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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. V. In which the History is continued.

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in the Case of those who mistake the highest Degree of Goodness for the lowest Degree of Weakness. *Allworthy* had indeed never liked this Man. He knew him to be proud and ill-natured; he also knew that his Divinity itself was tinged with his Temper, and such as in many Respects he himself did by no means approve: But he was at the same Time an excellent Scholar, and most indefatigable in teaching the two Lads. Add to this the strict Severity of his Life and Manners, an unimpeached Honesty, and a most devout Attachment to Religion. So that upon the whole, though *Allworthy* did not esteem nor love the Man, yet he could never bring himself to part with a Tutor to the Boys, who was, both by Learning and Industry, extremely well qualified for his Office; and he hoped, that as they were bred up in his own House, and under his own Eye, he should be able to correct whatever was wrong in *Thwackum's* Instructions.

C H A P. V.

In which the History is continued.

MR. *Allworthy*, in his last Speech, had collected some tender Ideas concerning *Jones*, which had brought Tears into the good Man's Eyes. This Mrs. *Miller* observing, said, 'Yes, yes, Sir, your Goodness to this poor young Man is known, notwithstanding all your Care to conceal it; but there is not a single Syllable of Truth in what those Villains said. Mr. *Nightingale* hath now discovered the whole Matter. It seems these Fellows were employed by a Lord, who is a Rival of poor Mr.

‘ Mr. *Jones*, to have pressed him on board a Ship.
 ‘ ——— I assure them I don’t know who they
 ‘ will press next. Mr. *Nightingale* here hath
 ‘ seen the Officer himself, who is a very pretty
 ‘ Gentleman, and hath told him all, and is very
 ‘ sorry for what he undertook, which he would
 ‘ never have done, had he known Mr. *Jones* to
 ‘ have been a Gentleman; but he was told that
 ‘ he was common strolling Vagabond.’

Allworthy stared at all this, and declared he was
 a Stranger to every Word she said. ‘ Yes, Sir,’
 answered she, ‘ I believe you are. ——— It is a
 ‘ very different Story, I believe, from what those
 ‘ Fellows told the Lawyer.’

‘ What Lawyer, Madam? what is it you
 ‘ mean?’ said *Allworthy*. ‘ Nay, nay,’ said
 she, ‘ this is so like you to deny your own Good-
 ‘ nefs; but Mr. *Nightingale* here saw him.’
 ‘ Saw whom, Madam?’ answered he. ‘ Why
 ‘ your Lawyer, Sir,’ said she, ‘ that you so
 ‘ kindly sent to enquire into the Affair.’ ‘ I am
 ‘ still in the Dark, upon my Honour,’ said *All-
 worthy*. ‘ Why then do you tell him, my
 ‘ dear Sir,’ cries she. ‘ Indeed, Sir,’ said *Night-
 ingale*, ‘ I did see that very Lawyer who went
 ‘ from you when I came into the Room, at an
 ‘ Alehouse in *Aldersgate*, in Company with two
 ‘ of the Fellows who were employed by Lord
 ‘ *Fellamar* to press Mr. *Jones*, and who were by
 ‘ that means present at the unhappy Rencounter
 ‘ between him and Mr. *Fitzpatrick*.’ ‘ I own,
 ‘ Sir,’ said Mrs. *Miller*, ‘ When I saw this Gen-
 ‘ tleman come into the Room to you, I told
 ‘ Mr. *Nightingale* that I apprehended you had
 ‘ sent him thither to enquire into the Affair.’
Allworthy shewed Marks of Astonishment in his
 Countenance at this News, and was indeed for



two or three Minutes struck dumb by it. At last, addressing himself to Mr. *Nightingale*, he said, 'I must confess myself, Sir, more surprized at what you tell me, than I have ever been before at any Thing in my whole Life. Are you certain this was the Gentleman?' 'I am most certain,' answered *Nightingale*. 'At *Aldersgata*?' cries *Allworthy*. 'And was you in Company with this Lawyer and the two Fellows?' — 'I was, Sir,' said the other, 'very near half an Hour.' — 'Well, Sir,' said *Allworthy*, 'and in what Manner did the Lawyer behave? Did you hear all that past between him and the Fellows?' 'No, Sir,' answered *Nightingale*, 'they had been together before I came. — In my Presence the Lawyer said little; but after I had several Times examined the Fellows, who persisted in a Story directly contrary to what I had heard from Mr. *Jones*, and which I find by Mr. *Fitzpatrick* was a rank Falshood; the Lawyer then desired the Fellows to say nothing but what was the Truth, and seemed to speak so much in Favour of Mr. *Jones*, that when I saw the same Person with you, I concluded your Goodness had prompted you to send him thither.' — 'And did you not send him thither?' says Mrs. *Miller*. — 'Indeed I did not,' answered *Allworthy*; 'nor did I know he had gone on such an Errand till this Moment.' — 'I see it all!' said Mrs. *Miller*: 'Upon my Soul, I see it all! No Wonder they have been clostetted so close lately. Son *Nightingale*, let me beg you run for these Fellows immediately—find them out if they are above Ground. I will go myself.' — 'Dear Madam,' said *Allworthy*, 'be patient,

‘tient, and do me the Favour to send a Servant
‘up Stairs to call Mr. *Dowling* hither, if he be
‘in the Houfe, or if not, Mr. *Blifil*.’ Mrs.
Miller went out muttering something to herself,
and presently returned with an Answer. ‘That
‘Mr. *Dowling* was gone; but that the t’other,
‘as she called him, was coming.’

Allworthy was of a cooler Disposition than the
good Woman, whose Spirits were all up in Arms
in the Cause of her Friend. He was not how-
ever without some Suspicions which were near a-
kin to hers. When *Blifil* came into the Room,
he asked him with a very serious Countenance,
and with a less friendly Look than he had ever be-
fore given him, ‘Whether he knew any Thing
‘of Mr. *Dowling*’s having seen any of the Per-
‘sons who were present at the Duel between
‘*Jones* and another Gentleman?’

There is nothing so dangerous as a Question
which comes by Surprize on a Man, whose Bu-
siness it is to conceal Truth, or to defend False-
hood. For which Reason those worthy Per-
sonages, whose noble Office it is to save the
Lives of their Fellow Creatures at the *Old-Bai-
ley*, take the utmost Care, by frequent previ-
ous Examination, to divine every Question,
which may be asked their Clients on the Day of
Trial, that they may be supply’d with proper and
ready Answers, which the most fertile Invention
cannot supply in an Instant. Besides, the sudden
and violent Impulse on the Blood, occasioned by
these Surprizes, causes frequently such an Al-
teration in the Countenance, that the Man is
obliged to give Evidence against himself. And
such indeed were the Alterations which the Coun-
tenance of *Blifil* underwent from this sudden Que-
stion, that we can scarce blame the Eagerness of



Mrs. *Miller*, who immediately cry'd out, ' Guilty, upon my Honour ! Guilty, upon my Soul !'

Mr. *Allworthy* sharply rebuked her for this Impetuosity ; and then turning to *Blifil*, who seem'd sinking into the Earth, he said, ' Why do you hesitate, Sir, at giving me an Answer ? You certainly must have employ'd him ; for he would not, of his own Accord, I believe, have undertaken such an Errand, and especially without acquainting me.'

Blifil then answer'd, ' I own, Sir, I have been guilty of an Offence, yet may I hope your Pardon ?' — ' My Pardon ?' said *Allworthy* very angrily. — ' Nay, Sir, answer'd *Blifil*, ' I knew you would be offended ; yet surely my dear Uncle will forgive the Effects of the most amiable of human Weaknesses. Compassion for those who do not deserve it, I own, is a Crime ; and yet it is a Crime from which you yourself are not entirely free. I know I have been guilty of it in more than one Instance to this very Person ; and I will own I did send Mr. *Dewling*, not on a vain and fruitless Enquiry, but to discover the Witnesses, and to endeavour to soften their Evidence. This, Sir, is the Truth ; which though I intended to conceal from you, I will not deny.'

' I confess,' said *Nightingale*, ' this is the Light in which it appear'd to me from the Gentleman's Behaviour.'

' Now, Madam,' said *Allworthy*, ' I believe you will once in your Life own you have entertained a wrong Suspicion, and are not so angry with my Nephew as you was.'

Mrs. *Miller* was silent ; for though she could not so hastily be pleas'd with *Blifil*, whom she looked

looked upon to have been the Ruin of *Jones*, yet in this particular Instance he had imposed upon her as well as upon the rest; so entirely had the Devil stood his Friend. And indeed, I look upon the vulgar Observation, *That the Devil often deserts his Friends, and leaves them in the Lurch*, to be a great Abuse on that Gentleman's Character. Perhaps he may sometimes desert those who are only his Cup Acquaintance; or who, at most, are but half his; but he generally stands by those who are thoroughly his Servants, and helps them off in all Extremities, 'till their Bargain expires.

As a conquered Rebellion strengthens a Government, or as Health is more perfectly established by Recovery from some Diseases; so Anger, when removed, often gives new Life to Affection. This was the Case of *Mr. Allworthy*; for *Blifil* having wiped off the greater Suspicion, the lesser, which had been raised by *Square's* Letter, sunk of Course, and was forgotten; and *Thwackum*, with whom he was greatly offended, bore alone all the Reflections which *Square* had cast on the Enemies of *Jones*.

As for that young Man, the Resentment of *Mr. Allworthy* began more and more to abate towards him. He told *Blifil*, 'he did not only forgive the extraordinary Efforts of his Good-Nature, but would give him the Pleasure of following his Example.' Then turning to *Mrs. Miller*, with a Smile which would have become an Angel, he cry'd, 'What say you, Madam; shall we take a Hackney-Coach, and all of us together pay a Visit to your Friend?' 'I promise you it is not the first Visit I have made in a Prison.'



Every Reader, I believe, will be able to answer for the worthy Woman; but they must have a great deal of Good-Nature, and be well acquainted with Friendship, who can feel what she felt on this Occasion. Few, I hope, are capable of feeling what now pass in the Mind of *Bliss!*; but those who are, will acknowledge, that it was impossible for him to raise any Objection to this Visit. Fortune, however, or the Gentleman lately mentioned above, stood his Friend, and prevented his undergoing so great a Shock: For at the very Instant when the Coach was sent for, *Partridge* arrived, and having called Mrs. *Miller* from the Company acquainted her with the dreadful Accident lately come to Light; and hearing Mr. *Allworthy's* Intention, begged her to find some Means of stopping him; 'for,' says he, 'the Matter must at all Hazards be kept a Secret from him; and if he should now go, he will find Mr. *Jones* and his Mother, who arrived just as I left him, lamenting over one another the horrid Crime they have ignorantly committed.'

The poor Woman, who was almost deprived of her Senses at his dreadful News, was never less capable of Invention than at present. However, as Women are much readier at this than Men, she bethought herself of an Excuse, and returning to *Allworthy* said, 'I am sure, Sir, you will be surprized at hearing any Objection from me to the kind Proposal you just now made; and yet I am afraid of the Consequence of it, if carried immediately into Execution. You must imagine, Sir, that all the Calamities which have lately befallen this poor young Fellow, must have thrown him into the lowest
De-

‘ Dejection of Spirits: And now, Sir, should we
 ‘ all on a sudden fling him into such a violent Fit
 ‘ of Joy, as I know your Presence will occasion,
 ‘ it may, I am afraid, produce some fatal Mis-
 ‘ chief, especially as his Servant who is without,
 ‘ tells me he is very far from being well.’
 ‘ Is his Servant without?’ cries *Allworthy*;
 ‘ Pray call him hither. I will ask him some
 ‘ Questions concerning his Master.’

Partridge was at first afraid to appear before
 Mr. *Allworthy*; but was at length persuaded, af-
 ter Mrs. *Miller*, who had often heard his whole
 Story from his own Mouth, had promised to in-
 troduce him.

Allworthy recollected *Partridge* the Moment
 he came into the Room, though many Years
 had passed since he had seen him. Mrs. *Miller*
 therefore might have spared here a formal Oration,
 in which indeed she was something prolix: For
 the Reader, I believe, may have observed already
 that the good Woman, among other Things,
 had a Tongue always ready for the Service of her
 Friends.’

‘ And are you,’ said *Allworthy* to *Partridge*,
 ‘ the Servant of Mr. *Jones*?’ ‘ I can’t say,
 ‘ Sir, answered he, that I am regularly a Ser-
 ‘ vant, but I live with him, an’t please your Ho-
 ‘ nour, at present. *Non sum qualis eram*, as your
 ‘ Honour very well knows.’

Mr. *Allworthy* then asked him many Questions
 concerning *Jones*, as to his Health, and other
 Matters; to all which *Partridge* answered, with-
 out having the least Regard to what was, but con-
 sidered only what he would have Things appear;
 for a strict Adherence to Truth was not among
 the