

**Landesbibliothek Oldenburg**

**Digitalisierung von Drucken**

**The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling**

In Four Volumes

**Fielding, Henry**

**London, 1750**

Chap. IV. A Picture of a Country Gentlewoman taken from the Life.

**urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-884**

## CHAP. IV.

*A Picture of a Country Gentlewoman taken from the Life.*

**M**R. *Western* having finished his *Holla*, and taken a little Breath, began to lament, in very pathetic Terms, the unfortunate Condition of Men, who are, says he, always *whipt* in by the Humours of some d---nd B---or other. I think I was *hard run* enough by your Mother for one Man; but after giving her a *Dodge*, here's another B---follows me upon the *Foil*; but curse my Jacket if I will be *run down* in this Manner by any o'um.

*Sophia* never had a single Dispute with her Father, till this unlucky Affair of *Blifil*, on any Account, except in Defence of her Mother, whom she had loved most tenderly, though she lost her in the eleventh Year of her Age. The Squire, to whom that poor Woman had been a faithful upper Servant all the Time of their Marriage, had returned that Behaviour, by making what the World calls a good Husband. He very seldom swore at her (perhaps not above once a Week) and never beat her: She had not the least Occasion for Jealousy. and was perfect Mistress of her Time; for she was never interrupted by her Husband, who was engaged all the Morning in his Field Exercises, and all the Evening with Bottle Companions. She scarce indeed ever saw him but at Meals; where she had the Pleasure of carving those Dishes which she had before attended at the Dressing. From these Meals she retired about five Minutes after the other Servants, having

having only staid to drink the King over the Water. Such were, it seems, Mr. *Western's* Orders: For it was a Maxim with him, that Women should come in with the first Dish, and go out after the first Glass. Obedience to these Orders was perhaps no difficult Task: For the Conversation (if it may be called so) was seldom such as could entertain a Lady. It consisted chiefly of Hallowing, Singing, Relations of sporting Adventures, B—d—y, and Abuse of Women and of the Government.

These, however, were the only Seasons when Mr. *Western* saw his Wife: For when he repaired to her Bed, he was generally so drunk that he could not see; and in the sporting Season he always rose from her before it was light. Thus was she perfect Mistress of her Time; and had besides a Coach and four usually at her Command; tho' unhappily indeed the Badness of the Neighbourhood, and of the Roads, made this of little Use: For none who had set much Value on their Necks would have passed through the one, or who had set any Value on their Hours, would have visited the other. Now to deal honestly with the Reader, she did not make all the Return expected to so much Indulgence: For she had been married against her Will, by a fond Father, the Match having been rather advantageous on her Side: For the Squire's Estate was upwards of 3000*l.* a Year, and her Fortune no more than a bare 8000*l.* Hence perhaps she had contracted a little Gloominess of Temper: For she was rather a good Servant than a good Wife; nor had she always the Gratitude to return the extraordinary Degree of roaring Mirth, with which the Squire received her, even with a good humoured

humoured Smile. She would, moreover, sometimes interfere with Matters which did not concern her, as the violent Drinking of her Husband, which in the gentlest Terms she would take some of the few Opportunities he gave her of remonstrating against. And once in her Life she very earnestly entreated him to carry her for two Months to *London*, which he peremptorily denied; nay, was angry with his Wife for the Request ever after, being well assured, that all the Husbands in *London* are Cuckolds.

For this last, and many other good Reasons, *Western* at length heartily hated his Wife; and as he never concealed this Hatred before her Death, so he never forgot it afterwards; but when any Thing in the least soured him, as a bad scenting Day, or a Distemper among his Hounds, or any other such Misfortune, he constantly vented his Spleen by Invectives against the Deceased; saying, — ‘If my Wife was alive now, she would be glad of this.’

These Invectives he was especially desirous of throwing forth before *Sophia*: For as he loved her more than he did any other, so he was really jealous that she had loved her Mother better than him. And this Jealousy *Sophia* seldom failed of heightening on these Occasions: For he was not contented with violating her Ears with the Abuse of her Mother; but endeavoured to force an explicit Approbation of all this Abuse, with which Desire he never could prevail upon her by any Promise or Threats to comply.

Hence some of my Readers will, perhaps, wonder that the Squire had not hated *Sophia* as much as he had hated her Mother; but I must inform them, that Hatred is not the Effect of Love, even  
through