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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. VII. Containing a Remark or two of our own, and many more of the good Company assembled in the Kitchen.

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forgave the indecent Reflections which the good Woman in her Passion had cast on his Performances, a Face of perfect Peace and Tranquillity reigned in the Kitchin; where sat assembled round the Fire, the Landlord and Landlady of the House, the Master of the Puppet-show, the Attorney's Clerk, the Exciseman, and the ingenious Mr. *Partridge*; in which Company past the agreeable Conversation which will be found in the next Chapter.

C H A P. VII.

Containing a Remark or two of our own, and many more of the good Company assembled in the Kitchin.

THOUGH the Pride of *Partridge* did not submit to acknowledge himself a Servant; yet he condescended in most Particulars to imitate the Manners of that Rank. One Instance of this was his greatly magnifying the Fortune of his Companion, as he called *Jones*: such is a general Custom with all Servants among Strangers, as none of them would willingly be thought the Attendant on a Beggar: For the higher the Situation of the Master is, the higher consequently is that of the Man in his own Opinion; the Truth of which Observation appears from the Behaviour of all the Footmen of the Nobility.

But tho' Title and Fortune communicate a Splendor all around them, and the Footmen of Men of Quality and of Estate think themselves entitled to a Part of that Respect which is paid to the Quality and Estates of their Masters; it is clearly otherwise with Regard to Virtue and Understanding. These Advantages are strictly personal,

sonal, and swallow themselves all the Respect which is paid to them. To say the Truth, this is so very little, that they cannot well afford to let any others partake with them. As these therefore reflect no Honour on the Domestick, so neither is he at all dishonoured by the most deplorable Want of both in his Master. Indeed it is otherwise in the Want of what is called Virtue in a Mistress, the Consequence of which we have before seen: For in this Dishonour there is a Kind of Contagion, which, like that of Poverty, communicates itself to all who approach it.

Now for these Reasons we are not to wonder that Servants (I mean among the Men only) should have so great Regard for the Reputation of the Wealth of their Masters, and little or none at all for their Character in other Points, and that tho' they would be ashamed to be the Footman of a Beggar, they are not so to attend upon a Rogue, or a Blockhead; and do consequently make no Scruple to spread the Fame of the Iniquities and Follies of their said Masters as far as possible, and this often with great Humour and Merriment. In reality, a Footman is often a Wit, as well as a Beau, at the Expence of the Gentleman whose Livery he wears.

After *Partridge*, therefore, had enlarged greatly on the vast Fortune to which *Mr. Jones* was Heir, he very freely communicated an Apprehension which he had begun to conceive the Day before, and for which, as we hinted at that very Time, the Behaviour of *Jones* seemed to have furnished a sufficient Foundation. In short, he was now pretty well confirmed in an Opinion, that his Master was out of his Wits, with which
Opinion

Opinion he very bluntly acquainted the good Company round the Fire.

With this Sentiment the Puppet-show Man immediately coincided. 'I own,' said he, 'the Gentleman surprized me very much, when he talked so absurdly about Puppet-shows. It is indeed hardly to be conceived that any Man in his Senses should be so much mistaken; what you say now, accounts very well for all his monstrous Notions. Poor Gentleman! I am heartily concerned for him; indeed he hath a strange Wildness about his Eyes, which I took notice of before, tho' I did not mention it.'

The Landlord agreed with this last Assertion, and likewise claimed the Sagacity of having observed it. 'And certainly,' added he, 'it must be so: for no one but a Madman would have thought of leaving so good a House, to ramble about the Country at that Time of Night.'

The Exciseman pulling his Pipe from his Mouth, said, 'He thought the Gentleman looked and talked a little wildly;' and then turning to *Partridge*, 'If he be a Madman,' says he, 'he should not be suffered to travel thus about the Country; for possibly he may do some Mischief. It is pity he was not secured and sent home to his Relations.'

Now some Conceits of this Kind were likewise lurking in the Mind of *Partridge*: For as he was now persuaded that *Jones* had run away from *Mr. Allwortby*, he promised himself the highest Rewards, if he could by any Means convey him back. But Fear of *Jones*, of whose Fierceness and Strength he had seen, and indeed felt some Instances, had however represented any such Scheme as impossible to be executed, and had discouraged

couraged him from applying himself to form any regular Plan for the Purpose. But no sooner did he hear the Sentiments of the Exciseman, than he embraced that Opportunity of declaring his own, and expressed a hearty Wish that such a Matter could be brought about.

‘ Could be brought about?’ says the Exciseman; ‘ why there is nothing easier.

‘ Ah! Sir,’ answered *Partridge*; ‘ you don’t know what a Devil of a Fellow he is. He can take me up with one Hand, and throw me out at Window; and he would too, if he did but imagine—

‘ Pogh!’ says the Exciseman. I believe I am as good a Man as he. Besides here are five of us.

‘ I don’t know what five,’ cries the Landlady, ‘ My Husband shall have nothing to do in it. Nor shall any violent Hands be laid upon any Body in my House. The young Gentleman is as pretty a young Gentleman as ever I saw in my Life, and I believe he is no more mad than any of us. What do you tell of his having a wild Look with his Eyes? They are the prettiest Eyes I ever saw, and he hath the prettiest Look with them; and a very modest civil young Man he is. I am sure I have bepitted him heartily ever since the Gentleman there in the Corner told us he was crost in Love. Certainly that is enough to make any Man, especially such a sweet young Gentleman as he is, to look a little otherwise than he did before. Lady, indeed! What the Devil would the Lady have better than such a handsome Man with a great Estate? I suppose she is one of your Quality-folks, one of your Townly Ladies that we saw last Night

in

‘ in the Puppet-show, who don’t know what they would be at.

The Attorney’s Clerk likewise declared he would have no Concern in the Business, without the Advice of Council. ‘ Suppose,’ says he, ‘ an Action of false Imprisonment should be brought against us, what Defence could we make? Who knows what may be sufficient Evidence of Madness to a Jury? But I only speak upon my own Account; for it don’t look well for a Lawyer to be concerned in these Matters, unless it be as a Lawyer. Juries are always less favourable to us than to other People. I don’t therefore dissuade you, Mr. *Thomson* (to the Exciseman) nor the Gentleman, nor any Body else.’

The Exciseman shook his Head at this Speech, and the Puppet-show-Man said, ‘ Madness was sometimes a difficult Matter for a Jury to decide: For I remember,’ says he, ‘ I was once present at a Trial of Madness, where twenty Witnesses swore that the Person was as mad as a *March Hare*; and twenty others, that he was as much in his Senses as any Man in *England*.— And indeed it was the Opinion of most People, that it was only a Trick of his Relations to rob the poor Man of his Right.’

‘ Very likely!’ cries the Landlady, ‘ I myself knew a poor Gentleman who was kept in a Mad-house all his Life by his Family, and they enjoyed his Estate, but it did them no Good: For tho’ the Law gave it them, it was the Right of another.’

‘ Pogh!’ cries the Clerk, with great Contempt, ‘ Who hath any Right but what the Law gives them? If the Law gave me the best Estate
‘ in

in the Country, I should never trouble myself
 much who had the Right.'

'If it be so,' says *Partridge*, '*Felix quem
 faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*'

My Landlord, who had been called out by the
 Arrival of a Horseman at the Gate, now returned
 into the Kitchin, and with an affrighted Coun-
 tenance cried out, 'What do you think, Gen-
 tlemen? The Rebels have given the Duke the
 Slip, and are got almost to *London*—It is cer-
 tainly true, for a Man on Horseback just now
 told me so.

'I am glad of it with all my Heart,' cries
Partridge, 'then there will be no fighting in
 these Parts.'

'I am glad,' cries the Clerk, 'for a better
 Reason; for I would always have Right take
 Place.'

'Ay but,' answered the Landlord, 'I have
 heard some People say this Man hath no Right.'

'I will prove the contrary in a Moment,'
 cries the Clerk; 'if my Father dies seized of a
 Right; do you mind me, seized of a Right, I
 say; Doth not that Right descend to his Son?
 And doth not one Right descend as well as an-
 other?'

'But how can he have any Right to make us
 Papiſhes?' says the Landlord.

'Never fear that,' cries *Partridge*. 'As to the
 Matter of Right, the Gentleman there hath
 proved it as clear as the Sun; and as to the Mat-
 ter of Religion, it is quite out of the Case.
 The Papiſts themselves don't expect any such
 Thing. A Popiſh Priest, whom I know very
 well, and who is a very honest Man, told me
 upon

‘ upon his Word and Honour they had no such
‘ Design.

‘ And another Priest of my Acquaintance,
said the Landlady, ‘ hath told me the same Thing—
‘ But my Husband is always so afraid of Papishes.
‘ I know a great many Papishes that are very
‘ honest Sort of People, and spend their Mo-
‘ ney very freely; and it is always a Maxim with
‘ me, that one Man’s Money is as good as
‘ another’s.’

‘ Very true, Mistress,’ said the Puppet-show-
man, ‘ I don’t care what Religion comes, pro-
‘ vided the Presbyterians are not uppermost; for
‘ they are Enemies to Puppet-shows.’

‘ And so you would sacrifice your Religion to
‘ your Interest;’ cries the Exciseman; ‘ and are
‘ desirous to see Popery brought in, are you?’

‘ Not I truly,’ answered the other, ‘ I hate
‘ Popery as much as any Man; but yet it is a
‘ Comfort to one, that one should be able to live
‘ under it, which I could not do among Presby-
‘ terians. To be sure every Man values his Live-
‘ lihood first; that must be granted; and I war-
‘ rant if you would confess the Truth, you are
‘ more afraid of losing your Place than any
‘ Thing else; but never fear, Friend, there will
‘ be an Excise under another Government as well
‘ as under this.’

‘ Why certainly,’ replied the Exciseman, ‘ I
‘ should be a very ill Man, if I did not honour
‘ the King, whose Bread I eat. That is no more
‘ than natural, as a Man may say: For what
‘ signifies it to me that there would be an Excise-
‘ office under another Government, since my
‘ Friends would be out, and I could expect no
‘ better than to follow them? No, no, Friend, I
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‘ shall never be bubbled out of my Religion in
 ‘ Hopes only of keeping my Place under another
 ‘ Government; for I should certainly be no bet-
 ‘ ter, and very probably might be worse.’

‘ Why, that is what I say,’ cries the Land-
 lord, ‘ whenever Folks say who knows what may
 ‘ happen? Odsfooks! should not I be a Block-
 ‘ head to lend my Money to I know not who,
 ‘ because mayhap he may return it again? I am
 ‘ sure it is safe in my own Bureau, and there I
 ‘ will keep it.’

The Attorney’s Clerk had taken a great Fancy
 to the Sagacity of *Partridge*. Whether this pro-
 ceeded from the great Discernment which the
 former had into Men, as well as Things, or whe-
 ther it arose from the Sympathy between their
 Minds; for they were both truly *Jacobites* in
 Principle; they now shook Hands heartily, and
 drank Bumpers of Strong Beer to Healths which
 we think proper to bury in Oblivion.

These Healths were afterwards pledged by all
 present, and even by my Landlord himself, tho’
 reluctantly; but he could not withstand the Me-
 naces of the Clerk, who swore he would never
 set his Foot within his House again, if he refused.
 The Bumpers which were swallowed on this Oc-
 casion soon put an End to the Conversation.
 Here, therefore, we will put an End to the
 Chapter.

C H A P.