

Observations on the 'Memoirs of the public and private life of Sir Richard Phillips' ... to which is prefixed, a letter to Sir Richard / [Thomas Blore].

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Publication/Creation

Stamford : J. Drakard, 1808.

Persistent URL

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OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
MEMOIRS
OF
THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE
OF
SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS,
KNIGHT,
HIGH SHERIFF

For the City of London and County of Middlesex :

to which is prefixed,

A LETTER to SIR RICHARD.

"The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools."
Proverbs, iii. 35.

STAMFORD:

Printed and Sold by J. Drakard;

SOLD ALSO BY B. CROSBY AND CO. STATIONERS' COURT,
PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

Price Sixpence.

1808.

Lately was published, price One Shilling,

THE THIRD EDITION OF

Mr. BLORE's

STATEMENT of a CORRESPONDENCE

with

RICH. PHILLIPS, Esq.

(now SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS,) Sheriff, &c. &c.

respecting

The Antiquary's Magazine.

~~~~~  
" This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge.—Gen. xix. 9.  
~~~~~

STAMFORD;

Printed and sold by J. Drakard; sold also by Crosby and Co.
Stationer's Court, London.



to
SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS,

Knight.

Sir,

The anonymous author of a work intituled "*Memoirs of the public and private Life of Sir Richard Phillips, Knight, High Sheriff for the City of London and County of Middlesex*" having, in allusion to my Statement of a Correspondence with you, thought proper to observe that the circumstances of my dispute with you have been laid before the public "*in a garbled state,*" I feel myself intitled to call upon you, if you think any facts have been suppressed, the disclosure of which will operate to place your character in a more advantageous light, to make such a statement of the circumstances pretended to be garbled, as you will venture to abide by in the

face of the world. If this demand should not be complied with, the public will probably think you have nothing worthy of notice to add to my statement; and that it is not essential to the deciding the question between you and me, to inquire whether the Memoirs of Sir Richard Phillips are the labors of an hired slanderer, or the spiteful effusions of exposed hypocrisy and mortified vanity.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

THO. BLORE.

12th Aug. 1808.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE raging thirst of the present age for contemporary biography, has encouraged to a great extent, the exposure of memoirs of living persons, and Sir Richard Phillips has, in the character of a publisher, introduced amongst the lumber of our circulating libraries, several volumes of that species of literature. It was not sufficient for him however, to walk in the humble line of a mere publisher, and he is now brought forward as the man of talents, the patron of literature, the friend of liberty and humanity, and the reformer of national abuses, by Messrs. Hughes, of Tottenham Court Road, and Symonds, of Paternoster Row, who, with a zeal highly laudable in brothers of the same trade, have, at a period

of extreme delicacy in his reputation, presented us with memoirs of his public and private life, for the purpose of effacing those unfavorable impressions which the malice of reviewers, the sneers of satirists, and the more serious determinations of courts of justice had formed : and the editor of the Star, anxious to twinkle in the same hemisphere, has darted a ray towards emblazoning the glory of this paragon of knightly excellence.

From the veneration I bear to chivalry, it is my wish to treat the gilded spurs of Sir Richard with the deference due to that rank into which he has been admitted by a generous sovereign. I respect the pride of ancestry, in despite of the opinion of one of his biographers, that this is a country in which it is held in sovereign contempt. I maintain the right of the children of Sir Richard to participate in any well-earned reputation of their father, as fully as to inherit his lands and tenements: but Sir

Richard should be informed of the initiatory admonition of the master cook, when knighthood was conferred in ancient days,—that the carving knife is always prepared to cut the spurs from the heels of the unworthy; and that *he* has paid the fees of that solemnity, though he may not have heard the admonitory charge, nor have anticipated any such disgrace.

I will not venture to assert that the memoirs of Sir Richard, published by his friends, Messrs. Hughes and Symonds, and the memoirs of him which appeared in the *Star*, are his own compositions; though there is much in the style of both, to render him suspected of being their author, independently of the contradictions introduced for the purpose of concealing him; and independently of the publication of Mr. Fox's letters, which could not have been published without Sir Richard's permission, and which all, who really respect the memory of Mr. Fox, must be sincerely

sorry to have seen exposed with any thing that concerns the name and fame of, Sir Richard Phillips.

In the few observations I have to offer on the memoirs, it is not my wish to enter into any other particulars than such as are immediately connected with myself. I do not feel sufficient interest in the subject to ascertain whether Sir Richard be, as stated by the editor of the *Star*,* “ a native of the city of London,” and “ brought up with an uncle, an eminent brewer in the metropolis ;” or whether, according to the statement published by Messrs. Hughes and Symonds, he “ was born in the *neighbourhood* of Leicester,” and had a father “ in the farming line :” † neither perhaps, is it of much importance whether Sir Richard, after his first unsuccessful expedition to London, returned back to Leicester,

* *Star*, No. 6085, Aug. 5, 1808.

† *Memoirs*, p. 9.

“ his native place.”* I only notice these things by way of specimen of the art with which Sir Richard’s friends have endeavoured to throw what really relates to him into obscurity: for I do not think his attachment to an heifer †—his subsequent disgust with animal food ‡—or the spark which struck his bosom in the shape of a pye-crust,** and at length blazed into matrimony, are circumstances more interesting than the time and place of his nativity, or the stars which presided on that momentous occasion.

My enquiry is not whether Sir Richard, in his outset at Leicester, assumed the character of a schoolmaster, a bookseller, or a conjuror. I am not inclined to examine whether, during his continuance at Leicester, he was the innocent object of merciless persecution, or a convicted ven-

* Memoirs, p. 12.

† Ib. p. 13.

‡ Ib. p. 14.

** Ib. p. 57.

der of virulent sedition. I know nothing of the *accident* from which his house took fire, or of the house of his *neighbour** in which the fire commenced ; nor shall I take the trouble of enquiring whether his endeavours to promote the correction of abuses in the management of the Prison at the Cold Bath Fields, were the generous exertions of a disinterested patriot, or the babbling of a turbulent demagogue anxious only for notoriety.

In the month of November, 1807, I published a statement of a correspondence which had before that time taken place between myself and Mr. Phillips the *Bookseller*, afterwards Mr. *Sheriff* Phillips, and at length Sir Richard Phillips, *Knight*. No subsequent consideration of what I then published has inclined me to wish the statement were in the slightest degree altered. It is true, it is *ex parte* ; but, if the

* *Star*.

merits of a case could never be decided upon, because a judge should have “heard *only one side*,” the consequence would be, that every offender who should be resolute enough to observe a contumacious silence, would escape from judgment.

This sort of silence Sir Richard Phillips has thought proper to observe, willing, perhaps, to have it thought that he could “a tale unfold;” but that his delicacy, or his pride, or his something, to which he may give the name most congenial with his feelings, would rather persuade him to bear the obloquy of having acted a dishonorable part, than to enter the lists to a combat derogatory from his knighthood.

Other circumstances, however, besides his dispute with me, or his avocations as the Sheriff of the most opulent city in the world, have made him an object of public notice; and as the vulgar generally suspect that there cannot be a smoke without some

fire, he has either thought himself, or some friend has thought for him, that something like a public apology was necessary for awkward appearances in several of the events of his life; and as it was not easy entirely to suppress that part of his history which is connected with the Antiquary's Magazine, my name has had the honor of being introduced into his memoirs, amongst those with whom he has had to contend, in his career of virtuous exertions for his own advancement and for the improvement of the interests of society.

The charge which is brought against me in the memoirs of Sir Richard Phillips, that I have exposed a private correspondence, and have thereby rendered myself undeserving of encouragement from any publisher, requires but few observations. Sir Richard had no right to presume that I would be the partaker of his confidence in any worthless trick, to injure the rights of others, even for the furtherance of my

own interest: and he must have strangely miscalculated my temper and habits, if he thought he could make me the tool of his dishonorable purposes. I neither wished nor asked for his confidence; nor had I any obligation, moral or political, to keep such a secret as that which I exposed. I never asked for encouragement from Sir Richard, either directly or indirectly. I never wanted it. He was a solicitor for my favor. He received it as far as was convenient to me, if not as far as was desirable to him: but his approaches to me were soon accompanied with more of the rudeness of a gallant than the anxiety of a lover, and I repulsed him when he discovered his motives for seeking my acquaintance.

I had no engagement with Sir Richard Phillips, that any performance of mine should rise to the standard of his expectations. I had no pretensions, neither made I any pretensions to the character of an artist. I never complained of the rejection

of any performances which passed through my hands to him. I despised the works of art which accompanied the first Number of the Antiquary's Magazine, because they were miserable copies of subjects which had been published before. The public sympathized in my contempt, and the Antiquary's Magazine bowed under the decision.

The writer of the memoirs of Sir Richard Phillips, says he is not willing to enter into a discussion of the merits of the case which I have so indelicately exposed. For what purpose then has he introduced the subject again to public notice? Why has he not permitted my statement to sink quietly into that oblivion, which sooner or later is the fate of such questions, and which in time may wrap the memory of Sir Richard himself in repose? Because he is aware there is much to be answered before Sir Richard can clear himself of the charges I have brought against him; and because he is aware of the difference between refuting a.

charge and professing to be prepared for its refutation. Is it usual for a guilty person to be anxious to bring his case to discussion?

But the writer of the memoirs tells us "those who are in anywise acquainted with the character of the present High Sheriff," (meaning Sir Richard Phillips no doubt,) well know that it is utterly impossible he could be guilty of such conduct as I would fain attribute to him. What then are we to conclude from this? Is the character of Sir Richard Phillips to bid defiance to evidence, and to prove that to be false which would otherwise be true? Are such things as would cover the faces of others with shame, only to improve the varnish of his countenance? He must deny his own hand writing before he can contradict me with success. Let him hazard his defence. It will be time enough to bring witnesses to his character upon a motion in extenuation of punishment. At present it is his duty to raise his beaver and to throw

down his gauntlet, if, like a true Knight, he means to challenge a trial.

The insinuation that I had paid for the review of my statement is an unfounded falsehood. But the panegyrist of Sir Richard Phillips may be capable, for aught I know, of such shabby means of ensuring success to his nefarious labors, and the whole tissue of his performance renders his slander of others as impotent as it is malicious.

THO. BLORE.