

"Was ever anything like it?" says the mistress; "why the devil would you not keep some of the best rooms for the quality, when you know scarce a day passes without some calling here?—If they be gentlemen, I am certain, when they know it is for her ladyship, they will get up again."

"Not upon my account," says the lady; "I will have no person disturbed for me. If you have a room that is commonly decent, it will serve me very well, though it be never so plain. I beg, madam, you will not give yourself so much trouble on my account." "O, madam!" cries the other, "I have several very good rooms for that matter, but none good enough for your honour's ladyship. However, as you are so condescending to take up with the best I have, do, Susan, get a fire in the Rose this minute. Will your ladyship be pleased to go up now, or stay till the fire is lighted?" "I think I have sufficiently warmed myself," answered the lady; "so, if you please, I will go now; I am afraid I have kept people, and particularly that gentleman (meaning Partridge), too long in the cold already. Indeed, I cannot bear to think of keeping any person from the fire this dreadful weather."—She then departed with her maid, the landlady marching with two lighted candles before her.

When that good woman returned, the conversation in the kitchen was all upon the charms of the young lady. There is indeed in perfect beauty a power which none almost can withstand; for my landlady, though she was not pleased at the negative given to the supper, declared she had never seen so lovely a creature. Partridge ran out into the most extravagant encomiums on her face, though he could not refrain from paying some compliments to the gold lace on her habit; the post-boy sung forth the praises of her goodness, which were likewise echoed by the other post-boy, who was now come in. "She's a true good lady, I warrant her," says he; "for she hath mercy upon dumb creatures; for she asked me every now and tan upon the journey, if I did not think she should hurt the horses by riding too fast? and when she came in she charged me to give them as much corn as ever they would eat."

Such charms are there in affability, and so sure is it to attract the praises of all kinds of people. It may indeed be compared to the celebrated Mrs. Hussey.¹ It is equally sure to set off every female perfection to the highest advantage, and to palliate and conceal every defect. A short reflection, which we could not

¹ A celebrated mantua-maker in the Strand, famous for setting off the shapes of women.

forbear making in this place, where my reader hath seen the loveliness of an affable deportment; and truth will now oblige us to contrast it, by showing the reverse.

CHAPTER IV

CONTAINING INFALLIBLE NOSTRUMS FOR PROCURING UNIVERSAL DISESTEEM AND HATRED

THE lady had no sooner laid herself on her pillow than the waiting-woman returned to the kitchen to regale with some of those dainties which her mistress had refused.

The company, at her entrance, shewed her the same respect which they had before paid to her mistress, by rising; but she forgot to imitate her, by desiring them to sit down again. Indeed, it was scarce possible they should have done so, for she placed her chair in such a posture as to occupy almost the whole fire. She then ordered a chicken to be broiled that instant, declaring, if it was not ready in a quarter of an hour, she would not stay for it. Now, though the said chicken was then at roost in the stable, and required the several ceremonies of catching, killing, and picking, before it was brought to the gridiron, my landlady would nevertheless have undertaken to do all within the time; but the guest, being unfortunately admitted behind the scenes, must have been witness to the *fourberie*; the poor woman was therefore obliged to confess that she had none in the house; "but, madam," said she, "I can get any kind of mutton in an instant from the butcher's."

"Do you think, then," answered the waiting-gentlewoman, "that I have the stomach of a horse, to eat mutton at this time of night? Sure you people that keep inns imagine your betters are like yourselves. Indeed, I expected to get nothing at this wretched place. I wonder my lady would stop at it. I suppose none but tradesmen and grasiers ever call here." The landlady fired at this indignity offered to her house; however, she suppressed her temper, and contented herself with saying, "Very good quality frequented it, she thanked heaven!" "Don't tell me," cries the other, "of quality! I believe I know more of people of quality than such as you.—But, prithee, without troubling me with any of your impertinence, do tell me what I can have for supper; for, though I cannot eat horse-flesh, I am really hungry." "Why, truly, madam," answered the landlady,

"you could not take me again at such a disadvantage; for I must confess I have nothing in the house, unless a cold piece of beef, which indeed a gentleman's footman and the post-boy have almost cleared to the bone." "Woman," said Mrs. Abigail (so for shortness we will call her), "I entreat you not to make me sick. If I had fasted a month, I could not eat what had been touched by the fingers of such fellows. Is there nothing neat or decent to be had in this horrid place?" "What think you of some eggs and bacon, madam?" said the landlady. "Are your eggs new laid? are you certain they were laid to-day? and let me have the bacon cut very nice and thin; for I can't endure anything that's gross.—Prithee try if you can do a little tolerably for once, and don't think you have a farmer's wife, or some of those creatures, in the house."—The landlady began then to handle her knife; but the other stopt her, saying, "Good woman, I must insist upon your first washing your hands; for I am extremely nice, and have been always used from my cradle to have everything in the most elegant manner."

The landlady, who governed herself with much difficulty, began now the necessary preparations; for as to Susan, she was utterly rejected, and with such disdain, that the poor wench was as hard put to it to restrain her hands from violence as her mistress had been to hold her tongue. This indeed Susan did not entirely; for, though she literally kept it within her teeth, yet there it muttered many "marry-come-ups, as good flesh and blood as yourself;" with other such indignant phrases.

While the supper was preparing, Mrs. Abigail began to lament she had not ordered a fire in the parlour; but, she said, that was now too late. "However," said she, "I have novelty to recommend a kitchen; for I do not believe I ever eat in one before." Then, turning to the post-boys, she asked them, "Why they were not in the stable with their horses? If I must eat my hard fare here, madam," cries she to the landlady, "I beg the kitchen may be kept clear, that I may not be surrounded with all the blackguards in town: as for you, sir," says she to Partridge, "you look somewhat like a gentleman, and may sit still if you please; I don't desire to disturb anybody but mob."

"Yes, yes, madam," cries Partridge, "I am a gentleman, I do assure you, and I am not so easily to be disturbed. *Non semper vox casualis est verbo nominativus.*" This Latin she took to be some affront, and answered, "You may be a gentleman, sir; but you don't show yourself as one to talk Latin to a woman." Partridge made a gentle reply, and concluded with more Latin;

upon which she tossed up her nose, and contented herself by abusing him with the name of a great scholar.

The supper being now on the table, Mrs. Abigail eat very heartily for so delicate a person; and, while a second course of the same was by her order preparing, she said, "And so, madam, you tell me your house is frequented by people of great quality?"

The landlady answered in the affirmative, saying, "There were a great many very good quality and gentlefolks in it now. There's young Squire Allworthy, as that gentleman there knows."

"And pray who is this young gentleman of quality, this young Squire Allworthy?" said Abigail.

"Who should he be," answered Partridge, "but the son and heir of the great Squire Allworthy, of Somersetshire!"

"Upon my word," said she, "you tell me strange news; for I know Mr. Allworthy of Somersetshire very well, and I know he hath no son alive."

The landlady pricked up her ears at this, and Partridge looked a little confounded. However, after a short hesitation, he answered, "Indeed, madam, it is true, everybody doth not know him to be Squire Allworthy's son; for he was never married to his mother; but his son he certainly is, and will be his heir too, as certainly as his name is Jones." At that word, Abigail let drop the bacon which she was conveying to her mouth, and cried out, "You surprize me, sir! Is it possible Mr. Jones should be now in the house?" "*Quare non?*" answered Partridge, "it is possible, and it is certain."

Abigail now made haste to finish the remainder of her meal, and then repaired back to her mistress, when the conversation passed which may be read in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

SHOWING WHO THE AMIABLE LADY, AND HER UNAMIABLE MAID WERE

As in the month of June, the damask rose, which chance hath planted among the lilies, with their candid hue mixes his vermilion; or as some playsome heifer in the pleasant month of May diffuses her odoriferous breath over the flowery meadows; or as, in the blooming month of April, the gentle, constant dove, perched on some fair bough, sits meditating on her mate, so, looking a hundred charms and breathing as many sweets, her

thoughts being fixed on her Tommy, with a heart as good and innocent as her face was beautiful, Sophia (for it was she herself) lay reclining her lovely head on her hand, when her maid entered the room, and, running directly to the bed, cried, "Madam—madam—who doth your ladyship think is in the house?" Sophia starting up, cried, "I hope my father hath not overtaken us." "No, madam, it is one worth a hundred fathers; Mr. Jones himself is here at this very instant." "Mr. Jones!" says Sophia, "it is impossible! I cannot be so fortunate." Her maid averred the fact, and was presently detached by her mistress to order him to be called; for she said she was resolved to see him immediately.

Mrs. Honour had no sooner left the kitchen in the manner we have before seen than the landlady fell severely upon her. The poor woman had indeed been loading her heart with foul language for some time, and now it scoured out of her mouth, as filth doth from a mud-cart, when the board which confines it is removed. Partridge likewise shovelled in his share of calumny, and (what may surprize the reader) not only bespattered the maid, but attempted to sully the lily-white character of Sophia herself. "Never a barrel the better herring," cries he, "*Noscitur à socio*, is a true saying. It must be confessed, indeed, that the lady in the fine garments is the civiller of the two; but I warrant neither of them are a bit better than they should be. A couple of Bath trulls, I'll answer for them; your quality don't ride about at this time o' night without servants." "Sbodlikins, and that's true," cries the landlady, "you have certainly hit upon the very matter; for quality don't come into a house without bespeaking a supper, whether they eat it or no."

While they were thus discoursing, Mrs. Honour returned and discharged her commission, by bidding the landlady immediately wake Mr. Jones, and tell him a lady wanted to speak with him. The landlady referred her to Partridge, saying, "he was the squire's friend: but, for her part, she never called men-folks, especially gentlemen," and then walked sullenly out of the kitchen. Honour applied herself to Partridge; but he refused, "for my friend," cries he, "went to bed very late, and he would be very angry to be disturbed so soon." Mrs. Honour insisted still to have him called, saying, "she was sure, instead of being angry, that he would be to the highest degree delighted when he knew the occasion." "Another time, perhaps, he might," cries Partridge; "but *non omnia possumus omnes*. One woman is enough at once for a reasonable man." "What do you mean by

one woman, fellow?" cries Honour. "None of your fellow," answered Partridge. He then proceeded to inform her plainly that Jones was in bed with a wench, and made use of an expression too indelicate to be here inserted; which so enraged Mrs. Honour, that she called him jackanapes, and returned in a violent hurry to her mistress, whom she acquainted with the success of her errand, and with the account she had received; which, if possible, she exaggerated, being as angry with Jones as if he had pronounced all the words that came from the mouth of Partridge. She discharged a torrent of abuse on the master, and advised her mistress to quit all thoughts of a man who had never shown himself deserving of her. She then ripped up the story of Molly Seagrim, and gave the most malicious turn to his formerly quitting Sophia herself; which, I must confess, the present incident not a little countenanced.

The spirits of Sophia were too much dissipated by concern to enable her to stop the torrent of her maid. At last, however, she interrupted her, saying, "I never can believe this; some villain hath belied him. You say you had it from his friend; but surely it is not the office of a friend to betray such secrets." "I suppose," cries Honour, "the fellow is his pimp; for I never saw so ill-looking a villain. Besides, such profligate rakes as Mr. Jones are never ashamed of these matters."

To say the truth, this behaviour of Partridge was a little inexcusable; but he had not slept off the effect of the dose which he swallowed the evening before; which had, in the morning, received the addition of above a pint of wine, or indeed rather of malt spirits; for the perry was by no means pure. Now, that part of his head which Nature designed for the reservoir of drink being very shallow, a small quantity of liquor overflowed it, and opened the sluices of his heart; so that all the secrets there deposited run out. These sluices were indeed, naturally, very ill-secured. To give the best-natured turn we can to his disposition, he was a very honest man; for, as he was the most inquisitive of mortals, and eternally prying into the secrets of others, so he very faithfully paid them by communicating, in return, everything within his knowledge.

While Sophia, tormented with anxiety, knew not what to believe, nor what resolution to take, Susan arrived with the sack-whey. Mrs. Honour immediately advised her mistress, in a whisper, to pump this wench, who probably could inform her of the truth. Sophia approved it, and began as follows: "Come hither, child; now answer me truly what I am going to ask you,

and I promise you I will very well reward you. Is there a young gentleman in this house, a handsome young gentleman, that——” Here Sophia blushed and was confounded. “A young gentleman,” cries Honour, “that came hither in company with that saucy rascal who is now in the kitchen?” Susan answered, “There was.”—“Do you know anything of any lady?” continues Sophia, “any lady? I don’t ask you whether she is handsome or no; perhaps she is not; that’s nothing to the purpose; but do you know of any lady?” “La, madam,” cries Honour, “you will make a very bad examiner. Hark’ee, child,” says she, “is not that very young gentleman now in bed with some nasty trull or other?” Here Susan smiled, and was silent. “Answer the question, child,” says Sophia, “and here’s a guinea for you.”—“A guinea! madam,” cries Susan; “la, what’s a guinea? If my mistress should know it I shall certainly lose my place that very instant.” “Here’s another for you,” says Sophia, “and I promise you faithfully your mistress shall never know it.” Susan, after a very short hesitation, took the money, and told the whole story, concluding with saying, “If you have any great curiosity, madam, I can steal softly into his room, and see whether he be in his own bed or no.” She accordingly did this by Sophia’s desire, and returned with an answer in the negative.

Sophia now trembled and turned pale. Mrs. Honour begged her to be comforted, and not to think any more of so worthless a fellow. “Why there,” says Susan, “I hope, madam, your ladyship won’t be offended; but pray, madam, is not your ladyship’s name Madam Sophia Western?” “How is it possible you should know me?” answered Sophia. “Why that man, that the gentlewoman spoke of, who is in the kitchen, told about you last night. But I hope your ladyship is not angry with me.” “Indeed, child,” said she, “I am not; pray tell me all, and I promise you I’ll reward you.” “Why, madam,” continued Susan, “that man told us all in the kitchen that Madam Sophia Western—indeed I don’t know how to bring it out.”—Here she stopt, till, having received encouragement from Sophia, and being vehemently pressed by Mrs. Honour, she proceeded thus:—“He told us, madam, though to be sure it is all a lie, that your ladyship was dying for love of the young squire, and that he was going to the wars to get rid of you. I thought to myself then he was a false-hearted wretch; but, now, to see such a fine, rich, beautiful lady as you be, forsaken for such an ordinary woman; for to be sure so she is, and another

man’s wife into the bargain. It is such a strange unnatural thing, in a manner.”

Sophia gave her a third guinea, and, telling her she would certainly be her friend if she mentioned nothing of what had passed, nor informed any one who she was, dismissed the girl, with orders to the post-boy to get the horses ready immediately.

Being now left alone with her maid, she told her trusty waiting-woman, “That she never was more easy than at present. I am now convinced,” said she, “he is not only a villain, but a low despicable wretch. I can forgive all rather than his exposing my name in so barbarous a manner. That renders him the object of my contempt. Yes, Honour, I am now easy; I am indeed; I am very easy;” and then she burst into a violent flood of tears.

After a short interval spent by Sophia, chiefly in crying, and assuring her maid that she was perfectly easy, Susan arrived with an account that the horses were ready, when a very extraordinary thought suggested itself to our young heroine, by which Mr. Jones would be acquainted with her having been at the inn, in a way which, if any sparks of affection for her remained in him, would be at least some punishment for his faults.

The reader will be pleased to remember a little muff, which hath had the honour of being more than once remembered already in this history. This muff, ever since the departure of Mr. Jones, had been the constant companion of Sophia by day, and her bedfellow by night; and this muff she had at this very instant upon her arm; whence she took it off with great indignation, and, having writ her name with her pencil upon a piece of paper which she pinned to it, she bribed the maid to convey it into the empty bed of Mr. Jones, in which, if he did not find it, she charged her to take some method of conveying it before his eyes in the morning.

Then, having paid for what Mrs. Honour had eaten, in which bill was included an account for what she herself might have eaten, she mounted her horse, and, once more assuring her companion that she was perfectly easy, continued her journey.

CHAPTER VI

CONTAINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE INGENUITY OF PARTRIDGE, THE MADNESS OF JONES, AND THE FOLLY OF FITZPATRICK

It was now past five in the morning, and other company began to rise and come to the kitchen, among whom were the serjeant and the coachman, who, being thoroughly reconciled, made a libation, or, in the English phrase, drank a hearty cup together.

In this drinking nothing more remarkable happened than the behaviour of Partridge, who, when the serjeant drank a health to King George, repeated only the word King; nor could he be brought to utter more; for though he was going to fight against his own cause, yet he could not be prevailed upon to drink against it.

Mr. Jones, being now returned to his own bed (but from whence he returned we must beg to be excused from relating), summoned Partridge from this agreeable company, who, after a ceremonious preface, having obtained leave to offer his advice, delivered himself as follows:—

“It is, sir, an old saying, and a true one, that a wise man may sometimes learn counsel from a fool; I wish, therefore, I might be so bold as to offer you my advice, which is to return home again, and leave these *horrida bella*, these bloody wars, to fellows who are contented to swallow gunpowder, because they have nothing else to eat. Now, everybody knows your honour wants for nothing at home; when that’s the case, why should any man travel abroad?”

“Partridge,” cries Jones, “thou art certainly a coward; I wish, therefore, thou wouldst return home thyself, and trouble me no more.”

“I ask your honour’s pardon,” cries Partridge; “I spoke on your account more than my own; for as to me, Heaven knows my circumstances are bad enough, and I am so far from being afraid, that I value a pistol, or a blunderbuss, or any such thing, no more than a pop-gun. Every man must die once, and what signifies the manner how? besides, perhaps I may come off with the loss only of an arm or a leg. I assure you, sir, I was never less afraid in my life; and so, if your honour is resolved to go on, I am resolved to follow you. But, in that case, I wish I might give my opinion. To be sure, it is a scandalous way of travelling, for a great gentleman like you to walk afoot. Now

here are two or three good horses in the stable, which the landlord will certainly make no scruple of trusting you with; but, if he should, I can easily contrive to take them; and, let the worst come to the worst, the king would certainly pardon you, as you are going to fight in his cause.”

Now, as the honesty of Partridge was equal to his understanding, and both dealt only in small matters, he would never have attempted a roguery of this kind, had he not imagined it altogether safe; for he was one of those who have more consideration of the gallows than of the fitness of things; but, in reality, he thought he might have committed this felony without any danger; for, besides that he doubted not but the name of Mr. Allworthy would sufficiently quiet the landlord, he conceived they should be altogether safe, whatever turn affairs might take; as Jones, he imagined, would have friends enough on one side, and as his friends would as well secure him on the other.

When Mr. Jones found that Partridge was in earnest in this proposal, he very severely rebuked him, and that in such bitter terms, that the other attempted to laugh it off, and presently turned the discourse to other matters; saying, he believed they were then in a bawdy house, and that he had with much ado prevented two wenches from disturbing his honour in the middle of the night. “Heyday!” says he, “I believe they got into your chamber whether I would or no; for here lies the muff of one of them on the ground.” Indeed, as Jones returned to his bed in the dark, he had never perceived the muff on the quilt, and, in leaping into his bed, he had tumbled it on the floor. This Partridge now took up, and was going to put into his pocket, when Jones desired to see it. The muff was so very remarkable, that our hero might possibly have recollected it without the information annexed. But his memory was not put to that hard office; for at the same instant he saw and read the words Sophia Western upon the paper which was pinned to it. His looks now grew frantic in a moment, and he eagerly cried out, “Oh Heavens! how came this muff here?” “I know no more than your honour,” cried Partridge; “but I saw it upon the arm of one of the women who would have disturbed you, if I would have suffered them.” “Where are they?” cries Jones, jumping out of bed, and laying hold of his cloaths. “Many miles off, I believe, by this time,” said Partridge. And now Jones, upon further enquiry, was sufficiently assured that the bearer of this muff was no other than the lovely Sophia herself.

The behaviour of Jones on this occasion, his thoughts, his looks, his words, his actions, were such as beggar all description. After many bitter execrations on Partridge, and not fewer on himself, he ordered the poor fellow, who was frightened out of his wits, to run down and hire him horses at any rate; and a very few minutes afterwards, having shuffled on his clothes, he hastened down-stairs to execute the orders himself, which he had just before given.

But before we proceed to what passed on his arrival in the kitchen, it will be necessary to recur to what had there happened since Partridge had first left it on his master's summons.

The serjeant was just marched off with his party, when the two Irish gentlemen arose, and came downstairs; both complaining that they had been so often waked by the noises in the inn, that they had never once been able to close their eyes all night.

The coach which had brought the young lady and her maid, and which, perhaps, the reader may have hitherto concluded was her own, was, indeed, a returned coach belonging to Mr. King, of Bath, one of the worthiest and honestest men that ever dealt in horse-flesh, and whose coaches we heartily recommend to all our readers who travel that road. By which means they may, perhaps, have the pleasure of riding in the very coach, and being driven by the very coachman, that is recorded in this history.

The coachman, having but two passengers, and hearing Mr. Maclachlan was going to Bath, offered to carry him thither at a very moderate price. He was induced to this by the report of the hostler, who said that the horse which Mr. Maclachlan had hired from Worcester would be much more pleased with returning to his friends there than to prosecute a long journey; for that the said horse was rather a two-legged than a four-legged animal.

Mr. Maclachlan immediately closed with the proposal of the coachman, and, at the same time, persuaded his friend Fitzpatrick to accept of the fourth place in the coach. This conveyance the soreness of his bones made more agreeable to him than a horse; and, being well assured of meeting with his wife at Bath, he thought a little delay would be of no consequence.

Maclachlan, who was much the sharper man of the two, no sooner heard that this lady came from Chester, with the other circumstances which he learned from the hostler, than it came into his head that she might possibly be his friend's wife; and

presently acquainted him with this suspicion, which had never once occurred to Fitzpatrick himself. To say the truth, he was one of those compositions which nature makes up in too great a hurry, and forgets to put any brains into their heads.

Now it happens to this sort of men, as to bad hounds, who never hit off a fault themselves; but no sooner doth a dog of sagacity open his mouth than they immediately do the same, and, without the guidance of any scent, run directly forwards as fast as they are able. In the same manner, the very moment Mr. Maclachlan had mentioned his apprehension, Mr. Fitzpatrick instantly concurred, and flew directly up-stairs, to surprize his wife, before he knew where she was; and unluckily (as Fortune loves to play tricks with those gentlemen who put themselves entirely under her conduct) ran his head against several doors and posts to no purpose. Much kinder was she to me, when she suggested that simile of the hounds, just before inserted; since the poor wife may, on these occasions, be so justly compared to a hunted hare. Like that little wretched animal, she pricks up her ears to listen after the voice of her pursuer; like her, flies away trembling when she hears it; and, like her, is generally overtaken and destroyed in the end.

This was not however the case at present; for after a long fruitless search, Mr. Fitzpatrick returned to the kitchen, where, as if this had been a real chace, entered a gentleman hallowing as hunters do when the hounds are at a fault. He was just alighted from his horse, and had many attendants at his heels.

Here, reader, it may be necessary to acquaint thee with some matters, which, if thou dost know already, thou art wiser than I take thee to be. And this information thou shalt receive in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH ARE CONCLUDED THE ADVENTURES THAT HAPPENED AT THE INN AT UPTON

IN the first place, then, this gentleman just arrived was no other person than Squire Western himself, who was come hither in pursuit of his daughter; and, had he fortunately been two hours earlier, he had not only found her, but his niece into the bargain; for such was the wife of Mr. Fitzpatrick, who had run away with her five years before, out of the custody of that sage lady, Madam Western.

Now this lady had departed from the inn much about the same time with Sophia; for, having been waked by the voice of her husband, she had sent up for the landlady, and being by her apprized of the matter, had bribed the good woman, at an extravagant price, to furnish her with horses for her escape. Such prevalence had money in this family; and though the mistress would have turned away her maid for a corrupt hussy, if she had known as much as the reader, yet she was no more proof against corruption herself than poor Susan had been.

Mr. Western and his nephew were not known to one another; nor indeed would the former have taken any notice of the latter if he had known him; for, this being a stolen match, and consequently an unnatural one in the opinion of the good squire, he had, from the time of her committing it, abandoned the poor young creature, who was then no more than eighteen, as a monster, and had never since suffered her to be named in his presence.

The kitchen was now a scene of universal confusion, Western enquiring after his daughter, and Fitzpatrick as eagerly after his wife, when Jones entered the room, unfortunately having Sophia's muff in his hand.

As soon as Western saw Jones, he set up the same holla as is used by sportsmen when their game is in view. He then immediately run up and laid hold of Jones, crying, "We have got the dog fox, I warrant the bitch is not far off." The jargon which followed for some minutes, where many spoke different things at the same time, as it would be very difficult to describe, so would it be no less unpleasant to read.

Jones having, at length, shaken Mr. Western off, and some of the company having interfered between them, our hero protested his innocence as to knowing anything of the lady; when Parson Supple stepped up, and said, "It is folly to deny it; for why, the marks of guilt are in thy hands. I will myself asseverate and bind it by an oath, that the muff thou bearest in thy hand belongeth unto Madam Sophia; for I have frequently observed her, of later days, to bear it about her." "My daughter's muff!" cries the squire in a rage. "Hath he got my daughter's muff? bear witness the goods are found upon him. I'll have him before a justice of peace this instant. Where is my daughter, villain?" "Sir," said Jones, "I beg you would be pacified. The muff, I acknowledge, is the young lady's; but, upon my honour, I have never seen her." At these words Western lost all patience, and grew inarticulate with rage.

Some of the servants had acquainted Fitzpatrick who Mr. Western was. The good Irishman, therefore, thinking he had now an opportunity to do an act of service to his uncle, and by that means might possibly obtain his favour, stepped up to Jones, and cried out, "Upon my conscience, sir, you may be ashamed of denying your having seen the gentleman's daughter before my face, when you know I found you there upon the bed together." Then, turning to Western, he offered to conduct him immediately to the room where his daughter was; which offer being accepted, he, the squire, the parson, and some others, ascended directly to Mrs. Waters's chamber, which they entered with no less violence than Mr. Fitzpatrick had done before.

The poor lady started from her sleep with as much amazement as terror, and beheld at her bedside a figure which might very well be supposed to have escaped out of Bedlam. Such wildness and confusion were in the looks of Mr. Western; who no sooner saw the lady than he started back, shewing sufficiently by his manner, before he spoke, that this was not the person sought after.

So much more tenderly do women value their reputation than their persons, that, though the latter seemed now in more danger than before, yet, as the former was secure, the lady screamed not with such violence as she had done on the other occasion. However, she no sooner found herself alone than she abandoned all thoughts of further repose; and, as she had sufficient reason to be dissatisfied with her present lodging, she dressed herself with all possible expedition.

Mr. Western now proceeded to search the whole house, but to as little purpose as he had disturbed poor Mrs. Waters. He then returned disconsolate into the kitchen, where he found Jones in the custody of his servants.

This violent uproar had raised all the people in the house, though it was yet scarcely daylight. Among these was a grave gentleman, who had the honour to be in the commission of the peace for the county of Worcester. Of which Mr. Western was no sooner informed than he offered to lay his complaint before him. The justice declined executing his office, as he said he had no clerk present, nor no book about justice business; and that he could not carry all the law in his head about stealing away daughters, and such sort of things.

Here Mr. Fitzpatrick offered to lend him his assistance, informing the company that he had been himself bred to the law. (And indeed he had served three years as clerk to an attorney in

the north of Ireland, when, chusing a genteeler walk in life, he quitted his master, came over to England, and set up that business which requires no apprenticeship, namely, that of a gentleman, in which he had succeeded, as hath been already partly mentioned.)

Mr. Fitzpatrick declared that the law concerning daughters was out of the present case; that stealing a muff was undoubtedly felony, and the goods being found upon the person, were sufficient evidence of the fact.

The magistrate, upon the encouragement of so learned a coadjutor, and upon the violent intercession of the squire, was at length prevailed upon to seat himself in the chair of justice, where being placed, upon viewing the muff which Jones still held in his hand, and upon the parson's swearing it to be the property of Mr. Western, he desired Mr. Fitzpatrick to draw up a commitment, which he said he would sign.

Jones now desired to be heard, which was at last, with difficulty, granted him. He then produced the evidence of Mr. Partridge, as to the finding it; but, what was still more, Susan deposed that Sophia herself had delivered the muff to her, and had ordered her to convey it into the chamber where Mr. Jones had found it.

Whether a natural love of justice, or the extraordinary comeliness of Jones, had wrought on Susan to make the discovery, I will not determine; but such were the effects of her evidence, that the magistrate, throwing himself back in his chair, declared that the matter was now altogether as clear on the side of the prisoner as it had before been against him: with which the parson concurred, saying, the Lord forbid he should be instrumental in committing an innocent person to durance. The justice then arose, acquitted the prisoner, and broke up the court.

Mr. Western now gave every one present a hearty curse, and, immediately ordering his horses, departed in pursuit of his daughter, without taking the least notice of his nephew Fitzpatrick, or returning any answer to his claim of kindred, notwithstanding all the obligations he had just received from that gentleman. In the violence, moreover, of his hurry, and of his passion, he luckily forgot to demand the muff 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, though 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 cloaths; 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.

CHAPTER 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 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 shown, 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 despatched to summon

Mr. Blifil; for, though 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 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-begone,
Drew Priam's curtains in the dead of night,
And would have told him, half his Troy was burn'd)

entered 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 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 anything at a distance, but was most sagacious in immediately seeing everything 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. Blifil, and threw himself, with the utmost dejection in his countenance, into a great chair.

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 nobody to thank but yourself. You know she hath been educated always in a manner directly 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 prevail 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 education, no such accident as this had ever befallen you; so that you must comfort yourself by thinking it was all your own doing; and, indeed, 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 threatened, 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 Jobs, you would make me forget all decency and decorum. Why would you interfere? Did I not beg you, did I not intreat you, to leave the whole conduct to me? You have defeated 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 English women are not to be treated like Ciraccian¹ slaves? We have the protection of the world; we are to be won by gentle means only, and not to be hectorred, and bullied, and beat into compliance. I thank Heaven 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 frightened and terrified into taking this measure; and, to speak honestly, 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 yourself by rememb'ring 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. Blifil, 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 inexcuseable," answered the lady; "for whom doth he ruin by his fondness but his own child?" To which Blifil immediately agreed.

Mrs. Western then began to express great confusion on the account of Mr. Blifil, and of the usage which he had received from a family to which he intended so much honour. On this subject she treated the folly of her niece with great severity; but concluded with throwing the whole on her brother, who, she said, was inexcuseable to have proceeded so far without better assurances of his daughter's consent: "But he was (says she) always of a violent, headstrong temper; and I can scarce forgive myself for all the advice I have thrown away upon him."

After much of this kind of conversation, which, perhaps, would not greatly entertain the reader, was it here particularly related, Mr. Blifil took his leave and returned home, not highly pleased with his disappointment: which, however, the philo-

¹ Possibly Circassian.

sophy which he had acquired from Square, and the religion infused into him by Thwackum, together with somewhat else, taught him to bear rather better than more passionate lovers bear these kinds of evils.

CHAPTER IX

THE ESCAPE OF SOPHIA

It is now time to look after Sophia; whom the reader, if he loves her half so well as I do, will rejoice to find escaped from the clutches of her passionate father, and from those of her dispassionate lover.

Twelve times did the iron register of time beat on the sonorous bell-metal, summoning the ghosts to rise and walk their nightly round.—In plainer language, it was twelve o'clock, and all the family, as we have said, lay buried in drink and sleep, except only Mrs. Western, who was deeply engaged in reading a political pamphlet, and except our heroine, who now softly stole downstairs, and, having unbarred and unlocked one of the house-doors, sallied forth, and hastened to the place of appointment.

Notwithstanding the many pretty arts which ladies sometimes practise, to display their fears on every little occasion (almost as many as the other sex uses to conceal theirs), certainly there is a degree of courage which not only becomes a woman, but is often necessary to enable her to discharge her duty. It is, indeed, the idea of fierceness, and not of bravery, which destroys the female character; for who can read the story of the justly celebrated Arria without conceiving as high an opinion of her gentleness and tenderness as of her fortitude? At the same time, perhaps, many a woman who shrieks at a mouse, or a rat, may be capable of poisoning a husband; or, what is worse, of driving him to poison himself.

Sophia, with all the gentleness which a woman can have, had all the spirit which she ought to have. When, therefore, she came to the place of appointment, and, instead of meeting her maid, as was agreed, saw a man ride directly up to her, she neither screamed out nor fainted away: not that her pulse then beat with its usual regularity; for she was, at first, under some surprize and apprehension: but these were relieved almost as soon as raised, when the man, pulling off his hat, asked her, in a very submissive manner, "If her ladyship did not expect to

meet another lady?" and then proceeded to inform her that he was sent to conduct her to that lady.

Sophia could have no possible suspicion of any falsehood in this account: she therefore mounted resolutely behind the fellow, who conveyed her safe to a town about five miles distant, where she had the satisfaction of finding the good Mrs. Honour: for, as the soul of the waiting-woman was wrapt up in those very habiliments which used to enwrap her body, she could by no means bring herself to trust them out of her sight. Upon these, therefore, she kept guard in person, while she detached the aforesaid fellow after her mistress, having given him all proper instructions.

They now debated what course to take, in order to avoid the pursuit of Mr. Western, who they knew would send after them in a few hours. The London road had such charms for Honour, that she was desirous of going on directly; alleging that, as Sophia could not be missed till eight or nine the next morning, her pursuers would not be able to overtake her, even though they knew which way she had gone. But Sophia had too much at stake to venture anything to chance; nor did she dare trust too much to her tender limbs, in a contest which was to be decided only by swiftness. She resolved, therefore, to travel across the country, for at least twenty or thirty miles, and then to take the direct road to London. So, having hired horses to go twenty miles one way, when she intended to go twenty miles the other, she set forward with the same guide behind whom she had ridden from her father's house; the guide having now taken up behind him, in the room of Sophia, a much heavier, as well as much less lovely burden; being, indeed, a huge portmanteau, well stuffed with those outside ornaments, by means of which the fair Honour hoped to gain many conquests, and, finally, to make her fortune in London city.

When they had gone about two hundred paces from the inn on the London road, Sophia rode up to the guide, and, with a voice much fuller of honey than was ever that of Plato, though his mouth is supposed to have been a bee-hive, begged him to take the first turning which led towards Bristol.

Reader, I am not superstitious, nor any great believer of modern miracles. I do not, therefore, deliver the following as a certain truth; for, indeed, I can scarce credit it myself: but the fidelity of an historian obliges me to relate what hath been confidently asserted. The horse, then, on which the guide rode, is reported to have been so charmed by Sophia's voice, that he

made a full stop, and expressed an unwillingness to proceed any farther.

Perhaps, however, the fact may be true, and less miraculous than it hath been represented; since the natural cause seems adequate to the effect: for, as the guide at that moment desisted from a constant application of his armed right heel (for, like Hudibras, he wore but one spur), it is more than possible that this omission alone might occasion the beast to stop, especially as this was very frequent with him at other times.

But if the voice of Sophia had really an effect on the horse, it had very little on the rider. He answered somewhat surlily, "That measter had ordered him to go a different way, and that he should lose his place if he went any other than that he was ordered."

Sophia, finding all her persuasions had no effect, began now to add irresistible charms to her voice; charms which, according to the proverb, makes the old mare trot, instead of standing still; charms to which modern ages have attributed all that irresistible force which the antients imputed to perfect oratory. In a word, she promised she would reward him to his utmost expectation.

The lad was not totally deaf to these promises; but he disliked their being indefinite; for, though perhaps he had never heard that word, yet that, in fact, was his objection. He said, "Gentlevolks did not consider the case of poor volks; that he had like to have been turned away the other day, for riding about the country with a gentleman from Squire Allworthy's, who did not reward him as he should have done."

"With whom?" says Sophia eagerly. "With a gentleman from Squire Allworthy's," repeated the lad; "the squire's son, I think they call 'un."—"Whither? which way did he go?" says Sophia.—"Why, a little o' one side o' Bristol, about twenty miles off," answered the lad.—"Guide me," says Sophia, "to the same place, and I'll give thee a guinea, or two, if one is not sufficient."—"To be certain," said the boy, "it is honestly worth two, when your ladyship considers what a risk I run; but, however, if your ladyship will promise me the two guineas, I'll e'en venture: to be certain it is a sinful thing to ride about my measter's horses; but one comfort is, I can only be turned away, and two guineas will partly make me amends."

The bargain being thus struck, the lad turned aside into the Bristol road, and Sophia set forward in pursuit of Jones, highly contrary to the remonstrances of Mrs. Honour, who had much

more desire to see London than to see Mr. Jones: for indeed she was not his friend with her mistress, as he had been guilty of some neglect in certain pecuniary civilities, which are by custom due to the waiting-gentlewoman in all love affairs, and more especially in those of a clandestine kind. This we impute rather to the carelessness of his temper than to any want of generosity; but perhaps she derived it from the latter motive. Certain it is that she hated him very bitterly on that account, and resolved to take every opportunity of injuring him with her mistress. It was therefore highly unlucky for her, that she had gone to the very same town and inn whence Jones had started, and still more unlucky was she in having stumbled on the same guide, and on this accidental discovery which Sophia had made.

Our travellers arrived at Hambrook¹ at the break of day, where Honour was against her will charged to enquire the route which Mr. Jones had taken. Of this, indeed, the guide himself could have informed them; but Sophia, I know not for what reason, never asked him the question.

When Mrs. Honour had made her report from the landlord, Sophia, with much difficulty, procured some indifferent horses, which brought her to the inn where Jones had been confined rather by the misfortune of meeting with a surgeon than by having met with a broken head.

Here Honour, being again charged with a commission of enquiry, had no sooner applied herself to the landlady, and had described the person of Mr. Jones, than that sagacious woman began, in the vulgar phrase, to smell a rat. When Sophia therefore entered the room, instead of answering the maid, the landlady, addressing herself to the mistress, began the following speech: "Good lack-a-day! why there now, who would have thought it? I protest the loveliest couple that ever eye beheld. I-fackins, madam, it is no wonder the squire run on so about your ladyship. He told me indeed you was the finest lady in the world, and to be sure so you be. Mercy on him, poor heart! I bepited him, so I did, when he used to hug his pillow, and call it his dear Madam Sophia. I did all I could to dissuade him from going to the wars: I told him there were men enow that were good for nothing else but to be killed, that had not the love of such fine ladies." "Sure," says Sophia, "the good woman is distracted." "No, no," cries the landlady, "I am not distracted. What, doth your ladyship think I don't know then? I assure you he told me all." "What saucy fellow," cries

¹ This was the village where Jones met the Quaker.

Honour, "told you anything of my lady?" "No saucy fellow," answered the landlady, "but the young gentleman you enquired after, and a very pretty young gentleman he is, and he loves Madam Sophia Western to the bottom of his soul." "He love my lady! I'd have you to know, woman, she is meat for his master."—"Nay, Honour," said Sophia, interrupting her, "don't be angry with the good woman; she intends no harm." "No, marry, don't I," answered the landlady, emboldened by the soft accents of Sophia; and then launched into a long narrative too tedious to be here set down, in which some passages dropt that gave a little offence to Sophia, and much more to her waiting-woman, who hence took occasion to abuse poor Jones to her mistress the moment they were alone together, saying, "that he must be a very pitiful fellow, and could have no love for a lady, whose name he would thus prostitute in an ale-house."

Sophia did not see his behaviour in so very disadvantageous a light, and was perhaps more pleased with the violent raptures of his love (which the landlady exaggerated as much as she had done every other circumstance) than she was offended with the rest; and indeed she imputed the whole to the extravagance, or rather ebullience, of his passion, and to the openness of his heart.

This incident, however, being afterwards revived in her mind, and placed in the most odious colours by Honour, served to heighten and give credit to those unlucky occurrences at Upton, and assisted the waiting-woman in her endeavours to make her mistress depart from that inn without seeing Jones.

The landlady finding Sophia intended to stay no longer than till her horses were ready, and that without either eating or drinking, soon withdrew; when Honour began to take her mistress to task (for indeed she used great freedom), and after a long harangue, in which she reminded her of her intention to go to London, and gave frequent hints of the impropriety of pursuing a young fellow, she at last concluded with this serious exhortation: "For heaven's sake, madam, consider what you are about, and whither you are going."

This advice to a lady who had already rode near forty miles, and in no very agreeable season, may seem foolish enough. It may be supposed she had well considered and resolved this already; nay, Mrs. Honour, by the hints she threw out, seemed to think so; and this I doubt not is the opinion of many readers, who have, I make no doubt, been long since well convinced of

the purpose of our heroine, and have heartily condemned her for it as a wanton baggage.

But in reality this was not the case. Sophia had been lately so distracted between hope and fear, her duty and love to her father, her hatred to Blifil, her compassion, and (why should we not confess the truth?) her love for Jones; which last the behaviour of her father, of her aunt, of every one else, and more particularly of Jones himself, had blown into a flame, that her mind was in that confused state which may be truly said to make us ignorant of what we do, or whither we go, or rather, indeed, indifferent as to the consequence of either.

The prudent and sage advice of her maid produced, however, some cool reflection; and she at length determined to go to Gloucester, and thence to proceed directly to London.

But, unluckily, a few miles before she entered that town, she met the hack-attorney, who, as is before mentioned, had dined there with Mr. Jones. This fellow, being well known to Mrs. Honour, stopt and spoke to her; of which Sophia at that time took little notice, more than to enquire who he was.

But, having had a more particular account from Honour of this man afterwards at Gloucester, and hearing of the great expedition he usually made in travelling, for which (as hath been before observed) he was particularly famous; recollecting, likewise, that she had overheard Mrs. Honour inform him that they were going to Gloucester, she began to fear lest her father might, by this fellow's means, be able to trace her to that city; wherefore, if she should there strike into the London road, she apprehended he would certainly be able to overtake her. She therefore altered her resolution; and, having hired horses to go a week's journey a way which she did not intend to travel, she again set forward after a light refreshment, contrary to the desire and earnest entreaties of her maid, and to the no less vehement remonstrances of Mrs. Whitefield, who, from good breeding, or perhaps from good nature (for the poor young lady appeared much fatigued), pressed her very heartily to stay that evening at Gloucester.

Having refreshed herself only with some tea, and with lying about two hours on the bed, while her horses were getting ready, she resolutely left Mrs. Whitefield's about eleven at night, and, striking directly into the Worcester road, within less than four hours arrived at that very inn where we last saw her.

Having thus traced our heroine very particularly back from her departure, till her arrival at Upton, we shall in a very few

words bring her father to the same place; who, having received the first scent from the post-boy, who conducted his daughter to Hambrook, very easily traced her afterwards to Gloucester; whence he pursued her to Upton, as he had learned Mr. Jones had taken that route (for Partridge, to use the squire's expression, left everywhere a strong scent behind him), and he doubted not in the least but Sophia travelled, or, as he phrased it, ran, the same way. He used indeed a very coarse expression, which need not be here inserted; as fox-hunters, who alone will understand it, will easily suggest it to themselves.