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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. IV. The Adventure of a Beggar-Man.

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ing. *Vir bonus est quis? Qui consulta Patrum,
qui leges juraque servat.* Not a Word of Fight-
ing; and I am sure the Scripture is so much
against it, that a Man shall never persuade me
he is a good Christian, while he sheds Christian-
blood.

C H A P. IV.

The Adventure of a Beggar-man.

JUST as *Partridge* had uttered that good and pious Doctrine, with which the last Chapter concluded, they arrived at another Cross-way, when a lame Fellow in Rags asked them for Alms; upon which *Partridge* gave him a severe Rebuke, saying, 'Every Parish ought to keep their own Poor.' *Jones* then fell a laughing, and asked *Partridge*, if he was not ashamed, with so much Charity in his Mouth, to have no Charity in his Heart. 'Your Religion,' says he, 'serves you only for an Excuse for your Faults, but is no Incentive to your Virtue. Can any Man who is really a Christian abstain from relieving one of his Brethren in such a miserable Condition?' And at the same time putting his Hand in his Pocket, he gave the poor Object a Shilling.

'Master,' cries the Fellow, after thanking him, 'I have a curious Thing here in my Pocket, which I found about two Miles off, if your Worship will please to buy it. I should not venture to pull it out to every one; but as you are so good a Gentleman, and so kind to the Poor, you won't suspect a Man of being a Thief only because he is poor.' He then pulled

out a little gilt Pocket-Book, and delivered it into the Hands of *Jones*.

Jones presently opened it, and (guess, Reader, what he felt,) saw in the first Page the Words *Sophia Western*, written by her own fair Hand. He no sooner read the Name, than he prest it close to his Lips; nor could he avoid falling into some very frantic Raptures, notwithstanding his Company; but, perhaps, these very Raptures made him forget he was not alone.

While *Jones* was kissing and mumbling the Book, as if he had an excellent brown butter'd Crust in his Mouth, or as if he had really been a Bookworm, or an Author, who had nothing to eat but his own Works, a Piece of Paper fell from its Leaves to the Ground, which *Partridge* took up, and delivered to *Jones*, who presently perceived it to be a Bank-Bill. It was, indeed, the very Bill which *Western* had given his Daughter, the Night before her Departure; and a *Jew* would have jumped to purchase it at five Shillings less than 100 l.

The Eyes of *Partridge* sparkled at this News, which *Jones* now proclaimed aloud; and so did (tho' with somewhat a different Aspect) those of the poor Fellow who had found the Book; and who (I hope from a Principle of Honesty) had never opened it: But we should not deal honestly by the Reader, if we omitted to inform him of a Circumstance, which may be here a little material, *viz.* That the Fellow could not read.

Jones, who had felt nothing but pure Joy and Transport from the finding the Book, was affected with a Mixture of Concern at this new Discovery: For his Imagination instantly suggested to him, that the Owner of the Bill might possibly want

want it, before he should be able to convey it to her. He then acquainted the Finder, that he knew the Lady to whom the Book belonged, and would endeavour to find her out as soon as possible, and return it her.

The Pocket-Book was a late Present from Mrs. *Western* to her Neice: It had cost five and twenty Shillings, having been bought of a celebrated Toyman; but the real Value of the Silver, which it contained in its Clasp, was about 18 *d.* and that Price the said Toyman, as it was altogether as good as when it first issued from his Shop, would now have given for it. A prudent Person would, however, have taken proper Advantage of the Ignorance of this Fellow, and would not have offered more than a Shilling, or perhaps Sixpence for it; nay, some perhaps would have given nothing, and left the Fellow to his Action of Trover, which some learned Serjeants may doubt whether he could, under these Circumstances, have maintained.

Jones, on the contrary, whose Character was on the Outside of Generosity, and may perhaps not very unjustly have been suspected of Extravagance, without any Hesitation, gave a Guinea in Exchange for the Book. The poor Man, who had not for a long Time before been possessed of so much Treasure, gave Mr. *Jones* a thousand Thanks, and discovered little less of Transport in his Muscles, than *Jones* had before shewn, when he had first read the Name of *Sophia Western*.

The Fellow very readily agreed to attend our Travellers to the Place where he had found the Pocket-Book. Together, therefore, they proceeded directly thither; but not so fast as Mr. *Jones*

desired; for his Guide unfortunately happened to be lame, and could not possibly travel faster than a Mile an Hour. As this Place, therefore, was at above three Miles Distance, though the Fellow had said otherwise, the Reader need not be acquainted how long they were in walking it.

Jones opened the Book a hundred Times during their Walk, kissed it as often, talked much to himself, and very little to his Companions. At all which the Guide express some Signs of Astonishment to *Partridge*; who more than once shook his Head, and cry'd, poor Gentleman! *erandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.*

At length they arrived at the very Spot where *Sophia* unhappily dropt the Pocket-Book, and where the Fellow had as happily found it. Here *Jones* offered to take Leave of his Guide, and to improve his Pace; but the Fellow, in whom that violent Surprize and Joy which the first Receipt of the Guinea had occasioned, was now considerably abated, and who had now had sufficient Time to recollect himself, put on a discontented Look, and, scratching his Head, said, 'He hoped his 'Worship would give him something more. 'Your Worship,' said he, 'will, I hope, take it 'into your Consideration, that if I had not been 'honest I might have kept the Whole.' And, indeed, this the Reader must confess to have been true. 'If the Paper there,' said he, 'be worth '100 *l.* I am sure the finding it deserves more 'than a Guinea. Besides, suppose your Worship 'should never see the Lady, nor give it her— 'and though your Worship looks and talks very 'much like a Gentleman, yet I have only your 'Worship's bare Word: And, certainly, if the
'right

' right Owner ben't to be found; it all belongs to
 ' the first Finder. I hope your Worship will
 ' consider all these Matters. I am but a poor
 ' Man, and therefore don't desire to have all;
 ' but it is but reasonable I should have my Share.
 ' Your Worship looks like a good Man, and,
 ' I hope, will consider my Honesty: For I might
 ' have kept every Farthing, and no-body ever
 ' the wiser.' I promise thee, upon my Honour,'
 cries *Jones*, ' that I know the right Owner, and
 ' will restore it her.' ' Nay, your Worship,'
 answered the Fellow, ' may do as you please as
 ' to that: if you will but give me my Share, that
 ' is one Half of the Money; your Honour may
 ' keep the rest yourself if you please;' and con-
 cluded with swearing by a very vehement Oath,
 ' that he would never mention a Syllable of it to
 ' any Man living.'

' Lookee, Friend,' cries *Jones*, ' the right
 ' Owner shall certainly have again all that she lost;
 ' and as for any further Gratuity, I really cannot
 ' give it you at present; but let me know your
 ' Name, and where you live, and it is more than
 ' possible, you may hereafter have further Reason
 ' to rejoice at this Morning's Adventure.'

' I don't know what you mean by Venture,'
 cries the Fellow; ' it seems, I must venture whe-
 ' ther you will return the Lady her Money or
 ' no: But I hope your Worship will consider—'
 ' Come, come,' said *Partridge*, ' tell his Honour
 ' your Name, and where you may be found;
 ' I warrant you will never repent having put the
 ' Money into his Hands.' The Fellow seeing
 no Hopes of recovering the Possession of the
 Pocket-Book, at last complied in giving in his