

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

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

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

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

## BOOK XV

## CHAPTER I

## TOO SHORT TO NEED A PREFACE

THERE are a set of religious, or rather moral writers, who teach that virtue is the certain road to happiness, and vice to misery, in this world. A very wholesome and comfortable doctrine, and to which we have but one objection, namely, that it is not true.

Indeed, if by virtue these writers mean the exercise of those cardinal virtues, which like good housewives stay at home, and mind only the business of their own family, I shall very readily concede the point; for so surely do all these contribute and lead to happiness, that I could almost wish, in violation of all the antient and modern sages, to call them rather by the name of wisdom, than by that of virtue; for, with regard to this life, no system, I conceive, was ever wiser than that of the antient Epicureans, who held this wisdom to constitute the chief good; nor foolisher than that of their opposites, those modern epicures, who place all felicity in the abundant gratification of every sensual appetite.

But if by virtue is meant (as I almost think it ought) a certain relative quality, which is always busying itself without-doors, and seems as much interested in pursuing the good of others as its own; I cannot so easily agree that this is the surest way to human happiness; because I am afraid we must then include poverty and contempt, with all the mischiefs which backbiting, envy, and ingratitude, can bring on mankind, in our idea of happiness; nay, sometimes perhaps we shall be obliged to wait upon the said happiness to a jail; since many by the above virtue have brought themselves thither.

I have not now leisure to enter upon so large a field of speculation, as here seems opening upon me; my design was to wipe off a doctrine that lay in my way; since, while Mr. Jones was acting the most virtuous part imaginable, in labouring to preserve his fellow-creatures from destruction, the devil, or some other evil spirit, one perhaps cloathed in human flesh, was hard at work to make him completely miserable in the ruin of his Sophia.

This, therefore, would seem an exception to the above rule, if indeed it was a rule; but as we have in our voyage through life

seen so many other exceptions to it, we chuse to dispute the doctrine on which it is founded, which we don't apprehend to be Christian, which we are convinced is not true, and which is indeed destructive of one of the noblest arguments that reason alone can furnish for the belief of immortality.

But as the reader's curiosity (if he hath any) must be now awake, and hungry, we shall provide to feed it as fast as we can.

## CHAPTER II

IN WHICH IS OPENED A VERY BLACK DESIGN AGAINST SOPHIA

I REMEMBER a wise old gentleman who used to say, "When children are doing nothing, they are doing mischief." I will not enlarge this quaint saying to the most beautiful part of the creation in general; but so far I may be allowed, that when the effects of female jealousy do not appear openly in their proper colours of rage and fury, we may suspect that mischievous passion to be at work privately, and attempting to undermine, what it doth not attack above-ground.

This was exemplified in the conduct of Lady Bellaston, who, under all the smiles which she wore in her countenance, concealed much indignation against Sophia; and as she plainly saw that this young lady stood between her and the full indulgence of her desires, she resolved to get rid of her by some means or other; nor was it long before a very favourable opportunity of accomplishing this presented itself to her.

The reader may be pleased to remember, that when Sophia was thrown into that consternation at the playhouse, by the wit and humour of a set of young gentlemen who call themselves the town, we informed him, that she had put herself under the protection of a young nobleman, who had very safely conducted her to her chair.

This nobleman, who frequently visited Lady Bellaston, had more than once seen Sophia there, since her arrival in town, and had conceived a very great liking to her; which liking, as beauty never looks more amiable than in distress, Sophia had in this fright so encreased, that he might now, without any great impropriety, be said to be actually in love with her.

It may easily be believed, that he would not suffer so handsome an occasion of improving his acquaintance with the beloved object as now offered itself to elapse, when even good breeding alone might have prompted him to pay her a visit.

The next morning therefore, after this accident, he waited on Sophia, with the usual compliments, and hopes that she had received no harm from her last night's adventure.

As love, like fire, when once thoroughly kindled, is soon blown into a flame, Sophia in a very short time compleated her conquest. Time now flew away unperceived, and the noble lord had been two hours in company with the lady, before it entered into his head that he had made too long a visit. Though this circumstance alone would have alarmed Sophia, who was somewhat more a mistress of computation at present; she had indeed much more pregnant evidence from the eyes of her lover of what past within his bosom; nay, though he did not make any open declaration of his passion, yet many of his expressions were rather too warm, and too tender, to have been imputed to complacence, even in the age when such complacence was in fashion; the very reverse of which is well known to be the reigning mode at present.

Lady Bellaston had been apprized of his lordship's visit at his first arrival; and the length of it very well satisfied her, that things went as she wished, and as indeed she had suspected the second time she saw this young couple together. This business, she rightly, I think, concluded, that she should by no means forward by mixing in the company while they were together; she therefore ordered her servants, that when my lord was going, they should tell him she desired to speak with him; and employed the intermediate time in meditating how best to accomplish a scheme, which she made no doubt but his lordship would very readily embrace the execution of.

Lord Fellamar (for that was the title of this young nobleman) was no sooner introduced to her ladyship, than she attacked him in the following strain: "Bless me, my lord, are you here yet? I thought my servants had made a mistake, and let you go away; and I wanted to see you about an affair of some importance."—"Indeed, Lady Bellaston," said he, "I don't wonder you are astonished at the length of my visit; for I have staid above two hours, and I did not think I had staid above half-a-one."—"What am I to conclude from thence, my lord?" said she. "The company must be very agreeable which can make time slide away so very deceitfully."—"Upon my honour," said he, "the most agreeable I ever saw. Pray tell me, Lady Bellaston, who is this blazing star which you have produced among us all of a sudden?"—"What blazing star, my lord?" said she, affecting a surprize. "I mean," said he,

"the lady I saw here the other day, whom I had last night in my arms at the playhouse, and to whom I have been making that unreasonable visit."—"O, my cousin Western!" said she; "why, that blazing star, my lord, is the daughter of a country booby squire, and hath been in town about a fortnight, for the first time."—"Upon my soul," said he, "I should swear she had been bred up in a court; for besides her beauty, I never saw anything so genteel, so sensible, so polite."—"O brave!" cries the lady, "my cousin hath you, I find."—"Upon my honour," answered he, "I wish she had; for I am in love with her to distraction."—"Nay, my lord," said she, "it is not wishing yourself very ill neither, for she is a very great fortune: I assure you she is an only child, and her father's estate is a good £3000 a-year." "Then I can assure you, madam," answered the lord, "I think her the best match in England." "Indeed, my lord," replied she, "if you like her, I heartily wish you had her." "If you think so kindly of me, madam," said he, "as she is a relation of yours, will you do me the honour to propose it to her father?" "And are you really then in earnest?" cries the lady, with an affected gravity. "I hope, madam," answered he, "you have a better opinion of me, than to imagine I would jest with your ladyship in an affair of this kind." "Indeed, then," said the lady, "I will most readily propose your lordship to her father; and I can, I believe, assure you of his joyful acceptance of the proposal; but there is a bar, which I am almost ashamed to mention; and yet it is one you will never be able to conquer. You have a rival, my lord, and a rival who, though I blush to name him, neither you, nor all the world, will ever be able to conquer." "Upon my word, Lady Bellaston," cries he, "you have struck a damp to my heart, which hath almost deprived me of being." "Fie, my lord," said she, "I should rather hope I had struck fire into you. A lover, and talk of damps in your heart! I rather imagined you would have asked your rival's name, that you might have immediately entered the lists with him." "I promise you, madam," answered he, "there are very few things I would not undertake for your charming cousin; but pray, who is this happy man?"—"Why, he is," said she, "what I am sorry to say most happy men with us are, one of the lowest fellows in the world. He is a beggar, a bastard, a foundling, a fellow in meaner circumstances than one of your lordship's footmen." "And is it possible," cried he, "that a young creature with such perfections should think of bestowing herself so un-

worthily?" "Alas! my lord," answered she, "consider the country—the bane of all young women is the country. There they learn a set of romantic notions of love, and I know not what folly, which this town and good company can scarce eradicate in a whole winter." "Indeed, madam," replied my lord, "your cousin is of too immense a value to be thrown away; such ruin as this must be prevented." "Alas!" cries she, "my lord, how can it be prevented? The family have already done all in their power; but the girl is, I think, intoxicated, and nothing less than ruin will content her. And to deal more openly with you, I expect every day to hear she is run away with him." "What you tell me, Lady Bellaston," answered his lordship, "affects me most tenderly, and only raises my compassion, instead of lessening my adoration of your cousin. Some means must be found to preserve so inestimable a jewel. Hath your ladyship endeavoured to reason with her?" Here the lady affected a laugh, and cried, "My dear lord, sure you know us better than to talk of reasoning a young woman out of her inclinations? These inestimable jewels are as deaf as the jewels they wear: time, my lord, time is the only medicine to cure their folly; but this is a medicine which I am certain she will not take; nay, I live in hourly horrors on her account. In short, nothing but violent methods will do." "What is to be done?" cries my lord; "what methods are to be taken?—Is there any method upon earth?—Oh! Lady Bellaston! there is nothing which I would not undertake for such a reward."—"I really know not," answered the lady, after a pause; and then pausing again, she cried out—"Upon my soul, I am at my wit's end on this girl's account.—If she can be preserved, something must be done immediately; and, as I say, nothing but violent methods will do.—If your lordship hath really this attachment to my cousin (and to do her justice, except in this silly inclination, of which she will soon see her folly, she is every way deserving), I think there may be one way, indeed it is a very disagreeable one, and what I am almost afraid to think of.—It requires a great spirit, I promise you." "I am not conscious, madam," said he, "of any defect there; nor am I, I hope, suspected of any such. It must be an egregious defect indeed, which could make me backward on this occasion." "Nay, my lord," answered she, "I am so far from doubting you, I am much more inclined to doubt my own courage; for I must run a monstrous risque. In short, I must place such a confidence in your honour as a wise woman will scarce ever

place in a man on any consideration." In this point likewise my lord very well satisfied her; for his reputation was extremely clear, and common fame did him no more than justice, in speaking well of him. "Well, then," said she, "my lord,—I—I vow, I can't bear the apprehension of it.—No, it must not be.—At least every other method shall be tried. Can you get rid of your engagements, and dine here to-day? Your lordship will have an opportunity of seeing a little more of Miss Western.—I promise you we have no time to lose. Here will be nobody but Lady Betty, and Miss Eagle, and Colonel Hampsted, and Tom Edwards; they will all go soon—and I shall be at home to nobody. Then your lordship may be a little more explicit. Nay, I will contrive some method to convince you of her attachment to this fellow." My lord made proper compliments, accepted the invitation, and then they parted to dress, it being now past three in the morning, or to reckon by the old style, in the afternoon.

### CHAPTER III

#### A FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE FOREGOING DESIGN

THOUGH the reader may have long since concluded Lady Bellaston to be a member (and no inconsiderable one) of the great world; she was in reality a very considerable member of the little world; by which appellation was distinguished a very worthy and honourable society which not long since flourished in this kingdom.

Among other good principles upon which this society was founded, there was one very remarkable; for, as it was a rule of an honourable club of heroes, who assembled at the close of the late war, that all the members should every day fight once at least; so 'twas in this, that every member should, within the twenty-four hours, tell at least one merry fib, which was to be propagated by all the brethren and sisterhood.

Many idle stories were told about this society, which from a certain quality may be, perhaps not unjustly, supposed to have come from the society themselves. As, that the devil was the president; and that he sat in person in an elbow-chair at the upper end of the table; but, upon very strict inquiry, I find there is not the least truth in any of those tales, and that the assembly consisted in reality of a set of very good sort of people, and the

fibbs which they propagated were of a harmless kind, and tended only to produce mirth and good humour.

Edwards was likewise a member of this comical society. To him therefore Lady Bellaston applied as a proper instrument for her purpose, and furnished him with a fib, which he was to vent whenever the lady gave him her cue; and this was not to be till the evening, when all the company but Lord Fellamar and himself were gone, and while they were engaged in a rubbers at whist.

To this time then, which was between seven and eight in the evening, we will convey our reader; when Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellamar, Miss Western, and Tom, being engaged at whist, and in the last game of their rubbers, Tom received his cue from Lady Bellaston, which was, "I protest, Tom, you are grown intolerable lately; you used to tell us all the news of the town, and now you know no more of the world than if you lived out of it."

Mr. Edwards then began as follows: "The fault is not mine, madam: it lies in the dulness of the age, that doth nothing worth talking of.—O la! though now I think on't, there hath a terrible accident befallen poor Colonel Wilcox.—Poor Ned.—You know him, my lord, everybody knows him; faith! I am very much concerned for him."

"What is it, pray?" says Lady Bellaston.

"Why, he hath killed a man this morning in a duel, that's all."

His lordship, who was not in the secret, asked gravely, whom he had killed? To which Edwards answered, "A young fellow we none of us know; a Somersetshire lad just came to town, one Jones his name is; a near relation of one Mr. Allworthy, of whom your lordship I believe hath heard. I saw the lad lie dead in a coffee-house.—Upon my soul, he is one of the finest corpses I ever saw in my life!"

Sophia, who had just begun to deal as Tom had mentioned that a man was killed, stopt her hand, and listened with attention (for all stories of that kind affected her), but no sooner had he arrived at the latter part of the story than she began to deal again; and having dealt three cards to one, and seven to another, and ten to a third, at last dropt the rest from her hand, and fell back in her chair.

The company behaved as usually on these occasions. The usual disturbance ensued, the usual assistance was summoned, and Sophia at last, as it is usual, returned again to life, and was soon after, at her earnest desire, led to her own apartment;

where, at my lord's request, Lady Bellaston acquainted her with the truth, attempted to carry it off as a jest of her own, and comforted her with repeated assurances, that neither his lordship nor Tom, though she had taught him the story, were in the true secret of the affair.

There was no farther evidence necessary to convince Lord Fellamar how justly the case had been represented to him by Lady Bellaston; and now, at her return into the room, a scheme was laid between these two noble persons, which, though it appeared in no very heinous light to his lordship (as he faithfully promised, and faithfully resolved too, to make the lady all the subsequent amends in his power by marriage), yet many of our readers, we doubt not, will see with just detestation.

The next evening at seven was appointed for the fatal purpose, when Lady Bellaston undertook that Sophia should be alone, and his lordship should be introduced to her. The whole family were to be regulated for the purpose, most of the servants dispatched out of the house; and for Mrs. Honour, who, to prevent suspicion, was to be left with her mistress till his lordship's arrival, Lady Bellaston herself was to engage her in an apartment as distant as possible from the scene of the intended mischief, and out of the hearing of Sophia.

Matters being thus agreed on, his lordship took his leave, and her ladyship retired to rest, highly pleased with a project, of which she had no reason to doubt the success, and which promised so effectually to remove Sophia from being any further obstruction to her amour with Jones, by a means of which she should never appear to be guilty, even if the fact appeared to the world; but this she made no doubt of preventing by huddling up a marriage, to which she thought the ravished Sophia would easily be brought to consent, and at which all the rest of her family would rejoice.

But affairs were not in so quiet a situation in the bosom of the other conspirator; his mind was tost in all the distracting anxiety so nobly described by Shakespear—

Between the acting of a dreadful thing,  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream;  
The genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council; and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection.—

Though the violence of his passion had made him eagerly

embrace the first hint of this design, especially as it came from a relation of the lady, yet when that friend to reflection, a pillow, had placed the action itself in all its natural black colours before his eyes, with all the consequences which must, and those which might probably attend it, his resolution began to abate, or rather indeed to go over to the other side; and after a long conflict, which lasted a whole night, between honour and appetite, the former at length prevailed, and he determined to wait on Lady Bellaston, and to relinquish the design.

Lady Bellaston was in bed, though very late in the morning, and Sophia sitting by her bed-side, when the servant acquainted her that Lord Fellamar was below in the parlour; upon which her ladyship desired him to stay, and that she would see him presently; but the servant was no sooner departed than poor Sophia began to intreat her cousin not to encourage the visits of that odious lord (so she called him, though a little unjustly) upon her account. "I see his design," said she; "for he made downright love to me yesterday morning; but as I am resolved never to admit it, I beg your ladyship not to leave us alone together any more, and to order the servants that, if he inquires for me, I may be always denied to him."

"La! child," says Lady Bellaston, "you country girls have nothing but sweethearts in your head; you fancy every man who is civil to you is making love. He is one of the most gallant young fellows about town, and I am convinced means no more than a little gallantry. Make love to you indeed! I wish with all my heart he would, and you must be an arrant mad woman to refuse him."

"But as I shall certainly be that mad woman," cries Sophia, "I hope his visits shall not be intruded upon me."

"O child!" said Lady Bellaston, "you need not be so fearful; if you resolve to run away with that Jones, I know no person who can hinder you."

"Upon my honour, madam," cries Sophia, "your ladyship injures me. I will never run away with any man; nor will I ever marry contrary to my father's inclinations."

"Well, Miss Western," said the lady, "if you are not in a humour to see company this morning, you may retire to your own apartment; for I am not frightened at his lordship, and must send for him up into my dressing-room."

Sophia thanked her ladyship, and withdrew; and presently afterwards Fellamar was admitted upstairs,

## CHAPTER IV

BY WHICH IT WILL APPEAR HOW DANGEROUS AN ADVOCATE A LADY IS WHEN SHE APPLIES HER ELOQUENCE TO AN ILL PURPOSE

WHEN Lady Bellaston heard the young lord's scruples, she treated them with the same disdain with which one of those sages of the law, called Newgate solicitors, treats the qualms of conscience in a young witness. "My dear lord," said she, "you certainly want a cordial. I must send to Lady Edgely for one of her best drams. Fie upon it! have more resolution. Are you frightened by the word rape? Or are you apprehensive—? Well! if the story of Helen was modern, I should think it unnatural. I mean the behaviour of Paris, not the fondness of the lady; for all women love a man of spirit. There is another story of the Sabine ladies—and that too, I thank heaven, is very antient. Your lordship, perhaps, will admire my reading; but I think Mr. Hook tells us, they made tolerable good wives afterwards. I fancy few of my married acquaintance were ravished by their husbands." "Nay, dear Lady Bellaston," cried he, "don't ridicule me in this manner." "Why, my good lord," answered she, "do you think any woman in England would not laugh at you in her heart, whatever prudery she might wear in her countenance?—You force me to use a strange kind of language, and to betray my sex most abominably; but I am contented with knowing my intentions are good, and that I am endeavouring to serve my cousin; for I think you will make her a husband notwithstanding this; or, upon my soul, I would not even persuade her to fling herself away upon an empty title. She should not upbraid me hereafter with having lost a man of spirit; for that his enemies allow this poor young fellow to be."

Let those who have had the satisfaction of hearing reflections of this kind from a wife or a mistress, declare whether they are at all sweetened by coming from a female tongue. Certain it is, they sunk deeper into his lordship than anything which Demosthenes or Cicero could have said on the occasion.

Lady Bellaston, perceiving she had fired the young lord's pride, began now, like a true orator, to rouse other passions to its assistance. "My lord," says she, in a graver voice, "you will be pleased to remember, you mentioned this matter to me first; for I would not appear to you in the light of one who is endeavouring to put off my cousin upon you. Fourscore thou-

sand pounds do not stand in need of an advocate to recommend them." "Nor doth Miss Western," said he, "require any recommendation from her fortune; for, in my opinion, no woman ever had half her charms." "Yes, yes, my lord," replied the lady, looking in the glass, "there have been women with more than half her charms, I assure you; not that I need lessen her on that account: she is a most delicious girl, that's certain; and within these few hours she will be in the arms of one, who surely doth not deserve her, though I will give him his due, I believe he is truly a man of spirit."

"I hope so, madam," said my lord; "though I must own he doth not deserve her; for, unless heaven or your ladyship disappoint me, she shall within that time be in mine."

"Well spoken, my lord," answered the lady; "I promise you no disappointment shall happen from my side; and within this week I am convinced I shall call your lordship my cousin in public."

The remainder of this scene consisted entirely of raptures, excuses, and compliments, very pleasant to have heard from the parties; but rather dull when related at second hand. Here, therefore, we shall put an end to this dialogue, and hasten to the fatal hour when everything was prepared for the destruction of poor Sophia.

But this being the most tragical matter in our whole history, we shall treat it in a chapter by itself.

## CHAPTER V

CONTAINING SOME MATTERS WHICH MAY AFFECT, AND OTHERS WHICH MAY SURPRIZE, THE READER

THE clock had now struck seven, and poor Sophia, alone and melancholy, sat reading a tragedy. It was the Fatal Marriage; and she was now come to that part where the poor distrest Isabella disposes of her wedding-ring.

Here the book dropt from her hand, and a shower of tears ran down into her bosom. In this situation she had continued a minute, when the door opened, and in came Lord Fellamar. Sophia started from her chair at his entrance; and his lordship advancing forwards, and making a low bow, said, "I am afraid, Miss Western, I break in upon you abruptly." "Indeed, my lord," says she, "I must own myself a little surprized at this

unexpected visit." "If this visit be unexpected, madam," answered Lord Fellamar, "my eyes must have been very faithless interpreters of my heart, when last I had the honour of seeing you; for surely you could not otherwise have hoped to detain my heart in your possession, without receiving a visit from its owner." Sophia, confused as she was, answered this bombast (and very properly I think) with a look of inconceivable disdain. My lord then made another and a longer speech of the same sort. Upon which Sophia, trembling, said, "Am I really to conceive your lordship to be out of your senses? Sure, my lord, there is no other excuse for such behaviour." "I am, indeed, madam, in the situation you suppose," cries his lordship; "and sure you will pardon the effects of a frenzy which you yourself have occasioned; for love hath so totally deprived me of reason, that I am scarce accountable for any of my actions." "Upon my word, my lord," said Sophia, "I neither understand your words nor your behaviour." "Suffer me then, madam," cries he, "at your feet to explain both, by laying open my soul to you, and declaring that I doat on you to the highest degree of distraction. O most adorable, most divine creature! what language can express the sentiments of my heart?" "I do assure you, my lord," said Sophia, "I shall not stay to hear any more of this." "Do not," cries he, "think of leaving me thus cruelly; could you know half the torments which I feel, that tender bosom must pity what those eyes have caused." Then fetching a deep sigh, and laying hold of her hand, he ran on for some minutes in a strain which would be little more pleasing to the reader than it was to the lady; and at last concluded with a declaration, "That if he was master of the world, he would lay it at her feet." Sophia then, forcibly pulling away her hand from his, answered with much spirit, "I promise you, sir, your world and its master I should spurn from me with equal contempt." She then offered to go; and Lord Fellamar, again laying hold of her hand, said, "Pardon me, my beloved angel, freedoms which nothing but despair could have tempted me to take.—Believe me, could I have had any hope that my title and fortune, neither of them inconsiderable, unless when compared with your worth, would have been accepted, I had, in the humblest manner, presented them to your acceptance.—But I cannot lose you.—By heaven, I will sooner part with my soul!—You are, you must, you shall be only mine." "My lord," says she, "I intreat you to desist from a vain pursuit; for, upon my honour, I will never hear you on this subject.

Let go my hand, my lord; for I am resolved to go from you this moment; nor will I ever see you more." "Then, madam," cries his lordship, "I must make the best use of this moment; for I cannot live, nor will I live without you."—"What do you mean, my lord?" said Sophia; "I will raise the family." "I have no fear, madam," answered he, "but of losing you, and that I am resolved to prevent, the only way which despair points to me."—He then caught her in his arms: upon which she screamed so loud, that she must have alarmed some one to her assistance, had not Lady Bellaston taken care to remove all ears.

But a more lucky circumstance happened for poor Sophia; another noise now broke forth, which almost drowned her cries; for now the whole house rang with, "Where is she? D—n me, I'll unkennel her this instant. Show me her chamber, I say. Where is my daughter? I know she's in the house, and I'll see her if she's above-ground. Show me where she is."—At which last words the door flew open, and in came Squire Western, with his parson and a set of myrmidons at his heels.

How miserable must have been the condition of poor Sophia, when the enraged voice of her father was welcome to her ears! Welcome indeed it was, and luckily did he come; for it was the only accident upon earth which could have preserved the peace of her mind from being for ever destroyed.

Sophia, notwithstanding her fright, presently knew her father's voice; and his lordship, notwithstanding his passion, knew the voice of reason, which peremptorily assured him, it was not now a time for the perpetration of his villany. Hearing, therefore, the voice approach, and hearing likewise whose it was (for as the squire more than once roared forth the word daughter, so Sophia, in the midst of her struggling, cried out upon her father), he thought proper to relinquish his prey, having only disordered her handkerchief, and with his rude lips committed violence on her lovely neck.

If the reader's imagination doth not assist me, I shall never be able to describe the situation of these two persons when Western came into the room. Sophia tottered into a chair, where she sat disordered, pale, breathless, bursting with indignation at Lord Fellamar; affrighted, and yet more rejoiced, at the arrival of her father.

His lordship sat down near her, with the bag of his wig hanging over one of his shoulders, the rest of his dress being somewhat disordered, and rather a greater proportion of linen than

is usual appearing at his bosom. As to the rest, he was amazed, affrighted, vexed, and ashamed.

As to Squire Western, he happened at this time to be overtaken by an enemy, which very frequently pursues, and seldom fails to overtake, most of the country gentlemen in this kingdom. He was, literally speaking, drunk; which circumstance, together with his natural impetuosity, could produce no other effect than his running immediately up to his daughter, upon whom he fell foul with his tongue in the most inveterate manner; nay, he had probably committed violence with his hands, had not the parson interposed, saying, "For heaven's sake, sir, animadvert that you are in the house of a great lady. Let me beg you to mitigate your wrath; it should minister a fulness of satisfaction that you have found your daughter; for as to revenge, it belongeth not unto us. I discern great contrition in the countenance of the young lady. I stand assured, if you will forgive her, she will repent her of all past offences, and return unto her duty."

The strength of the parson's arms had at first been of more service than the strength of his rhetoric. However, his last words wrought some effect, and the squire answered, "I'll forgee her if she wull ha' un. If wot ha' un, Sophy, I'll forgee thee all. Why dost unt speak? Shat ha' un! d—n me, shat ha' un! Why dost unt answer? Was ever such a stubborn tuoad?"

"Let me intreat you, sir, to be a little more moderate," said the parson; "you frighten the young lady so, that you deprive her of all power of utterance."

"Power of mine a—," answered the squire. "You take her part then, you do? A pretty parson, truly, to side with an undutiful child! Yes, yes, I will gee you a living with a pox. I'll gee un to the devil sooner."

"I humbly crave your pardon," said the parson; "I assure your worship I meant no such matter."

My Lady Bellaston now entered the room, and came up to the squire, who no sooner saw her, than, resolving to follow the instructions of his sister, he made her a very civil bow, in the rural manner, and paid her some of his best compliments. He then immediately proceeded to his complaints, and said, "There, my lady cousin; there stands the most undutiful child in the world; she hankers after a beggarly rascal, and won't marry one of the greatest matches in all England, that we have provided for her."

"Indeed, cousin Western," answered the lady, "I am per-

sueded you wrong my cousin. I am sure she hath a better understanding. I am convinced she will not refuse what she must be sensible is so much to her advantage."

This was a wilful mistake in Lady Bellaston, for she well knew whom Mr. Western meant; though perhaps she thought he would easily be reconciled to his lordship's proposals.

"Do you hear there," quoth the squire, "what her ladyship says? All your family are for the match. Come, Sophy, be a good girl, and be dutiful, and make your father happy."

"If my death will make you happy, sir," answered Sophia, "you will shortly be so."

"It's a lye, Sophy; it's a d—n'd lye, and you know it," said the squire.

"Indeed, Miss Western," said Lady Bellaston, "you injure your father; he hath nothing in view but your interest in this match; and I and all your friends must acknowledge the highest honour done to your family in the proposal."

"Ay, all of us," quoth the squire; "nay, it was no proposal of mine. She knows it was her aunt proposed it to me first.—Come, Sophy, once more let me beg you to be a good girl, and gee me your consent before your cousin."

"Let me give him your hand, cousin," said the lady. "It is the fashion now-a-days to dispense with time and long courtships."

"Pugh!" said the squire, "what signifies time; won't they have time enough to court afterwards? People may court very well after they have been a-bed together."

As Lord Fellamar was very well assured that he was meant by Lady Bellaston, so, never having heard nor suspected a word of Blifil, he made no doubt of his being meant by the father. Coming up, therefore, to the squire, he said, "Though I have not the honour, sir, of being personally known to you, yet, as I find I have the happiness to have my proposals accepted, let me intercede, sir, in behalf of the young lady, that she may not be more solicited at this time."

"You intercede, sir!" said the squire; "why, who the devil are you?"

"Sir, I am Lord Fellamar," answered he, "and am the happy man whom I hope you have done the honour of accepting for a son-in-law."

"You are a son of a b—," replied the squire, "for all your laced coat. You my son-in-law, and be d—n'd to you!"

"I shall take more from you, sir, than from any man,"



answered the lord; "but I must inform you that I am not used to hear such language without resentment."

"Resent my a——," quoth the squire. "Don't think I am afraid of such a fellow as thee art! because hast got a spit there dangling at thy side. Lay by your spit, and I'll give thee enough of meddling with what doth not belong to thee. I'll teach you to father-in-law me. I'll lick thy jacket."

"It's very well, sir," said my lord, "I shall make no disturbance before the ladies. I am very well satisfied. Your humble servant, sir; Lady Bellaston, your most obedient."

His lordship was no sooner gone, than Lady Bellaston, coming up to Mr. Western, said, "Bless me, sir, what have you done? You know not whom you have affronted; he is a nobleman of the first rank and fortune, and yesterday made proposals to your daughter; and such as I am sure you must accept with the highest pleasure."

"Answer for yourself, lady cousin," said the squire, "I will have nothing to do with any of your lords. My daughter shall have an honest country gentleman; I have pitched upon one for her—and she shall ha' un.—I am sorry for the trouble she hath given your ladyship with all my heart." Lady Bellaston made a civil speech upon the word trouble; to which the squire answered—"Why, that's kind—and I would do as much for your ladyship. To be sure relations should do for one another. So I wish your ladyship a good night.—Come, madam, you must go along with me by fair means, or I'll have you carried down to the coach."

Sophia said she would attend him without force; but begged to go in a chair, for she said she should not be able to ride any other way.

"Prithee," cries the squire, "wout unt persuade me canst not ride in a coach, wouldst? That's a pretty thing surely! No, no, I'll never let thee out of my sight any more till art married, that I promise thee." Sophia told him, she saw he was resolved to break her heart. "O break thy heart and be d—n'd," quoth he, "if a good husband will break it. I don't value a brass varden, not a halfpenny, of any undutiful b—— upon earth." He then took a violent hold of her hand; upon which the parson once more interfered, begging him to use gentle methods. At that the squire thundered out a curse, and bid the parson hold his tongue, saying, "At'nt in pulpit now? when art a got up there I never mind what dost say; but I won't be priest-ridden, nor taught how to behave myself by thee. I wish your ladyship

a good night. Come along, Sophy; be a good girl, and all shall be well. Shat ha' un, d—n me, shat ha' un!"

Mrs. Honour appeared below-stairs, and with a low curtesy to the squire offered to attend her mistress; but he pushed her away, saying, "Hold, madam, hold, you come no more near my house." "And will you take my maid away from me?" said Sophia. "Yes, indeed, madam, will I," cries the squire: "you need not fear being without a servant; I will get you another maid, and a better maid than this, who, I'd lay five pounds to a crown, is no more a maid than my grannum. No, no, Sophy, she shall contrive no more escapes, I promise you." He then packed up his daughter and the parson into the hackney coach, after which he mounted himself, and ordered it to drive to his lodgings. In the way thither he suffered Sophia to be quiet, and entertained himself with reading a lecture to the parson on good manners, and a proper behaviour to his betters.

It is possible he might not so easily have carried off his daughter from Lady Bellaston, had that good lady desired to have detained her; but, in reality, she was not a little pleased with the confinement into which Sophia was going; and as her project with Lord Fellamar had failed of success, she was well contented that other violent methods were now going to be used in favour of another man.

## CHAPTER VI

BY WHAT MEANS THE SQUIRE CAME TO DISCOVER HIS DAUGHTER

THOUGH the reader, in many histories, is obliged to digest much more unaccountable appearances than this of Mr. Western, without any satisfaction at all; yet, as we dearly love to oblige him whenever it is in our power, we shall now proceed to shew by what method the squire discovered where his daughter was.

In the third chapter, then, of the preceding book, we gave a hint (for it is not our custom to unfold at any time more than is necessary for the occasion) that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who was very desirous of reconciling her uncle and aunt Western, thought she had a probable opportunity, by the service of preserving Sophia from committing the same crime which had drawn on herself the anger of her family. After much deliberation, therefore, she resolved to inform her aunt Western where her cousin was, and accordingly she writ the following letter, which we shall give the reader at length, for more reasons than one.

"HONOURED MADAM,

"The occasion of my writing this will perhaps make a letter of mine agreeable to my dear aunt, for the sake of one of her nieces, though I have little reason to hope it will be so on the account of another.

"Without more apology, as I was coming to throw my unhappy self at your feet, I met, by the strangest accident in the world, my cousin Sophy, whose history you are better acquainted with than myself, though, alas! I know infinitely too much; enough indeed to satisfy me, that unless she is immediately prevented, she is in danger of running into the same fatal mischief, which, by foolishly and ignorantly refusing your most wise and prudent advice, I have unfortunately brought on myself.

"In short, I have seen the man, nay, I was most part of yesterday in his company, and a charming young fellow I promise you he is. By what accident he came acquainted with me is too tedious to tell you now; but I have this morning changed my lodgings to avoid him, lest he should by my means discover my cousin; for he doth not yet know where she is, and it is adviseable he should not, till my uncle hath secured her.—No time therefore is to be lost; and I need only inform you, that she is now with Lady Bellaston, whom I have seen, and who hath, I find, a design of concealing her from her family. You know, madam, she is a strange woman; but nothing could misbecome me more, than to presume to give any hint to one of your great understanding and great knowledge of the world, besides barely informing you of the matter of fact.

"I hope, madam, the care which I have shewn on this occasion for the good of my family, will recommend me again to the favour of a lady who hath always exerted so much zeal for the honour and true interest of us all; and that it may be a means of restoring me to your friendship, which hath made so great a part of my former, and is so necessary to my future happiness.

"I am,  
with the utmost respect,  
honoured madam,  
your most dutiful obliged niece,  
and most obedient humble servant,  
HARRIET FITZPATRICK."

Mrs. Western was now at her brother's house, where she had resided ever since the flight of Sophia, in order to administer

comfort to the poor squire in his affliction. Of this comfort, which she doled out to him in daily portions, we have formerly given a specimen.

She was now standing with her back to the fire, and, with a pinch of snuff in her hand, was dealing forth this daily allowance of comfort to the squire, while he smoaked his afternoon pipe, when she received the above letter; which she had no sooner read than she delivered it to him, saying, "There, sir, there is an account of your lost sheep. Fortune hath again restored her to you, and if you will be governed by my advice, it is possible you may yet preserve her."

The squire had no sooner read the letter than he leaped from his chair, threw his pipe into the fire, and gave a loud huzza for joy. He then summoned his servants, called for his boots, and ordered the Chevalier and several other horses to be saddled, and that parson Supple should be immediately sent for. Having done this, he turned to his sister, caught her in his arms, and gave her a close embrace, saying, "Zounds! you don't seem pleased; one would imagine you was sorry I have found the girl."

"Brother," answered she, "the deepest politicians, who see to the bottom, discover often a very different aspect of affairs, from what swims on the surface. It is true, indeed, things do look rather less desperate than they did formerly in Holland, when Lewis the Fourteenth was at the gates of Amsterdam; but there is a delicacy required in this matter, which you will pardon me, brother, if I suspect you want. There is a decorum to be used with a woman of figure, such as Lady Bellaston, brother, which requires a knowledge of the world, superior, I am afraid, to yours."

"Sister," cries the squire, "I know you have no opinion of my parts; but I'll shew you on this occasion who is a fool. Knowledge, quotha! I have not been in the country so long without having some knowledge of warrants and the law of the land. I know I may take my own wherever I can find it. Shew me my own daughter, and if I don't know how to come at her, I'll suffer you to call me a fool as long as I live. There be justices of peace in London, as well as in other places."

"I protest," cries she, "you make me tremble for the event of this matter, which, if you will proceed by my advice, you may bring to so good an issue. Do you really imagine, brother, that the house of a woman of figure is to be attacked by warrants and brutal justices of the peace? I will inform you how to proceed. As soon as you arrive in town, and have got yourself into a decent

dress (for indeed, brother, you have none at present fit to appear in), you must send your compliments to Lady Bellaston, and desire leave to wait on her. When you are admitted to her presence, as you certainly will be, and have told her your story, and have made proper use of my name (for I think you just know one another only by sight, though you are relations), I am confident she will withdraw her protection from my niece, who hath certainly imposed upon her. This is the only method.—Justices of peace, indeed! do you imagine any such event can arrive to a woman of figure in a civilised nation?"

"D—n their figures," cries the squire; "a pretty civilised nation, truly, where women are above the law. And what must I stand sending a parcel of compliments to a confounded whore, that keeps away a daughter from her own natural father? I tell you, sister, I am not so ignorant as you think me—I know you would have women above the law, but it is all a lye; I heard his lordship say at size, that no one is above the law. But this of yours is Hanover law, I suppose."

"Mr. Western," said she, "I think you daily improve in ignorance.—I protest you are grown an arrant bear."

"No more a bear than yourself, sister Western," said the squire.—"Pox! you may talk of your civility as you will, I am sure you never shew any to me. I am no bear, no, nor no dog neither, though I know somebody, that is something that begins with a b; but pox! I will show you I have got more good manners than some folks."

"Mr. Western," answered the lady, "you may say what you please, *je vous mesprise de tout mon cœur*. I shall not therefore be angry.—Besides, as my cousin, with that odious Irish name, justly says, I have that regard for the honour and true interest of my family, and that concern for my niece, who is a part of it, that I have resolved to go to town myself upon this occasion; for indeed, indeed, brother, you are not a fit minister to be employed at a polite court.—Greenland—Greenland should always be the scene of the tramontane negociation."

"I thank Heaven," cries the squire, "I don't understand you now. You are got to your Hanoverian linguo. However, I'll shew you I scorn to be behindhand in civility with you; and as you are not angry for what I have said, so I am not angry for what you have said. Indeed, I have always thought it a folly for relations to quarrel; and if they do now and then give a hasty word, why, people should give and take; for my part, I never bear malice; and I take it very kind of you to go up to

London; for I never was there but twice in my life, and then I did not stay above a fortnight at a time, and to be sure I can't be expected to know much of the streets and the folks in that time. I never denied that you know'd all these matters better than I. For me to dispute that would be all as one as for you to dispute the management of a pack of dogs, or the finding a hare sitting, with me."—"Which I promise you," says she, "I never will."—"Well, and I promise you," returned he, "that I never will dispute the t'other."

Here then a league was struck (to borrow a phrase from the lady) between the contending parties; and now the parson arriving, and the horses being ready, the squire departed, having promised his sister to follow her advice, and she prepared to follow him the next day.

But having communicated these matters to the parson on the road, they both agreed that the prescribed formalities might very well be dispensed with; and the squire, having changed his mind, proceeded in the manner we have already seen.

## CHAPTER VII

### IN WHICH VARIOUS MISFORTUNES BEFEL POOR JONES

AFFAIRS were in the aforesaid situation, when Mrs. Honour arrived at Mrs. Miller's, and called Jones out from the company, as we have before seen, with whom, when she found herself alone, she began as follows:—

"O, my dear sir! how shall I get spirits to tell you; you are undone, sir, and my poor lady's undone, and I am undone." "Hath anything happened to Sophia?" cries Jones, staring like a madman. "All that is bad," cries Honour: "Oh, I shall never get such another lady! Oh that I should ever live to see this day!" At these words Jones turned pale as ashes, trembled, and stammered; but Honour went on—"O! Mr. Jones, I have lost my lady for ever." "How? what! for Heaven's sake, tell me. O, my dear Sophia!" "You may well call her so," said Honour; "she was the dearest lady to me. I shall never have such another place."—"D—n your place!" cries Jones; "where is—what—what is become of my Sophia?" "Ay, to be sure," cries she, "servants may be d—n'd. It signifies nothing what becomes of them, though they are turned away, and ruined ever so much. To be sure they are not flesh and blood like other people. No, to

be sure, it signifies nothing what becomes of them." "If you have any pity, and compassion," cries Jones, "I beg you will instantly tell me what hath happened to Sophia?" "To be sure, I have more pity for you than you have for me," answered Honour; "I don't d—n you because you have lost the sweetest lady in the world. To be sure, you are worthy to be pitied, and I am worthy to be pitied too: for, to be sure, if ever there was a good mistress—" "What hath happened?" cries Jones, in almost a raving fit. "What?—What?" said Honour: "Why, the worst that could have happened both for you and for me.—Her father is come to town, and hath carried her away from us both." Here Jones fell on his knees in thanksgiving that it was no worse. "No worse!" repeated Honour; "what could be worse for either of us? He carried her off, swearing she should marry Mr. Blifil; that's for your comfort; and, for poor me, I am turned out of doors." "Indeed, Mrs. Honour," answered Jones, "you frightened me out of my wits. I imagined some most dreadful sudden accident had happened to Sophia; something, compared to which, even seeing her married to Blifil would be a trifle; but while there is life there are hopes, my dear Honour. Women, in this land of liberty, cannot be married by actual brutal force." "To be sure, sir," said she, "that's true. There may be some hopes for you; but alack-a-day! what hopes are there for poor me? And to be sure, sir, you must be sensible I suffer all this upon your account. All the quarrel the squire hath to me is for taking your part, as I have done, against Mr. Blifil." "Indeed, Mrs. Honour," answered he, "I am sensible of my obligations to you, and will leave nothing in my power undone to make you amends." "Alas! sir," said she, "what can make a servant amends for the loss of one place but the getting another altogether as good?" "Do not despair, Mrs. Honour," said Jones, "I hope to reinstate you again in the same." "Alack-a-day, sir," said she, "how can I flatter myself with such hopes when I know it is a thing impossible? for the squire is so set against me: and yet, if you should ever have my lady, as to be sure I now hopes heartily you will; for you are a generous, good-natured gentleman; and I am sure you loves her, and to be sure she loves you as dearly as her own soul; it is a matter in vain to deny it; because as why, everybody, that is in the least acquainted with my lady, must see it; for, poor dear lady, she can't dissemble: and if two people who loves one another a'n't happy, why who should be so? Happiness don't always depend upon what people has; besides, my lady has enough for both,

To be sure, therefore, as one may say, it would be all the pity in the world to keep two such lovers asunder; nay, I am convinced, for my part, you will meet together at last; for, if it is to be, there is no preventing it. If a marriage is made in heaven, all the justices of peace upon earth can't break it off. To be sure I wishes that parson Supple had but a little more spirit, to tell the squire of his wickedness in endeavouring to force his daughter contrary to her liking; but then his whole dependance is on the squire; and so the poor gentleman, though he is a very religious good sort of man, and talks of the badness of such doings behind the squire's back, yet he dares not say his soul is his own to his face. To be sure I never saw him make so bold as just now; I was afeard the squire would have struck him. I would not have your honour be melancholy, sir, nor despair; things may go better, as long as you are sure of my lady, and that I am certain you may be; for she never will be brought to consent to marry any other man. Indeed, I am terribly afeared the squire will do her a mischief in his passion, for he is a prodigious passionate gentleman; and I am afeared too the poor lady will be brought to break her heart, for she is as tender-hearted as a chicken. It is pity, methinks, she had not a little of my courage. If I was in love with a young man, and my father offered to lock me up, I'd tear his eyes out but I'd come at him; but then there's a great fortune in the case, which it is in her father's power either to give her or not; that, to be sure, may make some difference."

Whether Jones gave strict attention to all the foregoing harangue, or whether it was for want of any vacancy in the discourse, I cannot determine; but he never once attempted to answer, nor did she once stop till Partridge came running into the room, and informed him that the great lady was upon the stairs.

Nothing could equal the dilemma to which Jones was now reduced. Honour knew nothing of any acquaintance that subsisted between him and Lady Bellaston, and she was almost the last person in the world to whom he would have communicated it. In this hurry and distress, he took (as is common enough) the worst course, and, instead of exposing her to the lady, which would have been of little consequence, he chose to expose the lady to her; he therefore resolved to hide Honour, whom he had but just time to convey behind the bed, and to draw the curtains.

The hurry in which Jones had been all day engaged on account of his poor landlady and her family, the terrors occasioned by Mrs. Honour, and the confusion into which he was

thrown by the sudden arrival of Lady Bellaston, had altogether driven former thoughts out of his head; so that it never once occurred to his memory to act the part of a sick man; which, indeed, neither the gaiety of his dress, nor the freshness of his countenance, would have at all supported.

He received her ladyship, therefore, rather agreeably to her desires than to her expectations, with all the good humour he could muster in his countenance, and without any real or affected appearance of the least disorder.

Lady Bellaston no sooner entered the room, than she squatted herself down on the bed: "So, my dear Jones," said she, "you find nothing can detain me long from you. Perhaps I ought to be angry with you, that I have neither seen nor heard from you all day; for I perceive your distemper would have suffered you to come abroad: nay, I suppose you have not sat in your chamber all day drest up like a fine lady to see company after a lying-in; but, however, don't think I intend to scold you; for I never will give you an excuse for the cold behaviour of a husband, by putting on the ill-humour of a wife."

"Nay, Lady Bellaston," said Jones, "I am sure your ladyship will not upbraid me with neglect of duty, when I only waited for orders. Who, my dear creature, hath reason to complain? Who missed an appointment, last night, and left an unhappy man to expect, and wish, and sigh, and languish?"

"Do not mention it, my dear Mr. Jones," cried she. "If you knew the occasion, you would pity me. In short, it is impossible to conceive what women of condition are obliged to suffer from the impertinence of fools, in order to keep up the farce of the world. I am glad, however, all your languishing and wishing have done you no harm; for you never looked better in your life. Upon my faith! Jones, you might at this instant sit for the picture of Adonis."

There are certain words of provocation which men of honour hold can properly be answered only by a blow. Among lovers possibly there may be some expressions which can be answered only by a kiss. Now the compliment which Lady Bellaston now made Jones seems to be of this kind, especially as it was attended with a look, in which the lady conveyed more soft ideas than it was possible to express with her tongue.

Jones was certainly at this instant in one of the most disagreeable and distressed situations imaginable; for, to carry on the comparison we made use of before, though the provocation was given by the lady, Jones could not receive satisfaction, nor so

much as offer to ask it, in the presence of a third person; seconds in this kind of duels not being according to the law of arms. As this objection did not occur to Lady Bellaston, who was ignorant of any other woman being there but herself, she waited some time in great astonishment for an answer from Jones, who, conscious of the ridiculous figure he made, stood at a distance, and, not daring to give the proper answer, gave none at all. Nothing can be imagined more comic, nor yet more tragical, than this scene would have been if it had lasted much longer. The lady had already changed colour two or three times; had got up from the bed and sat down again, while Jones was wishing the ground to sink under him, or the house to fall on his head, when an odd accident freed him from an embarrassment, out of which neither the eloquence of a Cicero, nor the politics of a Machiavel, could have delivered him, without utter disgrace.

This was no other than the arrival of young Nightingale, dead drunk; or rather in that state of drunkenness which deprives men of the use of their reason, without depriving them of the use of their limbs.

Mrs. Miller and her daughters were in bed, and Partridge was smocking his pipe by the kitchen fire; so that he arrived at Mr. Jones's chamber-door without any interruption. This he burst open, and was entering without any ceremony, when Jones started from his seat and ran to oppose him, which he did so effectually, that Nightingale never came far enough within the door to see who was sitting on the bed.

Nightingale had in reality mistaken Jones's apartment for that in which himself had lodged; he therefore strongly insisted on coming in, often swearing that he would not be kept from his own bed. Jones, however, prevailed over him, and delivered him into the hands of Partridge, whom the noise on the stairs soon summoned to his master's assistance.

And now Jones was unwillingly obliged to return to his own apartment, where at the very instant of his entrance he heard Lady Bellaston venting an exclamation, though not a very loud one; and at the same time saw her flinging herself into a chair in a vast agitation, which in a lady of tender constitution would have been an hysteric fit.

In reality the lady, frightened with the struggle between the two men, of which she did not know what would be the issue, as she heard Nightingale swear many oaths he would come to his own bed, attempted to retire to her known place of hiding, which to her great confusion she found already occupied by another.

"Is this usage to be borne, Mr. Jones?" cries the lady.—"Basest of men!—What wretch is this to whom you have exposed me?" "Wretch!" cries Honour, bursting in a violent rage from her place of concealment—"Marry come up!—Wretch forsooth?—as poor a wretch as I am, I am honest; this is more than some folks who are richer can say."

Jones, instead of applying himself directly to take off the edge of Mrs. Honour's resentment, as a more experienced gallant would have done, fell to cursing his stars, and lamenting himself as the most unfortunate man in the world; and presently after, addressing himself to Lady Bellaston, he fell to some very absurd protestations of innocence. By this time the lady, having recovered the use of her reason, which she had as ready as any woman in the world, especially on such occasions, calmly replied: "Sir, you need make no apologies, I see now who the person is; I did not at first know Mrs. Honour: but now I do, I can suspect nothing wrong between her and you; and I am sure she is a woman of too good sense to put any wrong constructions upon my visit to you; I have been always her friend, and it may be in my power to be much more hereafter."

Mrs. Honour was altogether as placable as she was passionate. Hearing, therefore, Lady Bellaston assume the soft tone, she likewise softened hers.—"I'm sure, madam," says she, "I have been always ready to acknowledge your ladyship's friendships to me; sure I never had so good a friend as your ladyship—and to be sure, now I see it is your ladyship that I spoke to, I could almost bite my tongue off for very mad.—I constructions upon your ladyship—to be sure it doth not become a servant as I am to think about such a great lady—I mean I was a servant: for indeed I am nobody's servant now, the more miserable wretch is me.—I have lost the best mistress—" Here Honour thought fit to produce a shower of tears.—"Don't cry, child," says the good lady; "ways perhaps may be found to make you amends. Come to me to-morrow morning." She then took up her fan which lay on the ground, and without even looking at Jones, walked very majestically out of the room; there being a kind of dignity in the impudence of women of quality, which their inferiors vainly aspire to attain to in circumstances of this nature.

Jones followed her downstairs, often offering her his hand, which she absolutely refused him, and got into her chair without taking any notice of him, as he stood bowing before her.

At his return upstairs, a long dialogue past between him and

Mrs. Honour, while she was adjusting herself after the discomposure she had undergone. The subject of this was his infidelity to her young lady; on which she enlarged with great bitterness; but Jones at last found means to reconcile her, and not only so, but to obtain a promise of most inviolable secrecy, and that she would the next morning endeavour to find out Sophia, and bring him a further account of the proceedings of the squire.

Thus ended this unfortunate adventure to the satisfaction only of Mrs. Honour; for a secret (as some of my readers will perhaps acknowledge from experience) is often a very valuable possession: and that not only to those who faithfully keep it, but sometimes to such as whisper it about till it come to the ears of every one, except the ignorant person who pays for the supposed concealing of what is publicly known.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SHORT AND SWEET

NOTWITHSTANDING all the obligations she had received from Jones, Mrs. Miller could not forbear in the morning some gentle remonstrances for the hurricane which had happened the preceding night in his chamber. These were, however, so gentle and so friendly, professing, and indeed truly, to aim at nothing more than the real good of Mr. Jones himself, that he, far from being offended, thankfully received the admonition of the good woman, expressed much concern for what had past, excused it as well as he could, and promised never more to bring the same disturbances into the house.

But though Mrs. Miller did not refrain from a short expostulation in private at their first meeting, yet the occasion of his being summoned downstairs that morning was of a much agreeable kind, being indeed to perform the office of a father to Miss Nancy, and to give her in wedlock to Mr. Nightingale, who was now ready drest, and full as sober as many of my readers will think a man ought to be who receives a wife in so imprudent a manner.

And here perhaps it may be proper to account for the escape which this young gentleman had made from his uncle, and for his appearance in the condition in which we have seen him the night before.

Now when the uncle had arrived at his lodgings with his nephew, partly to indulge his own inclinations (for he dearly

loved his bottle), and partly to disqualify his nephew from the immediate execution of his purpose, he ordered wine to be set on the table; with which he so briskly plied the young gentleman, that this latter, who, though not much used to drinking, did not detest it so as to be guilty of disobedience or want of complacency by refusing, was soon completely finished.

Just as the uncle had obtained this victory, and was preparing a bed for his nephew, a messenger arrived with a piece of news, which so entirely disconcerted and shocked him, that he in a moment lost all consideration for his nephew, and his whole mind became entirely taken up with his own concerns.

This sudden and afflicting news was no less than that his daughter had taken the opportunity of almost the first moment of his absence, and had gone off with a neighbouring young clergyman; against whom, though her father could have had but one objection, namely, that he was worth nothing, yet she had never thought proper to communicate her amour even to that father; and so artfully had she managed, that it had never been once suspected by any, till now that it was consummated.

Old Mr. Nightingale no sooner received this account, than in the utmost confusion he ordered a post-chaise to be instantly got ready, and, having recommended his nephew to the care of a servant, he directly left the house, scarce knowing what he did, nor whither he went.

The uncle thus departed, when the servant came to attend the nephew to bed, had waked him for that purpose, and had at last made him sensible that his uncle was gone, he, instead of accepting the kind offices tendered him, insisted on a chair being called; with this the servant, who had received no strict orders to the contrary, readily complied; and, thus being conducted back to the house of Mrs. Miller, he had staggered up to Mr. Jones's chamber, as hath been before recounted.

This bar of the uncle being now removed (though young Nightingale knew not as yet in what manner), and all parties being quickly ready, the mother, Mr. Jones, Mr. Nightingale, and his love, stepped into a hackney-coach, which conveyed them to Doctors' Commons; where Miss Nancy was, in vulgar language, soon made an honest woman, and the poor mother became, in the purest sense of the word, one of the happiest of all human beings.

And now Mr. Jones, having seen his good offices to that poor woman and her family brought to a happy conclusion, began to apply himself to his own concerns; but here, lest many of my

readers should censure his folly for thus troubling himself with the affairs of others, and lest some few should think he acted more disinterestedly than indeed he did, we think proper to assure our reader, that he was so far from being unconcerned in this matter, that he had indeed a very considerable interest in bringing it to that final consummation.

To explain this seeming paradox at once, he was one who could truly say with him in Terence, *Homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto*. He was never an indifferent spectator of the misery or happiness of any one; and he felt either the one or the other in greater proportion as he himself contributed to either. He could not, therefore, be the instrument of raising a whole family from the lowest state of wretchedness to the highest pitch of joy without conveying great felicity to himself; more, perhaps, than worldly men often purchase to themselves by undergoing the most severe labour, and often by wading through the deepest iniquity.

Those readers who are of the same complexion with him will, perhaps, think this short chapter contains aundance of matter; while others may probably wish, short as it is, that it had been totally spared as impertinent to the main design, which I suppose they conclude is to bring Mr. Jones to the gallows, or, if possible, to a more deplorable catastrophe.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONTAINING LOVE-LETTERS OF SEVERAL SORTS

MR. JONES, at his return home, found the following letters lying on his table, which he luckily opened in the order they were sent.

#### LETTER I

“Surely I am under some strange infatuation; I cannot keep my resolutions a moment, however strongly made or justly founded. Last night I resolved never to see you more; this morning I am willing to hear if you can, as you say, clear up this affair. And yet I know that to be impossible. I have said everything to myself which you can invent.—Perhaps not. Perhaps your invention is stronger. Come to me, therefore, the moment you receive this. If you can forge an excuse, I almost promise you to believe it. Betrayed too—I will think no more.—Come to me directly.—This is the third letter I have

writ, the two former are burnt—I am almost inclined to burn this too—I wish I may preserve my senses.—Come to me presently.”

## LETTER II

“If you ever expect to be forgiven, or even suffered within my doors, come to me this instant.”

## LETTER III

“I now find you was not at home when my notes came to your lodgings. The moment you receive this let me see you;—I shall not stir out; nor shall anybody be let in but yourself. Sure nothing can detain you long.”

Jones had just read over these three billets, when Mr. Nightingale came into the room. “Well, Tom,” said he, “any news from Lady Bellaston, after last night’s adventure?” (for it was now no secret to any one in that house who the lady was). “The Lady Bellaston?” answered Jones very gravely.—“Nay, dear Tom,” cries Nightingale, “don’t be so reserved to your friends. Though I was too drunk to see her last night, I saw her at the masquerade. Do you think I am ignorant who the queen of the fairies is?” “And did you really then know the lady at the masquerade?” said Jones. “Yes, upon my soul, did I,” said Nightingale, “and have given you twenty hints of it since, though you seemed always so tender on that point, that I would not speak plainly. I fancy, my friend, by your extreme nicety in this matter, you are not so well acquainted with the character of the lady as with her person. Don’t be angry, Tom, but upon my honour, you are not the first young fellow she hath debauched. Her reputation is in no danger, believe me.”

Though Jones had no reason to imagine the lady to have been of the vestal kind when his amour began; yet, as he was thoroughly ignorant of the town, and had very little acquaintance in it, he had no knowledge of that character which is vulgarly called a demirep; that is to say, a woman who intrigues with every man she likes, under the name and appearance of virtue; and who, though some over-nice ladies will not be seen with her, is visited (as they term it) by the whole town, in short, whom everybody knows to be what nobody calls her.

When he found, therefore, that Nightingale was perfectly acquainted with his intrigue, and began to suspect that so scrupulous a delicacy as he had hitherto observed was not quite

necessary on the occasion, he gave a latitude to his friend’s tongue, and desired him to speak plainly what he knew, or had ever heard of the lady.

Nightingale, who, in many other instances, was rather too effeminate in his disposition, had a pretty strong inclination to tittle-tattle. He had no sooner, therefore, received a full liberty of speaking from Jones, than he entered upon a long narrative concerning the lady; which, as it contained many particulars highly to her dishonour, we have too great a tenderness for all women of condition to repeat. We would cautiously avoid giving an opportunity to the future commentators on our works, of making any malicious application, and of forcing us to be, against our will, the author of scandal, which never entered into our head.

Jones, having very attentively heard all that Nightingale had to say, fetched a deep sigh; which the other, observing, cried, “Heyday! why, thou art not in love, I hope! Had I imagined my stories would have affected you, I promise you should never have heard them.” “O my dear friend!” cries Jones, “I am so entangled with this woman, that I know not how to extricate myself. In love, indeed! no, my friend, but I am under obligations to her, and very great ones. Since you know so much, I will be very explicit with you. It is owing, perhaps, solely to her, that I have not, before this, wanted a bit of bread. How can I possibly desert such a woman? and yet I must desert her, or be guilty of the blackest treachery to one who deserves infinitely better of me than she can; a woman, my Nightingale, for whom I have a passion which few can have an idea of. I am half distracted with doubts how to act.” “And is this other, pray, an honourable mistress?” cries Nightingale. “Honourable!” answered Jones; “no breath ever yet durst sully her reputation. The sweetest air is not purer, the limpid stream not clearer, than her honour. She is all over, both in mind and body, consummate perfection. She is the most beautiful creature in the universe: and yet she is mistress of such noble elevated qualities, that, though she is never from my thoughts, I scarce ever think of her beauty but when I see it.”—“And can you, my good friend,” cries Nightingale, “with such an engagement as this upon your hands, hesitate a moment about quitting such a—” “Hold,” said Jones, “no more abuse of her: I detest the thought of ingratitude.” “Pooh!” answered the other, “you are not the first upon whom she hath conferred obligations of this kind. She is remarkably liberal where she likes; though, let me tell you, her favours are so prudently bestowed, that



they should rather raise a man's vanity than his gratitude." In short, Nightingale proceeded so far on this head, and told his friend so many stories of the lady, which he swore to the truth of, that he entirely removed all esteem for her from the breast of Jones; and his gratitude was lessened in proportion. Indeed, he began to look on all the favours he had received rather as wages than benefits, which depreciated not only her, but himself too in his own conceit, and put him quite out of humour with both. From this disgust, his mind, by a natural transition, turned towards Sophia; her virtue, her purity, her love to him, her sufferings on his account, filled all his thoughts, and made his commerce with Lady Bellaston appear still more odious. The result of all was, that, though his turning himself out of her service, in which light he now saw his affair with her, would be the loss of his bread; yet he determined to quit her, if he could but find a handsome pretence: which being communicated to his friend, Nightingale considered a little, and then said, "I have it, my boy! I have found out a sure method; propose marriage to her, and I would venture hanging upon the success." "Marriage?" cries Jones. "Ay, propose marriage," answered Nightingale, "and she will declare off in a moment. I knew a young fellow whom she kept formerly, who made the offer to her in earnest, and was presently turned off for his pains."

Jones declared he could not venture the experiment. "Perhaps," said he, "she may be less shocked at this proposal from one man than from another. And if she should take me at my word, where am I then? caught in my own trap, and undone for ever." "No," answered Nightingale, "not if I can give you an expedient by which you may at any time get out of the trap."—"What expedient can that be?" replied Jones. "This," answered Nightingale. "The young fellow I mentioned, who is one of the most intimate acquaintances I have in the world, is so angry with her for some ill offices she hath since done him, that I am sure he would, without any difficulty, give you a sight of her letters; upon which you may decently break with her; and declare off before the knot is tyed, if she should really be willing to tie it, which I am convinced she will not."

After some hesitation, Jones, upon the strength of this assurance, consented; but, as he swore he wanted the confidence to propose the matter to her face, he wrote the following letter, which Nightingale dictated:—

"MADAM,

"I am extremely concerned, that, by an unfortunate engagement abroad, I should have missed receiving the honour of your ladyship's commands the moment they came; and the delay which I must now suffer of vindicating myself to your ladyship greatly adds to this misfortune. O, Lady Bellaston! what a terror have I been in, for fear your reputation should be exposed by these perverse accidents! There is one only way to secure it. I need not name what that is. Only permit me to say, that as your honour is as dear to me as my own, so my sole ambition is to have the glory of laying my liberty at your feet; and believe me when I assure you, I can never be made completely happy, without you generously bestow on me a legal right of calling you mine for ever.—I am,

madam,  
with most profound respect,  
your ladyship's most obliged,  
obedient, humble servant,  
THOMAS JONES."

To this she presently returned the following answer:

"SIR,

"When I read over your serious epistle, I could, from its coldness and formality, have sworn that you already had the legal right you mention; nay, that we had for many years composed that monstrous animal a husband and wife. Do you really then imagine me a fool? or do you fancy yourself capable of so entirely persuading me out of my senses, that I should deliver my whole fortune into your power, in order to enable you to support your pleasures at my expense? Are these the proofs of love which I expected? Is this the return for——? but I scorn to upbraid you, and am in great admiration of your profound respect.

"P.S. I am prevented from revising:—Perhaps I have said more than I meant.—Come to me at eight this evening."

Jones, by the advice of his privy-council, replied:

"MADAM,

"It is impossible to express how much I am shocked at the suspicion you entertain of me. Can Lady Bellaston have conferred favours on a man whom she could believe capable of so base a design? or can she treat the most solemn tie of love with contempt? Can you imagine, madam, that if the violence

of my passion, in an unguarded moment, overcame the tenderness which I have for your honour, I would think of indulging myself in the continuance of an intercourse which could not possibly escape long the notice of the world; and which, when discovered, must prove so fatal to your reputation? If such be your opinion of me, I must pray for a sudden opportunity of returning those pecuniary obligations, which I have been so unfortunate to receive at your hands; and for those of a more tender kind, I shall ever remain, &c." And so concluded in the very words with which he had concluded the former letter.

The lady answered as follows:

"I see you are a villain! and I despise you from my soul. If you come here I shall not be at home."

Though Jones was well satisfied with his deliverance from a thralldom which those who have ever experienced it will, I apprehend, allow to be none of the lightest, he was not, however, perfectly easy in his mind. There was in this scheme too much of fallacy to satisfy one who utterly detested every species of falshood or dishonesty: nor would he, indeed, have submitted to put it in practice, had he not been involved in a distressful situation, where he was obliged to be guilty of some dishonour, either to the one lady or the other; and surely the reader will allow, that every good principle, as well as love, pleaded strongly in favour of Sophia.

Nightingale highly exulted in the success of his stratagem, upon which he received many thanks and much applause from his friend. He answered, "Dear Tom, we have conferred very different obligations on each other. To me you owe the regaining your liberty; to you I owe the loss of mine. But if you are as happy in the one instance as I am in the other, I promise you we are the two happiest fellows in England."

The two gentlemen were now summoned down to dinner, where Mrs. Miller, who performed herself the office of cook, had exerted her best talents to celebrate the wedding of her daughter. This joyful circumstance she ascribed principally to the friendly behaviour of Jones; her whole soul was fired with gratitude towards him, and all her looks, words, and actions, were so busied in expressing it, that her daughter, and even her new son-in-law, were very little objects of her consideration.

Dinner was just ended when Mrs. Miller received a letter; but as we have had letters enow in this chapter, we shall communicate its contents in our next.

## CHAPTER X

CONSISTING PARTLY OF FACTS, AND PARTLY OF OBSERVATIONS  
UPON THEM

THE letter, then, which arrived at the end of the preceding chapter was from Mr. Allworthy, and the purport of it was, his intention to come immediately to town, with his nephew Blifil, and a desire to be accommodated with his usual lodgings, which were the first floor for himself, and the second for his nephew.

The cheerfulness which had before displayed itself in the countenance of the poor woman was a little clouded on this occasion. This news did indeed a good deal disconcert her. To requite so disinterested a match with her daughter, by presently turning her new son-in-law out of doors, appeared to her very unjustifiable on the one hand; and on the other, she could scarce bear the thoughts of making any excuse to Mr. Allworthy, after all the obligations received from him, for depriving him of lodgings which were indeed strictly his due; for that gentleman, in conferring all his numberless benefits on others, acted by a rule diametrically opposite to what is practised by most generous people. He contrived, on all occasions, to hide his beneficence, not only from the world, but even from the object of it. He constantly used the words Lend and Pay, instead of Give; and by every other method he could invent, always lessened with his tongue the favours he conferred, while he was heaping them with both hands. When he settled the annuity of £50 a year therefore on Mrs. Miller, he told her, "it was in consideration of always having her first-floor when he was in town (which he scarce ever intended to be), but that she might let it at any other time, for that he would always send her a month's warning." He was now, however, hurried to town so suddenly, that he had no opportunity of giving such notice; and this hurry probably prevented him, when he wrote for his lodgings, adding, if they were then empty; for he would most certainly have been well satisfied to have relinquished them, on a less sufficient excuse than what Mrs. Miller could now have made.

But there are a sort of persons, who, as Prior excellently well remarks, direct their conduct by something

Beyond the fix'd and settled rules  
Of vice and virtue in the schools,  
Beyond the letter of the law.

To these it is so far from being sufficient that their defence would acquit them at the Old Bailey, that they are not even contented, though conscience, the severest of all judges, should discharge them. Nothing short of the fair and honourable will satisfy the delicacy of their minds; and if any of their actions fall short of this mark, they mope and pine, are as uneasy and restless as a murderer, who is afraid of a ghost, or of the hangman.

Mrs. Miller was one of these. She could not conceal her uneasiness at this letter; with the contents of which she had no sooner acquainted the company, and given some hints of her distress, than Jones, her good angel, presently relieved her anxiety. "As for myself, madam," said he, "my lodging is at your service at a moment's warning; and Mr. Nightingale, I am sure, as he cannot yet prepare a house fit to receive his lady, will consent to return to his new lodging, whither Mrs. Nightingale will certainly consent to go." With which proposal both husband and wife agreed.

The reader will easily believe, that the cheeks of Mrs. Miller began again to glow with additional gratitude to Jones; but, perhaps, it may be more difficult to persuade him, that Mr. Jones having in his last speech called her daughter Mrs. Nightingale (it being the first time that agreeable sound had ever reached her ears), gave the fond mother more satisfaction, and warmed her heart more towards Jones, than his having dissipated her present anxiety.

The next day was then appointed for the removal of the new-married couple, and of Mr. Jones, who was likewise to be provided for in the same house with his friend. And now the serenity of the company was again restored, and they past the day in the utmost cheerfulness, all except Jones, who, though he outwardly accompanied the rest in their mirth, felt many a bitter pang on the account of his Sophia, which were not a little heightened by the news of Mr. Blifil's coming to town (for he clearly saw the intention of his journey); and what greatly aggravated his concern was, that Mrs. Honour, who had promised to inquire after Sophia, and to make her report to him early the next evening, had disappointed him.

In the situation that he and his mistress were in at this time, there were scarce any grounds for him to hope that he should hear any good news; yet he was as impatient to see Mrs. Honour as if he had expected she would bring him a letter with an assignation in it from Sophia, and bore the disappointment as ill.

Whether this impatience arose from that natural weakness of the human mind, which makes it desirous to know the worst, and renders uncertainty the most intolerable of pains; or whether he still flattered himself with some secret hopes, we will not determine. But that it might be the last, whoever has loved cannot but know. For of all the powers exercised by this passion over our minds, one of the most wonderful is that of supporting hope in the midst of despair. Difficulties, improbabilities, nay, impossibilities, are quite overlooked by it; so that to any man extremely in love, may be applied what Addison says of Cæsar,

The Alps, and Pyrenæans, sink before him!

Yet it is equally true, that the same passion will sometimes make mountains of molehills, and produce despair in the midst of hope; but these cold fits last not long in good constitutions. Which temper Jones was now in, we leave the reader to guess, having no exact information about it; but this is certain, that he had spent two hours in expectation, when, being unable any longer to conceal his uneasiness, he retired to his room; where his anxiety had almost made him frantick, when the following letter was brought him from Mrs. Honour, with which we shall present the reader *verbatim et literatim*.

"SIR,

"I shud sartenly haf kaled on you a cordin too mi prommiss haddunt itt bin that hur lashipp prevent mee; for to bee sur, Sir, you nose very well that evere persun must luk furst at ome, and sartenly such anuther offar mite not have ever hapned, so as I shud ave bin justly to blam, had I not excepted of it when her lashipp was so veri kind as to offar to mak mee hur one uman without mi ever askin any such thing, to be sur shee is won of thee best ladis in thee wurd, and pepil who sase to the kontrari must bee veri wiket pepil in thare harts. To bee sur if ever I ave sad any thing of that kine it as bin thru ignorens, and I am hartili sorri for it. I nose your onur to be a genteelman of more onur and onesty, if I ever said ani such thing, to repete it to hurt a pore servant that as alwais add thee gratest respect in thee wurd for ure onur. To be sur won shud kepe wons tung within wons teeth, for no boddi nose what may hapen; and to bee sur if ani boddi ad tolde mee yesterday, that I shud haf ben in so gud a plase to day, I shud not haf beleaved it; for to be sur I never was a dremd of any such thing, nor shud I ever have soft

after ani other bodi's plase; but as her lashipp was so kine of her one a cord too give it mee without askin, to be sur Mrs. Etoff herself, nor no other boddi can blam mee for exceptin such a thing when it fals in mi waye. I beg ure Onur not to menshion ani thing of what I haf sad, for I wish ure Onur all thee gud luk in the wurd; and I don't cuestion butt thatt u will haf Madam Sofia in the end; butt ass to miself ure onur nose I kant bee of ani farder sarvis to u in that matar, nou bein under thee cumand off anuther parson, and nott mi one mistress, I begg ure Onur to say nothing of what past, and belive me to be, sir, ure Onur's umble servant to cumand till deth,

"HONOUR BLACKMORE."

Various were the conjectures which Jones entertained on this step of Lady Bellaston; who, in reality, had little farther design than to secure within her own house the repository of a secret, which she chose should make no farther progress than it had made already; but mostly, she desired to keep it from the ears of Sophia; for though that young lady was almost the only one who would never have repeated it again, her ladyship could not persuade herself of this; since, as she now hated poor Sophia with most implacable hatred, she conceived a reciprocal hatred to herself to be lodged in the tender breast of our heroine, where no such passion had ever yet found an entrance.

While Jones was terrifying himself with the apprehension of a thousand dreadful machinations, and deep political designs, which he imagined to be at the bottom of the promotion of Honour, Fortune, who hitherto seems to have been an utter enemy to his match with Sophia, tried a new method to put a final end to it, by throwing a temptation in his way, which in his present desperate situation it seemed unlikely he should be able to resist.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONTAINING CURIOUS, BUT NOT UNPRECEDENTED MATTER

THERE was a lady, one Mrs. Hunt, who had often seen Jones at the house where he lodged, being intimately acquainted with the women there, and indeed a very great friend to Mrs. Miller. Her age was about thirty, for she owned six-and-twenty; her face and person very good, only inclining a little too much to be fat. She had been married young by her relations to an old Turkey

merchant, who, having got a great fortune, had left off trade. With him she lived without reproach, but not without pain, in a state of great self-denial, for about twelve years; and her virtue was rewarded by his dying and leaving her very rich. The first year of her widowhood was just at an end, and she had past it in a good deal of retirement, seeing only a few particular friends, and dividing her time between her devotions and novels, of which she was always extremely fond. Very good health, a very warm constitution, and a good deal of religion, made it absolutely necessary for her to marry again; and she resolved to please herself in her second husband, as she had done her friends in the first. From her the following billet was brought to Jones:—

"SIR,

"From the first day I saw you, I doubt my eyes have told you too plainly that you were not indifferent to me; but neither my tongue nor my hand should have ever avowed it, had not the ladies of the family where you are lodged given me such a character of you, and told me such proofs of your virtue and goodness, as convince me you are not only the most agreeable, but the most worthy of men. I have also the satisfaction to hear from them, that neither my person, understanding, or character, are disagreeable to you. I have a fortune sufficient to make us both happy, but which cannot make me so without you. In thus disposing of myself, I know I shall incur the censure of the world; but if I did not love you more than I fear the world, I should not be worthy of you. One only difficulty stops me; I am informed you are engaged in a commerce of gallantry with a woman of fashion. If you think it worth while to sacrifice that to the possession of me, I am yours; if not, forget my weakness, and let this remain an eternal secret between you and

"ARABELLA HUNT."

At the reading of this, Jones was put into a violent flutter. His fortune was then at a very low ebb, the source being stopt from which hitherto he had been supplied. Of all he had received from Lady Bellaston, not above five guineas remained; and that very morning he had been dunned by a tradesman for twice that sum. His honourable mistress was in the hands of her father, and he had scarce any hopes ever to get her out of them again. To be subsisted at her expense, from that little fortune she had independent of her father, went much against the delicacy both of his pride and his love. This lady's fortune would have been

exceeding convenient to him, and he could have no objection to her in any respect. On the contrary, he liked her as well as he did any woman except Sophia. But to abandon Sophia, and marry another, that was impossible; he could not think of it upon any account. Yet why should he not, since it was plain she could not be his? Would it not be kinder to her, than to continue longer engaged to a hopeless passion for him? Ought he not to do so in friendship to her? This notion prevailed some moments, and he had almost determined to be false to her from a high point of honour: but that refinement was not able to stand very long against the voice of nature, which cried in his heart that such friendship was treason to love. At last he called for pen, ink, and paper, and writ as follows to Mrs. Hunt:—

“MADAM,

“It would be but a poor return to the favour you have done me to sacrifice any gallantry to the possession of you, and I would certainly do it, though I were not disengaged, as at present I am, from any affair of that kind. But I should not be the honest man you think me, if I did not tell you that my affections are engaged to another, who is a woman of virtue, and one that I never can leave, though it is probable I shall never possess her. God forbid that, in return of your kindness to me, I should do you such an injury as to give you my hand when I cannot give my heart. No; I had much rather starve than be guilty of that. Even though my mistress were married to another, I would not marry you unless my heart had entirely effaced all impressions of her. Be assured that your secret was not more safe in your own breast, than in that of your most obliged, and grateful humble servant,

“T. JONES.”

When our hero had finished and sent this letter, he went to his scutcheon, took out Miss Western's muff, kissed it several times, and then strutted some turns about his room, with more satisfaction of mind than ever any Irishman felt in carrying off a fortune of fifty thousand pounds.

## CHAPTER XII

### A DISCOVERY MADE BY PARTRIDGE

WHILE Jones was exulting in the consciousness of his integrity, Partridge came capering into the room, as was his custom when he brought, or fancied he brought, any good tidings. He had been dispatched that morning by his master, with orders to endeavour, by the servants of Lady Bellaston, or by any other means, to discover whither Sophia had been conveyed; and he now returned, and with a joyful countenance told our hero that he had found the lost bird. “I have seen, sir,” says he, “Black George, the gamekeeper, who is one of the servants whom the squire hath brought with him to town. I knew him presently, though I have not seen him these several years; but you know, sir, he is a very remarkable man, or, to use a purer phrase, he hath a most remarkable beard, the largest and blackest I ever saw. It was some time, however, before Black George could recollect me.” “Well, but what is your good news?” cries Jones; “what do you know of my Sophia?” “You shall know presently, sir,” answered Partridge, “I am coming to it as fast as I can. You are so impatient, sir, you would come at the infinitive mood before you can get to the imperative. As I was saying, sir, it was some time before he recollected my face.”—“Confound your face!” cries Jones, “what of my Sophia?” “Nay, sir,” answered Partridge, “I know nothing more of Madam Sophia than what I am going to tell you; and I should have told you all before this if you had not interrupted me; but if you look so angry at me, you will frighten all of it out of my head, or, to use a purer phrase, out of my memory. I never saw you look so angry since the day we left Upton, which I shall remember if I was to live a thousand years.”—“Well, pray go on your own way,” said Jones: “you are resolved to make me mad, I find.” “Not for the world,” answered Partridge, “I have suffered enough for that already; which, as I said, I shall bear in my remembrance the longest day I have to live.” “Well, but Black George?” cries Jones. “Well, sir, as I was saying, it was a long time before he could recollect me; for, indeed, I am very much altered since I saw him. *Non sum qualis eram*. I have had troubles in the world, and nothing alters a man so much as grief. I have heard it will change the colour of a man's hair in a night. However, at last, know me he did, that's sure enough; for we

are both of an age, and were at the same charity school. George was a great dunce, but no matter for that; all men do not thrive in the world according to their learning. I am sure I have reason to say so; but it will be all one a thousand years hence. Well, sir, where was I?—O—well, we no sooner knew each other, than, after many hearty shakes by the hand, we agreed to go to an alehouse and take a pot, and by good luck the beer was some of the best I have met with since I have been in town. Now, sir, I am coming to the point; for no sooner did I name you, and told him that you and I came to town together, and had lived together ever since, than he called for another pot, and swore he would drink to your health; and indeed he drank your health so heartily that I was overjoyed to see there was so much gratitude left in the world; and after we had emptied that pot I said I would be my pot too, and so we drank another to your health; and then I made haste home to tell you the news."

"What news?" cries Jones, "you have not mentioned a word of my Sophia!" "Bless me! I had like to have forgot that. Indeed, we mentioned a great deal about young Madam Western, and George told me all; that Mr. Blifil is coming to town in order to be married to her. He had best make haste then, says I, or somebody will have her before he comes; and, indeed, says I, Mr. Seagrim, it is a thousand pities somebody should not have her; for he certainly loves her above all the women in the world. I would have both you and she know, that it is not for her fortune he follows her; for I can assure you, as to matter of that, there is another lady, one of much greater quality and fortune than she can pretend to, who is so fond of somebody that she comes after him day and night."

Here Jones fell into a passion with Partridge, for having, as he said, betrayed him; but the poor fellow answered, he had mentioned no name: "Besides, sir," said he, "I can assure you, George is sincerely your friend, and wished Mr. Blifil at the devil more than once; nay, he said he would do anything in his power upon earth to serve you; and so I am convinced he will. Betray you, indeed! why, I question whether you have a better friend than George upon earth, except myself, or one that would go farther to serve you."

"Well," says Jones, a little pacified, "you say this fellow, who, I believe, indeed, is enough inclined to be my friend, lives in the same house with Sophia?"

"In the same house!" answered Partridge; "why, sir, he is one of the servants of the family, and very well drest I promise

you he is; if it was not for his black beard you would hardly know him."

"One service then at least he may do me," says Jones: "sure he can certainly convey a letter to my Sophia."

"You have hit the nail *ad unguem*," cries Partridge; "how came I not to think of it? I will engage he shall do it upon the very first mentioning."

"Well, then," said Jones, "do you leave me at present, and I will write a letter, which you shall deliver to him to-morrow morning; for I suppose you know where to find him."

"O yes, sir," answered Partridge, "I shall certainly find him again; there is no fear of that. The liquor is too good for him to stay away long. I make no doubt but he will be there every day he stays in town."

"So you don't know the street then where my Sophia is lodged?" cries Jones.

"Indeed, sir, I do," says Partridge.

"What is the name of the street?" cries Jones.

"The name, sir? why, here, sir, just by," answered Partridge, "not above a street or two off. I don't, indeed, know the very name; for, as he never told me, if I had asked, you know, it might have put some suspicion into his head. No, no, sir, let me alone for that. I am too cunning for that, I promise you."

"Thou art most wonderfully cunning, indeed," replied Jones; "however, I will write to my charmer, since I believe you will be cunning enough to find him to-morrow at the alehouse."

And now, having dismissed the sagacious Partridge, Mr. Jones sat himself down to write, in which employment we shall leave him for a time. And here we put an end to the fifteenth book.