

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. XIII. In which the foregoing Story is farther continued.

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

C H A P. XIII.

In which the foregoing Story is further continued.

‘ **M**Y Fellow Collegiate had now entered
 ‘ me in a new Scene of Life. I soon
 ‘ became acquainted with the whole Fraternity
 ‘ of Sharpers, and was let into their Secrets. I
 ‘ mean into the Knowledge of those gross Cheats
 ‘ which are proper to impose upon the raw and un-
 ‘ experienced: For there are some Tricks of a
 ‘ finer Kind, which are known only to a few of
 ‘ the Gang, who are at the Head of their Profes-
 ‘ sion; a Degree of Honour beyond my Expecta-
 ‘ tion; for Drink, to which I was immoder-
 ‘ ately addicte’d, and the natural Warmth of
 ‘ my Passions, prevented me from arriving at any
 ‘ great Success in an Art, which requires as much
 ‘ Coolness as the most austere School of Philo-
 ‘ sophy.

‘ Mr. *Watson*, with whom I now lived in the
 ‘ closest Amity, had unluckily the former Fail-
 ‘ ing to a very great Excess; so that instead of
 ‘ making a Fortune by his Profession, as some
 ‘ others did, he was alternately rich and poor,
 ‘ and was often obliged to surrender to his cooler
 ‘ Friends over a Bottle which they never tasted,
 ‘ that Plunder that he had taken from Culls at
 ‘ the publick Table

‘ However, we both made a Shift to pick up
 ‘ an uncomfortable Livelihood, and for two Years
 ‘ I continued of the Calling, during which Time
 ‘ I tasted all the Varieties of Fortune; sometimes
 ‘ flourishing in Affluence, and at others being
 ‘ obliged to struggle with almost incredible Diffi-
 ‘ culties.

culties. To-day wallowing in Luxury, and
 To-morrow reduced to the coarsest and most
 homely Fare. My fine Clothes being often on
 my Back in the Evening, and at the Pawnshop
 the next Morning.

One Night as I was returning Pennyles
 from the Gaming-table, I observed a very great
 Disturbance, and a large Mob gathered toge-
 ther in the Street. As I was in no Danger
 from Pick-pockets, I ventured into the Croud,
 where, upon Enquiry, I found that a Man had
 been robbed and very ill used by some Ruffians.
 The wounded Man appeared very bloody, and
 seemed scarce able to support himself on his
 Legs. As I had not therefore been deprived of
 my Humanity by my present Life and Conversa-
 tion, tho' they had left me very little of either
 Honesty or Shame, I immediately offered my
 Assistance to the unhappy Person, who thank-
 fully accepted it, and putting himself under my
 Conduct, begged me to convey him to some
 Tavern, where he might send for a Surgeon,
 being, as he said, faint with Loss of Blood.
 He seemed indeed highly pleased at finding one
 who appeared in the Dress of a Gentleman :
 For as to all the rest of the Company present,
 their Outside was such that he could not wisely
 place any Confidence in them.

I took the poor Man by the Arm, and led
 him to the Tavern where we kept our Rendez-
 vous, as it happened to be the nearest at Hand.
 A Surgeon happening luckily to be in the
 House, immediately attended, and applied him-
 self to dressing his Wounds, which I had the
 Pleasure to hear were not likely to be mortal.

The

‘ The Surgeon having very expeditiously and dextrously finished his Business, began to enquire in what Part of the Town the wounded Man lodged; who answered, “ That he was come to Town that very Morning; that his Horse was at an Inn in *Piccadilly*, and that he had no other Lodging, and very little or no Acquaintance in Town.”

‘ This Surgeon, whose Name I have forgot, tho’ I remember it began with an *R*, had the first Character in his Profession, and was Sergeant-Surgeon to the King. He had moreover many good Qualities, and was a very generous, good-natured Man, and ready to do any Service to his Fellow-Creatures. He offered his Patient the Use of his Chariot to carry him to his Inn, and at the same Time whispered in his Ear, “ That if he wanted any Money, he would furnish him,”

‘ The poor Man was not now capable of returning Thanks for this generous Offer: For having had his Eyes for some Time stedfastly on me, he threw himself back in his Chair, crying, O, my Son! my Son! and then fainted away.

‘ Many of the People present imagined this Accident had happened through his Loss of Blood; but I, who at the same Time began to recollect the Features of my Father, was now confirmed in my Suspicion, and satisfied that it was he himself who appeared before me. I presently ran to him, raised him in my Arms, and kissed his cold Lips with the utmost Eagerness. Here I must draw a Curtain over a Scene which I cannot describe: For though I did not lose my Being, as my Father for a while did,
‘ my

" my Senses were however so overpowered with
 " Affright and Surprize, that I am a Stranger to
 " what past during some Minutes, and indeed till
 " my Father had again recovered from his Swoon,
 " and I found myself in his Arms, both tenderly
 " embracing each other, while the Tears trickled
 " a-pace down the Cheeks of each of us.

" Most of those present seemed affected by this
 " Scene, which we, who might be considered as
 " the Actors in it, were desirous of removing from
 " the Eyes of all Spectators, as fast as we could ;
 " my Father therefore accepted the kind Offer of
 " the Surgeon's Chariot, and I attended him in it
 " to his Inn.

" When we were alone together, he gently
 " upbraided me with having neglected to write
 " to him during so long a Time, but entirely
 " omitted the Mention of that Crime which had
 " occasioned it. He then informed me of my
 " Mother's Death, and insisted on my returning
 " home with him, saying, " That he had long
 " suffered the greatest Anxiety on my Account ;
 " that he knew not whether he had most feared
 " my Death or wished it ; since he had so many
 " more dreadful Apprehensions for me. At last
 " he said, a neighbouring Gentleman, who had
 " just recovered a Son from the same Place, in-
 " formed him where I was, and that to reclaim
 " me from this Course of Life, was the sole Cause
 " of his Journey to *London*." He thanked Heaven
 " he had succeeded so far as to find me out by
 " Means of an Accident which had like to have
 " proved fatal to him ; and had the Pleasure to
 " think he partly owed his Preservation to my
 " Humanity, with which he profest himself to be
 " more delighted than he should have been with
 " my

‘ my filial Piety, if I had known that the Object
 ‘ of all my Care was my own Father.

‘ Vice had not so depraved my Heart, as to
 ‘ excite in it an Insensibility of so much paternal
 ‘ Affection, tho’ so unworthily bestowed. I
 ‘ presently promised to obey his Commands in
 ‘ my Return home with him, as soon as he was
 ‘ able to travel, which indeed he was in a very
 ‘ few Days, by the Assistance of that excellent
 ‘ Surgeon who had undertaken his Cure.

‘ The Day preceding my Father’s Journey
 ‘ (before which Time I scarce ever left him) I
 ‘ went to take my Leave of some of my most in-
 ‘ timate Acquaintance, particularly of Mr. *Wat-*
 ‘ *son*, who dissuaded me from burying myself,
 ‘ as he called it, out of a simple Compliance with
 ‘ the fond Desires of a foolish old Fellow. Such
 ‘ Solicitations, however, had no Effect, and I
 ‘ once more saw my own Home. My Father
 ‘ now greatly solicited me to think of Marriage ;
 ‘ but my Inclinations were utterly averse to any
 ‘ such Thoughts. I had tasted of Love already,
 ‘ and perhaps you know the extravagant Excesses
 ‘ of that most tender and most violent Passion.’
 Here the old Gentleman paused, and looked ear-
 nestly at *Jones* ; whose Countenance within a
 Minute’s Space displayed the Extremities of both
 Red and White. Upon which the old Man,
 without making any Observations, renewed his
 Narrative.

‘ Being now provided with all the Necessaries
 ‘ of Life, I betook myself once again to Study, and
 ‘ that with a more inordinate Application than I
 ‘ had ever done formerly. The Books which
 ‘ now employed my Time solely were those, as
 ‘ well ancient as modern, which treat of true
 ‘ Phi-

' Philosophy, a Word which is by many thought
 ' to be the Subject only of Farce and Ridicule.
 ' I now read over the Works of *Aristotle* and
 ' *Plato*, with the rest of those inestimable Treasures
 ' which ancient *Greece* had bequeathed to
 ' the World.

' These Authors, tho' they instructed me in
 ' no Science by which Men may promise to
 ' themselves to acquire the least Riches, or worldly
 ' Power, taught me, however, the Art of despising
 ' the highest Acquisitions of both. They
 ' elevate the Mind, and steel and harden it against
 ' the capricious Invasions of Fortune. They
 ' not only instruct in the Knowledge of Wisdom,
 ' but confirm Men in her Habits, and demonstrate
 ' plainly, that this must be our Guide, if
 ' we propose ever to arrive at the greatest worldly
 ' Happiness; or to defend ourselves with any
 ' tolerable Security against the Misery which
 ' every where surrounds and invests us.

' To this I added another Study, compared to
 ' which all the Philosophy taught by the wisest
 ' Heathens is little better than a Dream, and is
 ' indeed as full of Vanity as the silliest Jester ever
 ' pleased to represent it. This is that divine
 ' Wisdom which is alone to be found in the Holy
 ' Scriptures: For they impart to us the Knowledge
 ' and Assurance of Things much more
 ' worthy our Attention, than all which this
 ' World can offer to our Acceptance; of Things
 ' which Heaven itself hath condescended to reveal
 ' to us, and to the smallest Knowledge of
 ' which the highest human Wit unassisted could
 ' never ascend. I began now to think all the
 ' Time I had spent with the best Heathen Writers,
 ' was little more than Labour lost: For
 ' how-

' however pleasant and delightful their Lessons
 ' may be, or however adequate to the right Re-
 ' gulation of our Conduct with Respect to this
 ' World only; yet when compared with the
 ' Glory revealed in Scripture, their highest Do-
 ' cuments will appear as trifling, and of as little
 ' Consequence as the Rules by which Children
 ' regulate their childish little Games and Pastime.
 ' True it is, that Philosophy makes us wiser, but
 ' Christianity makes us better Men. Philosophy
 ' elevates and steels the Mind, Christianity softens
 ' and sweetens it. The Former makes us the
 ' Objects of human Admiration, the Latter of
 ' Divine Love. That insures us a temporal, but
 ' this an eternal Happiness.—But I am afraid I
 ' tire you with my Rhapsody.'

' Not at all,' cries *Partridge*; ' Lud forbid we
 ' should be tired with good Things.'

' I had spent,' continued the Stranger, ' about
 ' four Years in the most delightful Manner to
 ' myself, totally given up to Contemplation, and
 ' entirely unembarrassed with the Affairs of the
 ' World, when I lost the best of Fathers, and
 ' one whom I so entirely loved, that my Grief
 ' at his Loss exceeds all Description. I now
 ' abandoned my Books, and gave myself up for
 ' a whole Month to the Efforts of Melancholy
 ' and Despair. Time, however, the best Physsi-
 ' cian of the Mind, at length brought me Relief.'

' Ay, ay, *Tempus edax Rerum*,' said *Partridge*.
 ' I then,' continued the Stranger, ' betook my-
 ' self again to my former Studies, which I may
 ' say perfected my Cure: For Philosophy and Re-
 ' ligion may be called the Exercises of the Mind,
 ' and when this is disordered they are as whole-
 ' some as Exercise can be to a distempered Body.

‘ They do indeed produce similar Effects with
 ‘ Exercise: For they strengthen and confirm the
 ‘ Mind; till Man becomes, in the noble Strain
 ‘ of *Horace*,

‘ *Fortis, & in seipso totus teres atque rotundus,*

‘ *Externi ne quid valeat per lævæ morari:*

‘ *In quem manca ruit semper Fortuna.—**

Here *Jones* smiled at some Conceit which intruded itself into his Imagination; but the Stranger, I believe, perceived it not, and proceeded thus.

‘ My Circumstances were now greatly altered
 ‘ by the Death of that best of Men: For my
 ‘ Brother, who was now become Master of the
 ‘ House, differed so widely from me in his Inclinations,
 ‘ and our Pursuits in Life had been so very various,
 ‘ that we were the worst of Company to each other;
 ‘ but what made our living together still more disagreeable,
 ‘ was the little Harmony which could subsist between the few
 ‘ who resorted to me, and the numerous Train
 ‘ of Sportsmen who often attended my Brother
 ‘ from the Field to the Table: For such Fellows,
 ‘ besides the Noise and Nonsense with which they
 ‘ persecute the Ears of sober Men, endeavour always
 ‘ to attack them with Affront and Contempt. This
 ‘ was so much the Case, that neither I myself, nor my
 ‘ Friends, could ever sit down to a Meal with them,
 ‘ without being treated with Derision, because we were
 ‘ unacquainted with the Phrases of Sportsmen. For
 ‘ Men of true Learning, and almost universal

* Firm in himself, who on himself relies,
 Polish'd and round, who runs his proper Course,
 And breaks Misfortunes with superior Force.

Mr. FRANCIS.

‘ Know-

‘ Knowledge, always compassionate the Ignorance
 ‘ of others: but Fellows who excel in some lit-
 ‘ tle, low, contemptible Art, are always certain
 ‘ to despise those who are unacquainted with that
 ‘ Art.

‘ In short, we soon separated, and I went by
 ‘ the Advice of a Physician to drink the *Bath*
 ‘ Waters: For my violent Affliction, added to a
 ‘ sedentary Life, had thrown me into a kind of
 ‘ paralytic Disorder, for which those Waters are
 ‘ accounted an almost certain Cure. The second
 ‘ Day after my Arrival, as I was walking by the
 ‘ River, the Sun shone so intensely hot (tho’ it
 ‘ was early in the Year) that I retired to the Shel-
 ‘ ter of some Willows, and sat down by the Ri-
 ‘ ver-side. Here I had not been seated long be-
 ‘ fore I heard a Person on the other Side the Wil-
 ‘ lows, sighing and bemoaning himself bitterly.
 ‘ On a sudden, having uttered a most impious
 ‘ Oath, he cried, “I am resolved to bear it no
 ‘ longer,” and directly threw himself into the
 ‘ Water. I immediately started, and ran towards
 ‘ the Place, calling at the same Time as loudly as
 ‘ I could for Assistance. An Angler happened
 ‘ luckily to be a fishing a little below me, tho’
 ‘ some very high Sedge had hid him from my
 ‘ Sight. He immediately came up, and both of
 ‘ us together, not without some Hazard of our
 ‘ Lives, drew the Body to the Shore. At first
 ‘ we perceived no Sign of Life remaining; but
 ‘ having held the Body up by the Heels (for we
 ‘ soon had Assistance enough) it discharged a vast
 ‘ Quantity of Water at the Mouth, and at length
 ‘ began to discover some Symptoms of Breathing,
 ‘ and a little afterwards to move both its Hands
 ‘ and its Legs.

‘ An Apothecary, who happened to be present among others, advised that the Body, which seemed now to have pretty well emptied itself of Water, and which began to have many convulsive Motions, should be directly taken up, and carried into a warm Bed. This was accordingly performed, the Apothecary and myself attending.

‘ As we were going towards an Inn, for we knew not the Man’s Lodgings, luckily a Woman met us, who, after some violent Screaming, told us, that the Gentleman lodged at her House.

‘ When I had seen the Man safely deposited there, I left him to the Care of the Apothecary, who, I suppose, used all the right Methods with him; for the next Morning I heard he had perfectly recovered his Senses.

‘ I then went to visit him, intending to search out, as well as I could, the Cause of his having attempted so desperate an Act, and to prevent, as far as I was able, his pursuing such wicked Intentions for the future. I was no sooner admitted into his Chamber, than we both instantly knew each other; for who should this Person be, but my good Friend Mr. *Watson*! Here I will not trouble you with what past at our first Interview: For I would avoid Prolixity as much as possible.’ ‘ Pray let us hear all,’ cries *Partridge*, ‘ I want mightily to know what brought him to *Bath*.’

‘ You shall hear every Thing material,’ answered the Stranger; and then proceeded to relate what we shall proceed to write, after we have given a short breathing Time to both ourselves and the Reader.

C H A P.