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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. XI. The History draws nearer to a Conclusion.

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'thee to thy Mistress this Moment.' Here *Allworthy* interposed; and the Squire being unable to prevail either with the Uncle or Nephew, was, after some Litigation, obliged to consent to delay introducing *Jones* to *Sophia* till the Afternoon; at which Time *Allworthy*, as well in Compassion to *Jones*, as in Compliance with the eager Desires of *Western*, was prevailed upon to promise to attend at the Tea-table.

The Conversation which now ensued was pleasant enough; and with which, had it happened earlier in our History, we would have entertained our Reader; but as we have now Leisure only to attend to what is very material, it shall suffice to say, that Matters being entirely adjusted as to the Afternoon-visit, Mr. *Western* again returned home.

CH A P. XI.

The History draws nearer to a Conclusion.

WHEN Mr. *Western* was departed, *Jones* began to inform Mr. *Allworthy* and Mrs. *Miller*, that his Liberty had been procured by two noble Lords, who, together with two Surgeons, and a Friend of Mr. *Nightingale's* had attended the Magistrate by whom he had been committed, and by whom, on the Surgeons Oaths, that the wounded Person was out of all Manner of Danger from his Wound, he was discharged.

One only of these Lords, he said, he had ever seen before, and that no more than once; but the other had greatly surprized him, by asking his Pardon for an Offence he had been guilty of towards

wards him, occasioned, he said, entirely by his Ignorance who he was.

Now the Reality of the Case with which *Jones* was not acquainted till afterwards, was this. The Lieutenant whom Lord *Fellamar* had employed, according to the Advice of Lady *Bellafton*, to prefs *Jones*, as a Vagabond, into the Sea Service, when he came to report to his Lordship the Event which we have before seen, spoke very favourably of the Behaviour of Mr. *Jones* on all Accounts, and strongly assured that Lord, that he must have mistaken the Person; for that *Jones* was certainly a Gentleman: insomuch that his Lordship, who was strictly a Man of Honour, and would by no Means have been guilty of an Action which the World in general would have condemned, began to be much concerned for the Advice which he had taken.

Within a Day or two after this, Lord *Fellamar* happened to dine with the *Irish* Peer, who, in a Conversation upon the Duel, acquainted his Company with the Character of *Fitzpatrick*; to which indeed he did not do strict Justice, especially in what related to his Lady. He said, she was the most innocent, the most injured Woman alive, and that from Compassion alone he had undertaken her Cause. He then declared an Intention of going the next Morning to *Fitzpatrick's* Lodgings, in order to prevail with him, if possible, to consent to a Separation from his Wife, who, the Peer said, was in Apprehensions for her Life, if she should ever return to be under the Power of her Husband. Lord *Fellamar* agreed to go with him, that he might satisfy himself more concerning *Jones*, and the Circumstances of the Duel; for he was by no Means easy concerning



the Part he had acted. The Moment his Lordship gave a Hint of his Readiness to assist in the Delivery of the Lady, it was eagerly embraced by the other Nobleman, who depended much on the Authority of Lord *Fellamar*, as he thought it would greatly contribute to awe *Fitzpatrick* into a Compliance; and perhaps he was in the right; for the poor *Irishman* no sooner saw these noble Peers had undertaken the Cause of his Wife, than he submitted, and Articles of Separation were soon drawn up, and signed between the Parties.

Fitzpatrick had been so well satisfied by Mrs. *Waters* concerning the Innocence of his Wife with *Jones* at *Upton*, or perhaps from some other Reasons, was now become so indifferent to that Matter, that he spoke highly in Favour of *Jones*, to Lord *Fellamar*, took all the Blame upon himself, and said the other had behaved very much like a Gentleman, and a Man of Honour; and upon that Lord's further Enquiry concerning Mr. *Jones*, *Fitzpatrick* told him he was Nephew to a Gentleman of very great Fashion and Fortune, which was the Account he had just received from Mrs. *Waters*, after her Interview with *Dowling*.

Lord *Fellamar* now thought it behoved him to do every Thing in his Power to make Satisfaction to a Gentleman whom he had so grossly injured, and without any Consideration of Rivalship, (for he had now given over all Thoughts of *Sophia*) determined to procure Mr. *Jones*'s Liberty, being satisfied as well from *Fitzpatrick* as his Surgeon, that the Wound was not mortal. He therefore prevailed with the *Irish* Peer to accompany him to the Place where *Jones* was confined, to whom he behaved as we have already related.

When

When *Allworthy* returned to his Lodgings, he immediately carried *Jones* into his Room, and then acquainted him with the whole Matter, as well what he had heard from Mrs. *Waters*, as what he had discovered from Mr. *Dowling*.

Jones expressed great Astonishment, and no less Concern at this Account; but without making any Comment or Observation upon it. And now a Message was brought from Mr. *Blifil*, desiring to know if his Uncle was at Leisure, that he might wait upon him. *Allworthy* started and turned pale, and then in a more passionate Tone than I believe he had ever used before, bid the Servant tell *Blifil*, he knew him not. 'Consider, dear Sir,' — cries *Jones*, in a trembling Voice. — 'I have considered,' answered *Allworthy*, 'and you yourself shall carry my Message to the Villain. — No one can carry him the Sentence of his own Ruin so properly, as the Man whose Ruin he hath so villainously contrived.' — 'Pardon me, dear Sir,' said *Jones*; 'a Moment's Reflection will, I am sure, convince you of the contrary. What might perhaps be but Justice from another Tongue would from mine be Insult? and to whom? — My own Brother, and your Nephew. — Nor did he use me so barbarously. — Indeed that would have been more inexcusable than any Thing he hath done. Fortune may tempt Men of no very bad Dispositions to Injustice; but Insults proceed only from black and rancorous Minds, and have no Temptations to excuse them. — Let me beseech you, Sir, to do nothing by him in the present Height of your Anger. Consider, my dear Uncle, I was not myself condemned unheard.' *Allworthy* stood silent a Moment,



ment, and then embracing *Jones*, he said with Tears gushing from his Eyes, 'O my Child! to what Goodness have I been so long blind!'

Mrs. Miller entering the Room at that Moment, after a gentle Rap, which was not perceived, and seeing *Jones* in the Arms of his Uncle, the poor Woman, in an Agony of Joy, fell upon her Knees, and burst forth into the most ecstatic Thanksgivings to Heaven, for what had happened. — Then running to *Jones*, she embraced him eagerly, crying, 'My dearest Friend, I wish you Joy a thousand and a thousand Times of this blest Day;' and next *Allworthy* himself received the same Congratulations. To which he answered, 'Indeed, indeed, *Mrs. Miller*, I am beyond Expression happy.' Some few more Raptures having passed on all Sides, *Mrs. Miller* desired them both to walk down to Dinner in the Parlour, where she said there were a very happy Set of People assembled; being indeed no other than *Mr. Nightingale* and his Bride, and his Cousin *Harris* with her Bridegroom.

Allworthy excused himself from dining with the Company, saying he had ordered some little Thing for him and his Nephew in his own Apartment; for that they had much private Business to discourse of, but would not resist promising the good Woman, that both he and *Jones* would make Part of her Society at Supper.

Mrs. Miller then asked what was to be done with *Bliss*; 'for indeed, says she, I cannot be easy while such a Villain is in my House.' — *Allworthy* answered, 'He was as uneasy as herself on the same Account.' 'O!' cries she, 'if that be the Case, leave the Matter to me; I'll

' I'll soon shew him the Outside of my Doors, I
 ' warrant you. Here are two or three lusty Fel-
 ' lows below Stairs.' ' There will be no Need
 ' of any Violence, cries *Allworthy*; if you will
 ' carry him a Message from me, he will, I am
 ' convinced, depart of his own Accord.' ' Will I?'
 said *Mrs. Miller*, ' I never did any Thing in my
 ' Life with a better Will.' Here *Jones* inter-
 ed, and said, ' He had considered the Matter
 ' better, and would, if *Mr. Allworthy* pleased,
 ' be himself the Messenger.' ' I know, says he,
 ' already enough of your Pleasure, Sir, and I
 ' beg Leave to acquaint him with it by my own
 ' Words. Let me beseech you, Sir, added he,
 ' to reflect on the dreadful Consequences of driv-
 ' ing him to violent and sudden Despair. How
 ' unfit, alas! is this poor Man to die in his pre-
 ' sent Situation.' This Suggestion had not the
 least Effect on *Mrs. Miller*. She left the Room
 crying, ' You are too good, *Mr. Jones*, infi-
 ' nitely too good to live in this World.' But it
 made a deeper Impression on *Allworthy*. ' My
 ' good Child, said he, I am equally astonished at
 ' the Goodness of your Heart, and the Quick-
 ' ness of your Understanding. Heaven indeed
 ' forbid that this Wretch should be deprived of
 ' any Means or Time for Repentance. That
 ' would be a shocking Consideration indeed. Go
 ' to him therefore and use your own Discretion;
 ' yet do not flatter him with any Hopes of my
 ' Forgiveness; for I shall never forgive Villainy
 ' farther than my Religion obliges me, and that
 ' extends not either to our Bounty or our Conver-
 ' sation.'

Jones went up to *Bliss's* Room, whom he
 found in a Situation which moved his Pity, though

it



it would have raised a less amiable Passion in many Beholders. He cast himself on his Bed, where he lay abandoning himself to Despair, and drowned in Tears; not in such Tears as flow from Contrition, and wash away Guilt from Minds which have been seduced or surprized into it unawares, against the Bent of their natural Dispositions, as will sometimes happen from human Frailty, even to the Good: No, these Tears were such as the frighted Thief sheds in his Cart, and are indeed the Effects of that Concern which the most savage Natures are seldom deficient in feeling for themselves.

It would be unpleasant and tedious to paint this Scene in full Length. Let it suffice to say, that the Behaviour of *Jones* was kind to Excess. He omitted nothing which his Invention could supply, to raise and comfort the drooping Spirits of *Bliffl*, before he communicated to him the Resolution of his Uncle, that he must quit the House that Evening. He offered to furnish him with any Money he wanted, assured him of his hearty Forgiveness of all he had done against him, that he would endeavour to live with him hereafter as a Brother, and would leave nothing unattempted to effectuate a Reconciliation with his Uncle.

Bliffl was at first sullen and silent, balancing in his Mind whether he should yet deny all: But finding at last the Evidence too strong against him, he betook himself at last to Confession. He then asked Pardon of his Brother in the most vehement Manner, prostrated himself on the Ground, and kissed his Feet: In short, he was now as remarkably mean, as he had been before remarkably wicked.

Jones

Jones could not so far check his Disdain, but that it a little discovered itself in his Countenance at this extreme Servility. He raised his Brother the Moment he could from the Ground, and advised him to bear his Afflictions more like a Man; repeating, at the same Time, his Promises, that he would do all in his Power to lessen them: For which *Bliss* making many Professions of his Unworthiness, poured forth a Profusion of Thanks: And then he having declared he would immediately depart to another Lodging, *Jones* returned to his Uncle.

Among other Matters, *Allworthy* now acquainted *Jones* with the Discovery which he made concerning the 500 *l.* Bank-Notes. 'I have,' said he, 'already consulted a Lawyer, who tells me, to my great Astonishment, that there is no Punishment for a Fraud of this Kind. Indeed, when I consider the black Ingratitude of this Fellow toward you, I think a Highwayman, compared to him, is an innocent Person.'

'Good Heaven!' says *Jones*, 'is it possible? — I am shocked beyond Measure at this News. I thought there was not an honest Fellow in the World. — The Temptation of such a Sum was too great for him to withstand; for smaller Matters have come safe to me through his Hand. Indeed, my dear Uncle, you must suffer me to call it Weakness rather than Ingratitude; for I am convinced the poor Fellow loves me, and hath done me some Kindnesses, which I can never forget; nay, I believe he hath repented of this very Act: For it is not above a Day or two ago, when my Affairs seemed in the most desperate Situation, that he visited me in my Confinement, and offered

‘ offered me any Money I wanted. Consider, Sir, what a Temptation to a Man who hath tasted such bitter Distress, it must be to have a Sum in his Possession, which must put him and his Family beyond any future Possibility of suffering the like.

‘ Child,’ cries *Allworthy*, ‘ you carry this forgiving Temper too far. Such mistaken Mercy is not only Weakness but borders on Injustice, and is very pernicious to Society, as it encourages Vice. The Dishonesty of this Fellow I might perhaps have pardoned, but never his Ingratitude. And give me Leave to say, when we suffer any Temptation to atone for Dishonesty itself, we are as candid and merciful as we ought to be; and so far I confess I have gone; for I have often pitied the Fate of a Highwayman, when I have been on the Grand Jury; and have more than once applied to the Judge on the Behalf of such as have had any mitigating Circumstances in their Case; but when Dishonesty is attended with any blacker Crime, such as Cruelty, Murder, Ingratitude, or the like, Compassion and Forgiveness then become Faults. I am convinced the Fellow is a Villain, and he shall be punished; at least as far as I can punish him.’

This was spoke with so stern a Voice, that *Jones* did not think proper to make any Reply: Besides, the Hour appointed by Mr. *Western* now drew so near, that he had barely Time left to dress himself. Here therefore ended the present Dialogue, and *Jones* retired to another Room, where *Partridge* attended, according to Order, with his Cloaths.

Par-