

Chapter 52

The next day I dressed up again, but in quite different clothes, and walked the same way again, but nothing offered till I came into St. James's Park, where I saw abundance of fine ladies in the Park, walking in the Mall, and among the rest there was a little miss, a young lady of about twelve or thirteen years old, and she had a sister, as I suppose it was, with her, that might be about nine years old. I observed the biggest had a fine gold watch on, and a good necklace of pearl, and they had a footman in livery with them; but as it is not usual for the footman to go behind the ladies in the Mall, so I observed the footman stopped at their going into the Mall, and the biggest of the sisters spoke to him, which I perceived was to bid him be just there when they came back.

When I heard her dismiss the footman, I stepped up to him and asked him, what little lady that was? and held a little chat with him about what a pretty child it was with her, and how genteel and well-carriaged the lady, the eldest, would be: how

womanish, and how grave; and the fool of a fellow told me presently who she was; that she was Sir Thomas----'s eldest daughter, of Essex, and that she was a great fortune; that her mother was not come to town yet; but she was with Sir William----'s lady, of Suffolk, at her lodging in Suffolk Street, and a

great deal more; that they had a maid and a woman to wait on them, besides Sir Thomas's coach, the coachman, and himself; and that young lady was governess to the whole family, as well here as at home too; and, in short, told me abundance of things enough for my business.

I was very well dressed, and had my gold watch as well as she; so I left the footman, and I puts myself in a rank with this young lady, having stayed till she had taken one double turn in the Mall, and was going forward again; by and by I saluted her by her name, with the title of Lady Betty. I asked her when she heard from her father; when my lady her mother would be in town, and how she did.

I talked so familiarly to her of her whole family that she could not suspect but that I knew them all intimately. I asked her why she would come abroad without Mrs. Chime with her (that was the name of her woman) to take of Mrs. Judith, that was her sister. Then I entered into a long chat with her about her sister, what a fine little lady she was, and asked her if she had learned French, and a thousand such little things to entertain her, when on a sudden we saw the guards come, and the crowd ran to see the king go by to the Parliament House.

The ladies ran all to the side of the Mall, and I helped my lady to stand upon the edge of the boards on the side of the Mall, that she might be high enough to see; and took the little one and lifter her quite up; during which, I

took care to convey the gold watch so clean away from the Lady Betty, that she never felt it, nor missed it, till all the crowd was gone, and she was gotten into the middle of the Mall among the other ladies.

I took my leave of her in the very crowd, and said to her, as if in haste, 'Dear Lady Betty, take care of your little sister.' And so the crowd did as it were thrust me away from her, and that I was obliged unwillingly to take my leave.

The hurry in such cases is immediately over, and the place clear as soon as the king is gone by; but as there is always a great running and clutter just as the king passes, so having dropped the two little ladies, and done my business with them without any miscarriage, I kept hurrying on among the crowd, as if I ran to see the king, and so I got before the crowd and kept so till I came to the end of the Mall, when the king going on towards the Horse Guards, I went forward to the passage, which went then through against the lower end of the Haymarket, and there I bestowed a coach upon myself, and made off, and I confess I have not yet been so good as my word, viz. to go and visit my Lady Betty.

I was once of the mind to venture staying with Lady Betty till she missed the watch, and so have made a great outcry about it with her, and have got her into the coach, and put myself in the coach with her, and have gone home with her; for she appeared so fond of me, and so perfectly deceived by my so

readily talking to her of all her relations and family, that I thought it was very easy to push the thing farther, and to have got at least the necklace of pearl; but when I considered that though the child would not perhaps have suspected me, other people might, and that if I was searched I should be discovered, I thought it was best to go off with what I had got, and be satisfied.

I came accidentally afterwards to hear, that when the young lady missed her watch, she made a great outcry in the Park, and sent her footman up and down to see if he could find me out, she having described me so perfectly that he knew presently that it was the same person that had stood and talked so long with him, and asked him so many questions about them; but I gone far enough out of their reach before she could come at her footman to tell him the story.

I made another adventure after this, of a nature different from all I had been concerned in yet, and this was at a gaming-house near Covent Garden.

I saw several people go in and out; and I stood in the passage a good while with another woman with me, and seeing a gentleman go up that seemed to be of more than ordinary fashion, I said to him, 'Sir, pray don't they give women leave to go up?' 'Yes, madam,' says he, 'and to play too, if they please.' 'I mean so, sir,' said I. And with that he said he would introduce me if I had a mind; so I followed him to the door, and he looking in, 'There,

madam,' says he, 'are the gamesters, if you have a mind to venture.' I looked in and said to my comrade aloud, 'Here's nothing but men; I won't venture among them.' At which one of the gentlemen cried out, 'You need not be afraid, madam, here's none but fair gamesters; you are very welcome to come and set what you please.' so I went a little nearer and looked on, and some of them brought me a chair, and I sat down and saw the box and dice go round apace; then I said to my comrade, 'The gentlemen play too high for us; come, let us go.'

The people were all very civil, and one gentleman in particular encouraged me, and said, 'Come, madam, if you please to venture, if you dare trust me, I'll answer for it you shall have nothing put upon you here.' 'No, sir,' said I, smiling, 'I hope the gentlemen would not cheat a woman.' But still I declined venturing, though I pulled out a purse with money in it, that they might see I did not want money.

After I had sat a while, one gentleman said to me, jeering, 'Come, madam, I see you are afraid to venture for yourself; I always had good luck with the ladies, you shall set for me, if you won't set for yourself.' I told him, 'sir, I should be very loth to lose your money,' though I added, 'I am pretty lucky too; but the gentlemen play so high, that I dare not indeed venture my own.'

'Well, well,' says he, 'there's ten guineas, madam; set them for me.' so I took his money and set, himself looking on. I ran out nine of the guineas by one

and two at a time, and then the box coming to the next man to me, my gentleman gave me ten guineas more, and made me set five of them at once, and the gentleman who had the box threw out, so there was five guineas of his money again. He was encouraged at this, and made me take the box, which was a bold venture. However, I held the box so long that I had gained him his whole money, and had a good handful of guineas in my lap, and which was the better luck, when I threw out, I threw but at one or two of those that had set me, and so went off easy.

When I was come this length, I offered the gentleman all the gold, for it was his own; and so would have had him play for himself, pretending I did not understand the game well enough. He laughed, and said if I had but good luck, it was no matter whether I understood the game or no; but I should not leave off. However, he took out the fifteen guineas that he had put in at first, and bade me play with the rest. I would have told them to see how much I had got, but he said, 'No, no, don't tell them, I believe you are very honest, and 'tis bad luck to tell them'; so I played on.

I understood the game well enough, though I pretended I did not, and played cautiously. It was to keep a good stock in my lap, out of which I every now and then conveyed some into my pocket, but in such a manner, and at such convenient times, as I was sure he could not see it.

I played a great while, and had very good luck for him; but the last time I

held the box, they set me high, and I threw boldly at all; I held the box till I gained near fourscore guineas, but lost above half of it back in the last throw; so I got up, for I was afraid I should lose it all back again, and said to him, 'Pray come, sir, now, and take it and play for yourself; I think I have done pretty well for you.' He would have had me play on, but it grew late, and I desired to be excused. When I gave it up to him, I told him I hoped he would give me leave to tell it now, that I might see what I had gained, and how lucky I had been for him; when I told them, there were threescore and three guineas. 'Ay,' says I, 'if it had not been for that unlucky throw, I had got you a hundred guineas.' So I gave him all the money, but he would not take it till I had put my hand into it, and taken some for myself, and bid me please myself. I refused it, and was positive I would not take it myself; if he had a mind to anything of that kind, it should be all his own doings.

The rest of the gentlemen seeing us striving cried, 'Give it her all'; but I absolutely refused that. Then one of them said, 'D----n ye, jack, halve it with her; don't you know you should be always upon even terms with the ladies.' So, in short, he divided it with me, and I brought away thirty guineas, besides about forty-three which I had stole privately, which I was sorry for afterward, because he was so generous.