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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. IV. In which is introduced one of the pleasantest Barbers that was ever recorded in History, the Barber of Bagdad, nor be in Don Quixote, not excepted.

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‘to such Vagabonds?’ At which Words he flung out of the Room, and his Patient turning himself about soon recovered his Sleep; but his Dream was unfortunately gone.

C H A P. IV.

In which is introduced one of the pleasantest Barbers that was ever recorded in History, the Barber of Bagdad, or he in Don Quixote not excepted.

THE Clock had now struck Five, when Jones awaked from a Nap of seven Hours, so much refreshed, and in such perfect Health and Spirits, that he resolved to get up and dress himself: for which Purpose he unlocked his Portmanteau, and took out clean Linen, and a Suit of Cloaths; but first he slipped on a Frock, and went down into the Kitchin to bespeak something that might pacify certain Tumults he found rising within his Stomach.

Meeting the Landlady he accosted her with great Civility, and asked ‘what he could have for Dinner.’ ‘For Dinner!’ says she, ‘it is an odd Time a Day to think about Dinner. There is nothing drest in the House, and the Fire is almost out.’ ‘Well but,’ says he, ‘I must have something to eat, and it is almost indifferent to me what: For to tell you the Truth, I was never more hungry in my Life.’ ‘Then,’ says she, ‘I believe there is a Piece of cold Buttock and Carrot, which will fit you.’— ‘Nothing better,’ answered Jones, ‘but I should be obliged to you, if you would let it be fried.’ To which the Landlady consented, and said smiling, ‘she was glad to see him so well recovered:’

For

For the Sweetness of our Heroe's Temper was almost irresistibile; besides, she was really no ill-humoured Woman at the Bottom; but she loved Money so much, that she hated every Thing which had the Semblance of Poverty.

Jones now returned in order to dress himself, while his Dinner was preparing, and was, according to his Orders, attended by the Barber.

This Barber who went by the Name of little *Benjamin*, was a Fellow of great Oddity and Humour, which had frequently led him into small Inconveniencies, such as Slaps in the Face, Kicks in the Breech, broken Bones, &c. For every one doth not understand a Jest; and those who do, are often displeas'd with being themselves the Subjects of it. This Vice was, however, incurable in him; and though he had often smarted for it, yet if ever he conceived a Joke, he was certain to be deliver'd of it, without the least Respect of Persons, Time or Place.

He had a great many other Particularities in his Character, which I shall not mention, as the Reader will himself very easily perceive them, on his farther Acquaintance with this extraordinary Person.

Jones being impatient to be dress'd, for a Reason which may easily be imagin'd, thought the Shaver was very tedious in preparing his Suds, and begg'd him to make haste; to which the other answer'd, with much Gravity: For he never dispos'd his Muscles on any Account. '*Festina lenè* is a Proverb which I learnt long before I ever touch'd a Razor,' 'I find, Friend, you are a Scholar,' replied *Jones*. 'A poor one,' said the Barber, '*non omnia possumus omnes*. Again!' said *Jones*; 'I fancy you are good at capping

‘capping Verfes.’ ‘Excuse me, Sir,’ said the Barber, ‘*non tanto me dignor honore.*’ And then proceeding to his Operation, ‘Sir,’ said he, since ‘I have dealt in Suds, I could never discover ‘more than two Reasons for shaving, the one is ‘to get a Beard, and the other to get rid of one. ‘I conjecture, Sir, it may not be long since you ‘shaved, from the former of these Motives: ‘Upon my Word you have had good Success; ‘for one may say of your Beard, that it is *Ton-* ‘*dentis gravior.*’ ‘I conjecture, says *Jones*, that ‘thou art a very comical Fellow.’ ‘You mi- ‘stake me widely, Sir,’ said the Barber, ‘I am ‘too much addicted to the Study of Philosophy, ‘*Hinc illæ Lacrymæ*, Sir, that’s my Misfortune. ‘Too much Learning hath been my Ruin.’ ‘Indeed,’ says *Jones*, ‘I confess, Friend, you ‘have more Learning than generally belongs to ‘your Trade; but I can’t see how it can have ‘injured you.’ ‘Alas, Sir, answered the Shaver, ‘my Father disinherited me for it. He was a ‘Dancing-Master; and because I could read, ‘before I could dance, he took an Aversion to ‘me, and left every Farthing among his other ‘Children.—Will you please to have your ‘Temples—O la! I ask your Pardon, I fancy ‘there is *Hiatus in manuscriptis*. I heard you ‘was going to the Wars: but I find it was a ‘Mistake.’ ‘Why do you conclude so?’ says *Jones*. ‘Sure, Sir,’ answered the Barber, ‘you ‘are too wise a Man to carry a broken Head thi- ‘ther; for that would be carrying Coals to *New-* ‘*castle.*’ ‘Upon my Word,’ cries *Jones*, ‘thou art a ‘very odd Fellow, and I like thy Humour ex- ‘tremely; I shall be very glad if thou wilt come

' to me after Dinner, and drink a Glas with
 ' me; I long to be better acquainted with thee.
 ' O dear Sir,' said the Barber, ' I can do you
 ' twenty Times as great a Favour, if you will ac-
 ' cept of it., ' What is that, my Friend cries
Jones. ' Why I will drink a Bottle with you,
 ' if you please; For I dearly love Good-nature;
 ' and as you have found me out to be a comical
 ' Fellow, so I have no Skill in Physiognomy, if
 ' you are not one of the best-natured Gentlemen
 ' in the Universe.' *Jones* now walked down
 Stairs neatly drest, and perhaps the fair *Adonis*
 was not a lovelier Figure; and yet he had no
 Charms for my Landlady: For as that good Wo-
 man did not resemble *Venus* at all in her Person,
 so neither did she in her Taste. Happy had it
 been for *Nanny* the Chambermaid, if she had seen
 with the Eyes of her Mistress; for that poor Girl
 fell so violently in love with *Jones* in five Minutes,
 that her Passion afterwards cost her many a Sigh.
 This *Nancy* was extremely pretty, and altogether
 as coy; for she had refused a Drawer, and one or
 two young Farmers in the Neighbourhood, but
 the bright Eyes of our Heroe thawed all her Ice
 in a Moment.

When *Jones* returned to the Kitchin, his
 Cloth was not yet laid; nor indeed was there any
 Occasion it should, his Dinner remaining in *Statu*
quo, as did the Fire which was to dress it. This
 Disappointment might have put many a philoso-
 phical Temper into a Passion; but it had no such
 Effect on *Jones*. He only gave the Landlady a
 gentle Rebuke, saying, ' Since it was so difficult
 ' to get it heated, he would eat the Beef cold.'
 But now the good Woman, whether moved by
 Compassion, or by Shame, or by whatever other
 Motive

Motive, I cannot tell, first gave her Servants a round Scold for disobeying the Orders which she had never given, and then bidding the Drawer lay a Napkin in the Sun, she set about the Matter in good earnest, and soon accomplished it.

This Sun, into which *Jones* was now conducted, was truly named as *Lucus a non lucendo*; for it was an Apartment into which the Sun had scarce ever looked. It was indeed the worst Room in the House; and happy was it for *Jones* that it was so. However, he was now too hungry to find any Fault; but having once satisfied his Appetite, he ordered the Drawer to carry a Bottle of Wine into a better Room, and expressed some Resentment at having been shewn into a Dungeon.

The Drawer having obeyed his Commands, he was, after some Time, attended by the Barber; who would not indeed have suffered him to wait so long for his Company, had he not been listening in the Kitchen to the Landlady, who was entertaining a Circle that she had gathered round her, with the History of poor *Jones*, Part of which she had extracted from his own Lips, and the other Part was her own ingenuous Composition; ‘for she said he was a poor Parish Boy, taken into the House of Squire *Allworthy*, where he was bred up as an Apprentice, and now turned out of Doors for his Misdeeds, particularly for making Love to his young Mistress, and probably for robbing the House; for how else should he come by the little Money he hath; And this,’ says she, ‘is your Gentleman, forsooth.’ ‘A Servant of Squire *Allworthy*!’ says the Barber, ‘what’s his Name?’—‘Why he told me his Name was *Jones*,’ says she, ‘perhaps
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