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978-1-108-02175-3 - Through England on a Side Saddle: In the Time of William and Mary

Celia Fiennes

Excerpt

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THE DIARY  
OF  
CELIA FIENNES

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*THE ACCOUNT OFF*

severall Journeys into severall parts of England with many Remarkes; some w<sup>th</sup> my mother from Newtontony Wiltshire which is all on the downs a fine Champion Country pleasant for all sports, Rideing, Hunting, Courseing, Setting and shooteing. From Newtontony I went to Sarum 8 miles which is a Citty and Bishop's Seat, pretty Large town Streetes broad but through y<sup>e</sup> midst of them runs a little rivulet of water which makes y<sup>e</sup> Streetes not so cleane or so easie to pass in, they have stepps to Cross it and many open places for horses and Carriages to Cross itt—itt takes off Much from the beauty of y<sup>e</sup> streetes—the Cause of it was from the burning of the old town called Salsebury which was on a hill about a mile off this and it was so drye and farre from springs that it was destroyed by fire and only the ruines of the Castle is to be seen like a high wall with fortifications: this town now Stands low by the water by a great River, the houses are old Mostly timber Buildings, there is a large Market House with the town hall over it and a prison Just by—there is also a large Cross in another place and house over it for a Constant Market for fruite, fowle, Butter and Cheese and a fish Market; the town is well served with all provissions; there is good buildings in that part they call the Close, both New built and y<sup>e</sup> old

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good houses belonging to the doctors of the Church. Y<sup>e</sup> Dean has a very good house and Gardens, so is the Bishop's Palace at y<sup>e</sup> end of a Row of trees—the roomes are lofty and Stately: all these houses are round y<sup>e</sup> Cathedrall which is esteemed the finest in England in all respects, it only lyes low in a watry meadow so y<sup>t</sup> the foundations is in the water, made of faggots and timber, yet notwithstanding its want of a Riseing ground to stand on y<sup>e</sup> steeple is seen many miles off, the spire being so high it appears to us below as sharpe as a Dagger, Yet is in the Compass on the top as bigg as a Cart wheele; its all stone and Carved finely with spires and Arches, there are severall doores into y<sup>e</sup> Church, in the body of it stands the pulpet and seates on each side; there are two large Isle's runnes up on either side; the font stands below opposite to the quire y<sup>t</sup> enters w<sup>th</sup> 2 or 3 steps assent from a large Cross Isle that leads to the Cloysters, in which is y<sup>e</sup> Chapter house which is very large and supported only by one small stone Pillar in y<sup>e</sup> middle, painted round the walls with figures Carved y<sup>e</sup> whole acc<sup>o</sup>: of the book of Genesis, the Windows are painted very finely—Much of the History of the Bible. There is as many little Chappels in the Church as months in a yeare, as many doores as weekes, as many Marble pillars as dayes, as many windows as houres, as many partitions in the windows as minutes in the year. The rooffe of the Church is very lofty and exactly neate in all things though not so large as some other Cathedralls—the top of the Qoire is exactly painted and it lookes as fresh as if but new done though of 300 yeares standing—there is a very good organ and a deske for the reader raised so high even with the organ for y<sup>e</sup> advantage of the voice to be heard, yet y<sup>e</sup> Church is so lofty y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Eccos drowns y<sup>e</sup> Intelligableness of the voice. The Comunion table, hangings and y<sup>e</sup> booses are all of crimson velvet with gold fringe, 2 large Candlestickes gilt w<sup>th</sup> great white tapers in them, a large gilt bason to receive y<sup>e</sup> offerings in—there is many good monuments there, also there are ye Statues of the 3 bishops that built the Church cut in stone—there are two large fine monuments above y<sup>e</sup> Rest—one all free stone for the lord George,

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his Effiges and ladyes att length on a bed in their Robes and ruffs on pillows, and y<sup>e</sup> four pillars are twisted, and over it Angels, figures of birds, beasts, flowers and leaves very fine, there sits Justice w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> ballance in her hand, one scale laying over y<sup>e</sup> other twisted lookes very natural and well, with y<sup>e</sup> wreathed work all in free stone with their Armes cut about in Escutheons all about it ; the other is a monument for the Duke of Summerset all in marble, a large bed his Effigee in garment and ruff all in Coullours, his lady the same only she is laid one step above him because she was Daughter to the Dowager of ffrance and sister to Henry y<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> of England by her second husband Charles brandon Duke of Suffolk.

There is y<sup>e</sup> Effiges of their 2 sonnes, Lord Beachom at their head and Lord Seymour at y<sup>e</sup> feete in Armour on their Knees, and severall Daughters on their knees at y<sup>e</sup> bottom and 12 pillars of Irish gray marble. The Armes is cutt finely in Escutcheons &c. and in figures with y<sup>e</sup> supporters and severall sorts of beasts carved in a piramide fashion, and on y<sup>e</sup> top the Duke's Corronet—these 2 monum<sup>ts</sup> are railed in with Iron grates, there is the Effigee in stone off a doctor that starved himself to death attempting to imitate our Saviour to fast 40 dayes—but at 31 dayes end he became sensible of his evil and would have retrieved his life by eateing againe, but then by y<sup>e</sup> Just judgment of god could not swallow any thing down his throate ;—there is a chaple or burying place of Judge poppums that had two very wild sonnes and by 2 pictures of his sonnes, pictured one with death y<sup>e</sup> other with a skeleton and set in y<sup>e</sup> room they were to come into by their father's order, it pleased God to bless as a meanes to reclaim them. Ye pictures are still there; the windows of the Church but especially y<sup>e</sup> Quire are very finely painted and large of y<sup>e</sup> history of y<sup>e</sup> bible—the tower ffor y<sup>e</sup> bells are in y<sup>e</sup> yard at some distance from the Church—there are 6 Churches in the town and subburbs and y<sup>e</sup> County Goal at y<sup>e</sup> end of the town called ffisherton, just by the great river that runnes to Christ-Church in Salsebury. They keep the quarter session once in y<sup>e</sup> yeare the oth<sup>r</sup> tymes are kept at Malbrough about 24 mile off and at y<sup>e</sup>

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Devises about y<sup>e</sup> same distance w<sup>ch</sup> is a very neate little town with a very good market house and town hall sett on stone pillars ; it is a bourrough and a very rich tradeing place ffor the Clothing trade, the fourth place y<sup>e</sup> session is kept is Warminster about y<sup>e</sup> same distance—its a pretty little town a good Market for corn and there is the Mindiffe Coale which is allmost as good as the sea Coale from new-Castle that is dugg out of the hills all about ;—But y<sup>e</sup> Assizes is allwayes kept at Salsebury and is a Major town though Wilton about 2 mile off is y<sup>e</sup> County town and y<sup>e</sup> Knights of y<sup>e</sup> shire are chosen there, though its now but as a little village as it were, and only supported by the Earle of Pembroke which lives there and has a very ffine house with large Courts one within another. At y<sup>e</sup> Entrance there is a lofty Hall with good Pictures, 3 or 4 dineing roomes and drawing roomes of State with very good bed Chambers and well furnished velvet damaske and tissue, one Gallery and y<sup>e</sup> dineing roome was all wanscoated with pictures of y<sup>e</sup> family—there is a drawing roome and Anti roome, y<sup>e</sup> wanscoate is painted with y<sup>e</sup> whole History of the Acadia romance made by S<sup>r</sup> Philip Sidney, brother to the then Countess of Pembroke and Composed by him in y<sup>e</sup> ffine woods above y<sup>e</sup> house.

Another room is painted w<sup>th</sup> all sorts of sports, Hunting, Hawking &c.—they are all finely painted on the Ceiling and very lofty. there is one dineing roome y<sup>t</sup> the Chimney is just under a window and the Tunnells runnes upon each side. there is one Chamber, the chimney stands Just by the window opposite to Salsebury, and on the black Marble Chimney piece soe finely polished you may see all the Cathedrall as in a Glass ; I have seen it plaine. There are very fine Marble Chimney pieces in most of y<sup>e</sup> roomes, and marble windows. The Gardens are very fine with many gravel walkes with grass squaires set with fine brass and stone statues—fish ponds and basons with ffigures in y<sup>e</sup> middle spouting out water—dwarfe trees of all sorts and a fine flower garden—much wall fruite. Y<sup>e</sup> river runns through y<sup>e</sup> garden that easeily conveys by pipes water to all Parts.

A Grottoe is att y<sup>e</sup> end of the garden just y<sup>e</sup> middle off y<sup>e</sup>

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house—its garnished with many fine ffigures of y<sup>e</sup> Goddesses, and about 2 yards off the doore is severall pipes in a line that with a sluice spoutts water up to wett the strangers—in the middle roome is a round table and a large Pipe in the midst, on which they put a Crown or Gun or a branch, and so y<sup>t</sup>.spouts the water through y<sup>e</sup> Carvings and poynts all round y<sup>e</sup> roome at y<sup>e</sup> Artists pleasure to wet y<sup>e</sup> Company—there are figures at Each corner of y<sup>e</sup> roome that Can weep water on the beholders and by a straight pipe on y<sup>e</sup> table they force up y<sup>e</sup> water into y<sup>e</sup> hollow carving of y<sup>e</sup> rooff like a Crown or Coronet to appearance but is hollow within to retaine y<sup>e</sup> water fforced into it in great quantetyes y<sup>t</sup> disperses in y<sup>e</sup> hollow Cavity over y<sup>e</sup> roome and descends in a Shower of raine all about y<sup>e</sup> roome—on each side is two little roomes which by the turning their wires y<sup>e</sup> water runnes in y<sup>e</sup> rockes—you see and hear it and also it is so contrived in one room y<sup>t</sup> it makes y<sup>e</sup> melody of Nightingerills and all sorts of birds w<sup>ch</sup> engages y<sup>e</sup> Curiosity of y<sup>e</sup> Strangers to go in to see, but at y<sup>e</sup> Entrance off each room is a line of pipes that appear not till by a Sluice moved—it washes y<sup>e</sup> spectators designed for diversion.

Y<sup>e</sup> Grottoe is leaded on y<sup>e</sup> top where are fish ponds, and just without y<sup>e</sup> grottoe is a wooden bridge over y<sup>e</sup> river. Y<sup>e</sup> barristers are set out w<sup>th</sup> Lyons set thick on Either Side w<sup>th</sup> their mouths open, and by a sluice spout out water each to other in a perfect arch y<sup>e</sup> length of y<sup>e</sup> bridge. There are fine woods beyond y<sup>e</sup> house and a large parke walled in. From thence I went to Blandford in Dorsetshire 18 miles through a haire waring and a forest of y<sup>e</sup> Kings.

Blandford is a pretty neate Country town. Thence to Merly by Wimborn over a great river Called the Stoure and a large Arched bridge to a Relations house, S<sup>r</sup> William Constantines house—thence to Poole a little sea-port town 4 miles off where was a very good Minister in y<sup>e</sup> publick Church—M<sup>r</sup> Hardy.

From thence we went by boate to a little Isle Called brownsea 3 or 4 leagues off where there is much Copperice made, the stones being found about y<sup>e</sup> Isle in y<sup>e</sup> shore in great quantetyes. there is only one house there

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w<sup>ch</sup> is the Governours, besides little fishermen's houses ; they being all taken up about y<sup>e</sup> Copperice workes ; they gather y<sup>e</sup> Stones and place them on ground raised like y<sup>e</sup> beds in gardens, rows one above the other and are all Shelving, so y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> raine dissolves y<sup>e</sup> Stones and it drains down into trenches and pipes made to receive and Convey it to y<sup>e</sup> house, y<sup>ch</sup> is fitted with Iron pannes four square and of a pretty depth at least 12 yards over. They place Iron spikes in y<sup>e</sup> pannes full of branches and so as y<sup>e</sup> Liquor boyles to a candy it hangs on those branches ; I saw some taken up—it look'd like a vast bunch of grapes. Y<sup>e</sup> Coulour of y<sup>e</sup> Copperace not being much differing it lookes cleare like Suger-Candy—so when y<sup>e</sup> water is boyled to a Candy they take it out and replenish the pannes with more liquor. I do not remember they added anything to it only y<sup>e</sup> Stones of Copperice dissolved by y<sup>e</sup> raine into liquor as I mention'd at first—there are great furnaces under, y<sup>t</sup> Keepes all the pannes boyling—it was a large room or building with Severall of these large pannes : they do add old Iron and nailes to y<sup>e</sup> Copperass Stones. This is a noted place for lobsters and Crabs and shrimps. I there eate some very good. From Merly we went to y<sup>e</sup> Isle of Purbeck. At Warrum we passed over a bridge where y<sup>e</sup> sea flowed in, and Came by y<sup>e</sup> ruines of Corffe Castle which stands on a hill, yet surrounded by much higher hills y<sup>t</sup> might easily command it, and so in y<sup>e</sup> Civil warrs was batter'd down with Granadeers—thence you rise a great ascent of hills, called the Linch or rather y<sup>e</sup> ridge, being so for 3 or 4 miles, rideing to Quare, which was 16 miles ffrom Merly to a relations house—Cos'n Colliers.

From this ridge you see all y<sup>e</sup> Island over, which lookes very fruitfull, good lands, Meadows, woods and jnclosures—there are many quarys in these hills of y<sup>t</sup> w<sup>ch</sup> is called the free stone from hence they digg it—the shores are very Rocky all about y<sup>e</sup> Island. We went 3 miles off to Sonidge a sea faire place not very big—there is a flatt sand by y<sup>e</sup> sea a little way : they take up stones by y<sup>e</sup> shores y<sup>t</sup> are so oily, as y<sup>e</sup> poor burn it for ffire, and its so light a ffire it Serves for Candle too, but it has a strong offensive smell. At a place 4 mile off called Sea Cume the Rockes are so

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Craggy and y<sup>e</sup> Creekes of land so many y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> sea is very turbulēt—I pick'd shells and it being a spring tide I saw y<sup>e</sup> sea beat upon y<sup>e</sup> Rockes at least 20 yards with Such a ffoame or ffroth—and at another place the rockes had so large a Cavity and Hollow y<sup>t</sup> when y<sup>e</sup> Sea flowed in, it runne almost round and Sounded like some hall or high arch. In this Island are severall pretty good houses though not very large. Att Kingston, S<sup>r</sup> William Muese has a pretty house, and att Income M<sup>r</sup> Coliffords—Doonshay, M<sup>r</sup> Dollings and 7 mile off Quare. Att Finnum, lady Larences, there is a pretty large house but very old timber built : there I eate y<sup>e</sup> best Lobsters and Crabs, being boyled in y<sup>e</sup> Sea water and scarce Cold—very large and Sweet. Most of the houses in y<sup>e</sup> Island are built of stone—this is Just by the great Cliffts w<sup>ch</sup> are a vast height from y<sup>e</sup> sea—here is plenty of provision of all sorts especially of fish. ffrom Finnum we ascend a high hill of a great length till you are out of y<sup>e</sup> Island which does hardly appeare to be now an Isle, the tide having left it on this side that you passe only a little Brooke. There is another Castle called Brindon, but y<sup>t</sup> lyes low and appears not much—thence we came to Piddle 6 or 7 miles off where was a relation—Mr Oxenbridg; an old house w<sup>ch</sup> formerly was an abby—thence to Dorchester town 5 miles—it stands on y<sup>e</sup> side of a Hill the river runnes below it—the town lookes Compact and the streetes are very neatly pitch'd and of a good breadth—The Market-place is spacious--The Church very handsome and full of galleries.

Thence we went to Burport about 8 miles—The wayes are stony and very narrow—the town has a steep hill to descend through the whole place—thence to Woolfe 4 miles to a relation—Mr Newbery a man of many whimseys—would keep no women servants—had all washing, Ironing dairy and all performed by men—his house look's like a little village when you Come into y<sup>e</sup> Yard—so many little buildings apart from each other—one for a stillitory—another for out houses and offices, another long building for Silk wormes, and y<sup>e</sup> dwelling house is but mean and spoyl'd by his ffancy of makeing a hall up 3 storyes high and so

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lofty nothing suiteable to it. He had good gardens and orchards much good ffruite, but all in a most rude Confused manner. Thence we went to Colway neare Lime in Somersetshire about 8 miles to a relations house Mr Hendly's—from thence it is 2 miles to Lime a seaport place open to the main ocean, and so high and bleake Sea, that to secure the Harbour for shippes they have been at a great Charge to build a Mold from the town with stone like a halfe Moon, w<sup>ch</sup> they call the Cobb; its raised with a high wall and this runns into y<sup>e</sup> Sea a good Compass that y<sup>e</sup> Shippes rides safely within it, when the tide is out we may see the foundations of some part of it—that is the tyme they looke over it to see any breach and repaire it immediately, else y<sup>e</sup> tide come with so much violence would soone beate it down—there is some part of it low and only is to joyne y<sup>e</sup> rest to the land, and at high water is all Cover'd of such a depth of water that shippes may pass over it to enter the Cobb or halfe moone, which is difficult for fforeigners to attempt, being ignorant, though its better than going round the other way for those that know and do observe the tide—the spring tides and any Storme does some tymes beate up and wash over the walls of the forte or castle into the Court and so runns into the town, though at other tymes when its' the ordinary tide and calme sea it is at least 300 yards from the banke on which the high wall is built—In most parts of somersetshire it is very fruitfull for Orchards, plenty of apples and peares, but they are not Curious in the Planting the best sort of fruite which is a great pitty, being so soone produced and such quantetyes, they are likewise as Careless when they make Cider—they press all sorts of Apples together, else they might have as good sider as in any other parts, even as good as the Herriford-shire—they make great quantetyes of Cider, their presses are very large, so as I have seen a Cheese as they call them which yeilded 2 hoddsheds—they pound their apples, then lay fresh straw on the press, and on that a good lay off Pulp of the apples, then turne in the ends of the straw over it all round and lay fresh straw, then more apples up to the top. Just by Lime you Cross a little bropke into Devon-shire which is much like



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Somersetshire—fruitfull Country's for Corn, graseing, much for inclosures that makes the wayes very narrow, so as in some places a Coach and Waggons Cannot pass—they are forced to Carry their Corn and Carriages on horses' backs with frames of wood like pannyers on either side y<sup>e</sup> horse, so load it high and tye it w<sup>th</sup> Cords—this they do altogether the farther Westward they goe for y<sup>e</sup> wayes grow narrower and narrower on to y<sup>e</sup> lands end. They shewed me the Lizard point from Lime, it was a good distance—Y<sup>e</sup> land grows narrower in a compass round, as it were round the sea. From lime the wayes are also difficult by reason of the very steep hill up and down, and that so successively as little or no plaine even ground, and full of large smooth pebbles that make the strange horses slip and uneasie to go—the horses of the Country are accustomed to it and travell well in the rodes—in y<sup>e</sup> opener wayes they use a sort of waine or carriage made narrower than our Southern Waggon, but longer and so load them high—from Lime to Burport is 12 miles and so to Dorchester; thence to Blandford we pass over Woodbery hill eminent for a great Faire that is kept there of all things: the road passed by Cherbery—the foot of the hill on the Slope stands a pretty Seate of Mr Earles my relation—the house is new built on y<sup>e</sup> brow of y<sup>e</sup> hill whence you have large prospects of 20 mile round—you may see Shaftesbury thence 16 mile off—there is a good wood behind the house, good gardens wall'd with plenty of fruit, good fish and decoy pounds. There is a very good Hall at the entrance leads you to a large parlour and drawing room on y<sup>e</sup> right hand that opens to the gardens—a very good little parlour on the left with servants room, and another parlour for smoakeing, all well wanscoated and painted and the offices convenient—the Chambers are good and lofty and sizeable—good ffurniture in the best 2 Chambers, in an angle the staires leads up halfe way into y<sup>e</sup> middle of the house and so divides in four parts and runnes to each angle.

Thence 6 miles to Blandford, thence 18 to Salsebury and 8 mile to Newtonony which stands in y<sup>e</sup> midst of y<sup>e</sup> downs 8 mile from Andover a market town in Hampshire and y<sup>e</sup>

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roade to London. It lyes 15 mile from Winchester—it is three mile from Amesbury and 2 mile more to Stoneage that stands on Salsebury plaine—eminent for many battles being faught there—this Stoneage is reckon'd one of the wonders of England how such prodigious stone should be brought there, as no such Stone is seen in y<sup>e</sup> Country nearer than 20 mile. They are placed on the side of a hill in a rude jregullar form—two stones stands up and one laid on their tops with morteses into each other and thus are severall in a round like a wall with spaces between, but some are fallen down, so spoyle the order or breach in the temple, as some think it was in the heathen tymes; others thinke it the Trophy of some victory wone by one Ambrosious, and thence the town by it has its name of Amsebury. There is severall rows of lesser stones within the others set up in the same forme of 2 upright and one lies on the top like a gateway. How they were brought thither or whether they are a made stone is not resolved—they are very hard yet I have seen some of them scraped—the weather seemes not to penetrate them. To increase the wonder of the story is that none Can Count them twice alike—they stand confused and some single stones at a distance but I have told them often, and bring their number to 91. This Country is most Champion and open, pleasant for recreations—its husbandry is mostly Corn and sheep, the Downs though short grass y<sup>e</sup> feed is sweet, producing the finest wooll and sweet meat though but small.

The little towns or villages lies in the valleys and runs along in the bottom and are called Bourns having water running in most of them. From Stonidge I went to Evell in Somersetshire, thence to Meer a little town about 15 mile; by the town is a vast high hill called the Castle of Meer—its now all grass over and so steepe up that the ascent is by footsteps cut in the side of the hill. I was on the top where some had been digging and was come to a space that was Arched and the walls plaistred and washed white and smooth—it was but a little roome, I tooke a piece of its walls and plaister. That shews there may be Cells or vaults in the hill—from thence to Wincauton 7