

And in thy words, that something strong and keen  
Which comes of life when life has bravely done —  
Nor wilt thou all forget the mountain sun,  
Nor the wild Alps with winds and snows between.

Thou shalt win life: for thou shalt learn with awe  
How life is passion, but passion self-controlled,  
That flames, even as the stars, by ancient law, —  
Even as the stars that flame o'er field and fold,  
Beyond earth's nether coasts of gust and flaw,  
Bright, beautiful, unalterable, and old.

## ABOUT LAURENCE STERNE

BY WILBUR L. CROSS

ABOUT the Reverend and ingenious Laurence Sterne, as the reviewers were wont to call him, there was nothing at hand a half-century ago beyond vague traditions, and an ill-arranged collection of letters with the brief memoir. Thackeray may have divined the true character of the great humorist; but he was mistaken in the crucial facts from which he professed to infer that character. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has since collected many interesting and authentic details concerning Sterne; and within a decade or so much fresh information has found its way into print, or drifted in manuscript to the British Museum. Wherefore Sterne may now be followed in his career more closely than Richardson or Fielding, or any other novelist contemporary with them.

And it is the most extraordinary career of them all. Sterne is among those men who awake, as the phrase runs, to find themselves famous. When the first installment of *Tristram Shandy* made its appearance, Sterne was an obscure country parson, already in middle life, and long since broken in health. He was then living at Sutton-in-the-Forest, a small parish some eight miles from York, where he was vicar. Of the nearby Stillington—two miles distant through the fields—he

was also curate; and two prebendal stalls had been given him in the minster at York. Sterne began *Tristram Shandy* mainly to amuse himself and a few friends who met on winter evenings at the house of Stephen Croft, the squire of Stillington. After hesitancy and delay, "a lean edition" was printed by a local bookseller, and a bundle of copies was sent to Dodsley, the London publisher, "merely to feel the pulse of the world." Two months thereafter—it was early in March, 1760—Sterne and Croft followed the book up to London; and the Yorkshire parson at once met his fame. Within a fortnight he wrote back to York: "From Morning to night my Lodgings, which by the by, are the genteelest in Town, are full of the greatest Company. I dined these 2 days with 2 ladies of the Bedchamber; then with Lord Rockingham, Lord Edgecomb, Lord Winchelsea, Lord Littleton a Bishop, &c., &c." The bishop in this company was Warburton, just consecrated at Gloucester. He sent for Sterne, and gave him a purse of guineas and some books for the improvement of his style. Sterne kept the guineas, but treated the literary advice with the contempt it deserved. Garrick, one of the first to read *Tristram Shandy* and recommend it,

sought Sterne out and presented him with the freedom of Drury Lane. Dodsley hurried a new edition of the fashionable book through the press within three weeks. Hogarth drew the frontispiece, and Pitt accepted the dedication. Six weeks later came the *Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, with "the largest and most splendid list" of subscribers that "ever pranced before a book." Feeling himself "the richest man in Europe," this country parson, who had been "franked" up to London by Stephen Croft, now set up a carriage and drove "down into Yorkshire in superior style."

It was much like this, except for minor details, on the subsequent visits to London for the season. At another time it was Lord Spencer, instead of the Bishop of Gloucester, who presented the guineas. Instead of Rockingham or Lyttleton, it might be Lord Bathurst, the friend of Pope and Swift and Addison, who introduced himself with "I want to know you, Mr. Sterne." The aged patron of letters — then above eighty — went on to say that he had long ago closed his accounts in despair of finding again equals of the men he once knew, but that he was now ready to open the books once more before he died. "Go home, Mr. Sterne, and dine with me." In a race with death, Sterne fled across the Channel for southern France, but he had difficulty in passing beyond Paris. Dinners awaited him there "a fortnight deep." On returning a call from the Comte de Bissy, he found him trying to read *Tristram Shandy* in the original. Choiseul, then prime minister, struck by Yorick's lean and lank figure, — "a scarecrow with bright eyes," — asked for an introduction; and the Duke of Orleans ordered his portrait to be painted at full length, that it might hang in his gallery of eccentrics. Hume, who had come to Paris as secretary to the English embassy, brought him into the coterie of philosophers, among whom were Diderot and Holbach; and before leaving Paris finally, Yorick preached for them and the world of fashion in the hall

of ambassadors. It was an odd sermon on the mistake made by Hezekiah in exposing the treasures of his palace to the messengers from the King of Babylon. A farewell dinner followed, at which the philosophers waxed merry over the parson's description of "the astronomical miracle" that was performed in honor of Hezekiah.

And so it went on, at home and abroad, until Sterne came to London for the last time. On that last evening a company of Sterne's friends were dining not far from his lodgings in Old Bond Street. There were present the Dukes of Roxbury and Grafton, the Earls of March and Ossory, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Hume, and others distinguished for rank or achievements. "Go," said the host to a footman, "and inquire how Mr. Sterne is to-day." "I went into the room," said the footman on returning, "and he was just a-dying. I waited ten minutes; but in five he said, 'Now it is come!' He put up his hand as if to stop a blow, and died in a minute." When the news of Sterne's death reached Germany, where the younger writers were losing their heads over him, Lessing said: "I would gladly have given Yorick ten years of my own life, could I thereby have prolonged his career for a single year."

Men partial to Sterne have long wished to know something about him in the less strenuous days before the period of "dinners a fortnight deep." How did Yorick conduct himself in his northern parishes? And what was thought of him there? Isaac D'Israeli, so curious in out-of-the-way learning, once hinted that there existed a body of Yorkshire anecdotes relative to that early time; and it now proves to be so. They are contained in a long letter and part of another written in 1795 by John Croft to Caleb Whitefoord, the wit and diplomatist, remembered, perhaps, here in America as an intimate friend of Benjamin Franklin. This John Croft who wrote the letters was younger brother to the Stephen Croft already mentioned. He grew up under

Sterne at Stillington, and saw a good deal of him in later times. What he says of Sterne may not be all true, but it is most interesting.

"I generally act from the first impulse" or "according as the fly stings," said Sterne, describing himself in the character of Parson Yorick. His parishioners observed the same volatile temperament, but they expressed themselves less playfully. "They generally considered him," says Croft, "as crazy, or crack-brained. He was not steady to his Pastimes, or Recreations. At one time he wou'd take up the Gun and follow shooting till he became a good shott, then he wou'd take up the Pencil and paint Pictures. . . . Once it is said that as he was going over the Fields on a Sunday to preach at Stillington it happened that his Pointer Dogsprung a Covey of Partridges, when he went directly home for his Gun and left his Flock that was waiting for him in the Church, in the lurch."

After Sterne had won his fame, he was in much demand as a preacher on unusual occasions. He then carried into the pulpit the wit, humor, and pathos of *Tristram Shandy*. In those days he seemed, said Gray, who read him exactly, "tottering on the verge of laughter, and ready to throw his periwig in the face of his audience." But on the average Sterne was, according to Croft, a rather poor preacher. "When it was Sterne's turn," says the antiquary, "to preach at the Minster half of the Congregation usually went out of the Church as soon as he mounted the Pulpit, as his Delivery and Voice were so very disagreeable." This one may well believe, for his voice was weak and broken from asthma and consumption.

Of Mrs. Sterne, who figures so humorously and sentimentally in the printed correspondence, it is said: "Tho' she was but a homely woman, still she had many Admirers, as she was reported to have a Fortune, and she possessed a first rate understanding. He [Laurie] had paid his addresses to her during the space of two years, when she as constantly refused him,

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till at length she asked him the question herself and they went off directly from the Rooms [the assembly rooms at York] and were married. Afterwards they did not live on the best terms and harmony together. . . . They kept a Dairy Farm at Sutton, had seven milch cows, but they allways sold their Butter cheaper than their Neighbours, as they had not the least idea of oeconomy, [so] that they were allways behindhand and in arrears with Fortune." Mrs. Sterne, it is recorded further, "went out of her senses, when she fancied herself the Queen of Bohemia. He treated her as such, with all the supposed respect due to a crowned head."

It was while Mrs. Sterne imagined herself the Queen of Bohemia that her husband began *Tristram Shandy*. Neither his friends nor the publishers thought well of it at first. "When he read some of the loose sheets . . . to a select company assembled at Mr. Croft's for that purpose after dinner, they fell asleep, at which Sterne was so nettled that he threw the Manuscript into the fire, and had not luckily Mr. Croft rescued the scorched papers from the flames, the work wou'd have been consigned to oblivion. . . . And when he produced the Copy, to severall Gentlemen of York, they considered it merely as a laughable book, and when that he offered it to the Booksellers, they wou'd not have anything to say to it, nor wou'd they offer any price for it. The same happened when he offered it to Dodsley in London . . . and so it hung on his hands, till after some time a Mr. Lee, a Gentleman of York and a Bachelor of a liberal turn of mind, lent him One hundred pounds towards the Printing the Work."

But once in print *Tristram Shandy* "made a great noise, and had a prodigious run." "The next morning [after reaching London] Sterne was missing at breakfast. He went to Dodsley's, where, on inquiry for *Tristram Shandy's* works, his Vanity was highly flattered, when the Shopman told him, that there was not such a Book to be had in London either

for Love or money. . . . He frequently had cards of Invitation from the Nobility and People of the first Fashion, for a month to come, that it allmost amounted to a Parliamentary Interest to have his company at any rate, all which was more than his feeble Frame cou'd bear . . . Sterne's Popularity at one time arose to that pitch, that on a Wager laid in London that a Letter addressed to Tristram Shandy in Europe shou'd reach him, when luckily the Letter came down into Yorkshire and the Post Boy meeting Sterne on the road to Sutton pulled off his hatt and gave it him."

Of greater moment to literature than these anecdotes of a York antiquary are certain manuscripts in Sterne's own hand that have recently come to light. In the printed correspondence of Sterne, covering the summer while he was at work on the *Sentimental Journey*, there is frequent mention of a *Journal* that he was then keeping for Eliza, — Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, a young woman out of India, with whom Sterne had become fascinated. This remarkable document, long supposed to have gone astray, has had a curious history through the silent years. It was discovered by a Mr. Gibbs of Bath among waste books and papers that came to him from his father, a small local collector. Thackeray was permitted to see the manuscript when he was preparing the lectures on the *English Humourists*, and he afterwards related an incident from it in *A Roundabout Journey*. But for some unknown reason the *Journal* was not mentioned in the lecture on Sterne and Goldsmith; and the passage in the *Roundabout* was suppressed when the essay went into the collected edition. Mr. Gibbs showed the *Journal* to others besides Thackeray; and in 1878 he read an account of this and other Sterne manuscripts before a literary society at Bath. On his death in 1894, these manuscripts passed under his will to the British Museum.

The *Journal to Eliza* (it may be so called from its resemblance to Swift's

*Journal to Stella*) depicts in minute detail the emotional state which gave impulse to the *Sentimental Journey*. There are, indeed, indications that Sterne intended to print it at some time as a supplement to that exquisite study in sensation. Crude it is as Sterne left it, but it is precisely the crudeness one must expect when the emotions are recorded just as they arise, without waiting for the imagination to select and recombine them into the beauty of art and form. In places the *Journal* is also, it must be admitted, grossly human; but of that it is unnecessary to speak now. Sterne first met Mrs. Draper in London society early in January, 1767. Three months later she sailed for India, and Sterne shut himself up in his London lodgings, where he lay ill of fever for weeks, — "the room allways full of friendly Visitors" and "the rapper eternally going with Cards and enquiries." Though near death at one time, Sterne's sense of humor never deserted him. Indeed, the account he gave of his illness in the *Journal* is, in his own opinion, as ludicrous as anything in *Tristram Shandy*. Yorick, it is duly related with all circumstance, took cold from an overdose of Dr. James's Powder, the nostrum that was destined to kill Goldsmith; eminent members of the faculty were summoned, and then dismissed after their diagnosis, only to be summoned again to take twelve ounces of blood from the patient, and to prescribe Van Sweeten's corrosive mercury; the patient finally cured himself with a French tincture, to the surprise of the wise physicians, who felt Yorick's pulse, stroked their beards, and smiled. "I am going" — wrote Sterne on an evening; and corrected himself the next morning with "Am a little better — so shall not depart as I apprehended." All this part of the *Journal* amused Thackeray greatly, who wrote of it to Mr. Gibbs.

Returning to his northern parish in the summer to write the sentimental travels for the next season, Sterne still kept up the record of his daily sensations. More and more he now let his fancy play

sentimentally about the incidents in the friendship with Eliza. "Your Figure," he records one day, "is ever before my eyes — the sound of your voice vibrates with its sweetest tones the live long day in my ear." He sits down to the *Sentimental Journey*, and Eliza enters the library, takes a seat opposite to him, and "softens and modulates" his feelings for a sentimental portrait, — the grisette he met in a Parisian glove-shop, it may be, or the beautiful Fleming of the remise door. A little apartment is fitted up daintily in the "thatched palace," and called Eliza's room, which Yorick enters ten times every day to render his devotions in "the sweetest of earthly Tabernacles." And in "a retired corner" of the house-garden is built in her honor a pavilion, where he sits of an afternoon in reverie, — another Adam in fancy waiting for that day's sleep which is to bring another Eve.

As an aid to realizing the idea of Eliza, there is always by him a miniature that was painted before their separation. It is placed on his desk every morning, as he resumes the *Sentimental Journey*. He visits his friend Hall-Stevenson over at Crazy Castle, and at dinner the portrait is passed round the table while noisy Yorkshire squires drink to the health of the original. Or he takes a wheel into York with the portrait as his companion; it is shown to the Archbishop, — his Grace, his lady, and sister, — who listen to the story of the friendship that existed between Yorick and Eliza. And finally, in allusion to the *Sentimental Journey*, Sterne writes eloquently: "I have brought your name, *Eliza*! and Picture into my work — where they will remain — when you and I are at rest for ever."

The Eliza whom Sterne would place among the immortals, along with Swift's Stella and Waller's Saccharissa, was from all accounts a woman of great beauty. "Your eyes," wrote her admirer, "and the shape of your face (the latter the most perfect oval I ever saw) . . . are equal to any of God's works in a similar

way, and finer than any I beheld in all my travels." The oval face and brilliant eyes were also destined to startle out of propriety another ecclesiastic. The Abbé Raynal, the historian of the Indies, who made the acquaintance of Mrs. Draper after Sterne's death, stopped short in his work to indulge in mad eulogy. "Every instant," he said, "increased the delight she inspired; every instant rendered her more interesting . . . there was no one she did not eclipse because she was the only one like herself." And James Forbes of the *Oriental Memoirs*, — a cool head, — who saw much of Mrs. Draper at Bombay, thought that Anjengo would ever be remembered as the birthplace of this woman of "refined tastes and elegant accomplishments."

Among these accomplishments was, according to her friends, a spirited and original style. Men of genius, we are told, would not have disavowed her pages. She exalted, it is said again, the art of writing to a science. Hitherto it has been impossible to form an independent opinion as to what truth may lie at the basis of exaggerated praise like this, for the letters that have been published as from Eliza to Yorick are all forgeries. But attached to the *Journal* there is a long letter — some hundred pages — in Mrs. Draper's own hand, which she sent from Bombay to her friend Mrs. James in London. The letter is a sort of autobiography, in which are given with much detail the incidents that led to the friendship with Sterne, and the writer's subsequent life after returning to India. In the course of the narrative, Mrs. Draper carelessly throws off brief essays on conduct or education, character sketches, and sentimental episodes, half fact and half fiction, doubtless to show what she could do in these lines. She did not write exactly, as Sterne says somewhere, "with the pen of an angel," but her style would do no discredit to Miss Chapone or to Margaret Duchess of Newcastle. Her ideal was Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, whose assemblies of bluestocks were then becom-

ing famous. "I would rather be an attendant on her person," she wrote, after reading Mrs. Montagu's essay on the *Genius of Shakespeare*, "than the first peeress of the realm."

The beautiful Mrs. Draper of facile pen was twenty-three years old when the friendship began between her and Sterne. Born in India of English parents belonging on each side to a good family, — the present Lord Basing, of Hoddington House, Hants, is a descendant of her father's brother, — she was sent to England when a mere child for "the frivolous education," regarded as good enough for "girls destined for India." "The generality of us," she wrote in sorrowful retrospect, ". . . were never instructed in the Importance of any thing, but one Worldly Point, that of getting an Establishment of the Lucrative kind, as soon as possible, a tolerable complexion, an Easy manner, some degree of taste in the adjustment of our ornaments, some little skill in dancing a minuet, and singing an air." With this sort of training, she returned to India, in her fourteenth year, to become, six months later, the wife of Daniel Draper, her elder by some twenty years. Her husband, who had been for some time in the service of the East India Company, proved a faithful and efficient

servant, but he was withal heavy and unimaginative. After Mrs. Draper's memorable visit to England when she met Sterne, she went back to India, spoiled by flattery and literary ambitions, for the humdrum life that awaited her. For a time she assisted Mr. Draper in his correspondence, taking the place of two clerks; but this could not last long. She naturally enough felt, as one of her sentences runs, a "great Dearth of every thing which could charm the Heart — please the Fancy, or speak to the judgment." So came the inevitable quarrel between husband and wife, a life apart, and eventually Mrs. Draper's flight to England. The period of freedom was destined to be rather brief. Five years in England, and she died at the age of thirty-five.

Mrs. Draper lies buried in the cloisters of Bristol Cathedral, where to her memory stands a monument symbolizing in its two draped figures Genius and Benevolence, the qualities with which the inscription endows her. But her spirit, it was once a superstition, long continued to haunt Belvidere House, — her home overlooking the harbor of Bombay, — and might be dimly seen on any night, "flitting about in corridor or verandah in hoop and farthingale."



## MY NEIGHBOR'S

BY BETH BRADFORD GILCHRIST

THE tenth commandment has never greatly troubled me. My neighbor's house, his lands, his children, his manservants, his maidservants even, I can allow him with a quiet mind; his ox and his ass far be it from me to lure into less juicy pastures. There are many people, and my neighbor is one of them, whose satisfaction flourishes only in a soil of personal possession. They are always scheming to bring the widest possible acreage of *things* under the sway of one little two-lettered pronoun. I for pure and unalloyed pleasure go to that which is my neighbor's. Against his nine points of the law I set up my ten of enjoyment. What is mine has never held for me the irresponsible thrill of delight my neighbor's yields. My playhouse of a cottage with its quaint inconveniences within and its close-shorn fringe of green without — a poor thing but mine own — impels me to neither rampant independence nor couchant apology. My neighbor has ample elegance for his body-servant, and all outdoors for his playground, but so far as I am concerned he exists for my benefit. Why, then, should I make covetous comparisons? True, he may have aims of his own; he is not one to adopt readily the low estate of a means to my gratification, — who would not be an end in himself? — and it is not in human nature to recognize an unwelcome destiny without spectacles. I do not pretend to know his views; he speaks a language to which I hold no key.

My neighbor's grounds run far back from the road until, shaking off the lines of artful naturalness they have been forced into by the landscape gardener, they lose themselves in a delicious tangle of nonconformity. Their master is no freethinker. His mind is an intellectual

Noah's ark. Inherited in pairs from his fathers, culled in couples from the books he read in his youth, ideas have made entrance from time to time as into a life-boat warranted to outfloat the flood of new thought, and once within they have found security. My neighbor permits no leakage. I have a fancy he gives them air and exercise twice a day, when morning and evening he strolls with his cigar, never very widely, through his grounds. The gardens suffice for his constitutionals. Other minds have planned the direction of their paths, other hands have laid them out, and between their trim borders my neighbor's feet walk placidly. His climbing roses fling themselves over the fence in an ardor of new emprise; my neighbor calls his gardener's attention to their need of pruning. His is an existence doubling upon itself with comfortable complacency. A paradox is this neighbor of mine: the physical law of inertia personified, yet a busy man; an owner of much wealth, yet fully possessed of nothing; blind and deaf and dumb, yet saying, "I see, I hear, I speak — who to more purpose?"

Last year he put in hundreds of bulbs along the path that wanders sociably beside the brook: crocuses spreading a many-colored carpet over winter's ravages; narcissuses, companies of gay heralds, catching the May sunshine in their golden trumpets; flocks of tall iris, lanes of lilies, rich in Oriental splendor; and I know he never got half the pleasure out of them that I did. Really my neighbor and I are joint proprietors. He holds the title-deeds, I enjoy; he labors, I enter into the fruit of his labors. His is the substance; the earth of the gardens and their products, the wood of the trees and their fruitage, the sticks and stones of the