

Defoe Daniel

The Fortunate Mistress (Parts 1 and 2)



Daniel Defoe

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(Parts 1 and 2)**

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Defoe Daniel

The Fortunate Mistress (Parts 1 and 2) / or a History of the Life of Mademoiselle de Beleau Known by the Name of the Lady Roxana

INTRODUCTION

In March, 1724, was published the narrative in which Defoe came, perhaps even nearer than in *Moll Flanders*, to writing what we to-day call a novel, namely: *The Fortunate Mistress; or, a History of the Life and Vast Variety of Fortunes of Mademoiselle de' Belau; afterwards called the Countess of Wintelsheim, in Germany. Being the Person known by the name of the Lady Roxana, in the Time of King Charles II.* No second edition appeared till after Defoe's death, which occurred in 1731. Then for some years, various editions of *The Fortunate Mistress* came out. Because Defoe had not indicated the end of his chief characters so clearly as he usually did in his stories, several of these later editions carried on the history of the heroine. Probably none of the continuations was by Defoe himself, though the one in the edition of 1745 has been attributed to him. For this reason, and because it has some literary merit, it is included in the present edition.

That this continuation was not by Defoe is attested in various ways. In the first place, it tells the history of Roxana down to her death in July, 1742, a date which Defoe would not have been likely to fix, for he died himself in April, 1731. Moreover, the statement that she was sixty-four when she died, does not agree with the statement at the beginning of Defoe's narrative that she was ten years old in 1683. She must have been born in 1673, and consequently would have been sixty-nine in 1742. This discrepancy, however, ceases to be important when we consider the general confusion of dates in the part of the book certainly by Defoe. The title-page announces that his heroine was "known by the name of the Lady Roxana, in the Time of King Charles II." She must have been known by this name when she was a child of eleven or twelve, then, for she was ten when her parents fled to England "about 1683," and Charles II. died in February, 1685. Moreover, she was not married till she was fifteen; she lived eight years with her husband; and then she was mistress successively to the friendly jeweller, the Prince, and the Dutch merchant. Yet after this career, she returned to London in time to become a noted toast among Charles II.'s courtiers and to entertain at her house that monarch and the Duke of Monmouth.

A stronger argument for different authorship is the difference in style between the continuation of *Roxana* and the earlier narrative. In the continuation Defoe's best-known mannerisms are lacking, as two instances will show. Critics have often called attention to the fact that *fright*, instead of *frighten*, was a favourite word of Defoe. Now *frighten*, and not *fright*, is the verb used in the continuation. Furthermore, I have pointed out in a previous introduction¹ that Defoe was fond of making his characters *smile*, to show either kindness or shrewd penetration. They do not *smile* in the continuation.

There are other differences between the original story of *The Fortunate Mistress* and the continuation of 1745. The former is better narrative than the latter; it moves quicker; it is more real. And yet there is a manifest attempt in the continuation to imitate the manner and the substance of the story proper. There is a dialogue, for example, between Roxana and the Quakeress, modelled on the dialogues which Defoe was so fond of. Again, there is a fairly successful attempt to copy Defoe's

¹ See *Memoirs of a Cavalier*

circumstantiality; there is an amount of detail in the continuation which makes it more graphic than much of the fiction which has been given to the world. And finally, in understanding and reproducing the characters of Roxana and Amy, the anonymous author has done remarkably well. The character of Roxana's daughter is less true to Defoe's conception; the girl, as he drew her, was actuated more by natural affection in seeking her mother, and less by interest. The character of the Dutch merchant, likewise, has not changed for the better in the continuation. He has developed a vindictiveness which, in our former meetings with him, seemed foreign to his nature.

I have said that in *The Fortunate Mistress* Defoe has come nearer than usual to writing what we to-day call a novel; the reason is that he has had more success than usual in making his characters real. Though many of them are still wooden – lifeless types, rather than individuals – yet the Prince, the Quakeress, and the Dutch merchant occasionally wake to life; so rather more does the unfortunate daughter; and more yet, Amy and Roxana. With the exception of Moll Flanders, these last two are more vitalised than any personages Defoe invented. In this pair, furthermore, Defoe seems to have been interested in bringing out the contrast between characters. The servant, Amy, thrown with another mistress, might have been a totally different woman. The vulgarity of a servant she would have retained under any circumstances, as she did even when promoted from being the maid to being the companion of Roxana; but it was unreasoning devotion to her mistress, combined with weakness of character, which led Amy to be vicious.

Roxana, for her part, had to the full the independence, the initiative, which her woman was without, – or rather was without when acting for herself; for when acting in the interests of her mistress, Amy was a different creature. Like all of Defoe's principal characters, Roxana is eminently practical, cold-blooded and selfish. After the first pang at parting with her five children, she seldom thinks of them except as encumbrances; she will provide for them as decently as she can without personal inconvenience, but even a slight sacrifice for the sake of one of them is too much for her. Towards all the men with whom she has dealings, and towards the friendly Quakeress of the Minories, too, she shows a calculating reticence which is most unfeminine. The continuator of our story endowed the heroine with wholly characteristic selfishness when he made her, on hearing of Amy's death, feel less sorrow for the miserable fate of her friend, than for her own loss of an adviser.

And yet Roxana is capable of fine feeling, as is proved by those tears of joy for the happy change in her fortunes, which bring about that realistic love scene between her and the Prince in regard to the supposed paint on her cheeks. Again, when shipwreck threatens her and Amy, her emotion and repentance are due as much to the thought that she has degraded Amy to her own level as to thoughts of her more flagrant sins. That she is capable of feeling gratitude, she shows in her generosity to the Quakeress. And in her rage and remorse, on suspecting that her daughter has been murdered, and in her emotion several times on seeing her children, Roxana shows herself a true woman. In short, though for the most part monumentally selfish, she is yet saved from being impossible by several displays of noble emotion. One of the surprises, to a student of Defoe, is that this thick-skinned, mercantile writer, the vulgarest of all our great men of letters in the early eighteenth century, seems to have known a woman's heart better than a man's. At least he has succeeded in making two or three of his women characters more alive than any of his men. It is another surprise that in writing of women, Defoe often seems ahead of his age. In the argument between Roxana and her Dutch merchant about a woman's independence, Roxana talks like a character in a "problem" play or novel of our own day. This, perhaps, is not to Defoe's credit, but it is to his credit that he has said elsewhere²: "A woman well-bred and well-taught, furnished with the ... accomplishments of knowledge and behaviour, is a creature without comparison; her society is the emblem of sublime enjoyments; ... and the man that has such a one to his portion, has nothing to do but to rejoice in her, and be thankful." After

² *An Essay upon Projects, An Academy for Women.*

reading these words, one cannot but regret that Defoe did not try to create heroines more virtuous than Moll Flanders and Roxana.

It is not only in drawing his characters that Defoe, in *The Fortunate Mistress*, comes nearer than usual to producing a novel. This narrative of his is less loosely constructed than any others except *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Journal of the Plague Year*, which it was easier to give structure to. In both of them – the story of a solitary on a desert island and the story of the visitation of a pestilence – the nature of the subject made the author's course tolerably plain; in *The Fortunate Mistress*, the proper course was by no means so well marked. The more credit is due Defoe, therefore, that the book is so far from being entirely inorganised that, had he taken sufficient pains with the ending, it would have had as much structure as many good novels. There is no strongly defined plot, it is true; but in general, if a character is introduced, he is heard from again; a scene that impresses itself on the mind of the heroine is likely to be important in the sequel. The story seems to be working itself out to a logical conclusion, when unexpectedly it comes to an end. Defoe apparently grew tired of it for some reason, and wound it up abruptly, with only the meagre information as to the fate of Roxana and Amy that they "fell into a dreadful course of calamities."

G.H. MAYNADIER.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The history of this beautiful lady is to speak for itself; if it is not as beautiful as the lady herself is reported to be; if it is not as diverting as the reader can desire, and much more than he can reasonably expect; and if all the most diverting parts of it are not adapted to the instruction and improvement of the reader, the relator says it must be from the defect of his performance; dressing up the story in worse clothes than the lady whose words he speaks, prepared for the world.

He takes the liberty to say that this story differs from most of the modern performances of this kind, though some of them have met with a very good reception in the world. I say, it differs from them in this great and essential article, namely, that the foundation of this is laid in truth of fact; and so the work is not a story, but a history.

The scene is laid so near the place where the main part of it was transacted that it was necessary to conceal names and persons, lest what cannot be yet entirely forgot in that part of the town should be remembered, and the facts traced back too plainly by the many people yet living, who would know the persons by the particulars.

It is not always necessary that the names of persons should be discovered, though the history may be many ways useful; and if we should be always obliged to name the persons, or not to relate the story, the consequence might be only this – that many a pleasant and delightful history would be buried in the dark, and the world deprived both of the pleasure and the profit of it.

The writer says he was particularly acquainted with this lady's first husband, the brewer, and with his father, and also with his bad circumstances, and knows that first part of the story to be truth.

This may, he hopes, be a pledge for the credit of the rest, though the latter part of her history lay abroad, and could not be so well vouched as the first; yet, as she has told it herself, we have the less reason to question the truth of that part also.

In the manner she has told the story, it is evident she does not insist upon her justification in any one part of it; much less does she recommend her conduct, or, indeed, any part of it, except her repentance, to our imitation. On the contrary, she makes frequent excursions, in a just censuring and condemning her own practice. How often does she reproach herself in the most passionate manner, and guide us to just reflections in the like cases!

It is true she met with unexpected success in all her wicked courses; but even in the highest elevations of her prosperity she makes frequent acknowledgments that the pleasure of her wickedness was not worth the repentance; and that all the satisfaction she had, all the joy in the view of her prosperity – no, nor all the wealth she rolled in, the gaiety of her appearance, the equipages and the honours she was attended with, could quiet her mind, abate the reproaches of her conscience, or procure her an hour's sleep when just reflection kept her waking.

The noble inferences that are drawn from this one part are worth all the rest of the story, and abundantly justify, as they are the professed design of, the publication.

If there are any parts in her story which, being obliged to relate a wicked action, seem to describe it too plainly, the writer says all imaginable care has been taken to keep clear of indecencies and immodest expressions; and it is hoped you will find nothing to prompt a vicious mind, but everywhere much to discourage and expose it.

Scenes of crime can scarce be represented in such a manner but some may make a criminal use of them; but when vice is painted in its low-priced colours, it is not to make people in love with it, but to expose it; and if the reader makes a wrong use of the figures, the wickedness is his own.

In the meantime, the advantages of the present work are so great, and the virtuous reader has room for so much improvement, that we make no question the story, however meanly told, will find a passage to his best hours, and be read both with profit and delight.

A HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF ROXANA

I was born, as my friends told me, at the city of Poitiers, in the province or county of Poitou, in France, from whence I was brought to England by my parents, who fled for their religion about the year 1683, when the Protestants were banished from France by the cruelty of their persecutors.

I, who knew little or nothing of what I was brought over hither for, was well enough pleased with being here. London, a large and gay city, took with me mighty well, who, from my being a child, loved a crowd, and to see a great many fine folks.

I retained nothing of France but the language, my father and mother being people of better fashion than ordinarily the people called refugees at that time were; and having fled early, while it was easy to secure their effects, had, before their coming over, remitted considerable sums of money, or, as I remember, a considerable value in French brandy, paper, and other goods; and these selling very much to advantage here, my father was in very good circumstances at his coming over, so that he was far from applying to the rest of our nation that were here for countenance and relief. On the contrary, he had his door continually thronged with miserable objects of the poor starving creatures who at that time fled hither for shelter on account of conscience, or something else.

I have indeed heard my father say that he was pestered with a great many of those who, for any religion they had, might e'en have stayed where they were, but who flocked over hither in droves, for what they call in English a livelihood; hearing with what open arms the refugees were received in England, and how they fell readily into business, being, by the charitable assistance of the people in London, encouraged to work in their manufactories in Spitalfields, Canterbury, and other places, and that they had a much better price for their work than in France, and the like.

My father, I say, told me that he was more pestered with the clamours of these people than of those who were truly refugees, and fled in distress merely for conscience.

I was about ten years old when I was brought over hither, where, as I have said, my father lived in very good circumstances, and died in about eleven years more; in which time, as I had accomplished myself for the sociable part of the world, so I had acquainted myself with some of our English neighbours, as is the custom in London; and as, while I was young, I had picked up three or four playfellows and companions suitable to my years, so, as we grew bigger, we learned to call one another intimates and friends; and this forwarded very much the finishing me for conversation and the world.

I went to English schools, and being young, I learned the English tongue perfectly well, with all the customs of the English young women; so that I retained nothing of the French but the speech; nor did I so much as keep any remains of the French language tagged to my way of speaking, as most foreigners do, but spoke what we call natural English, as if I had been born here.

Being to give my own character, I must be excused to give it as impartially as possible, and as if I was speaking of another body; and the sequel will lead you to judge whether I flatter myself or no.

I was (speaking of myself at about fourteen years of age) tall, and very well made; sharp as a hawk in matters of common knowledge; quick and smart in discourse; apt to be satirical; full of repartee; and a little too forward in conversation, or, as we call it in English, bold, though perfectly modest in my behaviour. Being French born, I danced, as some say, naturally, loved it extremely, and sang well also, and so well that, as you will hear, it was afterwards some advantage to me. With all these things, I wanted neither wit, beauty, or money. In this manner I set out into the world, having all the advantages that any young woman could desire, to recommend me to others, and form a prospect of happy living to myself.

At about fifteen years of age, my father gave me, as he called it in French, 25,000 livres, that is to say, two thousand pounds portion, and married me to an eminent brewer in the city. Pardon me if I conceal his name; for though he was the foundation of my ruin, I cannot take so severe a revenge upon him.

With this thing called a husband I lived eight years in good fashion, and for some part of the time kept a coach, that is to say, a kind of mock coach; for all the week the horses were kept at work in the dray-carts; but on Sunday I had the privilege to go abroad in my chariot, either to church or otherways, as my husband and I could agree about it, which, by the way, was not very often; but of that hereafter.

Before I proceed in the history of the married part of my life, you must allow me to give as impartial an account of my husband as I have done of myself. He was a jolly, handsome fellow, as any woman need wish for a companion; tall and well made; rather a little too large, but not so as to be ungentle; he danced well, which I think was the first thing that brought us together. He had an old father who managed the business carefully, so that he had little of that part lay on him, but now and then to appear and show himself; and he took the advantage of it, for he troubled himself very little about it, but went abroad, kept company, hunted much, and loved it exceedingly.

After I have told you that he was a handsome man and a good sportsman, I have indeed said all; and unhappy was I, like other young people of our sex, I chose him for being a handsome, jolly fellow, as I have said; for he was otherwise a weak, empty-headed, untaught creature, as any woman could ever desire to be coupled with. And here I must take the liberty, whatever I have to reproach myself with in my after conduct, to turn to my fellow-creatures, the young ladies of this country, and speak to them by way of precaution. If you have any regard to your future happiness, any view of living comfortably with a husband, any hope of preserving your fortunes, or restoring them after any disaster, never, ladies, marry a fool; any husband rather than a fool. With some other husbands you may be unhappy, but with a fool you will be miserable; with another husband you may, I say, be unhappy, but with a fool you must; nay, if he would, he cannot make you easy; everything he does is so awkward, everything he says is so empty, a woman of any sense cannot but be surfeited and sick of him twenty times a day. What is more shocking than for a woman to bring a handsome, comely fellow of a husband into company, and then be obliged to blush for him every time she hears him speak? to hear other gentlemen talk sense, and he able to say nothing? and so look like a fool, or, which is worse, hear him talk nonsense, and be laughed at for a fool.

In the next place, there are so many sorts of fools, such an infinite variety of fools, and so hard it is to know the worst of the kind, that I am obliged to say, "No fool, ladies, at all, no kind of fool, whether a mad fool or a sober fool, a wise fool or a silly fool; take anything but a fool; nay, be anything, be even an old maid, the worst of nature's curses, rather than take up with a fool."

But to leave this awhile, for I shall have occasion to speak of it again; my case was particularly hard, for I had a variety of foolish things complicated in this unhappy match.

First, and which I must confess is very unsufferable, he was a conceited fool, *tout opiniatre*; everything he said was right, was best, and was to the purpose, whoever was in company, and whatever was advanced by others, though with the greatest modesty imaginable. And yet, when he came to defend what he had said by argument and reason, he would do it so weakly, so emptily, and so nothing to the purpose, that it was enough to make anybody that heard him sick and ashamed of him.

Secondly, he was positive and obstinate, and the most positive in the most simple and inconsistent things, such as were intolerable to bear.

These two articles, if there had been no more, qualified him to be a most unbearable creature for a husband; and so it may be supposed at first sight what a kind of life I led with him. However, I did as well as I could, and held my tongue, which was the only victory I gained over him; for when he would talk after his own empty rattling way with me, and I would not answer, or enter into discourse with him on the point he was upon, he would rise up in the greatest passion imaginable, and go away, which was the cheapest way I had to be delivered.

I could enlarge here much upon the method I took to make my life passable and easy with the most incorrigible temper in the world; but it is too long, and the articles too trifling. I shall mention some of them as the circumstances I am to relate shall necessarily bring them in.

After I had been married about four years, my own father died, my mother having been dead before. He liked my match so ill, and saw so little room to be satisfied with the conduct of my husband, that though he left me five thousand livres, and more, at his death, yet he left it in the hands of my elder brother, who, running on too rashly in his adventures as a merchant, failed, and lost not only what he had, but what he had for me too, as you shall hear presently.

Thus I lost the last gift of my father's bounty by having a husband not fit to be trusted with it: there's one of the benefits of marrying a fool.

Within two years after my own father's death my husband's father also died, and, as I thought, left him a considerable addition to his estate, the whole trade of the brewhouse, which was a very good one, being now his own.

But this addition to his stock was his ruin, for he had no genius to business, he had no knowledge of his accounts; he bustled a little about it, indeed, at first, and put on a face of business, but he soon grew slack; it was below him to inspect his books, he committed all that to his clerks and book-keepers; and while he found money in cash to pay the maltman and the excise, and put some in his pocket, he was perfectly easy and indolent, let the main chance go how it would.

I foresaw the consequence of this, and attempted several times to persuade him to apply himself to his business; I put him in mind how his customers complained of the neglect of his servants on one hand, and how abundance broke in his debt, on the other hand, for want of the clerk's care to secure him, and the like; but he thrust me by, either with hard words, or fraudulently, with representing the cases otherwise than they were.

However, to cut short a dull story, which ought not to be long, he began to find his trade sunk, his stock declined, and that, in short, he could not carry on his business, and once or twice his brewing utensils were extended for the excise; and, the last time, he was put to great extremities to clear them.

This alarmed him, and he resolved to lay down his trade; which, indeed, I was not sorry for; foreseeing that if he did not lay it down in time, he would be forced to do it another way, namely, as a bankrupt. Also I was willing he should draw out while he had something left, lest I should come to be stripped at home, and be turned out of doors with my children; for I had now five children by him, the only work (perhaps) that fools are good for.

I thought myself happy when he got another man to take his brewhouse clear off his hands; for, paying down a large sum of money, my husband found himself a clear man, all his debts paid, and with between two and three thousand pounds in his pocket; and being now obliged to remove from the brewhouse, we took a house at —, a village about two miles out of town; and happy I thought myself, all things considered, that I was got off clear, upon so good terms; and had my handsome fellow had but one capful of wit, I had been still well enough.

I proposed to him either to buy some place with the money, or with part of it, and offered to join my part to it, which was then in being, and might have been secured; so we might have lived tolerably at least during his life. But as it is the part of a fool to be void of counsel, so he neglected it, lived on as he did before, kept his horses and men, rid every day out to the forest a-hunting, and nothing was done all this while; but the money decreased apace, and I thought I saw my ruin hastening on without any possible way to prevent it.

I was not wanting with all that persuasions and entreaties could perform, but it was all fruitless; representing to him how fast our money wasted, and what would be our condition when it was gone, made no impression on him; but like one stupid, he went on, not valuing all that tears and lamentations could be supposed to do; nor did he abate his figure or equipage, his horses or servants, even to the last, till he had not a hundred pounds left in the whole world.

It was not above three years that all the ready money was thus spending off; yet he spent it, as I may say, foolishly too, for he kept no valuable company neither, but generally with huntsmen and horse-coursers, and men meaner than himself, which is another consequence of a man's being a

fool; such can never take delight in men more wise and capable than themselves, and that makes them converse with scoundrels, drink, belch with porters, and keep company always below themselves.

This was my wretched condition, when one morning my husband told me he was sensible he was come to a miserable condition, and he would go and seek his fortune somewhere or other. He had said something to that purpose several times before that, upon my pressing him to consider his circumstances, and the circumstances of his family, before it should be too late; but as I found he had no meaning in anything of that kind, as, indeed, he had not much in anything he ever said, so I thought they were but words of course now. When he had said he would be gone, I used to wish secretly, and even say in my thoughts, I wish you would, for if you go on thus you will starve us all.

He stayed, however, at home all that day, and lay at home that night; early the next morning he gets out of bed, goes to a window which looked out towards the stable, and sounds his French horn, as he called it, which was his usual signal to call his men to go out a-hunting.

It was about the latter end of August, and so was light yet at five o'clock, and it was about that time that I heard him and his two men go out and shut the yard gates after them. He said nothing to me more than as usual when he used to go out upon his sport; neither did I rise, or say anything to him that was material, but went to sleep again after he was gone, for two hours or thereabouts.

It must be a little surprising to the reader to tell him at once, that after this I never saw my husband more; but, to go farther, I not only never saw him more, but I never heard from him, or of him, neither of any or either of his two servants, or of the horses, either what became of them, where or which way they went, or what they did or intended to do, no more than if the ground had opened and swallowed them all up, and nobody had known it, except as hereafter.

I was not, for the first night or two, at all surprised, no, nor very much the first week or two, believing that if anything evil had befallen them, I should soon enough have heard of that; and also knowing, that as he had two servants and three horses with him, it would be the strangest thing in the world that anything could befall them all but that I must some time or other hear of them.

But you will easily allow, that as time ran on, a week, two weeks, a month, two months, and so on, I was dreadfully frightened at last, and the more when I looked into my own circumstances, and considered the condition in which I was left with five children, and not one farthing subsistence for them, other than about seventy pounds in money, and what few things of value I had about me, which, though considerable in themselves, were yet nothing to feed a family, and for a length of time too.

What to do I knew not, nor to whom to have recourse: to keep in the house where I was, I could not, the rent being too great; and to leave it without his orders, if my husband should return, I could not think of that neither; so that I continued extremely perplexed, melancholy, and discouraged to the last degree.

I remained in this dejected condition near a twelvemonth. My husband had two sisters, who were married, and lived very well, and some other near relations that I knew of, and I hoped would do something for me; and I frequently sent to these, to know if they could give me any account of my vagrant creature. But they all declared to me in answer, that they knew nothing about him; and, after frequent sending, began to think me troublesome, and to let me know they thought so too, by their treating my maid with very slight and unhandsome returns to her inquiries.

This grated hard, and added to my affliction; but I had no recourse but to my tears, for I had not a friend of my own left me in the world. I should have observed, that it was about half a year before this elopement of my husband that the disaster I mentioned above befell my brother, who broke, and that in such bad circumstances, that I had the mortification to hear, not only that he was in prison, but that there would be little or nothing to be had by way of composition.

Misfortunes seldom come alone: this was the forerunner of my husband's flight; and as my expectations were cut off on that side, my husband gone, and my family of children on my hands, and nothing to subsist them, my condition was the most deplorable that words can express.

I had some plate and some jewels, as might be supposed, my fortune and former circumstances considered; and my husband, who had never stayed to be distressed, had not been put to the necessity of rifling me, as husbands usually do in such cases. But as I had seen an end of all the ready money during the long time I had lived in a state of expectation for my husband, so I began to make away one thing after another, till those few things of value which I had began to lessen apace, and I saw nothing but misery and the utmost distress before me, even to have my children starve before my face. I leave any one that is a mother of children, and has lived in plenty and in good fashion, to consider and reflect what must be my condition. As to my husband, I had now no hope or expectation of seeing him any more; and indeed, if I had, he was a man of all the men in the world the least able to help me, or to have turned his hand to the gaining one shilling towards lessening our distress; he neither had the capacity or the inclination; he could have been no clerk, for he scarce wrote a legible hand; he was so far from being able to write sense, that he could not make sense of what others wrote; he was so far from understanding good English, that he could not spell good English; to be out of all business was his delight, and he would stand leaning against a post for half-an-hour together, with a pipe in his mouth, with all the tranquillity in the world, smoking, like Dryden's countryman, that whistled as he went for want of thought, and this even when his family was, as it were, starving, that little he had wasting, and that we were all bleeding to death; he not knowing, and as little considering, where to get another shilling when the last was spent.

This being his temper, and the extent of his capacity, I confess I did not see so much loss in his parting with me as at first I thought I did; though it was hard and cruel to the last degree in him, not giving me the least notice of his design; and indeed, that which I was most astonished at was, that seeing he must certainly have intended this excursion some few moments at least before he put it in practice, yet he did not come and take what little stock of money we had left, or at least a share of it, to bear his expense for a little while; but he did not; and I am morally certain he had not five guineas with him in the world when he went away. All that I could come to the knowledge of about him was, that he left his hunting-horn, which he called the French horn, in the stable, and his hunting-saddle, went away in a handsome furniture, as they call it, which he used sometimes to travel with, having an embroidered housing, a case of pistols, and other things belonging to them; and one of his servants had another saddle with pistols, though plain, and the other a long gun; so that they did not go out as sportsmen, but rather as travellers; what part of the world they went to I never heard for many years.

As I have said, I sent to his relations, but they sent me short and surly answers; nor did any one of them offer to come to see me, or to see the children, or so much as to inquire after them, well perceiving that I was in a condition that was likely to be soon troublesome to them. But it was no time now to dally with them or with the world; I left off sending to them, and went myself among them, laid my circumstances open to them, told them my whole case, and the condition I was reduced to, begged they would advise me what course to take, laid myself as low as they could desire, and entreated them to consider that I was not in a condition to help myself, and that without some assistance we must all inevitably perish. I told them that if I had had but one child, or two children, I would have done my endeavour to have worked for them with my needle, and should only have come to them to beg them to help me to some work, that I might get our bread by my labour; but to think of one single woman, not bred to work, and at a loss where to get employment, to get the bread of five children, that was not possible – some of my children being young too, and none of them big enough to help one another.

It was all one; I received not one farthing of assistance from anybody, was hardly asked to sit down at the two sisters' houses, nor offered to eat or drink at two more near relations'. The fifth, an ancient gentlewoman, aunt-in-law to my husband, a widow, and the least able also of any of the rest, did, indeed, ask me to sit down, gave me a dinner, and refreshed me with a kinder treatment than any of the rest, but added the melancholy part, viz., that she would have helped me, but that, indeed, she was not able, which, however, I was satisfied was very true.

Here I relieved myself with the constant assistant of the afflicted, I mean tears; for, relating to her how I was received by the other of my husband's relations, it made me burst into tears, and I cried vehemently for a great while together, till I made the good old gentlewoman cry too several times.

However, I came home from them all without any relief, and went on at home till I was reduced to such inexpressible distress that is not to be described. I had been several times after this at the old aunt's, for I prevailed with her to promise me to go and talk with the other relations, at least, that, if possible, she could bring some of them to take off the children, or to contribute something towards their maintenance. And, to do her justice, she did use her endeavour with them; but all was to no purpose, they would do nothing, at least that way. I think, with much entreaty, she obtained, by a kind of collection among them all, about eleven or twelve shillings in money, which, though it was a present comfort, was yet not to be named as capable to deliver me from any part of the load that lay upon me.

There was a poor woman that had been a kind of a dependent upon our family, and whom I had often, among the rest of the relations, been very kind to; my maid put it into my head one morning to send to this poor woman, and to see whether she might not be able to help in this dreadful case.

I must remember it here, to the praise of this poor girl, my maid, that though I was not able to give her any wages, and had told her so – nay, I was not able to pay her the wages that I was in arrears to her – yet she would not leave me; nay, and as long as she had any money, when I had none, she would help me out of her own, for which, though I acknowledged her kindness and fidelity, yet it was but a bad coin that she was paid in at last, as will appear in its place.

Amy (for that was her name) put it into my thoughts to send for this poor woman to come to me; for I was now in great distress, and I resolved to do so. But just the very morning that I intended it, the old aunt, with the poor woman in her company, came to see me; the good old gentlewoman was, it seems, heartily concerned for me, and had been talking again among those people, to see what she could do for me, but to very little purpose.

You shall judge a little of my present distress by the posture she found me in. I had five little children, the eldest was under ten years old, and I had not one shilling in the house to buy them victuals, but had sent Amy out with a silver spoon to sell it, and bring home something from the butcher's; and I was in a parlour, sitting on the ground, with a great heap of old rags, linen, and other things about me, looking them over, to see if I had anything among them that would sell or pawn for a little money, and had been crying ready to burst myself, to think what I should do next.

At this juncture they knocked at the door. I thought it had been Amy, so I did not rise up; but one of the children opened the door, and they came directly into the room where I was, and where they found me in that posture, and crying vehemently, as above. I was surprised at their coming, you may be sure, especially seeing the person I had but just before resolved to send for; but when they saw me, how I looked, for my eyes were swelled with crying, and what a condition I was in as to the house, and the heaps of things that were about me, and especially when I told them what I was doing, and on what occasion, they sat down, like Job's three comforters, and said not one word to me for a great while, but both of them cried as fast and as heartily as I did.

The truth was, there was no need of much discourse in the case, the thing spoke itself; they saw me in rags and dirt, who was but a little before riding in my coach; thin, and looking almost like one starved, who was before fat and beautiful. The house, that was before handsomely furnished with pictures and ornaments, cabinets, pier-glasses, and everything suitable, was now stripped and naked, most of the goods having been seized by the landlord for rent, or sold to buy necessaries; in a word, all was misery and distress, the face of ruin was everywhere to be seen; we had eaten up almost everything, and little remained, unless, like one of the pitiful women of Jerusalem, I should eat up my very children themselves.

After these two good creatures had sat, as I say, in silence some time, and had then looked about them, my maid Amy came in, and brought with her a small breast of mutton and two great bunches of turnips, which she intended to stew for our dinner. As for me, my heart was so overwhelmed at seeing

these two friends – for such they were, though poor – and at their seeing me in such a condition, that I fell into another violent fit of crying, so that, in short, I could not speak to them again for a great while longer.

During my being in such an agony, they went to my maid Amy at another part of the same room and talked with her. Amy told them all my circumstances, and set them forth in such moving terms, and so to the life, that I could not upon any terms have done it like her myself, and, in a word, affected them both with it in such a manner, that the old aunt came to me, and though hardly able to speak for tears, "Look ye, cousin," said she, in a few words, "things must not stand thus; some course must be taken, and that forthwith; pray, where were these children born?" I told her the parish where we lived before, that four of them were born there, and one in the house where I now was, where the landlord, after having seized my goods for the rent past, not then knowing my circumstances, had now given me leave to live for a whole year more without any rent, being moved with compassion; but that this year was now almost expired.

Upon hearing this account, they came to this resolution, that the children should be all carried by them to the door of one of the relations mentioned above, and be set down there by the maid Amy, and that I, the mother, should remove for some days, shut up the doors, and be gone; that the people should be told, that if they did not think fit to take some care of the children, they might send for the churchwardens if they thought that better, for that they were born in that parish, and there they must be provided for; as for the other child, which was born in the parish of – , that was already taken care of by the parish officers there, for indeed they were so sensible of the distress of the family that they had at first word done what was their part to do.

This was what these good women proposed, and bade me leave the rest to them. I was at first sadly afflicted at the thoughts of parting with my children, and especially at that terrible thing, their being taken into the parish keeping; and then a hundred terrible things came into my thoughts, viz., of parish children being starved at nurse; of their being ruined, let grow crooked, lamed, and the like, for want of being taken care of; and this sunk my very heart within me.

But the misery of my own circumstances hardened my heart against my own flesh and blood; and when I considered they must inevitably be starved, and I too if I continued to keep them about me, I began to be reconciled to parting with them all, anyhow and anywhere, that I might be freed from the dreadful necessity of seeing them all perish, and perishing with them myself. So I agreed to go away out of the house, and leave the management of the whole matter to my maid Amy and to them; and accordingly I did so, and the same afternoon they carried them all away to one of their aunts.

Amy, a resolute girl, knocked at the door, with the children all with her, and bade the eldest, as soon as the door was open, run in, and the rest after her. She set them all down at the door before she knocked, and when she knocked she stayed till a maid-servant came to the door; "Sweetheart," said she, "pray go in and tell your mistress here are her little cousins come to see her from – ," naming the town where we lived, at which the maid offered to go back. "Here, child," says Amy, "take one of 'em in your hand, and I'll bring the rest;" so she gives her the least, and the wench goes in mighty innocently, with the little one in her hand, upon which Amy turns the rest in after her, shuts the door softly, and marches off as fast as she could.

Just in the interval of this, and even while the maid and her mistress were quarrelling (for the mistress raved and scolded her like a mad woman, and had ordered her to go and stop the maid Amy, and turn all the children out of the doors again; but she had been at the door, and Amy was gone, and the wench was out of her wits, and the mistress too), I say, just at this juncture came the poor old woman, not the aunt, but the other of the two that had been with me, and knocks at the door: the aunt did not go, because she had pretended to advocate for me, and they would have suspected her of some contrivance; but as for the other woman, they did not so much as know that she had kept up any correspondence with me.

Amy and she had concerted this between them, and it was well enough contrived that they did so. When she came into the house, the mistress was fuming, and raging like one distracted, and called the maid all the foolish jades and sluts that she could think of, and that she would take the children and turn them all out into the streets. The good poor woman, seeing her in such a passion, turned about as if she would be gone again, and said, "Madam, I'll come again another time, I see you are engaged." "No, no, Mrs. –," says the mistress, "I am not much engaged, sit down; this senseless creature here has brought in my fool of a brother's whole house of children upon me, and tells me that a wench brought them to the door and thrust them in, and bade her carry them to me; but it shall be no disturbance to me, for I have ordered them to be set in the street without the door, and so let the churchwardens take care of them, or else make this dull jade carry 'em back to – again, and let her that brought them into the world look after them if she will; what does she send her brats to me for?"

"The last indeed had been the best of the two," says the poor woman, "if it had been to be done; and that brings me to tell you my errand, and the occasion of my coming, for I came on purpose about this very business, and to have prevented this being put upon you if I could, but I see I am come too late."

"How do you mean too late?" says the mistress. "What! have you been concerned in this affair, then? What! have you helped bring this family slur upon us?" "I hope you do not think such a thing of me, madam," says the poor woman; "but I went this morning to –, to see my old mistress and benefactor, for she had been very kind to me, and when I came to the door I found all fast locked and bolted, and the house looking as if nobody was at home."

"I knocked at the door, but nobody came, till at last some of the neighbours' servants called to me and said, 'There's nobody lives there, mistress; what do you knock for?' I seemed surprised at that. 'What, nobody lives there!' said I; 'what d'ye mean? Does not Mrs. – live there?' The answer was, 'No, she is gone;' at which I parleyed with one of them, and asked her what was the matter. 'Matter!' says she, 'why, it is matter enough: the poor gentlewoman has lived there all alone, and without anything to subsist her a long time, and this morning the landlord turned her out of doors.'

"Out of doors!" says I; 'what! with all her children? Poor lambs, what is become of them?' 'Why, truly, nothing worse,' said they, 'can come to them than staying here, for they were almost starved with hunger; so the neighbours, seeing the poor lady in such distress, for she stood crying and wringing her hands over her children like one distracted, sent for the churchwardens to take care of the children; and they, when they came, took the youngest, which was born in this parish, and have got it a very good nurse, and taken care of it; but as for the other four, they had sent them away to some of their father's relations, and who were very substantial people, and who, besides that, lived in the parish where they were born.'

"I was not so surprised at this as not presently to foresee that this trouble would be brought upon you or upon Mr. –; so I came immediately to bring word of it, that you might be prepared for it, and might not be surprised; but I see they have been too nimble for me, so that I know not what to advise. The poor woman, it seems, is turned out of doors into the street; and another of the neighbours there told me, that when they took her children from her she swooned away, and when they recovered her out of that, she ran distracted, and is put into a madhouse by the parish, for there is nobody else to take any care of her."

This was all acted to the life by this good, kind, poor creature; for though her design was perfectly good and charitable, yet there was not one word of it true in fact; for I was not turned out of doors by the landlord, nor gone distracted. It was true, indeed, that at parting with my poor children I fainted, and was like one mad when I came to myself and found they were gone; but I remained in the house a good while after that, as you shall hear.

While the poor woman was telling this dismal story, in came the gentlewoman's husband, and though her heart was hardened against all pity, who was really and nearly related to the children, for they were the children of her own brother, yet the good man was quite softened with the dismal

relation of the circumstances of the family; and when the poor woman had done, he said to his wife, "This is a dismal case, my dear, indeed, and something must be done." His wife fell a-raving at him: "What," says she, "do you want to have four children to keep? Have we not children of our own? Would you have these brats come and eat up my children's bread? No, no, let 'em go to the parish, and let them take care of them; I'll take care of my own."

"Come, come, my dear," says the husband, "charity is a duty to the poor, and he that gives to the poor lends to the Lord; let us lend our heavenly Father a little of our children's bread, as you call it; it will be a store well laid up for them, and will be the best security that our children shall never come to want charity, or be turned out of doors, as these poor innocent creatures are." "Don't tell me of security," says the wife, "'tis a good security for our children to keep what we have together, and provide for them, and then 'tis time enough to help keep other folks' children. Charity begins at home."

"Well, my dear," says he again, "I only talk of putting out a little money to interest: our Maker is a good borrower; never fear making a bad debt there, child, I'll be bound for it."

"Don't banter me with your charity and your allegories," says the wife angrily; "I tell you they are my relations, not yours, and they shall not roost here; they shall go to the parish."

"All your relations are my relations now," says the good gentleman very calmly, "and I won't see your relations in distress, and not pity them, any more than I would my own; indeed, my dear, they shan't go to the parish. I assure you, none of my wife's relations shall come to the parish, if I can help it."

"What! will you take four children to keep?" says the wife.

"No, no, my dear," says he, "there's your sister – , I'll go and talk with her; and your uncle – , I'll send for him, and the rest. I'll warrant you, when we are all together, we will find ways and means to keep four poor little creatures from beggary and starving, or else it would be very hard; we are none of us in so bad circumstances but we are able to spare a mite for the fatherless. Don't shut up your bowels of compassion against your own flesh and blood. Could you hear these poor innocent children cry at your door for hunger, and give them no bread?"

"Prithee, what need they cry at our door?" says she. "'Tis the business of the parish to provide for them; they shan't cry at our door. If they do, I'll give them nothing." "Won't you?" says he; "but I will. Remember that dreadful Scripture is directly against us, Prov. xxi. 13, 'Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.'"

"Well, well," says she, "you must do what you will, because you pretend to be master; but if I had my will I would send them where they ought to be sent: I would send them from whence they came."

Then the poor woman put in, and said, "But, madam, that is sending them to starve indeed, for the parish has no obligation to take care of 'em, and so they will lie and perish in the street."

"Or be sent back again," says the husband, "to our parish in a cripple-cart, by the justice's warrant, and so expose us and all the relations to the last degree among our neighbours, and among those who know the good old gentleman their grandfather, who lived and flourished in this parish so many years, and was so well beloved among all people, and deserved it so well."

"I don't value that one farthing, not I," says the wife; "I'll keep none of them."

"Well, my dear," says her husband, "but I value it, for I won't have such a blot lie upon the family, and upon your children; he was a worthy, ancient, and good man, and his name is respected among all his neighbours; it will be a reproach to you, that are his daughter, and to our children, that are his grandchildren, that we should let your brother's children perish, or come to be a charge to the public, in the very place where your family once flourished. Come, say no more; I will see what can be done."

Upon this he sends and gathers all the relations together at a tavern hard by, and sent for the four little children, that they might see them; and they all, at first word, agreed to have them taken care of, and, because his wife was so furious that she would not suffer one of them to be kept at home,

they agreed to keep them all together for a while; so they committed them to the poor woman that had managed the affair for them, and entered into obligations to one another to supply the needful sums for their maintenance; and, not to have one separated from the rest, they sent for the youngest from the parish where it was taken in, and had them all brought up together.

It would take up too long a part of this story to give a particular account with what a charitable tenderness this good person, who was but an uncle-in-law to them, managed that affair; how careful he was of them; went constantly to see them, and to see that they were well provided for, clothed, put to school, and, at last, put out in the world for their advantage; but it is enough to say he acted more like a father to them than an uncle-in-law, though all along much against his wife's consent, who was of a disposition not so tender and compassionate as her husband.

You may believe I heard this with the same pleasure which I now feel at the relating it again; for I was terribly affrighted at the apprehensions of my children being brought to misery and distress, as those must be who have no friends, but are left to parish benevolence.

I was now, however, entering on a new scene of life. I had a great house upon my hands, and some furniture left in it; but I was no more able to maintain myself and my maid Amy in it than I was my five children; nor had I anything to subsist with but what I might get by working, and that was not a town where much work was to be had.

My landlord had been very kind indeed after he came to know my circumstances; though, before he was acquainted with that part, he had gone so far as to seize my goods, and to carry some of them off too.

But I had lived three-quarters of a year in his house after that, and had paid him no rent, and, which was worse, I was in no condition to pay him any. However, I observed he came oftener to see me, looked kinder upon me, and spoke more friendly to me, than he used to do, particularly the last two or three times he had been there. He observed, he said, how poorly I lived, how low I was reduced, and the like; told me it grieved him for my sake; and the last time of all he was kinder still, told me he came to dine with me, and that I should give him leave to treat me; so he called my maid Amy, and sent her out to buy a joint of meat; he told her what she should buy; but naming two or three things, either of which she might take, the maid, a cunning wench, and faithful to me as the skin to my back, did not buy anything outright, but brought the butcher along with her, with both the things that she had chosen, for him to please himself. The one was a large, very good leg of veal; the other a piece of the fore-ribs of roasting beef. He looked at them, but made me chaffer with the butcher for him, and I did so, and came back to him and told him what the butcher had demanded for either of them, and what each of them came to. So he pulls out eleven shillings and threepence, which they came to together, and bade me take them both; the rest, he said, would serve another time.

I was surprised, you may be sure, at the bounty of a man that had but a little while ago been my terror, and had torn the goods out of my house like a fury; but I considered that my distresses had mollified his temper, and that he had afterwards been so compassionate as to give me leave to live rent free in the house a whole year.

But now he put on the face, not of a man of compassion only, but of a man of friendship and kindness, and this was so unexpected that it was surprising. We chatted together, and were, as I may call it, cheerful, which was more than I could say I had been for three years before. He sent for wine and beer too, for I had none; poor Amy and I had drank nothing but water for many weeks, and indeed I have often wondered at the faithful temper of the poor girl, for which I but ill requited her at last.

When Amy was come with the wine, he made her fill a glass to him, and with the glass in his hand he came to me and kissed me, which I was, I confess, a little surprised at, but more at what followed; for he told me, that as the sad condition which I was reduced to had made him pity me, so my conduct in it, and the courage I bore it with, had given him a more than ordinary respect for me, and made him very thoughtful for my good; that he was resolved for the present to do something

to relieve me, and to employ his thoughts in the meantime, to see if he could for the future put me into a way to support myself.

While he found me change colour, and look surprised at his discourse, for so I did, to be sure, he turns to my maid Amy, and looking at her, he says to me, "I say all this, madam, before your maid, because both she and you shall know that I have no ill design, and that I have, in mere kindness, resolved to do something for you if I can; and as I have been a witness of the uncommon honesty and fidelity of Mrs. Amy here to you in all your distresses, I know she may be trusted with so honest a design as mine is; for I assure you, I bear a proportioned regard to your maid too, for her affection to you."

Amy made him a curtsy, and the poor girl looked so confounded with joy that she could not speak, but her colour came and went, and every now and then she blushed as red as scarlet, and the next minute looked as pale as death. Well, having said this, he sat down, made me sit down, and then drank to me, and made me drink two glasses of wine together; "For," says he, "you have need of it;" and so indeed I had. When he had done so, "Come, Amy," says he, "with your mistress's leave, you shall have a glass too." So he made her drink two glasses also; and then rising up, "And now, Amy," says he, "go and get dinner; and you, madam," says he to me, "go up and dress you, and come down and smile and be merry;" adding, "I'll make you easy if I can;" and in the meantime, he said, he would walk in the garden.

When he was gone, Amy changed her countenance indeed, and looked as merry as ever she did in her life. "Dear madam," says she, "what does this gentleman mean?" "Nay, Amy," said I, "he means to do us good, you see, don't he? I know no other meaning he can have, for he can get nothing by me." "I warrant you, madam," says she, "he'll ask you a favour by-and-by." "No, no, you are mistaken, Amy, I dare say," said I; "you have heard what he said, didn't you?" "Ay," says Amy, "it's no matter for that, you shall see what he will do after dinner." "Well, well, Amy," says I, "you have hard thoughts of him. I cannot be of your opinion: I don't see anything in him yet that looks like it." "As to that, madam," says Amy, "I don't see anything of it yet neither; but what should move a gentleman to take pity of us as he does?" "Nay," says I, "that's a hard thing too, that we should judge a man to be wicked because he's charitable, and vicious because he's kind." "Oh, madam," says Amy, "there's abundance of charity begins in that vice; and he is not so unacquainted with things as not to know that poverty is the strongest incentive – a temptation against which no virtue is powerful enough to stand out. He knows your condition as well as you do." "Well, and what then?" "Why, then, he knows too that you are young and handsome, and he has the surest bait in the world to take you with."

"Well, Amy," said I, "but he may find himself mistaken too in such a thing as that." "Why, madam," says Amy, "I hope you won't deny him if he should offer it."

"What d'ye mean by that, hussy?" said I. "No, I'd starve first."

"I hope not, madam, I hope you would be wiser; I'm sure if he will set you up, as he talks of, you ought to deny him nothing; and you will starve if you do not consent, that's certain."

"What! consent to lie with him for bread? Amy," said I, "how can you talk so!"

"Nay, madam," says Amy, "I don't think you would for anything else; it would not be lawful for anything else, but for bread, madam; why, nobody can starve, there's no bearing that, I'm sure."

"Ay," says I, "but if he would give me an estate to live on, he should not lie with me, I assure you."

"Why, look you, madam; if he would but give you enough to live easy upon, he should lie with me for it with all my heart."

"That's a token, Amy, of inimitable kindness to me," said I, "and I know how to value it; but there's more friendship than honesty in it, Amy."

"Oh, madam," says Amy, "I'd do anything to get you out of this sad condition; as to honesty, I think honesty is out of the question when starving is the case. Are not we almost starved to death?"

"I am indeed," said I, "and thou art for my sake; but to be a whore, Amy!" and there I stopped.

"Dear madam," says Amy, "if I will starve for your sake, I will be a whore or anything for your sake; why, I would die for you if I were put to it."

"Why, that's an excess of affection, Amy," said I, "I never met with before; I wish I may be ever in condition to make you some returns suitable. But, however, Amy, you shall not be a whore to him, to oblige him to be kind to me; no, Amy, nor I won't be a whore to him, if he would give me much more than he is able to give me or do for me."

"Why, madam," says Amy, "I don't say I will go and ask him; but I say, if he should promise to do so and so for you, and the condition was such that he would not serve you unless I would let him lie with me, he should lie with me as often as he would, rather than you should not have his assistance. But this is but talk, madam; I don't see any need of such discourse, and you are of opinion that there will be no need of it."

"Indeed so I am, Amy; but," said I, "if there was, I tell you again, I'd die before I would consent, or before you should consent for my sake."

Hitherto I had not only preserved the virtue itself, but the virtuous inclination and resolution; and had I kept myself there I had been happy, though I had perished of mere hunger; for, without question, a woman ought rather to die than to prostitute her virtue and honour, let the temptation be what it will.

But to return to my story; he walked about the garden, which was, indeed, all in disorder, and overrun with weeds, because I had not been able to hire a gardener to do anything to it, no, not so much as to dig up ground enough to sow a few turnips and carrots for family use. After he had viewed it, he came in, and sent Amy to fetch a poor man, a gardener, that used to help our man-servant, and carried him into the garden, and ordered him to do several things in it, to put it into a little order; and this took him up near an hour.

By this time I had dressed me as well as I could; for though I had good linen left still, yet I had but a poor head-dress, and no knots, but old fragments; no necklace, no earrings; all those things were gone long ago for mere bread.

However, I was tight and clean, and in better plight than he had seen me in a great while, and he looked extremely pleased to see me so; for, he said, I looked so disconsolate and so afflicted before, that it grieved him to see me; and he bade me pluck up a good heart, for he hoped to put me in a condition to live in the world, and be beholden to nobody.

I told him that was impossible, for I must be beholden to him for it, for all the friends I had in the world would not or could not do so much for me as that he spoke of "Well, widow," says he (so he called me, and so indeed I was in the worst sense that desolate word could be used in), "if you are beholden to me, you shall be beholden to nobody else."

By this time dinner was ready, and Amy came in to lay the cloth, and indeed it was happy there was none to dine but he and I, for I had but six plates left in the house, and but two dishes; however, he knew how things were, and bade me make no scruple about bringing out what I had. He hoped to see me in a better plight. He did not come, he said, to be entertained, but to entertain me, and comfort and encourage me. Thus he went on, speaking so cheerfully to me, and such cheerful things, that it was a cordial to my very soul to hear him speak.

Well, we went to dinner. I'm sure I had not ate a good meal hardly in a twelvemonth, at least not of such a joint of meat as the loin of veal was. I ate, indeed, very heartily, and so did he, and he made me drink three or four glasses of wine; so that, in short, my spirits were lifted up to a degree I had not been used to, and I was not only cheerful, but merry; and so he pressed me to be.

I told him I had a great deal of reason to be merry, seeing he had been so kind to me, and had given me hopes of recovering me from the worst circumstances that ever woman of any sort of fortune was sunk into; that he could not but believe that what he had said to me was like life from the dead; that it was like recovering one sick from the brink of the grave; how I should ever make him

a return any way suitable was what I had not yet had time to think of; I could only say that I should never forget it while I had life, and should be always ready to acknowledge it.

He said that was all he desired of me; that his reward would be the satisfaction of having rescued me from misery; that he found he was obliging one that knew what gratitude meant; that he would make it his business to make me completely easy, first or last, if it lay in his power; and in the meantime he bade me consider of anything that I thought he might do for me, for my advantage, and in order to make me perfectly easy.

After we had talked thus, he bade me be cheerful. "Come," says he, "lay aside these melancholy things, and let us be merry." Amy waited at the table, and she smiled and laughed, and was so merry she could hardly contain it, for the girl loved me to an excess hardly to be described; and it was such an unexpected thing to hear any one talk to her mistress, that the wench was beside herself almost, and, as soon as dinner was over, Amy went upstairs, and put on her best clothes too, and came down dressed like a gentlewoman.

We sat together talking of a thousand things – of what had been, and what was to be – all the rest of the day, and in the evening he took his leave of me, with a thousand expressions of kindness and tenderness and true affection to me, but offered not the least of what my maid Amy had suggested.

At his going away he took me in his arms, protested an honest kindness to me; said a thousand kind things to me, which I cannot now recollect; and, after kissing me twenty times or thereabouts, put a guinea into my hand, which, he said, was for my present supply, and told me that he would see me again before it was out; also he gave Amy half-a-crown.

When he was gone, "Well, Amy," said I, "are you convinced now that he is an honest as well as a true friend, and that there has been nothing, not the least appearance of anything, of what you imagined in his behaviour?" "Yes," says Amy, "I am, but I admire at it. He is such a friend as the world, sure, has not abundance of to show."

"I am sure," says I, "he is such a friend as I have long wanted, and as I have as much need of as any creature in the world has or ever had." And, in short, I was so overcome with the comfort of it that I sat down and cried for joy a good while, as I had formerly cried for sorrow. Amy and I went to bed that night (for Amy lay with me) pretty early, but lay chatting almost all night about it, and the girl was so transported that she got up two or three times in the night and danced about the room in her shift; in short, the girl was half distracted with the joy of it; a testimony still of her violent affection for her mistress, in which no servant ever went beyond her.

We heard no more of him for two days, but the third day he came again; then he told me, with the same kindness, that he had ordered me a supply of household goods for the furnishing the house; that, in particular, he had sent me back all the goods that he had seized for rent, which consisted, indeed, of the best of my former furniture. "And now," says he, "I'll tell you what I have had in my head for you for your present supply, and that is," says he, "that the house being well furnished, you shall let it out to lodgings for the summer gentry," says he, "by which you will easily get a good comfortable subsistence, especially seeing you shall pay me no rent for two years, nor after neither, unless you can afford it."

This was the first view I had of living comfortably indeed, and it was a very probable way, I must confess, seeing we had very good conveniences, six rooms on a floor, and three stories high. While he was laying down the scheme of my management, came a cart to the door with a load of goods, and an upholsterer's man to put them up. They were chiefly the furniture of two rooms which he had carried away for his two years' rent, with two fine cabinets, and some pier-glasses out of the parlour, and several other valuable things.

These were all restored to their places, and he told me he gave them me freely, as a satisfaction for the cruelty he had used me with before; and the furniture of one room being finished and set up, he told me he would furnish one chamber for himself, and would come and be one of my lodgers, if I would give him leave.

I told him he ought not to ask me leave, who had so much right to make himself welcome. So the house began to look in some tolerable figure, and clean; the garden also, in about a fortnight's work, began to look something less like a wilderness than it used to do; and he ordered me to put up a bill for letting rooms, reserving one for himself, to come to as he saw occasion.

When all was done to his mind, as to placing the goods, he seemed very well pleased, and we dined together again of his own providing; and the upholsterer's man gone, after dinner he took me by the hand. "Come now, madam," says he, "you must show me your house" (for he had a mind to see everything over again). "No, sir," said I; "but I'll go show you your house, if you please;" so we went up through all the rooms, and in the room which was appointed for himself Amy was doing something. "Well, Amy," says he, "I intend to lie with you to-morrow night." "To-night if you please, sir," says Amy very innocently; "your room is quite ready." "Well, Amy," says he, "I am glad you are so willing." "No," says Amy, "I mean your chamber is ready to-night," and away she run out of the room, ashamed enough; for the girl meant no harm, whatever she had said to me in private.

However, he said no more then; but when Amy was gone he walked about the room, and looked at everything, and taking me by the hand he kissed me, and spoke a great many kind, affectionate things to me indeed; as of his measures for my advantage, and what he would do to raise me again in the world; told me that my afflictions and the conduct I had shown in bearing them to such an extremity, had so engaged him to me that he valued me infinitely above all the women in the world; that though he was under such engagements that he could not marry me (his wife and he had been parted for some reasons, which make too long a story to intermix with mine), yet that he would be everything else that a woman could ask in a husband; and with that he kissed me again, and took me in his arms, but offered not the least uncivil action to me, and told me he hoped I would not deny him all the favours he should ask, because he resolved to ask nothing of me but what it was fit for a woman of virtue and modesty, for such he knew me to be, to yield.

I confess the terrible pressure of my former misery, the memory of which lay heavy upon my mind, and the surprising kindness with which he had delivered me, and, withal, the expectations of what he might still do for me, were powerful things, and made me have scarce the power to deny him anything he would ask. However, I told him thus, with an air of tenderness too, that he had done so much for me that I thought I ought to deny him nothing; only I hoped and depended upon him that he would not take the advantage of the infinite obligations I was under to him, to desire anything of me the yielding to which would lay me lower in his esteem than I desired to be; that as I took him to be a man of honour, so I knew he could not like me better for doing anything that was below a woman of honesty and good manners to do.

He told me that he had done all this for me, without so much as telling me what kindness or real affection he had for me, that I might not be under any necessity of yielding to him in anything for want of bread; and he would no more oppress my gratitude now than he would my necessity before, nor ask anything, supposing he would stop his favours or withdraw his kindness, if he was denied; it was true, he said, he might tell me more freely his mind now than before, seeing I had let him see that I accepted his assistance, and saw that he was sincere in his design of serving me; that he had gone thus far to show me that he was kind to me, but that now he would tell me that he loved me, and yet would demonstrate that his love was both honourable, and that what he should desire was what he might honestly ask and I might honestly grant.

I answered that, within those two limitations, I was sure I ought to deny him nothing, and I should think myself not ungrateful only, but very unjust, if I should; so he said no more, but I observed he kissed me more, and took me in his arms in a kind of familiar way, more than usual, and which once or twice put me in mind of my maid Amy's words; and yet, I must acknowledge, I was so overcome with his goodness to me in those many kind things he had done that I not only was easy at what he did and made no resistance, but was inclined to do the like, whatever he had offered to do. But he went no farther than what I have said, nor did he offer so much as to sit down on the

bedside with me, but took his leave, said he loved me tenderly, and would convince me of it by such demonstrations as should be to my satisfaction. I told him I had a great deal of reason to believe him, that he was full master of the whole house and of me, as far as was within the bounds we had spoken of, which I believe he would not break, and asked him if he would not lodge there that night.

He said he could not well stay that night, business requiring him in London, but added, smiling, that he would come the next day and take a night's lodging with me. I pressed him to stay that night, and told him I should be glad a friend so valuable should be under the same roof with me; and indeed I began at that time not only to be much obliged to him, but to love him too, and that in a manner that I had not been acquainted with myself.

Oh! let no woman slight the temptation that being generously delivered from trouble is to any spirit furnished with gratitude and just principles. This gentleman had freely and voluntarily delivered me from misery, from poverty, and rags; he had made me what I was, and put me into a way to be even more than I ever was, namely, to live happy and pleased, and on his bounty I depended. What could I say to this gentleman when he pressed me to yield to him, and argued the lawfulness of it? But of that in its place.

I pressed him again to stay that night, and told him it was the first completely happy night that I had ever had in the house in my life, and I should be very sorry to have it be without his company, who was the cause and foundation of it all; that we would be innocently merry, but that it could never be without him; and, in short, I courted him so, that he said he could not deny me, but he would take his horse and go to London, do the business he had to do, which, it seems, was to pay a foreign bill that was due that night, and would else be protested, and that he would come back in three hours at farthest, and sup with me; but bade me get nothing there, for since I was resolved to be merry, which was what he desired above all things, he would send me something from London. "And we will make it a wedding supper, my dear," says he; and with that word took me in his arms, and kissed me so vehemently that I made no question but he intended to do everything else that Amy had talked of.

I started a little at the word wedding. "What do ye mean, to call it by such a name?" says I; adding, "We will have a supper, but t' other is impossible, as well on your side as mine." He laughed. "Well," says he, "you shall call it what you will, but it may be the same thing, for I shall satisfy you it is not so impossible as you make it."

"I don't understand you," said I. "Have not I a husband and you a wife?"

"Well, well," says he, "we will talk of that after supper;" so he rose up, gave me another kiss, and took his horse for London.

This kind of discourse had fired my blood, I confess, and I knew not what to think of it. It was plain now that he intended to lie with me, but how he would reconcile it to a legal thing, like a marriage, that I could not imagine. We had both of us used Amy with so much intimacy, and trusted her with everything, having such unexampled instances of her fidelity, that he made no scruple to kiss me and say all these things to me before her; nor had he cared one farthing, if I would have let him lie with me, to have had Amy there too all night. When he was gone, "Well, Amy," says I, "what will all this come to now? I am all in a sweat at him." "Come to, madam?" says Amy. "I see what it will come to; I must put you to bed to-night together." "Why, you would not be so impudent, you jade you," says I, "would you?" "Yes, I would," says she, "with all my heart, and think you both as honest as ever you were in your lives."

"What ails the slut to talk so?" said I. "Honest! How can it be honest?" "Why, I'll tell you, madam," says Amy; "I sounded it as soon as I heard him speak, and it is very true too; he calls you widow, and such indeed you are; for, as my master has left you so many years, he is dead, to be sure; at least he is dead to you; he is no husband. You are, and ought to be, free to marry who you will; and his wife being gone from him, and refusing to lie with him, then he is a single man again as much as ever; and though you cannot bring the laws of the land to join you together, yet, one refusing to do the office of a wife, and the other of a husband, you may certainly take one another fairly."

"Nay, Amy," says I, "if I could take him fairly, you may be sure I'd take him above all the men in the world; it turned the very heart within me when I heard him say he loved me. How could it be otherwise, when you know what a condition I was in before, despised and trampled on by all the world? I could have took him in my arms and kissed him as freely as he did me, if it had not been for shame."

"Ay, and all the rest too," says Amy, "at the first word. I don't see how you can think of denying him anything. Has he not brought you out of the devil's clutches, brought you out of the blackest misery that ever poor lady was reduced to? Can a woman deny such a man anything?"

"Nay, I don't know what to do, Amy," says I. "I hope he won't desire anything of that kind of me; I hope he won't attempt it. If he does, I know not what to say to him."

"Not ask you!" says Amy. "Depend upon it, he will ask you, and you will grant it too. I am sure my mistress is no fool. Come, pray, madam, let me go air you a clean shift; don't let him find you in foul linen the wedding-night."

"But that I know you to be a very honest girl, Amy," says I, "you would make me abhor you. Why, you argue for the devil, as if you were one of his privy councillors."

"It's no matter for that, madam, I say nothing but what I think. You own you love this gentleman, and he has given you sufficient testimony of his affection to you; your conditions are alike unhappy, and he is of opinion that he may take another woman, his first wife having broke her honour, and living from him; and that though the laws of the land will not allow him to marry formally, yet that he may take another woman into his arms, provided he keeps true to the other woman as a wife; nay, he says it is usual to do so, and allowed by the custom of the place, in several countries abroad. And, I must own, I am of the same mind; else it is in the power of a whore, after she has jilted and abandoned her husband, to confine him from the pleasure as well as convenience of a woman all the days of his life, which would be very unreasonable, and, as times go, not tolerable to all people; and the like on your side, madam."

Had I now had my senses about me, and had my reason not been overcome by the powerful attraction of so kind, so beneficent a friend; had I consulted conscience and virtue, I should have repelled this Amy, however faithful and honest to me in other things, as a viper and engine of the devil. I ought to have remembered that neither he or I, either by the laws of God or man, could come together upon any other terms than that of notorious adultery. The ignorant jade's argument, that he had brought me out of the hands of the devil, by which she meant the devil of poverty and distress, should have been a powerful motive to me not to plunge myself into the jaws of hell, and into the power of the real devil, in recompense for that deliverance. I should have looked upon all the good this man had done for me to have been the particular work of the goodness of Heaven, and that goodness should have moved me to a return of duty and humble obedience. I should have received the mercy thankfully, and applied it soberly, to the praise and honour of my Maker; whereas, by this wicked course, all the bounty and kindness of this gentleman became a snare to me, was a mere bait to the devil's hook; I received his kindness at the dear expense of body and soul, mortgaging faith, religion, conscience, and modesty for (as I may call it) a morsel of bread; or, if you will, ruined my soul from a principle of gratitude, and gave myself up to the devil, to show myself grateful to my benefactor. I must do the gentleman that justice as to say I verily believe that he did nothing but what he thought was lawful; and I must do that justice upon myself as to say I did what my own conscience convinced me, at the very time I did it, was horribly unlawful, scandalous, and abominable.

But poverty was my snare; dreadful poverty! The misery I had been in was great, such as would make the heart tremble at the apprehensions of its return; and I might appeal to any that has had any experience of the world, whether one so entirely destitute as I was of all manner of all helps or friends, either to support me or to assist me to support myself, could withstand the proposal; not that I plead this as a justification of my conduct, but that it may move the pity even of those that abhor the crime.

Besides this, I was young, handsome, and, with all the mortifications I had met with, was vain, and that not a little; and, as it was a new thing, so it was a pleasant thing to be courted, caressed, embraced, and high professions of affection made to me, by a man so agreeable and so able to do me good.

Add to this, that if I had ventured to disoblige this gentleman, I had no friend in the world to have recourse to; I had no prospect – no, not of a bit of bread; I had nothing before me but to fall back into the same misery that I had been in before.

Amy had but too much rhetoric in this cause; she represented all those things in their proper colours; she argued them all with her utmost skill; and at last the merry jade, when she came to dress me, "Look ye, madam," said she, "if you won't consent, tell him you will do as Rachel did to Jacob, when she could have no children – put her maid to bed to him; tell him you cannot comply with him, but there's Amy, he may ask her the question; she has promised me she won't deny you."

"And would you have me say so, Amy?" said I.

"No, madam; but I would really have you do so. Besides, you are undone if you do not; and if my doing it would save you from being undone, as I said before, he shall, if he will; if he asks me, I won't deny him, not I; hang me if I do," says Amy.

"Well, I know not what to do," says I to Amy.

"Do!" says Amy. "Your choice is fair and plain. Here you may have a handsome, charming gentleman, be rich, live pleasantly and in plenty, or refuse him, and want a dinner, go in rags, live in tears; in short, beg and starve. You know this is the case, madam," says Amy. "I wonder how you can say you know not what to do."

"Well, Amy," says I, "the case is as you say, and I think verily I must yield to him; but then," said I, moved by conscience, "don't talk any more of your cant of its being lawful that I ought to marry again, and that he ought to marry again, and such stuff as that; 'tis all nonsense," says I, "Amy, there's nothing in it; let me hear no more of that, for if I yield, 'tis in vain to mince the matter, I am a whore, Amy; neither better nor worse, I assure you."

"I don't think so, madam, by no means," says Amy. "I wonder how you can talk so;" and then she run on with her argument of the unreasonableness that a woman should be obliged to live single, or a man to live single, in such cases as before. "Well, Amy," said I, "come, let us dispute no more, for the longer I enter into that part, the greater my scruples will be; but if I let it alone, the necessity of my present circumstances is such that I believe I shall yield to him, if he should importune me much about it; but I should be glad he would not do it at all, but leave me as I am."

"As to that, madam, you may depend," says Amy, "he expects to have you for his bedfellow to-night. I saw it plainly in his management all day; and at last he told you so too, as plain, I think, as he could." "Well, well, Amy," said I, "I don't know what to say; if he will he must, I think; I don't know how to resist such a man, that has done so much for me." "I don't know how you should," says Amy.

Thus Amy and I canvassed the business between us; the jade prompted the crime which I had but too much inclination to commit, that is to say, not as a crime, for I had nothing of the vice in my constitution; my spirits were far from being high, my blood had no fire in it to kindle the flame of desire; but the kindness and good humour of the man and the dread of my own circumstances concurred to bring me to the point, and I even resolved, before he asked, to give up my virtue to him whenever he should put it to the question.

In this I was a double offender, whatever he was, for I was resolved to commit the crime, knowing and owning it to be a crime; he, if it was true as he said, was fully persuaded it was lawful, and in that persuasion he took the measures and used all the circumlocutions which I am going to speak of.

About two hours after he was gone, came a Leadenhall basket-woman, with a whole load of good things for the mouth (the particulars are not to the purpose), and brought orders to get supper by eight o'clock. However, I did not intend to begin to dress anything till I saw him; and he gave me

time enough, for he came before seven, so that Amy, who had gotten one to help her, got everything ready in time.

We sat down to supper about eight, and were indeed very merry. Amy made us some sport, for she was a girl of spirit and wit, and with her talk she made us laugh very often, and yet the jade managed her wit with all the good manners imaginable.

But to shorten the story. After supper he took me up into his chamber, where Amy had made a good fire, and there he pulled out a great many papers, and spread them upon a little table, and then took me by the hand, and after kissing me very much, he entered into a discourse of his circumstances and of mine, how they agreed in several things exactly; for example, that I was abandoned of a husband in the prime of my youth and vigour, and he of a wife in his middle age; how the end of marriage was destroyed by the treatment we had either of us received, and it would be very hard that we should be tied by the formality of the contract where the essence of it was destroyed. I interrupted him, and told him there was a vast difference between our circumstances, and that in the most essential part, namely, that he was rich, and I was poor; that he was above the world, and I infinitely below it; that his circumstances were very easy, mine miserable, and this was an inequality the most essential that could be imagined. "As to that, my dear," says he, "I have taken such measures as shall make an equality still;" and with that he showed me a contract in writing, wherein he engaged himself to me to cohabit constantly with me, to provide for me in all respects as a wife, and repeating in the preamble a long account of the nature and reason of our living together, and an obligation in the penalty of £7000 never to abandon me; and at last showed me a bond for £500, to be paid to me, or to my assigns, within three months after his death.

He read over all these things to me, and then, in a most moving, affectionate manner, and in words not to be answered, he said, "Now, my dear, is this not sufficient? Can you object anything against it? If not, as I believe you will not, then let us debate this matter no longer." With that he pulled out a silk purse, which had threescore guineas in it, and threw them into my lap, and concluded all the rest of his discourse with kisses and protestations of his love, of which indeed I had abundant proof.

Pity human frailty, you that read of a woman reduced in her youth and prime to the utmost misery and distress, and raised again, as above, by the unexpected and surprising bounty of a stranger; I say, pity her if she was not able, after all these things, to make any more resistance.

However, I stood out a little longer still. I asked him how he could expect that I could come into a proposal of such consequence the very first time it was moved to me; and that I ought, if I consented to it, to capitulate with him that he should never upbraid me with easiness and consenting too soon. He said no; but, on the contrary, he would take it as a mark of the greatest kindness I could show him. Then he went on to give reasons why there was no occasion to use the ordinary ceremony of delay, or to wait a reasonable time of courtship, which was only to avoid scandal; but, as this was private, it had nothing of that nature in it; that he had been courting me some time by the best of courtship, viz., doing acts of kindness to me; and that he had given testimonies of his sincere affection to me by deeds, not by flattering trifles and the usual courtship of words, which were often found to have very little meaning; that he took me, not as a mistress, but as his wife, and protested it was clear to him he might lawfully do it, and that I was perfectly at liberty, and assured me, by all that it was possible for an honest man to say, that he would treat me as his wife as long as he lived. In a word, he conquered all the little resistance I intended to make; he protested he loved me above all the world, and begged I would for once believe him; that he had never deceived me, and never would, but would make it his study to make my life comfortable and happy, and to make me forget the misery I had gone through. I stood still a while, and said nothing; but seeing him eager for my answer, I smiled, and looking up at him, "And must I, then," says I, "say yes at first asking? Must I depend upon your promise? Why, then," said I, "upon the faith of that promise, and in the sense of that inexpressible kindness you have shown me, you shall be obliged, and I will be wholly yours to the end of my life;" and with that I took his hand, which held me by the hand, and gave it a kiss.

And thus, in gratitude for the favours I received from a man, was all sense of religion and duty to God, all regard to virtue and honour, given up at once, and we were to call one another man and wife, who, in the sense of the laws both of God and our country, were no more than two adulterers; in short, a whore and a rogue. Nor, as I have said above, was my conscience silent in it, though it seems his was; for I sinned with open eyes, and thereby had a double guilt upon me. As I always said, his notions were of another kind, and he either was before of the opinion, or argued himself into it now, that we were both free and might lawfully marry.

But I was quite of another side – nay, and my judgment was right, but my circumstances were my temptation; the terrors behind me looked blacker than the terrors before me; and the dreadful argument of wanting bread, and being run into the horrible distresses I was in before, mastered all my resolution, and I gave myself up as above.

The rest of the evening we spent very agreeably to me; he was perfectly good-humoured, and was at that time very merry. Then he made Amy dance with him, and I told him I would put Amy to bed to him. Amy said, with all her heart; she never had been a bride in her life. In short, he made the girl so merry that, had he not been to lie with me the same night, I believe he would have played the fool with Amy for half-an-hour, and the girl would no more have refused him than I intended to do. Yet before, I had always found her a very modest wench as any I ever saw in all my life; but, in short, the mirth of that night, and a few more such afterwards, ruined the girl's modesty for ever, as shall appear by-and-by, in its place.

So far does fooling and toying sometimes go that I know nothing a young woman has to be more cautious of; so far had this innocent girl gone in jesting between her and I, and in talking that she would let him lie with her, if he would but be kinder to me, that at last she let him lie with her in earnest; and so empty was I now of all principle, that I encouraged the doing it almost before my face.

I say but too justly that I was empty of principle, because, as above, I had yielded to him, not as deluded to believe it lawful, but as overcome by his kindness, and terrified at the fear of my own misery if he should leave me. So with my eyes open, and with my conscience, as I may say, awake, I sinned, knowing it to be a sin, but having no power to resist. When this had thus made a hole in my heart, and I was come to such a height as to transgress against the light of my own conscience, I was then fit for any wickedness, and conscience left off speaking where it found it could not be heard.

But to return to our story. Having consented, as above, to his proposal, we had not much more to do. He gave me my writings, and the bond for my maintenance during his life, and for five hundred pounds after his death. And so far was he from abating his affection to me afterwards, that two years after we were thus, as he called it, married, he made his will, and gave me a thousand pounds more, and all my household stuff, plate, &c., which was considerable too.

Amy put us to bed, and my new friend – I cannot call him husband – was so well pleased with Amy for her fidelity and kindness to me that he paid her all the arrear of her wages that I owed her, and gave her five guineas over; and had it gone no farther, Amy had richly deserved what she had, for never was a maid so true to her mistress in such dreadful circumstances as I was in. Nor was what followed more her own fault than mine, who led her almost into it at first, and quite into it at last; and this may be a farther testimony what a hardness of crime I was now arrived to, which was owing to the conviction, that was from the beginning upon me, that I was a whore, not a wife; nor could I ever frame my mouth to call him husband or to say "my husband" when I was speaking of him.

We lived, surely, the most agreeable life, the grand exception only excepted, that ever two lived together. He was the most obliging, gentlemanly man, and the most tender of me, that ever woman gave herself up to. Nor was there ever the least interruption to our mutual kindness, no, not to the last day of his life. But I must bring Amy's disaster in at once, that I may have done with her.

Amy was dressing me one morning, for now I had two maids, and Amy was my chambermaid. "Dear madam," says Amy, "what! a'nt you with child yet?" "No, Amy," says I; "nor any sign of it."

"Law, madam!" says Amy, "what have you been doing? Why, you have been married a year and a half. I warrant your master would have got me with child twice in that time." "It may be so, Amy," says I. "Let him try, can't you?" "No," says Amy; "you'll forbid it now. Before, I told you he should, with all my heart; but I won't now, now he's all your own." "Oh," says I, "Amy, I'll freely give you my consent. It will be nothing at all to me. Nay, I'll put you to bed to him myself one night or other, if you are willing." "No, madam, no," says Amy, "not now he's yours."

"Why, you fool you," says I, "don't I tell you I'll put you to bed to him myself?" "Nay, nay," says Amy, "if you put me to bed to him, that's another case; I believe I shall not rise again very soon." "I'll venture that, Amy," says I.

After supper that night, and before we were risen from table, I said to him, Amy being by, "Hark ye, Mr. —, do you know that you are to lie with Amy to-night?" "No, not I," says he; but turns to Amy, "Is it so, Amy?" says he. "No, sir," says she. "Nay, don't say no, you fool; did not I promise to put you to bed to him?" But the girl said "No," still, and it passed off.

At night, when we came to go to bed, Amy came into the chamber to undress me, and her master slipped into bed first; then I began, and told him all that Amy had said about my not being with child, and of her being with child twice in that time. "Ay, Mrs. Amy," says he, "I believe so too. Come hither, and, we'll try." But Amy did not go. "Go, you fool," says I, "can't you? I freely give you both leave." But Amy would not go. "Nay, you whore," says I, "you said, if I would put you to bed, you would with all your heart." And with that I sat her down, pulled off her stockings and shoes, and all her clothes piece by piece, and led her to the bed to him. "Here," says I, "try what you can do with your maid Amy." She pulled back a little, would not let me pull off her clothes at first, but it was hot weather, and she had not many clothes on, and particularly no stays on; and at last, when she saw I was in earnest, she let me do what I would. So I fairly stripped her, and then I threw open the bed and thrust her in.

I need say no more. This is enough to convince anybody that I did not think him my husband, and that I had cast off all principle and all modesty, and had effectually stifled conscience.

Amy, I dare say, began now to repent, and would fain have got out of bed again; but he said to her, "Nay, Amy, you see your mistress has put you to bed; 'tis all her doing; you must blame her." So he held her fast, and the wench being naked in the bed with him, it was too late to look back, so she lay still and let him do what he would with her.

Had I looked upon myself as a wife, you cannot suppose I would have been willing to have let my husband lie with my maid, much less before my face, for I stood by all the while; but as I thought myself a whore, I cannot say but that it was something designed in my thoughts that my maid should be a whore too, and should not reproach me with it.

Amy, however, less vicious than I, was grievously out of sorts the next morning, and cried and took on most vehemently, that she was ruined and undone, and there was no pacifying her; she was a whore, a slut, and she was undone! undone! and cried almost all day. I did all I could to pacify her. "A whore!" says I. "Well, and am not I a whore as well as you?" "No, no," says Amy; "no, you are not, for you are married." "Not I, Amy," says I; "I do not pretend to it. He may marry you to-morrow, if he will, for anything I could do to hinder it. I am not married. I do not look upon it as anything." Well, all did not pacify Amy, but she cried two or three days about it; but it wore off by degrees.

But the case differed between Amy and her master exceedingly; for Amy retained the same kind temper she always had; but, on the contrary, he was quite altered, for he hated her heartily, and could, I believe, have killed her after it, and he told me so, for he thought this a vile action; whereas what he and I had done he was perfectly easy in, thought it just, and esteemed me as much his wife as if we had been married from our youth, and had neither of us known any other; nay, he loved me, I believe, as entirely as if I had been the wife of his youth. Nay, he told me it was true, in one sense, that he had two wives, but that I was the wife of his affection, the other the wife of his aversion.

I was extremely concerned at the aversion he had taken to my maid Amy, and used my utmost skill to get it altered; for though he had, indeed, debauched the wench, I knew that I was the principal occasion of it; and as he was the best-humoured man in the world, I never gave him over till I prevailed with him to be easy with her, and as I was now become the devil's agent, to make others as wicked as myself, I brought him to lie with her again several times after that, till at last, as the poor girl said, so it happened, and she was really with child.

She was terribly concerned at it, and so was he too. "Come, my dear," says I, "when Rachel put her handmaid to bed to Jacob, she took the children as her own. Don't be uneasy; I'll take the child as my own. Had not I a hand in the frolic of putting her to bed to you? It was my fault as much as yours." So I called Amy, and encouraged her too, and told her that I would take care of the child and her too, and added the same argument to her. "For," says I, "Amy, it was all my fault. Did not I drag your clothes off your back, and put you to bed to him?" Thus I, that had, indeed, been the cause of all the wickedness between them, encouraged them both, when they had any remorse about it, and rather prompted them to go on with it than to repent it.

When Amy grew big she went to a place I had provided for her, and the neighbours knew nothing but that Amy and I was parted. She had a fine child indeed, a daughter, and we had it nursed; and Amy came again in about half a year to live with her old mistress; but neither my gentleman, or Amy either, cared for playing that game over again; for, as he said, the jade might bring him a houseful of children to keep.

We lived as merrily and as happily after this as could be expected, considering our circumstances; I mean as to the pretended marriage, &c.; and as to that, my gentleman had not the least concern about him for it. But as much as I was hardened, and that was as much as I believe ever any wicked creature was, yet I could not help it, there was and would be hours of intervals and of dark reflections which came involuntarily in, and thrust in sighs into the middle of all my songs; and there would be sometimes a heaviness of heart which intermingled itself with all my joy, and which would often fetch a tear from my eye. And let others pretend what they will, I believe it impossible to be otherwise with anybody. There can be no substantial satisfaction in a life of known wickedness; conscience will, and does often, break in upon them at particular times, let them do what they can to prevent it.

But I am not to preach, but to relate; and whatever loose reflections were, and how often soever those dark intervals came on, I did my utmost to conceal them from him; ay, and to suppress and smother them too in myself; and, to outward appearance, we lived as cheerfully and agreeably as it was possible for any couple in the world to live.

After I had thus lived with him something above two years, truly I found myself with child too. My gentleman was mightily pleased at it, and nothing could be kinder than he was in the preparations he made for me, and for my lying-in, which was, however, very private, because I cared for as little company as possible; nor had I kept up my neighbourly acquaintance, so that I had nobody to invite upon such an occasion.

I was brought to bed very well (of a daughter too, as well as Amy), but the child died at about six weeks old, so all that work was to do over again – that is to say, the charge, the expense, the travail, &c.

The next year I made him amends, and brought him a son, to his great satisfaction. It was a charming child, and did very well. After this my husband, as he called himself, came to me one evening, and told me he had a very difficult thing happened to him, which he knew not what to do in, or how to resolve about, unless I would make him easy; this was, that his occasions required him to go over to France for about two months.

"Well, my dear," says I, "and how shall I make you easy?"

"Why, by consenting to let me go," says he; "upon which condition, I'll tell you the occasion of my going, that you may judge of the necessity there is for it on my side." Then, to make me easy in his going, he told me he would make his will before he went, which should be to my full satisfaction.

I told him the last part was so kind that I could not decline the first part, unless he would give me leave to add that, if it was not for putting him to an extraordinary expense, I would go over along with him.

He was so pleased with this offer that he told me he would give me full satisfaction for it, and accept of it too; so he took me to London with him the next day, and there he made his will, and showed it to me, and sealed it before proper witnesses, and then gave it to me to keep. In this will he gave a thousand pounds to a person that we both knew very well, in trust, to pay it, with the interest from the time of his decease, to me or my assigns; then he willed the payment of my jointure, as he called it, viz., his bond of five hundred pounds after his death; also, he gave me all my household stuff, plate, &c.

This was a most engaging thing for a man to do to one under my circumstances; and it would have been hard, as I told him, to deny him anything, or to refuse to go with him anywhere. So we settled everything as well as we could, left Amy in charge with the house, and for his other business, which was in jewels, he had two men he intrusted, who he had good security for, and who managed for him, and corresponded with him.

Things being thus concerted, we went away to France, arrived safe at Calais, and by easy journeys came in eight days more to Paris, where we lodged in the house of an English merchant of his acquaintance, and was very courteously entertained.

My gentleman's business was with some persons of the first rank, and to whom he had sold some jewels of very good value, and received a great sum of money in specie; and, as he told me privately, he gained three thousand pistoles by his bargain, but would not suffer the most intimate friend he had there to know what he had received; for it is not so safe a thing in Paris to have a great sum of money in keeping as it might be in London.

We made this journey much longer than we intended, and my gentleman sent for one of his managers in London to come over to us in Paris with some diamonds, and sent him back to London again to fetch more. Then other business fell into his hands so unexpectedly that I began to think we should take up our constant residence there, which I was not very averse to, it being my native country, and I spoke the language perfectly well. So we took a good house in Paris, and lived very well there; and I sent for Amy to come over to me, for I lived gallantly, and my gentleman was two or three times going to keep me a coach, but I declined it, especially at Paris, but as they have those conveniences by the day there, at a certain rate, I had an equipage provided for me whenever I pleased, and I lived here in a very good figure, and might have lived higher if I pleased.

But in the middle of all this felicity a dreadful disaster befell me, which entirely unhinged all my affairs, and threw me back into the same state of life that I was in before; with this one happy exception, however, that whereas before I was poor, even to misery, now I was not only provided for, but very rich.

My gentleman had the name in Paris for a rich man, and indeed he was so, though not so immensely rich as people imagined; but that which was fatal to him was, that he generally carried a shagreen case in his pocket, especially when he went to court, or to the houses of any of the princes of the blood, in which he had jewels of very great value.

It happened one day that, being to go to Versailles to wait upon the Prince of – , he came up into my chamber in the morning, and laid out his jewel-case, because he was not going to show any jewels, but to get a foreign bill accepted, which he had received from Amsterdam; so, when he gave me the case, he said, "My dear, I think I need not carry this with me, because it may be I may not come back till night, and it is too much to venture." I returned, "Then, my dear, you shan't go."

"Why?" says he. "Because, as they are too much for you, so you are too much for me to venture, and you shall not go, unless you will promise me not to stay so as to come back in the night."

"I hope there's no danger," said he, "seeing that I have nothing about me of any value; and therefore, lest I should, take that too," says he, and gives me his gold watch and a rich diamond which he had in a ring, and always wore on his finger.

"Well, but, my dear," says I, "you make me more uneasy now than before; for if you apprehend no danger, why do you use this caution? and if you apprehend there is danger, why do you go at all?"

"There is no danger," says he, "if I do not stay late, and I do not design to do so."

"Well, but promise me, then, that you won't," says I, "or else I cannot let you go."

"I won't indeed, my dear," says he, "unless I am obliged to it. I assure you I do not intend it; but if I should, I am not worth robbing now, for I have nothing about me but about six pistoles in my little purse and that little ring," showing me a small diamond ring, worth about ten or twelve pistoles, which he put upon his finger, in the room of the rich one he usually wore.

I still pressed him not to stay late, and he said he would not. "But if I am kept late," says he, "beyond my expectation, I'll stay all night, and come next morning." This seemed a very good caution; but still my mind was very uneasy about him, and I told him so, and entreated him not to go. I told him I did not know what might be the reason, but that I had a strange terror upon my mind about his going, and that if he did go, I was persuaded some harm would attend him. He smiled, and returned, "Well, my dear, if it should be so, you are now richly provided for; all that I have here I give to you." And with that he takes up the casket or case, "Here," says he, "hold your hand; there is a good estate for you in this case; if anything happens to me 'tis all your own. I give it you for yourself;" and with that he put the casket, the fine ring, and his gold watch all into my hands, and the key of his scrutoire besides, adding, "And in my scrutoire there is some money; it is all your own."

I stared at him as if I was frightened, for I thought all his face looked like a death's-head; and then immediately I thought I perceived his head all bloody, and then his clothes looked bloody too, and immediately it all went off, and he looked as he really did. Immediately I fell a-crying, and hung about him. "My dear," said I, "I am frightened to death; you shall not go. Depend upon it some mischief will befall you." I did not tell him how my vapourish fancy had represented him to me; that, I thought, was not proper. Besides, he would only have laughed at me, and would have gone away with a jest about it; but I pressed him seriously not to go that day, or, if he did, to promise me to come home to Paris again by daylight. He looked a little graver then than he did before, told me he was not apprehensive of the least danger, but if there was, he would either take care to come in the day, or, as he had said before, would stay all night.

But all these promises came to nothing, for he was set upon in the open day and robbed by three men on horseback, masked, as he went; and one of them, who, it seems, rifled him while the rest stood to stop the coach, stabbed him into the body with a sword, so that he died immediately. He had a footman behind the coach, who they knocked down with the stock or butt-end of a carbine. They were supposed to kill him because of the disappointment they met with in not getting his case or casket of diamonds, which they knew he carried about him; and this was supposed because, after they had killed him, they made the coachman drive out of the road a long way over the heath, till they came to a convenient place, where they pulled him out of the coach and searched his clothes more narrowly than they could do while he was alive. But they found nothing but his little ring, six pistoles, and the value of about seven livres in small moneys.

This was a dreadful blow to me, though I cannot say I was so surprised as I should otherwise have been, for all the while he was gone my mind was oppressed with the weight of my own thoughts, and I was as sure that I should never see him any more that I think nothing could be like it. The impression was so strong that I think nothing could make so deep a wound that was imaginary; and I was so dejected and disconsolate that, when I received the news of his disaster, there was no room for

any extraordinary alteration in me. I had cried all that day, ate nothing, and only waited, as I might say, to receive the dismal news, which I had brought to me about five o'clock in the afternoon.

I was in a strange country, and, though I had a pretty many acquaintances, had but very few friends that I could consult on this occasion. All possible inquiry was made after the rogues that had been thus barbarous, but nothing could be heard of them; nor was it possible that the footman could make any discovery of them by his description, for they knocked him down immediately, so that he knew nothing of what was done afterwards. The coachman was the only man that could say anything, and all his account amounted to no more than this, that one of them had soldier's clothes, but he could not remember the particulars of his mounting, so as to know what regiment he belonged to; and as to their faces, that he could know nothing of, because they had all of them masks on.

I had him buried as decently as the place would permit a Protestant stranger to be buried, and made some of the scruples and difficulties on that account easy by the help of money to a certain person, who went impudently to the curate of the parish of St. Sulpitius, in Paris, and told him that the gentleman that was killed was a Catholic; that the thieves had taken from him a cross of gold, set with diamonds, worth six thousand livres; that his widow was a Catholic, and had sent by him sixty crowns to the church of – , for masses to be said for the repose of his soul. Upon all which, though not one word was true, he was buried with all the ceremonies of the Roman Church.

I think I almost cried myself to death for him, for I abandoned myself to all the excesses of grief; and indeed I loved him to a degree inexpressible; and considering what kindness he had shown me at first, and how tenderly he had used me to the last, what could I do less?

Then the manner of his death was terrible and frightful to me, and, above all, the strange notices I had of it. I had never pretended to the second-sight, or anything of that kind, but certainly, if any one ever had such a thing, I had it at this time, for I saw him as plainly in all those terrible shapes as above; first, as a skeleton, not dead only, but rotten and wasted; secondly, as killed, and his face bloody; and, thirdly, his clothes bloody, and all within the space of one minute, or indeed of a very few moments.

These things amazed me, and I was a good while as one stupid. However, after some time I began to recover, and look into my affairs. I had the satisfaction not to be left in distress, or in danger of poverty. On the contrary, besides what he had put into my hands fairly in his lifetime, which amounted to a very considerable value, I found above seven hundred pistoles in gold in his scrutoire, of which he had given me the key; and I found foreign bills accepted for about twelve thousand livres; so that, in a word, I found myself possessed of almost ten thousand pounds sterling in a very few days after the disaster.

The first thing I did upon this occasion was to send a letter to my maid, as I still called her, Amy, wherein I gave her an account of my disaster, how my husband, as she called him (for I never called him so), was murdered; and as I did not know how his relations, or his wife's friends might act upon that occasion, I ordered her to convey away all the plate, linen, and other things of value, and to secure them in a person's hands that I directed her to, and then to sell or dispose of the furniture of the house, if she could, and so, without acquainting anybody with the reason of her going, withdraw; sending notice to his head manager at London that the house was quitted by the tenant, and they might come and take possession of it for the executors. Amy was so dexterous, and did her work so nimbly, that she gutted the house, and sent the key to the said manager, almost as soon as he had notice of the misfortune that befell their master.

Upon their receiving the surprising news of his death, the head manager came over to Paris, and came to the house. I made no scruple of calling myself Madame – , the widow of Monsieur – , the English jeweller. And as I spoke French naturally, I did not let him know but that I was his wife, married in France, and that I had not heard that he had any wife in England, but pretended to be surprised, and exclaim against him for so base an action; and that I had good friends in Poitou, where I was born, who would take care to have justice done me in England out of his estate.

I should have observed that, as soon as the news was public of a man being murdered, and that he was a jeweller, fame did me the favour as to publish presently that he was robbed of his casket of jewels, which he always carried about him. I confirmed this, among my daily lamentations for his disaster, and added that he had with him a fine diamond ring, which he was known to wear frequently about him, valued at one hundred pistoles, a gold watch, and a great quantity of diamonds of inestimable value in his casket, which jewels he was carrying to the Prince of – , to show some of them to him; and the prince owned that he had spoken to him to bring some such jewels, to let him see them. But I sorely repented this part afterward, as you shall hear.

This rumour put an end to all inquiry after his jewels, his ring, or his watch; and as for the seven hundred pistoles, that I secured. For the bills which were in hand, I owned I had them, but that, as I said I brought my husband thirty thousand livres portion, I claimed the said bills, which came to not above twelve thousand livres, for my *amende*; and this, with the plate and the household stuff, was the principal of all his estate which they could come at. As to the foreign bill which he was going to Versailles to get accepted, it was really lost with him; but his manager, who had remitted the bill to him, by way of Amsterdam, bringing over the second bill, the money was saved, as they call it, which would otherwise have been also gone; the thieves who robbed and murdered him were, to be sure, afraid to send anybody to get the bill accepted, for that would undoubtedly have discovered them.

By this time my maid Amy was arrived, and she gave me an account of her management, and how she had secured everything, and that she had quitted the house, and sent the key to the head manager of his business, and let me know how much she had made of everything very punctually and honestly.

I should have observed, in the account of his dwelling with me so long at – , that he never passed for anything there but a lodger in the house; and though he was landlord, that did not alter the case. So that at his death, Amy coming to quit the house and give them the key, there was no affinity between that and the case of their master who was newly killed.

I got good advice at Paris from an eminent lawyer, a counsellor of the Parliament there, and laying my case before him, he directed me to make a process in dower upon the estate, for making good my new fortune upon matrimony, which accordingly I did; and, upon the whole, the manager went back to England well satisfied that he had gotten the unaccepted bill of exchange, which was for two thousand five hundred pounds, with some other things, which together amounted to seventeen thousand livres; and thus I got rid of him.

I was visited with great civility on this sad occasion of the loss of my husband, as they thought him, by a great many ladies of quality. And the Prince of – , to whom it was reported he was carrying the jewels, sent his gentleman with a very handsome compliment of condolence to me; and his gentleman, whether with or without order, hinted as if his Highness did intend to have visited me himself, but that some accident, which he made a long story of, had prevented him.

By the concurrence of ladies and others that thus came to visit me, I began to be much known; and as I did not forget to set myself out with all possible advantage, considering the dress of a widow, which in those days was a most frightful thing; I say, as I did thus from my own vanity, for I was not ignorant that I was very handsome; I say, on this account I was soon made very public, and was known by the name of *La belle veufeu de Poictou*, or the pretty widow of Poictou. As I was very well pleased to see myself thus handsomely used in my affliction, it soon dried up all my tears; and though I appeared as a widow, yet, as we say in England, it was of a widow comforted. I took care to let the ladies see that I knew how to receive them; that I was not at a loss how to behave to any of them; and, in short, I began to be very popular there. But I had an occasion afterwards which made me decline that kind of management, as you shall hear presently.

About four days after I had received the compliments of condolence from the Prince – , the same gentleman he had sent before came to tell me that his Highness was coming to give me a visit. I was indeed surprised at that, and perfectly at a loss how to behave. However, as there was no remedy,

I prepared to receive him as well as I could. It was not many minutes after but he was at the door, and came in, introduced by his own gentleman, as above, and after by my woman Amy.

He treated me with abundance of civility, and condoled handsomely on the loss of my husband, and likewise the manner of it. He told me he understood he was coming to Versailles to himself, to show him some jewels; that it was true that he had discoursed with him about jewels, but could not imagine how any villains should hear of his coming at that time with them; that he had not ordered him to attend with them at Versailles, but told him that he would come to Paris by such a day, so that he was no way accessory to the disaster. I told him gravely I knew very well that all his Highness had said of that part was true; that these villains knew his profession, and knew, no doubt, that he always carried a casket of jewels about him, and that he always wore a diamond ring on his finger worth a hundred pistoles, which report had magnified to five hundred; and that, if he had been going to any other place, it would have been the same thing. After this his Highness rose up to go, and told me he had resolved, however, to make me some reparation; and with these words put a silk purse into my hand with a hundred pistoles, and told me he would make me a farther compliment of a small pension, which his gentleman would inform me of.

You may be sure I behaved with a due sense of so much goodness, and offered to kneel to kiss his hand; but he took me up and saluted me, and sat down again (though before he made as if he was going away), making me sit down by him.

He then began to talk with me more familiarly; told me he hoped I was not left in bad circumstances; that Mr. – was reputed to be very rich, and that he had gained lately great sums by some jewels, and he hoped, he said, that I had still a fortune agreeable to the condition I had lived in before.

I replied, with some tears, which, I confess, were a little forced, that I believed, if Mr. – had lived, we should have been out of danger of want, but that it was impossible to estimate the loss which I had sustained, besides that of the life of my husband; that, by the opinion of those that knew something of his affairs, and of what value the jewels were which he intended to have shown to his Highness, he could not have less about him than the value of a hundred thousand livres; that it was a fatal blow to me, and to his whole family, especially that they should be lost in such a manner.

His Highness returned, with an air of concern, that he was very sorry for it; but he hoped, if I settled in Paris, I might find ways to restore my fortune; at the same time he complimented me upon my being very handsome, as he was pleased to call it, and that I could not fail of admirers. I stood up and humbly thanked his Highness, but told him I had no expectations of that kind; that I thought I should be obliged to go over to England, to look after my husband's effects there, which, I was told, were considerable, but that I did not know what justice a poor stranger would get among them; and as for Paris, my fortune being so impaired, I saw nothing before me but to go back to Poictou to my friends, where some of my relations, I hoped, might do something for me, and added that one of my brothers was an abbot at – , near Poictiers.

He stood up, and taking me by the hand, led me to a large looking-glass, which made up the pier in the front of the parlour. "Look there, madam," said he; "is it fit that that face" (pointing to my figure in the glass) "should go back to Poictou? No, madam," says he; "stay and make some gentleman of quality happy, that may, in return, make you forget all your sorrows;" and with that he took me in his arms, and kissing me twice, told me he would see me again, but with less ceremony.

Some little time after this, but the same day, his gentleman came to me again, and with great ceremony and respect, delivered me a black box tied with a scarlet riband and sealed with a noble coat-of-arms, which, I suppose, was the prince's.

There was in it a grant from his Highness, or an assignment – I know not which to call it – with a warrant to his banker to pay me two thousand livres a year during my stay in Paris, as the widow of Monsieur – , the jeweller, mentioning the horrid murder of my late husband as the occasion of it, as above.

I received it with great submission, and expressions of being infinitely obliged to his master, and of my showing myself on all occasions his Highness's most obedient servant; and after giving my most humble duty to his Highness, with the utmost acknowledgments of the obligation, &c., I went to a little cabinet, and taking out some money, which made a little sound in taking it out, offered to give him five pistoles.

He drew back, but with the greatest respect, and told me he humbly thanked me, but that he durst not take a farthing; that his Highness would take it so ill of him, he was sure he would never see his face more; but that he would not fail to acquaint his Highness what respect I had offered; and added, "I assure you, madam, you are more in the good graces of my master, the Prince of – , than you are aware of; and I believe you will hear more of him."

Now I began to understand him, and resolved, if his Highness did come again, he should see me under no disadvantages, if I could help it. I told him, if his Highness did me the honour to see me again, I hoped he would not let me be so surprised as I was before; that I would be glad to have some little notice of it, and would be obliged to him if he would procure it me. He told me he was very sure that when his Highness intended to visit me he should be sent before to give me notice of it, and that he would give me as much warning of it as possible.

He came several times after this on the same errand, that is, about the settlement, the grant requiring several things yet to be done for making it payable without going every time to the prince again for a fresh warrant. The particulars of this part I did not understand; but as soon as it was finished, which was above two months, the gentleman came one afternoon, and said his Highness designed to visit me in the evening, but desired to be admitted without ceremony.

I prepared not my rooms only, but myself; and when he came in there was nobody appeared in the house but his gentleman and my maid Amy; and of her I bid the gentleman acquaint his Highness that she was an Englishwoman, that she did not understand a word of French, and that she was one also that might be trusted.

When he came into my room, I fell down at his feet before he could come to salute me, and with words that I had prepared, full of duty and respect, thanked him for his bounty and goodness to a poor, desolate woman, oppressed under the weight of so terrible a disaster; and refused to rise till he would allow me the honour to kiss his hand.

"*Levez vous donc,*" says the prince, taking me in his arms; "I design more favours for you than this trifle;" and going on, he added, "You shall for the future find a friend where you did not look for it, and I resolve to let you see how kind I can be to one who is to me the most agreeable creature on earth."

I was dressed in a kind of half mourning, had turned off my weeds, and my head, though I had yet no ribands or lace, was so dressed as failed not to set me out with advantage enough, for I began to understand his meaning; and the prince professed I was the most beautiful creature on earth. "And where have I lived," says he, "and how ill have I been served, that I should never till now be showed the finest woman in France!"

This was the way in all the world the most likely to break in upon my virtue, if I had been mistress of any; for I was now become the vainest creature upon earth, and particularly of my beauty, which as other people admired, so I became every day more foolishly in love with myself than before.

He said some very kind things to me after this, and sat down with me for an hour or more, when, getting up and calling his gentleman by his name, he threw open the door: "*Au boire,*" says he; upon which his gentleman immediately brought up a little table covered with a fine damask cloth, the table no bigger than he could bring in his two hands, but upon it was set two decanters, one of champagne and the other of water, six silver plates, and a service of fine sweetmeats in fine china dishes, on a set of rings standing up about twenty inches high, one above another. Below was three roasted partridges and a quail. As soon as his gentleman had set it all down, he ordered him to withdraw. "Now," says the prince, "I intend to sup with you."

When he sent away his gentleman, I stood up and offered to wait on his Highness while he ate; but he positively refused, and told me, "No; to-morrow you shall be the widow of Monsieur – , the jeweller, but to-night you shall be my mistress; therefore sit here," says he, "and eat with me, or I will get up and serve."

I would then have called up my woman Amy, but I thought that would not be proper neither; so I made my excuse, that since his Highness would not let his own servant wait, I would not presume to let my woman come up; but if he would please to let me wait, it would be my honour to fill his Highness's wine. But, as before, he would by no means allow me; so we sat and ate together.

"Now, madam," says the prince, "give me leave to lay aside my character; let us talk together with the freedom of equals. My quality sets me at a distance from you, and makes you ceremonious. Your beauty exalts you to more than an equality. I must, then, treat you as lovers do their mistresses, but I cannot speak the language; it is enough to tell you how agreeable you are to me, how I am surprised at your beauty, and resolve to make you happy, and to be happy with you."

I knew not what to say to him a good while, but blushed, and looking up towards him, said I was already made happy in the favour of a person of such rank, and had nothing to ask of his Highness but that he would believe me infinitely obliged.

After he had eaten, he poured the sweetmeats into my lap; and the wine being out, he called his gentleman again to take away the table, who, at first, only took the cloth and the remains of what was to eat away; and, laying another cloth, set the table on one side of the room with a noble service of plate upon it, worth at least two hundred pistoles. Then, having set the two decanters again upon the table, filled as before, he withdrew; for I found the fellow understood his business very well, and his lord's business too.

About half-an-hour after, the prince told me that I offered to wait a little before, that if I would now take the trouble he would give me leave to give him some wine; so I went to the table, filled a glass of wine, and brought it to him on a fine salver, which the glasses stood on, and brought the bottle or decanter for water in my other hand, to mix as he thought fit.

He smiled, and bid me look on that salver, which I did, and admired it much, for it was a very fine one indeed. "You may see," says he, "I resolve to have more of your company, for my servant shall leave you that plate for my use." I told him I believed his Highness would not take it ill that I was not furnished fit to entertain a person of his rank, and that I would take great care of it, and value myself infinitely upon the honour of his Highness's visit.

It now began to grow late, and he began to take notice of it. "But," says he, "I cannot leave you; have you not a spare lodging for one night?" I told him I had but a homely lodging to entertain such a guest. He said something exceeding kind on that head, but not fit to repeat, adding that my company would make him amends.

About midnight he sent his gentleman of an errand, after telling him aloud that he intended to stay here all night. In a little time his gentleman brought him a nightgown, slippers, two caps, a neckcloth, and shirt, which he gave me to carry into his chamber, and sent his man home; and then, turning to me, said I should do him the honour to be his chamberlain of the household, and his dresser also. I smiled, and told him I would do myself the honour to wait on him upon all occasions.

About one in the morning, while his gentleman was yet with him, I begged leave to withdraw, supposing he would go to bed; but he took the hint, and said, "I'm not going to bed yet; pray let me see you again."

I took this time to undress me, and to come in a new dress, which was, in a manner, *une dishabille*, but so fine, and all about me so clean and so agreeable, that he seemed surprised. "I thought," says he, "you could not have dressed to more advantage than you had done before; but now," says he, "you charm me a thousand times more, if that be possible."

"It is only a loose habit, my lord," said I, "that I may the better wait on your Highness." He pulls me to him. "You are perfectly obliging," says he; and, sitting on the bedside, says he, "Now you

shall be a princess, and know what it is to oblige the gratefullest man alive;" and with that he took me in his arms... I can go no farther in the particulars of what passed at that time, but it ended in this, that, in short, I lay with him all night.

I have given you the whole detail of this story to lay it down as a black scheme of the way how unhappy women are ruined by great men; for, though poverty and want is an irresistible temptation to the poor, vanity and great things are as irresistible to others. To be courted by a prince, and by a prince who was first a benefactor, then an admirer; to be called handsome, the finest woman in France, and to be treated as a woman fit for the bed of a prince – these are things a woman must have no vanity in her, nay, no corruption in her, that is not overcome by it; and my case was such that, as before, I had enough of both.

I had now no poverty attending me; on the contrary, I was mistress of ten thousand pounds before the prince did anything for me. Had I been mistress of my resolution, had I been less obliging, and rejected the first attack, all had been safe; but my virtue was lost before, and the devil, who had found the way to break in upon me by one temptation, easily mastered me now by another; and I gave myself up to a person who, though a man of high dignity, was yet the most tempting and obliging that ever I met with in my life.

I had the same particular to insist upon here with the prince that I had with my gentleman before. I hesitated much at consenting at first asking, but the prince told me princes did not court like other men; that they brought more powerful arguments; and he very prettily added that they were sooner repulsed than other men, and ought to be sooner complied with; intimating, though very genteely, that after a woman had positively refused him once, he could not, like other men, wait with importunities and stratagems, and laying long sieges; but as such men as he stormed warmly, so, if repulsed, they made no second attacks; and, indeed, it was but reasonable; for as it was below their rank to be long battering a woman's constancy, so they ran greater hazards in being exposed in their amours than other men did.

I took this for a satisfactory answer, and told his Highness that I had the same thoughts in respect to the manner of his attacks; for that his person and his arguments were irresistible; that a person of his rank and a munificence so unbounded could not be withstood; that no virtue was proof against him, except such as was able, too, to suffer martyrdom; that I thought it impossible I could be overcome, but that now I found it was impossible I should not be overcome; that so much goodness, joined with so much greatness, would have conquered a saint; and that I confessed he had the victory over me, by a merit infinitely superior to the conquest he had made.

He made me a most obliging answer; told me abundance of fine things, which still flattered my vanity, till at last I began to have pride enough to believe him, and fancied myself a fit mistress for a prince.

As I had thus given the prince the last favour, and he had all the freedom with me that it was possible for me to grant, so he gave me leave to use as much freedom with him another way, and that was to have everything of him I thought fit to command; and yet I did not ask of him with an air of avarice, as if I was greedily making a penny of him, but I managed him with such art that he generally anticipated my demands. He only requested of me that I would not think of taking another house, as I had intimated to his Highness that I intended, not thinking it good enough to receive his visits in; but he said my house was the most convenient that could possibly be found in all Paris for an amour, especially for him, having a way out into three streets, and not overlooked by any neighbours, so that he could pass and repass without observation; for one of the back-ways opened into a narrow dark alley, which alley was a thoroughfare or passage out of one street into another; and any person that went in or out by the door had no more to do but to see that there was nobody following him in the alley before he went in at the door. This request, I knew, was reasonable, and therefore I assured him I would not change my dwelling, seeing his Highness did not think it too mean for me to receive him in.

He also desired me that I would not take any more servants or set up any equipage, at least for the present; for that it would then be immediately concluded I had been left very rich, and then I should be thronged with the impertinence of admirers, who would be attracted by the money, as well as by the beauty of a young widow, and he should be frequently interrupted in his visits; or that the world would conclude I was maintained by somebody, and would be indefatigable to find out the person; so that he should have spies peeping at him every time he went out or in, which it would be impossible to disappoint; and that he should presently have it talked over all the toilets in Paris that the Prince de – had got the jeweller's widow for a mistress.

This was too just to oppose, and I made no scruple to tell his Highness that, since he had stooped so low as to make me his own, he ought to have all the satisfaction in the world that I was all his own; that I would take all the measures he should please to direct me to avoid the impertinent attacks of others; and that, if he thought fit, I would be wholly within doors, and have it given out that I was obliged to go to England to solicit my affairs there, after my husband's misfortune, and that I was not expected there again for at least a year or two. This he liked very well; only he said that he would by no means have me confined; that it would injure my health, and that I should then take a country-house in some village, a good way off of the city, where it should not be known who I was, and that he should be there sometimes to divert me.

I made no scruple of the confinement, and told his Highness no place could be a confinement where I had such a visitor, and so I put off the country-house, which would have been to remove myself farther from him and have less of his company; so I made the house be, as it were, shut up. Amy, indeed, appeared, and when any of the neighbours and servants inquired, she answered, in broken French, that I was gone to England to look after my affairs, which presently went current through the streets about us. For you are to note that the people of Paris, especially the women, are the most busy and impertinent inquirers into the conduct of their neighbours, especially that of a single woman, that are in the world, though there are no greater intriguers in the universe than themselves; and perhaps that may be the reason of it, for it is an old but a sure rule, that

"When deep intrigues are close and shy,
The guilty are the first that spy."

Thus his Highness had the most easy, and yet the most undiscoverable, access to me imaginable, and he seldom failed to come two or three nights in a week, and sometimes stayed two or three nights together. Once he told me he was resolved I should be weary of his company, and that he would learn to know what it was to be a prisoner; so he gave out among his servants that he was gone to – , where he often went a-hunting, and that he should not return under a fortnight; and that fortnight he stayed wholly with me, and never went out of my doors.

Never woman in such a station lived a fortnight in so complete a fulness of human delight; for to have the entire possession of one of the most accomplished princes in the world, and of the politest, best-bred man; to converse with him all day, and, as he professed, charm him all night, what could be more inexpressibly pleasing, and especially to a woman of a vast deal of pride, as I was?

To finish the felicity of this part, I must not forget that the devil had played a new game with me, and prevailed with me to satisfy myself with this amour, as a lawful thing; that a prince of such grandeur and majesty, so infinitely superior to me, and one who had made such an introduction by an unparalleled bounty, I could not resist; and, therefore, that it was very lawful for me to do it, being at that time perfectly single, and unengaged to any other man, as I was, most certainly, by the unaccountable absence of my first husband, and the murder of my gentleman who went for my second.

It cannot be doubted but that I was the easier to persuade myself of the truth of such a doctrine as this when it was so much for my ease and for the repose of my mind to have it be so: —

"In things we wish, 'tis easy to deceive;
What we would have, we willingly believe."

Besides, I had no casuists to resolve this doubt; the same devil that put this into my head bade me go to any of the Romish clergy, and, under the pretence of confession, state the case exactly, and I should see they would either resolve it to be no sin at all or absolve me upon the easiest penance. This I had a strong inclination to try, but I know not what scruple put me off of it, for I could never bring myself to like having to do with those priests. And though it was strange that I, who had thus prostituted my chastity and given up all sense of virtue in two such particular cases, living a life of open adultery, should scruple anything, yet so it was. I argued with myself that I could not be a cheat in anything that was esteemed sacred; that I could not be of one opinion, and then pretend myself to be of another; nor could I go to confession, who knew nothing of the manner of it, and should betray myself to the priest to be a Huguenot, and then might come into trouble; but, in short, though I was a whore, yet I was a Protestant whore, and could not act as if I was popish, upon any account whatsoever.

But, I say, I satisfied myself with the surprising occasion, that as it was all irresistible, so it was all lawful; for that Heaven would not suffer us to be punished for that which it was not possible for us to avoid; and with these absurdities I kept conscience from giving me any considerable disturbance in all this matter; and I was as perfectly easy as to the lawfulness of it as if I had been married to the prince and had had no other husband; so possible is it for us to roll ourselves up in wickedness, till we grow invulnerable by conscience; and that sentinel, once dozed, sleeps fast, not to be awakened while the tide of pleasure continues to flow, or till something dark and dreadful brings us to ourselves again.

I have, I confess, wondered at the stupidity that my intellectual part was under all that while; what lethargic fumes dozed the soul; and how was it possible that I, who in the case before, where the temptation was many ways more forcible and the arguments stronger and more irresistible, was yet under a continued inquietude on account of the wicked life I led, could now live in the most profound tranquillity and with an uninterrupted peace, nay, even rising up to satisfaction and joy, and yet in a more palpable state of adultery than before; for before, my gentleman, who called me wife, had the pretence of his wife being parted from him, refusing to do the duty of her office as a wife to him. As for me, my circumstances were the same; but as for the prince, as he had a fine and extraordinary lady, or princess, of his own, so he had had two or three mistresses more besides me, and made no scruple of it at all.

However, I say, as to my own part, I enjoyed myself in perfect tranquillity; and as the prince was the only deity I worshipped, so I was really his idol; and however it was with his princess, I assure you his other mistresses found a sensible difference, and though they could never find me out, yet I had good intelligence that they guessed very well that their lord had got some new favourite that robbed them of his company, and, perhaps, of some of his usual bounty too. And now I must mention the sacrifices he made to his idol, and they were not a few, I assure you.

As he loved like a prince, so he rewarded like a prince; for though he declined my making a figure, as above, he let me see that he was above doing it for the saving the expense of it, and so he told me, and that he would make it up in other things. First of all, he sent me a toilet, with all the appurtenances of silver, even so much as the frame of the table; and then for the house, he gave me the table, or sideboard of plate, I mentioned above, with all things belonging to it of massy silver; so that, in short, I could not for my life study to ask him for anything of plate which I had not.

He could, then, accommodate me in nothing more but jewels and clothes, or money for clothes. He sent his gentleman to the mercer's, and bought me a suit, or whole piece, of the finest brocaded silk, figured with gold, and another with silver, and another of crimson; so that I had three suits of clothes, such as the Queen of France would not have disdained to have worn at that time. Yet I went

out nowhere; but as those were for me to put on when I went out of mourning, I dressed myself in them, one after another, always when his Highness came to see me.

I had no less than five several morning dresses besides these, so that I need never be seen twice in the same dress; to these he added several parcels of fine linen and of lace, so much that I had no room to ask for more, or, indeed, for so much.

I took the liberty once, in our freedoms, to tell him he was too bountiful, and that I was too chargeable to him for a mistress, and that I would be his faithful servant at less expense to him; and that he not only left me no room to ask him for anything, but that he supplied me with such a profusion of good things that I could scarce wear them, or use them, unless I kept a great equipage, which, he knew, was no way convenient for him or for me. He smiled, and took me in his arms, and told me he was resolved, while I was his, I should never be able to ask him for anything, but that he would be daily asking new favours of me.

After we were up (for this conference was in bed), he desired I would dress me in the best suit of clothes I had. It was a day or two after the three suits were made and brought home. I told him, if he pleased, I would rather dress me in that suit which I knew he liked best. He asked me how I could know which he would like best before he had seen them. I told him I would presume for once to guess at his fancy by my own; so I went away and dressed me in the second suit, brocaded with silver, and returned in full dress, with a suit of lace upon my head, which would have been worth in England two hundred pounds sterling; and I was every way set out as well as Amy could dress me, who was a very genteel dresser too. In this figure I came to him, out of my dressing-room, which opened with folding-doors into his bedchamber.

He sat as one astonished a good while, looking at me, without speaking a word, till I came quite up to him, kneeled on one knee to him, and almost, whether he would or no, kissed his hand. He took me up, and stood up himself, but was surprised when, taking me in his arms, he perceived tears to run down my cheeks. "My dear," says he aloud, "what mean these tears?" "My lord," said I, after some little check, for I could not speak presently, "I beseech you to believe me, they are not tears of sorrow, but tears of joy. It is impossible for me to see myself snatched from the misery I was fallen into, and at once to be in the arms of a prince of such goodness, such immense bounty, and be treated in such a manner; it is not possible, my lord," said I, "to contain the satisfaction of it; and it will break out in an excess in some measure proportioned to your immense bounty, and to the affection which your Highness treats me with, who am so infinitely below you."

It would look a little too much like a romance here to repeat all the kind things he said to me on that occasion, but I can't omit one passage. As he saw the tears drop down my cheek, he pulls out a fine cambric handkerchief, and was going to wipe the tears off, but checked his hand, as if he was afraid to deface something; I say, he checked his hand, and tossed the handkerchief to me to do it myself. I took the hint immediately, and with a kind of pleasant disdain, "How, my lord," said I, "have you kissed me so often, and don't you know whether I am painted or not? Pray let your Highness satisfy yourself that you have no cheats put upon you; for once let me be vain enough to say I have not deceived you with false colours." With this I put a handkerchief into his hand, and taking his hand into mine, I made him wipe my face so hard that he was unwilling to do it, for fear of hurting me.

He appeared surprised more than ever, and swore, which was the first time that I had heard him swear from my first knowing him, that he could not have believed there was any such skin without paint in the world. "Well, my lord," said I, "your Highness shall have a further demonstration than this, as to that which you are pleased to accept for beauty, that it is the mere work of nature;" and with that I stepped to the door and rung a little bell for my woman Amy, and bade her bring me a cup full of hot water, which she did; and when it was come, I desired his Highness to feel if it was warm, which he did, and I immediately washed my face all over with it before him. This was, indeed, more than satisfaction, that is to say, than believing, for it was an undeniable demonstration, and he kissed my cheeks and breasts a thousand times, with expressions of the greatest surprise imaginable.

Nor was I a very indifferent figure as to shape; though I had had two children by my gentleman, and six by my true husband, I say I was no despicable shape; and my prince (I must be allowed the vanity to call him so) was taking his view of me as I walked from one end of the room to the other. At last he leads me to the darkest part of the room, and standing behind me, bade me hold up my head, when, putting both his hands round my neck, as if he was spanning my neck to see how small it was, for it was long and small, he held my neck so long and so hard in his hand that I complained he hurt me a little. What he did it for I knew not, nor had I the least suspicion but that he was spanning my neck; but when I said he hurt me, he seemed to let go, and in half a minute more led me to a pier-glass, and behold I saw my neck clasped with a fine necklace of diamonds; whereas I felt no more what he was doing than if he had really done nothing at all, nor did I suspect it in the least. If I had an ounce of blood in me that did not fly up into my face, neck, and breasts, it must be from some interruption in the vessels. I was all on fire with the sight, and began to wonder what it was that was coming to me.

However, to let him see that I was not unqualified to receive benefits, I turned about: "My lord," says I, "your Highness is resolved to conquer, by your bounty, the very gratitude of your servants; you will leave no room for anything but thanks, and make those thanks useless too, by their bearing no proportion to the occasion."

"I love, child," says he, "to see everything suitable. A fine gown and petticoat, a fine laced head, a fine face and neck, and no necklace, would not have made the object perfect. But why that blush, my dear?" says the prince. "My lord," said I, "all your gifts call for blushes, but, above all, I blush to receive what I am so ill able to merit, and may become so ill also."

Thus far I am a standing mark of the weakness of great men in their vice, that value not squandering away immense wealth upon the most worthless creatures; or, to sum it up in a word, they raise the value of the object which they pretend to pitch upon by their fancy; I say, raise the value of it at their own expense; give vast presents for a ruinous favour, which is so far from being equal to the price that nothing will at last prove more absurd than the cost men are at to purchase their own destruction.

I could not, in the height of all this fine doings – I say, I could not be without some just reflection, though conscience was, as I said, dumb, as to any disturbance it gave me in my wickedness. My vanity was fed up to such a height that I had no room to give way to such reflections. But I could not but sometimes look back with astonishment at the folly of men of quality, who, immense in their bounty as in their wealth, give to a profusion and without bounds to the most scandalous of our sex, for granting them the liberty of abusing themselves and ruining both.

I, that knew what this carcase of mine had been but a few years before; how overwhelmed with grief, drowned in tears, frightened with the prospect of beggary, and surrounded with rags and fatherless children; that was pawning and selling the rags that covered me for a dinner, and sat on the ground despairing of help and expecting to be starved, till my children were snatched from me to be kept by the parish; I, that was after this a whore for bread, and, abandoning conscience and virtue, lived with another woman's husband; I, that was despised by all my relations, and my husband's too; I, that was left so entirely desolate, friendless, and helpless that I knew not how to get the least help to keep me from starving, – that I should be caressed by a prince, for the honour of having the scandalous use of my prostituted body, common before to his inferiors, and perhaps would not have denied one of his footmen but a little while before, if I could have got my bread by it.

I say, I could not but reflect upon the brutality and blindness of mankind; that because nature had given me a good skin and some agreeable features, should suffer that beauty to be such a bait to appetite as to do such sordid, unaccountable things to obtain the possession of it.

It is for this reason that I have so largely set down the particulars of the caresses I was treated with by the jeweller, and also by this prince; not to make the story an incentive to the vice, which I am now such a sorrowful penitent for being guilty of (God forbid any should make so vile a use of so good a design), but to draw the just picture of a man enslaved to the rage of his vicious appetite;

how he defaces the image of God in his soul, dethrones his reason, causes conscience to abdicate the possession, and exalts sense into the vacant throne; how he deposes the man and exalts the brute.

Oh! could we hear the reproaches this great man afterwards loaded himself with when he grew weary of this admired creature, and became sick of his vice, how profitable would the report of them be to the reader of this story! But had he himself also known the dirty history of my actings upon the stage of life that little time I had been in the world, how much more severe would those reproaches have been upon himself! But I shall come to this again.

I lived in this gay sort of retirement almost three years, in which time no amour of such a kind, sure, was ever carried up so high. The prince knew no bounds to his munificence; he could give me nothing, either for my wearing, or using, or eating, or drinking, more than he had done from the beginning.

His presents were after that in gold, and very frequent and large, often a hundred pistoles, never less than fifty at a time; and I must do myself the justice that I seemed rather backward to receive than craving and encroaching. Not that I had not an avaricious temper, nor was it that I did not foresee that this was my harvest, in which I was to gather up, and that it would not last long; but it was that really his bounty always anticipated my expectations, and even my wishes; and he gave me money so fast that he rather poured it in upon me than left me room to ask it; so that, before I could spend fifty pistoles, I had always a hundred to make it up.

After I had been near a year and a half in his arms as above, or thereabouts, I proved with child. I did not take any notice of it to him till I was satisfied that I was not deceived; when one morning early, when we were in bed together, I said to him, "My lord, I doubt your Highness never gives yourself leave to think what the case should be if I should have the honour to be with child by you." "Why, my dear," says he, "we are able to keep it if such a thing should happen; I hope you are not concerned about that." "No, my lord," said I; "I should think myself very happy if I could bring your Highness a son; I should hope to see him a lieutenant-general of the king's armies by the interest of his father, and by his own merit." "Assure yourself, child," says he, "if it should be so, I will not refuse owning him for my son, though it be, as they call it, a natural son; and shall never slight or neglect him, for the sake of his mother." Then he began to importune me to know if it was so, but I positively denied it so long, till at last I was able to give him the satisfaction of knowing it himself by the motion of the child within me.

He professed himself overjoyed at the discovery, but told me that now it was absolutely necessary for me to quit the confinement which, he said, I had suffered for his sake, and to take a house somewhere in the country, in order for health as well as for privacy, against my lying-in. This was quite out of my way; but the prince, who was a man of pleasure, had, it seems, several retreats of this kind, which he had made use of, I suppose, upon like occasions. And so, leaving it, as it were, to his gentleman, he provided a very convenient house, about four miles south of Paris, at the village of —, where I had very agreeable lodgings, good gardens, and all things very easy to my content. But one thing did not please me at all, viz., that an old woman was provided, and put into the house to furnish everything necessary to my lying-in, and to assist at my travail.

I did not like this old woman at all; she looked so like a spy upon me, or (as sometimes I was frighted to imagine) like one set privately to despatch me out of the world, as might best suit with the circumstance of my lying-in. And when his Highness came the next time to see me, which was not many days, I expostulated a little on the subject of the old woman; and by the management of my tongue, as well as by the strength of reasoning, I convinced him that it would not be at all convenient; that it would be the greater risk on his side; and at first or last it would certainly expose him and me also. I assured him that my servant, being an Englishwoman, never knew to that hour who his Highness was; that I always called him the Count de Clerac, and that she knew nothing else of him, nor ever should; that if he would give me leave to choose proper persons for my use, it should be so ordered that not one of them should know who he was, or perhaps ever see his face; and that, for the

reality of the child that should be born, his Highness, who had alone been at the first of it, should, if he pleased, be present in the room all the time, so that he would need no witnesses on that account.

This discourse fully satisfied him, so that he ordered his gentleman to dismiss the old woman the same day; and without any difficulty I sent my maid Amy to Calais, and thence to Dover, where she got an English midwife and an English nurse to come over on purpose to attend an English lady of quality, as they styled me, for four months certain.

The midwife, Amy had agreed to pay a hundred guineas to, and bear her charges to Paris, and back again to Dover. The poor woman that was to be my nurse had twenty pounds, and the same terms for charges as the other.

I was very easy when Amy returned, and the more because she brought with the midwife a good motherly sort of woman, who was to be her assistant, and would be very helpful on occasion; and bespoke a man midwife at Paris too, if there should be any necessity for his help. Having thus made provision for everything, the Count, for so we all called him in public, came as often to see me as I could expect, and continued exceeding kind, as he had always been. One day, conversing together upon the subject of my being with child, I told him how all things were in order, but that I had a strange apprehension that I should die with that child. He smiled. "So all the ladies say, my dear," says he, "when they are with child." "Well, however, my lord," said I, "it is but just that care should be taken that what you have bestowed in your excess of bounty upon me should not be lost;" and upon this I pulled a paper out of my bosom, folded up, but not sealed, and I read it to him, wherein I had left order that all the plate and jewels and fine furniture which his Highness had given me should be restored to him by my women, and the keys be immediately delivered to his gentleman in case of disaster.

Then I recommended my woman, Amy, to his favour for a hundred pistoles, on condition she gave the keys up as above to his gentleman, and his gentleman's receipt for them. When he saw this, "My dear child," said he, and took me in his arms, "what! have you been making your will and disposing of your effects? Pray, who do you make your universal heir?" "So far as to do justice to your Highness, in case of mortality, I have, my lord," said I, "and who should I dispose the valuable things to, which I have had from your hand as pledges of your favour and testimonies of your bounty, but to the giver of them? If the child should live, your Highness will, I don't question, act like yourself in that part, and I shall have the utmost satisfaction that it will be well used by your direction."

I could see he took this very well. "I have forsaken all the ladies in Paris," says he, "for you, and I have lived every day since I knew you to see that you know how to merit all that a man of honour can do for you. Be easy, child; I hope you shall not die, and all you have is your own, to do what with it you please."

I was then within about two months of my time, and that soon wore off. When I found my time was come, it fell out very happily that he was in the house, and I entreated he would continue a few hours in the house, which he agreed to. They called his Highness to come into the room, if he pleased, as I had offered and as I desired him; and I sent word I would make as few cries as possible to prevent disturbing him. He came into the room once, and called to me to be of good courage, it would soon be over, and then he withdrew again; and in about half-an-hour more Amy carried him the news that I was delivered, and had brought him a charming boy. He gave her ten pistoles for her news, stayed till they had adjusted things about me, and then came into the room again, cheered me and spoke kindly to me, and looked on the child, then withdrew, and came again the next day to visit me.

Since this, and when I have looked back upon these things with eyes unpossessed with crime, when the wicked part has appeared in its clearer light and I have seen it in its own natural colours, when no more blinded with the glittering appearances which at that time deluded me, and as in like cases, if I may guess at others by myself, too much possessed the mind; I say, since this I have often wondered with what pleasure or satisfaction the prince could look upon the poor innocent infant, which, though his own, and that he might that way have some attachment in his affections to it, yet

must always afterwards be a remembrancer to him of his most early crime, and, which was worse, must bear upon itself, unmerited, an eternal mark of infamy, which should be spoken of, upon all occasions, to its reproach, from the folly of its father and wickedness of its mother.

Great men are indeed delivered from the burthen of their natural children, or bastards, as to their maintenance. This is the main affliction in other cases, where there is not substance sufficient without breaking into the fortunes of the family. In those cases either a man's legitimate children suffer, which is very unnatural, or the unfortunate mother of that illegitimate birth has a dreadful affliction, either of being turned off with her child, and be left to starve, &c., or of seeing the poor infant packed off with a piece of money to those she-butchers who take children off their hands, as 'tis called, that is to say, starve them, and, in a word, murder them.

Great men, I say, are delivered from this burthen, because they are always furnished to supply the expense of their out-of-the-way offspring, by making little assignments upon the Bank of Lyons or the townhouse of Paris, and settling those sums, to be received for the maintenance of such expense as they see cause.

Thus, in the case of this child of mine, while he and I conversed, there was no need to make any appointment as an appanage or maintenance for the child or its nurse, for he supplied me more than sufficiently for all those things; but afterwards, when time, and a particular circumstance, put an end to our conversing together (as such things always meet with a period, and generally break off abruptly), I say, after that, I found he appointed the children a settled allowance, by an assignment of annual rent upon the Bank of Lyons, which was sufficient for bringing them handsomely, though privately, up in the world, and that not in a manner unworthy of their father's blood, though I came to be sunk and forgotten in the case; nor did the children ever know anything of their mother to this day, other than as you may have an account hereafter.

But to look back to the particular observation I was making, which I hope may be of use to those who read my story, I say it was something wonderful to me to see this person so exceedingly delighted at the birth of this child, and so pleased with it; for he would sit and look at it, and with an air of seriousness sometimes a great while together, and particularly, I observed, he loved to look at it when it was asleep.

It was indeed a lovely, charming child, and had a certain vivacity in its countenance that is far from being common to all children so young; and he would often say to me that he believed there was something extraordinary in the child, and he did not doubt but he would come to be a great man.

I could never hear him say so, but though secretly it pleased me, yet it so closely touched me another way that I could not refrain sighing, and sometimes tears; and one time in particular it so affected me that I could not conceal it from him; but when he saw tears run down my face, there was no concealing the occasion from him; he was too importunate to be denied in a thing of that moment; so I frankly answered, "It sensibly affects me, my lord," said I, "that, whatever the merit of this little creature may be, he must always have a bend on his arms. The disaster of his birth will be always, not a blot only to his honour, but a bar to his fortunes in the world. Our affection will be ever his affliction, and his mother's crime be the son's reproach. The blot can never be wiped out by the most glorious action; nay, if it lives to raise a family," said I, "the infamy must descend even to its innocent posterity."

He took the thought, and sometimes told me afterwards that it made a deeper impression on him than he discovered to me at that time; but for the present he put it off with telling me these things could not be helped; that they served for a spur to the spirits of brave men, inspired them with the principles of gallantry, and prompted them to brave actions; that though it might be true that the mention of illegitimacy might attend the name, yet that personal virtue placed a man of honour above the reproach of his birth; that, as he had no share in the offence, he would have no concern at the blot; when, having by his own merit placed himself out of the reach of scandal, his fame should drown the memory of his beginning; that as it was usual for men of quality to make such little escapes, so

the number of their natural children were so great, and they generally took such good care of their education, that some of the greatest men in the world had a bend in their coats-of-arms, and that it was of no consequence to them, especially when their fame began to rise upon the basis of their acquired merit; and upon this he began to reckon up to me some of the greatest families in France and in England also.

This carried off our discourse for a time; but I went farther with him once, removing the discourse from the part attending our children to the reproach which those children would be apt to throw upon us, their originals; and when speaking a little too feelingly on the subject, he began to receive the impression a little deeper than I wished he had done. At last he told me I had almost acted the confessor to him; that I might, perhaps, preach a more dangerous doctrine to him than we should either of us like, or than I was aware of. "For, my dear," says he, "if once we come to talk of repentance we must talk of parting."

If tears were in my eyes before, they flowed too fast now to be restrained, and I gave him but too much satisfaction by my looks that I had yet no reflections upon my mind strong enough to go that length, and that I could no more think of parting than he could.

He said a great many kind things, which were great, like himself, and, extenuating our crime, intimated to me that he could no more part with me than I could with him; so we both, as I may say, even against our light and against our conviction, concluded to sin on; indeed, his affection to the child was one great tie to him, for he was extremely fond of it.

The child lived to be a considerable man. He was first an officer of the *Garde du Corps* of France, and afterwards colonel of a regiment of dragoons in Italy, and on many extraordinary occasions showed that he was not unworthy such a father, but many ways deserving a legitimate birth and a better mother; of which hereafter.

I think I may say now that I lived indeed like a queen; or, if you will have me confess that my condition had still the reproach of a whore, I may say I was, sure, the queen of whores; for no woman was ever more valued or more caressed by a person of such quality only in the station of a mistress. I had, indeed, one deficiency which women in such circumstances seldom are chargeable with, namely, I craved nothing of him, I never asked him for anything in my life, nor suffered myself to be made use of, as is too much the custom of mistresses, to ask favours for others. His bounty always prevented me in the first, and my strict concealing myself in the last, which was no less to my convenience than his.

The only favour I ever asked of him was for his gentleman, who he had all along entrusted with the secret of our affair, and who had once so much offended him by some omissions in his duty that he found it very hard to make his peace. He came and laid his case before my woman Amy, and begged her to speak to me to intercede for him, which I did, and on my account he was received again and pardoned, for which the grateful dog requited me by getting to bed to his benefactress, Amy, at which I was very angry. But Amy generously acknowledged that it was her fault as much as his; that she loved the fellow so much that she believed if he had not asked her she should have asked him. I say, this pacified me, and I only obtained of her that she should not let him know that I knew it.

I might have interspersed this part of my story with a great many pleasant parts and discourses which happened between my maid Amy and I, but I omit them on account of my own story, which has been so extraordinary. However, I must mention something as to Amy and her gentleman.

I inquired of Amy upon what terms they came to be so intimate, but Amy seemed backward to explain herself. I did not care to press her upon a question of that nature, knowing that she might have answered my question with a question, and have said, "Why, how did I and the prince come to be so intimate?" So I left off farther inquiring into it, till, after some time, she told it me all freely of her own accord, which, to cut it short, amounted to no more than this, that, like mistress like maid, as they had many leisure hours together below, while they waited respectively when his lord and I were together above; I say, they could hardly avoid the usual question one to another, namely, why might not they do the same thing below that we did above?

On that account, indeed, as I said above, I could not find in my heart to be angry with Amy. I was, indeed, afraid the girl would have been with child too, but that did not happen, and so there was no hurt done; for Amy had been hanselled before, as well as her mistress, and by the same party too, as you have heard.

After I was up again, and my child provided with a good nurse, and, withal, winter coming on, it was proper to think of coming to Paris again, which I did; but as I had now a coach and horses, and some servants to attend me, by my lord's allowance, I took the liberty to have them come to Paris sometimes, and so to take a tour into the garden of the Tuileries and the other pleasant places of the city. It happened one day that my prince (if I may call him so) had a mind to give me some diversion, and to take the air with me; but, that he might do it and not be publicly known, he comes to me in a coach of the Count de – , a great officer of the court, attended by his liveries also; so that, in a word, it was impossible to guess by the equipage who I was or who I belonged to; also, that I might be the more effectually concealed, he ordered me to be taken up at a mantua-maker's house, where he sometimes came, whether upon other amours or not was no business of mine to inquire. I knew nothing whither he intended to carry me; but when he was in the coach with me, he told me he had ordered his servants to go to court with me, and he would show me some of the *beau monde*. I told him I cared not where I went while I had the honour to have him with me. So he carried me to the fine palace of Meudon, where the Dauphin then was, and where he had some particular intimacy with one of the Dauphin's domestics, who procured a retreat for me in his lodgings while we stayed there, which was three or four days.

While I was there the king happened to come thither from Versailles, and making but a short stay, visited Madame the Dauphiness, who was then living. The prince was here incognito, only because of his being with me, and therefore, when he heard that the king was in the gardens, he kept close within the lodgings; but the gentleman in whose lodgings we were, with his lady and several others, went out to see the king, and I had the honour to be asked to go with them.

After we had seen the king, who did not stay long in the gardens, we walked up the broad terrace, and crossing the hall towards the great staircase, I had a sight which confounded me at once, as I doubt not it would have done to any woman in the world. The horse guards, or what they call there the *gens d'armes*, had, upon some occasion, been either upon duty or been reviewed, or something (I did not understand that part) was the matter that occasioned their being there, I know not what; but, walking in the guard-chamber, and with his jack-boots on, and the whole habit of the troop, as it is worn when our horse guards are upon duty, as they call it, at St. James's Park; I say, there, to my inexpressible confusion, I saw Mr. – , my first husband, the brewer.

I could not be deceived; I passed so near him that I almost brushed him with my clothes, and looked him full in the face, but having my fan before my face, so that he could not know me. However, I knew him perfectly well, and I heard him speak, which was a second way of knowing him. Besides being, you may be sure, astonished and surprised at such a sight, I turned about after I had passed him some steps, and pretending to ask the lady that was with me some questions, I stood as if I had viewed the great hall, the outer guard-chamber, and some things; but I did it to take a full view of his dress, that I might farther inform myself.

While I stood thus amusing the lady that was with me with questions, he walked, talking with another man of the same cloth, back again, just by me; and to my particular satisfaction, or dissatisfaction – take it which way you will – I heard him speak English, the other being, it seems, an Englishman.

I then asked the lady some other questions. "Pray, madam," says I, "what are these troopers here? Are they the king's guards?" "No," says she; "they are the *gens d'armes*; a small detachment of them, I suppose, attended the king to-day, but they are not his Majesty's ordinary guard." Another lady that was with her said, "No, madam, it seems that is not the case, for I heard them saying the

gens d'armes were here to-day by special order, some of them being to march towards the Rhine, and these attend for orders; but they go back to-morrow to Orleans, where they are expected."

This satisfied me in part, but I found means after this to inquire whose particular troop it was that the gentlemen that were here belonged to; and with that I heard they would all be at Paris the week after.

Two days after this we returned for Paris, when I took occasion to speak to my lord, that I heard the *gens d'armes* were to be in the city the next week, and that I should be charmed with seeing them march if they came in a body. He was so obliging in such things that I need but just name a thing of that kind and it was done; so he ordered his gentleman (I should now call him Amy's gentleman) to get me a place in a certain house, where I might see them march.

As he did not appear with me on this occasion, so I had the liberty of taking my woman Amy with me, and stood where we were very well accommodated for the observation which I was to make. I told Amy what I had seen, and she was as forward to make the discovery as I was to have her, and almost as much surprised at the thing itself. In a word, the *gens d'armes* entered the city, as was expected, and made a most glorious show indeed, being new clothed and armed, and being to have their standards blessed by the Archbishop of Paris. On this occasion they indeed looked very gay; and as they marched very leisurely, I had time to take as critical a view and make as nice a search among them as I pleased. Here, in a particular rank, eminent for one monstrous-sized man on the right; here, I say, I saw my gentleman again, and a very handsome, jolly fellow he was, as any in the troop, though not so monstrous large as that great one I speak of, who, it seems, was, however, a gentleman of a good family in Gascony, and was called the giant of Gascony.

It was a kind of a good fortune to us, among the other circumstances of it, that something caused the troops to halt in their march a little before that particular rank came right against that window which I stood in, so that then we had occasion to take our full view of him at a small distance, and so as not to doubt of his being the same person.

Amy, who thought she might, on many accounts, venture with more safety to be particular than I could, asked her gentleman how a particular man, who she saw there among the *gens d'armes*, might be inquired after and found out; she having seen an Englishman riding there which was supposed to be dead in England for several years before she came out of London and that his wife had married again. It was a question the gentleman did not well understand how to answer; but another person that stood by told her, if she would tell him the gentleman's name, he would endeavour to find him out for her, and asked jestingly if he was her lover. Amy put that off with a laugh, but still continued her inquiry, and in such a manner as the gentleman easily perceived she was in earnest; so he left bantering, and asked her in what part of the troop he rode. She foolishly told him his name, which she should not have done; and pointing to the cornet that troop carried, which was not then quite out of sight, she let him easily know whereabouts he rode, only she could not name the captain. However, he gave her such directions afterwards that, in short, Amy, who was an indefatigable girl, found him out. It seems he had not changed his name, not supposing any inquiry would be made after him here; but, I say, Amy found him out, and went boldly to his quarters, asked for him, and he came out to her immediately.

I believe I was not more confounded at my first seeing him at Meudon than he was at seeing Amy. He started and turned pale as death. Amy believed if he had seen her at first, in any convenient place for so villainous a purpose, he would have murdered her.

But he started, as I say above, and asked in English, with an admiration, "What are you?" "Sir," says she, "don't you know me?" "Yes," says he, "I knew you when you were alive; but what are you now? – whether ghost or substance I know not." "Be not afraid, sir, of that," says Amy; "I am the same Amy that I was in your service, and do not speak to you now for any hurt, but that I saw you accidentally yesterday ride among the soldiers; I thought you might be glad to hear from your friends

at London." "Well, Amy," says he then (having a little recovered himself), "how does everybody do? What! is your mistress here?" Thus they begun: —

Amy. My mistress, sir, alas! not the mistress you mean; poor gentlewoman, you left her in a sad condition.

Gent. Why, that's true, Amy; but it could not be helped; I was in a sad condition myself.

Amy. I believe so, indeed, sir, or else you had not gone away as you did; for it was a very terrible condition you left them all in, that I must say.

Gent. What did they do after I was gone?

Amy. Do, sir! Very miserably, you may be sure. How could it be otherwise?

Gent. Well, that's true indeed; but you may tell me, Amy, what became of them, if you please; for though I went so away, it was not because I did not love them all very well, but because I could not bear to see the poverty that was coming upon them, and which it was not in my power to help. What could I do?

Amy. Nay, I believe so indeed; and I have heard my mistress say many times she did not doubt but your affliction was as great as hers, almost, wherever you were.

Gent. Why, did she believe I was alive, then?

Amy. Yes, sir; she always said she believed you were alive, because she thought she should have heard something of you if you had been dead.

Gent. Ay, ay; my perplexity was very great indeed, or else I had never gone away.

Amy. It was very cruel, though, to the poor lady, sir, my mistress; she almost broke her heart for you at first, for fear of what might befall you, and at last because she could not hear from you.

Gent. Alas, Amy! what could I do? Things were driven to the last extremity before I went. I could have done nothing but help starve them all if I had stayed; and, besides, I could not bear to see it.

Amy. You know, sir, I can say little to what passed before, but I am a melancholy witness to the sad distresses of my poor mistress as long as I stayed with her, and which would grieve your heart to hear them.

[Here she tells my whole story to the time that the parish took off one of my children, and which she perceived very much affected him; and he shook his head, and said some things very bitter when he heard of the cruelty of his own relations to me.]

Gent. Well, Amy, I have heard enough so far. What did she do afterwards?

Amy. I can't give you any farther account, sir; my mistress would not let me stay with her any longer. She said she could neither pay me or subsist me. I told her I would serve her without any wages, but I could not live without victuals, you know; so I was forced to leave her, poor lady, sore against my will; and I heard afterwards that the landlord seized her goods, so she was, I suppose, turned out of doors; for as I went by the door, about a month after, I saw the house shut up; and, about a fortnight after that, I found there were workmen at work, fitting it up, as I suppose, for a new tenant. But none of the neighbours could tell me what was become of my poor mistress, only that they said she was so poor that it was next to begging; that some of the neighbouring gentlefolks had relieved her, or that else she must have starved.

Then she went on, and told him that after that they never heard any more of (me) her mistress, but that she had been seen once or twice in the city very shabby and poor in clothes, and it was thought she worked with her needle for her bread.

All this the jade said with so much cunning, and managed and humoured it so well, and wiped her eyes and cried so artificially, that he took it all as it was intended he should, and once or twice she saw tears in his eyes too. He told her it was a moving, melancholy story, and it had almost broke his heart at first, but that he was driven to the last extremity, and could do nothing but stay and see them all starve, which he could not bear the thoughts of, but should have pistolled himself if any such thing had happened while he was there; that he left (me) his wife all the money he had in the world but £25, which was as little as he could take with him to seek his fortune in the world. He could not

doubt but that his relations, seeing they were all rich, would have taken the poor children off, and not let them come to the parish; and that his wife was young and handsome, and, he thought, might marry again, perhaps, to her advantage, and for that very reason he never wrote to her or let her know he was alive, that she might in a reasonable term of years marry, and perhaps mend her fortunes; that he resolved never to claim her, because he should rejoice to hear that she had settled to her mind; and that he wished there had been a law made to empower a woman to marry if her husband was not heard of in so long a time, which time, he thought, should not be above four years, which was long enough to send word in to a wife or family from any part of the world.

Amy said she could say nothing to that but this, that she was satisfied her mistress would marry nobody unless she had certain intelligence that he had been dead from somebody that saw him buried. "But, alas!" says Amy, "my mistress was reduced to such dismal circumstances that nobody would be so foolish to think of her, unless it had been somebody to go a-begging with her."

Amy then, seeing him so perfectly deluded, made a long and lamentable outcry how she had been deluded away to marry a poor footman. "For he is no worse or better," says she, "though he calls himself a lord's gentleman. And here," says Amy, "he has dragged me over into a strange country to make a beggar of me;" and then she falls a-howling again, and snivelling, which, by the way, was all hypocrisy, but acted so to the life as perfectly deceived him, and he gave entire credit to every word of it.

"Why, Amy," says he, "you are very well dressed; you don't look as if you were in danger of being a beggar." "Ay, hang 'em!" says Amy, "they love to have fine clothes here, if they have never a smock under them. But I love to have money in cash, rather than a chestful of fine clothes. Besides, sir," says she, "most of the clothes I have were given me in the last place I had, when I went away from my mistress."

Upon the whole of the discourse, Amy got out of him what condition he was in and how he lived, upon her promise to him that if ever she came to England, and should see her old mistress, she should not let her know that he was alive. "Alas, sir!" says Amy, "I may never come to see England again as long as I live; and if I should, it would be ten thousand to one whether I shall see my old mistress, for how should I know which way to look for her, or what part of England she may be in? – not I," says she. "I don't so much as know how to inquire for her; and if I should," says Amy, "ever be so happy as to see her, I would not do her so much mischief as to tell her where you were, sir, unless she was in a condition to help herself and you too." This farther deluded him, and made him entirely open in his conversing with her. As to his own circumstances, he told her she saw him in the highest preferment he had arrived to, or was ever like to arrive to; for, having no friends or acquaintance in France, and, which was worse, no money, he never expected to rise; that he could have been made a lieutenant to a troop of light horse but the week before, by the favour of an officer in the *gens d'armes* who was his friend, but that he must have found eight thousand livres to have paid for it to the gentleman who possessed it, and had leave given him to sell. "But where could I get eight thousand livres," says he, "that have never been master of five hundred livres ready money at a time since I came into France?"

"Oh dear, sir!" says Amy, "I am very sorry to hear you say so. I fancy if you once got up to some preferment, you would think of my old mistress again, and do something for her. Poor lady," says Amy, "she wants it, to be sure;" and then she falls a-crying again. "It is a sad thing indeed," says she, "that you should be so hard put to it for money, when you had got a friend to recommend you, and should lose it for want of money." "Ay, so it was, Amy, indeed," says he; "but what can a stranger do that has neither money or friends?" Here Amy puts in again on my account. "Well," says she, "my poor mistress has had the loss, though she knows nothing of it. Oh dear! how happy it would have been! To be sure, sir, you would have helped her all you could." "Ay," says he, "Amy, so I would with all my heart; and even as I am, I would send her some relief, if I thought she wanted

it, only that then letting her know I was alive might do her some prejudice, in case of her settling, or marrying anybody."

"Alas," says Amy, "marry! Who will marry her in the poor condition she is in?" And so their discourse ended for that time.

All this was mere talk on both sides, and words of course; for on farther inquiry, Amy found that he had no such offer of a lieutenant's commission, or anything like it; and that he rambled in his discourse from one thing to another; but of that in its place.

You may be sure that this discourse, as Amy at first related it, was moving to the last degree upon me, and I was once going to have sent him the eight thousand livres to purchase the commission he had spoken of; but as I knew his character better than anybody, I was willing to search a little farther into it, and so I set Amy to inquire of some other of the troop, to see what character he had, and whether there was anything in the story of a lieutenant's commission or no.

But Amy soon came to a better understanding of him, for she presently learnt that he had a most scoundrel character; that there was nothing of weight in anything he said; but that he was, in short, a mere sharper, one that would stick at nothing to get money, and that there was no depending on anything he said; and that more especially about the lieutenant's commission, she understood that there was nothing at all in it, but they told her how he had often made use of that sham to borrow money, and move gentlemen to pity him and lend him money, in hopes to get him preferment; that he had reported that he had a wife and five children in England, who he maintained out of his pay, and by these shifts had run into debt in several places; and upon several complaints for such things, he had been threatened to be turned out of the *gens d'armes*; and that, in short, he was not to be believed in anything he said, or trusted on any account.

Upon this information, Amy began to cool in her farther meddling with him, and told me it was not safe for me to attempt doing him any good, unless I resolved to put him upon suspicions and inquiries which might be to my ruin, in the condition I was now in.

I was soon confirmed in this part of his character, for the next time that Amy came to talk with him, he discovered himself more effectually; for, while she had put him in hopes of procuring one to advance the money for the lieutenant's commission for him upon easy conditions, he by degrees dropped the discourse, then pretended it was too late, and that he could not get it, and then descended to ask poor Amy to lend him five hundred pistoles.

Amy pretended poverty, that her circumstances were but mean, and that she could not raise such a sum; and this she did to try him to the utmost. He descended to three hundred, then to one hundred, then to fifty, and then to a pistole, which she lent him, and he, never intending to pay it, played out of her sight as much as he could. And thus being satisfied that he was the same worthless thing he had ever been, I threw off all thoughts of him; whereas, had he been a man of any sense and of any principle of honour, I had it in my thoughts to retire to England again, send for him over, and have lived honestly with him. But as a fool is the worst of husbands to do a woman good, so a fool is the worst husband a woman can do good to. I would willingly have done him good, but he was not qualified to receive it or make the best use of it. Had I sent him ten thousand crowns instead of eight thousand livres, and sent it with express condition that he should immediately have bought himself the commission he talked of with part of the money, and have sent some of it to relieve the necessities of his poor miserable wife at London, and to prevent his children to be kept by the parish, it was evident he would have been still but a private trooper, and his wife and children should still have starved at London, or been kept of mere charity, as, for aught he knew, they then were.

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