

THE
HISTORY
OF
MOLL FLANDER'S,

WHO WAS BORN IN NEWGATE;

AND,

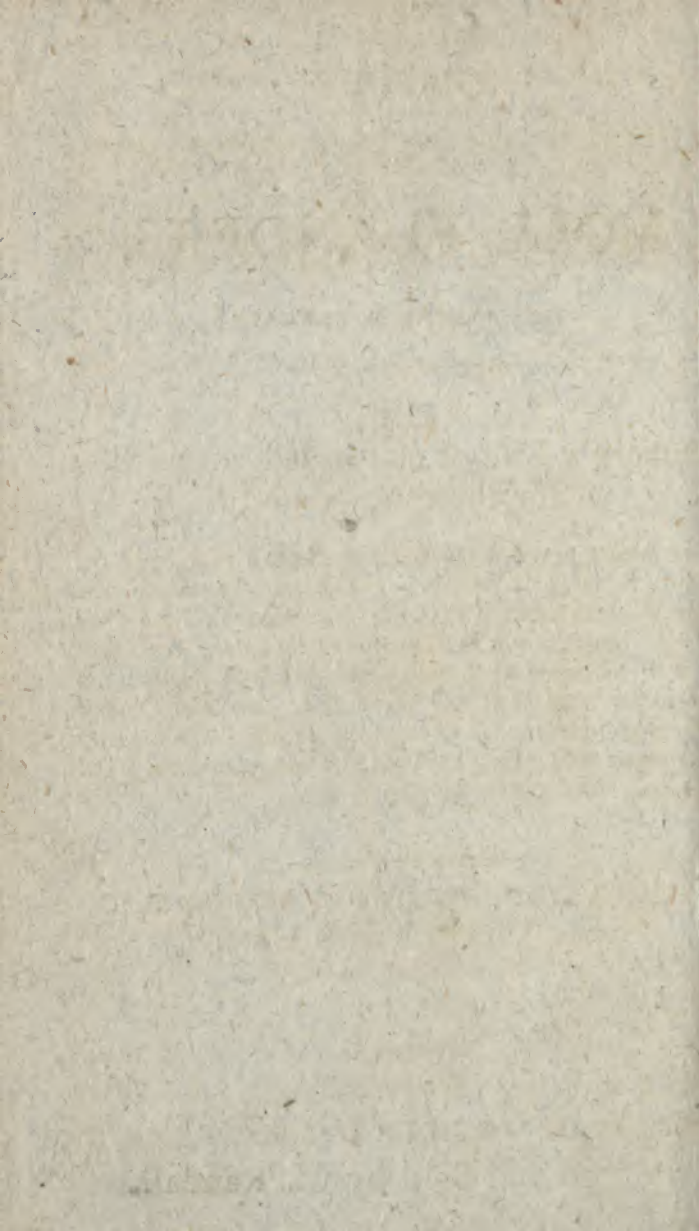
During a Life of continued varieties,
for threesore years,

*Was twelve years a whore; five times a wife, whereof
once to her own brother; twelve years a thief; was
eighteen times in Bridewell; nine times in New Pri-
son; eleven times in Woodstreet Compter; six times
in the Gatehouse; twenty-five times in Newgate; fif-
teen times whipt at the cart's tail; four times burnt
in the hand; once condemned to die; eight years
transported to Virginia: and at last grew rich, lived
honest, and died a penitent.*

Written from her own Memorandum,
and adorned with Cuts.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
MOLL FLANDERS.

THE most remarkable account that I can give of my parents is, that my father was hanged for felony, and my mother transported for the same, after she was delivered of me in Newgate; from whence I was taken by some

gypsies whom I remember, and left me at Colchester in Essex; where the magistrates taking compassion on me, put me to a nurse; with whom I lived thirteen years till such time as she died, and then being fancied by a rich gentlewoman for my nice needle-work, I shared in the education of her daughters in learning to dance, speak French,



and playing music; these qualifications, together with my beauty, caused my lady's eldest son to pretend love to me, and at last, with his alluring speeches and powerful gold, his melting kisses, and affectionate promises that he would marry me as soon as he came to age, he prevailed upon me to

surrender my virginity up to him, and to use me whenever he pleased; but scarce a year had expired before that his youngest brother pretended love also; in such an open and honest manner, insomuch that all the family took notice of it. How I should make a wife to him, and a whore to his eldest brother, I could not tell without being ruined; as loving the latter to extremity, being with child by him: but in short, there happening such disputes between the two brothers, it had like to have driven me from the family, but the eldest brother consented that I should marry the youngest as not caring to marry me himself, so I privately wedded him, who the first night he came so drunk to my bed, that I easily persuaded him he had done what his eldest brother had done before him.

In two years after he died, leaving me with two children, who were taken care of by his parents, and having then a tolerable good fortune in my own hands, I married a Draper, who soon was forced from me for debt into France which obliged me to take a lodging in

the Mint, where, in a widow's habit, I took upon me the name of Mrs Flanders. Here I was courted as a mistress by several lewd men, but all these I scorned, and it was my good fortune to marry a gentleman whose estate was in



Virginia, and whom I deceived by pretending to him I was a greater fortune than I really was. But indeed he

proved a very good husband, and prevailed with me to go over with him into Virginia, where I was kindly received by my husband's mother. But here I found that our family was of the Newgate train, she shewing me where she was burnt in the hand, bidding me not wonder, for that mayor F—— was an eminent pick-pocket, Justice B———r was a shop-lifter, and Tom W———r who had so narrowly escaped the nubbing post was there become an excellent dissenting preacher.

Here I lived about three years without having children, but not without an inward remorse, as knowing my second husband was not dead. And this set me upon returning again into England, teasing my spouse for that purpose, who wanted to know very much the true reason of it. But I told his mother who came to pump me, that her story she had told me of her being transported, confirmed me in the belief she was my mother who was delivered of me in Newgate, and by which means she was saved from the gallows. This very much surprised her, but dreading the thoughts of having another child by my husband I was

forced to disclose the matter, to excuse my coldness to him in his embraces. Upon hearing this, he fell into so deep a melancholy that twice he attempted to hang himself, but was prevented; and it was with very much difficulty that I obtained leave from him to return to England, which I did in the month of August, after eight years continuance in that country, landing at Milford Haven, in Wales, and in nine weeks arrived in London.

Some time after I went to Bath, where making my circumstances known, my landlady lodged and boarded me at a very cheap rate, till the spring, when I was courted by a gentleman who had a wife distempered in her head, and I received several presents from him, as a hundred guineas at one time, and fifty at another, for taking care of him in an illness. In short, I found him my best friend, taking several journies with him till at length he got me with child, and was delivered of a fine boy, going by the name of Sir Walter Cleave's lady. From Bath we returned to Hammer-smith, near London. Six years I lived with this gentleman, by whom I had

three children, till at length he fell sick in a house he had taken for his wife and family at Bloomsbury. But upon his recovery I found that I was slighted, no doubt through remorse of conscience. Yet he sent me a letter with a bank note of fifty pounds, promising he would take care of my little boy, but wanting to get the other fifty pounds of him, I signed a general release, which put an end to this affair.

But it was not long before it was my fortune to get an acquaintance with a clerk belonging to the bank, whose wife having made him a cuckold by keeping company with an officer in the army, and after that with an apprentice belonging to a Draper. I had like to have become his bride, promising on that account to get a divorce from his other wife.

But whilst this was doing, going down into Lancashire, and being imagined to be a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds, I was married to an Irish gentleman, by a Romish clergyman; but he finding that I had no such effects, as I, like a false woman, had represented unto him, nor he any estate more than

what he had spent in his equipage in courting me.

He therefore lent me as much money as would bear my charges up to London, discharged me from the marriage, left a letter for me upon the table, and went away the next morning. But after he had discharged his servants he returned at night, to my joy, and accompanied me as far as to Dunstable, where we afterwards parted after mutual instructions had passed for our future course of life.

At London, I lodged at an old midwife's as being big with child, where (as I had given directions) a letter was sent to me out of Lancashire, which had been directed there by the clerk of the bank; who told me he had obtained a decree against his wife, and was at my service. I returned an immediate answer under a cover, that I would be in town the latter end of the year. And indeed after having opened the matter to the midwife, and being delivered of a brave boy, which, with much difficulty, I allowed her to dispose of, I went to

Stone in Lancashire, and so taking coach, writ a letter, to my clerk to meet



me at Brickhill; there in a short time, he prevailed with me to marry him. The next day, from the window of the inn, I beheld my Lancashire husband with two others pass by; when soon after, they were all three pursued as highwaymen; but returning safely with my husband to town, I lived with him exceeding happy for the space of five years, by whom I had two children. Afterwards I rewarded my midwife for her fidelity to me. But my husband's clerk robbing him, it flung him into such a grief, that it immediately ended

his life; which entirely destroyed all my happiness.

Soon after this, being reduced to very great extremity, I was tempted to steal a small bundle out of an apothecary's shop in Leadenhall Street, in which I found a suit of child-bed linen, fine lace, a silver mug and spoons, three shillings, and other matters. The next thing that I did, I inveigled a little child away, from which I took its gold necklace, but though I had it in a private place, I would not kill or hurt it, and put it in the way home again. Another time I took out of a shop at Stephney, two rings, one a diamond ring, and the other a plain one: and as I was once in Lombard Street, a thief being pursued, dropped a piece of silk, which I made off with, and afterwards disposed of to a good advantage, and not as thieves commonly do for a song. Another time I stole a silver tankard out of an alehouse, which I afterwards sold to a pawn-broker who greatly encouraged me in such things. She shortly afterwards helped me to a mistress, who made me more expert in the thieving art; but

not more fortunate; for first, she herself with another of her scholars were apprehended, and committed to Newgate, for stealing three pieces of camb-
 ric from a linen-draper in Cheapside. Both of them were condemned to die, but only our scholar was executed; for the other came off with what they call a circuit pardon from the judge.

I cannot but reflect upon one crime I did in taking from the hands of a gentlewoman, a bundle of plate when her house was on fire, and conveying it to my own house, and so very fortunate was I in escaping, that I became exceeding remarkable among the thieves for none was so great as Moll Flanders; but at length being threatned to be impeached by some in Newgate, I clothed myself in a man's habit, though a smooth face (otherwise personal and tall enough) might soon have betrayed me. My impeacher being discovered as he was stealing some goods, was taken; and I happily escaped. Some time after this I had the happiness of seeing him hanged!

My name was as well known at the Old Bailey, as a remarkable traitor is at the Secretary's office. But being now an excellent pick-pocket as well as a strumpet, I took from a cull after I had made him drunk, his gold-watch, with his silk purse of gold, fine perriwig, sword and snuff box; and leaping out of the coach (which stood still to let another coach pass by) I left my fool to mourn his disaster. This success made me follow the whoring again, but finding the profits of it too small to support me, I returned again to my old trade of shop-lifting:

And one time as I was going along the street through Covent Garden, there was a cry of stop thief, stop thief; a mercer's shop having been robbed, and I secured as the transgressor, and most haughtily insulted by the mercer and his servants. In a little time they got the right thief, who was much in the same habit as mine. But for this affront I got an hundred and fifty pounds: so that all this, with my other substance might have maintained me, but I hav-

ng got an itch of thieving, could in no manner leave it off.

I had an opportunity of commencing a coiner, but that was such a beggarly, and yet so dangerous a business, that I would never embark in it. Nor could I ever yet be brought into the society of house-breakers. No person could be more dextrous in stealing gold-watches than I from the ladies' sides, either at the park, playhouse, or at church. I was also very dextrous at gaming, and at one time cleared 73 guineas. The uncommon success I had, made me go into the country, where at Cambridge, Sturbridge fair, and at New market, I expertly performed the same pranks over again; and at Ipswitch I robbed a Dutchman of a portmanteau, by pretending to be his wife in an inn, and in which was a very large quantity of gold and silver.

But afterwards coming up to London and venturing boldly into a fine silversmith's shop, while none were there, I was perceived by a shopkeeper over the way; but as I had a glance of him

so I meddled with nothing, and a justice of the peace coming by, being called, cleared me with flying colours.

Another time, going into a sempstress' shop in Cheapside, and cheapening half a dozen of very good holland shifts, I doubted the length of them upon which, the sempstress slipt one of the smocks upon her, which gave me the advantage to pin it with two or three pins to her petticoat, and taking up the rest, with other parcels of muslin, ran away out of the shop. The sempstress then endeavouring to put off the smock, pulled up her clouts and running after, cried, stop thief stop thief! with all she had exposed to the public; who taking her for a mad woman, I got clear off with my booty and the sempstress was bantered to her dying day, besides losing to the value of fifty pounds worth of muslin.

But, after happening to steal some brocaded silk from a mercer's shop, was apprehended and being carried before a justice, was committed to Newgate, the place of my nativity, where

is impossible for me to express the errors of a disconsolate mind.

Here the wretches triumphed over me. What! said they, is Mrs Flanders come to Newgate! what, Mrs Mary, and afterwards plain Moll Flanders. But I was forced to content myself with this piece of Newgate poetry:

If I swing by this string,
I shall hear the * bell ring,
And there's an end of poor Moll.

Here I got into blessed acquaintance, whose company soon made me as hardened as themselves; and where, to my amazement, I beheld among them my former Lancashire husband, and whose misfortunes he placed upon my account. Here my old tutoress had done what she could for me to make up the matter with my prosecutors; for she endeavored, tho' to no purpose, to hinder the jury from finding a bill of indictment against me. At the sessions I had pleaded Not Guilty, but was found

guilty of felony, and so received sentence of death accordingly.

So concerned was my poor governess, that having repented herself of all



her sins, she sent me a minister also who represented to me these four important truths, death, judgment, heaven and hell. When the dead warrant came down, he visited me as before the next day I heard the dismal toll of St. Sepulchre's bell, and then was in

formed of my reprieve, the unexpected joy made me immediately fall into a terrible swoon.

After this I was put on board in order for transportation, with several other victims, as they called us, where we endured great hardships, as the first night lying upon the bare boards, but afterwards were allowed the liberty of little cabins if we had any clothes to lay in them. That night the ship fell down



into a place which they call Busty Hole, from whence I sent a letter by the boatwain, who came on shore, to my go-

erness, and my poor Lancashire husband. The next day my governess sent me a sea bed, and a chest; in one drawer of which was my money; and gave me an answer to that which I sent to my husband, who hoped, though he could not go with me in the same ship, yet to see me in Virginia; but by intercession, he was afterwards put on board with us, where my money furnished us with good accommodation. So we took likewise several materials with us, for the work of planting; and so we sailed from the Downs on the 13th of April, and arrived safely on the coast of Virginia, where I soon perceived my own son and my brother, his father, whom I had my husband twenty years ago; but my mother had been dead some time before, having left a considerable plantation to me and my heirs.

Many were the ways I pondered on to get from the sight of my family, in these wretched circumstances; since I could not bear the sight of my child, my brother and husband, who live near that place I had taken for my settlement; and upon this very accou

e removed with all our effects into
 Maryland, after a long and unpleasant
 voyage. There we bought two servants,
 an English woman and a Negro man;
 and a piece of ground of fifty acres,
 and built a decent house thereon. And
 indeed our affairs went on very pros-
 perously, so that we looked upon one
 another with pleasure; and then I ob-
 tained my husband's consent to go to
 Virginia and to discover myself to my
 mother. When I landed, I wrote a letter
 to him, telling him of several particular
 affairs; which letter came into his son's
 hands, who asking the messenger where
 the gentlewoman was that wrote it, he
 came to me which was about seven miles
 off, attended by two servants on horse-
 back, and coming to me, kissed me,
 saying, "Dear mother are you alive!"
 and then he fell to weeping.

He told me that his father was quite
 overanuated and beside himself, which
 made him conceal the letter from him;
 but the plantation which my mother
 had left me, was in his possession; so
 that the produce of it he gave a hundred
 pounds, engaging to be my trustee and
 faithful steward. Indeed in all his

actions he proved a most dutiful child, allotting servants to wait upon me, and treating me with as great splendor as if I had been a sovereign princess. I presented him with a gold watch, and taking my leave of him, after I had acquainted him that I intended to marry a gentleman who came over with me, I set sail in a sloop my son had provided, and came safe to my own plantation again, bringing over with me three saddles, some hogs, two cows, and great many other things.

When I had related all this very good fortune to my husband, he lifted up his hands in an extacy of joy, and gave thanks to heaven for this sudden and so happy a change. Soon after this, arrived a cargo from England, which my governess had sent me with three women servants; which made my husband amazed, especially when I assured him that they were paid for. How, says he, was I deceived when I married a wife in Lancashire, I think I married a fortune, and a good fortune too.

I had taken care to buy those things for my husband, which I knew he took delight to wear; as two good long wigs, two silver-hilted swords, three or four side fowling pieces, a fine saddle with holsters & pistols very handsome, with a scarlet cloak; and in one word, every thing that I could think on that might possibly oblige him, and to make him appear (as he really was) a very fine gentleman. I must not omit informing my readers that one of the venches my governess had sent us happened to come double, having been got with child by one of the seamen in the ship, as she owned afterwards, before the ship got as far as Gravesend; so she brought us a fine boy about seven months after our landing.

After my brother's, (or former husband's) death, my son visited us, where my dear husband made him most exceeding welcome; and truly no person could be blessed with a more dutiful child. In this happy manner we lived for the space of twenty years, resolving to spend the remainder of our days in a sincere penitence for our wicked lives we had lived. And this we shall do

by our extensive charity and liberal hospitality to all men.

Thus far have we given an account of Moll Flanders: To which we shall add, that we have an account from Virginia, that she died lately, having prepared for that change with the greatest piety and devotion. And as she perceived her dissolution to draw near, she bequeathed several legacies for charitable uses; and dying, her funeral was performed with great solemnity, being interred in St. Mary's church in Virginia.

FINIS.