

I leave you to comment on this fact. All I desire is, that your name may never more be mentioned to

“S. W.”

Of the present situation of Mr. Jones's mind, and of the pangs with which he was now tormented, we cannot give the reader a better idea than by saying, his misery was such that even Thwackum would almost have pitied him. But, bad as it is, we shall at present leave him in it, as his good genius (if he really had any) seems to have done. And here we put an end to the sixteenth book of our history.

BOOK XVII

CHAPTER I

CONTAINING A PORTION OF INTRODUCTORY WRITING

WHEN a comic writer hath made his principal characters as happy as he can, or when a tragic writer hath brought them to the highest pitch of human misery, they both conclude their business to be done, and that their work is come to a period.

Had we been of the tragic complexion, the reader must now allow we were nearly arrived at this period, since it would be difficult for the devil, or any of his representatives on earth, to have contrived much greater torments for poor Jones than those in which we left him in the last chapter; and as for Sophia, a good-natured woman would hardly wish more uneasiness to a rival than what she must at present be supposed to feel. What then remains to complete the tragedy but a murder or two, and a few moral sentences!

But to bring our favourites out of their present anguish and distress, and to land them at last on the shore of happiness, seems a much harder task; a task, indeed, so hard that we do not undertake to execute it. In regard to Sophia, it is more than probable that we shall somewhere or other provide a good husband for her in the end—either Blifil, or my lord, or somebody else; but as to poor Jones, such are the calamities in which he is at present involved, owing to his imprudence, by which, if a man doth not become felon to the world, he is at least a *felo de se*; so destitute is he now of friends, and so persecuted by enemies, that we almost despair of bringing him to any good; and if our reader delights in seeing executions, I think he ought not to lose any time in taking a first row at Tyburn.

This I faithfully promise, that, notwithstanding any affection which we may be supposed to have for this rogue, whom we have unfortunately made our hero, we will lend him none of that supernatural assistance with which we are entrusted, upon condition that we use it only on very important occasions. If he doth not, therefore, find some natural means of fairly extricating himself from all his distresses, we will do no violence to the truth and dignity of history for his sake; for we had rather relate that he was hanged at Tyburn (which may very probably be the case) than forfeit our integrity, or shock the faith of our reader.

In this the antients had a great advantage over the moderns. Their mythology, which was at that time more firmly believed by the vulgar than any religion is at present, gave them always an opportunity of delivering a favourite heroe. Their deities were always ready at the writer's elbow, to execute any of his purposes; and the more extraordinary the invention was, the greater was the surprize and delight of the credulous reader. Those writers could with greater ease have conveyed a heroe from one country to another, nay from one world to another, and have brought him back again, than a poor circumscribed modern can deliver him from a jail.

The Arabians and Persians had an equal advantage in writing their tales from the genii and fairies, which they believe in as an article of their faith, upon the authority of the Koran itself. But we have none of these helps. To natural means alone we are confined; let us try therefore what, by these means, may be done for poor Jones; though, to confess the truth, something whispers me in the ear, that he doth not yet know the worst of his fortune; and that a more shocking piece of news than any he hath yet heard remains for him in the unopened leaves of fate.

CHAPTER II

THE GENEROUS AND GRATEFUL BEHAVIOUR OF MRS. MILLER

MR. ALLWORTHY and Mrs. Miller were just sat down to breakfast, when Blifil, who had gone out very early that morning, returned to make one of the company.

He had not been long seated before he began as follows: "Good Lord! my dear uncle, what do you think hath happened? I vow I am afraid of telling it you, for fear of shocking you with the remembrance of ever having shewn any kindness to such a villain." "What is the matter, child?" said the uncle. "I fear I have shewn kindness in my life to the unworthy more than once. But charity doth not adopt the vices of its objects." "O, sir!" returned Blifil, "it is not without the secret direction of Providence that you mention the word adoption. Your adopted son, sir, that Jones, that wretch whom you nourished in your bosom, hath proved one of the greatest villains upon earth." "By all that's sacred, 'tis false," cries Mrs. Miller. "Mr. Jones is no villain. He is one of the worthiest creatures breathing; and if any other person had called him villain, I would have thrown

all this boiling water in his face." Mr. Allworthy looked very much amazed at this behaviour. But she did not give him leave to speak, before, turning to him, she cried, "I hope you will not be angry with me; I would not offend you, sir, for the world; but, indeed, I could not bear to hear him called so." "I must own, madam," said Allworthy, very gravely, "I am a little surprized to hear you so warmly defend a fellow you do not know." "O! I do know him, Mr. Allworthy," said she, "indeed I do; I should be the most ungrateful of all wretches if I denied it. O! he hath preserved me and my little family; we have all reason to bless him while we live.—And I pray Heaven to bless him, and turn the hearts of his malicious enemies. I know, I find, I see, he hath such." "You surprize me, madam, still more," said Allworthy; "sure you must mean some other. It is impossible you should have any such obligations to the man my nephew mentions." "Too surely," answered she, "I have obligations to him of the greatest and tenderest kind. He hath been the preserver of me and mine. Believe me, sir, he hath been abused, grossly abused to you; I know he hath, or you, whom I know to be all goodness and honour, would not, after the many kind and tender things I have heard you say of this poor helpless child, have so disdainfully called him fellow.—Indeed, my best of friends, he deserves a kinder appellation from you, had you heard the good, the kind, the grateful things which I have heard him utter of you. He never mentions your name but with a sort of adoration. In this very room I have seen him on his knees, imploring all the blessings of heaven upon your head. I do not love that child there better than he loves you."

"I see, sir, now," said Blifil, with one of those grinning sneers with which the devil marks his best beloved, "Mrs. Miller really doth know him. I suppose you will find she is not the only one of your acquaintance to whom he hath exposed you. As for my character, I perceive, by some hints she hath thrown out, he hath been very free with it, but I forgive him." "And the Lord forgive you, sir!" said Mrs. Miller; "we have all sins enough to stand in need of his forgiveness."

"Upon my word, Mrs. Miller," said Allworthy, "I do not take this behaviour of yours to my nephew kindly; and I do assure you, as any reflections which you cast upon him must come only from that wickedest of men, they would only serve, if that were possible, to heighten my resentment against him: for I must tell you, Mrs. Miller, the young man who now stands before you hath ever been the warmest advocate for the ungrateful wretch whose

cause you espouse. This, I think, when you hear it from my own mouth, will make you wonder at so much baseness and ingratitude."

"You are deceived, sir," answered Mrs. Miller; "if they were the last words which were to issue from my lips, I would say you were deceived; and I once more repeat it, the Lord forgive those who have deceived you! I do not pretend to say the young man is without faults; but they are all the faults of wildness and of youth; faults which he may, nay, which I am certain he will, relinquish, and, if he should not, they are vastly overbalanced by one of the most humane, tender, honest hearts that ever man was blest with."

"Indeed, Mrs. Miller," said Allworthy, "had this been related of you, I should not have believed it." "Indeed, sir," answered she, "you will believe everything I have said, I am sure you will: and when you have heard the story which I shall tell you (for I will tell you all), you will be so far from being offended, that you will own (I know your justice so well), that I must have been the most despicable and most ungrateful of wretches if I had acted any other part than I have."

"Well, madam," said Allworthy, "I shall be very glad to hear any good excuse for a behaviour which, I must confess, I think wants an excuse. And now, madam, will you be pleased to let my nephew proceed in his story without interruption. He would not have introduced a matter of slight consequence with such a preface. Perhaps even this story will cure you of your mistake."

Mrs. Miller gave tokens of submission, and then Mr. Blifil began thus: "I am sure, sir, if you don't think proper to resent the ill-usage of Mrs. Miller, I shall easily forgive what affects me only. I think your goodness hath not deserved this indignity at her hands." "Well, child," said Allworthy, "but what is this new instance? What hath he done of late?" "What," cries Blifil, "notwithstanding all Mrs. Miller hath said, I am very sorry to relate, and what you should never have heard from me, had it not been a matter impossible to conceal from the whole world. In short, he hath killed a man; I will not say murdered—for perhaps it may not be so construed in law, and I hope the best for his sake."

Allworthy looked shocked, and blessed himself; and then, turning to Mrs. Miller, he cried, "Well, madam, what say you now?"

"Why, I say, sir," answered she, "that I never was more concerned at anything in my life; but, if the fact be true, I am

convinced the man, whoever he is, was in fault. Heaven knows there are many villains in this town who make it their business to provoke young gentlemen. Nothing but the greatest provocation could have tempted him; for of all the gentlemen I ever had in my house, I never saw one so gentle or so sweet-tempered. He was beloved by every one in the house, and every one who came near it."

While she was thus running on, a violent knocking at the door interrupted their conversation, and prevented her from proceeding further, or from receiving any answer; for, as she concluded this was a visitor to Mr. Allworthy, she hastily retired, taking with her her little girl, whose eyes were all over blubbered at the melancholy news she heard of Jones, who used to call her his little wife, and not only gave her many playthings, but spent whole hours in playing with her himself.

Some readers may, perhaps, be pleased with these minute circumstances, in relating of which we follow the example of Plutarch, one of the best of our brother historians; and others, to whom they may appear trivial, will, we hope, at least pardon them, as we are never prolix on such occasions.

CHAPTER III

THE ARRIVAL OF MR. WESTERN, WITH SOME MATTERS CONCERNING THE PATERNAL AUTHORITY

MRS. MILLER had not long left the room when Mr. Western entered; but not before a small wrangling bout had passed between him and his chairmen; for the fellows, who had taken up their burden at the Hercules Pillars, had conceived no hopes of having any future good customer in the squire; and they were moreover farther encouraged by his generosity (for he had given them of his own accord sixpence more than their fare); they therefore very boldly demanded another shilling, which so provoked the squire, that he not only bestowed many hearty curses on them at the door, but retained his anger after he came into the room; swearing that all the Londoners were like the court, and thought of nothing but plundering country gentlemen. "D—n me," says he, "if I won't walk in the rain rather than get into one of their hand-barrows again. They have jolted me more in a mile than Brown Bess would in a long fox-chase."

When his wrath on this occasion was a little appeased, he

resumed the same passionate tone on another. "There," says he, "there is fine business forwards now. The hounds have changed at last; and when we imagined we had a fox to deal with, od-rat it, it turns out to be a badger at last!"

"Pray, my good neighbour," said Allworthy, "drop your metaphors, and speak a little plainer." "Why, then," says the squire, "to tell you plainly, we have been all this time afraid of a son of a whore of a bastard of somebody's, I don't know whose, not I. And now here's a confounded son of a whore of a lord, who may be a bastard too for what I know or care, for he shall never have a daughter of mine by my consent. They have beggared the nation, but they shall never beggar me. My land shall never be sent over to Hanover."

"You surprize me much, my good friend," said Allworthy. "Why, zounds! I am surprized myself," answered the squire. "I went to zee sister Western last night, according to her own appointment, and there I was had into a whole room full of women. There was my lady cousin Bellaston, and my Lady Betty, and my Lady Catherine, and my lady I don't know who; d—n me, if ever you catch me among such a kennel of hoop-petticoat b—s! D—n me, I'd rather be run by my own dogs, as one Acton was, that the story-book says was turned into a hare, and his own dogs killed un and eat un. Od-rabbit it, no mortal was ever run in such a manner; if I dodged one way, one had me; if I offered to clap back, another snapped me. 'O! certainly one of the greatest matches in England,' says one cousin (here he attempted to mimic them); 'A very advantageous offer indeed,' cries another cousin (for you must know they be all my cousins, thof I never zeed half o' um before). 'Surely,' says that fat a—se b—, my Lady Bellaston, 'cousin, you must be out of your wits to think of refusing such an offer.'"

"Now I begin to understand," says Allworthy; "some person hath made proposals to Miss Western, which the ladies of the family approve, but is not to your liking."

"My liking!" said Western, "how the devil should it? I tell you it is a lord, and those are always volks whom you know I always resolved to have nothing to do with. Did unt I refuse a matter of vorty years' purchase now for a bit of land, which one o' um had a mind to put into a park, only because I would have no dealings with lords, and dost think I would marry my daughter zu? Besides, ben't I engaged to you, and did I ever go off any bargain when I had promised?"

"As to that point, neighbour," said Allworthy, "I entirely

release you from any engagement. No contract can be binding between parties who have not a full power to make it at the time, nor ever afterwards acquire the power of fulfilling it."

"Slud! then," answered Western, "I tell you I have power, and I will fulfil it. Come along with me directly to Doctors' Commons, I will get a licence; and I will go to sister and take away the wench by force, and she shall ha un, or I will lock her up, and keep her upon bread and water as long as she lives."

"Mr. Western," said Allworthy, "shall I beg you will hear my full sentiments on this matter?"—"Hear thee; ay, to be sure I will," answered he. "Why, then, sir," cries Allworthy, "I can truly say, without a compliment either to you or the young lady, that when this match was proposed, I embraced it very readily and heartily, from my regard to you both. An alliance between two families so nearly neighbours, and between whom there had always existed so mutual an intercourse and good harmony, I thought a most desirable event; and with regard to the young lady, not only the concurrent opinion of all who knew her, but my own observation assured me that she would be an inestimable treasure to a good husband. I shall say nothing of her personal qualifications, which certainly are admirable; her good nature, her charitable disposition, her modesty, are too well known to need any panegyric: but she hath one quality which existed in a high degree in that best of women, who is now one of the first of angels, which, as it is not of a glaring kind, more commonly escapes observation; so little indeed is it remarked, that I want a word to express it. I must use negatives on this occasion. I never heard anything of pertness, or what is called repartee, out of her mouth; no pretence to wit, much less to that kind of wisdom which is the result only of great learning and experience, the affectation of which, in a young woman, is as absurd as any of the affectations of an ape. No dictatorial sentiments, no judicial opinions, no profound criticisms. Whenever I have seen her in the company of men, she hath been all attention, with the modesty of a learner, not the forwardness of a teacher. You'll pardon me for it, but I once, to try her only, desired her opinion on a point which was controverted between Mr. Thwackum and Mr. Square. To which she answered, with much sweetness, 'You will pardon me, good Mr. Allworthy; I am sure you cannot in earnest think me capable of deciding any point in which two such gentlemen disagree.' Thwackum and Square, who both alike thought themselves sure of a favourable decision, seconded my request. She

answered with the same good humour, 'I must absolutely be excused: for I will affront neither so much as to give my judgment on his side.' Indeed, she always shewed the highest deference to the understandings of men; a quality absolutely essential to the making a good wife. I shall only add, that as she is most apparently void of all affectation, this deference must be certainly real."

Here Blifil sighed bitterly; upon which Western, whose eyes were full of tears at the praise of Sophia, blubbered out, "Don't be chicken-hearted, for shat ha her, d—n me, shat ha her, if she was twenty times as good."

"Remember your promise, sir," cried Allworthy, "I was not to be interrupted." "Well, shat unt," answered the squire; "I won't speak another word."

"Now, my good friend," continued Allworthy, "I have dwelt so long on the merit of this young lady, partly as I really am in love with her character, and partly that fortune (for the match in that light is really advantageous on my nephew's side) might not be imagined to be my principal view in having so eagerly embraced the proposal. Indeed, I heartily wished to receive so great a jewel into my family; but though I may wish for many good things, I would not, therefore, steal them, or be guilty of any violence or injustice to possess myself of them. Now to force a woman into a marriage contrary to her consent or approbation, is an act of such injustice and oppression, that I wish the laws of our country could restrain it; but a good conscience is never lawless in the worst regulated state, and will provide those laws for itself, which the neglect of legislators hath forgotten to supply. This is surely a case of that kind; for, is it not cruel, nay, impious, to force a woman into that state against her will; for her behaviour in which she is to be accountable to the highest and most dreadful court of judicature, and to answer at the peril of her soul? To discharge the matrimonial duties in an adequate manner is no easy task; and shall we lay this burthen upon a woman, while we at the same time deprive her of all that assistance which may enable her to undergo it? Shall we tear her very heart from her, while we enjoin her duties to which a whole heart is scarce equal? I must speak very plainly here. I think parents who act in this manner are accessories to all the guilt which their children afterwards incur, and of course must, before a just judge, expect to partake of their punishment; but if they could avoid this, good heaven! is there a soul who can bear the thought of having contributed to the damnation of his child?"

"For these reasons, my best neighbour, as I see the inclinations of this young lady are most unhappily averse to my nephew, I must decline any further thoughts of the honour you intended him, though I assure you I shall always retain the most grateful sense of it."

"Well, sir," said Western (the froth bursting forth from his lips the moment they were uncorked), "you cannot say but I have heard you out, and now I expect you'll hear me; and if I don't answer every word on't, why then I'll consent to gee the matter up. First then, I desire you to answer me one question—Did not I beget her? did not I beget her? answer me that. They say, indeed, it is a wise father that knows his own child; but I am sure I have the best title to her, for I bred her up. But I believe you will allow me to be her father, and if I be, am I not to govern my own child? I ask you that, am I not to govern my own child? and if I am to govern her in other matters, surely I am to govern her in this, which concerns her most. And what am I desiring all this while? Am I desiring her to do anything for me: to give me anything?—Zu much on t'other side, that I am only desiring her to take away half my estate now, and t'other half when I die. Well, and what is it all vor? Why, is unt it to make her happy? It's enough to make one mad to hear volks talk; if I was going to marry myself, then she would ha reason to cry and to blubber; but, on the contrary, han't I offered to bind down my land in such a manner, that I could not marry if I would, seeing as narro' woman upon earth would ha me. What the devil in hell can I do more? I contribute to her damnation!—Zounds! I'd zee all the world d—n'd bevore her little vinger should be hurt. Indeed, Mr. Allworthy, you must excuse me, but I am surprized to hear you talk in zuch a manner, and I must say, take it how you will, that I thought you had more sense."

Allworthy resented this reflection only with a smile; nor could he, if he would have endeavoured it, have conveyed into that smile any mixture of malice or contempt. His smiles at folly were indeed such as we may suppose the angels bestow on the absurdities of mankind.

Blifil now desired to be permitted to speak a few words. "As to using any violence on the young lady, I am sure I shall never consent to it. My conscience will not permit me to use violence on any one, much less on a lady for whom, however cruel she is to me, I shall always preserve the purest and sincerest affection; but yet I have read that women are seldom proof against

perseverance. Why may I not hope then by such perseverance at last to gain those inclinations, in which for the future I shall, perhaps, have no rival; for as for this lord, Mr. Western is so kind to prefer me to him; and sure, sir, you will not deny but that a parent hath at least a negative voice in these matters; nay, I have heard this very young lady herself say so more than once, and declare that she thought children inexcusable who married in direct opposition to the will of their parents. Besides, though the other ladies of the family seem to favour the pretensions of my lord, I do not find the lady herself is inclined to give him any countenance; alas! I am too well assured she is not; I am too sensible that wickedest of men remains uppermost in her heart."

"Ay, ay, so he does," cries Western.

"But surely," says Blifil, "when she hears of this murder which he hath committed, if the law should spare his life——"

"What's that?" cries Western. "Murder! hath he committed a murder, and is there any hopes of seeing him hanged?—Tol de rol, tol lol de rol." Here he fell a singing and capering about the room.

"Child," says Allworthy, "this unhappy passion of yours distresses me beyond measure. I heartily pity you, and would do every fair thing to promote your success."

"I desire no more," cries Blifil; "I am convinced my dear uncle hath a better opinion of me than to think that I myself would accept of more."

"Looke," says Allworthy, "you have my leave to write, to visit, if she will permit it—but I insist on no thoughts of violence. I will have no confinement, nothing of that kind attempted."

"Well, well," cries the squire, "nothing of that kind shall be attempted; we will try a little longer what fair means will effect; and if this fellow be but hanged out of the way—Tol lol de rol! I never heard better news in my life—I warrant everything goes to my mind.—Do, prithee, dear Allworthy, come and dine with me at the Hercules Pillars: I have bespoke a shoulder of mutton roasted, and a spare-rib of pork, and a fowl and egg-sauce. There will be nobody but ourselves, unless we have a mind to have the landlord; for I have sent Parson Supple down to Basingstoke after my tobacco-box, which I left at an inn there, and I would not lose it for the world; for it is an old acquaintance of above twenty years' standing. I can tell you landlord is a vast comical bitch, you will like un hugely."

Mr. Allworthy at last agreed to this invitation, and soon after

the squire went off, singing and capering at the hopes of seeing the speedy tragical end of poor Jones.

When he was gone, Mr. Allworthy resumed the aforesaid subject with much gravity. He told his nephew, "He wished with all his heart he would endeavour to conquer a passion, in which I cannot," says he, "flatter you with any hopes of succeeding. It is certainly a vulgar error, that aversion in a woman may be conquered by perseverance. Indifference may, perhaps, sometimes yield to it; but the usual triumphs gained by perseverance in a lover are over caprice, prudence, affectation, and often an exorbitant degree of levity, which excites women not over-warm in their constitutions to indulge their vanity by prolonging the time of courtship, even when they are well enough pleased with the object, and resolve (if they ever resolve at all) to make him a very pitiful amends in the end. But a fixed dislike, as I am afraid this is, will rather gather strength than be conquered by time. Besides, my dear, I have another apprehension which you must excuse. I am afraid this passion which you have for this fine young creature hath her beautiful person too much for its object, and is unworthy of the name of that love which is the only foundation of matrimonial felicity. To admire, to like, and to long for the possession of a beautiful woman, without any regard to her sentiments towards us, is, I am afraid, too natural; but love, I believe, is the child of love only; at least, I am pretty confident that to love the creature who we are assured hates us is not in human nature. Examine your heart, therefore, thoroughly, my good boy, and if, upon examination, you have but the least suspicion of this kind, I am sure your own virtue and religion will impel you to drive so vicious a passion from your heart, and your good sense will soon enable you to do it without pain."

The reader may pretty well guess Blifil's answer; but, if he should be at a loss, we are not at present at leisure to satisfy him, as our history now hastens on to matters of higher importance, and we can no longer bear to be absent from Sophia.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXTRAORDINARY SCENE BETWEEN SOPHIA AND HER AUNT

THE lowing heifer and the bleating ewe, in herds and flocks, may ramble safe and unregarded through the pastures. These are, indeed, hereafter doomed to be the prey of man; yet many years are they suffered to enjoy their liberty undisturbed. But if a plump doe be discovered to have escaped from the forest, and to repose herself in some field or grove, the whole parish is presently alarmed, every man is ready to set dogs after her; and, if she is preserved from the rest by the good squire, it is only that he may secure her for his own eating.

I have often considered a very fine young woman of fortune and fashion, when first found strayed from the pale of her nursery, to be in pretty much the same situation with this doe. The town is immediately in an uproar; she is hunted from park to play, from court to assembly, from assembly to her own chamber, and rarely escapes a single season from the jaws of some devourer or other; for, if her friends protect her from some, it is only to deliver her over to one of their own chusing, often more disagreeable to her than any of the rest; while whole herds or flocks of other women securely, and scarce regarded, traverse the park, the play, the opera, and the assembly; and though, for the most part at least, they are at last devoured, yet for a long time do they wanton in liberty, without disturbance or controul.

Of all these paragons none ever tasted more of this persecution than poor Sophia. Her ill stars were not contented with all that she had suffered on account of Blifil, they now raised her another pursuer, who seemed likely to torment her no less than the other had done. For though her aunt was less violent, she was no less assiduous in teizing her, than her father had been before.

The servants were no sooner departed after dinner, than Mrs. Western, who had opened the matter to Sophia, informed her, "That she expected his lordship that very afternoon, and intended to take the first opportunity of leaving her alone with him." "If you do, madam," answered Sophia, with some spirit, "I shall take the first opportunity of leaving him by himself." "How! madam!" cries the aunt; "is this the return you make me for my kindness in relieving you from your confinement at your father's?" "You know, madam," said Sophia, "the

cause of that confinement was a refusal to comply with my father in accepting a man I detested; and will my dear aunt, who hath relieved me from that distress, involve me in another equally bad?" "And do you think then, madam," answered Mrs. Western, "that there is no difference between my Lord Fellamar and Mr. Blifil?" "Very little, in my opinion," cries Sophia; "and, if I must be condemned to one, I would certainly have the merit of sacrificing myself to my father's pleasure." "Then my pleasure, I find," said the aunt, "hath very little weight with you; but that consideration shall not move me. I act from nobler motives. The view of aggrandizing my family, of ennobling yourself, is what I proceed upon. Have you no sense of ambition? Are there no charms in the thoughts of having a coronet on your coach?" "None, upon my honour," said Sophia. "A pincushion upon my coach would please me just as well." "Never mention honour," cries the aunt. "It becomes not the mouth of such a wretch. I am sorry, niece, you force me to use these words, but I cannot bear your groveling temper; you have none of the blood of the Westerns in you. But, however mean and base your own ideas are, you shall bring no imputation on mine. I will never suffer the world to say of me that I encouraged you in refusing one of the best matches in England; a match which, besides its advantage in fortune, would do honour to almost any family, and hath, indeed, in title, the advantage of ours." "Surely," says Sophia, "I am born deficient, and have not the senses with which other people are blessed; there must be certainly some sense which can relish the delights of sound and show, which I have not; for surely mankind would not labour so much, nor sacrifice so much for the obtaining, nor would they be so elate and proud with possessing, what appeared to them, as it doth to me, the most insignificant of all trifles."

"No, no, miss," cries the aunt; "you are born with as many senses as other people; but I assure you, you are not born with a sufficient understanding to make a fool of me, or to expose my conduct to the world; so I declare this to you, upon my word, and you know, I believe, how fixed my resolutions are, unless you agree to see his lordship this afternoon, I will, with my own hands, deliver you to-morrow morning to my brother, and will never henceforth interfere with you, nor see your face again." Sophia stood a few moments silent after this speech, which was uttered in a most angry and peremptory tone; and then, bursting into tears, she cried, "Do with me, madam, whatever you please; I am the most miserable undone wretch upon earth; if

my dear aunt forsakes me, where shall I look for a protector?" "My dear niece," cries she, "you will have a very good protector in his lordship; a protector whom nothing but a hankering after that vile fellow Jones can make you decline." "Indeed, madam," said Sophia, "you wrong me. How can you imagine, after what you have shewn me, if I had ever any such thoughts, that I should not banish them for ever? If it will satisfy you, I will receive the sacrament upon it never to see his face again." "But, child, dear child," said the aunt, "be reasonable; can you invent a single objection?" "I have already, I think, told you a sufficient objection," answered Sophia. "What?" cries the aunt; "I remember none." "Sure, madam," said Sophia, "I told you he had used me in the rudest and vilest manner." "Indeed, child," answered she, "I never heard you, or did not understand you:—but what do you mean by this rude, vile manner?" "Indeed, madam," said Sophia, "I am almost ashamed to tell you. He caught me in his arms, pulled me down upon the settee, and thrust his hand into my bosom, and kissed it with such violence that I have the mark upon my left breast at this moment." "Indeed!" said Mrs. Western. "Yes, indeed, madam," answered Sophia; "my father luckily came in at that instant, or Heaven knows what rudeness he intended to have proceeded to." "I am astonished and confounded," cries the aunt. "No woman of the name of Western hath been ever treated so since we were a family. I would have torn the eyes of a prince out, if he had attempted such freedoms with me. It is impossible! sure, Sophia, you must invent this to raise my indignation against him." "I hope, madam," said Sophia, "you have too good an opinion of me to imagine me capable of telling an untruth. Upon my soul it is true." "I should have stabbed him to the heart, had I been present," returned the aunt. "Yet surely he could have no dishonourable design; it is impossible! he durst not: besides, his proposals shew he hath not; for they are not only honourable, but generous. I don't know; the age allows too great freedoms. A distant salute is all I would have allowed before the ceremony. I have had lovers formerly, not so long ago neither; several lovers, though I never would consent to marriage, and I never encouraged the least freedom. It is a foolish custom, and what I never would agree to. No man kissed more of me than my cheek. It is as much as one can bring oneself to give lips up to a husband; and, indeed, could I ever have been persuaded to marry, I believe I should not have soon been brought to endure so much." "You will pardon me, dear

madam," said Sophia, "if I make one observation: you own you have had many lovers, and the world knows it, even if you should deny it. You refused them all, and, I am convinced, one coronet at least among them." "You say true, dear Sophy," answered she; "I had once the offer of a title." "Why, then," said Sophia, "will you not suffer me to refuse this once?" "It is true, child," said she, "I have refused the offer of a title; but it was not so good an offer; that is, not so very, very good an offer."—"Yes, madam," said Sophia; "but you have had very great proposals from men of vast fortunes. It was not the first, nor the second, nor the third advantageous match that offered itself." "I own it was not," said she. "Well, madam," continued Sophia, "and why may not I expect to have a second, perhaps, better than this? You are now but a young woman, and I am convinced would not promise to yield to the first lover of fortune, nay, or of title too. I am a very young woman, and sure I need not despair." "Well, my dear, dear Sophy," cries the aunt, "what would you have me say?" "Why, I only beg that I may not be left alone, at least this evening; grant me that, and I will submit, if you think, after what is past, I ought to see him in your company." "Well, I will grant it," cries the aunt. "Sophy, you know I love you, and can deny you nothing. You know the easiness of my nature; I have not always been so easy. I have been formerly thought cruel; by the men, I mean. I was called the cruel Parthenissa. I have broke many a window that has had verses to the cruel Parthenissa in it. Sophy, I was never so handsome as you, and yet I had something of you formerly. I am a little altered. Kingdoms and states, as Tully Cicero says in his epistles, undergo alterations, and so must the human form." Thus run she on for near half an hour upon herself, and her conquests, and her cruelty, till the arrival of my lord, who, after a most tedious visit, during which Mrs. Western never once offered to leave the room, retired, not much more satisfied with the aunt than with the niece; for Sophia had brought her aunt into so excellent a temper, that she consented to almost everything her niece said; and agreed that a little distant behaviour might not be improper to so forward a lover.

Thus Sophia, by a little well-directed flattery, for which surely none will blame her, obtained a little ease for herself, and, at least, put off the evil day. And now we have seen our heroine in a better situation than she hath been for a long time before, we will look a little after Mr. Jones, whom we left in the most deplorable situation that can be well imagined.

CHAPTER V

MRS. MILLER AND MR. NIGHTINGALE VISIT JONES IN THE PRISON

WHEN Mr. Allworthy and his nephew went to meet Mr. Western, Mrs. Miller set forwards to her son-in-law's lodgings, in order to acquaint him with the accident which had befallen his friend Jones; but he had known it long before from Partridge (for Jones, when he left Mrs. Miller, had been furnished with a room in the same house with Mr. Nightingale). The good woman found her daughter under great affliction on account of Mr. Jones, whom having comforted as well as she could, she set forwards to the Gatehouse, where she heard he was, and where Mr. Nightingale was arrived before her.

The firmness and constancy of a true friend is a circumstance so extremely delightful to persons in any kind of distress, that the distress itself, if it be only temporary, and admits of relief, is more than compensated by bringing this comfort with it. Nor are instances of this kind so rare as some superficial and inaccurate observers have reported. To say the truth, want of compassion is not to be numbered among our general faults. The black ingredient which fouls our disposition is envy. Hence our eye is seldom, I am afraid, turned upward to those who are manifestly greater, better, wiser, or happier than ourselves, without some degree of malignity; while we commonly look downwards on the mean and miserable with sufficient benevolence and pity. In fact, I have remarked, that most of the defects which have discovered themselves in the friendships within my observation, have arisen from envy only: a hellish vice; and yet one from which I have known very few absolutely exempt. But enough of a subject which, if pursued, would lead me too far.

Whether it was that Fortune was apprehensive lest Jones should sink under the weight of his adversity, and that she might thus lose any future opportunity of tormenting him, or whether she really abated somewhat of her severity towards him, she seemed a little to relax her persecution, by sending him the company of two such faithful friends, and what is perhaps more rare, a faithful servant. For Partridge, though he had many imperfections, wanted not fidelity; and though fear would not suffer him to be hanged for his master, yet the world, I believe, could not have bribed him to desert his cause.

While Jones was expressing great satisfaction in the presence

of his friends, Partridge brought an account that Mr. Fitzpatrick was still alive, though the surgeon declared that he had very little hopes. Upon which, Jones fetching a deep sigh, Nightingale said to him, "My dear Tom, why should you afflict yourself so upon an accident, which, whatever be the consequence, can be attended with no danger to you, and in which your conscience cannot accuse you of having been the least to blame? If the fellow should die, what have you done more than taken away the life of a ruffian in your own defence? So will the coroner's inquest certainly find it; and then you will be easily admitted to bail; and, though you must undergo the form of a trial, yet it is a trial which many men would stand for you for a shilling." "Come, come, Mr. Jones," says Mrs. Miller, "cheer yourself up. I knew you could not be the aggressor, and so I told Mr. Allworthy, and so he shall acknowledge too, before I have done with him."

Jones gravely answered, "That whatever might be his fate, he should always lament the having shed the blood of one of his fellow-creatures, as one of the highest misfortunes which could have befallen him. But I have another misfortune of the tenderest kind—O! Mrs. Miller, I have lost what I held most dear upon earth." "That must be a mistress," said Mrs. Miller; "but come, come; I know more than you imagine" (for indeed Partridge had blabbed all); "and I have heard more than you know. Matters go better, I promise you, than you think; and I would not give Blifil sixpence for all the chance which he hath of the lady."

"Indeed, my dear friend, indeed," answered Jones, "you are an entire stranger to the cause of my grief. If you was acquainted with the story, you would allow my case admitted of no comfort. I apprehend no danger from Blifil. I have undone myself." "Don't despair," replied Mrs. Miller; "you know not what a woman can do; and if anything be in my power, I promise you I will do it to serve you. It is my duty. My son, my dear Mr. Nightingale, who is so kind to tell me he hath obligations to you on the same account, knows it is my duty. Shall I go to the lady myself? I will say anything to her you would have me say."

"Thou best of women," cries Jones, taking her by the hand, "talk not of obligations to me;—but as you have been so kind to mention it, there is a favour which, perhaps, may be in your power. I see you are acquainted with the lady (how you came by your information I know not), who sits, indeed, very

near my heart. If you could contrive to deliver this (giving her a paper from his pocket), I shall for ever acknowledge your goodness."

"Give it me," said Mrs. Miller. "If I see it not in her own possession before I sleep, may my next sleep be my last! Comfort yourself, my good young man! be wise enough to take warning from past follies, and I warrant all shall be well, and I shall yet see you happy with the most charming young lady in the world; for I so hear from every one she is."

"Believe me, madam," said he, "I do not speak the common cant of one in my unhappy situation. Before this dreadful accident happened, I had resolved to quit a life of which I was become sensible of the wickedness as well as folly. I do assure you, notwithstanding the disturbances I have unfortunately occasioned in your house, for which I heartily ask your pardon, I am not an abandoned profligate. Though I have been hurried into vices, I do not approve a vicious character, nor will I ever, from this moment, deserve it."

Mrs. Miller expressed great satisfaction in these declarations, in the sincerity of which she averred she had an entire faith; and now the remainder of the conversation past in the joint attempts of that good woman and Mr. Nightingale to cheer the dejected spirits of Mr. Jones, in which they so far succeeded as to leave him much better comforted and satisfied than they found him; to which happy alteration nothing so much contributed as the kind undertaking of Mrs. Miller to deliver his letter to Sophia, which he despaired of finding any means to accomplish; for when Black George produced the last from Sophia, he informed Partridge that she had strictly charged him, on pain of having it communicated to her father, not to bring her any answer. He was, moreover, not a little pleased to find he had so warm an advocate to Mr. Allworthy himself in this good woman, who was, in reality, one of the worthiest creatures in the world.

After about an hour's visit from the lady (for Nightingale had been with him much longer), they both took their leave, promising to return to him soon; during which Mrs. Miller said she hoped to bring him some good news from his mistress, and Mr. Nightingale promised to enquire into the state of Mr. Fitzpatrick's wound, and likewise to find out some of the persons who were present at the rencounter.

The former of these went directly in quest of Sophia, whither we likewise shall now attend her.

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH MRS. MILLER PAYS A VISIT TO SOPHIA

ACCESS to the young lady was by no means difficult; for, as she lived now on a perfect friendly footing with her aunt, she was at full liberty to receive what visitants she pleased.

Sophia was dressing, when she was acquainted that there was a gentlewoman below to wait on her. As she was neither afraid, nor ashamed, to see any of her own sex, Mrs. Miller was immediately admitted.

Curtsies and the usual ceremonials between women who are strangers to each other, being past, Sophia said, "I have not the pleasure to know you, madam." "No, madam," answered Mrs. Miller, "and I must beg pardon for intruding upon you. But when you know what has induced me to give you this trouble, I hope—" "Pray, what is your business, madam?" said Sophia, with a little emotion. "Madam, we are not alone," replied Mrs. Miller, in a low voice. "Go out, Betty," said Sophia.

When Betty was departed, Mrs. Miller said, "I was desired, madam, by a very unhappy young gentleman, to deliver you this letter." Sophia changed colour when she saw the direction, well knowing the hand, and after some hesitation, said—"I could not conceive, madam, from your appearance, that your business had been of such a nature.—Whomever you brought this letter from, I shall not open it. I should be sorry to entertain an unjust suspicion of any one; but you are an utter stranger to me."

"If you will have patience, madam," answered Mrs. Miller, "I will acquaint you who I am, and how I came by that letter." "I have no curiosity, madam, to know anything," cries Sophia; "but I must insist on your delivering that letter back to the person who gave it you."

Mrs. Miller then fell upon her knees, and in the most passionate terms implored her compassion; to which Sophia answered: "Sure, madam, it is surprizing you should be so very strongly interested in the behalf of this person. I would not think, madam"—"No, madam," says Mrs. Miller, "you shall not think anything but the truth. I will tell you all, and you will not wonder that I am interested. He is the best-natured creature that ever was born."—She then began and related the story of Mr. Anderson.—After this she cried, "This, madam, this is

his goodness; but I have much more tender obligations to him. He hath preserved my child."—Here, after shedding some tears, she related everything concerning that fact, suppressing only those circumstances which would have most reflected on her daughter, and concluded with saying, "Now, madam, you shall judge whether I can ever do enough for so kind, so good, so generous a young man; and sure he is the best and worthiest of all human beings."

The alterations in the countenance of Sophia had hitherto been chiefly to her disadvantage, and had inclined her complexion to too great paleness; but she now waxed redder, if possible, than vermilion, and cried, "I know not what to say; certainly what arises from gratitude cannot be blamed—But what service can my reading this letter do your friend, since I am resolved never—" Mrs. Miller fell again to her entreaties, and begged to be forgiven, but she could not, she said, carry it back. "Well, madam," says Sophia, "I cannot help it, if you will force it upon me.—Certainly you may leave it, whether I will or no." What Sophia meant, or whether she meant anything, I will not presume to determine; but Mrs. Miller actually understood this as a hint, and presently laying the letter down on the table, took her leave, having first begged permission to wait again on Sophia; which request had neither assent nor denial.

The letter lay upon the table no longer than till Mrs. Miller was out of sight; for then Sophia opened and read it.

This letter did very little service to his cause; for it consisted of little more than confessions of his own unworthiness, and bitter lamentations of despair, together with the most solemn protestations of his unalterable fidelity to Sophia, of which, he said, he hoped to convince her, if he had ever more the honour of being admitted to her presence; and that he could account for the letter to Lady Bellaston in such a manner, that, though it would not entitle him to her forgiveness, he hoped at least to obtain it from her mercy. And concluded with vowing that nothing was ever less in his thoughts than to marry Lady Bellaston.

Though Sophia read the letter twice over with great attention, his meaning still remained a riddle to her; nor could her invention suggest to her any means to excuse Jones. She certainly remained very angry with him, though indeed Lady Bellaston took up so much of her resentment, that her gentle mind had but little left to bestow on any other person.

That lady was most unluckily to dine this very day with her aunt Western, and in the afternoon they were all three, by appointment, to go together to the opera, and thence to Lady Thomas Hatchet's drum. Sophia would have gladly been excused from all, but would not disoblige her aunt; and as to the arts of counterfeiting illness, she was so entirely a stranger to them, that it never once entered into her head. When she was drest, therefore, down she went, resolved to encounter all the horrors of the day, and a most disagreeable one it proved; for Lady Bellaston took every opportunity very civilly and slyly to insult her; to all which her dejection of spirits disabled her from making any return; and, indeed, to confess the truth, she was at the very best but an indifferent mistress of repartee.

Another misfortune which befel poor Sophia, was the company of Lord Fellamar, whom she met at the opera, and who attended her to the drum. And though both places were too publick to admit of any particularities, and she was farther relieved by the musick at the one place, and by the cards at the other, she could not, however, enjoy herself in his company; for there is something of delicacy in women, which will not suffer them to be even easy in the presence of a man whom they know to have pretensions to them, which they are disinclined to favour.

Having in this chapter twice mentioned a drum, a word which our posterity, it is hoped, will not understand in the sense it is here applied, we shall, notwithstanding our present haste, stop a moment to describe the entertainment here meant, and the rather as we can in a moment describe it.

A drum, then, is an assembly of well-dressed persons of both sexes, most of whom play at cards, and the rest do nothing at all; while the mistress of the house performs the part of the landlady at an inn, and like the landlady of an inn prides herself in the number of her guests, though she doth not always, like her, get anything by it.

No wonder then, as so much spirits must be required to support any vivacity in these scenes of dulness, that we hear persons of fashion eternally complaining of the want of them; a complaint confined entirely to upper life. How insupportable must we imagine this round of impertinence to have been to Sophia at this time; how difficult must she have found it to force the appearance of gaiety into her looks, when her mind dictated nothing but the tenderest sorrow, and when every thought was charged with tormenting ideas!

Night, however, at last restored her to her pillow, where we will leave her to soothe her melancholy at least, though incapable, we fear, of rest, and shall pursue our history, which, something whispers us, is now arrived at the eve of some great event.

CHAPTER VII

A PATHETIC SCENE BETWEEN MR. ALLWORTHY AND MRS. MILLER

MRS. MILLER had a long discourse with Mr. Allworthy, at his return from dinner, in which she acquainted him with Jones's having unfortunately lost all which he was pleased to bestow on him at their separation; and with the distresses to which that loss had subjected him; of all which she had received a full account from the faithful retailer Partridge. She then explained the obligations she had to Jones; not that she was entirely explicit with regard to her daughter; for though she had the utmost confidence in Mr. Allworthy, and though there could be no hopes of keeping an affair secret which was unhappily known to more than half a dozen, yet she could not prevail with herself to mention those circumstances which reflected most on the chastity of poor Nancy, but smothered that part of her evidence as cautiously as if she had been before a judge, and the girl was now on her trial for the murder of a bastard.

Allworthy said, there were few characters so absolutely vicious as not to have the least mixture of good in them. "However," says he, "I cannot deny but that you have some obligations to the fellow, bad as he is, and I shall therefore excuse what hath past already, but must insist you never mention his name to me more; for, I promise you, it was upon the fullest and plainest evidence that I resolved to take the measures I have taken." "Well, sir," says she, "I make not the least doubt but time will shew all matters in their true and natural colours, and that you will be convinced this poor young man deserves better of you than some other folks that shall be nameless."

"Madam," cries Allworthy, a little ruffled, "I will not hear any reflections on my nephew; and if ever you say a word more of that kind, I will depart from your house that instant. He is the worthiest and best of men; and I once more repeat it to you, he hath carried his friendship to this man to a blameable length, by too long concealing facts of the blackest die. The ingratitude of the wretch to this good young man is what I most resent; for,

madam, I have the greatest reason to imagine he had laid a plot to supplant my nephew in my favour, and to have disinherited him."

"I am sure, sir," answered Mrs. Miller, a little frightened (for, though Mr. Allworthy had the utmost sweetness and benevolence in his smiles, he had great terror in his frowns), "I shall never speak against any gentleman you are pleased to think well of. I am sure, sir, such behaviour would very little become me, especially when the gentleman is your nearest relation; but, sir, you must not be angry with me, you must not indeed, for my good wishes to this poor wretch. Sure I may call him so now, though once you would have been angry with me if I had spoke of him with the least disrespect. How often have I heard you call him your son? How often have you prattled to me of him with all the fondness of a parent? Nay, sir, I cannot forget the many tender expressions, the many good things you have told me of his beauty, and his parts, and his virtues; of his good-nature and generosity. I am sure, sir, I cannot forget them, for I find them all true. I have experienced them in my own cause. They have preserved my family. You must pardon my tears, sir, indeed you must. When I consider the cruel reverse of fortune which this poor youth, to whom I am so much obliged, hath suffered; when I consider the loss of your favour, which I know he valued more than his life, I must, I must lament him. If you had a dagger in your hand, ready to plunge into my heart, I must lament the misery of one whom you have loved, and I shall ever love."

Allworthy was pretty much moved with this speech, but it seemed not to be with anger; for, after a short silence, taking Mrs. Miller by the hand, he said very affectionately to her, "Come, madam, let us consider a little about your daughter. I cannot blame you for rejoicing in a match which promises to be advantageous to her, but you know this advantage, in a great measure, depends on the father's reconciliation. I know Mr. Nightingale very well, and have formerly had concerns with him; I will make him a visit, and endeavour to serve you in this matter. I believe he is a worldly man; but as this is an only son, and the thing is now irretrievable, perhaps he may in time be brought to reason. I promise you I will do all I can for you."

Many were the acknowledgments which the poor woman made to Allworthy for this kind and generous offer, nor could she refrain from taking this occasion again to express her gratitude towards Jones, "to whom," said she, "I owe the opportunity

of giving you, sir, this present trouble." Allworthy gently stopped her; but he was too good a man to be really offended with the effects of so noble a principle as now actuated Mrs. Miller; and indeed, had not this new affair inflamed his former anger against Jones, it is possible he might have been a little softened towards him, by the report of an action which malice itself could not have derived from an evil motive.

Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Miller had been above an hour together, when their conversation was put an end to by the arrival of Blifil and another person, which other person was no less than Mr. Dowling, the attorney, who was now become a great favourite with Mr. Blifil, and whom Mr. Allworthy, at the desire of his nephew, had made his steward; and had likewise recommended him to Mr. Western, from whom the attorney received a promise of being promoted to the same office upon the first vacancy; and, in the meantime, was employed in transacting some affairs which the squire then had in London in relation to a mortgage.

This was the principal affair which then brought Mr. Dowling to town; therefore he took the same opportunity to charge himself with some money for Mr. Allworthy, and to make a report to him of some other business; in all which, as it was of much too dull a nature to find any place in this history, we will leave the uncle, nephew, and their lawyer concerned, and resort to other matters.

CHAPTER VIII

CONTAINING VARIOUS MATTERS

BEFORE we return to Mr. Jones, we will take one more view of Sophia.

Though that young lady had brought her aunt into great good humour by those soothing methods which we have before related, she had not brought her in the least to abate of her zeal for the match with Lord Fellamar. This zeal was now inflamed by Lady Bellaston, who had told her the preceding evening, that she was well satisfied from the conduct of Sophia, and from her carriage to his lordship, that all delays would be dangerous, and that the only way to succeed was to press the match forward with such rapidity that the young lady should have no time to reflect, and be obliged to consent while she scarce knew what she did; in which manner, she said, one-half of the marriages among people

of condition were brought about. A fact very probably true, and to which, I suppose, is owing the mutual tenderness which afterwards exists among so many happy couples.

A hint of the same kind was given by the same lady to Lord Fellamar; and both these so readily embraced the advice, that the very next day was, at his lordship's request, appointed by Mrs. Western for a private interview between the young parties. This was communicated to Sophia by her aunt, and insisted upon in such high terms, that, after having urged everything she possibly could invent against it without the least effect, she at last agreed to give the highest instance of complacency which any young lady can give, and consented to see his lordship.

As conversations of this kind afford no great entertainment, we shall be excused from reciting the whole that past at this interview; in which, after his lordship had made many declarations of the most pure and ardent passion to the silent blushing Sophia, she at last collected all the spirits she could raise, and with a trembling low voice said, "My lord, you must be yourself conscious whether your former behaviour to me hath been consistent with the professions you now make." "Is there," answered he, "no way by which I can atone for madness? what I did, I am afraid, must have too plainly convinced you, that the violence of love had deprived me of my senses." "Indeed, my lord," said she, "it is in your power to give me a proof of an affection which I much rather wish to encourage, and to which I should think myself more beholden." "Name it, madam," said my lord, very warmly. "My lord," says she, looking down upon her fan, "I know you must be sensible how uneasy this pretended passion of yours hath made me." "Can you be so cruel to call it pretended?" says he. "Yes, my lord," answered Sophia, "all professions of love to those whom we persecute are most insulting pretences. This pursuit of yours is to me a most cruel persecution: nay, it is taking a most ungenerous advantage of my unhappy situation." "Most lovely, most adorable charmer, do not accuse me," cries he, "of taking an ungenerous advantage, while I have no thoughts but what are directed to your honour and interest, and while I have no view, no hope, no ambition, but to throw myself, honour, fortune, everything at your feet." "My lord," says she, "it is that fortune and those honours which gave you the advantage of which I complain. These are the charms which have seduced my relations, but to me they are things indifferent. If your lordship will merit my gratitude, there is but one way." "Pardon me, divine creature," said he,

"there can be none. All I can do for you is so much your due, and will give me so much pleasure, that there is no room for your gratitude." "Indeed, my lord," answered she, "you may obtain my gratitude, my good opinion, every kind thought and wish which it is in my power to bestow; nay, you may obtain them with ease, for sure to a generous mind it must be easy to grant my request. Let me beseech you, then, to cease a pursuit in which you can never have any success. For your own sake as well as mine, I entreat this favour; for sure you are too noble to have any pleasure in tormenting an unhappy creature. What can your lordship propose but uneasiness to yourself by a perseverance, which, upon my honour, upon my soul, cannot, shall not prevail with me, whatever distresses you may drive me to." Here my lord fetched a deep sigh, and then said—"Is it then, madam, that I am so unhappy to be the object of your dislike and scorn; or will you pardon me if I suspect there is some other?" Here he hesitated, and Sophia answered with some spirit, "My lord, I shall not be accountable to you for the reasons of my conduct. I am obliged to your lordship for the generous offer you have made; I own it is beyond either my deserts or expectations; yet I hope, my lord, you will not insist on my reasons, when I declare I cannot accept it." Lord Fellamar returned much to this, which we do not perfectly understand, and perhaps it could not all be strictly reconciled either to sense or grammar; but he concluded his ranting speech with saying, "That if she had pre-engaged herself to any gentleman, however unhappy it would make him, he should think himself bound in honour to desist." Perhaps my lord laid too much emphasis on the word gentleman; for we cannot else well account for the indignation with which he inspired Sophia, who, in her answer, seemed greatly to resent some affront he had given her.

When she was speaking, with her voice more raised than usual, Mrs. Western came into the room, the fire glaring in her cheeks, and the flames bursting from her eyes. "I am ashamed," says she, "my lord, of the reception which you have met with. I assure your lordship, we are all sensible of the honour done us; and I must tell you, Miss Western, the family expect a different behaviour from you." Here my lord interfered on behalf of the young lady, but to no purpose; the aunt proceeded till Sophia pulled out her handkerchief, threw herself into a chair, and burst into a violent fit of tears.

The remainder of the conversation between Mrs. Western and his lordship, till the latter withdrew, consisted of bitter lamenta-

tions on his side, and on hers of the strongest assurances that her niece should and would consent to all he wished. "Indeed, my lord," says she, "the girl hath had a foolish education, neither adapted to her fortune nor her family. Her father, I am sorry to say it, is to blame for everything. The girl hath silly country notions of bashfulness. Nothing else, my lord, upon my honour; I am convinced she hath a good understanding at the bottom, and will be brought to reason."

This last speech was made in the absence of Sophia; for she had some time before left the room, with more appearance of passion than she had ever shown on any occasion; and now his lordship, after many expressions of thanks to Mrs. Western, many ardent professions of passion which nothing could conquer, and many assurances of perseverance, which Mrs. Western highly encouraged, took his leave for this time.

Before we relate what now passed between Mrs. Western and Sophia, it may be proper to mention an unfortunate accident which had happened, and which had occasioned the return of Mrs. Western with so much fury, as we have seen.

The reader then must know, that the maid who at present attended on Sophia was recommended by Lady Bellaston, with whom she had lived for some time in the capacity of a comb-brush: she was a very sensible girl, and had received the strictest instructions to watch her young lady very carefully. These instructions, we are sorry to say, were communicated to her by Mrs. Honour, into whose favour Lady Bellaston had now so ingratiated herself, that the violent affection which the good waiting-woman had formerly borne to Sophia was entirely obliterated by that great attachment which she had to her new mistress.

Now, when Mrs. Miller was departed, Betty (for that was the name of the girl), returning to her young lady, found her very attentively engaged in reading a long letter, and the visible emotions which she betrayed on that occasion might have well accounted for some suspicions which the girl entertained; but indeed they had yet a stronger foundation, for she had overheard the whole scene which passed between Sophia and Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. Western was acquainted with all this matter by Betty, who, after receiving many commendations and some rewards for her fidelity, was ordered, that, if the woman who brought the letter came again, she should introduce her to Mrs. Western herself.

Unluckily, Mrs. Miller returned at the very time when Sophia was engaged with his lordship. Betty, according to order, sent her directly to the aunt; who, being mistress of so many circumstances relating to what had past the day before, easily imposed upon the poor woman to believe that Sophia had communicated the whole affair; and so pumped everything out of her which she knew relating to the letter and relating to Jones.

This poor creature might, indeed, be called simplicity itself. She was one of that order of mortals who are apt to believe everything which is said to them; to whom nature hath neither indulged the offensive nor defensive weapons of deceit, and who are consequently liable to be imposed upon by any one who will only be at the expense of a little falsehood for that purpose. Mrs. Western, having drained Mrs. Miller of all she knew, which, indeed, was but little, but which was sufficient to make the aunt suspect a great deal, dismissed her with assurances that Sophia would not see her, that she would send no answer to the letter, nor ever receive another; nor did she suffer her to depart without a handsome lecture on the merits of an office to which she could afford no better name than that of procurer.—This discovery had greatly discomposed her temper, when, coming into the apartment next to that in which the lovers were, she overheard Sophia very warmly protesting against his lordship's addresses. At which the rage already kindled burst forth, and she rushed in upon her niece in a most furious manner, as we have already described, together with what past at that time till his lordship's departure.

No sooner was Lord Fellamar gone, than Mrs. Western returned to Sophia, whom she upbraided in the most bitter terms for the ill use she had made of the confidence reposed in her; and for her treachery in conversing with a man with whom she had offered but the day before to bind herself in the most solemn oath never more to have any conversation. Sophia protested she had maintained no such conversation. "How, how! Miss Western," said the aunt; "will you deny your receiving a letter from him yesterday?" "A letter, madam!" answered Sophia, somewhat surprized. "It is not very well bred, miss," replies the aunt, "to repeat my words. I say a letter, and I insist upon your showing it me immediately." "I scorn a lie, madam," said Sophia; "I did receive a letter, but it was without my desire, and, indeed, I may say, against my consent." "Indeed, indeed, miss," cries the aunt, "you ought to be ashamed of owning you had received it at all; but where is the letter? for I will see it."

To this peremptory demand, Sophia paused some time before she returned an answer; and at last only excused herself by declaring she had not the letter in her pocket, which was, indeed, true; upon which her aunt, losing all manner of patience, asked her niece this short question, whether she would resolve to marry Lord Fellamar, or no? to which she received the strongest negative. Mrs. Western then replied with an oath, or something very like one, that she would early the next morning deliver her back into her father's hand.

Sophia then began to reason with her aunt in the following manner:—"Why, madam, must I of necessity be forced to marry at all? Consider how cruel you would have thought it in your own case, and how much kinder your parents were in leaving you to your liberty. What have I done to forfeit this liberty? I will never marry contrary to my father's consent, nor without asking yours—And when I ask the consent of either improperly, it will be then time enough to force some other marriage upon me." "Can I bear to hear this," cries Mrs. Western, "from a girl who hath now a letter from a murderer in her pocket?" "I have no such letter, I promise you," answered Sophia; "and, if he be a murderer, he will soon be in no condition to give you any further disturbance." "How, Miss Western!" said the aunt, "have you the assurance to speak of him in this manner; to own your affection for such a villain to my face?" "Sure, madam," said Sophia, "you put a very strange construction on my words." "Indeed, Miss Western," cries the lady, "I shall not bear this usage; you have learnt of your father this manner of treating me; he hath taught you to give me the lie. He hath totally ruined you by this false system of education; and, please heaven, he shall have the comfort of its fruits; for once more I declare to you, that to-morrow morning I will carry you back. I will withdraw all my forces from the field, and remain henceforth, like the wise king of Prussia, in a state of perfect neutrality. You are both too wise to be regulated by my measures; so prepare yourself, for to-morrow morning you shall evacuate this house."

Sophia remonstrated all she could; but her aunt was deaf to all she said. In this resolution therefore we must at present leave her, as there seems to be no hopes of bringing her to change it.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. JONES IN THE PRISON

MR. JONES passed about twenty-four melancholy hours by himself, unless when relieved by the company of Partridge, before Mr. Nightingale returned; not that this worthy young man had deserted or forgot his friend; for, indeed, he had been much the greatest part of the time employed in his service.

He had heard, upon enquiry, that the only persons who had seen the beginning of the unfortunate rencounter were a crew belonging to a man-of-war which then lay at Deptford. To Deptford therefore he went in search of this crew, where he was informed that the men he sought after were all gone ashore. He then traced them from place to place, till at last he found two of them drinking together, with a third person, at a hedge-tavern near Aldersgate.

Nightingale desired to speak with Jones by himself (for Partridge was in the room when he came in). As soon as they were alone, Nightingale, taking Jones by the hand, cried, "Come, my brave friend, be not too much dejected at what I am going to tell you—I am sorry I am the messenger of bad news; but I think it my duty to tell you." "I guess already what that bad news is," cries Jones. "The poor gentleman then is dead."—"I hope not," answered Nightingale. "He was alive this morning; though I will not flatter you; I fear, from the accounts I could get, that his wound is mortal. But if the affair be exactly as you told it, your own remorse would be all you would have reason to apprehend, let what would happen; but forgive me, my dear Tom, if I entreat you to make the worst of your story to your friends. If you disguise anything to us, you will only be an enemy to yourself."

"What reason, my dear Jack, have I ever given you," said Jones, "to stab me with so cruel a suspicion?" "Have patience," cries Nightingale, "and I will tell you all. After the most diligent enquiry I could make, I at last met with two of the fellows who were present at this unhappy accident, and I am sorry to say, they do not relate the story so much in your favour as you yourself have told it." "Why, what do they say?" cries Jones. "Indeed what I am sorry to repeat, as I am afraid of the consequence of it to you. They say that they were at too great a distance to overhear any words that passed between you: but they both agree that the first blow was given by

you." "Then, upon my soul," answered Jones, "they injure me. He not only struck me first, but struck me without the least provocation. What should induce those villains to accuse me falsely?" "Nay, that I cannot guess," said Nightingale, "and if you yourself, and I, who am so heartily your friend, cannot conceive a reason why they should belie you, what reason will an indifferent court of justice be able to assign why they should not believe them? I repeated the question to them several times, and so did another gentleman who was present, who, I believe, is a seafaring man, and who really acted a very friendly part by you; for he begged them often to consider that there was the life of a man in the case; and asked them over and over, if they were certain; to which they both answered, that they were, and would abide by their evidence upon oath. For heaven's sake, my dear friend, recollect yourself; for, if this should appear to be the fact, it will be your business to think in time of making the best of your interest. I would not shock you; but you know, I believe, the severity of the law, whatever verbal provocations may have been given you." "Alas! my friend," cries Jones, "what interest hath such a wretch as I? Besides, do you think I would even wish to live with the reputation of a murderer? If I had any friends (as, alas! I have none), could I have the confidence to solicit them to speak in the behalf of a man condemned for the blackest crime in human nature? Believe me, I have no such hope; but I have some reliance on a throne still greatly superior; which will, I am certain, afford me all the protection I merit."

He then concluded with many solemn and vehement protestations of the truth of what he had at first asserted.

The faith of Nightingale was now again staggered, and began to incline to credit his friend, when Mrs. Miller appeared, and made a sorrowful report of the success of her embassy; which when Jones had heard, he cried out most heroically, "Well, my friend, I am now indifferent as to what shall happen, at least with regard to my life; and if it be the will of Heaven that I shall make an atonement with that for the blood I have spilt, I hope the Divine Goodness will one day suffer my honour to be cleared, and that the words of a dying man, at least, will be believed, so far as to justify his character."

A very mournful scene now past between the prisoner and his friends, at which, as few readers would have been pleased to be present, so few, I believe, will desire to hear it particularly related. We will, therefore, pass on to the entrance of the

turnkey, who acquainted Jones that there was a lady without who desired to speak with him when he was at leisure.

Jones declared his surprize at this message. He said, "He knew no lady in the world whom he could possibly expect to see there." However, as he saw no reason to decline seeing any person, Mrs. Miller and Mr. Nightingale presently took their leave, and he gave orders to have the lady admitted.

If Jones was surprized at the news of a visit from a lady, how greatly was he astonished when he discovered this lady to be no other than Mrs. Waters! In this astonishment then we shall leave him awhile, in order to cure the surprize of the reader, who will likewise, probably, not a little wonder at the arrival of this lady.

Who this Mrs. Waters was, the reader pretty well knows; what she was, he must be perfectly satisfied. He will therefore be pleased to remember that this lady departed from Upton in the same coach with Mr. Fitzpatrick and the other Irish gentleman, and in their company travelled to Bath.

Now there was a certain office in the gift of Mr. Fitzpatrick at that time vacant, namely that of a wife: for the lady who had lately filled that office had resigned, or at least deserted her duty. Mr. Fitzpatrick therefore, having thoroughly examined Mrs. Waters on the road, found her extremely fit for the place, which, on their arrival at Bath, he presently conferred upon her, and she without any scruple accepted. As husband and wife this gentleman and lady continued together all the time they stayed at Bath, and as husband and wife they arrived together in town.

Whether Mr. Fitzpatrick was so wise a man as not to part with one good thing till he had secured another, which he had at present only a prospect of regaining; or whether Mrs. Waters had so well discharged her office, that he intended still to retain her as principal, and to make his wife (as is often the case) only her deputy, I will not say; but certain it is, he never mentioned his wife to her, never communicated to her the letter given him by Mrs. Western, nor ever once hinted his purpose of repossessing his wife; much less did he ever mention the name of Jones. For, though he intended to fight with him wherever he met him, he did not imitate those prudent persons who think a wife, a mother, a sister, or sometimes a whole family, the safest seconds on these occasions. The first account, therefore, which she had of all this was delivered to her from his lips, after he was brought home from the tavern where his wound had been drest.

As Mr. Fitzpatrick, however, had not the clearest way of telling a story at any time, and was now, perhaps, a little more confused than usual, it was some time before she discovered that the gentleman who had given him this wound was the very same person from whom her heart had received a wound, which, though not of a mortal kind, was yet so deep that it had left a considerable scar behind it. But no sooner was she acquainted that Mr. Jones himself was the man who had been committed to the Gatehouse for this supposed murder, than she took the first opportunity of committing Mr. Fitzpatrick to the care of his nurse, and hastened away to visit the conqueror.

She now entered the room with an air of gaiety, which received an immediate check from the melancholy aspect of poor Jones, who started and blessed himself when he saw her. Upon which she said, "Nay, I do not wonder at your surprize; I believe you did not expect to see me; for few gentlemen are troubled here with visits from any lady, unless a wife. You see the power you have over me, Mr. Jones. Indeed, I little thought, when we parted at Upton, that our next meeting would have been in such a place." "Indeed, madam," says Jones, "I must look upon this visit as kind; few will follow the miserable, especially to such dismal habitations." "I protest, Mr. Jones," says she, "I can hardly persuade myself you are the same agreeable fellow I saw at Upton. Why, your face is more miserable than any dungeon in the universe. What can be the matter with you?" "I thought, madam," said Jones, "as you knew of my being here, you knew the unhappy reason." "Pugh!" says she, "you have pinked a man in a duel, that's all." Jones exprest some indignation at this levity, and spoke with the utmost contrition for what had happened. To which she answered, "Well, then, sir, if you take it so much to heart, I will relieve you; the gentleman is not dead, and, I am pretty confident, is in no danger of dying. The surgeon, indeed, who first dressed him was a young fellow, and seemed desirous of representing his case to be as bad as possible, that he might have the more honour from curing him: but the king's surgeon hath seen him since, and says, unless from a fever, of which there are at present no symptoms, he apprehends not the least danger of life." Jones shewed great satisfaction at this report; upon which she affirmed the truth of it, adding, "By the most extraordinary accident in the world I lodge at the same house; and have seen the gentleman, and I promise you he doth you justice, and says, whatever be the consequence, that he was

entirely the aggressor, and that you was not in the least to blame."

Jones expressed the utmost satisfaction at the account which Mrs. Waters brought him. He then informed her of many things which she well knew before, as who Mr. Fitzpatrick was, the occasion of his resentment, &c. He likewise told her several facts of which she was ignorant, as the adventure of the muff, and other particulars, concealing only the name of Sophia. He then lamented the follies and vices of which he had been guilty; every one of which, he said, had been attended with such ill consequences, that he should be unpardonable if he did not take warning, and quit those vicious courses for the future. He lastly concluded with assuring her of his resolution to sin no more, lest a worse thing should happen to him.

Mrs. Waters with great pleasantry ridiculed all this, as the effects of low spirits and confinement. She repeated some witticisms about the devil when he was sick, and told him, "She doubted not but shortly to see him at liberty, and as lively a fellow as ever; and then," says she, "I don't question but your conscience will be safely delivered of all these qualms that it is now so sick in breeding."

Many more things of this kind she uttered, some of which it would do her no great honour, in the opinion of some readers, to remember; nor are we quite certain but that the answers made by Jones would be treated with ridicule by others. We shall therefore suppress the rest of this conversation, and only observe that it ended at last with perfect innocence, and much more to the satisfaction of Jones than of the lady; for the former was greatly transported with the news she had brought him; but the latter was not altogether so pleased with the penitential behaviour of a man whom she had, at her first interview, conceived a very different opinion of from what she now entertained of him.

Thus the melancholy occasioned by the report of Mr. Nightingale was pretty well effaced; but the dejection into which Mrs. Miller had thrown him still continued. The account she gave so well tallied with the words of Sophia herself in her letter, that he made not the least doubt but that she had disclosed his letter to her aunt, and had taken a fixed resolution to abandon him. The torments this thought gave him were to be equalled only by a piece of news which fortune had yet in store for him, and which we shall communicate in the second chapter of the ensuing book.

BOOK XVIII

CHAPTER I

A FAREWELL TO THE READER

WE are now, reader, arrived at the last stage of our long journey. As we have, therefore, travelled together through so many pages, let us behave to one another like fellow-travellers in a stage coach, who have passed several days in the company of each other; and who, notwithstanding any bickerings or little animosities which may have occurred on the road, generally make all up at last, and mount, for the last time, into their vehicle with cheerfulness and good humour; since after this one stage, it may possibly happen to us, as it commonly happens to them, never to meet more.

As I have here taken up this simile, give me leave to carry it a little farther. I intend, then, in this last book, to imitate the good company I have mentioned in their last journey. Now, it is well known that all jokes and raillery are at this time laid aside; whatever characters any of the passengers have for the jest-sake personated on the road are now thrown off, and the conversation is usually plain and serious.

In the same manner, if I have now and then, in the course of this work, indulged any pleasantry for thy entertainment, I shall here lay it down. The variety of matter, indeed, which I shall be obliged to cram into this book, will afford no room for any of those ludicrous observations which I have elsewhere made, and which may sometimes, perhaps, have prevented thee from taking a nap when it was beginning to steal upon thee. In this last book thou wilt find nothing (or at most very little) of that nature. All will be plain narrative only; and, indeed, when thou hast perused the many great events which this book will produce, thou wilt think the number of pages contained in it scarce sufficient to tell the story.

And now, my friend, I take this opportunity (as I shall have no other) of heartily wishing thee well. If I have been an entertaining companion to thee, I promise thee it is what I have desired. If in anything I have offended, it was really without any intention. Some things, perhaps, here said, may have hit thee or thy friends; but I do most solemnly declare they were