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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry London, 1750

Chap. XI. A short Chapter; but which contains sufficient Matter to affect the good-natured Reader.

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the joint Weight of many Facts falling upon him together, would be the most likely to crush him; and he watched therefore some such Opportunity as that with which Fortune had now kindly prefented him. Lastly, by prevailing with Thwackum to conceal the Matter for a Time, he knew he should confirm an Opinion of his Friendship to Jones, which he had greatly laboured to establish in Mr. Allworthy.

CHAP. XI.

A Short Chapter; but which contains sufficient Matter to affect the good-natured Reader.

T was Mr. Allworthy's Custom never to punish any one, not even to turn away a Servant, in a Passion. He resolved, therefore, to delay pass-

ing Sentence on Jones till the Afternoon.

The poor young Man attended at Dinner, as usual; but his Heart was too much loaded to suffer him to eat. His Grief too was a good deal aggravated by the unkind Looks of Mr. Allworthy; whence he concluded that Western had discovered the whole Affair between him and Sophia: But as to Mr. Blifil's Story, he had not the least Apprehension; for of much the greater Part he was entirely innocent; and for the Refidue, as he had forgiven and forgotten it himfelf, so he suspected no Remembrance on the other Side. When Dinner was over, and the Servants departed, Mr. Allworthy began to harangue. He set forth, in a long Speech, the many Iniquities of which Jones had been guilty, particularly those which this Day had brought to Light; and concluded by telling him, ' That un' less he could clear himself of the Charge, he was resolved to banish him his Sight for 'ever.'

Many Difadvantages attended poor Jones in making his Defence; nay, indeed, he hardly knew his Accusation: For as Mr. Alworthy, in: recounting the Drunkenness, &c. while he lay ill, out of Modesty sunk every thing that related particularly to himself, which indeed principally constituted the Crime; Jones could not deny the Charge. His Heart was, besides, almost broken already; and his Spirits were fo funk, that he. could fay nothing for himfelf; but acknowledged the Whole, and, like a Criminal in Despair, threw himself upon Mercy; concluding, 'That: tho' he must own himself guilty of many Follies and Inadvertencies, he hoped he had done "nothing to deferve what would be to him the greatest Punishment in the World.'

Allworthy answered, 'That he had forgiven him too often already, in Compassion to his 'Youth, and in Hopes of his Amendment: That he now found he was an abondoned Reprobate, and fuch as it would be criminal in any one to fupport and encourage. Nay,' faid Mr. Allworthy to him, 'your audacious Attempt to fleal away the young Lady calls upon me to juffify my own Character in punishing you. The . World, who have already cenfured the Regard . I have shewn for you, may think, with some Colour at least of Justice, that I connive at so base and barbarous an Action. An Action of which you must have known my Abhorrence; and which, had you had any Concern for my · Ease and Honour, as well as for my Friend-6 ship, you would never have thought of under-

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taking. Fie upon it, young Man! indeed there is scarce any Punishment equal to your Crimes, and I can fcarce think myfelf justifiable in what I am now going to bestow on byou. However, as I have educated you like a Child of my own, I will not turn you naked into the World. When you open this Paper, therefore, you will find fomething which may enable you, with Industry, to get an honest Livelihood; but if you employ it to worfe Purposes, I shall not think myself obliged to fupply you farther, being refolved, from this Day forward, to converse no more with you on any Account. I cannot avoid faying, There is no Part of your Conduct which I refent more than your ill Treatment of that good voung Man (meaning Blifil) who hath behaved with fo much Tenderness and Honour towards vou.'

These last Words were a Dose almost too bitter to be swallowed. A Flood of Tears now gushed from the Eyes of Jones, and every Faculty of Speech and Motion seemed to have deferted him. It was some Time before he was able to obey Allwerthy's peremptory Commands of departing; which he at length did, having first kissed his Hands with a Passion difficult to be affected, and as difficult to be described.

The Reader must be very weak, if, when he considers the Light in which Jones then appeared to Mr. Allworthy, he should blame the Rigour of his Sentence. And yet all the Neighbourhood, either from this Weakness, or from some worse Motive, condemned this Justice and Severity as the highest Cruelty. Nay, the very Persons who had before censured the good Man for the Kind-

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