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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. II. Containing a Conversation which Mr. Jones had himself.

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C H A P. II.

Containing a Conversation which Mr. Jones had
with himself.

JONES received his Effects from Mr. All-
worthy's early in the Morning, with the fol-
lowing Answer to his Letter.

SIR,

I Am commanded by my Uncle to acquaint
you, that as he did not proceed to those
Measures he had taken with you, without the
greatest Deliberation, and after the fullest Evi-
dence of your Unworthiness, so will it be al-
ways out of your Power to cause the least Al-
teration in his Resolution. He expresses great
Surprize at your Presumption in saying, you
have resigned all Pretensions to a young Lady,
to whom it is impossible you should ever have
had any, her Birth and Fortune having made
her so infinitely your Superior. Lastly, I am
commanded to tell you, that the only Instance
of your Compliance with my Uncle's Inclina-
tions, which he requires, is, your immediately
quitting this Country. I cannot conclude this
without offering you my Advice, as a Christian,
that you would seriously think of amending
your Life: That you may be assisted with Grace
so to do, will be always the Prayer of

Your humble Servant,

W. BLIFIL

Many

Many contending Passions were raised in our Heroe's Mind by this Letter; but the Tender prevailed at last over the Indignant and Irascible, and a Flood of Tears came seasonably to his Assistance, and possibly prevented his Misfortunes from either turning his Head, or bursting his Heart.

He grew, however, soon ashamed of indulging this Remedy; and starting up, he cried, 'Well then, I will give Mr. *Allworthy* the only Instance he requires of my Obedience. I will go this Moment—but whither?—why let Fortune direct; since there is no other who thinks it of any Consequence what becomes of this wretched Person, it shall be a Matter of equal Indifference to myself. Shall I alone regard what no other?—Ha! have I not Reason to think there is another?—One whose Value is above that of the whole World!—I may, I must imagine my *Sophia* is not indifferent to what becomes of me. Shall I then leave this only Friend—And such a Friend? Shall I not stay with her?—Where? How can I stay with her? Have I any Hopes of ever seeing her, tho' she was as desirous as myself, without exposing her to the Wrath of her Father? And to what Purpose? Can I think of soliciting such a Creature to consent to her own Ruin? Shall I indulge any Passion of mine at such a Price?—Shall I lurk about this Country like a Thief, with such Intentions?—No, I disdain, I detest the Thought. Farewel, *Sophia*; farewel most lovely, most beloved---' Here Passion stopped his Mouth, and found a Vent at his Eyes.

And now, having taken a Resolution to leave the Country, he began to debate with himself whither he should go. *The World*, as *Milton* phrases it, lay all before him; and *Jones*, no more than *A'lam*, had any Man to whom he might resort for Comfort or Assistance. All his Acquaintance were the Acquaintance of Mr. *Allworthy*, and he had no Reason to expect any Countenance from them, as that Gentleman had withdrawn his Favour from him. Men of great and good Characters should indeed be very cautious how they discard their Dependents; for the Consequence to the unhappy Sufferer is being discarded by all others.

What Course of Life to pursue, or to what Business to apply himself, was a second Consideration; and here the Prospect was all a melancholy Void. Every Profession, and every Trade, required Length of Time, and what was worse, Money; for Matters are so constituted, that 'Nothing out of Nothing' is not a truer Maxim in Physics than in Politics; and every Man who is greatly destitute of Money, is on that Account entirely excluded from all Means of acquiring it.

At last the Ocean, that hospitable Friend to the Wretched, opened her capacious Arms to receive him; and he instantly resolved to accept her kind Invitation. To express myself less figuratively, he determined to go to Sea.

This Thought indeed no sooner suggested itself, than he eagerly embraced it; and having presently hired Horses, he set out for *Bristol* to put it in Execution.

But