

Chapter 61

He looked wistfully at me, and I thought I guessed at what he meant, that is to say, that he had no money; but I was mistaken, his meaning was another way. 'You hinted just now, my dear,' said he, 'that there might be a way of coming back before I went, by which I understood you that it might be possible to buy it off here. I had rather give #200 to prevent going, than #100 to be set at liberty when I came there.' 'That is, my dear,' said I, 'because you do not know the place so well as I do.' 'That may be,' said he; 'and yet I believe, as well as you know it, you would do the same, unless it is because, as you told me, you have a mother there.'

I told him, as to my mother, it was next to impossible but that she must be dead many years before; and as for any other relations that I might have there, I knew them not now; that since the misfortunes I had been under had reduced me to the condition I had been in for some years, I had not kept up any correspondence with them; and that he would easily believe, I should find but a cold reception from them if I should be put to make my first visit in the condition of a transported felon; that therefore, if I went thither, I resolved not to see them; but that I had many views in going there, if it should be my fate, which took off all the uneasy part of it; and if he found himself obliged to go also, I should easily instruct him how to manage himself, so as never to go a servant at all, especially since I found he was not destitute of money, which was the only friend in such a condition.

He smiled, and said he did not tell me he had money. I took him up short, and told him I hoped he did not understand by my speaking, that I should expect any supply from him if he had money; that, on the other hand, though I had not a great deal, yet I did not want, and while I had any I would rather add to him than weaken him in that article, seeing, whatever he had, I knew in the case of transportation he would have occasion of it all.

He expressed himself in a most tender manner upon that head. He told me what money he had was not a great deal, but that he would never hide any of it from me if I wanted it, and that he assured me he did not speak with any such apprehensions; that he was only intent upon what I had hinted to him before he went; that here he knew what to do with himself, but that there he should be the most ignorant, helpless wretch alive.

I told him he frightened and terrified himself with that which had no terror in it; that if he had money, as I was glad to hear he had, he might not only avoid the servitude supposed to be the consequence of transportation, but begin the world upon a new foundation, and that such a one as he could not fail of success in, with the common application usual in such cases; that he could not but call to mind that is was what I had recommended to him many years before and had proposed it for our mutual subsistence and restoring our fortunes in the world; and I would tell him now, that to convince him both of the certainty of it and of my being fully acquainted with the method, and also fully satisfied in the probability of success, he

should first see me deliver myself from the necessity of going over at all, and then that I would go with him freely, and of my own choice, and perhaps carry enough with me to satisfy him that I did not offer it for want of being able to live without assistance from him, but that I thought our mutual misfortunes had been such as were sufficient to reconcile us both to quitting this part of the world, and living where nobody could upbraid us with what was past, or we be in any dread of a prison, and without agonies of a condemned hole to drive us to it; this where we should look back on all our past disasters with infinite satisfaction, when we should consider that our enemies should entirely forget us, and that we should live as new people in a new world, nobody having anything to say to us, or we to them.

I pressed this home to him with so many arguments, and answered all his own passionate objections so effectually that he embraced me, and told me I treated him with such sincerity and affection as overcame him; that he would take my advice, and would strive to submit to his fate in hope of having the comfort of my assistance, and of so faithful a counsellor and such a companion in his misery. But still he put me in mind of what I had mentioned before, namely, that there might be some way to get off before he went, and that it might be possible to avoid going at all, which he said would be much better. I told him he should see, and be fully satisfied, that I would do my utmost in that part too, and if it did not succeed, yet that I would make good the rest.

We parted after this long conference with such testimonies of kindness and affection as I thought were equal, if not superior, to that at our parting at Dunstable; and now I saw more plainly than before, the reason why he declined coming at that time any farther with me toward London than Dunstable, and why, when we parted there, he told me it was not convenient for him to come part of the way to London to bring me going, as he would otherwise have done. I have observed that the account of his life would have made a much more pleasing history than this of mine; and, indeed, nothing in it was more strange than this part, viz. that he carried on that desperate trade full five-and-twenty years and had never been taken, the success he had met with had been so very uncommon, and such that sometimes he had lived handsomely, and retired in place for a year or two at a time, keeping himself and a man-servant to wait on him, and had often sat in the coffee-houses and heard the very people whom he had robbed give accounts of their being robbed, and of the place and circumstances, so that he could easily remember that it was the same.

In this manner, it seems, he lived near Liverpool at the time

he unluckily married me for a fortune. Had I been the fortune he expected, I verily believe, as he said, that he would have taken up and lived honestly all his days.

He had with the rest of his misfortunes the good luck not to be actually

upon the spot when the robbery was done which he was committed for, and so none of the persons robbed could swear to him, or had anything to charge upon him. But it seems as he was taken with the gang, one hard-mouthed countryman swore home to him, and they were like to have others come in according to the publication they had made; so that they expected more evidence against him, and for that reason he was kept in hold.

However, the offer which was made to him of admitting him to transportation was made, as I understood, upon the intercession of some great person who pressed him hard to accept of it before a trial; and indeed, as he knew there were several that might come in against him, I thought his friend was in the right, and I lay at him night and day to delay it no longer.

At last, with much difficulty, he gave his consent; and as he was not therefore admitted to transportation in court, and on his petition, as I was, so he found himself under a difficulty to avoid embarking himself as I had said he might have done; his great friend, who was his intercessor for the favour of that grant, having given security for him that he should transport himself, and not return within the term.

This hardship broke all my measures, for the steps I took afterwards for my own deliverance were hereby rendered wholly ineffectual, unless I would abandon him, and leave him to go to America by himself; than which he protested he would much rather venture, although he were certain to go

directly to the gallows.

I must now return to my case. The time of my being transported according to my sentence was near at hand; my governess, who continued my fast friend, had tried to obtain a pardon, but it could not be done unless with an expense too heavy for my purse, considering that to be left naked and empty, unless I had resolved to return to my old trade again, had been worse than my transportation, because there I knew I could live, here I could not. The good minister stood very hard on another account to prevent my being transported also; but he was answered, that indeed my life had been given me at his first solicitations, and therefore he ought to ask no more. He was sensibly grieved at my going, because, as he said, he feared I should lose the good impressions which a prospect of death had at first made on me, and which were since increased by his instructions; and the pious gentleman was exceedingly concerned about me on that account.

On the other hand, I really was not so solicitous about it as I was before, but I industriously concealed my reasons for it from the minister, and to the last he did not know but that I went with the utmost reluctance and affliction.

It was in the month of February that I was, with seven other convicts, as they called us, delivered to a merchant that traded to Virginia, on board a ship, riding, as they called it, in Deptford Reach. The officer of the prison delivered us on board, and the master of the vessel gave a discharge for us.

We were for that night clapped under hatches, and kept so close that I thought I should have been suffocated for want of air; and the next morning the ship weighed, and fell down the river to a place they call Bugby's Hole, which was done, as they told us, by the agreement of the merchant, that all opportunity of escape should be taken from us. However, when the ship came thither and cast anchor, we were allowed more liberty, and particularly were permitted to come up on the deck, but not up on the quarter-deck, that being kept particularly for the captain and for passengers.

When by the noise of the men over my head, and the motion of the ship, I perceived that they were under sail, I was at first greatly surprised, fearing we should go away directly, and that our friends would not be admitted to see us any more; but I was easy soon after, when I found they had come to an anchor again, and soon after that we had notice given by some of the men where we were, that the next morning we should have the liberty to come up on deck, and to have our friends come and see us if we had any.