

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. XII. Relates that Mr. Jones continued his Journey contrary to the Advice of Partridge, with what happend on that Occasion.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-925

Hurt than what had before befallen *Partridge*, and which his Cloaths very easily bore, as they had been for many Years inured to the like. He soon regained his Side-Saddle, and, by the hearty Curfes and Blows which he bestowed on his Horfe, quickly fatisfied Mr. *Jones* that no Harm was done.

C H A P. XII.

Relates that Mr. Jones continued his Journey contrary to the Advice of Partridge, with what happened on that Occasion.

THEY now discovered a Light at some Distance, to the great Pleasure of *Jones*, and to the no small Terror of *Partridge*, who firmly believed himself to be bewitched, and that this Light was a *Jack with a Lantern*, or somewhat more mischievous.

But how were these Fears increased, when, as they approached nearer to this Light, (or Lights as they now appeared) they heard a confused Sound of Human Voices; of fingig, laughing, and hallowing, together with a strange Noise that seemed to proceed from some Instruments; but could hardly be allowed the Name of Music! Indeed, to favour a little the Opinion of *Partridge*, it might very well be called Music bewitched.

It is impossible to conceive a much greater Degree of Horror than what now seized on *Partridge*; the Contagion of which had reached the Post-Boy, who had been very attentive to many Things that the other had uttered. He now therefore joined in petitioning *Jones* to return; saying,

saying he firmly believed what *Partridge* had just before said, that tho' the Horses seemed to go on, they had not moved a Step forwards during at least the last half Hour.

Jones could not help smiling in the midst of his Vexation, at the Fears of these poor Fellows. 'Either we advance,' says he, 'towards the Lights, or the Lights have advanced towards us; for we are now at a very little Distance from them; but how can either of you be afraid of a Set of People who appear only to be merry-making?'

'Merry-making, Sir!' cries *Partridge*; 'who could be merry-making at this Time of Night, and in such a Place, and such Weather? They can be nothing but Ghosts or Witches, or some Evil Spirits or other, that's certain.'

'Let them be what they will,' cries *Jones*, 'I am resolved to go up to them, and enquire the Way to *Coventry*. All Witches, *Partridge*, are not such ill-natured Hags as that we had the Misfortune to meet with last.'

'Oh Lord, Sir!' cries *Partridge*, 'there is no knowing what Humour they will be in; to be sure it is always best to be civil to them; but what if we should meet with something worse than Witches, with Evil Spirits themselves?— Pray, Sir, be advised; pray, Sir, do. If you had read so many terrible Accounts as I have of these Matters, you would not be so Fool-hardy. —The Lord knows whither we have got already, or whither we are going: For sure such Darkness was never seen upon Earth, and I question whether it can be darker in the other World.'

VOL. III.

K

Jones

Jones put forwards as fast as he could, notwithstanding all these Hints and Cautions, and poor *Partridge* was obliged to follow: For tho' he hardly dared to advance, he dared still less to stay behind by himself.

At length they arrived at the Place whence the Lights and different Noises had issued. This *Jones* perceived to be no other than a Barn where a great Number of Men and Women were assembled, and diverting themselves with much apparent Jollity.

Jones no sooner appeared before the great Doors of the Barn, which were open, than a masculine and very rough Voice from within demanded who was there?—To which *Jones* gently answered, A Friend; and immediately asked the Road to *Coventry*.

'If you are a Friend,' cries another of the Men in the Barn, 'you had better alight till the Storm is over;' (for indeed it was now more violent than ever) 'you are very welcome to put up your Horse; for there is sufficient Room for him at one End of the Barn.'

'You are very obliging,' returned *Jones*; 'and I will accept your Offer for a few Minutes, whilst the Rain continues; and here are two more who will be glad of the same Favour.' This was accorded with more Good-will than it was accepted: For *Partridge* would rather have submitted to the utmost Inclemency of the Weather, than have trusted to the Clemency of those whom he took for Hobgoblins; and the poor Post Boy was now infected with the same Apprehensions; but they were both obliged to follow the Example of *Jones*; the one because he durst

not

not leave his Horse, and the other because he feared nothing so much as being left by himself.

Had this History been writ in the Days of Superstition, I should have had too much Compassion for the Reader to have left him so long in Suspence, whether *Beelzebub* or *Satan* was about actually to appear in Person, with all his Hellish Retinue; but as these Doctrines are at present very unfortunate, and have but few if any Believers, I have not been much aware of conveying any such Terrors. To say Truth, the whole Furniture of the infernal Regions hath long been appropriated by the Managers of Playhouses, who seem lately to have lain them by as Rubbish, capable only of affecting the Upper Gallery; a Place in which few of our Readers ever sit.

However, tho' we do not suspect raising any great Terror on this Occasion, we have Reason to fear some other Apprehensions may here arise in our Reader, into which we would not willingly betray him; I mean, that we are going to take a Voyage into Fairy Land, and to introduce a Set of Beings into our History, which scarce any one was ever childish enough to believe, though many have been foolish enough to spend their Time in writing and reading their Adventures.

To prevent therefore any such Suspicions, so prejudicial to the Credit of an Historian, who professes to draw his Materials from Nature only, we shall now proceed to acquaint the Reader who these People were, whose sudden Appearance had struck such Terrors into *Partridge*, had more than half frightened the Post-Boy, and had a little surprized even Mr. *Jones* himself.

The People then assembled in this Barn were no other than a Company of *Egyptians*, or as



they are vulgarly called *Gypsies*, and they were now celebrating the Wedding of one of their Society.

It is impossible to conceive a happier Set of People than appeared here to be met together. The utmost Mirth indeed shewed itself in every Countenance; nor was their Ball totally void of all Order and Decorum. Perhaps it had more than a Country Assembly is sometimes conducted with: For these People are subject to a formal Government and Laws of their own, and all pay Obedience to one great Magistrate, whom they call their King.

Greater Plenty likewise was no where to be seen, than what flourished in this Barn. Here was indeed no Nicety nor Elegance, nor did the keen Appetite of the Guests require any. Here was good Store of Bacon, Fowls, and Mutton, to which every one present provided better Sauce himself, than the best and dearest *French Cook* can prepare.

Aeneas is not described under more Consternation in the Temple of *Juno*,

Dum stupet obtutuque hæret defixus in uno,

than was our Heroe at what he saw in this Barn. While he was looking every where round him with Astonishment, a venerable Person approach'd him with many friendly Salutations, rather of too hearty a Kind to be called courtly. This was no other than the King of the *Gypsies* himself. He was very little distinguished in Dress from his Subjects, nor had he any *Regalia* of Majesty to support his Dignity; and yet there seem'd (as Mr. *Jones* said) to be somewhat in his Air which denoted Authority, and inspired the Beholders with

with an Idea of Awe and Respect; tho' all this was perhaps imaginary in *Jones*; and the Truth may be, that such Ideas are incident to Power, and almost inseparable from it.

There was somewhat in the open Countenance and courteous Behaviour of *Jones*, which being accompanied with much Comeliness of Person, greatly recommended him at first Sight to every Beholder. These were perhaps a little heighten'd in the present Instance, by that profound Respect which he paid to the King of the *Gypsies*, the Moment he was acquainted with his Dignity, and which was the sweetor to his *Gypsian* Majesty, as he was not used to receive such Homage from any but his own Subjects.

The King ordered a Table to be spread with the choicest of their Provisions for his Accommodation; and having placed himself at his Right Hand, his Majesty began to discourse our Heroe in the following Manner:

‘ Me doubt not, Sir, but you have often seen
 ‘ some of my People, who are what you call de
 ‘ Parties detache: For dey go about every where;
 ‘ but me fancy you imagine not we be so confi-
 ‘ drable Body as we be; and may be you will
 ‘ surprize more, when you hear de *Gypsy* be as or-
 ‘ derly and well govern People as any upon Face
 ‘ of de Earth.

‘ Me have Honour, as me say, to be deir
 ‘ King, and no Monarch can do boast of more
 ‘ dutiful Subject, ne no more affectionate. How
 ‘ far me deserve deir Good-will, me no say; but
 ‘ dis me can say, dat me never design any Ting
 ‘ but to do dem Good. Me fall no do boast of
 ‘ dat neider: For what can me do oderwise dan
 ‘ consider of de Good of dese poor People who



‘ go about all Day to give me always the best of
 ‘ what dey get. Dey love and honour me dare-
 ‘ fore, because me do love and take care of dem;
 ‘ dat is all, me know no oder Reason.

‘ About a thousand or two thousand Year ago,
 ‘ me cannot tell to a Year or two, as can neider
 ‘ write nor read, there was a great what you
 ‘ call,—a Volution among de *Gypsy*; for dere
 ‘ was de Lord *Gypsy* in dose Days; and dese Lord
 ‘ did quarrel vid one anoder about de Place; but
 ‘ de King of de *Gypsy* did demolish dem all, and
 ‘ made all his Subject equal vid each oder; and
 ‘ since dat time dey have agree very well: For
 ‘ dey no tink of being King, and may be it be
 ‘ better for dem as dey be; for me assure you it
 ‘ be ver troublesome ting to be King, and always
 ‘ to do Justice; me have often wish to be de pri-
 ‘ vate *Gypsy* when me have been forced to punish
 ‘ my dear Friend and Relation; for dough we
 ‘ never put to Death, our Punishments be ver se-
 ‘ vere. Dey make de *Gypsy* ashamed of dem-
 ‘ selves, and dat be ver terrible Punishment; me
 ‘ ave scarce ever known de *Gypsy* so punish do
 ‘ Harm any more.’

The King then proceeded to exprefs some
 Wonder that there was no such Punishment as
 Shame in other Governments. Upon which *Jones*
 assured him to the contrary: For that there were
 many Crimes for which Shame was inflicted by
 the *English* Laws, and that it was indeed one
 Consequence of all Punishment. ‘ Dat be ver
 ‘ strange,’ said the King: ‘ For me know and
 ‘ hears good deal of your People, dough me no
 ‘ live among dem; and me ave often hear dat
 ‘ Sham is de Consequence and de Cause too of
 ‘ many

‘ many of your Rewards. Are your Rewards and Punishments den de same Ting?’

While his Majesty was thus discourfing with *Jones*, a sudden Uproar arofe in the Barn, and as it feems upon this Occafion: The Courtefy of thefe People had by degrees removed all the Apprehenfions of *Partridge*, and he was prevailed upon not only to ftuff himfelf with their Food, but to tafte fome of their Liquors, which by degrees entirely expelled all Fear from his Compo- fition, and in its Stead introduced much more agreeable Senfations.

A young Female *Gyffy*, more remarkable for her Wit than her Beauty, had decoyed the honeft Fellow afide, pretending to tell his Fortune. Now when they were alone together in a remote Part of the Barn, whether it proceeded from the ftrong Liquor, which is never fo apt to inflame inordinate Defire as after moderate Fatigue; or whether the fair *Gyffy* herfelf threw afide the Delicacy and Decency of her Sex, and tempted the Youth *Partridge* with exprefs Solicitations; but they were difcovered in a very improper Manner by the Husband of the *Gyffy*, who from Jealoufy, it feems, had kept a watchful Eye over his Wife, and had dogged her to the Place, where he found her in the Arms of her Gallant.

To the great Confufion of *Jones*, *Partridge* was now hurried before the King; who heard the Accufation, and likewise the Culprit’s Defence, which was indeed very trifling: For the poor Fellow was confounded by the plain Evidence which appeared againft him, and had very little to fay for himfelf. His Majesty then turning towards *Jones*, faid, ‘ Sir, you have hear



‘ what dey say; what Punishment do you tink
 ‘ your Man deserve?’

Jones answered, ‘ He was sorry for what had
 ‘ happened; and that *Partridge* should make the
 ‘ Husband all the Amends in his Power: He said,
 ‘ he had very little Money about him at that
 ‘ Time;’ and putting his Hand into his Pocket,
 offered the Fellow a Guinea. To which he im-
 mediately answered, ‘ He hoped his Honour
 ‘ would not think of giving him less than five.’

This Sum, after some Altercation, was reduced
 to two; and *Jones* having stipulated for the full
 Forgiveness of both *Partridge* and the Wife, was
 going to pay the Money; when his Majesty re-
 straining his Hand, turned to the Witnesses, and
 asked him, ‘ At what Time he had discovered the
 ‘ Criminals?’ To which he answered, ‘ That he
 ‘ had been desired by the Husband to watch the
 ‘ Motions of his Wife from her first speaking to
 ‘ the Stranger, and that he had never lost Sight
 ‘ of her afterwards till the Crime had been com-
 ‘ mitted.’ The King then asked, ‘ If the Hus-
 ‘ band was with him all that Time in his lurking
 ‘ Place?’ To which he answered in the Affirma-
 tive. His *Egyptian* Majesty then addressed him-
 self to the Husband as follows, ‘ Me be sorry to
 ‘ see any *Gypsy* dat have no more Honour dan to
 ‘ sell de Honour of his Wife for Money. If
 ‘ you had de Love for your Wife, you would
 ‘ have prevented dis Matter, and not endeavour
 ‘ to make her de Whore dat you might discover
 ‘ her. Me do order dat you have no Money
 ‘ given you; for you deserve Punishment, not
 ‘ Reward; me do order derefore, dat you be de
 ‘ infamous *Gypsy*, and do wear Pair of Horns
 ‘ upon your Forehead for one Month, and dat
 ‘ your

‘ your Wife be called de Whore, and pointed at
 ‘ all dat Time: For you be de infamous *Gypfy*,
 ‘ but she be no less the infamous Whore.’

The *Gypfies* immediately proceeded to execute the Sentence, and left *Jones* and *Partridge* alone with his Majesty.

Jones greatly applauded the Justice of the Sentence; upon which the King turning to him said,
 ‘ Me believe you be surprize: For me suppose
 ‘ you have ver bad Opinion of my People; me
 ‘ suppose you think us all de Tieves.’

‘ I must confes, Sir,’ said *Jones*, ‘ I have not
 ‘ heard so favourable an Account of them as they
 ‘ seem to deserve.’

‘ Me vil tell you,’ said the King, ‘ how the
 ‘ Difference is between you and us. My People
 ‘ rob your People, and your People rob one
 ‘ anoder.’

Jones afterwards proceeded very gravely to set forth the Happiness of those Subjects who live under such a Magistrate.

Indeed their Happiness appears to have been so compleat, that we are aware lest some Advocate for arbitrary Power should hereafter quote the Case of those People, as an Instance of the great Advantages which attend that Government above all others.

And here we will make a Concession, which would not perhaps have been expected from us, That no limited Form of Government is capable of rising to the same Degree of Perfection, or of producing the same Benefits to Society with this. Mankind have never been so happy, as when the greatest Part of the then known World was under the Dominion of a single Master; and this State of their Felicity continued during the Reigns

of five successive Princes *. This was the true Æra of the Golden Age, and the only Golden Age, which ever had any Existence, unless in the warm Imaginations of the Poets, from the Expulsion from *Eden* down to this Day.

In reality, I know but of one solid Objection to absolute Monarchy. The only Defect in which excellent Constitution seems to be the Difficulty of finding any Man adequate to the Office of an absolute Monarch: For this indispensably requires three Qualities very difficult, as it appears from History, to be found in princely Natures: First, a sufficient Quantity of Moderation in the Prince, to be contented with all the Power which is possible for him to have. 2dly, Enough of Wisdom to know his own Happiness. And, 3dly, Goodness sufficient to support the Happiness of others, when not only compatible with, but instrumental to his own.

Now if an absolute Monarch, with all these great and rare Qualifications, should be allowed capable of conferring the greatest Good on Society; it must be surely granted, on the contrary, that absolute Power vested in the Hands of one who is deficient in them all, is likely to be attended with no less a Degree of Evil.

In short, our own Religion furnishes us with adequate Ideas of the Blessing, as well as Curse which may attend absolute Power. The Pictures of Heaven and of Hell will place a very lively Image of both before our Eyes: For though the Prince of the latter can have no Power, but what he originally derives from the omnipotent Sovereign in the former; yet it plainly appears

* *Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonini.*

from

from Scripture, that absolute Power in his infernal Dominions is granted to their Diabolical Ruler. This is indeed the only absolute Power which can by Scripture be derived from Heaven. If therefore the several Tyrannies upon Earth can prove any Title to a divine Authority, it must be derived from this original Grant to the Prince of Darkness, and these subordinate Deputations must consequently come immediately from him whose Stamp they so expressly bear.

To conclude, as the Examples of all Ages shew us that Mankind in general desire Power only to do Harm, and when they obtain it, use it for no other Purpose; it is not consonant with even the least Degree of Prudence to hazard an Alteration, where our Hopes are poorly kept in Countenance by only two or three Exceptions out of a thousand Instances to alarm our Fears. In this Case it will be much wiser to submit to a few Inconveniencies arising from the dispassionate Deafness of Laws, than to remedy them by applying to the passionate open Ears of a Tyrant.

Nor can the Example of the *Gypsies*, tho' possibly they may have long been happy under this Form of Government, be here urged; since we must remember the very material Respect in which they differ from all other People, and to which perhaps this their Happiness is entirely owing, namely, that they have no false Honours among them; and that they look on Shame as the most grievous Punishment in the World.