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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. X. Consisting partly of Facts, and partly of Observations upon them.

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principally to the friendly Behaviour of *Jones*, her whole Soul was fired with Gratitude towards him, and all her Looks, Words, and Actions were so busted in expressing it, that her Daughter, and even her new Son-in-law, were very little the Objects of her Consideration.

Dinner was just ended when *Mrs. Miller* received a Letter; but as we have had Letters enough in this Chapter, we shall communicate the Contents in our next.

C H A P. X.

Consisting partly of Facts, and partly of Observations upon them.

THE Letter then which arrived at the End of the preceding Chapter was from *Mr. Allworthy*, and the Purport of it was his Intention to come immediately to Town, with his Nephew *Blifil*, and a Desire to be accommodated with his usual Lodgings, which were the first Floor for himself, and the second for his Nephew.

The Chearfulness which had before displayed itself in the Countenance of the poor Woman, was a little clouded on this Occasion. This News did indeed a good deal disconcert her. To requite so disinterested a Match with her Daughter, by presently turning her new Son-in-law out of Doors, appeared to her very unjustifiable on the one Hand; and on the other, she could scarce bear the Thoughts of making any Excuse to *Mr. Allworthy*, after all the Obligations received from him, for depriving him of Lodgings which were indeed strictly his Due: For that Gentleman, in conferring all his numberless Benefits on others, acted

acted by a Rule diametrically opposite to what is practised by most generous People. He contrived, on all Occasions, to hide his Beneficence not only from the World, but even from the Object of it. He constantly used the Words *Lend* and *Pay*, instead of *Give*; and by every other Method he could invent, always lessened with his Tongue the Favours he conferred while he was heaping them with both his Hands. When he settled the Annuity of 50 *l.* a Year, therefore, on Mrs. *Miller*, he told her, 'it was in Consideration of ' always having her First-Floor when he was in ' Town,' (which he scarce ever intended to be) ' but that she might let it at any other Time, for ' that he would always send her a Month's Warn- ' ing.' He was now, however, hurried to Town so suddenly that he had no Opportunity of giving such Notice; and this Hurry probably prevented him, when he wrote for his Lodgings, adding, *if they were then empty*: For he would most certainly have been well satisfied to have relinquished them on a less sufficient Excuse, than what Mrs. *Miller* could now have made.

But there are a Sort of Persons, who, as *Prior* excellently well remarks, direct their Conduct by something

*Beyond the fix'd and settled Rules
Of Vice and Virtue in the Schools,
Beyond the Letter of the Law.* }

To these it is so far from being sufficient that their Defence would acquit them at the *Old-Bailey*, that they are not even contented, though Conscience, the severest of all Judges, should discharge them. Nothing short of the Fair and Honourable

Honourable will satisfy the Delicacy of their Minds; and if any of their Actions fall short of this Mark, they mope and pine, are as uneasy and restless as a Murderer, who is afraid of a Ghost, or of the Hangman.

Mrs. *Miller* was one of these. She could not conceal her Uneasiness at this Letter; with the Contents of which she had no sooner acquainted the Company, and given some Hints of her Distress, than *Jones*, her good Angel, presently relieved her Anxiety. 'As for myself, Madam,' said he, 'my Lodging is at your Service at a Moment's Warning: And Mr. *Nightingale*, I am sure, as he cannot yet prepare a House fit to receive his Lady, will consent to return to his new Lodging, whither Mrs. *Nightingale* will certainly consent to go.' With which Proposal both Husband and Wife instantly agreed.

The Reader will easily believe, that the Cheeks of Mrs. *Miller* began again to glow with additional Gratitude to *Jones*; but, perhaps, it may be more difficult to persuade him, that Mr. *Jones* having, in his last Speech, called her Daughter Mrs. *Nightingale*, (it being the first Time that agreeable Sound had ever reached her Ears) gave the fond Mother more Satisfaction, and warmed her Heart more towards *Jones*, than his having dissipated her present Anxiety.

The next Day was then appointed for the Removal of the new-married Couple, and of Mr. *Jones*, who was likewise to be provided for in the same House with his Friend. And now the Serenity of the Company was again restored, and they past the Day in the utmost Chearfulness, all except *Jones*, who, though he outwardly accompanied the rest in their Mirth, felt many a bitter
Pang

Pang on the Account of his *Sophia*; which were not a little heightened by the News of Mr. *Bliss*'s coming to Town, (for he clearly saw the Intention of his Journey :) And what greatly aggravated his Concern was, that Mrs. *Honour*, who had promised to enquire after *Sophia*, and to make her Report to him early the next Evening, had disappointed him.

In the Situation that he and his Mistress were in at this Time, there were scarce any Grounds for him to hope, that he should hear any good News; yet he was as impatient to see Mrs. *Honour*, as if he had expected she would bring him a Letter with an Assignation in it from *Sophia*, and bore the Disappointment as ill. Whether this Impatience arose from that natural Weakness of the human Mind, which makes it desirous to know the worst, and renders Uncertainty the most intolerable of Pains; or whether he still flattered himself with some secret Hopes, we will not determine. But that it might be the last, whoever has loved cannot but know. For of all the Powers exercised by this Passion over our Minds, one of the most wonderful is that of supporting Hope in the midst of Despair. Difficulties, Improbabilities, nay Impossibilities are quite overlooked by it; so that to any Man extremely in Love, may be applied what *Addison* says of *Cæsar*,

The Alps, and Pyrenæans, sink before him!

Yet it is equally true, that the same Passion will sometimes make Mountains of Molehills, and produce Despair in the midst of Hope; but these cold Fits last not long in good Constitutions. Which Temper *Jones* was now in, we leave the



Reader to guess, having no exact Information about it; but this is certain, that he had spent two Hours in Expectation, when being unable any longer to conceal his Uneasiness, he retired to his Room; where his Anxiety had almost made him frantick, when the following Letter was brought him from Mrs. Honour, with which we shall present the Reader *verbatim & literatim*.

S I R,

I shud fartenly haf kalel on you a cordin too mi Prommis haddunt itt bin that hur Lashipp prevent mee; for too bee sur, Sir, you nose very well that evere Persun must luk furst at ome, and fartenly such anuther offer mite not ave ever hapned, so as I shud ave bin justly to blam, had I not excepted of it when her Laship was so veri kind as to offer to mak mee hur one Uman without mi ever askin any such thing, to bee sur shee is won of thee best Ladis in thee Wurld, and Pepil who safe to the Kontrari must bee veri wicket Pepil in thare Harts. To be sur if ever I ave sad any thing of that Kine it as bin thru Ighorens and I am hartili forri for it. I nose your Onur to be a Genteelman of more Onur and Onetty, if I ever said ani such thing, to repete it to hurt a pore Servant that as alwais ad thee grateft Respect in thee World for ure Onur. To bee sur won shud kepe wons Tung within one's Teeth, for no Boddi nose what may hapen; and too bee sur if ani Boddi ad tolde mee Yesterday, that I shud haf bin in so gud a Plase to Day, I shud not haf beleved it; for too bee sur I never was a dremd of any such Thing, nor shud I ever have soft after ani other Bodi's Plase; but as her Lashipp wafs so

kine

' kine of her one a cord too give it mee without
 ' askin, to be sure Mrs. *Etoff* herself, nor no
 ' other Boddi can blam mee for exceptin such a
 ' Thing when it fals in mi Waye. I begg ure
 ' Onur not too menshion ani thing of what I haf
 ' sad, for I wish ure Onur all thee gud Luk in
 ' thee Wurld; and I don't cuesday butt thatt u
 ' wil haf Madam *Sofia* in the End; butt as to
 ' miself ure Onur nose I kant bec of ani farder
 ' Sarvis to u in that Matar, nou bein under thee
 ' Cumand oft anuthar Parion, and nott mi one
 ' Mistres. I begg ure Onur to say nothing of
 ' what past, and belive me to be, Sir,

' Ure Onur's umble Sarvant

' To Cumand till Deth,

' Honour *Blackmore*.'

Various were the Conjectures when *Jones* en-
 tertained on this Step of Lady *Bellaston*; who in
 reality had little farther Design than to secure
 within her own House the Repository of a Secret,
 which she chose should make no farther Progress
 than it had made already; but mostly she desired
 to keep it from the Ears of *Sophia*; for though
 that young Lady was almost the only one who
 would never have repeated it again, her Ladyship
 could not persuade herself of this; since as she
 now hated poor *Sophia* with most implacable Ha-
 tred, she conceived a reciprocal Hatred to herself
 to be lodged in the tender Breast of our Heroine,
 where no such Passion had ever yet found an En-
 trance.