

Chapter 29

This obliged them in the highest degree, and as I was besieged day and night with good company and pleasant discourse, so I had two or three old ladies that lay at me upon the subject of religion too. I was so complaisant, that though I would not completely engage, yet I made no scruple to be present at their mass, and to conform to all their gestures as they showed me the pattern, but I would not come too cheap; so that I only in the main encouraged them to expect that I would turn Roman Catholic, if I was instructed in the Catholic doctrine as they called it, and so the matter rested.

I stayed here about six weeks; and then my conductor led me back to a country village, about six miles from Liverpool, where her brother (as she called him) came to visit me in his own chariot, and in a very good figure, with two footmen in a good livery; and the next thing was to make love to me. As it had happened to me, one would think I could not have been cheated, and indeed I thought so myself, having a safe card at home, which I resolved not to quit unless I could mend myself very much. However, in all appearance this brother was a match worth my listening to, and the least his estate was valued at was #1000 a year, but the sister said it was worth #1500 a year, and lay most of it in Ireland.

I that was a great fortune, and passed for such, was above being asked how much my estate was; and my false friend taking it upon a foolish hearsay,

had raised it from #500 to #5000, and by the time she came into the country she called it #15,000. The Irishman, for such I understood him to be, was stark mad at this bait; in short, he courted me, made me presents, and ran in debt like a madman for the expenses of his equipage and of his courtship. He had, to give him his due, the appearance of an extraordinary fine gentleman; he was tall, well-shaped, and had an extraordinary address; talked as naturally of his park and his stables, of his horses, his gamekeepers, his woods, his tenants, and his servants, as if we had been in the mansion-house, and I had seen them all about me.

He never so much as asked me about my fortune or estate, but assured me that when we came to Dublin he would jointure me in #600 a year good land; and that we could enter into a deed of settlement or contract here for the performance of it.

This was such language indeed as I had not been used to, and I was here beaten out of all my measures; I had a she-devil in my bosom, every hour telling me how great her brother lived. One time she would come for my orders, how I would have my coaches painted, and how lined; and another time what clothes my page should wear; in short, my eyes were dazzled. I had now lost my power of saying No, and, to cut the story short, I consented to be married; but to be the more private, we were carried farther into the country, and married by a Romish clergyman, who I was assured would marry us as effectually as a Church of England parson.

I cannot say but I had some reflections in this affair upon the dishonourable forsaking my faithful citizen, who loved me sincerely, and who was endeavouring to quit himself of a scandalous whore by whom he had been indeed barbarously used, and promised himself infinite happiness in his new choice; which choice was now giving up herself to another in a manner almost as scandalous as hers could be.

But the glittering shoe of a great estate, and of fine things, which the deceived creature that was now my deceiver represented every hour to my imagination, hurried me away, and gave me no time to think of London, or of anything there, much less of the obligation I had to a person of infinitely more real merit than what was now before me.

But the thing was done; I was now in the arms of my new spouse, who appeared still the same as before; great even to

magnificence, and nothing less than #1000 a year could support the ordinary equipage he appeared in.

After we had been married about a month, he began to talk of my going to West Chester in order to embark for Ireland. However, he did not hurry me, for we stayed near three weeks longer, and then he sent to Chester for a coach to meet us at the Black Rock, as they call it, over against Liverpool.

Thither we went in a fine boat they call a pinnace, with six oars; his servants, and horses, and baggage going in the ferry-boat. He made his excuse to me that he had no acquaintance in Chester, but he would go before and get some handsome apartment for me at a private house. I asked him how long we should stay at Chester. He said, not at all, any longer than one night or two, but he would immediately hire a coach to go to Holyhead. Then I told him he should by no means give

himself the trouble to get private lodgings for one night or two, for that Chester being a great place, I made no doubt but there would be very good inns and accommodation enough; so we lodged at an inn in the West Street, not far from the Cathedral; I forget what sign it was at.

Here my spouse, talking of my going to Ireland, asked me if I had no affairs to settle at London before we went off. I told him No, not of any great consequence, but what might be done as well by letter from Dublin.

'Madam,' says he, very respectfully, 'I suppose the greatest part of your estate, which my sister tells me is most of it in money in the Bank of England, lies secure enough, but in case it required transferring, or any way altering its property, it might be necessary to go up to London and settle those things before we went over.'

I seemed to look strange at it, and told him I knew not what he meant; that I had no effects in the Bank of England that I knew of; and I hoped he could

not say that I had ever told him I had. No, he said, I had not told him so, but his sister had said the greatest part of my estate lay there. 'And I only mentioned it, me dear,' said he, 'that if there was any occasion to settle it, or order anything about it, we might not be obliged to the hazard and trouble of another voyage back again'; for he added, that he did not care to venture me too much upon the sea.

I was surprised at this talk, and began to consider very seriously what the meaning of it must be; and it presently occurred to me that my friend, who called him brother, had represented me in colours which were not my due; and I thought, since it was come to that pitch, that I would know the bottom of it before I went out of England, and before I should put myself into I knew not whose hands in a strange country.

Upon this I called his sister into my chamber the next morning, and letting her know the discourse her brother and I had been upon the evening before, I conjured her to tell me what she had said to him, and upon what foot it was that she had made this marriage. She owned that she had told him that I was a great fortune, and said that she was told so at London. 'Told so!' says I warmly; 'did I ever tell you so?' No, she said, it was true I did not tell her so, but I had said several times that what I had was in my own disposal. 'I did so,' returned I very quickly and hastily, 'but I never told you I had anything called a fortune; no, not that I had #100, or the value of #100, in the world. Any how did it consist with my being a fortune,;' said I, 'that I

should come here into the north of England with you, only upon the account of living cheap?' At these words, which I spoke warm and high, my husband, her brother (as she called him), came into the room, and I desired him to come and sit down, for I had something of moment to say before them both, which it was absolutely necessary he should hear.

He looked a little disturbed at the assurance with which I seemed to speak it, and came and sat down by me, having first shut the door; upon which I began, for I was very much provoked, and turning myself to him, 'I am afraid,' says I, 'my dear' (for I spoke with kindness on his side), 'that you have a very great abuse put upon you, and an injury done you never to be repaired in your marrying me, which, however, as I have had no hand in it, I desire I may be fairly acquitted of it, and that the blame may lie where it ought to lie, and nowhere else, for I wash my hands of every part of it.'

'What injury can be done me, my dear,' says he, 'in marrying you. I hope it is to my honour and advantage every way.' 'I will soon explain it to you,' says I, 'and I fear you will have no reason to think yourself well used; but I will convince you, my dear,' says I again, 'that I have had no hand in it'; and there I stopped a while.

He looked now scared and wild, and began, I believe, to suspect what followed; however, looking towards me, and saying only, 'Go on,' he sat

silent, as if to hear what I had more to say; so I went on. 'I asked you last night,' said I, speaking to him, 'if ever I made any boast to you of my estate, or ever told you I had any estate in the Bank of England or anywhere else, and you owned I had not, as is most true; and I desire you will tell me here, before your sister, if ever I gave you any reason from me to think so, or that ever we had any discourse about it'; and he owned again I had not, but said I had appeared always as a woman of fortune, and he depended on it that I was so, and hoped he was not deceived. 'I am not inquiring yet whether you have been deceived or not,' said I; 'I fear you have, and I too; but I am clearing myself from the unjust charge of being concerned in deceiving you.

'I have been now asking your sister if ever I told her of any fortune or estate I had, or gave her any particulars of it; and she owns I never did. Any pray, madam,' said I, turning myself to her, 'be so just to me, before your brother, to charge me, if you can, if ever I pretended to you that I had an estate; and why, if I had, should I come down into this country with you on purpose to spare that little I had, and live cheap?' She could not deny one word, but said she had been told in London that I had a very great fortune, and that it lay in the Bank of England.