Chapter IX: The History of Imlac Continued

WHEN I first entered upon the world of waters, and lost sight of land, I looked round about me with pleasing terror, and thinking
my soul enlarged by the boundless prospect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without satiety; but, in a short time, I grew
weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only see again what I had already seen. I then descended into the ship, and
doubted for a while whether all my future pleasures would not end like this in disgust and disappointment. [64]
Yet, surely, said I, the ocean and the land are very different; the only variety of water is rest and motion, but the earth has mountains
and valleys, deserts and cities: it is inhabited by men of different customs and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in
life, though I should miss it in nature.
"With this thought I quieted my mind; and amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of
navigation, which I have never practiced, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of
which I have been ever placed.
"I was almost weary of my naval amusements when we landed safely at Surat. I secured my money, and purchasing some [65]
commodities for show, joined myself to a caravan that was passing into the inland country. My companions, for some reason or
other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my inquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, considered me as a novice
whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn at the usual expense the art of fraud. They exposed me to the theft of servants,
and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered upon false pretences, without any advantage to themselves, but that of rejoicing
in the superiority of their own knowledge."
"Stop a moment, said the prince. Is there such depravity in man, as that he should injure another without benefit to himself? I can
[66] easily conceive that all are pleased with superiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which, being neither your crime
nor your folly, could afford them no reason to applaud themselves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they
might as effectually have shewn by warning, as betraying you."
"Pride, said Imlac, is seldom delicate, it will please itself with very mean advantages; and envy feels not its own happiness, but when
it maybe compared with the misery of others. They were my enemies because they grieved to think me rich, and my oppressors
because they delighted to find me weak." [67]
"Proceed, said the prince: I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to mistaken motives."
"In this company, said Imlac, I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indostan, the city in which the great Mogul commonly resides. I
applied myself to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converse with the learned men; some of whom I
found morose and reserved, and others easy and communicative; some were unwilling to teach another what they had with difficulty
learned themselves; and some shewed that the end of their studies was to gain the dignity of instructing.
"To the tutor of the young princes I recommended myself so [68] much, that I was presented to the emperour as a man of uncommon
knowledge. The emperour asked me many questions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect any
thing that he uttered above the power of a common man, he dismissed me astonished at his wisdom, and enamoured of his goodness.
"My credit was now so high, that the merchants, with whom I had travelled, applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the court.
I was surprised at their confidence of solicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard
me with cold indifference, and shewed no tokens of shame or sorrow. [69]
"They then urged their request with the offer of a bribe; but what I would not do for kindness I would not do for money; and refused
them, not because they had injured me, but because I would not enable them to injure others ; for I knew they would have made use
of my credit to cheat those who should buy their wares.
"Having resided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many remains of ancient
magnificence, and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies
afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, [70] and of tracing human nature through all its variations.
"From Persia I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation at once pastoral and warlike; who live without any settled habitation; whose
only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they
neither covet nor envy their possessions.