

Book I

containing as much of the birth of the foundling as is necessary or proper to acquaint the reader with in the beginning of this history



Chapter I

The *Introduction* to the *Work*, or *Bill of Fare* to the *Feast*



AN AUTHOR OUGHT TO CONSIDER HIMSELF, NOT AS A GENTLEMAN WHO gives a private or eleemosynary treat, but rather as one who keeps a public ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money. In the former case, it is well known, that the entertainer provides what fare he pleases; and tho' this should be very indifferent, and utterly disagreeable to the taste of his company, they must not find any fault; nay, on the contrary, good-breeding forces them outwardly to approve and to commend whatever is set before them. Now the contrary of this happens to the master of an ordinary. Men who pay for what they eat, will insist on gratifying their palettes, however nice and even whimsical these may prove; and if every thing is not agreeable to their taste, will challenge a right to censure, to abuse, and to d—n their dinner without controul.

To prevent therefore giving offence to their customers by any such disappointment, it hath been usual, with the honest and well-meaning host, to provide a bill of fare, which all persons may peruse at their first entrance into the house; and, having thence acquainted themselves with the entertainment which they may expect, may either stay and regale with what is provided for them, or may depart to some other ordinary better accommodated to their taste.

As we do not disdain to borrow wit or wisdom from any man who is capable of lending us either, we have condescended to take a hint from these honest victuallers, and shall prefix not only a general bill of fare to our whole entertainment, but shall likewise give the reader particular bills to every course which is to be served up in this and the ensuing volumes.

The provision then which we have here made is no other than HUMAN NATURE. Nor do I fear that my sensible reader, though most luxurious in his