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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. II. The Adventures which Sophia met with, after her leaving Upton.

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For as *Martial* says, *Aliter non fit, Avite, Liber. No Book can be otherwise compos'd.* All Beauty of Character, as well as of Countenance, and indeed of every Thing human, is to be tried in this Manner. Cruel indeed would it be, if such a Work as this History, which hath employ'd some Thousands of Hours in the composing, should be liable to be condemned, because some particular Chapter, or perhaps Chapters, may be obnoxious to very just and sensible Objections. And yet nothing is more common than the most rigorous Sentence upon Books supported by such Objections, which, if they were rightly taken (and that they are not always) do by no Means go to the Merit of the whole. In the Theatre especially, a single Expression which doth not coincide with the Taste of the Audience, or with any individual Critic of that Audience, is sure to be hiss'd; and one Scene which should be disapproved, would hazard the whole Piece. To write within such severe Rules as these, is as impossible as to live up to some splenetic Opinions; and if we judge according to the Sentiments of some Critics, and of some Christians, no Author will be saved in this World, and no Man in the next.

C H A P. II.

The Adventures which Sophia met with, after her leaving Upton.

OUR History, just before it was oblig'd to turn about, and travel backwards, had mentioned the Departure of *Sophia* and her Maid from the Inn; we shall now therefore pursue the Steps

Steps of that lovely Creature, and leave her unworthy Lover a little longer to bemoan his Ill-Luck, or rather his ill Conduct.

Sophia having directed her Guide to travel through Bye-Roads across the Country, they now passed the *Severn*, and had scarce got a Mile from the Inn, when the young Lady, looking behind her, saw several Horses coming after on full Speed. This greatly alarmed her Fears, and she called to the Guide to put on as fast as possible.

He immediately obeyed her, and away they rode a full Gallop. But the faster they went, the faster were they followed; and as the Horses behind were somewhat swifter than those before, so the former were at length overtaken. A happy Circumstance for poor *Sophia*; whose Fears, joined to her Fatigue, had almost overpowered her Spirits; but she was now instantly relieved by a female Voice, that greeted her in the softest Manner, and with the utmost Civility. This Greeting, *Sophia*, as soon as she could recover her Breath, with like Civility, and with the highest Satisfaction to herself, returned.

The Travellers who joined *Sophia*, and who had given her such Terror, consisted, like her own Company, of two Females and a Guide. The two Parties proceeded three full Miles together before any one offered again to open their Mouths; when our Heroine, having pretty well got the better of her Fear, (but yet being somewhat surprized that the other still continued to attend her, as she pursued no great Road, and had already passed through several Turnings) accosted the strange Lady in a most obliging Tone; and said, 'She was very happy to find they were both travelling the same Way.' The other, who,

who, like a Ghost, only wanted to be spoke to, readily answered, ' That the Happiness was entirely hers; that she was a perfect Stranger in that Country, and was so overjoyed at meeting a Companion of her own Sex, that she had perhaps been guilty of an Impertinence which required great Apology, in keeping Pace with her.' More Civilities passed between these two Ladies; for Mrs. *Honour* had now given Place to the fine Habit of the Stranger, and had fallen into the Rear. But tho' *Sophia* had great Curiosity to know why the other Lady continued to travel on through the same Bye-roads with herself, nay, tho' this gave her some Uneasiness; yet Fear, or Modesty, or some other Consideration, restrained her from asking the Question.

The strange Lady now laboured under a Difficulty which appears almost below the Dignity of History to mention. Her Bonnet had been blown from her Head not less than five Times within the last Mile; nor could she come at any Ribbon or Handkerchief to tye it under her Chin. When *Sophia* was informed of this, she immediately supplied her with a Handkerchief for this Purpose; which while she was pulling from her Pocket, she perhaps too much neglected the Management of her Horse, for the Beast now unluckily making a false Step, fell upon his Fore-Legs, and threw his fair Rider from his Back.

Tho' *Sophia* came Head foremost to the Ground, she happily received not the least Damage; and the same Circumstances which had perhaps contributed to her Fall, now preserved her from Confusion; for the Lane which they were then passing, was narrow and very much over-grown with Trees, so that the Moon could here afford very little

little Light, and was moreover, at present, so obscured in a Cloud, that it was almost perfectly dark. By these Means the young Lady's Modesty, which was extremely delicate, escaped as free from Injury as her Limbs, and she was once more reinstated in her Saddle, having received no other Harm than a little Fright by her Fall.

Day-light at length appeared in its full Lustre; and now the two Ladies, who were riding over a Common Side by Side, looking stedfastly at each other, at the same Moment both their Eyes became fixed; both their Horses stopt, and both speaking together, with equal Joy pronounced, the one the Name of *Sophia*, the other that of *Harriet*.

This unexpected Encounter surprized the Ladies much more than I believe it will the sagacious Reader, who must have imagined that the strange Lady could be no other than Mrs. *Fitzpatrick*, the Cousin of Miss *Western*, whom we before-mentioned to have sallied from the Inn a few Minutes after her.

So great was the Surprise and Joy which these two Cousins conceived at this Meeting (for they had formerly been most intimate Acquaintance and Friends, and had long lived together with their Aunt *Western*) that it is impossible to recount half the Congratulations which passed between them, before either asked a very natural Question of the other, namely, whether she was going.

This at last, however, came first from Mrs. *Fitzpatrick*; but easy and natural as the Question may seem, *Sophia* found it difficult to give it a very ready and certain Answer. She begged her Cousin therefore to suspend all Curiosity till they arrived at some Inn, 'which I suppose,' says she,
' can

‘ can hardly be far distant; and believe me,
 ‘ *Harriet*, I suspend as much Curiosity on my
 ‘ Side; for indeed I believe our Astonishment is
 ‘ pretty equal.’

The Conversation which passed between these Ladies on the Road, was, I apprehend, little worth relating; and less certainly was that between the two Waiting-women: For they likewise began to pay their Compliments to each other. As for the Guides, they were debarred from the Pleasure of Discourse, the one being placed in the Van, and the other obliged to bring up the Rear.

In this Posture they travelled many Hours, till they came into a wide and well beaten Road, which, as they turned to the Right, soon brought them to a very fair promising Inn; where they all alighted: But so fatigued was *Sephia*, that, as she had sat her Horse during the last five or six Miles with great Difficulty, so was she now incapable of dismounting from him without Assistance. This the Landlord, who had hold of her Horse, presently perceiving, offered to lift her in his Arms from her Saddle; and she too readily accepted the Tender of his Service. Indeed Fortune seems to have resolved to put *Sephia* to the Blush that Day, and the second malicious Attempt succeeded better than the first; for my Landlord had no sooner received the young Lady in his Arms, than his Feet, which the Gout had lately very severely handled, gave way, and down he tumbled; but at the same Time, with no less Dexterity than Gallantry, contrived to throw himself under his charming Burthen, so that he alone received any Bruise from the Fall; for the great Injury which happened to *Sephia*, was a violent

violent Shock given to her Modesty, by an immoderate Grin, which, at her rising from the Ground, she observed in the Countenances of most of the Bye-Standers. This made her suspect what had really happened, and what we shall not here relate, for the Indulgence of those Readers who are capable of laughing at the Offence given to a young Lady's Delicacy. Accidents of this Kind we have never regarded in a comical Light; nor will we scruple to say, that he must have a very inadequate Idea of the Modesty of a beautiful young Woman, who would wish to sacrifice it to so paultry a Satisfaction as can arise from Laughter.

This Fright and Shock, joined to the violent Fatigue which both her Mind and Body had undergone, almost overcame the excellent Constitution of *Sophia*, and she had scarce Strength sufficient to totter into the Inn, leaning on the Arm of her Maid. Here she was no sooner seated than she called for a Glass of Water; but *Mrs. Honour*, very judiciously, in my Opinion, changed it into a Glass of Wine.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick hearing from *Mrs. Honour*, that *Sophia* had not been in Bed during the two last Nights, and observing her to look very pale and wan with her Fatigue, earnestly entreated her to refresh herself with some Sleep. She was yet a Stranger to her History, or her Apprehensions; but had she known both, she would have given the same Advice; for Rest was visibly necessary for her; and their long Journey through Bye-Roads so entirely removed all Danger of Pursuit, that she was herself perfectly easy on that Account.

Sophia

Sophia was easily prevailed on to follow the Counsel of her Friend, which was heartily seconded by her Maid. Mrs. *Fitzpatrick* likewise offered to bear her Cousin Company, which *Sophia*, with much Complaisance, accepted.

The Mistress was no sooner in Bed, than the Maid prepared to follow her Example. She began to make many Apologies to her Sister *Abigail* for leaving her alone in so horrid a Place as an Inn; but the other stopped her short, being as well inclined to a Nap as herself, and desired the Honour of being her Bedfellow. *Sophia's* Maid agreed to give her a Share of her Bed, but put in her Claim to all the Honour. So after many Court'sies and Compliments, to Bed together went the Waiting-women, as their Mistresses had done before them.

It was usual with my Landlord (as indeed it is with the whole Fraternity) to enquire particularly of all Coachmen, Footmen, Postboys, and others, into the Names of all his Guests; what their Estate was, and where it lay. It cannot therefore be wondered at, that the many particular Circumstances which attended our Travellers, and especially their retiring all to Sleep at so extraordinary and unusual an Hour as ten in the Morning, should excite his Curiosity. As soon therefore as the Guides entered the Kitchin, he began to examine who the Ladies were, and whence they came; but the Guides, tho' they faithfully related all they knew, gave him very little Satisfaction. On the contrary, they rather enflamed his Curiosity than extinguished it.

This Landlord had the Character, among all his Neighbours, of being a very sagacious Fellow. He was thought to see farther and deeper

into

into Things than any Man in the Parish, the Parson himself not excepted. Perhaps his Look had contributed not a little to procure him this Reputation; for there was in this something wonderfully wise and significant, especially when he had a Pipe in his Mouth; which, indeed, he seldom was without. His Behaviour, likewise, greatly assisted in promoting the Opinion of his Wisdom. In his Deportment he was solemn, if not fullen; and when he spoke, which was seldom, he always delivered himself in a slow Voice; and though his Sentences were short, they were still interrupted with many Hums and Ha's, Ay, Ays, and other Expletives: So that though he accompanied his Words with certain explanatory Gestures, such as shaking, or nodding the Head, or pointing with his Forefinger, he generally left his Hearers to understand more than he expressed; nay, he commonly gave them a Hint, that he knew much more than he thought proper to disclose. This last Circumstance alone, may, indeed, very well account for his Character of Wisdom; since Men are strangely inclined to worship what they do not understand. A grand Secret, upon which several Imposers on Mankind have totally relied for the Success of their Frauds.

This polite Person now taking his Wife aside, asked her, 'What she thought of the Ladies lately arrived?' 'Think of them?' said the Wife, 'why what should I think of them?' 'I know, answered he, 'what I think. The Guides tell strange Stories. One pretends to be come from Gloucester, and the other from Upton; and neither of them, for what I can find, can tell whither they are going. But what People ever travel across the Country from Upton hither,

' especially to *London*? And one of the Maid-
 ' Servants, before she alighted from her Horse,
 ' asked, if this was not the *London Road*? Now
 ' I have put all these Circumstances together, and
 ' whom do you think I have found them out to
 ' be?' ' Nay,' answered she, ' you know I ne-
 ' ver pretend to guess at your Discoveries.'— ' It
 ' is a good Girl,' replied he, chucking her under
 the Chin; ' I must own you have always sub-
 ' mitted to my Knowledge of these Matters.
 ' Why then, depend upon it; mind what I say,
 ' —depend upon it, they are certainly some of
 ' the Rebel Ladies, who, they say, travel with
 ' the young Chevalier; and have taken a round-
 ' about Way to escape the Duke's Army.'

' Husband,' quoth the Wife, ' you have cer-
 ' tainly hit it; for one of them is dress'd as fine as
 ' any Princess; and, to be sure, she looks for all
 ' the World like one.—But yet, when I consider
 ' one Thing.'— ' When you consider,' cries the
 Landlord contemptuously— ' Come, pray let's
 ' hear what you consider.'— ' Why it is,' an-
 swered the Wife, ' that she is too humble to be
 ' any very great Lady; for while our *Betty* was
 ' warming the Bed, she called her nothing but
 ' Child, and my Dear, and Sweetheart; and
 ' when *Betty* offered to pull off her Shoes and
 ' Stockings, she would not suffer her, saying, she
 ' would not give her the Trouble.'

' Pugh!' answered the Husband, ' That is no-
 ' thing. Dost think, because you have seen
 ' some great Ladies rude and uncivil to Persons
 ' below them, that none of them know how to
 ' behave themselves when they come before their
 ' Inferiors? I think I know People of Fashion
 ' when I see them. I think I do. Did not she



‘ call for a Glass of Water when she came in ?
‘ Another Sort of Women would have called for
‘ a Dram ; you know they would. If she be
‘ not a Woman of very great Quality, sell me for
‘ a Fool ; and, I believe, those who buy me will
‘ have a bad Bargain. Now, would a Woman
‘ of her Quality travel without a Footman, unless
‘ upon some such extraordinary Occasion ?
‘ Nay, to be sure, Husband,’ cries she, ‘ you know
‘ these Matters better than I, or most Folk.’ ‘ I
‘ think I do know something,’ said he. ‘ To be
‘ sure,’ answered the Wife, ‘ the poor little Heart
‘ looked so piteous, when she sat down in the
‘ Chair, I protest I could not help having a Com-
‘ passion for her, almost as much as if she had
‘ been a poor Body. But what’s to be done, Hus-
‘ band ? If an she be a Rebel, I suppose you in-
‘ tend to betray her up to the Court. Well, she’s
‘ a sweet-tempered, good-humoured Lady, be she
‘ what she will, and I shall hardly refrain from
‘ crying when I hear she is hanged or beheaded.’
‘ Pooh,’ answered the Husband !——But as to
‘ what’s to be done it is not so easy a Matter to
‘ determine. I hope, before she goes away, we
‘ shall have the News of a Battle : For if the Che-
‘ valier should get the better, she may gain us In-
‘ terest at Court, and make our Fortunes with-
‘ out betraying her.’ ‘ Why that’s true,’ replied
the Wife ; ‘ and I heartily hope she will have it
‘ in her Power. Certainly she’s a sweet good
‘ Lady ; it would go horribly against me to have
‘ her come to any Harm.’ ‘ Pooh,’ cries the
Landlord, ‘ Women are always so tender-hearted.
‘ Why you would not harbour Rebels, would you ?’
‘ No, certainly,’ answered the Wife ; ‘ and as
‘ or betraying her, come what will on’t, nobody
‘ can