

Chapter 12

I should go back a little here to where I left off. The elder brother having thus managed me, his next business was to manage his mother, and he never left till he had brought her to acquiesce and be passive in the thing, even without acquainting the father, other than by post letters; so that she consented to our marrying privately, and leaving her to manage the father afterwards.

Then he cajoled with his brother, and persuaded him what service he had done him, and how he had brought his mother to consent, which, though true, was not indeed done to serve

him, but to serve himself; but thus diligently did he cheat him, and had the thanks of a faithful friend for shifting off his whore into his brother's arms for a wife. So certainly does interest banish all manner of affection, and so naturally do men give up honour and justice, humanity, and even Christianity, to secure themselves.

I must now come back to brother Robin, as we always called him, who having got his mother's consent, as above, came big with the news to me, and told me the whole story of it, with a sincerity so visible, that I must confess it grieved me that I must be the instrument to abuse so honest a gentleman. But there was no remedy; he would have me, and I was not obliged to tell him that I was his brother's whore, though I had no other way

to put him off; so I came gradually into it, to his satisfaction, and behold we were married.

Modesty forbids me to reveal the secrets of the marriage-bed, but nothing could have happened more suitable to my circumstances than that, as above, my husband was so fuddled when he came to bed, that he could not remember in the morning whether he had had any conversation with me or no, and I was obliged to tell him he had, though in reality he had not, that I might be sure he could make to inquiry about anything else.

It concerns the story in hand very little to enter into the further particulars of the family, or of myself, for the five years that I lived with this husband, only to observe that I had two children by him, and that at the end of five years he died. He had been really a very good husband to me, and we lived very agreeably together; but as he had not received much from them, and had in the little time he lived acquired no great matters, so my circumstances were not great, nor was I much mended by the match.

Indeed, I had preserved the elder brother's bonds to me, to pay #500, which he offered me for my consent to marry his brother; and this, with what I had saved of the money he formerly gave me, about as much more by my husband, left me a widow with about #1200 in my pocket.

My two children were, indeed, taken happily off my hands by

my husband's father and mother, and that, by the way, was all

they got by Mrs. Betty.

I confess I was not suitably affected with the loss of my husband, nor indeed can I say that I ever loved him as I ought to have done, or as was proportionable to the good usage I had from him, for he was a tender, kind, good-humoured man as any woman could desire; but his brother being so always in my sight, at least while we were in the country, was a continual snare to me, and I never was in bed with my husband but I wished myself in the arms of his brother; and though his brother never offered me the least kindness that way after our marriage, but carried it just as a brother out to do, yet it was impossible for me to do so to him; in short, I committed adultery and incest with him every day in my desires, which, without doubt, was as effectually criminal in the nature of the guilt as if I had actually done it.

Before my husband died his elder brother was married, and we, being then removed to London, were written to by the old lady to come and be at the wedding. My husband went, but I pretended indisposition, and that I could not possibly travel, so I stayed behind; for, in short, I could not bear the sight of his being given to another woman, though I knew I was never to have him myself.

I was now, as above, left loose to the world, and being still young and handsome, as everybody said of me, and I assure you I thought myself so, and with a tolerable fortune in my pocket, I put no small value upon myself. I was courted by several very considerable tradesmen, and particularly very warmly by one, a linen-draper, at whose house, after my husband's death, I took a lodging, his sister being my acquaintance. Here I had all the liberty and all the opportunity to be gay and appear in company that I could desire, my landlord's sister being one of the maddest, gayest things alive, and not so much mistress of her virtue as I thought as first she had been. She brought me into a world of wild company, and even brought home several persons, such as she liked well enough to gratify, to see her pretty widow, so she was pleased to call me, and that name I got in a little time in public. Now, as fame and fools make an assembly, I was here wonderfully caressed, had abundance of admirers, and such as called themselves lovers; but I found not one fair proposal among them all. As for their common design, that I understood too well to be drawn into any more snares of that kind. The case was altered with me: I had money in my pocket, and had nothing to say to them. I had been tricked once by that cheat called love, but the game was over; I was resolved now to be married or nothing, and to be well married or not at all.

I loved the company, indeed, of men of mirth and wit, men of gallantry and figure, and was often entertained with such, as I was also with others; but I found by just observation, that the brightest men came upon the dullest

errand--that is to say, the dullest as to what I aimed at. On the other hand, those who came with the best proposals were the dullest and most

disagreeable part of the world. I was not averse to a tradesman, but then I would have a tradesman, forsooth, that was something of a gentleman too; that when my husband had a mind to carry me to the court, or to the play, he might become a sword, and look as like a gentleman as another man; and not be one that had the mark of his apron-strings upon his coat, or the mark of his hat upon his periwig; that should look as if he was set on to his sword, when his sword was put on to him, and that carried his trade in his countenance.

Well, at last I found this amphibious creature, this land-water thing called a gentleman-tradesman; and as a just plague upon my folly, I was caught in the very snare which, as I might say, I laid for myself. I said for myself, for I was not trepanned, I confess, but I betrayed myself.

This was a draper, too, for though my comrade would have brought me to a bargain with her brother, yet when it came to the point, it was, it seems, for a mistress, not a wife; and I kept true to this notion, that a woman should never be kept for a mistress that had money to keep herself.

Thus my pride, not my principle, my money, not my virtue, kept me honest; though, as it proved, I found I had much better have been sold by my she-

comrade to her brother, than have sold myself as I did to a tradesman that was rake, gentleman, shopkeeper, and beggar, all together.

But I was hurried on (by my fancy to a gentleman) to ruin myself in the grossest manner that every woman did; for my new husband coming to a lump of money at once, fell into such a profusion of expense, that all I had, and all he had before, if he had anything worth mentioning, would not have held it out above one year.

He was very fond of me for about a quarter of a year, and what I got by that was, that I had the pleasure of seeing a great deal of my money spent upon myself, and, as I may say, had

some of the spending it too. 'Come, my dear,' says he to me one day, 'shall we go and take a turn into the country for about a week?' 'Ay, my dear,' says I, 'whither would you go?' 'I care not whither,' says he, 'but I have a mind to look like quality for a week. We'll go to Oxford,' says he. 'How,' says I, 'shall we go? I am no horsewoman, and 'tis too far for a coach.'

'Too far!' says he; 'no place is too far for a coach-and-six. If I carry you out, you shall travel like a duchess.' 'Hum,' says I, 'my dear, 'tis a frolic; but if you have a mind to it, I don't care.' Well, the time was appointed, we had a rich coach, very good horses, a coachman, postillion, and two footmen in very good liveries; a gentleman on horseback, and a page with a feather in

his hat upon another horse. The servants all called him my lord, and the inn-keepers, you may be sure, did the like, and I was her honour the Countess, and thus we traveled to Oxford, and a very pleasant journey we had; for, give him his due, not a beggar alive knew better how to be a lord than my husband. We saw all the rarities at Oxford, talked with two or three Fellows of colleges about putting out a young nephew, that was left to his lordship's care, to the University, and of their being his tutors. We diverted ourselves with bantering several other poor scholars, with hopes of being at least his lordship's chaplains and putting on a scarf; and thus having lived like quality indeed, as to expense, we went away for Northampton, and, in a word, in about twelve days' ramble came home again, to the tune of about #93 expense.

Vanity is the perfection of a fop. My husband had this excellence, that he valued nothing of expense; and as his history, you may be sure, has very little weight in it, 'tis enough to tell you that in about two years and a quarter he broke, and was not so happy to get over into the Mint, but got into a sponging-house, being arrested in an action too heavy from him to give bail to, so he sent for me to come to him.

It was no surprise to me, for I had foreseen some time that all was going to wreck, and had been taking care to reserve something if I could, though it was not much, for myself. But when he sent for me, he behaved much better than I expected, and told me plainly he had played the fool, and suffered

himself to be surprised, which he might have prevented; that now he foresaw he could not stand it, and therefore he would have me go home, and in the night take away everything I had in the house of any value, and secure it; and after that, he told me that if I could get away one hundred or two hundred pounds in goods out of the shop, I should do it; 'only,' sayshe, 'let me know nothing of it, neither what you take norwhither you carry it; for as for me,' says he, 'I am resolved to get out of this house and be gone; and if you never hear of memore, my dear,' says he, 'I wish you well; I am only sorry forthe injury I have done you.' He said some very handsomethings to me indeed at parting; for I told you he was a gentleman, and that was all the benefit I had of his being so; that he used me very handsomely and with good mannersupon all occasions, even to the last, only spent all I had, andleft me to rob the creditors for something to subsist on.