

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. III. A Project of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and her Visit to Lady Bellafton.

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

extraordinary, or any ways material to this History, we shall here put an End to this Chapter.

C H A P. III.

A Project of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and her Visit to Lady Bellaſton.

WHEN Mrs. *Fitzpatrick* retired to Reſt, her Thoughts were entirely taken up by her Couſin *Sophia* and Mr. *Jones*. She was, indeed, a little offended with the former, for the Diligentiſm which ſhe now diſcovered. In which Meditation ſhe had not long exerciſed her Imagination, before the following Conceit ſuggeſted itſelf: That could ſhe poſſibly become the Means of preſerving *Sophia* from this Man, and of reſtoring her to her Father, ſhe ſhould, in all human Probability, by ſo great a Service to the Family, reconcile to herſelf both her Uncle and her Aunt *Western*.

As this was one of her moſt favourite Wiſhes, ſo the Hope of Succeſs ſeemed ſo reaſonable, that nothing remained but to conſider of proper Methods to accompliſh her Scheme. To attempt to reaſon the Caſe with *Sophia*, did not appear to her one of thoſe Methods: For as *Betty* had reported from Mrs. *Honour*, that *Sophia* had a violent Inclination to *Jones*, ſhe conceived, that to diſſuade her from the Match, was an Endeavour of the ſame Kind as it would be, very heartily and earneſtly to entreat a Moth not to fly into a Candle.

If the Reader will pleaſe to remember, that the Acquaintance which *Sophia* had with Lady *Bellaſton*, was contracted at the Houſe of Mrs. *Western*,

tern, and must have grown at the very Time when Mrs. *Fitzpatrick* lived with this latter Lady, he will want no Information, that Mrs. *Fitzpatrick* must have been acquainted with her likewise. They were, besides, both equally her distant Relations.

After much Consideration, therefore, she resolved to go early in the Morning to that Lady, and endeavour to see her, unknown to *Sophia*, and to acquaint her with the whole Affair. For she did not in the least doubt, but that the prudent Lady, who had often ridiculed romantic Love, and indiscreet Marriages, in her Conversation, would very readily concur in her Sentiments concerning this Match, and would lend her utmost Assistance to prevent it.

This Resolution she accordingly executed; and the next Morning before the Sun, she huddled on her Cloaths, and at a very unfashionable, unseasonable, unvisitable Hour went to Lady *Bellafton*, to whom she got Access, without the least Knowledge or Suspicion of *Sophia*, who though not asleep, lay at that Time awake in her Bed, with *Honour* snoring by her Side.

Mrs. *Fitzpatrick* made many Apologies for an early, abrupt Visit, at an Hour when she said she should not have thought of disturbing her Ladyship, but upon Business of the utmost Consequence. She then opened the whole Affair, told all she had heard from *Betty*; and did not forget the Visit which *Jones* had paid to herself the preceding Evening.

Lady *Bellafton* answered with a Smile, 'Then you have seen this terrible Man, Madam; pray is he so very fine a Figure as he is represented?'

'For

‘ For *Etoff* entertained me last Night almost
 ‘ two Hours with him. The Wench I believe
 ‘ is in Love with him by Reputation.’ Here the
 Reader will be apt to wonder; but the Truth is
 that Mrs. *Etoff*, who had the Honour to pin and
 unpin the Lady *Bellaſton*, had received complete
 Information concerning the ſaid Mr. *Jones*, and
 had faithfully conveyed the ſame to her Lady laſt
 Night (or rather that Morning) while ſhe was
 undreſſing; on which Accounts ſhe had been de-
 tained in her Office above the Space of an Hour
 and half.

The Lady indeed, tho’ generally well enough
 pleaſed with the Narratives of Mrs. *Etoff* at thoſe
 Seaſons, gave an extraordinary Attention to her
 Account of *Jones*; for *Honour* had deſcribed him
 as a very handſome Fellow, and Mrs. *Etoff* in her
 Hurry added ſo much to the Beauty of his Perſon
 to her Report, that Lady *Bellaſton* began to con-
 ceive him to be a kind of Miracle in Nature.

The Curioſity which her Woman had inſpired,
 was now greatly increaſed by Mrs. *Fitzpatrick*,
 who ſpoke as much in Favour of the Perſon of
Jones, as ſhe had before ſpoken in Diſpraiſe of his
 Birth, Character and Fortune.

When Lady *Bellaſton* had heard the whole,
 ſhe answered gravely, ‘ Indeed, Madam, this is
 ‘ a Matter of great Conſequence. Nothing can
 ‘ certainly be more commendable than the Part
 ‘ you act; and I ſhall be very glad to have my
 ‘ Share in the Preſervation of a young Lady of
 ‘ ſo much Merit, and for whom I have ſo much
 ‘ Eſteem.’

‘ Doth not your Ladyſhip think,’ ſays Mrs.
Fitzpatrick eagerly, ‘ that it would be the beſt
 ‘ Way

‘ Way to write immediately to my Uncle, and
 ‘ acquaint him where my Cousin is?’

The Lady pondered a little upon this, and thus
 answered—‘ Why, no, Madam, I think not.
 ‘ *Di Western* hath described her Brother to me to
 ‘ be such a Brute, that I cannot consent to put
 ‘ any Woman under his Power who hath escaped
 ‘ from it. I have heard he behaved like a Mon-
 ‘ ster to his own Wife; for he is one of those
 ‘ Wretches who think they have a Right to ty-
 ‘ rannize over us, and from such I shall ever
 ‘ esteem it the Cause of my Sex to rescue any
 ‘ Woman who is so unfortunate to be under their
 ‘ Power.—The Business, dear Cousin, will be
 ‘ only to keep Miss *Western* from seeing this
 ‘ young Fellow, till the good Company, which
 ‘ she will have an Opportunity of meeting here,
 ‘ give her a properer Turn.’

‘ If he should find her out, Madam,’ answered
 the other, ‘ your Ladyship may be assured he will
 ‘ leave nothing unattempted to come at her.’

‘ But, Madam,’ replied the Lady, ‘ it is im-
 ‘ possible he should come here—tho’ indeed it is
 ‘ possible he may get some Intelligence where she
 ‘ is, and then may lurk about the House—I wish
 ‘ therefore I knew his Person.

‘ Is there no Way, Madam, by which I could
 ‘ have a Sight of him? For otherwise you know,
 ‘ Cousin, she may contrive to see him here with-
 ‘ out my Knowledge.’ Mrs. *Fitzpatrick* an-
 swered, ‘ That he had threatened her with ano-
 ‘ ther Visit that Afternoon, and that if her Lady-
 ‘ ship pleased to do her the Honour of calling
 ‘ upon her then, she would hardly fail of seeing
 ‘ him between Six and Seven; and if he came
 ‘ earlier she would, by some Means or other, de-
 ‘ tain