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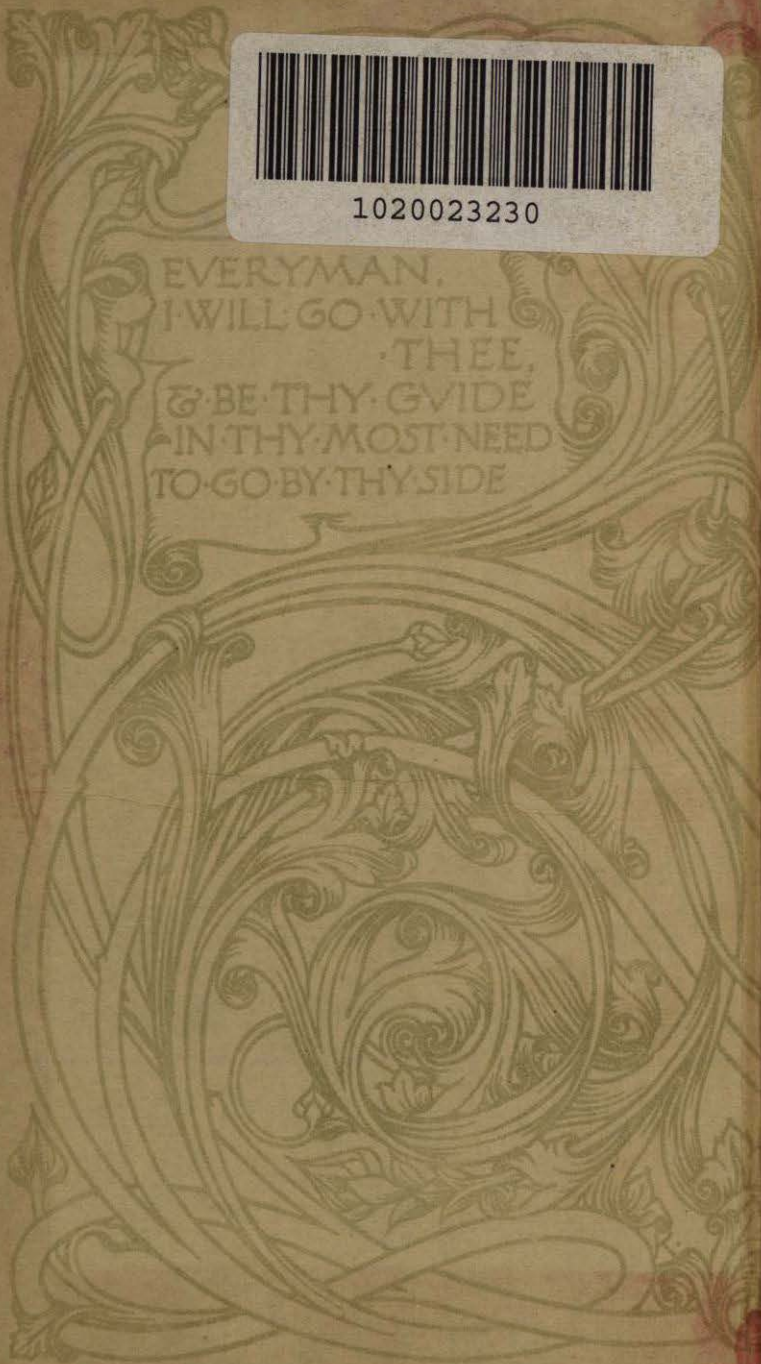
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EVERYMAN,  
I WILL GO WITH  
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& BE THY GUIDE  
IN THY MOST NEED  
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*Burgess*  
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EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS

FICTION

TOM JONES BY HENRY  
FIELDING · INTRODUCTION  
BY GEORGE SAINTSBURY  
VOL. ONE

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**A** TALE  
WHICH  
HOLDETH  
CHILDREN  
FROM PLAY  
& OLD MEN  
FROM THE  
CHIMNEY  
CORNER  
BY SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

*The* HISTORY  
OF TOM JONES  
*A Foundling* · By  
HENRY FIELDING  
VOLUME ONE



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ACERVO DE LITERATURA

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## INTRODUCTION

THE *orbis terrarum* of literary criticism has not had much difficulty in deciding that *Tom Jones* is, in something else than mere size, Fielding's greatest work. If both Johnson and Thackeray seem to have preferred *Amelia*, enough allowance has been made in the General Introduction<sup>1</sup> for any expression of the former, while the latter was evidently biased at the particular moment. The characteristics of *Amelia* were well suited to contrast with and atone for the rather exaggerated delineation of Fielding's Bohemianism which it had suited Thackeray to give; and, speaking to a mixed audience, he no doubt felt it easier to dwell on the later than on the earlier book. The extreme condemnation of Tom, the hero as distinct from *Tom* the book, which is put elsewhere in the mouth of Colonel Newcome, is at least partly dramatic; and I am not sure that the indirect eulogy in *Pendennis*—that *Tom Jones* was the last book in which an English novelist was allowed to depict a man—does not make up for any censure expressed or implied elsewhere. It is, without the grandiloquence, nearly as lofty a eulogy as Gibbon's. What that great writer said is universally known, and no comment on it is necessary, except a reminder that in many ways Gibbon's tastes were rather Continental or cosmopolitan than English, and that he was by no means likely to be bribed by the intensely national flavour of the novel. Of late there has been a disposition to demur to Coleridge's hardly less lofty eulogy of the mere craftsmanship shown in the novel. But Scott, a practised critic, a novelist of unsurpassed competence, and not always a very enthusiastic encomiast of Fielding, has endorsed it in the Introduction to the *Fortunes of Nigel*. After such names it is unnecessary to cite any others by way of authority, and we may pass to the direct consideration of the book itself.

*Tom Jones*, then, is a novel which differs from almost all other novels both in the range and the precision of its scale and scheme. Its personages are extremely numerous, and there is justice in the half-humorous protestation of the author, in reference to the apparent repetition in the two

<sup>1</sup> This appeared originally as an introduction to Fielding's works and has been reprinted in *Joseph Andrews* in Everyman's Library.

landladies, that they are "most carefully differentiated from each other." Its scenes are extremely varied, and each has its local colour adjusted with perfect propriety. Of the actions and passions represented it is indeed possible for the *advocatus diaboli* to urge that, whatever their range and truth to nature within their limits, there is a certain want of height and depth in them. But this is only saying in other words that the middle of the eighteenth century was not the beginning of the sixteenth; that Fielding had not the tragic touch; and that though he was most emphatically a "maker," he was not in the transferred and specialised sense a poet. Lastly, all these varying excellences and excellent variations are adjusted together in so cunning an arrangement of dramatic narrative, that some have found it absolutely impeccable, while few have done more than protest against the Man of the Hill, question whether we do not see more than we need of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and ask whether the catastrophe is not, especially considering the very leisurely movement of the earlier scenes, somewhat hurried and huddled. As for the characters, exception, so far as I know, has not been seriously taken to any save on the score of art and nature to Allworthy and Blifil, on the score of morality to Mr. Jones himself. Some have indeed expressed their desire for something with more air and fire than the heroine; but there are always people who grumble thus. Let us try to sweep the negatives aside before attempting the affirmative.

I have already in the General Introduction attempted to disable the objection to the "Man of the Hill," and I need say no more on that head except that he, like all his kind, is distinctly a *hors-d'œuvre*, to be taken or left at choice. Nor do the other objections to construction seem to me much more valid. The famous preliminary observations have had extended to them by severe judges the indulgence which I myself claim for the episodes, and while they cannot be said in any way to delay the action, they provide the book with an additional element of interest—an element with which, to the same extent and in the same intensity, no other novel in the world is furnished. As for the end, a certain "quickening-up at the finish" hath invariably been allowed, and even prescribed, to artists, and I do not know that it can be said to be greatly exceeded here.

It is, however, undeniable that the defects of Allworthy and Blifil appear at this point more than elsewhere, and

indeed to some extent produce the effect complained of. And I shall further admit that these two characters, especially Blifil, seem to me almost the only spots in Fielding's sun. For Allworthy we can indeed make some excuse—lame after its kind, for your excuse invariably *claudicat*. There is little doubt that Fielding was hampered and misled by his intention to glorify a particular person, his benefactor Allworthy. Nature, when you cannot take liberties with her, is always a clog on Art, and gratitude constrains the license of the will of men more than malevolence, inasmuch as there is a greater difficulty in disguising particulars. But Allworthy is not so unnatural as he is unsatisfactory; for a very benevolent and very unsuspecting man, whose head was not quite so good as his heart, might act in the way here described. Moreover, his folly and injustice (for his action towards Tom really deserves these words) are not only useful, but almost necessary to the course of the action—a defence rather technical than convincing, but technically good. And here it may be sufficient to say a few words about the effect of Fielding's long practice in drama before he took to fiction. The order has not been usual, for obvious reasons, though the contrary process, the corruption of a good novelist into a dramatist not so good, is, for reasons equally obvious, quite common. But Fielding and Dumas are eminent instances of the happy effect which dramatic practice exercises on the novelist. Dumas, a better dramatist than Fielding, cannot touch him as a novelist; but, like him, he owes to his dramatic practice the singular freedom of even his most hastily cobbled-up stories from what is really otiose. His playwright's eye kept him from the commonest and worst fault of novel-writing, the introduction of matter irrelevant to the story. But it may be somewhat questioned whether the same playwright's habit did not in Fielding's case induce the fault of being contented, in rare instances, with what *was* necessary for the story.

This operated, I think, even more strongly in the case of Blifil. I do not know that even he can be pronounced wholly unnatural. "A prig, and a bad prig," is not, I fear, an unnatural character in itself. But for this or that reason, Fielding has not made this young wretch alive, as he has made every one else, great and small, among his personages. He seems almost to have deliberately abstained from doing so. We see very little of Blifil in action; he is generally recounted to us. The "messengers," to use the term familiar to readers of the



Greek drama, do his business; the author hangs back to tell his misdeeds; himself is seldom in much evidence on the actual stage. It may be that Fielding could not trust himself with him; that he felt that if he had allowed his figure to appear more actively, something of the dreadful greatness of Jonathan Wild would have passed into Blifil, and have dwarfed and eclipsed the healthier and lighter characters. It may be that he disliked him too much, and shovelled him as quickly as possible out of his hands, as a little later he may have done with a particularly loathsome rogue at Bow Street. But here again these are weak excuses. If Thackeray has one great advantage over his master, I think it is when we compare Barnes Newcome with Blifil. They are very much alike; indeed, as Mr. Blifil, we are expressly told, "retired to the North," it may possibly have happened that some of his blood was in the veins of that most respectable family. But Barnes is much more human, much completer, much more alive. The late Mr. G. S. Venables, an excellent lawyer and an excellent critic, used, I am told, to remark in connection with some puzzling passages at the end of *Oliver Twist*, that "Dickens hanged Fagin for being the villain of a novel." I am inclined to think that Fielding exacted a more terrible penalty from this his one odious child for the same offence. He deprived him of life to start with.

Nobody can say this of Blifil's brother by the mother's side. "Mr. Thomas" is exceedingly human; and the objections which have been lodged against him have been and must be quite different. With one of them—the anathema launched by Colonel Newcome—there is some slight difficulty in dealing. But the Colonel, though one of the best, was not one of the wisest of men, and he was decidedly weak in history. It might be almost sufficient to say that Scott, the paragon of manly chivalry, and not always a very lenient or sympathetic judge of Fielding, does not seem to have taken any special objection to the Lady Bellaston episode. And I frankly admit that I do not see why he should. In the first place, it must be remembered that the point of honour which decrees that a man must not under any circumstances accept money from a woman with whom he is on certain terms, is of very modern growth, and is still tempered by the proviso that he may take as much as he likes or can get from his wife. In Fielding's days, or but a very little earlier, this moral had simply not been invented. Marlborough, his father's great commander,

notoriously took a large sum from the Duchess of Cleveland in precisely Tom Jones' circumstances; and though Marlborough's enemies included the bitterest and brightest wits of his time, they seem to have objected, when they objected at all, rather to his careful investment of this money than to his acceptance of it. No easy-going gentleman of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in France or England—and it must be remembered that to compare Tom

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Nobody can say this of Blifil's brother "Mr. Thomas" is exceedingly harsh, which have been lodged against him are quite different. With one of them, by Colonel Newcome—there is something. But the Colonel, though one of the wisest of men, and he was determined might be almost sufficient to say of his manly chivalry, and not always a fair judge of Fielding, does not seem to have any objection to the Lady Bellaston episode that I do not see why he should. I remember that the point of the story is that a man must not under any circumstances marry a woman with whom he is on certain terms of growth, and is still tempered by the same as much as he likes or can get from his wife. In Fielding's days, or but a very little earlier, this moral had simply not been invented. Marlborough, his father's great commander,

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Nobody can say this of Blifil. "Mr. Thomas" is exceedingly different from the others which have been lodged against him, and quite different. With one of the others, by Colonel Newcome—there is a resemblance. But the Colonel, though the wisest of men, and he was so, might be almost sufficient to supply the want of manly chivalry, and not always a good judge of Fielding, does not see the objection to the Lady Bellaston. I do not see why he should not have remembered that the point of a man must not under any circumstances be taken with a woman with whom he is on certain terms of growth, and is still tempered by the same as much as he likes or can get from his wife. In Fielding's days, or but a very little earlier, this moral had simply not been invented. Marlborough, his father's great commander,

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Thomas's character is the commonest but most interesting. It is most certain that he is not a Peleas or an Amadis, a hero. He gives us an extremely pleasant surprise—good luck, good sense, good impulses—a young man, as far as he understands his own abilities, rather than an extraordinary nice young man. His *jeune homme sensuel* needs consisted in

"Like Paris handsome, and like Hector brave,"

but a much better fellow than Paris and a much luckier one than Hector.

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The more general objections to Mr. Thomas's character seem to me to proceed from one of the commonest but most uncritical faults of criticism—the refusal to consider what it is that the author intended to give us. It is most certain that Fielding did not intend to give us an *Æneas* or an *Amadis*, a *Galahad* or an *Artegall*. He meant to give us an extremely ordinary young man in all respects except good luck, good looks, fair understanding, and generous impulses—a young man incapable of doing anything cruel, or, as far as he understood it, mean, but of no very exceptional abilities, rather thoughtless, fond of pleasure, and not extraordinarily nice about its sources and circumstances—a *jeune homme sensuel moyen*, in short. His concessions to heroic needs consisted in making Tom not only—

"Like Paris handsome, and like Hector brave,"

but a much better fellow than Paris and a much luckier one than Hector.

It seems to me that we have absolutely no business to go beyond these limits and insist that Tom shall be a Joseph or even a Percivale; still less to demand that he shall be a young man of literary and artistic sympathies; least of all that he shall be troubled about his soul either in the manner of Launcelot Smith or in the manner of Francis Neyrac. The late Mr. Kingsley was, and the living M. Bourget is, a very clever man. To them too, especially to the first, fell something of the faculty of creative observation, and neither mixes with it more ephemeral matter than he had a right to mix. But if, when the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are to some future generation what the first before and the first after Christ are to us, some competent critic turns out of a new Herculaneum or Pompeii a box containing *Tom Jones*, *Yeast*, and *La Terre Promise*, I know what his verdict will be.

A very little of the same injustice which has thus weighed upon Tom has involved the divine Sophia; but with this we need hardly concern ourselves at all. It is not necessary that she should be our ideal, or any one's ideal. But if any one has read and digested the great and famous first chapter of the Sixth Book, which, if not exactly exhaustive of its difficult subject, contains more practical wisdom than the *Phædrus* and more honest passion than all Stendhal's treatise *De l'Amour*, he will admit that she was a worthy object of the feelings it discusses. Perhaps Mr. Jones was not quite worthy of her; it is not the least of her own worthinesses that the fact is extremely unlikely ever to have occurred to her.

For all the rest we have few vituperators. I think indeed with Scott, rather than with my friend Mr. Dobson, that Squire Western ought not to have taken that beating from the Captain; but then I own myself, as Scott probably was, jealous for the honour of the Tory party, to which Mr. Western also belonged. Nobody else is "out" for a moment during the whole of this long and delightful story. Everybody does what he or she ought to have done—I do not mean morally, which might subject me to the censures of the Church and the Schools alike, but according to the probabilities of human nature and the requirements of great art. Fielding cannot introduce the most insignificant character who makes a substantial appearance without finishing the drawing; he cannot send on the merest scene-shifters, the veriest candle-snuffers, and "population of Cyprus," without impressing upon them natural and distinct personalities. As you turn the pages,

the long silent world becomes alive again in all its varied scenes, very much as the old coachyard did when the Bagman's Uncle took that walk from Edinburgh to Leith after supper. The whole thing is perfectly real, and real without effort. Indeed this extraordinary vitality belongs to the minor characters in almost a greater degree than to the major. There is Miss Western, with her perpetual and yet not the least overdone politics; and her niece Mrs. Fitzpatrick—very ripe and real she; and Mrs. Waters, for whom she was mistaken, and who was mistaken for her and also for other people; and Partridge the immortal; and the pair of named hand-maidens, Deborah and Honour, who come only short of Mrs. Slipslop; and the pair of unnamed landladies; and their chambermaids, who if they are not always virtuous or beautiful, possess that charm which an old poet thought the highest, that they "never will say no," and are generally good-natured and charitable souls. There is no mistake about Lady Bellaston, and not much about Lord Fellamar. But no possible space could suffice for this sort of talk. Let it be enough to add to the old and well-deserved praise of the "fresh air" and healthy atmosphere of the whole piece, that these effects, so often acknowledged, are due first of all to the vitality of which we have been speaking. *Tom Jones* is an epic of life—not indeed of the highest, the rarest, the most impassioned of life's scenes and phases, but of the healthy average life of the average natural man; not faultless nor perfect by any means, but human and actual as no one else but Shakspeare has shown him in the mimic world.

The following is a list of the works of Henry Fielding:—

DRAMATIC WORKS:—Love in several Masques, 1728; The Temple Beau, 1730; Author's Farce, 1730; Pleasures of the Town, 1730; The Coffee-house Politician, 1730; Tom Thumb: a Tragedy, 1730; Grub-street Opera, 1731; Letter Writers, or a New Way to keep a Wife at Home, 1731; The Lottery, 1732; The Modern Husband, 1732; The Covent Garden Tragedy, 1732; Debauchees, or the Jesuit caught, 1732; The Mock Doctor, 1732; The Miser, 1733; Deborah, or a Wife for you all, 1733; The Intriguing Chambermaid, 1734; Don Quixote in England, 1734; An old Man taught Wisdom, 1735; The Universal Gallant, 1735; Pasquin: a Dramatick Satire on the Times, 1736; Historical Register for the Year 1736, 1737; Eurydice, 1737; Eurydice Hissed, or a Word to the Wise, 1737; Tumble-down Dick, or Phaeton in the Suds, 1737; Miss Lucy in Town (only in part by Fielding), 1742; The Wedding Day, 1743.

OTHER WORKS:—Of True Greatness, 1741; The Vernoniad (burlesque epic), 1741; The Opposition: a Vision, 1741; The Crisis: a Sermon, 1741; The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his friend Mr. Abraham Adams, 1742; A full Vindication of the Duchess Dowager of

Marlborough, 1742; *Plutus, the God of Riches*, from Aristophanes (with W. Young); Preface to his sister's novel, *David Simple*, 1744; Preface to subsequent collection of *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple and some others*, 1747; *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, 1749; Charge to the Grand Jury of Westminster, 1749; A true State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez, 1749; An Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers, etc., 1751; *Amelia*, 1751; Examples of the Interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of the Murder, 1752; Proposals for making an Effectual Provision for the Poor, 1753; A clear State of the Case of Elizabeth Canning, 1753; Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon, by the late Henry Fielding, with Fragment of a Comment on Lord Bolingbroke's Essays, 1755.

Fielding edited the *Champion* (with James Ralph), 1739-40; *The True Patriot*, 1745-46; the *Jacobite's Journal*, 1747-1748; and the *Covent Garden Journal*, 1752.

In 1743 he published *Miscellanies*, 3 vols., containing Poems, Essays, Journey from this World to the Next, and *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*. A play, *The Fathers, or a good-natured Man*, was published posthumously; Garrick wrote a prologue and epilogue for it, and it was acted in 1798.

WORKS.—Ed. by Arthur Murphy, 1762 (with *Memoir*); Among later editions: In 10 vols., ed. with biographical essay by Leslie Stephen, 1882; by Saintsbury, 12 vols., 1893, 1902 (*Temple Fielding*); with Introduction by E. Gosse, 1898-9; by Sidney Lee, 1905, etc.

The Novels were published with *Memoir* by Sir W. Scott, 1821; *Miscellanies and Poems*, ed. J. P. Browne, 1872.

LIFE.—Essay on his Life and Genius, by Murphy, prefixed to Works, 1762; W. Watson, 1807; T. Roscoe, prefixed to one volume edition, 1840; Frederick Lawrence, *Life of Henry Fielding*, with notes of his Writings, his Times, and his Contemporaries, 1855; Thomas Keightley, *On the Life and Writings of Henry Fielding* (*Fraser's Magazine*, January and February, 1858); H. Austin Dobson, 1900, and in *English Men of Letters*, 1907 (first published, 1883). See also above (Sir W. Scott, Leslie Stephen) under Editions of Works.

TO THE HONOURABLE

GEORGE LYTTLETON, ESQ.;

ONE OF THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE TREASURY

SIR,

NOTWITHSTANDING your constant refusal, when I have asked leave to prefix your name to this dedication, I must still insist on my right to desire your protection of this work.

To you, Sir, it is owing that this history was ever begun. It was by your desire that I first thought of such a composition. So many years have since past, that you may have, perhaps, forgotten this circumstance: but your desires are to me in the nature of commands; and the impression of them is never to be erased from my memory.

Again, Sir, without your assistance this history had never been completed. Be not startled at the assertion. I do not intend to draw on you the suspicion of being a romance writer. I mean no more than that I partly owe to you my existence during great part of the time which I have employed in composing it: another matter which it may be necessary to remind you of; since there are certain actions of which you are apt to be extremely forgetful; but of these I hope I shall always have a better memory than yourself.

Lastly, It is owing to you that the history appears what it now is. If there be in this work, as some have been pleased to say, a stronger picture of a truly benevolent mind than is to be found in any other, who that knows you, and a particular acquaintance of yours, will doubt whence that benevolence hath been copied? The world will not, I believe, make me the compliment of thinking I took it from myself. I care not: this they shall own, that the two persons from whom I have taken it, that is to say, two of the best and worthiest men in the world, are strongly and zealously my friends. I might be contented with this, and yet my vanity will add a third to the number; and him one of the greatest and noblest, not only in his rank, but in every public and private virtue. But here, whilst my gratitude for the princely benefactions of the Duke of Bedford bursts from my

heart, you must forgive my reminding you that it was you who first recommended me to the notice of my benefactor.

And what are your objections to the allowance of the honour which I have solicited? Why, you have commended the book so warmly, that you should be ashamed of reading your name before the dedication. Indeed, sir, if the book itself doth not make you ashamed of your commendations, nothing that I can here write will, or ought. I am not to give up my right to your protection and patronage, because you have commended my book: for though I acknowledge so many obligations to you, I do not add this to the number; in which friendship, I am convinced, hath so little share: since that can neither bias your judgment, nor pervert your integrity. An enemy may at any time obtain your commendation by only deserving it; and the utmost which the faults of your friends can hope for, is your silence; or, perhaps, if too severely accused, your gentle palliation.

In short, sir, I suspect, that your dislike of public praise is your true objection to granting my request. I have observed that you have, in common with my two other friends, an unwillingness to hear the least mention of your own virtues; that, as a great poet says of one of you, (he might justly have said it of all three), you

Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.

If men of this disposition are as careful to shun applause, as others are to escape censure, how just must be your apprehension of your character falling into my hands; since what would not a man have reason to dread, if attacked by an author who had received from him injuries equal to my obligations to you!

And will not this dread of censure increase in proportion to the matter which a man is conscious of having afforded for it? If his whole life, for instance, should have been one continued subject of satire, he may well tremble when an incensed satirist takes him in hand. Now, sir, if we apply this to your modest aversion to panegyric, how reasonable will your fears of me appear!

Yet surely you might have gratified my ambition, from this single confidence, that I shall always prefer the indulgence of your inclinations to the satisfaction of my own. A very strong instance of which I shall give you in this address, in which I am determined to follow the example of all other dedicators, and will consider not what my patron really deserves to have written, but what he will be best pleased to read.

Without further preface then, I here present you with the labours of some years of my life. What merit these labours have is already known to yourself. If, from your favourable judgment, I have conceived some esteem for them, it cannot be imputed to vanity; since I should have agreed as implicitly to your opinion, had it been given in favour of any other man's production. Negatively, at least, I may be allowed to say, that had I been sensible of any great demerit in the work, you are the last person to whose protection I would have ventured to recommend it.

From the name of my patron, indeed, I hope my reader will be convinced, at his very entrance on this work, that he will find in the whole course of it nothing prejudicial to the cause of religion and virtue, nothing inconsistent with the strictest rules of decency, nor which can offend even the chastest eye in the perusal. On the contrary, I declare, that to recommend goodness and innocence hath been my sincere endeavour in this history. This honest purpose you have been pleased to think I have attained: and to say the truth, it is likeliest to be attained in books of this kind; for an example is a kind of picture, in which virtue becomes, as it were, an object of sight, and strikes us with an idea of that loveliness, which Plato asserts there is in her naked charms.

Besides displaying that beauty of virtue which may attract the admiration of mankind, I have attempted to engage a stronger motive to human action in her favour, by convincing men, that their true interest directs them to a pursuit of her. For this purpose I have shown that no acquisitions of guilt can compensate the loss of that solid inward comfort of mind, which is the sure companion of innocence and virtue; nor can in the least balance the evil of that horror and anxiety which, in their room, guilt introduces into our bosoms. And again, that as these acquisitions are in themselves generally worthless, so are the means to attain them not only base and infamous, but at best uncertain, and always full of danger. Lastly, I have endeavoured strongly to inculcate, that virtue and innocence can scarce ever be injured but by indiscretion; and that it is this alone which often betrays them into the snares that deceit and villainy spread for them. A moral which I have the more industriously laboured, as the teaching it is, of all others, the likeliest to be attended with success; since, I believe, it is much easier to make good men wise, than to make bad men good.

For these purposes I have employed all the wit and humour

of which I am master in the following history; wherein I have endeavoured to laugh mankind out of their favourite follies and vices. How far I have succeeded in this good attempt, I shall submit to the candid reader, with only two requests: First, that he will not expect to find perfection in this work; and Secondly, that he will excuse some parts of it, if they fall short of that little merit which I hope may appear in others.

I will detain you, sir, no longer. Indeed I have run into a preface, while I professed to write a dedication. But how can it be otherwise? I dare not praise you; and the only means I know of to avoid it, when you are in my thoughts, are either to be entirely silent, or to turn my thoughts to some other subject.

Pardon, therefore, what I have said in this epistle, not only without your consent, but absolutely against it; and give me at least leave, in this public manner, to declare that I am, with the highest respect and gratitude,—

Sir,

Your most obliged,

Obedient, humble servant,

HENRY FIELDING.

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