

## Chapter 50

Then I proceeded to tell how the journeyman treated me; how they would not suffer me to send for any of my friends; how afterwards they found the real thief, and took the very goods they had lost upon her, and all the particulars as before.

Then the constable related his case: his dialogue with the mercer about discharging me, and at last his servant's refusing to go with him, when he had charged him with him, and his master encouraging him to do so, and at last his striking the constable, and the like, all as I have told it already.

The justice then heard the mercer and his man. The mercer indeed made a long harangue of the great loss they have daily by lifters and thieves; that it was easy for them to mistake, and that when he found it he would have dismissed me, etc., as above. As to the journeyman, he had very little to say, but that he pretended other of the servants told him that I was really the person.

Upon the whole, the just first of all told me very courteously I was discharged; that he was very sorry that the mercer's man should in his eager pursuit have so little discretion as to take up an innocent person for a guilty person; that if he had not been so unjust as to detain me afterward, he believed I would have forgiven the first affront; that, however, it was not in his power to award me any reparation for anything, other than by openly

reproving them, which he should do; but he supposed I would apply to such methods as the law directed; in the meantime he would bind him over.

But as to the breach of the peace committed by the journeyman, he told me he should give me some satisfaction for that, for he should commit him to Newgate for assaulting the constable, and for assaulting me also.

Accordingly he sent the fellow to Newgate for that assault, and his master gave bail, and so we came away; but I had the satisfaction of seeing the mob wait upon them both, as they came out, hallooing and throwing stones and dirt at the coaches they rode in; and so I came home to my governess.

After this hustle, coming home and telling my governess the story, she falls a-laughing at me. 'Why are you merry?' says

I; 'the story has not so much laughing room in it as you imagine; I am sure I have had a great deal of hurry and fright too, with a pack of ugly rogues.'

'Laugh!' says my governess; 'I laugh, child, to see what a lucky creature you are; why, this job will be the best bargain to you that ever you made in your life, if you manage it well. I warrant you,' says she, 'you shall make the mercer pay you #500 for damages, besides what you shall get out of the journeyman.'

I had other thoughts of the matter than she had; and especially, because I

had given in my name to the justice of peace; and I knew that my name was so well known among the people at Hick's Hall, the Old Bailey, and such places, that if this cause came to be tried openly, and my name came to be inquired into, no court would give much damages, for the reputation of a person of such a character. However, I was obliged to begin a prosecution in form, and accordingly my governess found me out a very creditable sort of a man to manage it, being an attorney of very good business, and of a good reputation, and she was certainly in the right of this; for had she employed a pettifogging hedge solicitor, or a man not known, and not in good reputation, I should have brought it to but little.

I met this attorney, and gave him all the particulars at large, as they are recited above; and he assured me it was a case, as he said, that would very well support itself, and that he did not question but that a jury would give very considerable damages on such an occasion; so taking his full instructions he began the prosecution, and the mercer being arrested, gave bail. A few days after his giving bail, he comes with his attorney to my attorney, to let him know that he desired to accommodate the matter; that it was all carried on I the heat of an unhappy passion; that his client, meaning me, had a sharp provoking tongue, that I used them ill, gibing at them, and jeering them, even while they believed me to be the very person, and that I had provoked them, and the like.

My attorney managed as well on my side; made them believe

I was a widow of fortune, that I was able to do myself justice, and had great friends to stand by me too, who had all made me promise to sue to the utmost, and that if it cost me a thousand pounds I would be sure to have satisfaction, for that the affronts I had received were insufferable.

However, they brought my attorney to this, that he promised he would not blow the coals, that if I inclined to accommodation, he would not hinder me, and that he would rather persuade me to peace than to war; for which they told him he should be no loser; all which he told me very honestly, and told me that if they offered him any bribe, I should certainly know it; but upon the whole he told me very honestly that if I would take his opinion, he would advise me to make it up with them, for that as they were in a great fright, and were desirous above all things to make it up, and knew that, let it be what it would, they would be allotted to bear all the costs of the suit; he believed they would give me freely more than any jury or court of justice would give upon a trial. I asked him what he thought they would be brought to. He told me he could not tell as to that, but he would tell me more when I saw him again. Some time after this, they came again to know if he had talked with me. He told them he had; that he found me not so averse to an accommodation as some of my friends were, who resented the disgrace offered me, and set me on; that they blowed the coals in secret, prompting me to revenge, or do myself justice, as they called it; so that he could not tell what to say to it; he told them he would do his endeavour to persuade me,

but he ought to be able to tell me what proposal they made. They pretended they could not make any proposal, because it might be made use of against them; and he told them, that by the same rule he could not make any offers, for that might be pleaded in abatement of what damages a jury might be inclined to give. However, after some discourse and mutual promises that no advantage should be taken on either side, by what was transacted then or at any other of those meetings, they came to a kind of a treaty; but so remote, and so wide from one another, that nothing could be expected from it; for my attorney demanded #500 and charges, and they offered #50 without charges; so they broke off, and the mercer proposed to have a meeting with me myself; and my attorney agreed to that very readily.

My attorney gave me notice to come to this meeting in good clothes, and with some state, that the mercer might see I was something more than I seemed to be that time they had me. Accordingly I came in a new suit of second mourning, according to what I had said at the justice's. I set myself out, too, as well as a widow's dress in second mourning would admit; my governess also furnished me with a good pearl necklace, that shut in behind with a locket of diamonds, which she had in pawn; and I had a very good figure; and as I stayed till I was sure they were come, I came in a coach to the door, with my maid with me.

When I came into the room the mercer was surprised. He stood up and

made his bow, which I took a little notice of, and but a little, and went and sat down where my own attorney had pointed to me to sit, for it was his house. After a little while the mercer said, he did not know me again, and began to make some compliments his way. I told him, I believed he did not know me at first, and that if he had, I believed he would not have treated me as he did.

He told me he was very sorry for what had happened, and that it was to testify the willingness he had to make all possible reparation that he had appointed this meeting; that he hoped I would not carry things to extremity, which might be not only too great a loss to him, but might be the ruin of his business and shop, in which case I might have the satisfaction of repaying an injury with an injury ten times greater; but that I would then get nothing, whereas he was willing to do me any justice that was in his power, without putting himself or me to the trouble or charge of a suit at law.

I told him I was glad to hear him talk so much more like a man of sense than he did before; that it was true, acknowledgment in most cases of affronts was counted reparation sufficient; but this had gone too far to be made up so; that I was not revengeful, nor did I seek his ruin, or any man's else, but that all my friends were unanimous not to let me so far neglect my character as to adjust a thing of this kind without a sufficient reparation of honour; that to be taken up for a thief was such an indignity as could not be put up; that my character was above being treated so by any that knew me,

but because in my condition of a widow I had been for some time careless of myself, and negligent of myself, I might be taken for such a creature, but that for the particular usage I had from him afterwards, --and then I repeated all as before; it was so provoking I had scarce patience to repeat it.

Well, he acknowledged all, and was might humble indeed; he made proposals very handsome; he came up to #100 and to pay all the law charges, and added that he would make me a present of a very good suit of clothes. I came down to #300, and I demanded that I should publish an advertisement of the particulars in the common newspapers.

This was a clause he never could comply with. However, at last he came up, by good management of my attorney, to #150 and a suit of black silk clothes; and there I agree, and as it were, at my attorney's request, complied with it, he paying my attorney's bill and charges, and gave us a good supper into the bargain.

When I came to receive the money, I brought my governess with me, dressed like an old duchess, and a gentleman very well dressed, who we pretended courted me, but I called him cousin, and the lawyer was only to hint privately to him that his gentleman courted the widow.