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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. XII. In which the Man of the Hill continues his History.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-884

The Stranger smiled at this Story, and *Jones* burst into a loud Fit of Laughter, upon which *Partridge* cried, ‘ Ay, you may laugh, Sir, and so did some others, particularly a Squire, who is thought to be no better than an Atheist ; who forsooth, because there was a Calf with a white Face found dead in the same Lane the next Morning, would fain have it, that the Battle was between *Frank* and that, as if a Calf would set upon a Man. Besides, *Frank* told me he knew it to be a Spirit, and could swear to him in any Court in Christendom, and he had not drank above a Quart or two, or such a Matter of Liquor at the Time. Lud have Mercy upon us, and keep us all from dipping our Hands in Blood, I say.’

‘ Well, Sir,’ said *Jones* to the Stranger, ‘ Mr. *Partridge* hath finished his Story, and I hope will give you no future Interruption, if you will be so kind to proceed.’ He then resumed his Narration ; but as he hath taken Breath for a while, we think proper to give it to our Reader, and shall therefore put an End to this Chapter.

C H A P. XII.

In which the Man of the Hill continues his History.

‘ I Had now regained my Liberty,’ said the Stranger, ‘ but I had lost my Reputation ; for there is a wide Difference between the Case of a Man who is barely acquitted of a Crime in a Court of Justice, and of him who is acquitted in his own Heart, and in the Opinion of the People. I was conscious of my Guilt, and
‘ ashamed

‘ ashamed to look any one in the Face, so resolved to leave *Oxford* the next Morning, before the Day-light discovered me to the Eyes of any Beholders.

‘ When I had got clear of the City, it first entered into my Head to return Home to my Father, and endeavour to obtain his Forgiveness; but as I had no Reason to doubt his Knowledge of all which had past, and as I was well assured of his great Averſion to all Acts of Dishonesty I could entertain no Hopes of being received by him, especially since I was too certain of all the good Offices in the Power of my Mother: Nay, had my Father’s Pardon been as sure, as I conceived his Resentment to be, I yet question whether I could have had the Assurance to behold him, or whether I could, upon any Terms, have submitted to live and converse with those, who, I was convinced, knew me to have been guilty of so base an Action.

‘ I hastened therefore back to *London*, the best Retirement of either Grief or Shame, unless for Persons of a very public Character; for here you have the Advantage of Solitude without its Disadvantage, since you may be alone and in Company at the same Time; and while you walk or sit unobserved, Noise, Hurry, and a constant Succession of Objects, entertain the Mind, and prevent the Spirits from preying on themselves, or rather on Grief or Shame, which are the most unwholesome Diet in the World; and on which (though there are many who never taste either but in public) there are some who can feed very plentifully, and very fatally when alone.



But as there is scarce any human Good with-
 out its concomitant Evil, so there are People
 who find an Inconvenience in this unobserving
 Temper of Mankind; I mean Persons who
 have no Money; for as you are not put out of
 Countenance, so neither are you cloathed or
 fed by those who do not know you. And a Man
 may be as easily starved in *Leadenhall Market* as
 in the Deserts of *Arabia*.
 It was at present my Fortune to be destitute
 of that great Evil, as it is apprehended to be
 by several Writers, who I suppose were over-
 burthened with it, namely, Money.' "With
 Submission, Sir, said *Partridge*, I do not re-
 member any Writers who have called it *Ma-*
lorum; but *Irritamenta Malorum. Effodiun-*
tur opes irritamenta Malorum." Well, Sir;
 continued the Stranger, whether it be an Evil;
 or only the Cause of Evil, I was entirely void
 of it, and at the same Time of Friends, and
 as I thought of Acquaintance; when one Even-
 ing as I was passing through the *Inner Temple*,
 very hungry, and very miserable, I heard a
 Voice on a sudden haling me with great Fami-
 liarity by my Christian Name; and upon my
 turning about, I presently recollected the Per-
 son who so saluted me, to have been my Fel-
 low Collegiate; one who had left the Univer-
 sity above a Year, and long before any of my
 Misfortunes had befallen me. This Gentle-
 man, whose Name was *Watson*, shook me
 heartily by the Hand, and expressing great Joy
 at meeting me, proposed our immediately
 drinking a Bottle together. I first declined the
 Proposal, and pretended Business; but as he
 was very earnest and pressing, Hunger at last
 overcame.

' overcame my Pride, and I fairly confessed to
 ' him I had no Money in my Pocket; yet not
 ' without framing a Lie for an Excuse, and im-
 ' puting it to my having changed my Breeches
 ' that Morning. Mr. *Watson* answered, " I
 ' thought, *Jack*, you and I had been too old
 ' Acquaintance for you to mention such a Mat-
 ' ter." He then took me by the Arm, and was
 ' pulling me along; but I gave him very little
 ' Trouble, for my own Inclinations pulled me
 ' much stronger than he could do.'

' We then went into the Friars, which you
 ' know is the Scene of all Mirth and Jollity.
 ' Here when we arrived at the Tavern, Mr. *Wat-*
 ' *son* applied himself to the Drawer only, with-
 ' out taking the least Notice of the Cook; for
 ' he had no Suspicion but that I had dined long
 ' since. However, as the Case was really other-
 ' wise, I forged another Falshood, and told my
 ' Companion, I had been at the further End of
 ' the City on Business of Consequence, and had
 ' snapt up a Mutton Chop in Haste; so that I was
 ' again hungry and wished he would add a Beef
 ' Steak to his Bottle.' Some People,' cries *Par-*
 ' *tridge*, ' ought to have good Memories, or did
 ' you find just Money enough in your Breeches
 ' to pay for the Mutton Chop?' ' Your Obser-
 ' vation is right,' answered the Stranger, ' and
 ' I believe such Blunders are inseparable from all
 ' dealing in Untruth.—But to proceed—I began
 ' now to feel myself extremely happy. The Meat
 ' and Wine soon revived my Spirits to a high
 ' Pitch, and I enjoyed much Pleasure in the Con-
 ' versation of my old Acquaintance, the rather,
 ' as I thought him entirely ignorant of what had
 ' happened at the Univerfity since his leaving it.
 ' But

“ But he did not suffer me to remain long in
 “ this agreeable Delusion; for taking a Bumper
 “ in one Hand, and holding me by the other,
 “ Here, my Boy,” cries he, “ here’s wishing
 “ you Joy of your being so honourably acquitted
 “ of that Affair laid to your Charge.” ‘ I was
 “ Thunderstruck with Confusion at those Words,
 “ which *Watson* observing, proceeded thus—
 “ Nay, never be ashamed, Man; thou hast been
 “ acquitted, and no one now dares call thee guilty;
 “ but prithee do tell me, who am thy Friend, I
 “ hope thou didst really rob him; for rat me if it
 “ was not a meritorious Action to strip such a
 “ sneaking pitiful Rascal, and instead of the Two
 “ hundred Guineas, I wish you had taken as
 “ many thousand. Come, come, my Boy, don’t
 “ be shy of confessing to me, you are not now
 “ brought before one of the Pimps. D--n me,
 “ if I don’t honour you for it; for, as I hope
 “ for Salvation, I would have made no manner
 “ of Scruple of doing the same Thing.”

‘ This Declaration a little relieved my Abash-
 ‘ ment, and as Wine had now somewhat opened
 ‘ my Heart, I very freely acknowledged the Rob-
 ‘ bery, but acquainted him that he had been misin-
 ‘ formed as to the Sum taken, which was little
 ‘ more than a fifth Part of what he had mentioned.’

“ I am sorry for it with all my Heart” ‘ quoth
 ‘ he, “ and I wish thee better Success another
 ‘ Time. Tho’ if you will take my Advice,
 ‘ you shall have no Occasion to run any Such
 ‘ Risque. Here,” said he, (taking some Dice
 ‘ out of his Pocket “ here’s the Stuff. Here are
 ‘ the Implements; here are the little Doctors
 ‘ which cure the Distempers of the Purse. Fol-
 ‘ low but my Counsel, and I will shew you a
 “ Way

“ Way to empty the Pocket of a *Queer Cull*
 “ without any Danger of the *Nubbing Cheat.*”
 ‘ *Nubbing Cheat,*’ cries *Partridge,* ‘ Pray, Sir,
 ‘ what is that?’

‘ Why that, Sir,’ says the Stranger, is a Cant
 ‘ Phrase for the Gallows; for as Gamesters differ
 ‘ little from Highwaymen in their Morals, so do
 ‘ they very much resemble them in their Lan-
 ‘ guage.

‘ We had now each drank our Bottle, when
 ‘ Mr. *Watson* said, the Board was sitting, and
 ‘ that he must attend, earnestly pressing me, at
 ‘ the same Time, to go with him and try my
 ‘ Fortune. I answered, he knew that was at
 ‘ present out of my Power, as I had informed
 ‘ him of the Emptiness of my Pocket. To say
 ‘ the Truth, I doubted not, from his many strong
 ‘ Expressions of Friendship, but that he would
 ‘ offer to lend me a small Sum for that Purpose;
 ‘ but he answered, “ Never mind that, Man,
 ‘ e’en boldly run a Levant;” (*Partridge* was go-
 ‘ ing to enquire the Meaning of that Word; but
 ‘ *Jones* stopped his Mouth;) “ but be circumspect
 ‘ as to the Man. I will tip you the proper Per-
 ‘ son, which may be necessary, as you do not
 ‘ know the Town, nor can distinguish a Rum
 ‘ Cull from a Queer one.”

‘ The Bill was now brought, when *Watson*
 ‘ paid his Share, and was departing. I reminded
 ‘ him, not without blushing, of my having no
 ‘ Money.’ He answered, “ That signifies nothing,
 ‘ score it behind the Door, or make a bold Brush,
 ‘ and take no Notice---Or---stay, says he, I
 ‘ will go down Stairs first, and then do you take
 ‘ up my Money, and score the whole Reckon-
 ‘ ing at the Bar, and I will wait for you at the
 ‘ “ Corner.”

“ Corner.” “ I exprest some Dislike at this,
 “ and hinted my Expectations that he would have
 “ deposited the whole; but he swore he had not
 “ another Sixpence in his Pocket.

“ He then went down, and I was prevailed on
 “ to take up the Money and follow him, which I
 “ did close enough to hear him tell the Drawer
 “ the Reckoning was upon the Table. The
 “ Drawer passed by me up Stairs; but I made
 “ such Haste into the Street, that I heard nothing
 “ of his Disappointment, nor did I mention a
 “ Syllable at the Bar, according to my Instruc-
 “ tions.

“ We now went directly to the Gaming Ta-
 “ ble, where Mr. *Watson* to my Surprise, pulled
 “ out a large Sum of Money, and placed it before
 “ him, as did many others; all of them, no
 “ doubt, considering their own Heaps as so many
 “ decoy Birds, which were to entice and draw
 “ over the Heaps of their Neighbours.

“ Here it would be tedious to relate all the
 “ Freaks which Fortune, or rather the Dice,
 “ played in this her Temple. Mountains of
 “ Gold were in a few Moments reduced to no-
 “ thing at one Part of the Table, and rose as
 “ suddenly in another. The rich grew in a Mo-
 “ ment poor, and the Poor as suddenly became
 “ rich; so that it seemed a Philosopher could no
 “ where have so well instructed his Pupils in the
 “ Contempt of Riches, at least he could no where
 “ have better inculcated the Incertainty of their
 “ Duration.

“ For my own Part, after having considerably
 “ improved my small Estate, I at last entirely de-
 “ molished it. Mr. *Watson* too, after much Va-
 “ riety of Luck, rose from the Table in some
 “ Heat,

' Heat, and declared he had lost a cool Hundred,
 ' and would play no longer. Then coming up
 ' to me, he asked me to return with him to the
 ' Tavern; but I positively refused, saying, I
 ' would not bring myself a second Time into
 ' such a Dilemma, and especially as he had lost
 ' all his Money, and was now in my own Con-
 ' dition.' "Pooh," says he, "I have just bor-
 ' rowed a couple of Guineas of a Friend; and
 ' one of them is at your Service." "He imme-
 ' diately put one of them into my Hand, and I
 ' no longer resisted his Inclination.

' I was at first a little shocked at returning to
 ' the same House whence we had departed in so
 ' unhandsome a Manner; but when the Drawer,
 ' with very civil Address, told us, "he believed
 ' we had forgot to pay our Reckoning," I be-
 ' came perfectly easy, and very readily gave him
 ' a Guinea, bid him pay himself, and acquiesced
 ' in the unjust Charge which had been laid on my
 ' Memory.

' Mr. *Watson* now bespoke the most extrava-
 ' gant Supper he could well think of, and tho'
 ' he had contented himself with simple Claret
 ' before, nothing now but the most precious
 ' Burgundy would serve his Purpose.

' Our Company was soon encreased by the
 ' Addition of several Gentlemen from the Gam-
 ' ing Table; most of whom, as I afterwards
 ' found, came not to the Tavern to drink, but
 ' in the Way of Business: for the true Gamesters
 ' pretended to be ill, and refused their Glafs,
 ' while they plied heartily two young Fellows,
 ' who were to be afterwards pillaged, as indeed
 ' they were without Mercy. Of this Plunder I
 ' had

‘ had the good Fortune to be a Sharer, tho’ I was
 ‘ not yet let into the Secret.

‘ There was one remarkable Accident attended
 ‘ this Tavern Play; for the Money, by Degrees,
 ‘ totally disappeared, so that tho’ at the Begin-
 ‘ ning the Table was half covered with Gold,
 ‘ yet before the Play ended, which it did not till
 ‘ the next Day, being *Sunday*, at Noon, there
 ‘ was scarce a single Guinea to be seen on the
 ‘ Table; and this was the stranger, as every
 ‘ Person present except myself declared he had
 ‘ lost; and what was become of the Money,
 ‘ unless the Devil himself carried it away, is dif-
 ‘ ficult to determine.’

‘ Most certainly he did,’ says *Partridge*, ‘ for
 ‘ evil Spirits can carry away any thing without
 ‘ being seen, tho’ there were never so many Folk
 ‘ in the Room; and I should not have been sur-
 ‘ prized if he had carried away all the Company
 ‘ of a set of wicked Wretches, who were at
 ‘ play in Sermon-time. And I could tell you a
 ‘ true Story, if I would, where the Devil took
 ‘ a Man out of Bed from another Man’s Wife,
 ‘ and carried him away through the Key-hole of
 ‘ the Door. I’ve seen the very House where it
 ‘ was done, and no Body hath lived in it these
 ‘ thirty Years.’

Tho’ *Jones* was a little offended by the Imper-
 tinence of *Partridge*, he could not however avoid
 smiling at his Simplicity. The Stranger did the
 same, and then proceeded with his Story, as will
 be seen in the next Chapter.