.

ALAS, POOR YORICK!

Ten times a day has Yorick's ghost the consolation of hearing this inscription read over with a variety of plaintive tones, denoting pity and esteem: no-one goes by the grave without stopping to cast a look upon it, and sighing as he walks on, 'Alas, poor Yorick!'

CHAPTER 13

It is now high time to mention the midwife again, merely to remind the reader that there is such a person, whom I am going to introduce for good and all. But as unexpected business may intervene, 'twas right to take care that the poor woman should not be lost in the meantime; because when she is wanted, we cannot do without her.

I think I told you that this good woman's fame had spread to the very edge of that circle of importance, which every soul has surrounding him; – and by the way, whenever 'tis said that some one is of great importance in the world, this circle may be enlarged or contracted in a compound ratio of their position, profession, knowledge, abilities, height and depth (measuring both ways).

In the present case, if I remember, I fixed its diameter as about four miles, which not only took in the whole parish, but extended to the skirts of the next. She was, moreover, very well regarded at various houses and farms within another two or three miles.

But I must here inform you that all this will be more exactly shown in a map, now in the hands of the engraver, which, with many other developments of this work, will be added to the end of the twentieth volume, – not to swell the work, for I detest the thought of such a thing, but by way of commentary, illustration, and a key to such passages as shall be thought to be of dark or doubtful meaning, after my life shall have been read by all the world; – which, between you and me, and in spite of all that the reviewers of Great Britain may write or say to the contrary, I am determined shall be the case. – I need not tell your worship, that all this is spoke in confidence.

CHAPTER 14

Upon looking into my mother's marriage-settlement, in order to clear up a point before proceeding any farther in this history – I had the good fortune to pop upon the very thing I wanted, before I had read for a day and a half. It might have taken me a month; which shows plainly, that when a man sits down to write a history, even if only the history of Tom Thumb, he has no idea what confounded hindrances he is to meet with in his way, or what a dance he may be led before all is over.

Could a writer drive his history straight forward, as a muleteer drives on his mule, without ever once turning his head either to right or left, he could foretell to the hour when he should get to his journey's end; but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible. For, if he is a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations to make as he goes along, which he cannot avoid. He will have views perpetually catching his eye, which he can no more help stopping to look at than he can fly; he will moreover have various

Accounts to reconcile:

Anecdotes to pick up:

Inscriptions to make out:

Stories to weave in:

Traditions to sift:

Personages to call upon:

Panegyrics to paste up: – All which both the man and his mule are quite exempt from.

To sum up; there are archives at every stage to be looked into, and records, documents, and endless genealogies that he must read. – In short, there is no end of it. For my own part, I declare I have been at it these six weeks, making all the speed I possibly could, – and am not yet born. I have just been able to tell you *when* it happened, but not *how*; – so that you see the thing is still far from being accomplished.

These unforeseen stoppages, which I had no conception of when I first set out – but which, I am now convinced, will increase rather than diminish as I advance – have made me resolve not to be in a hurry; but to go on leisurely, writing and publishing two volumes of my life every year; – which, if I can make a tolerable bargain with my bookseller, I shall continue to do as long as I live.

CHAPTER 15

The article in my mother's marriage-settlement, which I told the reader I was at pains to search for, is so much more fully expressed than I could do it, that it would be barbarity to paraphrase it. – It is as follows.

‘And this Indenture further witnesseth, That the said Walter Shandy, merchant, in consideration of the said intended marriage to be had, and to be well and truly solemnised and consummated between the said Walter Shandy and Elizabeth Mollineux aforesaid, doth grant, covenant, condescend, consent, conclude, bargain, and fully agree to and with John Dixon, and James Turner, Esqrs. the above-named Trustees. – **To Wit,** That in case it should hereafter so fall out, chance, happen, or otherwise come to pass, That the said Walter Shandy, merchant, shall have left off business before the time that the said Elizabeth Mollineux shall, according to the course of nature, have left off bearing and bringing forth children; and that, in consequence of the said Walter Shandy having so left off business, he shall in despite and against the free-will, consent, and agreement of the said Elizabeth Mollineux, make a departure from the city of London, in order to retire to, and dwell upon, his estate at Shandy Hall, or at any other country-seat, castle, hall, mansion or grange-house, now purchased, or hereafter to be purchased, or upon any part or parcel thereof: That then, and as often as the said Elizabeth Mollineux shall happen to be *enceint* or pregnant with child or children lawfully begot, or to be begotten, upon the body of the said Elizabeth Mollineux, during her said pregnancy, he the said Walter Shandy shall, at his own proper cost and charges, upon good and reasonable notice, which is hereby agreed to be within six weeks of the said Elizabeth Mollineux's full reckoning, or time of supposed delivery, – pay, or cause to be paid, the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds for and unto the use and uses, intent, end, and purpose following: **That is to say,** That the said sum of one hundred and twenty pounds shall be paid into the hands of the said Elizabeth Mollineux, for the well and truly hiring of one coach, to carry and convey the body of the said Elizabeth Mollineux, and the child or children with which she shall then be pregnant, unto the city of London; and for the further paying and defraying of all other incidental costs, charges, and expenses, in and about, and for and relating to, her said intended delivery and lying-in, in the said city or suburbs thereof. And that the said Elizabeth Mollineux shall and may hire the said coach and horses, and have free ingress, egress, and regress throughout her journey, in and from the said coach, without any let, suit, trouble, disturbance, molestation, discharge, hindrance, forfeiture, eviction, vexation, interruption, or incumbrance whatsoever. And that it shall moreover be lawful for the said Elizabeth Mollineux, when she shall well and truly be advanced in her said pregnancy, to live and reside in such place or places, and with such relations, friends, and other persons within the said city of London, as she at her own will and pleasure shall think fit.’

In three words, ‘My mother was to lay in, (if she chose) in London.’

But in order to put a stop to any unfair play on my mother's part, which a marriage-article of this nature opened a door to – and which indeed would not have been thought of, but for my uncle Toby Shandy – the following clause was added:

‘That in case my mother should, at any time, put my father to the trouble and expense of a London journey, upon false cries and tokens; – for every such instance,

she should forfeit all the rights which the covenant gave her on the next such occasion.'

This was only reasonable; – and yet, I have always thought it hard that the whole weight of the article should have fallen entirely, as it did, upon myself.

But I was born to misfortunes: for my poor mother, whether it was wind or water, or simply the swell of imagination in her; – or how far a strong desire to be with child might mislead her judgment: – in short, whether she was deceived or deceiving in this matter, is not for me to decide.

The fact was this: that in late September 1717, the year before I was born, my mother carried my father up to town much against the grain: when no child appeared, he insisted upon the extra clause; so that I was doomed, by marriage-articles, to have my nose squeezed flat to my face.

How this event came about, and what a train of disappointments has pursued me through my life from the compression of this single member, – shall be laid before the reader all in due time.

CHAPTER 16

After this false alarm, my father, as anybody may imagine, came back down with my mother into the country in a pettish humour. The first five-and-twenty miles he did nothing but fret and tease himself, and indeed my mother too, about the cursed expense, of which he said every shilling might have been saved; – then what vexed him more than everything else was the provoking time of the year, which, as I told you, was late September, when his wall-fruit and greengages were just ready for picking. 'Had he been whistled up to London upon a Fool's errand in any other month, he should not have cared.'

For the next few miles, his subject was the heavy blow he had sustained from the loss of a son, whom he had reckoned upon as a second staff for his old age, if Bobby should fail him. The disappointment of this, he said, was ten times more than all the money which the journey had cost: rot the hundred and twenty pounds, he did not mind it a rush.

From Stilton to Grantham, nothing in the whole affair provoked him so much as the condolences of his friends, and the foolish figure they should both make at church on Sunday; of which he gave so many satirical descriptions that my mother declared, on these two stages she did nothing but laugh and cry in a breath, all the way.

From Grantham till they had crossed the Trent, my father was out of patience at the vile trick which he fancied my mother had played him.

'Certainly,' he said to himself, over and over again, 'the woman could not be deceived. If she could, what weakness!'

– Tormenting word! which led his imagination a thorny dance, and played the deuce with him; for as soon as the word *weakness* was uttered, it set him upon counting how many kinds of weaknesses there were, of body and mind; and then he would brood for a stage or two together, how far the cause of these vexations might have arisen out of himself.

All in all, he had so many disquieting subjects fretting in his mind, that my mother, whatever her journey up, had but an uneasy journey of it down. In a word, (as she complained to my uncle Toby,) he would have tired out the patience of any flesh alive.

CHAPTER 17

Though my father travelled homewards, as I told you, in none of the best of moods, pshawing and pishing all the way down, yet he kept the worst part of the story to himself: which was his resolution to hold my mother to my uncle Toby's clause in the marriage-settlement. It was not until the very night in which I was begot, which was thirteen months after, that she had the least idea of his intention: when my father, happening, as you remember, to be a little annoyed and out of temper, took occasion as they lay chatting gravely in bed afterwards, to let her know that she must keep to the bargain made between them in their marriage-deeds, and lie-in with her next child at home, to balance last year's journey.

My father was a gentleman of many virtues, but he had a strong spice in his nature which might be called either the virtue of perseverance, or the vice of obstinacy. Because my mother knew this, she knew 'twas no use remonstrating; so she resolved to sit down quietly, and make the most of it.

CHAPTER 18

As it was that night agreed, or rather determined, that my mother should lie-in with me at home in the country, she planned accordingly. When she was three days, or thereabouts, gone with child, she began to think about the midwife, whom you have so often heard me mention; and before the week was through, she had come to a decision; – even though there was a scientific operator within eight miles of us, who had wrote a five shilling book upon midwifery, in which he had not only exposed the blunders of midwives, but had added many curious improvements for the quicker extraction of the foetus in cases of danger. Despite this, my mother was absolutely determined to trust her life, and mine with it, into the old woman's hand only.

– Now this I like; when we cannot get the exact thing we wish, never to make do with the next best: – no; that's pitiful beyond description; it was only a week ago from this very day, – which is March 9, 1759 – that my dear, dear Jenny, observing I looked a little grave, as she stood fingering a silk at five-and-twenty shillings a yard, told the mercer she was sorry she had given him so much trouble; and immediately went and bought herself stuff at tenpence a yard. 'Tis the same greatness of soul; only in my mother's case, she could not heroine it as she might have wished, because the old midwife had really some claim to be depended upon, having had near twenty years' success in the parish, without one accident which could be laid to her account.

Nevertheless, my father had some uneasiness about this choice. Quite apart from his love for his family, he felt himself particularly concerned that all should go right in this case; – because of the extra sorrow he lay open to, should any evil befall his wife and child in lying-in at Shandy-Hall. He knew that in such a misfortune, the world would add to his afflictions by loading him with the whole blame of it.

– 'Alas, had Mrs. Shandy, poor lady! only had her wish of going up to town to lie-in, which, they say, she begged for upon her knees, and which considering the fortune which Mr. Shandy got with her, was no great matter – the lady and her babe might both have been alive at this hour.'

This, my father knew, would be unanswerable. Yet it was not merely to shelter himself, nor through care for his offspring and wife, that he was so extremely anxious about this point. My father had extensive views of things, and dreaded setting a bad example to the public.

He was aware that all political writers had agreed and lamented for centuries that the current of men and money towards the metropolis, upon one frivolous errand or another, was so great as to become dangerous to our civil rights, – though, by the bye, a *current* was not the image he preferred: a *distemper* was here his favourite metaphor. He would turn it into a perfect allegory, by maintaining that in the body national, just as in the body natural, when the blood was driven up into the head faster than it could find its way down, the circulation must stop, and death follow.

There was little danger, he would say, of French invasions; nor was he pained by corruption in our constitution, which he hoped was not so bad as was imagined; but he feared that in some violent push, we should go off, all at once, in a state-apoplexy.

My father was never able to give the history of this distemper, without the remedy along with it.

‘If I were an absolute monarch,’ he would say, hitching up his breeches as he rose from his arm-chair, ‘I would appoint judges, at every avenue of my metropolis, who should note every fool’s business who came there; and if it was not important enough to leave his own home, they should be all sent back, like vagrants, to the place of origin. By this means I should take care that my metropolis did not totter through its own weight. The head should be no longer too big for the body; the limbs should regain their natural strength. Good cheer and hospitality should flourish once more; and country Squires acquire more influence.

‘Why are there so few palaces and gentlemen’s seats in the French provinces?’ he would continue, with some emotion. ‘Why are the few remaining Chateaus in so ruinous a condition? Because, Sir, in that kingdom all interest is concentrated in the court, and the looks of the Grand Monarch: by whose moods every Frenchman lives or dies.’

Another political reason which prompted my father to guard against the least evil accident in my mother’s lying-in in the country, was that any such event would throw a balance of power into the weaker vessels of the gentry. This would, in the end, prove fatal to the monarchical system of domestic government established in the first creation of things by God.

In this point he was entirely of Sir Robert Filmer’s opinion, that the institutions of the greatest monarchies in the eastern parts of the world were, originally, all stolen from that admirable prototype of Great Britain; which, for a century, he said, had gradually been degenerating into a mixed government, which seldom produced anything but sorrow and confusion.

For all these reasons, my father was for having the man-midwife by all means, – my mother by no means. My father begged she would for once give up her prerogative in this matter, and let him choose for her; – my mother, on the contrary, insisted upon her privilege to choose for herself, and have no help but the old woman’s.

What could my father do? He was almost at his wit’s end; talked it over with her in all moods; argued the matter with her like a Christian, – like a heathen, – like a husband, – like a father, – like a patriot, – like a man. My mother answered everything

only like a woman; which was a little hard upon her; for as she could not fight it out behind such a variety of characters, 'twas no fair match: – 'twas seven to one.

What could my mother do? She had the advantage of a small reinforcement of personal chagrin, which bore her up, and enabled her to dispute the affair with my father on equal terms. In a word, my mother was to have the old woman, and the man-midwife was to have licence to drink a bottle of wine with my father and my uncle Toby in the back parlour, – for which he was to be paid five guineas.

Before I finish this chapter, I must warn my fair reader not to take it for granted, from an unguarded word or two which I have dropped in, that I am a married man. The tender mention of my dear, dear Jenny, with some other touches of conjugal knowledge here and there, might have misled the most candid judge into such a presumption. All I plead for, Madam, is strict justice: do not prejudge till you have better evidence than you have at present.

Not that I wish you to think that my dear, dear Jenny is my kept mistress; – no, that would be flattering my character in the other extreme, and giving it a freedom, which, perhaps, it has no right to. All I aim for, is the utter impossibility, for some volumes, that you should know how this matter really stands. For my dear, dear Jenny! may perhaps be my child. Consider – I was born in the year 1718. – Nor is there anything unnatural in the idea that my dear Jenny may be my friend.

– Friend!

– My friend. Surely, Madam, a friendship between the two sexes may exist without–

– Fie! Mr. Shandy.

– Without anything, Madam, but that tender and delicious sentiment which always mixes in friendship, where there is a difference of sex. Let me entreat you to read the best French Romances; it will really, Madam, astonish you to see with what a variety of chaste expressions this delicious sentiment is dressed out.

CHAPTER 19

Despite my father's great good sense, he had a notion so unusual that I fear the reader, when I mention it, will immediately throw the book aside, and either laugh or condemn it as a fanciful idea. That notion concerned the choice of Christian names, on which he thought a great deal depended.

His opinion was, that there was a strange kind of magic bias, which good or bad names, as he called them, irresistibly impressed upon our characters and conduct.

Even Don Quixote did not have more to say on the powers of necromancy in dishonouring his deeds, or on Dulcinea's name in shedding lustre upon them, than my father said about the names Trismegistus or Archimedes, on the one hand – or Nyky and Simkin on the other.

'How many Caesars and Pompeys,' he would say, 'have by mere inspiration of the names been made worthy of them? And how many are there, who might have done exceeding well in the world, had not their spirits been totally depressed and Nicodemus'd into nothing?'

My father would say to the sceptical: 'I admit that it may seem fanciful; and yet, my dear Sir, you are a person of good sense, free from narrow prejudice, and are too liberal to dismiss an opinion merely because it lacks friends. Your dear son, from whose sweet temper you have so much to expect – your Billy, Sir! – would you, for the world, have called him Judas? Even if offered money, would you have consented to such a desecration of him? O my God! Sir, you would have trampled upon the offer. If your son were called Judas, the treacherous idea inseparable from the name would have accompanied him through life like his shadow, and, in the end, made a miser and a rascal of him, in spite, Sir, of your example.'

I never knew a man able to answer this argument. But, indeed, my father was irresistible; he was born an orator; – *Theodidactos*, taught by God. – Persuasion hung upon his lips, and Logic and Rhetoric were so blended in him, and he guessed so shrewdly the weaknesses and passions of his respondent, that Nature might have stood up and said, 'This man is eloquent.'

In short, whether he was on the weak or the strong side of the question, 'twas hazardous in either case to attack him. And yet, 'tis strange, he had never read Cicero, nor Quintilian, nor Isocrates, nor Aristotle, nor Longinus, Ramus or Farnaby; and what is more astonishing, he had never read one single lecture upon Crackenthorp or Burgersdicius, or any Dutch commentator. He did not even know the difference between an argument *ad ignorantiam*, and an argument *ad hominem*; so that I remember, when he went along with me to enter my name at Jesus College, my worthy tutor was amazed that a man who did not know the names of his tools, should be able to work so well with them.

My father had to work with them as best he could, because he had a thousand little sceptical notions of the comic kind to defend – most of which, I believe, started out as whims, mere Bagatelles; he would make merry with them for half an hour or so, and having sharpened his wit upon them, dismiss them till another day.

I mention this, not only as a theory of the forming of my father's many odd opinions, – but as a warning to the learned reader against the indiscreet reception of whimsical ideas, which, allowed free entrance into our brains, at length settle, – beginning in jest, but ending in earnest.

Whether this was the case with my father's notions – whether his judgement was duped by his wit, or how far his notions, though odd, might be right – the reader shall decide. All I am saying is, that in this idea of the influence of Christian names, he was serious; he was systematical, and would move heaven and earth, and twist and torture everything in nature, to support his hypothesis.

In consequence, he would lose all patience whenever he saw people more careless about the name they gave their child, than in the choice of Ponto or Cupid for their puppy-dog.

He would say that once a vile name was injudiciously given, 'twas not like a man's reputation, which might be cleared. This injury could never be undone.

Because of this opinion, my father had the strongest likings and dislikings towards certain names. Some names were absolutely indifferent to him. Jack, Dick, and Tom were of this class: these my father called neutral names, saying that there had been many knaves and fools, as well as wise and good men, who had borne them; so that they cancelled each other out. He would not give a cherry-stone to choose amongst them.

Bob, my brother's name, was another of these neutral names; and as my father happened to be at Epsom when it was given him, he would often thank Heaven it was no worse. Andrew, he said, was less than nothing. William stood pretty high: Numps, or Humphrey, again was low with him: and Nick, he said, was the Devil.

But, of all the names in the universe, he had the most unconquerable aversion for Tristram; he had the lowest opinion of it. So that in the midst of a dispute on the subject, in which, by the bye, he was frequently involved, he would sometimes break off and demand whether his antagonist had ever heard of a man called Tristram performing anything great or worth recording?

'No,' he would say, – 'TRISTRAM! – The thing is impossible.'

What else could my father do other than write a book to publish this notion to the world? There is little point in having opinions without giving them proper vent. So in 1716, two years before I was born, my father wrote a Dissertation upon the word Tristram, showing the world, with great candour, the grounds of his abhorrence to the name.

When this story is compared with the title-page, will not the gentle reader pity my father from his soul? – to see an orderly and well-disposed gentleman, who though singular, was yet inoffensive in his notions; to see him baffled and overthrown in his wishes; to behold events falling out against him in so cruel a way, as if they had been planned merely to insult him. – In a word, to behold him, in his old age, ten times in a day suffering sorrow as he called the child of his prayers Tristram! Melancholy sound! which, to his ears, was equivalent to *Nincompoop*.

I swear, if ever malignant spirit took pleasure in crossing the purposes of mortal man, it must have been here; and if it was not necessary that I should be born before I was christened, I would this moment give the reader an account of it.

CHAPTER 20

How could you, Madam, be so inattentive? I told you in that last chapter, that my mother was not a papist.

– Papist! You told me no such thing, Sir.

– Madam, I repeat that I told you as plain as words could tell.

– Then I must have missed a page.

– No, Madam, you have not missed a word.

– Then I was asleep, Sir.

– No, Madam. I insist that you immediately turn back, and read the whole chapter over again.

I have imposed this penance upon the lady, not out of cruelty; but from the best of motives; and therefore make her no apology. 'Tis to rebuke a vicious taste which has crept into thousands besides herself, of reading more in quest of the adventures, than of the deep knowledge which a book of this type should impart. The reader should be accustomed to make wise reflections as he goes; a habit which made Pliny the younger affirm, 'That he never read a book so bad that he could not draw some profit from it.'

But here comes my fair lady. – Have you read over again the chapter, Madam, as I asked? You have: And did you not observe the passage? No? Then, Madam, please ponder well the last line but one, where I say, 'It was necessary I should be born before I was christened.' Had my mother, Madam, been a Papist, that consequence would not follow.

– For the Romish rituals direct the baptising of the child, if it is in danger, before it is born; and the Doctors of the Sorbonne have determined that baptism may be administered to the unborn child by injection, using *une petite canulle* – or in English, *a squirt*. ('Tis very strange that St. Thomas Aquinas should have rejected this possibility. – 'Infantes in matris uteris existentes,' quoth he, 'baptizari possunt nullo modo.' – O Thomas! Thomas!)

It is a terrible misfortune for this book of mine – as for all literature – that the vile lust for fresh adventures has got so strongly into our habit. So intent are we upon satisfying the impatience of our desire that nothing but the gross and carnal parts of a book go in. Subtle hints fly off like spirits upwards; the heavy moral escapes downwards; and both are as much lost to the world, as if they were left in the bottom of the ink-well.

I wish that from this reader's example, all good people may be taught to think as well as read.

If the reader is curious to see the question upon baptism by injection, as presented to the Doctors of the Sorbonne, with their response thereupon, it is as follows.

(Note: *A translation from the French by the abridger follows each section below:*)

MEMOIRE présenté à Messieurs les Docteurs de SORBONNE . [Vide Deventer, Paris edit., 4to, 1734, p. 366.]

Un Chirurgien Accoucheur, represente à Messieurs les Docteurs de SORBONNE, qu'il y a des cas, quoique très rares, où une mere ne sçauroit accoucher, & même où l'enfant est tellement renfermé dans le sein de sa mere, qu'il ne fait

parôître aucune partie de son corps, ce qui seroit un cas, suivant les Rituels, de lui conférer, du moins sous condition, le baptême. Le Chirurgien, qui consulte, prétend, par le moyen d'une petite canulle, de pouvoir baptiser immédiatement l'enfant, sans faire aucun tort à la mere. Il demand si ce moyen, qu'il vient de proposer, est permis & légitime, & s'il peut s'en servir dans les cas qu'il vient d'exposer.

(Translation: A baby may be baptised before it is born, in certain cases, by means of a little tube.)

RESPONSE

Le Conseil estime, que la question proposée souffre de grandes difficultés. Les Théologiens posent d'un côté pour principe, que le baptême, qui est une naissance spirituelle, suppose une premiere naissance; il faut être né dans le monde, pour renaître en Jesus Christ, comme ils l'enseignent. S. Thomas, 3 part, quæst. 88, artic. II, suit cette doctrine comme une verité constante; l'on ne peut, dit ce S. Docteur, baptiser les enfans qui sont renfermés dans le sein de leurs meres, & S. Thomas est fondé sur ce, que les enfans ne sont point nés, & ne peuvent être comptés parmi les autres hommes; d'où il conclud, qu'ils ne peuvent être l'objet d'une action extérieure, pour recevoir par leur ministère, les sacremens nécessaires au salut: *Pueri in maternis uteris existentes nondum prodierunt in lucem ut cum aliis hominibus vitam ducant; unde non possunt subjici actioni humanæ, ut per eorum ministerium sacramenta recipiant ad salutem.* Les rituels ordonnent dans la pratique ce que les théologiens ont établi sur les mêmes matières, & ils deffendent tous d'une manière uniforme, de baptiser les enfans qui sont renfermés dans le sein de leurs meres, s'ils ne font paroître quelque partie de leurs corps. Le concours des théologiens, & des rituels, qui sont les règles des diocèses, paroît former une autorité qui termine la question presente; cependant le conseil de conscience considerant d'un côté, que le raisonnement des théologiens est uniquement fondé sur une raison de convenance, & que la deffense des rituels suppose que l'on ne peut baptiser immédiatement les enfans ainsi renfermés dans le sein de leurs meres, ce qui est contre la supposition presente; & d'un autre côté, considerant que les mêmes théologiens enseignent, que l'on peut risquer les sacremens que Jesus Christ a établis comme des moyens faciles, mais nécessaires pour sanctifier les hommes; & d'ailleurs estimant, que les enfans renfermés dans le sein de leurs meres, pourroient être capables de salut, parcequ'ils sont capables de damnation; -pour ces considerations, & en egard à l'exposé, suivant lequel on assure avoir trouvé un moyen certain de baptiser ces enfans ainsi renfermés, sans faire aucun tort à la mere, le Conseil estime que l'on pourroit se servir du moyen proposé, dans la confiance qu'il a, que Dieu n'a point laissé ces sortes d'enfans sans aucuns secours, & supposant, comme il est exposé, que le moyen dont il s'agit est propre à leur procurer le baptême; cependant comme il s'agiroit, en autorisant la pratique proposée, de changer une regie universellement établie, le Conseil croit que celui qui consulte doit s'adresser à son evêque, & à qui il appartient de juger de l'utilité, & du danger du moyen proposé, & comme, sous le bon plaisir de l'evêque, le Conseil estime qu'il faudroit recourir au Pape, qui a le droit d'expliquer les règles de l'eglise, & d'y déroger dans le cas, ou la loi ne sçauroit obliger, quelque sage & quelque utile que paroisse la manière de baptiser dont il s'agit, le Conseil ne pourroit l'approuver sans le concours de ces deux autorités. On conseille au moins à celui qui consulte, de s'adresser à son evêque, & de lui faire part de la presente décision, afin

que, si le prelat entre dans les raisons sur lesquelles les docteurs soussignés s'appuyent, il puisse être autorisé dans le cas de nécessité, ou il risqueroit trop d'attendre que la permission fût demandée & accordée d'employer le moyen qu'il propose si avantageux au salut de l'enfant.

(Translation: No! If a child is not born it cannot be baptised. Though if you really must, perhaps it can.)

Sorbonne, le 10 Avril, 1733.

A. LE MOYNE.

L. DE ROMIGNY.

DE MARCILLY.

Mr. Tristram Shandy's compliments to Messrs. Le Moyne, De Romigny, and De Marcilly; he hopes they rested well the night after so tiresome a consultation. He begs to know whether after the ceremony of marriage, and before that of consummation, the baptizing of all the Homunculi at once, slapdash, by injection, would not be a shorter and safer cut still; if they come safe into the world after this, they shall be baptized again.

– Provided that the thing can be done, which Mr. Shandy believes it may, *par le moyen d'une petite canulle, and sans faire aucun tort au pere (by means of a tiny tube, and without doing any damage to the father.)*

CHAPTER 21

‘I wonder what’s all that noise, and running backwards and forwards for, upstairs,’ said my father, after an hour and a half’s silence, to my uncle Toby, who was sitting on the opposite side of the fire, smoking his pipe in mute contemplation of his new pair of black plush breeches.

‘What can they be doing, brother?’ said my father. ‘We can scarce hear ourselves talk.’

‘I think,’ replied my uncle Toby, taking his pipe from his mouth, ‘I think,’ says he:

– But to enter into my uncle Toby’s sentiments upon this matter, you must enter first a little into his character, the outlines of which I shall just give you, and then the dialogue between him and my father will go on again.

Pray who was that man – for I write in such a hurry, I have no time to look it up – who first observed ‘That there was great inconstancy in our air and climate?’ Whoever he was, ’twas a good observation. Someone I forget, a century later observed, ‘It is this which has given us such a variety of odd and whimsical characters.’ This copious store-house of original materials is the cause why our Comedies are so much better than those of France: that discovery was not made till about the middle of King William’s reign, when the great Dryden, in writing one of his long prefaces, (if I mistake not) most fortunately hit upon it. Then, toward the latter end of Queen Anne, the great Addison took up the notion, and fully explained it to the world in the *Spectator*.

This strange irregularity in our climate, producing so strange an irregularity in our characters, gives us something to make merry with when the weather will not allow us to go out of doors. – That observation is my own; and was created by me this very rainy day, March 26, 1759, between nine and ten in the morning.

Thus, my fellow-labourers in this great harvest of our learning, now ripening before our eyes; thus it is, by slow steps, that our knowledge physical, metaphysical, physiological, polemical, nautical, mathematical, technical, biographical, romantical, chemical, and obstetrical, with fifty other branches (most ending in -ical) have for these two last centuries been creeping up towards that Acme of perfection, from which we cannot be far off.

When that perfection is reached, it will put an end to all writing; the lack of writing will put an end to all reading; – and in time, as war begets poverty; poverty peace, – that must, in due course, put an end to all knowledge – and we shall have to begin again, exactly where we started.

Happy! thrice happy times! I only wish that the time of my begetting, as well as the manner of it, had been a little altered, – or that it could have been put off, without any inconvenience to my father or mother, for another five-and-twenty years, when a man in the literary world might have stood some chance.

But I forget my uncle Toby, whom all this while we have left knocking the ashes from his pipe.

His character was of the type which does honour to our atmosphere; and I should have ranked him amongst the first-rate productions of it, had not there appeared such a strong family-likeness, which showed that he derived his unusual nature more from blood, than from water or weather. And I have often wondered that my father, when he observed signs of eccentricity in me when I was a boy, should

never have tried to account for them in this way: for all the Shandy family were of an original character: – I mean the males, the females had no character at all – except, indeed, my great aunt Dinah, who, about sixty years ago, was married and got with child by the coachman, for which my father, according to his hypothesis of names, would often say, ‘She might thank her christening.’

It will seem very strange to the reader, that this event, so many years after it happened, should interrupt the cordial peace and unity between my father and my uncle Toby. But nothing ever affected our family in the ordinary way. Perhaps at the time the event happened, our family had something else to afflict it; and it lay waiting for an opportunity to do its work. – I do not say this for a fact: I merely point out different paths of investigation, in order to find the first springs of the events I tell; – not like the decisive Tacitus, who outwits himself and his reader, but with the humility of a heart devoted to aiding the inquisitive; to them I write – and by them I shall be read, to the very end of the world.

I can explain exactly how my great aunt Dinah created a rift between my father and my uncle. It occurred as follows:

My uncle Toby Shandy was a gentleman who had a most extreme modesty of nature. Whether ’twas natural or acquired, ’twas nevertheless modesty in its truest sense; and that is, Madam, not in regard to words, but to things. His modesty even equalled, if possible, the modesty of a woman: that female cleanliness of mind, Madam, which makes your sex so much an object of awe to ours.

You might imagine, Madam, that my uncle Toby spent much of his time talking with your sex, and that from such fair examples acquired this turn of mind.

I wish I could say so, – but unless it was with his sister-in-law, my mother, my uncle Toby scarce exchanged three words with the female sex in as many years. No; he got this modesty, Madam, by a blow.

– A blow!

– Yes, Madam, a blow from a stone, broke off by a cannon-ball from the parapet of a horn-work at the siege of Namur, which struck full upon my uncle Toby’s groin.

– How could that cause it?

– The story of that, Madam, is long and interesting; but it would be running my history all upon heaps to give it you here. Later on, every detail of it shall be faithfully laid before you: but till then, I can say only that my uncle Toby was a gentleman of unparalleled modesty.

Since he also had some family pride, he could never bear to hear the affair of my aunt Dinah mentioned, without the greatest emotion. The least hint of it made him blush; but when my father told the story in mixed company, which he did frequently, it would set my uncle Toby’s modesty bleeding; and he would take my father aside to expostulate with him, saying he would give him anything if he would only let the story rest.

My father, I believe, had the truest love for my uncle Toby, and would have done anything to ease his brother’s heart. But this lay out of his power.

My father, as I told you, was a philosopher; and my aunt Dinah’s affair was a matter of as much consequence to him, as the movements of the planets in their systems. Just as Venus’s orbit fortified the Copernican system, so the backslidings of my aunt Dinah in her orbit, did the same service in establishing my father’s system of names, which, I trust, will for ever hereafter be called the Shandean System.

In any other family dishonour, my father would not have revealed the affair to the world; but he felt he owed an obligation to truth. My father would say to my uncle Toby, ‘Dinah was my aunt; – but Truth is my sister.’

These contrasting tempers of my father and my uncle were the source of many a fraternal squabble. The one could not bear to hear the tale of family disgrace, and the other would scarce let a day pass without some hint at it.

‘For God’s sake,’ my uncle Toby would cry, ‘and for my sake, and for all our sakes, my dear brother Shandy, do let this story of our aunt’s sleep in peace! How can you have so little feeling for the character of our family?’

‘What is the character of a family to an hypothesis?’ my father would reply. ‘Nay, if you come to that – what is the life of a family?’

‘The life of a family!’ my uncle Toby would say, throwing himself back in his armchair, and lifting up his hands, his eyes, and one leg.

‘Yes, the life,’ my father would say. ‘How many thousands of ’em are every year cast away, (in all civilized countries at least) – and considered as nothing, compared to an hypothesis?’

My uncle Toby would answer, ‘Every such instance is downright Murder.’

‘There lies your mistake,’ my father would reply; ‘for, in Science there is no such thing as murder; ’tis only Death, brother.’

My uncle Toby would never answer this by any other argument, than that of whistling half a dozen bars of *Lillabullero*. This was the usual channel through which his passions got vent, when anything shocked or surprised him, or when he was presented with an absurdity.

As none of our logical writers have thought proper to give a name to this particular species of argument, I here take the liberty to do it myself, for two reasons. First, that it may stand distinguished for ever from every other type of argument – like the *Argumentum ad Verecundiam*, *ex Absurdo*, *ex Fortiori*, etc; – and secondly, that it may be said by my grandchildren, when I am laid to rest, that their learned grandfather’s head had been busy once; that he had invented a name for one of the best and most unanswerable arguments in the whole science of Logic.

I do therefore command that it be known by the name and title of the *Argumentum Fistulatorium* (*or Whistlers’ Argument*); and that it should rank hereafter with the *Argumentum Baculinum* (*or Argument of Sticks*) and the *Argumentum ad Crumenam* (*or Moneybags’ Argument*), and for ever after be treated of in the same chapter.

As for the *Argumentum Tripodium*, (*or Three-footed Argument*), which is never used except by the woman against the man; – and the *Argumentum ad Rem* (*or Argument to the Point*), which, contrarywise, is only used by the man against the woman; – as the one of these is the best answer to the other, let them be kept apart, and be treated of in a place by themselves.

CHAPTER 22

The famous Dr. Joseph Hall, who was Bishop of Exeter in King James I's reign, tells us in one of his Decads, printed at London in the year 1610, by John Beal, of Aldersgate-street, 'That it is an abominable thing for a man to praise himself'; and I agree.

And yet, on the other hand, when a thing is executed in a masterly kind of a fashion, yet likely to go undiscovered; – I think it is just as abominable that a man should lose the honour of it, and go out of the world with the idea of it rotting in his head.

This is precisely my situation.

For in this long digression which I was accidentally led into, as in all my digressions (apart from one) there is a masterstroke of digressive skill, the merit of which has all along, I fear, been overlooked by my reader, – not for lack of penetration in him, – but because 'tis an excellence seldom expected in a digression; – and it is this:

That though my digressions are all fair, as you observe, and though I fly off from my subject as much as any writer in Great Britain; yet I constantly take care to order affairs so that my main business does not stand still in my absence.

I was just going, for example, to have given you the outlines of my uncle Toby's character, when my aunt Dinah and the coachman came across us, and led us wandering some millions of miles into the heart of the planetary system. Despite this, you perceive that the drawing of my uncle Toby's character went on gently all the time; – not the great contours of it, but some faint strokes were here and there touched on, as we went along, so that you are much better acquainted with my uncle Toby now than you were before.

By this means, two contrary motions are introduced into the machinery of my work, and reconciled. In a word, my work is digressive, and progressive too, both at the same time.

This, Sir, is a very different story from that of the earth's moving round her axis in her daily rotation, along with her progress in her elliptic orbit which brings about the year and our variety of seasons; – though I admit it suggested the thought, as I believe the greatest of our discoveries have come from such trifling hints.

Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine – they are the life, the soul of reading! Take them out of this book, for instance, and you might as well take the book along with them; cold eternal winter would reign in every page. Restore them to the writer; – he steps forth like a bridegroom who bids All-hail to the feast.

All the skill is in the good cookery and management of these digressions, not only for the advantage of the reader, but also of the author, whose distress, in this matter, is truly pitiable. For, if he begins a digression, from that moment his whole work stands stock still; – and if he goes on with his main work, then there is an end of his digression.

This is vile work. For which reason, from the start, you see, I have constructed this book with such intersections, and have so complicated and involved the digressive and progressive movements, one wheel within another, that the whole machine, in general, has been kept a-going. What's more, it shall be kept a-going for forty years, if it pleases the fountain of health to bless me so long with life and good spirits.

CHAPTER 23

I am inclined to begin this chapter very nonsensically. – Accordingly I set off thus:

If Momus's glass windows had been fixed in human breasts, as proposed by that mocking spirit of Greek mythology, so that men's thought might be laid bare; – then, the first consequence would have been, that all of us must have paid window-tax every day of our lives.

And the second; that nothing more would have been necessary to examine a man's character, but to have gone softly, as you would to a beehive, and looked in, – viewed the soul stark naked; observed her movements; traced all her maggots from their hatching to their crawling forth; – watched the soul's frisks and gambols; – and then to take your pen and set down what you had seen.

But this is an advantage not to be had by any biographer on this planet. In the planet Mercury, perhaps, it may be so, – for there the intense heat of the nearby sun must, I think, long ago have vitrified the bodies of the inhabitants, so that they may have fine transparent bodies of clear glass – until the inhabitants grow old and wrinkled, whereby the rays of light, in passing through them, become monstrously refracted, so that a man cannot be seen through.

But here on earth our minds shine not through the body, but are wrapped up in a dark covering of uncrystallised flesh and blood; so that if we would see the characters within, we must do it some other way.

Many are the ways in which human wit can do this.

Some, for instance, draw all their characters with wind-instruments. Virgil notes that way in the affair of Dido and Aeneas; but it is as false as the breath of fame. I know that the Italians pretend be able to exactly measure one particular sort of character, from the *forte* or *piano* of a certain wind-instrument they use, which they say is infallible. I dare not mention the name of the instrument; it's enough that we have it amongst us. – This is enigmatical, and intended to be so. I beg, Madam, that you read on as fast as you can, and do not stop to inquire about it.

There are others who will draw a man's character from his evacuations; but this often gives a very incorrect outline, unless you take a sketch of his in-goings too; and compound one good figure from them both.

I should have no objection to this method, but that I think it must smell too strong of the lamp, and be made wearisome by forcing you to have an eye to his natural actions.

There are others, fourthly, who disdain all these methods; not from any creativity of their own, but because they borrow the ideas of mechanical copyists. – These, you must know, are your great historians.

One of these you will see drawing a full-length character against the light; that's dishonest, and hard upon the character of the man who sits.

Others will make a drawing of you in the *Camera Obscura* – that is most unfair of all, because you are sure to be shown in your most ridiculous attitudes.

To avoid all these errors in giving you my uncle Toby's character, I am determined to draw it by no mechanical help whatever; nor shall my pencil be guided by any wind-instrument; nor will I consider either his repletions or his discharges, – but in a word, I will draw my uncle Toby's character from his Hobby-Horse.

CHAPTER 24

If I was not sure that the reader must be impatient to hear my uncle Toby's character, I would here convince him that there is no instrument so fit to draw such a thing with, as a Hobby-Horse.

A man and his Hobby-Horse, though they may not act on each other in exactly the same way as the soul and body do, yet doubtless have a communication between them of some kind; and my opinion is, that it is in the manner of electrified bodies, and that, by means of the heated parts of the rider coming into contact with the back of the Hobby-Horse, by long journeys and much friction, the body of the rider is at length filled with as much Hobby-Horsical matter as it can hold. So if you are able to give a clear description of the nature of the one, you may form a pretty exact notion of the character of the other.

Now the Hobby-Horse which my uncle Toby always rode, was in my opinion well worth describing because of its uniqueness; – for you might have travelled from York to Dover to Penzance, and not have seen one like it. Indeed, so strange, and so utterly unlike any of the species was he, that it might be disputed whether he was really a Hobby-Horse at all: but it was proved by my uncle Toby's getting upon his back and riding him about.

In truth, my uncle Toby mounted him with so much pleasure, and he carried my uncle so well, – that he cared very little what the world thought about it.

It is now high time, however, that I give you a description of him. But first, just let me acquaint you with how my uncle Toby came by him.

CHAPTER 25

When the wound in my uncle Toby's groin, which he received at the siege of Namur, made him unfit for the army, he returned to England, in order, if possible, to be set to rights.

He was for four years totally confined to his room: and in the course of his cure, through all that time, suffered unspeakable miseries, owing to a series of exfoliations from the *os pubis*, and the *os illium*, both of which bones were dismally crushed, as much by the irregularity of the stone as by its size, (though it was pretty large), which made the surgeon think that the great injury which it had done my uncle Toby's groin, was more owing to the weight of the stone than to its projectile force.

My father at that time was just beginning business in London, and had taken a house there; and as there was the truest friendship between the two brothers, and my father thought my uncle Toby could nowhere be so well nursed as in his own house, he assigned him the very best room in it. What was more, he would never allow a friend to step into the house without leading him upstairs to see his brother Toby, and chat an hour by his bedside.

The history of a soldier's wound beguiles the pain of it; – my uncle's visitors at least thought so, and they would frequently turn the talk to that subject, – and from there, the talk would roll on to the siege itself.

These conversations were infinitely kind; and my uncle Toby received great relief from them, and would have received much more, except that they brought him unforeseen perplexities, which for three months retarded his cure greatly; and if he had not hit upon a way to get himself out of them, I believe they would have laid him in his grave.

What my uncle Toby's perplexities were – 'tis impossible for you to guess; if you could, I should blush; because as an author, I pride myself on the fact that my reader has never yet been able to guess anything. And in this, Sir, I am so fastidious that if I thought you were able to form the least conjecture of what was to come in the next page – I would tear it out of my book.

BOOK 2

CHAPTER 1

I have begun a new book, so that I might have room enough to explain the perplexities in which my uncle Toby was involved, from the many questions about the siege of Namur, where he received his wound.

I must remind the reader, if he has read the history of King William's wars, that one of the most memorable attacks in that siege was made by the English and Dutch upon the point of the counterscarp, at the gate of St. Nicolas, which enclosed the great sluice where the English were terribly exposed to the shot of the counter-guard of St. Roch. The result of that dispute, in three words, was this: that the Dutch lodged themselves upon the counter-guard, and that the English held the covered-way before St. Nicolas-gate, notwithstanding the gallantry of the French officers on the glacis.

As my uncle Toby was an eye-witness at Namur, he was generally eloquent in his account of it; and the many perplexities he was in, arose out of the difficulties he found in making clear the differences between the scarp and counter-scarp, the glacis and covered-way, and the half-moon and ravelin, so that his company would fully comprehend where and what he was about.

In trying to explain these terms, my uncle Toby did oft-times puzzle his visitors, and sometimes himself too.

To speak the truth, unless the company my father led upstairs were very clear-headed, or my uncle Toby was in one of his explanatory moods, 'twas difficult to keep the discourse free from obscurity.

What especially perplexed my uncle Toby was this: that in the attack of the counterscarp, before the gate of St. Nicolas, extending from the bank of the Maes up to the water-stop, the ground was cut across with such a multitude of dykes, drains, rivulets, and sluices, – and he would get so bewildered amongst them, that frequently he could neither go backwards or forwards; and was obliged to give up the attack on that account.

This perturbed my uncle Toby more than you would imagine: and as my father's kindness was continually dragging up fresh enquirers, he had a very uneasy time. When he could not retreat out of the ravelin without getting into the half-moon, or get out of the covered-way without falling down the counterscarp, nor cross the dyke without slipping into the ditch, he must have fretted inwardly.

These little vexations, which may seem trifling to the man who has not read Hippocrates, – yet whoever has read Hippocrates or Dr. James Mackenzie, and has considered well the effects which the passions have upon the digestion – (Why not of a wound as well as of a dinner?) – may easily conceive what sharp paroxysms of his wound my uncle Toby must have undergone.

Having borne the pain of it for three months together, he resolved to extricate himself.

He was one morning lying upon his back in his bed, the wound upon his groin allowing him to lie in no other position, when a thought came into his head, that if he could have pasted upon a board a large map of the citadel of Namur and its environs, it might be a means of giving him ease. I note his desire to have the environs along with the citadel, because my uncle Toby's wound was got in one of the traverses,

about a hundred yards from the angle of the trench opposite the demi-bastion of St. Roch: – so that he was pretty confident he could stick a pin upon the identical spot of ground where the stone struck him.

All this was fulfilled, and not only freed him from a world of sad explanations, but proved the happy means, as you will read, of providing my uncle Toby with his Hobby-Horse.

CHAPTER 2

There is nothing so foolish, when you are making an entertainment of this kind, as to let your critics run it down. Nor is there anything so likely to make them do it, as leaving them out of the party, or bestowing your attention upon the rest of your guests, and ignoring the critics at your table.

– I guard against both; for, in the first place, I have left half a dozen places purposely open for them; and in the next place, I pay them all court.

– Gentlemen, I kiss your hands; no company could give me half the pleasure, – by my soul I am glad to see you. – Sit down, and fall on heartily.

I said I had left six places, and I was about to have left a seventh open for them; but being told by a Critic that I had acquitted myself well enough, I shall fill it up directly, and make more room next year.

‘How, in the name of wonder! could your uncle Toby, a military man, whom you have represented as no fool, be such a confused, pudding-headed, muddle-brained fellow, as–’

Go look.

So, Sir Critic, I could have replied; but I scorn it. ’Tis uncivil language, only fit for a man who cannot give clear accounts of things, or dive deep enough into the causes of human ignorance. It is moreover the reply valiant – and therefore I reject it: for though it might have suited my uncle Toby’s character as a soldier excellently well, (had he not accustomed himself, in such attacks, to whistle *Lillabullero*,) yet it would not do for me.

You see plainly, that I write as a man of learning; – that even my similes, my allusions, my metaphors, are erudite, – and that I must sustain my character properly, or what would become of me? Why, Sir, I should be undone; at the very moment that I filled up one place against a critic, I should have made an opening for a couple more.

Therefore I answer thus:

Pray, Sir, did you ever read Locke’s *Essay upon the Human Understanding*? – Don’t answer me rashly – because many, I know, quote the book, who have not read it – and many have read it who do not understand it. If either of these is your case, I will tell you in three words what the book is. It is a history.

– A history! of who? what? where? when?

It is a history-book, Sir, of what passes in a man’s own mind; and if you will say so much of the book, and no more, believe me, you will cut no contemptible figure in a metaphysic circle.

But this is by the way.

Now if you will venture to go along with me, and look into the bottom of this matter, it will be found that the cause of confusion in a man's mind is threefold.

Dull organs, dear Sir, in the first place. Secondly, slight impressions made by the objects. And thirdly, a memory like unto a sieve, not able to retain what it has received.

Call down Dolly your chambermaid, and I will make this matter so plain that Dolly herself should understand it. When Dolly has written her letter to Robin, and has thrust her arm into her pocket;—recollect that the organs of perception can by nothing in this world, be so aptly explained as by that thing which Dolly's hand is in search of: — an inch, Sir, of red sealing-wax.

When this is melted, and dropped upon the letter, if Dolly fumbles too long for her thimble, the wax will be too hard, and it will not receive the thimble's mark. Very well. If Dolly's wax is too soft, — though it may take the impression, it will not hold it; and last of all, supposing the wax good, and also the thimble, but applied too hastily — in any of these three cases, the print left by the thimble will not be true.

Now you must understand that not one of these was the cause of the confusion in my uncle Toby's discourse; and it is for that very reason I enlarge upon them for so long, — to show the world what it did *not* arise from.

What it *did* arise from, I have hinted above, is the unsteady uses of words, which have perplexed the clearest understandings.

If you have ever read the literary histories of past ages; — what terrible battles of words they have perpetuated, with so much gall and ink shed that a good-natured man cannot read them without tears in his eyes — gentle critic! when thou hast considered all this, thou wilt not wonder at my uncle Toby's perplexities. Thou wilt drop a tear of pity upon his scarp and his counterscarp; his glacis and his covered way; his ravelin and his half-moon. His life was put in jeopardy not by ideas, but by words.

CHAPTER 3

When my uncle Toby got his map of Namur, he began immediately to study it diligently; for since his recovery depended upon the passions of his mind, he needed to make himself master of his subject, so as to be able to talk of it without emotion.

In a fortnight's close application, which, by the bye, did my uncle Toby's wound upon his groin no good, – he was able, with the help of Gobesius's military architecture and pyroballogy, translated from the Flemish, to form his discourse with passable clarity; and after two months, he was right eloquent upon it, and could not only attack the advanced counterscarp, but was able to cross the Maes and Sambre, make diversions as far as Vauban's line, and give his visitors as distinct a history of these attacks, as of that of the gate of St. Nicolas, where he had received his wound.

But desire of knowledge, like the thirst of riches, increases with the acquisition of it. The more my uncle Toby pored over his map, the more he took a liking to it!

The more he drank of this sweet fountain of science, the greater was his thirst, so that before the first year of his confinement had ended, there was scarce a fortified town in Italy or Flanders of which he had not procured a plan, carefully collecting the histories of their sieges, their demolitions, and their improvements, which he would read with such intense delight that he would forget himself, his wound, his confinement and his dinner.

In the second year my uncle Toby purchased Ramelli and Cataneo, translated from the Italian; Stevinus, Moralis, the Chevalier de Ville, Lorini, Cochorn, Sheeter, the Count de Pagan, the Marshal Vauban, and Monsignor Blondel, with almost as many books of military architecture as Don Quixote had of chivalry in his library.

Towards the beginning of the third year, in 1699, my uncle Toby found it necessary to understand a little of projectiles. He began with Tartaglia, the first man who detected that a cannon-ball could not do its mischief along a right line. – This Tartaglia proved to be impossible.

– Endless is the search of Truth.

No sooner was my uncle Toby satisfied which road the cannon-ball did not go, but he resolved to find out which road the ball did go. For this purpose he was obliged to set off afresh with old Maltus, and studied him devoutly. Next came Galileo and Torricellius, wherein, by certain Geometrical rules, he found the precise part to be a Parabola – or else an Hyperbola – and that the parameter of the conic section of the said path was to the quantity and amplitude in a direct ratio as the whole line to the sine of double the angle of incidence formed by the breech upon an horizontal plane; and that the semiparameter–

Stop! my dear uncle Toby – stop! Go not one foot farther into this thorny and bewildered track! intricate are the mazes of this labyrinth! intricate are the troubles which the pursuit of this bewitching phantom Knowledge will bring upon thee. O my uncle – fly, fly from it as from a serpent.

Is it fit that thou should'st sit up, with the wound upon thy groin, whole nights baking thy blood with hectic watchings? Alas! 'twill exasperate thy symptoms – evaporate thy spirits – waste thy strength – impair thy health – and hasten all the infirmities of thy old age. – O my uncle! my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 4

Any writer understands this, – that the best narrative in the world, tacked too close to the last spirited appeal to my uncle Toby, would have felt cold and vapid; therefore I ended the chapter, though I was in the middle of my story.

Writers of my stamp have one principle in common with painters. Where exact copying makes our pictures less striking, we think it more pardonable to trespass against truth, than beauty. This is to be understood with a grain of salt; but as the parallel is made more for the sake of letting the last chapter cool, than anything else, it does not matter greatly whether the reader approves of it or not.

In the latter end of the third year, my uncle Toby, seeing that the parameter and semiparameter of the conic section angered his wound, left off the study of projectiles in a kind of a huff, and kept to the practical part of fortification only; the pleasure of which, like a spring held back, returned upon him with redoubled force.

It was in this year that my uncle began to cease to wear a clean shirt daily, – to dismiss his barber unshaven, and to allow his surgeon scarce time enough to dress his wound: lo! all of a sudden, he began to sigh heavily for his recovery, – complained to my father, and grew impatient with the surgeon. One morning, as he heard him coming up stairs, he shut his books, in order to expostulate with him. He dwelt long upon the miseries he had undergone in the last four melancholy years; – adding, that had it not been for his brother's kindness, he would have sunk under his misfortunes.

My father was nearby: my uncle Toby's unexpected eloquence brought tears into his eyes. The surgeon was confounded; in the four years he had attended him, my uncle Toby had never dropped one fretful word; – he had been all submission. So the surgeon was astonished when he heard my uncle peremptorily insist upon his healing the wound directly, or sending for the king's surgeon to do it for him.

My uncle Toby had a desire of life and health in common with his species; but I have told you before, that nothing affected our family the common way; and from the manner in which this eager desire now showed itself, the penetrating reader will suspect there was some other cause for it in my uncle's head.

'Tis the subject of the next chapter to set forth what that cause was. When that's done, 'twill be time to return to the parlour fire-side, where we left my uncle Toby in the middle of his sentence.

CHAPTER 5

When a man gives himself up to a ruling passion, – or, in other words, when his Hobby-Horse grows headstrong – farewell cool reason!

My uncle Toby's wound was nearly well, and the surgeon told him that if no fresh exfoliation happened, it would be dried up in five or six weeks.

But my uncle Toby now broiled with impatience to carry out his plan; this seemed too long – and so, without consulting with anyone, which, by the bye, I think is right, if you are determined to take no one's advice, – he privately ordered Trim, his servant, to pack lint and dressings, and hire a carriage to be at the door by twelve o'clock that day. Leaving a banknote upon the table for the surgeon's care, and a letter of tender thanks for his brother's, he packed up his maps, his books of fortification, &c., and by the help of a crutch on one side, and Trim on the other, my uncle Toby embarked for Shandy-Hall. The reason was as follows:

The night before this change happened, my uncle Toby was sitting at his table with his maps, &c., crowded about him; – in reaching for his tobacco-box, he accidentally threw down his compasses, and in stooping to take the compasses up, he knocked over his case of instruments; and in trying to catch the case, he thrust Monsieur Blondel's volume off the table, and Count de Pagan o'top of him.

My uncle Toby rung his bell for his man Trim.

'Trim,' quoth he, 'see what confusion I have been making – I must have a better table, Trim. Can'st thou order me one twice as big?'

'Yes, your Honour,' replied Trim; 'but I hope your Honour will be soon be well enough to get down to your country-seat, where we could manage this matter to a T.'

I must here inform you that this servant, who went by the name of Trim, had been a corporal in my uncle's company. His real name was James Butler, but having got the nick-name of Trim in the regiment, my uncle Toby, unless he happened to be very angry with him, would never call him by any other name.

The poor fellow had been disabled by a wound on his left knee with a musket-bullet, at the battle of Landen, two years before the siege of Namur; and as he was well-beloved in the regiment, and handy into the bargain, my uncle Toby took him for his servant; and of excellent use he was, as a valet, groom, barber, cook, tailor, and nurse; and served him with great fidelity and affection.

My uncle Toby loved him in return, all the more because of the similitude of their knowledge. – For Corporal Trim, after four years' attention to his master's talk upon fortified towns, had become proficient in the science; and was thought by the cook and chamber-maid to know as much about strongholds as my uncle himself.

I have but one more stroke to give to finish Corporal Trim's character, and it is the only dark line in it. The fellow loved to hear himself talk. Set his tongue a-going, and you had no hold of him – he was voluble; though so respectful that you could not be angry. My uncle Toby loved him not just as a faithful servant, but as a humble friend; he could not bear to stop his mouth.

'If I durst presume,' continued Trim, 'to advise your Honour?'

'Thou art welcome, Trim,' quoth my uncle: 'speak without fear.'

'Why then,' replied Trim, standing as erect as if on parade, 'I think,' quoth he, advancing his left leg, and pointing with his right hand towards a map of Dunkirk, which was pinned on the wall, – 'I think, with humble submission to your judgment, that these ravelins, bastions, curtins, and horn-works, make but a poor, contemptible,

fiddle-faddle piece of work upon paper, compared to what your Honour and I could make of it were we in the country, and had a quarter-acre or so to do what we pleased with. Your Honour might sit out of doors, and give me the nography—('Call it ichnography,' quoth my uncle) 'of the town or citadel, and I will be shot by your Honour upon the glacis, if I did not fortify it to your Honour's liking.'

'I dare say thou would'st, Trim,' quoth my uncle.

'For if your Honour,' continued the Corporal, 'could but mark me the polygon, with its exact lines and angles, I would begin digging the fossé, and if your Honour could tell me the proper depth and breadth, I would throw out the earth for the scarp and counterscarp accordingly.'

'Very right, Trim,' quoth my uncle Toby.

'And when I had sloped them to your mind, and faced the glacis with sods, as the finest fortifications are done in Flanders, I would make the walls and parapets with sods too.'

'The best engineers call them gazons, Trim,' said my uncle.

'Gazons or sods,' replied Trim, 'your Honour knows they are ten times better than a facing of brick or stone.'

'They are,' quoth my uncle Toby, nodding; 'for a cannon-ball enters the gazon without bringing any rubbish down, which might fill the fossé and allow the passage over it.'

'Your Honour understands these matters;' replied Corporal Trim, 'but if we went into the country, I would work under your Honour's directions like a horse, and make fortifications, batteries, saps, ditches, and palisadoes, that it should be worth riding twenty miles to see.'

My uncle Toby blushed with joy; he was fired with Corporal Trim's description.

'Trim!' he said, 'Enough.'

'We might begin the campaign,' continued Trim, 'on the very day that the Allies take the field, and demolish them town by town as fast as—'

'Trim,' quoth my uncle, 'say no more.'

'Your Honour might sit in your arm-chair, giving me orders, and I would—'

'Say no more, Trim,' quoth my uncle Toby.

'Your Honour would get pleasure, good air, and good health, and your Honour's wound would be well in a month.'

'Thou hast said enough, Trim,' quoth my uncle Toby; 'I like thy project mightily.'

'And if your Honour pleases, I'll this moment go and buy a spade, and a shovel and a pick-axe, and a couple of—'

'Say no more, Trim,' quoth my uncle Toby, quite overcome with rapture, and thrusting a guinea into Trim's hand: 'say no more; but go down, and bring up my supper.'

Trim ran down and brought up his master's supper; – yet the plan ran so in my uncle Toby's head, that he could not taste it.

'Trim,' quoth my uncle, 'get me to bed.' But Trim's description had so fired his imagination, that he could not shut his eyes. The more he considered it, the more bewitching the idea appeared; so that, two hours before day-light, he had decided on the whole plan of his and Corporal Trim's decampment.

My uncle Toby had a little neat country-house, in the village near my father's estate at Shandy Hall. Behind his house was a kitchen-garden of about half an acre; and at the bottom of the garden, and cut off from it by a tall yew hedge, was a bowling-green of about a quarter-acre: so as soon as Corporal Trim uttered the words, 'a quarter-acre,' this bowling-green instantly became painted upon my uncle Toby's fancy.

Never did lover hasten to a beloved mistress with more heat and expectation than my uncle Toby did, to enjoy this thing in private. As well as being sheltered from the house by a tall yew hedge, it was screened on the other three sides by holly and flowering shrubs: so that the idea of privacy added to my uncle's Toby's pleasure.

Vain thought! however private it might seem – to think, dear uncle Toby, of enjoying a thing which took up a quarter-acre of ground, – and not have it known!

How my uncle and Corporal Trim managed this matter, may make an interesting under-plot in the epitasis and working-up of this drama. – But for now the scene must drop, and change for the parlour fire-side.

CHAPTER 6

‘What can they be doing, brother?’ said my father.

‘I think,’ replied my uncle Toby, taking, as I told you, his pipe from his mouth, and striking the ashes out of it; – ‘I think it would not be amiss, brother, if we rung the bell.’

‘Pray, what’s all that racket over our heads, Obadiah?’ quoth my father.

‘Sir,’ answered Obadiah with a bow, ‘my Mistress is taken very badly.’

‘And where’s Susannah running to down the garden?’

‘Sir, she is running into the town,’ replied Obadiah, ‘to fetch the old midwife.’

‘Then saddle a horse,’ quoth my father, ‘and go directly for Dr. Slop, the man-midwife, and let him know your mistress is fallen into labour – and that I desire him to return with you speedily.’

‘It is very strange,’ said my father to my uncle Toby, as Obadiah shut the door, – ‘when there is an expert such as Dr. Slop so near, that my wife should persist so obstinately in trusting the life of my child to the ignorance of an old woman; – and not only the life of my child, but her own life, and with it the lives of all the children I might have in the future.’

‘Mayhap, brother,’ replied my uncle Toby, ‘she does it to save the expense.’

‘A pudding’s end!’ replied my father; ‘the Doctor must be paid the same for inaction as action, – if not more, to keep him happy.’

‘Then it can only be out of Modesty,’ quoth my uncle Toby, in the simplicity of his heart. ‘I dare say she does not care to let a man come so near her ****.’

I will not say whether my uncle Toby had completed the sentence or not; but if he had not fully arrived at its end, – then the world stands indebted to the sudden snapping of my father’s tobacco-pipe for one of the neatest examples of that ornamental figure in oratory, the *Aposiopesis*. How the slight touches of the chisel, the pencil, the pen, the fiddle-stick, et cetera, give true pleasure! – O my countrymen – be cautious of your language; and never, O! never forget upon what small particles your eloquence and your fame depend.

‘My sister, mayhap,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘does not choose to let a man come so near her ****.’ Make this row of stars, and ’tis an *Aposiopesis*. Take it away, and write ‘Backside’; ’tis Bawdy. – Scratch ‘Backside’ out, and put ‘Covered way’ in, ’tis a Metaphor; – and, I dare say, as fortification ran so much in my uncle Toby’s head, that word was the one he would have added.

But whether that was the case or no; – or whether the snapping of my father’s tobacco-pipe happened through accident or anger, will be seen in due time.

CHAPTER 7

When my father's tobacco-pipe snapped in the middle, he stood up and threw the pieces violently into the fire.

'Not choose,' quoth he, (repeating my uncle Toby's words) 'to let a man come so near her! – By Heaven, brother Toby! you would try the patience of Job.'

'Why?' replied my uncle in astonishment.

'To think,' said my father, 'of a man living to your age, and knowing so little about women!'

'I know nothing at all about them,' replied my uncle Toby. 'And I think that the shock I received the year after the demolition of Dunkirk, in my affair with widow Wadman – which shock you know was caused by my total ignorance of the sex – makes me say, that I do not pretend to know anything about 'em or their concerns.'

'Methinks, brother,' replied my father, 'you might, at least, know the right end of a woman from the wrong.'

Aristotle says that when a man thinks of anything which is past, he looks down upon the ground; but when he thinks of something that is to come, he looks up.

My uncle Toby, I suppose, thought of neither, for he looked horizontally.

'Right end of a woman!' quoth he, muttering low, and fixing his eyes upon a crevice in the chimney-piece – 'I declare, I know no more which it is than the man in the moon.'

'Then, brother Toby,' replied my father, 'I will tell you. Everything in this world, my dear brother, has two handles.'

'Not always.'

'Everyone has two hands,' replied my father, – 'which comes to the same thing. Now, if a man was to sit down coolly, and consider the shape, the construction, come-at-ability, and convenience of all the parts which constitute a Woman, and compare them analogically—'

'I never understood the meaning of that word,' quoth my uncle Toby.

'–Analogy,' replied my father, 'is the certain relation which different—'

Here a loud rap at the door snapped my father's definition (like his tobacco-pipe) in two, and, at the same time, crushed the head of a notable dissertation; – it was some months before my father could complete it. And it is problematical (considering the confusion of our domestic misadventures, now coming thick and fast) whether or not I shall be able to find a place for it in my third volume.

CHAPTER 8

It is about an hour and a half's good reading since my uncle Toby rung the bell, and Obadiah was ordered to go for Dr. Slop, the man-midwife; so no one can say that I have not allowed Obadiah time enough, poetically speaking, to go and return; – though, truly speaking, the man perhaps has scarce had time to get on his boots.

If the critic is resolved to measure the true distance betwixt the ringing of the bell and the rap at the door; and, finding it to be no more than two minutes thirteen seconds, should decide to insult me for such a breach in the probability of time; – I would remind him that the idea of duration is got merely from the succession of our ideas.

I would ask him to consider that it is only eight miles from Shandy-Hall to Dr. Slop's house; and that whilst Obadiah has been going there and back, I have brought my uncle Toby from Namur, across all Flanders, into England: – that I have had him ill upon my hands four years; – and have taken him and Corporal Trim a journey of near two hundred miles into Yorkshire, all of which must have prepared the reader's imagination for the entrance of Dr. Slop upon the stage.

If my critic is intractable, alleging that two minutes and thirteen seconds are no more than two minutes and thirteen seconds, and will render my book a Romance – if I am thus pressed – I then put an end to the whole objection, by informing him that Obadiah had got no more than sixty yards from the stable before he met with Dr. Slop; and indeed he gave a dirty proof that he had met with him, and was within an ace of giving a tragical one too.

Imagine to yourself – but this had better begin a new chapter.

CHAPTER 9

Imagine to yourself a little squat, uncourtly figure of a Doctor Slop, about four feet and a half in height, but with considerable breadth of belly.

Imagine him waddling slowly through the dirt upon a little pony, scarce able, alack! to walk under such a burden, even had the roads been good. – They were not. – Now imagine Obadiah mounted upon a strong monster of a coach-horse, in full gallop, and speeding the opposite way.

Pray, Sir, let me interest you a moment in this description.

If Dr. Slop had beheld Obadiah a mile off, in a narrow lane, heading directly towards him at that monstrous rate, splashing and plunging like a devil through thick and thin as he approached, would not such a phenomenon, with such a vortex of mud and water round its axis, have been more fearful to Dr. Slop than the worst of Whiston's comets?

– To say nothing of the Nucleus; that is, of Obadiah and the coach-horse. – In my idea, the vortex alone of 'em was enough to carry, if not the doctor, at least the doctor's pony, quite away. What then do you think Dr. Slop's terror must have been, when you read (which you are just going to do) that he was advancing towards Shandy-Hall, and was within five yards of a sharp angle in the dirtiest part of a dirty lane, – when Obadiah and his coach-horse turned the corner, rapid, furious – pop – full upon him!

What could Dr. Slop do? – he crossed himself + (for the doctor, Sir, was a Papist.) He would have done better to have kept hold of the pummel – nay, to have done nothing at all; for in crossing himself he let go his whip, and in attempting to save his whip, he lost his stirrup, – in losing which he lost his seat; – and in the multitude of all these losses (which, by the bye, shows what little point there is in crossing oneself) the unfortunate doctor lost his presence of mind.

Tumbling off his pony like a pack of wool, he landed with the broadest part of him sunk twelve inches deep in the mire.

Obadiah had been riding so fast, and the Momentum of the coach-horse was so great, that he rode in a circle three times round Dr. Slop, before he stopped his beast; and then 'twas done with such an explosion of mud that he had better have kept his distance. Never was a Dr. Slop so bespattered, and so transubstantiated into mud.

CHAPTER 10

When Dr. Slop entered the back parlour, where my father and my uncle Toby were discussing the nature of women, it was hard to say whether Dr. Slop's appearance, or his presence, surprised them more; for Obadiah had led him in as he was, unwiped, with all his stains and blotches on him.

He stood like Hamlet's ghost, motionless and speechless, for a full minute and a half at the parlour-door in all the majesty of mud. His hinder parts, upon which he had fallen, were totally besmeared, and every other part so blotched with Obadiah's explosion, that you would have sworn that every grain of it had taken effect.

Here was an opportunity for my uncle Toby to have triumphed over my father; for no one who beheld Dr. Slop in that pickle, could disagree with my uncle's opinion, 'That mayhap Mrs. Shandy might not care to let Dr. Slop come near her ****.' But 'twas not my uncle Toby's nature to insult.

Had my father reflected a moment, he might have recalled that he had told Dr. Slop only the week before, that my mother was at her full reckoning; and 'twas very natural in the doctor to have ridden to Shandy-Hall, to see how matters went on.

But my father's mind took unfortunately a wrong turn; running upon his ringing of the bell and the rap upon the door, measuring the distance betwixt them, and able to think of nothing else.

The ringing of the bell, and the rap upon the door, likewise struck my uncle Toby, – but it excited a very different train of thought; – the noises instantly brought Stevinus, the great engineer, into my uncle Toby's mind. What business Stevinus had in this affair, is the greatest problem of all. – It shall be solved, but not in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11

Writing, when properly managed (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation. As no one in good company would venture to do all the talking; – so no author with good manners would presume to do all the thinking. The truest respect which you can pay to the reader’s understanding, is to leave him something to imagine.

For my own part, I am eternally paying him compliments of this kind, and do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination busy.

Thus, I have given an ample description of Dr. Slop’s sad overthrow, and his appearance in the back-parlour; his imagination must now go on with it for a while.

Let the reader imagine then, that Dr. Slop has told his tale – and in what words his fancy chooses. Let him suppose that Obadiah has told his tale also, with rueful looks of concern.

– Let him imagine that my father has stepped upstairs to see my mother. And, to conclude, – let him imagine the doctor washed, rubbed down, condoled, and got into a pair of Obadiah’s pumps, stepping towards the door, on the very point of entering the action.

Truce! – truce, good Dr. Slop: – stay thy obstetric hand! Hast thou, Dr. Slop, been told of the secret and solemn treaty which has brought thee here? Art thou aware that at this instant, a mere midwife is put over thy head?

Alas! ’tis too true. What canst thou do? Thou hast come unarmed; thou hast left thy new-invented forceps, and all thy instruments of deliverance, behind thee. By Heaven! at this moment they are hanging up in a green baize bag, at thy house! – Ring – call – send Obadiah back upon the coach-horse to bring them with all speed.

‘Make haste, Obadiah,’ quoth my father, ‘and I’ll give thee a crown!’

Quoth my uncle Toby – ‘I’ll give him another.’

CHAPTER 12

‘Your sudden and unexpected arrival,’ quoth my uncle Toby to Dr. Slop (all three of them sitting down to the fire together,) – ‘instantly brought the great Stevinus into my head, who, you must know, is a favourite author with me.’

My father said, ‘I will lay twenty guineas that this Stevinus was some engineer or other, or has wrote upon the science of fortification.’

‘He has so,’ replied my uncle Toby.

‘I knew it,’ said my father, ‘though, for the soul of me, I cannot see what connection there can be betwixt Dr. Slop’s sudden coming, and fortification; – yet I feared it. No matter how unfit for the subject, you are sure to bring it in. I declare, my brother Toby, I would not have my head so full of curtins and hornworks.’

‘I dare say you would not,’ quoth Dr. Slop, interrupting him, and laughing greatly at his pun.

No critic could detest a pun more than my father; it annoyed him at any time; – but to be broke in upon by one, in a serious discussion, was as bad, he would say, as a fillip upon the nose.

‘Sir,’ quoth my uncle Toby to Dr. Slop, ‘the curtins my brother Shandy mentions have nothing to do with bedsteads; – though, I know Du Cange says that bed-curtains, in all probability, have taken their name from them. – Nor have the hornworks he speaks of, anything to do with the horn-works of cuckoldom. The Curtin, Sir, is the word we use in fortification, for that part of the rampart which lies between two bastions. Besiegers seldom attack the curtins directly, because they are so well flanked.’

‘’Tis the case of other curtains,’ quoth Dr. Slop, laughing.

‘However,’ continued my uncle Toby, ‘to make them sure, we generally place ravelins before them, taking care only to extend them beyond the fossé or ditch. – Men who know little of fortification, confound the ravelin and the half-moon, though they are very different things; – not in their construction, for we make them exactly alike; for they always consist of two faces, making a salient angle with the gorges, not straight, but in a crescent.’

‘Where then lies the difference?’ quoth my father, a little testily.

‘In their situations,’ answered my uncle. ‘For when a ravelin, brother, stands before the curtin, it is a ravelin; and when it stands before a bastion, then it is not a ravelin; – it is a half-moon; a half-moon likewise is a half-moon so long as it stands before its bastion; – but was it to get before the curtin, ’twould be no more than a ravelin.’

‘I think,’ quoth my father, ‘that the noble science of defence has its weak sides.’

‘As for the hornworks–’ (‘High! ho!’ sighed my father) ‘which,’ continued my uncle Toby, ‘my brother was speaking of, they are part of an outwork; they are called by French engineers, *Ouvrage à corne*, and we make them to cover such places as we suspect to be weaker than the rest. – ’Tis formed by two epaulments or demi-bastions – they are very pretty, and if you will take a walk, I’ll show you one well worth your trouble. I admit when we crown them, they are much stronger, but then they are very expensive, and take up a great deal of ground, so that, in my opinion–’

‘By the mother who bore us! brother Toby,’ quoth my father, not able to hold out any longer, ‘you would provoke a saint. Here you have got us, I know not how, into the middle of the old subject again. So full is your head of these confounded

works, that though my wife is this moment in labour, and you hear her cry out, yet you want to carry off the man-midwife.’

‘*Accoucheur*, if you please,’ quoth Dr. Slop.

‘Certainly,’ replied my father. ‘I don’t care what they call you, – but I wish the whole science of fortification at the devil; it will be the death of me. I would not, brother Toby, have my brains so full of saps, mines, blinds, pallisadoes, ravelins, half-moons, and such trumpery, if it made me owner of all the towns in Flanders.’

My uncle Toby was a man of courage: and I know no man under whose arm I would have sooner taken shelter. He felt this insult of my father’s as feelingly as a man could do; – but he was of a peaceful, placid nature, with scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly.

‘Go,’ says he, one day at dinner, to one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him all dinner-time, and which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last; – ‘I’ll not hurt thee,’ says my uncle Toby, going across the room, with the fly in his hand, – ‘Go,’ says he, lifting up the sash, and letting it escape; ‘poor devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee? This world is wide enough to hold both thee and me.’

I was but ten years old when this happened: but this action instantly set my whole frame into one vibration of most pleasurable sensation; how far the manner and expression of it, or a tone of voice attuned by mercy, might find a passage to my heart, I know not. This I know, that the lesson of universal good-will then taught by my uncle Toby, has never since been worn out of my mind. And though I would not depreciate what university study has done for me, or discredit the other helps of an expensive education; – yet I often think that I owe half of my philanthropy to that one accidental impression.

[This is to serve for parents instead of a whole volume upon the subject.]

I could not draw this stroke in my uncle Toby’s picture, by the instrument with which I drew the other parts of it, that mere Hobby-Horsical likeness: – this is a part of his moral character.

My father was very different in his endurance of wrongs; he had a much more acute sensibility, and a little soreness of temper; though this never extended to malignancy: – yet in the small vexations of life, ’twas apt to show itself in a witty kind of peevishness. He was, however, frank and generous; and in the little bubblings-up of this acid humour towards others, but particularly towards my uncle Toby, whom he truly loved, he would feel more ten times more pain than he ever gave (except in the affair of my aunt Dinah, or where an hypothesis was concerned).

The characters of the two brothers appeared with great advantage in this affair of Stevinus.

I need not tell the reader that a man’s Hobby-Horse is the tenderest part he has; and these unprovoked blows at my uncle Toby’s Hobby-Horse were felt by him.

– Pray, Sir, what said he? How did he behave?

– O, Sir! – it was great. For when my father had finished insulting his Hobby-Horse, my uncle turned his head, and looked into my father’s face with so much good-nature; so placid – so fraternal – so inexpressibly tender, it penetrated my father to his heart. He rose up hastily from his chair, seizing my uncle Toby’s hands.

‘Brother Toby,’ said he, ‘I beg thy pardon; forgive me.’

‘My dear, dear brother,’ answered my uncle, ‘say no more about it; you are heartily welcome, brother.’

‘But ’tis ungenerous,’ replied my father, ‘to hurt any man; – a brother worse; but to hurt a brother of such gentle manners, – ’tis base: ’tis cowardly. Besides, what have I to do, my dear Toby, with your pleasures, unless it was in my power (which it is not) to increase them?’

‘Brother Shandy,’ answered my uncle Toby, looking wistfully in his face, ‘you do increase my pleasure very much, in begetting children for the Shandy family at your time of life.’

‘By that, Sir,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘Mr. Shandy increases his own pleasure.’

‘Not a jot,’ quoth my father.

CHAPTER 13

‘My brother does it,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘out of principle.’

‘In a family way, I suppose,’ quoth Dr. Slop.

‘Pshaw!’ said my father, ‘’tis not worth talking of.’

CHAPTER 14

As my father spoke the last three words, he sat down. My uncle Toby rung the bell, to order Corporal Trim to step home for Stevinus: – my uncle's house being not far away.

Some men would have dropped the subject of Stevinus; but my uncle Toby went on with the subject, to show my father that he bore him no resentment.

'Your sudden appearance, Dr. Slop,' quoth he, 'instantly brought Stevinus into my head, because the celebrated sailing chariot belonging to Prince Maurice, which carried half a dozen people thirty miles in I don't know how few minutes, was invented by Stevinus, that great mathematician and engineer.'

'You might have spared your servant the trouble of going for Stevinus's account of it,' quoth Dr. Slop, 'because in my return from Leyden through the Hague, I walked as far as Schevling, which is two long miles, to view it.'

'That's nothing,' replied my uncle Toby. 'The learned Peireskius walked five hundred miles, from Paris to Schevling and back again, simply in order to see it.'

Some men cannot bear to be out-done.

'The more fool Peireskius,' replied Dr. Slop.

'Why so?' replied my father, interested in the discussion. – 'Why is Peireskius to be abused for having an appetite for knowledge? For although I know nothing of the sailing chariot in question, and I cannot guess upon what principles it is made – yet certainly the machine was constructed upon solid ones, or it could not have worked as well as my brother says.'

'It worked,' replied my uncle Toby, 'as well, if not better; for, as Peireskius said, it was as swift as the wind itself.'

'Pray, Dr. Slop,' quoth my father, 'upon what principles was this chariot set a-going?'

'Upon very pretty principles to be sure,' replied Dr. Slop, evading the question: 'and I have often wondered why none of our gentry, who live upon plains, attempt nothing of this kind; for 'twould be excellent good husbandry to make use of the winds, which cost nothing, and which eat nothing, rather than horses, which (the devil take 'em) both cost and eat a great deal.'

'For that very reason,' replied my father, 'the scheme is bad. It is the consumption of our products, as well as the manufacture of them, which gives bread to the hungry, circulates trade, and brings in money. – If I was a Prince, though I would generously reward the scientist who invented such things, yet I would also suppress the use of them.'

My father here had got into his element, and was going on as prosperously with his dissertation upon trade, as my uncle Toby had upon fortification; – but the destinies had decreed that no speech should be spun by my father that day, for as he opened his mouth to begin the next sentence,

CHAPTER 15

in popped Corporal Trim with Stevinus, too late – for the conversation had run into a new channel.

‘You may take the book home again, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘But prithee, Corporal,’ quoth my father, with drollery, – ‘first look into it, and see if thou canst spy a sailing chariot.’

Corporal Trim had learned to obey; so taking the book to a side-table, and running through the leaves; he said, ‘Your Honour, I can see no such thing; however,’ he continued, drolling a little in his turn, ‘I’ll make sure of it.’ Bending the covers back, he gave the book a good sound shake.

‘There is something falling out,’ said Trim, ‘but it is not a chariot, or anything like one.’

‘Prithee, Corporal,’ said my father, smiling, ‘what is it then?’

‘I think,’ answered Trim, stooping to take it up, ‘’tis more like a sermon.’

‘I cannot conceive how it is possible,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘for a sermon to have got into my Stevinus.’

‘If it please your Honours,’ said Trim, ‘I will read you a page;’ for he loved to hear himself read almost as well as talk.

‘As we have nothing better to do,’ replied my father, ‘and if Dr. Slop has no objection, order the Corporal to give us a page or two of it, if he is able.’

‘He can read it,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘as well as I can. Trim was the best scholar in my company.’

Corporal Trim made a humble bow to his master; then laying down his hat upon the floor, he advanced into the middle of the room, where he could best see and be seen by his audience.

CHAPTER 16

‘Have you any objection?’ my father asked Dr. Slop.

‘Not in the least,’ replied Dr. Slop; ‘for it may be composed by a divine of my church, as well as of yours.’

‘Begin, Trim, and read distinctly,’ quoth my father.

‘I will, an’ please your Honour,’ replied the Corporal, bowing, and requesting attention with a movement of his hand.

CHAPTER 17

– But before the Corporal begins, I must first give you a description of his attitude; otherwise you will imagine him stiff and perpendicular, – his eye fixed, as if on duty, his look determined; clenching the sermon in his left hand. – In a word, you would be apt to paint Trim, as if he was standing in his platoon ready for action. His attitude was as unlike this as you can conceive.

He stood before them with his body bent forwards to make an angle of 85 degrees and a half from the horizontal; – which orators know very well to be the true persuasive angle of incidence; – in any other angle you may talk and preach, certainly; but with what effect, I leave the world to judge!

The necessity of this precise angle, of 85 degrees and a half – does it not show us, by the way, how the arts and sciences mutually befriend each other?

How the deuce Corporal Trim, who knew not an acute angle from an obtuse one, came to hit it so exactly; whether it was chance or good sense or imitation, I know not.

He stood, I repeat, with his body somewhat bent forwards, his right leg sustaining seven-eighths of his weight, – the left foot advanced a little, his knee bent, not violently, but so as to fall within the limits of the line of beauty; – consider, it had one eighth of his body to bear up – so that the foot could be no farther advanced, or the knee more bent, than what would allow him to carry an eighth part of his weight.

[This I recommend to painters: – need I add, to orators! for unless they practise it, they must fall upon their noses.]

So much for Corporal Trim’s legs. He held the sermon loosely, not carelessly, in his left hand; his right arm falling negligently by his side, but with the palm open and turned towards his audience, ready to aid the sentiment if needed.

Corporal Trim’s eyes and face were in full harmony with the rest of him; he looked frank and assured.

So he stood, with such an oratorical sweep of figure, a statue might have been modelled from it.

He made a bow, and read as follows:

The Sermon

HEBREWS xiii. 18

For we trust we have a good Conscience

“‘Trust! Trust we have a good conscience!’”

‘Certainly, Trim,’ quoth my father, interrupting him, ‘you give that sentence a very improper accent; for you curl up your nose, man, and read it with a sneering tone, as if the Parson was going to abuse the apostle.’

‘He is, your Honour,’ replied Trim.

‘Pugh!’ said my father, smiling.

‘Sir,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘The writer (who I perceive is a Protestant) is certainly going to abuse the apostle, if he has not done it already.’

‘But how,’ replied my father, ‘have you concluded so soon, Dr. Slop, that the writer is of our church? for aught I can see, he may be of any church.’

‘Because,’ answered Dr. Slop, ‘if he was of ours, he would not dare take such a liberty. If, in our communion, Sir, a man was to insult an apostle – a saint – he would have his eyes scratched out.’

‘What, by the saint?’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘No,’ replied Dr. Slop, ‘he would have an old house on his head.’

‘Is the Inquisition an ancient building?’ asked my uncle Toby.

‘I know nothing of architecture,’ replied Dr. Slop.

‘An’ please your Honours,’ quoth Trim, ‘the Inquisition is the vilest—’

‘Prithce stop thy description, Trim, I hate the very name of it,’ said my father.

‘It has its uses,’ answered Dr. Slop, ‘though I’m no great advocate for it; yet, in such a case as this, he would soon be taught better manners; and I can tell him, if he went on, he would be flung into the Inquisition for his pains.’

‘God help him then,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘Amen,’ added Trim; ‘for I have a poor brother who has been fourteen years a captive in it.’

‘I never heard one word of this before,’ said my uncle Toby. ‘How came he there, Trim?’

‘O, Sir! the story will make your heart bleed – but it is too long to be told now; your Honour shall hear it some day when I am working beside you in our fortifications; – but the short of the story is this. My brother Tom was a servant in Lisbon, and married a Jew’s widow, who kept a small shop, and sold sausages, which somehow or other, was the cause of his being taken in the middle of the night out of his bed, where he was lying with his wife and two small children, and carried to the Inquisition, where, God help him,’ continued Trim, with a deep sigh, pulling out his handkerchief, ‘the poor honest lad lies confined to this hour.’

The tears trickled down Trim’s cheeks faster than he could wipe them away. Dead silence ensued for some minutes. Certain proof of pity!

‘Come, Trim,’ quoth my father, after a while, ‘read, and put this melancholy story out of thy head. Begin again.’

Corporal Trim wiped his face, returned his handkerchief into his pocket, and began again.

The Sermon

HEBREWS xiii. 18

For we trust we have a good Conscience

“‘Trust! trust we have a good conscience! Surely if there is anything in this life which a man may depend upon, and may know upon the most indisputable evidence, it must be this very thing, whether he has a good conscience or no.’”

[‘I am positive I am right,’ quoth Dr. Slop.]

“‘If a man thinks at all, he must be aware of his own thoughts and desires; he must remember his past pursuits, and know the true motives which have governed the actions of his life.

“‘In other matters we may be deceived by false appearances; but here the mind has all the evidence and facts within herself; is conscious of the web she has wove; – knows its texture, and the exact share which every passion has had in working upon the designs which virtue or vice has planned before her.’”

[‘The language is good, and I declare Trim reads very well,’ quoth my father.]

“Now, as conscience is nothing but the knowledge which the mind has within herself; and the approval or censure, which it makes upon our actions; ’tis plain, you will say, that whenever this inward testimony goes against a man, and he stands self-accused, that he must be guilty. And, on the contrary, when the report is favourable on his side, and his heart condemns him not: – it is not a matter of trust, as the apostle suggests, but a matter of certainty, that the conscience is good, and that the man must be good also.”

[‘Then the apostle is altogether wrong, I suppose,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘and the Protestant divine is in the right.’

‘Sir, have patience,’ replied my father, ‘for I think it will presently appear that St. Paul and the Protestant divine have the same opinion.’

‘As nearly so,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘as east is like west; but this comes from the liberty of the press.’

‘It is only the liberty of the pulpit,’ replied my uncle Toby; ‘for it does not appear that the sermon is printed, or ever likely to be.’

‘Go on, Trim,’ quoth my father.]

“At first sight this may seem to be the true state of the case: and the knowledge of right and wrong is so truly impressed upon the mind of man, that if a man’s conscience did not, by long habits of sin, gradually become hard, and lose that sense and perception which God gave it: if this never happened; or if it was certain that self-love never biased the judgment: – if neither favour nor wit entered this sacred Court, and if Passion never pronounced judgement instead of Reason: – was this truly so, then no doubt the moral state of a man would be exactly what he himself esteemed it: and the guilt or innocence of every man’s life could be known by no better measure, than his own approbation or censure.

‘I admit that whenever a man’s conscience accuses him of guilt (as it seldom errs on that side), we may safely say that (except in cases of melancholy) there are sufficient grounds for the accusation.

“But the opposite will not hold true; namely, that whenever there is guilt, the conscience must accuse; and that if it does not, that a man is therefore innocent. This is not fact. The common consolation which some good Christian or other is hourly administering to himself, – that he thanks God he has a good conscience, merely because he hath a quiet one – is false; and the rule is liable to so much error that the whole force of it is lost.

“A man may be vicious and utterly debauched; may live shamelessly, openly committing a sin which shall ruin for ever the deluded partner of his guilt; and not only cover her head with dishonour, but involve a whole virtuous family in shame and sorrow for her sake. Surely, you will think conscience must lead such a man a troublesome life; he can have no rest night or day from its reproaches.

“Alas! Conscience is busy elsewhere all this time, talking aloud against petty larceny, and executing vengeance upon some puny crimes that his fortune secures him against any temptation of committing; so that he lives as merrily, sleeps as soundly, and at last meets death as unconcernedly as a much better man.”

[‘All this is impossible with us,’ quoth Dr. Slop, turning to my father; ‘it could not happen in our church.’

‘It happens in ours only too often,’ replied my father.

‘I admit,’ quoth Dr. Slop, struck with my father’s frankness, ‘that a man in the Romish church may live badly; but then he cannot easily die so.’

‘Tis little matter,’ replied my father, ‘how a rascal dies.’

‘I mean,’ answered Dr. Slop, ‘he would be denied the last sacraments.’

‘Pray, how many have you,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘for I always forget?’

‘Seven,’ answered Dr. Slop.

‘Humph!’ said my uncle Toby, with the tone of that particular kind of surprise, when a man looking into a drawer finds more of a thing than he expected.

Dr. Slop understood this tone. ‘Humph!’ he replied. ‘Sir, are there not seven cardinal virtues? Seven mortal sins? Seven heavens?’

‘Tis more than I know,’ replied my uncle Toby.

‘Are there not seven wonders of the world? Seven days of the creation? Seven planets? Seven plagues?’

‘That there are,’ quoth my father. ‘But prithee, Trim, go on.’]

“‘Another man is sordid, unmerciful,’” (here Trim waved his right hand) – “‘a selfish wretch, incapable either of private friendship or public spirit. He passes by the widow and orphan in their distress, and sees human misery without a sigh or a prayer. Shall not conscience rise up and sting him? ‘No,’ he says; ‘there is no need, I pay every man his due; I have no fornication, no faithless vows; thank God, I am not an adulterer like other men.’

“‘A third is crafty and designing in his nature. View his life; ’tis nothing but a cunning mixture of dark arts and subterfuges. You will see such a one working out designs upon the ignorance of the poor and needy man. He shall raise a fortune upon an inexperienced youth, or an unsuspecting friend, who would have trusted him with his life.

“‘When old age comes on, and repentance calls him to look back upon this black account, conscience finds no law broken by what he has done; perceives no prison opening its gates. Conscience is safely entrenched behind the Letter of the Law; sits there invulnerable, fortified with Cases and Reports.’”

[Here Corporal Trim and my uncle Toby exchanged looks.

‘Aye, aye, Trim!’ quoth my uncle Toby, shaking his head, ‘these are sorry fortifications.’

‘O! very poor work,’ answered Trim.

‘The character of this last man,’ said Dr. Slop, ‘is more detestable than all the rest; and seems to have been taken from some pettifogging Lawyer. Amongst us, a man’s conscience could not possibly continue so long blinded: three times a year, at least, he must go to confession.’

‘Will that restore it to sight?’ asked my uncle Toby.

‘Go on, Trim,’ quoth my father, ‘or Obadiah will have got back before thou hast finished thy sermon.’

‘Tis a very short one,’ replied Trim.

‘I wish it was longer,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘for I like it hugely.’

Trim went on.]

“‘A fourth man shall lack even this refuge; he scorns the doubtful workings of secret plots. See the bare-faced villain, how he cheats, lies, perjures, robs, murders! Horrid! – But indeed no better was to be expected, for the poor man was in the dark! His priest had got the keeping of his conscience; and all he would let him know of it, was that he must believe in the Pope; go to Mass; cross himself; be a good Catholic, and that this was enough to carry him to heaven.

“‘But if he is so wicked, you may say, – if he robs and stabs, will not his conscience receive a wound? – Aye, but the man has carried it to confession; the

wound will soon be quite healed up by absolution. O Popery! what hast thou to answer for? Not content with the many natural ways in which the heart of man is every day treacherous to itself, thou hast wilfully set open the wide gate of deceit to this unwary traveller, too apt, God knows, to go astray, and confidently speak peace to himself, when there is no peace.

“Examples of this are too notorious to require much evidence. If any man doubts them, I must refer him to his own reflections, and will then trust my appeal with his heart.

“He will soon find that there, wicked actions are viewed differently: some, which his wishes and habits have prompted him to commit, are painted with false beauty; yet others, to which he feels no inclination, appear naked and deformed, surrounded with folly and dishonour.

“When David surprised Saul sleeping in the cave, and cut off the skirt of his robe – we read his heart smote him for what he had done. But in the matter of Uriah, where a faithful and gallant servant, whom he ought to have loved, fell to make way for his lust, – where conscience had so much greater reason to take alarm, his heart smote him not. We read not once of the least sorrow or compunction which he felt for what he had done.

“Thus conscience, placed on high as a judge within us, and intended by our Maker as a just one, – by an unhappy train of impediments, does its office so imperfectly – sometimes so corruptly – that it is not to be trusted alone. Therefore we find there is an absolute necessity of joining another principle with it, to aid its determinations.

“So that if you would form a just judgment of the degree of merit in which you stand, – call in religion and morality. What is written in the law of God? Consult calm reason and the obligations of justice and truth; what say they?

“Let Conscience determine the matter upon these reports; and then if thy heart condemns thee not, the rule will be infallible;” [Here Dr. Slop fell asleep] – “thou wilt have just grounds to believe that the judgment thou hast passed upon thyself, is the judgment of God; and an anticipation of that righteous sentence which will be pronounced upon thee hereafter, when thou art finally called to account.

“Blessed is the man, indeed, then, as the author of *Ecclesiasticus* says, who is not pricked with the multitude of his sins. Blessed is the man whose heart hath not condemned him; whether he be rich, or poor, if he have a good heart, he shall rejoice; his mind shall tell him more than seven watch-men upon a tower on high.”

[‘A tower has no strength,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘unless ’tis flanked.’]

“In the darkest doubts it shall conduct him safer than all the restrictions of law-makers, forced out of pure necessity to guard against the mischievous effects of those consciences which are corrupt and misguided.”

[‘I see plainly,’ said my father, ‘that this sermon has been composed to be preached at the law-courts. I like the reasoning, and am sorry that Dr. Slop has fallen asleep: for it is now clear, that the Parson, as I thought at first, never insulted St. Paul in the least; nor has there been the least difference between them.’]

‘The best friends in the world may differ sometimes,’ replied my uncle Toby.

‘True, brother Toby,’ quoth my father, shaking hands with him. ‘We’ll fill our pipes, and then Trim shall go on. What dost thou think of it, Trim?’

‘I think,’ answered the Corporal, ‘that the seven watch-men upon the tower, who, I suppose, are sentinels, are more than necessary; and to go on at that rate, would harass a regiment all to pieces, which a commanding officer will never do. Two

sentinels are as good as twenty. – I have been a commanding officer myself,’ continued Trim, rising an inch higher, ‘and all the time I had the honour to serve his Majesty King William, I never left more than two sentinels in my life.’

‘Very right, Trim,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘but the towers in Solomon’s days were not like our bastions; nor had they hornworks, or ravelins before the curtain, in his time; or such a fossé as we make with a cuvette in the middle, and counterscarps pallisadoed along it. The seven men upon the tower were set there, I daresay, not only to look out, but to defend it.’

My father smiled inwardly, but not outwardly; the subject being rather too serious to make a jest of. Putting his pipe into his mouth, he ordered Trim to read on.]

“‘To have the fear of God before our eyes, and to govern our actions by the eternal measures of right and wrong: the first of these will follow the duties of religion; the second, those of morality, which are so inseparably connected together that you cannot divide them (though the attempt is often made) without breaking them both.

“‘I said the attempt is often made; and so it is; – there being nothing more common than a man who has no sense of religion, and indeed has enough honesty to pretend to none, who would take it as the bitterest affront should you hint at a suspicion of his moral character, or imagine he was not completely just and scrupulous.

“‘There is little reason to envy such a one the honour of his motive. Let him declaim as pompously as he chooses, it will be found to rest upon no better foundation than his interest, his pride, his ease, or some other such changeable passion as gives us little dependence upon his actions in matters of great distress.

“‘I will illustrate this by an example.

“‘I know the banker I deal with, or the physician I usually call in—”

[‘There is no need,’ cried Dr. Slop, waking, ‘to call in any physician in this case.’]

“– to be neither of them men of religion: I hear them make a scornful jest of it every day. Despite this, I put my fortune into the hands of the one, and I trust my life to the honest skill of the other.

“‘Now let me examine my reason for this great confidence. Firstly, I do not believe that either of them will use the power I put into their hands to my disadvantage; I know their success in the world depends upon the fairness of their characters. In a word, they cannot hurt me without hurting themselves more.

“‘But if interest lay, for once, on the other side; if the one, without stain to his reputation, could take my fortune, or the other could enjoy an estate by my death, without dishonour to himself – in this case, what hold have I over either of them? Religion, the strongest of all motives, is out of the question; Interest, the next most powerful motive in the world, is strongly against me. What have I left to cast into the opposite scale to balance this temptation? Alas! I have nothing. I am at the mercy of Honour, or some such capricious principle – poor security for my property and my health!

“‘As, therefore, we cannot depend upon morality without religion, so there is nothing better to be expected from religion without morality. Nevertheless, ’tis not uncommon to see a man whose real moral character stands very low, who yet entertains the highest notion of himself as a religious man.

“‘He may be covetous, revengeful, implacable, and dishonest; yet he talks loudly against the infidelity of the age, goes twice a day to church, attends the

sacraments, and cheats his conscience into thinking that he is a religious man, and has discharged truly his duty to God. You will find such a man generally looks down upon everyone who has less apparent piety, – though, perhaps, ten times more real honesty than himself.

“I believe there is no one mistaken principle which has wrought more serious mischief. For a proof of this, examine the history of the Romish church; see what scenes of cruelty, murder, rapine, bloodshed—”

[‘They may thank their own obstinacy,’ cried Dr. Slop.]

“– have all been sanctified by a religion not governed by morality. In how many countries has the crusading sword of this misguided saint-errant spared neither age nor merit? and, as he fought under the banners of a religion which freed him from justice and humanity, he showed none; mercilessly trampled upon the unfortunate, and pitied not their distress.”

[‘I have been in many a battle,’ quoth Trim, sighing, ‘but never in so melancholy a one as this.’

‘Why? what do you understand of it?’ said Dr. Slop, looking at Trim with something of contempt.

‘I know,’ replied Trim, ‘that I never refused mercy to any man who begged for it; and rather than fire upon a child or woman, I would lose my life a thousand times.’

‘Here’s a crown for thee, Trim, to drink with Obadiah to-night,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘God bless your Honour,’ replied Trim; ‘I had rather those poor women and children had it.’

‘Thou art an honest fellow,’ quoth my uncle.

My father nodded. ‘But prithee, Trim,’ he said, ‘make an end, for I see thou hast but a page or two left.’

Corporal Trim read on.]

“If the testimony of past centuries in this matter is not enough, consider how the votaries of that religion are every day thinking to serve God, by actions which are a dishonour and scandal.

“To be convinced of this, go with me for a moment into the prisons of the Inquisition.” [God help my poor brother Tom.] “Behold Religion, with Mercy and Justice chained under her feet, there sitting ghastly upon a black tribunal, propped up with racks and instruments of torment. Hark! what a piteous groan!” [Here Trim’s face turned as pale as ashes.] “See the melancholy wretch who uttered it—” [Here the tears began to trickle down] “–brought forth to undergo the anguish of a mock trial, and endure the utmost pains that a studied system of cruelty has been able to invent.” [‘D__n them all,’ quoth Trim.] “Behold this helpless victim, his body so wasted with sorrow and confinement—”

[‘Oh! ’tis my brother,’ cried poor Trim, dropping the sermon upon the ground. My father and my uncle, and even Slop himself, pitied the poor fellow’s distress.

‘Why, Trim,’ said my father, ‘this is not a history, ’tis a sermon: prithee begin the sentence again.’]

“Behold this helpless victim, his body so wasted with sorrow and confinement, you will see every nerve and muscle as it suffers.

“Observe the last movement of that horrid engine!” [‘I would rather face a cannon,’ quoth Trim.] “See what convulsions it has thrown him into! Consider what exquisite tortures he endures! ’Tis all nature can bear! Good God! see how it keeps his weary soul hanging upon his trembling lips!”

['I would not read another line,' quoth Trim, 'for the world; I fear all this is in Portugal, where my poor brother Tom is.'

'I tell thee, Trim,' quoth my father, "'tis not a history.'

'There's not a word of truth in it,' quoth Slop.

'That's another story,' replied my father. 'However, 'tis cruelty to force Trim to go on. Give me the sermon, Trim; I'll finish it, and thou may'st go.'

'I must stay and hear it,' replied Trim.

'Poor Trim!' quoth my uncle Toby.

My father went on.]

“– Consider what exquisite torture he endures! 'Tis all nature can bear! Good God! See how it keeps his weary soul hanging upon his trembling lips, not suffered to depart! Behold the unhappy wretch led back to his cell!”

['Thank God,' quoth Trim, 'they have not killed him.']

“See him dragged out of it again to meet the flames in his last agonies, which this principle – that there can be religion without mercy – has prepared for him.”

['Thank God, he is dead,' quoth Trim, 'he is out of his pain.'

'Hush, Trim,' said my father, lest Trim should incense Dr. Slop; 'we shall never have done at this rate.]

“The surest way to test the merit of any disputed notion is, to trace its consequences, and compare them with the spirit of Christianity; 'tis the rule which our Saviour hath left us, and it is worth a thousand arguments – *By their fruits ye shall know them.*

“I will add no more, apart from two or three short rules deducible from this.

“First, whenever a man talks loudly against religion, always suspect that it is not his reason, but his passions speaking. A bad life and a good belief are troublesome neighbours.

“Secondly, when a man tells you that something goes against his conscience, believe he means exactly the same as when he tells you something goes against his stomach.

“In a word, – trust that man in nothing, who has not a Conscience in everything.

“And, in your own case, remember that your conscience is not a law. God and reason made the law, and have placed conscience within you to determine – not according to the ebbs and flows of passion, but like a judge, who makes no new law, but faithfully declares that law which he knows already written.

“FINIS.”

'Thou hast read the sermon extremely well, Trim,' quoth my father.

'If he had spared his comments,' replied Dr. Slop, 'he would have read it much better.'

'I should have read it ten times better, Sir,' answered Trim, 'but that my heart was so full.'

'That was the very reason, Trim,' replied my father, 'which made thee read the sermon so well; and if our clergy would feel as deeply as this poor fellow, the eloquence of our pulpits would be a model for the whole world. I like the sermon well, 'tis dramatic, and catches the attention.'

'We preach much in that way,' said Dr. Slop.

'I know that very well,' said my father, but in a tone which disgusted Dr. Slop.

‘But our sermons have the advantage,’ said Dr. Slop, a little piqued, ‘in that we never introduce any character into them below a patriarch, a martyr or a saint.’

‘There are some very bad characters in this,’ said my father, ‘but I do not think the sermon a jot worse for ’em.’

‘But pray,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘whose can this be? How could it get into my Stevinus?’

‘In answer to the first question, I know the author,’ quoth my father; ‘for ’tis the parson of the parish.’

The style of it matching those my father constantly heard preached in his parish-church, he guessed that it was Yorick’s. – It was proved to be so the next day, when Yorick sent a servant to my uncle Toby’s house to enquire after it.

It seems that Yorick had borrowed Stevinus, and had carelessly popped his sermon, which he had just written, into the middle of it; and forgetfully sent Stevinus home with his sermon to keep him company.

Ill-fated sermon! Thou wast lost, after this recovery, a second time, dropped through an unsuspected hole in thy master’s pocket, down into a treacherous and tattered lining, – trod deep into the dirt by the hind-foot of his horse; buried ten days in the mire, – raised up out of it by a beggar – sold for a halfpenny to a parish-clerk, transferred to his parson, and lost for ever to thine owner; nor restored till this very moment that I tell the world the story.

Can the reader believe, that this sermon was preached in York cathedral before a thousand witnesses, by a certain prebendary of that church, and actually printed by him, only two years after Yorick’s death?* Yorick indeed, was never better served in his life; but it was a little hard to plunder him after he was laid in his grave.

However, as the gentleman who did it was in perfect agreement with Yorick, and printed copies to give away; – I do not tell this anecdote to hurt his character and advancement in the church; but find myself impelled by two reasons.

The first is, that I may give rest to Yorick’s ghost; which the country-people believe still walks.

The second reason is, that by telling this story to the world, I can inform it that if this sample of Yorick’s sermons is liked, there are many more such sermons in the possession of the Shandy family, enough to make a handsome volume, at the world’s service.

* *Abridger’s note*: The Prebendary of York being one Laurence Sterne, who preached the sermon there in 1750.

CHAPTER 18

Obadiah came in jingling, with all the instruments in the green baize bag we spoke of, slung across his body, just as Corporal Trim went out.

‘It is now proper, I think,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘to send upstairs to know how Mrs. Shandy goes on.’

‘I have ordered,’ answered my father, ‘the old midwife to come down to us if there is the least difficulty; for you must know, Dr. Slop,’ he continued, with a perplexed kind of smile, ‘that by a treaty between me and my wife, you are no more than an auxiliary in this affair, – and not even that, unless the midwife upstairs cannot do without you. Women have their fancies, and in these situations they claim a right of deciding in whose hands they shall undergo it.’

‘They are right,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘But, Sir,’ replied Dr. Slop to my father, ignoring my uncle, ‘the father of a family, who wishes its perpetuity, in my opinion, had better insist on this prerogative, and give up some other rights instead.’

‘I know not,’ quoth my father testily, ‘what we have left to give up, in lieu of who shall bring our children into the world, unless the right of who shall beget them.’

‘Sir,’ replied Dr. Slop, ‘it would astonish you to know what improvements we have made of late years in all branches of obstetrical knowledge, but particularly in that the safe and expeditious extraction of the foetus, which has received such lights, that for my part I wonder how the world has–’

– ‘I wish,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘you had seen what prodigious armies we had in Flanders.’

CHAPTER 19

I have dropped the curtain over this scene for a minute, to remind you of one thing, and to inform you of another.

What I have to inform you, comes, I own, a little out of its due course; – for it should have been told a hundred and fifty pages ago, but I foresaw that 'twould come in pat, and be of more advantage here than elsewhere. Writers need to look ahead, to keep up the spirit and connection of what they have in hand.

When these two things are done, the curtain shall be drawn up again, and my uncle Toby, my father, and Dr. Slop shall go on with their discourse without any more interruption.

First, then, I have to remind you of this; – that from the example of my father's unusual notions about Christian names, you were led into assuming that he was just as odd and whimsical in fifty other opinions. In truth, there was not a stage in the life of man, from his begetting to the lean and slippered pantaloons, that he did not have some favourite notion of, far out of the highway of thinking.

My father, Sir, saw nothing in the light in which others placed it; he placed things in his own light.

Knowledge, like matter, he would affirm, was divisible into grains and scruples *ad infinitum*. Error was error; no matter where it fell, 'twas fatal to truth, who was kept down at the bottom of her well as inevitably by a mistake in the dust of a butterfly's wings, as in the disk of the sun, the moon, and all the stars put together.

He would often lament that it was due to neglect of this truth, that so many things in this world were out of joint; – and that the foundations of our church and state were weakened.

He would say, 'We are a ruined people. Why?' he would ask, using the syllogism of Zeno and Chrysippus, without knowing it belonged to them. – 'Why are we ruined? Because we are corrupted. Why are we corrupted? Because we are needy. And why are we needy? From the neglect of our pence: our bank notes, Sir, take care of themselves.

'Tis the same,' he would say, 'throughout all the sciences; the great points are not to be broke in upon – the laws of nature will defend themselves – but error' (he would add, looking earnestly at my mother) – 'error creeps in through the minute holes and crevices which human nature leaves unguarded.'

This style of thinking in my father, is what I had to remind you of.

– The point you are to be informed of, and which I have reserved for this place, is as follows.

Amongst the many and excellent reasons, with which my father had urged my mother to accept Dr. Slop's assistance rather than the old woman's, there was one particular reason which he put his whole strength to. – It failed because he could not make her comprehend its drift.

'Cursed luck!' said he to himself, one afternoon, as he walked out of the room after arguing it for an hour and a half with her, to no purpose; 'Cursed luck!' said he, biting his lip, 'for a man to be master of one of the finest chains of reasoning in nature, and have a wife with such a head that he cannot make an impression on it, to save his soul.'

This argument, though it was entirely lost upon my mother, had more weight with him than all his other arguments together: I will therefore try to do it justice.

My father began with these two axioms:

First, that an ounce of a man's own wit was worth a ton of other people's.

Secondly (which by the bye, was the basis of the first axiom, though it comes after), that every man's wit must come from his own soul, and no one else's.

Now, it was plain to my father that all souls were equal, and that the difference between the most acute and the most obtuse understanding came not from any original sharpness or bluntness of one mind above or below another, but arose merely from the organisation of the body, in that part where the soul took up her residence. He had therefore researched exactly where that was.

From the best accounts he could find, he believed it could not be where Des Cartes had fixed it, upon the top of the pineal gland of the brain; though, to speak the truth, as so many nerves terminated in that place, 'twas no bad guess; and my father would have certainly agreed with that great philosopher, had it not been for my uncle Toby telling him a story of an officer at the battle of Landen, who had one part of his brain shot away by a musket-ball, and another part of it taken out by a French surgeon; and afterwards recovered, and did his duty very well without it.

If death, said my father, is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body; and if it is true that people can walk about and do their business without brains, then certainly the soul does not inhabit there. Q. E. D.

As for that thin, subtle and fragrant juice which Borri, the great Milanese physician, claims to have discovered in the cerebellum, and which he affirms to be the seat of the soul, my father could not subscribe to this theory by any means. The very idea of so noble and exalted a being as the soul residing there and sitting dabbling like a tadpole all day long, in a puddle, shocked him.

What, therefore, seemed the most likely head-quarters of the soul, was somewhere about the *medulla oblongata*, where, it was generally agreed by Dutch anatomists, all the minute nerves from the organs converged, like streets and winding alleys into a square.

So far there was nothing singular in my father's opinion. – But here he took a road of his own, setting up another Shandean hypothesis upon these corner-stones.

He maintained that next to the due care to be taken in the act of begetting each individual, and in naming him, the third aim of a parent was the preservation of this delicate and fine-spun web from the havoc which was generally made by the violent compression which the head was forced to undergo, by the nonsensical method of bringing us into the world head foremost.

– This requires explanation.

My father, who dipped into all kinds of books, upon looking into Smelvgot's *Lithopædus Senonesis de Partu difficili* had found out that the pliable state of a child's head at birth was such, that by force of the woman's efforts, which, in strong labour-pains, was equal, upon average, to the weight of 470 pounds acting perpendicularly upon it, – so it happened that in 49 cases out of 50, the child's head was compressed and moulded into the shape of a conical piece of dough, such as a pastry-cook rolls up to make a pie of.

'Good God!' cried my father, 'what havoc and destruction must this cause in the fine and tender texture of the cerebellum!'

But how great was his apprehension, when he farther understood that this force squeezed and propelled the cerebrum towards the cerebellum, which was the seat of understanding!

‘Angels defend us!’ cried my father, – ‘can any soul withstand this shock? No wonder the intellectual web is so tattered; and that so many of our best heads are all perplexity and confusion within.’

But my father read on, and learned that when a child was turned topsy-turvy, which was easy for an operator to do, and was extracted by the feet; – that then the cerebellum was propelled simply towards the cerebrum, where it could do no harm.

‘By heavens!’ cried he, ‘the world is in conspiracy to drive out what little wit God has given us. What is it to me which end of my son comes foremost into the world, provided his cerebellum escapes uncrushed?’

It is the nature of an hypothesis, when once a man has created it, that it generally grows stronger with everything he hears or reads.

When my father had held this hypothesis about a month, there was scarce a phenomenon of stupidity or genius which he could not readily solve by it; it accounted for his eldest son being the greatest blockhead in the family.

‘Poor devil,’ he would say, ‘he made way for the capacity of his younger brothers.’ It wonderfully explained the acumen of the Asiatic genius, and that sprightlier turn of minds in warmer climates; not from the common-place solution of a clearer sky, and more sunshine, &c; but he affirmed that in warmer climates, nature had laid a lighter tax upon the fairer sex, so that the pressure upon the head in childbirth was slight, the cerebellum was preserved, and the soul might act as it liked.

When my father had got so far, what a blaze of light did the accounts of the Caesarean section, and of the towering geniuses who had come safe into the world by it, cast upon this hypothesis?

‘Here you see,’ he would say, ‘there was no injury done; no pressure of the head against the pelvis; no propulsion of the cerebrum – and pray, what were the happy consequences? Why, Sir, Julius Caesar, who gave the operation a name; and Hermes Trismegistus, Scipio Africanus, and our Edward the Sixth, who, had he lived, would have done honour to the hypothesis. These, and many more famous men, all came sideways, Sir, into the world.’

The incision of the uterus ran for six weeks in my father’s head; he had read that wounds in the abdomen were not mortal, so that the belly of the mother might be opened extremely well to give a passage to the child.

He mentioned this one afternoon to my mother, – merely as a matter of fact; but seeing her turn as pale as ashes at the very mention of it, he thought it as well to say no more, contenting himself with admiring it in silence.

This was my father Mr. Shandy’s hypothesis; concerning which I have only to add, that my brother Bobby did as much honour to it as any one of the great heroes we spoke of. For happening to be born when my father was at Epsom, – being moreover my mother’s first child, coming into the world head foremost, and turning out afterwards a lad of wonderful slowness, – my father was confirmed in his opinion: and as he had failed at one end, he was determined to try the other.

This was not to be expected from the midwife, – and was therefore one of my father’s reasons in favour of a man of science, whom he could better deal with.

Of all men in the world, Dr. Slop was the fittest for my father’s purpose; for though this new-invented forceps was, he maintained, the safest instrument of deliverance, yet, it seems, he had scattered a word or two in his book, in favour of extracting the baby by its feet; though not for the soul’s good, but for reasons merely obstetrical.

This will account for the coalition betwixt my father and Dr. Slop in the ensuing discourse, which went a little hard against my uncle Toby. How a plain man could bear up against two such allies in science, is hard to conceive.

You may conjecture upon it, if you please, – and whilst your imagination is in motion, you may encourage it to discover how my uncle Toby got his modesty by the wound upon his groin. You may try to account for the loss of my nose by marriage-articles, and show the world how I could have the misfortune to be called Tristram, in opposition to my father's hypothesis, and the wishes of the whole family.

These, with fifty other points left yet unravelled, you may endeavour to solve; but I tell you now it will be in vain, for you will not come within a league of the truth.

The reader must wait for a full explanation of these matters till next year, when a series of events will be laid open which he little expects.

BOOK 3

CHAPTER 1

‘I wish, Dr. Slop,’ quoth my uncle Toby earnestly, – ‘I wish you had seen what prodigious armies we had in Flanders.’

My uncle Toby’s wish did a thing he never intended; – it confounded Dr. Slop – putting his ideas to flight, so that he could not rally them again for the soul of him.

In all disputes, nothing is more dangerous, Madam, than a wish coming sideways in this unexpected manner upon a man. The safest way to take off the force of the wish, is for the party wished at, instantly to stand up and wish the wisher something in return of pretty near the same value, so balancing the account upon the spot.

This will be fully illustrated in my chapter of wishes.

Dr. Slop did not understand the nature of this defence; he was puzzled, and it put an entire stop to the dispute for four minutes and a half. Five would have been fatal to it: my father saw the danger. The dispute was most interesting to him – ‘Whether the child of his prayers should be born without a head or with one.’ He waited till the last moment, to allow Dr. Slop to return the wish; but perceiving that he was confounded, and was looking with that perplexed vacuity of eye which puzzled souls generally stare with – first up – then down – then east – then west, and so on; – and seeing that he had actually begun to count the brass nails upon the arm of his chair, my father thought there was no time to be lost, so took up the discourse as follows.

CHAPTER 2

‘– What prodigious armies you had in Flanders!’ replied my father, taking his wig off his head with his right hand, and with his left hand pulling out a striped handkerchief from his right coat pocket, in order to rub his head.

Now, in this I think my father was much to blame; and I will tell you why.

Matters of no more seeming consequence than ‘Whether my father should have taken off his wig with his right hand or his left,’ have divided the greatest kingdoms, and made their monarchs’ crowns totter upon their heads.

As my father’s handkerchief was in his right coat pocket, he should not have taken off his wig with his right hand, but with his left; and then, when the rubbing of his head called for his handkerchief, he could have put his right hand into his right coat pocket to take it out without the least violent or ungraceful twist of his body.

In this case, (unless my father had been resolved to make a fool of himself by bending his elbow at some nonsensical angle) – his whole attitude would have been easy – natural – unforced: Reynolds himself might have painted him as he sat.

Now, consider what a devil of a figure my father made of himself.

In the latter end of Queen Anne’s reign, and in the beginning of King George’s, coat pockets were cut very low down in the skirt. I need say no more – the devil himself could not have contrived a worse fashion for one in my father’s situation.

CHAPTER 3

It was not an easy matter in any king's reign to force your hand diagonally across your whole body to reach the bottom of your opposite coat pocket. – In the year 1718, when this happened, it was extremely difficult; so that when my uncle Toby discovered the zig-zaggery of my father's approaches, it instantly brought into his mind those moves he had made before the gate of St. Nicolas; the idea of which distracted him so much, that he was about to ring the bell for Trim to go and fetch his map of Namur, in order to measure the angles of that attack – particularly the one where he received his wound upon his groin.

My father knit his brows, and all the blood in his body rushed up into his face. – My uncle Toby dismounted immediately.

– I did not realise your uncle Toby was on horseback.–

CHAPTER 4

A man's body and his mind are exactly like a jerkin, and a jerkin's lining; rumple the one, – you rumple the other. There is one exception, however, and that is, when you are so fortunate a fellow as to have your jerkin made of gum-taffeta, and its lining of sarcenet.

Zeno, Cleanthes, Diogenes Babylonius, Dionysius, Heracleotes, Antipater amongst the Greeks; Cato, Varro and Seneca amongst the Romans; Pantaeonus, Clemens Alexandrinus and Montaigne amongst the Christians; and a score of good, honest, unthinking Shandean people, whose names I can't recollect, – all pretended that their jerkins were made this way; – you might have rumped and crumpled the outside of them all to pieces; you might have played the very devil with them, yet not one of the insides would have been one button the worse.

I believe that mine is of this type: for never has my poor jerkin been tickled off at such a rate as it has been these last nine months, – and yet I declare, its lining is intact. Pell-mell, helter-skelter, ding-dong, cut and thrust, they have been trimming it for me: and had there been the least gumminess in my lining, – by heaven! it would have been frayed and fretted to a thread.

You Monthly reviewers! how could you slash my jerkin as you did? – how did you know you would not cut my lining too?

I most heartily say, God bless you; – if any of you should storm and rage at me, as some of you did last May – I am determined to react with good temper; and as long as I live or write (which in my case means the same thing,) never to give an honest gentleman a worse word than my uncle Toby gave the fly which buzzed about his nose all dinner-time.

– 'Go, poor devil,' quoth he; 'Why should I hurt thee? This world is wide enough to hold both thee and me.'

CHAPTER 5

Any man, Madam, observing the rush of blood to my father's face, so that he reddened six whole tints and a half: – any man but my uncle Toby, who had observed this, together with the violent knitting of my father's brows, and the contortion of his body, would have concluded my father was in a rage; and he would then have screwed himself up to the same pitch; – and then the devil would have broke loose.

Any man, I say, but my uncle Toby, whose benign heart interpreted every motion in the kindest sense possible, would have concluded my father was angry, and blamed him too. My uncle Toby blamed no one but the tailor who cut the pocket; so sitting still while my father got his handkerchief out, he looked at him with inexpressible good-will – until my father went on as follows.

CHAPTER 6

'What prodigious armies you had in Flanders! – Brother Toby,' quoth my father, 'I do believe thee to be an honest, upright man; nor is it thy fault, if children come with their heads foremost into the world: – but believe me, dear Toby, the dangers our children meet, after they enter the world, are enough – there is no need to expose them to unnecessary dangers in their passage to it.'

'Are these dangers greater nowadays,' asked my uncle seriously, – 'than in times past?'

'Brother Toby,' answered my father, 'if a child was fairly begot, and born healthy, and the mother did well, our forefathers never looked further.'

My uncle Toby reclined gently back in his chair, and then directing the buccinatory muscles along his cheeks, and the orbicular muscles around his lips to do their duty – he whistled *Lillabullero*.

CHAPTER 7

Whilst my uncle Toby was whistling *Lillabullero*, Dr. Slop was stamping, and cursing Obadiah most dreadfully. – It would have cured you, Sir, for ever of the vile sin of swearing, to have heard him; I am determined therefore to relate the whole affair to you.

When Dr. Slop's maid gave the green baize bag with her master's instruments in it to Obadiah, she very sensibly exhorted him to put his head and one arm through the strings, and ride with it slung across his body; and undoing the bow-knot, she helped him on with it. However, this loosened the mouth of the bag; so, lest anything should bolt out as Obadiah galloped back, they took it off again: and with great care and caution, they pursed up the mouth of the bag and tied the two strings with half a dozen hard knots, which Obadiah pulled together with all his strength.

This solved the problem as they intended; but caused some evils which neither had foreseen. Although the bag was tied tight at its neck, the instruments had so much room to move in at the bottom that Obadiah could not go at a trot without a terrible jingle; but when he sped up, and pricked his horse into a full gallop – by Heaven! Sir, the jingle was incredible. As the poor fellow said, – ‘he was not able to hear himself whistle.’

CHAPTER 8

As Obadiah preferred whistling to any other music, he set to work to contrive a means by which he could enjoy it.

In all distresses where small cords are wanted, nothing is so apt to enter a man's head as his hat-band. Obadiah did not hesitate to use his. So taking hold of the bag and instruments, and gripping them together with one hand, and with his other hand and his teeth pulling the hat-band down over them, he tied and cross-tied them all fast together from one end to the other with such a multiplicity of roundabouts and cross turns, with a knot at every intersection, that Dr. Slop must have had three-fifths of Job's patience to have unloosed them.

No man living who had seen that bag, who knew with what great speed Nature can hasten childbirth when she thinks proper, would have had the least doubt about which between Dr. Slop and Nature would have won the race. My mother, Madam, would have been delivered sooner than the green bag, by at least twenty knots.

The victim of small accidents, Tristram Shandy! thou wilt ever be! Had that happened – thy affairs would have not been so depressed – (at least by the depression of thy nose); nor the fortunes of thy house so often, so vexatiously abandoned – but 'tis over, all but the account of 'em, which cannot be given to the curious till I am got out into the world.

CHAPTER 9

The moment Dr. Slop cast his eyes upon his bag, the very same thought occurred to him.

‘’Tis God’s mercy,’ quoth he (to himself) ‘that Mrs. Shandy has had so bad a time of it, – or else she might have given birth seven times, before these knots could be untied.’

– But here you must distinguish – the thought floated only in Dr. Slop’s mind, without sail or ballast, as a simple proposition; millions of which, as your worship knows, are every day swimming quietly in a man’s understanding, without being carried backwards or forwards, till some little gusts of passion or interest drive them on.

A sudden trampling in the room above did this very action.

‘By all that’s unfortunate,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘unless I make haste, the thing will actually happen.’

CHAPTER 10

In the case of knots, – by which, in the first place, I do not mean slip-knots – because in the course of my life and opinions – my opinions concerning them will come in more properly when I mention the catastrophe of my great uncle Mr. Hammond Shandy, a little man, but of high fancy – he rushed into the duke of Monmouth’s affair: – secondly, nor do I mean bow-knots; there is so little skill required to unloose them that they are beneath my notice.

But by knots I mean good, honest, devilish tight, hard knots, like Obadiah’s; – in which there is no quibbling provision made by the duplication and return of the two ends of the strings through the annulus, to get them undone by. – I hope you understand me.

In the case of these knots, and of the obstructions such knots cast in our way through life – every hasty man can whip out his penknife and cut through them.

– ’Tis wrong. Believe me, Sirs, the most virtuous way is to take our teeth or our fingers to them. Dr. Slop had lost his teeth in a hard labour; his favourite instrument, extracting in a wrong direction, and unfortunately slipping, had knocked out three of the best of them with its handle. – He tried his fingers: alas, his nails were cut close.

‘The deuce take it! I can make nothing of it,’ cried Dr. Slop. – The trampling overhead increased. – ‘Pox take the fellow! I shall never get the knots untied as long as I live.’ – My mother groaned. – ‘Lend me your penknife – I must cut them – psha! Lord! I have cut my thumb to the bone – curse the fellow – I wish the scoundrel hanged – or shot – I wish all the devils in hell had him for a blockhead!’

My father had a great respect for Obadiah, and could not bear to hear him abused in such a manner; to say nothing of the indignity it offered to himself.

He was determined to have revenge.

‘Small curses, Dr. Slop, upon great occasions,’ quoth he, ‘are a waste of our strength to no purpose.’

‘I know,’ replied Dr. Slop.

‘They are like sparrow-shot,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘fired against a bastion.’

‘They serve,’ continued my father, ‘to stir the temper – not relieve it: for my own part, I seldom curse at all. I think it bad – but if I fall into it by surprise, I generally keep enough presence of mind to make it answer my purpose – that is, I swear on till I find myself easy. A wise man, however, would always try to vent these humours in proportion to the size and ill intent of the offence.’

‘Injuries come only from the heart,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘For this reason,’ continued my father, with the most Cervantick gravity, ‘I have the greatest respect for that gentleman who sat down and composed fit forms of swearing suitable for all cases, from the lowest to the highest provocation. He kept these forms by him on the chimney-piece, within his reach, ready for use.’

‘I never knew,’ replied Dr. Slop, ‘that such a thing was ever thought of.’

‘I beg your pardon,’ answered my father; ‘I was reading, though not using, one of them to my brother Toby this morning, whilst he poured out the tea – ’tis here upon the shelf; but if I remember right, ’tis too violent for a cut of the thumb.’

‘Not at all,’ quoth Dr. Slop; ‘the devil take the fellow.’

‘Then,’ answered my father, ‘’tis at your service, Dr. Slop – on condition you will read it aloud.’

Rising up and reaching down a form of excommunication of the church of Rome, a copy of which my father had procured from the church of Rochester, writ by Ernelphus the bishop – with a most serious look, he put it into Dr. Slop’s hands.

Dr. Slop wrapped his thumb up in his handkerchief, and without any suspicion, read aloud, as follows – my uncle Toby whistling *Lillabullero* as loud as he could all the time.

CAP. XI

EXCOMMUNICATIO

Ex auctoritate Dei omnipotentis, Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, et sanctorum canonum, sanctaeque et intemeratae Virginis Dei genetricis Mariae,—

CHAPTER 11

“By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the holy canons, and of the undefiled Virgin Mary, mother of our Saviour.” I think there is no need to read aloud,’ quoth Dr. Slop to my father, dropping the paper to his knee, ‘as you have read it so lately, Sir. I may as well read it to myself.’

‘No,’ replied my father; ‘there is something so whimsical, especially in the latter part of it, I should enjoy a second reading.’

Dr. Slop did not altogether like it; but when my uncle Toby offered to give over whistling, and read it himself, Dr. Slop thought he might as well read it under the cover of my uncle’s whistling; so raising the paper to his face to hide his chagrin, he read it aloud as follows, – my uncle Toby whistling *Lillabullero*, though not quite so loud as before.

“By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the undefiled Virgin Mary, mother of our Saviour, and of all the celestial angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, powers, cherubins and seraphins, and of all the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles and evangelists, and of the holy innocents, and all the saints – May he (Obadiah) be damned (for tying these knots). We excommunicate him, and from the thresholds of the holy church of God Almighty we sequester him, that he may be tormented and delivered over with those who reject the Lord God. And as fire is quenched with water, so let the light of him be put out for evermore, unless he shall repent (Obadiah, of the knots which he has tied). Amen.

“May the Father who created man, curse him. May the Son who suffered for us, curse him. May the Holy Ghost, who was given to us in baptism, curse him (Obadiah). May the holy cross which Christ ascended, curse him.

“May the holy and eternal Virgin Mary, mother of God, curse him. May all the angels and archangels, and all the heavenly armies, curse him.” [‘Our armies swore terribly in Flanders,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘but not like this. I could not curse my dog so.’]

“May St. John and St. Peter and St. Paul, and St. Andrew, and all Christ’s apostles curse him. And may the other disciples and evangelists, who by their preaching converted the world, and may the holy company of martyrs and confessors who are found pleasing to God Almighty, curse him (Obadiah).

“May the holy choir of virgins, who for the honour of Christ have despised the things of the world, damn him. May all the saints beloved of God, damn him. May the heavens and earth, and all the holy things therein, damn him (Obadiah).

“May he (Obadiah) be damned wherever he be – whether in the house or the stables, the garden or the field, or the highway, the path, in the wood, or the water, or in the church. May he be cursed in living, in dying.” [Here my uncle Toby kept whistling one long note to the end of the sentence – with Dr. Slop like a running bass all the way.]

“May he be cursed in eating, in drinking, in being hungry, in being thirsty, in fasting, in sleeping, in walking, in standing, in sitting, in lying, in working, in resting, in pissing, in shitting, and in blood-letting!”

“May he (Obadiah) be cursed in all the faculties of his body!

“May he be cursed in the hair of his head! May he be cursed in his brains, in his temples, in his forehead, in his ears, in his eye-brows, in his cheeks, in his jaw-bones, in his nostrils, in his fore-teeth and grinders, in his lips, in his throat, in his shoulders, in his wrists, in his arms, in his hands, in his fingers!

“May he be damned in his mouth, in his breast, in his heart and stomach!

“May he be cursed in his groin—” [‘God forbid!’ quoth my uncle Toby], “— in his thighs, in his genitals” [my father shook his head], “and in his hips, his knees, his legs, and feet, and toe-nails!

“May the Son of the living God, with all the glory of his Majesty”—

[Here my uncle Toby, throwing back his head, gave a monstrous, long, loud *Whew – w – w*. By the golden beard of Jupiter and Juno and by the beards of the other heathen deities, which by the bye was no small number, what with the beards of your celestial gods, town-gods and country-gods, and celestial goddesses – all of which beards, when counted together, made no less than thirty thousand effective beards in the Pagan establishment – every beard of which claimed the rights of being sworn by – by all these beards together – I vow that of the two bad cassocks I am worth in the world, I would have given the better of them to have been there, and heard my uncle Toby’s accompaniment.]

–“curse him!” continued Dr. Slop, “and may heaven, with all its powers, rise up against him, curse and damn him (Obadiah) unless he repent and make satisfaction! Amen.”

‘I declare,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘I could not curse the devil himself so bitterly.’

‘But he is cursed, and damned already, to all eternity,’ replied Dr. Slop.

‘I am sorry for it,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

Dr. Slop drew up his mouth, and was just beginning to return my uncle Toby’s whistle – when the door hastily opening in the next chapter but one put an end to the affair.

CHAPTER 12

Now don't let us give ourselves airs, and pretend that the oaths we use in this land of liberty are our own; don't imagine that because we have the spirit to swear them, we had the wit to invent them too.

I'll undertake to prove it to any man, except to a connoisseur: – though I declare I object to a connoisseur in swearing, as I would do to a connoisseur in painting, the whole set of 'em are so hung round and befetished with the trinkets of criticism, – or to drop my metaphor, which by the bye is a pity – their heads, Sir, are stuck so full of rules, which they apply upon all occasions, that a work of genius had better go to the devil at once, than stay to be pricked and tortured to death by 'em.

'And how did Garrick speak the soliloquy last night?'

'Oh, my lord, most ungrammatically! betwixt the substantive and the adjective, which should agree in number, case, and gender, he made a breach; and betwixt the nominative case, which your lordship knows should govern the verb, he paused in the epilogue a dozen times, three seconds by a stop-watch, my lord, each time!'

'But was the sense suspended also? Did no expression of face or voice fill up the chasm? Did you look?'

'I looked only at the stop-watch, my lord.'

'Excellent observer! – And what of this new book the whole world makes such a fuss about?'

'Oh! 'tis out of all plumb, my lord, – not one of the four corners was a right angle. And as for the epic poem your lordship bid me look at – upon measuring its length, breadth, height, and depth, 'tis out, my lord, in every one of its dimensions.'

'Admirable connoisseur! And did you take a look at the grand picture on your way?'

''Tis a melancholy daub, my lord! not one principle of the pyramid in any group! – and there is none of the colouring of Titian – the expression of Rubens – the grace of Raphael – or the corregiescity of Corregio.'

Grant me patience, Heaven! Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world, the cant of criticism is the most tormenting! I would walk fifty miles to kiss the hand of the man who will generously give his imagination into his author's hands, and be pleased without caring why!

Great Apollo! – give me one stroke of native humour, with a single spark of thy own fire – and send Mercury, with the rules and compasses, with my compliments to – never mind.

Now I will undertake to prove that all the oaths which we have been puffing off these last two hundred and fifty years as originals – except *God's flesh and God's fish*, which were oaths monarchical – I say, there is not an oath or curse amongst them, which has not been copied over and over again out of Ernulphus a thousand times: but, like all copies, how infinitely short of the force of the original!

It is thought to be no bad oath to say 'God damn you.' But set it beside Ernulphus's 'God Almighty the Father damn you – God the Son damn you – God the Holy Ghost damn you' – you see 'tis nothing. There is an orientality in his that we cannot rise up to: besides, he had such a thorough knowledge of the human frame, its membranes, nerves, ligaments, and joints, that when Ernulphus cursed, no part escaped him.

– 'Tis true there is something of a hardness in his manner – and, as in Michael Angelo, a lack of grace – but then there is such gusto!

My father considered Ernulphus's work as an institute of swearing. He suspected that Ernulphus, by order of the pope, had with great learning and diligence collected together all the laws of it; for the same reason that the emperor Justinian ordered his chancellor to collect the Roman laws together – lest, through the rust of time, and the fatality of all things committed to oral tradition, they should be lost to the world for ever.

For this reason my father would often affirm that there was not an oath, from the great and tremendous oath of William the Conqueror ('By the splendour of God') down to the lowest oath of a scavenger ('Damn your eyes') which was not to be found in Ernulphus. In short, he would add – 'I defy a man to swear *out* of it.'

The hypothesis is, like most of my father's, singular and ingenious; nor have I any objection to it, except that it overturns my own.

CHAPTER 13

– 'Bless my soul! – my poor mistress is ready to faint – and her pains are gone – and the bottle of julap is broke – and the nurse has cut her arm –' ('and I, my thumb,' cried Dr. Slop,) – 'and the child is where it was,' continued Susannah, 'and the midwife has fallen backwards upon the fender, and bruised her hip as black as your hat.'

'I'll look at it,' quoth Dr. Slop.

'There is no need of that,' replied Susannah; 'you had better look at my mistress. But the midwife would gladly first tell you how things are, so desires you would go upstairs and speak to her.'

Human nature is the same in all professions.

The midwife had earlier been put over Dr. Slop's head. – 'No,' replied Dr. Slop, 'twould be proper if the midwife came down to me.'

'I like subordination,' quoth my uncle Toby, 'and without it, after the reduction of Lisle, I know not what might have become of the garrison of Ghent, in the mutiny in the year Ten.'

'Nor do I know, Captain Shandy,' replied Dr. Slop, (parodying my uncle Toby's hobby-horsical reflection, though full as hobby-horsical himself) 'what might have become of the garrison above stairs, in the mutiny and confusion I find things are in at present, but for the subordination of fingers and thumbs to ***** – the application of which, Sir, with this accident of mine, comes in so *à propos*, that without it, the cut upon my thumb might have been felt by the Shandy family, as long as they had a name.'

CHAPTER 14

Let us go back to the ***** in the last chapter.

It is a singular stroke of eloquence (at least it was, when eloquence flourished at Athens and Rome, and would be so now, if orators wore mantles) not to mention the name of a thing, when you had the actual thing about you, ready to produce, pop, in the place you wanted it. An axe, a sword, a rusty helmet, a pound and a half of ashes in an urn, or a three-halfpenny pickle pot – but above all, a tender infant royally clothed – though if it was too young, and the oration too long, it must certainly have beshit the orator's mantle. – And then again, if it was too old, it must have been unwieldy and inconvenient for his purpose.

Otherwise, when an orator has hit the precise time – hid his Bambino in his mantle so cunningly that no-one could smell it – and produced it skilfully – Oh Sirs! it has done wonders. It has turned the brains, and shook the principles, and unhinged the politics of half a nation.

These feats could only be done, however, where orators wore mantles – and pretty large ones too, with some five-and-twenty yards of good superfine cloth, large flowing folds and a great style of design. All which plainly shows that the decay of eloquence is owing to nothing else in the world, but short coats. We can conceal nothing under ours, Madam, worth showing.

CHAPTER 15

Dr. Slop happening to have his green baize bag upon his knees, 'twas as good as a mantle to him: so that when he foresaw his sentence would end in his new-invented forceps, he thrust his hand into the bag in order to have them ready to flourish at the ***** which you noticed.

However, he fumbled so vilely in pulling them out that it ruined the effect, and what was ten times worse, in pulling out his forceps, he unfortunately drew out the squirt along with it.

When a proposition can be taken in two ways, the respondent may reply to whichever he finds most convenient. – This threw the advantage of the argument quite on my uncle Toby's side.

'Good God!' he cried, 'are children brought into the world with a squirt?'

CHAPTER 16

‘Upon my honour, Sir, you have tore every bit of skin off the back of my hands with your forceps,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘and you have crushed my knuckles to a jelly into the bargain.’

‘’Tis your own fault,’ said Dr. Slop; ‘you should have clinched your two fists together in the form of a child’s head as I told you, and sat firm.’

‘I did so,’ answered my uncle Toby.

‘Then the points of my forceps have not been sufficiently armed, or the rivet wants closing – or else the cut in my thumb made me a little awkward – or possibly–’

‘’Tis well,’ quoth my father, interrupting, ‘that the experiment was not first made upon my child’s head.’

‘It would not have been a cherry-stone the worse,’ answered Dr. Slop.

‘I maintain,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘it would have broke the cerebellum (unless the skull had been as hard as granite).’

‘Pshaw!’ replied Dr. Slop, ‘a child’s head is naturally as soft as the pap of an apple; the sutures give way – and besides, I could have extracted by the feet after.’

‘Not you,’ said the midwife.

‘I rather wish you would begin that way,’ quoth my father.

CHAPTER 17

– ‘And pray, good woman, would you not say it is as likely to be the child’s hip, as the child’s head?’

‘’Tis most certainly the head,’ replied the midwife.

‘Because,’ continued Dr. Slop (turning to my father), ‘as positive as these old ladies generally are, ’tis a point very difficult to know – and yet of the greatest importance; because, Sir, if the hip is mistaken for the head – there is a possibility (if it is a boy) that the forceps * * * * *’

What the possibility was, Dr. Slop whispered very low to my father, and then to my uncle. ‘There is no such danger,’ continued he, ‘with the head.’

‘No, in truth,’ quoth my father, ‘but when your possibility has taken place at the hip – you may as well take off the head too.’

It is morally impossible the reader should understand this – ’tis enough Dr. Slop understood it; so taking the green baize bag in his hand, he tripped pretty nimbly, for a man of his size, across the room to the door, and was shown the way by the midwife to my mother’s apartments.

CHAPTER 18

‘It is two hours, and ten minutes,’ cried my father, looking at his watch, ‘since Dr. Slop and Obadiah arrived – and I know not how it happens, brother Toby, but to my imagination it seems an age.’

– Here – pray, Sir, take my cap, and my bell, and my slippers. I freely make you a present of ’em, on condition you give me all your attention in this chapter.

Though my father said, ‘he knew not how it happened,’ yet he knew very well how it happened; – and at the instant he spoke it, decided to give my uncle Toby a clear account of the matter by a metaphysical dissertation upon the duration of time and its modes, in order to show my uncle by what mechanism in the brain it happened that the rapid succession of their ideas, and the eternal scampering of the discussion from one thing to another, had lengthened out so short a period to so great an extent.

– ‘I know not how it happens,’ cried my father, ‘but it seems an age.’

‘’Tis owing entirely,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘to the succession of our ideas.’

My father had proposed infinite pleasure to himself in this argument of the succession of ideas, and had not the least apprehension of having it snatched out of his hands by my uncle Toby, who (honest man!) generally never troubled his brain with abstruse ideas of time and space. Theories about Infinity, Prescience, Liberty, Necessity, and so forth, which have cracked so many fine heads, never did my uncle Toby’s head the least injury. My father knew it, and was no less surprised than he was disappointed with my uncle’s answer.

‘Do you understand the theory of that?’ he asked.

‘Not I,’ quoth my uncle.

‘But you have some idea of what you talk about?’

‘No more than my horse,’ replied my uncle Toby.

‘Gracious heaven!’ cried my father, ‘there is a worth in thy honest ignorance, brother Toby – ’twere almost a pity to exchange it for knowledge. – But I’ll tell thee. To understand what time is, without which we never can comprehend infinity, – we ought seriously to sit down and consider what idea we have of duration, and how we came by it.’

‘Why?’

‘If you will turn your eyes inwards upon your mind,’ continued my father, ‘you will perceive, brother, that whilst we are talking, and thinking, and smoking our pipes, we know that we exist, and so we estimate the existence, or the continuation of the existence of ourselves, or anything else, commensurate to the succession of any ideas in our minds, the duration of ourselves, or any such other thing co-existing with our thinking – and so according to that preconceived–’

‘You puzzle me to death,’ cried my uncle Toby.

‘In every man’s head, there is a regular succession of ideas which follow each other in train just like–’

‘A train of artillery?’ said my uncle Toby.

‘A train of a fiddle-stick!’ quoth my father. ‘– which follow and succeed one another in our minds like the images in the inside of a lantern turned round by the heat of a candle.’

‘I declare,’ quoth my uncle, ‘mine are more like a smoke-jack that turns a spit in a chimney.’

‘Then, brother Toby, I have nothing more to say to you upon the subject,’ said my father.

CHAPTER 19

– What a conjecture was here lost! My father in one of his best explanatory moods – in eager pursuit of a metaphysical point into thick darkness; my uncle Toby with his head like a smoke-jack; – the funnel unswept, and the ideas whirling round in it, all darkened with soot! By the ashes of my dear Rabelais, and dearer Cervantes! – my father and my uncle’s discourse upon Time and Eternity was devoutly to be wished for! and my father’s petulance in putting a stop to it as he did, was a robbery of such a philosophical jewel, as is never likely to occur again.

CHAPTER 20

Though my father persisted in not going on with the discourse, yet he could not get my uncle Toby’s smoke-jack out of his head. There was something in the comparison which hit his fancy; so, resting his elbow upon the table, and reclining his head upon his palm, he began to meditate on it: but his spirits being worn out with the fatigues of investigating so many different subjects – the idea of the smoke-jack soon turned his thoughts upside down, so that he fell asleep before he knew it.

As for my uncle Toby, his smoke-jack had not made a dozen revolutions, before he fell asleep also. Peace be with them both!

Dr. Slop is engaged with the midwife and my mother above stairs. Trim is busy turning an old pair of jackboots into a couple of mortars, to be employed in the siege of Messina next summer – and is this instant boring the touch-holes with a hot poker.

All my heroes are off my hands. ’Tis the first time I have had a moment to spare – and I’ll make use of it, and write my preface.

THE AUTHOR’S PREFACE

No, I’ll not say a word about it – here it is. To the world I leave it; – it must speak for itself.

All I know is – when I sat down, I meant to write a good book; and a wise, aye, and a discreet one – taking care, as I went along, to put into it all the wit and judgment which the great Author had thought fit to give me – so that, as your worships see, ’tis just as God pleases.

Now, Agelastes sayeth, That there may be some wit in it, for aught he knows – but no judgment at all. And Triptolemus and Phutatorius agree, asking, How could there be? for wit and judgment in this world never go together; they differ as much as east from west – so says Locke – so do farting and hiccuping, say I. But in answer to this, Didius the great church lawyer, in *De Fartendi et Illustrandi Fallaciis*, maintains that an illustration is no argument – nor do I maintain the wiping of a looking-glass clean to be a syllogism, but you all see the better for it – so that the main good these things do is to clarify the understanding before the argument itself, in order to free it from any little specks of dust which might hinder an idea and spoil all.

Now, my dear anti-Shandean, and thrice able critics, and fellow-labourers (for to you I write this Preface) – and to you, most subtle statesmen and discreet doctors: Monopolus, my politician; Didius, my counsel; Kysarcius, my friend; Phutatorius, my guide; Gastripheres, the preserver of my life; Somnolentius, the balm and repose of it – not forgetting all others, whom for brevity, but out of no resentment to you, I lump all together.

My most zealous wish and fervent prayer in your behalf, and in my own too, is, that the great gifts of wit and judgment, with everything which usually goes along with them – such as memory, fancy, genius, eloquence, and what not, may this moment, without stint or measure, be poured down as warm as we could bear – scum and sediment and all – into the cells, cellules, domiciles, dormitories, refectories, and spare places of our brains – until every part of them be so filled up that no more could possibly be got in.

Bless us! what noble work we should make! – what spirits should I find myself in, to be writing for such readers! – and you – with what raptures would you read!

Oh! 'tis too much – I faint away deliciously at the thoughts of it – 'tis more than nature can bear! I am giddy – I'm dying – I am gone. Help! Help! Help!

But hold – I am coming round again, for I foresee that as we shall all of us be great wits, we should never agree amongst ourselves; there would be so much satire and sarcasm – scoffing and flouting – thrusting and parrying – there would be nothing but mischief among us. What biting and scratching, and what a racket and a clatter we should make, what breaking of heads and rapping of knuckles!

But then again, being men of great judgment, we would make up matters as fast as they went wrong; and though we should hate each other, we should nevertheless, my dear creatures, be all courtesy and kindness, milk and honey. 'Twould be a paradise upon earth – so that upon the whole we should have done well enough.

All I fret at, is how to bring the point itself about; for as your worships know, these heavenly emanations of wit and judgment, which I have so bountifully wished for us, have only a certain quantity stored up for the use of all mankind; and such small amounts are sent forth into this wide world, in such narrow streams, that one wonders how it could be enough for the needs of so many populous empires.

Indeed, in Nova Zembla in the far north, Lapland, and all those cold and dreary tracts of the globe which lie under the arctic and antarctic circles – where the spirits are compressed almost to nothing, and where a man's passions are as frigid as the zone itself – there not one spark of wit is given. Angels defend us! what a dismal thing would it be to have governed a kingdom, to have fought a battle, or wrote a book, or got a child, with so plentiful a lack of wit and judgment!

For mercy's sake, let us think no more about it, but travel on as fast as we can southwards into Norway – crossing over Swedeland, if you please, through the small triangular province of Angermania to the lake of Bothnia; down to Carelia, and so on along the border of the Baltic, up to Petersburg, then through the north parts of the Russian empire – leaving Siberia upon the left hand, till we are in the very heart of Asiatic Tartary.

Now throughout this long tour, you observe the good people are better off by far than in the polar countries; for if you look attentively, you may perceive some small glimmerings of wit, with a comfortable provision of good plain judgment; with which they do very well.

Now, Sir, if I conduct you home again into this warmer island, where you perceive the spring-tide of our blood runs high – where we have more ambition, pride,

envy, lechery, and other whoreson passions to govern – the height of our wit, and the depth of our judgment, you see, are exactly proportioned to our need – and we have them amongst us in such plenty, that no one thinks he has any cause to complain.

It must however be confessed, that, as our air blows hot and cold, wet and dry, ten times in a day, we have them in no regular and settled way. Sometimes for near half a century together, there shall be very little wit or judgment to be seen or heard of amongst us: the channels of them shall seem quite dried up – then all of a sudden the sluices break out, and run like fury – and then, in writing, and fighting, and twenty other gallant things, we drive all the world before us.

It is by these observations, and a reasoning by analogy which Suidas calls dialectic induction, that I draw this position as most true;

That just so much wit and judgment shines down on us as is allowed by God, whose infinite wisdom dispenses everything in exact measure, and who knows how much will light us on our way in this night of our obscurity.

So I can no longer conceal from you, that the fervent wish in your behalf with which I set out, was no more than the first insinuating How d’ye of a caressing prefacer, stifling his reader, as a lover sometimes does a coy mistress, into silence.

For alas! If only this light could be so easily procured – I tremble to think how many thousands of benighted travellers (in the learned sciences at least) must have blundered on in the dark, running their heads against posts, and knocking out their brains; some falling with their noses into sinks – others with their tails into kennels. Here is one half of a learned profession tilting against the other half, and tumbling over one other in the dirt like hogs.

– Here are the brethren of another profession, who should have opposed each other, flying on the contrary like a flock of wild geese, all the same way. – What confusion! what mistakes! Here are fiddlers and painters judging tunes and pictures by their eyes and ears instead of measuring by a quadrant.

Here is a statesman turning the political wheel the wrong way, *against* the stream of corruption – by Heaven! – instead of *with* it.

Over there is a surgeon feeling his patient’s pulse, instead of his apothecary’s – or upon his knees in tears, begging the forgiveness of a mangled victim, – offering a fee instead of taking one.

In that spacious Hall, a coalition of lawyers, driving a damned, dirty, vexatious cause before them, the wrong way! kicking it *out* of the great doors, instead of *in*, almost as if the laws had been made for the peace of mankind; and moreover, settling a paltry dispute in five-and-twenty minutes, which might have taken up as many months – or have even lasted years, providing food all that time for a hundred lawyers.

As for the Clergy – No, if I say a word against them, I’ll be shot. I dare not for my soul touch upon the subject. In the nervous condition I am in, ’tis safer to draw a curtain across the melancholy account, and hasten from it, as fast as I can, to my main point – and that is, how it happens that your men of least wit are reported to be men of most judgment. But mark – I say, *reported*; for it is no more than a report, and a vile and a malicious one into the bargain.

This I shall forthwith make appear.

I hate set dissertations – and ’tis one of the silliest things in ’em, to darken your hypothesis by placing a number of tall, opaque words betwixt your own and your reader’s idea – when in all likelihood, if you had looked about, you might have seen something which would have cleared the point at once.

“For what harm doth the desire of knowledge bring to any man, if even from a sot, a pot, a fool, a stool, an oil bottle, an old slipper, or a cane chair?” – I am this moment sitting upon one. Will you let me illustrate this affair of wit and judgment, by the two knobs on the back of it? They are fastened on, you see, with two pegs stuck into two holes, and will place what I have to say in so clear a light, as to let you see the meaning of my whole preface, as plainly as if it was made of sun-beams.

I enter now directly upon the point.

Here stands wit and there stands judgment beside it, just like the two knobs I’m speaking of, upon the back of this same chair.

You see, they are the highest and most ornamental parts of its frame – as wit and judgment are of ours; and are made to go together, in order – as we say in such cases of embellishment – to ‘answer one another’.

Now, for the clearer illustration of this matter, let us take off one of these two curious ornaments (I care not which) from the chair. Nay, don’t laugh – but did you ever see such a ridiculous business as this has made of it? Why, ’tis as miserable a sight as a sow with one ear. Would any self-respecting craftsman turn out a piece of work in such a condition?

Nay, answer me this question: whether this one single knob, which now stands here like a blockhead by itself, can serve any purpose but to remind one of the lack of the other? Would it not be ten times better without any knob at all?

Now these two knobs being, as I said, wit and judgment, which as I have proved, are most needful, and hard to come at – there is not a mortal among us who does not wish to be, or to be thought at least, master of them both.

Now your graver gentry having little or no chance in aiming at the one unless they had the other – pray what do you think would become of them? Why, Sirs, in spite of all their gravities, their only recourse would be to snatch up and secrete what they could under their cloaks and great periwigs; raising a hue and cry at the same time against the lawful owners.

I need not tell your worships, that even the great Locke was tricked by this means. With the help of vast wigs and grave faces, their deep and solemn cry deceived the philosopher. Instead of sitting down coolly to examine the matter, he took the fact for granted, and joined in the cry as boisterously as the rest.

As for great wigs, upon which I may have spoken my mind too freely – I declare that I do not detest either great wigs or long beards, except when I see them grown on purpose to carry on this imposture. Peace be with them! mark only – I write not for them.

CHAPTER 21

Every day for at least ten years my father resolved to have it mended – 'tis not mended yet; no other family would have borne with it an hour – and what is most astonishing, there was not a subject in the world upon which my father was so eloquent, as that of door-hinges. And yet his speech and actions were at perpetual handy-cuffs. Never did the parlour-door open, without his philosophy felling victim to it; yet three drops of oil, and a smart stroke of a hammer, would have solved it for ever.

Inconsistent soul that man is! languishing under wounds which he has the power to heal! – his whole life a contradiction to his knowledge! Poor unhappy creature! Are there not enough causes of misery in this life? Yet he adds more; he struggles against evils which cannot be avoided, and submits to others, which a tiny effort would remove.

By all that is virtuous, if there are three drops of oil to be got, and a hammer to be found within ten miles of Shandy Hall – the parlour door hinge shall be mended in this reign.

CHAPTER 22

When Corporal Trim had finished making his two mortars, he was delighted with his handy-work; and knowing how pleased his master would be to see them, he could not resist carrying them directly into the parlour.

Now besides the moral lesson I gave in the affair of hinges, I had another reason for mentioning it.

Had the parlour door opened and turned upon its hinges, as a door should do—

For example, as cleverly as our government has been turning upon its hinges – in this case, there would have been no danger in Corporal Trim's peeping in: the moment he had beheld my father and my uncle Toby fast asleep, he would have respectfully retired in silence and left them both in their armchairs, dreaming happily.

However, during the many years in which this hinge was out of order, amongst the hourly grievances my father held about it, was this one; that he never folded his arms to take his nap after dinner, without thinking that he would be unavoidably awakened by the first person who should open the door. This thought so often stepped in betwixt him and his balmy repose, as to rob him, as he declared, of the enjoyment of it.

'Pray what's the matter? Who is there?' cried my father, waking the moment the door began to creak. 'I wish the smith would look at that confounded hinge.'

''Tis nothing, your honour,' said Trim, 'but two mortars I am bringing in.'

'Don't make a clatter with them here,' cried my father. 'If Dr. Slop has drugs to pound, let him do it in the kitchen.'

'May it please your honour,' cried Trim, 'they are two mortar-pieces for a siege next summer, which I have been making out of a pair of jack-boots, which Obadiah told me your honour had stopped wearing.'

‘By Heaven!’ cried my father, springing out of his chair. ‘I have nothing which I value so much as those jack-boots – they were our great grandfather’s, they are an inheritance.’

‘Then I fear,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘that Trim has cut off the entail.’

‘I have only cut off the tops, your honour,’ cried Trim.

‘These jack-boots,’ cried my father, (smiling, though very angry at the same time) ‘have been in the family, brother, ever since the civil wars. Sir Roger Shandy wore them at the battle of Marston-Moor. I declare I would not have taken ten pounds for them.’

‘I’ll pay you the money, brother,’ quoth my uncle Toby, looking at the two mortars with infinite pleasure, and putting his hand into his breeches pocket.

‘Brother Toby,’ replied my father, ‘you care not what money you throw away, provided ’tis upon a Siege.’

‘Have I not one hundred and twenty pounds a year, besides my half pay?’ cried my uncle Toby.

‘What is that,’ replied my father, ‘to ten pounds for a pair of jack-boots? Twelve guineas for your pontoons? Half as much for your Dutch draw-bridge? – to say nothing of the train of brass artillery you ordered last week, with twenty other preparations for the siege of Messina. Believe me, dear brother,’ continued my father, taking him kindly by the hand, ‘these military operations carry you into greater expenses than you were first aware of; and my dear Toby, they will in the end make a beggar of you.’

‘What does it matter, brother,’ replied my uncle Toby, ‘so long as we know ’tis for the good of the nation?’

My father could not help smiling – his anger was never more than a spark; and the zeal and simplicity of Trim, and the generous (though hobby-horsical) gallantry of my uncle Toby, brought him into perfect good humour with them both.

‘Generous souls! God prosper you, and your mortar-pieces!’ quoth he to himself.

CHAPTER 23

‘All is quiet and hush above stairs,’ cried my father; ‘I hear not one foot stirring. Prithce, Trim, who’s in the kitchen?’

‘Not a soul,’ answered Trim, ‘except Dr. Slop.’

‘Confusion!’ cried my father, getting to his feet; ‘not one thing has gone right this day! If I believed in astrology’ (which, by the bye, my father did), ‘I would have sworn some retrograde planet was hanging over this unfortunate house, and turning everything out of its place. Why, I thought Dr. Slop was upstairs with my wife. What can the fellow be puzzling about in the kitchen?’

‘He is busy, your honour,’ replied Trim, ‘in making a bridge.’

‘’Tis very obliging in him,’ quoth my uncle Toby: ‘pray tell him I thank him heartily.’

My uncle Toby mistook the bridge as widely as my father mistook the mortars; – but to understand this, I fear I must give you an exact account of the road which led to the mistake; or at least I must give you some account of an adventure of Trim’s, though much against my will; I say much against my will, because the story is certainly out of its place here; for by rights it should come either amongst the anecdotes of my uncle Toby’s amours with widow Wadman, or else in Trim’s and my uncle Toby’s campaigns on the bowling-green; but then if I reserve it for either of those parts of my story, I ruin the story I’m upon; – and if I tell it here, I anticipate matters, and ruin it there.

What would your worships have me do in this case?

– Tell it, Mr. Shandy, by all means.

– You are a fool, Tristram, if you do.

O ye powers which enable mortal man to tell a story worth the hearing – that kindly show him where to begin and where to end it – what to put in and what to leave out! Ye, who preside over this vast empire of biographical freebooters, and see how many scrapes your subjects hourly fall into – will you do one thing?

I beg and beseech you that wherever three different roads meet in one point, as they have done just here – that you set up a guide-post in the centre of them, in mere charity, to direct an uncertain devil which road he is to take.

CHAPTER 24

Though the shock my uncle Toby received in his affair with widow Wadman made him resolve never more to think of the female sex, yet corporal Trim had made no such bargain with himself.

In my uncle Toby's case there was a strange and unaccountable meeting of circumstances, which drew him in to lay siege to that fair citadel. In Trim's case there was a meeting of nothing, but of him and Bridget in the kitchen. When my uncle Toby sat down before the widow, corporal Trim stood before the maid.

After a series of attacks and repulses by my uncle Toby over nine months, a most minute account of which shall be given in its proper place, my uncle Toby, honest man! found it necessary to draw off his forces and raise the siege somewhat indignantly.

Corporal Trim, as I said, had made no such bargain with himself. However, his faithful heart not allowing him to go into a house which his master had forsaken with disgust – he contented himself with a blockade; – that is, he kept others off. For though he never went to the house, when he met Bridget in the village, it was with a nod, or a smile; he would shake her hand – or ask her lovingly how she did – or give her a ribbon – and now-and-then, though only when it could be done with decorum, would give her a –

Things stood in this situation for five years; from the demolition of Dunkirk in 1713, to the end of my uncle Toby's campaign in 1718. Trim, after he had put my uncle Toby to bed as usual, was going one moonshiny night to see that everything was right at his fortifications, when in the lane separated from the bowling-green with flowering shrubs he espied his Bridget.

As the corporal thought there was nothing in the world so well worth showing her as the glorious works which he and my uncle Toby had made, he courteously took her hand, and led her in.

But the foul-mouthed trumpet of Fame carried a report of this from ear to ear, till at length it reached my father – along with this strange circumstance, that my uncle Toby's Dutch drawbridge, which went across the ditch, was somehow broken and crushed all to pieces that very night.

My father, as you have observed, had no great esteem for my uncle Toby's hobby-horse; he thought it the most ridiculous horse that ever gentleman mounted. So this accident tickled my father's imagination beyond measure, and proved an inexhaustible fund of entertainment to him.

'Well – dear Toby!' my father would say, 'do tell me how this affair of the bridge happened.'

'How can you tease me so about it?' my uncle Toby would reply. 'I have told you twenty times, word for word as Trim told me.'

'Prithee, how was it then, corporal?' my father would cry, turning to Trim.

'It was a mere misfortune, your honour; I was showing Mrs. Bridget our fortifications, and going too near the edge of the ditch, I unfortunately slipped in. And being linked arm in arm with Mrs. Bridget, I dragged her after me, and she fell backwards against the bridge—'

'– and Trim's foot' (my uncle Toby would cry) 'getting into the cuvette, he tumbled against the bridge too. It was fortunate that the poor fellow did not break his leg.'

‘Ay truly,’ my father would say, ‘a limb is soon broke in such encounters.’

‘And so, your honour, the bridge, which was a very slight one, was broke down betwixt us, and splintered all to pieces.’

At other times, when my uncle Toby was so unfortunate as to say a syllable about cannons or bombs, my father would expound upon the Battering-Rams of the ancients. – He would tell my uncle Toby of the Syrian Catapults, which threw such monstrous stones so many hundred feet, that they shook the strongest bulwarks to their very foundation: he would describe the wonderful mechanism of the Ballista – the terrible effects of the fire-hurling Pyroboli – the danger of the Terebra and Scorpio.

‘But what are these,’ he would say, ‘to the destructive machinery of corporal Trim? No bridge that ever was constructed can hold out against such artillery.’

My uncle Toby would never attempt any defence against this ridicule, except by smoking his pipe with redoubled vehemence. In doing this, he raised so dense a smoke one night, that it set my father into a fit of violent coughing.

My uncle Toby leaped up without feeling the pain in his groin – and, with infinite pity, stood beside his brother, tapping his back, and holding his head, and from time to time wiping his eyes with a clean handkerchief. The affectionate manner in which he did this cut my father to the quick for the pain he had just been giving him.

‘May my brains be knocked out with a battering-ram,’ quoth my father to himself, ‘if ever I insult this worthy soul again!’

CHAPTER 25

The draw-bridge being irreparable, Trim was ordered to start another – but not upon the same model: for my uncle Toby rightly foreseeing that warfare would break out betwixt Spain and the Empire, and that the campaign must in all likelihood be in Naples or Sicily, he determined upon an Italian bridge.

When Corporal Trim had about half finished it, my uncle Toby found a defect which he had never considered before. The draw-bridge turned upon hinges at both ends, opening in the middle, one half turning to one side of the fosse, and the other to the other.

The advantage of this was, that by dividing the weight of the bridge into two equal portions, it allowed my uncle to raise it up or let it down with the end of his crutch; but the disadvantages were great – ‘for by this means,’ he would say, ‘I leave one half of my bridge in my enemy’s possession, and pray of what use is the other?’

The natural remedy for this was to have his bridge fastened only at one end with hinges, so that the whole might be lifted up together, and stand bolt upright – but that would require too much strength to operate.

For a whole week, my uncle Toby was determined to have one constructed to draw back horizontally, to hinder a passage; and to thrust forwards again to gain a passage – but on my father advising him earnestly to have nothing more to do with thrusting bridges, he changed his mind for that of the marquis d’Hôpital’s invention: with a lead weight as an eternal balance, constructed in a curve approximating to a cycloid – if not a cycloid itself.

My uncle Toby understood the nature of a parabola as well as any man in England, but was not quite such a master of the cycloid.

‘We’ll ask somebody about it,’ he cried to Trim.

CHAPTER 26

When Trim came in and told my father that Dr. Slop was in the kitchen, busy making a bridge, my uncle Toby took it instantly for granted that Dr. Slop was making a model of the marquis d’Hôpital’s bridge.

‘’Tis very obliging in him,’ quoth he; ‘pray tell him I thank him heartily.’

Had my uncle Toby’s head been a Savoyard’s peep-show box, with my father peeping in at one end – it could not have given him a clearer picture of my uncle Toby’s imagination; so he was beginning to triumph–

When Trim’s answer, the next instant, tore the laurel from his brows, and twisted it to pieces.

CHAPTER 27

‘This unfortunate draw-bridge of yours–’ began my father.

‘God bless your honour,’ cried Trim, ‘’tis a bridge for the baby’s nose. In bringing him into the world with his vile instruments, he has crushed his nose, Susannah says, as flat as a pancake, and he is making a bridge with cotton and a thin piece of whalebone out of Susannah’s corset, to raise it up.’

‘Lead me, brother Toby,’ cried my father, ‘to my room this instant.’

CHAPTER 28

From the first moment I sat down to write this for the amusement and instruction of the world, a cloud has been slowly gathering over my father. A tide of little evils and distresses has been setting in against him. – Not one thing, as he observed, has gone right: and now is the storm going to break and pour down full upon his head.

I enter upon this part of my story in a most pensive and melancholy frame of mind. Just now, when I dipped my pen into my ink, I could not help noticing with what a cautious, sad and solemn air I did it. – Lord! how different from the rash and hair-brained squirts thou art wont, Tristram, to use in other moods – dropping thy pen – spurting thy ink about thy table and books – as if they cost thee nothing!

CHAPTER 29

I am persuaded, madam, ‘That both man and woman bear pain or sorrow (and, for aught I know, pleasure too) best in a horizontal position.’

The moment my father got into his chamber, he wildly threw himself prostrate across the bed in the attitude of a man borne down with sorrows. – The palm of his right hand covering both his eyes, he gently sunk down till his nose touched the quilt; his left arm hung over the side of the bed, his knuckles reclining upon the handle of the chamber-pot – his right leg dangled half over the bed, the edge of it pressing on his shin-bone.

– He felt it not. Sorrow took possession of every line of his face. He sighed once – heaved his breast often – but uttered not a word.

An old chair, fringed with woollen bobs, stood at the bed’s head. My uncle Toby sat down in it.

Before an affliction is digested, consolation always comes too soon; and after it is digested – it comes too late: so that you see, madam, there is only a mark between these two as fine as a hair, for a comforter to take aim at. My uncle Toby was always either on this side, or on that of it, and did not believe he could hit the mark; therefore, when he sat down, he drew the curtain a little, pulled out a handkerchief – gave a low sigh – but held his peace.

CHAPTER 30

‘All is not gain that is got into the purse.’ Although my father had read the oddest books in the universe, and had moreover the oddest way of thinking that ever man was blessed with, yet it had this drawback – that it laid him open to some of the oddest and most whimsical distresses; of which this is as strong an example as can be given.

No doubt, the breaking of the bridge of a child’s nose, by a pair of forceps – however scientifically applied – would vex any man; yet it will not account for the extravagance of his affliction, nor will it justify the unchristian manner he surrendered himself up to.

To explain this, I must leave him upon the bed for half an hour – and my uncle Toby in his old fringed chair beside him.

CHAPTER 31

‘I think it a very unreasonable demand,’ cried my great-grandfather, twisting up the paper, and throwing it upon the table. ‘By this account, madam, you have only two thousand pounds fortune – and yet you insist upon having three hundred pounds a year jointure after my death.’

‘Because,’ replied my great-grandmother, ‘you have little or no nose, Sir.’

Now before I use the word *Nose* again – to avoid all confusion in this interesting part of my story, I shall define exactly what I mean by the term: being of the opinion that negligent writers who despise this precaution make themselves as clear as a Will o’ the Wisp: in order to which, what you have to do, before you set out, unless you intend to go puzzling on to the day of judgment – but to give the world a good definition, and stand to it, of the main word you have most occasion for – changing it, Sir, as you would a guinea, into small coin? which done – let the father of confusion puzzle you, if he can; or put a different idea either into your head, or your reader’s head, if he knows how.

In books of strict morality and close reasoning, such as this one, neglecting to make yourself clear is inexcusable; and Heaven is witness, how the world has revenged itself upon me for leaving so many openings to equivocal meanings – and for depending so much upon the cleanliness of my readers’ imaginations.

‘Here are two meanings,’ cried Eugenius, pointing with his forefinger at the word *Crevice*, in the one hundred and seventy-eighth page of the first volume of this book.

‘And here are two roads,’ replied I, ‘a dirty and a clean one – which shall we take?’

‘The clean,’ replied Eugenius.

‘Eugenius’, said I, stepping before him, ‘to define is to distrust.’ Thus I triumphed over Eugenius; but I triumphed over him like a fool. However, I am not an obstinate one: therefore–

I define a nose as follows – only beseeching my readers, both male and female, for the love of God to guard against the suggestions of the devil, and not to allow him to put any other ideas into their minds, than this.

For by the word *Nose*, throughout all this long chapter of noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word *Nose* occurs – I declare, by that word I mean a nose, and nothing more, or less.

CHAPTER 32

‘Because,’ quoth my great-grandmother, ‘you have little or no nose, Sir.’

‘S’death!’ cried my great-grandfather, clapping his hand upon his nose, ‘’tis not so small as that; ’tis a full inch longer than my father’s.’

Now, my great-grandfather’s nose was like the noses of the people whom Pantagrue found dwelling upon the island of Ennasin. ’Twas shaped, Sir, like an ace of clubs.

‘’Tis a full inch longer than my father’s,’ continued my grandfather, pressing up the ridge of his nose with his finger.

‘You must mean your uncle’s,’ replied my great-grandmother.

My great-grandfather was convinced. – He untwisted the paper, and signed the article.

CHAPTER 33

‘What an excessive jointure, my dear, we pay out of this small estate of ours,’ quoth my grandmother to my grandfather.

‘My father,’ replied my grandfather, ‘had no more nose, my dear, than there is upon the back of my hand.’

Now, you must know that my great-grandmother outlived my grandfather twelve years; so that my father had the jointure to pay, a hundred and fifty pounds half-yearly, during all that time.

No man paid his bills with a better grace than my father. As far as a hundred pounds went, he would fling it upon the table with a generous spirit; but faced with half that amount, he gave a loud ‘Hem!’ , rubbed his nose, scratched his head, looked at both sides of every guinea as he parted with it – and could seldom get to the end of the fifty pounds, without pulling out his handkerchief, and wiping his temples.

Defend me, gracious Heaven! from those persecuting spirits who make no allowances for these workings within us, and for opinions derived from our ancestors!

For three generations at least this opinion in favour of long noses had gradually been taking root in our family; so my father’s whimsical brain was far from having devised this, as it had almost all his other strange notions. He might be said to have sucked this in with his mother’s milk. However, if education planted the mistake, my father watered it, and ripened it to perfection.

He would often declare that he did not see how the greatest family in England could stand it out against an uninterrupted succession of six or seven short noses. And conversely, he would add, it must be a great problem when the same number of long and jolly noses, following one another in a line, did not raise the family up into the best vacancies in the kingdom.

He would often boast that the Shandy family ranked very high in King Harry the VIIIth’s time, owing to its noses; – but that it had never recovered from the blow of my great-grandfather’s nose. ‘It was an ace of clubs indeed,’ he would cry, shaking his head, ‘and as vile a one for an unfortunate family as ever turned up trumps.’

–Softly, gentle reader! where is thy fancy carrying thee? By my great-grandfather’s nose, I mean the external organ of smelling – and which painters say, should take up a full third of the face measured downwards from the hairline.

What a life an author has!

CHAPTER 34

It is a blessing that nature has formed the mind of man with the same happy backwardness which is observed in old dogs – ‘of not learning new tricks.’

What a shuttlecock of a fellow would the greatest philosopher be, if he was eternally changing sides!

Now, my father, as I told you, Sir, picked up an opinion as a man picks up an apple. – It becomes his own – and if he is a man of spirit, he would lose his life rather than give it up.

I am aware that Didius will contest this point; and cry out, ‘Whence comes this man’s right to this apple? Pray, Mr. Shandy, how did it begin to be his? was it when he gathered it? or when he chewed it? or when he roasted it? or when he peeled, or digested it? – or when he–? For ’tis plain, Sir, that if the first picking up of the apple did not make it his – then no later act could.’

‘Brother Didius,’ Tribonius will answer, ‘it is decreed, as you may find it in Gregorius and Justinian’s laws, that the sweat of a man’s brows are as much his own property as the breeches upon his backside; and once dropped upon the said apple by the labour when it is found, carried home, roasted, peeled, eaten, digested, and so on; – ’tis evident that the gatherer of the apple has mixed up something with it which was his own, and so the apple is his apple.’

By the same learned chain of reasoning my father stood up for all his opinions; he had spared no pains in picking them up, and the more uncommon they were, the stronger was his claim. They had cost him moreover so much labour in cooking and digesting that they might well and truly be said to be his own. Accordingly he held fast by ’em, with teeth and claws, and would fortify them with as many ramparts as my uncle Toby would a citadel.

There was one plaguy rub – the scarcity of materials to defend himself against attack, since few men of genius had written on the subject of great noses. By the trotting of my lean horse, it is incredible! I am quite at a loss, when I consider how much precious time has been wasted upon worse subjects – how many millions of books in all languages have been fabricated upon points not half so important.

What books he could find, however, my father set great store by; and though he would often mock my uncle Toby’s library, yet at the same time he collected every book which had been wrote upon noses with as much care as my honest uncle collected those on military architecture.

Here – why here, rather than in any other part of my story, I cannot tell: but here it is: my heart stops me to pay to thee, my dear uncle Toby, the tribute I owe thy goodness. Here let me kneel and pour forth the warmest love for thee, and veneration for thy excellency, that ever virtue kindled in a nephew’s bosom.

– Peace and comfort rest for evermore upon thy head! – Thou didst envy no man’s comforts – insulted no man’s opinions – blackened no man’s character – devoured no man’s bread. Gently, with faithful Trim behind thee, didst thou amble round the little circle of thy pleasures, jostling no creature in thy way. For each one’s sorrow thou hadst a tear; for each man’s need, thou hadst a shilling.

Whilst I can afford to pay a weeder, the path from thy door to thy bowling-green shall never be over-grown. Whilst there is an acre of land in the Shandy family, thy fortifications, my dear uncle Toby, shall never be demolished.

CHAPTER 35

My father's collection on noses was not great, but it was curious; he had the good fortune, moreover, to start well, in getting Bruscombille's prologue upon long noses for only three half-crowns, owing to the stall-man seeing my father had a strong fancy for the book the moment he laid his hands upon it.

'There are not three Bruscombilles in Christendom,' said the stall-man, 'except those chained up in libraries.'

My father flung down the money – took Bruscombille and hurried home from Piccadilly to Coleman-street with it, as if it were a treasure.

Once home, he solaced himself with Bruscombille after the manner in which, 'tis ten to one, your worship solaced yourself with your first mistress – that is, from morning unto night.

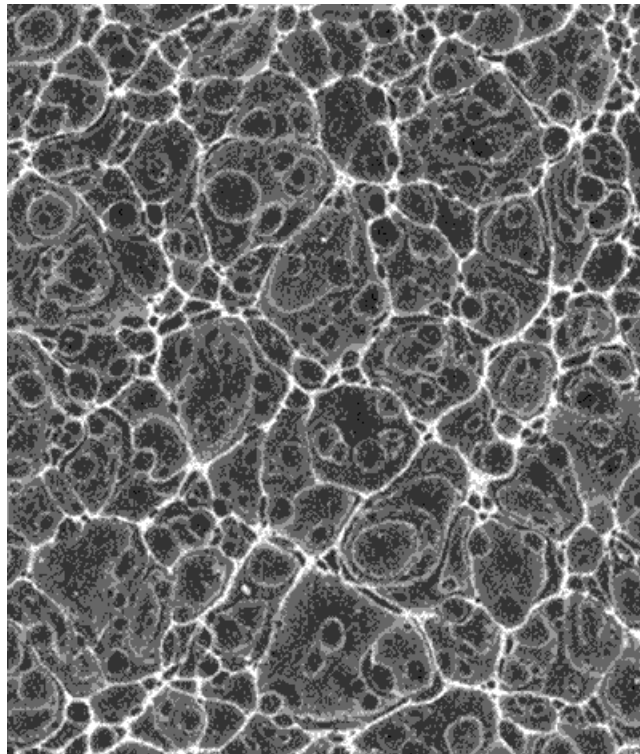
Take note, I go no farther with the simile. My father's eye was greater than his appetite – he cooled – his affections became divided – he purchased Prignitz, Scroderus, Paraeus, Bouchet's Evening Conferences, and above all, the great and learned Hafen Slawkenbergius; about which, as I shall have much to say by and by – I will say nothing now.

CHAPTER 36

Of all the tracts my father studied in support of his hypothesis, there was not one which disappointed him more at first, than the celebrated dialogue between Pamphagus and Cocles, written by the great Erasmus, upon the various uses of long noses. – Now don't let Satan, my dear girl, get astride of your imagination: if he is so nimble as to slip on – let me beg you to frisk, jump, and kick like Tickletooby's mare till you throw his worship into the dirt.

– And pray who was Tickletooby's mare?

'Tis as unscholarlike a question, Sir, as to have asked what year the second Punic war broke out. Read, read, read, my unlearned reader! – or by the knowledge of the great saint Paraleipomenon, you had better throw down this book at once; for without much reading and knowledge, you will no more be able to penetrate the moral of the next marbled page (motley emblem of my work!) than the world with all its wisdom has been able to unravel the many truths which still lie mystically hid under the dark veil of the black one.



CHAPTER 37

‘*Nihil me poenitet hujus nasi,*’ quoth Pamphagus; that is, ‘My nose has been the making of me.’ ‘*Nec est cur poeniteat,*’ replies Cocles; that is, ‘How the deuce should such a nose fail?’

This was laid down by Erasmus with great plainness; but my father was disappointed to find no subtler argument from so able a pen.

My father pished and pughed at first most terribly. But as the dialogue was by Erasmus, he soon read it over again with great application, studying every word through and through.

He could still make nothing of it. ‘Mayhap more is meant than is said in it,’ quoth he. ‘Learned men don’t write dialogues upon long noses for nothing. I’ll study the mystic and allegoric sense.’

My father read on. Now I must inform your worships, that besides the many nautical uses of long noses listed by Erasmus, he writes that a long nose has its domestic conveniences also; for instance, in the want of a pair of bellows, it will do excellently well *ad excitandum focum* (to arouse the fire.)

My father had got out his penknife, and was trying experiments upon the sentence, to see if he could not scratch some better sense into it.

‘I’ve got within a single letter, brother Toby,’ cried he, scratching on, ‘of Erasmus’s mystic meaning. I’ve done it,’ he said, snapping his fingers. ‘See, my dear brother, how I have mended the sense.’

‘But you have marred a word,’ replied my uncle Toby. My father bit his lip – and tore the page out in a passion.

CHAPTER 38

O Slawkenbergius! thou faithful analyzer of my *Disgrazias* – thou sad foreteller of the misfortunes which have come slap upon me from the shortness of my nose, and no other cause. Tell me, Slawkenbergius! what secret impulse first cried out to thee – ‘Go, go, Slawkenbergius! dedicate the labours of thy life and all thy powers to the service of mankind, and write a grand Folio for them, upon the subject of their noses.’

How this came to pass – as he has been dead and buried ninety years – we can only guess.

In the account which Hafen Slawkenbergius gives the world of his motives for spending so many years writing this one work – towards the end of his prologue, which by the bye should have come first, but the bookbinder has most injudiciously placed it betwixt the contents list and the book itself – he informs his reader, that ever since he had arrived at the age of discernment, and was able to sit down coolly, and consider the true state of man – or, to shorten my translation, for Slawkenbergius’s book is in Latin, and somewhat prolix – ‘ever since I understood what was what,’ quoth Slawkenbergius, ‘and could see that the point of long noses had been too loosely handled by others, I have felt a mighty and irresistible call to undertake this myself.’

And to do him justice, he deserves to be held up as a prototype for all writers of voluminous works. For he has taken in, Sir, the whole subject – examined every part of it – then brought it into full daylight; elucidating it with his profound knowledge of the sciences – collecting, and compiling – begging, borrowing, and stealing, as he went along, so that his book may be considered a thorough-stitched Digest and regular institute of noses, containing all that needs to be known about them.

Therefore I will not speak of many (otherwise) valuable books of my father’s collection, either wrote plump on noses or touching them – such as Prignitz, now lying upon the table before me, who from the examination of four thousand different skulls, in twenty charnel-houses in Silesia, through which he had rummaged – has informed us, that the shape of the osseous or bony parts of human noses, in every country except Crim Tartary, are much more alike than the world imagines; and that the size and jollity of every individual nose is owing to the cartilaginous and muscular parts of it, into whose ducts the blood and animal spirits are driven by the warmth of the imagination. So, says Prignitz, the excellency of the nose is in direct arithmetical proportion to the excellency of the wearer’s fancy or imagination.

Likewise, because ’tis all contained in Slawkenbergius, I say nothing of Scoderus who, all the world knows, violently opposed Prignitz – proving ‘that on the contrary – the nose begat the fancy.’

My father was weighing up which side he should take in this affair; when Ambrose Paraeus decided it by overthrowing both systems.

I am sure the learned know this: I mention it only to show that I know the fact myself–

That this Ambrose Paraeus was chief surgeon and nose-mender to Francis the Ninth of France, and was esteemed by the whole college of physicians, for knowing more about noses than anyone who had ever taken them in hand.

Now Ambrose Paraeus convinced my father that both Prignitz and Scoderus were wrong; and that the length and goodness of the nose was owing simply to the softness of the nurse’s breast; and flat, short noses were due to firmness of the same

organ of nutrition in the healthy – which, though happy for the woman, was the undoing of the child, inasmuch as his nose was so snubbed that it would never grow to full measure. But when the mother’s breast was soft and flaccid – by sinking into it, quoth Paraeus, as into so much butter, the nose was comforted, nourished, plumped up, and set a-growing for ever.

I have two things to observe of Paraeus; first, that he explains all this with the utmost chastity and decorum: for which may he rest in peace!

And, secondly, that his hypothesis overthrew not only the systems of Prignitz and Scroderus – but also the peace and harmony of our family. For three days, it not only embroiled matters between my father and my mother, but turned the whole house and everything in it, except my uncle Toby, quite upside down.

Such a ridiculous dispute between a man and his wife surely never occurred. My mother, you must know–

– but I have fifty things more necessary to let you know first – I have a hundred difficulties to clear up, and a thousand domestic misadventures crowding in upon me thick and fast. A cow broke in (tomorrow morning) to my uncle Toby’s fortifications, and ate the grass which faced his hornwork and covered way. – Trim insists upon a court-martial – the cow to be shot – Slop to be crucified – myself to be tristram’d and made a martyr of; – poor unhappy devils that we all are! – I need swaddling – but there is not time to waste – I have left my father lying across his bed, and my uncle Toby sitting in his old chair beside him, and promised I would go back to them in half an hour; and five-and-thirty minutes are lapsed already.

Of all the perplexities an author was ever in, this certainly is the greatest, for I have Slawkenbergius’s folio, Sir, to finish – a dialogue between my father and my uncle Toby, upon the solution of Prignitz, Scroderus and others to relate – a tale out of Slawkenbergius to translate, and all this in five minutes less than no time at all. Such a head! would to Heaven my enemies only saw the inside of it!

CHAPTER 39

There was no scene more entertaining in our family – and I believe the supreme Maker never put a family together whose characters were contrasted with so dramatic a felicity as ours; or which afforded such exquisite scenes, as in the Shandy Family.

None of these was more diverting, I say, in this whimsical theatre of ours – than what frequently arose out of this chapter of long noses – especially when my father’s imagination was heated with the enquiry, and nothing would serve him but to heat my uncle Toby’s too.

My uncle Toby, with infinite patience, would sit smoking his pipe for hours, whilst my father was trying every way to drive Prignitz and Scroderus into his head.

Whether they were above my uncle Toby’s reason – or whether his brain was like damp timber, where no spark could possibly take hold – or that it was so full of saps, mines, curtains, and such military obstacles, I say not.

’Twas unfortunate, no doubt, that my father had to translate every word for my uncle’s benefit; and as my father was no great master of Latin, his translation of Slawkenbergius was not always of the purest. This naturally opened a door to a second misfortune; that in his zeal to persuade my uncle Toby, my father’s ideas ran on as much faster than the translation, as the translation outran my uncle Toby: which added little to the clarity of my father’s lecture.

CHAPTER 40

The gift of reasoning and deduction – I mean in man, not in superior classes of being, such as angels and spirits – but inferior beings, as your worships all know, syllogize by their noses.

The gift of syllogising, or reasoning, logicians tell us, is the finding out the agreement or disagreement of two ideas with one another, by the intervention of a third idea (called the *medius terminus*); just as a man, as Locke observes, uses a yardstick to find two nine-pin-alleys to be of the same length, although they could not be brought next to each other to compare.

Had the same great reasoner looked on, as my father illustrated his systems of noses, and observed my uncle Toby’s deportment – what great attention he gave to every word – and with what wonderful seriousness he contemplated his pipe, holding it this way and that – he would have concluded that my uncle Toby had got hold of the *medius terminus*, and was comparing and measuring with it the truth of each hypothesis of long noses, as my father laid them before him.

This, by the bye, was more than my father wanted – his aim in these lectures was not to enable my uncle Toby to discuss, but to comprehend; – to hold the grains of learning – not to weigh them. My uncle Toby, as you will read in the next chapter, did neither.

CHAPTER 41

‘Tis a pity,’ cried my father one winter’s night, after three hours’ painful translation of Slawkenbergius – ‘tis a pity that truth, brother Toby, should shut herself up in such impregnable fortresses, and not surrender under the closest siege.’

Now it happened then, as indeed it had often done before, that my uncle Toby’s thoughts, during my father’s explanation of Prignitz, had taken a short flight to the bowling-green! His body might as well have taken a turn there too – for with all the appearance of being intent on the argument, my uncle Toby was in fact as ignorant of the whole lecture as if my father had been translating Slawkenbergius from Latin into Cherokee.

But the word siege, like a talismanic power, wafted through my uncle Toby’s fancy – he opened his ears – and my father, observing that he took his pipe out of his mouth, and shuffled his chair nearer the table, – my father with great pleasure began his sentence again, only dropping the metaphor of the siege, to keep clear of some dangers he foresaw from it.

‘Tis a pity,’ said my father, ‘that truth can only be on one side, brother, considering what ingenuity these learned men have all shown in their solutions of noses.’

‘Solutions? Can then noses be dissolved?’ replied my uncle Toby.

My father thrust back his chair – rose up – took four long strides to the door – jerked it open – shut it again – went hastily to his bureau – walked slowly back – threw his bookmark into the fire – bit my mother’s satin pin-cushion in two, filling his mouth with bran – confounded it – but mark! the oath of confusion was levelled at my uncle Toby’s brain, which was confused enough already.

’Twas well my father’s passions lasted not long; for so long as they did last, they led him a busy life; and nothing made his passions go off so like gunpowder, as the unexpected blows his science met with from the quaint simplicity of my uncle Toby’s questions. Had ten dozen hornets stung him all at once, they could not have startled him half so much as one single query unseasonably popping in full upon him in his hobby-horsical career.

’Twas all one to my uncle Toby – he smoked his pipe on with unvaried composure – he never intended offence to his brother – and as he could seldom find out where the sting lay, he always gave my father the chance of cooling by himself. My father took five minutes and thirty-five seconds on this occasion.

‘By all that’s good, brother Toby!’ said he, eventually. ‘Why, by the solutions of noses, I meant, as you might have known, had you favoured me with one grain of attention, the various accounts which learned men give of the causes of short and long noses.’

‘There is no cause but one,’ replied my uncle, ‘why one man’s nose is longer than another’s: because God pleases to have it so.’

‘That is Grangousier’s solution,’ said my father.

‘Tis he,’ continued my uncle Toby, ‘who makes us all, and puts us together in such proportions as is agreeable to his infinite wisdom.’

‘Tis a pious account,’ cried my father, ‘but not philosophical – there is more religion in it than science.’

Now my uncle Toby feared God, and revered religion. So the moment my father finished his remark, my uncle Toby fell a-whistling *Lillabullero* with more zeal (though more out of tune) than usual.

CHAPTER 42

Every page of Slawkenbergius was a rich treasure of knowledge to my father; and he would often say in closing the book, that if all the arts and sciences in the world were lost – should the wisdom of governments ever be forgot, and Slawkenbergius only were left – there would be enough in him, he would say, to set the world a-going again.

A treasure therefore was he indeed! an institute of all that needed to be known about noses, and everything else. All day was Hafen Slawkenbergius his recreation and delight: 'twas for ever in his hands, as worn and thumbed as a canon's prayer-book.

In my opinion, the best, or at least the most amusing part of Hafen Slawkenbergius is his tales – and, considering he was a German, many of them told quite imaginatively. These take up his second book, and are contained in ten decads, each decad having ten tales – there are a few in his eighth, ninth, and tenth decads, which I own seem rather playful – but in general they all turn somehow or other upon the main hinges of his subject, and were collected by him as so many illustrations upon the doctrines of noses.

As we have leisure upon our hands – if you give me leave, madam, I'll tell you the ninth tale of his tenth decad.

BOOK 4

SLAWKENBERGIUS'S TALE

It was a cool refreshing evening in late August, when a stranger, mounted upon a dark mule, with a small cloak-bag behind him, containing a few shirts, a pair of shoes, and a crimson-satin pair of breeches, entered the town of Strasburg.

He told the sentinel at the gates that he had been at the Promontory of Noses – was going on to Frankfort – and should be back again at Strasburg in a month, on his way to Crim Tartary.

The sentinel looked up into the stranger's face – he never saw such a Nose in his life!

'I have made a very good venture of it,' quoth the stranger. Slipping his hand out of a loop of black ribbon, from which a scimitar was hung, he courteously touched his cap, put a florin into the sentinel's hand, and passed on.

'It grieves me,' said the sentinel, speaking to a little bandy-legged drummer, 'that so courteous a soul should have lost his scabbard. He will not be able to get a scabbard to fit his scimitar in all Strasburg.'

'I never had a scabbard,' replied the stranger, looking back at them. 'I carry my scimitar naked,' continued he, his mule moving on slowly all the time – 'on purpose to defend my nose.'

'It is well worth it, gentle stranger,' replied the sentinel.

'Tis not worth a penny,' said the bandy-legged drummer; 'tis a nose of parchment.'

'Apart from being six times as big, 'tis a nose like my own,' said the sentinel.

'I heard it crackle,' said the drummer.

'By dunder,' said the sentinel, 'I saw it bleed.'

'What a pity,' cried the bandy-legged drummer, 'we did not touch it!'

At this very moment, the same point was being debated betwixt a trumpeter and his wife, who were just coming up, and had stopped to see the stranger pass by.

'What a nose!' said the trumpeter's wife, 'tis as long as a trumpet.'

'And of the same metal,' said the trumpeter, 'as you hear by its sneezing.'

'Tis as soft as a flute,' said she.

'Tis brass,' said the trumpeter.

'Tis a pudding's end,' said his wife.

'I tell thee,' said the trumpeter, 'tis a brazen nose.'

'I'll get to the bottom of it,' said the trumpeter's wife, 'for I will touch it with my finger before I sleep.'

The stranger's mule moved on so slowly that he heard every word of both these disputes.

'No!' said he, dropping his reins, and crossing his hands upon his breast, in a saint-like position. 'No! I owe nothing to the world – slandered as I have been. My nose shall never be touched whilst Heaven gives me strength.'

Making a vow to Saint Nicholas, he took up the reins and rode on slowly through the streets of Strasburg, till he came to the great inn in the market-place opposite the church.

The stranger alighted, and ordered his mule to be led into the stable, and his cloak-bag to be brought in: then, opening it, and taking out his crimson-satin breeches, with a silver-fringed appendage, which I dare not name – he put on his breeches, with his fringed codpiece, and with his short scimitar in his hand, walked out on to the grand parade.

The stranger had taken three turns upon the parade, when he saw the trumpeter's wife. So turning short, lest she should try to touch his nose, he instantly went back to his inn – undressed, packed up his crimson-satin breeches, &c., in his cloak-bag, and called for his mule.

'I am going on to Frankfort,' said the stranger, 'and shall be back at Strasburg in a month. I hope,' he continued, stroking his mule before he mounted it, 'that you have been kind to this faithful slave of mine – it has carried me above six hundred leagues.'

'Tis a long journey, Sir,' replied the inn-keeper, 'unless a man has great business.'

'Tut! tut!' said the stranger. 'I have been at the Promontory of Noses; and have got me one of the goodliest, thank Heaven, that ever man had.'

Whilst the stranger was giving this odd account of himself, the inn-keeper and his wife kept their eyes fixed full on the stranger's nose.

'By saint Radagunda,' said the inn-keeper's wife to her husband, 'it is bigger than a dozen noses put together! Is it not a noble nose?'

'Tis a false nose, my dear,' said the inn-keeper.

'Tis a true nose,' said his wife.

'Tis made of fir-tree,' said he. 'I smell the turpentine.'

'There's a pimple on it,' said she.

'Tis a dead nose,' replied the inn-keeper.

'Tis a live nose, and if I am alive myself,' said the inn-keeper's wife, 'I will touch it.'

'I have made a vow to saint Nicolas,' said the stranger, 'that my nose shall not be touched till–' Here he stopped.

'Till when?' said she.

'It never shall be touched,' said he, clasping his hands to his breast, 'until that hour–'

'What hour?' cried she.

'Never! never!' said the stranger, 'never till I am got to–'

'For Heaven's sake, to where?' said she. But the stranger rode away without saying another word.

The stranger had not got half a league towards Frankfort before all the city of Strasburg was in an uproar about his nose. The Compline bells were ringing to call the Strasburgers to their prayers, but no one heard 'em. The city was like a swarm of bees – men, women, and children flying in at one door, out at another – this way and that way – 'did you see it? did you see it? for mercy's sake, who saw it?'

'Alas! I was at vespers!' 'I was washing,' 'I was scouring,' – 'I never saw it' – 'I never touched it!' was the general cry.

Whilst all this confusion triumphed throughout the city of Strasburg, the courteous stranger went gently upon his mule towards Frankfort, talking as he rode, in broken sentences, sometimes to his mule – sometimes to himself – sometimes to his Julia.

‘O Julia, my lovely Julia! – nay, I cannot stop to let thee bite that thistle – that a rival should have robbed me of enjoyment on the very point of it...

‘Pugh! – ’tis nothing but a thistle – never mind...

‘Banished from my country – my friends – from thee...

‘Poor devil, thou’rt sadly tired! Come, get on a little faster – there’s nothing in my cloak-bag but two shirts, a crimson-satin pair of breeches, and a fringed – Dear Julia...

‘But why to Frankfort – is an unfelt hand secretly leading me?...

‘Saint Nicolas! at this rate we shall be all night in getting to...

‘To happiness – or am I to be the plaything of fortune? – why did I not stay at Strasburg! Come, thou shalt drink – to St. Nicolas – O Julia! – What dost thou prick up thy ears at? ’tis nothing but a man, &c...’

The stranger rode on, talking in this manner, till he arrived at his inn, where he alighted, saw his mule taken good care of – took his cloak-bag, with his crimson-satin breeches, &c., in it – called for an omelette, went to his bed about twelve o’clock, and in five minutes fell asleep.

By then the tumult in Strasburg had abated; the Strasburgers had got quietly into their beds – but they did not rest: for in their minds, the stranger’s nose had taken on as many different shapes as there were heads in Strasburg to hold them.

The abbess of Quedlingberg, who had come that week to Strasburg with four dignitaries of her order, to consult the university upon a case relating to their placket-holes – was ill all the night.

The courteous stranger’s nose had got perched in her brain, and made such rousing work in the fancies of the four nuns of her chapter, that they could not get a wink of sleep the whole night through – in short, they got up like so many ghosts.

All the severer orders of nuns who lay that night in blankets of hair-cloth, were in a worse condition still; – from tumbling and tossing in their beds the whole night, they scratched themselves, and got out of their beds almost flayed alive, having never once shut their eyes.

The nuns of saint Ursula acted the wisest – they never attempted to go to bed at all.

The dean of Strasburg and the prebendaries (assembled that morning to consider the case of buttered buns) all wished they had followed the nuns of saint Ursulas’ example.

In the confusion, the bakers had forgot to prove their loaves – so there were no buttered buns to be had for breakfast in all Strasburg. The cathedral was in a commotion: such restlessness, and such a zealous inquiry into its cause, had never happened since Martin Luther had turned the city upside down.

What a carnival did the stranger’s nose cause in the laity! ’tis more than my pen has power to describe; though I acknowledge, (cries Slawkenbergius, with more gaiety than I could have expected from him) that there is many a good simile which might give my countrymen some idea of it; but at the end of such a work as this, on which I have spent the greatest part of my life, how should I have either time or inclination to search for it? Let it suffice to say, that the riot and disorder in the Strasburgers’ fantasies was so general – so many strange things were spoken about it – every soul, good and bad – rich and poor – learned and unlearned – mistress and maid – spent their time in hearing about it: every eye languished to see it – every finger burned to touch it.

Now what added to their desire was this, that the sentinel, the bandy-legged drummer, the trumpeter, the trumpeter's wife, the inn-keeper and his wife, all widely differed from each other in their description of the stranger's nose.

They all agreed in two points: first, that he was gone to Frankfort and would not return for a month; and secondly that, whether his nose was true or false, the stranger himself was a perfect paragon of beauty – the finest-made man – the most genteel and courteous that had ever entered the gates of Strasburg; that as he rode, with his scimitar slung loosely to his wrist, or walked in his crimson-satin breeches across the parade – 'twas with so sweet an air of careless modesty, yet so manly, that if his nose had not stood in the way, he would have captured the heart of every virgin who saw him.

The abbess called for the trumpeter's wife, who went to visit her with the trumpet in her hand, to illustrate her theory. The sentinel and bandy-legged drummer – nothing could equal them! they read lectures under the city-gates, with all the pomp of Greek orators.

The inn-keeper read his lecture in the stable-yard – his wife read hers more privately in a back room. All flocked to their lectures – in a word, each Strasburger came crowding for information on the stranger's nose.

As soon as the trumpeter's wife had left the abbess, she began to speak in public, on a stool in the middle of the great parade – which incommoded the other demonstrators: when a philosopher (cries Slawkenbergius) has a trumpet to help him, pray what rival can be heard besides him?

Whilst the unlearned were all thus busy in getting down to the bottom of the well where Truth lived – the learned were as busy in pumping her up through the channel of argument. They concerned themselves not with facts – they reasoned.

The Faculty had thrown most light upon this subject – except that all their disputes about it ran into the matter of growths and oedematous swellings: they could not keep clear of them – and the stranger's nose had nothing to do with either.

It was proved, however, very satisfactorily, that such a ponderous mass of matter could not be conglomerated to the nose whilst the infant was *in Utero*, without destroying the balance of the foetus, and throwing it plump upon its head nine months before its time.

The opponents granted the theory – but denied the consequences.

And if a suitable provision of veins, arteries, &c., said they, was not laid in for the nourishment of such a nose from the start, before it came into the world, it could not grow afterwards.

This was answered by a dissertation upon nutriment, and the effect which it had in increasing and prolonging the muscular parts. In the triumph of this theory, they even affirmed that there was no reason why a nose might not grow to the size of the man himself.

The respondents said this could never happen so long: for a man's lungs and heart could produce only enough blood for one single man, and no more; so that, if there was as much nose as man, a mortification must necessarily follow: and either the nose must fall off the man, or the man must fall off his nose.

The more curious inquirers after nature and her doings were divided about the nose. They theorised that there was a set arrangement of the human frame, which could not be transgressed except within a certain circle; but they could not agree about the diameter of it.

The logicians stuck much closer to the point: they began and ended with the word Nose.

A nose, argued the logician, cannot bleed without blood circulating in it to supply the drops. Now death being nothing but the stagnation of the blood – I deny the definition, said his antagonist: death is the separation of the soul from the body. Then we don't agree about our weapons, said the logician. Then there is an end of the dispute, replied the antagonist.

The civilians were still more concise. Such a monstrous nose, said they, if it was a true nose, could not possibly have been allowed in civil society – and if it was false, to impose upon society in this way was a still greater violation of its rights.

However, this did not prove whether the stranger's nose was true or false.

So the controversy went on. The ecclesiastic court said that there was nothing to stop a decree, since the stranger had confessed he had been at the Promontory of Noses, and had got one of the goodliest. To this it was answered, it was impossible there should be such a place as the Promontory of Noses, without learned men knowing about it. The commissary of the bishop of Strasburg explained in a treatise that the Promontory of Noses was a mere allegorical expression, meaning only that nature had given him a long nose: in proof of which, he cited some two dozen authorities.

It happened that the two universities of Strasburg – the Lutheran, founded in 1538 by Jacobus Surmis, and the Popish, founded by Leopold, arch-duke of Austria, – were at this time employing all their knowledge (except what was required by the affair of the abbess of Quedlingberg's placket-holes) in determining the point of Martin Luther's damnation.

The Popish doctors had undertaken to demonstrate that from the influence of the planets on 22nd October 1483, when the moon was in the twelfth house, Jupiter, Mars, and Venus in the third, and the Sun, Saturn and Mercury in the fourth – that he must unavoidably be a damned man – and that his doctrines therefore were damned too.

By inspecting his horoscope, where five planets were in coition all at once with Scorpio (in reading this my father would always shake his head) in the ninth house, which the Arabians allotted to religion – it appeared that Martin Luther did not care one penny about the matter – and from the horoscope directed to the conjunction of Mars, they made it plain he must die cursing and blaspheming, with his soul, steeped in guilt, being sent to the lake of hell-fire.

The objection of the Lutheran doctors to this, was that it must certainly be the soul of another man, born on 22nd October 1483, which was damned – for it appeared from the register of Islaben, that Luther was not born in 1483, but in 1484; and not on 22^d October, but on 10th November, the eve of Martinmas day, from whence he had the name of Martin.

[I must break off for a moment, to tell the reader that my father never read this passage of Slawkenbergius to my uncle Toby without triumph – not over my uncle Toby, but over the whole world.

'Now you see, brother,' he would say, 'that christian names are not such indifferent things; had Luther here been called by any other name but Martin, he would have been damned to all eternity. Not that I look upon Martin as a good name – 'tis only a little better than neutral – yet you see it was of service to him.'

Although my father knew the weakness of this prop to his hypothesis, he could not help using it; and it was certainly for this reason that there was no other story in Slawkenbergius which my father read over with half the delight. It flattered two of his

strangest hypotheses together – his Names and his Noses. He might have read all the books in the Alexandrian Library without finding one which hit these two nails upon the head at one stroke.]

The universities of Strasburg were hard tugging at this affair of Luther's destination, and might have gone on with it, had not the size of the stranger's nose drawn off the attention of the world. – it was their business to follow.

As for the abbess of Quedlingberg and her dignitaries, the enormity of the stranger's nose was running so much in their fancies that the affair of their placket-holes was cold..

'Twas impossible to have guessed on which side of the nose the two universities would split.

'Tis above reason,' cried the doctors on one side.

'Tis below reason,' cried the others.

'Tis faith,' cried one.

'Tis a fiddle-stick,' said the other.

'Tis possible.'

'Tis impossible.'

'God's power is infinite,' cried the Nosarians. 'He can make matter think.'

'As certainly as you can make a velvet cap out of a sow's ear,' replied the Antinosarians.

'Infinite power is infinite power.'

'It extends only to possible things,' replied the Lutherans.

'By God in heaven,' cried the Popish doctors, 'he can make a nose, if he thinks fit, as big as the steeple of Strasburg.'

Now the steeple of Strasburg being the tallest church-steeple in the whole world, the Antinosarians denied that a nose of 575 feet in length could be worn, at least by a middle-sized man. The Popish doctors swore it could. The Lutheran doctors said No; it could not.

This at once started a new dispute upon the extent and limitation of the attributes of God. That led them naturally to Thomas Aquinas, and Thomas Aquinas to the devil.

The stranger's nose was no more heard of in the dispute.

The controversy inflamed the Strasburgers' imaginations to a vast degree. The less they understood of the matter, the greater was their wonder about it. Their doctors had argued themselves out of sight, and left the poor Strasburgers stranded!

What was to be done? The uproar increased – the city gates were set open.

Unfortunate Strasburgers! – they neither ate, or drank, or slept, or prayed, or hearkened to the calls of religion or nature for seven-and-twenty days together.

On the twenty-eighth the courteous stranger had promised to return to Strasburg.

Seven thousand coaches (Slawkenbergius must certainly have made some mistake in his numbers) – 15,000 single-horse chairs – 20,000 waggons, crowded as full as they could hold with senators, counsellors, widows, wives, virgins, canons, and concubines – the abbess of Quedlingberg leading the procession in one coach, and the dean of Strasburg on her left – the rest following higglety-pigglety, some on horseback, some on foot, some down the Rhine – all set out at sun-rise to meet the courteous stranger on the road.

Haste we now towards the catastrophe of my tale. I say *Catastrophe* (cries Slawkenbergius) inasmuch as a tale not only rejoiceth in the *Catastrophe* and *Peripetia* of a Drama, but moreover in all the essential parts of it – its *Protasis*,

Epitasis, Catastasis: all growing one out of the other, in the order Aristotle first planted them – without which a tale had better never be told at all. In all my ten decads, I, Slawkenbergius, have tied down every tale tightly to this rule.

From the stranger's first speech with the sentinel, to his leaving the city of Strasburg after pulling off his crimson-satin pair of breeches, is the *Protasis* or first entrance – where the characters are just touched in, and the subject begun.

The *Epitasis*, wherein the action is more fully entered upon, till it arrives at its height called the *Catastasis*, and which usually takes up the 2nd and 3rd act, is included within that busy period of my tale, betwixt the first night's uproar about the nose, to the conclusion of the trumpeter's wife's lectures upon it: and from the first dispute of the learned to the doctors finally leaving the Strasburgers stranded, is the *Catastasis* or the ripening of events for their bursting forth in the fifth act.

This begins with the setting out of the Strasburgers in the Frankfort road, and ends in unwinding the labyrinth and bringing the hero out of agitation (as Aristotle calls it) to a state of rest and quietness.

This, says Hafen Slawkenbergius, constitutes the *Catastrophe* or *Peripetia* of my tale – which I am going to relate.

We left the stranger behind the curtain asleep – he enters now upon the stage.

'What dost thou prick up thy ears at? 'tis nothing but a man upon a horse,' was the last word the stranger uttered to his mule. The mule let the traveller and his horse pass by.

This traveller was hastening to get to Strasburg. 'What a fool am I,' said he, when he had rode about a league farther, 'to think of getting into Strasburg this night. The great Strasburg! garrisoned with five thousand of the best troops in the world! Alas! if I was at its gates this moment, I could not gain admittance – better go back to the last inn I have passed.' The traveller turned his horse, and three minutes after the stranger had been conducted into his chamber, he arrived at the same inn.

'We have bacon in the house,' said the host, 'and bread – and till eleven o'clock tonight we had three eggs – but a stranger, who arrived an hour ago, has had them in an omelette.'

'I want nothing but a bed,' said the traveller.

'I have one as soft as in all Alsatia,' said the host. 'The stranger would have slept in it, for 'tis my best bed, were it not for his nose.'

'He has got a cold?' said the traveller.

'No – but 'tis a camp-bed, and our maid Jacinta imagined there was not room in it to turn his nose in, it is so long a nose.'

The traveller fixed his eyes upon Jacinta. 'Trifle not with my anxiety,' said he.

''Tis no trifle,' said Jacinta, ''tis the most glorious nose!'

The traveller fell upon his knees, and said, looking up to heaven, 'Thou hast conducted me to the end of my pilgrimage. – 'Tis Diego.'

This traveller was the brother of the Julia so often invoked that night by the stranger as he rode; and was come, on her behalf, in quest of him. He had accompanied his sister from Valadolid across the Pyrenean mountains and through France, along the many meanders of a lover's thorny tracks.

Julia had sunk under the journey, and at Lyons had sickened, but had just strength to write a tender letter to Diego; and having put the letter into her brother's hands, she took to her bed.

Fernandez (for that was her brother's name) could not shut his eyes that night. At dawn he rose, and hearing Diego was risen too, he entered his chamber, and handed over his sister's letter.

It was as follows:

'Seig. Diego,

'Whether my suspicions of your nose were just – 'tis not the time to inquire – it is enough I have not had firmness to put them to farther trial.

'How could I know myself so little, when I sent my Duenna to forbid your coming to my house? or how could I know you so little, Diego, as to imagine you would not have stayed one day in Valladolid to have eased my doubts? Was I to be abandoned, Diego, because I was deceived? or was it kind to take me at my word, whether my suspicions were just or no, and leave me, as you did, a prey to uncertainty and sorrow?

'My brother will tell you how soon Julia repented of the rash message she had sent you – in what frantic haste she flew to her window, and how many days and nights she stayed there, looking towards the way which Diego was wont to come.

'He will tell you how, when Julia heard of your departure, her spirits deserted her – her heart sickened. O Diego! how many weary steps has my brother led me trying to trace out yours; how oft have I fainted by the way, and sunk into his arms, with only power to cry out – O my Diego!

'If you are as noble as you look, you will fly to me, almost as fast as you fled from me – yet you will arrive but to see me expire. 'Tis a bitter draught, Diego, but oh! 'tis embittered still more by dying un___'

Her strength gave out, and she could proceed no farther.

The heart of the courteous Diego overflowed as he read – he ordered his mule to be saddled forthwith; and as no prose is equal to poetry in such conflicts, whilst the ostler was getting ready his mule, Diego eased his mind by writing on the wall in charcoal:

ODE

Harsh and untuneful are the notes of love,
Unless my Julia strikes the key,
Her hand alone can touch the part,
Whose dulcet movement charms the heart,
And governs all the man with sympathetic sway.

'Tis a pity there was no more; but whether Diego was slow in composing verses – or the ostler quick in saddling mules – certainly, the mule and Fernandez's horse were ready at the door before Diego was ready for his second stanza.

So they sallied forth, passed the Rhine, traversed Alsace, rode towards Lyons, and before the Strasburgers had set out on their cavalcade, Fernandez, Diego, and his Julia, had crossed the Pyrenean mountains, and got safe to Valladolid.

Of all restless desires, curiosity is the strongest – and the Strasburgers felt the full force of it; for three days and nights they were tossed to and fro in the Frankfort road with the tempestuous fury of this passion, before they could bear to return home. When alas! an event was prepared for them, the most grievous that could befall a free people.

As this revolution of the Strasburgers' affairs is often spoken of, and little understood, I will, in ten words, says Slawkenbergius, give the world an explanation, and finish my tale.

Everybody knows of the grand system of Universal Monarchy, written in France in the year 1664.

One branch of that system, was to get possession of Strasburg, in order to disturb the quiet of Germany – and in consequence, Strasburg unhappily fell into French hands.

In tracing the true springs of such revolutions – the vulgar look too high for them – statesmen look too low – Truth (for once) lies in the middle.

What a fatal thing is the pride of a free city! cries one historian. The Strasburgers were too proud to receive an imperial garrison – so fell prey to a French one.

Another says, The Strasburgers' fate may be a warning to all free people to save their money. They used up their resources, and in the end had not strength to keep their gates shut, and so the French pushed them open.

Alas! alas! cries Slawkenbergius, 'twas not the French; 'twas Curiosity pushed them open. When they saw the Strasburgers all marched out to follow the stranger's nose – the French marched in.

Trade has decayed ever since, only because Noses have always so run in their heads, that the Strasburgers could not follow their business.

Alas! cries Slawkenbergius; it is not the first – and I fear will not be the last fortress that has been either won – or lost – by Noses.

The End Of Slawkenbergius's Tale

CHAPTER 1

With all this learning upon Noses running perpetually in my father's fancy – with so many family prejudices – ten decads of such tales – how could a man with such exquisite feelings as my father bear the shock in any other posture, but the very one I have described?

Throw yourself down upon the bed – only place a looking-glass in a chair beside it, before you do–

– But was the stranger's nose a true nose, or a false one?

To tell that before-hand, madam, would spoil one of the best tales in the Christian-world; and that is the tenth of the tenth decad, which immediately follows it.

This tale, cried Slawkenbergius, somewhat exultingly, has been reserved by me for the conclusion of my whole work, as I know of no tale which could possibly ever go down after it.

'Tis a tale indeed!

It starts with the first interview in the inn at Lyons, when Fernandez left the courteous stranger and his sister Julia alone in her chamber, and is titled

THE INTRICACIES OF DIEGO AND JULIA

Heavens! thou art a strange creature, Slawkenbergius! what a whimsical view of the heart of woman hast thou opened! How this can ever be translated into good English, I have no idea. There seems a sixth sense needed to do it rightly. What can he mean by 'the lambent pupilability of slow, low, dry chat, five notes below the natural tone' – which you know, madam, is little more than a whisper?

The moment I pronounced the words, I felt something like a vibration in the heart-strings. – The brain made no acknowledgment. There's often no good understanding betwixt 'em. – I'm lost. I can make nothing of it – unless the voice being little more than a whisper, it forces the eyes to approach within six inches of each other – and to look into the pupils – is not that dangerous? But it can't be avoided – for if they look up to the ceiling, the two chins unavoidably meet – and if they look down into each other's lap, the foreheads contact, which at once puts an end to the sentimental part of the conference. – What is left, madam, is not worth stooping for.

CHAPTER 2

My father lay stretched across the bed as still as if the hand of death had pushed him down, for a full hour and a half, before he began to play upon the floor with the foot which hung over the bed-side; my uncle Toby's heart was lighter for it.

In a few moments, his left-hand, which had all the time reclined upon the handle of the chamber-pot, thrust it a little more under the bed – he drew up his hand – gave a *hem!* My good uncle Toby, with infinite pleasure, answered it; and gladly would have added a sentence of consolation: but having no talents that way, and fearing that he might say something to make a bad matter worse, he contented himself with resting his chin placidly upon the cross of his crutch.

Now whether the compression shortened my uncle Toby's face into a more pleasurable oval – or whether the philanthropy of his heart braced up his muscles, doubling the benignity which was there before, is not hard to decide. My father, in turning his eyes, was struck with such a gleam of sunshine in his face, as melted the sullenness of his grief in a moment.

He broke silence as follows.

CHAPTER 3

'Did ever man, brother Toby,' cried my father, raising himself upon his elbow, and turning to face my uncle, who was sitting in his old fringed chair, with his chin resting upon his crutch – 'did ever a poor unfortunate man receive so many lashes?'

'The most I ever saw given,' quoth my uncle Toby (ringing the bell for Trim) 'was to a grenadier, I think in Mackay's regiment.'

Had my uncle Toby shot a bullet through my father's heart, he could not have fallen down with his nose upon the quilt more suddenly.

'Bless me!' said my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 4

‘Was it Mackay’s regiment,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘where the poor grenadier was so unmercifully whipped about the ducats?’

‘O Christ! he was innocent!’ cried Trim, with a deep sigh. ‘And he was whipped, your honour, almost to death’s door.’

‘I thank thee, Trim,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘I never think of it,’ continued Trim, ‘and my poor brother Tom’s misfortunes – for we were all school-fellows – without crying like a coward.’

‘Tears are no proof of cowardice, Trim. I drop them often myself,’ cried my uncle Toby.

‘I know your honour does,’ replied Trim, ‘and so am not ashamed of it. – But to think of two virtuous lads with hearts as warm and honest as God could make them – going forth with gallant spirits to seek their fortunes – and falling into such evils! poor Tom! to be tortured upon a rack for nothing but marrying a Jew’s widow who sold sausages – and honest Dick Johnson’s soul to be scourged out of his body, for the ducats another man put into his knapsack! O! these are misfortunes, your honour, worth lying down and crying over.’

My father could not help blushing.

‘’Twould be a pity, Trim,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘if thou shouldst ever feel sorrow of thy own – thou feelest it so tenderly for others.’

‘Alack-o-day,’ replied the corporal, brightening up, ‘your honour knows I have neither wife or child – I can have no sorrows in this world.’ My father could not help smiling.

‘As few as any man, Trim,’ replied my uncle Toby; ‘yet thou couldst suffer from the distress of poverty in thy old age, when thou hast outlived thy friends.’

‘Never fear, your honour,’ replied Trim cheerily.

‘But I would have thee never fear, Trim,’ replied my uncle; ‘and therefore’ – standing up – ‘therefore in recompense of thy long fidelity to me, and the goodness of thy heart – thou shalt never ask elsewhere, Trim, for a penny.’

Trim attempted to thank my uncle Toby – but tears trickled down his cheeks faster than he could wipe them off. He laid his hands upon his breast – made a bow, and shut the door.

‘I have left Trim my bowling-green,’ cried my uncle Toby. – My father smiled.

‘I have left him moreover a pension,’ continued my uncle Toby. – My father looked grave.

CHAPTER 5

Is this a fit time, said my father to himself, to talk of Pensions and Grenadiers?

CHAPTER 6

When my uncle Toby first mentioned the grenadier, my father, I said, fell down with his nose flat to the quilt, as suddenly as if shot; but I did not add that every other limb of my father instantly relapsed into the same attitude in which he lay first described; so that when corporal Trim left the room, and my father wanted to rise off the bed – he had all the little preparatory movements to run over again.

Attitudes are nothing, madam – 'tis the transition from one attitude to another, like the resolution of the discord into harmony, which is all in all.

My father played the same jig with his toe upon the floor – pushed the chamber-pot a little farther underneath the bed – gave a *hem* – raised himself upon his elbow – and was just beginning to address my uncle Toby – when, recollecting the unsuccessfulness of his first effort in that attitude, he stood, and making a turn across the room, he stopped before my uncle. He addressed him then as follows:

CHAPTER 7

'When I reflect, brother Toby, upon Man, and the many troubles he is open to – when I consider how oft we eat the bread of affliction, and that we are born to it, as to our inheritance–'

'I was born to nothing,' quoth my uncle, interrupting, 'but my commission.'

'Zooks!' said my father; 'did not my uncle leave you a hundred and twenty pounds a year?'

'What could I have done without it?' replied my uncle Toby.

'That's another matter,' said my father testily. 'But I say, Toby, when one runs over the catalogue of all the sorrows with which the heart of man is overcharged, 'tis wonderful how the mind can bear itself up, as it does.'

''Tis by the assistance of Almighty God,' cried my uncle Toby. ''Tis not from our own strength, brother Shandy – a sentinel might as well pretend to stand against fifty men. We are upheld by the grace of the best of Beings.'

'That is cutting the knot,' said my father, 'instead of untying it. But allow me to lead you, brother, a little deeper into the mystery.'

'With all my heart,' replied my uncle.

My father instantly took up the attitude in which Socrates is so finely painted by Raphael; which your connoisseurship knows is so exquisitely imagined, that even the particular manner of the reasoning of Socrates is expressed by it – for he holds the forefinger of his left hand between the forefinger and the thumb of his right.

So stood my father, holding his forefinger betwixt his finger and his thumb, and reasoning with my uncle Toby in his old fringed chair with woollen bobs – O Garrick! what a rich scene wouldst thou make of this! and how gladly would I write such another to secure my immortality.

CHAPTER 8

‘Though man is so curious a vehicle,’ said my father, ‘yet his frame is so slight, and so totteringly put together, that the sudden jostlings it unavoidably meets with in this rugged journey, would tear it to pieces a dozen times a day – were it not, brother Toby, that there is a secret spring within us.’

‘I take it you mean Religion,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘Will that set my child’s nose on?’ cried my father, letting go his finger.

‘It makes everything straight for us,’ answered my uncle Toby.

‘Figuratively speaking, dear Toby, it may,’ said my father; ‘but the spring I am speaking of, is that great power within us of counterbalancing evil, which, like a secret spring in a well-ordered machine, though it can’t prevent the shock – at least it deadens our sense of it.’

‘Now, my dear brother,’ continued my father, replacing his forefinger, ‘if my child had arrived safe into the world, with his nose intact – fanciful as I may appear in my opinion of christian names, and of that magic bias which good or bad names impress upon our characters – Heaven is witness! in my warmest wishes for my child, I never wished to crown his head with more glory and honour than George or Edward would have bestowed on him. But alas! as the greatest evil has befallen him – I must counteract it with the greatest good. He shall be christened Trismegistus.’

‘I wish it may help,’ replied my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 9

‘What a chapter of chances,’ said my father, turning on the first landing, as he and my uncle Toby were going downstairs – ‘what a long chapter of chances do the events of this world lay open to us! Take pen in hand, brother Toby, and calculate it.’

‘I know no more of calculation than this banister,’ said my uncle Toby (attempting to strike it with his crutch, and hitting my father a blow upon his shin-bone). ‘’Twas a hundred to one chance,’ cried my uncle.

‘I thought,’ quoth my father (rubbing his shin), ‘you knew nothing of calculations, brother.’

The success of my father’s repartee tickled off the pain of his shin. It was well it happened (chance! again) – or the world would never have known the subject of my father’s calculation – there was no chance of guessing it–

What a lucky chapter of chances has this turned out! for it has saved me the trouble of writing one especially, and in truth I have enough already upon my hands without it. Have I not promised the world a chapter of knots? two chapters upon the right and wrong end of a woman? a chapter upon whiskers? a chapter upon wishes? a chapter of noses? No, I have done that. A chapter upon my uncle Toby’s modesty? to say nothing of a chapter upon chapters, which I will finish before I sleep. By my great-grandfather’s whiskers, I shall never get through half of ’em this year.

‘Take pen in hand, and calculate it,’ said my father, ‘and it will turn out a million to one, that of all the parts of the body, the forceps should have the ill luck just to break that part, which should destroy the fortunes of our house with it.’

‘It might have been worse,’ replied my uncle Toby. ‘Suppose the hip had presented, as Dr. Slop foreboded.’

My father reflected half a minute– ‘True,’ said he.

CHAPTER 10

Is it not a shame to make two chapters of what passed in going down one pair of stairs? for we are got no farther yet than the first landing, and there are fifteen more steps down to the bottom; and for aught I know, as my father and my uncle Toby are in a talking mood, there may be as many chapters as steps.

– A sudden impulse comes across me – drop the curtain, Shandy – I drop it – and hey for a new chapter.

If I had a rule to govern this affair – as I do all things out of rule, I would tear it to pieces, and throw it into the fire. Is a man to follow rules – or are rules to follow him?

Now this, you must know, being my chapter upon chapters, which I promised to write before I went to sleep, I thought I should ease my conscience by telling the world all I knew about the matter at once. Is not this ten times better than setting out with a parade of wisdom, and saying that chapters relieve the mind – assist the reader – and that in a work of this dramatic cast they are as necessary as the scene-shifting?

O! but to understand this, you must read Longinus – if you are no wiser after that, never fear, read him again – Avicenna and Licetus read Aristotle’s metaphysics forty times, and never understood a single word. But mark the consequence – Avicenna turned out a desperate writer; and as for Licetus, though all the world knows he was born a foetus of only five inches and a half in length, yet he grew to such astonishing height in literature as to write a book with a title as long as himself – the learned know I mean his *Gonopsychanthropologia*, upon the origin of the human soul.

So much for my chapter upon chapters, which I hold to be the best chapter in my whole work.

CHAPTER 11

‘We shall bring all things to rights,’ said my father, setting his foot upon the first step from the landing.

‘This Trismegistus,’ he continued, drawing his leg back and turning to my uncle Toby, ‘was the greatest king – the greatest law-giver – philosopher – and the greatest priest–’

‘– and engineer.’ said my uncle Toby.

‘Of course,’ said my father.

CHAPTER 12

‘And how does your mistress?’ cried my father, calling from the landing to Susannah, whom he saw passing the foot of the stairs with a huge pincushion in her hand.

Susannah, without looking up, said, ‘As well as can be expected.’

‘What a fool am I!’ said my father, drawing his leg back again. ‘’Tis ever the answer. – And how is the child, pray?’ – No reply. – ‘And where is Dr. Slop?’ added my father, raising his voice, and looking over the banisters. – Susannah was out of hearing.

‘Of all the riddles of a married life,’ said my father, crossing the landing to set his back against the wall, ‘of all the puzzling riddles, of which, brother Toby, there are more loads than all Job’s asses could have carried – there is none more puzzling than this – that from the very moment the mistress of the house is brought to bed, every female in it, right down to the kitchen-maid, becomes an inch taller for it; and gives themselves more airs upon that single inch, than all their other inches put together.’

‘I think rather,’ replied my uncle Toby, ‘that ’tis we who sink an inch lower. If I meet a woman with child, I do it. ’Tis a heavy tax upon that half of our fellow-creatures, brother Shandy – ’tis a piteous burden upon ’em,’ continued he, shaking his head.

‘Yes, yes, ’tis a painful thing,’ said my father, shaking his head too – but never did two heads shake together, from two such different causes.

‘God bless / Deuce take ’em all,’ said my uncle Toby / and my father, each to himself.

CHAPTER 13

Holla! here's sixpence – do step into that bookseller's shop, and get me a day-tall critic. I am very willing to give any one of 'em a crown to help me get my father and my uncle Toby off the stairs, and put them to bed.

'Tis high time; for except for a short nap, which they had whilst Trim was boring the jack-boots – which nap, by the bye, did my father no good, because of the bad hinge – they have not shut their eyes since nine hours before Dr. Slop was led into the back parlour by Obadiah.

Was every day of my life to be as busy as this – Truce.

I will not finish that sentence till I have made an observation upon the strange state of affairs between the reader and myself – an observation that never applied before to any biographical writer in the world, but me – and therefore, for its novelty alone, it must be worth your worships attending to.

I am this month one whole year older than I was this time twelve months ago; and having got, as you see, almost into the middle of my fourth volume, and no farther than my first day of life – therefore I have three hundred and sixty-four days more life to write now, than when I first set out; so that instead of advancing, as a common writer, in my work – on the contrary, I am just thrown so many volumes back.

If every day of my life was as busy as this – and my opinions were to take up as much description – and why should they be cut short? – at this rate I should just live 364 times faster than I write. It must follow that the more I write, the more I shall have to write – and consequently, the more your worships read, the more your worships will have to read.

Was it not that my Opinions will be the death of me, I shall lead a fine life out of this life of mine; or, rather shall lead a couple of fine lives together.

As for the proposal of twelve volumes a year, it no way alters my prospect – rush as I may, I shall never overtake myself; at the worst I shall have one day's head start of my pen – and one day is enough for two volumes – and two volumes will be enough for one year.

Heaven prosper the manufacturers of paper under this propitious reign.

As for Geese and their quills – I have no concern. Nature is bountiful – I shall never lack tools to work with.

So then, friend! you have got my father and my uncle off the stairs, and seen them to bed? How did you manage it? You dropped a curtain at the stair-foot. – Here's a crown for your trouble.

CHAPTER 14

‘Then reach me my breeches off the chair,’ said my father to Susannah.

‘There is no time to dress you, Sir,’ cried Susannah; ‘the child is as black in the face as my—’

‘As your what?’ said my father.

‘Bless me, Sir,’ said Susannah, ‘the child’s in a fit.’

‘And where’s Mr. Yorick?’

‘Never where he should be,’ said Susannah, ‘but his curate’s in the dressing-room, with the child upon his arm, waiting for the name – and my mistress bid me run as fast as I could to know, since Captain Shandy is the godfather, whether it should be called after him.’

‘If one were sure,’ said my father to himself, scratching his eyebrow, ‘that the child was expiring, one might as well compliment my brother Toby – and it would be a pity, in that case, to throw away so great a name as Trismegistus upon him – but he may recover. No, no,’ he said to Susannah. ‘I’ll get up.’

‘There is no time,’ cried Susannah, ‘the child’s as black as my shoe.’

‘Trismegistus,’ said my father. ‘But stay – thou art a leaky vessel, Susannah. Canst thou carry Trismegistus in thy head, the length of the gallery without scattering it?’

‘Can I?’ cried Susannah, shutting the door in a huff.

‘If she can, I’ll be shot,’ said my father, bouncing out of bed in the dark, and groping for his clothes.

Susannah ran with all speed along the gallery.

My father made all possible speed to find his breeches.

‘’Tis Tris – something,’ cried Susannah.

‘There is no christian-name in the world,’ said the curate, ‘beginning with Tris, but Tristram.’

‘Then ’tis Tristram-gistus,’ quoth Susannah.

‘There is no *gistus* to it, noodle! – ’tis my own name,’ replied the curate, dipping his hand into the basin. ‘Tristram!’ said he, &c. &c. &c.; so Tristram was I called, and Tristram shall I be to the day of my death.

My father followed Susannah, with nothing more than his breeches on, fastened through haste with but a single button, and that button only half in the button-hole.

‘She has not forgot the name?’ cried my father.

‘No, no,’ said the curate.

‘And the child is better,’ cried Susannah.

‘And how does your mistress?’

‘As well,’ said Susannah, ‘as can be expected.’

‘Pish!’ said my father, the button of his breeches slipping out of the button-hole. So whether that Pish was levelled at Susannah is a doubt, and must be a doubt till I have time to write the three following favourite chapters: that is, my chapter of chamber-maids, my chapter of Pishes, and my chapter of button-holes.

All I can say at present is this, that as my father cried ‘Pish!’ he whisked himself about – and with his breeches held up by one hand, he turned along the gallery to bed, somewhat slower than he came.

CHAPTER 15

I wish I could write a chapter upon sleep.

A fitter occasion could never have presented itself than this moment, when all the curtains are drawn – the candles put out – and no creature’s eyes are open but a single one, of my mother’s nurse.

It is a fine subject!

And yet, fine as it is, I would rather write a dozen chapters upon button-holes than a single chapter upon this. Button-holes! there is something lively in the very idea of ’em – and trust me, when I get amongst ’em – You gentry look as grave as you will – I’ll make merry work with my button-holes. I shall have ’em all to myself – ’tis a maiden subject – I shall run foul of no man’s fine sayings in it.

But as for sleep – I know I shall make nothing of it before I begin. I am no dab hand at fine sayings in the first place, and in the next, I cannot for my soul look grave, and tell the world ’tis the refuge of the unfortunate – the freedom of the prisoner – the comfort of the hopeless and the weary; nor could I lie by affirming, that – of all the delicious functions of our nature, by which God, in his bounty, has been pleased to recompense the sufferings wherewith his justice has wearied us – that this is the chiefest (for I know pleasures worth ten of it); or what a happiness it is to man, when the anxieties of the day are over, and he lies back, with the heavens looking calm and sweet above him – no fear or doubt troubling him.

‘God’s blessing,’ said Sancho Panza, ‘be upon the man who first invented this thing called sleep – it covers a man like a cloak.’ Now this speaks warmer to my heart than all the dissertations squeezed out of the heads of the learned.

Not that I altogether disapprove of what Montaigne says – ’tis admirable in its way; (I quote by memory):

‘The world enjoys other pleasures,’ says he, ‘as they do that of sleep, without feeling it as it slips by. We should ruminate upon it, in order to give proper thanks to him who grants it to us. I cause myself to be disturbed in my sleep, so that I may the better relish it. And yet I see few,’ says he, ‘who sleep less than me. I love to lie hard and alone, and even without my wife. This last may stagger the world – but remember, “La Vraisemblance n’est pas toujours du Côté de la Verité.”’ And so much for sleep.

CHAPTER 16

‘If my wife will allow it, brother Toby, Trismegistus shall be dressed and brought down to us, whilst we are getting our breakfasts. Go fetch Susannah, Obadiah.’

‘She is run upstairs,’ answered Obadiah, ‘sobbing and crying as if her heart would break.’

‘We shall have a rare month of it,’ said my father wistfully, shaking his head: ‘We shall have a devilish month, brother Toby; fire, water, women, wind!’

‘’Tis some misfortune,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘That it is,’ cried my father, ‘to have so many jarring elements breaking loose in every corner of a gentleman’s house. Whilst you and I, brother Toby, possess ourselves, and sit here silent and unmoved, a storm is whistling over our heads. – And what’s the matter, Susannah?’

‘They have called the child Tristram – and my mistress is just got out of an hysteric fit about it – ’tis not my fault,’ said Susannah. ‘I told him it was Tristram-gistus.’

‘Make tea for yourself, brother Toby,’ said my father – but in a manner how different from agitation than a common reader would imagine!

For he spake sweetly, and took down his hat with the genteelest movement.

‘Go to the bowling-green for corporal Trim,’ said my uncle Toby to Obadiah, as soon as my father left the room.

CHAPTER 17

When the misfortune of my Nose fell so heavily upon my father – the reader remembers that he walked upstairs, and cast himself upon his bed; and hence will expect the same movements from him, upon his misfortune of my Name: – no.

The different weight, dear Sir – nay, even the different packaging of two vexations of the same weight – makes a very wide difference in our manner of bearing them. Only half an hour ago, in my hurry, I threw a fair page which I had just finished writing out, slap into the fire, instead of the foul one.

Instantly I snatched off my wig, and threw it with all my force up to the ceiling – indeed I caught it as it fell – but there was an end of the matter. I do not think anything else in Nature would have given such immediate ease. She, dear Goddess, in provoking cases, thrusts us into this or that posture, we know not why – but we live amongst riddles and mysteries; though we cannot reason upon it – yet we benefit from it – and that’s enough.

Now, my father could not lie down with this affliction – nor could he carry it upstairs like the other. He walked composedly out with it to the fish-pond.

Had my father leaned his head upon his hand, and reasoned an hour which way to go, reason would not have directed him there: but there is something, Sir, so unaccountably becalming in an orderly and sober walk towards a fish-pond, that I have often wondered that neither Pythagoras, nor Plato, nor Solon, nor Lycurgus, nor Mahomet, nor any of your noted lawgivers, ever gave orders about them.

CHAPTER 18

‘Your honour,’ said Trim, shutting the parlour-door, ‘has heard, I imagine, of the unlucky accident?’

‘O yes, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘and it gives me great concern.’

‘I am heartily concerned too,’ replied Trim, ‘but I hope your honour will believe that it was not in the least owing to me.’

‘To thee, Trim?’ cried my uncle Toby kindly. ‘’Twas Susannah’s and the curate’s folly betwixt them.’

‘What business could they have together in the garden?’

‘In the gallery, thou meanest,’ replied my uncle.

Trim found he was upon a wrong scent, and stopped short. Two misfortunes, quoth he to himself, are twice as many as are needed now; – the mischief the cow has done in breaking into the fortifications, may be told to his honour later.

My uncle Toby, free of all suspicion, went on:

‘For my own part, Trim, I can see little difference betwixt my nephew’s being called Tristram or Trismegistus – though as it sits so near my brother’s heart, I would have given a hundred pounds for it not to have happened.’

‘A hundred pounds, your honour!’ replied Trim. ‘I would not give a cherry-stone.’

‘Nor would I, Trim, upon my own account; but my brother, whom there is no arguing with in this case, maintains that a great deal depends upon christian-names – and he says there never was an heroic action performed by one called Tristram. He holds that a Tristram cannot be learned, wise, or brave.’

‘’Tis all fancy, your honour – I fought just as well,’ replied the corporal, ‘when the regiment called me Trim, as when they called me James Butler.’

‘For my own part,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘though I should blush to boast, Trim – yet had my name been Alexander, I could have done no more at Namur than my duty.’

‘Bless your honour!’ cried Trim, ‘does a man think of his christian-name when he goes upon the attack?’

‘Or when he stands in the trench, Trim?’ cried my uncle.

‘Or when he enters a breach?’ said Trim, pushing between two chairs.

‘Or forces the lines?’ said my uncle, rising up.

‘Or faces a platoon?’ cried Trim, raising his stick.

‘Or when he marches up the glacis?’ cried my uncle Toby warmly, as he set his foot upon the stool.

CHAPTER 19

My father returned from his walk to the fish-pond, and opened the parlour-door just as my uncle Toby was marching up the glacis. Never in his life was my uncle Toby caught riding at such a desperate rate! Alas! my uncle Toby! had not a weightier matter called forth my father's eloquence – how would thy poor Hobby-Horse then have been insulted!

My father hung up his hat, and after glancing at the disorder of the room, he took one of the chairs which had formed the corporal's breach, and sat down in it. As soon as the tea-things were taken away, and the door shut, he broke out in a lamentation.

MY FATHER'S LAMENTATION

'It is in vain,' said my father, 'to struggle any longer against this most uncomfortable idea. I see plainly, that either for my own sins, brother Toby, or for the sins and follies of the Shandy family, Heaven has arrayed its heaviest artillery against me; and its force is directed against the prosperity of my child.'

'Such a thing would batter the universe about our ears, brother Shandy,' said my uncle Toby, 'if it was so.'

'Unhappy Tristram: child of wrath! mistake! and discontent! What misfortune in the book of embryonic evils, has not fallen upon thy head, ever since thou camest into the world, in the decline of thy father's days – 'tis pitiful, brother Toby. How were we defeated! You know the event – 'tis too melancholy a one to be repeated now – when the few animal spirits I had, with which memory, imagination, and quick wits should have been conveyed to my son – were all dispersed, confused, and sent to the devil.

'Here was the time to have tried an experiment – whether serenity of mind in my wife, with a due attention, brother Toby, to her evacuations and repletions, might not, during nine months gestation, have set all things to rights. My child was bereft of these! What a teasing life did she lead herself, and consequently her foetus too, with that nonsensical anxiety about lying-in in town?'

'I thought my sister in law submitted with the greatest patience,' replied my uncle Toby. 'I never heard her utter one fretful word about it.'

'She fumed inwardly,' cried my father; 'and that, let me tell you, was ten times worse for the child. – And then! what battles did she fight with me about the midwife!'

'There she gave vent,' said my uncle Toby.

'Vent!' cried my father. 'But what was all this, my dear Toby, to the injuries done by my child's coming head foremost into the world, when all I wished was to have saved this little casket unbroke. – With all my precautions, my system was turned topside-turvy in the womb! his head exposed to the hand of violence, and a pressure of 470 pounds avoirdupois acting so upon its apex – 'tis ninety per cent likely that the fine net-work of the intellectual web was torn to a thousand tatters.

'Still we could have done,' he went on. 'Be he a fool, a cripple – give him but a Nose and the door of fortune stands open. There Fate has done her worst. Yet still, brother Toby, there was one cast of the dice left for our child. O Tristram! Tristram! Tristram!'

'We will send for Mr. Yorick,' said my uncle Toby.

'You may send for whom you will,' replied my father.

CHAPTER 20

What a rate have I gone on at, frisking it away for four volumes, without looking once behind, to see whom I trod upon!

‘I’ll tread upon no one,’ quoth I to myself when I mounted – ‘I’ll take a good rattling gallop; but I’ll not hurt the poorest jackass upon the road.’

So off I set – up one lane – down another, through this turnpike – over that, as if the champion jockeys were behind me.

Now if you ride at this rate, however good your intention – ’tis a million to one you’ll do some one a mischief, if not yourself. – He’s been flung off – he’s lost his hat – he’ll break his neck – see! if he has not galloped full among the scaffolding of the critics! He’ll knock his brains out against their posts – he’s bounced out! – look – he’s riding like a mad-cap full tilt through a crowd of painters, poets, physicians, lawyers, churchmen, statesmen, soldiers, prelates, popes, and engineers.

‘Don’t fear,’ said I, ‘I’ll not hurt the poorest jackass upon the road.’

‘But your horse throws dirt; see, you’ve splashed a bishop!’

‘I hope to God, ’twas only Ernulphus,’ said I.

‘But you’ve squirted full in the faces of the doctors of the Sorbonne!’

‘That was last year,’ replied I.

‘But you have just trod upon a king!’

‘I deny it,’ quoth I, and so have got off, and here am I standing with my bridle in one hand, and my cap in the other, to tell my story.

And what is it? You shall hear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 21

As Francis the first of France was one winterly night warming himself over the fire, and talking with his first minister –

‘It would not be amiss,’ said the king, stirring up the embers with his cane, ‘if this good understanding betwixt ourselves and Switzerland was strengthened.’

‘There is no end in giving money to them, Sire,’ replied the minister; ‘they would swallow up the treasury of France.’

‘Poo! poo!’ answered the king. ‘There are more ways of bribing states than giving money. I’ll pay Switzerland the honour of being godfather to my next child.’

‘Your majesty,’ said the minister, ‘you’d have all the grammarians in Europe upon your back; Switzerland, as a republic, being female, cannot be a godfather.’

‘She may be godmother,’ replied Francis – ‘so announce my intentions by a courier tomorrow.’

‘I am astonished,’ said Francis a fortnight later, to his minister, ‘that we have had no answer from Switzerland.’

‘Sire, I have this moment brought you their reply.’

‘They take it kindly?’ said the king.

‘They do, Sire, and have the highest sense of the honour your majesty has done them – but the republic, as godmother, claims her right of naming the child.’

‘Probably,’ quoth the king, ‘she will christen him Francis, or Henry, or some name that she knows will be agreeable to us.’

‘Your majesty is deceived,’ replied the minister. ‘I have received a message from our ambassador, with the republic’s decision on that point.’

‘And what name has the republic fixed upon for the prince?’

‘Shadrach, Meshech, Abed-nego,’ replied the minister.

‘By Saint Peter’s girdle, I will have nothing to do with the Swiss,’ cried Francis. ‘We’ll pay them off.’

‘Sire, there are not sixty thousand crowns in the treasury.’

‘I’ll pawn the best jewel in my crown,’ quoth Francis.

‘Your honour stands pawned already in this matter.’

‘Then, Monsieur,’ said the king, ‘by ____, we’ll go to war with ’em.’

CHAPTER 22

Although, gentle reader, I have endeavoured carefully (with such slender skill as God has given me,) that these little books which I here put into thy hands, might stand instead of many bigger books – yet I have been so fanciful and careless, that I am ashamed, and assure thee that I have no thoughts of treading upon Francis the First. Nor, in the character of my uncle Toby, do I mean to characterize the military of my country – and by Trim, I do not mean the duke of Ormond – and if my book is wrote against free-will, or taxes, or any thing – ’tis wrote, your worships, against the spleen! – in order, by convulsive movements of the diaphragm, and the shaking of the abdominal muscles in laughter, to drive the gall and other bitter juices from the organs of his majesty’s subjects, down into their duodenums.

CHAPTER 23

‘But can the thing be undone, Yorick?’ said my father.

‘I am vile at canon law,’ replied Yorick, ‘but we shall at least know the worst of this matter.’

‘I hate these great dinners,’ said my father.

‘The size of the dinner is not the point,’ answered Yorick. ‘We want, Mr. Shandy, to dive into the bottom of this doubt, whether the name can be changed or not – and as so many officials, advocates, proctors, and school-divines are all to meet at one table, and Didius has invited you – who, in your distress, would miss such an occasion? All that you need to do is to ask Didius to manage a conversation after dinner so as to introduce the subject.’

‘Then my brother Toby shall go with us,’ cried my father.

‘Let my old tie-wig,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘and my laced regimentals, be hung by the fire all night, Trim.’

CHAPTER 25

– No doubt, Sir – there is a whole chapter (number 24) missing here – and a chasm of ten pages made in the book by it – but the bookbinder is neither a fool, or a knave, nor is the book a jot more imperfect – but, on the contrary, is more perfect by missing the chapter, than having it, as I shall demonstrate.

– I question, by the bye, whether the same experiment might not be made successfully upon various other chapters – but there is no end in trying experiments upon chapters – so enough.

But before I begin my demonstration, let me just tell you, that the chapter which I have torn out, and which otherwise you would be reading now, was the description of my father’s, my uncle Toby’s, Trim’s, and Obadiah’s setting out and journeying to the visit at ****.

‘We’ll go in the coach,’ said my father – ‘Prithee, has the coat of arms been altered, Obadiah?’

It would have made my story much better to have begun with telling you that at the time my mother’s heraldic arms were added to the Shandy’s, when the coach was re-painted upon their marriage, it had so happened that the coach-painter – whether by painting all his works with the left-hand, like Hans Holbein – or whether ’twas a blunder – or the sinister turn which everything relating to our family was apt to take – it happened that, instead of the *bend-dexter*, which since Harry the Eighth’s reign was honestly our due, a *bend-sinister*, the emblem of a child born out of wedlock, had been drawn across the field of the Shandy coat of arms.

’Tis scarce credible that a man as wise as my father, could be so much incommoded with so small a matter. The word coach, or coach-man, or coach-horse, could never be named, without him complaining of carrying this vile mark of illegitimacy upon his own coach; he was never able to step in or out of it, without turning round to view the arms, and vowing that it was the last time he would ever set his foot in it, till the *bend-sinister* was removed. But like the hinge, it was destined ever to be grumbled at, and never to be mended.

‘Has the *bend-sinister* been brushed out?’ said my father.

‘No, Sir,’ answered Obadiah.

‘We’ll go on horseback,’ said my father, turning to Yorick.

‘The clergy know nothing of heraldry,’ said Yorick.

‘No matter,’ cried my father.

‘Never mind the *bend-sinister*,’ said my uncle Toby, putting on his tie-wig.

‘No, indeed,’ said my father. ‘You may go with my aunt Dinah on a visit with a *bend-sinister*, if you think fit.’

My poor uncle blushed. My father was vexed at himself.

‘No – my dear brother,’ he said, changing his tone, ‘but the damp of the coach may give me the sciatica again, – so if you please, you shall ride my wife’s horse – and as you are to preach, Yorick, you had better make your way before us – and we shall follow at our own rates.’

Now the chapter I was obliged to tear out, was the description of this cavalcade, in which Corporal Trim and Obadiah, upon two coach-horses, slowly led the way – whilst my uncle Toby, in his laced regimentals and tie-wig, rode alongside my father.

But the painting of this journey is so much above the style of anything else I have painted in this book, that it could not have remained here without depreciating every other scene; and destroying that necessary balance betwixt chapters, from which the harmony of the whole work results. I am only just set up in the business, so know little about it – but, in my opinion, to write a book is like humming a song – stay in tune with yourself, madam, no matter how high or how low you take it.

‘I’m to preach at court next Sunday,’ said Homenas; ‘run over my notes.’ So I hummed over his notes – and a tolerable tune I thought it, never noticing how low, flat, and spiritless it was, until all of a sudden, up started a melody in the middle of it, so fine, so rich, so heavenly – it carried my soul up into the other world. ‘Your notes, Homenas,’ I should have said, ‘are good notes; – but it was so perpendicular a precipice – so cut off from the rest of the work, that I found myself flying into the other world, and discovered that the vale from which I had come was so deep and dismal, that I shall never have the heart to descend into it again.’

– And so much for tearing out of chapters.

CHAPTER 26

‘See if he is not cutting it into slips, and handing them around to light their pipes!’

‘’Tis abominable,’ answered Didius.

‘It should not go unnoticed,’ said doctor Kysarcius.

‘Methinks,’ said Didius, half rising from his chair, to remove a bottle which stood betwixt him and Yorick – ‘you might have spared this sarcastic stroke, and have hit upon a more proper place, Mr. Yorick, to have shown your contempt of us. If the sermon is of no better worth than to light pipes with – ’twas certainly, Sir, not good enough to be preached before so learned an assembly; and if ’twas good enough to be preached before us, ’twas certainly too good to light pipes with afterwards.’

Didius thought, ‘I have got him hung upon the horns of my dilemma – let him get off as he can.’

‘I have undergone such unspeakable torments, in bringing forth this sermon,’ quoth Yorick, ‘that I declare, Didius, I would suffer martyrdom before I would sit down and make such another. It came from my head instead of my heart – and it is for the pain it gave me, that I revenge myself on it in this manner. To preach – to parade before vulgar eyes our beggarly learning, tinselled over with a few words which glitter, but convey little light and less warmth – ’tis not preaching the gospel – but ourselves. For my own part,’ continued he, ‘I had rather direct five words point-blank to the heart.’

As Yorick pronounced the word *point-blank*, my uncle Toby rose up to say something upon projectiles – when a single word uttered from the opposite side of the table drew everyone’s ears – a word of all others in the dictionary the last to be expected – a word I am ashamed to write – yet must be written – guess ten thousand guesses, you’ll never get there–

In short, I’ll tell it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 27

'Zounds! ----- Z-----
ds!' cried Phutatorius, partly to himself, yet high enough to be heard, in a tone between amazement and bodily pain.

One or two could distinguish the mixture of the two tones as plainly as a fifth chord in music – but they could not tell what in the world to make of it.

Others imagined that Phutatorius, who was short-tempered, was about to take the cudgels from Didius and attack Yorick – and that the desperate monosyllable Z-----ds was the introduction to a forceful speech. But seeing Phutatorius stop short, they then supposed that it was no more than an involuntary breath, casually forming itself into an oath – without the sin of one.

Those who sat next to him looked upon it, on the contrary, as a real oath against Yorick, whom he was known to not like – this oath being squeezed out by the surprise which so strange a theory of preaching had given him.

How finely we argue upon mistaken facts!

Everybody there assumed that Phutatorius's mind was intent upon the debate between Didius and Yorick; and indeed he looked first towards the one and then the other, with the air of a man listening.

But the truth was, that Phutatorius knew not one word of what was passing – his thoughts were taken up with something which was happening at that very instant within his own breeches, and in a part of them where he was most interested. So although he looked with all the attention in the world, and had screwed up every muscle in his face, – yet the true cause of his exclamation lay a yard below.

This I will try to explain with decency.

Gastripheres, who had wandered into the kitchen before dinner, to see how things went on – observing a wicker-basket of fine chestnuts standing upon the dresser, had ordered that a hundred of them might be roasted and sent in after dinner, because Didius, and Phutatorius especially, were fond of 'em.

The chestnuts were brought in – and as Phutatorius's fondness for 'em was uppermost in the waiter's head, he laid them directly before Phutatorius, wrapped up hot in a clean damask napkin.

Now, one chestnut, of more life and rotundity than the rest, must have been put in motion – it was sent rolling off the table; and as Phutatorius sat straddled under – it fell straight into that particular opening of Phutatorius's breeches, for which there is no chaste word in Johnson's dictionary. Let it suffice to say – it was that opening which, in all good societies, the laws of decorum strictly require to be shut up.

Phutatorius's neglect of this rule had opened a door to this accident.

– Accident I call it; but Acrites and Mythogeras were both sure that there was no accident in it – but that the hot chestnut's falling directly into that particular place was a judgment upon Phutatorius, for his filthy treatise *de Concubinis retinendis*, which he had published about twenty years earlier, and was that week going to give the world a second edition of.

It is not my business to dip my pen in this controversy – all that concerns me is the fact that the gap in Phutatorius's breeches was wide enough to receive the chestnut; which somehow or other fell piping hot into it, without anyone noticing.

The genial warmth of the chestnut was not unpleasant for the first twenty seconds or so – and did no more than gently call Phutatorius's attention to the part.

But the heat increasing speedily into the regions of pain, the soul of Phutatorius, together with his thoughts, attention and judgment, all tumultuously crowded down to the place of danger, leaving his upper regions as empty as my purse.

Phutatorius had no idea of what was going on below, nor could he make any guess what the devil was the matter. However, he deemed it most prudent, in the situation he was in, to bear it, if possible, like a Stoic; which, with the help of some wry faces, he had certainly accomplished.

But then the thought darted into his mind, that though the anguish felt like heat, it might just as likely be a bite as a burn; and that possibly some detested reptile had crept up, and was fastening its teeth in him – a horrid idea which seized Phutatorius with a sudden panic, and threw him quite off his guard.

The effect was that he leapt up, uttering that *Z-----ds* – which was the least any man could have said upon the occasion.

Drawing forth the chestnut, he threw it down violently upon the floor – and Yorick picked it up.

It is curious to observe the triumph of slight incidents over the mind: – what incredible weight they have in forming our opinions, – so that trifles, light as air, waft a belief into the soul, and plant it immoveably within.

Yorick, as I said, picked up the chestnut – the action was trifling – he did it, for no reason, but that a good chestnut was worth stooping for.

But this incident, trifling as it was, worked differently in Phutatorius's head. He considered Yorick's act as a plain acknowledgment that the chestnut was originally his – and that it must have been Yorick who had played him a prank. The table being very narrow, it gave Yorick, who sat opposite him, the opportunity of slipping the chestnut in – and consequently Phutatorius assumed he did it.

The look of suspicion which Phutatorius gave Yorick spoke his opinion – and as Phutatorius was naturally supposed to know more of the matter than any other person, his opinion at once became the general one.

And naturally, men looked for the cause of this. – The search was not long.

It was well known that Yorick had never a good opinion of Phutatorius's treatise, *de Concubinis retinendis* – and 'twas decided that there was a mystical meaning in Yorick's prank, and that his chucking the hot chestnut into Phutatorius's breeches was a sarcastical fling at his book – the doctrines of which had enflamed many an honest man in the same place.

This idea was thought by many to be a master-stroke of arch-wit.

This, as the reader has seen, was groundless: though Yorick was 'a man of jest,' his nature withheld him from that, and many other pranks, of which he undeservedly bore the blame. It was his misfortune all his life to bear the blame of a thousand things, of which he was incapable. All I blame him for – and also like him for – was that he would never set a story right with the world, even if he could. In every ill usage of that sort, he acted precisely as in the affair of his lean horse – he could have explained it to his honour, but he would not stoop to tell his story to those who believed ungenerous reports. He trusted to time and truth to do it for him.

This heroic cast of mind often inconvenienced him; here it was followed by the fixed resentment of Phutatorius, who rose up from his chair with a smile; saying that he would not forget the obligation.

– The smile was for the company.

– The threat was for Yorick.

CHAPTER 28

‘Can you tell me,’ quoth Phutatorius, ‘–what is best to take out the heat?’

‘That greatly depends,’ said Eugenius, pretending ignorance of the adventure, ‘upon the nature of the part. If it is a tender part, which can easily be wrapped up–’

‘It is,’ replied Phutatorius, lifting up his right leg to ventilate it.

‘In that case,’ said Eugenius, ‘I would advise you not to tamper with it; but send to the printer, and trust your cure to a soft sheet of paper just come off the press – simply twist it round.’

‘Although the damp paper has a refreshing coolness,’ quoth Yorick, ‘yet I presume it is the oil and lamp-black with which the paper is impregnated, which does the business.’

‘Right,’ said Eugenius, ‘and it is a remedy both anodyne and safe.’

‘As the main thing is the oil and lamp-black,’ said Gastripheres, ‘I should spread them thick upon a rag, and clap it on directly.’

‘That would not answer,’ said Eugenius, ‘for the neatness and elegance of the prescription is what matters. For if the type is a very small one, the useful particles have the advantage of being spread so infinitely thin, and with such a mathematical equality (large capitals excepted) as no management of the spatula can come up to.’

‘It is very lucky,’ replied Phutatorius, ‘that the second edition of my treatise is at this instant in the press.’

‘You may use any page of it,’ said Eugenius.

‘Provided,’ quoth Yorick, ‘there is no bawdry in it.’

‘They are just now printing the ninth chapter,’ replied Phutatorius.

‘Pray what is that chapter’s title?’ said Yorick, bowing respectfully.

‘*De re concubinaria – On the Matter of Concubines.*’

‘For Heaven’s sake keep out of that chapter,’ quoth Yorick.

CHAPTER 29

‘Now,’ quoth Didius, rising up, ‘if such a blunder about a Christian name had happened before the Reformation, when baptism was administered in Latin, – many things might have occurred which would allow an authority to pronounce the baptism null, with a power of giving the child a new name. Had a priest, for instance, through ignorance of the Latin tongue, baptized a child *in nomine patriae et filia et spiritum sanctos* – the baptism was held null.’

‘I beg your pardon,’ replied Kysarcus, ‘in that case, as the mistake was only the word-endings, the baptism was valid. To have rendered it null, the priest should have blundered on the first syllable of each noun, and not the last.’

My father delighted in subtleties of this kind, and listened with great attention.

‘If Gastripheres, for example,’ continued Kysarcus, ‘baptizes a child of John Stradling’s *in gomine gattris*, instead of *in nomine patris* – is this a baptism? No: for the root of each word is torn up, and it becomes meaningless; therefore, it is null.’

‘Of course,’ answered Yorick, in a tone part jest and part earnest.

‘But in the case cited,’ continued Kysarcus, ‘with *patriae* for *patris*, and so on – as it is a fault only in the declension, and the roots of the words and their meaning continue untouched, it does not hinder the baptism. We have an instance in a decree of Pope Leo the Third–’

‘But my brother’s child has nothing to do with the Pope,’ cried my uncle Toby; ‘’tis the child of a Protestant gentleman, christened Tristram against the wishes of his father and mother, and all his kin.’

‘If the wishes of only Mr. Shandy’s family were to have weight in this matter,’ said Kysarcus, ‘Mrs. Shandy, of all people, has the least.’

My uncle Toby laid down his pipe, and my father drew his chair closer to the table, to hear more.

‘It has been a question, Captain Shandy, amongst the best lawyers in this land,’ continued Kysarcus, “‘whether the mother be of kin to her child;” but, after much enquiry into all the arguments – it has been judged for the negative: namely, “That the mother is not of kin to her child.””

My father instantly clapped his hand upon my uncle Toby’s mouth, under the pretence of whispering in his ear; the truth was, he was alarmed for *Lillabullero*, for he had a great desire to hear more of so curious an argument. My uncle Toby resumed his pipe, and contenting himself with whistling *Lillabullero* inwardly.

‘This decision,’ continued Kysarcus, ‘however contrary it may seem to run to vulgar ideas, yet had reason strongly on its side; and has been put beyond dispute by the famous case of the Duke of Suffolk. The case, Mr. Shandy, was this.

‘In the reign of Edward the Sixth, Charles duke of Suffolk, having a son by one mother, and a daughter by another, made his last will, wherein he left his goods to his son, and died. After his death the son died also – but without a will, without wife or child. Since his mother and his sister by the father’s side were then living, the mother took the administration of her son’s goods, according to the 21st statute of Harry the Eighth, whereby if any person should die intestate the administration of his goods shall be committed to the next of kin.

‘The administration being thus granted to the mother, the sister began a suit before the Ecclesiastical Judge, alleging, first, that she herself was next of kin; and second, that the mother was not of kin at all to the deceased son; and therefore she

prayed the court that the administration of the estate might be revoked from the mother and given to her.

‘As it was a great cause, with much depending upon its result, the most learned lawyers were consulted as to whether the mother was of kin to her son, or no. All the lawyers and judges were unanimously of the opinion, that the mother was not of kin to her child.’

‘And what said the duchess of Suffolk to it?’ said my uncle Toby.

The unexpectedness of my uncle’s question confounded Kysarcus. He paused, and Triptolemus took over.

‘’Tis a principle in the law,’ said Triptolemus, ‘that things do not ascend, but descend in it; so that however true it is, that the child is of the blood and seed of its parents – the parents, nevertheless, are not of the blood and seed of the child; for they are not begot by the child.’

‘But Triptolemus,’ cried Didius, ‘from this it would follow, not only that the mother is not of kin to her child – but the father likewise.’

‘It is held,’ said Triptolemus, ‘that the father, the mother, and the child, though they be three persons, yet are they but one flesh; and consequently no degree of kindred.’

‘There you push the argument again too far,’ cried Didius, ‘for there is no prohibition in nature – though there is in the Bible – to prevent a man from begetting a child upon his grandmother – in which case, supposing the issue a daughter, she would stand in relation both of–’

‘But who ever thought,’ cried Kysarcus, ‘of lying with his grandmother?’

‘A young gentleman in one case,’ replied Yorick, ‘not only thought of it, but justified his intention to his father by the law of retaliation. “You lay, Sir, with my mother,” said the lad; “why may not I lie with yours?” ’Tis the *Argumentum commune* – the argument of the common public.’

‘’Tis as good,’ replied Eugenius, ‘as they deserve.’

The company broke up.

CHAPTER 30

‘And pray,’ said my uncle Toby, leaning upon Yorick, as he and my father were helping him down the stairs – don’t be terrified, madam, this staircase conversation is not so long as the last – ‘And pray, Yorick,’ said my uncle, ‘which way is this affair of Tristram at length settled by these learned men?’

‘Very satisfactorily,’ replied Yorick; ‘no mortal, Sir, has any concern with it – for Mrs. Shandy the mother is nothing at all a-kin to him – and as the mother’s is the surest side, Mr. Shandy is even less than nothing.’

‘That may well be,’ said my father, shaking his head.

‘Let the learned say what they will, there must certainly,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘have been some shared blood betwixt the duchess of Suffolk and her son.’

‘The vulgar are of the same opinion,’ quoth Yorick, ‘to this hour.’

CHAPTER 31

Though my father was hugely tickled with the subtleties of this learned discourse – 'twas still like putting ointment on a broken bone.

When he got home, his afflictions weighed upon him so much the heavier. He became pensive – walked frequently to the fish-pond – sighed often – and would have certainly fallen ill, had not his thoughts been distracted by a fresh train of worries left him, with a legacy of a thousand pounds, by my aunt Dinah.

My father had scarce read the letter, when he instantly began to puzzle his head how to use the money to the honour of his family. A hundred-and-fifty odd projects took possession of him by turns – he would go to Rome – he would go to law – he would buy stock – he would buy John Hobson's farm – he would build a new front to his house, and add a new wing to make it even. – There was a fine water-mill on this side, and he would build a wind-mill on the other side of the river in full view to answer it.

– But above all things in the world, he would enclose the great Ox-moor, and send out my brother Bobby immediately upon his travels.

As the sum was finite, and could not do everything, of all these projects, the two last made the deepest impression; and he would have done both, could he have afforded it: but he needed to decide in favour of either one or the other.

This was not so easy; for though my father had long before set his heart upon this necessary part of my brother's education, and had determined to carry it out with the first money that returned from his investments in the Mississippi-scheme – yet the Ox-moor, which was a fine, large, gorse-covered, undrained common, belonging to the Shandy-estate, had almost as old a claim upon him: he had long wished to turn it to some account.

Having never had to decide between the two before, he now found that it was so equal a match between the Ox-moor and my Brother, as to cause no small contest in the old gentleman's mind.

People may laugh – but the case was this.

It had always been the family's custom that the eldest son should be free to travel into foreign parts before marriage – not only to benefit bodily from the exercise and change of air – but also for the delectation of his fancy, by the feather put into his cap of having been abroad.

Now as this was a reasonable indulgence – to deprive him of it, without why or wherefore – and thereby make him the first Shandy unwhirled about Europe in a post-chaise – would be using him ten times worse than a Turk.

On the other hand, the case of the Ox-moor was just as hard.

As well as the purchase-money, which was eight hundred pounds, it had cost the family eight hundred pounds more in a law-suit about fifteen years before – besides the Lord knows what trouble and vexation.

It had been in possession of the Shandy-family ever since the middle of the last century; and though it lay full in view before the house, bounded on one side by the water-mill, and on the other by the projected wind-mill spoken of above – yet, unaccountably, it had always been most shamefully overlooked. To speak the truth, it had suffered so much that it would have made any man's heart bleed (Obadiah said) who understood the value of the land, to have rode over it, and seen the condition it was in.

However, as neither its purchase nor its position were of my father's doing, he had never concerned himself with it – till fifteen years before, when the fighting of that cursed law-suit mentioned above (which had arose about its boundaries), being altogether my father's own act, naturally awakened every argument in its favour, so that he felt honour-bound to do something for it – and that now or never was the time.

I think it was ill-luck that the reasons on both sides were so equally balanced; for though my father weighed them anxiously – reading books of farming one day – books of travels another – arguing with my uncle and Yorick, and talking over the affair of the Ox-moor with Obadiah – yet nothing appeared so strongly in behalf of the one, which was not counterbalanced by some consideration of equal weight in the other.

For, to be sure, with the proper helps, the Ox-moor would undoubtedly have made a different appearance from what it did – yet this was also true with regard to my brother Bobby.

The contest, I own, at first sight, did not appear so close: for whenever my father calculated the simple expense of burning and fencing in the Ox-moor, compared to the profit it would bring him – the latter turned out so prodigiously in his favour, that you would have thought the Ox-moor would have carried all before it. For it was plain his crop of rape should make two thousand pounds the very first year – besides an excellent wheat harvest the year following – and the year after that, a hundred, if not two hundred quarters of peas and beans – besides potatoes without end.

But then, to think he was all this while breeding up my brother like a hog to eat them, knocked all on the head again, and left the old gentleman in such suspense that he knew no more than his heels what to do.

Nobody can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man's mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in contrary directions: for to say nothing of the havoc made on the nerves, such a wayward friction works to a dreadful degree upon the more gross and solid parts, impairing the strength of a man every time it goes backwards and forwards.

My father would certainly have sunk under this evil, as he had done under that of my christian name – had he not been rescued out of it by a fresh evil – the misfortune of my brother Bobby's death.

What is the life of man! Is it not to shift from sorrow to sorrow? – to button up one cause of vexation – and unbutton another?

CHAPTER 32

From this moment I am to be considered as heir-apparent to the Shandy family – and it is from this point properly that the story of my Life and my Opinions begins. With all my hurry, I have merely been clearing the ground to raise the building – and such a building do I foresee it will turn out, as never was planned and executed since Adam.

In five minutes I shall have thrown my pen into the fire, and my last drop of ink with it. I have ten things to do in that time – I have a thing to name – a thing to lament – a thing to hope – a thing to promise, and a thing to threaten – I have a thing to suppose – a thing to declare – a thing to conceal – a thing to choose, and a thing to pray for.

This chapter, therefore, I name the chapter of Things – and my next chapter, that is, the first chapter of my next volume, shall be my chapter upon Whiskers.

The thing I lament is, that things have crowded in so thick upon me, that I have not been able to get into that part of my work, towards which I have always looked forwards with earnest desire; and that is the Campaigns, but especially the amours of my uncle Toby, the events of which are of so singular and Cervantick a nature, that if I can manage to convey the same impressions to every other brain, which they excite in mine – my book shall make its way in the world much better than I have done.

Oh Tristram! Tristram! can this but be brought about – thy credit as an author shall counterbalance the many evils which have befallen thee as a man!

No wonder I itch so much to get at these amours. – They are the choicest morsel of my whole story! and when I do get at 'em – assure yourselves, good folks, I shall not be dainty in my choice of words! – that's the thing I have to declare.

I shall never get through them all in five minutes, I fear – and the thing I hope is, that your worships are not offended – if you are, depend upon it, I'll give you something next year to be offended at – that's my dear Jenny's way – but who my Jenny is, and which is the right and the wrong end of a woman, is the thing to be concealed – it shall be told you in the next chapter but one after my chapter of Button-holes – and not one chapter before.

And now that you have got to the end of these four volumes – the thing I have to ask is, how do your heads feel? My own aches dismally! As for your healths, I know they are better. True Shandeism opens the heart and lungs, and forces the blood to run freely through its channels, making the wheel of life run long and cheerfully round.

If I was allowed, like Sancho Panza, to choose my kingdom, it should be a kingdom of hearty laughing subjects. And as the bilious passions, by creating disorders in the blood, have as bad an influence upon the body politic as the body natural – and as nothing but a habit of virtue can fully govern those passions – I would add to my prayer that God would make my subjects as Wise as they were Merry; and then should I be the happiest monarch, and they the happiest people under heaven.

And so, with this moral, I take my leave of your worships till this time twelve-month, when, (unless this vile cough kills me in the meantime) I'll lay open to the world a story you little dream of.

BOOK 5

CHAPTER I

If it had not been for those two mettlesome horses, and that madcap of a postillion who drove them from Stilton to Stamford, the thought would have never entered my head. He flew like lightning – we scarce touched the ground – the impetuous motion was communicated to my brain – and my heart.

‘By the great God of day,’ said I, looking towards the sun, and thrusting my arm out of the carriage window, ‘I will lock up my study-door the moment I get home, and throw its key down the well.’

The London waggon confirmed me in my resolution; it hung tottering upon the hill, scarce progressing, dragged up by eight heavy beasts – ‘by main strength!’ quoth I, nodding – ‘but your betters drag the same way!’

Tell me, shall we for ever be adding so much to the bulk – and so little to the stock of learning?

Shall we for ever make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring out of one vessel into another?

Are we for ever to be twisting, and untwisting the same rope?

Shall we be eternally showing the relics of learning, as monks do the relics of their saints – without working one single miracle with them?

Who made Man – that most excellent and noble creature of the world – the miracle of nature, as Zoroaster called him – the image of God, as said Moses – the ray of divinity, as said Plato – the marvel of marvels, as said Aristotle – to go sneaking on at this pitiful, pettifogging rate?

I wish that every imitator caught the farcy, or glanders, for his pains; and that there was a good farcical house, large enough to hold ’em, shag rag and bob-tail, male and female, all together: and this leads me to the affair of Whiskers.

UPON WHISKERS

I’m sorry I made it – ’twas as inconsiderate a promise as ever entered a man’s head.

A chapter upon whiskers! alas! the world will not bear it – ’tis a delicate world – and if I had seen the fragment below, as surely as noses are noses, and whiskers are whiskers, I would have steered clear of this dangerous chapter.

THE FRAGMENT

* * * * *

* – ‘You are half asleep, my good lady,’ said the old gentleman. Taking the old lady’s hand, and giving it a gentle squeeze, he pronounced the word, ‘Whiskers. – shall we change the subject?’

‘By no means,’ replied the old lady. ‘I like your account of those matters.’ Throwing a gauze handkerchief over her head, and leaning back in the chair, she continued, ‘Please go on.’

The old gentleman went on as follows:

‘Whiskers!’ cried the queen of Navarre, dropping her knotting ball, as La Fosseuse uttered the word.

‘Whiskers, madam,’ said La Fosseuse, making a curtsy.

The maid of honour’s voice was soft and low, yet every letter of the word *Whiskers* fell distinctly upon the queen’s ear.

‘Whiskers!’ cried Queen Margaret again.

‘Whiskers!’ replied La Fosseuse. ‘There is not a cavalier, madam, in Navarre, that has so gallant a pair—’

‘Of what?’ cried the queen, smiling.

‘Of whiskers,’ said La Fosseuse, with infinite modesty.

The word Whiskers was used in the best company throughout the little kingdom of Navarre, notwithstanding La Fosseuse’s indiscreet use of it: the truth was, she had said the word, not only before the queen, but on other occasions at court, with an accent which always implied a mystery.

And as the court of Margaret was a mixture of gallantry and devotion, the word stood its ground. The clergy were for it – the laity were against it – and as for the women, they were divided.

The excellent figure and bearing of the young Seigneur De Croix was at that time beginning to draw the attention of the maids of honour. The lady De Baussiere fell deeply in love with him; La Battarelle did the same. La Guyol, La Maronette and La Sabatiere fell in love with him also – La Rebours and La Fosseuse knew better.

The queen of Navarre was sitting with her ladies in the bow-window, facing the gate, as De Croix passed through it.

‘He is handsome,’ said the Lady Baussiere. ‘He is finely shaped,’ said La Guyol. ‘I never saw an officer with two such legs,’ said La Maronette.

–‘But he has no whiskers,’ cried La Fosseuse.

The queen went to her oratory, musing upon the subject; ‘Ave Maria! – what can La Fosseuse mean?’ said she, kneeling to pray.

La Guyol, La Battarelle, La Maronette and La Sabatiere retired instantly to their chambers. ‘Whiskers!’ said all four to themselves.

The Lady Carnavallette was telling her rosary: from St. Antony down to St. Ursula, not a saint passed through her fingers without whiskers.

The Lady Baussiere had got into a wilderness of speculations upon La Fosseuse’s words. She mounted her palfrey, her page following, and rode on.

‘One penny,’ cried a suppliant of the Order of Mercy, ‘one single penny, on behalf of a thousand patient captives.’

The Lady Baussiere rode on.

‘Pity the unfortunate,’ said a devout old man meekly holding up a box in his withered hands. ‘’tis for a prison – for an hospital – ’tis for an old man – a poor man undone by shipwreck, by fire – ’tis to feed the hungry – to comfort the sick.’

The Lady Baussiere rode on.

An ancient kinsman bowed low.

The Lady Baussiere rode on.

He ran alongside her palfrey, begging: ‘Cousin, aunt, sister, mother, for Christ’s sake, remember me – pity me.’

The Lady Baussiere rode on.

‘Take hold of my whiskers,’ said the Lady Baussiere. The page took hold of her palfrey, and she dismounted.

There are certain ideas which leave prints of themselves about our eyes; and a consciousness somewhere about the heart makes these etchings all the stronger – we spell them out without a dictionary.

‘Ha, ha! he, hee!’ cried La Guyol and La Sabatiere, looking at each other’s eyes.

‘Ho, ho!’ cried La Battarelle and Maronette, doing the same.

La Fosseuse drew her hairpin from her hair, and traced the outline of a small whisker with the blunt end of it upon her upper lip.

The Lady Baussiere coughed thrice. – La Guyol smiled.

‘Fie,’ said the Lady Baussiere. The queen of Navarre touched her eye with the tip of her finger – as if to say, I understand you all.

’Twas plain to the whole court that the word was ruined. It made a faint stand, however, for a few months, by the end of which, the Seignior De Croix found it high time to leave Navarre for want of whiskers; and the word became indecent, and absolutely unfit for use.

The best word in the world must have suffered under such conditions. The curate of d’Estella wrote a book on this, setting forth the dangers of accessory ideas.

‘Does not all the world know,’ said the curate, ‘that Noses suffered the same fate centuries ago, which Whiskers have now done? Have not beds, bolsters, nightcaps and chamber-pots stood upon the brink of destruction ever since? Are not trousers and placket-holes and pump-handles in danger still from the same association? Chastity is the gentlest of all affections – but if you give it its head, ’tis like a ramping lion.’

The drift of the curate’s argument was not understood. The world went the wrong way, and bridled his ass at the tail.

And when Delicacy and Lust next meet together, they may decree *that* bawdy also.

CHAPTER 2

When my father received the letter containing the melancholy news of my brother Bobby's death, he was busy calculating the expense of travelling from Calais to Paris and Lyons.

My father had almost got to the end of the journey, when he had to start afresh because of Obadiah's opening the door to tell him the family was out of yeast – and to ask whether he might take the great coach-horse and ride in search of some.

'With all my heart, Obadiah,' said my father (pursuing his journey).

'But the coach-horse needs a shoe, poor creature!' said Obadiah.

'Poor creature!' said my uncle Toby, like a string vibrating in unison.

'Then ride the Scotch horse,' quoth my father.

'He cannot bear a saddle upon his back,' quoth Obadiah.

'The devil's in that horse; then take Patriot,' cried my father.

'Patriot is sold,' said Obadiah.

'Sold!' cried my father, as if the thing had not been a matter of fact.

'Your worship ordered me to sell him last April,' said Obadiah.

'Then go on foot,' cried my father.

'I had much rather walk than ride,' said Obadiah, shutting the door.

'What plagues,' cried my father, going on with his calculation.

'But the roads are flooded,' said Obadiah, opening the door again.

Till that moment, my father, who had a map and a book of the post-roads before him, had kept one foot of his compasses fixed upon Nevers, the next stage in his journey and his calculation: but this second attack of Obadiah's, in opening the door and laying the whole country under water, was too much.

He let go his compasses – or rather, in a mixture of accident and anger, he threw them upon the table; and then he had to return all the way back to Calais.

He had got forward again with his journey to within a stride of Nevers, when the letter was brought in, which contained the news of my brother's death.

'By your leave, Monsieur,' cried my father, stabbing his compasses through Nevers into the table – and nodding to my uncle Toby to see what was in the letter. Holding his compasses with one hand, and his book of post-roads in the other – half calculating and half listening – he leaned upon the table with both elbows, as my uncle Toby hummed over the letter.

'-----
----- he's gone!' said my uncle Toby.

'Where? Who?' cried my father.

'My nephew,' said my uncle Toby.

'What – without leave – without money?' cried my father in amazement.

'No: he is dead, my dear brother,' quoth my uncle Toby.

'Without being ill?' cried my father.

'I dare say not,' said my uncle Toby, in a low voice, and sighing deeply. 'Poor lad! He is dead.'

When Agrippina was told of her son's death, Tacitus informs us that she abruptly broke off her work. – My father stuck his compasses into Nevers yet more firmly.

How my father went on, in my opinion, deserves a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER 3

And a chapter it shall have, and a devil of a one too – so look out.

'Tis either Plato, or Plutarch, or Seneca, or Xenophon – or perhaps Cardan or Petrarch or Stella – or possibly it may be some church father, St. Austin or St. Cyprian, who affirms that it is an irresistible and natural passion to weep for the loss of our friends or children. And so we find that David wept for his son Absalom, Adrian for his Antinous, Niobe for her children, and Apollodorus shed tears for Socrates.

My father managed his affliction differently from most men; for he neither wept it away, or slept it off, as the Laplanders do, or hanged it, like the English; nor did he curse it, or damn it, or rhyme it, or lillabullero it.

He got rid of it, however.

Will your worships allow me to squeeze in a story?

When Tully was bereft of his dear daughter Tullia, at first he took it to heart, grieving, 'O my Tullia! my child! Methinks I see her, I hear her, I talk with my Tullia.'

But when he began to look into the stores of philosophy, and realise how many excellent things might be said upon the occasion – 'nobody can conceive,' says the great orator, 'how happy and joyful it made me.'

My father was proud of his eloquence, and with reason: it was indeed his strength – and his weakness too, for if an occasion would permit him to say either a wise thing, a witty, or a shrewd one – he had all he wanted. A blessing which tied up my father's tongue, and a misfortune which let it loose, were pretty equal: sometimes, indeed, the misfortune was the better. For instance, if the pleasure of the harangue was 10 and the pain of the misfortune only 5, my father gained from it.

This clue will unravel what otherwise would seem very inconsistent in my father's character; that when provoked by the blunders of servants and other family mishaps, his anger, or rather the duration of it, ran contrary to all conjecture.

My father had a favourite little mare, which he had bred with a most beautiful Arabian horse, in order to have a foal out of her for his own riding: he talked about this foal every day as if it had already been reared, broke, and saddled. By some neglect or other in Obadiah, it so fell out that my father's expectations were answered with nothing better than a mule, and as ugly a beast as ever was produced.

My mother and my uncle Toby expected my father would be the death of Obadiah – and that there would never be an end of it.

'See here! you rascal,' cried my father, pointing to the mule, 'what you have done!'

'It was not me,' said Obadiah.

'How do I know that?' replied my father.

Triumph swam in my father's eyes at this repartee – and so Obadiah heard no more about it.

Now let us go back to my brother's death.

Philosophy has a fine saying for everything. – For Death it has an entire set; the trouble was, they all rushed at once into my father's head, so that 'twas difficult to set them in order. – He took them as they came.

'Tis inevitable – the first statute in Magna Carta – it is an everlasting act of parliament, my dear brother. All must die.

‘If my son could *not* have died, that would have been a matter of wonder.

‘Monarchs and princes dance in the same ring with us.

‘To die is the great debt and tribute due unto nature: tombs and monuments pay it; the proudest pyramid of all has lost its apex, and stands obtruncated in the traveller’s horizon.’ (My father found he got great ease, and went on.)

‘Kingdoms, towns and cities, have they not their ends? and when those powers, which at first cemented them together, have performed their evolutions, they fall back.’

‘Brother Shandy,’ said my uncle Toby, laying down his pipe.

‘Revolutions, I meant,’ quoth my father, ‘evolutions is nonsense.’

‘’Tis not nonsense,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘But is it not nonsense to break the thread of such a discourse upon such an occasion?’ cried my father. ‘–Do not, dear Toby, I beseech thee, interrupt me at this crisis.’

My uncle put his pipe into his mouth.

‘Where is Troy and Mycenae, and Thebes and Delos?’ continued my father.

‘What is become of Nineveh and Babylon? The fairest towns that ever the sun rose upon, are now no more; the names only are left, and those in time will be forgotten, and lost in a perpetual night: the world itself, brother Toby, must come to an end.

‘Returning out of Asia, when I sailed from Aegina towards Megara,’ (‘when can this have been?’ thought my uncle Toby) ‘I began to view the country round about. Aegina was behind me, Megara was before, Piraeus on the right hand, Corinth on the left. What flourishing towns, now prostrate upon the earth! Alas! said I to myself, that man should disturb his soul for the loss of a child, when all this lies buried – remember, said I – remember thou art a man.’

Now my uncle Toby did not know that this last paragraph was an extract of Sulpicius’s letter to Tully. And as my father, when he did business in the Turkey trade, had been three or four times in the Levant, and had once stayed a whole year and an half, my uncle Toby naturally concluded that, in one of these visits, he had taken a trip into Asia; and that all this sailing affair with Aegina behind, and Megara before, &c., &c., was nothing more than the course of my father’s voyage.

‘Pray, brother,’ quoth my uncle in a kindly way, ‘what year of our Lord was this?’

‘’Twas no year of our Lord,’ replied my father.

‘That’s impossible,’ cried my uncle Toby.

‘Simpleton!’ said my father, ‘’twas forty years before Christ was born.’

My uncle Toby had only two things for it; either to suppose his brother to be the wandering Jew, or that his misfortunes had disordered his brain.

‘May the Lord God protect and restore him,’ said he silently, with tears in his eyes.

My father placed the tears to a proper account, and went on with spirit.

‘There is not such great odds, brother Toby, betwixt good and evil, as the world imagines.’ (This, by the bye, was not likely to cure my uncle Toby’s suspicions.)

‘Labour, sorrow, grief, sickness and woe, are the sauces of life.

‘My son is dead! – so much the better; ’tis a shame in such a tempest to have but one anchor.

‘But he is gone for ever from us! – be it so. He is got from under the hands of his barber before he was bald – he is but risen from a feast before he was surfeited. The Thracians wept when a child was born’ (‘and we were very near it,’ quoth my

uncle Toby) ‘—and feasted and made merry when a man died. For death opens the gate of fame, and shuts the gate of envy; it unlooses the captive’s chain.

‘Show me the man who dreads death, and I’ll show thee a prisoner who dreads liberty.

‘Is it not better, my dear brother Toby, not to hunger at all, than to eat?’

‘Is it not better to be freed from cares and melancholy, than be like a traveller, who comes weary to his inn, only to have to start his journey afresh?’

‘There is no terror, brother Toby, in death’s looks, except what it borrows from groans and convulsions, and the wiping away of tears with the bottoms of curtains, in a dying man’s room. Strip it of these, and what is it?’

‘’Tis better in battle than in bed,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘Better in battle!’ continued my father, smiling, for he had absolutely forgot my brother Bobby. ‘’Tis not terrible – for when we are, death is not; and when death is, we are not.’

My uncle Toby laid down his pipe to consider this.

‘For this reason,’ continued my father, ‘’tis worthy to recollect how little change, in great men, the approaches of death have made. Vespasian died in a jest; Galba with a sentence – Tiberius in concealment, and Augustus in a compliment.’

‘I hope ’twas a sincere one,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘’Twas to his wife,’ said my father.

CHAPTER 4

‘And lastly, of all the choice anecdotes which history gives us on this matter,’ continued my father, ‘this, like a gilded dome, crowns all. ’Tis the story of Cornelius Gallus, which, I dare say, brother Toby, you have read.’

‘I dare say I have not,’ replied my uncle.

‘He died,’ said my father, ‘while *****.’

‘If it was with his wife,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘there could be no hurt in it.’

‘That’s more than I know,’ replied my father.

CHAPTER 5

My mother was going very gingerly in the dark along the passage which led to the parlour, as my uncle Toby pronounced the word *wife*.

Obadiah had left the door a little ajar, so that my mother heard enough to imagine herself the subject of the conversation. Laying her finger across her lips, and holding her breath, she put her ear to the chink in the door and listened with all her powers.

In this attitude I am determined to let her stand for five minutes: till I bring the affairs of the kitchen up to date.

CHAPTER 6

Though in one sense, our family was a simple machine, consisting of only a few wheels; yet these wheels were set in motion by so many different springs, and such a variety of strange principles and impulses – that although it was a simple machine, it had all the appearance of a complex one, with as many odd movements within it as ever were beheld in the inside of a Dutch silk-mill.

Amongst them was this effect: that whatever debate or dialogue was going on in the parlour, there was generally another at the same time, and upon the same subject, running parallel along with it in the kitchen.

Now to bring this about, whenever an extraordinary message or letter was delivered in the parlour – or my mother or father were observed by the servants to be arguing or discontented – in short, when there was anything worth knowing or listening to, 'twas the rule to leave the door not absolutely shut, but somewhat ajar – as it stands just now – which, under cover of the bad hinge (and that might be one of the many reasons why it was never mended) was not difficult to manage.

My mother at this moment stands profiting by this gap. – Obadiah did the same thing, as soon as he had left the letter with the news of my brother's death; so that before my father had got over his surprise, and begun his speech, Trim in the kitchen had stood up to speak his sentiments on the subject.

A curious observer would have given a great deal to have heard Corporal Trim and my father, two orators so contrasted by nature and education, haranguing over the same bier.

My father – a man of deep reading and prompt memory – with Cato and Seneca at his fingers' ends.

The corporal – with no deeper reading than his muster-roll.

The one proceeding from metaphor to allusion, and striking the fancy as he went along with the pleasantries of his images.

The other, without wit or antithesis, leaving the images aside, and going straight to the heart. O Trim! would to heaven thou had'st a better historian! – O ye critics! will nothing melt you?

CHAPTER 7

‘My young master in London is dead!’ said Obadiah.

A green satin night-gown of my mother’s, which had been twice cleaned, was the first idea which Obadiah’s exclamation brought into Susannah’s head. – Well might Locke write a chapter upon the imperfection of words.

‘Then,’ quoth Susannah, ‘we must all go into mourning.’

But note: the word *mourning* excited in Susannah’s mind not one single idea tinged with grey or black. – All was the green of a green satin night-gown.

‘O! ’twill be the death of my poor mistress,’ cried Susannah. – My mother’s whole wardrobe followed. What a procession! her red damask, her yellow lustrings, her brown taffeta, her laced caps and bed-gowns and under-petticoats. Not a rag was left behind. ‘No, she will never look up again,’ said Susannah.

We had a fat, foolish scullery-maid who had been all autumn struggling with a dropsy.

‘He is dead!’ said Obadiah.

‘So am not I,’ said the foolish scullery-maid.

‘Here is sad news, Trim,’ cried Susannah, wiping her eyes as Trim entered the kitchen. ‘Master Bobby is dead and buried’ – the funeral was an invention of Susannah’s – ‘and we shall all have to go into mourning.’

‘I hope that the news is not true,’ said Trim.

‘I heard the letter read with my own ears,’ answered Obadiah.

‘Oh! he’s dead,’ said Susannah.

‘As sure,’ said the scullery-maid, ‘as I’m alive.’

‘I lament for him from my heart and soul,’ said Trim, with a sigh. ‘Poor boy!’

‘He was alive last Whitsuntide!’ said Jonathan the coachman.

‘Whitsuntide! alas!’ cried Trim, extending his right arm, and falling instantly into the same attitude in which he read the sermon. ‘What is Whitsuntide, Jonathan, or any tide or time, to this? Are we not here now,’ he continued (striking his stick upon the floor) – ‘and are we not’ (dropping his hat upon the ground) ‘gone! in a moment!’

Susannah burst into a flood of tears.

‘We are not stocks and stones,’ said Trim.

Jonathan, Obadiah and the cook-maid all melted. Even the foolish scullery-maid, who was scouring a fish-kettle, was roused. The whole kitchen crowded about the corporal.

Now, as I see that the preservation of our church and state – and possibly the distribution of property and power in the whole world – may in future depend upon the right understanding of the corporal’s eloquence – I demand your attention, your worships.

I said, ‘we were not stocks and stones.’ I should have added, nor are we angels, but men clothed with bodies, and governed by our imaginations; and what a junketing piece of work there is between these and our seven senses, especially some of my own, I am ashamed to confess. Let it suffice to say the eye has the quickest commerce with the soul, – gives a smarter stroke, and leaves more upon the fancy than words can convey.

–I’ve gone a little astray – no matter, let us now go back to the mortality of Trim’s hat. ‘Are we not here now, and gone in a moment?’

There was nothing in the sentence that we do not hear every day; and without the hat, Trim would have made nothing of it.

‘Are we not here now;’ said he, ‘and are we not’ (dropping his hat plump upon the ground) ‘gone! in a moment?’

The hat descended as if it held a lump of clay. Nothing could have expressed the sentiment of mortality like it; – it fell dead. The corporal’s eye fixed upon it, as upon a corpse, and Susannah burst into tears.

Now – a hat may be dropped in ten thousand ways, without any effect. Had he flung it, or thrown it, or skimmed it, or had he dropped it like a goose – like a nincompoop – it would have failed, and its effect have been lost.

Ye who govern this mighty world with the engines of eloquence – who heat it, and cool it, and melt it, and mollify it–

Ye who wind and turn the passions with this great windlass–

Ye who drive – and why not Ye also who are driven, like turkeys to market with a stick – meditate, I beseech you, upon Trim’s hat.

CHAPTER 8

Stay – I have a small account to settle with the reader before Trim can go on with his speech. It shall be done in two minutes.

Amongst many other book-debts, I owe the world a chapter upon chamber-maids and button-holes, which I promised earlier: but since some of your worships tell me that these two subjects, especially connected, might endanger the world’s morals, – I pray that the chapter upon chamber-maids and button-holes may be forgiven me, and that they will accept the last chapter instead; which is nothing but a chapter of chamber-maids, green gowns, and old hats.

Trim took his hat off the ground, put it upon his head, and then went on with his oration upon death.

CHAPTER 9

‘To us, Jonathan, who know not want or care – who live here in the service of two of the best of masters (excepting his majesty King William the Third) – I admit that from Whitsuntide to within three weeks of Christmas is not long; – but to those, Jonathan, who know what death is, and what havoc and destruction he can make – ’tis a whole age. O Jonathan! ’twould make a man’s heart bleed,’ continued the corporal, ‘to consider how low many a brave and upright fellow has been laid since that time!’

‘And trust me, Susy,’ he added, turning to Susannah, whose eyes were swimming, ‘before that time comes round again, many a bright eye will be dim.’ Susannah wept – but she curtsied too.

Trim continued, still looking at her, ‘Are we not like a flower of the field – is not all flesh grass? ’Tis clay, – ’tis dirt.’

– They all looked at the scullery maid.

‘What is the finest face that ever man saw?’

‘I could hear Trim talk so for ever,’ cried Susannah (laying her hand upon Trim’s shoulder).

‘What is it – but corruption?’ – Susannah took it off.

Now I love you for this – ’tis this delicious mixture within you which makes you the dear creatures you are – and anyone who hates you for it – all I can say is, he has a pumpkin for his head.

CHAPTER 10

Whether Susannah, by taking her hand too suddenly off the corporal's shoulder, broke the chain of his reflections—

Or whether the corporal began to suspect he was talking more like the chaplain than himself—

Whatever the cause, he went on thus:

'For my own part, I declare that in battle, I do not care *this* for death.' He snapped his fingers. 'Let death not take me in a cowardly way, like poor Joe Gibbins, in cleaning his gun. A pull of a trigger – a push of a bayonet – look along the line – see! Jack's down! No – 'tis Dick. Then Jack's no worse. No matter which it is; we pass on. In hot pursuit the wound which brings death is not felt. The man who flees is in ten times more danger than the man who marches up into the jaws of death. I've looked him in the face a hundred times, and know what he is. He's nothing, Obadiah, on the battlefield.'

'But he's very frightful in a house,' quoth Obadiah.

'I never mind it in a coach-box,' said Jonathan.

'It must, in my opinion, be most natural in bed,' said Susannah.

'And if I could escape him there, I would,' said Trim, – 'but that is nature.'

'Nature is nature,' said Jonathan.

'And that is why,' cried Susannah, 'I so much pity my mistress. She will never get over it.'

'I pity the captain the most,' answered Trim. 'Madam will get ease of heart in weeping, and the Squire in talking about it, – but my poor master will keep it all in silence to himself. I shall hear him sigh in his bed for a whole month, as he did for lieutenant Le Fever. "Your honour, do not sigh so piteously," I would say. "I cannot help it, Trim," my master would reply, "'tis so sad, I cannot get it off my heart." "Your honour fears not death yourself." "I fear nothing, Trim," he would say, "but doing a wrong thing. Well, I will take care of Le Fever's boy." And with that, like a medicine, he would fall asleep.'

'I like to hear Trim's stories about the captain,' said Susannah.

'He is a kindly-hearted gentleman,' said Obadiah.

'Aye, and a brave one too,' said the corporal. 'There never was a better officer, or a better man: for he would march up to the cannon's mouth – and yet he has a heart as soft as a child for other people. He would not hurt a chicken.'

'I would sooner,' quoth Jonathan, 'drive such a gentleman for seven pounds a year, than some for eight.'

'Thank thee, Jonathan!' said the corporal, shaking his hand. 'I would serve him to the day of my death out of love. He is a friend and a brother to me, and if I was only sure my poor brother Tom was dead, and if I was worth ten thousand pounds, I would leave every shilling to the captain.' Trim could not refrain from tears at this idea. The whole kitchen was affected.

'Do tell us the story of the poor lieutenant,' said Susannah.

'With all my heart,' answered the corporal.

They formed a circle about the fire; and as soon as the scullery-maid had shut the door, the corporal began.

CHAPTER 11

I am a Turk if I had not forgot my mother! I don't wonder at it; so often has my judgment deceived me, that I always suspect it, right or wrong.

For all this, I respect truth as much as anybody; and when it has slipped away from us, if a man will but take me by the hand, and go quietly to search for it, as for a thing we have both lost, I'll go to the world's end with him.

But I hate disputes, and therefore (apart from religious points, or those concerning society) I would almost agree to anything that does not choke me, rather than be drawn into one.

Yet I cannot bear suffocation – and bad smells worst of all. For which reasons, I have resolved that if ever the army of martyrs was to be increased, I would have no hand in it, one way or t'other.

CHAPTER 12

But to return to my mother.

My uncle Toby's opinion, Madam, 'that there could be no harm in Cornelius Gallus, the Roman praetor's lying with his wife;' – or rather the last word of it (for that was all my mother heard) caught hold of her by the weak part of the whole sex.

– Do not mistake me; I mean her curiosity. She instantly concluded that she was the subject of the conversation; and every word my father said, she applied to herself.

Pray, Madam, what lady would not have done the same?

From Cornelius's death, my father had gone on to that of Socrates, and was giving my uncle Toby an outline of his pleading before his judges; 'twas irresistible – not the speech of Socrates, but my father's temptation to it. He had wrote the *Life of Socrates* himself the year before he left off trade, which, I fear, was the means of hastening him out of it.

So no one was able to set out with so full a sail, and on so swelling a tide of heroic loftiness upon the subject, as my father. Not a line in Socrates's speech ended with a shorter word than *annihilation*; there was not a worse thought in it than *to be – or not to be* – the entering upon a new and untried state of things, – or was it upon a profound and peaceful sleep, without disturbance? That we and our children were born to die – but not born to be slaves – no – there I mistake; that was part of Eleazer's oration, as recorded by Josephus, which Eleazer had from the philosophers of India; in all likelihood Alexander the Great, in his invasion of India, stole that sentiment, amongst other things; so that it was carried, if not by himself (for we all know he died at Babylon), by some of his marauders, to Greece, then Rome, then France, and thence to England. So things come round.

By land carriage; I can conceive no other way.

By water the sentiment might easily have come down the Ganges into the Bay of Bengal, and so into the Indian Sea; and following the course of trade (the route by the Cape of Good Hope being then unknown), it might be carried with spices up the Red Sea to Joddah, or Sues, and from thence by caravans to Coptos, three days' journey distant, and so down the Nile directly to Alexandria, where the Sentiment would be landed at the very foot of the great stair-case of the Alexandrian library. Bless me! what a trade was driven by the learned in those days!

[Note: My father's work on Socrates, which he never published, is in manuscript, with some other tracts which will be printed in due time.]

CHAPTER 13

Now my father had a way like Job's (if there ever was such a man—
— though, by the bye, just because your learned men find some difficulty in
fixing the precise era in which he lived; whether before or after the patriarchs, &c. —
to vote, therefore, that he never lived at all, is a little cruel.)

My father, I say, had a way, when things went extremely wrong, of wondering
why he was begot, wishing himself dead — and sometimes worse.

And when the provocation ran high — Sir, you scarce could have distinguished
him from Socrates himself: every word disdainng life, and careless about its issues.
For this reason, though my mother was not a woman of deep reading, yet the
summary of Socrates's oration, which my father was giving my uncle Toby, was not
altogether new to her.

She listened to it composedly, and would have done so to the end of the chapter,
had not my father plunged without good reason into that part of the pleading where
the great philosopher reckons up his alliances and children: 'I have friends — I have
relations — I have three desolate children,' says Socrates.

'Then,' cried my mother, opening the door, 'you have one more, Mr. Shandy,
than I know of.'

'By heaven! I have one less,' said my father, getting up and walking out of the
room.

CHAPTER 14

'They are Socrates's children,' said my uncle Toby.

'He has been dead a hundred years,' replied my mother.

My uncle, not caring to argue, laid down his pipe upon the table. Rising up, and
taking my mother most kindly by the hand, silently he led her out after my father, so
that he might finish enlightening her himself.

CHAPTER 15

Had this volume been a farce, which, unless everyone's life and opinions are regarded as a farce, I see no reason to suppose – the last chapter, Sir, would have finished the first act of it, and then this chapter must have set off thus.

Ptr..r..r..ing – twing – twang – prut – trut – 'tis a cursed bad fiddle. Is it in tune or no? *trut, prut* – They should be fifths. 'Tis wickedly strung – *twang*. – The bridge is a mile too high – *trut, prut* – hark! 'tis not so bad a tone.

Diddle diddle, diddle diddle, diddle diddle, dum. There is no problem in playing before good judges, but there's a man there – the grave man in black – 'Sdeath! not the gentleman with the sword on. Sir, I had rather play a Caprichio to Calliope, than draw my bow across my fiddle before that man; and yet I'll wager the greatest musical odds ever laid, that I will this moment go three hundred leagues out of tune upon my fiddle, without punishing one single nerve of his.–

Twaddle diddle, tweddle diddle, – twiddle diddle, – twoddle diddle, – twuddle diddle, – prut trut – krish – krash – krush. I've undone you, Sir, but you see he's no worse.

Diddle diddle, diddle diddle, diddle diddle – hum – drum.

Your worships love music – and some of you play delightfully yourselves – *trut-prut, prut-trut*.

O! I could sit and listen whole days, to one who can make what he fiddles to be felt, who inspires me with his joys and hopes, and puts the hidden springs of my heart into motion.

CHAPTER 16

The first thing which entered my father's head, after affairs were a little settled in the family, and Susannah had got possession of my mother's green satin night-gown – was to sit down coolly, after Xenophon's example, and write a Tristra-paedia, or system of education for me; collecting his scattered thoughts, and binding them together, so as to form an Institute for the government of my childhood and adolescence.

I was my father's last stake – he had lost my brother Bobby entirely; he had lost, he reckoned, full three-fourths of me – that is, he had been unfortunate in his three first great casts of the dice for me – my begetting, my nose, and my name – but there was this one left.

Accordingly my father gave himself up to it with as much devotion as ever my uncle Toby gave to his study of projectiles. The difference was, that my uncle Toby drew his knowledge of projectiles from Nicholas Tartaglia. My father spun his knowledge, every thread of it, out of his own brain – or reeled and twisted what all other spinners had spun before him, which was pretty near the same thing.

In about three years, my father had almost reached the middle of his work. Like all other writers, he met with disappointments. He imagined he should be able to fit whatever he had to say into so small a space that, when it was finished and bound, it might be rolled up in my mother's pocket-case. Matter grows under our hands.

My father gave himself up to it, however, with painful diligence, proceeding step by step with the same caution as was used by John de la Casse, the archbishop of Benevento, in writing his *Galatea*, on which he spent near forty years; and when the thing came out, it was only half the size of a *Rider's Almanack*. How he managed it, unless he spent most of his time combing his whiskers, or playing at cards with his chaplain, would puzzle anyone not let into the true secret; and therefore 'tis worth explaining to the world.

I admit, if John de la Casse, for whose memory (despite his *Galatea*) I retain the highest respect, – if he had been, Sir, a slender clerk of dull wit, he and his *Galatea* might have jogged on together to the age of Methuselah, and have not been worth a mention.

But John de la Casse was a genius of fertile fancy; yet with the natural advantages which should have spurred him on with his *Galatea*, he was incapable of writing more than a line and a half in a whole summer's day. This disability arose from his opinion that, whenever a Christian was writing a book with the intent of publishing it to the world, his first thoughts were always the temptations of the evil one.

And, he maintained, when a person of high character and status turned author, from the very moment he took pen in hand – all the devils in hell broke out of their holes to cajole him. Every thought, however it came to him, was a stroke of one or other of these devils. So that the life of a writer was not so much a state of composition, as a state of warfare; and his success, like a soldier's, depended not so much upon his Wit as his Resistance.

My father was hugely pleased with this theory of John de la Casse. – How far my father actually believed in the devil will be seen when I come to speak of his religious notions: 'tis enough to say here, that he took up the allegory of the doctrine, if not its literal sense; and would often say there was as much good truth in John de la Casse's description as was to be found in any poetic fiction or ancient record.

'Prejudice of education,' he would say, 'is the devil – and the multitudes of them which we suck in with our mother's milk are the devil and all. We are haunted with them, brother Toby, in all our researches; and if a man was fool enough to submit tamely to them, what would his book be? Nothing,' he would add, throwing his pen away, – 'nothing but a farrago of the clack of nurses, and of the nonsense of the old women (of both sexes) throughout the kingdom.'

This is the best account I can give of the slow progress my father made in his *Tristra-paedia*; at which (as I said) he was over three years at work, and had scarce completed one half. The misfortune was, that I was all that time totally neglected and abandoned to my mother: and what was almost as bad, by the very delay, the first part of the work was rendered entirely useless – every day a page or two became outdated.

– Certainly it was ordained as a scourge upon our pride, that the wisest of us should thus outwit ourselves, and eternally deny our purposes, in the intemperate act of pursuing them.

In short, my father advanced so very slow with his work, and I began to get forwards at such a rate, that, if an event had not happened – which, if it can be told with decency, shall not be concealed a moment from the reader – I believe I would have outgrown it.

CHAPTER 17

–’Twas nothing, – I did not lose two drops of blood – ’twas not worth calling in a surgeon. – Thousands suffer by choice, what I did by accident. Doctor Slop made ten times more of it than he needed: and I am this day (August the 10th, 1761) paying the price of this man’s reputation. – O, ’twould provoke a stone, to see how things go on in this world!

The chamber-maid had left no chamber pot under the bed:

‘Cannot you contrive, master,’ quoth Susannah, lifting up the sash window with one hand, as she spoke, and helping me up into the window-seat with the other, ‘cannot you manage, my dear, just once, to **** ** * ** * **?’

I was five years old. Susannah did not consider that nothing was well hung in our family, – so slap came the sash window down like lightning upon me.

– ‘Nothing is left for me,’ cried Susannah, ‘but to flee the country.’

My uncle Toby’s house was a much kinder sanctuary; and so Susannah fled to it.

CHAPTER 18

When Susannah told the corporal the misadventure of the sash, and its ‘murder’ of me, (as she called it), the blood left his cheeks – all accessories in murder being guilty. Trim’s conscience told him he was as much to blame as Susannah; and if this had been true, my uncle Toby would have had as much to answer for as either of ’em; so that neither reason nor instinct could possibly have guided Susannah’s steps to so suitable an asylum.

It is in vain for the Reader to try to understand this: to form any theory that will explain it, he must cudgel his brains sore. Why should I torture him? ’Tis my own affair: I’ll explain it myself.

CHAPTER 19

‘’Tis a pity, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby, resting his hand upon the corporal’s shoulder, as they stood surveying their works, ‘that we have not a couple of field-pieces to mount in that new redoubt; ’twould secure the lines along there, and make the attack on that side quite complete: get me a couple cast, Trim.’

‘Your honour shall have them,’ replied Trim, ‘before to-morrow morning.’

It was the joy of Trim’s heart to supply my uncle Toby in his campaigns with whatever his fancy called for; had it been his last coin, he would have sat down and hammered it into a fire-arm, to please his Master. The corporal had already, – what with cutting off the ends of my uncle Toby’s leaden spouts – hacking at the sides of his lead gutters – melting down his pewter shaving-basin, and climbing on the church roof for spare ends of lead, – he had brought no less than eight new battering cannons into the field.

My uncle Toby’s demand for two more pieces for the redoubt set the corporal at work again; and he had taken the two leaden weights from the nursery window: and as the sash pulleys were of no use without the weights, he had taken them away also, to make wheels for one of their gun-carriages.

He had dismantled every sash-window in my uncle Toby’s house long before, in the same way, though not always in the same order; for sometimes he began with the pulleys; and with the pulleys gone, the lead became useless, – and so the lead went to pot too.

A great Moral might be picked handsomely out of this, but I have not time. ’Tis enough to say that wherever the demolition began, ’twas equally fatal to the sash window.

CHAPTER 20

The corporal might have kept the matter entirely to himself, and left Susannah to have sustained the whole weight of blame; but true courage is not content with coming off so.

Trim imagined that the misfortune would never have happened, but for what he had done. – How would your honours have behaved? He determined not to take shelter behind Susannah, but to give it; and with this resolution, he marched upright into the parlour, to lay the whole manoeuvre before my uncle Toby.

My uncle Toby had just been giving Yorick an account of the battle of Steenkirk, and of the strange conduct of Count Solmes in ordering the footsoldiers to halt, and the cavalry to march; which was directly contrary to the king’s commands, and proved the loss of the day.

Trim, by the help of his forefinger, laid flat upon the table, and the edge of his hand striking across it at right angles, managed to tell his story so that priests and virgins might have listened to it; and the story being told – the dialogue went on as follows.

CHAPTER 21

'I would be impaled on stakes,' cried the corporal, 'before I would allow the woman to come to any harm; 'twas my fault, your honour, not hers.'

'Corporal Trim,' replied my uncle Toby, ''tis I certainly who deserve the blame, – you obeyed your orders.'

'Had Count Solmes done the same at the battle of Steenkirk,' said Yorick to the corporal, who had been run over by a dragoon in the retreat, 'he would have saved thee.'

'Saved!' cried Trim; 'he would have saved five battalions, your reverence; there was Cutts's,' he continued counting on his fingers, 'Mackay's, Angus's, Graham's, and Leven's, all cut to pieces; and so would the English life-guards have been too, had it not been for some regiments upon the right, who marched up boldly to relieve them, and received the enemy's fire in their faces – they'll go to heaven for it.'

'Trim is right,' said my uncle Toby, nodding.

'What signified his marching the cavalry,' continued the corporal, 'where the ground was so straight, and the French had so many hedges, and copses, and ditches to cover them. – Count Solmes should have sent us; we would have fired muzzle to muzzle with them. He had his foot shot off however for his pains, the very next campaign at Landen.'

'Poor Trim got his wound there,' quoth my uncle Toby.

''Twas owing, your honour, entirely to Count Solmes – had he drubbed them soundly at Steenkirk, they would not have fought us at Landen.'

'Possibly not, Trim,' said my uncle Toby; 'though if you give them a moment's time to entrench themselves, they are a nation which will pop and pop for ever at you. There is no way but to march coolly up to them, – receive their fire, and fall upon them, pell-mell.'

'Ding dong,' added Trim.

'Horse and foot,' said my uncle.

'Helter skelter,' said Trim.

'Right and left,' cried my uncle Toby.

'Blood an' ounds,' shouted the corporal. The battle raged; Yorick drew his chair to one side for safety, and after a moment, my uncle Toby, sinking his voice, resumed as follows.

CHAPTER 22

'King William,' said my uncle Toby to Yorick, 'was so terribly provoked at Count Solmes for disobeying his orders, that he would not allow him in his presence for months after.'

'I fear,' answered Yorick, 'Squire Shandy will be just as much provoked at the corporal. But 'twould be singularly hard in this case, if corporal Trim, who has behaved so differently to Count Solmes, should be rewarded with the same disgrace.'

'I would blow up my fortifications,' cried my uncle Toby, 'and my house with them, and we would perish under their ruins, before I would stand by and see it.'

Trim directed a grateful bow towards his master – and so the chapter ends.

CHAPTER 23

'Then, Yorick,' replied my uncle, 'you and I will lead the way, and you, corporal, follow a few paces behind us.'

'And Susannah, an' please your honour,' said Trim, 'shall be put in the rear.'

In this order, without either drums beating, or colours flying, they marched slowly from my uncle Toby's house to Shandy-Hall.

'I wish,' said Trim, as they entered, 'instead of the sash weights, I had cut off the church spout, as I once thought to have done.'

– 'You have cut off spouts enough,' replied Yorick.

CHAPTER 24

Although many pictures have been given of my father, in different airs and attitudes, not one of them could help the reader to predict how my father would think, speak, or act, upon any occasion. He had such an infinitude of oddities in him, that to know how he would take a thing, baffled, Sir, all calculations.

The truth was, that every object presented its face and cross-section to his eye, altogether different from the plan of it seen by the rest of mankind.

This is the true reason that my dear Jenny and I have such eternal squabbles about nothing. She looks at her outside, I, at her in. – How is it possible we should agree about her value?

CHAPTER 25

'Tis a settled thing that, provided an author keeps along the line of his story, he may go backwards and forwards as he wishes; 'tis not considered to be a digression.

Therefore I take the benefit of going backwards myself.

CHAPTER 26

Fifty thousand pannier loads of devils with their tails chopped off could not have made so diabolical a scream, as I did when the accident befell me. It brought my mother instantly into the nursery, so that Susannah just had time to escape down the back stairs as my mother came up the front.

Now, though I was old enough to have told the story myself, yet Susannah, in passing through the kitchen, had left it in shorthand with the cook – the cook had told it with a commentary to Jonathan, and Jonathan to Obadiah; so that by the time my father had rung the bell half a dozen times, to know what was the matter, Obadiah could give him an account of it, just as it had happened.

‘I thought as much,’ said my father, tucking up his night-gown, and walking up stairs.

One might imagine from this that my father had already wrote that remarkable chapter in the *Tristra-paedia*, which to me is the most original and entertaining one in the whole book – and that is the chapter upon sash-windows, with a bitter tirade at the end of it, upon the forgetfulness of chamber-maids.

I have just two reasons for thinking otherwise.

First, had the matter been considered before the event happened, my father certainly would have nailed up the sash window; which, considering with what difficulty he composed books, he might have done with ten times less trouble than writing the chapter.

However, this argument, though good, is made obsolete by the second reason which I offer in support of my opinion that my father did not write the chapter upon sash-windows and chamber-pots: and it is this.

That, in order to make the *Tristra-paedia* complete, I wrote the chapter myself.

CHAPTER 27

My father put on his spectacles – looked – took them off, and without opening his lips, turned about and walked quickly down stairs. My mother imagined he had stepped down for a bandage and basilicon ointment; but seeing him return with a couple of tomes, and Obadiah following him with a large reading-desk, she assumed the books to be herbals, and drew him a chair to the bedside, so that he might consult on the case at his ease.

‘If it be but right done,’ said my father, turning to the *Section de sede vel subjecto circumcisionis*, – for he had brought up *Spenser de Legibus Hebraeorum Ritualibus*, and *Maimonides*.

‘– Only tell us,’ cried my mother, interrupting him, ‘what herbs?’

‘For that,’ replied my father, ‘you must send for Dr. Slop.’

My mother went down, and my father went on reading the section as follows:

* * * * *
* * *

‘Very well,’ said my father; * * * * *
* * * * * ‘– nay, if it has that convenience–’ – and without stopping to decide whether the Jews had it from the Egyptians, or the Egyptians from the Jews, he rose; and rubbing his forehead as if rubbing out the footsteps of care, he shut the book, and walked down stairs.

‘Nay,’ said he, mentioning the name of a different great nation upon every step as he set his foot upon it – ‘if the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Phoenicians, the Arabians, and the Cappadocians did it – if Solon and Pythagoras submitted – what is Tristram? who am I, to fret or fume about the matter?’

CHAPTER 28

‘Dear Yorick,’ said my father, smiling (for Yorick had come into the parlour with my uncle Toby) – ‘this Tristram of ours, I find, comes very hardly by his religious rites. Never was the son of Jew, Christian, Turk or Infidel initiated into them in so slovenly a manner.’

‘But he is none the worse, I trust,’ said Yorick.

‘There has certainly,’ continued my father, ‘been the devil and all to do in his stars, when this offspring of mine was made.’

‘You are a better judge of that than I,’ replied Yorick.

‘Astrologers know better than us both,’ quoth my father; ‘the trine and sextil aspects have jumped awry, or the lords of the genitures (as they call them) have been at bo-peep.’

‘’Tis possible,’ answered Yorick.

‘But is the child,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘any the worse?’

‘The Troglodytes say not,’ replied my father. ‘And your theologians, Yorick, tell us he’s the better for it.’

‘Provided,’ said Yorick, ‘you travel him into Egypt.’

‘Of that,’ answered my father, ‘he will have the advantage, when he sees the Pyramids.’

‘Now every word of this,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘is Arabic to me.’

‘Ilus,’ continued my father, ‘circumcised his whole army one morning.’

‘Not without a court martial?’ cried my uncle.

‘Though the learned,’ continued my father, taking no notice of my uncle’s remark, but turning to Yorick, ‘are greatly divided as to who Ilus was; some say Saturn; some the Supreme Being; – others, no more than a brigadier general under the Pharaoh.’

‘Whoever he was,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘I know not by what article of war he could justify it.’

‘Historians,’ answered my father, ‘give two-and-twenty different reasons for it: – others have shown how futile most of these are. But then again, our best polemic divines—’

‘I wish there was not a polemic divine in the kingdom,’ said Yorick. ‘One ounce of practical divinity is worth a painted ship-load of all that their reverences have imported these fifty years.’

‘Pray, Mr. Yorick,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘do tell me what a polemic divine is?’

‘The best description I have read, captain Shandy,’ replied Yorick, ‘is the account of a couple of ’em in the battle fought hand to hand betwixt Gymnast and captain Tripet; which I have in my pocket.’

‘May I hear it?’ asked my uncle Toby earnestly.

‘You shall,’ said Yorick.

‘As the corporal is waiting for me at the door, and I know the description of a battle will do the poor fellow more good than his supper, I beg, brother, you’ll let him come in.’

‘With all my soul,’ said my father.

Trim came in, erect and happy as an emperor; and having shut the door, Yorick took a book from his coat-pocket, and read, or pretended to read, as follows.

CHAPTER 29

– ‘which words being heard by all the soldiers there, many of them being inwardly terrified, did shrink back and make room for the assailant. All this did Gymnast consider; and therefore, acting as if he was alighting from his horse, as he was poising himself on the mounting side, he most nimbly (with his short sword by his thigh) shifted his feet in the stirrup, and performed the stirrup-leather feat, whereby, after the inclining of his body downwards, he launched himself aloft into the air, and placed both his feet together upon the saddle, standing upright with his back turned towards his horse’s head.

“Now,” (said he) “my case goes forward.” Then suddenly, in the same posture, he performed a gambol upon one foot, and turning to the left, carried his body perfectly round into his former position, without missing one jot.

“Ha!” said Tripet, “I will not do that, – and not without cause.”

“Well,” said Gymnast, “I have failed. I will undo this leap;” then with marvellous strength and agility, turning to the right, he performed another frisking gambol as before; then he set his right thumb upon the bow of the saddle, raised himself up, and sprung into the air, poising his whole weight upon the said thumb, and so turned and whirled himself about three times. At the fourth turn, reversing his body, and overturning it upside down and foreside back without touching anything, he brought himself betwixt the horse’s ears, and then with a jerking swing, he seated himself upon the crupper–’

(‘This can’t be fighting,’ said my uncle Toby. The corporal shook his head. ‘Have patience,’ said Yorick.)

‘Then Tripet passed his right leg over his saddle, and placed himself *en croup*.

“But,” said he, “twere better for me to get into the saddle;” then putting the thumbs of both hands upon the crupper, and leaning on them, as the only supporters of his body, he turned heels over head, and found himself betwixt the bow of the saddle; then springing into the air with a somersault, he turned about like a windmill, and made above a hundred frisks, turns, and demi-pommadas–’

‘Good God!’ cried Trim, losing all patience; ‘one home thrust of a bayonet is worth it all.’

‘I think so too,’ replied Yorick.

‘I am of a contrary opinion,’ quoth my father.

CHAPTER 30

‘No,’ replied my father, answering a question from Yorick. ‘I have not advanced in the Tristra-paedia, but – reach me, Trim, the book from off the desk – it has oft-times been in my mind to read it over to you, Yorick, and to my brother Toby: – shall we have a short chapter or two now, and more later on, till we get through the whole?’

My uncle Toby and Yorick agreed politely; and the corporal, though he was not included in the compliment, made his bow. The company smiled.

‘Trim,’ quoth my father, ‘has paid the full price for staying out the entertainment.’

‘He did not seem to relish the play,’ replied Yorick.

‘’Twas a Tom-fool-battle, your reverence, of captain Tripet’s and that other officer, making so many somersaults; the French come on capering now and then, but not quite so much.’

My uncle Toby never felt more pleased than with the corporal’s reflections at that moment. He lit his pipe; Yorick drew his chair closer to the table; my father took up the book, coughed twice, and began.

CHAPTER 31

‘The first thirty pages,’ said my father, turning over the leaves, ‘are a little dry; and as they are not closely connected with the subject, we’ll pass them by. ’Tis a prefatory introduction, or an introductory preface (for I am not sure which to call it) upon political government; the foundation of which is laid in the first conjunction betwixt male and female, for procreation of the species – I was insensibly led into it.’

‘’Twas natural,’ said Yorick.

‘The origin of society,’ continued my father, ‘is conjugal; and nothing more than the getting together of one man and one woman; to which Hesiod adds a servant: but supposing in the beginning there were no men servants born – he lays the foundation of society in a man, a woman and a bull.’

‘I believe ’tis an ox,’ quoth Yorick, quoting the passage in Greek. ‘A bull must have given more trouble than he was worth.’

‘But there is a better reason,’ said my father (dipping his pen into his ink); ‘for since the ox is the most patient and useful of animals, ’twas the best emblem for the new joined couple.’

‘And there is a stronger reason still for the ox,’ added my uncle Toby. ‘For when the ground was tilled by the ox, then they began to secure it by walls and ditches, which was the origin of fortification.’

‘True, true, dear Toby,’ cried my father, striking out *bull*, and putting *ox* in his place.

He gave Trim a nod to snuff the candle, and resumed.

‘I enter upon this speculation,’ said he carelessly, half shutting the book, ‘merely to show the foundation of the natural relation between a father and his child; he acquires these rights over him in several ways–

‘1st, by marriage.

‘2nd, by adoption.

‘3rd, by legitimation.

‘And 4th, by procreation; all of which I consider in their order.’

‘I would lay some stress on one of them,’ replied Yorick: ‘the act of procreation, especially when it ends there, in my opinion lays as little obligation upon the child, as it conveys power to the father.’

‘You are wrong,’ said my father, ‘and for this plain reason: * * *

* * * * *
* – I own,’ added my father, ‘that the offspring, upon this account, is not under the power of the mother.’

‘But the reason holds equally good for her,’ replied Yorick.

‘She is under another’s authority herself,’ said my father: ‘and besides, she is not the principal agent.’

‘In what?’ asked my uncle Toby.

‘Though by all means,’ added my father (not attending to my uncle Toby), ‘“The son ought to pay her respect,” as you may read, Yorick, in the first book of the Institutes of Justinian, at the eleventh title and the tenth section.’

‘I can read it just as well,’ replied Yorick, ‘in the Catechism.’

CHAPTER 32

‘Trim can repeat every word of it by heart,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘Pugh!’ said my father, not caring to be interrupted with Trim’s saying his Catechism.

‘He can, upon my honour,’ replied my uncle. ‘Ask him, Mr. Yorick, any question you please.’

‘The fifth Commandment, Trim,’ said Yorick mildly, with a gentle nod. The corporal stood silent.

‘You don’t ask him right,’ said my uncle Toby. Raising his voice to a rapid tone of command, he cried: ‘The fifth.’

‘I must begin with the first, an’ please your honour,’ said the corporal.

Yorick could not help smiling.

‘Your reverence does not consider,’ said the corporal, shouldering his stick like a musket, and marching into the middle of the room, ‘that ’tis exactly the same thing as presenting arms. – “Join your right-hand to your firelock. Poise your firelock. Now rest your firelock,”’ said he, demonstrating with his stick, and acting as both commander and soldier. ‘You see one leads into another. If his honour will begin but with the first—’

‘The First,’ cried my uncle Toby, waving his tobacco-pipe like a sword.

The corporal went through his manual with exactness; and having honoured his father and mother, made a low bow, and stepped aside.

‘Everything in this world,’ said my father, ‘is big with jest, and has wit in it, if we can but find it.’

‘Here in the Catechism is the scaffolding of Instruction, without the Building behind it.’

‘Here is the looking-glass for teachers, tutors, and gerund-grinders, to view themselves in.’

‘Oh! there is a husk and shell, Yorick, which grows up with learning, which they know not how to fling away!’

‘Sciences may be learned by rote, but wisdom not.’

Yorick thought my father was inspired.

‘I will promise this moment,’ said my father, ‘to donate all my aunt Dinah’s legacy to charitable causes’ (of which, by the bye, my father had no high opinion), ‘if the corporal has any one distinct idea attached to any one word he has repeated.— Prithee, Trim,’ quoth my father, turning to him, ‘What dost thou mean, by “honouring thy father and mother?”’

‘Allowing them, an’ please your honour, three half-pence a day out of my pay, when they grow old.’

‘And didst thou do that, Trim?’ said Yorick.

‘He did indeed,’ replied my uncle Toby.

‘Then, Trim,’ said Yorick, springing out of his chair, and shaking the corporal’s hand, ‘thou art the best commentator upon that commandment; and I honour thee more for it, corporal Trim, than if thou hadst had a hand in the Talmud itself.’

CHAPTER 33

‘O blessed health!’ exclaimed my father, as he turned to the next chapter, ‘thou art above all gold and treasure; ’tis thou who enlargest the soul, ready to receive instruction and to relish virtue. He that has thee, has little more to wish for. I have concentrated all that can be said upon this important matter into a very little room; therefore we’ll read the whole chapter.’

He read as follows:

‘The whole secret of health depends upon the contention for mastery betwixt the radical heat and the radical moisture—’

‘You have proved that fact, I suppose,’ said Yorick.

‘Sufficiently,’ replied my father, shutting the book – but not pettishly; he kept his fore-finger in the chapter, his thumb resting upon the upper-side of the cover, and his three fingers supporting the lower side of it, without the least compressive violence.

‘I have demonstrated the truth of that point,’ quoth my father, nodding, ‘most sufficiently in the preceding chapter.’

Now if the man in the moon could be told that a man on the earth had wrote a chapter demonstrating that the secret of all health depended upon the contention for mastery betwixt the radical heat and the radical moisture, – and that he had managed it so well, that there was not one single word wet or dry upon heat or moisture, throughout the whole chapter—

‘O thou eternal Maker of all beings!’ he would cry, striking his breast with his hand (if he had one.) ‘Thou whose power and goodness can bring thy creatures to this infinite degree of perfection – What have we Moonites done?’

CHAPTER 34

With two strokes, the one at Hippocrates, the other at Lord Verulam, my father achieved it.

The stroke at Hippocrates the physician, with which he began, was no more than a short insult upon his sorrowful complaint of *Ars longa* and *Vita brevis*.

‘Life is short,’ cried my father, ‘and the art of healing tedious! And who are we to thank for both, but the ignorance of quacks themselves, and the coach-loads of chemical cure-alls, with which they have deceived the world?’

‘O my lord Verulam!’ cried my father, turning from Hippocrates, and making his second stroke at the principal peddler of cure-alls. ‘What shall I say to thee, my great lord Verulam? What shall I say to thy opium, thy salt-petre, thy greasy unctions, thy daily purges and nightly enemas, and bogus medicines?’

My father was never at a loss what to say to any man, upon any subject; and had the least excuse for this beginning of any man breathing. How he dealt with lord Verulam’s opinion, you shall see – but when, I know not – we must first see what his lordship’s opinion was.

CHAPTER 35

The two great causes which shorten life, says lord Verulam, are:

First: the internal spirit, which, like a gentle flame, wastes the body down to death:

And secondly, the external air, that parches the body: these two enemies, attacking us together, at length destroy our organs, and make them unfit to carry on the functions of life.

This being the case, the road to Longevity was plain; nothing more being required, (says his lordship), but to repair the waste committed by the internal spirit, by making it more thick and dense with a regular course of opiates, and also by cooling its heat with three grains and a half of salt-petre every morning before you got up.

Still this frame of ours was left exposed to the assaults of the air – but this was fenced off by a course of greasy unctions, which so fully saturated the pores of the skin, that no particles could enter, nor get out. This put a stop to all perspiration, the cause of so many scurvy distempers – and a course of enemias was needed to make the system complete.

What my father had to say to my lord of Verulam's opiates, his salt-petre, and greasy unctions and purges, you shall read, – but not today – or tomorrow: time presses upon me, – my reader is impatient – I must get on. You shall read the chapter at your leisure (if you choose), as soon as the *Tristra-paedia* is published.

Suffice it to say at present, my father destroyed the hypothesis, and in doing so, he established his own.

CHAPTER 36

'The whole secret of health,' said my father, beginning the sentence again, 'depends upon the contention betwixt the radical heat and radical moisture within us; hardly any skill would be needed to maintain it, if only the schoolmen had not confused matters (as Van Helmont, the famous chemist, has proved) by mistaking the radical moisture for the fat of animal bodies.

'Now the radical moisture is not the fat of animals, but an oily and balsamous substance; for the fat is cold; whereas the oily and balsamous parts are of a lively heat and spirit, which accounts for the observation of Aristotle, "*Quod omne animal post coitum est triste.*"

'Now it is certain that the radical heat lives in the radical moisture, but whether *vice versa*, is a doubt. However, when the one decays, the other decays also; causing either an unnatural heat and dryness – or an unnatural moisture, leading to dropsies. So that if a child, as he grows up, can be taught to avoid running into fire or water, as either of 'em threaten his destruction, 'twill be all that needs to be done on that account.'

CHAPTER 37

The description of the siege of Jericho itself could not have held the attention of my uncle Toby more powerfully than the last chapter. His eyes were fixed upon my father throughout it; whenever he mentioned radical heat and radical moisture, my uncle took his pipe out of his mouth, and shook his head; and as soon as the chapter was finished, he beckoned to the corporal, to ask him the following question, (aside) –

* * * * *

‘It was at the siege of Limerick, your honour,’ replied the corporal.

‘The poor fellow and I,’ quoth my uncle Toby to my father, ‘were scarce able to crawl out of our tents, when the siege of Limerick was raised, for the very reason you mention.’

‘Now what can have got into that precious noddle of thine, my dear brother?’ cried my father, mentally.

‘I believe,’ quoth the corporal, ‘that if it had not been for the quantity of brandy we set fire to every night, and the claret and cinnamon which I gave your honour—’

‘—And the Geneva gin, Trim,’ added my uncle Toby, ‘which did us more good than all—’

‘—I verily believe, your honour,’ continued the corporal, ‘we would both have died in the trenches, and been buried there.’

‘The noblest grave a soldier could wish for, corporal!’ cried my uncle Toby, his eyes sparkling.

‘But a pitiful death!’ replied the corporal.

All this was as much Arabic to my father; he did not know whether to frown or smile.

My uncle Toby, turning to Yorick, began the account of Limerick, and settled the point for my father at once.

CHAPTER 38

‘It was undoubtedly,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘a great happiness for myself and the corporal, that we had a burning fever, and a raging thirst, during the whole five-and-twenty days that dysentery was in the camp; otherwise what my brother calls the radical moisture must have got the better of us.’

My father drew in his lungs top-full of air, and blew it forth again, as slowly as he could.

‘It was Heaven’s mercy,’ continued my uncle, ‘which put it into the corporal’s head to keep that contention betwixt the radical heat and the radical moisture, by reinforcing the fever with hot wine and spices; he kept up a continual firing, so that the radical heat stood its ground, and was a fair match for the moisture, terrible as it was. – Upon my honour,’ added my uncle Toby, ‘you might have heard the contention within our bodies, brother, twenty miles away.’

‘If there was no firing,’ said Yorick.

‘Well,’ said my father, ‘if I was a judge, and the laws permitted it, I would condemn some of the worst malefactors—’

Yorick, foreseeing the sentence was likely to end with no mercy, laid his hand upon my father’s breast, and begged he would wait for a few minutes, till he asked the corporal a question.

‘Prithee, Trim,’ said Yorick, ‘tell us honestly – what is thy opinion of this radical heat and radical moisture?’

‘With humble submission to his honour’s better judgment,’ quoth the corporal, bowing to my uncle Toby.

‘Speak thy opinion freely, corporal,’ said my uncle.

The corporal put his hat under his left arm, and with his stick hanging upon his wrist, he marched up to the place where he had performed his catechism; then putting his hand to his underjaw, he delivered his notion thus.

CHAPTER 39

Just as the corporal was beginning – in waddled Dr. Slop. ‘Tis no matter – the corporal shall go on in the next chapter.

‘Well, my good doctor,’ cried my father sportively, for his changes of mood were unaccountably sudden; ‘and how is this whelp of mine faring?’

Had my father been asking about the amputation of a puppy-dog’s tail, he could not have done it more carelessly. Dr. Slop did not care for this mode of enquiry. – He sat down.

‘Pray, Sir,’ quoth my uncle Toby more earnestly, ‘in what condition is the boy?’

‘Twill end in a phimosis,’ replied Dr. Slop.

‘I am no wiser than I was,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘Then let the corporal go on,’ said my father, ‘with his medical lecture.’

The corporal made a bow to Dr. Slop, and then continued:

CHAPTER 40

‘The city of Limerick, the siege of which was begun under his majesty king William, the year after I entered the army, lies in the middle of a devilish wet, swampy country.’

‘’Tis quite surrounded,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘with the River Shannon, and is one of the strongest fortified places in Ireland.’

‘I think this is a new fashion,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘of beginning a medical lecture.’

‘’Tis all cut through,’ said the corporal, ‘with drains and bogs; and there was such a quantity of rain fell during the siege, the whole country was like a puddle; ’twas that which brought on the dysentery, which almost killed us both. A soldier could not lie dry in his tent, without cutting a ditch round it, to draw off the water; and those who could afford it, as his honour could, set fire every night to a dish full of brandy, which took off the damp of the air, and made the inside of the tent as warm as a stove.’

‘And what conclusion dost thou draw,’ cried my father, ‘from all this?’

‘I infer, an’ please your worship,’ replied Trim, ‘that the radical moisture is nothing but ditch-water – and that the radical heat, of those who can afford it, is burnt brandy; – for a private soldier, ’tis nothing but ditch-water and a dram of gin – and give us but enough of it, with a pipe of tobacco, to drive away the vapours – we know not what it is to fear death.’

‘I am at a loss, Captain Shandy,’ quoth Dr. Slop, ‘to decide whether your servant shines most in physiology or divinity.’ Slop had not forgot Trim’s comment on the sermon.

‘Only an hour ago,’ replied Yorick, ‘the corporal was examined in the latter, and passed with great honour.’

‘The radical heat and moisture,’ quoth Dr. Slop, turning to my father, ‘you must know, is the foundation of our being. – It is inherent in the seeds of all animals, and may be preserved in many ways, but principally in my opinion by consubstantials, impriments, and occludents. Now this poor fellow,’ continued Dr. Slop, pointing to the corporal, ‘has heard some superficial talk upon this delicate point.’

‘That he has,’ said my father.

‘Very likely,’ said my uncle.

‘I’m sure of it,’ quoth Yorick.

CHAPTER 41

Doctor Slop being called out to look at a cataplasm he had ordered, it gave my father an opportunity of going on with another chapter in the *Tristra-paedia*.

Come! cheer up, my lads; I’ll show you land – for when we have tugged through that chapter, the book shall not be opened again this twelve-month. *Huzza!*

CHAPTER 42

‘ – Five years with a bib under his chin;
‘Four years in learning the alphabet;
‘A year and a half in learning to write his own name;
‘Seven long years working at Greek and Latin;

‘Four years at his probations and negations – with the fine statue still lying in the middle of the marble block, and nothing done, except his tools sharpened to hew it out! ’Tis a piteous delay! Was not the great Julius Scaliger within an ace of never getting his tools sharpened at all? Forty-four years old was he before he could manage Greek; and Peter Damianus, bishop of Ostia, as all the world knows, could not read even when he was full-grown. Baldus entered the law so late in life, that everybody imagined he intended to be an advocate in the other world.

‘No wonder that, when Eudamidas heard Xenocrates at seventy-five discussing wisdom, he asked gravely, “If the old man is still disputing wisdom, what time will he have to make use of it?”’

Yorick listened to my father with great attention; there was a seasoning of wisdom mixed up with his strangest whims, and he had sometimes such illuminations in the darkest of his eclipses, as almost atoned for them.

‘I am convinced, Yorick,’ continued my father, ‘that there is a North-west passage to the intellectual world; and that the soul of man has shorter ways of acquiring knowledge, than we generally take. But, alack! Not every child, Yorick, has a parent to point it out.

‘It entirely depends,’ added my father in a low voice, ‘upon the auxiliary verbs.’ Yorick could not have looked more surprised.

‘I am surprised too,’ cried my father, observing it. ‘I think it one of the greatest calamities, that those who have been entrusted with our children’s education, and whose business it was to open their minds, and stock them early with ideas, have made so little use of the auxiliary verbs. – So that, except Raymond Lullius, and the elder Pelegrini, who used them so perfectly that, in a few lessons, he could teach a young gentleman to discuss any subject, *pro* and *con*, to the admiration of all—’

‘I should be glad,’ said Yorick, interrupting, ‘to understand this matter.’

‘You shall,’ said my father. ‘The greatest improvement a single word is capable of, is a high metaphor, – for which, in my opinion, the idea is generally the worse – but be that as it may – when the mind has done that, there is an end; the mind is at rest, until a second idea enters; and so on.

‘Now the use of the Auxiliaries is to set the soul a-going by herself upon the word; and by twisting them round this great engine, to open new areas of enquiry, and make every idea engender millions.’

‘You excite my curiosity greatly,’ said Yorick.

‘For my own part,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘I have given up.’

‘The Danes who were on the left at the siege of Limerick,’ quoth corporal Trim, ‘were all auxiliaries.’

‘And very good ones,’ said my uncle Toby. ‘But the auxiliaries my brother is talking about, I imagine to be different things.’

‘You do?’ said my father, rising up.

CHAPTER 43

My father took a turn across the room, sat down, and finished the chapter.

‘The auxiliary verbs we are concerned in here,’ he continued, ‘are, *am*; *was*; *have*; *had*; *do*; *did*; *make*; *made*; *shall*; *should*; *will*; *would*; *can*; *could*; *owe*; *ought*; *used*; or *is wont*. And these varied with tenses, present, past, or future, or with these questions added to them – *Is it? Was it? Will it be? Would it be? May it be? Might it be?* And these again put negatively: *Is it not? Was it not?* Or chronologically – *Has it been always? Lately? How long ago?* Or hypothetically: *If it was? If it was not?* – if the French should beat the English? If the Sun should go out of the Zodiac?

‘Now, by the right use of these,’ continued my father, ‘no idea can enter a child’s brain, without a crowd of ideas being drawn forth from it. – Didst thou ever see a white bear?’ he cried, turning to Trim.

‘No, your honour,’ replied the corporal.

‘But thou couldst talk about one, Trim,’ said my father, ‘if needed?’

‘How is it possible, brother,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘if the corporal never saw one?’

‘That is the fact I want,’ replied my father. ‘The possibility of it is as follows.

‘A White Bear! Very well. Have I ever seen one? Might I ever have seen one? Am I ever to see one? Ought I ever to have seen one? Or can I ever see one?’

‘Would I had seen a white bear!’

‘If I should see a white bear, what would I say? If I should never see a white bear, what then?’

‘If I never have, can, must, or shall see a white bear alive; have I ever seen the skin of one? Did I ever see one painted? – described? Have I never dreamed of one?’

‘Did my father, mother, uncle, aunt, brothers or sisters, ever see a white bear? What would they give? How would they behave?’

‘How would the white bear have behaved? Is he wild? Tame? Terrible? Rough? Smooth?’

‘Is the white bear worth seeing?’

‘Is there no sin in it?’

‘Is it better than a black one?’

BOOK 6

CHAPTER 1

We'll not stop two moments, my dear Sir, – only, as we have got through five volumes, (do, Sir, sit down upon a set – they are better than nothing) let us just look back upon the country we have passed through.

– What a wilderness has it been! and what a mercy that we have not been lost in it!

Did you think the world contained so many Jack Asses? How they viewed and reviewed us as we passed over the bottom of that little valley! and when we climbed that hill, and were just getting out of sight – good God! what a braying did they all set up!

Prithee, shepherd! who keeps all those Jack Asses?

* * *

What! are they never groomed? Never taken in in winter? Bray – bray, bray on – louder still – that's nothing. Was I a Jack Ass, I solemnly declare, I would bray from morning until night.

CHAPTER 2

When my father had danced his white bear backwards and forwards through half a dozen pages, he closed the book, and handed it triumphantly to Trim.

‘Tristram,’ said he, ‘shall be made to conjugate every word in the dictionary, backwards and forwards. By this means, you see, Yorick, every word is converted into a thesis or proposition; and each proposition leads the mind on into fresh enquiries. The force of this engine is incredible in opening a child’s head.’

‘’Tis enough, brother Shandy,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘to burst it into a thousand splinters.’

‘I presume,’ said Yorick, smiling, ‘it must be owing to this that the famous Vincent Quirino was able, in his eighth year, to paste up in the public schools at Rome no less than four thousand five hundred different theses, upon the most obscure points of theology; and to defend them well enough to dumbfound his opponents.’

‘What is that,’ cried my father, ‘to Alphonsus Tostatus, who, almost in his nurse’s arms, learned all the sciences and arts without being taught any one of them? – And what shall we say of the great Piereskus?’

‘That’s the very man,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘who walked five hundred miles from Paris to Shevling and back again, merely to see Stevinus’s flying chariot. – He was a very great man!’ added my uncle (meaning Stevinus).

‘He was,’ said my father (meaning Piereskus); ‘and increased his knowledge so greatly, that it is said that when he was seven years of age, his father committed entirely to his care the education of his younger brother, a boy of five.’

‘Was the father as wise as the son?’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘I should think not,’ said Yorick.

‘But what are these,’ continued my father, in a fit of enthusiasm, ‘to those prodigies of childhood, Grotius, Scioppius, Heinsius, Pascal, Ferdinand de Cordouè, and others? Some went through their classics at seven; others wrote tragedies at eight; Ferdinand de Cordouè was so wise at nine, and gave such proofs of his knowledge and goodness, that the monks imagined he was Antichrist. – Others were masters of fourteen languages at ten, finished studying rhetoric, poetry, logic, and ethics, at eleven, wrote commentaries upon Servius at twelve, and at thirteen received their degrees.’

‘But you forget the great Lipsius,’ quoth Yorick, ‘who composed a work* the day he was born.’

‘They should have wiped it up,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘and said no more about it.’

* However, Baillet says that to understand how Lipsius composed a book on the first day of his life, one must imagine, that this first day is not that of his birth, but that on which he began to use reason; this would have been at the age of nine years; and we are persuaded that it was at this age that Lipsius composed a poem.

CHAPTER 3

When Dr Slop's cataplasm, or poultice, was ready, an untimely scruple of decorum made Susannah refuse to hold the candle, whilst Slop put the cataplasm on. Slop had not given Susannah any pain relief for her distemper, and so a quarrel had strung up betwixt them.

'Oh!' said Slop, casting a glance at Susannah; 'then, I think I know you, madam.'

'You know me, Sir!' cried Susannah fastidiously, with a toss of her head.

Doctor Slop clapped his finger and his thumb instantly upon his nostrils.

Susannah was ready to burst with anger. 'Tis false,' she said.

'Come, come, Mrs. Modesty,' said Slop, somewhat elated with his success, 'if you won't hold the candle and look – hold it and shut your eyes.'

'That's one of your popish shifts,' cried Susannah.

'Tis better,' said Slop, 'than no shift at all, young woman.'

'I defy you, Sir,' cried Susannah, pulling her shift sleeve into sight below her elbow.

It was almost impossible for two persons to assist each other in a surgical case with more bad-tempered cordiality.

Slop snatched up the cataplasm; Susannah snatched up the candle.

'This way,' said Slop. Susannah, looking one way, and moving another, instantly set fire to Slop's wig, which being somewhat bushy and greasy, burnt out before it was well kindled.

'You impudent whore!' cried Slop, straightening up with the cataplasm in his hand.

'I never destroyed anybody's nose,' said Susannah, 'which is more than you can say!'

'Is it?' cried Slop, throwing the cataplasm in her face.

'Yes, it is,' cried Susannah, returning the compliment with what was left in the pan.

CHAPTER 4

After this, as the cataplasm had failed, Dr. Slop and Susannah retired into the kitchen to prepare a fomentation for me; and meanwhile, my father decided the point as you will read.

CHAPTER 5

‘You see ’tis high time,’ said my father to my uncle Toby and Yorick, ‘to take this young creature out of these women’s hands, and put him into those of a private tutor. Marcus Antoninus had fourteen tutors at once to superintend his son Commodus’s education, and in six weeks he dismissed five of them. I think that those five whom he dismissed did Commodus’s temper, in that short time, more hurt than the other nine were able to rectify all their lives long.

‘Now, when I consider the person who is to teach my son as the mirror in which my son will view himself from morning to night, and by which he is to adjust his looks, his demeanour, and perhaps the inmost sentiments of his heart; – I would like one, Yorick, polished at all points, fit for my child to look into.’

‘This is very good sense,’ quoth my uncle Toby to himself.

‘There is,’ continued my father, ‘a certain mien and motion of the body, both in acting and speaking, which denotes a man is good within; and I am not surprised that Gregory of Nazianzum, upon observing the hasty gestures of Julian, should foretell he would one day become a heretic; or that St. Ambrose should turn his assistant out of doors, because of an indecent motion of his head, which went backwards and forwards like a flail. There are a thousand unnoticed openings which let a penetrating eye into a man’s soul; and I maintain that a man does not so much as lay down his hat without revealing something of his nature.

‘For these reasons, the tutor I choose shall neither lisp, squint, or wink, or talk loud, or look fierce, or foolish; – or bite his lips, or grind his teeth, or speak through his nose, or pick it, or blow it with his fingers.

‘He shall neither walk fast, or slow, nor fold his arms, or hang them down, or hide them in his pocket.

‘He shall neither strike, or pinch, or tickle; or bite, or cut his nails, or hawk, or spit, or sniff, or drum his feet or fingers in company; nor (according to Erasmus) shall he speak to any one in urinating, nor point to carrion or excrement.’

‘Now this is all nonsense again,’ quoth my uncle Toby to himself.

‘I will have him,’ continued my father, ‘cheerful and jovial; at the same time, prudent, vigilant, acute, inventive, quick in resolving doubts; – he shall be wise, judicious, and learned.’

‘And why not humble, and moderate, and gentle-tempered and good?’ said Yorick.

‘And why not,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘generous, and bountiful, and brave?’

‘He shall be, my dear Toby,’ replied my father, getting up to shake his hand.

‘Then, brother Shandy,’ answered my uncle, ‘I humbly beg to recommend poor Le Fever’s son to you.’ A tear of joy sparkled in my uncle Toby’s eye, and another in the corporal’s, as the proposition was made – you will see why when you read Le Fever’s story. – Fool that I am! I cannot recollect what it was that hindered me from letting the corporal tell it in his own words; but I must tell it now in my own.

CHAPTER 6

THE STORY OF LE FEVER

It was in the summer of that year in which Dendermond was taken by the allies, which was about seven years after my uncle Toby and Trim had gone into the country to lay siege upon the bowling-green to some of the finest fortified cities in Europe.

My uncle Toby was one evening at home having his supper, with Trim sitting behind him – for in consideration of the corporal's lame and painful knee, when my uncle Toby dined, he would never allow the corporal to stand; and the poor fellow's veneration for his master was such that my uncle Toby had some trouble in maintaining this point; for often he would look back and see the corporal standing behind him with the most dutiful respect: this bred more little squabbles betwixt them, than all other causes in five-and-twenty years—

But this is neither here nor there. Why do I mention it? Ask my pen, it governs me – I govern not it.

He was one evening sitting thus at his supper, when the landlord of a little inn in the village came into the parlour, with an empty phial in his hand, to beg a glass of sherry.

'Tis for a poor gentleman – I think, of the army,' said the landlord, 'who was taken ill at my house four days ago, and has had no desire to taste anything, till just now, when he took a fancy for a glass of sherry and thin toast. If I could not beg it, I would almost steal it for the poor gentleman, he is so ill. We are all of us concerned for him.'

'Thou art a good-natured soul,' cried my uncle Toby; 'and thou shalt drink the poor gentleman's health in a glass thyself: take a couple of bottles, and tell him he is heartily welcome to them, and to a dozen more if they will do him good.'

As the landlord shut the door, my uncle said to Trim: 'I am sure he is a very compassionate fellow, Trim – yet I cannot help thinking that there must be something uncommon in his guest, too, to make the landlord and his family care so much for him. Step after him, Trim, do; and ask if he knows his name.'

'I have quite forgot it, truly,' said the landlord, on returning with the corporal, 'but I can ask his son. He has a boy of eleven or twelve years of age; – but the poor creature has eaten as little as his father; he does nothing but mourn for him, and has not stirred from the bedside these two days.'

My uncle Toby laid down his knife and fork, and thrust his plate away. Trim brought him his pipe and tobacco.

'Stay a little,' said my uncle Toby, lighting his pipe. After he had smoked about a dozen whiffs, he said,

'Trim! As it is a bad night, I am thinking of wrapping myself up in my cloak, and paying a visit to this poor gentleman.'

'Your honour has not worn your cloak,' replied the corporal, 'since the night before your honour received your wound; and it is so cold and rainy a night, that even with the cloak, 'twill bring on your honour's torment in your groin.'

'I fear so,' replied my uncle Toby; 'but I am not at rest in my mind, Trim, since the landlord's account.'

'Leave it to me, your honour,' quoth the corporal. 'I'll go to the house and reconnoitre, and act accordingly; and I will bring your honour a full account in an hour.'

‘Go, Trim,’ said my uncle; ‘here’s a shilling for thee to drink with his servant.’

‘I shall get it all out of him,’ said the corporal, shutting the door.

My uncle Toby filled his second pipe; and apart from wondering whether a fortified outwork was as well in a straight line, as a crooked one, – he might be said to have thought of nothing but poor Le Fever and his boy the whole time he smoked it.

CHAPTER 7

THE STORY OF LE FEVER CONTINUED

It was not till my uncle Toby had knocked the ashes out of his third pipe, that corporal Trim returned from the inn, and gave him this account.

‘I despaired, at first,’ said the corporal, ‘of getting any news of the poor sick lieutenant.’

‘He is in the army, then?’ said my uncle Toby. ‘In what regiment?’

‘I’ll tell your honour everything as I learnt it,’ replied the corporal.

‘Then, Trim, I’ll fill another pipe,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘and not interrupt thee; so sit down in the window-seat, Trim, and begin thy story again.’

The corporal bowed, sat down, and began again.

‘I despaired at first,’ said he, ‘of getting any news of the lieutenant and his son; for when I asked where his servant was, from whom I could make enquiries, I was told that he had no servant with him; that he had come to the inn with hired horses.

“‘If I get better, my dear,” said he, giving his purse to his son to pay the man, “we can hire horses again.”

“‘But alas! the poor gentleman will never leave here,” said the landlady to me, “for I heard the death-watch all night long; and when he dies, his son will certainly die too, for he is broken-hearted.”

‘I was hearing this account,’ continued the corporal, ‘when the youth came into the kitchen, to order thin toast for his father – “but I will make it myself,” said the youth.

“‘Pray let me save you the trouble,” said I.

“‘I believe, Sir,” said he, very modestly, “I can please him best myself.”

“‘I am sure,” said I, “he will not like the toast the worse for being toasted by an old soldier.” The youth took hold of my hand, and burst into tears.’

‘Poor boy!’ said my uncle Toby. ‘The name of a soldier, Trim, sounded like the name of a friend; I wish I had him here.’

‘I was near weeping myself,’ continued the corporal. ‘When I gave him the toast, I thought it was proper to tell him I was captain Shandy’s servant, and that your honour (though a stranger) was extremely concerned for his father; and that if there was any food or drink we could provide, he was heartily welcome to it. He made a low bow and went up stairs with the toast.

“‘I warrant you, my dear,” said I, “your father will be well again.” Mr. Yorick’s curate was smoking a pipe by the kitchen fire, but said not a word to comfort the youth. – I thought it wrong.’

‘I think so too,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘When the lieutenant had taken his sherry and toast, he revived a little, and sent word to the kitchen that he should be glad if I would step upstairs in ten minutes.

“I believe,” said the landlord, “he is going to say his prayers – for there was a book by his bed-side, and as I shut the door, I saw his son take up a cushion.”

“I thought,” said the curate, “that you gentlemen of the army, Mr. Trim, never said your prayers at all.”

“I heard the poor gentleman say his prayers last night,” said the landlady, “very devoutly.”

“Are you sure?” said the curate.

“A soldier, an’ please your reverence,” said I, “prays as often as a parson; and when he is fighting for his king, and for his own life and his honour too, he has the most reason to pray to God of anyone in the world.”

“Twas well said, Trim,” said my uncle Toby.

“But when a soldier,” said I, “has been standing for twelve hours in the trenches, up to his knees in cold water, – or engaged for months in long and dangerous marches; resting one night upon his arms, and roused the next in his shirt: harassed and benumbed, with no straw to kneel on – he must say his prayers how and when he can. I believe,” said I, for I was annoyed, “I believe, your reverence, that when a soldier gets time, he prays as heartily as a parson, though not with all his fuss and hypocrisy.”

‘Thou shouldst not have said that, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘for God only knows who is a hypocrite: at the day of judgment it will be seen who has done their duties, and who has not. – But we may depend upon it, Trim, that God is so just, that if we have done our duties, it will never be asked whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one. – But go on with thy story.’

‘When I went up,’ continued the corporal, ‘into the lieutenant’s room, he was lying in his bed: the youth was just taking up the cushion, upon which I supposed he had been kneeling.

‘When I walked up to his bed-side, the lieutenant said to me: “If you are captain Shandy’s servant, present my thanks to your master, with my little boy’s thanks too. If he was of Leven’s regiment” – I told him your honour was – “Then,” said he, “I served three campaigns with him in Flanders, and remember him, but ’tis most likely that he knows nothing of me. My name is Le Fever, a lieutenant in Angus’s; possibly he may know my story. Pray tell the captain, I was the ensign at Breda, whose wife was most unfortunately killed with a musket-shot, as she lay in my arms in my tent.”

“I remember the story very well,” said I.

“Do you?” said he, wiping his eyes; and drawing out a little ring tied with a black ribbon about his neck, he kissed it twice.

“Here, Billy,” said he. The boy flew across the room to the bed-side, and falling on his knee, took the ring in his hand, kissed his father, and then sat down upon the bed and wept.’

‘I remember,’ said my uncle Toby, sighing deeply, ‘the story of the ensign and his wife, with a circumstance his modesty omitted; and particularly well because he, as well as she, upon some account or other (I forget what) was pitied by the whole regiment; but finish thy story.’

‘’Tis finished already,’ said the corporal, ‘for I could stay no longer. Young Le Fever saw me to the bottom of the stairs; and as we went down, told me they had come from Ireland, and were on their way to join the regiment in Flanders. But alas! the lieutenant’s last march is over.’

‘Then what is to become of his poor boy?’ cried my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 8

THE STORY OF LE FEVER CONTINUED

It was to my uncle Toby's eternal honour, that although he was warmly engaged at that time in carrying on the siege of Dendermond, and had already made a lodgment upon the counterscarp, nevertheless he gave it up, and bent his whole thoughts towards the private distresses at the inn; and except that he ordered the garden gate to be bolted up, by which he might be said to have turned the siege into a blockade, he left Dendermond to itself; and only considered how to relieve the poor lieutenant and his son.

That kind being, who is a friend to the friendless, shall recompense thee for this.

As corporal Trim was putting him to bed, my uncle Toby said, 'I tell thee, Trim: when thou offered'st my services to Le Fever – as sickness and travelling are expensive for a poor lieutenant, with a son to support – thou shouldst have made an offer to him of my purse; he would have been welcome to it.'

'Your honour gave me no orders,' said the corporal.

'True,' quoth my uncle; 'thou didst very right, Trim, as a soldier, but very wrong as a man. And when thou offered'st him whatever was in my house, thou shouldst have offered him my house too. A sick brother officer should have the best quarters, Trim, and we could tend and look to him. Thou art an excellent nurse, Trim, and with thy care, and the old woman's, and his boy's, and mine together, we might set him upon his legs: in a fortnight or three weeks, he might march.'

'He will never march, your honour, in this world,' said the corporal.

'He will march,' said my uncle Toby, rising up, with one shoe off.

'An' please your honour,' said the corporal, 'he will never march but to his grave.'

'He shall march,' cried my uncle Toby, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch; 'he shall march to his regiment.'

'He cannot stand,' said the corporal.

'He shall be supported,' said my uncle Toby.

'He'll drop,' said the corporal, 'and what will become of his boy? do what we can for him, the poor soul will die.'

'He shall not die, by G __,' cried my uncle Toby.

– The Accusing Spirit, which flew up to heaven with the oath, blushed as he gave it in; and the Recording Angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever.

CHAPTER 9

My uncle Toby went to his bureau, put his purse into his breeches pocket, and having ordered the corporal to go early in the morning for a doctor, – he went to bed, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER 10

THE STORY OF LE FEVER CONTINUED

The sun looked bright the morning after, to every eye in the village but Le Fever's; the hand of death pressed heavy upon his eye-lids. My uncle Toby entered the lieutenant's room, and without preface or apology sat down upon the chair by the bed-side, opened the curtain in the manner of an old friend and brother officer, and asked him how he did, – how he had rested, – where was his pain, – what he could do to help him: and without giving him time to answer any of the enquiries, went on, and told him of the little plan which he had made.

'You shall go to my house, Le Fever,' said my uncle Toby, 'and we'll send for a doctor, and an apothecary; and the corporal shall be your nurse – and I'll be your servant, Le Fever.'

There was a frankness in my uncle Toby – not the effect of familiarity, but the cause of it – which let you at once into his soul, and showed you the goodness of his nature. Additionally, there was something in his looks, and voice, and manner, which beckoned to the unfortunate to come and take shelter under him; so that before my uncle Toby had half finished his kind offers to the father, the son had pressed up close to him, and had taken hold of his coat.

The blood and spirits of Le Fever, which were growing cold and slow within him, and were retreating to their last citadel, the heart, rallied back. The film left his eyes for a moment: he looked up wishfully in my uncle Toby's face, then at his boy; and that look was never broken.

Nature instantly ebbed again, – the film returned – the pulse fluttered – stopped – went on – stopped again – moved – stopped – shall I go on? No.

CHAPTER 11

I am so impatient to return to my own story, that what remains of young Le Fever's shall be told in a very few words in the next chapter. All that needs to be added in this chapter is as follows:

That my uncle Toby and young Le Fever attended the poor lieutenant, as chief mourners, to his grave.

That the governor of Dendermond paid him all military honours, and that Yorick paid for all ecclesiastic – for he buried him in his chancel: and it appears that he preached a funeral sermon over him. I say it appears, for it was Yorick's custom to write on the first page of every sermon which he composed, the time, place, and occasion of its being preached: to this, he would add some short comment upon the sermon itself, seldom, indeed, much to its credit.

For instance, 'This sermon upon the Jewish dispensation – I don't like it at all; 'tis most tritely put together. This is a flimsy composition; what was in my head when I made it?'

'– The excellency of this text is, that it will suit any sermon, and of this sermon, that it will suit any text.'

‘ – For this sermon I shall be hanged, for I have stolen most of it. Doctor Paidagunes found me out. Set a thief to catch a thief.’

On the back of half a dozen I find written, ‘So-so,’ – and upon a couple, ‘Moderato;’ by which, since he left the two sermons marked ‘Moderato’ and the half dozen of ‘So-so’ tied together in one bundle – one may safely suppose he meant pretty near the same thing.

There is but one difficulty with this, which is that the ‘moderato’s’ are five times better than the ‘so-so’s’; show ten times more knowledge of the human heart; have seventy times more wit and spirit in them; (and, to rise properly in my climax) reveal a thousand times more genius; – and to crown all, are infinitely more entertaining than the ‘so-so’s’. Therefore, when Yorick’s sermons are offered to the world, though I shall include only one of the ‘so-so’s’, I shall, nevertheless, print the two ‘moderato’s’ without any scruple.

What Yorick could mean by the words *lentamente*, *tenutè*, *grave*, and sometimes *adagio*, with which he has labelled some of these sermons, I dare not guess. I am more puzzled still upon finding *a l’octava alta!* upon one; *Con strepito* upon another; *Siciliana* upon a third; *Alla capella* upon a fourth.

All I know is that they are musical terms, and have a meaning; and as he was a musical man, I have no doubt that his compositions impressed very distinct ideas of their characters upon his fancy.

Amongst these is that particular sermon which has unaccountably led me into this digression – the funeral sermon upon poor Le Fever. It seems to have been his favourite composition: it is upon mortality; and is tied lengthways and crossways with yarn, and then rolled up and twisted round with a half-sheet of dirty blue paper, which smells horribly of horse drugs. Whether these marks of humiliation were designed, I doubt; because at the end of the sermon, he had wrote–

‘Bravo!’

– though it is two inches, at least, below the last line of the sermon, at that extreme right hand corner of the page, which, you know, is generally covered with your thumb; and it is wrote so faintly as scarcely to draw the eye towards it, whether your thumb is there or not. Being wrote moreover with very pale ink, diluted almost to nothing, ’tis more like the shadow of vanity, than Vanity herself – resembling rather a faint thought of applause, secretly stirring up in the heart of the composer, than a gross, obtrusive mark of it.

Nonetheless, I am aware that in publishing this, I do no service to Yorick’s character as a modest man; but all men have their failings! and what wipes this one almost away, is that the word was struck through sometime afterwards in a different tint – as if he was ashamed of the opinion he once held of it.

CHAPTER 12

When my uncle Toby had turned Le Fever's belongings into money and settled all his accounts, there was nothing left but an old regimental coat and a sword. The coat my uncle gave to the corporal.

'Wear it, Trim,' said he, 'for the sake of the poor lieutenant. – And this' – my uncle Toby drew the sword out of the scabbard as he spoke – 'this, young Le Fever, I'll save for thee. 'Tis all the fortune which God has left thee; but if he has given thee a heart to fight thy way with – and thou doest it like a man of honour – 'tis enough for us.'

As soon as my uncle Toby had laid a foundation, and taught the boy to inscribe a regular polygon in a circle, he sent him to a public school, where – except Whitsuntide and Christmas, when the corporal went to fetch him home – he remained until the spring of 1717. Then, fired by stories of the emperor's sending his army into Hungary against the Turks, he left his Greek and Latin without leave; and throwing himself upon his knees before my uncle, begged his father's sword, and my uncle's permission to go and try his fortune as a soldier.

Twice did my uncle Toby forget his wound and cry out, 'Le Fever! I will go with thee, and thou shalt fight beside me.' – And twice he laid his hand upon his groin, and hung his head in sorrow.

My uncle Toby kept Le Fever a fortnight to equip him, and buy his passage to Leghorn. Then he took down the sword from where it had hung since the lieutenant's death, and put it into his hand.

'If thou art brave, Le Fever,' said he, 'this will not fail thee; but' (musing a little), 'Fortune may. If she does, come back again to me, Le Fever,' said he, embracing him, 'and we will shape thee another course.'

The greatest injury could not have affected Le Fever more than my uncle Toby's kindness; he parted from my uncle as the best of sons from the best of fathers – both dropped tears – and as my uncle Toby gave him his last kiss, he slipped him sixty guineas, tied up in an old purse of his father's, along with his mother's ring; – and bid God bless him.

CHAPTER 13

Le Fever reached the Imperial army in time to try his sword at the defeat of the Turks before Belgrade; but a series of undeserved accidents pursued him from that moment for four years after; he withstood these buffetings, till sickness overtook him at Marseilles.

From thence he wrote to my uncle Toby that he had lost his time, his services, his health, and, in short, everything but his sword; and was waiting for the first ship to return to him.

As this letter arrived about six weeks before Susannah's accident, Le Fever was hourly expected; and was uppermost in my uncle Toby's mind while my father was describing the person he would choose as a tutor for me. However, as my uncle Toby thought my father somewhat fanciful in the accomplishments he required, he did not mention Le Fever's name till Yorick suggested that the tutor should be gentle-tempered, generous, and good. This impressed the image of Le Fever upon my uncle Toby so forcibly, he rose instantly, and taking my father's hands, said:

'I beg, brother Shandy, I may recommend poor Le Fever's son to you. He has a good heart.'

'And a brave one too, your honour,' said the corporal.

'The best hearts, Trim, are ever the bravest,' replied my uncle Toby.

'And the greatest cowards, your honour, in our regiment, were the greatest rascals. There was sergeant Kumber, and ensign—'

'We'll talk of them,' said my father, 'another time.'

CHAPTER 14

What a jovial and merry world would this be, but for that inextricable labyrinth of debts, cares, woes, want, grief, melancholy, impositions, and lies!

Doctor Slop, like a son of a w____, (as my father called him,) to exalt himself, debased me to death – and made ten thousand times more of Susannah's accident than there was any grounds for; so that in a week's time, it was in everybody's mouth, That poor Master Shandy * * * * * entirely.

And Fame, who loves to double everything, in three days more, had sworn – and all the world, as usual, believed her – 'That the nursery window had not only * * * * *; but that * * * * * also.'

Could the world have been sued, my father would have done so, and trounced it; but as every soul who mentioned the affair, did it with the greatest pity imaginable, 'twas like flying in the face of his best friends.

And yet to be silent was to acknowledge the report, at least in the opinion of half the world; and to make a bustle in contradicting it, was to confirm it as strongly in the opinion of the other half.

'Was ever poor devil of a country gentleman so hampered?' said my father.

'I would show him publicly,' said my uncle Toby, 'at the market cross.'

'Twill have no effect,' said my father.

CHAPTER 15

‘I’ll put him, however, into breeches,’ said my father, ‘let the world say what it will.’

CHAPTER 16

There are a thousand resolutions, Sir, both in church and state, as well as in private concerns, which, though they have the appearance of being taken in a hasty, hare-brained manner, were, however, weighed – argued about – entered into, and examined on all sides with so much coolness, that the Goddess of Coolness herself could not have done it better.

One of these was my father’s resolution of putting me into breeches; which, though decided in a huff, and a defiance of all mankind, had, nevertheless, been judicially talked over betwixt him and my mother about a month before, in two different beds of justice, which my father had for that purpose.

I shall explain the nature of these beds of justice in my next chapter; and in the chapter following that, you shall step with me, Madam, behind the curtain, to hear how my father and my mother debated this affair of the breeches – from which you may form an idea of how they debated all lesser matters.

CHAPTER 17

The ancient Goths of Germany, who (the learned Cluverius says) were first settled between the Vistula and the Oder, had a wise custom of debating everything of importance twice; that is, once drunk, and once sober. – Drunk, so that their councils might have vigour; – and sober, so that they might have discretion.

Now my father being entirely a water-drinker, was for a long time perplexed how to turn this to his advantage, as he did every other thing which the ancients did or said; and it was not till the seventh year of his marriage, after a thousand fruitless experiments, that he hit upon a method which answered the purpose.

That was, when any difficult and momentous point was to be settled, which required great sobriety, and great spirit too – he fixed and set apart the first Sunday night in the month, and the Saturday night immediately before it, to argue it over in bed, with my mother. By this contrivance, if you consider, Sir, the significance of these days in my first volume, * * * * *

These my father, humorously enough, called his ‘beds of justice’; for from the two different counsels taken in these two different moods, a middle one was generally found which was as near wisdom as if he had got drunk and sober a hundred times. This method answers full as well in literary discussions, as in conjugal; but it is not every author that can try the experiment as the Goths did it. My way is this:

In delicate and ticklish discussions (of which, heaven knows, there are all too many in my book) – where I find I cannot take a step without the danger of having someone upon my back – I write one-half full, and t’other half hungry; or write it all full, and correct it fasting, or vice versa, for they come to the same thing. So I feel myself upon a par with my father in his first bed of justice, and no way inferior to him in his second.

Now, when I write full, I write free from the cares and terrors of the world. I count not my scars; nor does my fancy go forth into dark corners. In a word, I write as much from the fullness of my heart, as my stomach.

But when I am fasting, ’tis a different story. I pay the world all possible attention and respect – so that betwixt both, I write a careless kind of a civil, nonsensical, good-humoured Shandean book, which will do all your hearts good – And your heads too, provided you understand it.

CHAPTER 18

‘We should begin,’ said my father, turning round in bed, and shifting his pillow towards my mother’s, ‘We should begin to think, Mrs. Shandy, of putting this boy into breeches.’

‘We should so,’ said my mother.

‘We defer it, my dear, shamefully.’

‘I think we do, Mr. Shandy,’ said my mother.

‘Although the child looks extremely good in his tunics,’ said my father.

‘He does look very good in them,’ replied my mother.

‘So that it would be almost a sin,’ added my father, ‘to take him out of ’em.’

‘It would,’ said my mother.

‘But indeed he is growing very tall,’ rejoined my father.

‘He is very tall for his age, indeed,’ said my mother.

‘I can not imagine,’ quoth my father, ‘who the deuce he takes after.’

‘I cannot conceive, for my life,’ said my mother.

‘Humph!’ said my father.

(The dialogue ceased for a moment.)

‘I am very short myself,’ continued my father gravely.

‘You are very short, Mr. Shandy,’ said my mother.

‘Humph!’ quoth my father to himself again: and plucked his pillow a little further from my mother’s. There was a pause for three minutes and a half.

‘When he gets these breeches,’ cried my father in a higher tone, ‘he’ll look like a beast in ’em.’

‘He will be very awkward in them at first,’ replied my mother.

‘And ’twill be lucky if that’s the worst of it,’ added my father.

‘It will be very lucky,’ answered my mother.

‘I suppose,’ replied my father, ‘he’ll be exactly like other people’s children.’

‘Exactly,’ said my mother.

‘Though I shall be sorry for that,’ added my father: and the debate stopped again.

‘They should be of leather,’ said my father, turning around.

‘They will last him longer,’ said my mother.

‘But he can have no linings to ’em,’ replied my father.

‘He cannot,’ said my mother.

‘’Twere better to have them of fustian,’ quoth my father.

‘Nothing can be better,’ quoth my mother.

‘Except dimity,’ replied my father.

‘’Tis best of all,’ replied my mother.

‘One must not give him his death, however,’ said my father.

‘By no means,’ said my mother: and the dialogue stood still again.

‘I am resolved, however,’ quoth my father, breaking silence, ‘he shall have no pockets in them.’

‘There is no need for any,’ said my mother.

‘I mean in his coat and waistcoat,’ cried my father.

‘I mean so too,’ replied my mother.

‘Though if he gets a toy or top – they are like a crown and a sceptre to children – they should have somewhere to keep it.’

‘Order it as you please, Mr. Shandy,’ replied my mother.
‘But don’t you think it right?’ pressed my father.
‘Perfectly,’ said my mother, ‘if it pleases you, Mr. Shandy.’
‘There’s for you!’ cried my father, losing his temper. ‘Pleases me! You never will distinguish, Mrs. Shandy, nor shall I ever teach you to do it, betwixt a point of pleasure and a point of convenience.’

This was on the Sunday night: and further this chapter sayeth not.

CHAPTER 19

After my father had debated the affair of the breeches with my mother, he consulted Albertus Rubenius upon it; and Rubenius used my father ten times worse (if possible) than my father had used my mother. My father might as well have thought of extracting the seven cardinal virtues out of a beard, as of extracting a single word out of Rubenius upon the subject.

Upon every other article of ancient dress, Rubenius was very communicative; he gave a full and satisfactory account of

The Toga, or loose gown.

The Chlamys.

The Ephod.

The Tunica, or Jacket.

The Synthesis.

The Paenula.

The Lacema, with its Cucullus.

The Paludamentum.

The Praetexta.

The Sagum, or soldier’s jerkin.

‘But what are all these to the breeches?’ said my father.

Rubenius threw down upon the counter all kinds of shoes which had been in fashion with the Romans:

The open shoe.

The close shoe.

The slip shoe.

The wooden shoe.

The hobnailed military shoe.

The clogs.

The pattins.

The pantoufles.

The brogues.

The sandals.

The felt shoe.

The linen shoe.

The laced shoe.

The braided shoe.

Rubenius shewed my father how well they all fitted, how they laced on, with what straps, thongs, ribbons, jags, and ends.

‘But I want to know about the breeches,’ said my father.

Rubenius informed my father that the Romans manufactured various fabrics, some plain, some striped, some woven through with silk and gold; that linen was not in common use till the decline of the empire, when the Egyptians brought it into vogue.

–That persons of quality distinguished themselves by the fineness and whiteness of their clothes; which colour they wore on their birthdays and public rejoicings. That it appeared from historians that they frequently sent their clothes to be cleaned and whitened: but that poorer people generally wore brown clothes of a coarser texture, till Augustus’s reign, when the slave dressed like his master, and almost every distinction of dress was lost, but the *Latus Clavus*.

‘And what was the *Latus Clavus*?’ said my father.

Rubenius told him that the point was still being argued amongst the learned: that Egnatius, Sigonius, Lipsius, Lazius, Casaubon and Scaliger, all differed from each other. Some took it to be the button; some the coat itself; others only the colour of it. Bayfius, in his *Wardrobe of the Ancients*, chap. 12, honestly said he knew not what it was, whether a stud, a button, a loop, a buckle, or a clasp.

My father lost the horse, but not the saddle.

‘They are hooks and eyes,’ said he – and with hooks and eyes he ordered my breeches to be made.

CHAPTER 20

We are now going to enter upon a new scene of events.

– Leave we then the breeches in the tailor’s hands, with my father standing over him as he works, reading him a lecture upon the *latus clavus*, and pointing to the precise part of the waistband where he wanted it sewed on.

Leave we my mother, careless about it, as about everything else in the world which concerned her; that is, indifferent as to how it was done, provided it was but done at all.

Leave we Slop likewise to the profits of my dishonours.

Leave we poor Le Fever to get home from Marseilles as best he can. And last of all, because the hardest of all–

Let us leave, if possible, myself. – But ’tis impossible; I must go along with you to the end of the work.

CHAPTER 21

If the reader has not a clear idea of the quarter-acre of ground which lay at the bottom of my uncle Toby's kitchen-garden, and which was the scene of so many of his delicious hours – the fault is not in me, but in the reader's imagination; for I gave him a minute description.

Nature blessed this plot with her kindest compost, just enough to keep shape, but not so much as to cling to the spade, and render such glorious works nasty in foul weather.

My uncle Toby came down, as the reader has been informed, with the plans of almost every fortified town in Italy and Flanders. The Duke of Marlborough, or the allies, might go where they pleased; my uncle Toby was prepared for them.

He would take the plan of a town, and enlarge it upon a scale to the exact size of his bowling-green; upon the surface of which, by means of a large roll of thread, and many small pickets driven into the ground, he transferred the lines from his paper. Then, on deciding the depths and slopes of the ditches, the height of the parapets, &c., he set the corporal to work – and sweetly went it on.

The nature of the soil, the nature of the work itself, and above all, the good-nature of my uncle Toby sitting by from morning to night, and chatting kindly with the corporal upon past deeds, left Labour little else but the ceremony of the name.

When the place was finished in this manner, my uncle Toby and the corporal began to run their first parallel.

– I beg you not to interrupt by telling me 'That the first parallel should be at least six hundred yards distant – and that I have not left a single inch for it'; for my uncle Toby extended his works from the bowling-green onto his kitchen-garden, so that his first and second parallels ran betwixt two rows of cabbages and cauliflowers; the inconveniences of which will be considered in the history of my uncle Toby's campaigns, of which this is but a sketch, and will be finished in perhaps three pages (but there is no guessing).

– The campaigns themselves will take three books; and therefore had better be printed apart – but we'll take the following sketch of them in the meantime.

CHAPTER 22

When the town, with its works, was finished, my uncle Toby and the corporal began to run their first parallel from the same points as the allies ran theirs; and following the accounts in the daily papers, they went on, during the whole siege, step by step with the allies.

When the duke of Marlborough made a lodgment, my uncle Toby made one too. And when a bastion was battered down, or a defence ruined, the corporal took his mattock and did the same – and so on; gaining ground over the works, till the town fell into their hands.

To one who took pleasure in the happiness of others, there could not have been a greater sight in the world, than to have stood behind the hornbeam hedge, and observed the spirit with which my uncle Toby and Trim sallied forth; the one with the *Gazette* in his hand, the other with a spade on his shoulder to execute its contents.

What an honest triumph in my uncle Toby's looks as he marched up to the ramparts! What intense pleasure swimming in his eye as he stood over the corporal, reading the paragraph to him while he worked. – But when he mounted the chamade, with the colours in his hand, to fix them upon the ramparts – Heaven! Earth! Sea! wet or dry, ye never made so intoxicating a draught.

In this happy track for many years, without interruption, except now and then when the west wind detained the Flanders mail, and kept them in torture – but still 'twas the torture of the happy – in this track, I say, my uncle Toby and Trim moved for many years, every year adding some improvement to their operations, which always opened fresh springs of delight.

The first year's campaign was carried on in the plain and simple method I've related.

In the second year, in which my uncle Toby took Liege and Ruremond, he thought he might afford the expense of four handsome draw-bridges, two of which I have described in the former part of my work.

At the end of the same year he added a couple of gates with portcullises. That Christmas, instead of a new suit of clothes, he treated himself with a handsome sentry-box, to stand at the corner of the bowling-green: betwixt this and the glacis, there was a little esplanade for him and the corporal to hold councils of war upon.

The sentry-box was in case of rain.

The following spring, all these were painted white, which enabled my uncle Toby to take the field with great splendour.

My father would often say to Yorick, that if any man alive had done such a thing, except his brother Toby, it would have been looked upon as a refined satire upon the parading, prancing manner in which Louis XIV had taken the field.

'But 'tis not my brother Toby's nature, kind soul!' my father would add, 'to insult any one.'

– But let us go on.

CHAPTER 23

I must observe, that although in the first year's campaign, the word *town* is often mentioned, yet a town was not added till the year after the sentry-box was painted, which was the third year of my uncle Toby's campaigns. Upon his taking Amberg, Bonn, Rhinberg, and Huy and Limbourg, one after another, a thought came into the corporal's head, that to talk of taking so many towns, without one town to show for it, was very nonsensical; and so he proposed to my uncle Toby that they should have a little wooden model of a town built, to serve for all.

My uncle Toby instantly agreed, but with the addition of two singular improvements, of which he was extremely proud.

One was, to have the town built in the Flemish style, with grated windows, and the gable ends facing the streets, &c. – like those in Ghent and Bruges.

The other was, not to have the houses made together, but to have every house independent, to hook on, or off, so as to form the plan of whatever town they pleased. This was begun directly, and many a look of congratulation was exchanged between my uncle Toby and the corporal, as the carpenter did the work.

The next summer, the town was a perfect Proteus, constantly changing from Landen – to Trerebach – to Santvliet – to Drusen – and so on.

Surely never did any Town act so many parts, since Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the fourth year, my uncle Toby, thinking a town looked foolish without a church, added a very fine one with a steeple. Trim wished for bells in it; my uncle said, the metal had better be cast into cannon.

This led the way for half a dozen brass artillery field-pieces, to be planted three on each side of my uncle Toby's sentry-box; and these soon led to somewhat larger cannons, till it came at last to my father's jack boots.

The next year, when Lisle was besieged, and Ghent and Bruges fell into our hands, my uncle Toby was sadly in need of proper ammunition; I say *proper*, because his great artillery would not bear gunpowder; which was just as well. For so full were the papers of the incessant firings by the besiegers – and so heated was my uncle Toby's imagination with these accounts, that he would have shot away all his estate.

A substitute was therefore needed, to keep up something like a continual firing in the imagination. The corporal, whose strength lay in invention, supplied an entire new system of battering of his own, which was the finishing touch to the whole apparatus.

This will be better explained if I set off, as I generally do, at a little distance from the subject.

CHAPTER 24

Poor Tom, the corporal's unfortunate brother who married the Jew's widow, had sent him over some trinkets, amongst which there was

A Montero-cap and two Turkish tobacco-pipes.

The Turkish tobacco-pipes were ornamented with flexible tubes of Morocco leather and gold wire, and mounted at their ends, one with ivory, the other with black ebony, tipped with silver.

The Montero-cap was scarlet, of a superfine Spanish cloth, mounted all round with fur, except about four inches in the front, which was faced with a light blue embroidered cloth. It seemed to have been the property of a Portuguese quartermaster.

The corporal was proud of it, for its own sake as well as for the sake of the giver, so he seldom wore it; and yet never was a Montero-cap put to so many uses; for in all disputed points, provided the corporal was sure he was in the right, it was either his oath, his wager, or his gift.

– 'Twas his gift in the present case.

'I'll be bound,' said the corporal to himself, 'to give away my Montero-cap to the first beggar who comes to the door, if I do not manage this matter to his honour's satisfaction.'

He completed it the very next morning; which was that of the storm of the counterscarp betwixt the Lower Deule and St Andrew's Gate; and on the left, between St. Magdalen's and the river.

As this was the most memorable, gallant and bloody attack in the whole war, my uncle Toby prepared himself for it with more than ordinary solemnity.

The evening before, as my uncle Toby went to bed, he ordered his ramallie wig, which had laid inside out for many years in the corner of an old campaigning trunk, to be taken out, ready for the morning; – and the first thing he did, when he had stepped out of bed, was to put it on.

He proceeded next to his breeches, and buckled on his sword-belt. He had got his sword half way in, when he considered he should want shaving, and that it would be very inconvenient doing it with his sword on, so took it off. He then found the same objection in his wig – so that went off too. So that what with one thing and another, 'twas ten o'clock, half an hour later than his usual time, before my uncle Toby sallied out.

CHAPTER 25

My uncle Toby had scarce turned the corner of his yew hedge, which separated his kitchen-garden from his bowling-green, when he perceived the corporal had begun the attack without him.

Let me describe the corporal's apparatus, and his attack, just as it struck my uncle Toby, as he turned towards the sentry-box where the corporal was at work.

The corporal—

– Tread lightly on his ashes, ye men of genius, for he was your kinsman.

Weed his grave clean, ye men of goodness, for he was your brother.

Oh corporal! had I thee, now – how would I cherish thee! thou should'st wear thy Montero-cap every hour of every day – But alas! alas! thou art gone; thy genius fled up to the stars from whence it came – and that warm and generous heart of thine, compressed into a clod of the valley!

– But what is this, to that future and dreaded page, where I look towards the velvet pall, decorated with the military ensigns of thy master – the first of men – where, I shall see thee, faithful servant! laying his sword with a trembling hand across his coffin, and then returning pale as ashes to follow his hearse, as he directed thee; where all my father's systems shall be baffled by his sorrows; and, in spite of his philosophy, I shall behold him twice taking his spectacles from off his nose, to wipe his eyes – when I see him sadly cast in the rosemary – O Toby! in what corner of the world shall I seek thy fellow?

Gracious powers! which open the lips of the dumb, and make the stammerer speak plain – when I shall arrive at this dreaded page, help me then.

CHAPTER 26

The corporal, who the night before had resolved to keep up something like an incessant firing upon the enemy during the attack, – had no further idea how at that time, other than smoking tobacco out of one of my uncle Toby's six cannon beside his sentry-box.

Upon turning it over in his mind, he soon decided that by means of his two Turkish tobacco-pipes, along with three smaller tubes of leather added to their lower ends, with the same number of tin-pipes fitted to the touch-holes, and sealed with clay next the cannon, and then tied with waxed silk at their insertions into the Morocco tube – he should be able to fire the six field-pieces all together, as easily as firing one.

Let no man say from what tags and jags human knowledge may not be advanced. Let no man, who has read of my father's first and second beds of justice, ever say from what strange sources light may not be struck, to illuminate the arts and sciences. Heaven! thou knowest how I love them – and that I would this moment give my shirt—

'Thou art a fool, Shandy,' says Eugenius, 'for thou hast only a dozen shirts in the world.'

No matter for that, Eugenius. – But to this project.

The corporal sat up the best part of the night, in bringing it to perfection; and having charged his cannon to the top with tobacco, he went contentedly to bed.

CHAPTER 27

The corporal had slipped out ten minutes before my uncle Toby, to fix his apparatus, and just give the enemy a shot or two before my uncle came.

He had drawn the six field-pieces all close up together in front of the sentry-box, leaving a gap of about a yard and a half betwixt the three on the right and left, for the convenience of charging, &c., and also possibly to make two batteries, which he might think double the honour of one.

In the rear and facing this gap, with his back to the door of the sentry-box, the corporal had taken his post. He held the ivory pipe, leading to the battery on the right, betwixt the finger and thumb of his right hand, and the ebony pipe, which led to the battery on the left, in his other hand. With his right knee firm upon the ground, as if in the front rank of his platoon, the corporal, with his Montero-cap upon his head, was furiously playing off his two batteries at the same time against the counter-guard, where the attack was to be made that morning.

His first intention, as I said, was no more than giving the enemy a single puff or two; but the pleasure of the puffs, as well as the puffing, had insensibly got hold of the corporal, and had drawn him on from puff to puff, into the very height of the attack, by the time my uncle Toby joined him.

'Twas well for my father, that my uncle Toby was not due to write his will that day.

CHAPTER 28

My uncle Toby took the ivory pipe out of the corporal's hand – looked at it for half a minute, and returned it.

Then he took it from the corporal again, and raised it half way to his mouth – and hastily gave it back a second time.

The corporal redoubled the attack; my uncle Toby smiled – then looked grave – then smiled for a moment – then looked serious for a long time.

'Give me the ivory pipe, Trim,' said my uncle Toby. Never did my uncle's mouth water so much for a pipe in his life. He retired into the sentry-box with the pipe in his hand.

Dear uncle Toby! don't go into the sentry-box with the pipe; – you can't trust a man with such a thing in such a corner.

CHAPTER 29

I beg the reader will assist me here, to wheel off my uncle Toby's ordnance behind the scenes, – to remove his sentry-box, and clear his military apparatus out of the way; that done, my dear friend Garrick, we'll sweep the stage, draw up the curtain, and exhibit my uncle Toby dressed in a new character, in which the world can have no idea how he will act. And yet, if pity be akin to love, and bravery likewise, you have seen enough of my uncle Toby to trace these family likenesses betwixt the passions.

There was, Madam, in my uncle Toby, a singleness of heart which misled him so far out of the little serpentine tracks in which things of this nature usually go on, you can have no conception of it. There was a plainness and simplicity of thinking, with such a trusting ignorance of the foldings of the heart of woman; – and so naked and defenceless did he stand before you (when a siege was out of his head), that you might have shot my uncle, Madam, ten times in a day.

With all this, my uncle Toby had that unparalleled modesty of nature I once told you of, which stood eternal sentry upon his feelings, so that you might as well–

But where am I going? these reflections crowd in upon me ten pages at least too soon, and take up time which I ought to give to facts.

CHAPTER 30

Of the few men whose breasts never felt the sting of love, the great heroes of ancient and modern stories have carried off nine parts in ten of the honour; and I wish I had the key of my study for five minutes, to tell you their names – recollect them I cannot – so accept these, for the present, in their stead.

There was the great king Aldrovandus, and Bosphorus, and Cappadocius, and Dardanus, and Pontus, and Asius, to say nothing of the iron-hearted Charles the XIIth, whom the Countess of K***** herself could make nothing of. There was Babylonicus, Mediterraneanus, Persicus, and Prusicus, not one of whom ever bowed down to the goddess Love – the truth is, they had all something else to do. – And so had my uncle Toby – till Fate – till Fate, I say, envying his name the glory of being handed down to posterity with Aldrovandus's and the rest, basely patched up the peace of Utrecht.

– Believe me, Sirs, 'twas the worst deed she did that year.

CHAPTER 31

Amongst the many ill consequences of the treaty of Utrecht, it almost gave my uncle Toby a surfeit of sieges; and though he recovered his appetite afterwards, it left its scar upon his heart. To the end of his life he never could hear Utrecht mentioned, or even read an article of news from the *Utrecht Gazette*, without sighing as if his heart would break.

My father, who was a great Motive-monger, and generally knew your motive for laughing or crying much better than you knew it yourself – would always console my uncle Toby upon these occasions as if he imagined my uncle Toby grieved for nothing so much as the loss of his hobby-horse.

‘Never mind, brother Toby,’ he would say; ‘by God’s blessing we shall have another war break out again one of these days. – For I defy ’em, my dear Toby, to take countries without taking towns, or towns without sieges.’

My uncle Toby did not take this kindly. He thought the stroke at his hobby-horse ungenerous, because in striking the horse he hit the rider too, and in the most dishonourable part possible; so upon these occasions, he always laid down his pipe upon the table to defend himself with more fire than usual.

I told the reader that my uncle Toby was not eloquent. Certainly it was not easy for him to make long harangues, and he hated florid speeches; but there were times where the stream overflowed the man, and ran so counter to its usual course, that my uncle Toby, for a time, was equal to Tertullus.

My father was so highly pleased with one of these speeches of my uncle Toby’s, which he delivered one evening to him and Yorick, that he wrote it down before he went to bed.

I have had the good fortune to find it amongst my father’s papers, with here and there an insertion of his own, betwixt two crooks, thus [].

It is labelled,

MY BROTHER TOBY’S JUSTIFICATION OF HIS OWN PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT IN WISHING TO CONTINUE THE WAR

I may safely say, I have read this oration of my uncle Toby’s a hundred times, and think it so fine a model of defence – it shows so sweet and gallant a temperament, that I give it to the world, word for word as I find it.

CHAPTER 32

MY UNCLE TOBY'S APOLOGETICAL ORATION

I am aware, brother Shandy, that when a military man wishes, as I have done, for war, it has a bad appearance; and that, no matter how just his motives may be, he stands in an uneasy position in vindicating himself.

Therefore, if a soldier is prudent, which he may be without being a jot the less brave, he will not utter his wish in the hearing of an enemy; for an enemy will not believe him. He will be cautious of doing it even to a friend, lest he may suffer in his esteem.

But if his heart is overcharged, and a secret sigh for arms must have its vent, he will reserve it for the ear of a brother, who knows his character, and what his true principles of honour are: what I hope mine are, brother Shandy, would be unbecoming in me to say – I have been much worse, I know, than I ought, and somewhat worse, perhaps, than I think.

But such as I am, you, my dear brother, who sucked the same breast as me, and with whom I have been brought up from my cradle, and from whom I have concealed no action of my life – such as I am, you must by this time know me, with all my vices and weaknesses of age, temper and understanding.

Tell me then, my dear brother Shandy, which of them was at fault when I condemned the peace of Utrecht, and grieved that the war was not carried on a little longer? Did you think it unworthy of your brother, that in wishing for war, he should wish for more of his fellow-creatures to be slain, or driven from their peaceful habitations, merely for his own pleasure? Tell me, brother Shandy, upon what deed of mine do you base it? [The devil a deed do I know of, dear Toby – wrote my father – except one for a hundred pounds, which I lent thee to carry on these cursed sieges.]

If, when I was a school-boy, I could not hear a drum beat, without my heart beating with it – was it my fault, or Nature's?

When Guy, Earl of Warwick, and the Seven Champions of England, were handed around the school, were they not all purchased with my own pocket-money? Was that selfish, brother Shandy? When we read over the siege of Troy, was I not as much concerned for the destruction of the Greeks and Trojans as any boy in the school? Was I not given three strokes of a ferula for calling Helen a bitch for it? Did any one of you shed more tears for Hector? And when king Priam came to the camp to beg his body, and returned weeping back to Troy without it – you know, brother, I could not eat my dinner.

Did that show me to be cruel? Or because, brother Shandy, my heart panted for war, did that prove it could not ache for the distresses of war too?

O brother! 'tis one thing for a soldier to gather laurels, and 'tis another to scatter cypress. [Who told thee, my dear Toby, that cypress was used by the ancients on mournful occasions?]

'Tis one thing, brother Shandy, for a soldier to hazard his own life – to leap first into the trench, where he is sure to be cut in pieces: 'tis one thing, from a thirst of glory, to enter the breach first, and march bravely on with drums and trumpets: – and 'tis another thing to reflect on the miseries of war; to view the desolations of whole countries, and consider the hardships which the soldier himself is forced (for sixpence a day, if he can get it) to undergo.

Need I be told, dear Yorick, that so soft and gentle a creature, born to love, mercy, and kindness, as man is, was not shaped for this? But why did you not add, Yorick, – if not by Nature – that he is so by Necessity?

For what is war? what is it, Yorick, when fought upon principles of liberty and honour, but the getting together of quiet and harmless people, with their swords in their hands, to keep the ambitious and the turbulent within bounds? And heaven is my witness, brother Shandy, that the pleasure I have taken in these things, and that infinite delight, in particular, which has attended my sieges on my bowling-green, has arose within me, and I hope in the corporal too, from our awareness that we were answering the great purposes of our creation.

CHAPTER 33

I told the Christian reader – hoping he is Christian; – if he is not, I am sorry for it, and beg he will consider the matter, and not lay the blame entirely upon this book–

I told him, Sir – for in truth, when a man is telling a story in the strange way I do mine, he is obliged continually to be going backwards and forwards to keep all tight together in the reader's fancy – which if I did not take heed to do more than at first, there is so much unfixed and equivocal matter starting up, with so many breaks and gaps, and so little service do the stars afford, which, nevertheless, I hang up in some of the darkest passages, knowing that the world is apt to lose its way, with all the light the noon-day sun can give it – and now you see, I am lost myself!

But 'tis my father's fault; and whenever my brains come to be dissected, you will perceive that he has left a large uneven thread running along the whole length of the web, so that you cannot cut out a * * (there I hang up a couple of lights again) without it being seen or felt.

You see 'tis morally impracticable for me to wind this round to where I set out– I begin the chapter over again.

CHAPTER 34

I told the Christian reader in the beginning of the chapter which preceded my uncle Toby's apologetical oration, that the peace of Utrecht almost parted my uncle Toby from his hobby-horse.

There is an indignant way in which a man sometimes dismounts his horse, which as good as says, 'I'll go afoot all my life, before I would ride a single mile upon your back again.'

Now my uncle Toby could not be said to dismount his horse in this manner, or indeed, at all – rather, his horse flung him – and somewhat viciously. It created a sort of shyness betwixt my uncle Toby and his hobby-horse. He had no use for him from March to November, except now and then to take a short ride out, just to see that the fortifications and harbour of Dunkirk were correctly demolished.

The French were so backwards all that summer in setting about it, and Monsieur Tugghe, the Deputy at Dunkirk, presented so many affecting petitions to the queen, beseeching her to cause her thunder-bolts to fall only upon the martial works; and the queen having pity, and her ministers not wishing to have the town dismantled, for these private reasons, * * * * *
* * * * * – it was three full months after my uncle Toby and the corporal had constructed the town, ready to be destroyed, that the commandants, deputies and negotiators would permit him to do so.

–Fatal inactivity!

The corporal was all for beginning the demolition, by making a breach in the ramparts.

'No, that will never do,' said my uncle Toby, 'for then the English garrison will not be safe an hour; because if the French are treacherous—'

'They are as treacherous as devils, your honour,' said the corporal.

'It gives me concern to hear it, Trim,' said my uncle Toby, 'for they don't lack personal bravery; and if a breach is made in the ramparts, they may enter it, and make themselves masters of the place.'

'Let them enter, if they dare,' said the corporal, brandishing his spade.

'In cases like this, corporal,' said my uncle Toby, 'a commandant must act with prudence. We will begin with the outworks towards the sea and the land, and demolish the most distant, Fort Louis, first – and the rest, one by one, as we retreat towards the town; then we'll fill up the harbour – retire into the citadel, and blow it up: and then, corporal, we'll embark for England.'

'We are there,' quoth the corporal, recollecting himself.

'Very true,' said my uncle Toby, looking at the church.

CHAPTER 35

A delusive, delicious consultation or two of this kind, betwixt my uncle Toby and Trim, upon the demolition of Dunkirk, for a moment recalled the ideas of those pleasures which were slipping from under him.

Yet all went on heavily. Stillness and Silence entered the solitary parlour, and drew their gauzy mantle over my uncle Toby's head; and Listlessness sat quietly down beside him in his arm-chair.

No longer did Amberg and Rhinberg and Limbourg and the rest hurry on the blood. No longer did saps, and mines, and palisades, keep out this fair enemy of man's repose. No more could my uncle Toby, after passing the French lines, as he ate his egg at supper, then break into the heart of France, march up to the gates of Paris, and fall asleep with nothing but ideas of glory. No more could he dream that he had fixed the royal standard upon the tower of the Bastille, and awake with it streaming in his head.

–Softer visions – gentler vibrations – stole sweetly in upon his slumbers. The trumpet of war fell from his hands; he took up the lute, sweet instrument! of all the most delicate! the most difficult!

– How wilt thou touch it, my dear uncle Toby?

CHAPTER 36

Now, because I have once or twice said that I was confident the following memoirs of my uncle Toby's courtship of widow Wadman, whenever I got time to write them, would turn out one of the most complete accounts of the practice of love and love-making that ever was addressed to the world – do you imagine that I shall set out with a description of what love is? whether part God and part Devil, as Plotinus puts it–

– Or supposing the whole of love to be as ten – as Ficinus does – ‘How many parts of it are one, and how many the other’ – or whether it is all one great Devil from head to tail, as Plato says: but Plato appears to have been a man of much the same temper as doctor Baynyard, who being a great enemy to blisters, imagined that half a dozen of 'em at once would draw a man to his grave, and rashly concluded that the Devil himself was nothing but one great bouncing blister beetle.

I have nothing to say to people who allow themselves this monstrous liberty in arguing, but what Nazianzen cried out to Philagrius–

‘O fine reasoning, Sir! when you philosophize in your moods and passions.’

Nor should I stop to inquire whether love is a disease, or embroil myself with Rhasis and Dioscorides, whether the seat of it is in the brain or liver; because this would lead me on to an examination of the two opposite manners in which patients have been treated – the one, of Aertius, who always began with a cooling dressing of hempseed and bruised cucumbers, followed with thin potations of water-lilies and purslane – to which he added a pinch of snuff of the herb Hanea.

– The other, that of Gordonius (in Ch. 15 of *De Amore*), who directs they should be thrashed *ad putorem usque* – till they stink again.

My father, who had a great stock of knowledge of this kind, was very busy with the progress of my uncle Toby's affairs: from his theories of love, (with which, by the way, he contrived to crucify my uncle Toby's mind, almost as much as his amours themselves) – he put one into practice; and by means of a camphorated waxed cloth to allay lust, which he imposed upon the tailor whilst he was making my uncle Toby a new pair of breeches, he produced Gordonius's effect upon my uncle Toby without the disgrace.

What changes this produced, will be read in its proper place: all that needs to be added is this – that whatever effect the camphorated cloth had upon my uncle Toby, it had a vile effect upon the house; and if my uncle Toby had not swathed it in smoke, it might have had a vile effect upon my father too.

CHAPTER 37

All I ask is that I am not obliged to give a definition of love, so long as I can go on with my story using the word with its common meaning.

When I find myself entangled in this mystic labyrinth, my Opinion will then come in, of course, and lead me out.

At present, I hope I shall be understood in telling the reader my uncle Toby fell in love.

– Not that the phrase is at all to my liking: for to say a man is fallen in love, or is deeply in love, or up to the ears in love, carries the implication that love is a thing below a man: this is returning again to Plato's damnable opinion.

Let love be what it will – my uncle Toby fell into it.

And possibly, gentle reader, with such a temptation, so wouldst thou: for never did thy eyes behold anything more desirable than widow Wadman.

CHAPTER 38

To imagine this right, call for pen and ink – here's paper ready to your hand. Sit down, Sir, and paint her as like your mistress as you can – as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you – 'tis all one to me – please your own fancy.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Was ever any thing in Nature so sweet! so exquisite!

How could my uncle Toby resist?

Thrice happy book! thou wilt have this one page, at least, which Malice will not blacken, and which Ignorance cannot misrepresent.

CHAPTER 39

As Susannah was informed by Mrs. Bridget of my uncle Toby's falling in love with her mistress fifteen days before it happened – which Susannah then told my mother the next day – it has given me an opportunity of entering upon my uncle Toby's amours a fortnight before their existence.

'I have some news to tell you, Mr. Shandy,' quoth my mother, 'which will surprise you greatly.'

Now my father was then holding one of his second beds of justice, and was musing about the hardships of matrimony, as my mother spoke.

'Our brother Toby is going to be married to Mrs. Wadman.'

'Then he will never again,' quoth my father, 'be able to lie diagonally in his bed as long as he lives.'

It was a consuming vexation to my father, that my mother never asked the meaning of a thing she did not understand.

'She is not a woman of science,' my father would say – 'but she might ask a question.'

My mother never did. She went out of the world at last without knowing whether it turned round, or stood still. My father had officiously told her a thousand times which way it was, but she always forgot.

For these reasons, a discourse between them seldom went on much further than a proposition, a reply, and a rejoinder; after which, it generally took breath for a few minutes (as in the affair of the breeches), and then went on again.

'If he marries, 'twill be the worse for us,' quoth my mother.

'Not much,' said my father; 'he may as well batter away his means upon that, as any thing else.'

'To be sure,' said my mother: so here ended the proposition, the reply and the rejoinder.

'It will be some amusement to him, too,' said my father.

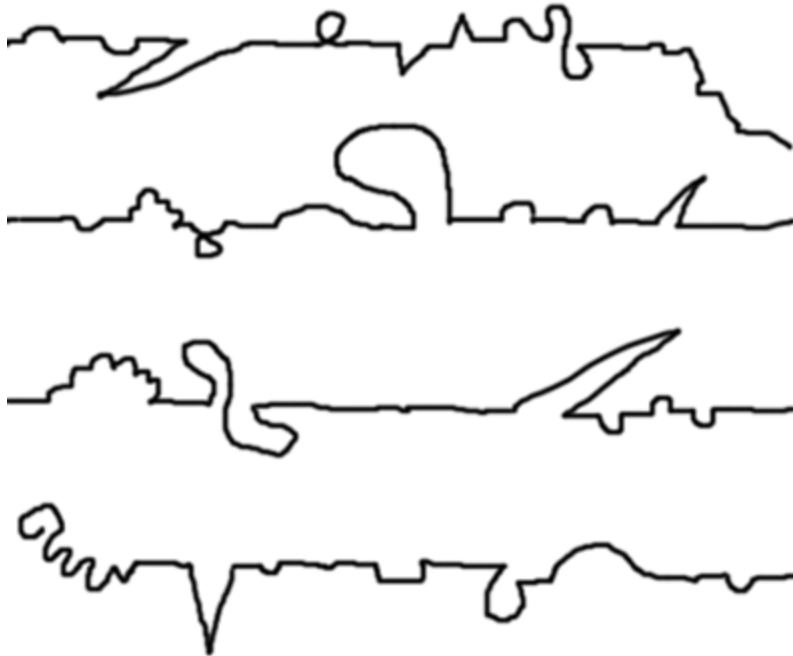
'A very great one,' answered my mother, 'if he should have children.'

'Lord have mercy upon me,' said my father to himself. * * * *

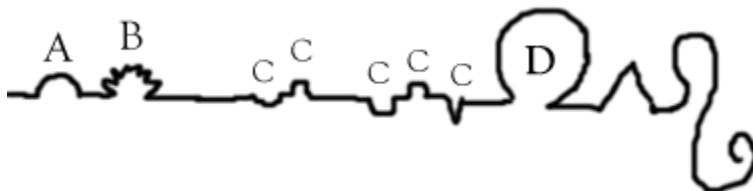
* * * * *
* * * * *

CHAPTER 40

I am now beginning to get fairly into my work; and have no doubt that I shall be able to go on with my uncle Toby's story, and my own, in a tolerable straight line. Now,



These were the four lines I moved in through my first, second, third, and fourth volumes. In the fifth volume I have been very good, – the precise line I have described in it being this:



By which it appears, that except at the curve, marked A, where I took a trip to Navarre, and B, which is the short airing when I was there with the Lady Baussiere and her page, I have not taken the least frisk of a digression, till John de la Casse's devils led me the round you see marked D. As for c c c c c, they are nothing but parentheses, and the ins and outs common to the lives of the greatest ministers of state; and when compared with my transgressions at the letters A B D – they vanish into nothing.

In this last volume I have done better still – for from the end of Le Fever's episode, to the beginning of my uncle Toby's campaigns, I have scarce stepped a yard out of my way.

If I mend at this rate, it is not impossible that I may arrive at the excellency of going on even thus:



which is a line drawn as straight as I could draw it, with a ruler, turning neither to the right nor left.

This line – the path-way for Christians to walk in! say divines–

– The emblem of moral rectitude! says Cicero–

– The best line! say cabbage planters – is the shortest line, says Archimedes, which can be drawn from one point to another.

What a journey!

Pray can you tell me, without anger, before I write my chapter upon straight lines – by what mistake it has come to pass, that your men of genius have all along confounded this line with the line of Gravitation?

BOOK 7

CHAPTER 1

No – I think, I said, I would write two volumes every year, provided the vile cough which then tormented me, and which I dread worse than the devil, would allow me – and in another place (but where, I can't recollect now) I swore it should be kept going at that rate these forty years, if I were blessed so long with health and good spirits.

Now as for my spirits, apart from playing the fool with me nineteen hours out of the twenty-four, I have much to thank 'em for. Cheerily have ye made me tread the path of life with all its burdens upon my back; ye have never once deserted me. In dangers ye gilded my horizon with hope, and when Death himself knocked at my door – ye bade him come again, in so gay and careless a tone that he doubted his mission – 'There must certainly be some mistake,' quoth he.

Now there is nothing in this world I hate worse, than to be interrupted in a story – and I was that moment telling Eugenius a most tawdry one, of a nun who fancied herself a shell-fish, and of a monk damned for eating a mussel, and was showing him the justice of the procedure –

'Did ever so grave a person get into so vile a scrape?' quoth Death.

'Thou hast had a narrow escape, Tristram,' said Eugenius, taking my hand as I finished my story.

'But there is no living, Eugenius,' replied I, 'now that this son of a whore has found out my lodgings. I have forty volumes to write, and forty thousand things to say and do which nobody in the world will say and do for me; and as thou seest, Death has got me by the throat (for Eugenius could scarce hear me speak). As I am no match for him in the open field, had I not better, whilst these two spider legs of mine are able to support me – had I not better fly for my life?'

''Tis my advice, my dear Tristram,' said Eugenius.

'Then by heaven! I will lead him a dance – for I will gallop to the banks of the Garonne,' quoth I, 'and if I hear him clattering at my heels I'll scamper away to Mount Vesuvius, and from there to the world's end. If he follows me, I pray God he may break his neck.'

'He runs more risk there,' said Eugenius, 'than thou.'

Eugenius's wit and affection brought blood into the cheek from whence it had been some months banished. – 'Twas a vile moment to bid adieu; he led me to my chaise.

'*Allons!*' said I; the postboy cracked his whip – off I went like a cannon, and in half a dozen bounds got into Dover.

CHAPTER 2

‘Now hang it!’ quoth I, as I looked towards the French coast – ‘a man should know something of his own country before he goes abroad – and I never gave a peep into Rochester church, or Chatham Dock, or visited St. Thomas at Canterbury, though they all lay in my way.’

– But mine, indeed, is a particular case –

So without arguing further, I skipped into the boat, and in five minutes we got under sail, and scudded away like the wind.

‘Pray, captain,’ quoth I, as I was going down into the cabin, ‘is a man never overtaken by Death in this crossing?’

‘Why, there is not time for a man to be sick,’ replied he.

‘What a cursed liar! for I am sick as a horse already,’ quoth I. ‘What a brain! – upside down! hey-day! the cells are broke loose one into another, and the blood, and lymph, and nervous juices are all jumbled into one mass – everything turns round in it like a thousand whirlpools–

‘Sick! sick! sick! sick!

‘When shall we get to land, captain? – they have hearts like stones – O I am deadly sick! reach me that thing, boy – I wish I was at the bottom – Madam! how is it with you? Undone! undone! – What, the first time? – No, ’tis the second, third, sixth, tenth time, sir – hey-day! what a trampling over head! Hallo! cabin boy! what’s the matter?’

The wind chopped about! s’Death! – then I shall meet him full in the face.

What luck! ‘’Tis chopped about again, master.’

‘O the devil chop it–’

‘Captain,’ quoth she, ‘for heaven’s sake, let us get ashore.’

CHAPTER 3

It is a great inconvenience to a man in a hurry, that there are three distinct roads between Calais and Paris, and there is so much to be said about them by the deputies from the towns which lie along them, that half a day is easily lost in settling which you’ll take.

First, the road by Lisle and Arras, which is the most round-about – but most interesting.

The second, that by Amiens, which you may go if you would see Chantilly.

And that by Beauvais, which you may go if you wish.

For this reason a great many choose to go by Beauvais.

CHAPTER 4

‘Now before I leave Calais,’ a travel-writer would say, ‘it would not be amiss to give some account of it.’

Now I think it very much amiss that a man cannot go quietly through a town and let it alone, when it does not meddle with him; but he must be taking out his pen at every kennel he crosses over, for the sake of describing it. If we may judge from what has been wrote of these things, by all who have wrote and galloped – or who have galloped and wrote – or who have wrote galloping, which is the way I do – from the great Addison, who did it with his satchel of school books hanging at his a___, there is not a galloper of us all who might not have gone on ambling quietly in his own ground, and have wrote all he had to write there.

For my own part, as heaven is my judge – I know no more of Calais (except the little my barber told me of it as he was sharpening his razor), than I do of Cairo; for it was dusky evening when I landed, and as dark as pitch in the morning when I set out. Yet by merely knowing what is what, and by putting this and that together, I would lay odds that I could this moment write a chapter upon Calais as long as my arm; and with such distinct and satisfactory detail that you would take me for the town-clerk himself.

– It should be penned moreover, sir, with so much knowledge and good sense, and truth, and precision–

– Nay – if you don’t believe me, you may read the chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Calais, Calatium, Calusium, Calesium.

This town, if we may trust its archives, was once a small village belonging to the Count de Guignes; and as it now boasts fourteen thousand inhabitants, as well as four hundred and twenty families in the suburbs, it must have grown up little by little, I suppose, to its present size.

Though there are four convents, there is but one parish church in the whole town; I had not an opportunity of taking its dimensions, but it is pretty easy to make a guess at ’em – for as there are fourteen thousand inhabitants in the town, if the church holds them all it must be considerably large – and if it will not, ’tis a pity they have not another. It is built in the form of a cross, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary; the steeple, which has a spire, is in the middle of the church, and stands upon four pillars elegant and light enough, but also strong. It is decorated with eleven altars, fine rather than beautiful. The great altar is a masterpiece in its kind; ’tis of white marble, and, I was told, near sixty feet high.

There was nothing struck me more than the great Square, tho’ I cannot say ’tis either well paved or well built; but ’tis in the heart of the town, and most of the streets around there terminate in it. Could there have been a fountain, which it seems there cannot, it would have doubtless been a great ornament in the centre of this square, – not that it is properly a square, because ’tis forty feet longer from east to west, than from north to south; so that the French are right to call them *Places* rather than *Squares*, which, strictly speaking, they are not.

The town-hall seems to be but a sorry building, and not in the best repair; however it serves very well for the magistrates, who assemble in it from time to time to distribute justice.

Although I have heard much of it, there is nothing at all curious in the Courgain; 'tis a quarter inhabited solely by sailors and fishermen, consisting of a number of small streets, neatly built of brick; 'tis extremely populous, but there is nothing curious in that either. – A traveller may see it to satisfy himself – however he must not on any account omit seeing La Tour de Guet; 'tis so called because in war it serves to give warning of approaching enemies – but 'tis monstrous high, and catches the eye so continually, you cannot avoid noticing it.

It was a singular disappointment to me that I could not take an exact survey of the fortifications, which are the strongest in the world, and which, since they were started by Philip, Count of Boulogne, have cost (as I learned from an engineer in Gascony) above a hundred million livres. It is very remarkable that where the town is naturally the weakest, they have expended the most money; so that the out-works stretch a great way, and occupy a large area of ground.

However, when all is said and done, it must be acknowledged that Calais was never so important in itself, as from its situation, which gave our ancestors easy entrance into France. It was no less troublesome to the English in those times, than Dunkirk has been in ours; so that it was looked upon as the key to both kingdoms, which no doubt is the reason that there have arisen so many contentions about who should keep it.

Of these, the siege of Calais, or rather the blockade, was the most memorable, as it withstood the efforts of Edward the Third a whole year, and was only ended at last by famine and extreme misery. The gallantry of Eustace de St. Pierre, who offered himself as a victim for his fellow-citizens, has ranked his name with heroes. As it will not take up above fifty pages, it would be unjust to the reader not to give him a detailed account of that romantic story, as well as of the siege itself, in Rapin's own words:

CHAPTER 6

– But courage, gentle reader! – I scorn it – 'tis enough to have thee in my power – but to make use of that advantage would be too much – No! by that all-powerful fire which warms the visionary brain! before I would force a helpless creature upon this hard service, and make thee pay, poor soul! for fifty pages, which I have no right to sell thee, – naked as I am, I would browse upon the mountains, and smile when the north wind brought me neither my tent nor my supper.

So keep on, my brave boy! and make thy way to Boulogne.

CHAPTER 7

– Boulogne! hah! – so we are all got together – a jolly set of debtors and sinners – but I can't stay with you – I'm pursued like a hundred devils, and shall be overtaken before I can change horses:– for heaven's sake, make haste–

'Tis for high-treason,' quoth a very little man, whispering to a tall man next to him.

'Or else for murder,' quoth the tall man.

'No', quoth a third; 'the gentleman has been committing–'

'Ah! ma chere fille!' said I, as she tripped by, 'you look as rosy as the morning,'

'No; 'tis debt,' quoth a fourth (she curtsied to me – I kissed my hand to her.)

'Tis certainly for debt,' quoth a fifth; 'I would not pay that gentleman's debts for a thousand pounds.'

'I have no debt,' quoth I, 'but the debt of Nature, and I will pay her every farthing I owe her – How can you be so hard-hearted, Madam, to arrest a poor traveller not harming anyone? do stop that death-looking, long-striding scoundrel who is following me – if only for a stage or two, just give me a head start, I beseech you, madam–'

'Now, 'tis a great pity,' quoth mine Irish host, 'that all this good courtship should be lost; for the young gentlewoman has been after going out of hearing.'

'Simpleton!' quoth I. 'So you have nothing else in Boulogne worth seeing?'

'By Jasus! there is the finest Seminary for the Humanities.'

'There cannot be a finer,' quoth I.

CHAPTER 8

When a man's wishes hurry on his ideas ninety times faster than the vehicle he rides in – woe be to truth! and woe be to the vehicle upon which he breathes forth his disappointment!

As I never describe men or things in anger, 'more haste less speed,' was all the reflection I made upon the affair, the first time it happened. The second, third, fourth, and fifth time, I blamed only the second, third, fourth, and fifth post-boys, without reflecting further; but when the event befell me a sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth time, I could not avoid making a national reflection:

That something is always wrong in a French post-chaise, upon first setting out.

Or thus:

A French postilion always has to alight before he has got three hundred yards out of town.

What's wrong now?

Diable! – a rope's broke! – a knot has slipped! – a staple's drawn! – a tag, a rag, a jag, a strap, a buckle, wants altering.

Now, I never swear at the post-chaise, or its driver – but I take the matter coolly, and consider that some tag, rag, jag, strap or buckle will always want altering, wherever I travel. So I take the good and the bad as they fall in my road, and get on.

‘Do so, my lad!’ said I; he had lost five minutes already, in alighting to get a luncheon of black bread, which he had crammed into the chaise-pocket, and he had remounted and was going leisurely on, to relish it the better – ‘Get on, my lad,’ said I, briskly – but in the most persuasive tone imaginable, for I jingled a coin against the glass: the dog grinned from ear to ear, and behind his sooty muzzle uncovered a pearly row of teeth.

Heaven! What masticators! What bread!

– and so as he finished his last mouthful, we entered the town of Montreuil.

CHAPTER 9

There is not a town in all France which looks better on the map than Montreuil; but when you come to see it – it looks pitiful.

There is one thing, however, in it that is very handsome; and that is the inn-keeper’s daughter. She has been eighteen months at school in Amiens, and six at Paris; so she knits, and sews, and dances, and does the little coquetries very well.

– A slut! In these five minutes that I have stood looking at her, she has let fall at least a dozen loops in a white thread stocking – yes, yes, I see, you cunning gipsy! – you need not pin it to your knee.

– That Nature should have told this creature about a *statue’s thumb!*

– But as this sample is worth all their thumbs – and as Janatone (for that is her name) stands so well for a drawing – may I never draw more, if I do not draw her in all her proportions, and with as determined a pencil, as if I had her in the wettest drapery.

– But your worships choose rather that I should give you the length, breadth, and height of the great parish-church, or draw the abbey of Saint Austerberte, which was transported here from Artois, so that your worships may measure them at your leisure. But he who measures thee, Janatone, must do it now – thy frame will change – and before twice twelve months are passed, thou mayest grow out like a pumpkin, and lose thy shape – or thou mayest go off like a flower, and lose thy beauty – nay, thou mayest go off like a hussy, and lose thyself.

But if I go on with my drawing, I’ll be shot–

So you must be content with the original; which, on a fine evening in Montreuil, you will see as you change horses: but unless you have as bad a reason for haste as I have, you had better stop–

– Lord help me! I could not.

CHAPTER 10

All which being considered, and because Death might be much nearer to me than I imagined – ‘I wish I was at Abbeville,’ quoth I, ‘if only to see how they card and spin’ – so off we set.

From Montreuil to Nampont – from Nampont to Bernay – from Bernay to Nouvion – from Nouvion to Abbeville–

– but the carders and spinners were all gone to bed.

CHAPTER 11

What a vast advantage is travelling! only it heats one; but there is a remedy for that, which you will pick out of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 12

If I could tell Death, like my apothecary, how and where I will take his purge – I should certainly refuse to submit to it before my friends. Therefore I never seriously think upon the manner of this great catastrophe, which torments my thoughts as much as the catastrophe itself; but I constantly draw the curtain across it with this wish, that God may let it happen to me not in my own house – but rather in some decent inn. At home, I know, the concern of my friends, wiping my brows and smoothing my pillow, will crucify my soul; but in an inn, the few cold services I wanted would be purchased with a few guineas, and provided with an undisturbed, but punctual attention.

– But mark. This inn should not be the inn at Abbeville, even if there was no other inn in the universe.

Let the horses be ready by four in the morning – Yes, by four, Sir! or I'll raise a clatter in the house shall wake the dead.

CHAPTER 13

'Make them like unto a wheel' is a bitter sarcasm, as all the learned know, against the grand tour, and the restless spirit for making it, which David foresaw would haunt the children of men; and therefore, (thinks the great bishop Hall), 'tis one of the severest imprecations which David ever uttered against the enemies of the Lord. For motion, says he, is inquietness; and rest is heavenly.

Now, I think differently; that motion is so much of life, and joy – and that to stand still, or move slowly, is death and the devil–

Hollo! the whole world's asleep! – bring out the horses – grease the wheels – tie on the mail – I'll not lose a moment–

Now the wheel we are talking of, with which he curseth his enemies, should certainly be a post-chaise wheel, whether they had them in Palestine at that time or not – and my wheel must as certainly be a cart-wheel groaning round once in an age; and of which I dare say they had great store in that hilly country.

I love the Pythagoreans (much more than ever I dare tell my dear Jenny) for their 'getting out of the body, in order to think well.' No man thinks right, whilst he is in it; blinded as he must be, with his humours, and either too lax or too tense. – Reason is half Sensation; and the measure of heaven itself is but the measure of our present appetites–

– But which of the two do you think to be mostly in the wrong?

'You, certainly,' quoth she, 'to disturb a whole family so early.'

CHAPTER 14

But she did not know I had vowed not to shave my beard till I got to Paris; yet I hate to make mysteries of nothing. 'Tis the cold cautiousness of one of those little souls from which Lessius (*De Moribus Divinis*, book 13, ch. 24) hath made his estimate, that one Dutch cubic mile will allow room enough for eight hundred thousand million souls, which he supposes to be as many as can possibly be damned to the end of the world.

I am at a loss as to what could be in Franciscus Ribbera's head, when he pretends that no less a space than two hundred Italian miles cubed will be sufficient to hold the same number – he certainly must have counted some of the old Roman souls, without reflecting how much, by a gradual decline in the course of eighteen hundred years, they must have shrunk almost to nothing.

In Lessius's time, these souls were as little as can be imagined – we find them less now–

And next winter we shall find them less again; so that if we go on this way, I have no doubt that in half a century we shall have no souls at all; by that time I doubt likewise of the existence of the Christian faith; both of 'em will be exactly worn out together.

Blessed Jupiter! and blessed every other heathen god and goddess! for then ye will all come into play again, with Priapus at your tails – what jovial times!

– but where am I? and into what a delicious riot of things am I rushing? I, who must be cut short in the midst of my days! – peace to thee, generous fool! and let me go on.

CHAPTER 15

– 'So hating, I say, to make mysteries of nothing' – I entrusted it with the post-boy, as soon as I got into the chaise; he gave a crack with his whip, and with the horse trotting, we danced it along to Ailly au Clochers, famed in days of yore for the finest chimes in the world; but we danced through it without music – the chimes being greatly out of order (as they were through all France).

And so making all possible speed, from

Ailly au Clochers, I got to Hixcourt, and then to Pequignay, and then Amiens, about which town I have nothing to inform you, but what I told you once before – that Janatone went there to school.

CHAPTER 16

Of all the whiffling vexations which come puffing across a man's canvas, there is not one more teasing and tormenting than this:

That be you never so ready for sleep – tho' you are passing perhaps through the finest country, upon the best roads, and in the easiest carriage in the world – nay, even if you were sure you could sleep for fifty miles, without once opening your eyes – yet the necessity of paying for the horses at every stage – of putting your hand into your pocket, and counting out three livres fifteen sous, puts an end to rest so effectively that you cannot sleep above six miles, to save your soul from destruction.

'I'll be even with 'em,' quoth I, 'for I'll put the precise sum into a piece of paper, and hold it ready in my hand all the way. Now I shall have nothing to do,' said I (composing myself to rest), 'but to drop this gently into the post-boy's hat, and not say a word.'

But then he wants two sous more to drink – or there is an old twelve sous piece which will not pass – or a livre to be brought over from the last stage, which Monsieur had forgot; still sweet sleep is retrievable; and still might the flesh recover from these blows – but then, by heaven! you have paid but for a single post-stage – whereas 'tis a stage and a half; and this obliges you to pull out your book of post-roads, the print of which is so very small, it forces you to open your eyes, whether you will or no.

Then Monsieur le Curé offers you a pinch of snuff – or a poor soldier shows you his leg – or a shaveling his box – or the priestess of the cistern will water your wheels, swearing they need it – and in all this, the mind gets so thoroughly awakened, you cannot get it asleep again.

It was entirely owing to one of these misfortunes that I did not pass clean by the stables of Chantilly –

– The postilion persisting that the two sous piece was a fake, I opened my eyes, and seeing it to be genuine as plain as my nose – I leaped out of the chaise in a passion, and so saw everything at Chantilly in spite. I tried this for three post-stages and a half, and believe 'tis the best principle in the world to travel speedily upon; for as few objects look inviting in that mood, you have little or nothing to stop you. By this means I passed through St. Dennis without so much as turning my head towards the Abbey.

– Richness of their treasury! stuff and nonsense! their jewels are all false. I would not give three sous for anything in it, but Jaidas's lantern – and only because it might be of use in the dark.

CHAPTER 17

Crack, crack – crack, crack – crack, crack – ‘so this is Paris!’ quoth I (in the same mood). ‘Humph! Paris!

‘The first, the finest, the most brilliant–

‘The streets however are nasty.

‘But I suppose it looks better than it smells.’

Crack, crack – crack, crack – what a fuss thou makest! as if the good people needed to be informed that a man with a pale face and clad in black was driven into Paris at nine o’clock by a postilion in a tawny yellow jerkin–

Crack, crack – crack, crack – I wish thy whip–

But ’tis the spirit of thy nation; so crack on.

Ha! – and no one gives you space by the wall! but if the walls are besh _t, – how can you do otherwise?

And prithee when do they light the lamps? What? never in the summer months! – Ho! ’tis the time of salads. O rare! salad and soup – soup and salad – salad and soup, encore–

How can that coachman swear so lewdly to that lean horse? don’t you see, friend, the streets are so villainously narrow, that there is not room to turn a wheelbarrow? In the grandest city of the world, it would not have been amiss if they had been a touch wider; if only so that a man in the street might know on which side of it he was walking.

– Ten cooks’ shops! and twenty barbers! all within three minutes’ driving! one would think that all the cooks and barbers, by joint consent, had said ‘Come, let us all go live at Paris: the French love good eating – we shall rank high; if their god is their belly – their cooks must be gentlemen: and as the periwig maketh the man, and the wig-maker maketh the periwig – therefore,’ the barbers would say, ‘we shall rank higher still, and all wear swords–’

And one would swear they continue to do so, (as far as one can tell by candle-light,) to this day.

CHAPTER 18

The French are certainly misunderstood: but whether the fault is theirs, in not sufficiently explaining themselves, or speaking too precisely – or whether the fault is on our side, in not understanding their language well enough – I shall not decide. But 'tis evident to me, when people say 'That they who have seen Paris, have seen everything,' they must mean those who have seen it by day-light.

As for candle-light – I give it up – there was no depending upon it; in all the five hundred grand Hotels in Paris, and the five hundred good things (allowing one good thing to a Hotel), which by candle-light are best to be seen, felt, heard, and understood (which, by the bye, is a quotation from Lilly) – barely one of us out of fifty can get our heads thrust in amongst them.

'Tis simply this,

That by the last survey taken in the year 1716, Paris did contain nine hundred streets; (viz.)

In the quarter called the City, there are fifty-three streets.

In St. James of the Shambles, fifty-five streets.

In St. Oportune, thirty-four streets.

In the quarter of the Louvre, twenty-five streets.

In the Palace Royal, or St. Honorius, forty-nine streets.

In Mont. Martyr, forty-one streets.

In St. Eustace, twenty-nine streets.

In the Halles, twenty-seven streets.

In St. Dennis, fifty-five streets.

In St. Martin, fifty-four streets.

And in a further ten quarters, five hundred and thirteen streets, into any of which you may walk; and when you have seen them by day-light – their gates, bridges, squares, and statues – and have crusaded moreover, through all their parish-churches, – and to crown all, have taken a walk to the four palaces–

Then you will have seen–

– but no one needs tell you what, for you will read of it yourself upon the portico of the Louvre, in these words,

EARTH NO SUCH FOLKS!
NO FOLKS E'ER SUCH A TOWN AS PARIS IS!
SING, DERRY, DERRY, DOWN.

Non orbis gentem, non urbem gens habet ullam - - - ulla parem.

The French have a gay way of treating everything that is Great; and that is all that can be said.

CHAPTER 19

In mentioning the word *gay* (as in the close of the last chapter) it reminds an author of the word *spleen*: not that there appears to be any more common ground betwixt them, than betwixt light and darkness – only 'tis a craft of authors to keep up a good understanding amongst words, as politicians do amongst men – not knowing how soon they may need to use them together – so I write it down here–

SPLEEN

This, upon leaving Chantilly, I declared to be the best principle in the world to travel speedily upon; but that was only my opinion. I still hold the same view – only I had not then enough experience of its working to add that, though you do get on at a tearing rate, yet it makes you uneasy; for which reason I here quit it entirely, and for ever. – It spoiled the digestion of a good supper, and brought on a bilious diarrhoea, which brings me back again to my first principle – with which I shall now scamper away to the banks of the Garonne–

No; – I cannot stop a moment to give you the character of the people – their manners – their customs – their laws – their religion – their commerce: qualified as I may be, by spending three days amongst them–

Still I must away – the roads are paved – the post-stages are short – the days are long – I shall be at Fontainebleau before the king–

Was he going there? not that I know–

CHAPTER 20

Now I hate to hear a traveller complain that we do not get on so fast in France as we do in England; whereas we get on much faster, all things considered. If you weigh their vehicles with the mountains of baggage, and consider their puny horses, 'tis a wonder they get on at all: a French post-horse would not know what in the world to do, was it not for the two words ***** and ***** in which there is as much sustenance as a bag of corn.

As these words cost nothing, I long to tell the reader what they are; but they must be said plainly, and with the most distinct articulation, or they will not work – and yet to do it in that plain way – your reverences may laugh, or abuse it in the parlour.

Therefore I have been revolving in my fancy for some time, by what clean device I might use the words, so that whilst I satisfy the reader I do not offend him.

– My ink burns my finger to try – but I fear 'twill burn my paper.

No; – I dare not–

But if you wish to know how the abbess of Andoüillets and a novice of her convent got over the difficulty – I'll tell you without the least scruple.

CHAPTER 21

The abbess of Andoüillet, which is situated amongst the hills between Burgundy and Savoy, having a stiff knee joint, tried every remedy: first, prayers and thanksgiving; then invocations to all the saints in heaven promiscuously – then particularly to every saint who had ever had a stiff leg; then touching it with all the relics in the convent, principally the thigh-bone of the man of Lystra, who had been impotent from his youth – then wrapping it up in her veil or her rosary – then trying secular aids, anointing it with oils and fomentations – then with poultices of marsh-mallows, lilies and fenugreek – then decoctions of wild chicory, water-cresses, chervil and sweet Cecily.

When none of these worked, she decided to try the hot baths of Bourbon – so she ordered all to be got ready for her journey. A novice of about seventeen, Margarita, was elected as her companion.

An old carriage was ordered to be drawn out into the sun. The gardener of the convent, being chosen as muleteer, led out the two old mules, whilst a couple of lay-sisters were busy darning the carriage lining and sewing on the shreds of yellow binding, which the teeth of time had unravelled. A tailor sat musically in a shed, assorting four dozen bells for the harness, whistling to each bell as he tied it on.

– By seven the next morning, all looked spruce, and was ready at the convent gate.

The abbess of Andoüillet, supported by Margarita the novice, advanced slowly to the carriage; both were clad in white, with their black rosaries hanging at their breasts.

– They entered; and nuns in the same uniform, sweet emblem of innocence, looked in, each kissing the lily hand of the good abbess, who blessed them.

I declare I am interested in this story, and wish I had been there.

The gardener, whom I shall now call the muleteer, was a little, hearty, good-natured, chattering, drinking fellow, who had mortgaged a month of his wages in a leather cask of wine, which he had put behind the carriage, with a large russet riding-coat over it, to guard it from the sun. As the weather was hot, and he was active, walking ten times more than he rode, he found many occasions to fall back to the rear of his carriage; till all his wine was gone before the journey was half finished.

Man is a creature of habit. The day had been sultry – the evening was delicious – the wine was generous – the Burgundian hill was steep – a little tempting bush over the door of an inn at the foot of it, rustled with a gentle air – ‘Come, thirsty muleteer – come in.’

– The muleteer gave the mules a sound lash, and looking in the abbess’s and Margarita’s faces as if to say ‘here I am’ he gave his mules a second good crack to get them moving, and slinking behind, he entered the inn.

The muleteer, as I told you, was a little, joyous, chirping fellow. He thought not of tomorrow, provided he got his wine, and a little chit-chat along with it; so entering into a long conversation, about how he was chief gardener to the convent of Andoüillet, &c. &c., and how she had got a white swelling by kneeling, and what herbs he had got for her, &c. &c., and that if the waters of Bourbon did not mend that leg, she might as well be lame, &c. &c.–

– In telling his story, he absolutely forgot about the heroine of it – as well as the little novice – and what was more important, the two mules; who are creatures that take advantage of the world, and would rather go sideways, longways, and backwards than forwards – and up hill, down hill, and which way they can.

The muleteer did not consider this. Let us leave him then, the happiest and most thoughtless of mortal men – and let us look for the mules, the abbess, and Margarita.

After the muleteer's two last strokes the mules had gone quietly on up the hill, till they had conquered about half of it; when the elder of them, a shrewd crafty old devil, glancing behind and seeing no muleteer–

‘By my fig!’ swore she, ‘I’ll go no further.’

‘And if I do,’ replied the other, ‘they shall make a drum of my hide.’

And so with one consent they stopped.

CHAPTER 22

‘Get on with you,’ said the abbess.

‘Wh – ysh – ysh,’ cried Margarita.

‘Shu – shu – shu,’ shooed the abbess.

‘Whu – w – whew,’ whewed Margarita, pursing up her sweet lips.

Thump – thump – thump went the abbess with the end of her cane against the bottom of the carriage–

The old mule let out a f__.

CHAPTER 23

‘We are ruined and undone, my child,’ said the abbess to Margarita; ‘we shall be here all night – we shall be plundered and ravished–’

‘We shall be ravished,’ said Margarita, ‘as sure as a gun.’

‘Sancta Maria!’ cried the abbess, ‘why was I governed by this knee? why did I leave the convent? why didst thou not let thy servant die unpolluted?’

‘O!’ cried the novice, ‘I would rather be anywhere than in this strait!’

‘O my virginity! virginity!’ cried the abbess.

‘–inity! –inity!’ said the novice, sobbing.

CHAPTER 24

‘My dear mother,’ quoth the novice, recovering a little – ‘there are two certain words, which I have been told will force any horse or mule to go up a hill whether he will or no; be he never so obstinate, the moment he hears them, he obeys.’

‘They are magic words!’ cried the abbess in horror.

‘No,’ replied Margarita calmly, ‘but they are sinful in the first degree – a mortal sin – and if we are ravished and die unabsolved, we shall–’

‘But you may tell them to me,’ interrupted the abbess.

‘They cannot, my dear mother, be spoken at all; they will make one’s blood fly up into one’s face.’

‘But you may whisper them in my ear,’ quoth the abbess.

Heaven! hadst thou no guardian angel to send to the inn at the bottom of the hill? was there no friendly spirit who could rouse the muleteer from his banquet?

Rouse him! – but ’tis too late – the horrid words are spoken –
– and how to tell them with unpolluted lips – Lord, guide me–

CHAPTER 25

‘All sins,’ quoth the abbess, ‘are either mortal or venial: there is no further division. Now a venial sin being the least of all sins – being halved, it becomes diluted into no sin at all.’

‘Now I see no sin in saying, *bou, bou, bou, bou, bou*, a hundred times together; nor is there any wickedness in pronouncing the syllable *ger, ger, ger, ger, ger*, all day long. Therefore, my dear daughter,’ continued the abbess, ‘I will say *bou*, and thou shalt say *ger*; and then alternately, as there is no more sin in *fou* than in *bou*, thou shalt say *fou* and I will come in, just as in our complines, with *ker*.’

And accordingly the abbess set off thus:

Abbess: *Bou– bou– bou–*

Margarita: *–ger –ger –ger.*

And then

Margarita: *Fou– fou– fou–*

Abbess: *–ker –ker –ker.*

The two mules acknowledged the words with a lash of their tails; but no more.

‘’Twill work by and by,’ said the novice.

Abbess: *Bou– bou– bou– bou– bou–*

Margarita: *–ger –ger –ger –ger –ger.*

‘Quicker still,’ cried Margarita.

Fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou.

‘Quicker still,’ cried Margarita.

Bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou.

‘Quicker still–’

‘God preserve me!’ said the abbess.

‘They do not understand us,’ cried Margarita.

‘But the Devil does,’ said the abbess of Andouilletts.

CHAPTER 26

What a tract of country have I run over! how much nearer to the warm sun have I advanced, and how many goodly cities have I seen, while you have been reading, Madam! There's Fontainebleau, and Sens, and Joigny, and Auxerre, and Dijon, and Mâcon, and a score more upon the road to Lyons – and I might as well talk to you of so many market towns in the moon, as tell you one word about them: this chapter, if not the next too, will be entirely lost, do what I will–

‘Why, ’tis a strange story, Tristram!’

– Alas! Madam, had it been upon some melancholy lecture of the cross – the peace of resignation – it would not have been difficult: or had I thought of writing upon wisdom and holiness – you would have come with a better appetite from it–

– I wish I never had wrote it: but as I never blot anything out, let us use some honest means to get it out of our heads directly.

Pray reach me my fool's cap – I fear you sit upon it, Madam – ’tis under the cushion–

‘Bless me! you have had it upon your head this half hour.’

There then let it stay, with a

Fa-ra diddle di

and a fa-ri diddle d

and a high-dum – dye-dum

fiddle - dumb - c.

And now, Madam, we may venture to go on.

CHAPTER 27

All you need say of Fontainebleau, if you are asked, is that it stands about forty miles from Paris, in the middle of a large forest – that the king goes there every two or three years, with his court, to hunt – and any English gentleman of fashion may be loaned a horse to join in, taking care only not to out-gallop the king.

Though there are two reasons why you need not talk loud of this to everyone.

First, because ’twill make the said nags the harder to be got; and

Secondly, because ’tis not a word of it true. *Allons!*

As for Sens – you may dispatch it in a word – ‘’Tis an archiepiscopal see.’

For Joigny – the less one says of it the better.

But as for Auxerre – I could go on for ever: for in my grand tour through Europe, in which my father accompanied me, with my uncle Toby, and Trim, and Obadiah, and indeed most of the family, except my mother, who being taken up with a project of knitting my father a pair of large worsted breeches, stayed at home at Shandy Hall to keep things right during the expedition; in which, I say, my father stopping us two days at Auxerre, his researches left me plenty to say upon it – in short, wherever my father went – but especially in this journey through France and Italy – he saw kings and courts in such strange lights – and his remarks upon the characters and customs of the countries we passed over, were so opposite to those of

all other mortal men – and to crown all – the scrapes which we were perpetually getting into, because of his opinions, were so odd and tragi-comical – and the whole tour appears so different from any other tour of Europe which was ever executed – that I venture to say the fault must be mine if it be not read by all travellers, till the world stands still.

But this rich bale is not to be opened now; except a small thread or two of it, merely to unravel the mystery of my father's stay at Auxerre, since I have mentioned it.

'We'll go, brother Toby,' said my father, 'to the abbey of Saint Germain, to see these bodies which Monsieur Sequier recommends.'

'I'll go see any body,' quoth my uncle Toby; for he was all compliance throughout the journey.

'They are all mummies,' said my father.

'Then one need not shave,' quoth my uncle.

'Shave! No,' cried my father – 'twill be more like family to go with our beards on.'

So out we went to the abbey of Saint Germain.

'Everything is very fine, and very rich, and very superb, and very magnificent,' said my father to the sacristan, who was a Benedictine – 'but we hoped to see the bodies, of which Monsieur Sequier has given the world so exact a description.'

The sacristan bowed, and lighting a torch, he led us into the tomb of St. Heribald.

'This,' said the sacristan, laying his hand upon the tomb, 'was a renowned prince of Bavaria, who under the reigns of Charlemagne, Louis and Charles the Bald, held great sway in the government.'

'I dare say he was a gallant soldier too,' said my uncle.

'He was a monk,' said the sacristan.

My uncle Toby and Trim looked at each other, dismayed; but my father clapped both his hands upon his cod-piece, which was a way he had when anything hugely tickled him: for though he hated a monk worse than all the devils in hell – yet this shot hitting my uncle Toby put him into the gayest humour in the world.

'And pray what do you call this gentleman?' quoth my father sportingly.

'This tomb,' said the young Benedictine, 'contains the bones of Saint Maxima, who came from Ravenna to touch the bones of Saint Germain, the builder of the abbey.'

'And what did she get by it?' said my uncle Toby.

'What does any woman get by it?' said my father.

'Martyrdom,' replied the young Benedictine, with so humble yet decisive a tone, it disarmed my father for a moment. 'Tis supposed,' continued the Benedictine, 'that St. Maxima has lain in this tomb four hundred years, and two hundred before her canonization.'

'Tis a slow rise, brother Toby,' quoth my father, 'in this army of martyrs.'

'A desperate slow one, your honour,' said Trim.

'Poor St. Maxima!' said my uncle Toby low to himself.

'She was one of the fairest ladies of Italy or France,' continued the sacristan.

'But who the deuce has got lain down here?' quoth my father, pointing with his cane to a large tomb as we walked on.

'It is Saint Optat, Sir,' answered the sacristan.

'And what is Saint Optat's story?'

‘Saint Optat was a bishop—’

‘I thought so, by heaven!’ cried my father, interrupting him. ‘Saint Optat!’ and snatching out his pocket-book, he wrote it down as a new prop to his system of christian names. I will be so bold as to say that even if he had found a treasure in Saint Optat’s tomb, it would not have made him half so rich. ’Twas as successful a visit as ever was paid to the dead; and so pleased was my father that he determined at once to stay another day in Auxerre.

‘I’ll see the rest of these good gentry to-morrow,’ said my father, as we crossed the square.

‘And while you are paying that visit, brother,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘the corporal and I will mount the ramparts.’

CHAPTER 28

Now this is the most puzzled skein of all – for in this last chapter, I have been getting forwards in two different journeys together – for I have got entirely out of Auxerre in this journey which I am writing now, and I am only half way out of Auxerre in that which I shall write hereafter.

In pushing for perfection, I have brought myself into such a situation as no traveller ever stood in before; for I am this moment walking across the market-place of Auxerre with my father and my uncle Toby – and also entering Lyons with my post-chaise broke into a thousand pieces – and I am moreover this instant in a handsome pavilion built by Pringello upon the banks of the Garonne, which Mons. Sligniac has lent me, and where I now sit rhapsodising on all these affairs.

– Let me collect myself, and pursue my journey.

CHAPTER 29

'I am glad of it,' said I, as I walked into Lyons – my chaise being all laid higgledy-piggledy with my baggage in a cart, which was moving slowly before me – 'I am heartily glad,' said I, 'that 'tis all broke to pieces; for now I can go directly and cheaply by water to Avignon, which will carry me on a hundred and twenty miles of my journey, – and from thence, I can hire a couple of mules and cross the plains of Languedoc for almost nothing. I shall gain four hundred livres by the misfortune: and pleasure worth double the money. How fast I shall fly down the rapid Rhone, scarce seeing the ancient cities of Vienne, Valence, and Vivieres! I shall snatch a blushing grape from the Hermitage and Côte roti, as I shoot by them!

'And what a fresh spring in the blood! to behold upon the banks the castles of romance, where courteous knights have rescued the distressed, and to see the mountains, the cataracts, and Nature with all her great works about her.'

As I went on thus, methought my chaise grew gradually smaller; the freshness of the painting was no more – the gilding lost its lustre – and the whole thing appeared so sorry! so contemptible! – that I was just about to curse it to the devil – when a pert chaise-undertaker, stepping nimbly across the street, demanded if Monsieur would have his chaise refitted?

'No, no,' said I.

'Would Monsieur sell it?'

'With all my soul,' said I. 'The iron work is worth forty livres – and the windows forty more.'

What wealth this post-chaise brought me! This is my usual method of book-keeping – making a penny of every disaster that happens to me –

Do, my dear Jenny, tell the world how I behaved under the most oppressive disaster which could befall me as a man proud of his manhood –

'Tis enough,' saidst thou to me, as I stood with my garters in my hand, reflecting upon what had *not* happened. 'Tis enough, Tristram, and I am satisfied,' thou saidst, whispering in my ear: '***** ** ***** ** *****; ***** ** **.' – Any other man would have sunk down to the centre.

'Everything is good for something,' quoth I.

So I should not blame fortune so often as I have done, for pelting me all my life with so many small evils: surely, I should be angry that fortune has not sent me great ones. A score of good cursed, bouncing losses, would have been as good as a pension to me.

CHAPTER 30

There could not be a greater vexation than to spend the best part of a day at Lyons, the most opulent city in France, enriched with antiquities – and not be able to see it. To be withheld for any reason, must be a vexation; but to be withheld by a vexation must certainly be

VEXATION upon VEXATION.

I had got my two dishes of milky coffee (which by the bye is excellently good for a consumption, but you must boil the milk and coffee together – otherwise 'tis only coffee and milk) – and as it was only eight in the morning, and the boat did not go till noon, I had time to see some of Lyons.

'I will walk to the cathedral,' said I, 'and see the wonderful mechanism of this great clock of Lippius.'

Now, of all things in the world, I understand the least of mechanism. I was never yet able to comprehend the principles of a squirrel cage, or a knife-grinder's wheel.

'First I'll see the surprising movements of this great clock,' said I; 'and then I will visit the great library of the Jesuits, and get a sight of the thirty volumes of the history of China, wrote in the Chinese language.'

Now I know as little of the Chinese language as I do of the mechanism of Lippius's clock-work; so why these two should have jostled themselves into my mind, I know not.

'When these curiosities are seen,' quoth I to my valet, 'we will go to the church of St. Ireneus, and see the pillar to which Christ was tied, and then the house where Pontius Pilate lived.'

''Twas at the next town,' said he, 'at Vienne.'

'I am glad,' said I, rising briskly, and striding across the room – 'for so much the sooner shall I be at the Tomb of the two lovers.'

Why I took long strides in uttering this, I will explain.

CHAPTER 31

O there is a sweet era in the life of man, when (the brain being tender as pap) a story of two fond lovers, separated by cruel parents, and by crueller destiny—

Amandus – He
Amanda – She

each ignorant of the other's course,

He – east
She – west

– Amandus taken captive by the Turks, and carried to the emperor of Morocco's court, where the princess of Morocco falls in love with him and keeps him twenty years in prison for the love of his Amanda—

– she (Amanda) all the time wandering barefoot o'er rocks and mountains, calling *Amandus! Amandus!* – making every hill echo back his name—

– at every town, sitting down forlorn at the gate – 'Has my Amandus entered?' – till going round and round the world – chance bringing them at the same moment to the gate of Lyons, their native city, and calling out aloud,

'Is Amandus—

'Is my Amanda—

'—still alive?

– they fly into each other's arms, and both drop down dead for joy—

There is a soft era in every gentle mortal's life, where such a story entertains the brain more than all the Crusts and Rusts of antiquity.

'Twas all that stuck in my own brain from my reading of Lyons; in finding, moreover, that a tomb dedicated to Amandus and Amanda was built outside the gates, where lovers call upon them – I never could get into an amorous scrape, without that tomb, somehow or other, coming into my mind at the close.

– Nay, such an empire had it established over me, that I could not think of Lyons without it entering my fancy; and I have often said in my wild irreverent way, 'I thought this neglected shrine as valuable as that of Mecca, and the Santa Casa, and that some time or other, I would go on a pilgrimage to it.'

In my list of sights, therefore, this, though last, was not, you see, the least; so taking longer strides than usual, I walked down calmly; and had paid my bill – and had moreover given the maid ten sous, and was receiving the wishes of my host for a pleasant voyage down the Rhône – when I was stopped at the gate.

CHAPTER 32

–’Twas by a poor ass, who had just turned in with a couple of large panniers upon his back, for turnip-tops and cabbage-leaves; and stood dubious, with his two fore-feet on the inside of the threshold, and with his two hind feet on the street, not knowing whether he was to go in or no.

Now, I cannot bear to strike an ass – there is such a patient endurance of sufferings in his looks that it always disarms me; and I do not even like to speak unkindly to him. On the contrary, wherever I meet an ass, I have always something civil to say to him; and as one word begets another, I generally fall into conversation with him: imagining his responses from the expression on his face – or from looking into his heart, and seeing what is natural for an ass to think.

In truth, it is the only creature with whom I can do this: for parrots, jackdaws, &c. – I never exchange a word with them – nor with apes; for they act by rote, as parrots speak by it, and both make me silent. Even my dog and my cat, though I value them both (and my dog would speak if he could) – yet neither of them has the talents for conversation – I can make nothing of a discourse with them, beyond the proposition, the reply, and rejoinder, which ended my father’s and mother’s conversations in his beds of justice.

– But with an ass, I can commune for ever.

‘Come, Honesty!’ said I, seeing it was impossible to get past him – ‘art thou coming in, or going out?’

The ass twisted his head round to look up the street.

‘Well,’ replied I, ‘we’ll wait a minute for thy driver.’

He turned his head and looked wistfully the opposite way.

‘I understand thee perfectly,’ answered I. ‘If thou takest a wrong step, he will cudgel thee to death. – Well! a minute is but a minute, and if it saves a fellow-creature a beating, it is not ill spent.’

He was eating the stem of an artichoke as this went on, and had dropped it out of his mouth half a dozen times, and picked it up again.

‘God help thee, Jack!’ said I, ‘thou hast a bitter breakfast – and a bitter day’s labour, and many a bitter blow, I fear, for wages. – And now thy mouth is as bitter, I dare say, as soot’ (for he had cast aside the stem) ‘and thou hast not a friend in all this world, that will give thee a macaroon.’

In saying this, I pulled out a bag of ’em, which I had just purchased, and gave him one – and my heart smites me, that I did this more to see how an ass would eat a macaroon than out of kindness.

When the ass had eaten his macaroon, I pressed him to come in. The poor beast was heavily loaded – his legs seemed to tremble – and as I pulled at his halter, it broke in my hand. He looked up pensive as if to say, ‘Don’t thrash me with it.’

‘If I do,’ said I, ‘I’ll be d__d.’ The word was but half pronounced, like the abbess of Andoüillets’s (so there was no sin in it) – when a person coming in, let fall a thundering blow upon the poor devil’s crupper.

‘Out upon it!’ cried I – but the interjection was equivocal – for the end of an willow branch in the ass’s pannier had caught hold of my breeches pocket as he rushed past me, and rent it in the most disastrous direction you can imagine – so that the

‘Out upon it!’ in my opinion, should have come here.

But this I leave to be settled by

THE
REVIEWERS
OF
MY BREECHES,

which I have brought along with me for that purpose.

CHAPTER 33

When all was set to rights, I came downstairs again with my valet, in order to go out towards the tomb of the two lovers – and was a second time stopped at the gate – not by the ass – but by the person who struck him; standing on the very spot where the ass had stood.

It was a messenger from the post-office, with a bill in his hand for the payment of some six livres.

‘Upon what account?’ said I.

‘The king’s,’ replied he with a shrug.

‘My good friend,’ quoth I, ‘as sure as I am I – and you are you–’

‘And who are you?’ said he.

‘Don’t puzzle me,’ said I.

CHAPTER 34

‘But it is true,’ continued I, ‘that I owe the king of France nothing but my goodwill.’

‘*Pardonnez moi,*’ replied the messenger, ‘you owe him six livres four sous, for the next post-stage from here to St. Fons, in your route to Avignon. Since it is a post royal, you pay double for the horses and postillion – otherwise ’twould have been three livres two sous.’

‘But I don’t go by land,’ said I.

‘You may if you please,’ replied he.

‘Your most obedient servant,’ said I, making him a bow – he bowed as low in return. – I was never more disconcerted with a bow in my life.

‘The devil take the serious character of these people!’ quoth I (aside). ‘They understand no more of Irony than this—’

The comparison was standing close by with his panniers – but I could not say his name.

‘Sir,’ said I, collecting myself, ‘it is not my intention to take the post-stage.’

‘But you may,’ said he, ‘if you choose.’

‘And I may take salt on my pickled herring,’ said I, ‘if I choose – but I do not choose.’

‘But you must pay for the post-stage, whether you do or no.’

‘Defend me!’ I cried. ‘I travel by water – I am going down the Rhône this very afternoon – my baggage is in the boat – and I have actually paid nine livres for my passage.’

‘’Tis all one,’ said he.

‘Mon Dieu! what, pay for the way I go! and for the way I do not go!’

‘’Tis all one.’

‘The devil it is!’ said I – ‘but I will go to ten thousand Bastilles first – O England! England! thou land of liberty and good sense, thou tenderest of mothers and gentlest of nurses,’ cried I, falling upon one knee.

The priest coming in at that instant, and seeing a person in black, kneeling, with a face as pale as ashes, asked if I needed the aid of the church—

‘I go by Water,’ said I; ‘—and here’s another wants to make me pay for going by Oil.’

CHAPTER XXXV

As I perceived the messenger would have his six livres four sous, I had nothing else for it, but to say some smart thing worth the money:

And so I set off thus:

‘Pray, sir, why is a defenceless stranger to be used just the reverse from how you use a Frenchman in this matter?’

‘By no means,’ said he.

‘Excuse me,’ said I; ‘for you have begun by tearing off my breeches – and now you want my pocket. Whereas – if you had first taken my pocket, as you do with your own people – and then left me bare a ___’d, – I would have been a beast to have complained.

‘As it is – ’tis contrary to the law of nature.

‘’Tis contrary to reason.

‘’Tis contrary to the Gospel.’

‘But not to this,’ said he, putting a printed paper into my hand:

PAR LE ROY.

-----‘’Tis a pithy beginning,’ quoth I; and so read on

‘By which it appears,’ quoth I, having read it over a little too rapidly, ‘that if a man sets out in a post-chaise from Paris – he must go on travelling in one, all the days of his life – or pay for it.’

‘Excuse me,’ said he, ‘it means this: that if you set out with an intention of going post from Paris to Avignon, you shall not change that intention or mode of travelling, without first satisfying the fermiers for two posts further than the place you repent at. The Revenues are not to fall short through your fickleness.’

‘O, by heavens!’ cried I, ‘if fickleness is taxable in France – we have nothing to do but to make the best peace with you we can–’

And so the Peace was made–

And if it is a bad one – as Tristram Shandy laid the corner-stone of it, nobody but Tristram Shandy ought to be hanged.

CHAPTER 36

Though I was aware I had said only six livres' worth of clever things, yet I was determined to note them down before I left; so putting my hand into my coat-pocket for my journal of remarks – my remarks were stolen!

'Heaven! earth! sea! fire!' cried I. 'My remarks are stolen! what shall I do? Pray, did I drop any remarks, as I stood beside you?'

'You dropped a good many,' said he.

'Pugh!' said I, 'those were worth six livres – but these are a large parcel.'

He shook his head.

'Monsieur Le Blanc! did you see any papers of mine? Did your housemaid? Run upstairs, François! I must have my remarks – they were the best that ever were made,' cried I, 'the wisest – the wittiest. – What shall I do?'

Sancho Panza, when he lost his ass's furniture, did not exclaim more bitterly.

CHAPTER 37

When my brain began to get out of the confusion into which this jumble of accidents had cast me, it soon occurred to me that I had left my remarks in the chaise – and that in selling my chaise, I had sold my remarks along with it. I leave this empty space so that the reader may swear into it any oath he wishes. If ever I swore in my life, it was then–

'*****!' said I – 'and so my remarks on France, which were full of wit and worth, have I sold to a chaise-renovator for four Louis, giving him a post-chaise worth six into the bargain. Had it been to a bookseller, I could have borne it – but to a chaise-vamper! Take me to him this moment, François.'

The valet led the way.

CHAPTER 38

When we arrived at the Chaise-vamper's house, it was shut up; it was the eighth of September, the nativity of the blessed Virgin Mary.

Tantarra-ra-tan-tivi – the whole world was gone out a Maypoling – frisking here – capering there – nobody cared a button for me or my remarks; so I sat down upon a bench by the door, philosophating upon my condition.

I had not waited half an hour, when the mistress came in to take the curling-papers from her hair, before she went to the Maypoles–

The French women, by the bye, love Maypoles, at any time of year – give 'em but a Maypole, down it goes – 'tis meat, drink, washing, and lodging to 'em – and if we but had the policy to send plenty of Maypoles to France, the women would dance round them (with the men for company) till they were all blind.

The wife of the chaise-vamper came in, and jerked off her cap, to begin removing her curling-papers from her hair. One of them fell upon the ground – I instantly saw it was my writing–

'O! you have got my remarks upon your head, Madam!' cried I.

'J'en suis bien mortifiée,' said she.

'Twas as well they stuck there – for if they had gone deeper, they would have made such confusion in a Frenchwoman's noddle that she would have been better off unfrizzled.

'Tenez,' said she – and taking them from her curls, she put them gravely one by one into my hat – one twisted this way – and one that–

'By my faith,' quoth I, 'when they are published, they will be worse twisted still.'

CHAPTER 39

'And now for Lippius's clock!' said I – 'nothing can prevent us seeing that, and the Chinese history.'

'Except the time,' said François, 'for 'tis almost eleven.'

'Then we must speed the faster,' said I, striding away to the cathedral.

I cannot say, in my heart, that it gave me any concern in being told, as I was entering the west door, that Lippius's great clock had not worked for some years.

'It will give me more time,' thought I, 'to peruse the Chinese history; and besides, I shall be able to give the world an account of the clock in its decay.'

–And so away I hurried to the Jesuit college.

Now, like many projects, the wish of getting a peep at the history of China in Chinese, struck the fancy only at a distance; – for as I came nearer to the point, my wish cooled, till at length I would not have given a cherrystone to have it gratified. My time was short, and my heart was at the Tomb of the Lovers.

'I wish to God,' said I, as I knocked, 'that the key of the library may be lost.'

It ended just as well–

For all the Jesuits had got the colic.

CHAPTER 40

As I knew that the Tomb of the Lovers was just outside the gate leading to the Fauxbourg de Vaise, I sent François to the boat, so that I might pay homage to it without a witness of my weakness.

I walked with joy towards the place – when I saw the gate, my heart glowed within me–

‘Tender and faithful spirits!’ cried I, addressing myself to Amandus and Amanda – ‘long have I waited to drop this tear upon your tomb – I come – I come–’
When I came – there was no tomb to drop it upon.

What would I have given for my uncle Toby, to have whistled *Lillabullero!*

CHAPTER 41

I flew from the tomb of the lovers – or rather I did not (for it did not exist) and just reached the boat in time to save my passage. Before I had sailed a hundred yards, the Rhône and the Saône met, and carried me down merrily betwixt them.

But I have described this voyage down the Rhône before I made it–

So now I am at Avignon, and as there is nothing to stop me but a short remark upon the place, in three minutes you will see me crossing the bridge on a mule, with François upon a horse, and the owner of both striding before us with a long gun upon his shoulder, and a sword under his arm, lest we should run away with his animals. Had you seen my breeches, you would not have thought the precaution amiss.

Before I go further, let me get rid of my remark upon Avignon, which is this:

That I think it wrong, merely because a man’s hat has been blown off his head the first night he comes to Avignon, that he should therefore say, ‘Avignon is the windiest town in all France.’

This is why I laid no stress upon the accident till I had enquired of the inn-keeper about it. When I was told seriously it was so – and hearing, moreover, the windiness of Avignon spoke of as a proverb – I set it down, merely to ask the learned what can be the cause. The consequence I saw – for they are all Dukes, Marquisses, and Counts in Avignon – so that there is scarce any talking to them on a windy day.

‘Prithee, friend,’ said I, ‘hold my mule for a moment,’ – for I wanted to pull off one of my jack-boots, which hurt my heel. The man was standing quite idle outside the door of the inn, and I assumed he was in some way concerned with the house or stable; so I put the bridle into his hand and begun with the boot.

When I had finished, I turned to take the mule from the man, and thank him–

But Monsieur le Marquis had walked in–

CHAPTER 42

I had now the whole south of France to cross upon my mule at my leisure – for I had left Death far behind me – ‘I have followed many a man through France,’ quoth he, ‘but never at this speed.’

– Still he followed, and still I fled him, but I fled him cheerfully – and he lagged like one without hope of catching his prey. – Why should I fly him at this rate?

So I changed the mode of my travelling once more; and, after running so rapid and rattling a course, I flattered my fancy with thinking that I should cross the rich plains of Languedoc upon my mule’s back, as slowly as foot could fall.

There is nothing more pleasing to a traveller – or more terrible to travel-writers, than a large rich plain; especially if it is without great rivers or bridges, and presents nothing to the eye but one unvaried picture of plenty. For after they have told you that ’tis delicious! or delightful! and that nature pours out her abundance, &c, they have then a large plain upon their hands, which they know not what to do with – and which is of little use to them but to carry them to some town; and that town may be of no more use than as a starting-point for the next plain – and so on.

This is most terrible work; judge if I don’t manage my plains better.

CHAPTER 43

I had not gone above two leagues and a half, before the man with his gun began to look at his priming.

I had three times loitered terribly behind, half a mile at least every time; once, talking to a drum-maker – I did not understand his craft–

The second time, I met a couple of Franciscans more short of time than myself, and not being able to get to the bottom of what I was about – I had turned back with them–

The third time was to trade with a gossip, a basket of Provence figs for four sous; but when the figs were paid for, it turned out that there were two dozen eggs covered with vine-leaves at the bottom of the basket. I had no intention of buying eggs–

But I wanted the basket – and the gossip wanted to keep it, or she could do nothing with her eggs – and without it I could do nothing with my figs, which were too ripe already, and most of ’em burst at the side: this brought on a short argument, which ended in different proposals about what we should both do.

– How we disposed of our eggs and figs, I defy you to guess. You will read the whole of it – not this year, for I am hastening to the story of my uncle Toby’s amours – but you will read it in the collection of stories which arose out of the journey across this plain – and which, therefore, I call my

PLAIN STORIES.

How fatigued my pen has been in this journey over so barren a track, the world must judge – but the traces of it, which are all vibrating together this moment, tell me ’tis the most fruitful and busy period of my life; for as I had made no agreement with my man with the gun, as to time – by stopping and talking to every soul I met –

joining all parties before me – waiting for everyone behind – hailing all kinds of pilgrims, fiddlers and friars – not passing a woman in a mulberry-tree without commending her legs, and tempting her into conversation with a pinch of snuff–

In short, by seizing every handle which chance held out to me in this journey, I turned my plain into a city. – I was always in company, and as my mule loved society as much as myself, and had some proposals to offer to every beast he met – I am confident we could have passed through London for a month with fewer adventures.

O! there is that sprightly frankness in the Languedocians that looks like the simplicity which poets sing of in better days. – I will delude my fancy, and believe it is so.

'Twas in the road betwixt Nismes and Lunel, where there is the best Muscatto wine in France.

The sun was set – work was finished; the nymphs had tied up their hair – the men were preparing for a carousal – my mule stopped dead.

'Tis the fife and tambourine,' said I.

'I'm frightened to death,' quoth he. 'By saint Boogar, I'll not go a step further.'

'Very well, sir,' said I, leaping off his back, and kicking off my boots. 'I'll take a dance, – so stay you here.'

A sun-burnt daughter of Labour rose up from the group to meet me as I advanced; her chestnut hair was tied up in a knot, but for a single tress.

'We want a cavalier,' said she, holding out her hands.

'And a cavalier ye shall have,' said I, taking them.

Hadst thou only, Nannette, been dressed like a duchess! – But that cursed slit in thy petticoat!

Nannette cared not for it. She led me up by the hand.

A lame youth with a pipe and a tambourine ran sweetly over the prelude, as he sat upon the bank.

'Tie me up this tress of hair,' said Nannette, putting a piece of string into my hand. – I forgot I was a stranger. – The knot fell down – we had been seven years acquainted.

The youth played – and off we bounded.

The youth's sister sang like an angel – 'twas a Gascoigne roundelay.

VIVA LA JOIA!
FIDON LA TRISTESSA!

The nymphs joined in, and their swains an octave below them.

'Viva la joia!' was on Nanette's lips – and in her eyes. A spark of amity shot across the space betwixt us.

Why could I not live and end my days thus? why could not a man sit down in the lap of content here – and dance, and sing, and say his prayers, and go to heaven with this nut-brown maid?

'Tis time to dance off,' quoth I; so changing partners and tunes, I danced it away from Lunel to Montpellier – from thence to Beziers – through Narbonne and Carcasson, till at last I danced myself into Perdrillo's pavilion, where pulling out a lined paper, so that I might go straight on, without digression, to my uncle Toby's amours–

I began thus–

BOOK 8

CHAPTER 1

– But softly – on these sportive plains, and under this genial sun, where all flesh is running out piping, fiddling, and dancing, I defy – despite all that I have earlier said upon straight lines – I defy the best cabbage planter in existence to go on coolly and critically planting his cabbages in straight lines, without straddling out, or sidling into some bastardly digression.

– In Freeze-land, or Fog-land, it may be done–

But in this clear climate of fantasy and perspiration, where every idea gets vent – in this fertile land of chivalry and romance, where I now sit, unscrewing my ink-horn to write my uncle Toby’s amours, with all the meanders of Julia’s track in quest of her Diego in full view of my study window – if thou comest not and takest me by the hand–

What a work it is likely to turn out!

Let us begin it.

CHAPTER 2

It is with Love as with Cuckoldom–

But now I am talking of beginning a book, and have long had a thing upon my mind to be told to the reader, which, if not told now, can never be told to him – so I’ll just mention it, and then begin in good earnest.

The thing is this.

That of all the several ways of beginning a book which are now in practice throughout the world, I am confident my own way of doing it is the best. I’m sure it is the most religious – for I begin with writing the first sentence – and trusting to Almighty God for the second.

’Twould cure an author for ever of all the fuss and folly of opening his street-door, and calling in his neighbours and friends, with the devil and all his imps, just to observe how one sentence of mine follows another, and how the plan follows the whole.

I wish you saw me half-starting out of my chair; with what confidence I look up – catching the idea sometimes before it reaches me–

I have no

Zeal or Anger–

Anger or Zeal–

No-one shall ever kindle a worse spark within me, or have an unkindler greeting, than what he will read in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

– Bonjour! – good morrow! so you have got your cloak on! but 'tis a cold morning – and how goes it with thy concubine, thy wife, and thy little ones o' both sides? and when did you hear from your sister, aunt, uncle, and cousins? – I hope they have got better of their colds, coughs, claps, toothaches, fevers, sciaticas, swellings, and sore eyes.

– What a devil of an apothecary! to take so much blood – give such a vile purge – poultice – plaster – clyster – blister! And why so much calomel? and such a dose of opium! – By my great-aunt Dinah's old black velvet mask! I think there was no need for it.

Now this Mask being a little bald about the chin, by frequent putting off and on, before she was got with child by the coachman – not one of our family would wear it after. To mend the Mask, was more than the mask was worth – and to wear a bald mask was as bad as having no mask at all.

This is the reason, may it please your reverences, that in all our numerous family, for four generations, we count no more than one archbishop, a Welsh judge, three or four aldermen, and a single mountebank–

In the sixteenth century, we boast of no less than a dozen alchemists.

CHAPTER 4

'It is with Love as with Cuckoldom' – the suffering party is generally the last who knows anything about it: this comes from having half a dozen words for one thing; and so long as what to one man's breast is Love may be Hatred, in another – or Sentiment or Nonsense – no Madam, not there, I mean the part I am pointing at – how can we help ourselves?

Of all mortal men who ever soliloquized upon this mystic subject, my uncle Toby was the worst fitted to have pushed his researches through such a trial of feelings; and he would have let them run on, to see how they would turn out – had not Bridget's telling of them to Susannah, and Susannah's disclosure to all the world, made it necessary for my uncle Toby to look into the affair.

CHAPTER 5

Why weavers, gardeners, and gladiators – or a man with a wasted leg – should ever have had some tender nymph breaking her heart in secret for them, are points well accounted for by ancient and modern physiologists.

A water-drinker, provided he is a professed one, and does it without fraud, is precisely in the same predicament: not that, at first sight, there is any logic in it, ‘That a rill of cold water dribbling through my inward parts, should light up a torch in my Jenny’s–’

– It seems to run opposite to the natural workings of causes and effects–
But it shows the weakness of human reason.

– ‘And you are in perfect good health? And drink nothing but water?’

Impetuous fluid! the moment thou pressest against the flood-gates of the brain – see how they give way!

In swims Curiosity with her damsels – they dive into the centre of the current–
Fancy sits musing upon the bank, and, watching the stream, turns straws and bulrushes into masts and bowsprits. And Desire, with her vest held up in one hand, snatches at them with the other, as they swim by–

O ye water-drinkers! is it by this delusive fountain, that ye have so often turned this world around like a mill-wheel – grinding the faces of the impotent – bepeppering their noses, and changing the very face of nature–

‘If I was you,’ quoth Yorick, ‘I would drink more water, Eugenius.’

‘And, if I was you, Yorick,’ replied Eugenius, ‘so would I.’

Which shows they had both read Longinus–

For my own part, I am resolved never to read any book but my own, as long as I live.

CHAPTER 6

I wish my uncle Toby had been a water-drinker; for that would have accounted for Widow Wadman feeling something stirring within her in his favour, the first time she saw him. – Something! something.

– Something perhaps more than friendship – less than love – something – no matter what – no matter where–

But the truth is, my uncle Toby was not a water-drinker; he drank it neither pure nor mixed, except where better drink was not to be had – or while he was under cure. When the surgeon told him it would extend the fibres, and mend them sooner – my uncle Toby drank it for quietness sake.

Now as no effect in nature can be produced without a cause, and as my uncle Toby was neither a weaver, a gardener, or a gladiator – unless by that you mean a captain of foot – we can only suppose that my uncle Toby's leg – but that will not aid us in this hypothesis, unless it proceeded from some ailment in the foot, which it did not – for my uncle Toby's leg was not emaciated at all. It was a little stiff and awkward, from total disuse for the three years he lay confined at my father's house; but it was plump and muscular, and in all other respects as good a leg as the other.

I declare, I do not recollect any time of my life, where my understanding was more at a loss how to torture the chapter I had been writing, to the service of the chapter following it, than in this present case. One would think I enjoyed running into difficulties of this kind, merely to make fresh experiments in getting out of them.

– Are the distresses of an author not sufficient, Tristram, but thou must entangle thyself still more?

Is it not enough that thou art in debt, and that thou hast ten cart-loads of thy fifth and sixth volumes still unsold, and art almost at thy wit's ends, how to get them off thy hands?

To this hour art thou not tormented with the vile asthma that thou got skating in Flanders? and is it but two months ago, that in a fit of laughter on seeing a cardinal make water like a chorister, with both hands, thou brakest a vessel in thy lungs, and lost two quarts of blood; which is full half a gallon?

CHAPTER 7

But for heaven's sake, let us not talk of quarts or gallons – let us take the story straight before us; it is so intricate a one, it will scarce bear any part being out of place; and, somehow or other, you have got me thrust into the middle of it–

– I beg we may take more care.

CHAPTER 8

My uncle Toby and the corporal had travelled down speedily to take possession of the spot of ground we have spoke of, in order to open their campaign as early as the rest of the allies; but they forgot a most necessary article; not a spade, a pickaxe, or a shovel—

– It was a bed to lie on. So, as Shandy-Hall was at that time unfurnished, and the little inn where poor Le Fever died was not yet built, my uncle Toby had to accept a bed at Mrs. Wadman’s, for a night or two, till corporal Trim, with the help of a carpenter, constructed one in my uncle Toby’s house.

A daughter of Eve: such was widow Wadman, and ’tis all the character I intend to give her—

– ‘That she was a perfect woman’ – had better be fifty leagues off – or in her warm bed – or playing with a case-knife – or anything, rather than make a man the object of her attention, when the house and all the furniture is her own.

There is no problem out of doors in day-light, where a woman can view a man in more lights than one – but in her house, she cannot see him without mixing something of her own goods and chattels along with him, till he gets foisted into her inventory—

And then good night.

CHAPTER 9

Pray, do not night-shirts differ from day-shirts in this way; that they are so much longer, that when you are laid down in them, they fall almost as far below the feet, as day-shirts fall short of them?

Widow Wadman’s night-shirts (as was the mode I suppose in Queen Anne’s reign) were cut in this fashion; they were two ells and a half in length; so that allowing a moderate woman two ells, she had half an ell to spare, to do what she would with.

Now in the many bleak and decemberly nights of a seven years widowhood, this habit had gradually got established in her bed-chamber. – That as soon as Mrs. Wadman was put to bed, and had stretched her legs down to the bottom of it, Bridget, with suitable decorum, having first opened the bed-clothes at the feet, took hold of the spare half-ell of cloth, drew it down, twisted it, pinned it above the hem, tucked all in tight, and wished her mistress a good night.

Bridget did this every night; the etiquette was sacred.

The first night, as soon as the corporal had conducted my uncle Toby upstairs, at about ten, Mrs. Wadman threw herself into her arm-chair, and reclining her cheek upon her hand, she ruminated till midnight.

The second night she went to her bureau, took out her marriage-settlement, and read it over with great devotion: and the third night (which was the last of my uncle Toby’s stay) when Bridget had pulled down the night-shift, and was trying to stick in the pin—

– With a kick of both heels she kicked the pin out of her fingers – the etiquette fell to the ground, and was shivered into a thousand atoms.

From which it was plain that widow Wadman was in love with my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 10

My uncle Toby's head at that time was full of other matters, so that it was not till the demolition of Dunkirk that he found leisure to return this sentiment.

This made an armistice (with regard to my uncle Toby – but regarding Mrs. Wadman, a vacancy) of almost eleven years. But in all cases of this nature, it is the second blow, no matter how much later, which makes the fray.

I choose for that reason to call these the amours of my uncle Toby with Mrs. Wadman, rather than the amours of Mrs. Wadman with my uncle Toby.

This makes a difference.

It is not like the affair of an *old hat cocked* – and a *cocked old hat* – but there is a difference here in the nature of things–

And let me tell you, gentry, a wide one too.

CHAPTER 11

Now as widow Wadman loved my uncle Toby, and my uncle Toby did not love widow Wadman, there was nothing for widow Wadman to do but to go on loving my uncle Toby – or let it alone.

She would do neither the one nor the other.

– Gracious heaven! – but I forget I am a little of her temper myself; for whenever it happens that an earthly goddess is so much this, that, and t'other, that I cannot eat my breakfast – and she cares not three halfpence whether I eat my breakfast or no–

– Curse on her! and so I send her to Tartary, and from Tartary to Terra del Fuego, and so on to the devil: in short, there is not an infernal niche where I do not take her divinityship and stick it.

But as the heart is tender, and its passions ebb and flow ten times a minute, I instantly bring her back again; and as I do all things in extremes, I place her in the very centre of the milky-way–

Brightest of stars! shed thy influence upon someone–

'The deuce take her and her influence too – much good may it do him! – By all that is hairy and gashly!' I cry, taking off my furred cap, and twisting it round my finger. 'I would not give sixpence for a dozen such!

'But 'tis an excellent cap (putting it upon my head,) – and warm, and soft; especially if you stroke it the right way – but alas! that will never be my luck.

'No; I shall never have a finger in the pie' (so here I break my metaphor)–

'Crust and Crumb

'Inside and out

'Top and bottom – I detest it, I hate it, I'm sick at the sight of it–

'Tis all pepper,

garlic,

salt, and

devil's dung – I would not touch it for the world–'

'O Tristram! Tristram!' cried Jenny.

'O Jenny! Jenny!' replied I, and so went on with the twelfth chapter.

CHAPTER 12

'Not touch it for the world,' did I say—
Lord, how I have heated my imagination with this metaphor!

CHAPTER 13

Which shows, let your worships say what you will, Love is certainly, at least alphabetically speaking, one of the most

A gitating

B ewitching

C onfounded

D evilish affairs of life – the most

E xtravagant

F utilitous

G alligaskinish

H andy-dandyish

I racundulous (there is no K to it) and

L yrical of all human passions: at the same time, the most

M isgiving

N innyhammering

O bstipating

P ragmatical

S tridulous

R idiculous – though by the bye the R should have gone first – but in short 'tis of such a nature, as my father once told my uncle Toby upon the close of a long speech on the subject – 'You can scarce,' said he, 'combine two ideas together upon it, brother Toby, without an hypallage.'

'What's that?' cried my uncle Toby.

'The cart before the horse,' replied my father.

'And what is he to do there?' cried my uncle Toby.

'Nothing,' quoth my father, 'but to get in – or let it alone.'

Now widow Wadman, as I told you before, would do neither the one or the other.

She stood, however, ready harnessed at all points.

CHAPTER 14

The Fates, who certainly foresaw these amours of widow Wadman and my uncle Toby, had, from the first creation of matter, established such a chain of causes and effects, that it was scarce possible for my uncle Toby to have dwelt in any other house in the world, or to have occupied any other garden, but the very house and garden which lay next to Mrs. Wadman's.

This, with the advantage of a thickset arbour in Mrs. Wadman's garden, but planted in the hedge-row of my uncle Toby's, gave her all the occasions Love-militancy wanted. She could observe my uncle Toby's movements, and hear his councils of war; and as he had unsuspectingly given leave to the corporal, through Bridget, to make Widow Wadman a communicating wicker-gate to enlarge her walks, it enabled her to approach the very door of the sentry-box; and sometimes out of gratitude to make an attack, and try to blow my uncle Toby up in the very sentry-box itself.

CHAPTER 15

It is a great pity – but 'tis certain that man may be set on fire like a candle, at either end – provided there is a sufficient wick standing out. If there is not – there's an end of it; and if there is – by lighting it at the bottom, as the flame in that case generally puts itself out – there's an end of it again.

For my part, could I always choose which way I would be burnt – I would oblige a housewife constantly to light me at the top; for then I should burn down decently to the socket; that is, from my head to my heart, from my heart to my liver, from my liver to my bowels, and so on by the veins and arteries, through all the turns of the intestines and their tunicles to the blind gut–

'I beseech you, doctor Slop,' quoth my uncle Toby, interrupting him as he mentioned the blind gut, in a discourse with my father the night my mother was brought to bed of me – 'I beseech you,' quoth my uncle, 'to tell me which is the blind gut; for I do not know where it lies.'

'The blind gut,' answered doctor Slop, 'lies betwixt the Ilion and Colon.'

'In a man?' said my father.

''Tis precisely the same,' cried doctor Slop, 'in a woman.'

'That's more than I know,' quoth my father.

CHAPTER 16

– And so to make sure of both systems, Mrs. Wadman planned to light my uncle Toby, if possible, at both ends at once.

Now, if Mrs. Wadman had been rummaging for seven years through all the military lumber rooms of the Tower of London, she could not have found anything so fit for her purpose, as that which my uncle Toby had fixed up ready to her hands.

I believe I have not told you – but I don't know – possibly I have – that whatever town or fortress the corporal was at work upon, during their campaign my uncle Toby always kept a plan of the place inside his sentry-box, fastened up with pins at the top, but loose at the bottom, for the convenience of holding it up to the eye.

So in an attack, Mrs. Wadman had nothing more to do, when she had got to the door of the sentry-box, but to extend her right hand; to take hold of the map or plan, and to advance it towards her; on which my uncle Toby's passions were sure to catch fire – for he would instantly take hold of the other corner of the map in his left hand, and with his pipe in the other, begin an explanation.

The world will naturally understand the reasons for Mrs. Wadman's next stroke of generalship – which was, to take my uncle Toby's tobacco-pipe out of his hand as soon as she possibly could, under the pretence of pointing at some redoubt in the map.

– It obliged my uncle Toby to make use of his forefinger.

The difference it made in the attack was this; that placing her finger on the end of my uncle Toby's tobacco-pipe would have caused no effect. For as there was no blood or vital heat in the end of the tobacco-pipe, it could excite no feeling – nothing but smoke.

Whereas, in following my uncle Toby's forefinger with hers, close through all the little turns and indentings of his works – pressing sometimes against the side of it – then treading upon its nail – then tripping it up – touching it here – then there, and so on – it set something in motion.

This, though slight skirmishing, and at a distance from the main body, yet drew on the rest; for here, the map usually falling close to the side of the sentry-box, my uncle Toby would lay his hand flat upon it, in order to go on with his explanation; and Mrs. Wadman, by a manoeuvre as quick as thought, would place her hand close beside it.

By bringing up her forefinger parallel to my uncle Toby's – it unavoidably brought the thumb into action – which naturally brought in the whole hand. Mrs. Wadman might now take up thine, dear uncle Toby! with the gentlest pushings and compressions that a hand is capable of receiving.

Whilst this was happening, how could she forget to make him aware that it was her leg at the bottom of the sentry-box, which slightly pressed against the calf of his – so that my uncle Toby being thus attacked on both sides – was it any wonder, if now and then, it put his centre into disorder?

'The deuce take it!' said my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 17

These attacks of Mrs. Wadman varied like the attacks which history is full of. A general looker-on would scarce allow them to be attacks at all – or if he did, would confuse them all together – but it will be time enough to be more exact in my descriptions of them, as I come up to them, which will not be for some chapters.

I have nothing more to add, but that, in a bundle of drawings which my father kept, there is a plan of Bouchain in perfect preservation; and upon the lower right-hand corner there still remain the marks of a snuffy finger and thumb, which there is all the reason in the world to imagine were Mrs. Wadman's. This seems an authentic record of one of these attacks; for there are vestiges of two pin-holes visible on the opposite corner of the map, which are unquestionably where it was pricked up in the sentry-box–

By all that is priestly! I value this precious relic, with its stigmata and pricks, more than all the relics of the Romish church.

CHAPTER 18

'I think, your honour,' quoth Trim, 'the fortifications are quite destroyed.'

'I think so too,' replied my uncle Toby with a sigh;– 'but step into the parlour, Trim, for the treaty – it lies upon the table.'

'It has lain there these six weeks,' replied the corporal, 'till this very morning, when the old woman kindled the fire with it.'

'Then,' said my uncle, 'there is no further need for our services.'

'The more's the pity,' said the corporal. He cast his spade into the wheel-barrow with a disconsolate air, and was heavily turning around to look for his pickaxe and shovel, to carry them off the field – when a 'heigh-ho!' reverberating sorrowfully from the sentry-box forbade him.

'No,' said the corporal to himself. 'I'll do it before his honour rises to-morrow morning.' So, taking his spade out of the wheel-barrow again, in order to divert his master, he loosened a sod or two, and having given them a gentle blow with the back of the spade, he sat down close by my uncle Toby's feet, and began as follows.

CHAPTER 19

‘It was a thousand pities – though I believe I am going to say a foolish thing for a soldier—’

‘A soldier,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘is no more exempt from saying a foolish thing than a man of letters.’

‘But not so often, your honour,’ replied the corporal. ‘—It was a thousand pities, your honour, to destroy these works – and a thousand pities to have let them stood.’

‘Thou art right, Trim,’ said my uncle.

‘This,’ continued the corporal, ‘is why during their demolition I have never once whistled, or sung, or laughed, or told your honour one story, good or bad—’

‘Thou hast many excellencies, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘and of the stories thou hast told me, either to amuse me in my painful hours, or divert me in my grave ones, – thou hast seldom told me a bad one.’

‘Because, your honour, except one of a King of Bohemia and his seven castles, they are all true; for they are about myself.’

‘I do not like them worse on that score,’ said my uncle Toby. ‘But prithee what is this story? Tell it – provided it is not a merry one; for I am not in a mood at present to do it justice.’

‘It is not merry by any means,’ replied the corporal.

‘Nor would I have it altogether grave,’ added my uncle Toby.

‘It is neither one nor the other,’ replied the corporal, ‘but will suit your honour exactly.’

‘I thank thee; prithee begin it, Trim,’ cried my uncle Toby.

The corporal made his bow; and though it is not easy to pull off a lank Montero-cap with grace – nor to make a bow so teeming with respect when a man is sitting squat upon the ground; yet by allowing the palm of his right hand to slip backwards upon the grass – and with his left hand, squeezing rather than pulling off his cap – the corporal acquitted himself well; and having cleared his throat, he set off thus.

THE STORY OF THE KING OF BOHEMIA AND HIS SEVEN CASTLES

‘There was a certain king of Bo—’

My uncle Toby obliged the corporal to halt, by touching the Montero-cap on the ground with the end of his cane – as much as to say, ‘Why don’t you put it on, Trim?’

Trim took it up with respectful slowness, and casting a humiliated glance upon the embroidery of the front, which was dismally tarnished and frayed, he laid it down again between his two feet, to moralise upon the subject.

‘Thou art about to observe,’ cried my uncle Toby, ‘—that nothing in this world is made to last for ever.’

‘But when tokens of my dear brother’s love and remembrance wear out,’ said Trim, ‘what shall we say?’

‘There is no need to say anything else,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

The corporal, perceiving that it would be in vain for the wit of man to extract a purer moral from his cap, put it on, and returned to his story.

THE STORY OF THE KING OF BOHEMIA AND HIS SEVEN CASTLES,
CONTINUED

‘There was a certain king of Bohemia, but in whose reign, I am not able to inform your honour—’

‘I do not desire it, Trim,’ cried my uncle Toby.

‘It was a little before the time when giants were beginning to leave off breeding: but in what year that was—’

‘I would not give a halfpenny to know,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘Only, your honour, it makes a story look better—’

‘’Tis thy own, Trim, so take any date thou choosest, and welcome,’ said my uncle Toby pleasantly.

The corporal bowed; for of every century, from the first creation of the world down to Noah’s flood; and through all the Dynasties, Olympiads, and other memorable epochs of the world, down to the coming of Christ, and from thence to the very moment in which the corporal was telling his story – my uncle Toby laid this vast empire of time and all its abysses at his feet.

But as Modesty scarce touches with a finger what Liberality offers her with open hands – the corporal contented himself with the very worst year of the whole bunch.

To prevent your honours from tearing the flesh off your bones in argument, I tell you plainly it was the year 1712, when the Duke of Ormond was playing the devil in Flanders. – The corporal took it, and set out with it afresh on his expedition to Bohemia.

THE STORY OF THE KING OF BOHEMIA AND HIS SEVEN CASTLES,
CONTINUED

‘In the year of our Lord 1712, there was, an’ please your honour—’

‘To tell thee truly, Trim,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘any other date would have pleased me better, not only on account of the sad stain upon our history that year, in marching our troops away from the siege of Quesnoi – but also on the score of thy own story, Trim; because if there are in fact giants in it—’

‘Only one, your honour.’

‘’Tis as bad as twenty,’ replied my uncle Toby; ‘thou should’st have carried him back some seven or eight hundred years, out of harm’s way of critics. Therefore I would advise thee, if ever thou tellest it again—’

‘If I but once get through it, I will never tell it again,’ quoth Trim.

‘Poo, poo!’ said my uncle Toby; but with accents of such sweet encouragement that the corporal went on with alacrity.

THE STORY OF THE KING OF BOHEMIA AND HIS SEVEN CASTLES,
CONTINUED

‘There was, an’ please your honour,’ said the corporal, raising his voice, ‘a certain king of Bohemia—’

‘Leave out the date entirely, Trim,’ quoth my uncle, gently laying his hand upon the corporal’s shoulder. ‘A story passes very well without these niceties. It is not easy for a soldier like us, Trim, to see further than the end of his musket.’

‘God bless your honour!’ said the corporal; ‘a soldier has something else to do; if not in action, or on a march, or on duty – he has his firelock to furbish – his regimentals to mend – himself to shave and keep clean: what business has a soldier to know anything of geography?’

‘Thou shouldst say chronology, Trim,’ said my uncle; ‘for geography is of great use to him; he must be acquainted intimately with every country; he should know every town and village, its canals, its roads and rivers – how far they are navigable, and where fordable; he should be able to give an exact map of all the plains, forts, woods and swamps through which his army is to march; he should know their produce, their plants, their minerals, their waters, their animals, their seasons, their climates, their inhabitants, their customs, their language, their policy, and even their religion.’

‘For how else,’ continued my uncle Toby, rising up in his sentry-box – ‘how else could Marlborough have marched his army from the Maes to Belburg; then to Newdorf and Landenbourg; from thence to Balmerchoffen; and to Skellenburg, where he broke in upon the enemy’s works; forced his passage over the Danube; crossed the Lech – pushed on his troops into the heart of the empire, to the plains of Blenheim? Great as he was, he could not have advanced a step, without the aids of Geography.’

‘As for Chronology, I own, Trim,’ continued my uncle Toby, sitting down again, ‘that it seems the science which the soldier might best spare, was it not for the invention of gunpowder; which has opened a new era of military improvements, changing so totally the nature of attacks and defences, that the world cannot be too inquisitive in knowing what great man was its discoverer.’

‘I am far from disputing,’ continued my uncle, ‘what historians agree, that in the year 1380 a certain priest called Schwartz showed the use of gunpowder to the Venetians, in their wars against the Genoese; but ’tis certain he was not the first; because if we are to believe Don Pedro, the bishop of Leon–’

‘How came priests and bishops, your honour, to trouble their heads so much about gunpowder?’

‘God knows,’ said my uncle Toby; ‘–He avers, in his chronicle of King Alphonsus, that in 1343 the secret of gunpowder was well known, and used with success, both by Moors and Christians, in their sea-combats, and their most memorable sieges in Spain and Barbary. – And all the world knows that Friar Bacon had wrote about it, a hundred and fifty years before Schwartz was born. – And that the Chinese,’ added my uncle, ‘embarrass us still more, by boasting of the invention hundreds of years even before him–’

‘They are a pack of liars,’ cried Trim.

‘They are deceived in this matter,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘as is plain from the present miserable state of military architecture amongst them; which consists of nothing more than a fossé with a brick wall without flanks – and with a supposed bastion at each, so barbarously constructed, that it looks for all the world–’

‘Like one of my seven castles, your honour,’ quoth Trim.

My uncle Toby, though needing a comparison, most courteously refused Trim’s offer – till Trim telling him he had half a dozen more in Bohemia, which he knew not how to get off his hands – my uncle Toby was so touched with the corporal’s kindness that he stopped his speech upon gunpowder, and begged him to go on with his story.

THE STORY OF THE KING OF BOHEMIA AND HIS SEVEN CASTLES, CONTINUED

‘This unfortunate King of Bohemia—’ said Trim.

‘Was he unfortunate, then?’ cried my uncle Toby.

The corporal, wishing the word at the devil, began to run back in his mind the principal events in the King of Bohemia’s story; from which it appeared that he was the most fortunate man in the world. It stopped the corporal in his tracks: for not caring to retract the phrase – still less to explain it – and least of all, to twist his tale – he looked in my uncle Toby’s face for help, but seeing my uncle Toby awaiting help himself, after a hum and a haw, he went on:

‘The King of Bohemia,’ said the corporal, ‘was unfortunate in this – that taking great pleasure in navigation and all sort of sea affairs – and there happening throughout the whole kingdom of Bohemia to be no seaport town whatever—’

‘How the deuce should there be, Trim?’ cried my uncle Toby; ‘for Bohemia being totally inland, it could have happened no otherwise.’

‘There might be,’ said Trim, ‘if it had pleased God.’

My uncle Toby never spoke of God without diffidence.

‘I believe not,’ he replied, after a pause; ‘for having Silesia and Moravia to the east; Lusatia and Upper Saxony to the north; Franconia to the west, and Bavaria to the south, Bohemia could not have been propelled to the sea without ceasing to be Bohemia. Nor could the sea have come up to Bohemia, without overflowing a great part of Germany, and destroying millions of defenceless inhabitants. Which would mean such a lack of compassion in him who caused it – that I think, Trim, the thing could in no way happen.’

The corporal made the bow of conviction; and went on.

‘Now the King of Bohemia with his queen and courtiers happening one fine summer’s evening to walk out—’

‘Aye! there the word *happening* is right, Trim,’ cried my uncle Toby; ‘for the King of Bohemia and his queen might have walked out or not: – ’twas a matter of chance.’

‘King William was of the opinion, your honour,’ quoth Trim, ‘that everything was predestined for us in this world; so that he would often say to his soldiers, that “every bullet had its billet.”’

‘He was a great man,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘And I believe,’ continued Trim, ‘that the shot which disabled me at the battle of Landen, was pointed at my knee for no other purpose, but to place me in your honour’s service, where I should be taken so much better care of in my old age.’

‘So I believe too, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby.

Both hearts were full of sudden overflowings; a short silence ensued.

‘Besides,’ resumed the corporal more cheerfully, ‘if it had not been for that single shot, I would never have been in love.’

‘So, thou wast once in love, Trim!’ said my uncle Toby, smiling.

‘Head over heels! your honour.’

‘Prithee when? where? – and how came it to pass? I never heard one word of it before,’ quoth my uncle.

‘I dare say,’ answered Trim, ‘that every drummer in the regiment knew of it.’

‘Then it’s high time I did,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘Your honour remembers the total rout and confusion of our army at Landen; everyone was left to shift for himself; and if it had not been for the regiments of Wyndham, Lumley, and Galway, which covered the retreat, the king himself could scarce have gained it – he was pressed hard, as your honour knows–’

‘Gallant mortal!’ cried my uncle Toby, with enthusiasm – ‘I see him galloping to bring up the remains of the English cavalry, and tear the laurel from Luxembourg’s brows – I see him riding along the line – then wheeling about, and charging Conti at the head of it – Brave! brave, by heaven! He deserves a crown.’

‘As richly, as a thief a halter,’ shouted Trim.

My uncle Toby knew the corporal’s loyalty; – otherwise the comparison was not at all to his liking. The corporal regretted it, but it could not be recalled; so he went on.

‘As the number of wounded was prodigious, and no one had time to think of anything but his own safety, I was left upon the field. It was noon the next day before I was put into a cart with thirteen or fourteen more, to be taken to hospital. There is no part of the body, your honour, where a wound causes more intolerable anguish than upon the knee–’

‘Except the groin,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘An’ please your honour,’ replied the corporal, ‘the knee, in my opinion, must certainly be the most acute, there being so many tendons and what-d’ye-call-’ems all around it.’

‘It is for that reason,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘that the groin is infinitely more sensitive – there being not only tendons and what-d’ye-call-’ems – but moreover * * *.’

Mrs. Wadman, who had been all this time in her arbour, instantly held her breath – unpinned her mob-cap, and stood upon one leg.

The dispute went on with amicable and equal force betwixt my uncle Toby and Trim; till Trim at length recollecting that he had often cried at his master’s sufferings, but never shed a tear at his own, was willing to give up the point, which my uncle Toby would not allow.

‘’Tis proof of nothing, Trim,’ said he, ‘but thy generosity.’

So whether the pain of a wound in the groin is greater than the pain of a wound in the knee – or *vice versa* – to this day remains unsettled.

CHAPTER 20

‘The anguish of my knee,’ continued the corporal, ‘was excessive; and the uneasiness of the cart on the rough roads made it still worse. Every step was death to me: so that with the loss of blood, and a fever besides, all together it was more than I could bear.

‘Our cart halted at a peasants’ house; they helped me in, and a young woman took a cordial from her pocket to give me. Seeing it cheered me, she gave it me a second and a third time.

‘I told her of the anguish I was in, saying it was so intolerable to me, that I had much rather lie down and die, than go on – when, upon her attempting to lead me to the bed, I fainted away in her arms. She was a good soul! as your honour will hear,’ said the corporal, wiping his eyes.

‘I thought love was a joyous thing,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘’Tis the most serious thing, your honour, (sometimes), in the world. The cart with the wounded men set off without me. So when I came round, I found myself in a quiet cottage, with no one but the young woman, and the peasant and his wife. I was laid across the bed in the corner, with my wounded leg upon a chair, and the young woman beside me, holding her handkerchief dipped in vinegar to my nose, and rubbing my temples.

‘I took her at first for the peasant’s daughter, so had offered her a little purse with eighteen florins, which my poor brother Tom had sent me, just before he set out for Lisbon. – I never told your honour that piteous story yet.’ – Here Trim wiped his eyes again.

‘The young woman called the old man and his wife into the room to show them the money,’ he went on, ‘in order to gain me credit for a bed and what necessaries I should want, till I could be got to the hospital. “Come then!” said she; “I’ll be your banker – and I’ll be your nurse too.”

‘I thought by her manner of speaking, as well as by her dress, that the young woman could not be the peasant’s daughter. She was in black down to her toes, with her hair concealed under a cambric border: she was one of those kind of nuns, of which, your honour knows, there are a good many in Flanders.’

‘By thy description, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘I dare say she was a young Beguine, who are found in the Spanish Netherlands. They differ from nuns in this, that they can quit their cloister if they choose to marry. They take care of the sick by profession – though I had rather they did it out of good-nature.’

‘She often told me,’ quoth Trim, ‘she did it for the love of Christ. – I did not like it.’

‘We’ll ask Mr. Yorick about it to-night, at my brother Shandy’s – so remind me,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘The young Beguine,’ continued the corporal, ‘having told me she would be my nurse, went to prepare something for me – and in a short time she came back with flannels, and having fomented my knee for a couple of hours, and made me a thin basin of gruel for my supper, she wished me rest, and promised to be with me early in the morning.

‘I had little rest. My fever ran very high that night – I kept seeing her – I was every moment cutting the world in two, to give her half – and crying that I had nothing but a knapsack and eighteen florins to share with her. The whole night long, I

dreamed the fair Beguine, like an angel, was close by my bedside, offering me cordials – and I was only awakened from my dreams by her coming as promised, and giving them in reality. She was scarce ever away from me; and so dependent on her was I, that my heart sickened when she left the room: and yet,’ continued the corporal, making a strange observation–

‘– it was not love – for during the three weeks she was almost constantly with me, fomenting my knee with her hand, night and day – I can honestly say, your honour, that * * * * * ,not once.’

‘That was very odd, Trim,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘I think so too,’ said Mrs. Wadman.

‘It never did,’ said the corporal.

CHAPTER 21

‘But ’tis no marvel,’ continued the corporal, seeing my uncle Toby musing – ‘for Love, your honour, is exactly like war, in this; that a soldier, even though he has escaped three weeks by Saturday night, may nevertheless be shot through his heart on Sunday morning. It happened so here, only it was on Sunday afternoon when I fell in love all at once – it burst upon me, your honour, like a bomb – scarce giving me time to say, “God bless me.”’

‘I thought,’ said my uncle, ‘a man never fell in love so suddenly. I prithee, tell me how this happened.’

‘With pleasure,’ said the corporal, bowing.

CHAPTER 22

‘On a Sunday afternoon, the old man and his wife had walked out–

‘Everything was still as midnight about the house–

‘There was not so much as a duck or a duckling in the yard–

–‘when the fair Beguine came in to see me.

‘My wound was then doing fairly well – the inflammation had gone, but I had an itch both above and below my knee, so insufferable that I had not slept for it.

“‘Let me see it,” said she, kneeling down, and laying her hand upon the part below my knee – “it only wants rubbing a little;” so covering it with the bed-clothes, she began with the forefinger of her right hand to rub under my knee, guiding her finger by the edge of the dressing.

‘In five or six minutes I felt the end of her second finger – and presently it was laid flat with the other, and she continued rubbing in that way round and round for a good while. It then came into my head, that I should fall in love. – I blushed when I saw how white a hand she had – I shall never see another hand so white whilst I live.’

‘Not in that place,’ said my uncle Toby.

Though he was serious, the corporal could not help smiling.

‘The young Beguine,’ he continued, ‘seeing the rubbing helped me greatly, proceeded to rub with three fingers – till by little and little she brought down the fourth, and rubbed with her whole hand: I will never say another word upon hands again – but it was softer than satin–’

‘Prithee, Trim, commend it as much as thou wilt,’ said my uncle Toby; ‘I shall hear thy story with the more delight.’

The corporal thanked his master.

‘The fair Beguine,’ said he, ‘continued rubbing with her whole hand under my knee, till I feared her zeal would weary her. “I would do a thousand times more,” said she, “for the love of Christ” – In saying which, she moved her hand to the part above my knee, and rubbed it also.

‘I perceived, then, I was beginning to be in love–

‘As she continued rub-rub-rubbing – I felt it spread from under her hand, your honour, to every part of my frame.

‘The more she rubbed, and the longer strokes she took – the more the fire kindled in my veins – till at length, by two or three strokes longer than the rest – my passion rose to the highest pitch – I seized her hand–’

‘– And then thou clapped it to thy lips, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘and made a speech.’

Whether the corporal’s amour ended precisely in that way, is not important; it is enough that it contained the essence of all the love romances which have ever been wrote since the beginning of the world.

CHAPTER 23

As soon as the corporal had finished the story of his amour, Mrs. Wadman silently sallied forth from her arbour, passed the wicker-gate, and advanced towards my uncle Toby's sentry-box. The effect which Trim had made in my uncle's mind was too favourable a crisis to let slip.

The attack was determined upon: it was facilitated still more by my uncle Toby's ordering the corporal to move away the shovel, spade, pick-axe, and other military stores which lay scattered upon the ground. – The corporal marched – the field was clear.

If ever Plan deserved registering in letters of gold, it was certainly the Plan of Mrs. Wadman's attack on my uncle Toby in his sentry-box.

Now the plan hanging up in the sentry-box at this point being the plan of Dunkirk, and the tale of Dunkirk a tale of relaxation, it opposed every impression she could make: and besides, the manoeuvre of fingers and hands in the attack of the sentry-box, was so outdone by the fair Beguine's, in Trim's story, that just then, that particular attack, however successful before, became the most heartless attack that could be made.

But Mrs. Wadman had scarce opened the wicket-gate, when her mind took in the change of circumstances.

She formed a new attack in a moment.

CHAPTER 24

'I am half distracted, captain Shandy,' said Mrs. Wadman, holding up her handkerchief to her left eye, as she approached the door of the sentry-box. 'A mote – or sand – or something – has got into my eye – do look into it.'

In saying which, Mrs. Wadman edged herself close in beside my uncle Toby, and squeezed herself upon the corner of his bench. 'Do look into it,' said she.

Honest soul! thou didst look into it with as much innocence as a child; and 'twere as much a sin to have hurt thee.

I will answer for my uncle Toby, that he would have sat quietly upon a sofa from June to January, with an eye as fine as the Thracian Rodope's beside him, without being able to tell whether it was black or blue.

The difficulty was to get my uncle Toby to look at an eye at all.

'Tis surmounted. And

I see him with his pipe in his hand, and the ashes falling out of it – looking and looking again, with twice the good-nature that ever Galileo looked for a spot in the sun.

In vain! for Widow Wadman's left eye shines as lucid as her right – there is neither mote, or sand, or dust, or speck floating in it. – Nothing, my dear uncle! but one delicious fire, furtively shooting out from it, into thine –

If thou lookest, uncle Toby, one moment longer – thou art undone.

CHAPTER 25

An eye is exactly like a cannon, in this respect; that it is not so much the eye or the cannon, in themselves, as it is the carriage of the eye – and the carriage of the cannon, by which both are able to do execution. I don't think the comparison a bad one; however, as 'tis placed at the head of the chapter, as much for use as ornament, all I desire in return is, that whenever I speak of Mrs. Wadman's eyes, you keep it in your fancy.

'I protest, Madam,' said my uncle Toby, 'I can see nothing in your eye.'

'It is not in the white,' said Mrs. Wadman: my uncle Toby looked with might and main into the pupil–

Now of all the eyes which ever were created, up to those of Venus herself – there never was an eye so fitted to rob my uncle Toby of his repose, as this one. It was not, Madam, a rolling, wanton eye – nor an eye petulant and imperious, of high claims and terrifying demands, which would have curdled at once that milk of human nature which made up my uncle Toby.

'Twas an eye soft and gentle – speaking not like the trumpet stop of some ill-made organ, but whispering soft like the last low accent of an expiring saint – 'How can you live comfortless, captain Shandy, and alone, without a bosom to lean your head on – or to trust your cares to?'

It was an eye–

But I shall be in love with it myself, if I say another word about it.

– It did the business for my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 26

There is nothing that shows the character of my father and my uncle Toby in a more entertaining light, than their different manner under the same accident of love. I do not call love a misfortune, but am persuaded that a man's heart is the better for it.

Great God! what must my uncle Toby's heart have been with love, when 'twas all benignity without it.

My father, as appears from many of his papers, was very subject to this passion before he married – but from a little subacid kind of drollish impatience in his nature, whenever love befell him, he would never submit to it, but would pish, and huff, and bounce, and kick, and play the Devil, and write the bitterest verses that ever man wrote. There is one verse upon somebody's eye that for two or three nights kept him from his rest; which begins thus:

'A Devil 'tis – and mischief such doth work
As never yet did Pagan, Jew, or Turk.'

In short, when in love, my father was all abuse and foul language, cursing this and that and everything under heaven which aided or abetted his love – yet he cursed himself into the bargain, as one of the most egregious fools that ever was let loose in the world.

My uncle Toby, on the contrary, took it like a lamb – sat still and let the poison work in his veins without resistance. In the sharpest pains of the wound (like that on his groin) he never dropped one fretful word – he blamed neither heaven nor earth, or spoke ill of any body. He sat solitary and pensive with his pipe – looking at his lame leg – then whiffing out a sentimental *heigh ho!* mixed with the smoke.

He took it like a lamb, I say.

In truth he had mistook it at first; for having taken a ride with my father that morning, to save if possible a beautiful wood which the dean and chapter were hewing down to give to the poor; and which was in full view of my uncle Toby's house, and of singular service to him in his description of the battle of Wynnendale – by trotting on too hastily to save it, upon an uneasy saddle – it so happened, that a blister formed in the nethermost part of my uncle Toby – the first shootings of which (as he had no experience of love) he had taken for a part of the passion – till the blister breaking in the one case – and the other remaining – my uncle Toby was convinced that his wound was not skin-deep, but that it had gone to his heart.

CHAPTER 27

My uncle Toby knew little of the world; and therefore when he felt he was in love with widow Wadman, he had no idea that the thing was to be made a mystery of. Even had it been otherwise, as he looked upon Trim as a humble friend, it would have made no difference to the manner in which he informed him of it.

'I am in love, corporal!' quoth my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 28

‘In love!’ said the corporal. ‘Your honour was very well the day before yesterday, when I was telling you the story of the King of Bohemia.’

‘Bohemia!’ said my uncle Toby, musing. ‘What became of that story, Trim?’

‘We lost it, your honour, somehow – but your honour was as free from love then, as I am.’

‘’Twas whilst thou went’st off with the wheel-barrow. Mrs. Wadman has left a ball here,’ quoth my uncle Toby, pointing to his breast.

‘She can no more withstand a siege, than she can fly,’ cried the corporal.

‘But as we are neighbours, Trim, I think it best to let her know it civilly first,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘If I might presume to differ from your honour – I would begin with making a good thundering attack upon her, in return – and telling her civilly afterwards. For if she knows anything of your honour’s being in love, beforehand—’

‘L__d help her! she knows no more of it,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘than the child unborn.’

Precious souls!

Mrs. Wadman had told it, with all its circumstances, to Bridget twenty-four hours before; and was at that very moment consulting her about some slight misgivings which the Devil, who never lies dead in a ditch, had put into her head.

‘I am terribly afraid,’ said widow Wadman, ‘that if I should marry him, Bridget, the poor captain will not enjoy good health, with the monstrous wound upon his groin.’

‘It may not be so very large,’ replied Bridget, ‘as you think, Madam. I believe, besides, that ’tis dried up.’

‘I would like to know – merely for his sake,’ said Mrs. Wadman.

‘We’ll know the long and the broad of it in ten days,’ answered Bridget; ‘for whilst the captain is paying his addresses to you, I’m confident Mr. Trim will be for making love to me – and I’ll let him, to get it all out of him.’

These measures were taken. Meanwhile, my uncle Toby and the corporal went on with theirs.

‘Now,’ quoth the corporal, one arm a-kimbo, ‘if your honour will give me leave to lay down the plan of this attack—’

‘That will please me exceedingly,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘and as thou must act as my *aid de camp*, here’s a crown for thy commission.’

‘Then, your honour,’ said the corporal, making a bow, ‘we will begin with getting your honour’s laced clothes out of the campaign-trunk, and have the blue and gold taken up at the sleeves – and I’ll put your white wig fresh into pipes – and send for a tailor, to have your honour’s thin scarlet breeches turned—’

‘I had better take the red plush ones,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

‘They will be too clumsy,’ said the corporal.

CHAPTER 29

‘Thou wilt get a brush and a little chalk to my sword.’

‘’Twill only be in your honour’s way,’ replied Trim.

CHAPTER 30

‘– But your honour’s two razors shall be new set – and I will get my Montero-cap furbished, and put on poor lieutenant Le Fever’s regimental coat, which your honour gave me to wear for his sake; and as soon as your honour is clean shaved, and has got your clean shirt on, and everything is ready for the attack – we’ll march up boldly. Whilst your honour engages Mrs. Wadman in the parlour, to the right – I’ll attack Mrs. Bridget in the kitchen, to the left; and I’ll answer for it,’ said the corporal, snapping his fingers, ‘that the day is our own.’

‘I wish I may manage it right;’ said my uncle Toby, ‘but I declare, corporal, I had rather march up to the very edge of a trench.’

‘A woman is quite a different thing,’ said the corporal.

‘I suppose so,’ quoth my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 31

If anything which my father said could have provoked my uncle Toby while he was in love, it was the perverse use my father was always making of an expression of Hilarion the hermit; who, in speaking of his abstinence, his flagellations, and other parts of his religion, would say – though with more facetiousness than became a hermit – ‘That they were the means he used, to make his ass (meaning his body) leave off kicking.’

It pleased my father well; it was a laconic way of expressing and libelling, at the same time, the desires and appetites of the lower part of us; so that for many years of my father’s life, he never used the word *passions* – but always *ass* instead.

I must here observe to you the difference betwixt

My father’s ass
and my hobby-horse.

For my hobby-horse, if you recollect, is in no way a vicious beast; he has scarce one hair of the ass about him. – ’Tis the little filly-folly which carries you out for the present hour – a butterfly, a picture, a fiddlestick – uncle Toby’s siege – or anything, which a man can get astride on, to canter away from the cares of life. ’Tis as useful a beast as exists in the whole of creation.

But as for my father’s ass – oh! mount him not: ’tis a lustful beast – and foul befall the man who does not stop him from kicking.

CHAPTER 32

‘Well! dear brother Toby,’ said my father, upon first seeing him after he fell in love – ‘and how goes it with your Ass?’

Now my uncle Toby, thinking more of the part where he had the blister than of the hermit’s metaphor, imagined that my father, who was not very ceremonious in his choice of words, had enquired after the part by its proper name. So although my mother, doctor Slop and Mr. Yorick were sitting in the parlour, he thought it civil to reply using the same term as my father.

‘My A__e,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘is much better, brother Shandy.’

My father had formed great expectations from his Ass in this onset; and would have said more, but doctor Slop setting up an intemperate laugh – and my mother crying out, ‘L__d bless us!’ – it drove my father’s Ass off the field – and the laugh then becoming general, there was no bringing him back to the charge for some time.

And so the discourse went on without him.

‘Everybody,’ said my mother, ‘says you are in love, brother Toby, and we hope it is true.’

‘I am as much in love, I believe,’ replied he, ‘as any man usually is.’

‘Humph!’ said my father.

‘And when did you know it?’ asked my mother.

‘When the blister broke,’ replied my uncle Toby.

My uncle Toby’s reply put my father into good temper – so he charged on foot.

CHAPTER 33

‘As the ancients agree, brother Toby,’ said my father, ‘that there are two distinct kinds of love, according to the different parts which are affected by it – the Brain or Liver – when a man is in love, he needs to consider which of the two he is fallen into.’

‘What does it matter which it is,’ replied my uncle Toby, ‘provided it will make a man marry, and love his wife, and get a few children?’

‘A few children!’ cried my father, rising out of his chair, and looking full in my mother’s face. ‘A few children!’ he repeated as he walked to and fro.

‘Not, my dear brother Toby,’ he cried, recovering himself, ‘not that I should be sorry if thou hadst – on the contrary, I should rejoice – and be as kind to every one of them as a father—’

My uncle Toby stole his hand into my father’s to give it a squeeze.

‘Nay, moreover,’ continued he, ‘so full art thou, my dear Toby, of the milk of human nature, ’tis a pity the world is not peopled by creatures like thee; and was I an Asiatic monarch, I would oblige thee, provided it would not impair thy strength – or weaken thy mind, brother Toby, which these gymnics are apt to do – otherwise, dear Toby, I would procure thee the most beautiful women in my empire, and I would oblige thee, *willy nilly*, to beget one subject every month.’

‘Now I would not,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘get a child, *willy nilly*, that is, whether I wished or no, to please the greatest prince upon earth.’

‘And ’twould be cruel in me, brother, to compel thee;’ said my father; ‘but ’tis a case put to show thee, that it is not thy begetting a child, but the system of Love and Marriage, which I would set thee right in.’

‘There is a great deal of plain sense in captain Shandy’s opinion of love,’ said Yorick. ‘Amongst the ill-spent hours of my life, I have read many flourishing poets, from whom I never could extract so much—’

‘I wish, Yorick,’ said my father, ‘you had read Plato; for there you would have learnt that there are two Loves.’

‘I know there were two Religions among the ancients,’ replied Yorick, ‘one for the vulgar, and another for the learned; but I think one Love might have served both of them very well.’

‘It could not,’ replied my father, ‘because according to Ficinus, one of these loves is rational – the other is natural. The first is ancient – without mother: the second, begotten of Jupiter and Dione.’

‘Pray, brother,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘what has a man who believes in God to do with this?’

My father could not stop to answer, for fear of breaking his thread.

‘The latter,’ continued he, ‘is wholly of the nature of Venus. The first excites to heroic love, and the desire of philosophy and truth – the second excites to desire, simply—’

‘I think the procreation of children as beneficial to the world,’ said Yorick, ‘as the finding out of the longitude.’

‘To be sure,’ said my mother, ‘love keeps peace in the world.’

‘In the house, my dear, I own—’

‘It replenishes the earth,’ said my mother.

‘But it keeps heaven empty – my dear,’ replied my father.

‘’Tis Virginity,’ cried Slop triumphantly, ‘which fills paradise.’

‘Well said, nun!’ quoth my father.

CHAPTER 34

My father had such a skirmishing, slashing way with him, in his arguments – thrusting and ripping, and giving everyone a stroke to remember him by – that if there were twenty people in company, in less than half an hour he was sure to have every one of 'em against him.

Moreover, if there was any position more untenable than the rest, he would be sure to throw himself into it; and once there, he would defend it so gallantly, that 'twould have been difficult for a brave man to drive him out.

Yorick, for this reason, though he would often attack him, could never bear to do it with all his force.

Doctor Slop's Virginity, in the close of the last chapter, had got him on the right side of the rampart; and he was beginning to blow up all the convents in Christendom about Slop's ears, when corporal Trim came into the parlour to inform my uncle Toby that his thin scarlet breeches, in which the attack was to be made upon Mrs. Wadman, would not do; for the tailor, about to turn them, had found they had been turned before.

'Then turn them again, brother,' said my father, 'for there will be many a turning of 'em yet before all's done.'

'They are as rotten as dirt,' said the corporal.

'Then order a new pair,' said my father; 'for though I know,' he continued, turning to the company, 'that widow Wadman has been deeply in love with my brother Toby for many years, and has used every art of woman to outwit him into the same passion – yet now that she has caught him, her fever will be past its height – she has gained her point.'

'In this case,' he continued, 'Love is not so much a Sentiment as a Situation, into which a man enters as my brother Toby would enter a battalion. No matter whether he loves the service or no, once in it, he acts as if he did; and takes every step to show himself a man of prowess.'

The hypothesis was plausible enough, and my uncle Toby had only one objection to it – but my father had not finished.

'For this reason,' he continued, 'although all the world knows that Mrs. Wadman loves my brother Toby, and my brother Toby loves Mrs. Wadman, and no obstacle can forbid the music striking up this very night, yet I will answer for it that the same tune will not be played in a year.'

'We have taken our measures badly,' quoth my uncle Toby to Trim.

'I would lay my Montero-cap,' said Trim – now Trim's Montero-cap, as I once told you, was his constant wager; and having furbished it up for the attack, it made the odds look better – 'I would lay my Montero-cap to a shilling – if it was proper to offer a wager before your honours—'

'There is nothing improper in it,' said my father, ''tis a mode of expression. All it means is that thou believest – now, what dost thou believe?'

'That widow Wadman cannot hold out ten days.'

'And whence,' cried Slop jeeringly, 'hast thou all this knowledge of woman, friend?'

'By falling in love with a popish clergywoman,' said Trim.

''Twas a Beguine,' said my uncle Toby.

Doctor Slop was too angry to listen to the distinction; and my father taking that chance to fall helter-skelter upon the whole order of Nuns and Beguines, as a set of silly, fusty, baggages – Slop could not stand it – and my uncle Toby having some measures to take about his breeches – the company broke up.

My father being left alone, and having half an hour upon his hands before bed-time, called for pen and paper, and wrote my uncle Toby the following letter of instructions:

MY DEAR BROTHER TOBY,

What I am going to say to thee is upon the nature of women, and of love-making to them; and it is good that thou hast occasion for a letter of instructions upon that head, and that I am able to write it to thee.

Mrs. Shandy being now nearby, preparing for bed – I have thrown together, just as they have come into my mind, such hints as I judge may be of use; intending, in this, to give thee a token of my love.

Firstly, with regard to religion in this affair – though I know how few of its offices thou neglectest – yet I would remind thee of one thing during thy courtship; and that is, never to go forth upon the enterprise, without first recommending thyself to the protection of Almighty God, that he may defend thee from the evil one.

Shave the whole top of thy head clean every four or five days, but oftener if convenient; lest in taking off thy wig before her, she should discover how much has been cut away by Time.

'Twere better to keep ideas of baldness out of her fancy.

Always remember, Toby,

'That women are timid.' And 'tis well they are – or else there would be no dealing with them.

Let not thy breeches be too tight, or hang too loose about thy thighs, like the trunk-hose of our ancestors.

Whatever thou hast to say, utter it in a low, soft tone of voice. Silence weaves dreams of midnight secrecy into the brain.

Avoid all kinds of pleasantry and facetiousness in thy discourse with her, and do all thou canst to keep from her books which tend thereto: there are some devotional tracts, which she may read over – but do not allow her to look into Rabelais, or Don Quixote.

They are books which excite laughter; and thou knowest, dear Toby, that there is no passion so serious as lust.

If thou art permitted to sit upon the same sofa with her, and to lay thy hand upon hers – beware: – thou canst not lay thy hand on hers, without her feeling the temper of thine. Leave that undetermined; so that thou wilt have her curiosity on thy side. If she is not conquered by that, and thy Ass continues kicking – thou must begin by losing a few ounces of blood below the ears, according to the practice of the ancient Scythians, who cured the most intemperate fits of appetite by that means.

Avicenna is for having the part anointed with the syrup of hellebore, using proper purges – and I believe rightly. Thou must eat little or no goat's flesh, nor red deer; and carefully abstain from peacocks, cranes, coots and water-hens.

As for thy drink – I need not tell thee, it must be the infusion of Vervain and the herb Hanea, of which Aelian relates such effects – but if thy stomach palls, take cucumbers, melons, purslane, water-lilies, woodbine, and lettuce instead.

There is nothing further which occurs to me at present—
So wishing everything, dear Toby, for the best,
I rest thy affectionate brother,
WALTER SHANDY.

CHAPTER 35

Whilst my father was writing his letter of instructions, my uncle Toby and the corporal were busy preparing for the attack. As the turning of the thin scarlet breeches was laid aside, there was no reason to put it off beyond the next morning; so accordingly it was resolved upon for eleven o'clock.

'Come, my dear,' said my father to my mother — 'twill be a brotherly act to walk down to my brother Toby's, to support him in this attack of his.'

When my father and mother entered, my uncle Toby and the corporal were about to sally forth — but the account is worth more than to be wove into the fag end of the eighth volume of such a work as this.

— My father had just time to put the letter of instructions into my uncle Toby's coat-pocket — and join with my mother in wishing his attack prosperous.

'I could like,' said my mother, 'to look through the key-hole out of curiosity.'

'Call it by its right name, my dear,' quoth my father — 'and look through the key-hole as long as you like.'

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS

OF

TRISTRAM SHANDY

GENTLEMAN

A DEDICATION

TO A GREAT MAN

Having previously intended to dedicate *The Amours of my Uncle Toby* to Mr. *** – I see more reasons, *a posteriori*, for dedicating it to Lord *****.

I should lament if this exposed me to the jealousy of their Reverences, because *a posteriori*, in Court-Latin, means the kissing of hands – or anything else – in order to get preferment.

My opinion of Lord ***** is neither better nor worse than my opinion of Mr. ***. Honours, like impressions upon coin, may give a local value to base metal; but Gold and Silver will pass all over the world, without any other recommendation than their own weight.

The same good-will that made me think of offering up half an hour's amusement to Mr. *** operates more forcibly at present, as half an hour's amusement will be more refreshing after labour and sorrow, than after a philosophical repast.

Nothing is so amusing as a total change of ideas; no ideas are so totally different as those of Ministers, and innocent Lovers. Therefore, when I come to talk of Statesmen, it will be in such a way as to prevent mistakes about them. – I propose to dedicate that Volume to some gentle Shepherd; (as Pope almost says–)

Whose thoughts proud Science never taught to stray,
Far as the Statesman's walk or Patriot-way;
Yet simple Nature to his hopes had given
Out of a cloud-capp'd head a humbler heaven;
Some untamed World in depths of wood embraced–
Some happier Island in the watery-waste–
And where admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful Dog should bear him company.

In a word, by thus introducing an entire new set of objects to his Imagination, I shall give a Diversion to his love-sick Contemplations. In the meantime,

I am
THE AUTHOR.

BOOK 9

CHAPTER 1

I call all the powers of time and chance, which check us in our careers in this world, to bear witness that I could never yet get fairly to my uncle Toby's amours till this very moment, when my mother's curiosity – or a different impulse in her, as my father would have it – made her wish to peep through the key-hole.

'Call it, my dear, by its right name,' quoth my father, 'and look through the key-hole as long as you like.'

Nothing but the fermentation of that little subacid humour, which I have often spoken of, in my father, could have made such an insinuation. He was however frank and generous in his nature; so that he had scarce finished this ungracious retort, when his conscience smote him.

My mother was at that moment conjugally swinging with her left arm twisted under his right, in such a way that the inside of her hand rested upon the back of his – she raised her fingers, and let them fall – it could scarce be called a tap; or if it was a tap, 'twould be hard to say whether 'twas a tap of remonstrance, or of confession.

My father classed it right – Conscience redoubled her blow. – He turned his face suddenly the other way, and my mother, supposing his body was about to turn with it, by a cross movement of her right leg, brought herself so far in front, that as he turned his head, he met her eye.

– Confusion again! he saw a thousand reasons to wipe out the reproach, and as many to reproach himself – a thin, blue, chill crystal, so clear that the least speck of desire might have been seen, if it had existed – it did not – and how I happen to be so lewd myself, particularly before the equinoxes, Heaven above knows – for my mother was never so.

Temperate blood ran orderly through her veins at all times; she had never the least heat in her humours. – And as for my father! 'Twas the whole business of his life to keep all fancies of that kind out of her head. Nature had done her part to spare him this trouble; and my father knew it.

– And here am I sitting, this 12th day of August 1766, in a purple jerkin and yellow slippers, without either wig or cap on, a most tragicomical completion of his prediction, 'That I should neither think, nor act like any other man's child, upon that very account.'

My father's mistake was in attacking my mother's motive, instead of her act; for certainly key-holes were made for other purposes; and the act denied a key-hole to be what it was. It became a violation of nature; and so was, you see, criminal.

This is why, your Reverences, key-holes are the occasions of more sin and wickedness than all other holes in this world put together.

– which leads me to my uncle Toby's amours.

CHAPTER 2

Though the corporal had been as good as his word in putting my uncle Toby's great ramallie-wig into pipes, yet the time was too short to produce any great effects from it. The wig had lain many years squeezed up in the corner of his old campaign trunk; and was not so pliable as one would have wished. It curled everywhere but where the corporal required.

Such it was – but the sweet look of goodness which sat upon my uncle Toby's brow made everything around it appear so sovereignly, and Nature had wrote Gentleman with so fair a hand in every line of his face, that even his tarnished gold-laced hat and huge cockade of flimsy taffeta became him. Though not worth a button in themselves, yet the moment my uncle Toby put them on, they seemed to have been picked by the hand of Science to set him off to advantage.

Nothing in this world could have co-operated more powerfully towards this, than my uncle Toby's blue and gold coat, if only it had fitted. In the sixteen years since it had been made, through total inactivity in my uncle Toby's life – for he seldom went further than the bowling-green – his blue and gold had become so miserably tight, that it was with the utmost difficulty that the corporal was able to get him into it. The taking up at the sleeves had not helped.

It was laced however down the back, and at the side-seams, in the mode of King William's reign; and shone so bright in the sun, and had so metallic and doughty an air, that my uncle Toby might have been attacking in armour.

As for the thin scarlet breeches, they had been unripped by the tailor between the legs, and left at sixes and sevens.

– Yes, Madam, but let us govern our fancies. As there was no alternative in my uncle Toby's wardrobe, he sallied forth in the red plush.

The corporal had arrayed himself in poor Le Fever's regimental coat; and with his hair tucked up under his Montero-cap, marched three paces behind his master. A whiff of military pride had puffed out his shirt at the wrist; upon which, from a black leather thong, hung the corporal's stick. – My uncle Toby carried his cane like a pike.

'It looks well at least,' quoth my father to himself.

CHAPTER 3

My uncle Toby turned his head more than once, to see how he was supported by the corporal; and the corporal gave a slight flourish with his stick – and with most respectful encouragement, bid his honour 'never fear.'

Now my uncle Toby did fear, and grievously too; he knew not so much as the right end of a Woman from the wrong, and therefore was never at his ease near one of them – unless in sorrow or distress; then infinite was his pity. Yet except when he was beguiled into it by Mrs. Wadman, he had never looked steadfastly into a woman's eye; and would often tell my father in the simplicity of his heart, that it was almost as bad as talking bawdy.

'And suppose it is?' my father would say.

CHAPTER 4

‘She cannot,’ quoth my uncle Toby, halting twenty paces from Mrs. Wadman’s door – ‘she cannot take it amiss.’

‘She will take it, your honour,’ said the corporal, ‘just as the Jew’s widow at Lisbon took it from my brother Tom.’

‘And how was that?’ quoth my uncle Toby, turning round to face him.

‘Your honour,’ replied the corporal, ‘knows of Tom’s misfortunes; if he had not married the widow – or if they had only put pork into their sausages – the honest soul would never have been taken out of his warm bed, and dragged to the inquisition. ’Tis a cursed place; when once a poor creature is in, he is in for ever.’

‘’Tis very true,’ said my uncle Toby, looking gravely at Mrs. Wadman’s house as he spoke.

‘Nothing,’ continued the corporal, ‘can be so sad as confinement for life – or so sweet as liberty.’

‘Nothing, Trim,’ said my uncle, musing.

‘Whilst a man is free –’ cried the corporal, giving a flourish with his stick thus:



My uncle Toby looked earnestly towards his cottage and his bowling-green.

The corporal had unwarily conjured up the Spirit of calculation with his wand; so he then began to conjure him down again with his story.

CHAPTER 5

‘When Tom began, your honour, to think of settling himself in the world, it happened about that time, that a Jew who kept a sausage shop in the same street, had the ill luck to die, and leave his widow in possession of a roaring trade. – Tom thought there could be no harm in offering her his service to carry it on.

‘So without any introduction to the widow, except that of buying a pound of sausages at her shop, Tom set out – reckoning that at the worst, he should at least get a pound of sausages; but, if things went well, he should be set up – getting not only a pound of sausages, but a wife and a sausage shop into the bargain.

‘I fancy, your honour, I see him this moment with his white dimity waistcoat and breeches, and hat o’ one side, passing jollily along the street, swinging his stick, with a smile and a cheerful word for everybody he met. – But alas! Tom! thou smilest no more,’ cried the corporal.

‘Poor fellow!’ said my uncle Toby feelingly.

‘He was an honest, light-hearted lad, your honour—’

‘Then he resembled thee, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby.

The corporal blushed down to his fingers’ ends – a tear of gratitude and sorrow started into his eye, and ran sweetly down his cheek; my uncle Toby’s tears kindled as one lamp does at another; and taking hold of Trim’s coat, as if to ease his lame leg, he stood silent for a minute. Then he took his hand away, and the corporal, making a bow, went on with the story of his brother and the Jew’s widow.

CHAPTER 6

‘When Tom got to the shop, your honour, there was nobody in it but a poor negro girl, with a bunch of white feathers tied to the end of a long cane, flapping away flies – not killing them.’

‘’Tis a pretty picture!’ said my uncle Toby; ‘she had suffered persecution, Trim, and had learnt mercy.’

‘She was good, and the story of that poor friendless lass would melt a heart of stone,’ said Trim. ‘Some dismal winter’s evening, when your honour is in the mood, I shall tell you it.’

‘Do not forget, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘Does a negro have a soul?’ asked the corporal.

‘I am not much versed in things of that kind,’ quoth my uncle; ‘but I suppose, God would not leave him without one, any more than thee or me.’

‘Then why, your honour, is a black wench to be used worse than a white one?’

‘I can give no reason,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘Only,’ cried the corporal, ‘because she has no one to stand up for her.’

‘’Tis that very thing, Trim,’ quoth my uncle Toby, ‘which recommends her and her brethren to our protection; the fortune of war has put the whip into our hands now – where it may be hereafter, heaven knows! but the brave will not use it unkindly.’

‘God forbid,’ said the corporal; and he returned to his story – but with an embarrassment the reader may not comprehend; for by the many sudden transitions of feeling, he had lost the sportable key of his voice, which gave spirit to his tale.

So giving a stout *hem!* to rally back the retreating spirits, and placing his left arm akimbo, the corporal continued his story.

CHAPTER 7

‘Tom walked past the Moorish girl, and went on into the room beyond, to talk to the Jew’s widow about love, and this pound of sausages; and being, as I have said, an open cheery-hearted lad, he took a chair, and with great civility placed it close to her at the table, and sat down.

‘There is nothing so awkward as courting a woman whilst she is making sausages – so Tom began a discourse upon them; first, gravely, “as to how they were made – with what meats, herbs, and spices;” then a little gaily, as, “With what skins – whether the largest were not the best?” – and so on – taking care to under-season what he had to say upon sausages, rather than over-season; so that he might have room to act–’

‘It was owing to the neglect of that very precaution,’ said my uncle Toby, laying his hand upon Trim’s shoulder, ‘that Count De la Motte lost the battle of Wynnendale: he pressed too speedily into the wood, and let Lisle fall into our hands, and then Ghent and Bruges; it was so late in the year, and so terrible a season came on, that otherwise our troops might have perished–’

‘Why may not battles, your honour, as well as marriages, be made in heaven?’ My uncle Toby mused–

Religion inclined him to say one thing, and his idea of military skill another. Not being able to frame a reply, he said nothing; and the corporal finished his story.

‘As Tom saw that he gained ground, and that all he said upon the subject of sausages was kindly taken, he went on to help her in making them. – First, by taking hold of the ring of the sausage whilst she stroked the meat down with her hand – then by cutting the strings into proper lengths, and holding them whilst she took them one by one – and so on, till at last he ventured to tie the sausage himself, whilst she held the snout.

‘Now a widow, your honour, always chooses a second husband as unlike the first as she can: so the affair was half settled in her mind before Tom mentioned it.

‘She made a feint however of defending herself, by snatching up a sausage: Tom instantly laid hold of another.

‘But seeing Tom’s had more gristle in it–

‘She signed the agreement; Tom sealed it; and there was an end of the matter.’

CHAPTER 8

‘All womankind,’ continued Trim, ‘from the highest to the lowest, love jokes; the difficulty is to know what sort; and there is no knowing that, but by trying, as we do with our artillery in the field, by raising or letting down their breeches, till we hit the mark.’

‘I like the comparison,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘better than the thing itself.’

‘Because your honour,’ quoth the corporal, ‘loves glory more than pleasure.’

‘I hope, Trim,’ answered my uncle, ‘I love mankind more than either; and as the knowledge of arms tends to the good and quiet of the world – particularly that branch of it which we have practised together on our bowling-green – and keeps the lives of the few, from the plunderings of the many – whenever that drum beats, I trust, corporal, we shall neither of us lack the humanity and fellow-feeling to face about and march.’

In pronouncing this, my uncle Toby turned around, and marched firmly as if at the head of his company – and the faithful corporal, shouldering his stick, marched close behind him down the avenue.

‘Now what can their two noddles be about?’ cried my father to my mother; ‘by all that’s strange, they are besieging Mrs. Wadman, and are marching round her house to mark out the surrounding lines.’

‘I dare say—’ quoth my mother—

– But stop, dear Sir – for what my mother dared to say upon the occasion – and what my father did say, with her replies, shall be read, perused, commented on, and in short, thumbed over by Posterity in a separate chapter. – I say, by Posterity – for what has this book done more than the *Legation of Moses*, or the *Tale of a Tub*, that it may not swim down the gutter of Time along with them?

I will not argue the matter: Time wastes too fast: every letter I write tells me how rapidly Life follows my pen; the days of it, more precious, my dear Jenny! than the rubies about thy neck, are flying over our heads like light clouds on a windy day, never to return – everything presses on – whilst thou art twisting that lock of hair, see! it grows grey; and every adieu, and every absence which follows it, are preludes to that eternal separation which we are shortly to make.

Heaven have mercy upon us both!

CHAPTER 9

Now, for what the world thinks of that ejaculation – I would not give a penny.

CHAPTER 10

My mother had gone with her left arm twisted in my father's right, till they were directly opposite the front of Mrs. Wadman's house. My father looked across; and seeing my uncle Toby and the corporal within ten paces of the door, he said,

'Let us just stop a moment, and see how my brother Toby and his man Trim make their first entry – it will not detain us a minute.'

'No matter if it be ten minutes,' quoth my mother.

The corporal was just then starting the story of his brother Tom and the Jew's widow: the story went on – and on – and on again; there was no end of it.

G__ help my father! he pished fifty times, and wished the corporal's stick, with all its flourishings, at the devil.

When events like these my father is waiting for, are hanging in the scales of fate, the mind changes its expectations; without this it would not have power to see it out.

Curiosity governs the first moment; and the second moment is all economy to justify the expense of the first – and for the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth moments, and so on – 'tis a point of Honour.

Writers have assigned all this to Patience; but that Virtue, methinks, has enough power without invading the few dismantled castles which Honour has left upon the earth.

My father stood it out as well as he could to the end of Trim's story; and then to the end of my uncle Toby's speech upon arms; when, seeing that instead of marching up to Mrs. Wadman's door, they both turned around and marched down the avenue in the opposite direction – he broke out at once with that little subacid soreness of humour which distinguished his character from that of other men.

CHAPTER 11

‘Now what can their two noddles be about?’

‘I dare say,’ said my mother, ‘they are making fortifications.’

‘Not on Mrs. Wadman’s premises!’ cried my father.

‘I suppose not,’ quoth my mother.

‘I wish,’ said my father, raising his voice, ‘the whole science of fortification at the devil, with all its trumpery of saps, mines, blinds, gabions, and cuvetts—’

‘They are foolish things,’ said my mother.

Now my mother would never disagree to any proposition my father laid before her, merely because she did not understand it, or had no ideas of the meaning of the terms upon which the proposition rolled. She would go on using a hard word twenty years together, without giving herself any trouble to enquire about it.

This was an eternal source of misery to my father, and cut short more good dialogues between them, than the most petulant contradiction could have done. The few which survived were the better for the cuvetts – the ditches within ditches.

‘They are foolish things;’ said my mother.

‘Particularly the cuvetts,’ replied my father.

He tasted the sweet of triumph – and went on.

‘Not that they are, properly speaking, Mrs. Wadman’s premises,’ said my father, ‘because she is only tenant for life.’

‘That makes a great difference,’ said my mother.

‘In a fool’s head,’ replied my father.

‘Unless she should happen to have a child,’ said my mother.

‘But she must persuade my brother Toby first to get her one.’

‘To be sure,’ quoth my mother.

‘Though if it comes to persuasion,’ said my father, ‘Lord have mercy upon them.’

‘Amen,’ said my mother, *piano*.

‘Amen,’ cried my father, *fortissimo*.

‘Amen,’ said my mother again – but with such a sigh of personal pity, as discomfited every fibre of my father. He instantly took out his almanac; but before he could look in it, Yorick’s congregation coming out of church, answered half of his business with it – and my mother telling him it was a sacrament day answered the other half.

My father, remiss in not attending church, put his almanac into his pocket, and returned home with a most embarrassed look.

CHAPTER 12

Upon looking back from the end of the last chapter, and surveying the texture of what has been wrote, it is necessary that upon this page and the next three, a good quantity of assorted matter should be inserted to keep up that balance betwixt wisdom and folly, without which a book would not hold together: nor will a poor creeping digression do the business – no; it must be a good frisky one, and upon a frisky subject too.

The only difficulty is raising powers suitable to the nature of the service: Fancy is capricious – Wit should be spontaneous – and Pleasantry (good-natured slut though she is) will not come at a call, even if an empire were laid at her feet.

– The best way is for a man to say his prayers–

Only, if it reminds him of his infirmities and defects, he will find himself rather worse after he has said them than before.

For my own part, there is not a way either moral or mechanical under heaven that I could think of, which I have not taken in his case: sometimes addressing myself directly to the soul, and then by trying what could be made of it upon the body, by temperance, soberness, and chastity.

‘These are good,’ quoth I, ‘for health – for happiness in this world – and for happiness in the next–’

In short, they were good for everything but the thing wanted; and there they were good for nothing, but to leave the soul just as heaven made it. As for the virtues of faith and hope, they give it courage; but then that snivelling virtue Meekness (as my father would always call it) takes it quite away again, so you are exactly where you started.

Now in all ordinary cases, there is nothing which I have found to inspire the author’s wit and fancy so well as this–

– Certainly, if I am not blinded by self-love, there must be something of true genius about me, because I do not know what envy is: for never do I hit upon any invention for the furtherance of good writing, without instantly making it public; wishing that all mankind should write as well as myself.

– Which they certainly will, when they think as little.

CHAPTER 13

Now in ordinary cases – that is, when I am stupid, and the thoughts rise heavily and pass gummous through my pen–

Or when I am got, I know not how, into a cold unmetaphorical vein of infamous writing, and cannot get out of it; so must be obliged to go on writing like a Dutch commentator to the end of the chapter, unless something be done–

– I never stop conferring with pen and ink one moment; for if a pinch of snuff, or a stride or two across the room will not do the business for me – I take a razor; and without further ceremony except that of first lathering my beard, I shave. Then I change my shirt – put on a better coat – send for my latest wig – put my topaz ring upon my finger; and in a word, dress myself, from one end to the other, after my best fashion.

Now the devil must be in it, if this does not do: for consider, Sir, as every man is present at the shaving of his own beard – the Situation puts her own notion into the brain.

– I maintain that the ideas of a rough-bearded man are seven years more terse for one single shave; and if they did not risk being quite shaved away, might be carried up by continual shavings to the highest pitch of sublimity. How Homer could write with so long a beard, I don't know – and as it defies my hypothesis, I don't care. – But let us return to the dress.

Ludovicus Sorbonensis makes this entirely an affair of the body; but he is deceived: the soul and body are joint-sharers in everything they get. A man cannot dress without his ideas getting clothed at the same time; and if he dresses like a gentleman, every one of them stands presented to his imagination, genteelized along with him – so that he has nothing to do, but take his pen, and write like himself.

And so, when your honours would know whether I wrote clean and fit to be read, you will be able to judge full as well by looking into my Laundress's bill, as my book. There was one single month in which I dirtied thirty shirts with clean writing; and yet was more abused, cursed, and criticised for what I had wrote in that one month, than in all the other months of that year put together.

–But my critics had not seen my bills.

CHAPTER 14

As I have no intention of beginning the Digression I am making all this preparation for, till I come to the 15th chapter – I have this chapter free to put to any use I think proper. – I have twenty this moment ready for it – I could write my chapter of Button-holes–

Or my chapter of Pishes–

Or my chapter of Knots – but they might lead me into mischief: the safest way is to follow the track of the learned, and raise objections against what I have been writing, though I declare, I know no more than my heels how to answer them.

It may be said, there is a pelting kind of Thersitical satire, as black as the ink 'tis wrote with – this sort of satirist urges that all the personal washings and scrubbings upon earth do a genius no good – but on the contrary, the dirtier the fellow is, the better he succeeds.

To this, I have no other answer but that the Archbishop of Benevento wrote his nasty *Romance of the Galatea*, as all the world knows, in a purple coat, waistcoat, and purple breeches; and on account of that outfit, the penance that was set him of writing a commentary upon the book of Revelations was hardly too severe.

Another objection to this remedy is its lack of universality; for the shaving part of it, by an unalterable law of nature, excludes one half of the species entirely from its use. All I can say is, that female writers, whether English or French, must do without it.

– As for the Spanish ladies – I do not care.

CHAPTER 15

The fifteenth chapter is come at last; and brings nothing with it a sad example of ‘How our pleasures slip from under us in this world!’

For in talking of my digression – I declare before heaven I have made it! What a strange creature is mortal man!

Better get all these things out of our heads, and return to my uncle Toby.

CHAPTER 16

When my uncle Toby and the corporal had marched down to the bottom of the avenue, they recollected that their business lay the other way; so they turned around and marched up to Mrs. Wadman's door.

'I warrant your honour,' said the corporal, touching his Montero-cap with his hand, as he knocked at the door.

My uncle Toby said nothing: the truth was, he had not altogether marshalled his ideas; he wished for another conference. As the corporal was mounting up the three steps before the door, my uncle *ahemmed* twice; – a portion of his most modest spirits fled, at each expulsion, towards the corporal, who stood with the door rapper suspended for a full minute in his hand, he scarce knew why.

Bridget stood inside, with her finger and thumb upon the latch, benumbed with expectation; and Mrs. Wadman, with an eye ready to be deflowered again, sat breathless behind the window-curtain of her bed-chamber, watching their approach.

'Trim!' said my uncle Toby – but as he said it, Trim let fall the rapper.

My uncle Toby, perceiving that all hopes of a conference were knocked on the head, whistled *Lillabullero*.

CHAPTER 17

As Mrs. Bridget's finger and thumb were upon the latch, the corporal did not knock as often as perhaps your honour's tailor does – certainly not as often as mine; for I owe him five and twenty pounds at least, and wonder at the man's patience.

– But this is nothing to the world: only 'tis a cursed thing to be in debt, and there seems to be a fatality in the exchequer of our house; I'm persuaded there is no prince, pope, or potentate who more desires to keep straight with the world than I do – or who takes more likely means for it. I never give above half a guinea – or walk with boots – or cheapen tooth-picks – or pay a shilling for a band-box; and for the six months I'm in the countryside, I live on so small a scale that I outdo Rousseau – for I keep no man-servant, or horse, or cow, or dog, or cat, or anything that can eat or drink, except a thin poor piece of a Vestal housemaid (to keep my fire in), who has generally as bad an appetite as myself – but if you think this makes a philosopher of me – I would not give a rush for your judgments.

True philosophy – but there is no treating the subject whilst my uncle is whistling *Lillabullero*.

– Let us go into the house.

CHAPTER 18

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

CHAPTER 19

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

CHAPTER 20

* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

‘You shall see the very place, Madam,’ said my uncle Toby.

Mrs. Wadman blushed – looked towards the door – turned pale – blushed again – recovered her natural colour – blushed worse than ever; which, for the sake of the unlearned reader, I translate thus:

‘L__d! I cannot look at it – What would the world say if I looked at it? I should drop down, if I looked at it – I wish I could look at it – there can be no sin in looking at it – I will look at it.’

Whilst all this was running through Mrs. Wadman’s imagination, my uncle Toby had risen from the sofa, and left the parlour, to give Trim an order about it in the passage–

* * * * *

– ‘I believe it is in the garret,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘I saw it there, your honour, this morning,’ answered Trim.

‘Then prithee, Trim,’ said my uncle Toby, ‘go and bring it into the parlour.’

The corporal did not approve of the order, but cheerfully obeyed. He put on his Montero-cap, and went as fast as his lame knee would let him. My uncle Toby returned into the parlour, and sat himself down again upon the sofa.

‘You shall lay your finger upon the place,’ said my uncle Toby.

‘I will not touch it, however,’ thought Mrs. Wadman.

This shows what little knowledge is got by mere words – we must go up to the source.

Now in order to clear up the mist which hangs upon these three pages, I must try to be as clear as possible myself.

Rub your hands thrice across your foreheads – blow your noses – sneeze, my good people! – God bless you–

Now give me all the help you can.

CHAPTER 21

As there are fifty different ends for which a woman takes a husband, she first carefully weighs them all: then by discourse, enquiry, and inference, she investigates whether she has got hold of the right one – and if she has – then, by pulling it gently this way and that, she decides whether or not it will not break.

The imagery under which Slawkenbergius impresses this upon the reader's fancy, in the beginning of his third Decad, is so ludicrous that the honour I bear the sex, will not allow me to quote it.

'She first,' saith Slawkenbergius, 'stops the ass, and holding his halter in her left hand (lest he should get away) she thrusts her right hand into the very bottom of his pannier to search for it.'

'For what?'

'You'll not know the sooner,' quoth Slawkenbergius, 'for interrupting me. – "I have nothing, good Lady, but empty bottles," says the first ass.

"I'm loaded with tripes;" says the second.

"And thou art little better," quoth she to the third; "for there is nothing in thy panniers but trunk-hose and slippers" – and so to the fourth and fifth, going through the whole string of asses, till coming to the ass which carries it, she turns the pannier upside down, looks at it – considers it – measures it – stretches it – wets it – dries it – then takes her teeth to the warp and weft of it.'

– Of what? for the love of Christ!

'I am determin'd,' answered Slawkenbergius, 'that all the powers upon earth shall never wring that secret from my breast.'

CHAPTER 22

We live in a world beset on all sides with mysteries and riddles – but it seems strange that Nature, who makes everything so well for its purpose, whether she designs for the plough or the cart – yet at the same time should so eternally bungle it as she does, in making so simple a thing as a married man.

Whether it is in the choice of the clay, or because it is spoiled in the baking, so that a husband may turn out too crusty on one hand – or not crusty enough, on the other; – or whether this great Artificer is not so attentive to the little details of that part of the species – or whether her Ladyship sometimes scarce knows what sort of a husband will do – I know not: we will discuss it after supper.

However, with regard to my uncle Toby's fitness for the marriage state, nothing was ever better. Nature had formed him of the best and kindest clay – had tempered it with her own milk, and breathed into it the sweetest spirit – she had made him gentle, generous, and humane – she had filled his heart with trust and confidence, and made it fit for the tenderest offices. – She had moreover considered the other causes for which matrimony was ordained–

And accordingly * * * * *
* * * * *

The gift was not defeated by my uncle Toby's wound.

Now this wound was somewhat apocryphal; and the Devil had raised scruples in Mrs. Wadman's brain about it; and like the true devil he was, had done his own work at the same time, by turning my uncle Toby's Virtue thereupon into nothing but empty bottles, tripes, trunk-hose, and slippers.

CHAPTER 23

Mrs. Bridget had pawned all a chambermaid's little stock of honour that she would get to the bottom of the affair in ten days; assuming that whilst my uncle Toby was making love to her mistress, the corporal would make love to her.

'And I'll let him as much as he likes,' said Bridget, 'to get it out of him.'

Friendship has two garments; an outer and an under one. Bridget was serving her mistress's interests in the one – and doing the thing which most pleased herself in the other. However, with so many stakes depending upon my uncle Toby's wound, Mrs. Wadman (without discouraging Mrs. Bridget) was determined to play her cards herself.

A child might have looked into my uncle Toby's hand – there was such a plainness and simplicity in his playing what trumps he had – with such an innocent ignorance of the ten-ace – and so naked and defenceless did he sit upon the sofa with widow Wadman, that a generous heart would have wept to have won the game from him.

Let us drop the metaphor.

CHAPTER 24

– And the story too if you please: for though I have all along been hastening earnestly towards this part of it, knowing it to be the choicest morsel I had to offer to the world, yet now that I am got to it, anyone who wishes is welcome to take my pen, and go on with the story. I foresee the difficulties of description – and feel my want of powers.

It is one comfort at least to me, that I lost some fourscore ounces of blood this week in a fever which attacked me at the beginning of this chapter; so that I hope it may be more in the globular parts of the blood, rather than in the subtle aura of the brain – whichever it is, an Invocation can do no hurt.

THE INVOCATION

Gentle Spirit of sweetest humour, who formerly did sit upon the easy pen of my beloved Cervantes; thou who glided'st daily through his window, and turned the twilight of his prison into noonday brightness by thy presence – tinged his little urn of water with heaven-sent nectar, and all the time he wrote of Sancho and his master, didst cast thy mystic mantle o'er the evils of his life–

– Turn hither, I beseech thee! behold these breeches! – they are all I have in the world – that piteous rent was given them at Lyons–

My shirts! see what a deadly schism has happened amongst 'em – for the tails are in Lombardy, and the rest of 'em here – I only had six, and a cunning gypsy of a laundress at Milan cut off the tails of five.

And yet, despite all this, and a pistol tinderbox which was filched from me at Sienna, and twice that I paid five Pauls for two hard eggs, once at Raddicoffini, and a second time at Capua – I do not think a journey through France and Italy, provided a man keeps his temper all the way, is so bad a thing as some people would make you believe.

– 'Tis nonsense to imagine they will lend you their carriages to be shaken to pieces for nothing; and unless you pay twelve sous for greasing your wheels, how should the poor peasant get butter for his bread? – We really expect too much – and as for the livre or two above par for your suppers and bed – at the most they are but one shilling and ninepence halfpenny – why quibble? for heaven's sake, pay it, rather than disappoint your fair Hostess and her Damsels – and besides, my dear Sir, on your departure you get a sisterly kiss of each of 'em worth a pound – at least I did.

– For my uncle Toby's amours running in my head had the same effect upon me as if they had been my own. – I was in the most perfect state of good-will; and felt the kindest harmony vibrating within me with every oscillation of the chaise; so that whether the roads were rough or smooth, everything I saw touched upon some secret spring of sentiment or rapture.

– They were the sweetest notes I ever heard; and I instantly let down the window to hear them more distinctly.

'Tis Maria,' said the postillion; 'Poor Maria is sitting upon a bank playing her vespers upon her pipe, with her little goat beside her.'

The young fellow uttered this so feelingly that I instantly made a vow to give him a four-and-twenty sous piece, when I got to Moulins.

'And who is poor Maria?' said I.

‘The love and piety of all the villages around us;’ said the postilion. – ‘Just three years ago, the sun did not shine upon so fair, so quick-witted and amiable a maid; and Maria deserved a better fate than to have her marriage banns forbid, by the intrigues of the curate who published them.’

Here Maria, who had made a short pause, put the pipe to her mouth, and began the tune again – they were the same notes, yet ten times sweeter.

‘It is the evening service to the Virgin,’ said the young man, ‘but who has taught her to play it, no one knows; we think that heaven has assisted her; for ever since she has been unsettled in her mind, it seems her only consolation. She has never once had the pipe out of her hand, but plays that service night and day.’

The postillion delivered this with so much eloquence, that I could not help seeing something in his face above his position, and should have sifted out his history, had not poor Maria taken such full possession of me.

We had by this time almost reached the bank where Maria was sitting: she wore her hair drawn up into a silk-net, with a few olive leaves twisted a little fantastically on one side. – She was beautiful; and if ever I felt the full force of an honest heart-ache, it was the moment I saw her –

‘God help her! poor damsel!’ said the postilion. ‘A hundred masses have been said in the churches and convents for her – but without effect; we have still hopes, as she is sensible for short intervals, that the Virgin will restore her to herself. But her parents, who know her best, have no hope, and think her senses are lost for ever.’

As the postillion spoke this, Maria made a cadence so melancholy, so tender, that I sprung out of the chaise to help her, and found myself sitting betwixt her and her goat.

Maria looked wistfully for some time at me, and then at her goat – and then at me – and then at her goat again.

‘Well, Maria,’ said I softly, ‘what resemblance do you find?’

I do entreat the reader to believe that it was from the humblest conviction of what a Beast man is, that I asked the question. I would never have made a witticism in the presence of Misery – and I so smarted at the very idea of it, that I swore I would utter grave sentences the rest of my days – and never attempt again to commit mirth with man, woman, or child, in my life.

As for writing nonsense – that I leave to the world.

Adieu, Maria, poor hapless damsel! – some time, I thought, I may hear thy sorrows from thy own lips – but I was deceived; for she took her pipe and played such a tale of woe with it, that I rose up, and with broken steps walked softly to my chaise.

– What an excellent inn at Moulins!

CHAPTER 25

When we have got to the end of this chapter (but not before) we must turn back to the two blank chapters, on the account of which my honour has lain bleeding this half hour. – I stop it by pulling off one of my yellow slippers and throwing it violently across my room, with a declaration at the heel of it–

– That any resemblance it may bear to half the chapters which are written in the world is of no consequence; besides, I look upon a chapter which has nothing in it, with respect. Considering what worse things there are in the world, it is no way a proper subject for satire–

– Why then was it left so? And without waiting for my reply, shall I be called blockhead, numbskull, doddypole, dunderhead, ninny-hammer, nincompoop, sh_t-a-bed, and as many other unsavoury names as ever the cake-bakers of Lernè called King Garangantan’s shepherds – and I’ll let them do it, as Bridget said, as much as they please; for how could they foresee that I needed to write the 25th chapter of my book before the 18th?

So I don’t take it amiss. I merely wish that it may be a lesson to the world, ‘to let people tell their stories their own way.’

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

As Mrs. Bridget opened the door before the corporal had properly knocked, the interval before my uncle Toby's entrance into the parlour was so short that Mrs. Wadman had just time to get from behind the curtain, – lay a Bible upon the table, and advance to receive him.

My uncle Toby saluted Mrs. Wadman in the manner of 1713 – then, turning around, he marched up abreast with her to the sofa, and in three plain words – though not before he was sat down – nor after he was sat down – but as he was sitting down, told her, 'he was in love.'

Mrs. Wadman naturally looked down, expecting that my uncle Toby would go on; but having no talents for amplification, and Love being a subject of which he had no mastery – having told her once that he loved her, he let it alone, and left the matter to work its own way.

My father was always in raptures with this system of my uncle Toby's, as he falsely called it; and would often say, that if his brother could have added a pipe of tobacco to his process, he would have found his way towards the hearts of half the women on the globe.

My uncle Toby never understood what my father meant; nor will I presume to extract more from it, than a condemnation of an error which most of the world, except the French, lie under – believing 'that talking of love, is making it.'

I would as soon set about making a black-pudding by the same recipe.

Let us go on: Mrs. Wadman expecting my uncle Toby would do so, until the silence became almost indecent: so edging herself a little more towards him, and raising up her eyes, sub-blushing, as she did it – she took up the gauntlet – or the discourse – with my uncle Toby, thus:

'The cares and worries of the marriage state,' quoth she, 'are very great.'

'I suppose so,' said my uncle Toby.

'And therefore when a person,' continued Mrs. Wadman, 'is so much at his ease as you are – so happy, captain Shandy, in yourself, your friends and your amusements – I wonder, what reasons can incline you to the state?'

'They are written,' quoth my uncle, 'in the Common-Prayer Book.'

Thus far my uncle Toby went on warily, and kept within his depth, leaving Mrs. Wadman to sail upon the gulf as she pleased.

'As for children,' said Mrs. Wadman, 'though a principal end of marriage, and the natural wish, I suppose, of every parent – yet do not we all find, they are certain sorrows, and very uncertain comforts? and what compensation is there, dear sir, for the many worries of a suffering and defenceless mother who brings them into life?'

'I declare,' said my uncle Toby, smitten with pity, 'I know of none; unless it be the pleasure which it has pleased God—'

'A fiddlestick!' quoth she.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH

Now there are so many notes, tunes, chants, airs, looks, and accents with which the word *fiddlestick* may be pronounced, every one of 'em having a meaning as different from the other, as dirt from cleanliness – that Casuists reckon up no less than fourteen thousand.

Mrs. Wadman hit upon the *fiddlestick* which summoned all my uncle Toby's modest blood into his cheeks. Feeling that he had somehow or other got beyond his depth, he stopped short; and without entering further either into the pains or pleasures of matrimony, he laid his hand upon his heart, and made an offer to take them as they were, and share them with her.

When my uncle Toby had said this, he did not care to say it again; so casting his eye upon the Bible which Mrs. Wadman had laid upon the table, he took it up; and popping, dear soul! upon a passage in it which was most interesting to him – the siege of Jericho – he began to read it – leaving his proposal of marriage, like his declaration of love, to work with her after its own way.

But it worked not at all in her; because there was something working there before – Babblers that I am! I have anticipated what it was a dozen times; but there is fire still in the subject. – *Allons*.

CHAPTER 26

It is natural for a stranger who is going from London to Edinburgh, to enquire before he sets out, how many miles to York, which is about half way – nor does anybody wonder, if he then asks about the corporation coach, &c.

It was just as natural for Mrs. Wadman, whose first husband was afflicted with a Sciatica, to wish to know how far from the hip to the groin; and how far she was likely to suffer more or less in the one case than in the other.

She had accordingly read all of Drake's anatomy. She had peeped into Wharton upon the brain, and borrowed Graaf upon the bones and muscles; but could make nothing of it.

She had reasoned likewise from her own powers – laid down theorems – and come to no conclusion.

To clear up all, she had twice asked Doctor Slop 'if poor captain Shandy was ever likely to recover from his wound?'

'He is recovered,' Doctor Slop would say.

'What! quite?'

'Quite, madam.'

'But what do you mean by a recovery?' Mrs. Wadman would say.

Doctor Slop was the worst man alive at definitions; and so Mrs. Wadman could get no knowledge: in short, there was no way to extract it, but from my uncle Toby himself.

There is an accent of humanity in an enquiry of this kind – how shall I describe it? 'tis an accent which covers the part with a garment, and gives the enquirer a right to be as particular with it as your surgeon.

'Was it without remission?'

'Was it more tolerable in bed?'

'Could he lie on both sides alike with it?'

'Was he able to mount a horse?'

'Was motion bad for it?' et cetera, were so tenderly spoken, and so directed towards my uncle Toby's heart, that every item of them sunk deep into it – but when Mrs. Wadman went round about by Namur to get at my uncle Toby's groin; and engaged him to attack the point of the advanced counterscarp of Saint Roch, sword in hand – and then with tender notes playing upon his ear, led him all bleeding by the hand out of the trench, wiping her eye, as he was carried to his tent–

Heaven! Earth! Sea! – all was lifted up – an angel of mercy sat beside him on the sofa – his heart glowed with fire – and had he had a thousand hearts, he would have lost them all to Mrs. Wadman.

'And whereabouts, dear Sir,' quoth Mrs. Wadman, 'did you receive this sad blow?' She glanced towards the waistband of my uncle Toby's red plush breeches, expecting naturally, as the shortest reply, that my uncle Toby would lay his forefinger upon the place.

It fell out otherwise – for my uncle Toby having got his wound before the gate of St. Nicolas, in one of the traverses of the trench opposite the salient angle of the demibastion of St. Roch, he could stick a pin upon the exact spot of ground where he was standing when the stone struck him. My uncle immediately thought of his large map of the citadel of Namur and its environs, which he had purchased and pasted

down upon a board during his long illness. It had lain with other military lumber in the garret ever since, and accordingly the corporal was sent into the garret to fetch it.

My uncle Toby measured off two hundred feet on the map, with Mrs. Wadman's scissors, from the angle before the gate of St. Nicolas; and with such a virgin modesty laid her finger upon the place, that the goddess of Decency shook her head, and forbade her to explain the mistake.

Unhappy Mrs. Wadman!

– For nothing can make this chapter end with spirit but an apostrophe to thee – but my heart tells me, that in such a crisis, an apostrophe is an insult in disguise, and before I would offer one to a woman in distress – let the chapter go to the devil.

CHAPTER 27

My uncle Toby's Map is carried down into the kitchen.

CHAPTER 28

'And here is the Maes – and this is the Sambre;' said the corporal, pointing with his right hand extended towards the map and his left round Mrs. Bridget's shoulder. 'And this,' said he, 'is the town of Namur – and here lay his honour and myself – and in this cursed trench, Mrs. Bridget,' quoth the corporal, taking her by the hand, 'did he receive the wound which crushed him so miserably *here*.'

– In pronouncing which, he slightly pressed the back of her hand towards the part – and let it fall.

'We thought, Mr. Trim, it had been more in the middle,' said Mrs. Bridget.

'That would have undone us for ever,' said the corporal.

'And my poor mistress too,' said Bridget.

The corporal made no reply, but by giving Bridget a kiss.

'Come – come,' said Bridget, sliding one hand over the other, in a way that could not be done were there the slightest wart or protuberance.

'Tis every syllable of it false,' cried the corporal, before she had half finished.

'I know it to be fact,' said Bridget, 'from witnesses.'

'Upon my honour,' said the corporal, blushing with honest resentment, 'tis a story, Mrs. Bridget, as false as hell—'

'Not,' said Bridget, interrupting him, 'that either I or my mistress care a halfpenny about it – only that when one is married, one would choose to have such a thing by one at least—'

It was somewhat unfortunate for Mrs. Bridget, that she had begun the attack with her manual exercise; for the corporal instantly * * * * *
* * * * *

CHAPTER 29

Bridget did not know whether to laugh or cry.

She snatched up a rolling-pin – 'twas ten to one, she had laughed – She laid it down – she cried; and had one single tear tasted of bitterness, full sorrowful would the corporal's heart have been; but he understood the sex better than my uncle Toby at least, and so he assailed Mrs. Bridget after this manner.

'I know, Mrs. Bridget,' said he, giving her a most respectful kiss, 'that thou art good and modest by nature, and art so generous a girl that thou would'st not wound an insect, much less the honour of so gallant a soul as my master – but thou hast been deluded, dear Bridget, as is often a woman's case, "to please others more than themselves."' "

Bridget's eyes poured down at the sensations the corporal excited.

'Tell me, then, my dear Bridget,' continued the corporal, taking hold of her hand, and giving a second kiss – 'whose suspicion has misled thee?'

Bridget sobbed a sob or two – then opened her eyes – the corporal wiped 'em with her apron – she then opened her heart and told him all.

CHAPTER 30

My uncle Toby and the corporal had gone on separately with their operations for most of the campaign, and had cut off all communication from each other as effectively as if they had been separated by the Maes or the Sambre.

My uncle Toby, on his side, had presented himself every afternoon in his red and silver, and blue and gold alternately, and sustained an infinity of attacks in them, without knowing them to be attacks – and so had nothing to communicate–

The corporal, on his side, in taking Bridget, had gained considerable advantages – and consequently had much to communicate – but the nature of the advantages, and the manner by which he had seized them, required so careful a telling that the corporal dared not try it. Though aware of glory, he would rather have gone without laurels for ever, than torture his master's modesty for a single moment–

Best of honest and gallant servants! Could I raise thee amongst the gods, Trim – I would do it in the very next page.

CHAPTER 31

Now my uncle Toby had one evening laid down his pipe upon the table, and was counting over to himself upon his fingers all Mrs. Wadman's perfections one by one; and either by omitting some, or counting others twice over, was puzzling himself sadly before he could get beyond his middle finger.

'Prithee, Trim!' said he, taking up his pipe again, 'bring me a pen and ink.' Trim brought paper also.

'Take a full sheet, Trim!' said my uncle Toby, making a sign with his pipe to sit down at the table. The corporal obeyed – placed the paper before him – dipped pen in ink.

'She has a thousand virtues, Trim!' said my uncle Toby.

'Am I to set them down, your honour?' quoth the corporal.

'But they must be taken in their ranks,' replied my uncle Toby; 'for of them all, Trim, that which wins me most is the compassionate turn and singular humanity of her character – I protest,' added my uncle Toby, looking up, 'that were I her brother, Trim, she could not make more constant or more tender enquiries after my sufferings.'

The corporal made no reply to this, but a cough. He dipped the pen a second time; and when my uncle Toby pointed with the end of his pipe to the top of the sheet, the corporal wrote down the word *Humanity* - - - thus.

'Prithee, corporal,' said my uncle, 'how often does Mrs. Bridget enquire after the wound on thy kneecap, which thou received'st at the battle of Landen?'

'She never enquires after it at all.'

'That, corporal,' said my uncle Toby, with all the triumph his goodness would permit, – 'That shows the difference in the character of the mistress and the maid. If I had the same wound, Mrs. Wadman would have enquired into every circumstance relating to it a hundred times.'

'She would have enquired, your honour, ten times as often about your honour's groin.'

'The pain, Trim, is equally excruciating, and Compassion cares as much about the one as the other—'

'God bless your honour!' cried the corporal. 'What has a woman's compassion to do with a wound upon a man's kneecap? had your honour's knee been shot into ten thousand splinters, Mrs. Wadman would have troubled her head as little about it as Bridget; because,' added the corporal, lowering his voice, and speaking very distinctly, as he gave his reason—

'The knee is a distance from the main body – whereas the groin, your honour knows, is upon the very curtain of the place.'

My uncle Toby gave a long, low whistle.

The corporal had advanced too far to retire – he told the rest.

My uncle Toby laid down his pipe as gently upon the fender as if it were a spider's web.

– 'Let us go to my brother Shandy's,' said he.

CHAPTER 32

There will be just time, whilst my uncle Toby and Trim are walking to my father's, to inform you that Mrs. Wadman had, some months before this, confided in my mother; and that Mrs. Bridget, who had the burden of her own and her mistress's secret to carry, had got happily delivered of both to Susannah behind the garden-wall.

As for my mother, she saw nothing in it to make a fuss about – but Susannah was the perfect means to export a family secret; for she instantly imparted it to Jonathan, and Jonathan to the cook; the cook sold it with some kitchen-fat to the postillion for a groat, who traded it with the dairy maid for something of about the same value – and though whispered in the hay-loft, Fame caught the notes with her brazen trumpet, and sounded them upon the house-top.

In a word, there was not an old woman in the village or five miles round, who did not understand the difficulties of my uncle Toby's siege, and what were the secret articles which had delayed the surrender.

My father, whose way was to force every event in nature into an hypothesis, by which means no man ever crucified Truth at the rate he did – had just heard of the report as my uncle Toby set out; and was demonstrating to Yorick, despite my mother sitting by – not only 'That the devil was in women, and that the whole of the affair was lust;' but that every evil and disorder in the world, of whatever kind, from the first fall of Adam down to my uncle Toby's, was owing one way or other to the same unruly appetite.

Yorick was trying to make my father's hypothesis more temperate, when my uncle Toby entered the room. At the infinite benevolence and forgiveness in his looks, my father's eloquence rekindled against the passion – and as he was not very fastidious in his choice of words when he was angry, as soon as my uncle Toby was seated by the fire, my father broke out in this manner.

CHAPTER 33

‘That the race of so great, so exalted and godlike a Being as man should be continued, I am far from denying; but I think it a pity, that it should be done by means of a passion which bends down the faculties, and turns all the wisdom of the soul backwards – a passion, my dear,’ continued my father, addressing himself to my mother, ‘which couples and equals wise men with fools, and makes us come out of our caverns and hiding-places more like satyrs and four-footed beasts than men.

‘I know it will be said,’ continued my father, ‘that in itself, and simply taken – like hunger, or thirst, or sleep – ’tis neither good or bad – neither shameful or otherwise. Why then did the delicacy of Diogenes and Plato so revolt against it? and why, when we are about to plant a child, do we put out the candle? and why are all the parts thereof held to be impossible to convey cleanly by any language or translation?

‘The act of killing and destroying a man,’ continued my father, raising his voice and turning to my uncle Toby, ‘you see, is glorious – and the weapons by which we do it are honourable. – We march with them upon our shoulders – We strut with them by our sides – We gild them – We carve them – We inlay them; even a scoundrel cannon has an ornament cast upon its breach.’

My uncle Toby laid down his pipe to intercede for a better epithet – and Yorick was rising up to batter the whole hypothesis to pieces–

– When Obadiah burst into the room with a complaint which cried out for an immediate hearing.

The case was this:

My father, by ancient custom of the manor, was obliged to keep a Bull for the service of the Parish, and Obadiah had led his cow upon a pop-visit to him one day or other the preceding summer.

I say, one day or other – because as chance would have it, it was the day on which he married my father’s housemaid – so one was a reckoning for the other. Therefore when Obadiah’s wife was brought to bed of a child, Obadiah thanked God.

– ‘Now,’ said Obadiah, ‘I shall have a calf:’ so he went daily to visit his cow.

‘She’ll calve on Monday – on Tuesday – on Wednesday at the latest–’

The cow did not calve. – ‘no – she’ll not calve till next week.’

The cow put it off terribly – till at the end of the sixth week Obadiah’s suspicions fell upon the Bull.

Now the parish being very large, my father’s Bull, to speak the truth, was not equal to the job; he had, however, got himself thrust into employment – and as he went through the business with a grave face, my father had a high opinion of him.

‘Most of the townsmen,’ quoth Obadiah, ‘believe that ’tis all the Bull’s fault.’

‘But may not a cow be barren?’ replied my father, turning to Doctor Slop.

‘It never happens,’ said Dr. Slop; ‘but Obadiah’s wife may have come before her time. – Prithee has the child hair upon his head?’

‘It is as hairy as I am,’ said Obadiah; he had not shaved for three weeks.

‘Wheu - - u - - u - -’ cried my father, with an exclamatory whistle; ‘and so, brother Toby, this poor Bull of mine, who is as good a Bull as ever p_ ssed, and might have done for Europa herself – had he but two legs less, he might have lost his character – which to a Town Bull is the very same thing as his life–’

‘L__d!’ said my mother. ‘What is all this story about?’
‘A Cock and a Bull,’ said Yorick. ‘– And one of the best of its kind, I ever heard.’

The End

Lillabullero

Trad. Irish



* * *

This is a free ebook from
<https://englishliteratureebooks.com/>

It may be freely shared or copied for any non-commercial purpose.
It may not be sold.

* * *

[Return to start of book](#)