

BOOK V

CHAPTER I

OF THE SERIOUS IN WRITING, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE IT IS INTRODUCED

PERADVENTURE there may be no parts in this prodigious work which will give the reader less pleasure in the perusing, than those which have given the author the greatest pains in composing. Among these probably may be reckoned those initial essays which we have prefixed to the historical matter contained in every book; and which we have determined to be essentially necessary to this kind of writing, of which we have set ourselves at the head.

For this our determination we do not hold ourselves strictly bound to assign any reason; it being abundantly sufficient that we have laid it down as a rule necessary to be observed in all prosai-comi-epic writing. Who ever demanded the reasons of that nice unity of time or place which is now established to be so essential to dramatic poetry? What critic hath been ever asked, why a play may not contain two days as well as one? Or why the audience (provided they travel, like electors, without any expense) may not be wafted fifty miles as well as five? Hath any commentator well accounted for the limitation which an antient critic hath set to the drama, which he will have contain neither more nor less than five acts? Or hath any one living attempted to explain what the modern judges of our theatres mean by that word *low*; by which they have happily succeeded in banishing all humour from the stage, and have made the theatre as dull as a drawing-room! Upon all these occasions the world seems to have embraced a maxim of our law, viz., *cuicumque in arte sua perito credendum est*: for it seems perhaps difficult to conceive that any one should have had enough of impudence to lay down dogmatical rules in any art or science without the least foundation. In such cases, therefore, we are apt to conclude there are sound and good reasons at the bottom, though we are unfortunately not able to see so far.

Now, in reality, the world have paid too great a compliment to critics, and have imagined them men of much greater profundity than they really are. From this complacence, the critics have been emboldened to assume a dictatorial power, and have

so far succeeded, that they are now become the masters, and have the assurance to give laws to those authors from whose predecessors they originally received them.

The critic, rightly considered, is no more than the clerk, whose office it is to transcribe the rules and laws laid down by those great judges whose vast strength of genius hath placed them in the light of legislators, in the several sciences over which they presided. This office was all which the critics of old aspired to; nor did they ever dare to advance a sentence, without supporting it by the authority of the judge from whence it was borrowed.

But in process of time, and in ages of ignorance, the clerk began to invade the power and assume the dignity of his master. The laws of writing were no longer founded on the practice of the author, but on the dictates of the critic. The clerk became the legislator, and those very peremptorily gave laws whose business it was, at first, only to transcribe them.

Hence arose an obvious, and perhaps an unavoidable error; for these critics being men of shallow capacities, very easily mistook mere form for substance. They acted as a judge would, who should adhere to the lifeless letter of law, and reject the spirit. Little circumstances, which were perhaps accidental in a great author, were by these critics considered to constitute his chief merit, and transmitted as essentials to be observed by all his successors. To these encroachments, time and ignorance, the two great supporters of imposture, gave authority; and thus many rules for good writing have been established, which have not the least foundation in truth or nature; and which commonly serve for no other purpose than to curb and restrain genius, in the same manner as it would have restrained the dancing-master, had the many excellent treatises on that art laid it down as an essential rule that every man must dance in chains.

To avoid, therefore, all imputation of laying down a rule for posterity, founded only on the authority of *ipse dixit*—for which, to say the truth, we have not the profoundest veneration—we shall here waive the privilege above contended for, and proceed to lay before the reader the reasons which have induced us to intersperse these several digressive essays in the course of this work.

And here we shall of necessity be led to open a new vein of knowledge, which if it hath been discovered, hath not, to our remembrance, been wrought on by any antient or modern writer. This vein is no other than that of contrast, which runs through all the works of the creation, and may probably have a large

share in constituting in us the idea of all beauty, as well natural as artificial: for what demonstrates the beauty and excellence of anything but its reverse? Thus the beauty of day, and that of summer, is set off by the horrors of night and winter. And, I believe, if it was possible for a man to have seen only the two former, he would have a very imperfect idea of their beauty.

But to avoid too serious an air; can it be doubted, but that the finest woman in the world would lose all benefit of her charms in the eye of a man who had never seen one of another cast? The ladies themselves seem so sensible of this, that they are all industrious to procure foils: nay, they will become foils to themselves; for I have observed (at Bath particularly) that they endeavour to appear as ugly as possible in the morning, in order to set off that beauty which they intend to show you in the evening.

Most artists have this secret in practice, though some, perhaps, have not much studied the theory. The jeweller knows that the finest brilliant requires a foil; and the painter, by the contrast of his figures, often acquires great applause.

A great genius among us will illustrate this matter fully. I cannot, indeed, range him under any general head of common artists, as he hath a title to be placed among those

Inventas qui vitam excoluere per artes.

Who by invented arts have life improved.

I mean here the inventor of that most exquisite entertainment, called the English Pantomime.

This entertainment consisted of two parts, which the inventor distinguished by the names of the serious and the comic. The serious exhibited a certain number of heathen gods and heroes, who were certainly the worst and dullest company into which an audience was ever introduced; and (which was a secret known to few) were actually intended so to be, in order to contrast the comic part of the entertainment, and to display the tricks of harlequin to the better advantage.

This was, perhaps, no very civil use of such personages: but the contrivance was, nevertheless, ingenious enough, and had its effect. And this will now plainly appear, if, instead of serious and comic, we supply the words duller and dullest; for the comic was certainly duller than anything before shown on the stage, and could be set off only by that superlative degree of dulness which composed the serious. So intolerably serious, indeed, were these gods and heroes, that harlequin (though the English gentleman

of that name is not at all related to the French family, for he is of a much more serious disposition) was always welcome on the stage, as he relieved the audience from worse company.

Judicious writers have always practised this art of contrast with great success. I have been surprized that Horace should cavil at this art in Homer; but indeed he contradicts himself in the very next line:

*Indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus ;
Verum opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.*

I grieve if e'er great Homer chance to sleep,
Yet slumbers on long works have right to creep.

For we are not here to understand, as perhaps some have, that an author actually falls asleep while he is writing. It is true, that readers are too apt to be so overtaken; but if the work was as long as any of Oldmixon, the author himself is too well entertained to be subject to the least drowsiness. He is, as Mr. Pope observes,

Sleepless himself to give his readers sleep.

To say the truth, these soporific parts are so many scenes of serious artfully interwoven, in order to contrast and set off the rest; and this is the true meaning of a late facetious writer, who told the public that whenever he was dull they might be assured there was a design in it.

In this light, then, or rather in this darkness, I would have the reader to consider these initial essays. And after this warning, if he shall be of opinion that he can find enough of serious in other parts of this history, he may pass over these, in which we profess to be laboriously dull, and begin the following books at the second chapter.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH MR. JONES RECEIVES MANY FRIENDLY VISITS DURING HIS CONFINEMENT; WITH SOME FINE TOUCHES OF THE PASSION OF LOVE, SCARCE VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE

TOM JONES had many visitors during his confinement, though some, perhaps, were not very agreeable to him. Mr. Allworthy saw him almost every day; but though he pitied Tom's sufferings, and greatly approved the gallant behaviour which had occasioned them; yet he thought this was a favourable opportunity to bring him to a sober sense of his indiscreet conduct;

and that wholesome advice for that purpose could never be applied at a more proper season than at the present, when the mind was softened by pain and sickness, and alarmed by danger; and when its attention was unembarrassed with those turbulent passions which engage us in the pursuit of pleasure.

At all seasons, therefore, when the good man was alone with the youth, especially when the latter was totally at ease, he took occasion to remind him of his former miscarriages, but in the mildest and tenderest manner, and only in order to introduce the caution which he prescribed for his future behaviour; "on which alone," he assured him, "would depend his own felicity, and the kindness which he might yet promise himself to receive at the hands of his father by adoption, unless he should hereafter forfeit his good opinion: for as to what had past," he said, "it should be all forgiven and forgotten. He therefore advised him to make a good use of this accident, that so in the end it might prove a visitation for his own good."

Thwackum was likewise pretty assiduous in his visits; and he too considered a sick-bed to be a convenient scene for lectures. His stile, however, was more severe than Mr. Allworthy's: he told his pupil, "That he ought to look on his broken limb as a judgment from heaven on his sins. That it would become him to be daily on his knees, pouring forth thanksgivings that he had broken his arm only, and not his neck; which latter," he said, "was very probably reserved for some future occasion, and that, perhaps, not very remote. For his part," he said, "he had often wondered some judgment had not overtaken him before; but it might be perceived by this, that Divine punishments, though slow, are always sure." Hence likewise he advised him, "to foresee, with equal certainty, the greater evils which were yet behind, and which were as sure as this of overtaking him in his state of reprobacy. These are," said he, "to be averted only by such a thorough and sincere repentance as is to be expected or hoped for from one so abandoned in his youth, and whose mind, I am afraid, is totally corrupted. It is my duty, however, to exhort you to this repentance, though I too well know all exhortations will be vain and fruitless. But *liberavi animam meam*. I can accuse my own conscience of no neglect; though it is at the same time with the utmost concern I see you travelling on to certain misery in this world, and to as certain damnation in the next."

Square talked in a very different strain; he said, "Such accidents as a broken bone were below the consideration of a wise

man. That it was abundantly sufficient to reconcile the mind to any of these mischances, to reflect that they are liable to befall the wisest of mankind, and are undoubtedly for the good of the whole." He said, "It was a mere abuse of words to call those things evils, in which there was no moral unfitness: that pain, which was the worst consequence of such accidents, was the most contemptible thing in the world;" with more of the like sentences, extracted out of the second book of Tully's Tusculan questions, and from the great Lord Shaftesbury. In pronouncing these he was one day so eager, that he unfortunately bit his tongue; and in such a manner, that it not only put an end to his discourse, but created much emotion in him, and caused him to mutter an oath or two: but what was worst of all, this accident gave Thwackum, who was present, and who held all such doctrine to be heathenish and atheistical, an opportunity to clap a judgment on his back. Now this was done with so malicious a sneer, that it totally unhinged (if I may so say) the temper of the philosopher, which the bite of his tongue had somewhat ruffled; and as he was disabled from venting his wrath at his lips, he had possibly found a more violent method of revenging himself, had not the surgeon, who was then luckily in the room, contrary to his own interest, interposed and preserved the peace.

Mr. Blifl visited his friend Jones but seldom, and never alone. This worthy young man, however, professed much regard for him, and as great concern at his misfortune; but cautiously avoided any intimacy, lest, as he frequently hinted, it might contaminate the sobriety of his own character: for which purpose he had constantly in his mouth that proverb in which Solomon speaks against evil communication. Not that he was so bitter as Thwackum; for he always expressed some hopes of Tom's reformation; "which," he said, "the unparalleled goodness shown by his uncle on this occasion, must certainly effect in one not absolutely abandoned:" but concluded, if Mr. Jones ever offends hereafter, I shall not be able to say a syllable in his favour."

As to Squire Western, he was seldom out of the sick-room, unless when he was engaged either in the field or over his bottle. Nay, he would sometimes retire hither to take his beer, and it was not without difficulty that he was prevented from forcing Jones to take his beer too: for no quack ever held his nostrum to be a more general panacea than he did this; which, he said, had more virtue in it than was in all the physic in an apothecary's shop.

He was, however, by much entreaty, prevailed on to forbear the application of this medicine; but from serenading his patient every hunting morning with the horn under his window, it was impossible to withhold him; nor did he ever lay aside that hallow, with which he entered into all companies, when he visited Jones, without any regard to the sick person's being at that time either awake or asleep.

This boisterous behaviour, as it meant no harm, so happily it effected none, and was abundantly compensated to Jones, as soon as he was able to sit up, by the company of Sophia, whom the squire then brought to visit him; nor was it, indeed, long before Jones was able to attend her to the harpsichord, where she would kindly condescend, for hours together, to charm him with the most delicious music, unless when the squire thought proper to interrupt her, by insisting on Old Sir Simon, or some other of his favourite pieces.

Notwithstanding the nicest guard which Sophia endeavoured to set on her behaviour, she could not avoid letting some appearances now and then slip forth: for love may again be likened to a disease in this, that when it is denied a vent in one part, it will certainly break out in another. What her lips, therefore, concealed, her eyes, her blushes, and many little involuntary actions, betrayed.

One day, when Sophia was playing on the harpsichord, and Jones was attending, the squire came into the room, crying, "There, Tom, I have had a battle for thee below-stairs with thick parson Thwackum. He hath been a telling Allworthy, before my face, that the broken bone was a judgment upon thee. D—n it, says I, how can that be? Did he not come by it in defence of a young woman? A judgment indeed! Pox, if he never doth anything worse, he will go to heaven sooner than all the parsons in the country. He hath more reason to glory in it than to be ashamed of it."—"Indeed, sir," says Jones, "I have no reason for either; but if it preserved Miss Western, I shall always think it the happiest accident of my life."—"And to gu," said the squire, "to zet Allworthy against thee vor it! D—n un, if the parson had unt his petticoats on, I should have lent un o flick; for I love thee dearly, my boy, and d—n me if there is anything in my power which I won't do for thee. Sha't take thy choice of all the horses in my stable to-morrow morning, except only the Chevalier and Miss Slouch." Jones thanked him, but declined accepting the offer. "Nay," added the squire, "sha't ha the sorrel mare that Sophy rode. She cost me fifty

guineas, and comes six years old this grass." "If she had cost me a thousand," cries Jones passionately, "I would have given her to the dogs." "Pooh! pooh!" answered Western; "what! because she broke thy arm? Shouldst forget and forgive. I thought hadst been more a man than to bear malice against a dumb creature."—Here Sophia interposed, and put an end to the conversation, by desiring her father's leave to play to him; a request which he never refused.

The countenance of Sophia had undergone more than one change during the foregoing speeches; and probably she imputed the passionate resentment which Jones had expressed against the mare, to a different motive from that from which her father had derived it. Her spirits were at this time in a visible flutter; and she played so intolerably ill, that had not Western soon fallen asleep, he must have remarked it. Jones, however, who was sufficiently awake, and was not without an ear any more than without eyes, made some observations; which being joined to all which the reader may remember to have passed formerly, gave him pretty strong assurances, when he came to reflect on the whole, that all was not well in the tender bosom of Sophia; an opinion which many young gentlemen will, I doubt not, extremely wonder at his not having been well confirmed in long ago. To confess the truth, he had rather too much diffidence in himself, and was not forward enough in seeing the advances of a young lady; a misfortune which can be cured only by that early town education, which is at present so generally in fashion.

When these thoughts had fully taken possession of Jones, they occasioned a perturbation in his mind, which, in a constitution less pure and firm than his, might have been, at such a season, attended with very dangerous consequences. He was truly sensible of the great worth of Sophia. He extremely liked her person, no less admired her accomplishments, and tenderly loved her goodness. In reality, as he had never once entertained any thought of possessing her, nor had ever given the least voluntary indulgence to his inclinations, he had a much stronger passion for her than he himself was acquainted with. His heart now brought forth the full secret, at the same time that it assured him the adorable object returned his affection.

CHAPTER III

WHICH ALL WHO HAVE NO HEART WILL THINK TO CONTAIN MUCH
ADO ABOUT NOTHING

THE reader will perhaps imagine the sensations which now arose in Jones to have been so sweet and delicious, that they would rather tend to produce a chearful serenity in the mind, than any of those dangerous effects which we have mentioned; but in fact, sensations of this kind, however delicious, are, at their first recognition, of a very tumultuous nature, and have very little of the opiate in them. They were, moreover, in the present case, embittered with certain circumstances, which being mixed with sweeter ingredients, tended altogether to compose a draught that might be termed bitter-sweet; than which, as nothing can be more disagreeable to the palate, so nothing, in the metaphorical sense, can be so injurious to the mind.

For first, though he had sufficient foundation to flatter himself in what he had observed in Sophia, he was not yet free from doubt of misconstruing compassion, or at best, esteem, into a warmer regard. He was far from a sanguine assurance that Sophia had any such affection towards him, as might promise his inclinations that harvest, which, if they were encouraged and nursed, they would finally grow up to require. Besides, if he could hope to find no bar to his happiness from the daughter, he thought himself certain of meeting an effectual bar in the father; who, though he was a country squire in his diversions, was perfectly a man of the world in whatever regarded his fortune; had the most violent affection for his only daughter, and had often signified, in his cups, the pleasure he proposed in seeing her married to one of the richest men in the county. Jones was not so vain and senseless a coxcomb as to expect, from any regard which Western had professed for him, that he would ever be induced to lay aside these views of advancing his daughter. He well knew that fortune is generally the principal, if not the sole, consideration, which operates on the best of parents in these matters: for friendship makes us warmly espouse the interest of others; but it is very cold to the gratification of their passions. Indeed, to feel the happiness which may result from this, it is necessary we should possess the passion ourselves. As he had therefore no hopes of obtaining her father's consent; so he thought to endeavour to succeed without it, and by such

means to frustrate the great point of Mr. Western's life, was to make a very ill use of his hospitality, and a very ungrateful return to the many little favours received (however roughly) at his hands. If he saw such a consequence with horror and disdain, how much more was he shocked with what regarded Mr. Allworthy; to whom, as he had more than filial obligations, so had he for him more than filial piety! He knew the nature of that good man to be so averse to any baseness or treachery, that the least attempt of such a kind would make the sight of the guilty person for ever odious to his eyes, and his name a detestable sound in his ears. The appearance of such unsurmountable difficulties was sufficient to have inspired him with despair, however ardent his wishes had been; but even these were controuled by compassion for another woman. The idea of lovely Molly now intruded itself before him. He had sworn eternal constancy in her arms, and she had as often vowed never to out-live his deserting her. He now saw her in all the most shocking postures of death; nay, he considered all the miseries of prostitution to which she would be liable, and of which he would be doubly the occasion; first by seducing, and then by deserting her; for he well knew the hatred which all her neighbours, and even her own sisters, bore her, and how ready they would all be to tear her to pieces. Indeed, he had exposed her to more envy than shame, or rather to the latter by means of the former: for many women abused her for being a whore, while they envied her her lover, and her finery, and would have been themselves glad to have purchased these at the same rate. The ruin, therefore, of the poor girl must, he foresaw, unavoidably attend his deserting her; and this thought stung him to the soul. Poverty and distress seemed to him to give none a right of aggravating those misfortunes. The meanness of her condition did not represent her misery as of little consequence in his eyes, nor did it appear to justify, or even to palliate, his guilt, in bringing that misery upon her. But why do I mention justification? His own heart would not suffer him to destroy a human creature who, he thought, loved him, and had to that love sacrificed her innocence. His own good heart pleaded her cause; not as a cold venal advocate, but as one interested in the event, and which must itself deeply share in all the agonies its owner brought on another.

When this powerful advocate had sufficiently raised the pity of Jones, by painting poor Molly in all the circumstances of wretchedness; it artfully called in the assistance of another

passion, and represented the girl in all the amiable colours of youth, health, and beauty; as one greatly the object of desire, and much more so, at least to a good mind, from being, at the same time, the object of compassion.

Amidst these thoughts, poor Jones passed a long sleepless night, and in the morning the result of the whole was to abide by Molly, and to think no more of Sophia.

In this virtuous resolution he continued all the next day till the evening, cherishing the idea of Molly, and driving Sophia from his thoughts; but in the fatal evening, a very trifling accident set all his passions again on float, and worked so total a change in his mind, that we think it decent to communicate it in a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER IV

A LITTLE CHAPTER, IN WHICH IS CONTAINED A LITTLE INCIDENT

AMONG other visitants, who paid their compliments to the young gentleman in his confinement, Mrs. Honour was one. The reader, perhaps, when he reflects on some expressions which have formerly dropt from her, may conceive that she herself had a very particular affection for Mr. Jones; but, in reality, it was no such thing. Tom was a handsome young fellow; and for that species of men Mrs. Honour had some regard; but this was perfectly indiscriminate; for having being crossed in the love which she bore a certain nobleman's footman, who had basely deserted her after a promise of marriage, she had so securely kept together the broken remains of her heart, that no man had ever since been able to possess himself of any single fragment. She viewed all handsome men with that equal regard and benevolence which a sober and virtuous mind bears to all the good. She might indeed be called a lover of men, as Socrates was a lover of mankind, preferring one to another for corporeal, as he for mental qualifications; but never carrying this preference so far as to cause any perturbation in the philosophical serenity of her temper.

The day after Mr. Jones had that conflict with himself which we have seen in the preceding chapter, Mrs. Honour came into his room, and finding him alone, began in the following manner:—"La, sir, where do you think I have been? I warrants you, you would not guess in fifty years; but if you did guess, to be sure I must not tell you neither."—"Nay, if it be something

which you must not tell me," said Jones, "I shall have the curiosity to enquire, and I know you will not be so barbarous to refuse me."—"I don't know," cries she, "why I should refuse you neither, for that matter; for to be sure you won't mention it any more. And for that matter, if you knew where I have been, unless you knew what I have been about, it would not signify much. Nay, I don't see why it should be kept a secret for my part; for to be sure she is the best lady in the world." Upon this, Jones began to beg earnestly to be let into this secret, and faithfully promised not to divulge it. She then proceeded thus:—"Why, you must know, sir, my young lady sent me to enquire after Molly Seagrim, and to see whether the wench wanted anything; to be sure, I did not care to go, methinks; but servants must do what they are ordered.—How could you undervalue yourself so, Mr. Jones?—So my lady bid me go and carry her some linen, and other things. She is too good. If such forward sluts were sent to Bridewel, it would be better for them. I told my lady, says I, madam, your la'ship is encouraging idleness."—"And was my Sophia so good?" says Jones. "My Sophia! I assure you, marry come up," answered Honour. "And yet if you knew all—indeed, if I was as Mr. Jones, I should look a little higher than such trumpery as Molly Seagrim." "What do you mean by these words," replied Jones, "if I knew all?" "I mean what I mean," says Honour. "Don't you remember putting your hands in my lady's muff once? I vow I could almost find in my heart to tell, if I was certain my lady would never come to the hearing on't." Jones then made several solemn protestations. And Honour proceeded—"Then to be sure, my lady gave me that muff; and afterwards, upon hearing what you had done"—"Then you told her what I had done?" interrupted Jones. "If I did, sir," answered she, "you need not be angry with me. Many's the man would have given his head to have had my lady told, if they had known,—for, to be sure, the biggest lord in the land might be proud—but, I protest, I have a great mind not to tell you." Jones fell to entreaties, and soon prevailed on her to go on thus. "You must know then, sir, that my lady had given this muff to me; but about a day or two after I had told her the story, she quarrels with her new muff, and to be sure it is the prettiest that ever was seen. Honour, says she, this is an odious muff; it is too big for me, I can't wear it: till I can get another, you must let me have my old one again, and you may have this in the room on't—for she's a good lady, and scorns to give a thing and take a thing, I promise you that. So to be sure

I fetched it her back again, and, I believe, she hath worn it upon her arm almost ever since, and I warrants hath given it many a kiss when nobody hath seen her."

Here the conversation was interrupted by Mr. Western himself, who came to summon Jones to the harpsichord; whither the poor young fellow went all pale and trembling. This Western observed, but, on seeing Mrs. Honour, imputed it to a wrong cause; and having given Jones a hearty curse between jest and earnest, he bid him beat abroad, and not poach up the game in his warren.

Sophia looked this evening with more than usual beauty, and we may believe it was no small addition to her charms, in the eye of Mr. Jones, that she now happened to have on her right arm this very muff.

She was playing one of her father's favourite tunes, and he was leaning on her chair, when the muff fell over her fingers, and put her out. This so disconcerted the squire, that he snatched the muff from her, and with a hearty curse threw it into the fire. Sophia instantly started up, and with the utmost eagerness recovered it from the flames.

Though this incident will probably appear of little consequence to many of our readers; yet, trifling as it was, it had so violent an effect on poor Jones, that we thought it our duty to relate it. In reality, there are many little circumstances too often omitted by injudicious historians, from which events of the utmost importance arise. The world may indeed be considered as a vast machine, in which the great wheels are originally set in motion by those which are very minute, and almost imperceptible to any but the strongest eyes.

Thus, not all the charms of the incomparable Sophia; not all the dazzling brightness, and languishing softness of her eyes; the harmony of her voice, and of her person; not all her wit, good-humour, greatness of mind, or sweetness of disposition, had been able so absolutely to conquer and enslave the heart of poor Jones, as this little incident of the muff. Thus the poet sweetly sings of Troy—

—*Captique dolis lachrymisque coacti*
Quos neque Tydides, nec Larissæus Achilles,
Non anni domuere decem, non mille Carinæ.
 What Diomedes or Thetis' greater son,
 A thousand ships, nor ten years' siege had done,
 False tears and fawning words the city won.

The citadel of Jones was now taken by surprise. All those

considerations of honour and prudence which our hero had lately with so much military wisdom placed as guards over the avenues of his heart, ran away from their posts, and the god of love marched in, in triumph.

CHAPTER V

A VERY LONG CHAPTER, CONTAINING A VERY GREAT INCIDENT

BUT though this victorious deity easily expelled his avowed enemies from the heart of Jones, he found it more difficult to supplant the garrison which he himself had placed there. To lay aside all allegory, the concern for what must become of poor Molly greatly disturbed and perplexed the mind of the worthy youth. The superior merit of Sophia totally eclipsed, or rather extinguished, all the beauties of the poor girl; but compassion instead of contempt succeeded to love. He was convinced the girl had placed all her affections, and all her prospect of future happiness, in him only. For this he had, he knew, given sufficient occasion, by the utmost profusion of tenderness towards her: a tenderness which he had taken every means to persuade her he would always maintain. She, on her side, had assured him of her firm belief in his promise, and had with the most solemn vows declared, that on his fulfilling or breaking these promises, it depended, whether she should be the happiest or most miserable of womankind. And to be the author of this highest degree of misery to a human being, was a thought on which he could not bear to ruminare a single moment. He considered this poor girl as having sacrificed to him everything in her little power; as having been at her own expense the object of his pleasure; as sighing and languishing for him even at that very instant. Shall then, says he, my recovery, for which she hath so ardently wished; shall my presence, which she hath so eagerly expected, instead of giving her that joy with which she hath flattered herself, cast her at once down into misery and despair? Can I be such a villain? Here, when the genius of poor Molly seemed triumphant, the love of Sophia towards him, which now appeared no longer dubious, rushed upon his mind, and bore away every obstacle before it.

At length it occurred to him, that he might possibly be able to make Molly amends another way; namely, by giving her a sum of money. This, nevertheless, he almost despaired of her

accepting, when he recollected the frequent and vehement assurances he had received from her, that the world put in balance with him would make her no amends for his loss. However, her extreme poverty, and chiefly her egregious vanity (somewhat of which hath been already hinted to the reader), gave him some little hope, that, notwithstanding all her avowed tenderness, she might in time be brought to content herself with a fortune superior to her expectation, and which might indulge her vanity, by setting her above all her equals. He resolved therefore to take the first opportunity of making a proposal of this kind.

One day, accordingly, when his arm was so well recovered that he could walk easily with it slung in a sash, he stole forth, at a season when the squire was engaged in his field exercises, and visited his fair one. Her mother and sisters, whom he found taking their tea, informed him first that Molly was not at home; but afterwards the eldest sister acquainted him, with a malicious smile, that she was above stairs a-bed. Tom had no objection to this situation of his mistress, and immediately ascended the ladder which led towards her bed-chamber; but when he came to the top, he, to his great surprise, found the door fast; nor could he for some time obtain any answer from within; for Molly, as she herself afterwards informed him, was fast asleep.

The extremes of grief and joy have been remarked to produce very similar effects; and when either of these rushes on us by surprize, it is apt to create such a total perturbation and confusion, that we are often thereby deprived of the use of all our faculties. It cannot therefore be wondered at, that the unexpected sight of Mr. Jones should so strongly operate on the mind of Molly, and should overwhelm her with such confusion, that for some minutes she was unable to express the great raptures, with which the reader will suppose she was affected on this occasion. As for Jones, he was so entirely possessed, and as it were enchanted, by the presence of his beloved object, that he for a while forgot Sophia, and consequently the principal purpose of his visit.

This, however, soon recurred to his memory; and after the first transports of their meeting were over, he found means by degrees to introduce a discourse on the fatal consequences which must attend their amour, if Mr. Allworthy, who had strictly forbidden him ever seeing her more, should discover that he still carried on this commerce. Such a discovery, which his enemies gave him reason to think would be unavoidable, must, he said,

end in his ruin, and consequently in hers. Since therefore their hard fates had determined that they must separate, he advised her to bear it with resolution, and swore he would never omit any opportunity, through the course of his life, of showing her the sincerity of his affection, by providing for her in a manner beyond her utmost expectation, or even beyond her wishes, if ever that should be in his power; concluding at last, that she might soon find some man who would marry her, and who would make her much happier than she could be by leading a disreputable life with him.

Molly remained a few moments in silence, and then bursting into a flood of tears, she began to upbraid him in the following words: "And this is your love for me, to forsake me in this manner, now you have ruined me! How often, when I have told you that all men are false and perjury alike, and grow tired of us as soon as ever they have had their wicked wills of us, how often have you sworn you would never forsake me! And can you be such a perjury man after all? What signifies all the riches in the world to me without you, now you have gained my heart, so you have—you have—? Why do you mention another man to me? I can never love any other man as long as I live. All other men are nothing to me. If the greatest squire in all the country would come a suiting to me to-morrow, I would not give my company to him. No, I shall always hate and despise the whole sex for your sake."—

She was proceeding thus, when an accident put a stop to her tongue, before it had run out half its career. The room, or rather garret, in which Molly lay, being up one pair of stairs, that is to say, at the top of the house, was of a sloping figure, resembling the great Delta of the Greeks. The English reader may perhaps form a better idea of it, by being told that it was impossible to stand upright anywhere but in the middle. Now, as this room wanted the conveniency of a closet, Molly had, to supply that defect, nailed up an old rug against the rafters of the house, which enclosed a little hole where her best apparel, such as the remains of that sack which we have formerly mentioned, some caps, and other things with which she had lately provided herself, were hung up and secured from the dust.

This enclosed place exactly fronted the foot of the bed, to which, indeed, the rug hung so near, that it served in a manner to supply the want of curtains. Now, whether Molly, in the agonies of her rage, pushed this rug with her feet; or Jones might touch it; or whether the pin or nail gave way of its own

accord, I am not certain; but as Molly pronounced those last words, which are recorded above, the wicked rug got loose from its fastening, and discovered everything hid behind it; where among other female utensils appeared—(with shame I write it, and with sorrow will it be read)—the philosopher Square, in a posture (for the place would not near admit his standing upright) as ridiculous as can possibly be conceived.

The posture, indeed, in which he stood, was not greatly unlike that of a soldier who is tied neck and heels; or rather resembling the attitude in which we often see fellows in the public streets of London, who are not suffering but deserving punishment by so standing. He had a nightcap belonging to Molly on his head, and his two large eyes, the moment the rug fell, stared directly at Jones; so that when the idea of philosophy was added to the figure now discovered, it would have been very difficult for any spectator to have refrained from immoderate laughter.

I question not but the surprize of the reader will be here equal to that of Jones; as the suspicions which must arise from the appearance of this wise and grave man in such a place, may seem so inconsistent with that character which he hath, doubtless, maintained hitherto, in the opinion of every one.

But to confess the truth, this inconsistency is rather imaginary than real. Philosophers are composed of flesh and blood as well as other human creatures; and however sublimated and refined the theory of these may be, a little practical frailty is as incident to them as to other mortals. It is, indeed, in theory only, and not in practice, as we have before hinted, that consists the difference: for though such great beings think much better and more wisely, they always act exactly like other men. They know very well how to subdue all appetites and passions, and to despise both pain and pleasure; and this knowledge affords much delightful contemplation, and is easily acquired; but the practice would be vexatious and troublesome; and, therefore, the same wisdom which teaches them to know this, teaches them to avoid carrying it into execution.

Mr. Square happened to be at church on that Sunday, when, as the reader may be pleased to remember, the appearance of Molly in her sack had caused all that disturbance. Here he first observed her, and was so pleased with her beauty, that he prevailed with the young gentlemen to change their intended ride that evening, that he might pass by the habitation of Molly, and by that means might obtain a second chance of seeing her. This reason, however, as he did not at that time mention to any, so

neither did we think proper to communicate it then to the reader.

Among other particulars which constituted the unfitness of things in Mr. Square's opinion, danger and difficulty were two. The difficulty therefore which he apprehended there might be in corrupting this young wench, and the danger which would accrue to his character on the discovery, were such strong dissuasives, that it is probable he at first intended to have contented himself with the pleasing ideas which the sight of beauty furnishes us with. These the gravest men, after a full meal of serious meditation, often allow themselves by way of dessert: for which purpose, certain books and pictures find their way into the most private recesses of their study, and a certain liquorish part of natural philosophy is often the principal subject of their conversation.

But when the philosopher heard, a day or two afterwards, that the fortress of virtue had already been subdued, he began to give a larger scope to his desires. His appetite was not of that squeamish kind which cannot feed on a dainty because another hath tasted it. In short, he liked the girl the better for the want of that chastity, which, if she had possessed it, must have been a bar to his pleasures; he pursued and obtained her.

The reader will be mistaken, if he thinks Molly gave Square the preference to her younger lover: on the contrary, had she been confined to the choice of one only, Tom Jones would undoubtedly have been, of the two, the victorious person. Nor was it solely the consideration that two are better than one (though this had its proper weight) to which Mr. Square owed his success: the absence of Jones during his confinement was an unlucky circumstance; and in that interval some well-chosen presents from the philosopher so softened and unguarded the girl's heart, that a favourable opportunity became irresistible, and Square triumphed over the poor remains of virtue which subsisted in the bosom of Molly.

It was now about a fortnight since this conquest, when Jones paid the above-mentioned visit to his mistress, at a time when she and Square were in bed together. This was the true reason why the mother denied her as we have seen; for as the old woman shared in the profits arising from the iniquity of her daughter, she encouraged and protected her in it to the utmost of her power; but such was the envy and hatred which the elder sister bore towards Molly, that, notwithstanding she had some part of the booty, she would willingly have parted with this to ruin her sister and spoil her trade. Hence she had acquainted

Jones with her being above-stairs in bed, in hopes that he might have caught her in Square's arms. This, however, Molly found means to prevent, as the door was fastened; which gave her an opportunity of conveying her lover behind that rug or blanket where he now was unhappily discovered.

Square no sooner made his appearance than Molly flung herself back in her bed, cried out she was undone, and abandoned herself to despair. This poor girl, who was yet but a novice in her business, had not arrived to that perfection of assurance which helps off a town lady in any extremity; and either prompts her with an excuse, or else inspires her to brazen out the matter with her husband, who, from love of quiet, or out of fear of his reputation—and sometimes, perhaps, from fear of the gallant, who, like Mr. Constant in the play, wears a sword—is glad to shut his eyes, and content to put his horns in his pocket. Molly, on the contrary, was silenced by this evidence, and very fairly gave up a cause which she had hitherto maintained with so many tears, and with such solemn and vehement protestations of the purest love and constancy.

As to the gentleman behind the arras, he was not in much less consternation. He stood for a while motionless, and seemed equally at a loss what to say, or whither to direct his eyes. Jones, though perhaps the most astonished of the three, first found his tongue; and being immediately recovered from those uneasy sensations which Molly by her upbraidings had occasioned, he burst into a loud laughter, and then saluting Mr. Square, advanced to take him by the hand, and to relieve him from his place of confinement.

Square being now arrived in the middle of the room, in which part only he could stand upright, looked at Jones with a very grave countenance, and said to him, "Well, sir, I see you enjoy this mighty discovery, and, I dare swear, take great delight in the thoughts of exposing me; but if you will consider the matter fairly, you will find you are yourself only to blame. I am not guilty of corrupting innocence. I have done nothing for which that part of the world which judges of matters by the rule of right, will condemn me. Fitness is governed by the nature of things, and not by customs, forms, or municipal laws. Nothing is indeed unfit which is not unnatural."—"Well reasoned, old boy," answered Jones; "but why dost thou think that I should desire to expose thee? I promise thee, I was never better pleased with thee in my life; and unless thou hast a mind to discover it thyself, this affair may remain a profound secret for me."—"Nay,

Mr. Jones," replied Square, "I would not be thought to undervalue reputation. Good fame is a species of the Kalon, and it is by no means fitting to neglect it. Besides, to murder one's own reputation is a kind of suicide, a detestable and odious vice. If you think proper, therefore, to conceal any infirmity of mine (for such I may have, since no man is perfectly perfect), I promise you I will not betray myself. Things may be fitting to be done, which are not fitting to be boasted of; for by the perverse judgment of the world, that often becomes the subject of censure, which is, in truth, not only innocent but laudable."—"Right!" cries Jones: "what can be more innocent than the indulgence of a natural appetite? or what more laudable than the propagation of our species?"—"To be serious with you," answered Square, "I profess they always appeared so to me."—"And yet," said Jones, "you was of a different opinion when my affair with this girl was first discovered."—"Why, I must confess," says Square, "as the matter was misrepresented to me, by that parson Thwackum, I might condemn the corruption of innocence: it was that, sir, it was that—and that—: for you must know, Mr. Jones, in the consideration of fitness, very minute circumstances, sir, very minute circumstances cause great alteration."—"Well," cries Jones, "be that as it will, it shall be your own fault, as I have promised you, if you ever hear any more of this adventure. Behave kindly to the girl, and I will never open my lips concerning the matter to any one. And, Molly, do you be faithful to your friend, and I will not only forgive your infidelity to me, but will do you all the service I can." So saying, he took a hasty leave, and, slipping down the ladder, retired with much expedition.

Square was rejoiced to find this adventure was likely to have no worse conclusion; and as for Molly, being recovered from her confusion, she began at first to upbraid Square with having been the occasion of her loss of Jones; but that gentleman soon found the means of mitigating her anger, partly by caresses, and partly by a small nostrum from his purse, of wonderful and approved efficacy in purging off the ill humours of the mind, and in restoring it to a good temper.

She then poured forth a vast profusion of tenderness towards her new lover; turned all she had said to Jones, and Jones himself, into ridicule; and vowed, though he once had the possession of her person, that none but Square had ever been master of her heart.

CHAPTER VI

BY COMPARING WHICH WITH THE FORMER, THE READER MAY POSSIBLY CORRECT SOME ABUSE WHICH HE HATH FORMERLY BEEN GUILTY OF IN THE APPLICATION OF THE WORD LOVE

THE infidelity of Molly, which Jones had now discovered, would, perhaps, have vindicated a much greater degree of resentment than he expressed on the occasion; and if he had abandoned her directly from that moment, very few, I believe, would have blamed him.

Certain, however, it is, that he saw her in the light of compassion; and though his love to her was not of that kind which could give him any great uneasiness at her inconstancy, yet was he not a little shocked on reflecting that he had himself originally corrupted her innocence; for to this corruption he imputed all the vice into which she appeared now so likely to plunge herself.

This consideration gave him no little uneasiness, till Betty, the elder sister, was so kind, some time afterwards, entirely to cure him by a hint, that one Will Barnes, and not himself, had been the first seducer of Molly; and that the little child, which he had hitherto so certainly concluded to be his own, might very probably have an equal title, at least, to claim Barnes for its father.

Jones eagerly pursued this scent when he had first received it; and in a very short time was sufficiently assured that the girl had told him truth, not only by the confession of the fellow, but at last by that of Molly herself.

This Will Barnes was a country gallant, and had acquired as many trophies of this kind as any ensign or attorney's clerk in the kingdom. He had, indeed, reduced several women to a state of utter profligacy, had broke the hearts of some, and had the honour of occasioning the violent death of one poor girl, who had either drowned herself, or, what was rather more probable, had been drowned by him.

Among other of his conquests, this fellow had triumphed over the heart of Betty Seagrim. He had made love to her long before Molly was grown to be a fit object of that pastime; but had afterwards deserted her, and applied to her sister, with whom he had almost immediate success. Now Will had, in reality, the sole possession of Molly's affection, while Jones and Square were almost equally sacrifices to her interest and to her pride.

Hence had grown that implacable hatred which we have before seen raging in the mind of Betty; though we did not think it necessary to assign this cause sooner, as envy itself alone was adequate to all the effects we have mentioned.

Jones was become perfectly easy by possession of this secret with regard to Molly; but as to Sophia, he was far from being in a state of tranquillity; nay, indeed, he was under the most violent perturbation; his heart was now, if I may use the metaphor, entirely evacuated, and Sophia took absolute possession of it. He loved her with an unbounded passion, and plainly saw the tender sentiments she had for him; yet could not this assurance lessen his despair of obtaining the consent of her father, nor the horrors which attended his pursuit of her by any base or treacherous method.

The injury which he must thus do to Mr. Western, and the concern which would accrue to Mr. Allworthy, were circumstances that tormented him all day, and haunted him on his pillow at night. His life was a constant struggle between honour and inclination, which alternately triumphed over each other in his mind. He often resolved, in the absence of Sophia, to leave her father's house, and to see her no more; and as often, in her presence, forgot all those resolutions, and determined to pursue her at the hazard of his life, and at the forfeiture of what was much dearer to him.

This conflict began soon to produce very strong and visible effects: for he lost all his usual sprightliness and gaiety of temper, and became not only melancholy when alone, but dejected and absent in company; nay, if ever he put on a forced mirth, to comply with Mr. Western's humour, the constraint appeared so plain, that he seemed to have been giving the strongest evidence of what he endeavoured to conceal by such ostentation.

It may, perhaps, be a question, whether the art which he used to conceal his passion, or the means which honest nature employed to reveal it, betrayed him most: for while art made him more than ever reserved to Sophia, and forbade him to address any of his discourse to her, nay, to avoid meeting her eyes, with the utmost caution; nature was no less busy in counter-plotting him. Hence, at the approach of the young lady, he grew pale; and if this was sudden, started. If his eyes accidentally met hers, the blood rushed into his cheeks, and his countenance became all over scarlet. If common civility ever obliged him to speak to her, as to drink her health at table, his tongue was sure to falter. If he touched her, his hand, nay his whole frame, trembled.

And if any discourse tended, however remotely, to raise the idea of love, an involuntary sigh seldom failed to steal from his bosom. Most of which accidents nature was wonderfully industrious to throw daily in his way.

All these symptoms escaped the notice of the squire: but not so of Sophia. She soon perceived these agitations of mind in Jones, and was at no loss to discover the cause; for indeed she recognized it in her own breast. And this recognition is, I suppose, that sympathy which hath been so often noted in lovers, and which will sufficiently account for her being so much quicker-sighted than her father.

But, to say the truth, there is a more simple and plain method of accounting for that prodigious superiority of penetration which we must observe in some men over the rest of the human species, and one which will serve not only in the case of lovers, but of all others. From whence is it that the knave is generally so quick-sighted to those symptoms and operations of knavery, which often dupe an honest man of a much better understanding? There surely is no general sympathy among knaves; nor have they, like freemasons, any common sign of communication. In reality, it is only because they have the same thing in their heads, and their thoughts are turned the same way. Thus, that Sophia saw, and that Western did not see, the plain symptoms of love in Jones can be no wonder, when we consider that the idea of love never entered into the head of the father, whereas the daughter, at present, thought of nothing else.

When Sophia was well satisfied of the violent passion which tormented poor Jones, and no less certain that she herself was its object, she had not the least difficulty in discovering the true cause of his present behaviour. This highly endeared him to her, and raised in her mind two of the best affections which any lover can wish to raise in a mistress—these were, esteem and pity—for sure the most outrageously rigid among her sex will excuse her pitying a man whom she saw miserable on her own account; nor can they blame her for esteeming one who visibly, from the most honourable motives, endeavoured to smother a flame in his own bosom, which, like the famous Spartan theft, was preying upon and consuming his very vitals. Thus his backwardness, his shunning her, his coldness, and his silence, were the forwardest, the most diligent, the warmest, and most eloquent advocates; and wrought so violently on her sensible and tender heart, that she soon felt for him all those gentle sensations which are consistent with a virtuous and elevated female mind. In short, all

which esteem, gratitude, and pity, can inspire in such towards an agreeable man—indeed, all which the nicest delicacy can allow. In a word, she was in love with him to distraction.

One day this young couple accidentally met in the garden, at the end of the two walks which were both bounded by that canal in which Jones had formerly risked drowning to retrieve the little bird that Sophia had there lost.

This place had been of late much frequented by Sophia. Here she used to ruminate, with a mixture of pain and pleasure, on an incident which, however trifling in itself, had possibly sown the first seeds of that affection which was now arrived to such maturity in her heart.

Here then this young couple met. They were almost close together before either of them knew anything of the other's approach. A bystander would have discovered sufficient marks of confusion in the countenance of each; but they felt too much themselves to make any observation. As soon as Jones had a little recovered his first surprize, he accosted the young lady with some of the ordinary forms of salutation, which she in the same manner returned; and their conversation began, as usual, on the delicious beauty of the morning. Hence they past to the beauty of the place, on which Jones launched forth very high encomiums. When they came to the tree whence he had formerly tumbled into the canal, Sophia could not help reminding him of that accident, and said, "I fancy, Mr. Jones, you have some little shuddering when you see that water."—"I assure you, madam," answered Jones, "the concern you felt at the loss of your little bird will always appear to me the highest circumstance in that adventure. Poor little Tommy! there is the branch he stood upon. How could the little wretch have the folly to fly away from that state of happiness in which I had the honour to place him? His fate was a just punishment for his ingratitude."—"Upon my word, Mr. Jones," said she, "your gallantry very narrowly escaped as severe a fate. Sure the remembrance must affect you."—"Indeed, madam," answered he, "if I have any reason to reflect with sorrow on it, it is, perhaps, that the water had not been a little deeper, by which I might have escaped many bitter heart-aches that Fortune seems to have in store for me."—"Fie, Mr. Jones!" replied Sophia; "I am sure you cannot be in earnest now. This affected contempt of life is only an excess of your complacence to me. You would endeavour to lessen the obligation of having twice ventured it for my sake. Beware the third time." She spoke these last words with a smile,

and a softness inexpressible. Jones answered with a sigh, "He feared it was already too late for caution:" and then looking tenderly and stedfastly on her, he cried, "Oh, Miss Western! can you desire me to live? Can you wish me so ill?" Sophia, looking down on the ground, answered with some hesitation, "Indeed, Mr. Jones, I do not wish you ill."—"Oh, I know too well that heavenly temper," cries Jones, "that divine goodness, which is beyond every other charm."—"Nay, now," answered she, "I understand you not. I can stay no longer."—"I—I would not be understood!" cries he; "nay, I can't be understood. I know not what I say. Meeting you here so unexpectedly, I have been unguarded: for Heaven's sake pardon me, if I have said anything to offend you. I did not mean it. Indeed, I would rather have died—nay, the very thought would kill me."—"You surprize me," answered she. "How can you possibly think you have offended me?"—"Fear, madam," says he, "easily runs into madness; and there is no degree of fear like that which I feel of offending you. How can I speak then? Nay, don't look angrily at me; one frown will destroy me. I mean nothing. Blame my eyes, or blame those beauties. What am I saying? Pardon me if I have said too much. My heart overflowed. I have struggled with my love to the utmost, and have endeavoured to conceal a fever which preys on my vitals, and will, I hope, soon make it impossible for me ever to offend you more."

Mr. Jones now fell a trembling as if he had been shaken with the fit of an ague. Sophia, who was in a situation not very different from his, answered in these words: "Mr. Jones, I will not affect to misunderstand you; indeed, I understand you too well; but, for Heaven's sake, if you have any affection for me, let me make the best of my way into the house. I wish I may be able to support myself thither."

Jones, who was hardly able to support himself, offered her his arm, which she condescended to accept, but begged he would not mention a word more to her of this nature at present. He promised he would not; insisting only on her forgiveness of what love, without the leave of his will, had forced from him: this, she told him, he knew how to obtain by his future behaviour; and thus this young pair tottered and trembled along, the lover not once daring to squeeze the hand of his mistress, though it was locked in his.

Sophia immediately retired to her chamber, where Mrs. Honour and the hartshorn were summoned to her assistance. As to poor Jones, the only relief to his distempered mind was an