History of Tom Jones
A Foundling
VOL.II

By

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Freeditorial

HISTORY OF TOM JONES A FOUNDLING

Chapter i. — Showing what kind of a history this is; what it is like, and what it is not like.

Though we have properly enough entitled this our work, a history, and not a life; nor an apology for a life, as is more in fashion; yet we intend in it rather to pursue the method of those writers, who profess to disclose the revolutions of countries, than to imitate the painful and voluminous historian, who, to preserve the regularity of his series, thinks himself obliged to fill up as much paper with the detail of months and years in which nothing remarkable happened, as he employs upon those notable aeras when the greatest scenes have been transacted on the human stage.

Such histories as these do, in reality, very much resemble a newspaper, which consists of just the same number of words, whether there be any news in it or not. They may likewise be compared to a stage coach, which performs constantly the same course, empty as well as full. The writer, indeed, seems to think himself obliged to keep even pace with time, whose amanuensis he is; and, like his master, travels as slowly through centuries of monkish dulness, when the world seems to have been asleep, as through that bright and busy age so nobly distinguished by the excellent Latin poet—

Ad confligendum venientibus undique poenis,

Omnia cum belli trepido concussa tumultu

Horrida contremuere sub altis aetheris auris;

In dubioque fuit sub utrorum regna cadendum

Omnibus humanis esset, terraque marique.

Of which we wish we could give our readers a more adequate translation than that by Mr Creech—

When dreadful Carthage frighted Rome with arms,

And all the world was shook with fierce alarms;

Whilst undecided yet, which part should fall,

Which nation rise the glorious lord of all.

Now it is our purpose, in the ensuing pages, to pursue a contrary method. When any extraordinary scene presents itself (as we trust will often be the case), we shall spare no pains nor paper to open it at large to our reader; but if whole years should pass without producing anything worthy his notice, we shall not be afraid of a chasm in our history; but shall hasten on to matters of consequence, and leave such periods of time totally unobserved.

These are indeed to be considered as blanks in the grand lottery of time. We therefore, who are the registers of that lottery, shall imitate those sagacious persons who deal in that which is drawn at Guildhall, and who never trouble the public with the many blanks they dispose of; but when a great prize happens to be drawn, the newspapers are presently filled with it, and the world is sure to be informed at whose office it was sold: indeed, commonly two or three different offices lay claim to the honour of having disposed of it; by which, I suppose, the adventurers are given to understand that certain brokers are in the secrets of Fortune, and indeed of her cabinet council.

My reader then is not to be surprized, if, in the course of this work, he shall find some chapters very short, and others altogether as long; some that contain only the time of a single day, and others that comprise years; in a word, if my history sometimes seems to stand still, and sometimes to fly. For all which I shall not look on myself as accountable to any court of critical jurisdiction whatever: for as I am, in reality, the founder of a new province of writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please therein. And these laws, my readers, whom I consider as my subjects, are bound to believe in and to obey; with which that they may readily and cheerfully comply, I do hereby assure them that I shall principally regard their ease and advantage in all such institutions: for I do not, like a jure divino tyrant, imagine that they are my slaves, or my commodity. I am, indeed, set over them for their own good only, and was created for their use, and not they for mine. Nor do I doubt, while I make their interest the great rule of my writings, they will unanimously concur in supporting my dignity, and in rendering me all the honour I shall deserve or desire.

Chapter ii. — Religious cautions against showing too much favour to bastards; and a great discovery made by Mrs Deborah Wilkins.

Eight months after the celebration of the nuptials between Captain Blifil and Miss Bridget Allworthy, a young lady of great beauty, merit, and fortune, was Miss Bridget, by reason of a fright, delivered of a fine boy. The child was indeed to all appearances perfect; but the midwife discovered it was born a month before its full time.

Though the birth of an heir by his beloved sister was a circumstance of great joy to Mr Allworthy, yet it did not alienate his affections from the little foundling, to whom he had been godfather, had given his own name of Thomas, and whom he had hitherto seldom failed of visiting, at least once a day, in his nursery.

He told his sister, if she pleased, the new-born infant should be bred up together with little Tommy; to which she consented, though with some little reluctance: for she had truly a great complacence for her brother; and hence she had always behaved towards the foundling with rather more kindness than ladies of rigid virtue can sometimes bring themselves to show to these children, who, however innocent, may be truly called the living monuments of incontinence.

The captain could not so easily bring himself to bear what he condemned as a fault in Mr Allworthy. He gave him frequent hints, that to adopt the fruits of sin, was to give countenance to it. He quoted several texts (for he was well read in Scripture), such as, He visits the sins of the fathers upon the children; and the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge,&c. Whence he argued the legality of punishing the crime of the parent on the bastard. He said, "Though the law did not positively allow the destroying such base-born children, yet it held them to be the children of nobody; that the Church considered them as the children of nobody; and that at the best, they ought to be brought up to the lowest and vilest offices of the commonwealth."

Mr Allworthy answered to all this, and much more, which the captain had urged on this subject, "That, however guilty the parents might be, the children were certainly innocent: that as to the texts he had quoted, the former of them was a particular denunciation against the Jews, for the sin of idolatry, of relinquishing and hating their heavenly King; and the latter was parabolically spoken, and rather intended to denote the certain and necessary consequences of sin, than any express judgment against it. But to represent the Almighty as avenging the sins of the guilty on the innocent, was indecent, if not blasphemous, as it was to represent him acting against the first principles of natural justice, and against the original notions of right and wrong, which he himself had implanted in our minds; by which we were to judge not only in all matters which were not revealed, but even of the truth of revelation itself. He said he knew many held the same principles with the captain on this head; but he was himself firmly convinced to the contrary, and would provide in the same manner for this poor infant, as if a legitimate child had had fortune to have been found in the same place."

While the captain was taking all opportunities to press these and such like arguments, to remove the little foundling from Mr Allworthy's, of whose fondness for him he began to be jealous, Mrs Deborah had made a discovery, which, in its event, threatened at least to prove more fatal to poor Tommy than all the reasonings of the captain.

Whether the insatiable curiosity of this good woman had carried her on to that business, or whether she did it to confirm herself in the good graces of Mrs Blifil, who, notwithstanding her outward behaviour to the foundling, frequently abused the infant in private, and her brother too, for his fondness to it, I will not determine; but she had now, as she conceived, fully detected the father of the foundling.

Now, as this was a discovery of great consequence, it may be necessary to trace it from the fountain-head. We shall therefore very minutely lay open those previous matters by which it was produced; and for that purpose we shall be obliged to reveal all the secrets of a little family with which my reader is at present entirely unacquainted; and of which the oeconomy was so rare and extraordinary, that I fear it will shock the utmost credulity of many married persons.

Chapter iii. — The description of a domestic government founded upon rules directly contrary to those of Aristotle.

My reader may please to remember he hath been informed that Jenny Jones had lived some years with a certain schoolmaster, who had, at her earnest desire, instructed her in Latin, in which, to do justice to her genius, she had so improved herself, that she was become a better scholar than her master.

Indeed, though this poor man had undertaken a profession to which learning must be allowed necessary, this was the least of his commendations. He was one of the best-natured fellows in the world, and was, at the same time, master of so much pleasantry and humour, that he was reputed the wit of the country; and all the neighbouring gentlemen were so desirous of his company, that as denying was not his talent, he spent much time at their houses, which he might, with more emolument, have spent in his school.

It may be imagined that a gentleman so qualified and so disposed, was in no danger of becoming formidable to the learned seminaries of Eton or Westminster. To speak plainly, his scholars were divided into two classes: in the upper of which was a young gentleman, the son of a neighbouring squire, who, at the age of seventeen, was just entered into his Syntaxis; and in the lower was a second son of the same gentleman, who, together with seven parish-boys, was learning to read and write.

The stipend arising hence would hardly have indulged the schoolmaster in the luxuries of life, had he not added to this office those of clerk and barber, and had not Mr Allworthy added to the whole an annuity of ten pounds, which the poor man received every Christmas, and with which he was enabled to cheer his heart during that sacred festival.

Among his other treasures, the pedagogue had a wife, whom he had married out of Mr Allworthy's kitchen for her fortune, viz., twenty pounds, which she had there amassed.

This woman was not very amiable in her person. Whether she sat to my friend Hogarth, or no, I will not determine; but she exactly resembled the young woman who is pouring out her mistress's tea in the third picture of the Harlot's Progress. She was, besides, a profest follower of that noble sect founded by Xantippe of old; by means of which she became more formidable in the school than her husband; for, to confess the truth, he was never master there, or anywhere else, in her presence.

Though her countenance did not denote much natural sweetness of temper, yet this was, perhaps, somewhat soured by a circumstance which generally poisons matrimonial

felicity; for children are rightly called the pledges of love; and her husband, though they had been married nine years, had given her no such pledges; a default for which he had no excuse, either from age or health, being not yet thirty years old, and what they call a jolly brisk young man.

Hence arose another evil, which produced no little uneasiness to the poor pedagogue, of whom she maintained so constant a jealousy, that he durst hardly speak to one woman in the parish; for the least degree of civility, or even correspondence, with any female, was sure to bring his wife upon her back, and his own.

In order to guard herself against matrimonial injuries in her own house, as she kept one maid-servant, she always took care to chuse her out of that order of females whose faces are taken as a kind of security for their virtue; of which number Jenny Jones, as the reader hath been before informed, was one.

As the face of this young woman might be called pretty good security of the before-mentioned kind, and as her behaviour had been always extremely modest, which is the certain consequence of understanding in women; she had passed above four years at Mr Partridge's (for that was the schoolmaster's name) without creating the least suspicion in her mistress. Nay, she had been treated with uncommon kindness, and her mistress had permitted Mr Partridge to give her those instructions which have been before commemorated.

But it is with jealousy as with the gout: when such distempers are in the blood, there is never any security against their breaking out; and that often on the slightest occasions, and when least suspected.

Thus it happened to Mrs Partridge, who had submitted four years to her husband's teaching this young woman, and had suffered her often to neglect her work, in order to pursue her learning. For, passing by one day, as the girl was reading, and her master leaning over her, the girl, I know not for what reason, suddenly started up from her chair: and this was the first time that suspicion ever entered into the head of her mistress. This did not, however, at that time discover itself, but lay lurking in her mind, like a concealed enemy, who waits for a reinforcement of additional strength before he openly declares himself and proceeds upon hostile operations: and such additional strength soon arrived to corroborate her suspicion; for not long after, the husband and wife being at dinner, the master said to his maid, Da mihi aliquid potum: upon which the poor girl smiled, perhaps at the badness of the Latin, and, when her mistress cast her eyes on her, blushed, possibly with a consciousness of having laughed at her master. Mrs Partridge, upon this, immediately fell into a fury, and discharged the trencher on which she was eating, at the head of poor Jenny, crying out, "You impudent whore, do you play tricks with my husband before my face?" and at the same instant rose from her

chair with a knife in her hand, with which, most probably, she would have executed very tragical vengeance, had not the girl taken the advantage of being nearer the door than her mistress, and avoided her fury by running away: for, as to the poor husband, whether surprize had rendered him motionless, or fear (which is full as probable) had restrained him from venturing at any opposition, he sat staring and trembling in his chair; nor did he once offer to move or speak, till his wife, returning from the pursuit of Jenny, made some defensive measures necessary for his own preservation; and he likewise was obliged to retreat, after the example of the maid.

This good woman was, no more than Othello, of a disposition

To make a life of jealousy

And follow still the changes of the moon

With fresh suspicions—

With her, as well as him,

—To be once in doubt,

Was once to be resolvd—

she therefore ordered Jenny immediately to pack up her alls and begone, for that she was determined she should not sleep that night within her walls.

Mr Partridge had profited too much by experience to interpose in a matter of this nature. He therefore had recourse to his usual receipt of patience, for, though he was not a great adept in Latin, he remembered, and well understood, the advice contained in these words

—Leve fit quod bene fertur onus

in English:

A burden becomes lightest when it is well borne—

which he had always in his mouth; and of which, to say the truth, he had often occasion to experience the truth.

Jenny offered to make protestations of her innocence; but the tempest was too strong for her to be heard. She then betook herself to the business of packing, for which a small quantity of brown paper sufficed, and, having received her small pittance of wages, she returned home.

The schoolmaster and his consort passed their time unpleasantly enough that evening, but something or other happened before the next morning, which a little abated the fury of Mrs Partridge; and she at length admitted her husband to make his excuses: to which she gave the readier belief, as he had, instead of desiring her to recall Jenny, professed a satisfaction in her being dismissed, saying, she was grown of little use as a servant, spending all her time in reading, and was become, moreover, very pert and obstinate; for, indeed, she and her master had lately had frequent disputes in literature; in which, as hath been said, she was become greatly his superior. This, however, he would by no means allow; and as he called her persisting in the right, obstinacy, he began to hate her with no small inveteracy.

Chapter iv. — Containing one of the most bloody battles, or rather duels, that were ever recorded in domestic history.

For the reasons mentioned in the preceding chapter, and from some other matrimonial concessions, well known to most husbands, and which, like the secrets of freemasonry, should be divulged to none who are not members of that honourable fraternity, Mrs Partridge was pretty well satisfied that she had condemned her husband without cause, and endeavoured by acts of kindness to make him amends for her false suspicion. Her passions were indeed equally violent, whichever way they inclined; for as she could be extremely angry, so could she be altogether as fond.

But though these passions ordinarily succeed each other, and scarce twenty-four hours ever passed in which the pedagogue was not, in some degree, the object of both; yet, on extraordinary occasions, when the passion of anger had raged very high, the remission was usually longer: and so was the case at present; for she continued longer in a state of affability, after this fit of jealousy was ended, than her husband had ever known before: and, had it not been for some little exercises, which all the followers of Xantippe are obliged to perform daily, Mr Partridge would have enjoyed a perfect serenity of several months.

Perfect calms at sea are always suspected by the experienced mariner to be the forerunners of a storm, and I know some persons, who, without being generally the devotees of superstition, are apt to apprehend that great and unusual peace or tranquillity will be attended with its opposite. For which reason the antients used, on such occasions, to sacrifice to the goddess Nemesis, a deity who was thought by them to look with an invidious eye on human felicity, and to have a peculiar delight in overturning it.

As we are very far from believing in any such heathen goddess, or from encouraging any superstition, so we wish Mr John Fr——, or some other such philosopher, would bestir himself a little, in order to find out the real cause of this sudden transition from good to bad fortune, which hath been so often remarked, and of which we shall proceed to give an instance; for it is our province to relate facts, and we shall leave causes to persons of much higher genius.

Mankind have always taken great delight in knowing and descanting on the actions of others. Hence there have been, in all ages and nations, certain places set apart for public rendezvous, where the curious might meet and satisfy their mutual curiosity. Among these, the barbers' shops have justly borne the pre-eminence. Among the Greeks,

barbers' news was a proverbial expression; and Horace, in one of his epistles, makes honourable mention of the Roman barbers in the same light.

Those of England are known to be no wise inferior to their Greek or Roman predecessors. You there see foreign affairs discussed in a manner little inferior to that with which they are handled in the coffee-houses; and domestic occurrences are much more largely and freely treated in the former than in the latter. But this serves only for the men. Now, whereas the females of this country, especially those of the lower order, do associate themselves much more than those of other nations, our polity would be highly deficient, if they had not some place set apart likewise for the indulgence of their curiosity, seeing they are in this no way inferior to the other half of the species.

In enjoying, therefore, such place of rendezvous, the British fair ought to esteem themselves more happy than any of their foreign sisters; as I do not remember either to have read in history, or to have seen in my travels, anything of the like kind.

This place then is no other than the chandler's shop, the known seat of all the news; or, as it is vulgarly called, gossiping, in every parish in England.

Mrs Partridge being one day at this assembly of females, was asked by one of her neighbours, if she had heard no news lately of Jenny Jones? To which she answered in the negative. Upon this the other replied, with a smile, That the parish was very much obliged to her for having turned Jenny away as she did.

Mrs Partridge, whose jealousy, as the reader well knows, was long since cured, and who had no other quarrel to her maid, answered boldly, She did not know any obligation the parish had to her on that account; for she believed Jenny had scarce left her equal behind her.

"No, truly," said the gossip, "I hope not, though I fancy we have sluts enow too. Then you have not heard, it seems, that she hath been brought to bed of two bastards? but as they are not born here, my husband and the other overseer says we shall not be obliged to keep them."

"Two bastards!" answered Mrs Partridge hastily: "you surprize me! I don't know whether we must keep them; but I am sure they must have been begotten here, for the wench hath not been nine months gone away."

Nothing can be so quick and sudden as the operations of the mind, especially when hope, or fear, or jealousy, to which the two others are but journeymen, set it to work. It occurred instantly to her, that Jenny had scarce ever been out of her own house while she lived with her. The leaning over the chair, the sudden starting up, the Latin, the smile, and many other things, rushed upon her all at once. The satisfaction her husband

expressed in the departure of Jenny, appeared now to be only dissembled; again, in the same instant, to be real; but yet to confirm her jealousy, proceeding from satiety, and a hundred other bad causes. In a word, she was convinced of her husband's guilt, and immediately left the assembly in confusion.

As fair Grimalkin, who, though the youngest of the feline family, degenerates not in ferocity from the elder branches of her house, and though inferior in strength, is equal in fierceness to the noble tiger himself, when a little mouse, whom it hath long tormented in sport, escapes from her clutches for a while, frets, scolds, growls, swears; but if the trunk, or box, behind which the mouse lay hid be again removed, she flies like lightning on her prey, and, with envenomed wrath, bites, scratches, mumbles, and tears the little animal.

Not with less fury did Mrs Partridge fly on the poor pedagogue. Her tongue, teeth, and hands, fell all upon him at once. His wig was in an instant torn from his head, his shirt from his back, and from his face descended five streams of blood, denoting the number of claws with which nature had unhappily armed the enemy.

Mr Partridge acted for some time on the defensive only; indeed he attempted only to guard his face with his hands; but as he found that his antagonist abated nothing of her rage, he thought he might, at least, endeavour to disarm her, or rather to confine her arms; in doing which her cap fell off in the struggle, and her hair being too short to reach her shoulders, erected itself on her head; her stays likewise, which were laced through one single hole at the bottom, burst open; and her breasts, which were much more redundant than her hair, hung down below her middle; her face was likewise marked with the blood of her husband: her teeth gnashed with rage; and fire, such as sparkles from a smith's forge, darted from her eyes. So that, altogether, this Amazonian heroine might have been an object of terror to a much bolder man than Mr Partridge.

He had, at length, the good fortune, by getting possession of her arms, to render those weapons which she wore at the ends of her fingers useless; which she no sooner perceived, than the softness of her sex prevailed over her rage, and she presently dissolved in tears, which soon after concluded in a fit.

That small share of sense which Mr Partridge had hitherto preserved through this scene of fury, of the cause of which he was hitherto ignorant, now utterly abandoned him. He ran instantly into the street, hallowing out that his wife was in the agonies of death, and beseeching the neighbours to fly with the utmost haste to her assistance. Several good women obeyed his summons, who entering his house, and applying the usual remedies on such occasions, Mrs Partridge was at length, to the great joy of her husband, brought to herself.

As soon as she had a little recollected her spirits, and somewhat composed herself with a cordial, she began to inform the company of the manifold injuries she had received from her husband; who, she said, was not contented to injure her in her bed; but, upon her upbraiding him with it, had treated her in the cruelest manner imaginable; had tore her cap and hair from her head, and her stays from her body, giving her, at the same time, several blows, the marks of which she should carry to the grave.

The poor man, who bore on his face many more visible marks of the indignation of his wife, stood in silent astonishment at this accusation; which the reader will, I believe, bear witness for him, had greatly exceeded the truth; for indeed he had not struck her once; and this silence being interpreted to be a confession of the charge by the whole court, they all began at once, una voce, to rebuke and revile him, repeating often, that none but a coward ever struck a woman.

Mr Partridge bore all this patiently; but when his wife appealed to the blood on her face, as an evidence of his barbarity, he could not help laying claim to his own blood, for so it really was; as he thought it very unnatural, that this should rise up (as we are taught that of a murdered person often doth) in vengeance against him.

To this the women made no other answer, than that it was a pity it had not come from his heart, instead of his face; all declaring, that, if their husbands should lift their hands against them, they would have their hearts' bloods out of their bodies.

After much admonition for what was past, and much good advice to Mr Partridge for his future behaviour, the company at length departed, and left the husband and wife to a personal conference together, in which Mr Partridge soon learned the cause of all his sufferings.

Chapter v. — Containing much matter to exercise the judgment and reflection of the reader.

I believe it is a true observation, that few secrets are divulged to one person only; but certainly, it would be next to a miracle that a fact of this kind should be known to a whole parish, and not transpire any farther.

And, indeed, a very few days had past, before the country, to use a common phrase, rung of the schoolmaster of Little Baddington; who was said to have beaten his wife in the most cruel manner. Nay, in some places it was reported he had murdered her; in others, that he had broke her arms; in others, her legs: in short, there was scarce an injury which can be done to a human creature, but what Mrs Partridge was somewhere or other affirmed to have received from her husband.

The cause of this quarrel was likewise variously reported; for as some people said that Mrs Partridge had caught her husband in bed with his maid, so many other reasons, of a very different kind, went abroad. Nay, some transferred the guilt to the wife, and the jealousy to the husband.

Mrs Wilkins had long ago heard of this quarrel; but, as a different cause from the true one had reached her ears, she thought proper to conceal it; and the rather, perhaps, as the blame was universally laid on Mr Partridge; and his wife, when she was servant to Mr Allworthy, had in something offended Mrs Wilkins, who was not of a very forgiving temper.

But Mrs Wilkins, whose eyes could see objects at a distance, and who could very well look forward a few years into futurity, had perceived a strong likelihood of Captain Blifil's being hereafter her master; and as she plainly discerned that the captain bore no great goodwill to the little foundling, she fancied it would be rendering him an agreeable service, if she could make any discoveries that might lessen the affection which Mr Allworthy seemed to have contracted for this child, and which gave visible uneasiness to the captain, who could not entirely conceal it even before Allworthy himself; though his wife, who acted her part much better in public, frequently recommended to him her own example, of conniving at the folly of her brother, which, she said, she at least as well perceived, and as much resented, as any other possibly could.

Mrs Wilkins having therefore, by accident, gotten a true scent of the above story,— though long after it had happened, failed not to satisfy herself thoroughly of all the particulars; and then acquainted the captain, that she had at last discovered the true father of the little bastard, which she was sorry, she said, to see her master lose his reputation in the country, by taking so much notice of.

The captain chid her for the conclusion of her speech, as an improper assurance in judging of her master's actions: for if his honour, or his understanding, would have suffered the captain to make an alliance with Mrs Wilkins, his pride would by no means have admitted it. And to say the truth, there is no conduct less politic, than to enter into any confederacy with your friend's servants against their master: for by these means you afterwards become the slave of these very servants; by whom you are constantly liable to be betrayed. And this consideration, perhaps it was, which prevented Captain Blifil from being more explicit with Mrs Wilkins, or from encouraging the abuse which she had bestowed on Allworthy.

But though he declared no satisfaction to Mrs Wilkins at this discovery, he enjoyed not a little from it in his own mind, and resolved to make the best use of it he was able.

He kept this matter a long time concealed within his own breast, in hopes that Mr Allworthy might hear it from some other person; but Mrs Wilkins, whether she resented the captain's behaviour, or whether his cunning was beyond her, and she feared the discovery might displease him, never afterwards opened her lips about the matter.

I have thought it somewhat strange, upon reflection, that the housekeeper never acquainted Mrs Blifil with this news, as women are more inclined to communicate all pieces of intelligence to their own sex, than to ours. The only way, as it appears to me, of solving this difficulty, is, by imputing it to that distance which was now grown between the lady and the housekeeper: whether this arose from a jealousy in Mrs Blifil, that Wilkins showed too great a respect to the foundling; for while she was endeavouring to ruin the little infant, in order to ingratiate herself with the captain, she was every day more and more commending it before Allworthy, as his fondness for it every day increased. This, notwithstanding all the care she took at other times to express the direct contrary to Mrs Blifil, perhaps offended that delicate lady, who certainly now hated Mrs Wilkins; and though she did not, or possibly could not, absolutely remove her from her place, she found, however, the means of making her life very uneasy. This Mrs Wilkins, at length, so resented, that she very openly showed all manner of respect and fondness to little Tommy, in opposition to Mrs Blifil.

The captain, therefore, finding the story in danger of perishing, at last took an opportunity to reveal it himself.

He was one day engaged with Mr Allworthy in a discourse on charity: in which the captain, with great learning, proved to Mr Allworthy, that the word charity in Scripture nowhere means beneficence or generosity.

"The Christian religion," he said, "was instituted for much nobler purposes, than to enforce a lesson which many heathen philosophers had taught us long before, and

which, though it might perhaps be called a moral virtue, savoured but little of that sublime, Christian-like disposition, that vast elevation of thought, in purity approaching to angelic perfection, to be attained, expressed, and felt only by grace. Those," he said, "came nearer to the Scripture meaning, who understood by it candour, or the forming of a benevolent opinion of our brethren, and passing a favourable judgment on their actions; a virtue much higher, and more extensive in its nature, than a pitiful distribution of alms, which, though we would never so much prejudice, or even ruin our families, could never reach many; whereas charity, in the other and truer sense, might be extended to all mankind."

He said, "Considering who the disciples were, it would be absurd to conceive the doctrine of generosity, or giving alms, to have been preached to them. And, as we could not well imagine this doctrine should be preached by its Divine Author to men who could not practise it, much less should we think it understood so by those who can practise it, and do not.

"But though," continued he, "there is, I am afraid, little merit in these benefactions, there would, I must confess, be much pleasure in them to a good mind, if it was not abated by one consideration. I mean, that we are liable to be imposed upon, and to confer our choicest favours often on the undeserving, as you must own was your case in your bounty to that worthless fellow Partridge: for two or three such examples must greatly lessen the inward satisfaction which a good man would otherwise find in generosity; nay, may even make him timorous in bestowing, lest he should be guilty of supporting vice, and encouraging the wicked; a crime of a very black dye, and for which it will by no means be a sufficient excuse, that we have not actually intended such an encouragement; unless we have used the utmost caution in chusing the objects of our beneficence. A consideration which, I make no doubt, hath greatly checked the liberality of many a worthy and pious man."

Mr Allworthy answered, "He could not dispute with the captain in the Greek language, and therefore could say nothing as to the true sense of the word which is translated charity; but that he had always thought it was interpreted to consist in action, and that giving alms constituted at least one branch of that virtue.

"As to the meritorious part," he said, "he readily agreed with the captain; for where could be the merit of barely discharging a duty? which," he said, "let the word charity have what construction it would, it sufficiently appeared to be from the whole tenor of the New Testament. And as he thought it an indispensable duty, enjoined both by the Christian law, and by the law of nature itself; so was it withal so pleasant, that if any duty could be said to be its own reward, or to pay us while we are discharging it, it was this.

"To confess the truth," said he, "there is one degree of generosity (of charity I would have called it), which seems to have some show of merit, and that is, where, from a principle of benevolence and Christian love, we bestow on another what we really want ourselves; where, in order to lessen the distresses of another, we condescend to share some part of them, by giving what even our own necessities cannot well spare. This is, I think, meritorious; but to relieve our brethren only with our superfluities; to be charitable (I must use the word) rather at the expense of our coffers than ourselves; to save several families from misery rather than hang up an extraordinary picture in our houses or gratify any other idle ridiculous vanity—this seems to be only being human creatures. Nay, I will venture to go farther, it is being in some degree epicures: for what could the greatest epicure wish rather than to eat with many mouths instead of one? which I think may be predicated of any one who knows that the bread of many is owing to his own largesses.

"As to the apprehension of bestowing bounty on such as may hereafter prove unworthy objects, because many have proved such; surely it can never deter a good man from generosity. I do not think a few or many examples of ingratitude can justify a man's hardening his heart against the distresses of his fellow-creatures; nor do I believe it can ever have such effect on a truly benevolent mind. Nothing less than a persuasion of universal depravity can lock up the charity of a good man; and this persuasion must lead him, I think, either into atheism, or enthusiasm; but surely it is unfair to argue such universal depravity from a few vicious individuals; nor was this, I believe, ever done by a man, who, upon searching his own mind, found one certain exception to the general rule." He then concluded by asking, "who that Partridge was, whom he had called a worthless fellow?"

"I mean," said the captain, "Partridge the barber, the schoolmaster, what do you call him? Partridge, the father of the little child which you found in your bed."

Mr Allworthy exprest great surprize at this account, and the captain as great at his ignorance of it; for he said he had known it above a month: and at length recollected with much difficulty that he was told it by Mrs Wilkins.

Upon this, Wilkins was immediately summoned; who having confirmed what the captain had said, was by Mr Allworthy, by and with the captain's advice, dispatched to Little Baddington, to inform herself of the truth of the fact: for the captain exprest great dislike at all hasty proceedings in criminal matters, and said he would by no means have Mr Allworthy take any resolution either to the prejudice of the child or its father, before he was satisfied that the latter was guilty; for though he had privately satisfied himself of this from one of Partridge's neighbours, yet he was too generous to give any such evidence to Mr Allworthy.

Chapter vi. — The trial of Partridge, the schoolmaster, for incontinency; the evidence of his wife; a short reflection on the wisdom of our law; with other grave matters, which those will like best who understand

them most.

It may be wondered that a story so well known, and which had furnished so much matter of conversation, should never have been mentioned to Mr Allworthy himself, who was perhaps the only person in that country who had never heard of it.

To account in some measure for this to the reader, I think proper to inform him, that there was no one in the kingdom less interested in opposing that doctrine concerning the meaning of the word charity, which hath been seen in the preceding chapter, than our good man. Indeed, he was equally intitled to this virtue in either sense; for as no man was ever more sensible of the wants, or more ready to relieve the distresses of others, so none could be more tender of their characters, or slower to believe anything to their disadvantage.

Scandal, therefore, never found any access to his table; for as it hath been long since observed that you may know a man by his companions, so I will venture to say, that, by attending to the conversation at a great man's table, you may satisfy yourself of his religion, his politics, his taste, and indeed of his entire disposition: for though a few odd fellows will utter their own sentiments in all places, yet much the greater part of mankind have enough of the courtier to accommodate their conversation to the taste and inclination of their superiors.

But to return to Mrs Wilkins, who, having executed her commission with great dispatch, though at fifteen miles distance, brought back such a confirmation of the schoolmaster's guilt, that Mr Allworthy determined to send for the criminal, and examine him viva voce. Mr Partridge, therefore, was summoned to attend, in order to his defence (if he could make any) against this accusation.

At the time appointed, before Mr Allworthy himself, at Paradise-hall, came as well the said Partridge, with Anne, his wife, as Mrs Wilkins his accuser.

And now Mr Allworthy being seated in the chair of justice, Mr Partridge was brought before him. Having heard his accusation from the mouth of Mrs Wilkins, he pleaded not guilty, making many vehement protestations of his innocence.

Mrs Partridge was then examined, who, after a modest apology for being obliged to speak the truth against her husband, related all the circumstances with which the reader

hath already been acquainted; and at last concluded with her husband's confession of his guilt.

Whether she had forgiven him or no, I will not venture to determine; but it is certain she was an unwilling witness in this cause; and it is probable from certain other reasons, would never have been brought to depose as she did, had not Mrs Wilkins, with great art, fished all out of her at her own house, and had she not indeed made promises, in Mr Allworthy's name, that the punishment of her husband should not be such as might anywise affect his family.

Partridge still persisted in asserting his innocence, though he admitted he had made the above-mentioned confession; which he however endeavoured to account for, by protesting that he was forced into it by the continued importunity she used: who vowed, that, as she was sure of his guilt, she would never leave tormenting him till he had owned it; and faithfully promised, that, in such case, she would never mention it to him more. Hence, he said, he had been induced falsely to confess himself guilty, though he was innocent; and that he believed he should have confest a murder from the same motive.

Mrs Partridge could not bear this imputation with patience; and having no other remedy in the present place but tears, she called forth a plentiful assistance from them, and then addressing herself to Mr Allworthy, she said (or rather cried), "May it please your worship, there never was any poor woman so injured as I am by that base man; for this is not the only instance of his falsehood to me. No, may it please your worship, he hath injured my bed many's the good time and often. I could have put up with his drunkenness and neglect of his business, if he had not broke one of the sacred commandments. Besides, if it had been out of doors I had not mattered it so much; but with my own servant, in my own house, under my own roof, to defile my own chaste bed, which to be sure he hath, with his beastly stinking whores. Yes, you villain, you have defiled my own bed, you have; and then you have charged me with bullocking you into owning the truth. It is very likely, an't please your worship, that I should bullock him? I have marks enow about my body to show of his cruelty to me. If you had been a man, you villain, you would have scorned to injure a woman in that manner. But you an't half a man, you know it. Nor have you been half a husband to me. You need run after whores, you need, when I'm sure—And since he provokes me, I am ready, an't please your worship, to take my bodily oath that I found them a-bed together. What, you have forgot, I suppose, when you beat me into a fit, and made the blood run down my forehead, because I only civilly taxed you with adultery! but I can prove it by all my neighbours. You have almost broke my heart, you have, you have."

Here Mr Allworthy interrupted, and begged her to be pacified, promising her that she should have justice; then turning to Partridge, who stood aghast, one half of his wits

being hurried away by surprize and the other half by fear, he said he was sorry to see there was so wicked a man in the world. He assured him that his prevaricating and lying backward and forward was a great aggravation of his guilt; for which the only atonement he could make was by confession and repentance. He exhorted him, therefore, to begin by immediately confessing the fact, and not to persist in denying what was so plainly proved against him even by his own wife.

Here, reader, I beg your patience a moment, while I make a just compliment to the great wisdom and sagacity of our law, which refuses to admit the evidence of a wife for or against her husband. This, says a certain learned author, who, I believe, was never quoted before in any but a law-book, would be the means of creating an eternal dissension between them. It would, indeed, be the means of much perjury, and of much whipping, fining, imprisoning, transporting, and hanging.

Partridge stood a while silent, till, being bid to speak, he said he had already spoken the truth, and appealed to Heaven for his innocence, and lastly to the girl herself, whom he desired his worship immediately to send for; for he was ignorant, or at least pretended to be so, that she had left that part of the country.

Mr Allworthy, whose natural love of justice, joined to his coolness of temper, made him always a most patient magistrate in hearing all the witnesses which an accused person could produce in his defence, agreed to defer his final determination of this matter till the arrival of Jenny, for whom he immediately dispatched a messenger; and then having recommended peace between Partridge and his wife (though he addressed himself chiefly to the wrong person), he appointed them to attend again the third day; for he had sent Jenny a whole day's journey from his own house.

At the appointed time the parties all assembled, when the messenger returning brought word, that Jenny was not to be found; for that she had left her habitation a few days before, in company with a recruiting officer.

Mr Allworthy then declared that the evidence of such a slut as she appeared to be would have deserved no credit; but he said he could not help thinking that, had she been present, and would have declared the truth, she must have confirmed what so many circumstances, together with his own confession, and the declaration of his wife that she had caught her husband in the fact, did sufficiently prove. He therefore once more exhorted Partridge to confess; but he still avowing his innocence, Mr Allworthy declared himself satisfied of his guilt, and that he was too bad a man to receive any encouragement from him. He therefore deprived him of his annuity, and recommended repentance to him on account of another world, and industry to maintain himself and his wife in this.

There were not, perhaps, many more unhappy persons than poor Partridge. He had lost the best part of his income by the evidence of his wife, and yet was daily upbraided by her for having, among other things, been the occasion of depriving her of that benefit; but such was his fortune, and he was obliged to submit to it.

Though I called him poor Partridge in the last paragraph, I would have the reader rather impute that epithet to the compassion in my temper than conceive it to be any declaration of his innocence. Whether he was innocent or not will perhaps appear hereafter; but if the historic muse hath entrusted me with any secrets, I will by no means be guilty of discovering them till she shall give me leave.

Here therefore the reader must suspend his curiosity. Certain it is that, whatever was the truth of the case, there was evidence more than sufficient to convict him before Allworthy; indeed, much less would have satisfied a bench of justices on an order of bastardy; and yet, notwithstanding the positiveness of Mrs Partridge, who would have taken the sacrament upon the matter, there is a possibility that the schoolmaster was entirely innocent: for though it appeared clear on comparing the time when Jenny departed from Little Baddington with that of her delivery that she had there conceived this infant, yet it by no means followed of necessity that Partridge must have been its father; for, to omit other particulars, there was in the same house a lad near eighteen, between whom and Jenny there had subsisted sufficient intimacy to found a reasonable suspicion; and yet, so blind is jealousy, this circumstance never once entered into the head of the enraged wife.

Whether Partridge repented or not, according to Mr Allworthy's advice, is not so apparent. Certain it is that his wife repented heartily of the evidence she had given against him: especially when she found Mrs Deborah had deceived her, and refused to make any application to Mr Allworthy on her behalf. She had, however, somewhat better success with Mrs Blifil, who was, as the reader must have perceived, a much better-tempered woman, and very kindly undertook to solicit her brother to restore the annuity; in which, though good-nature might have some share, yet a stronger and more natural motive will appear in the next chapter.

These solicitations were nevertheless unsuccessful: for though Mr Allworthy did not think, with some late writers, that mercy consists only in punishing offenders; yet he was as far from thinking that it is proper to this excellent quality to pardon great criminals wantonly, without any reason whatever. Any doubtfulness of the fact, or any circumstance of mitigation, was never disregarded: but the petitions of an offender, or the intercessions of others, did not in the least affect him. In a word, he never pardoned because the offender himself, or his friends, were unwilling that he should be punished.

Partridge and his wife were therefore both obliged to submit to their fate; which was indeed severe enough: for so far was he from doubling his industry on the account of his lessened income, that he did in a manner abandon himself to despair; and as he was by nature indolent, that vice now increased upon him, by which means he lost the little school he had; so that neither his wife nor himself would have had any bread to eat, had not the charity of some good Christian interposed, and provided them with what was just sufficient for their sustenance.

As this support was conveyed to them by an unknown hand, they imagined, and so, I doubt not, will the reader, that Mr Allworthy himself was their secret benefactor; who, though he would not openly encourage vice, could yet privately relieve the distresses of the vicious themselves, when these became too exquisite and disproportionate to their demerit. In which light their wretchedness appeared now to Fortune herself; for she at length took pity on this miserable couple, and considerably lessened the wretched state of Partridge, by putting a final end to that of his wife, who soon after caught the small-pox, and died.

The justice which Mr Allworthy had executed on Partridge at first met with universal approbation; but no sooner had he felt its consequences, than his neighbours began to relent, and to compassionate his case; and presently after, to blame that as rigour and severity which they before called justice. They now exclaimed against punishing in cold blood, and sang forth the praises of mercy and forgiveness.

These cries were considerably increased by the death of Mrs Partridge, which, though owing to the distemper above mentioned, which is no consequence of poverty or distress, many were not ashamed to impute to Mr Allworthy's severity, or, as they now termed it, cruelty.

Partridge having now lost his wife, his school, and his annuity, and the unknown person having now discontinued the last-mentioned charity, resolved to change the scene, and left the country, where he was in danger of starving, with the universal compassion of all his neighbours.

Chapter vii. — A short sketch of that felicity which prudent couples may extract from hatred: with a short apology for those people who overlook imperfections in their friends.

Though the captain had effectually demolished poor Partridge, yet had he not reaped the harvest he hoped for, which was to turn the foundling out of Mr Allworthy's house.

On the contrary, that gentleman grew every day fonder of little Tommy, as if he intended to counterbalance his severity to the father with extraordinary fondness and affection towards the son.

This a good deal soured the captain's temper, as did all the other daily instances of Mr Allworthy's generosity; for he looked on all such largesses to be diminutions of his own wealth.

In this, we have said, he did not agree with his wife; nor, indeed, in anything else: for though an affection placed on the understanding is, by many wise persons, thought more durable than that which is founded on beauty, yet it happened otherwise in the present case. Nay, the understandings of this couple were their principal bone of contention, and one great cause of many quarrels, which from time to time arose between them; and which at last ended, on the side of the lady, in a sovereign contempt for her husband; and on the husband's, in an utter abhorrence of his wife.

As these had both exercised their talents chiefly in the study of divinity, this was, from their first acquaintance, the most common topic of conversation between them. The captain, like a well-bred man, had, before marriage, always given up his opinion to that of the lady; and this, not in the clumsy awkward manner of a conceited blockhead, who, while he civilly yields to a superior in an argument, is desirous of being still known to think himself in the right. The captain, on the contrary, though one of the proudest fellows in the world, so absolutely yielded the victory to his antagonist, that she, who had not the least doubt of his sincerity, retired always from the dispute with an admiration of her own understanding and a love for his.

But though this complacence to one whom the captain thoroughly despised, was not so uneasy to him as it would have been had any hopes of preferment made it necessary to show the same submission to a Hoadley, or to some other of great reputation in the science, yet even this cost him too much to be endured without some motive. Matrimony, therefore, having removed all such motives, he grew weary of this condescension, and began to treat the opinions of his wife with that haughtiness and insolence, which none but those who deserve some contempt themselves can bestow, and those only who deserve no contempt can bear.

When the first torrent of tenderness was over, and when, in the calm and long interval between the fits, reason began to open the eyes of the lady, and she saw this alteration of behaviour in the captain, who at length answered all her arguments only with pish and pshaw, she was far from enduring the indignity with a tame submission. Indeed, it at first so highly provoked her, that it might have produced some tragical event, had it not taken a more harmless turn, by filling her with the utmost contempt for her husband's understanding, which somewhat qualified her hatred towards him; though of this likewise she had a pretty moderate share.

The captain's hatred to her was of a purer kind: for as to any imperfections in her knowledge or understanding, he no more despised her for them, than for her not being six feet high. In his opinion of the female sex, he exceeded the moroseness of Aristotle himself: he looked on a woman as on an animal of domestic use, of somewhat higher consideration than a cat, since her offices were of rather more importance; but the difference between these two was, in his estimation, so small, that, in his marriage contracted with Mr Allworthy's lands and tenements, it would have been pretty equal which of them he had taken into the bargain. And yet so tender was his pride, that it felt the contempt which his wife now began to express towards him; and this, added to the surfeit he had before taken of her love, created in him a degree of disgust and abhorrence, perhaps hardly to be exceeded.

One situation only of the married state is excluded from pleasure: and that is, a state of indifference: but as many of my readers, I hope, know what an exquisite delight there is in conveying pleasure to a beloved object, so some few, I am afraid, may have experienced the satisfaction of tormenting one we hate. It is, I apprehend, to come at this latter pleasure, that we see both sexes often give up that ease in marriage which they might otherwise possess, though their mate was never so disagreeable to them. Hence the wife often puts on fits of love and jealousy, nay, even denies herself any pleasure, to disturb and prevent those of her husband; and he again, in return, puts frequent restraints on himself, and stays at home in company which he dislikes, in order to confine his wife to what she equally detests. Hence, too, must flow those tears which a widow sometimes so plentifully sheds over the ashes of a husband with whom she led a life of constant disquiet and turbulency, and whom now she can never hope to torment any more.

But if ever any couple enjoyed this pleasure, it was at present experienced by the captain and his lady. It was always a sufficient reason to either of them to be obstinate in any opinion, that the other had previously asserted the contrary. If the one proposed any amusement, the other constantly objected to it: they never loved or hated, commended or abused, the same person. And for this reason, as the captain looked with an evil eye on the little foundling, his wife began now to caress it almost equally with her own child.

The reader will be apt to conceive, that this behaviour between the husband and wife did not greatly contribute to Mr Allworthy's repose, as it tended so little to that serene happiness which he had designed for all three from this alliance; but the truth is, though he might be a little disappointed in his sanguine expectations, yet he was far from being acquainted with the whole matter; for, as the captain was, from certain obvious reasons, much on his guard before him, the lady was obliged, for fear of her brother's displeasure, to pursue the same conduct. In fact, it is possible for a third person to be very intimate, nay even to live long in the same house, with a married couple, who have any tolerable discretion, and not even guess at the sour sentiments which they bear to each other: for though the whole day may be sometimes too short for hatred, as well as for love; yet the many hours which they naturally spend together, apart from all observers, furnish people of tolerable moderation with such ample opportunity for the enjoyment of either passion, that, if they love, they can support being a few hours in company without toying, or if they hate, without spitting in each other's faces.

It is possible, however, that Mr Allworthy saw enough to render him a little uneasy; for we are not always to conclude, that a wise man is not hurt, because he doth not cry out and lament himself, like those of a childish or effeminate temper. But indeed it is possible he might see some faults in the captain without any uneasiness at all; for men of true wisdom and goodness are contented to take persons and things as they are, without complaining of their imperfections, or attempting to amend them. They can see a fault in a friend, a relation, or an acquaintance, without ever mentioning it to the parties themselves, or to any others; and this often without lessening their affection. Indeed, unless great discernment be tempered with this overlooking disposition, we ought never to contract friendship but with a degree of folly which we can deceive; for I hope my friends will pardon me when I declare, I know none of them without a fault; and I should be sorry if I could imagine I had any friend who could not see mine. Forgiveness of this kind we give and demand in turn. It is an exercise of friendship, and perhaps none of the least pleasant. And this forgiveness we must bestow, without desire of amendment. There is, perhaps, no surer mark of folly, than an attempt to correct the natural infirmities of those we love. The finest composition of human nature, as well as the finest china, may have a flaw in it; and this, I am afraid, in either case, is equally incurable; though, nevertheless, the pattern may remain of the highest value.

Upon the whole, then, Mr Allworthy certainly saw some imperfections in the captain; but as this was a very artful man, and eternally upon his guard before him, these appeared to him no more than blemishes in a good character, which his goodness made him overlook, and his wisdom prevented him from discovering to the captain himself. Very different would have been his sentiments had he discovered the whole; which perhaps would in time have been the case, had the husband and wife long continued this kind of behaviour to each other; but this kind Fortune took effectual means to prevent,

by forcing the captain to do that which rendered him again dear to his wife, and restored all her tenderness and affection towards him.

Chapter viii. — A receipt to regain the lost affections of a wife, which hath never been known to fail in the most desperate cases.

The captain was made large amends for the unpleasant minutes which he passed in the conversation of his wife (and which were as few as he could contrive to make them), by the pleasant meditations he enjoyed when alone.

These meditations were entirely employed on Mr Allworthy's fortune; for, first, he exercised much thought in calculating, as well as he could, the exact value of the whole: which calculations he often saw occasion to alter in his own favour: and, secondly and chiefly, he pleased himself with intended alterations in the house and gardens, and in projecting many other schemes, as well for the improvement of the estate as of the grandeur of the place: for this purpose he applied himself to the studies of architecture and gardening, and read over many books on both these subjects; for these sciences, indeed, employed his whole time, and formed his only amusement. He at last completed a most excellent plan: and very sorry we are, that it is not in our power to present it to our reader, since even the luxury of the present age, I believe, would hardly match it. It had, indeed, in a superlative degree, the two principal ingredients which serve to recommend all great and noble designs of this nature; for it required an immoderate expense to execute, and a vast length of time to bring it to any sort of perfection. The former of these, the immense wealth of which the captain supposed Mr Allworthy possessed, and which he thought himself sure of inheriting, promised very effectually to supply; and the latter, the soundness of his own constitution, and his time of life, which was only what is called middle-age, removed all apprehension of his not living to accomplish.

Nothing was wanting to enable him to enter upon the immediate execution of this plan, but the death of Mr Allworthy; in calculating which he had employed much of his own algebra, besides purchasing every book extant that treats of the value of lives, reversions, &c. From all which he satisfied himself, that as he had every day a chance of this happening, so had he more than an even chance of its happening within a few years.

But while the captain was one day busied in deep contemplations of this kind, one of the most unlucky as well as unseasonable accidents happened to him. The utmost malice of Fortune could, indeed, have contrived nothing so cruel, so mal-a-propos, so absolutely destructive to all his schemes. In short, not to keep the reader in long suspense, just at the very instant when his heart was exulting in meditations on the happiness which would accrue to him by Mr Allworthy's death, he himself—died of an apoplexy.

This unfortunately befel the captain as he was taking his evening walk by himself, so that nobody was present to lend him any assistance, if indeed, any assistance could have preserved him. He took, therefore, measure of that proportion of soil which was now become adequate to all his future purposes, and he lay dead on the ground, a great (though not a living) example of the truth of that observation of Horace:

Tu secanda marmora

Locas sub ipsum funus; et sepulchri

Immemor, struis domos.

Which sentiment I shall thus give to the English reader: "You provide the noblest materials for building, when a pickaxe and a spade are only necessary: and build houses of five hundred by a hundred feet, forgetting that of six by two."

Chapter ix. — A proof of the infallibility of the foregoing receipt, in the lamentations of the widow; with other suitable decorations of death, such as physicians, &c., and an epitaph in the true stile.

Mr Allworthy, his sister, and another lady, were assembled at the accustomed hour in the supper-room, where, having waited a considerable time longer than usual, Mr Allworthy first declared he began to grow uneasy at the captain's stay (for he was always most punctual at his meals); and gave orders that the bell should be rung without the doors, and especially towards those walks which the captain was wont to use.

All these summons proving ineffectual (for the captain had, by perverse accident, betaken himself to a new walk that evening), Mrs Blifil declared she was seriously frightened. Upon which the other lady, who was one of her most intimate acquaintance, and who well knew the true state of her affections, endeavoured all she could to pacify her, telling her—To be sure she could not help being uneasy; but that she should hope the best. That, perhaps the sweetness of the evening had inticed the captain to go farther than his usual walk: or he might be detained at some neighbour's. Mrs Blifil answered, No; she was sure some accident had befallen him; for that he would never stay out without sending her word, as he must know how uneasy it would make her. The other lady, having no other arguments to use, betook herself to the entreaties usual on such occasions, and begged her not to frighten herself, for it might be of very ill consequence to her own health; and, filling out a very large glass of wine, advised, and at last prevailed with her to drink it.

Mr Allworthy now returned into the parlour; for he had been himself in search after the captain. His countenance sufficiently showed the consternation he was under, which, indeed, had a good deal deprived him of speech; but as grief operates variously on different minds, so the same apprehension which depressed his voice, elevated that of Mrs Blifil. She now began to bewail herself in very bitter terms, and floods of tears accompanied her lamentations; which the lady, her companion, declared she could not blame, but at the same time dissuaded her from indulging; attempting to moderate the grief of her friend by philosophical observations on the many disappointments to which human life is daily subject, which, she said, was a sufficient consideration to fortify our minds against any accidents, how sudden or terrible soever. She said her brother's example ought to teach her patience, who, though indeed he could not be supposed as much concerned as herself, yet was, doubtless, very uneasy, though his resignation to the Divine will had restrained his grief within due bounds.

"Mention not my brother," said Mrs Blifil; "I alone am the object of your pity. What are the terrors of friendship to what a wife feels on these occasions? Oh, he is lost!

Somebody hath murdered him—I shall never see him more!"—Here a torrent of tears had the same consequence with what the suppression had occasioned to Mr Allworthy, and she remained silent.

At this interval a servant came running in, out of breath, and cried out, The captain was found; and, before he could proceed farther, he was followed by two more, bearing the dead body between them.

Here the curious reader may observe another diversity in the operations of grief: for as Mr Allworthy had been before silent, from the same cause which had made his sister vociferous; so did the present sight, which drew tears from the gentleman, put an entire stop to those of the lady; who first gave a violent scream, and presently after fell into a fit.

The room was soon full of servants, some of whom, with the lady visitant, were employed in care of the wife; and others, with Mr Allworthy, assisted in carrying off the captain to a warm bed; where every method was tried, in order to restore him to life.

And glad should we be, could we inform the reader that both these bodies had been attended with equal success; for those who undertook the care of the lady succeeded so well, that, after the fit had continued a decent time, she again revived, to their great satisfaction: but as to the captain, all experiments of bleeding, chafing, dropping, &c., proved ineffectual. Death, that inexorable judge, had passed sentence on him, and refused to grant him a reprieve, though two doctors who arrived, and were fee'd at one and the same instant, were his counsel.

These two doctors, whom, to avoid any malicious applications, we shall distinguish by the names of Dr Y. and Dr Z., having felt his pulse; to wit, Dr Y. his right arm, and Dr Z. his left; both agreed that he was absolutely dead; but as to the distemper, or cause of his death, they differed; Dr Y. holding that he died of an apoplexy, and Dr Z. of an epilepsy.

Hence arose a dispute between the learned men, in which each delivered the reasons of their several opinions. These were of such equal force, that they served both to confirm either doctor in his own sentiments, and made not the least impression on his adversary.

To say the truth, every physician almost hath his favourite disease, to which he ascribes all the victories obtained over human nature. The gout, the rheumatism, the stone, the gravel, and the consumption, have all their several patrons in the faculty; and none more than the nervous fever, or the fever on the spirits. And here we may account for those disagreements in opinion, concerning the cause of a patient's death, which sometimes occur, between the most learned of the college; and which have greatly

surprized that part of the world who have been ignorant of the fact we have above asserted.

The reader may perhaps be surprized, that, instead of endeavouring to revive the patient, the learned gentlemen should fall immediately into a dispute on the occasion of his death; but in reality all such experiments had been made before their arrival: for the captain was put into a warm bed, had his veins scarified, his forehead chafed, and all sorts of strong drops applied to his lips and nostrils.

The physicians, therefore, finding themselves anticipated in everything they ordered, were at a loss how to apply that portion of time which it is usual and decent to remain for their fee, and were therefore necessitated to find some subject or other for discourse; and what could more naturally present itself than that before mentioned?

Our doctors were about to take their leave, when Mr Allworthy, having given over the captain, and acquiesced in the Divine will, began to enquire after his sister, whom he desired them to visit before their departure.

This lady was now recovered of her fit, and, to use the common phrase, as well as could be expected for one in her condition. The doctors, therefore, all previous ceremonies being complied with, as this was a new patient, attended, according to desire, and laid hold on each of her hands, as they had before done on those of the corpse.

The case of the lady was in the other extreme from that of her husband: for as he was past all the assistance of physic, so in reality she required none.

There is nothing more unjust than the vulgar opinion, by which physicians are misrepresented, as friends to death. On the contrary, I believe, if the number of those who recover by physic could be opposed to that of the martyrs to it, the former would rather exceed the latter. Nay, some are so cautious on this head, that, to avoid a possibility of killing the patient, they abstain from all methods of curing, and prescribe nothing but what can neither do good nor harm. I have heard some of these, with great gravity, deliver it as a maxim, "That Nature should be left to do her own work, while the physician stands by as it were to clap her on the back, and encourage her when she doth well."

So little then did our doctors delight in death, that they discharged the corpse after a single fee; but they were not so disgusted with their living patient; concerning whose case they immediately agreed, and fell to prescribing with great diligence.

Whether, as the lady had at first persuaded her physicians to believe her ill, they had now, in return, persuaded her to believe herself so, I will not determine; but she continued a whole month with all the decorations of sickness. During this time she was

visited by physicians, attended by nurses, and received constant messages from her acquaintance to enquire after her health.

At length the decent time for sickness and immoderate grief being expired, the doctors were discharged, and the lady began to see company; being altered only from what she was before, by that colour of sadness in which she had dressed her person and countenance.

The captain was now interred, and might, perhaps, have already made a large progress towards oblivion, had not the friendship of Mr Allworthy taken care to preserve his memory, by the following epitaph, which was written by a man of as great genius as integrity, and one who perfectly well knew the captain.