

Fielding has given us an immortal type in his Parson Adams; "His virtue, and his other qualifications, as they rendered him equal to his office, so they made him an agreeable and valuable companion, and had so much endeared and well recommended him to a bishop, that at the age of fifty he was provided with a handsome income of twenty-three pounds a year; which, however, he could not make any great figure with, because he lived in a dear country, and was a little encumbered with a wife and six children." Thirdly, there was the dilettante parson, fond of books, pictures and music; whose elegant tastes made him despise his fox-hunting brethren, and whose polished wit, and dimly comprehended sarcasms made them tremble before him at the periodical 'visitations' of the diocesan clergy. To this last class Laurence Sterne belonged. Fielding has bequeathed to us, in fiction, a faithful portrait of the reverend drudge, and in real life, Sterne affords an example no less complete of the reverend trifler. Parson Adams was housed and clad hardly better than a labourer, and was ignorant of the ways and usages of society, but in heart, and mind, and soul he was a gentleman. Sterne was a man of the world; he had a competence, educated tastes, an intellect transcendently superior to that of even a scholar such as Parson Adams, and a tender and feeling heart. But he abused these bounteous gifts of Nature and Fortune, and although we may feel great affection for him, we cannot accord to him the name of gentleman, in its highest sense, as unhesitatingly as we do to Fielding's half-starved and threadbare parson.

Laurence Sterne, the son of a lieutenant in the army, was born on the 24th of November, 1713, a day as he says 'ominous to my poor father, who was,' on that day, 'with many other brave officers, broke, and sent adrift into the wide world.' In less than a year, however, the exigencies of war

caused the regiment to be again enrolled, and Sterne's father, accompanied by his wife and children, followed its fortunes in various quarters of the globe, until his death in Jamaica, in 1731. Lawrence Sterne, however, fortunately for himself, had been separated from his parents, after sharing their wanderings for ten years. In the year 1723, his father placed him at school at Halifax, where he stayed until, to quote his own words, 'by God's care of me, my cousin Sterne, of Elvington, became a father to me, and sent me to the University, etc., etc.' Upon leaving the University, he obtained the living of Sutton from his uncle, who was 'Prebendary of Durham, Canon Residentiary, Precentor and Prebendary of York, Rector of Rise, and Rector of Hornsey cum Riston,' a formidable example of the pluralism which was then sapping the foundations of the Church. In 1741, Sterne married a young lady of York, the match being entirely one of affection on both sides. It may be remarked, parenthetically, that men of Sterne's stamp of character invariably marry for love, and almost as invariably make their wives miserable. Through his wife's connections, he got the living of Stillington, which he says had been promised her 'if she married a clergyman in Yorkshire,' and his uncle soon after his marriage bestowed on him the Prebendary of York. He lived for nearly twenty years at Sutton, doing duty both there and at Stillington, and his own account of his life during this long period, although brief, is eminently characteristic. 'I had then,' he says, 'very good health. Books, painting, fiddling, and shooting were my amusements.' In 1760, he went up to London to superintend the publication of the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy*, which had been issued from the York press in the previous year. He left his wife and daughter behind him, in a hired house at York, and this was the first outward separation between husband and wife.