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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. II. Containing Letters and other Matters which attend Amours.

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we mean to represent them as such. They might as well suppose, that every Clergyman was represented by *Thwackum*, or every Soldier by Ensign *Northerton*.

There is not indeed a greater Error than that which universally prevails among the Vulgar, who borrowing their Opinion from some ignorant Satirists, have affixed the Character of Lewdness to these Times. On the contrary, I am convinced there never was less of Love Intrigue carried on among Persons of Condition, than now. Our present Women have been taught by their Mothers to fix their Thoughts only on Ambition and Vanity, and to despise the Pleasures of Love as unworthy their Regard; and being afterwards, by the Care of such Mothers, married without having Husbands, they seem pretty well confirmed in the Justness of those Sentiments; whence they content themselves, for the dull Remainder of Life, with the Pursuit of more innocent, but I am afraid more childish Amusements, the bare Mention of which would ill suit with the Dignity of this History. In my humble Opinion, the true Characteristic of the present *Beau Monde*, is rather Folly than Vice, and the only Epithet which it deserves is that of *Friivolous*.

C H A P. II.

Containing Letters and other Matters which attend Amours.

JONES had not long been at Home, before he received the following Letter.

‘ I was never more surprized than when I
‘ found you was gone. When you left the
‘ Room,

' Room, I little imagined you intended to have
 ' left the House without seeing me again. Your
 ' Behaviour is all of a Piece, and convinces me
 ' how much I ought to despise a Heart which
 ' can doat upon an Idiot; though I know not
 ' whether I should not admire her Cunning more
 ' than her Simplicity: Wonderful both! For
 ' though she understood not a Word of what
 ' passed between us, she yet had the Skill, the
 ' Assurance, the——what shall I call it? to de-
 ' ny to my Face, that she knows you, or ever
 ' saw you before.—Was this a Scheme laid
 ' between you, and have you been base enough
 ' to betray me?—O how I despise her, you,
 ' and all the World, but chiefly myself! for—I
 ' dare not write what I should afterwards run
 ' mad to read; but remember, I can detest as
 ' violently as I have loved.'

Jones had but little Time given him to reflect
 on this Letter, before a second was brought him
 from the same Hand; and this, likewise, we shall
 set down in the precise Words.

' When you consider the Hurry of Spirits in
 ' which I must have writ, you cannot be fur-
 ' prized at any Expressions in my former Note.
 ' ——Yet, perhaps, on Reflection, they were
 ' rather too warm. At least I would, if possible,
 ' think all owing to the odious Playhouse, and to
 ' the Impertinence of a Fool, which detained
 ' me beyond my Appointment.—How easy is it
 ' to think well of those we love?—Perhaps
 ' you desire I should think so. I have resolved
 ' to see you To-Night; so come to me im-
 ' mediately.

P. S. I have ordered to be at Home to none but
yourself.

P. S. Mr. Jones will imagine I shall assist
him in his Defence; for I believe he
cannot desire to impose on me more
than I desire to impose on myself.

P. S. Come immediately.

To the Men of Intrigue I refer the Determination, whether the angry or the tender Letter gave the greatest Uneasiness to *Jones*. Certain it is, he had no violent Inclination to pay any more Visits that Evening, unless to one single Person. However he thought his Honour engaged, and had not this been Motive sufficient, he would not have ventured to blow the Temper of *Lady Bellaston* into that Flame of which he had Reason to think it susceptible, and of which he feared the Consequence might be a Discovery to *Sophia*, which he dreaded. After some discontented Walks therefore about the Room, he was preparing to depart, when the Lady kindly prevented him, not by another Letter, but by her own Presence. She entered the Room very disordered in her Dress, and very discomposed in her Looks, and threw herself into a Chair, where having recovered her Breath, she said,—‘ You see, Sir, when Women have gone one Length too far, they will stop at none. If any Person would have sworn this to me a Week ago, I would not have believed it of myself.’ ‘ I hope, Madam, said *Jones*, my charming Lady *Bellaston* will be as difficult to believe any thing
against

' against one who is so sensible of the many Ob-
 ' ligations she hath conferred upon him.' ' In-
 ' deed! says she, sensible of Obligations! Did I
 ' expect to hear such cold Language from Mr.
 ' Jones?' ' Pardon me, my dear Angel, said he,
 ' if after the Letters I have received, the Ter-
 ' rors of your Anger, though I know not how
 ' I have deserved it'—' And have I then,
 ' says she with a Smile, so angry a Countenance?
 ' —Have I really brought a chiding Face with
 ' me?'—' If there be Honour in Man, said
 ' he, I have done nothing to merit your Anger.
 ' -----You remember the Appointment you sent
 ' me---I went in Pursuance -----I beseech you,
 ' cry'd she, do not run through the odious Re-
 ' cital-----Answer me but one Question, and I
 ' shall be easy—Have you not betrayed my Ho-
 ' nour to her?---Jones fell upon his Knees, and
 ' began to utter the most violent Protestations,
 ' when Partridge came dancing and capering in-
 ' to the Room, like one drunk with Joy, crying
 ' out, She's found! she's found!--Here, Sir,
 ' here, she's here,---Mrs. Honour is upon the
 ' Stairs.' ' Stop her a Moment, cries Jones,---
 ' Here, Madam, step behind the Bed, I have
 ' no other Room nor Closet, nor Place on Earth
 ' to hide you in; sure never was so damn'd an
 ' Accident.'-----' D--n'd indeed! said the Lady,
 as she went to her Place of Concealment; and,
 presently afterwards in came Mrs Honour. ' Hey
 ' day! says she, Mr. Jones, what's the Matter?
 ' ---That impudent Rascal your Servant, would
 ' scarce let me come up Stairs. I hope he hath
 ' not the same Reason to keep me from you as he
 ' had at Upton.---I suppose you hardly expected
 ' to see me; but you have certainly bewitch-

'ed my Lady. Poor dear young Lady! To
 'be sure, I loves her as tenderly as if she was
 'my own Sister. Lord have Mercy upon
 'you, if you don't make her a good Husband;
 'and to be sure if you do not, nothing can be bad
 'enough for you.' *Jones* begged her only to whif-
 'per, for that there was a Lady dying in the next
 'Room.' 'A Lady! cries she; ay, I suppose
 'one of your Ladies.--O Mr. *Jones*, there are
 'too many of them in the Word; I believe we
 'are got into the House of one, for my Lady
 '*Bellaſten* I darſt to ſay is no better than ſhe
 'ſhould be.'---'Huſh! huſh! cries *Jones*, every
 'Word is over-heard in the next Room.' 'I
 'don't care a Farthing, cries *Honour*, I ſpeaks
 'no Scandal of any one; but to be ſure the
 'Servants make no Scruple of ſaying as how
 'her Ladyſhip meets Men at another Place---
 'where the Houſe goes under the Name of a
 'poor Gentlewoman, but her Ladyſhip pays the
 'Rent, and many's the good Thing beſides,
 'they ſay, ſhe hath of her.'---Here *Jones*, after
 'expreſſing the utmoſt Uneaſineſs, offered to ſtop
 'her Mouth,---'Hey day! why ſure Mr. *Jones*
 'you will let me ſpeak, I ſpeaks no Scandal, for
 'I only ſays what I heard from others,--- and
 'thinks I to myſelf much good may it do the
 'Gentlewhoman with her Riches, if ſhe comes
 'by it in ſuch a wicked Manner. To be ſure
 'it is better to be poor and honeſt.' 'The Ser-
 'vants are Villains, cries *Jones*, and abuſe their
 'Lady unjuſtly.---Ay to be ſure Servants are al-
 'ways Villains, and ſo my Lady ſays, and won't
 'hear a Word of it.'---'No, I am convinced,
 'ſays *Jones*, my *Sophia* is above liſtning to ſuch
 'baſe Scandal.' 'Nay, I believe it is no Scandal
 'neither,

‘neither, cries *Honour*, for why should she meet
‘Men at another House?---It can never be for
‘any Good: For if she had a lawful Design of
‘being courted, as to be sure any Lady may
‘lawfully give her Company to Men upon that
‘Account; why where can be the Sense?---I pro-
‘test, cries *Jones*, I can’t hear all this of a Lady
‘of such Honour, and a Relation of *Sophia*;
‘besides you will distract the poor Lady in the
‘next Room.--- Let me intreat you to walk
‘with me down Stairs.’---‘Nay, Sir, if you won’t
‘let me speak, I have done—Here, Sir, is a
‘Letter from my young Lady,---what would
‘some Men give to have this? But, Mr. *Jones*,
‘I think you are not over and above generous,
‘and yet I have heard some Servants say---but I
‘am sure you will do me the Justice to own I
‘never saw the Colour of your Money.’ Here
Jones hastily took the Letter, and presently after
slip’d five Pieces into her Hand. He then returned
a thousand Thanks to his dear *Sophia* in a Whisper,
and begged her to leave him to read her Letter;
she presently departed, not without expressing
much grateful Sense of his Generosity.

Lady *Bellafton* now came from behind the
Curtain. How shall I describe her Rage? Her
Tongue was at first incapable of Utterance; but
Streams of Fire darted from her Eyes, and well
indeed they might, for her Heart was all in a
Flame. And now as soon as her Voice found
Way, instead of expressing any Indignation a-
gainst *Honour*, or her own Servants, she began
to attack poor *Jones*. ‘You see, said she, what
‘I have sacrificed to you, my Reputation, my
‘Honour,---gone for ever! And what Return
‘have I found? Neglected, slighted for a Coun-



try Girl, for an Idiot.'—'What Neglect, Madam, or what Slight, cries *Jones*, have I been guilty of?—Mr. *Jones*, said she, it is in vain to dissemble, if you will make me easy, you must entirely give her up; and as a Proof of your Intention, shew me the Letter.'—'What Letter, Madam?' said *Jones*. Nay, surely, said she, you cannot have the Confidence to deny your having received a Letter by the Hands of that Trollop.'—'And can your Ladyship, cries he, ask of me what I must part with my Honour before I grant? Have I acted in such a Manner by your Ladyship? Could I be guilty of betraying this poor innocent Girl to you, what Security could you have, that I should not act the same Part by yourself? A Moment's Reflection will, I am sure, convince you, that a Man with whom the Secrets of a Lady are not safe, must be the most contemptible of Wretches.'—'Very well, said she—I need not insist on your becoming this contemptible Wretch in your own Opinion; for the Inside of the Letter could inform me of nothing more than I know already. I see the Footing you are upon.'—Here ensued a long Conversation, which the Reader, who is not too curious, will thank me for not inserting at length. It shall suffice therefore to inform him, that *Lady Bellafton* grew more and more pacified, and at length believed, or affected to believe, his Protestations, that his meeting with *Sophia* that Evening was merely accidental, and every other Matter which the Reader already knows, and which as *Jones* set before her in the strongest Light, it is plain that she had in Reality no Reason to be angry with him.

She