

**The History
Of
The Late Mr.
Jonathan Wild the
Great
VOL.I**

**By
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***Free*editorial** 

THE HISTORY OF THE LATE MR. JONATHAN WILD THE GREAT

CHAPTER ONE

SHEWING THE WHOLESOME USES DRAWN FROM RECORDING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THOSE WONDERFUL PRODUCTIONS OF NATURE CALLED GREAT MEN.

As it is necessary that all great and surprising events, the designs of which are laid, conducted, and brought to perfection by the utmost force of human invention and art, should be produced by great and eminent men, so the lives of such may be justly and properly styled the quintessence of history. In these, when delivered to us by sensible writers, we are not only most agreeably entertained, but most usefully instructed; for, besides the attaining hence a consummate knowledge of human nature in general; of its secret springs, various windings, and perplexed mazes; we have here before our eyes lively examples of whatever is amiable or detestable, worthy of admiration or abhorrence, and are consequently taught, in a manner infinitely more effectual than by precept, what we are eagerly to imitate or carefully to avoid.

But besides the two obvious advantages of surveying, as it were in a picture, the true beauty of virtue and deformity of vice, we may moreover learn from Plutarch, Nepos, Suetonius, and other biographers, this useful lesson, not too hastily, nor in the gross, to bestow either our praise or censure; since we shall often find such a mixture of good and evil in the same character that it may require a very accurate judgment and a very elaborate inquiry to determine on which side the balance turns, for though we sometimes meet with an Aristides or a Brutus, a Lysander or a Nero, yet far the greater number are of the mixt kind, neither totally good nor bad; their greatest virtues being obscured and allayed by their vices, and those again softened and coloured over by their virtues.

Of this kind was the illustrious person whose history we now undertake; to whom, though nature had given the greatest and most shining endowments, she had not given them absolutely pure and without allay. Though he had much of the admirable in his character, as much perhaps as is usually to be found in a hero, I will not yet venture to affirm that he was entirely free from all defects, or that the sharp eyes of censure could not spy out some little blemishes lurking amongst his many great perfections.

We would not therefore be understood to affect giving the reader a perfect or consummate pattern of human excellence, but rather, by faithfully recording some little

imperfections which shadowed over the lustre of those great qualities which we shall here record, to teach the lesson we have above mentioned, to induce our reader with us to lament the frailty of human nature, and to convince him that no mortal, after a thorough scrutiny, can be a proper object of our adoration.

But before we enter on this great work we must endeavour to remove some errors of opinion which mankind have, by the disingenuity of writers, contracted: for these, from their fear of contradicting the obsolete and absurd doctrines of a set of simple fellows, called, in derision, sages or philosophers, have endeavoured, as much as possible, to confound the ideas of greatness and goodness; whereas no two things can possibly be more distinct from each other, for greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind, and goodness in removing it from them. It seems therefore very unlikely that the same person should possess them both; and yet nothing is more usual with writers, who find many instances of greatness in their favourite hero, than to make him a compliment of goodness into the bargain; and this, without considering that by such means they destroy the great perfection called uniformity of character. In the histories of Alexander and Caesar we are frequently, and indeed impertinently, reminded of their benevolence and generosity, of their clemency and kindness. When the former had with fire and sword overrun a vast empire, had destroyed the lives of an immense number of innocent wretches, had scattered ruin and desolation like a whirlwind, we are told, as an example of his clemency, that he did not cut the throat of an old woman, and ravish her daughters, but was content with only undoing them. And when the mighty Caesar, with wonderful greatness of mind, had destroyed the liberties of his country, and with all the means of fraud and force had placed himself at the head of his equals, had corrupted and enslaved the greatest people whom the sun ever saw, we are reminded, as an evidence of his generosity, of his largesses to his followers and tools, by whose means he had accomplished his purpose, and by whose assistance he was to establish it.

Now, who doth not see that such sneaking qualities as these are rather to be bewailed as imperfections than admired as ornaments in these great men; rather obscuring their glory, and holding them back in their race to greatness, indeed unworthy the end for which they seem to have come into the world, viz. of perpetrating vast and mighty mischief?

We hope our reader will have reason justly to acquit us of any such confounding ideas in the following pages; in which, as we are to record the actions of a great man, so we have nowhere mentioned any spark of goodness which had discovered itself either faintly in him, or more glaringly in any other person, but as a meanness and imperfection, disqualifying them for undertakings which lead to honour and esteem among men.

As our hero had as little as perhaps is to be found of that meanness, indeed only enough to make him partaker of the imperfection of humanity, instead of the perfection of diabolism, we have ventured to call him THE GREAT; nor do we doubt but our reader, when he hath perused his story, will concur with us in allowing him that title.

CHAPTER TWO

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF AS MANY OF OUR HERO'S ANCESTORS AS CAN BE GATHERED OUT OF THE RUBBISH OF ANTIQUITY, WHICH HATH BEEN CAREFULLY SIFTED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

It is the custom of all biographers, at their entrance into their work, to step a little backwards (as far, indeed, generally as they are able) and to trace up their hero, as the ancients did the river Nile, till an incapacity of proceeding higher puts an end to their search.

What first gave rise to this method is somewhat difficult to determine. Sometimes I have thought that the hero's ancestors have been introduced as foils to himself. Again, I have imagined it might be to obviate a suspicion that such extraordinary personages were not produced in the ordinary course of nature, and may have proceeded from the author's fear that, if we were not told who their fathers were, they might be in danger, like prince Prettyman, of being supposed to have had none. Lastly, and perhaps more truly, I have conjectured that the design of the biographer hath been no more than to shew his great learning and knowledge of antiquity. A design to which the world hath probably owed many notable discoveries, and indeed most of the labours of our antiquarians.

But whatever original this custom had, it is now too well established to be disputed. I shall therefore conform to it in the strictest manner.

Mr. Jonathan Wild, or Wyld, then (for he himself did not always agree in one method of spelling his name), was descended from the great Wolfstan Wild, who came over with Hengist, and distinguished himself very eminently at that famous festival, where the Britons were so treacherously murdered by the Saxons; for when the word was given, i.e. Nemet eour Saxes, take out your swords, this gentleman, being a little hard of hearing, mistook the sound for Nemet her sacs, take out their purses; instead therefore of applying to the throat, he immediately applied to the pocket of his guest, and contented himself with taking all that he had, without attempting his life.

The next ancestor of our hero who was remarkably eminent was Wild, surnamed Langfanger, or Longfinger. He flourished in the reign of Henry III., and was strictly attached to Hubert de Burgh, whose friendship he was recommended to by his great excellence in an art of which Hubert was himself the inventor; he could, without the knowledge of the proprietor, with great ease and dexterity, draw forth a man's purse from any part of his garment where it was deposited, and hence he derived his surname. This gentleman was the first of his family who had the honour to suffer for the good of his country: on whom a wit of that time made the following epitaph:—

O shame o' justice! Wild is hang'd, For thatten he a pocket fang'd, While safe old Hubert, and his gang, Doth pocket o' the nation fang.

Langfanger left a son named Edward, whom he had carefully instructed in the art for which he himself was so famous. This Edward had a grandson, who served as a volunteer under the famous Sir John Falstaff, and by his gallant demeanour so recommended himself to his captain, that he would have certainly been promoted by him, had Harry the fifth kept his word with his old companion.

After the death of Edward the family remained in some obscurity down to the reign of Charles the first, when James Wild distinguished himself on both sides the question in the civil wars, passing from one to t'other, as Heaven seemed to declare itself in favour of either party. At the end of the war, James not being rewarded according to his merits, as is usually the case of such impartial persons, he associated himself with a brave man of those times, whose name was Hind, and declared open war with both parties. He was successful in several actions, and spoiled many of the enemy: till at length, being overpowered and taken, he was, contrary to the law of arms, put basely and cowardly to death by a combination between twelve men of the enemy's party, who, after some consultation, unanimously agreed on the said murder.

This Edward took to wife Rebecca, the daughter of the above- mentioned John Hind, esq., by whom he had issue John, Edward, Thomas, and Jonathan, and three daughters, namely, Grace, Charity, and Honour. John followed the fortunes of his father, and, suffering with him, left no issue. Edward was so remarkable for his compassionate temper that he spent his life in soliciting the causes of the distressed captives in Newgate, and is reported to have held a strict friendship with an eminent divine who solicited the spiritual causes of the said captives. He married Editha, daughter and co-heiress of Geoffry Snap, gent., who long enjoyed an office under the high sheriff of London and Middlesex, by which, with great reputation, he acquired a handsome fortune: by her he had no issue. Thomas went very young abroad to one of our American colonies, and hath not been since heard of. As for the daughters, Grace was married to a merchant of Yorkshire who dealt in horses. Charity took to husband an eminent gentleman, whose name I cannot learn, but who was famous for so friendly a disposition that he was bail for above a hundred persons in one year. He had likewise the remarkable humour of walking in Westminster-hall with a straw in his shoe. Honour, the youngest, died unmarried: she lived many years in this town, was a great frequenter of plays, and used to be remarkable for distributing oranges to all who would accept of them.

Jonathan married Elizabeth, daughter of Scragg Hollow, of Hockley- in-the-Hole, esq.; and by her had Jonathan, who is the illustrious subject of these memoirs.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION OF MR. JONATHAN WILD THE GREAT.

It is observable that Nature seldom produces any one who is afterwards to act a notable part on the stage of life, but she gives some warning of her intention; and, as the dramatic poet generally prepares the entry of every considerable character with a solemn narrative, or at least a great flourish of drums and trumpets, so doth this our Alma Mater by some shrewd hints pre-admonish us of her intention, giving us warning, as it were, and crying—

—Venienti occurrite morbo.

Thus Astyages, who was the grandfather of Cyrus, dreamt that his daughter was brought to bed of a vine, whose branches overspread all Asia; and Hecuba, while big with Paris, dreamt that she was delivered of a firebrand that set all Troy in flames; so did the mother of our great man, while she was with child of him, dream that she was enjoyed in the night by the gods Mercury and Priapus. This dream puzzled all the learned astrologers of her time, seeming to imply in it a contradiction; Mercury being the god of ingenuity, and Priapus the terror of those who practised it. What made this dream the more wonderful, and perhaps the true cause of its being remembered, was a very extraordinary circumstance, sufficiently denoting something preternatural in it; for though she had never heard even the name of either of these gods, she repeated these very words in the morning, with only a small mistake of the quantity of the latter, which she chose to call Priapus instead of Priapus; and her husband swore that, though he might possibly have named Mercury to her (for he had heard of such an heathen god), he never in his life could anywise have put her in mind of that other deity, with whom he had no acquaintance.

Another remarkable incident was, that during her whole pregnancy she constantly longed for everything she saw; nor could be satisfied with her wish unless she enjoyed it clandestinely; and as nature, by true and accurate observers, is remarked to give us no appetites without furnishing us with the means of gratifying them; so had she at this time a most marvellous glutinous quality attending her fingers, to which, as to birdlime, everything closely adhered that she handled.

To omit other stories, some of which may be perhaps the growth of superstition, we proceed to the birth of our hero, who made his first appearance on this great theatre the very day when the plague first broke out in 1665. Some say his mother was delivered of

him in an house of an orbicular or round form in Covent-garden; but of this we are not certain. He was some years afterwards baptized by the famous Mr. Titus Oates.

Nothing very remarkable passed in his years of infancy, save that, as the letters TH are the most difficult of pronunciation, and the last which a child attains to the utterance of, so they were the first that came with any readiness from young master Wild. Nor must we omit the early indications which he gave of the sweetness of his temper; for though he was by no means to be terrified into compliance, yet might he, by a sugar-plum, be brought to your purpose; indeed, to say the truth, he was to be bribed to anything, which made many say he was certainly born to be a great man.

He was scarce settled at school before he gave marks of his lofty and aspiring temper; and was regarded by all his schoolfellows with that deference which men generally pay to those superior geniuses who will exact it of them. If an orchard was to be robbed Wild was consulted, and, though he was himself seldom concerned in the execution of the design, yet was he always concerter of it, and treasurer of the booty, some little part of which he would now and then, with wonderful generosity, bestow on those who took it. He was generally very secret on these occasions; but if any offered to plunder of his own head, without acquainting master Wild, and making a deposit of the booty, he was sure to have an information against him lodged with the schoolmaster, and to be severely punished for his pains.

He discovered so little attention to school-learning that his master, who was a very wise and worthy man, soon gave over all care and trouble on that account, and, acquainting his parents that their son proceeded extremely well in his studies, he permitted his pupil to follow his own inclinations, perceiving they led him to nobler pursuits than the sciences, which are generally acknowledged to be a very unprofitable study, and indeed greatly to hinder the advancement of men in the world: but though master Wild was not esteemed the readiest at making his exercise, he was universally allowed to be the most dexterous at stealing it of all his schoolfellows, being never detected in such furtive compositions, nor indeed in any other exercitations of his great talents, which all inclined the same way, but once, when he had laid violent hands on a book called *Gradus ad Parnassum*, i. e. A step towards Parnassus, on which account his master, who was a man of most wonderful wit and sagacity, is said to have told him he wished it might not prove in the event *Gradus ad Patibulum*, i. e. A step towards the gallows.

But, though he would not give himself the pains requisite to acquire a competent sufficiency in the learned languages, yet did he readily listen with attention to others, especially when they translated the classical authors to him; nor was he in the least backward, at all such times, to express his approbation. He was wonderfully pleased with that passage in the eleventh Iliad where Achilles is said to have bound two sons of

Priam upon a mountain, and afterwards to have released them for a sum of money. This was, he said, alone sufficient to refute those who affected a contempt for the wisdom of the ancients, and an undeniable testimony of the great antiquity of priggism.[Footnote: This word, in the cant language, signifies thievery.] He was ravished with the account which Nestor gives in the same book of the rich booty which he bore off (i.e. stole) from the Eleans. He was desirous of having this often repeated to him, and at the end of every repetition he constantly fetched a deep sigh, and said IT WAS A GLORIOUS BOOTY.

When the story of Cacus was read to him out of the eighth Aeneid he generously pitied the unhappy fate of that great man, to whom he thought Hercules much too severe: one of his schoolfellows commending the dexterity of drawing the oxen backward by their tails into his den, he smiled, and with some disdain said, HE COULD HAVE TAUGHT HIM A BETTER WAY.

He was a passionate admirer of heroes, particularly of Alexander the Great, between whom and the late king of Sweden he would frequently draw parallels. He was much delighted with the accounts of the Czar's retreat from the latter, who carried off the inhabitants of great cities to people his own country. THIS, he said, WAS NOT ONCE THOUGHT OF BY Alexander; BUT added, PERHAPS HE DID NOT WANT THEM.

Happy had it been for him if he had confined himself to this sphere; but his chief, if not only blemish, was, that he would sometimes, from an humility in his nature too pernicious to true greatness, condescend to an intimacy with inferior things and persons. Thus the Spanish Rogue was his favourite book, and the Cheats of Scapin his favourite play.

The young gentleman being now at the age of seventeen, his father, from a foolish prejudice to our universities, and out of a false as well as excessive regard to his morals, brought his son to town, where he resided with him till he was of an age to travel. Whilst he was here, all imaginable care was taken of his instruction, his father endeavouring his utmost to inculcate principles of honour and gentility into his son.

CHAPTER FOUR

MR. WILD'S FIRST ENTRANCE INTO THE WORLD. HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH COUNT LA RUSE.

An accident soon happened after his arrival in town which almost saved the father his whole labour on this head, and provided master Wild a better tutor than any after-care or expense could have furnished him with. The old gentleman, it seems, was a FOLLOWER of the fortunes of Mr. Snap, son of Mr. Geoffrey Snap, whom we have before mentioned to have enjoyed a reputable office under the Sheriff of London and Middlesex, the daughter of which Geoffrey had intermarried with the Wilds. Mr. Snap the younger, being thereto well warranted, had laid violent hands on, or, as the vulgar express it, arrested one count La Ruse, a man of considerable figure in those days, and had confined him to his own house till he could find two seconds who would in a formal manner give their words that the count should, at a certain day and place appointed, answer all that one Thomas Thimble, a taylor, had to say to him; which Thomas Thimble, it seems, alleged that the count had, according to the law of the realm, made over his body to him as a security for some suits of cloaths to him delivered by the said Thomas Thimble. Now as the count, though perfectly a man of honour, could not immediately find these seconds, he was obliged for some time to reside at Mr. Snap's house: for it seems the law of the land is, that whoever owes another 10 pounds, or indeed 2 pounds, may be, on the oath of that person, immediately taken up and carried away from his own house and family, and kept abroad till he is made to owe, 50 pounds, whether he will or no; for which he is perhaps afterwards obliged to lie in gaol; and all these without any trial had, or any other evidence of the debt than the above said oath, which if untrue, as it often happens, you have no remedy against the perjurer; he was, forsooth, mistaken.

But though Mr. Snap would not (as perhaps by the nice rules of honour he was obliged) discharge the count on his parole, yet did he not (as by the strict rules of law he was enabled) confine him to his chamber. The count had his liberty of the whole house, and Mr. Snap, using only the precaution of keeping his doors well locked and barred, took his prisoner's word that he would not go forth.

Mr. Snap had by his second lady two daughters, who were now in the bloom of their youth and beauty. These young ladies, like damsels in romance, compassionated the captive count, and endeavoured by all means to make his confinement less irksome to him; which, though they were both very beautiful, they could not attain by any other way so effectually as by engaging with him at cards, in which contentions, as will appear hereafter, the count was greatly skilful.

As whisk and swabbers was the game then in the chief vogue, they were obliged to look for a fourth person in order to make up their parties. Mr. Snap himself would sometimes relax his mind from the violent fatigues of his employment by these recreations; and sometimes a neighbouring young gentleman or lady came in to their assistance: but the most frequent guest was young master Wild, who had been educated from his infancy with the Miss Snaps, and was, by all the neighbours, allotted for the husband of Miss Tishy, or Laetitia, the younger of the two; for though, being his cousin-german, she was perhaps, in the eye of a strict conscience, somewhat too nearly related to him, yet the old people on both sides, though sufficiently scrupulous in nice matters, agreed to overlook this objection.

Men of great genius as easily discover one another as freemasons can. It was therefore no wonder that the count soon conceived an inclination to an intimacy with our young hero, whose vast abilities could not be concealed from one of the count's discernment; for though this latter was so expert at his cards that he was proverbially said to PLAY THE WHOLE GAME, he was no match for master Wild, who, inexperienced as he was, notwithstanding all the art, the dexterity, and often the fortune of his adversary, never failed to send him away from the table with less in his pocket than he brought to it, for indeed Langfanger himself could not have extracted a purse with more ingenuity than our young hero.

His hands made frequent visits to the count's pocket before the latter had entertained any suspicion of him, imputing the several losses he sustained rather to the innocent and sprightly frolick of Miss Doshy, or Theodosia, with which, as she indulged him with little innocent freedoms about her person in return, he thought himself obliged to be contented; but one night, when Wild imagined the count asleep, he made so unguarded an attack upon him, that the other caught him in the fact: however, he did not think proper to acquaint him with the discovery he had made, but, preventing him from any booty at that time, he only took care for the future to button his pockets, and to pack the cards with double industry.

So far was this detection from causing any quarrel between these two prigs,[Footnote: Thieves] that in reality it recommended them to each other; for a wise man, that is to say a rogue, considers a trick in life as a gamester doth a trick at play. It sets him on his guard, but he admires the dexterity of him who plays it. These, therefore, and many other such instances of ingenuity, operated so violently on the count, that, notwithstanding the disparity which age, title, and above all, dress, had set between them, he resolved to enter into an acquaintance with Wild. This soon produced a perfect intimacy, and that a friendship, which had a longer duration than is common to that passion between persons who only propose to themselves the common advantages of eating, drinking, whoring, or borrowing money; which ends, as they soon fail, so doth

the friendship founded upon them. Mutual interest, the greatest of all purposes, was the cement of this alliance, which nothing, of consequence, but superior interest, was capable of dissolving.

CHAPTER FIVE

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN YOUNG MASTER WILD AND COUNT LA RUSE, WHICH, HAVING EXTENDED TO THE REJOINDER, HAD A VERY QUIET, EASY, AND NATURAL CONCLUSION.

One evening, after the Miss Snaps were retired to rest, the count thus addressed himself to young Wild: "You cannot, I apprehend, Mr. Wild, be such a stranger to your own great capacity, as to be surprised when I tell you I have often viewed, with a mixture of astonishment and concern, your shining qualities confined to a sphere where they can never reach the eyes of those who would introduce them properly into the world, and raise you to an eminence where you may blaze out to the admiration of all men. I assure you I am pleased with my captivity, when I reflect I am likely to owe to it an acquaintance, and I hope friendship, with the greatest genius of my age; and, what is still more, when I indulge my vanity with a prospect of drawing from obscurity (pardon the expression) such talents as were, I believe, never before like to have been buried in it: for I make no question but, at my discharge from confinement, which will now soon happen, I shall be able to introduce you into company, where you may reap the advantage of your superior parts.

"I will bring you acquainted, sir, with those who, as they are capable of setting a true value on such qualifications, so they will have it both in their power and inclination to prefer you for them. Such an introduction is the only advantage you want, without which your merit might be your misfortune; for those abilities which would entitle you to honour and profit in a superior station may render you only obnoxious to danger and disgrace in a lower."

Mr. Wild answered, "Sir, I am not insensible of my obligations to you, as well for the over-value you have set on my small abilities, as for the kindness you express in offering to introduce me among my superiors. I must own my father hath often persuaded me to push myself into the company of my betters; but, to say the truth, I have an aukward pride in my nature, which is better pleased with being at the head of the lowest class than at the bottom of the highest. Permit me to say, though the idea may be somewhat coarse, I had rather stand on the summit of a dunghill than at the bottom of a hill in Paradise. I have always thought it signifies little into what rank of life I am thrown, provided I make a great figure therein, and should be as well satisfied with exerting my talents well at the head of a small party or gang, as in the command of a mighty army; for I am far from agreeing with you, that great parts are often lost in a low situation; on the contrary, I am convinced it is impossible they should be lost. I have often persuaded myself that there were not fewer than a thousand in Alexander's troops capable of performing what Alexander himself did.

"But, because such spirits were not elected or destined to an imperial command, are we therefore to imagine they came off without a booty? or that they contented themselves with the share in common with their comrades? Surely, no. In civil life, doubtless, the same genius, the same endowments, have often composed the statesman and the prig, for so we call what the vulgar name a thief. The same parts, the same actions, often promote men to the head of superior societies, which raise them to the head of lower; and where is the essential difference if the one ends on Tower-hill and the other at Tyburn? Hath the block any preference to the gallows, or the ax to the halter, but was given them by the ill-guided judgment of men? You will pardon me, therefore, if I am not so hastily inflamed with the common outside of things, nor join the general opinion in preferring one state to another. A guinea is as valuable in a leathern as in an embroidered purse; and a cod's head is a cod's head still, whether in a pewter or a silver dish."

The count replied as follows: "What you have now said doth not lessen my idea of your capacity, but confirms my opinion of the ill effect of bad and low company. Can any man doubt whether it is better to be a great statesman or a common thief? I have often heard that the devil used to say, where or to whom I know not, that it was better to reign in Hell than to be a valet-de-chambre in Heaven, and perhaps he was in the right; but sure, if he had had the choice of reigning in either, he would have chosen better. The truth therefore is, that by low conversation we contract a greater awe for high things than they deserve. We decline great pursuits not from contempt but despair. The man who prefers the high road to a more reputable way of making his fortune doth it because he imagines the one easier than the other; but you yourself have asserted, and with undoubted truth, that the same abilities qualify you for undertaking, and the same means will bring you to your end in both journeys—as in music it is the same tune, whether you play it in a higher or a lower key. To instance in some particulars: is it not the same qualification which enables this man to hire himself as a servant, and to get into the confidence and secrets of his master in order to rob him, and that to undertake trusts of the highest nature with a design to break and betray them? Is it less difficult by false tokens to deceive a shopkeeper into the delivery of his goods, which you afterwards run away with, than to impose upon him by outward splendour and the appearance of fortune into a credit by which you gain and he loses twenty times as much? Doth it not require more dexterity in the fingers to draw out a man's purse from his pocket, or to take a lady's watch from her side, without being perceived of any (an excellence in which, without flattery, I am persuaded you have no superior), than to cog a die or to shuffle a pack of cards? Is not as much art, as many excellent qualities, required to make a pimping porter at a common bawdy-house as would enable a man to prostitute his own or his friend's wife or child? Doth it not ask as good a memory, as nimble an invention, as steady a countenance, to forswear yourself in Westminster-hall as would furnish out a

complete tool of state, or perhaps a statesman himself? It is needless to particularize every instance; in all we shall find that there is a nearer connexion between high and low life than is generally imagined, and that a highwayman is entitled to more favour with the great than he usually meets with. If, therefore, as I think I have proved, the same parts which qualify a man for eminence in a low sphere, qualify him likewise for eminence in a higher, sure it can be no doubt in which he would chuse to exert them. Ambition, without which no one can be a great man, will immediately instruct him, in your own phrase, to prefer a hill in Paradise to a dunghill; nay, even fear, a passion the most repugnant to greatness, will shew him how much more safely he may indulge himself in the free and full exertion of his mighty abilities in the higher than in the lower rank; since experience teaches him that there is a crowd oftener in one year at Tyburn than on Tower-hill in a century." Mr. Wild with much solemnity rejoined, "That the same capacity which qualifies a mill-ken,[Footnote: A housebreaker.] a bridle-cull,[Footnote: A highwayman.] or a buttock-and-file, [Footnote: A shoplifter. Terms used in the Cant Dictionary.] to arrive at any degree of eminence in his profession, would likewise raise a man in what the world esteem a more honourable calling, I do not deny; nay, in many of your instances it is evident that more ingenuity, more art, are necessary to the lower than the higher proficients. If, therefore, you had only contended that every prig might be a statesman if he pleased, I had readily agreed to it; but when you conclude that it is his interest to be so, that ambition would bid him take that alternative, in a word, that a statesman is greater or happier than a prig, I must deny my assent. But, in comparing these two together, we must carefully avoid being misled by the vulgar erroneous estimation of things, for mankind err in disquisitions of this nature as physicians do who in considering the operations of a disease have not a due regard to the age and complexion of the patient. The same degree of heat which is common in this constitution may be a fever in that; in the same manner that which may be riches or honour to me may be poverty or disgrace to another: for all these things are to be estimated by relation to the person who possesses them. A booty of £10 looks as great in the eye of a bridle-cull, and gives as much real happiness to his fancy, as that of as many thousands to the statesman; and doth not the former lay out his acquisitions in whores and fiddles with much greater joy and mirth than the latter in palaces and pictures? What are the flattery, the false compliments of his gang to the statesman, when he himself must condemn his own blunders, and is obliged against his will to give fortune the whole honour of success? What is the pride resulting from such sham applause, compared to the secret satisfaction which a prig enjoys in his mind in reflecting on a well-contrived and well-executed scheme? Perhaps, indeed, the greater danger is on the prig's side; but then you must remember that the greater honour is so too. When I mention honour, I mean that which is paid them by their gang; for that weak part of the world which is vulgarly called THE WISE see both in a disadvantageous and disgraceful light; and as the prig enjoys (and merits too) the greater degree of honour from his gang, so doth he suffer the less disgrace from the world, who think his misdeeds, as they call

them, sufficiently at last punished with a halter, which at once puts an end to his pain and infamy; whereas the other is not only hated in power, but detested and condemned at the scaffold; and future ages vent their malice on his fame, while the other sleeps quiet and forgotten. Besides, let us a little consider the secret quiet of their consciences: how easy is the reflection of having taken a few shillings or pounds from a stranger, without any breach of confidence, or perhaps any great harm to the person who loses it, compared to that of having betrayed a public trust, and ruined the fortunes of thousands, perhaps of a great nation! How much braver is an attack on the highway than at a gaming-table; and how much more innocent the character of a b—dy-house than a c—t pimp!" He was eagerly proceeding, when, casting his eyes on the count, he perceived him to be fast asleep; wherefore, having first picked his pocket of three shillings, then gently jogged him in order to take his leave, and promised to return to him the next morning to breakfast, they separated: the count retired to rest, and master Wild to a night-cellar.

CHAPTER SIX

FURTHER CONFERENCES BETWEEN THE COUNT AND MASTER WILD, WITH OTHER MATTERS OF THE GREAT KIND.

The count missed his money the next morning, and very well knew who had it; but, as he knew likewise how fruitless would be any complaint, he chose to pass it by without mentioning it. Indeed it may appear strange to some readers that these gentlemen, who knew each other to be thieves, should never once give the least hint of this knowledge in all their discourse together, but, on the contrary, should have the words honesty, honour, and friendship as often in their mouths as any other men. This, I say, may appear strange to some; but those who have lived long in cities, courts, gaols, or such places, will perhaps be able to solve the seeming absurdity.

When our two friends met the next morning the count (who, though he did not agree with the whole of his friend's doctrine, was, however, highly pleased with his argument) began to bewail the misfortune of his captivity, and the backwardness of friends to assist each other in their necessities; but what vexed him, he said, most, was the cruelty of the fair: for he intrusted Wild with the secret of his having had an intrigue with Miss Theodosia, the elder of the Miss Snaps, ever since his confinement, though he could not prevail with her to set him at liberty. Wild answered, with a smile, "It was no wonder a woman should wish to confine her lover where she might be sure of having him entirely to herself;" but added, he believed he could tell him a method of certainly procuring his escape. The count eagerly besought him to acquaint him with it. Wild told him bribery was the surest means, and advised him to apply to the maid. The count thanked him, but returned, "That he had not a farthing left besides one guinea, which he had then given her to change." To which Wild said, "He must make it up with promises, which he supposed he was courtier enough to know how to put off." The count greatly applauded the advice, and said he hoped he should be able in time to persuade him to condescend to be a great man, for which he was so perfectly well qualified.

This method being concluded on, the two friends sat down to cards, a circumstance which I should not have mentioned but for the sake of observing the prodigious force of habit; for though the count knew if he won ever so much of Mr. Wild he should not receive a shilling, yet could he not refrain from packing the cards; nor could Wild keep his hands out of his friend's pockets, though he knew there was nothing in them.

When the maid came home the count began to put it to her; offered her all he had, and promised mountains in futuro; but all in vain— the maid's honesty was impregnable. She said, "She would not break her trust for the whole world; no, not if she could gain a hundred pound by it." Upon which Wild stepping up and telling her "She need not fear

losing her place, for it would never be found out; that they could throw a pair of sheets into the street, by which it might appear he got out at a window; that he himself would swear he saw him descending; that the money would be so much gains in her pocket; that, besides his promises, which she might depend on being performed, she would receive from him twenty shillings and ninepence in ready money (for she had only laid out threepence in plain Spanish); and lastly, that, besides his honour, the count should leave a pair of gold buttons (which afterwards turned out to be brass) of great value, in her hands, as a further pawn."

The maid still remained inflexible, till Wild offered to lend his friend a guinea more, and to deposit it immediately in her hands. This reinforcement bore down the poor girl's resolution, and she faithfully promised to open the door to the count that evening.

Thus did our young hero not only lend his rhetoric, which few people care to do without a fee, but his money too (a sum which many a good man would have made fifty excuses before he would have parted with), to his friend, and procured him his liberty.

But it would be highly derogatory from the GREAT character of Wild, should the reader imagine he lent such a sum to a friend without the least view of serving himself. As, therefore, the reader may easily account for it in a manner more advantageous to our hero's reputation, by concluding that he had some interested view in the count's enlargement, we hope he will judge with charity, especially as the sequel makes it not only reasonable but necessary to suppose he had some such view.

A long intimacy and friendship subsisted between the count and Mr. Wild, who, being by the advice of the count dressed in good cloaths, was by him introduced into the best company. They constantly frequented the assemblies, auctions, gaming-tables, and play-houses; at which last they saw two acts every night, and then retired without paying—this being, it seems, an immemorial privilege which the beaus of the town prescribe for themselves. This, however, did not suit Wild's temper, who called it a cheat, and objected against it as requiring no dexterity, but what every blockhead might put in execution. He said it was a custom very much savouring of the sneaking-budge, [Footnote: Shoplifting] but neither so honourable nor so ingenious.

Wild now made a considerable figure, and passed for a gentleman of great fortune in the funds. Women of quality treated him with great familiarity, young ladies began to spread their charms for him, when an accident happened that put a stop to his continuance in a way of life too insipid and inactive to afford employment for those great talents which were designed to make a much more considerable figure in the world than attends the character of a beau or a pretty gentleman.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MASTER WILD SETS OUT ON HIS TRAVELS, AND RETURNS HOME AGAIN. A VERY SHORT CHAPTER, CONTAINING INFINITELY MORE TIME AND LESS MATTER THAN ANY OTHER IN THE WHOLE STORY.

We are sorry we cannot indulge our reader's curiosity with a full and perfect account of this accident; but as there are such various accounts, one of which only can be true, and possibly and indeed probably none; instead of following the general method of historians, who in such cases set down the various reports, and leave to your own conjecture which you will chuse, we shall pass them all over.

Certain it is that, whatever this accident was, it determined our hero's father to send his son immediately abroad for seven years; and, which may seem somewhat remarkable, to his majesty's plantations in America—that part of the world being, as he said, freer from vices than the courts and cities of Europe, and consequently less dangerous to corrupt a young man's morals. And as for the advantages, the old gentleman thought they were equal there with those attained in the politer climates; for travelling, he said, was travelling in one part of the world as well as another; it consisted in being such a time from home, and in traversing so many leagues; and [he] appealed to experience whether most of our travellers in France and Italy did not prove at their return that they might have been sent as profitably to Norway and Greenland.

According to these resolutions of his father, the young gentleman went aboard a ship, and with a great deal of good company set out for the American hemisphere. The exact time of his stay is somewhat uncertain; most probably longer than was intended. But howsoever long his abode there was, it must be a blank in this history, as the whole story contains not one adventure worthy the reader's notice; being indeed a continued scene of whoring, drinking, and removing from one place to another.

To confess a truth, we are so ashamed of the shortness of this chapter, that we would have done a violence to our history, and have inserted an adventure or two of some other traveller; to which purpose we borrowed the journals of several young gentlemen who have lately made the tour of Europe; but to our great sorrow, could not extract a single incident strong enough to justify the theft to our conscience.

When we consider the ridiculous figure this chapter must make, being the history of no less than eight years, our only comfort is, that the histories of some men's lives, and perhaps of some men who have made a noise in the world, are in reality as absolute blanks as the travels of our hero. As, therefore, we shall make sufficient amends in the sequel for this inanity, we shall hasten on to matters of true importance and immense

greatness. At present we content ourselves with setting down our hero where we took him up, after acquainting our reader that he went abroad, staid seven years, and then came home again.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AN ADVENTURE WHERE WILD, IN THE DIVISION OF THE BOOTY, EXHIBITS AN ASTONISHING INSTANCE OF GREATNESS.

The count was one night very successful at the hazard-table, where Wild, who was just returned from his travels, was then present; as was likewise a young gentleman whose name was Bob Bagshot, an acquaintance of Mr. Wild's, and of whom he entertained a great opinion; taking, therefore, Mr. Bagshot aside, he advised him to provide himself (if he had them not about him) with a case of pistols, and to attack the count in his way home, promising to plant himself near with the same arms, as a corps de reserve, and to come up on occasion. This was accordingly executed, and the count obliged to surrender to savage force what he had in so genteel and civil a manner taken at play.

And as it is a wise and philosophical observation, that one misfortune never comes alone, the count had hardly passed the examination of Mr. Bagshot when he fell into the hands of Mr. Snap, who, in company with Mr. Wild the elder and one or two more gentlemen, being, it seems, thereto well warranted, laid hold of the unfortunate count, and conveyed him back to the same house from which, by the assistance of his good friend, he had formerly escaped.

Mr. Wild and Mr. Bagshot went together to the tavern, where Mr. Bagshot (generously, as he thought) offered to share the booty, and, having divided the money into two unequal heaps, and added a golden snuff-box to the lesser heap, he desired Mr. Wild to take his choice.

Mr. Wild immediately conveyed the larger share of the ready into his pocket, according to an excellent maxim of his, "First secure what share you can before you wrangle for the rest;" and then, turning to his companion, he asked with a stern countenance whether he intended to keep all that sum to himself? Mr. Bagshot answered, with some surprise, that he thought Mr. Wild had no reason to complain; for it was surely fair, at least on his part, to content himself with an equal share of the booty, who had taken the whole. "I grant you took it," replied Wild; "but, pray, who proposed or counselled the taking it? Can you say that you have done more than executed my scheme? and might not I, if I had pleased, have employed another, since you well know there was not a gentleman in the room but would have taken the money if he had known how, conveniently and safely, to do it?" "That is very true," returned Bagshot, "but did not I execute the scheme, did not I run the whole risque? Should not I have suffered the whole punishment if I had been taken, and is not the labourer worthy of his hire?" "Doubtless," says Jonathan, "he is so, and your hire I shall not refuse you, which is all that the labourer is entitled to or ever enjoys. I remember when I was at school to have heard some verses which for the

excellence of their doctrine made an impression on me, purporting that the birds of the air and the beasts of the field work not for themselves. It is true, the farmer allows fodder to his oxen and pasture to his sheep; but it is for his own service, not theirs, In the same manner the ploughman, the shepherd, the weaver, the builder, and the soldier, work not for themselves but others; they are contented with a poor pittance (the labourer's hire), and permit us, the GREAT, to enjoy the fruits of their labours. Aristotle, as my master told us, hath plainly proved, in the first book of his politics, that the low, mean, useful part of mankind, are born slaves to the wills of their superiors, and are indeed as much their property as the cattle. It is well said of us, the higher order of mortals, that we are born only to devour the fruits of the earth; and it may be as well said of the lower class, that they are born only to produce them for us. Is not the battle gained by the sweat and danger of the common soldier? Are not the honour and fruits of the victory the general's who laid the scheme? Is not the house built by the labour of the carpenter and the bricklayer? Is it not built for the profit only of the architect and for the use of the inhabitant, who could not easily have placed one brick upon another? Is not the cloth or the silk wrought into its form and variegated with all the beauty of colours by those who are forced to content themselves with the coarsest and vilest part of their work, while the profit and enjoyment of their labours fall to the share of others? Cast your eye abroad, and see who is it lives in the most magnificent buildings, feasts his palate with the most luxurious dainties, his eyes with the most beautiful sculptures and delicate paintings, and clothes himself in the finest and richest apparel; and tell me if all these do not fall to his lot who had not any the least share in producing all these conveniences, nor the least ability so to do? Why then should the state of a prig[Footnote: A thief.] differ from all others? Or why should you, who are the labourer only, the executor of my scheme, expect a share in the profit? Be advised, therefore; deliver the whole booty to me, and trust to my bounty for your reward." Mr. Bagshot was some time silent, and looked like a man thunderstruck, but at last, recovering himself from his surprize, he thus began: "If you think, Mr. Wild, by the force of your arguments, to get the money out of my pocket, you are greatly mistaken. What is all this stuff to me? D—n me, I am a man of honour, and, though I can't talk as well as you, by G—you shall not make a fool of me; and if you take me for one, I must tell you you are a rascal." At which words he laid his hand to his pistol. Wild, perceiving the little success the great strength of his arguments had met with, and the hasty temper of his friend, gave over his design for the present, and told Bagshot he was only in jest. But this coolness with which he treated the other's flame had rather the effect of oil than of water. Bagshot replied in a rage, "D—n me, I don't like such jests; I see you are a pitiful rascal and a scoundrel." Wild, with a philosophy worthy of great admiration, returned, "As for your abuse, I have no regard to it; but, to convince you I am not afraid of you, let us lay the whole booty on the table, and let the conqueror take it all." And having so said, he drew out his shining hanger, whose glittering so dazzled the eyes of Bagshot, that, in tone entirely altered, he said, "No! he was contented with what he had already;

that it was mighty ridiculous in them to quarrel among themselves; that they had common enemies enough abroad, against whom they should unite their common force; that if he had mistaken Wild he was sorry for it; and as for a jest, he could take a jest as well as another." Wild, who had a wonderful knack of discovering and applying to the passions of men, beginning now to have a little insight into his friend, and to conceive what arguments would make the quickest impression on him, cried out in a loud voice, "That he had bullied him into drawing his hanger, and, since it was out, he would not put it up without satisfaction." "What satisfaction would you have?" answered the other. "Your money or your blood," said Wild. "Why, look ye, Mr. Wild," said Bagshot, "if you want to borrow a little of my part, since I know you to be a man of honour, I don't care if I lend you; for, though I am not afraid of any man living, yet rather than break with a friend, and as it may be necessary for your occasions—" Wild, who often declared that he looked upon borrowing to be as good a way of taking as any, and, as he called it, the genteelest kind of sneaking-budge, putting up his hanger, and shaking his friend by the hand, told him he had hit the nail on the head; it was really his present necessity only that prevailed with him against his will, for that his honour was concerned to pay a considerable sum the next morning. Upon which, contenting himself with one half of Bagshot's share, so that he had three parts in four of the whole, he took leave of his companion and retired to rest.

CHAPTER NINE

WILD PAYS A VISIT TO MISS LETITIA SNAP. A DESCRIPTION OF THAT LOVELY YOUNG CREATURE, AND THE SUCCESSLESS ISSUE OF MR. WILD'S ADDRESSES.

The next morning when our hero waked he began to think of paying a visit to Miss Tishy Snap, a woman of great merit and of as great generosity; yet Mr. Wild found a present was ever most welcome to her, as being a token of respect in her lover. He therefore went directly to a toy-shop, and there purchased a genteel snuff-box, with which he waited upon his mistress, whom he found in the most beautiful undress. Her lovely hair hung wantonly over her forehead, being neither white with, nor yet free from, powder; a neat double clout, which seemed to have been worn a few weeks only, was pinned under her chin; some remains of that art with which ladies improve nature shone on her cheeks; her body was loosely attired, without stays or jumps, so that her breasts had uncontrolled liberty to display their beauteous orbs, which they did as low as her girdle; a thin covering of a rumpled muslin handkerchief almost hid them from the eyes, save in a few parts, where a good-natured hole gave opportunity to the naked breast to appear. Her gown was a satin of a whitish colour, with about a dozen little silver spots upon it, so artificially interwoven at great distance, that they looked as if they had fallen there by chance. This, flying open, discovered a fine yellow petticoat, beautifully edged round the bottom with a narrow piece of half gold lace which was now almost become fringe: beneath this appeared another petticoat stiffened with whalebone, vulgarly called a hoop, which hung six inches at least below the other; and under this again appeared an under-garment of that colour which Ovid intends when he says,

—Qui color albus erat nunc est contrarius albo.

She likewise displayed two pretty feet covered with silk and adorned with lace, and tied, the right with a handsome piece of blue ribbon; the left, as more unworthy, with a piece of yellow stuff, which seemed to have been a strip of her upper petticoat. Such was the lovely creature whom Mr. Wild attended. She received him at first with some of that coldness which women of strict virtue, by a commendable though sometimes painful restraint, enjoin themselves to their lovers. The snuff-box, being produced, was at first civilly, and indeed gently, refused; but on a second application accepted. The tea-table was soon called for, at which a discourse passed between these young lovers, which, could we set it down with any accuracy, would be very edifying as well as entertaining to our reader; let it suffice then that the wit, together with, the beauty, of this young creature, so inflamed the passion of Wild, which, though an honourable sort of a passion, was at the same time so extremely violent, that it transported him to freedoms too offensive to the nice chastity of Laetitia, who was, to confess the truth, more

indebted to her own strength for the preservation of her virtue than to the awful respect or backwardness of her lover; he was indeed so very urgent in his addresses, that, had he not with many oaths promised her marriage, we could scarce have been strictly justified in calling his passion honourable; but he was so remarkably attached to decency, that he never offered any violence to a young lady without the most earnest promises of that kind, these being, he said, a ceremonial due to female modesty, which cost so little, and were so easily pronounced, that the omission could arise from nothing but the mere wantonness of brutality. The lovely Laetitia, either out of prudence, or perhaps religion, of which she was a liberal professor, was deaf to all his promises, and luckily invincible by his force; for, though she had not yet learnt the art of well clenching her fist, nature had not however left her defenceless, for at the ends of her fingers she wore arms, which she used with such admirable dexterity, that the hot blood of Mr. Wild soon began to appear in several little spots on his face, and his full-blown cheeks to resemble that part which modesty forbids a boy to turn up anywhere but in a public school, after some pedagogue, strong of arm, hath exercised his talents thereon. Wild now retreated from the conflict, and the victorious Laetitia, with becoming triumph and noble spirit, cried out, "D—n your eyes, if this be your way of shewing your love, I'll warrant I gives you enough on't." She then proceeded to talk of her virtue, which Wild bid her carry to the devil with her, and thus our lovers parted.

CHAPTER TEN

A DISCOVERY OF SOME MATTERS CONCERNING THE CHASTE LAETITIA WHICH MUST WONDERFULLY SURPRISE, AND PERHAPS AFFECT, OUR READER.

Mr. Wild was no sooner departed than the fair conqueress, opening the door of a closet, called forth a young gentleman whom she had there enclosed at the approach of the other. The name of this gallant was Tom Smirk. He was clerk to an attorney, and was indeed the greatest beau and the greatest favourite of the ladies at the end of the town where he lived. As we take dress to be the characteristic or efficient quality of a beau, we shall, instead of giving any character of this young gentleman, content ourselves with describing his dress only to our readers. He wore, then, a pair of white stockings on his legs, and pumps on his feet: his buckles were a large piece of pinchbeck plate, which almost covered his whole foot. His breeches were of red plush, which hardly reached his knees; his waistcoat was a white dimity, richly embroidered with yellow silk, over which he wore a blue plush coat with metal buttons, a smart sleeve, and a cape reaching half way down his back. His wig was of a brown colour, covering almost half his pate, on which was hung on one side a little laced hat, but cocked with great smartness. Such was the accomplished Smirk, who, at his issuing forth from the closet, was received with open arms by the amiable Laetitia. She addressed him by the tender name of dear Tommy, and told him she had dismissed the odious creature whom her father intended for her husband, and had now nothing to interrupt her happiness with him.

Here, reader, thou must pardon us if we stop a while to lament the capriciousness of Nature in forming this charming part of the creation designed to complete the happiness of man; with their soft innocence to allay his ferocity, with their sprightliness to soothe his cares, and with their constant friendship to relieve all the troubles and disappointments which can happen to him. Seeing then that these are the blessings chiefly sought after and generally found in every wife, how must we lament that disposition in these lovely creatures which leads them to prefer in their favour those individuals of the other sex who do not seem intended by nature as so great a masterpiece! For surely, however useful they may be in the creation, as we are taught that nothing, not even a louse, is made in vain, yet these beaus, even that most splendid and honoured part which in this our island nature loves to distinguish in red, are not, as some think, the noblest work of the Creator. For my own part, let any man chuse to himself two beaus, let them be captains or colonels, as well-dressed men as ever lived, I would venture to oppose a single Sir Isaac Newton, a Shakespear, a Milton, or perhaps some few others, to both these beaus; nay, and I very much doubt whether it had not been better for the world in general that neither of these beaus had ever been born than

that it should have wanted the benefit arising to it from the labour of any one of those persons.

If this be true, how melancholy must be the consideration that any single beau, especially if he have but half a yard of ribbon in his hat, shall weigh heavier in the scale of female affection than twenty Sir Isaac Newtons! How must our reader, who perhaps had wisely accounted for the resistance which the chaste Laetitia had made to the violent addresses of the ravished (or rather ravishing) Wild from that lady's impregnable virtue—how must he blush, I say, to perceive her quit the strictness of her carriage, and abandon herself to those loose freedoms which she indulged to Smirk! But alas! when we discover all, as to preserve the fidelity of our history we must, when we relate that every familiarity had past between them, and that the FAIR Laetitia (for we must, in this single instance, imitate Virgil when he drops the *pius* and the *pater*, and drop our favourite epithet of chaste), the FAIR Laetitia had, I say, made Smirk as happy as Wild desired to be, what must then be our reader's confusion! We will, therefore, draw a curtain over this scene, from that philogyny which is in us, and proceed to matters which, instead of dishonouring the human species, will greatly raise and ennoble it.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONTAINING AS NOTABLE INSTANCES OF HUMAN GREATNESS AS ARE TO BE MET WITH IN ANCIENT OR MODERN HISTORY. CONCLUDING WITH SOME WHOLESOME HINTS TO THE GAY PART OF MANKIND.

Wild no sooner parted from the chaste Laetitia than, recollecting that his friend the count was returned to his lodgings in the same house, he resolved to visit him; for he was none of those half-bred fellows who are ashamed to see their friends when they have plundered and betrayed them; from which base and pitiful temper many monstrous cruelties have been transacted by men, who have sometimes carried their modesty so far as to the murder or utter ruin of those against whom their consciences have suggested to them that they have committed some small trespass, either by the debauching a friend's wife or daughter, belying or betraying the friend himself, or some other such trifling instance. In our hero there was nothing not truly great: he could, without the least abashment, drink a bottle with the man who knew he had the moment before picked his pocket; and, when he had stripped him of everything he had, never desired to do him any further mischief; for he carried good-nature to that wonderful and uncommon height that he never did a single injury to man or woman by which he himself did not expect to reap some advantage. He would often indeed say that by the contrary party men often made a bad bargain with the devil, and did his work for nothing.

Our hero found the captive count, not basely lamenting his fate nor abandoning himself to despair, but, with due resignation, employing himself in preparing several packs of cards for future exploits. The count, little suspecting that Wild had been the sole contriver of the misfortune which had befallen him, rose up and eagerly embraced him, and Wild returned his embrace with equal warmth. They were no sooner seated than Wild took an occasion, from seeing the cards lying on the table, to inveigh against gaming, and, with an usual and highly commendable freedom, after first exaggerating the distressed circumstances in which the count was then involved, imputed all his misfortunes to that cursed itch of play which, he said, he concluded had brought his present confinement upon him, and must unavoidably end in his destruction. The other, with great alacrity, defended his favourite amusement (or rather employment), and, having told his friend the great success he had after his unluckily quitting the room, acquainted him with the accident which followed, and which the reader, as well as Mr. Wild, hath had some intimation of before; adding, however, one circumstance not hitherto mentioned, viz. that he had defended his money with the utmost bravery, and had dangerously wounded at least two of the three men that had attacked him. This behaviour Wild, who not only knew the extreme readiness with which the booty had been delivered, but also the constant frigidity of the count's courage, highly applauded,

and wished he had been present to assist him. The count then proceeded to animadvert on the carelessness of the watch, and the scandal it was to the laws that honest people could not walk the streets in safety; and, after expatiating some time on that subject, he asked Mr. Wild if he ever saw so prodigious a run of luck (for so he chose to call his winning, though he knew Wild was well acquainted with his having loaded dice in his pocket). The other answered it was indeed prodigious, and almost sufficient to justify any person who did not know him better in suspecting his fair play. "No man, I believe, dares call that in question," replied he. "No, surely," says Wild; "you are well known to be a man of more honour; but pray, sir," continued he, "did the rascals rob you of all?" "Every shilling," cries the other, with an oath: "they did not leave me a single stake."

While they were thus discoursing, Mr. Snap, with a gentleman who followed him, introduced Mr. Bagshot into the company. It seems Mr. Bagshot, immediately after his separation from Mr. Wild, returned to the gaming-table, where having trusted to fortune that treasure which he had procured by his industry, the faithless goddess committed a breach of trust, and sent Mr. Bagshot away with as empty pockets as are to be found in any laced coat in the kingdom. Now, as that gentleman was walking to a certain reputable house or shed in Convent-garden market he fortuneed to meet with Mr. Snap, who had just returned from conveying the count to his lodgings, and was then walking to and fro before the gaming-house door; for you are to know, my good reader, if you have never been a man of wit and pleasure about town, that, as the voracious pike lieth snug under some weed before the mouth of any of those little streams which discharge themselves into a large river, waiting for the small fry which issue thereout, so hourly, before the door or mouth of these gaming-houses, doth Mr. Snap, or some other gentleman of his occupation, attend the issuing forth of the small fry of young gentlemen, to whom they deliver little slips of parchment, containing invitations of the said gentlemen to their houses, together with one Mr. John Doe,[Footnote: This is a fictitious name which is put into every writ; for what purpose the lawyers best know.] a person whose company is in great request. Mr. Snap, among many others of these billets, happened to have one directed to Mr. Bagshot, being at the suit or solicitation of one Mrs. Anne Sample, spinster, at whose house the said Bagshot had lodged several months, and whence he had inadvertently departed without taking a formal leave, on which account Mrs. Anne had taken this method of SPEAKING WITH him.

Mr. Snap's house being now very full of good company, he was obliged to introduce Mr. Bagshot into the count's apartment, it being, as he said, the only chamber he had to LOCK UP in. Mr. Wild no sooner saw his friend than he ran eagerly to embrace him, and immediately presented him to the count, who received him with great civility.

CHAPTER TWELVE

OTHER PARTICULARS RELATING TO MISS TISHY, WHICH PERHAPS MAY NOT GREATLY SURPRISE AFTER THE FORMER. THE DESCRIPTION OF A VERY FINE GENTLEMAN. AND A DIALOGUE BETWEEN WILD AND THE COUNT, IN WHICH PUBLIC VIRTUE IS JUST HINTED AT, WITH, ETC.

Mr. Snap had turned the key a very few minutes before a servant of the family called Mr. Bagshot out of the room, telling him there was a person below who desired to speak with him; and this was no other than Miss Laetitia Snap, whose admirer Mr. Bagshot had long been, and in whose tender breast his passion had raised a more ardent flame than that which any of his rivals had been able to raise. Indeed, she was so extremely fond of this youth, that she often confessed to her female confidants, if she could ever have listened to the thought of living with any one man, Mr. Bagshot was he. Nor was she singular in this inclination, many other young ladies being her rivals in this matter, who had all the great and noble qualifications necessary to form a true gallant, and which nature is seldom so extremely bountiful as to indulge to any one person. We will endeavour, however, to describe them all with as much exactness as possible. He was then six feet high, had large calves, broad shoulders, a ruddy complexion, with brown curled hair, a modest assurance, and clean linen. He had indeed, it must be confessed, some small deficiencies to counterbalance these heroic qualities; for he was the silliest fellow in the world, could neither write nor read, nor had he a single grain or spark of honour, honesty, or good-nature, in his whole composition.

As soon as Mr. Bagshot had quitted the room the count, taking Wild by the hand, told him he had something to communicate to him of very great importance. "I am very well convinced," said he, "that Bagshot is the person who robbed me." Wild started with great amazement at this discovery, and answered, with a most serious countenance, "I advise you to take care how you cast any such reflections on a man of Mr. Bagshot's nice honour, for I am certain he will not bear it." "D—n his honour!" quoth the enraged count; "nor can I bear being robbed; I will apply to a justice of peace." Wild replied, with great indignation, "Since you dare entertain such a suspicion against my friend, I will henceforth disclaim all acquaintance with you. Mr. Bagshot is a man of honour, and my friend, and consequently it is impossible he should be guilty of a bad action." He added much more to the same purpose, which had not the expected weight with the count; for the latter seemed still certain as to the person, and resolute in applying for justice, which, he said, he thought he owed to the public as well as to himself. Wild then changed his countenance into a kind of derision, and spoke as follows: "Suppose it should be possible that Mr. Bagshot had, in a frolic (for I will call it no other), taken this method of borrowing your money, what will you get by prosecuting him? Not your

money again, for you hear he was stripped at the gaming-table (of which Bagshot had during their short confabulation informed them); you will get then an opportunity of being still more out of pocket by the prosecution. Another advantage you may promise yourself is the being blown up at every gaming-house in town, for that I will assure you of; and then much good may it do you to sit down with the satisfaction of having discharged what it seems you owe the public. I am ashamed of my own discernment when I mistook you for a great man. Would it not be better for you to receive part (perhaps all) of your money again by a wise concealment: for, however seedy [Footnote: Poor.] Mr. Bagshot may be now, if he hath really played this frolic with you, you may believe he will play it with others, and when he is in cash you may depend on a restoration; the law will be always in your power, and that is the last remedy which a brave or a wise man would resort to. Leave the affair therefore to me; I will examine Bagshot, and, if I find he hath played you this trick, I will engage my own honour you shall in the end be no loser." The count answered, "If I was sure to be no loser, Mr. Wild, I apprehend you have a better opinion of my understanding than to imagine I would prosecute a gentleman for the sake of the public. These are foolish words of course, which we learn a ridiculous habit of speaking, and will often break from us without any design or meaning. I assure you, all I desire is a reimbursement; and if I can by your means obtain that, the public may—;" concluding with a phrase too coarse to be inserted in a history of this kind.

They were now informed that dinner was ready, and the company assembled below stairs, whither the reader may, if he please, attend these gentlemen.

There sat down at the table Mr. Snap, and the two Miss Snaps his daughters, Mr. Wild the elder, Mr. Wild the younger, the count, Mr. Bagshot, and a grave gentleman who had formerly had the honour of carrying arms in a regiment of foot, and who was now engaged in the office (perhaps a more profitable one) of assisting or following Mr. Snap in the execution of the laws of his country.

Nothing very remarkable passed at dinner. The conversation (as is usual in polite company) rolled chiefly on what they were then eating and what they had lately eaten. In this the military gentleman, who had served in Ireland, gave them a very particular account of a new manner of roasting potatoes, and others gave an account of other dishes. In short, an indifferent by-stander would have concluded from their discourse that they had all come into this world for no other purpose than to fill their bellies; and indeed, if this was not the chief, it is probable it was the most innocent design Nature had in their formation.

As soon as THE DISH was removed, and the ladies retired, the count proposed a game at hazard, which was immediately assented to by the whole company, and, the dice

being immediately brought in, the count took up the box and demanded who would set him: to which no one made any answer, imagining perhaps the count's pockets to be more empty than they were; for, in reality, that gentleman (notwithstanding what he had heartily sworn to Mr. Wild) had, since his arrival at Mr. Snap's, conveyed a piece of plate to pawn, by which means he had furnished himself with ten guineas. The count, therefore, perceiving this backwardness in his friends, and probably somewhat guessing at the cause of it, took the said guineas out of his pocket, and threw them on the table; when lo, (such is the force of example) all the rest began to produce their funds, and immediately, a considerable sum glittering in their eyes, the game began.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A CHAPTER OF WHICH WE ARE EXTREMELY VAIN, AND WHICH INDEED WE LOOK ON AS OUR CHEF-D'OEUVRE; CONTAINING A WONDERFUL STORY CONCERNING THE DEVIL, AND AS NICE A SCENE OF HONOUR AS EVER HAPPENED.

My reader, I believe, even if he be a gamester, would not thank me for an exact relation of every man's success; let it suffice then that they played till the whole money vanished from the table. Whether the devil himself carried it away, as some suspected, I will not determine; but very surprising it was that every person protested he had lost, nor could any one guess who, unless THE DEVIL, had won.

But though very probable it is that this arch fiend had some share in the booty, it is likely he had not all; Mr. Bagshot being imagined to be a considerable winner, notwithstanding his assertions to the contrary; for he was seen by several to convey money often into his pocket; and what is still a little stronger presumption is, that the grave gentleman whom we have mentioned to have served his country in two honourable capacities, not being willing to trust alone to the evidence of his eyes, had frequently dived into the said Bagshot's pocket, whence (as he tells us in the apology for his life afterwards published [Footnote: Not in a book by itself, in imitation of some other such persons, but in the ordinary's account, &c., where all the apologies for the lives of rogues and whores which have been published within these twenty years should have been inserted.]), though he might extract a few pieces, he was very sensible he had left many behind. The gentleman had long indulged his curiosity in this way before Mr. Bagshot, in the heat of gaming, had perceived him; but, as Bagshot was now leaving off play, he discovered this ingenious feat of dexterity; upon which, leaping up from his chair in violent passion, he cried out, "I thought I had been among gentlemen and men of honour, but, d—n me, I find we have a pickpocket in company." The scandalous sound of this word extremely alarmed the whole board, nor did they all shew less surprise than the CONV—N (whose not sitting of late is much lamented) would express at hearing there was an atheist in the room; but it more particularly affected the gentleman at whom it was levelled, though it was not addressed to him. He likewise started from his chair, and, with a fierce countenance and accent, said, "Do you mean me? D—n your eyes, you are a rascal and a scoundrel!" Those words would have been immediately succeeded by blows had not the company interposed, and with strong arm withheld the two antagonists from each other. It was, however, a long time before they could be prevailed on to sit down; which being at last happily brought about, Mr. Wild the elder, who was a well-disposed old man, advised them to shake hands and be friends; but the gentleman who had received the first affront absolutely refused it, and swore HE WOULD HAVE THE VILLAIN'S BLOOD. Mr. Snap highly applauded the

resolution, and affirmed that the affront was by no means to be put up by any who bore the name of a gentleman, and that unless his friend resented it properly he would never execute another warrant in his company; that he had always looked upon him as a man of honour, and doubted not but he would prove himself so; and that, if it was his own case, nothing should persuade him to put up such an affront without proper satisfaction. The count likewise spoke on the same side, and the parties themselves muttered several short sentences purporting their intentions. At last Mr. Wild, our hero, rising slowly from his seat, and having fixed the attention of all present, began as follows: "I have heard with infinite pleasure everything which the two gentlemen who spoke last have said with relation to honour, nor can any man possibly entertain a higher and nobler sense of that word, nor a greater esteem of its inestimable value, than myself. If we have no name to express it by in our Cant Dictionary, it were well to be wished we had. It is indeed the essential quality of a gentleman, and which no man who ever was great in the field or on the road (as others express it) can possibly be without. But alas! gentlemen, what pity is it that a word of such sovereign use and virtue should have so uncertain and various an application that scarce two people mean the same thing by it? Do not some by honour mean good-nature and humanity, which weak minds call virtues? How then! Must we deny it to the great, the brave, the noble; to the sackers of towns, the plunderers of provinces, and the conquerors of kingdoms! Were not these men of honour? and yet they scorn those pitiful qualities I have mentioned. Again, some few (or I am mistaken) include the idea of honesty in their honour. And shall we then say that no man who withholds from another what law, or justice perhaps, calls his own, or who greatly and boldly deprives him of such property, is a man of honour? Heaven forbid I should say so in this, or, indeed, in any other good company! Is honour truth? No; it is not in the lie's going from us, but in its coming to us, our honour is injured. Doth it then consist in what the vulgar call cardinal virtues? It would be an affront to your understandings to suppose it, since we see every day so many men of honour without any. In what then doth the word honour consist? Why, in itself alone. A man of honour is he that is called a man of honour; and while he is so called he so remains, and no longer. Think not anything a man commits can forfeit his honour. Look abroad into the world; the PRIG, while he flourishes, is a man of honour; when in gaol, at the bar, or the tree, he is so no longer. And why is this distinction? Not from his actions; for those are often as well known in his flourishing estate as they are afterwards; but because men, I mean those of his own party or gang, call him a man of honour in the former, and cease to call him so in the latter condition. Let us see then; how hath Mr. Bagshot injured the gentleman's honour? Why, he hath called him a pick-pocket; and that, probably, by a severe construction and a long roundabout way of reasoning, may seem a little to derogate from his honour, if considered in a very nice sense. Admitting it, therefore, for argument's sake, to be some small imputation on his honour, let Mr. Bagshot give him satisfaction; let him doubly and triply repair this oblique injury by directly asserting that he believes he is a man of honour." The gentleman answered he was content to refer it to

Mr. Wild, and whatever satisfaction he thought sufficient he would accept. "Let him give me my money again first," said Bagshot, "and then I will call him a man of honour with all my heart." The gentleman then protested he had not any, which Snap seconded, declaring he had his eyes on him all the while; but Bagshot remained still unsatisfied, till Wild, rapping out a hearty oath, swore he had not taken a single farthing, adding that whoever asserted the contrary gave him the lie, and he would resent it. And now, such was the ascendancy of this great man, that Bagshot immediately acquiesced, and performed the ceremonies required: and thus, by the exquisite address of our hero, this quarrel, which had so fatal an aspect, and which between two persons so extremely jealous of their honour would most certainly have produced very dreadful consequences, was happily concluded.

Mr. Wild was indeed a little interested in this affair, as he himself had set the gentleman to work, and had received the greatest part of the booty: and as to Mr. Snap's deposition in his favour, it was the usual height to which the ardour of that worthy person's friendship too frequently hurried him. It was his constant maxim that he was a pitiful fellow who would stick at a little rapping [Footnote: Rapping is a cant word for perjury.] for his friend.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

IN WHICH THE HISTORY OF GREATNESS IS CONTINUED.

Matters being thus reconciled, and the gaming over, from reasons before hinted, the company proceeded to drink about with the utmost chearfulness and friendship; drinking healths, shaking hands, and professing the most perfect affection for each other. All which were not in the least interrupted by some designs which they then agitated in their minds, and which they intended to execute as soon as the liquor had prevailed over some of their understandings. Bagshot and the gentleman intending to rob each other; Mr. Snap and Mr. Wild the elder meditating what other creditors they could find out to charge the gentleman then in custody with; the count hoping to renew the play, and Wild, our hero, laying a design to put Bagshot out of the way, or, as the vulgar express it, to hang him with the first opportunity. But none of these great designs could at present be put in execution, for, Mr. Snap being soon after summoned abroad on business of great moment, which required likewise the assistance of Mr. Wild the elder and his other friend, and as he did not care to trust to the nimbleness of the count's heels, of which he had already had some experience, he declared he must LOCK UP for that evening. Here, reader, if them pleasest, as we are in no great haste, we will stop and make a simile. As when their lap is finished, the cautious huntsman to their kennel gathers the nimble-footed hounds, they with lank ears and tails slouch sullenly on, whilst he, with his whippers-in, follows close at their heels, regardless of their dogged humour, till, having seen them safe within the door, he turns the key, and then retires to whatever business or pleasure calls him thence; so with lowring countenance and reluctant steps mounted the count and Bagshot to their chamber, or rather kennel, whither they were attended by Snap and those who followed him, and where Snap, having seen them deposited, very contentedly locked the door and departed. And now, reader, we will, in imitation of the truly laudable custom of the world, leave these our good friends to deliver themselves as they can, and pursue the thriving fortunes of Wild, our hero, who, with that great aversion to satisfaction and content which is inseparably incident to great minds, began to enlarge his views with his prosperity: for this restless, amiable disposition, this noble avidity which increases with feeding, is the first principle or constituent quality of these our great men; to whom, in their passage on to greatness, it happens as to a traveller over the Alps, or, if this be a too far-fetched simile, to one who travels westward over the hills near Bath, where the simile was indeed made. He sees not the end of his journey at once; but, passing on from scheme to scheme, and from hill to hill, with noble constancy, resolving still to attain the summit on which he hath fixed his eye, however dirty the roads may be through which he struggles, he at length arrives—at some vile inn, where he finds no kind of entertainment nor conveniency for repose. I fancy, reader, if thou hast ever travelled in these roads, one part of my simile is sufficiently apparent (and, indeed, in all these illustrations, one side

is generally much more apparent than the other); but, believe me, if the other doth not so evidently appear to thy satisfaction, it is from no other reason than because thou art unacquainted with these great men, and hast not had sufficient instruction, leisure, or opportunity, to consider what happens to those who pursue what is generally understood by GREATNESS: for surely, if thou hadst animadverted, not only on the many perils to which great men are daily liable while they are in their progress, but hadst discerned, as it were through a microscope (for it is invisible to the naked eye), that diminutive speck of happiness which they attain even in the consummation of their wishes, thou wouldst lament with me the unhappy fate of these great men, on whom nature hath set so superior a mark, that the rest of mankind are born for their use and emolument only, and be apt to cry out, "It is pity that THOSE for whose pleasure and profit mankind are to labour and sweat, to be hacked and hewed, to be pillaged, plundered, and every war destroyed, should reap so LITTLE advantage from all the miseries they occasion to others." For my part, I own myself of that humble kind of mortals who consider themselves born for the behoof of some great man or other, and could I behold his happiness carved out of the labour and ruin of a thousand such reptiles as myself I might with satisfaction exclaim, Sic, sic juvat: but when I behold one GREAT MAN starving with hunger and freezing with cold, in the midst of fifty thousand who are suffering the same evils for his diversion; when I see another, whose own mind is a more abject slave to his own greatness, and is more tortured and racked by it, than those of all his vassals; lastly, when I consider whole nations rooted out only to bring tears into the eyes of a GREAT MAN, not indeed because he hath extirpated so many, but because he had no more nations to extirpate, then truly I am almost inclined to wish that Nature had spared us this her MASTERPIECE, and that no GREAT MAN had ever been born into the world.

But to proceed with our history, which will, we hope, produce much better lessons, and more instructive, than any we can preach: Wild was no sooner retired to a night-cellar than he began to reflect on the sweets he had that day enjoyed from the labours of others, viz., first, from Mr. Bagshot, who had for his use robbed the count; and, secondly, from the gentleman, who, for the same good purpose, had picked the pocket of Bagshot. He then proceeded to reason thus with himself: "The art of policy is the art of multiplication, the degrees of greatness being constituted by those two little words MORE or LESS. Mankind are first properly to be considered under two grand divisions, those that use their own hands, and those who employ the hands of others. The former are the base and rabble; the latter, the genteel part of the creation. The mercantile part of the world, therefore, wisely use of the term EMPLOYING HANDS, and justly prefer each other as they employ more or fewer; for thus one merchant says he is greater than another because he employs more hands. And now indeed the merchant should seem to challenge some character of greatness, did we not necessarily come to a second division, viz., of those who employ hands for the use of the community in which they live, and of

those who employ hands merely for their own use, without any regard to the benefit of society. Of the former sort are the yeoman, the manufacturer, the merchant, and perhaps the gentleman. The first of these being to manure and cultivate his native soil, and to employ hands to produce the fruits of the earth. The second being to improve them by employing hands likewise, and to produce from them those useful commodities which serve as well for the conveniences as necessities of life. The third is to employ hands for the exportation of the redundance of our own commodities, and to exchange them with the redundances of foreign nations, that thus every soil and every climate may enjoy the fruits of the whole earth. The gentleman is, by employing hands, likewise to embellish his country with the improvement of art and sciences, with the making and executing good and wholesome laws for the preservation of property and the distribution of justice, and in several other manners to be useful to society. Now we come to the second part of this division, viz., of those who employ hands for their own use only; and this is that noble and great part who are generally distinguished into conquerors, absolute princes, statesmen, and prigs [Footnote: Thieves.]. Now all these differ from each other in greatness only—they employ MORE or FEWER hands. And Alexander the Great was only GREATER than a captain of one of the Tartarian or Arabian hordes, as he was at the head of a larger number. In what then is a single prig inferior to any other great man, but because he employs his own hands only; for he is not on that account to be levelled with the base and vulgar, because he employs his hands for his own use only. Now, suppose a prig had as many tools as any prime minister ever had, would he not be as great as any prime minister whatsoever? Undoubtedly he would. What then have I to do in the pursuit of greatness but to procure a gang, and to make the use of this gang centre in myself? This gang shall rob for me only, receiving very moderate rewards for their actions; out of this gang I will prefer to my favour the boldest and most iniquitous (as the vulgar express it); the rest I will, from time to time, as I see occasion, transport and hang at my pleasure; and thus (which I take to be the highest excellence of a prig) convert those laws which are made for the benefit and protection of society to my single use."

Having thus preconceived his scheme, he saw nothing wanting to put it in immediate execution but that which is indeed the beginning as well as the end of all human devices: I mean money. Of which commodity he was possessed of no more than sixty-five guineas, being all that remained from the double benefits he had made of Bagshot, and which did not seem sufficient to furnish his house, and every other convenience necessary for so grand an undertaking. He resolved, therefore, to go immediately to the gaming-house, which was then sitting, not so much with an intention of trusting to fortune as to play the surer card of attacking the winner in his way home. On his arrival, however, he thought he might as well try his success at the dice, and reserve the other resource as his last expedient. He accordingly sat down to play; and as Fortune, no more than others of her sex, is observed to distribute her favours with strict regard to great

mental endowments, so our hero lost every farthing in his pocket. This loss however he bore with great constancy of mind, and with as great composure of aspect. To say truth, he considered the money as only lent for a short time, or rather indeed as deposited with a banker. He then resolved to have immediate recourse to his surer stratagem; and, casting his eyes round the room, he soon perceived a gentleman sitting in a disconsolate posture, who seemed a proper instrument or tool for his purpose. In short (to be as concise as possible in these least shining parts of our history), Wild accosted this man, sounded him, found him fit to execute, proposed the matter, received a ready assent, and, having fixed on the person who seemed that evening the greatest favourite of Fortune, they posted themselves in the most proper place to surprise the enemy as he was retiring to his quarters, where he was soon attacked, subdued, and plundered; but indeed of no considerable booty; for it seems this gentleman played on a common stock, and had deposited his winnings at the scene of action, nor had he any more than two shillings in his pocket when he was attacked.

This was so cruel a disappointment to Wild, and so sensibly affects us, as no doubt it will the reader, that, as it must disqualify us both from proceeding any farther at present, we will now take a little breath, and therefore we shall here close this book.