

Chapter 31

'Truly,' said I to him, 'I find you would soon have conquered me; and it is my affliction now, that I am not in a condition to let you see how easily I should have been reconciled to you, and have passed by all the tricks you had put upon me, in recompense of so much good-humour. But, my dear,' said I, 'what can we do now? We are both undone, and what better are we for our being reconciled together, seeing we have nothing to live on?'

We proposed a great many things, but nothing could offer where there was nothing to begin with. He begged me at last to talk no more of it, for, he said, I would break his heart; so we talked of other things a little, till at last he took a husband's leave of me, and so we went to sleep.

He rose before me in the morning; and indeed, having lain awake almost all night, I was very sleepy, and lay till near eleven o'clock. In this time he took his horses and three servants, and all his linen and baggage, and away he went, leaving a short but moving letter for me on the table, as follows:--

'MY DEAR--I am a dog; I have abused you; but I have been drawn into do it by a base creature, contrary to my principle and the general practice of my life. Forgive me, my dear! I ask your pardon with the greatest sincerity; I am the most miserable of men, in having deluded you. I have been so happy to possess you, and now am so wretched as to be forced to fly from you. Forgive me, my dear; once more I say, forgive me! I am not able to see you ruined by

me, and myself unable to support you. Our marriage is nothing; I shall never be able to see you again; I here discharge you from it; if you can marry to your advantage, do not decline it on my account; I here

swear to you on my faith, and on the word of a man of honour, I will never disturb your repose if I should know of it, which, however, is not likely. On the other hand, if you should not marry, and if good fortune should befall me, it shall be all yours, wherever you are.

'I have put some of the stock of money I have left into your pocket; take places for yourself and your maid in the stage-coach, and go for London; I hope it will bear your charges thither, without breaking into your own. Again I sincerely ask your pardon, and will do so as often as I shall ever think of you. Adieu, my dear, for ever!--I am, your most affectionately, J.E.'

Nothing that ever befell me in my life sank so deep into my heart as this farewell. I reproached him a thousand times in my thoughts for leaving me, for I would have gone with him through the world, if I had begged my bread. I felt in my pocket, and there found ten guineas, his gold watch, and two little rings, one a small diamond ring worth only about #6, and the other a plain gold ring.

I sat me down and looked upon these things two hours together, and scarce spoke a word, till my maid interrupted me by telling me my dinner was

ready. I ate but little, and after dinner I fell into a vehement fit of crying, every now and then calling him by his name, which was James. 'O Jemmy!' said I, 'come back, come back. I'll give you all I have; I'll beg, I'll starve with you.' And thus I ran raving about the room several times, and then sat down between whiles, and then walking about again, called upon him to come back, and then cried again; and thus I passed the afternoon, till about seven o'clock, when it was near dusk, in the evening, being August, when, to my unspeakable surprise, he comes back into the inn, but without a servant, and comes directly up into my chamber.

I was in the greatest confusion imaginable, and so was he too. I could not imagine what should be the occasion of it, and began to be at odds with myself whether to be glad or sorry; but my affection biassed all the rest, and it was impossible to conceal my joy, which was too great for smiles, for it burst out into tears. He was no sooner entered the room but he ran to me and took me in his arms, holding me fast, and almost stopping my breath with his kisses, but spoke not a word. At length I began. 'My dear,' said I, 'how could you go away from me?' to which he gave no answer, for it was impossible for him to speak.

When our ecstasies were a little over, he told me he was gone about fifteen miles, but it was not in his power to go any farther without coming back to see me again, and to take his leave of me once more.

I told him how I had passed my time, and how loud I had called him to come back again. He told me he heard me very plain upon Delamere Forest, at a place about twelve miles off. I smiled. 'Nay,' says he, 'do not think I am in jest, for if ever I heard your voice in my life, I heard you call me aloud, and sometimes I thought I saw you running after me.' 'Why,' said I, 'what did I say?'--for I had not named the words to him. 'You called aloud,' says he, 'and said, O Jemmy! O Jemmy! come back, come back.'

I laughed at him. 'My dear,' says he, 'do not laugh, for, depend upon it, I heard your voice as plain as you hear mine now; if you please, I'll go before a magistrate and make oath of it.' I then began to be amazed and surprised, and indeed frightened, and told him what I had really done, and how I had called after him, as above.

When we had amused ourselves a while about this, I said to him: 'Well, you shall go away from me no more; I'll go all over the world with you rather.' He told me it would be very difficult thing for him to leave me, but since it must be, he hoped I would make it as easy to me as I could; but as for him, it would be his destruction that he foresaw.

However, he told me that he considered he had left me to travel to London alone, which was too long a journey; and that as he might as well go that way as any way else, he was resolved to see me safe thither, or near it; and if he did go away then without taking his leave, I should not take it ill of him;

and this he made me promise.

He told me how he had dismissed his three servants, sold their horses, and sent the fellows away to seek their fortunes, and all in a little time, at a town on the road, I know not where. 'And,' says he, 'it cost me some tears all alone by myself, to think how much happier they were than their master, for they could go to the next gentleman's house to see for a service, whereas,' said he, 'I knew not wither to go, or what to do with myself.'

I told him I was so completely miserable in parting with him, that I could not be worse; and that now he was come again, I would not go from him, if he would take me with him, let him go whither he would, or do what he would. And in the meantime I agreed that we would go together to London; but I could not be brought to consent he should go away at last and not take his leave of me, as he proposed to do; but told him, jesting, that if he did, I would call him back again as loud as I did before. Then I pulled out his watch and gave it him back, and his two rings, and his ten guineas; but he would not take them, which made me very much suspect that he resolved to go off upon the road and leave me.

The truth is, the circumstances he was in, the passionate expressions of his letter, the kind, gentlemanly treatment I had from him in all the affair, with the concern he showed for me in it, his manner of parting with that large share which he gave me of his little stock left--all these had joined to make

such impressions on me, that I really loved him most tenderly, and could not bear the thoughts of parting with him.

Two days after this we quitted Chester, I in the stage-coach, and he on horseback. I dismissed my maid at Chester. He was very much against my being without a maid, but she being a servant hired in the country, and I resolving to keep no servant at London, I told him it would have been barbarous to have taken the poor wench and have turned her away as soon as I came to town; and it would also have been a needless charge on the road, so I satisfied him, and he was easy enough on the score.

He came with me as far as Dunstable, within thirty miles of London, and then he told me fate and his own misfortunes obliged him to leave me, and that it was not convenient for him to go to London, for reasons which it was of no value to me to know, and I saw him preparing to go. The stage-coach we were in did not usually stop at Dunstable, but I desiring it but for a quart of an hour, they were content to stand at an inndoor a while, and we went into the house.

Being in the inn, I told him I had but one favour more to as of him, and that was, that since he could not go any farther, he would give me leave to stay a week or two in the town with him, that we might in that time think of something to prevent such a ruinous thing to us both, as a final separation would be; and that I had something of moment to offer him, that I had never

said yet, and which perhaps he might find practicable to our mutual advantage.

This was too reasonable a proposal to be denied, so he called the landlady of the house, and told her his wife was taken ill, and so ill that she could not think of going any farther in the stage-coach, which had tired her almost to death, and asked if she could not get us a lodging for two or three days in a private house, where I might rest me a little, for the journey had been too much for me. The landlady, a good sort of woman, well-bred and very obliging, came immediately to see me; told me she had two or three very good rooms in a part of the house quite out of the noise, and if I saw them, she did not doubt but I would like them, and I should have one of her maids, that should do nothing else but be appointed to wait on me. This was so very kind, that I could not but accept of it, and thank her; so I went to look on the rooms and liked them very well, and indeed they were extraordinarily furnished, and very pleasant lodgings; so we paid the stage-coach, took out our baggage, and resolved to stay here a while.

Here I told him I would live with him now till all my money was spent, but would not let him spend a shilling of his own. We had some kind squabble about that, but I told him it was the last time I was like to enjoy his company, and I desired he would let me be master in that thing only, and he should govern in everything else; so he acquiesced.