

THE
HISTORY
OF
CHARLES JONES,
THE FOOTMAN.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.



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THE HISTORY, &c.

MY Father, George Jones, commonly called Black George, on account of his swarthy complexion, was one of the most industrious men in the whole village. His cottage, which was his own, and partly built by his own hands, stands on the common, about a stone's throw from the road, near the great Oak-tree, in the parish of King's Charleton in Somersetshire.—The Lord of the Manor having granted him leave to inclose a bit of the common for a garden, my father had got a thriving young orchard and a long strip of potatoes, besides his cottage, all the produce of his own industry. It used to be a favourite saying with him, that no man to whom God had given two hands, had ever need to want. 'For my part (says he,) I never knew what want was.—When I am sick, the club supports me, and when I am well, I warrant I'll support myself.' My mother, besides being equally industrious, was much more religious, and therefore much happier. She was as good and sweet-tempered a woman as any in the world, be the next where she will. For constancy at her place of wor-
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ship, civility to her neighbours, cleanliness in her own person, her house and her children, she had not her fellow. But the most remarkable thing in her (I am afraid a very uncommon thing) was her steady and uninterrupted practice of family prayer. It must have been a hard day's work indeed, that hindered her from her prayers. At six in the morning and eight in the evening, as regularly as ever the hour came, she always knelt down with her children round her, four of us, and read with great solemnity and devotion a short form given her by the clergyman, which concluded with the Lord's prayer, in which we all joined. And she used to say after she had finished, 'Now I can go to bed or to work, in peace; for now we may hope God will protect us.' I am sorry to say my Father seldom joined with us. He used to pretend he was busy or tired; and yet it would not have detained him long neither, for we were never more than six minutes about it, and surely twelve minutes a day (six in the morning and six in the evening) is no great time to give to God. One thing has often struck me, that if any thing went wrong and ruffled my dear mother's temper, or made her uneasy, the prayer seemed to set it all to rights. When she had been to prayers, all her grief seemed to be fled away. And indeed I observed the same thing with respect to my father; if he
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ever did join with us, it always seemed somehow to compose and sweeten his mind, and make him a great deal kinder to my mother and us.

As my father and mother were very industrious themselves, they were very desirous to make their children so; every child was employed as soon as he was able, in something or other. At about thirteen years of age my employment had been for some time to weed in the parson's garden, and run of errands for him. At fourteen he took me into his house, and not a little proud was I at obtaining the title of his 'little footman.' The morning I left my father's cottage, my dear mother, who was as kind as she was good, appeared to be very much affected; she said she could not commit me to the wide world, without first committing me to God who governed it; and then she knelt down with me by her side, and prayed, 'Gracious Lord, be pleased to have mercy on my dear boy. To thy care I commend him. Guard him, I beseech thee, in the many temptations which he is now beginning to encounter. May he with solid piety and honest diligence, do his duty in that state of life in which it hath pleased thee to place him.'— She then gave me her blessing, put a Testament into my pocket, bid me fear God, and always act for my master as I would do for my myself.

In my new situation there were to be
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sure some few things disagreeable. My mistress was peevish and fretful; the cook violent and passionate. But what service is there, or indeed, what situation in life, howsoever much above servitude, in which there is not something unpleasant? Every state has its trials; servants have theirs: but if they cannot learn to put up with some little inconveniencies, they may change their places every year of their lives, and never be satisfied after all. This is a lesson I have learnt by long experience.

Though by God's blessing I had received a more religious education than most children, it yet soon appeared that I had many faults, which it was necessary for me to be corrected of before I could become a good servant. At first, when I was sent upon an errand, I was much given to loitering. I was then too young to consider that by loitering in errands I was wasting what was not my own, my master's time. Besides this fault, as every thing which I saw and heard in my master's house was such as I had never seen or heard before, I was too apt to talk of it to my old play fellows, or at the village shop. But as soon as ever I became a little older, I began to reflect that this was very wrong. One Sunday evening, when I had leave to go home to see my parents, I was beginning to tell my mother how there had been a great uproar at the parsonage the day before, about
 ——Here she put her hand upon my lips,
 and

and said, ' Charles, not a word more of what has passed at the parsonage. Whatsoever happens in your master's house is never to be spoken of out of your master's doors. A tale-bearing servant is always an unfaithful servant ; he betrays the trust which his master puts in him.'

My mother's vehemence surprised me a little, but it made so much impression upon me, that I was pretty well broken of the fault from that very time. Into how many scrapes has this talkative temper brought many servants of my acquaintance! There was poor Nic Jarret, the Squire's under footman, that lost his place, a new suit of black broad cloth, and a legacy of five pounds, which he would soon have had by reason of his mistress's death, only for saying at a neighbour's house, that his mistress sometimes fell asleep while the Squire was reading to the family on a Sunday night.

Nic and I were at one time rather too intimate: I remember one day, when I was about sixteen, having attended my master to the Squire's house, Nic prevailed on me after dinner to play with him at pitch and tofs. I was worth at that time five shillings and two pence, more money than I had ever possessed before in my life. In about two hours Nic reduced me to my last shilling. But though it was a heavy stroke at the time, yet it proved in the end a happy event, for by
my

my mother's persuasions, I resolved thence forward never to game again as long I lived, which resolution, by God's grace, I have hitherto happily kept. I wish from my heart that all other servants would resolve the same. The practice of card-playing, so common among servants in large families, is the worst custom they can possibly fall into. My poor brother Tom suffered enough for it. One day having received in the morning a quarter's wages, he lost the whole of it before night at All Fours; and what was the consequence? Why, from that very time, he took to those practices of cheating his master which ended in his ruin. How much better would it be for all Servants, if instead of wasting their leisure in card-playing, they would amuse themselves in reading some Godly book, or improve themselves in writing, or cyphering. It was by this means, for I was never taught to write, that I qualified myself for the place of Bailiff, which I now fill.

I remember Nic used to say, 'Whilst my master plays cards in the parlour, why shouldst thou be so squeamish as not to play in the kitchen?' But Nic did not consider that his master being rich, and playing for small sums, his losses laid him under no temptation of dishonesty in order to repay them; besides the Squire could read and write at any time, whereas this was our only leisure time, and if we did not improve ourselves then, we never could; what

what might be comparatively innocent in him, might be ruinous to us. And even if my master be a professed gambler, that is no reason I should be so too. A servant is to do what is right, let his master do what he will. If a master swears and gets drunk, and talks at table with indecency, or against God and religion, to God he must account for it, and a sorry account it will be, I doubt; but his example will not excuse our crimes, though it will aggravate his. We must take care of our own souls, whether our masters take care of theirs or not.

But to return to my history; I am ashamed to say that I was guilty more than once in the earlier part of my servitude, of the shocking and detestable crime of lying, in order to excuse or screen my faults.— Happily I was cured of it in the following manner: Having been one day ordered to carry a bottle of wine to a sick man, one of my master's parishioners, I accidentally broke the bottle, and of course lost the wine. What was to be done? Should I confess my misfortune, and acknowledge my carelessness, or conceal it by a lie? After some deliberation, I resolved upon the lie.—I therefore had made up my story, 'how the poor man sent his duty to my master, and thanked him a thousand times, and that he was a little better, and that his wife said she thought this wine would save his life.'

life.' Being thus prepared, as I was returning home, I met a pedlar, of whom I bought for a penny a little book, containing a story of a woman at Devizes, who was struck dead on the spot for telling a lie. To be sure it was Heaven sent the pedlar to me, to save me from the sin I was going to commit. 'If this woman was struck dead for a lie, (said I to myself) why may not I?' I therefore went directly home, and made a confession of my negligence and misfortune. And it was well for me I did; for the sick man, whose duty and thanks I had wickedly intended to carry to my master, was dead, as I understood afterwards, three hours before the bottle was broken. From this time, therefore, I began to see, what I am now fully convinced of, that besides the sinfulness of lying, it is always more for the interest and lasting comforts of servants to confess the truth at once, than to conceal a fault by falsehood. When a servant has told a lie, he is always in danger of its being found out, and sooner or later it generally is found out, and then his character is ruined. Whereas, if he confesses the truth at once, he probably escapes without any anger at all, or at worst it is soon over, and the fault itself is forgotten.

Having now lived seven years at the parsonage, and being twenty-one years of age, my master called me one day into his study,

study, where he spent a good deal of his time, and said to me, ' Charles, you have lived with me a considerable time, and it has been always with much pleasure that I have remarked the decency, sobriety and diligence of your conduct. Those few faults which you have, further experience and more years will, I doubt not, cure. You are now qualified for a better place than mine, and are entitled to higher wages than it is in my power to give. I have therefore recommended you to a friend of mine in London, for which place you are to set out, if you approve it, in a month. But I should think it a crime to dismiss you to a situation so full of temptations, without giving you some little advice. Listen, therefore, my dear Charles, to what I shall say, as I mean it only for your good. In the first place, fear God; and then you will never have an occasion to be afraid of man. Act always in his presence. Never enter or quit your bed without prayer. Do always for your master, as you would your master, if you were to change places, should do for you. Endeavour to get a pious friend, but avoid, as you would the plague, all wicked company. Be cautious of too great familiarity with your female fellow servants; an unlawful intercourse of this kind will ruin you, body and soul. Flee from an ale-house as you would from the devil; if you

once

once get into it, you will never be out of it. Keep your money, and your money will keep you. Here, Charles, is a Bible for you: the more you read it, the more you will love it; and the more you love it, the better you will be, and the happier. I have written some directions for you in the first page of it. God bless you; and when my race, which is now drawing to its end, shall finish, may we meet in heaven. My master's kindness so affected me, that I could not answer him for tears. I was indeed very glad of going to see so fine a place as London, though at the same time I could not leave a house where I had been treated more like a child than a servant, without great regret. I shall not attempt to describe my parting with my mother. No description, I am sure, could do justice to the solemn and affectionate manner in which she exhorted me to be pious and just, and recommended me to God in prayer. Her last words I shall never forget—'I know my dear son (said she) that you love me tenderly, and that you would not give me unnecessary pain on any account. Remember then, that whenever you do any wrong thing, you are planting a dagger in your mother's heart.' With these words, her eyes brim full of tears, and her hands lifted up in silent prayer to God, she turned away from me, and went into the cottage.

And

And now, Reader, you find me in the great and dangerous city of London, in the service of a very wealthy master, who kept twelve servants besides myself. If country people knew London as well as I do, how cautious would they be of exchanging their safe and peaceful situations in the country for the perils and temptations of a great city. How many young fellows have I known, who lived honestly and happily in their native place, come up to London in the hope of higher wages, and there forfeit their integrity, their peace of mind, their health; their character and souls. Workmen in particular are very fond of getting into large cities, because they think their labour will turn to better account there than in their own villages. They do not consider that in a city, they must give as much for a filthy room, in a filthy house, inhabited by half a dozen families situated in a close, smoky, dirty street, as in the country would pay the rent of a cottage and a garden. They do not consider the dearth of provisions in a city, the temptations they are under from bad women, wicked company, and the great number of ale-houses. In short, I am fully persuaded that a labourer in the country, on a shilling a day, is better off than one in a city on two shillings.

When I came to my place, I found every thing for the first three or four days very
smooth

smooth and very pleasant, plenty of provisions, plenty of drink, little work, and a very merry servants' hall. But soon the face of things, with respect to me, changed very much, and I underwent a severer temptation than I ever experienced before or since in the whole course of my life. I had always hitherto been taught to consider that sobriety, and diligence, and piety, were virtues. I therefore never swore, I never got drunk, I never gamed, I went to church as often as I could, I said my prayers night and morning, and on Sunday at least, if not on other days, I read a little in my good old master's Bible. But here I soon found that all this was the worst vice I could be guilty of. As soon as they found me out, it seemed to be a trial of skill amongst them who should plague me most. One called me a Parson; another, a Methodist; a third, a conceited Prig; a fourth, a canting Hypocrite. If I went into any other gentleman's kitchen it was all the same; my character flew before me, and many were the jests and laughs raised both at home and abroad at my expence. In short, during three months, my life was a constant state of anxiety and torment; so that at last I was almost tempted, God forgive me for the thought, to do as they did, and forfeit my everlasting soul in order to avoid the present uneasiness. But while things were in this state, I felt myself

self greatly and unexpectedly relieved one Sunday morning by a Sermon which I happened to hear from our Parish Minister, on the following text: 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil of you *falsely* for my sake, for great is your reward in heaven.' The excellent discourse which this pious man delivered on these words was so exactly suited to my circumstances and feelings, that it seemed as if it had been addressed solely to me; and it pleased God so to apply what had been said to my heart and understanding, that I not only determined to bear in *future* the sneers and scoffs of my fellow servants with patience and fortitude, but even those very sneers which I formerly considered as my heaviest calamity, were now no longer grievous. From this time, therefore, my uneasiness was pretty well at an end. And I earnestly recommend it to all other servants, who have been so happy as to acquire sober and virtuous habits, not so suffer themselves to be laughed out of their sobriety and virtue by the jests and ridicule of their fellow-servants. They may depend upon it that their cause is a good one, and though they suffer for it at first, they will finally triumph. In a short time all my persecution was at an end. 'To be sure (said the coachman one day to the cook) Charles is a little too religious, but upon my

my word I don't think he is the worse of it. Mayhap it might be better for us we were more like him. I don't see but that he is as humble, friendly, and worthy a fellow as any amongst us. For my part I shall laugh at him no longer.' This speech, which I happened accidentally to overhear, gave me great pleasure, and I soon found by the agreeable change in my fellow-servants' conduct towards me, that the coachman had expressed the opinion of the whole hall. It is true I did every thing to obtain their good will that lay in my power. I was as civil and obliging to every one among them as I possibly could. Was any thing to be done? if nobody else would do it, I never stopped to consider whether it belonged to my place or not, but did it out of hand. If any body took it into his head to fall out with me, I generally disarmed him of his wrath by saying nothing. If any little quarrels, or misfortunes, or misconduct, happened in the hall, I always endeavoured to hush it up, and never carried any tales to the master, unless when I saw any body wronging him, and then I thought it my duty, or unless the thing was very bad indeed. In short, by pursuing always this line of conduct, I found my situation very comfortable and agreeable. My master treated me with great confidence and kindness; my fellow-servants with great friendliness and respect.

In about two years time, the footman that used to go to market being turned away for drunkenness, which vice soon proved his ruin, my master told me, that as he believed I was an honest and careful young man, and perceiving that I could write and keep an account, he should in future employ me in marketing. To market, therefore, I went every day, and as I had now a good deal of my master's money always in my hands, I prayed heartily to God that he would be pleased to preserve me under the temptation to which this exposed me. My first exploit in this way was the purchase of ten shillings worth of fruit at a fruiterer's. When I had finished my bargain, and was coming out of the shop, the fruiterer slipped a shilling into my hand. As I had never, to the best of my recollection, seen him before, I was somewhat surprized at his generosity; but fortunately had the presence of mind to ask him whether he had charged his fruit the higher on account of this present to me. 'Why young man (said he) this is an honest question, and I will give you an honest answer. The fact is, that as we know that gentlemen of your cloth expect some compliment from the tradesmen that they deal with, we are obliged in our own defence, to charge our articles the higher on that account to their masters.' 'And so,

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(said I) the money you give us, comes finally from the pockets of our masters?' 'To be sure it does.' 'Why then, (said I) I will take your shilling, but shall charge my master only nine shillings.' And this method I constantly pursued in the like case ever after; for I think the above mentioned practice of footmen, which, however, I hope is not very common with them, is just the same in conscience as if they should rob their master's bureau.

One Monday morning, having settled my account for the last week with my master, I found that he had made a mistake against himself of twenty shillings. As soon as I discovered it, I said to myself, here now is an opportunity for getting twenty shillings without any risk of detection; but God forbid that I should do it, as it would ruin my peace of mind, and destroy my soul. I therefore pointed out the error to my master the first opportunity.—'Charles, (said he) you are right, the mistake is obvious. I acknowledge I made it purposely to try your honesty. You will find that this affair will turn out, before long, to your advantage.' Now, though I do not think it quite fair of masters to lay this kind of trap for their servants integrity, yet as I know by experience they sometimes do it, we must be doubly on our guard. Indeed, dishonesty is never safe. It always will out somehow

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or other. I have seen surprizing instances of the discovery of it, when it seemed to have been committed with such cunning as to be impossible to be detected.

One day as I was going to market, I met Sir Robert S——'s butler, who told me, that having long observed my sobriety and diligence, he was happy to have it now in his power to offer me a place in his master's family, where my wages would be raised two guineas a year. I thanked him, and told him he should have his answer next evening. In the mean time I called upon a pious and worthy friend, whom I consulted in all difficulties, and asked his opinion. After mature deliberation, he said, 'Charles, don't go. When you are once got into a good place, stick to it like a leech. The rolling stone gets no moss. The more years you continue in one service, the more you are respected by your master and all the world. A good family considers an old servant as one of themselves, and can no more see him want than a near relation. Whereas servants that are continually roving from place to place, have no friend in distress, and seldom get a provision for old age.' Happy it was for me that I followed this good advice. If I had not, I should probably have been nothing more than a poor footman all my life.

But before I bring my own story to an end, I must beg my reader's patience, to listen

listen to the sad fate of my poor brother Tom. Alas! poor Tom, he was a great favourite in our kitchen, because he sung the best song, and told the merriest tale, and paid his card money the most freely of any gentleman footman about town. And then he swore so much like a gentleman, and was so complaisant to the ladies, and pushed about the strong beer so merrily, that he was, said our servants, the most agreeable company in the world. And yet all these entertaining qualities did not preserve my poor brother from the most dreadful state of distress and ruin. One morning he came to me about ten o'clock with a very woeful face, which was a thing very unusual for him, and told me, that he had just been turned away from his place without a character, that he had no money, many debts, and no real friends, and what was worse than all, that he was labouring under disease.

Tom grew worse every day, and was at length given over. In the morning of that day, while I was sitting at his bedside, who should come in but my dear mother. She had walked 130 miles, except now and then a lift in the waggon, to attend upon and comfort her undeserving son. When she saw him, pale and emaciated, and his face half consumed by disease, it so shocked her, that she fainted away. As soon as she recovered, and was a little relieved by
 a plentiful

a plentiful flood of tears, she said, ' My dear Tom, I am come to take care of thee, and make thee better, if I can.' ' Alas! mother (answered he, putting his clay cold hand into hers) it is all too late. I have but a few hours to live. It is by neglecting your advice that I am brought to this. Gaming and drink, and bad company, and bad women have been my ruin. O! what will become of my soul! If I could but live my life over again.—Here he was seized with a sudden fit, and though he lived some hours, he never spoke after; and died that evening in my mother's arms.

After recounting the sorrowful history of my unhappy brother, I must now hasten to conclude my own. About a twelve-month after the offer of a place in Sir Robert S——'s family, my master, in consideration as he said, of my faithful services, made me his butler. He was indeed so kind and friendly to me on all occasions, that I found it necessary to be extremely cautious lest I should grow proud, or saucy, or familiar, which some servants, when they have lived long in a place, and find themselves in favour, are apt to do. After enjoying this post about six years, our family being now removed into the country, I made acquaintance with a farmer's daughter living near the great house, whom on account of her religious and industrious principles, and her amiable and cheerful temper,

temper, I wished to make my wife. She was no flaunter in fine clothes, none of your dancing, flirting, forward lasses, that run about to christenings, and revels, and hops, that will ruin a man before he knows where he is; but a pious, sober, stay-at-home, industrious young woman; else I am sure any body might have had her for me. As I had never been guilty of any unnecessary expence, for nobody will call that unnecessary which I sent yearly to my parents, my savings, the interest being added yearly to the principal in the hands of my master, amounted to two hundred pounds. And as Fanny's father promised to give her another hundred, I thought we might with this take a small farm, and maintain ourselves comfortably and decently.—I therefore communicated the affair to my master. ‘Charles, (said he) though I am loth to part with so good a servant, yet I think it an act of gratitude due to you for your long and faithful services, to consent readily to any thing which may be for your welfare. But I do not think it necessary for us to part at all. I am at present in want of a bailiff. You may, if you approve it, undertake that office, and still retain your present wages. Your father-in-law, who is an experienced farmer, will instruct and assist you in the duties of it. I will, besides, let you a small farm on an advantageous lease, which you may make the most of for yourself.’

To

To this kind and generous offer I joyfully assented. And Fanny and myself have now lived together six years in the farm-house near the park-gate, happy and prosperous. My father being dead, and my brother and sister settled, my mother, who is now very old, lives with me; and by her example and exhortation I find a sense of religion sink deeper into my soul every day, and indeed I am very well convinced by long experience, that there is nothing in this world can make us truly happy but that.

I address this little book, which I wrote by little and little in the long evenings of the last hard winter, to all footmen. I hope they will not be angry with my well meant endeavours, but take kindly what is intended only for their good.

FINIS.

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