

to avoid feeling both disgust and contempt. But acts of confessed criminality should be separated from acts in which nothing beyond folly is proven. One of the heaviest indictments against Sterne, and the one which is the most frequently urged against him, is based upon his relations with Mrs. Eliza Draper. This lady who was the wife of Daniel Draper, a gentleman holding an important position in Bombay, had been compelled to leave India on account of her health, and during her stay in England she accidentally made the acquaintance of Sterne. One of those ridiculous sentimental friendships, to which elderly men of Sterne's type are so prone, sprang up between them. Little is known of the facts of the case, and almost the whole of the evidence against Sterne consists in his own letters to the lady. These are sufficiently foolish and contemptible, but they certainly do not by any means prove that the intercourse ever proceeded beyond the verge of folly. Maudlin sentimentality, with an admixture of pretended piety can never form pleasant reading, and these letters are sufficiently offensive without making them worse by presuming guilt. Sterne's acquaintance with Mrs. Draper was short; she rejoined her husband in India, and most of the published letters to her have reference to their approaching separation. It has been severely commented upon, that Sterne, at precisely the same time as he was engaged in this precious correspondence, wrote the most charming and simply affectionate letters to his daughter Lydia. Certainly the elderly Lothario, and the tenderly solicitous father are not characters that harmonize well, when placed in such close juxtaposition. Defenders of Sterne have urged that a vain and silly woman, such as Mrs. Draper undoubtedly was, will often attach herself to a famous man like Sterne, and force him to share her folly. The letters do not bear out this view; the writer evident-

ly entered *con amore* into the ridiculous intrigue, and was probably much more genuinely interested in it than Mrs. Draper herself, who soon forgot her 'loving Brahmin,' and proved by her subsequent life that, as she grew older, she improved neither in morals nor in wisdom.

It is refreshing to turn from the perusal of these, and other perhaps still more odious letters, and read Sterne's correspondence with his daughter Lydia. Here the genuinely affectionate man is invariably seen at his best. When his thoughts turned to the one being on earth whom he loved with a pure and passionate tenderness, he cast off from his heart the crust of selfishness and self-indulgence, and was, for the time at least, a simple, true, and loving father. 'You have enough to do,' he says, 'for I have also sent you a guitar; and as you have no genius for drawing, (though you never could be made to believe it), pray waste not your time about it. Remember to write to me as to a friend—in short, whatever comes into your little head, and then it will be natural.' In a letter to a friend, he says, 'I have great offers too in Ireland—the Bishops of C—— and R—— are both my friends; but I have rejected every proposal unless Mrs. S. and my Lydia could accompany me thither. I live for the sake of my girl, and with her sweet, light burthen in my arms, I could get up fast the hill of preferment, if I choose it; but without my Lydia, if a mitre was offered me, it would sit uneasy upon my brow.' Even Thackeray admits that all his letters to his daughter are 'artless, kind, affectionate and *not* sentimental,' and there are among his letters to the friends to whom he was really attached, many concerning which the same might be said. It was in the summer of 1764 that Sterne returned from his journey to France, leaving his wife and daughter behind him. Amidst all the pleasures and excitement of his life, he never