

History of Tom Jones
A Foundling
VOL.XIV

By
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Freeditorial 

HISTORY OF TOM JONES A FOUNDLING

Chapter I

An Essay To Prove That An Author Will Write The Better For Having Some Knowledge Of The Subject On Which He Writes.

As several gentlemen in these times, by the wonderful force of genius only, without the least assistance of learning, perhaps, without being well able to read, have made a considerable figure in the republic of letters; the modern critics, I am told, have lately begun to assert, that all kind of learning is entirely useless to a writer; and, indeed, no other than a kind of fetters on the natural sprightliness and activity of the imagination, which is thus weighed down, and prevented from soaring to those high flights which otherwise it would be able to reach.

This doctrine, I am afraid, is at present carried much too far: for why should writing differ so much from all other arts? The nimbleness of a dancing-master is not at all prejudiced by being taught to move; nor doth any mechanic, I believe, exercise his tools the worse by having learnt to use them. For my own part, I cannot conceive that Homer or Virgil would have writ with more fire, if instead of being masters of all the learning of their times, they had been as ignorant as most of the authors of the present age. Nor do I believe that all the imagination, fire, and judgment of Pitt, could have produced those orations that have made the senate of England, in these our times, a rival in eloquence to Greece and Rome, if he had not been so well read in the writings of Demosthenes and Cicero, as to have transferred their whole spirit into his speeches, and, with their spirit, their knowledge too.

I would not here be understood to insist on the same fund of learning in any of my brethren, as Cicero persuades us is necessary to the composition of an orator. On the contrary, very little reading is, I conceive, necessary to the poet, less to the critic, and the least of all to the politician. For the first, perhaps, Byshe's Art of Poetry, and a few of our modern poets, may suffice; for the second, a moderate heap of plays; and, for the last, an indifferent collection of political journals.

To say the truth, I require no more than that a man should have some little knowledge of the subject on which he treats, according to the old maxim of law, *Quam quisque nōrit artem in eā se exerceat*. With this alone a writer may sometimes do tolerably well; and, indeed, without this, all the other learning in the world will stand him in little stead.

For instance, let us suppose that Homer and Virgil, Aristotle and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, could have met all together, and have clubbed their several talents to have composed a treatise on the art of dancing: I believe it will be readily agreed they could not have equalled the excellent treatise which Mr Essex hath given us on that subject, entitled, *The Rudiments of Genteel Education*. And, indeed, should the excellent Mr Broughton be prevailed on to set fist to paper, and to complete the above-said rudiments, by delivering down the true principles of athletics, I question whether the world will have any cause to lament, that none of the great writers, either antient or modern, have ever treated about that noble and useful art.

To avoid a multiplicity of examples in so plain a case, and to come at once to my point, I am apt to conceive, that one reason why many English writers have totally failed in describing the manners of upper life, may possibly be, that in reality they know nothing of it.

This is a knowledge unhappily not in the power of many authors to arrive at. Books will give us a very imperfect idea of it; nor will the stage a much better: the fine gentleman formed upon reading the former will almost always turn out a pedant, and he who forms himself upon the latter, a coxcomb.

Nor are the characters drawn from these models better supported. Vanbrugh and Congreve copied nature; but they who copy them draw as unlike the present age as Hogarth would do if he was to paint a rout or a drum in the dresses of Titian and of Vandyke. In short, imitation here will not do the business. The picture must be after Nature herself. A true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation, and the manners of every rank must be seen in order to be known.

Now it happens that this higher order of mortals is not to be seen, like all the rest of the human species, for nothing, in the streets, shops, and coffee-houses; nor are they shown, like the upper rank of animals, for so much a-piece. In short, this is a sight to which no persons are admitted without one or other of these qualifications, viz., either birth or fortune, or, what is equivalent to both, the honourable profession of a gamester. And, very unluckily for the world, persons so qualified very seldom care to take upon themselves the bad trade of writing; which is generally entered upon by the lower and poorer sort, as it is a trade which many think requires no kind of stock to set up with.

Hence those strange monsters in lace and embroidery, in silks and brocades, with vast wigs and hoops; which, under the name of lords and ladies, strut the stage, to the great delight of attorneys and their clerks in the pit, and of the citizens and their apprentices in the galleries; and which are no more to be found in real life than the centaur, the chimera, or any other creature of mere fiction. But to let my reader into a secret, this knowledge of upper life, though very necessary for preventing mistakes, is no very great

resource to a writer whose province is comedy, or that kind of novels which, like this I am writing, is of the comic class.

What Mr Pope says of women is very applicable to most in this station, who are, indeed, so entirely made up of form and affectation, that they have no character at all, at least none which appears. I will venture to say the highest life is much the dullest, and affords very little humour or entertainment. The various callings in lower spheres produce the great variety of humorous characters; whereas here, except among the few who are engaged in the pursuit of ambition, and the fewer still who have a relish for pleasure, all is vanity and servile imitation. Dressing and cards, eating and drinking, bowing and courtesying, make up the business of their lives.

Some there are, however, of this rank upon whom passion exercises its tyranny, and hurries them far beyond the bounds which decorum prescribes; of these the ladies are as much distinguished by their noble intrepidity, and a certain superior contempt of reputation, from the frail ones of meaner degree, as a virtuous woman of quality is by the elegance and delicacy of her sentiments from the honest wife of a yeoman and shopkeeper. Lady Bellaston was of this intrepid character; but let not my country readers conclude from her, that this is the general conduct of women of fashion, or that we mean to represent them as such. They might as well suppose that every clergyman was represented by Thwackum, or every soldier by ensign Northerton.

There is not, indeed, a greater error than that which universally prevails among the vulgar, who, borrowing their opinion from some ignorant satirists, have affixed the character of lewdness to these times. On the contrary, I am convinced there never was less of love intrigue carried on among persons of condition than now. Our present women have been taught by their mothers to fix their thoughts only on ambition and vanity, and to despise the pleasures of love as unworthy their regard; and being afterwards, by the care of such mothers, married without having husbands, they seem pretty well confirmed in the justness of those sentiments; whence they content themselves, for the dull remainder of life, with the pursuit of more innocent, but I am afraid more childish amusements, the bare mention of which would ill suit with the dignity of this history. In my humble opinion, the true characteristic of the present beau monde is rather folly than vice, and the only epithet which it deserves is that of frivolous.

Chapter ii. — Containing letters and other matters which attend amours.

Jones had not been long at home before he received the following letter:—

"I was never more surprized than when I found you was gone. When you left the room I little imagined you intended to have left the house without seeing me again. Your behaviour is all of a piece, and convinces me how much I ought to despise a heart which can doat upon an idiot; though I know not whether I should not admire her cunning more than her simplicity: wonderful both! For though she understood not a word of what passed between us, yet she had the skill, the assurance, the——what shall I call it? to deny to my face that she knows you, or ever saw you before.—Was this a scheme laid between you, and have you been base enough to betray me?—O how I despise her, you, and all the world, but chiefly myself! for——I dare not write what I should afterwards run mad to read; but remember, I can detest as violently as I have loved."

Jones had but little time given him to reflect on this letter, before a second was brought him from the same hand; and this, likewise, we shall set down in the precise words.

"When you consider the hurry of spirits in which I must have writ, you cannot be surprized at any expressions in my former note.—Yet, perhaps, on reflection, they were rather too warm. At least I would, if possible, think all owing to the odious playhouse, and to the impertinence of a fool, which detained me beyond my

appointment.—How easy is it to think well of those we love!—Perhaps you desire I should think so. I have resolved to see you to-night; so come to me immediately.

"P.S.—I have ordered to be at home to none but yourself.

"P.S.—Mr Jones will imagine I shall assist him in his defence; for I believe he cannot desire to impose on me more than I desire to impose on myself.

"P.S.—Come immediately."

To the men of intrigue I refer the determination, whether the angry or the tender letter gave the greatest uneasiness to Jones. Certain it is, he had no violent inclination to pay any more visits that evening, unless to one single person. However, he thought his honour engaged, and had not this been motive sufficient, he would not have ventured to blow the temper of Lady Bellaston into that flame of which he had reason to think it susceptible, and of which he feared the consequence might be a discovery to Sophia, which he dreaded. After some discontented walks therefore about the room, he was preparing to depart, when the lady kindly prevented him, not by another letter, but by her own presence. She entered the room very disordered in her dress, and very discomposed in her looks, and threw herself into a chair, where, having recovered her breath, she said—"You see, sir, when women have gone one length too far, they will stop at none. If any person would have sworn this to me a week ago, I would not have believed it of myself." "I hope, madam," said Jones, "my charming Lady Bellaston will be as difficult to believe anything against one who is so sensible of the many obligations she hath conferred upon him." "Indeed!" says she, "sensible of obligations! Did I expect to hear such cold language from Mr Jones?" "Pardon me, my dear angel," said he, "if, after the letters I have received, the terrors of your anger, though I know not how I have deserved it."—"And have I then," says she, with a smile, "so angry a countenance?—Have I really brought a chiding face with me?"—"If there be honour in man," said he, "I have done nothing to merit your anger.—You remember the appointment you sent me; I went in pursuance."—"I beseech you," cried she, "do not run through the odious recital.—Answer me but one question, and I shall be easy. Have you not betrayed my

honour to her?"—Jones fell upon his knees, and began to utter the most violent protestations, when Partridge came dancing and capering into the room, like one drunk with joy, crying out, "She's found! she's found!—Here, sir, here, she's here—Mrs Honour is upon the stairs." "Stop her a moment," cries Jones—"Here, madam, step behind the bed, I have no other room nor closet, nor place on earth to hide you in; sure never was so damned an accident."—"D—n'd indeed!" said the lady, as she went to her place of concealment; and presently afterwards in came Mrs Honour. "Hey-day!" says she, "Mr Jones, what's the matter?—That impudent rascal your servant would scarce let me come upstairs. I hope he hath not the same reason to keep me from you as he had at Upton.—I suppose you hardly expected to see me; but you have certainly bewitched my lady. Poor dear young lady! To be sure, I loves her as tenderly as if she was my own sister. Lord have mercy upon you, if you don't make her a good husband! and to be sure, if you do not, nothing can be bad enough for you." Jones begged her only to whisper, for that there was a lady dying in the next room. "A lady!" cries she; "ay, I suppose one of your ladies.—O Mr Jones, there are too many of them in the world; I believe we are got into the house of one, for my Lady Bellaston I darst to say is no better than she should be."—"Hush! hush!" cries Jones, "every word is overheard in the next room." "I don't care a farthing," cries Honour, "I speaks no scandal of any one; but to be sure the servants make no scruple of saying as how her ladyship meets men at another place—where the house goes under the name of a poor gentlewoman; but her ladyship pays the rent, and many's the good thing besides, they say, she hath of her."—Here Jones, after expressing the utmost uneasiness, offered to stop her mouth:—"Hey-day! why sure, Mr Jones, you will let me speak; I speaks no scandal, for I only says what I heard from others—and thinks I to myself, much good may it do the gentlewoman with her riches, if she comes by it in such a wicked manner. To be sure it is better to be poor and honest." "The servants are villains," cries Jones, "and abuse their lady unjustly."—"Ay, to be sure, servants are always villains, and so my lady says, and won't hear a word of it."—"No, I am convinced," says Jones, "my Sophia is above listening to such base scandal." "Nay, I believe it is no scandal, neither," cries Honour, "for why should she meet men at another house?—It can never be for any good: for if she had a lawful design of being courted, as to be sure any lady may lawfully give her company to men upon that account: why, where can be the sense?"—"I protest," cries Jones, "I can't hear all this of a lady of such honour, and a relation of Sophia; besides, you will distract the poor lady in the next room.—Let me entreat you to walk with me down stairs."—"Nay, sir, if you won't let me speak, I have done.—Here, sir, is a letter from my young lady—what would some men give to have this? But, Mr Jones, I think you are not over and above generous, and yet I have heard some servants say— but I am sure you will do me the justice to own I never saw the colour of your money." Here Jones hastily took the letter, and presently after slipped five pieces into her hand. He then returned a thousand thanks to his dear Sophia in a whisper, and begged her to leave him to read her letter: she presently departed, not without expressing much grateful sense of his generosity.

Lady Bellaston now came from behind the curtain. How shall I describe her rage? Her tongue was at first incapable of utterance; but streams of fire darted from her eyes, and well indeed they might, for her heart was all in a flame. And now as soon as her voice found way, instead of expressing any indignation against Honour or her own servants, she began to attack poor Jones. "You see," said she, "what I have sacrificed to you; my reputation, my honour—gone for ever! And what return have I found? Neglected, slighted for a country girl, for an idiot."—"What neglect, madam, or what slight," cries Jones, "have I been guilty of?"—"Mr Jones," said she, "it is in vain to dissemble; if you will make me easy, you must entirely give her up; and as a proof of your intention, show me the letter."—"What letter, madam?" said Jones. "Nay, surely," said she, "you cannot have the confidence to deny your having received a letter by the hands of that trollop."—"And can your ladyship," cries he, "ask of me what I must part with my honour before I grant? Have I acted in such a manner by your ladyship? Could I be guilty of betraying this poor innocent girl to you, what security could you have that I should not act the same part by yourself? A moment's reflection will, I am sure, convince you that a man with whom the secrets of a lady are not safe must be the most contemptible of wretches."—"Very well," said she—"I need not insist on your becoming this contemptible wretch in your own opinion; for the inside of the letter could inform me of nothing more than I know already. I see the footing you are upon."—Here ensued a long conversation, which the reader, who is not too curious, will thank me for not inserting at length. It shall suffice, therefore, to inform him, that Lady Bellaston grew more and more pacified, and at length believed, or affected to believe, his protestations, that his meeting with Sophia that evening was merely accidental, and every other matter which the reader already knows, and which, as Jones set before her in the strongest light, it is plain that she had in reality no reason to be angry with him.

She was not, however, in her heart perfectly satisfied with his refusal to show her the letter; so deaf are we to the clearest reason, when it argues against our prevailing passions. She was, indeed, well convinced that Sophia possessed the first place in Jones's affections; and yet, haughty and amorous as this lady was, she submitted at last to bear the second place; or, to express it more properly in a legal phrase, was contented with the possession of that of which another woman had the reversion.

It was at length agreed that Jones should for the future visit at the house: for that Sophia, her maid, and all the servants, would place these visits to the account of Sophia; and that she herself would be considered as the person imposed upon.

This scheme was contrived by the lady, and highly relished by Jones, who was indeed glad to have a prospect of seeing his Sophia at any rate; and the lady herself was not a little pleased with the imposition on Sophia, which Jones, she thought, could not possibly discover to her for his own sake.

The next day was appointed for the first visit, and then, after proper ceremonials, the Lady Bellaston returned home.

Chapter iii. — Containing various matters.

Jones was no sooner alone than he eagerly broke open his letter, and read as follows:—

"Sir, it is impossible to express what I have suffered since you left this house; and as I have reason to think you intend coming here again, I have sent Honour, though so late at night, as she tells me she knows your lodgings, to prevent you. I charge you, by all the regard you have for me, not to think of visiting here; for it will certainly be discovered; nay, I almost doubt, from some things which have dropt from her ladyship, that she is not already without some suspicion. Something favourable perhaps may happen; we must wait with patience; but I once more entreat you, if you have any concern for my ease, do not think of returning hither."

This letter administered the same kind of consolation to poor Jones, which Job formerly received from his friends. Besides disappointing all the hopes which he promised to himself from seeing Sophia, he was reduced to an unhappy dilemma, with regard to Lady Bellaston; for there are some certain engagements, which, as he well knew, do very difficultly admit of any excuse for the failure; and to go, after the strict prohibition from Sophia, he was not to be forced by any human power. At length, after much deliberation, which during that night supplied the place of sleep, he determined to feign himself sick: for this suggested itself as the only means of failing the appointed visit, without incensing Lady Bellaston, which he had more than one reason of desiring to avoid.

The first thing, however, which he did in the morning, was, to write an answer to Sophia, which he inclosed in one to Honour. He then despatched another to Lady Bellaston, containing the above-mentioned excuse; and to this he soon received the following answer:—

"I am vexed that I cannot see you here this afternoon, but more concerned for the occasion; take great care of yourself, and have

the best advice, and I hope there will be no danger.—I am so tormented all this morning with fools, that I have scarce a moment's time to write to you. Adieu.

"P.S.—I will endeavour to call on you this evening, at nine.—Be sure to be alone."

Mr Jones now received a visit from Mrs Miller, who, after some formal introduction, began the following speech:—"I am very sorry, sir, to wait upon you on such an occasion; but I hope you will consider the ill consequence which it must be to the reputation of my poor girls, if my house should once be talked of as a house of ill-fame. I hope you won't think me, therefore, guilty of impertinence, if I beg you not to bring any more ladies in at that time of night. The clock had struck two before one of them went away."—"I do assure you, madam," said Jones, "the lady who was here last night, and who staid the latest (for the other only brought me a letter), is a woman of very great fashion, and my near relation."—"I don't know what fashion she is of," answered Mrs Miller; "but I am sure no woman of virtue, unless a very near relation indeed, would visit a young gentleman at ten at night, and stay four hours in his room with him alone; besides, sir, the behaviour of her chairmen shows what she was; for they did nothing but make jests all the evening in the entry, and asked Mr Partridge, in the hearing of my own maid, if madam intended to stay with his master all night; with a great deal of stuff not proper to be repeated. I have really a great respect for you, Mr Jones, upon your own account; nay, I have a very high obligation to you for your generosity to my cousin. Indeed, I did not know how very good you had been till lately. Little did I imagine to what dreadful courses the poor man's distress had driven him. Little did I think, when you gave me the ten guineas, that you had given them to a highwayman! O heavens! what goodness have you shown! How have you preserved this family!—The character which Mr Allworthy hath formerly given me of you was, I find, strictly true.—And indeed, if I had no obligation to you, my obligations to him are such, that, on his account, I should shew you the utmost respect in my power.—Nay, believe me, dear Mr Jones, if my daughters' and my own reputation were out of the case, I should, for your own sake, be sorry that so pretty a young gentleman should converse with these women; but if you are resolved to do it, I must beg you to take another lodging; for I do not myself like to have such things carried on under my roof; but more especially upon the account of my girls, who have little, heaven knows, besides their characters, to recommend them." Jones started and changed colour at the name of Allworthy. "Indeed, Mrs Miller," answered he, a little warmly, "I do not take this at all kind. I will never

bring any slander on your house; but I must insist on seeing what company I please in my own room; and if that gives you any offence, I shall, as soon as I am able, look for another lodging."—"I am sorry we must part then, sir," said she; "but I am convinced Mr Allworthy himself would never come within my doors, if he had the least suspicion of my keeping an ill house."—"Very well, madam," said Jones.—"I hope, sir," said she, "you are not angry; for I would not for the world offend any of Mr Allworthy's family. I have not slept a wink all night about this matter."—"I am sorry I have disturbed your rest, madam," said Jones, "but I beg you will send Partridge up to me immediately;" which she promised to do, and then with a very low courtesy retired.

As soon as Partridge arrived, Jones fell upon him in the most outrageous manner. "How often," said he, "am I to suffer for your folly, or rather for my own in keeping you? is that tongue of yours resolved upon my destruction?" "What have I done, sir?" answered affrighted Partridge. "Who was it gave you authority to mention the story of the robbery, or that the man you saw here was the person?" "I, sir?" cries Partridge. "Now don't be guilty of a falsehood in denying it," said Jones. "If I did mention such a matter," answers Partridge, "I am sure I thought no harm; for I should not have opened my lips, if it had not been to his own friends and relations, who, I imagined, would have let it go no farther." "But I have a much heavier charge against you," cries Jones, "than this. How durst you, after all the precautions I gave you, mention the name of Mr Allworthy in this house?" Partridge denied that he ever had, with many oaths. "How else," said Jones, "should Mrs Miller be acquainted that there was any connexion between him and me? And it is but this moment she told me she respected me on his account." "O Lord, sir," said Partridge, "I desire only to be heard out; and to be sure, never was anything so unfortunate: hear me but out, and you will own how wrongfully you have accused me. When Mrs Honour came downstairs last night she met me in the entry, and asked me when my master had heard from Mr Allworthy; and to be sure Mrs Miller heard the very words; and the moment Madam Honour was gone, she called me into the parlour to her. 'Mr Partridge,' says she, 'what Mr Allworthy is it that the gentlewoman mentioned? is it the great Mr Allworthy of Somersetshire?' 'Upon my word, madam,' says I, 'I know nothing of the matter.' 'Sure,' says she, 'your master is not the Mr Jones I have heard Mr Allworthy talk of?' 'Upon my word, madam,' says I, 'I know nothing of the matter.' 'Then,' says she, turning to her daughter Nancy, says she, 'as sure as tenpence this is the very young gentleman, and he agrees exactly with the squire's description.' The Lord above knows who it was told her: for I am the arrantest villain that ever walked upon two legs if ever it came out of my mouth. I promise you, sir, I can keep a secret when I am desired. Nay, sir, so far was I from telling her anything about Mr Allworthy, that I told her the very direct contrary; for, though I did not contradict it at that moment, yet, as second thoughts, they say, are best, so when I came to consider that somebody must have informed her, thinks I to myself, I will put an end to the story; and so I went back again into the parlour some time afterwards, and says I, upon my word, says I, whoever,

says I, told you that this gentleman was Mr Jones; that is, says I, that this Mr Jones was that Mr Jones, told you a confounded lie: and I beg, says I, you will never mention any such matter, says I; for my master, says I, will think I must have told you so; and I defy anybody in the house ever to say I mentioned any such word. To be certain, sir, it is a wonderful thing, and I have been thinking with myself ever since, how it was she came to know it; not but I saw an old woman here t'other day a begging at the door, who looked as like her we saw in Warwickshire, that caused all that mischief to us. To be sure it is never good to pass by an old woman without giving her something, especially if she looks at you; for all the world shall never persuade me but that they have a great power to do mischief, and to be sure I shall never see an old woman again, but I shall think to myself, *Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem.*"

The simplicity of Partridge set Jones a laughing, and put a final end to his anger, which had indeed seldom any long duration in his mind; and, instead of commenting on his defence, he told him he intended presently to leave those lodgings, and ordered him to go and endeavour to get him others.

Chapter iv. — Which we hope will be very attentively perused by young people of both sexes.

Partridge had no sooner left Mr Jones than Mr Nightingale, with whom he had now contracted a great intimacy, came to him, and, after a short salutation, said, "So, Tom, I hear you had company very late last night. Upon my soul you are a happy fellow, who have not been in town above a fortnight, and can keep chairs waiting at your door till two in the morning." He then ran on with much commonplace raillery of the same kind, till Jones at last interrupted him, saying, "I suppose you have received all this information from Mrs Miller, who hath been up here a little while ago to give me warning. The good woman is afraid, it seems, of the reputation of her daughters." "Oh! she is wonderfully nice," says Nightingale, "upon that account; if you remember, she would not let Nancy go with us to the masquerade." "Nay, upon my honour, I think she's in the right of it," says Jones: "however, I have taken her at her word, and have sent Partridge to look for another lodging." "If you will," says Nightingale, "we may, I believe, be again together; for, to tell you a secret, which I desire you won't mention in the family, I intend to quit the house to-day." "What, hath Mrs Miller given you warning too, my friend?" cries Jones. "No," answered the other; "but the rooms are not convenient enough. Besides, I am grown weary of this part of the town. I want to be nearer the places of diversion; so I am going to Pall-mall." "And do you intend to make a secret of your going away?" said Jones. "I promise you," answered Nightingale, "I don't intend to bilk my lodgings; but I have a private reason for not taking a formal leave." "Not so private," answered Jones; "I promise you, I have seen it ever since the second day of my coming to the house. Here will be some wet eyes on your departure. Poor Nancy, I pity her, faith! Indeed, Jack, you have played the fool with that girl. You have given her a longing, which I am afraid nothing will ever cure her of." Nightingale answered, "What the devil would you have me do? would you have me marry her to cure her?" "No," answered Jones, "I would not have had you make love to her, as you have often done in my presence. I have been astonished at the blindness of her mother in never seeing it." "Pugh, see it!" cries Nightingale. "What, the devil should she see?" "Why, see," said Jones, "that you have made her daughter distractedly in love with you. The poor girl cannot conceal it a moment; her eyes are never off from you, and she always colours every time you come into the room. Indeed, I pity her heartily; for she seems to be one of the best-natured and honestest of human creatures." "And so," answered Nightingale, "according to your doctrine, one must not amuse oneself by any common gallantries with women, for fear they should fall in love with us." "Indeed, Jack," said Jones, "you wilfully misunderstand me; I do not fancy women are so apt to fall in love; but you have gone far beyond common gallantries." "What, do you suppose," says Nightingale, "that we have been a-bed together?" "No, upon my honour," answered Jones, very seriously,

"I do not suppose so ill of you; nay, I will go farther, I do not imagine you have laid a regular premeditated scheme for the destruction of the quiet of a poor little creature, or have even foreseen the consequence: for I am sure thou art a very good-natured fellow; and such a one can never be guilty of a cruelty of that kind; but at the same time you have pleased your own vanity, without considering that this poor girl was made a sacrifice to it; and while you have had no design but of amusing an idle hour, you have actually given her reason to flatter herself that you had the most serious designs in her favour. Prithce, Jack, answer me honestly; to what have tended all those elegant and luscious descriptions of happiness arising from violent and mutual fondness? all those warm professions of tenderness, and generous disinterested love? Did you imagine she would not apply them? or, speak ingenuously, did not you intend she should?" "Upon my soul, Tom," cries Nightingale, "I did not think this was in thee. Thou wilt make an admirable parson. So I suppose you would not go to bed to Nancy now, if she would let you?" "No," cries Jones, "may I be d—n'd if I would." "Tom, Tom," answered Nightingale, "last night; remember last night—"

When every eye was closed, and the pale moon,
And silent stars, shone conscious of the theft."

"Looke, Mr Nightingale," said Jones, "I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity, more than my neighbours. I have been guilty with women, I own it; but am not conscious that I have ever injured any.—Nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself, be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being."

"Well, well," said Nightingale, "I believe you, and I am convinced you acquit me of any such thing."

"I do, from my heart," answered Jones, "of having debauched the girl, but not from having gained her affections."

"If I have," said Nightingale, "I am sorry for it; but time and absence will soon wear off such impressions. It is a receipt I must take myself; for, to confess the truth to you—I never liked any girl half so much in my whole life; but I must let you into the whole secret, Tom. My father hath provided a match for me with a woman I never saw; and she is now coming to town, in order for me to make my addresses to her."

At these words Jones burst into a loud fit of laughter; when Nightingale cried—"Nay, prithce, don't turn me into ridicule. The devil take me if I am not half mad about this matter! my poor Nancy! Oh! Jones, Jones, I wish I had a fortune in my own possession."

"I heartily wish you had," cries Jones; "for, if this be the case, I sincerely pity you both; but surely you don't intend to go away without taking your leave of her?"

"I would not," answered Nightingale, "undergo the pain of taking leave, for ten thousand pounds; besides, I am convinced, instead of answering any good purpose, it would only serve to inflame my poor Nancy the more. I beg, therefore, you would not mention a word of it to-day, and in the evening, or to-morrow morning, I intend to depart."

Jones promised he would not; and said, upon reflection, he thought, as he had determined and was obliged to leave her, he took the most prudent method. He then told Nightingale he should be very glad to lodge in the same house with him; and it was accordingly agreed between them, that Nightingale should procure him either the ground floor, or the two pair of stairs; for the young gentleman himself was to occupy that which was between them.

This Nightingale, of whom we shall be presently obliged to say a little more, was in the ordinary transactions of life a man of strict honour, and, what is more rare among young gentlemen of the town, one of strict honesty too; yet in affairs of love he was somewhat loose in his morals; not that he was even here as void of principle as gentlemen sometimes are, and oftener affect to be; but it is certain he had been guilty of some indefensible treachery to women, and had, in a certain mystery, called making love, practised many deceits, which, if he had used in trade, he would have been counted the greatest villain upon earth.

But as the world, I know not well for what reason, agree to see this treachery in a better light, he was so far from being ashamed of his iniquities of this kind, that he gloried in them, and would often boast of his skill in gaining of women, and his triumphs over their hearts, for which he had before this time received some rebukes from Jones, who always express great bitterness against any misbehaviour to the fair part of the species, who, if considered, he said, as they ought to be, in the light of the dearest friends, were to be cultivated, honoured, and caressed with the utmost love and tenderness; but, if regarded as enemies, were a conquest of which a man ought rather to be ashamed than to value himself upon it.

Chapter v. — A short account of the history of Mrs Miller.

Jones this day eat a pretty good dinner for a sick man, that is to say, the larger half of a shoulder of mutton. In the afternoon he received an invitation from Mrs Miller to drink tea; for that good woman, having learnt, either by means of Partridge, or by some other means natural or supernatural, that he had a connexion with Mr Allworthy, could not endure the thoughts of parting with him in an angry manner.

Jones accepted the invitation; and no sooner was the tea-kettle removed, and the girls sent out of the room, than the widow, without much preface, began as follows: "Well, there are very surprizing things happen in this world; but certainly it is a wonderful business that I should have a relation of Mr Allworthy in my house, and never know anything of the matter. Alas! sir, you little imagine what a friend that best of gentlemen hath been to me and mine. Yes, sir, I am not ashamed to own it; it is owing to his goodness that I did not long since perish for want, and leave my poor little wretches, two destitute, helpless, friendless orphans, to the care, or rather to the cruelty, of the world.

"You must know, sir, though I am now reduced to get my living by letting lodgings, I was born and bred a gentlewoman. My father was an officer of the army, and died in a considerable rank: but he lived up to his pay; and, as that expired with him, his family, at his death, became beggars. We were three sisters. One of us had the good luck to die soon after of the small-pox; a lady was so kind as to take the second out of charity, as she said, to wait upon her. The mother of this lady had been a servant to my grand-mother; and, having inherited a vast fortune from her father, which he had got by pawnbroking, was married to a gentleman of great estate and fashion. She used my sister so barbarously, often upbraiding her with her birth and poverty, calling her in derision a gentlewoman, that I believe she at length broke the heart of the poor girl. In short, she likewise died within a twelvemonth after my father. Fortune thought proper to provide better for me, and within a month from his decease I was married to a clergyman, who had been my lover a long time before, and who had been very ill used by my father on that account: for though my poor father could not give any of us a shilling, yet he bred us up as delicately, considered us, and would have had us consider ourselves, as highly as if we had been the richest heiresses. But my dear husband forgot all this usage, and the moment we were become fatherless he immediately renewed his addresses to me so warmly, that I, who always liked, and now more than ever esteemed him, soon complied. Five years did I live in a state of perfect happiness with that best of men, till at last—Oh! cruel! cruel fortune, that ever separated us, that deprived me of the kindest of husbands and my poor girls of the tenderest parent.—O my poor girls! you never knew the blessing which ye lost.—I am ashamed, Mr Jones, of this womanish weakness; but I shall never mention him without tears." "I ought rather, madam," said Jones, "to be

ashamed that I do not accompany you." "Well, sir," continued she, "I was now left a second time in a much worse condition than before; besides the terrible affliction I was to encounter, I had now two children to provide for; and was, if possible, more penniless than ever; when that great, that good, that glorious man, Mr Allworthy, who had some little acquaintance with my husband, accidentally heard of my distress, and immediately writ this letter to me. Here, sir, here it is; I put it into my pocket to shew it you. This is the letter, sir; I must and will read it to you.

"Madam,

"I heartily condole with you on your late grievous loss, which your own good sense, and the excellent lessons you must have learnt from the worthiest of men, will better enable you to bear than any advice which I am capable of giving. Nor have I any doubt that you, whom I have heard to be the tenderest of mothers, will suffer any immoderate indulgence of grief to prevent you from discharging your duty to those poor infants, who now alone stand in need of your tenderness.

"`However, as you must be supposed at present to be incapable of much worldly consideration, you will pardon my having ordered a person to wait on you, and to pay you twenty guineas, which I beg you will accept till I have the pleasure of seeing you, and believe me to be, madam, &c.'

"This letter, sir, I received within a fortnight after the irreparable loss I have mentioned; and within a fortnight afterwards, Mr Allworthy—the blessed Mr Allworthy, came to pay me a visit, when he placed me in the house where you now see me, gave me a large sum of money to furnish it, and settled an annuity of £50 a-year upon me, which I have constantly received ever since. Judge, then, Mr Jones, in what regard I must hold a

benefactor, to whom I owe the preservation of my life, and of those dear children, for whose sake alone my life is valuable. Do not, therefore, think me impertinent, Mr Jones (since I must esteem one for whom I know Mr Allworthy hath so much value), if I beg you not to converse with these wicked women. You are a young gentleman, and do not know half their artful wiles. Do not be angry with me, sir, for what I said upon account of my house; you must be sensible it would be the ruin of my poor dear girls. Besides, sir, you cannot but be acquainted that Mr Allworthy himself would never forgive my conniving at such matters, and particularly with you."

"Upon my word, madam," said Jones, "you need make no farther apology; nor do I in the least take anything ill you have said; but give me leave, as no one can have more value than myself for Mr Allworthy, to deliver you from one mistake, which, perhaps, would not be altogether for his honour; I do assure you, I am no relation of his."

"Alas! sir," answered she, "I know you are not, I know very well who you are; for Mr Allworthy hath told me all; but I do assure you, had you been twenty times his son, he could not have expressed more regard for you than he hath often expressed in my presence. You need not be ashamed, sir, of what you are; I promise you no good person will esteem you the less on that account. No, Mr Jones, the words `dishonourable birth' are nonsense, as my dear, dear husband used to say, unless the word `dishonourable' be applied to the parents; for the children can derive no real dishonour from an act of which they are intirely innocent."

Here Jones heaved a deep sigh, and then said, "Since I perceive, madam, you really do know me, and Mr Allworthy hath thought proper to mention my name to you; and since you have been so explicit with me as to your own affairs, I will acquaint you with some more circumstances concerning myself." And these Mrs Miller having expressed great desire and curiosity to hear, he began and related to her his whole history, without once mentioning the name of Sophia.

There is a kind of sympathy in honest minds, by means of which they give an easy credit to each other. Mrs Miller believed all which Jones told her to be true, and exprest much pity and concern for him. She was beginning to comment on the story, but Jones interrupted her; for, as the hour of assignation now drew nigh, he began to stipulate for a second interview with the lady that evening, which he promised should be the last at her house; swearing, at the same time, that she was one of great distinction, and that nothing but what was intirely innocent was to pass between them; and I do firmly believe he intended to keep his word.

Mrs Miller was at length prevailed on, and Jones departed to his chamber, where he sat alone till twelve o'clock, but no Lady Bellaston appeared.

As we have said that this lady had a great affection for Jones, and as it must have appeared that she really had so, the reader may perhaps wonder at the first failure of her appointment, as she apprehended him to be confined by sickness, a season when friendship seems most to require such visits. This behaviour, therefore, in the lady, may, by some, be condemned as unnatural; but that is not our fault; for our business is only to record truth.

Chapter vi. — Containing a scene which we doubt not will affect all our readers.

Mr Jones closed not his eyes during all the former part of the night; not owing to any uneasiness which he conceived at being disappointed by Lady Bellaston; nor was Sophia herself, though most of his waking hours were justly to be charged to her account, the present cause of dispelling his slumbers. In fact, poor Jones was one of the best-natured fellows alive, and had all that weakness which is called compassion, and which distinguishes this imperfect character from that noble firmness of mind, which rolls a man, as it were, within himself, and like a polished bowl, enables him to run through the world without being once stopped by the calamities which happen to others. He could not help, therefore, compassionating the situation of poor Nancy, whose love for Mr Nightingale seemed to him so apparent, that he was astonished at the blindness of her mother, who had more than once, the preceding evening, remarked to him the great change in the temper of her daughter, "who from being," she said, "one of the liveliest, merriest girls in the world, was, on a sudden, become all gloom and melancholy."

Sleep, however, at length got the better of all resistance; and now, as if he had already been a deity, as the antients imagined, and an offended one too, he seemed to enjoy his dear-bought conquest.—To speak simply, and without any metaphor, Mr Jones slept till eleven the next morning, and would, perhaps, have continued in the same quiet situation much longer, had not a violent uproar awakened him.

Partridge was now summoned, who, being asked what was the matter, answered, "That there was a dreadful hurricane below-stairs; that Miss Nancy was in fits; and that the other sister, and the mother, were both crying and lamenting over her." Jones expressed much concern at this news; which Partridge endeavoured to relieve, by saying, with a smile, "he fancied the young lady was in no danger of death; for that Susan" (which was the name of the maid) "had given him to understand, it was nothing more than a common affair. In short," said he, "Miss Nancy hath had a mind to be as wise as her mother; that's all; she was a little hungry, it seems, and so sat down to dinner before grace was said; and so there is a child coming for the Foundling Hospital."—"Prithee, leave thy stupid jesting," cries Jones. "Is the misery of these poor wretches a subject of mirth? Go immediately to Mrs Miller, and tell her I beg leave—Stay, you will make some blunder; I will go myself; for she desired me to breakfast with her." He then rose and dressed himself as fast as he could; and while he was dressing, Partridge, notwithstanding many severe rebukes, could not avoid throwing forth certain pieces of brutality, commonly called jests, on this occasion. Jones was no sooner dressed than he walked downstairs, and knocking at the door, was presently admitted by the maid, into the outward parlour, which was as empty of company as it was of any apparatus for

eating. Mrs Miller was in the inner room with her daughter, whence the maid presently brought a message to Mr Jones, "That her mistress hoped he would excuse the disappointment, but an accident had happened, which made it impossible for her to have the pleasure of his company at breakfast that day; and begged his pardon for not sending him up notice sooner." Jones desired, "She would give herself no trouble about anything so trifling as his disappointment; that he was heartily sorry for the occasion; and that if he could be of any service to her, she might command him."

He had scarce spoke these words, when Mrs Miller, who heard them all, suddenly threw open the door, and coming out to him, in a flood of tears, said, "O Mr Jones! you are certainly one of the best young men alive. I give you a thousand thanks for your kind offer of your service; but, alas! sir, it is out of your power to preserve my poor girl.—O my child! my child! she is undone, she is ruined for ever!" "I hope, madam," said Jones, "no villain"——"O Mr Jones!" said she, "that villain who yesterday left my lodgings, hath betrayed my poor girl; hath destroyed her.—I know you are a man of honour. You have a good—a noble heart, Mr Jones. The actions to which I have been myself a witness, could proceed from no other. I will tell you all: nay, indeed, it is impossible, after what hath happened, to keep it a secret. That Nightingale, that barbarous villain, hath undone my daughter. She is—she is—oh! Mr Jones, my girl is with child by him; and in that condition he hath deserted her. Here! here, sir, is his cruel letter: read it, Mr Jones, and tell me if such another monster lives."

The letter was as follows:

"DEAR NANCY,

"As I found it impossible to mention to you what, I am afraid, will be no less shocking to you, than it is to me, I have taken this method to inform you, that my father insists upon my immediately paying my addresses to a young lady of fortune, whom he hath provided for my—I need not write the detested word. Your own good understanding will make you sensible, how entirely I am obliged to an obedience, by which I shall be for ever excluded from your dear arms. The fondness of your mother may encourage you to trust her

with the unhappy consequence of our love, which may be easily kept a secret from the world, and for which I will take care to provide, as I will for you. I wish you may feel less on this account than I have suffered; but summon all your fortitude to your assistance, and forgive and forget the man, whom nothing but the prospect of certain ruin could have forced to write this letter. I bid you forget me, I mean only as a lover; but the best of friends you shall ever find in your faithful, though unhappy,

"J. N."

When Jones had read this letter, they both stood silent during a minute, looking at each other; at last he began thus: "I cannot express, madam, how much I am shocked at what I have read; yet let me beg you, in one particular, to take the writer's advice. Consider the reputation of your daughter."—"It is gone, it is lost, Mr Jones," cried she, "as well as her innocence. She received the letter in a room full of company, and immediately swooning away upon opening it, the contents were known to every one present. But the loss of her reputation, bad as it is, is not the worst; I shall lose my child; she hath attempted twice to destroy herself already; and though she hath been hitherto prevented, vows she will not outlive it; nor could I myself outlive any accident of that nature.—What then will become of my little Betsy, a helpless infant orphan? and the poor little wretch will, I believe, break her heart at the miseries with which she sees her sister and myself distracted, while she is ignorant of the cause. O 'tis the most sensible, and best-natured little thing! The barbarous, cruel—hath destroyed us all. O my poor children! Is this the reward of all my cares? Is this the fruit of all my prospects? Have I so cheerfully undergone all the labours and duties of a mother? Have I been so tender of their infancy, so careful of their education? Have I been toiling so many years, denying myself even the conveniences of life, to provide some little sustenance for them, to lose one or both in such a manner?" "Indeed, madam," said Jones, with tears in his eyes, "I pity you from my soul."—"O! Mr Jones," answered she, "even you, though I know the goodness of your heart, can have no idea of what I feel. The best, the kindest, the most dutiful of children! O my poor Nancy, the darling of my soul! the delight of my eyes! the pride of my heart! too much, indeed, my pride; for to those foolish, ambitious hopes, arising from her beauty, I owe her ruin. Alas! I saw with pleasure the liking which this

young man had for her. I thought it an honourable affection; and flattered my foolish vanity with the thoughts of seeing her married to one so much her superior. And a thousand times in my presence, nay, often in yours, he hath endeavoured to soothe and encourage these hopes by the most generous expressions of disinterested love, which he hath always directed to my poor girl, and which I, as well as she, believed to be real. Could I have believed that these were only snares laid to betray the innocence of my child, and for the ruin of us all?"—At these words little Betsy came running into the room, crying, "Dear mamma, for heaven's sake come to my sister; for she is in another fit, and my cousin can't hold her." Mrs Miller immediately obeyed the summons; but first ordered Betsy to stay with Mr Jones, and begged him to entertain her a few minutes, saying, in the most pathetic voice, "Good heaven! let me preserve one of my children at least."

Jones, in compliance with this request, did all he could to comfort the little girl, though he was, in reality, himself very highly affected with Mrs Miller's story. He told her "Her sister would be soon very well again; that by taking on in that manner she would not only make her sister worse, but make her mother ill too." "Indeed, sir," says she, "I would not do anything to hurt them for the world. I would burst my heart rather than they should see me cry.—But my poor sister can't see me cry.—I am afraid she will never be able to see me cry any more. Indeed, I can't part with her; indeed, I can't.—And then poor mamma too, what will become of her?—She says she will die too, and leave me: but I am resolved I won't be left behind." "And are you not afraid to die, my little Betsy?" said Jones. "Yes," answered she, "I was always afraid to die; because I must have left my mamma, and my sister; but I am not afraid of going anywhere with those I love."

Jones was so pleased with this answer, that he eagerly kissed the child; and soon after Mrs Miller returned, saying, "She thanked heaven Nancy was now come to herself. And now, Betsy," says she, "you may go in, for your sister is better, and longs to see you." She then turned to Jones, and began to renew her apologies for having disappointed him of his breakfast.

"I hope, madam," said Jones, "I shall have a more exquisite repast than any you could have provided for me. This, I assure you, will be the case, if I can do any service to this little family of love. But whatever success may attend my endeavours, I am resolved to attempt it. I am very much deceived in Mr Nightingale, if, notwithstanding what hath happened, he hath not much goodness of heart at the bottom, as well as a very violent affection for your daughter. If this be the case, I think the picture which I shall lay before him will affect him. Endeavour, madam, to comfort yourself, and Miss Nancy, as well as you can. I will go instantly in quest of Mr Nightingale; and I hope to bring you good news."

Mrs Miller fell upon her knees and invoked all the blessings of heaven upon Mr Jones; to which she afterwards added the most passionate expressions of gratitude. He then departed to find Mr Nightingale, and the good woman returned to comfort her daughter, who was somewhat cheered at what her mother told her; and both joined in resounding the praises of Mr Jones.

Chapter vii. — The interview between Mr Jones and Mr Nightingale.

The good or evil we confer on others very often, I believe, recoils on ourselves. For as men of a benign disposition enjoy their own acts of beneficence equally with those to whom they are done, so there are scarce any natures so entirely diabolical, as to be capable of doing injuries, without paying themselves some pangs for the ruin which they bring on their fellow-creatures.

Mr Nightingale, at least, was not such a person. On the contrary, Jones found him in his new lodgings, sitting melancholy by the fire, and silently lamenting the unhappy situation in which he had placed poor Nancy. He no sooner saw his friend appear than he arose hastily to meet him; and after much congratulation said, "Nothing could be more opportune than this kind visit; for I was never more in the spleen in my life."

"I am sorry," answered Jones, "that I bring news very unlikely to relieve you: nay, what I am convinced must, of all other, shock you the most. However, it is necessary you should know it. Without further preface, then, I come to you, Mr Nightingale, from a worthy family, which you have involved in misery and ruin." Mr Nightingale changed colour at these words; but Jones, without regarding it, proceeded, in the liveliest manner, to paint the tragical story with which the reader was acquainted in the last chapter.

Nightingale never once interrupted the narration, though he discovered violent emotions at many parts of it. But when it was concluded, after fetching a deep sigh, he said, "What you tell me, my friend, affects me in the tenderest manner. Sure there never was so cursed an accident as the poor girl's betraying my letter. Her reputation might otherwise have been safe, and the affair might have remained a profound secret; and then the girl might have gone off never the worse; for many such things happen in this town: and if the husband should suspect a little, when it is too late, it will be his wiser conduct to conceal his suspicion both from his wife and the world."

"Indeed, my friend," answered Jones, "this could not have been the case with your poor Nancy. You have so entirely gained her affections, that it is the loss of you, and not of her reputation, which afflicts her, and will end in the destruction of her and her family." "Nay, for that matter, I promise you," cries Nightingale, "she hath my affections so absolutely, that my wife, whoever she is to be, will have very little share in them." "And is it possible then," said Jones, "you can think of deserting her?" "Why, what can I do?" answered the other. "Ask Miss Nancy," replied Jones warmly. "In the condition to which you have reduced her, I sincerely think she ought to determine what reparation you shall make her. Her interest alone, and not yours, ought to be your sole consideration."

But if you ask me what you shall do, what can you do less," cries Jones, "than fulfil the expectations of her family, and her own? Nay, I sincerely tell you, they were mine too, ever since I first saw you together. You will pardon me if I presume on the friendship you have favoured me with, moved as I am with compassion for those poor creatures. But your own heart will best suggest to you, whether you have never intended, by your conduct, to persuade the mother, as well as the daughter, into an opinion, that you designed honourably: and if so, though there may have been no direct promise of marriage in the case, I will leave to your own good understanding, how far you are bound to proceed."

"Nay, I must not only confess what you have hinted," said Nightingale; "but I am afraid even that very promise you mention I have given." "And can you, after owning that," said Jones, "hesitate a moment?" "Consider, my friend," answered the other; "I know you are a man of honour, and would advise no one to act contrary to its rules; if there were no other objection, can I, after this publication of her disgrace, think of such an alliance with honour?" "Undoubtedly," replied Jones, "and the very best and truest honour, which is goodness, requires it of you. As you mention a scruple of this kind, you will give me leave to examine it. Can you with honour be guilty of having under false pretences deceived a young woman and her family, and of having by these means treacherously robbed her of her innocence? Can you, with honour, be the knowing, the wilful occasion, nay, the artful contriver of the ruin of a human being? Can you, with honour, destroy the fame, the peace, nay, probably, both the life and soul too, of this creature? Can honour bear the thought, that this creature is a tender, helpless, defenceless, young woman? A young woman, who loves, who doats on you, who dies for you; who hath placed the utmost confidence in your promises; and to that confidence hath sacrificed everything which is dear to her? Can honour support such contemplations as these a moment?"

"Common sense, indeed," said Nightingale, "warrants all you say; but yet you well know the opinion of the world is so contrary to it, that, was I to marry a whore, though my own, I should be ashamed of ever showing my face again."

"Fie upon it, Mr Nightingale!" said Jones, "do not call her by so ungenerous a name: when you promised to marry her she became your wife; and she hath sinned more against prudence than virtue. And what is this world which you would be ashamed to face but the vile, the foolish, and the profligate? Forgive me if I say such a shame must proceed from false modesty, which always attends false honour as its shadow.—But I am well assured there is not a man of real sense and goodness in the world who would not honour and applaud the action. But, admit no other would, would not your own heart, my friend, applaud it? And do not the warm, rapturous sensations, which we feel from the consciousness of an honest, noble, generous, benevolent action, convey more delight to the mind than the undeserved praise of millions? Set the alternative fairly before your

eyes. On the one side, see this poor, unhappy, tender, believing girl, in the arms of her wretched mother, breathing her last. Hear her breaking heart in agonies, sighing out your name; and lamenting, rather than accusing, the cruelty which weighs her down to destruction. Paint to your imagination the circumstances of her fond despairing parent, driven to madness, or, perhaps, to death, by the loss of her lovely daughter. View the poor, helpless, orphan infant; and when your mind hath dwelt a moment only on such ideas, consider yourself as the cause of all the ruin of this poor, little, worthy, defenceless family. On the other side, consider yourself as relieving them from their temporary sufferings. Think with what joy, with what transports that lovely creature will fly to your arms. See her blood returning to her pale cheeks, her fire to her languid eyes, and raptures to her tortured breast. Consider the exultations of her mother, the happiness of all. Think of this little family made by one act of yours completely happy. Think of this alternative, and sure I am mistaken in my friend if it requires any long deliberation whether he will sink these wretches down for ever, or, by one generous, noble resolution, raise them all from the brink of misery and despair to the highest pitch of human happiness. Add to this but one consideration more; the consideration that it is your duty so to do—That the misery from which you will relieve these poor people is the misery which you yourself have wilfully brought upon them."

"O, my dear friend!" cries Nightingale, "I wanted not your eloquence to rouse me. I pity poor Nancy from my soul, and would willingly give anything in my power that no familiarities had ever passed between us. Nay, believe me, I had many struggles with my passion before I could prevail with myself to write that cruel letter, which hath caused all the misery in that unhappy family. If I had no inclinations to consult but my own, I would marry her to-morrow morning: I would, by heaven! but you will easily imagine how impossible it would be to prevail on my father to consent to such a match; besides, he hath provided another for me; and to-morrow, by his express command, I am to wait on the lady."

"I have not the honour to know your father," said Jones; "but, suppose he could be persuaded, would you yourself consent to the only means of preserving these poor people?" "As eagerly as I would pursue my happiness," answered Nightingale: "for I never shall find it in any other woman.—O, my dear friend! could you imagine what I have felt within these twelve hours for my poor girl, I am convinced she would not engross all your pity. Passion leads me only to her; and, if I had any foolish scruples of honour, you have fully satisfied them: could my father be induced to comply with my desires, nothing would be wanting to compleat my own happiness or that of my Nancy."

"Then I am resolved to undertake it," said Jones. "You must not be angry with me, in whatever light it may be necessary to set this affair, which, you may depend on it, could not otherwise be long hid from him: for things of this nature make a quick progress when once they get abroad, as this unhappily hath already. Besides, should any fatal

accident follow, as upon my soul I am afraid will, unless immediately prevented, the public would ring of your name in a manner which, if your father hath common humanity, must offend him. If you will therefore tell me where I may find the old gentleman, I will not lose a moment in the business; which, while I pursue, you cannot do a more generous action than by paying a visit to the poor girl. You will find I have not exaggerated in the account I have given of the wretchedness of the family."

Nightingale immediately consented to the proposal; and now, having acquainted Jones with his father's lodging, and the coffee-house where he would most probably find him, he hesitated a moment, and then said, "My dear Tom, you are going to undertake an impossibility. If you knew my father you would never think of obtaining his consent.—Stay, there is one way—suppose you told him I was already married, it might be easier to reconcile him to the fact after it was done; and, upon my honour, I am so affected with what you have said, and I love my Nancy so passionately, I almost wish it was done, whatever might be the consequence."

Jones greatly approved the hint, and promised to pursue it. They then separated, Nightingale to visit his Nancy, and Jones in quest of the old gentleman.

Chapter viii. — What passed between Jones and old Mr Nightingale; with the arrival of a person not yet mentioned in this history.

Notwithstanding the sentiment of the Roman satirist, which denies the divinity of fortune, and the opinion of Seneca to the same purpose; Cicero, who was, I believe, a wiser man than either of them, expressly holds the contrary; and certain it is, there are some incidents in life so very strange and unaccountable, that it seems to require more than human skill and foresight in producing them.

Of this kind was what now happened to Jones, who found Mr Nightingale the elder in so critical a minute, that Fortune, if she was really worthy all the worship she received at Rome, could not have contrived such another. In short, the old gentleman, and the father of the young lady whom he intended for his son, had been hard at it for many hours; and the latter was just now gone, and had left the former delighted with the thoughts that he had succeeded in a long contention, which had been between the two fathers of the future bride and bridegroom; in which both endeavoured to overreach the other, and, as it not rarely happens in such cases, both had retreated fully satisfied of having obtained the victory.

This gentleman, whom Mr Jones now visited, was what they call a man of the world; that is to say, a man who directs his conduct in this world as one who, being fully persuaded there is no other, is resolved to make the most of this. In his early years he had been bred to trade; but, having acquired a very good fortune, he had lately declined his business; or, to speak more properly, had changed it from dealing in goods, to dealing only in money, of which he had always a plentiful fund at command, and of which he knew very well how to make a very plentiful advantage, sometimes of the necessities of private men, and sometimes of those of the public. He had indeed conversed so entirely with money, that it may be almost doubted whether he imagined there was any other thing really existing in the world; this at least may be certainly averred, that he firmly believed nothing else to have any real value.

The reader will, I fancy, allow that Fortune could not have culled out a more improper person for Mr Jones to attack with any probability of success; nor could the whimsical lady have directed this attack at a more unseasonable time.

As money then was always uppermost in this gentleman's thoughts, so the moment he saw a stranger within his doors it immediately occurred to his imagination, that such stranger was either come to bring him money, or to fetch it from him. And according as one or other of these thoughts prevailed, he conceived a favourable or unfavourable idea of the person who approached him.

Unluckily for Jones, the latter of these was the ascendant at present; for as a young gentleman had visited him the day before, with a bill from his son for a play debt, he apprehended, at the first sight of Jones, that he was come on such another errand. Jones therefore had no sooner told him that he was come on his son's account than the old gentleman, being confirmed in his suspicion, burst forth into an exclamation, "That he would lose his labour." "Is it then possible, sir," answered Jones, "that you can guess my business?" "If I do guess it," replied the other, "I repeat again to you, you will lose your labour. What, I suppose you are one of those sparks who lead my son into all those scenes of riot and debauchery, which will be his destruction? but I shall pay no more of his bills, I promise you. I expect he will quit all such company for the future. If I had imagined otherwise, I should not have provided a wife for him; for I would be instrumental in the ruin of nobody." "How, sir," said Jones, "and was this lady of your providing?" "Pray, sir," answered the old gentleman, "how comes it to be any concern of yours?"—"Nay, dear sir," replied Jones, "be not offended that I interest myself in what regards your son's happiness, for whom I have so great an honour and value. It was upon that very account I came to wait upon you. I can't express the satisfaction you have given me by what you say; for I do assure you your son is a person for whom I have the highest honour.—Nay, sir, it is not easy to express the esteem I have for you; who could be so generous, so good, so kind, so indulgent to provide such a match for your son; a woman, who, I dare swear, will make him one of the happiest men upon earth."

There is scarce anything which so happily introduces men to our good liking, as having conceived some alarm at their first appearance; when once those apprehensions begin to vanish we soon forget the fears which they occasioned, and look on ourselves as indebted for our present ease to those very persons who at first raised our fears.

Thus it happened to Nightingale, who no sooner found that Jones had no demand on him, as he suspected, than he began to be pleased with his presence. "Pray, good sir," said he, "be pleased to sit down. I do not remember to have ever had the pleasure of seeing you before; but if you are a friend of my son, and have anything to say concerning this young lady, I shall be glad to hear you. As to her making him happy, it will be his own fault if she doth not. I have discharged my duty, in taking care of the main article. She will bring him a fortune capable of making any reasonable, prudent, sober man, happy." "Undoubtedly," cries Jones, "for she is in herself a fortune; so beautiful, so genteel, so sweet-tempered, and so well-educated; she is indeed a most accomplished young lady; sings admirably well, and hath a most delicate hand at the harpsichord." "I did not know any of these matters," answered the old gentleman, "for I never saw the lady: but I do not like her the worse for what you tell me; and I am the better pleased with her father for not laying any stress on these qualifications in our bargain. I shall always think it a proof of his understanding. A silly fellow would have brought in these articles as an addition to her fortune; but, to give him his due, he never mentioned any

such matter; though to be sure they are no disparagements to a woman." "I do assure you, sir," cries Jones, "she hath them all in the most eminent degree: for my part, I own I was afraid you might have been a little backward, a little less inclined to the match; for your son told me you had never seen the lady; therefore I came, sir, in that case, to entreat you, to conjure you, as you value the happiness of your son, not to be averse to his match with a woman who hath not only all the good qualities I have mentioned, but many more."—"If that was your business, sir," said the old gentleman, "we are both obliged to you; and you may be perfectly easy; for I give you my word I was very well satisfied with her fortune." "Sir," answered Jones, "I honour you every moment more and more. To be so easily satisfied, so very moderate on that account, is a proof of the soundness of your understanding, as well as the nobleness of your mind."—"Not so very moderate, young gentleman, not so very moderate," answered the father.—"Still more and more noble," replied Jones; "and give me leave to add, sensible: for sure it is little less than madness to consider money as the sole foundation of happiness. Such a woman as this with her little, her nothing of a fortune"—"I find," cries the old gentleman, "you have a pretty just opinion of money, my friend, or else you are better acquainted with the person of the lady than with her circumstances. Why, pray, what fortune do you imagine this lady to have?" "What fortune?" cries Jones, "why, too contemptible a one to be named for your son."—"Well, well, well," said the other, "perhaps he might have done better."—"That I deny," said Jones, "for she is one of the best of women."—"Ay, ay, but in point of fortune I mean," answered the other. "And yet, as to that now, how much do you imagine your friend is to have?"—"How much?" cries Jones, "how much? Why, at the utmost, perhaps £200." "Do you mean to banter me, young gentleman?" said the father, a little angry. "No, upon my soul," answered Jones, "I am in earnest: nay, I believe I have gone to the utmost farthing. If I do the lady an injury, I ask her pardon." "Indeed you do," cries the father; "I am certain she hath fifty times that sum, and she shall produce fifty to that before I consent that she shall marry my son." "Nay," said Jones, "it is too late to talk of consent now; if she had not fifty farthings your son is married."—"My son married!" answered the old gentleman, with surprize. "Nay," said Jones, "I thought you was unacquainted with it." "My son married to Miss Harris!" answered he again. "To Miss Harris!" said Jones; "no, sir; to Miss Nancy Miller, the daughter of Mrs Miller, at whose house he lodged; a young lady, who, though her mother is reduced to let lodgings—"—"Are you bantering, or are you in earnest?" cries the father, with a most solemn voice. "Indeed, sir," answered Jones, "I scorn the character of a banterer. I came to you in most serious earnest, imagining, as I find true, that your son had never dared acquaint you with a match so much inferior to him in point of fortune, though the reputation of the lady will suffer it no longer to remain a secret."

While the father stood like one struck suddenly dumb at this news, a gentleman came into the room, and saluted him by the name of brother.

But though these two were in consanguinity so nearly related, they were in their dispositions almost the opposites to each other. The brother who now arrived had likewise been bred to trade, in which he no sooner saw himself worth £6000 than he purchased a small estate with the greatest part of it, and retired into the country; where he married the daughter of an unbeneficed clergyman; a young lady, who, though she had neither beauty nor fortune, had recommended herself to his choice entirely by her good humour, of which she possessed a very large share.

With this woman he had, during twenty-five years, lived a life more resembling the model which certain poets ascribe to the golden age, than any of those patterns which are furnished by the present times. By her he had four children, but none of them arrived at maturity, except only one daughter, whom, in vulgar language, he and his wife had spoiled; that is, had educated with the utmost tenderness and fondness, which she returned to such a degree, that she had actually refused a very extraordinary match with a gentleman a little turned of forty, because she could not bring herself to part with her parents.

The young lady whom Mr Nightingale had intended for his son was a near neighbour of his brother, and an acquaintance of his niece; and in reality it was upon the account of his projected match that he was now come to town; not, indeed, to forward, but to dissuade his brother from a purpose which he conceived would inevitably ruin his nephew; for he foresaw no other event from a union with Miss Harris, notwithstanding the largeness of her fortune, as neither her person nor mind seemed to him to promise any kind of matrimonial felicity: for she was very tall, very thin, very ugly, very affected, very silly, and very ill-natured.

His brother, therefore, no sooner mentioned the marriage of his nephew with Miss Miller, than he expressed the utmost satisfaction; and when the father had very bitterly reviled his son, and pronounced sentence of beggary upon him, the uncle began in the following manner:

"If you was a little cooler, brother, I would ask you whether you love your son for his sake or for your own. You would answer, I suppose, and so I suppose you think, for his sake; and doubtless it is his happiness which you intended in the marriage you proposed for him.

"Now, brother, to prescribe rules of happiness to others hath always appeared to me very absurd, and to insist on doing this, very tyrannical. It is a vulgar error, I know; but it is, nevertheless, an error. And if this be absurd in other things, it is mostly so in the affair of marriage, the happiness of which depends entirely on the affection which subsists between the parties.

"I have therefore always thought it unreasonable in parents to desire to chuse for their children on this occasion; since to force affection is an impossible attempt; nay, so much doth love abhor force, that I know not whether, through an unfortunate but uncurable perverseness in our natures, it may not be even impatient of persuasion.

"It is, however, true that, though a parent will not, I think, wisely prescribe, he ought to be consulted on this occasion; and, in strictness, perhaps, should at least have a negative voice. My nephew, therefore, I own, in marrying, without asking your advice, hath been guilty of a fault. But, honestly speaking, brother, have you not a little promoted this fault? Have not your frequent declarations on this subject given him a moral certainty of your refusal, where there was any deficiency in point of fortune? Nay, doth not your present anger arise solely from that deficiency? And if he hath failed in his duty here, did you not as much exceed that authority when you absolutely bargained with him for a woman, without his knowledge, whom you yourself never saw, and whom, if you had seen and known as well as I, it must have been madness in you to have ever thought of bringing her into your family?

"Still I own my nephew in a fault; but surely it is not an unpardonable fault. He hath acted indeed without your consent, in a matter in which he ought to have asked it, but it is in a matter in which his interest is principally concerned; you yourself must and will acknowledge that you consulted his interest only, and if he unfortunately differed from you, and hath been mistaken in his notion of happiness, will you, brother, if you love your son, carry him still wider from the point? Will you increase the ill consequences of his simple choice? Will you endeavour to make an event certain misery to him, which may accidentally prove so? In a word, brother, because he hath put it out of your power to make his circumstances as affluent as you would, will you distress them as much as you can?"

By the force of the true Catholic faith St Anthony won upon the fishes. Orpheus and Amphion went a little farther, and by the charms of music enchanted things merely inanimate. Wonderful, both! but neither history nor fable have ever yet ventured to record an instance of any one, who, by force of argument and reason, hath triumphed over habitual avarice.

Mr Nightingale, the father, instead of attempting to answer his brother, contented himself with only observing, that they had always differed in their sentiments concerning the education of their children. "I wish," said he, "brother, you would have confined your care to your own daughter, and never have troubled yourself with my son, who hath, I believe, as little profited by your precepts, as by your example." For young Nightingale was his uncle's godson, and had lived more with him than with his father. So that the uncle had often declared he loved his nephew almost equally with his own child.

Jones fell into raptures with this good gentleman; and when, after much persuasion, they found the father grew still more and more irritated, instead of appeased, Jones conducted the uncle to his nephew at the house of Mrs Miller.

Chapter ix. — Containing strange matters.

At his return to his lodgings, Jones found the situation of affairs greatly altered from what they had been in at his departure. The mother, the two daughters, and young Mr Nightingale, were now sat down to supper together, when the uncle was, at his own desire, introduced without any ceremony into the company, to all of whom he was well known; for he had several times visited his nephew at that house.

The old gentleman immediately walked up to Miss Nancy, saluted and wished her joy, as he did afterwards the mother and the other sister; and lastly, he paid the proper compliments to his nephew, with the same good humour and courtesy, as if his nephew had married his equal or superior in fortune, with all the previous requisites first performed.

Miss Nancy and her supposed husband both turned pale, and looked rather foolish than otherwise upon the occasion; but Mrs Miller took the first opportunity of withdrawing; and, having sent for Jones into the dining-room, she threw herself at his feet, and in a most passionate flood of tears, called him her good angel, the preserver of her poor little family, with many other respectful and endearing appellations, and made him every acknowledgment which the highest benefit can extract from the most grateful heart.

After the first gust of her passion was a little over, which she declared, if she had not vented, would have burst her, she proceeded to inform Mr Jones that all matters were settled between Mr Nightingale and her daughter, and that they were to be married the next morning; at which Mr Jones having expressed much pleasure, the poor woman fell again into a fit of joy and thanksgiving, which he at length with difficulty silenced, and prevailed on her to return with him back to the company, whom they found in the same good humour in which they had left them.

This little society now past two or three very agreeable hours together, in which the uncle, who was a very great lover of his bottle, had so well plyed his nephew, that this latter, though not drunk, began to be somewhat flustered; and now Mr Nightingale, taking the old gentleman with him upstairs into the apartment he had lately occupied, unbosomed himself as follows:—

"As you have been always the best and kindest of uncles to me, and as you have shown such unparalleled goodness in forgiving this match, which to be sure may be thought a little improvident, I should never forgive myself if I attempted to deceive you in anything." He then confessed the truth, and opened the whole affair.

"How, Jack?" said the old gentleman, "and are you really then not married to this young woman?" "No, upon my honour," answered Nightingale, "I have told you the simple truth." "My dear boy," cries the uncle, kissing him, "I am heartily glad to hear it. I never was better pleased in my life. If you had been married I should have assisted you as much as was in my power to have made the best of a bad matter; but there is a great difference between considering a thing which is already done and irrecoverable, and that which is yet to do. Let your reason have fair play, Jack, and you will see this match in so foolish and preposterous a light, that there will be no need of any dissuasive arguments." "How, sir?" replies young Nightingale, "is there this difference between having already done an act, and being in honour engaged to do it?" "Pugh!" said the uncle, "honour is a creature of the world's making, and the world hath the power of a creator over it, and may govern and direct it as they please. Now you well know how trivial these breaches of contract are thought; even the grossest make but the wonder and conversation of a day. Is there a man who afterwards will be more backward in giving you his sister, or daughter? or is there any sister or daughter who would be more backward to receive you? Honour is not concerned in these engagements." "Pardon me, dear sir," cries Nightingale, "I can never think so; and not only honour, but conscience and humanity, are concerned. I am well satisfied, that, was I now to disappoint the young creature, her death would be the consequence, and I should look upon myself as her murderer; nay, as her murderer by the cruellest of all methods, by breaking her heart." "Break her heart, indeed! no, no, Jack," cries the uncle, "the hearts of women are not so soon broke; they are tough, boy, they are tough." "But, sir," answered Nightingale, "my own affections are engaged, and I never could be happy with any other woman. How often have I heard you say, that children should be always suffered to chuse for themselves, and that you would let my cousin Harriet do so?" "Why, ay," replied the old gentleman, "so I would have them; but then I would have them chuse wisely.—Indeed, Jack, you must and shall leave the girl."—"Indeed, uncle," cries the other, "I must and will have her." "You will, young gentleman;" said the uncle; "I did not expect such a word from you. I should not wonder if you had used such language to your father, who hath always treated you like a dog, and kept you at the distance which a tyrant preserves over his subjects; but I, who have lived with you upon an equal footing, might surely expect better usage: but I know how to account for it all: it is all owing to your preposterous education, in which I have had too little share. There is my daughter, now, whom I have brought up as my friend, never doth anything without my advice, nor ever refuses to take it when I give it her." "You have never yet given her advice in an affair of this kind," said Nightingale; "for I am greatly mistaken in my cousin, if she would be very ready to obey even your most positive commands in abandoning her inclinations." "Don't abuse my girl," answered the old gentleman with some emotion; "don't abuse my Harriet. I have brought her up to have no inclinations contrary to my own. By suffering her to do whatever she pleases, I have enured her to a habit of being pleased to do whatever I like." "Pardon, me, sir," said Nightingale, "I have not the least design to

reflect on my cousin, for whom I have the greatest esteem; and indeed I am convinced you will never put her to so severe a trial, or lay such hard commands on her as you would do on me.—But, dear sir, let us return to the company; for they will begin to be uneasy at our long absence. I must beg one favour of my dear uncle, which is that he would not say anything to shock the poor girl or her mother." "Oh! you need not fear me," answered he, "I understand myself too well to affront women; so I will readily grant you that favour; and in return I must expect another of you." "There are but few of your commands, sir," said Nightingale, "which I shall not very cheerfully obey." "Nay, sir, I ask nothing," said the uncle, "but the honour of your company home to my lodging, that I may reason the case a little more fully with you; for I would, if possible, have the satisfaction of preserving my family, notwithstanding the headstrong folly of my brother, who, in his own opinion, is the wisest man in the world."

Nightingale, who well knew his uncle to be as headstrong as his father, submitted to attend him home, and then they both returned back into the room, where the old gentleman promised to carry himself with the same decorum which he had before maintained.

Chapter x. — A short chapter, which concludes the book.

The long absence of the uncle and nephew had occasioned some disquiet in the minds of all whom they had left behind them; and the more, as, during the preceding dialogue, the uncle had more than once elevated his voice, so as to be heard downstairs; which, though they could not distinguish what he said, had caused some evil foreboding in Nancy and her mother, and, indeed, even in Jones himself.

When the good company, therefore, again assembled, there was a visible alteration in all their faces; and the good-humour which, at their last meeting, universally shone forth in every countenance, was now changed into a much less agreeable aspect. It was a change, indeed, common enough to the weather in this climate, from sunshine to clouds, from June to December.

This alteration was not, however, greatly remarked by any present; for as they were all now endeavouring to conceal their own thoughts, and to act a part, they became all too busily engaged in the scene to be spectators of it. Thus neither the uncle nor nephew saw any symptoms of suspicion in the mother or daughter; nor did the mother or daughter remark the overacted complacency of the old man, nor the counterfeit satisfaction which grinned in the features of the young one.

Something like this, I believe, frequently happens, where the whole attention of two friends being engaged in the part which each is to act, in order to impose on the other, neither sees nor suspects the arts practised against himself; and thus the thrust of both (to borrow no improper metaphor on the occasion) alike takes place.

From the same reason it is no unusual thing for both parties to be overreached in a bargain, though the one must be always the greater loser; as was he who sold a blind horse, and received a bad note in payment.

Our company in about half an hour broke up, and the uncle carried off his nephew; but not before the latter had assured Miss Nancy, in a whisper, that he would attend her early in the morning, and fulfil all his engagements.

Jones, who was the least concerned in this scene, saw the most. He did indeed suspect the very fact; for, besides observing the great alteration in the behaviour of the uncle, the distance he assumed, and his overstrained civility to Miss Nancy; the carrying off a bridegroom from his bride at that time of night was so extraordinary a proceeding that it could be accounted for only by imagining that young Nightingale had revealed the whole truth, which the apparent openness of his temper, and his being flustered with liquor, made too probable.

While he was reasoning with himself, whether he should acquaint these poor people with his suspicion, the maid of the house informed him that a gentlewoman desired to speak with him.—He went immediately out, and, taking the candle from the maid, ushered his visitant upstairs, who, in the person of Mrs Honour, acquainted him with such dreadful news concerning his Sophia, that he immediately lost all consideration for every other person; and his whole stock of compassion was entirely swallowed up in reflections on his own misery, and on that of his unfortunate angel.

What this dreadful matter was, the reader will be informed, after we have first related the many preceding steps which produced it, and those will be the subject of the following book.

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