

**A SENTIMENTAL
JOURNEY THROUGH
FRANCE AND ITALY**

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A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy by Laur. Sterne

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LAUR. STERNE

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BY LAUR. STERNE.



PARIS,
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x - 1802.



SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
LAUR. STERNE.

LAURENCE STERNE was the son of an Irish officer, and born at Clonmel in the south of Ireland november 24th, 1713, a few days after his mother arrived from Dunkirk. His father, Roger Sterne, lieutenant in Handaside's regiment in Ireland, was married to Agnes Hebert, widow of a captain of a good family. His great grandfather was an archbishop, and his uncle a prebendary of our cathedrals.

Sterne, when yet a boy, had a wonderful escape in falling through a mill-race, whilst the mill was going, and of being taken up unhurt. In 1721, he was fixed at school near Halifax, where he got an able master, with whom he staid till about the latter end of 1731, in which year his father died in the month of march. Here I cannot omit mentioning another anecdote of Sterne's, which happened to him at Halifax. His school-master had the ceiling of the school-room new white-washed.

the ladder remained there. Sterne, one unlucky day, mounted it, and wrote with a brush in large capital letters, LAU. STERNE, for which the usher whipped him. His master was very much hurt at this, and said before him, that never should that name be effaced; for he was a boy of genius, and he was sure he should come to preferment. This expression made the boy forget the stripes he had received. In the year 1732, his cousin Sterne, of Elvington, became a father to our author, and sent him to the university of Cambridge, where he spent the usual number of years, read a great deal, laughed more, and sometimes took the diversion of puzzling his tutors. He left Cambridge with the character of an odd man, who had no harm in him, and who had parts if he would use them.

Upon leaving the university, he seated himself quietly in the lap of the church, at Sutton on the forest of Galtres, a small vicarage in Yorkshire, which he got by the means of his uncle. At York he became acquainted with his wife. He married her in the year 1741, and got by her his only daughter, who is known by the name of Lydia. Sterne and his uncle were then upon very good terms, for he soon got by him the prebend of York; but the uncle, being a party-man, quarrelled with him afterwards, because he would not write paragraphs in the news-papers, detesting such dirty work, and thinking it beneath him.

From that period his uncle became his bitterest enemy. By his wife's means he got the living of Stillington. A friend of her's in the south had promised her, that if she married a clergyman in Yorkshire, when the living became vacant, he would make her a compliment of it. He remained near twenty years at Sutton. As he had then very good health, books, painting, fiddling and shooting (as our author expresses himself) were his favourite amusements. In the year 1760, he took a house at York for his wife and daughter, and went up to London to publish his two first volumes of *Shandy* *. In that year Lord F— presented him with the curacy of Coxwold, a sweet retirement in comparison of Sutton. In 1762, he went to France, before the peace was concluded, whither his wife and daughter followed him. He left them both in France, and two years after he went to Italy for the recovery of his health. In his way home to England, he called upon them again in France, from whence they returned after him to England.

This is almost all we have learned from the account ** of Sterne himself. The rest we have gathered from the accounts of his friends.

When Sterne lived at Sutton, an occasion

* The first edition was printed in the preceding year at York.

** *Memoirs of the Life and family of the late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne.*

offered, which made him first feel himself, and to which, perhaps, we owe the origin of the history of *Tristram*. There happened a dispute among some of the superiors of his order, in which Sterne's friend, one of the best men in the world, was concerned. A person, who filled a lucrative benefice, was not satisfied with enjoying it during his own life-time, but exerted all his interest to have it entailed upon his wife and son after his decease. Sterne's friend, who expected the reversion of this living, had not, however, sufficient influence to prevent the success of his adversary. At this critical period, Sterne attacked the monopolizer in joke, and wrote « The history of a good warm watch-coat, with which the present possessor is not content to cover his own shoulders, unless he can also cut out of it a petticoat for his wife, and a pair of breeches for his son. »

What all the serious arguments in the world could not have effected, Sterne's satirical pen brought about. The intended monopolizer sent him word, that if he would suppress the publication of this sarcasm, he would resign his pretensions to the next candidate. The pamphlet was suppressed, the reversion took place, and Sterne was requited, by the interest of his patron, with the prebendaryship of York *.

* This pamphlet was afterwards published under this title: A POLITICAL ROMANCE ADDRESSED TO — Esq. of YORK.

An incident, much about the same time, contributed exceedingly to establish the reputation of Sterne's wit. It was this: He was sitting in the coffee-house at York, when a stranger came in, who gave much offence to the company, consisting chiefly of gentlemen of the gown, by descanting too freely upon religion and the hypocrisy of the clergy. The young fellow at length addressed himself to Sterne, asking him, what were his sentiments upon the subject: when, instead of answering him directly, he told the willing: «That
« his dog was reckoned one of the most beautiful
« pointers in the whole county, was very good-
« natured, but that he had an infernal trick,
« which destroyed all his good qualities. — He
« never sees a clergyman, (continued Sterne) but
« he immediately flies at him. » — « How long may
« he have had that trick, Sir? » — « Ever since he
« was a puppy. » The young man felt the keenness of the satire, turned upon his heel, and left Sterne to triumph.

At this time Sterne was possessed of some good livings, having enjoyed, so early as the year 1745, the vicarage of Sutton on the forest of Galtrees, where he usually performed divine service on Sunday mornings; and in the afternoon he preached at the rectory of Stillington, which he held as one of the prebends of York, in which capacity he also assisted regularly, in his turn, at the cathedral. Thus he decently lived a becoming