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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. VIII. In which the History goes backward.

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of *Jones*: I say luckily; for he would have died on the Spot rather than have parted with it.

Jones likewise, with his Friend *Partridge*, set forward the Moment he had paid his Reckoning, in Quest of his lovely *Sophia*, whom he now resolved never more to abandon the Pursuit of. Nor could he bring himself even to take Leave of *Mrs. Waters*; of whom he detested the very Thoughts, as she had been, tho' not designedly, the Occasion of his missing the happiest Interview with *Sophia*, to whom he now vowed eternal Constancy.

As for *Mrs. Waters*, she took the Opportunity of the Coach which was going to *Bath*; for which Place she set out in Company with the two *Irish* Gentlemen, the Landlady kindly lending her her Clothes; in Return for which she was contented only to receive about double their Value, as a Recompence for the Loan. Upon the Road she was perfectly reconciled to *Mr. Fitzpatrick*, who was a very handsome Fellow, and indeed did all she could to console him in the Absence of his Wife.

Thus ended the many odd Adventures which *Mr. Jones* encountered at his Inn at *Upton*, where they talk, to this Day, of the Beauty and lovely Behaviour of the charming *Sophia*, by the Name of the *Somersetshire* Angel.

C H A P. VIII.

In which the History goes backward.

BEFORE we proceed any farther in our History, it may be proper to look a little back, in order to account for the extraordinary Appearance

pearance of *Sophia* and her Father at the Inn at *Upton*.

The Reader may be pleased to remember, that in the Ninth Chapter of the Seventh Book of our History, we left *Sophia*, after a long Debate between Love and Duty, deciding the Cause, as it usually, I believe, happens, in Favour of the former.

This Debate had arisen, as we have there shewn, from a Visit which her Father had just before made her, in order to force her Consent to a Marriage with *Blifil*; and which he had understood to be fully implied in her Acknowledgment, that she neither must, nor could refuse any absolute Command of his.

Now from this Visit the Squire retired to his Evening Potation, overjoyed at the Success he had gained with his Daughter; and as he was of a social Disposition, and willing to have Partakers in his Happiness, the Beer was ordered to flow very liberally into the Kitchen; so that before Eleven in the Evening, there was not a single Person sober in the House, except only Mrs. *Western* herself, and the charming *Sophia*.

Early in the Morning a Messenger was dispatched to summon Mr. *Blifil*: For tho' the Squire imagined that young Gentleman had been much less acquainted than he really was, with the former Aversion of his Daughter; as he had not, however, yet received her Consent, he longed impatiently to communicate it to him, not doubting but that the intended Bride herself would confirm it with her Lips. As to the Wedding, it had the Evening before been fixed, by the Male Parties, to be celebrated on the next Morning save one.

Breakfast

Breakfast was now set forth in the Parlour, where Mr. *Blifil* attended, and where the Squire and his Sister likewise were assembled; and now *Sophia* was ordered to be called.

O, *Shakespear*, had I thy Pen! O, *Hogarth*, had I thy Pencil! then would I draw the Picture of the poor Serving-Man, who, with pale Countenance, staring Eyes, chattering Teeth, faltering Tongue, and trembling Limbs,

(E'en such a Man, so faint, so spiritless,
So dull, so dead in Look, so woe-be-gone,
Drew *Priam's* Curtains in the dead of Night,
And would have told him, half his *Troy* was
burn'd)

enter'd the Room, and declared,—*That Madam Sophia was not to be found.*

'Not to be found!' cries the Squire, starting from his Chair; 'Zounds and D——nation! Blood and Fury! Where, when, how, what, —Not to be found! where?'

'La! Brother,' said Mrs. *Western*, with true political Coldness, 'you are always throwing yourself into such violent Passions for nothing. My Niece, I suppose, is only walked out into the Garden. I protest you are grown so unreasonable, that it is impossible to live in the House with you.'

'Nay, nay,' answered the Squire, returning as suddenly to himself, as he had gone from himself; 'if that be all the Matter, it signifies not much; but, upon my Soul, my Mind misgave me, when the Fellow said she was not to be found.' He then gave Orders for the Bell to be rung in the Garden, and sat himself contentedly down.

No

No two Things could be more the Reverse of each other than were the Brother and Sister, in most Instances; particularly in this, That as the Brother never foresaw any thing at a Distance, but was most sagacious in immediately seeing every Thing the Moment it had happened; so the Sister eternally foresaw at a Distance, but was not so quick-sighted to Objects before her Eyes. Of both these the Reader may have observed Examples: And, indeed, both their several Talents were excessive: For as the Sister often foresaw what never came to pass, so the Brother often saw much more than was actually the Truth.

This was not however the Case at present. The same Report was brought from the Garden, as before had been brought from the Chamber, that Madam *Sophia* was not to be found.

The Squire himself now sallied forth, and began to roar forth the Name of *Sophia* as loudly, and in as hoarse a Voice, as whilome did *Hercules* that of *Hylas*: And as the Poet tells us, that the whole Shore echoed back the Name of that beautiful Youth; so did the House, the Garden, and all the Neighbouring Fields, resound nothing but the Name of *Sophia*, in the hoarse Voices of the Men, and in the shrill Pipes of the Women; while Echo seemed so pleased to repeat the beloved Sound, that if there is really such a Person, I believe *Ovid* hath belied her Sex.

Nothing reigned for a long Time but Confusion; 'till at last the Squire having sufficiently spent his Breath, returned to the Parlour, where he found Mrs. *Western* and Mr. *Bliss*, and threw himself, with the utmost Dejection in his Countenance, into a great Chair.

Here



Here Mrs. *Western* began to apply the following Consolation :

“ Brother, I am sorry for what hath happened ;
 “ and that my Niece should have behaved herself
 “ in a Manner so unbecoming her Family ; but
 “ it is all your own Doings, and you have no-
 “ body to thank but yourself. You know she
 “ hath been educated always in a Manner direct-
 “ ly contrary to my Advice, and now you see the
 “ Consequence. Have I not a thousand Times
 “ argued with you about giving my Niece her
 “ own Will ? But you know I never could pre-
 “ vail upon you : and when I had taken so much
 “ Pains to eradicate her headstrong Opinions, and
 “ to rectify your Errors in Policy, you know
 “ she was taken out of my Hands ; so that I
 “ have nothing to answer for. Had I been
 “ trusted entirely with the Care of her Educa-
 “ tion, no such Accident as this had ever befallen
 “ you : So that you must comfort yourself by
 “ thinking it was all your own Doing ; and, in-
 “ deed, what else could be expected from such
 “ Indulgence ? ” —

“ Zounds ! Sister, answered he, “ you are
 “ enough to make one mad. Have I indulged
 “ her ? have I given her her Will ? — It was no
 “ longer ago than last Night that I threatned,
 “ if she disobeyed me, to confine her to her
 “ Chamber, upon Bread and Water, as long as
 “ she lived. — You would provoke the Patience of
 “ *Job*.”

“ Did ever Mortal hear the like ? ” replied she.
 “ Brother, if I had not the Patience of fifty
 “ *Jabs*, you would make me forget all Decency
 “ and Decorum. Why would you interfere ?

“ Did

“ Did I not beg you, did I not entreat you to
 “ leave the whole Conduct to me? You have de-
 “ feated all the Operations of the Campaign by
 “ one false Step. Would any Man in his Senses
 “ have provoked a Daughter by such Threats as
 “ these? How often have I told you, that *Eng-
 “ lish* Women are not to be treated like *Cir-
 “ cassin* † Slaves. We have the Protection of
 “ the World: We are to be won by gentle
 “ Means only, and not to be hector'd, and bul-
 “ lied, and beat into Compliance. I thank Hea-
 “ ven, no *Salique* Law governs here. Brother,
 “ you have a Roughness in your Manner which
 “ no Woman but myself would bear. I do not
 “ wonder my Niece was frightned and terrified
 “ into taking this Measure; and to speak honest-
 “ ly, I think my Niece will be justified to the
 “ World for what she hath done. I repeat it to
 “ you again, Brother, you must comfort your-
 “ self by remembering that it is all your own
 “ Fault. How often have I advised—” Here
Western rose hastily from his Chair, and, venting
 two or three horrid Imprecations, ran out of the
 Room.

When he was departed, his Sister expressed
 more Bitterness (if possible) against him, than she
 had done while he was present; for the Truth of
 which she appealed to Mr. *Bliss*, who, with
 great Complacence, acquiesced entirely in all she
 said; but excused all the Faults of Mr. *Western*,
 ‘ as they must be considered,’ he said, ‘ to have
 ‘ proceeded from the too inordinate Fondness of
 ‘ a Father, which must be allowed the Name of
 ‘ an amiable Weakness.’ ‘ So much the more
 ‘ inexcusable,’ answered the Lady; ‘ for whom

† Possibly *Circassin*.

‘ doth