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Samuel RICHARDSON

A PASSAGE FROM PAMELA, OR VIRTUE REWARDED

My dear master came to me, at entering the chapel, and took my and, and led me up to the altar. "Remember, my dear girl," whispered he, "and be cheerful." "I am, I will, Sir," said I; but hardly knew what I said. God forgive me ! but I never was so absent in my life, as at first : even till Mr. Williams had gone on his service, so far as to the awful words about "requiring us, as we shall answer at the dreadful day of judgment;" and then the solemn words, and my master's whispering, "Mind this, my dear," made me start. Said he, still whispering, "Know you any impediment?" I blushed, and said, softly, "None, Sir, but my great unworthiness."

Then followed the sweet words, "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife," etc., and I began to take heart a little, when my dearest master answered audibly to this question, "I will". But I could only make a curtsy, when they asked me; though I am sure, my heart was readier than my speech, and answered to every article of obey, serve, love, and honour.

Mr. Peters gave me away, and I said after Mr. Williams, as well as I could, as my dear master did, with a much better grace, the words of betrothment; and the ceremony of the ring passing next, I received the dear favour at his worthy hands, with a most grateful heart; and he told me afterwards, that when he had done saying: "With this ring I thee wed," etc., I curtsied, and said: "Thank you, Sir". May-be I did; for it was a most grateful part of the service, and my heart was

overwhelmed with his goodness, and the tender grace where-with he performed it. I was very glad the next part was the prayer, and kneeling; for I trembled so, I could hardly stand, betwixt fear and joy.

The joining of our hands, and declaration of our being married, to the few witnesses present; the blessing, the psalm, and prayers, and the concluding exhortation, were so many beautiful, welcome, and lovely parts of this divine office, that my heart was delighted with them, and my spirits a little freer.

Thus, my dearest parents, is your happy, thrice happy Pamela, at last married; and to whom? — Why to her beloved, gracious master! the lord of her wishes! God be evermore blessed and praised! and make me not wholly unworthy of such transcendent honour! and bless and reward the dear good gentleman: who has thus exalted his unworthy servant, unto a place which the greatest ladies would think themselves happy in!

Oliver GOLDSMITH

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD AT HOME

I had scarce taken orders a year, before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife, as she did her weddinggown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well. To do her justice, she was a good-natured, notable woman; and as for breeding, there were few country ladies who could show more. She could read any English book without much spelling; but for pickling, preserving, and cockery, none could excel her. She prided herself also upon being an excellent contriver in housekeeping; though I could never find that we grew richer with all her contrivances.

However, we loved each other tenderly, and our fondness increased as we grew old. There was, in fact, nothing that could make us angry with the world or each other. We had an elegant house, situated in a fine country, and a good neighbourhood. The year was spent in moral or rural amusement; in visiting our rich neighbours, and relieving such as were poor. We had no revolutions to fear, nor fatigues to undergo; all our adventures were by the fireside; and all our migrations from the blue bed to the brown.

— 2 —

As we lived near the road, we often had the traveller or stranger visit us to taste our gooseberry wine, for which we had great reputation; and I profess with the veracity of an historian, I never knew one of them find fault with it. Our cousins too, even to the fortieth remove, all remembered their affinity, without any help from the herald's office, and came very frequently to see us. Some of them did us no great honour by these claims of kindred; as we had the blind, the maimed, and the halt amongst the number. However, my wife always insisted, that, as they were the same flesh and blood, they should sit with us at the same table. So that, if we had not very rich, we generally had very happy friends about us; for this remark will hold good through life, that the poorer the guest, the better pleased he ever is with being treated; and as some men gaze with admiration at the colours of a tulip, or the wing of a butterfly, so I was by nature an admirer of happy human faces. However, when any one of our relations was found to be a person of very bad character, a troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house, I ever took care to lend him a riding-coat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes a horse of small value, and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them. By this the house was cleared of such as we did not like; but never was the family of Wakefield known to turn the traveller or the poor dependant out of doors.

Thus we lived several years in a state of much happiness; not but that we sometimes had these little rubs which Providence sends to enhance the value of its favours. My orchard was often robbed by school-boys, and my wife's custards plundered by the cats or the children. The squire would sometimes fall asleep in the most pathetic parts of my sermon, or his lady return my wife's civilities at church with a mutilated courtesy. But we soon got over the uneasiness caused by such accidents, and usually, in three or four days, began to wonder how they vexed us.

Samuel JOHNSON

LETTER TO LORD CHESTERFIELD

February 7, 1755

MY LORD: — I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of "The World", that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To

be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le Vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; — That I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. — I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, I have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect; for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess my obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

MY LORD,

Your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,
SAM. JOHNSON

— 4 —

ADDISON

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY AT CHURCH.

(From : The Spectator, Monday, July 9, 1711)

My friend, Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that, in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a commonprayer-book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singingmaster, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the Psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing Psalms half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces amen three or four times to the same prayer and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend in the midst of the service calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an

— 5 —

idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then inquires how such a one's wife, or mother, or son, or father, do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me that upon a catechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a fitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the Church service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.



— 6 —