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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. V. A short Account of the History of Mrs. Miller.

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which he had before this Time received some Rebukes from *Jones*, who always exprest great Bitterness against any Misbehaviour to the fair Part of the Species, who, if considered, he said, as they ought to be, in the Light of the dearest Friends, were to be cultivated, honoured, and caressed with the utmost Love and Tenderness; but, if regarded as Enemies, were a Conquest of which a Man ought rather to be ashamed than to value himself upon it.

C H A P. V.

A short Account of the History of Mrs. Miller.

JONES this Day eat a pretty good Dinner for a sick Man, that is to say, the larger Half of a Shoulder of Mutton. In the Afternoon he received an Invitation from *Mrs. Miller* to drink Tea: For that good Woman having learnt, either by Means of *Partridge*, or by some other Means natural or supernatural, that he had a Connection with *Mr. Allworthy*, could not endure the Thoughts of parting with him in an angry Manner.

Jones accepted the Invitation; and no sooner was the Tea-kettle removed, and the Girls sent out of the Room, than the Widow, without much Preface, began as follows: 'Well, there are very surprizing Things happen in this World; but certainly it is a wonderful Business, that I should have a Relation of *Mr. Allworthy* in my House, and never know any Thing of the Matter. Alas! Sir, you little imagine what a Friend that best of Gentlemen hath been to me and mine. Yes, Sir, I am not ashamed to own it;



' it is owing to his Goodness, that I did not long
 ' since perish for Want, and leave my poor little
 ' Wretches, two destitute, helpless, friendless
 ' Orphans, to the Care, or rather to the Cruelty
 ' of the World.

' You must know, Sir, though I am now re-
 ' duced to get my Living by letting Lodgings, I
 ' was born and bred a Gentlewoman. My Fa-
 ' ther was an Officer of the Army, and died in a
 ' considerable Rank: But he lived up to his Pay;
 ' and as that expired with him, his Family, at
 ' his Death, became Beggars. We were three
 ' Sisters. One of us had the good Luck to die
 ' soon after of the Small-pox: A Lady was so
 ' kind as to take the second out of Charity, as
 ' she said, to wait upon her. The Mother of
 ' this Lady had been a Servant to my Grandmo-
 ' ther; and having inherited a vast Fortune from
 ' her Father, which he had got by Pawnbroking,
 ' was married to a Gentleman of great Estate and
 ' Fashion. She used my Sister so barbarously,
 ' often upbraiding her with her Birth and Pover-
 ' ty, calling her in Derision a Gentlewoman, that
 ' I believe she at length broke the Heart of the
 ' poor Girl. In short, she likewise died with-
 ' in a Twelvemonth after my Father. Fortune
 ' thought proper to provide better for me, and
 ' within a Month from his Decease I was mar-
 ' ried to a Clergyman, who had been my Lover
 ' a long Time before, and who had been very
 ' ill-used by my Father on that Account: For
 ' though my poor Father could not give any of
 ' us a Shilling, yet he bred us up as delicately,
 ' considered us, and would have had us consider
 ' ourselves as highly, as if we had been the rich-
 ' est Heiresses. But my dear Husband forgot all
 ' this

‘ this Usage, and the Moment we were become
 ‘ fatherless, he immediately renewed his Addreses
 ‘ to me so warmly, that I, who always liked,
 ‘ and now more than ever esteemed him, soon
 ‘ comply’d. Five Years did I live in a State of
 ‘ perfect Happiness with that best of Men, till
 ‘ at last—Oh! cruel, cruel Fortune that ever se-
 ‘ parated us, that deprived me of the kindest of
 ‘ Husbands, and my poor Girls of the tenderest
 ‘ Parent.—O my poor Girls! you never knew
 ‘ the Blessing which ye lost.—I am ashamed, Mr.
 ‘ Jones, of this womanish Weakness; but I shall
 ‘ never mention him without Tears.’ — ‘ I ought
 ‘ rather, Madam,’ said Jones, ‘ to be ashamed
 ‘ that I do not accompany you.’ — ‘ Well, Sir,’
 continued she, ‘ I was now left a second Time
 ‘ in a much worse Condition than before; be-
 ‘ sides the terrible Affliction I was to encounter,
 ‘ I had now two Children to provide for; and
 ‘ was, if possible, more penniless than ever, when
 ‘ that great, that good, that glorious Man, Mr.
 ‘ Allworthy, who had some little Acquaintance
 ‘ with my Husband, accidentally heard of my Dis-
 ‘ tress, and immediately writ this Letter to me.
 ‘ Here, Sir,—here it is; I put it into my Pocket
 ‘ to shew it you. This is the Letter, Sir; I
 ‘ must and will read it to you.

‘ Madam,
 ‘ I Heartily condole with you on your late
 ‘ grievous Loss, which your own good Sense,
 ‘ and the excellent Lessons you must have learnt
 ‘ from the worthiest of Men, will better enable
 ‘ you to bear, than any Advice which I am ca-
 ‘ pable of giving. Nor have I any Doubt that
 ‘ you, whom I have heard to be the tenderest of



“ Mothers, will suffer any immoderate Indul-
 “ gence of Grief to prevent you from discharg-
 “ ing your Duty to those poor Infants, who now
 “ alone stand in Need of your Tendersness.

“ However, as you must be supposed at pre-
 “ sent to be incapable of much worldly Consid-
 “ eration, you will pardon my having ordered a
 “ Person to wait on you, and to pay you Twenty
 “ Guineas, which I beg you will accept ’till I
 “ have the Pleasure of seeing you, and believe
 “ me to be, Madam, &c.”

“ This Letter, Sir, I received within a Fort-
 “ night after the irreparable Loss I have men-
 “ tioned, and within a Fortnight afterwards, Mr.
 “ *Allworthy*, — the blessed Mr. *Allworthy*, came to
 “ pay me a Visit, when he placed me in the House
 “ where you now see me, gave me a large Sum
 “ of Money to furnish it, and settled an Annuity
 “ of 50*l.* a Year upon me, which I have con-
 “ stantly received ever since. Judge then, Mr.
 “ *Jones*, in what Regard I must hold a Benefac-
 “ tor, to whom I owe the Preservation of my
 “ Life, and of those dear Children, for whose
 “ Sake alone my Life is valuable. — Do not, there-
 “ fore, think me impertinent, Mr. *Jones*, (since
 “ I must esteem one for whom I know Mr. *All-*
 “ *worthy* hath so much Value) if I beg you not
 “ to converse with these wicked Women. You
 “ are a young Gentleman, and do not know half
 “ their artful Wiles. Do not be angry with me,
 “ Sir, for what I said upon account of my House;
 “ you must be sensible it would be the Ruin of
 “ my poor dear Girls. Besides, Sir, you cannot
 “ but be acquainted, that Mr. *Allworthy* himself
 “ would

‘ would never forgive my conniving at such Matters, and particularly with you.’

‘ Upon my Word, Madam,’ said *Jones*, ‘ you need make no farther Apology; nor do I in the least take any Thing ill you have said: But give me Leave, as no one can have more Value than myself for Mr. *Allworthy*, to deliver you from one Mistake, which, perhaps, would not be altogether for his Honour: I do assure you, I am no Relation of his.’

‘ Alas! Sir,’ answered she, ‘ I know you are not. I know very well who you are; for Mr. *Allworthy* hath told me all: But I do assure you, had you been twenty Times his Son, he could not have expressed more Regard for you, than he hath often expressed in my Presence. You need not be ashamed, Sir, of what you are; I promise you no good Person will esteem you the less on that Account. No, Mr. *Jones*; the Words ‘ dishonourable Birth’ are Nonsense, as my dear dear Husband used to say, unless the Word ‘ dishonourable’ be applied to the Parents; for the Children can derive no real Dishonour from an Act of which they are intirely innocent.’

Here *Jones* heaved a deep Sigh, and then said, ‘ Since I perceive, Madam, you really do know me, and Mr. *Allworthy* hath thought proper to mention my Name to you; and since you have been so explicit with me as to your own Affairs, I will acquaint you with some more Circumstances concerning myself.’ And these Mrs. *Miller* having expressed great Desire and Curiosity to hear, he began and related to her his whole History, without once mentioning the Name of *Sophia*.

There is a Kind of Sympathy in honest Minds, by Means of which they give an easy Credit to each other. Mrs. *Miller* believed all which *Jones* told her to be true, and exprest much Pity and Concern for him. She was beginning to comment on the Story, but *Jones* interrupted her: For as the Hour of Affignation now drew nigh, he began to stipulate for a second Interview with the Lady that Evening, which he promised should be the last at her House; swearing, at the same Time, that she was one of great Distinction, and that nothing but what was intirely innocent was to pass between them; and I do firmly believe he intended to keep his Word.

Mrs. *Miller* was at length prevailed on, and *Jones* departed to his Chamber, where he sat alone till Twelve o'Clock, but no Lady *Bellaston* appeared.

As we have said that this Lady had a great Affection for *Jones*, and as it must have appeared that she really had so, the Reader may perhaps wonder at the first Failure of her Appointment, as she apprehended him to be confined by Sickness, a Season when Friendship seems most to require such Visits. This Behaviour, therefore, in the Lady, may, by some, be condemned as unnatural; but that is not our Fault; for our Business is only to record Truth.