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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. VI. In which the History is farther continued.

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the Articles of this honest Fellow's Morality, or his Religion.

During this Dialogue Mr. *Nightingale* took his Leave, and presently after Mrs. *Miller* left the Room, when *Allworthy* likewise dispatched *Bliss*; for he imagined that *Partridge*, when alone with him, would be more explicit than before Company. They were no sooner left in private together, than *Allworthy* began as in the following Chapter.

C H A P. VI.

In which the History is farther continued.

'S U R E, Friend,' said the good Man, 'you are the strangest of all human Beings. Not only to have suffered as you have formerly, for obstinately persisting in a Falshood; but to persist in it thus to the last, and to pass thus upon the World for a Servant of your own Son? What Interest can you have in all this? What can be your Motive?'

'I see, Sir,' said *Partridge*, falling down upon his Knees, 'that your Honour is prepossessed against me, and resolved not to believe any Thing I say, and therefore what signifies my Protestations? but yet there is one above who knows that I am not the Father of this young Man.'

'How!' said *Allworthy*, 'Will you yet deny what you was formerly convicted of upon such unanswerable, such manifest Evidence? Nay, what a Confirmation is your being now found with this very Man, of all which twenty Years ago appeared against you. I thought
' you

‘ you had left the Country; nay, I thought you
 ‘ had been long since dead.—In what Manner
 ‘ did you know any Thing of this young Man?
 ‘ Where did you meet with him, unless you had
 ‘ kept some Correspondence together? Do not de-
 ‘ ny this; for I promise you it will greatly raise your
 ‘ Son in my Opinion, to find that he hath such
 ‘ a Sense of filial Duty, as privately to support his
 ‘ Father for so many Years.’

‘ If your Honour will have Patience, to hear me,’
 said *Partridge*, ‘ I will tell you all.’—Being
 bid go on, he proceeded thus: ‘ When your Ho-
 ‘ nour conceived that Displeasure against me, it
 ‘ ended in my Ruin soon after; for I lost my little
 ‘ School; and the Minister, thinking I sup-
 ‘ pose it would be agreeable to your Honour,
 ‘ turned me out from the Office of Clerk; so
 ‘ that I had nothing to trust to but the Barber’s
 ‘ Shop, which in a Country Place like that, is
 ‘ a poor Livelihood; and when my Wife died
 ‘ (for ’till that Time I received a Pension of 12l.
 ‘ a Year from an unknown Hand, which in-
 ‘ deed I believe was your Honour’s own, for no
 ‘ Body that ever I heard of doth these Things
 ‘ besides) but as I was saying, when she died,
 ‘ this Pension forsook me; so that now as I ow-
 ‘ ed two or three small Debts, which began to
 ‘ be troublesome to me, particularly one †
 ‘ which an Attorney brought up by Law-char-

† This is a Fact which I knew happen to a poor Clergyman
 in *Dorsetshire*, by the Villainy of an Attorney, who not con-
 tented with the exorbitant Costs to which the poor Man was put
 by a single Action, brought afterwards another Action on the
 Judgment, as it was called. A Method frequently used to op-
 press the Poor, and bring Money into the Pockets of Attorneys,
 to the great Scandal of the Law, of the Nation, of Christianity,
 and even of Human Nature itself.

ges from 15 s. to near 30 l.) and as I found all my usual Means of living had forsook me, I packed up my little All as well as I could, and went off.

The first Place I came to was *Salisbury*, where I got into the Service of a Gentleman belonging to the Law, and one of the best Gentlemen that ever I knew; for he was not only good to me, but I know a Thousand good and charitable Acts which he did while I staid with him; and I have known him often refuse Business, because it was paultry and oppressive.—You need not be so particular, said *Allworthy*; I know this Gentleman, and a very worthy Man he is, and an Honour to his Profession.—Well, Sir, continued *Partridge*, from hence I removed to *Lymington*, where I was above three Years in the Service of another Lawyer, who was likewise a very good Sort of a Man, and to be sure one of the merriest Gentlemen in *England*. Well, Sir, at the End of the three Years I set up a little School, and was likely to do well again, had it not been for a most unlucky Accident. Here I kept a Pig; and one Day, as ill Fortune would have it, this Pig broke out, and did a Trespass I think they call it, in a Garden belonging to one of my Neighbours, who was a proud, revengeful Man, and employed a Lawyer, one—one—I can't think of his Name; but he sent for a Writ against me, and had me to *Size*. When I came there, Lord have Mercy upon me—to hear what the Counsellors said. There was one that told my Lord a Parcel of the confoundedst Lies about me; he said, that I used to drive my Hogs into other Folks Gardens, and

' a great deal more ; and at last he said, He
 ' hoped I had at last brought my Hogs to a fair
 ' Market. To be sure, one would have thought,
 ' that instead of being Owner only of one poor
 ' little Pig, I had been the greatest Hog-mer-
 ' chant in *England*. Well—' Pray,' said *All-*
worthy, ' do not be so particular. I have heard
 ' nothing of your Son yet.' ' O it was a great
 ' many Years,' answered *Partridge*, ' before I
 ' saw my Son, as you are pleased to call him.—
 ' I went over to *Ireland* after this, and taught
 ' School at *Cork*, (for that one Suit ruined me
 ' again, and I lay seven Years in *Winchester*
 ' Goal.)—' Well,' said *Allworthy*, ' pass that
 ' over till your Return to *England*.'—' Then,
 ' Sir,' said he, ' it was about half a Year ago
 ' that I landed at *Bristol*, where I stayed some
 ' Time, and not finding it do there, and hearing
 ' of a Place between that and *Gloucester*, where
 ' the Barber was just dead, I went thither, and
 ' there I had been about two Months when
 ' Mr. *Jones* came thither.' He then gave *All-*
worthy a very particular Account of their first
 Meeting, and of every Thing as well as he could
 remember, which had happened from that Day
 to this ; frequently interlarding his Story with
 Panegyrics on *Jones*, and not forgetting to in-
 sinuate the great Love and Respect which he had
 for *Allworthy*. He concluded with saying, ' Now,
 ' Sir, I have told your Honour the whole Truth.'
 And then repeated a most solemn Protestation,
 ' That he was no more the Father of *Jones* than
 ' of the Pope of *Rome*;' and imprecated the most
 bitter Curses on his Head, if he did not speak
 Truth.

What

‘What am I to think of this Matter?’ cries *Allworthy*. ‘For what Purpose should you so strongly deny a Fact, which I think it would be rather your Interest to own?’—‘Nay, Sir,’ answered *Partridge*, (for he could hold no longer) ‘if your Honour will not believe me, you are like soon to have Satisfaction enough. I wish you had mistaken the Mother of this young Man, as well as you have his Father.’—And now being asked what he meant, with all the Symptoms of Horror, both in his Voice and Countenance, he told *Allworthy* the whole Story, which he had a little before expressed such Desire to *Mrs. Miller* to conceal from him.

Allworthy was almost as much shocked at this Discovery as *Partridge* himself had been while he related it. ‘Good Heavens!’ says he, ‘in what miserable Distresses do Vice and Imprudence involve Men! How much beyond our Designs are the Effects of Wickedness sometimes carried!’ He had scarce uttered these Words, when *Mrs. Waters* came hastily and abruptly into the Room. *Partridge* no sooner saw her, than he cried, ‘Here, Sir, here is the very Woman herself. This is the unfortunate Mother of Mr. *Jones*; I am sure she will acquit me before your Honour.’—‘Pray, Madam’—

Mrs. Waters, without paying any Regard to what *Partridge* said, and almost without taking any Notice of him, advanced to Mr. *Allworthy*. ‘I believe, Sir, it is so long since I had the Honour of seeing you, that you do not recollect me.’—‘Indeed,’ answered *Allworthy*, ‘you are so very much altered, on many Accounts, that had not this Man already acquainted me
‘who