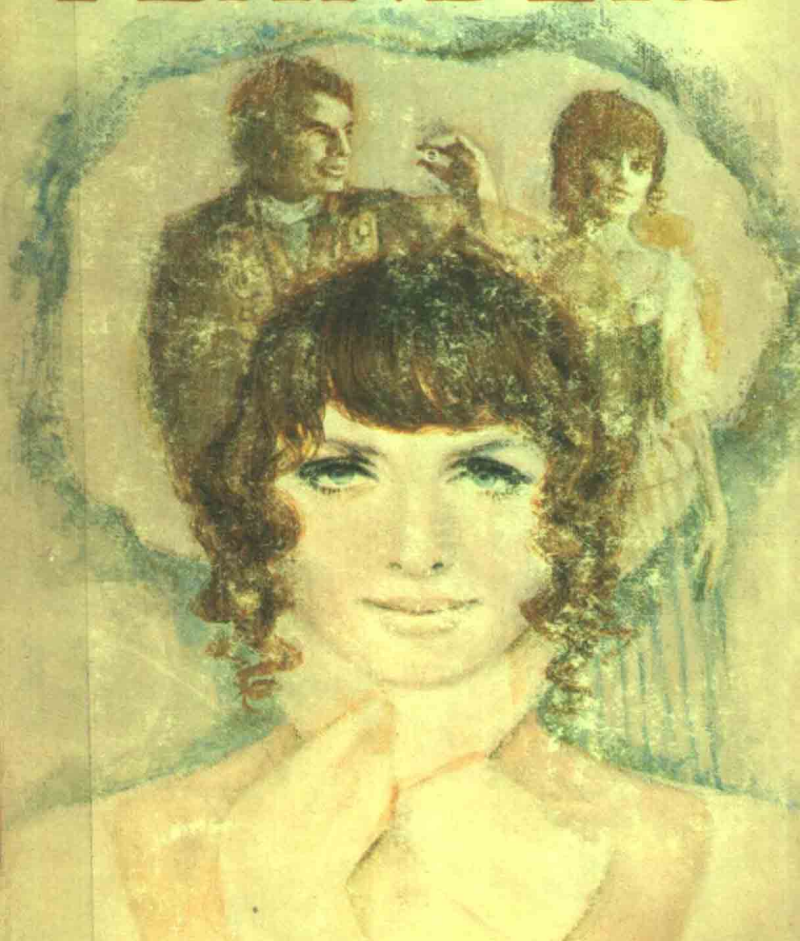
DANIEL DEFOE

MOLL FLANDERS



Introduction by Elizabeth Tate

Complete and Unabridged

THE FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES
OF THE FAMOUS

MOLL FLANDERS

Who was Born in Newgate, and during a Life of Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Years a Whore, Five Times a Wife (whereof once to her own Brother), Twelve years a Thief, Eight Years a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest, and dy'd a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums . . .

by DANIEL DEFOE

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MOLL FLANDERS

DANIEL DEFOE

INTRODUCTION

DEFOE, an astute and experienced publicist, sets forth his wares on the title page of *Moll Flanders,* as follows:

> The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders Who was Born in Newgate, and during a Life of Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Years a Whore, Five Times a Wife (whereof once to her own Brother), Twelve Years a Thief, Eight Years a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest, and dy'd a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums . . .

What a banquet! Prostitution, plural marriage (without benefit of divorce), incest, thievery—all followed by due punishment, repentance and rehabilitation.

The author's Preface sets up the story as authentic autobiography, not to be confused with the "novels and romances" with which "the world is so taken up of late." On the contrary, Defoe tells us, "the author is here supposed to be writing her own history"—i.e. "from her own Memorandums." But he has had to clean up her language, a task he accomplished "with no little difficulty."

In great detail, the Preface labors the instructive and tonic moral harvest to be garnered from Moll's account of "all her vicious practices," and, of course, even more from her eventual reformation. With so noble an end in view, "None can . . . cast any reproach upon it or our design in publishing it."

Naturally, a disclaimer thus explicit smells of protesting too much. A reader of our day must assume that Defoe reckoned on two things: the salacious interest of the vulgar

in Moll's sexual and criminal adventures, an interest which he wished to encourage; and the criticism of the pious, which he was seeking to forestall. Without cynicism, one may also assume he was writing to make money—"No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money," in Dr. Johnson's stout dictum—and therefore Defoe was giving his tale the best possible send-off.

Moll Flanders is a memorable heroine, from her birth in Newgate Prison, to a mother who had "pleaded her belly" (her pregnancy) to escape execution, the penalty meted out then (and long after) for petty thievery. Her crime was "scarce worth mentioning," as Moll put it, "viz. borrowing three pieces of fine holland of a certain draper in Cheapside."

Brought up first by some gypsies and later by various well-intentioned persons, Moll fell from grace in the family which had adopted her as a quasi-familiar of its young daughters. Beautiful, innocent and vain, she was seduced by the elder son, with a promise of marriage "when he is come to his estate." An old kind of promise, it was probably not very likely even to Moll, and certainly not to her seducer. They skilfully managed to keep their "connection" a secret from the family. When the younger son, one Robin, grew enamored of the beautiful Moll, and proposed honorable marriage, she tried to refuse, for she felt herself unable to be the mistress of one brother and the wife of another. Oddly, it was not practical difficulties which deterred her, but her own strong moral scruples.

With her various marriages and "connections," the story gallops along. In middle age, having somewhat lost her taste for sex, she became a master-thief, under the tutelage of one she called "my governess." This sequence reads almost like a classic manual of thievery, a how-to explication of the tricks of the trade. Largely because of its air of total authenticity, it is fascinating stuff, probably written, if not from "*her* own Memorandums," then from his, Defoe's. For he had not only served two terms in Newgate as a prisoner, but also printed actual interviews with other prisoners. Undoubtedly he knew well the milieu and the habits of the character he was, so to speak, impersonating in Moll.

With the teasers of the expert narrator, the promises and foreshadowings ("as shall appear in the sequel . . . for a reason which will presently be disclosed"), Moll's story exerts the power of the picaresque, though Defoe was not pleased to call it a novel. It lags only when Moll and her

Lancashire husband, curiously reunited after a long separation, settle down in the New World. Here one misses Defoe's wonderful eye for the "vivifying detail." Though he apparently boned up on the geography of the Chesapeake Bay region, he was simply not at home in the New World as he was in the London streets, or in Newgate Prison. Also, of course, the plain fact is that virtue is usually less interesting than vice, and Defoe knew it. However warmly he recommends his New World sequence as "a story fruitful of instruction," he also notes, in Moll's voice: "I doubt that part of the story will not be equally diverting as the wicked part." Her rapid rise to fortune strains our credulity, as does her passion for her Virginia son, born of the incestuous marriage. The children of previous unions she had shed with less care than if they had been litters of puppies or kittens—with the exception of the one born under the roof of "my governess," a son whose keep Moll provided with uncharacteristic maternal tenderness.

A propos of character, Defoe chooses for his heroine a characterizing sobriquet, while concealing her "real name" (she is first known to us as "Mistress Betty"), and leaves most of the other characters nameless, save Robin, the first husband. Though "I loved my Lancashire husband entirely," and in a moment of extra-sensory communication and passion called him by his name "which was James (O Jemy!)," he remains for the reader a mere tag, a place-name as much as a character, at least until the New World, where she made him "very handsome, with a scarlet cloak . . . to appear, as he really was, a very fine gentleman." (He had been, in addition, a runaway husband and a highwayman.) The absence or infrequency of other names emphasizes the writer's concentration upon his single character, Moll, viewed by E. M. Forster "like a tree in a park . . . she stands in an open space like a tree." The pseudonym Defoe invented includes the word "moll" used for "prostitute" since 1604, and up until our own day (as in "gangster's moll"), and the far more subtle connotations of the word "Flanders." Chaucer scholars have pointed out the evil repute of Flanders in fourteenth-century England, in connection with the three sinister rogues of the Pardoner's Tale. "In Flaundres whilom was a compaignye / Of yonge folk that haunteden folyë." Evidently, these connotations lingered until Defoe's day.

The charge of "emotional shallowness" has been laid against Defoe (especially about *Robinson Crusoe*) by read-

ers as different as Dickens and Walter de la Mare. Edward Wagenknecht speaks of Defoe's "comparative failure as a creator of individual character." But at least Moll Flanders is immensely alive in the view of such critics as E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf. Defoe, she says,

> "makes us understand that Moll Flanders was a woman on her own account and not only material for a succession of adventures . . . Like all Defoe's women, she is a person of robust understanding. Since she makes no scruple of telling lies when they serve her purpose, there is something undeniable about her truth when she speaks it. . . . Like all unconscious artists, he leaves more gold in his work than his own generation was able to bring to the surface. The interpretation that we put on his characters might therefore well have puzzled him."

This essay on Defoe, to be found now in *The Common Reader,* was first printed in 1919. Since then, the gold which Defoe left in his work has been mined assiduously by the experts. Virginia Woolf, too, might well be puzzled by some of the interpretations put on his characters, especially that of Moll Flanders. The fashionable measuring-rod of "ambiguity" has found a place here. Was she ever truly a penitent? Was Defoe's moralizing in earnest, or tongue-in-cheek? Or both?

Defoe has been described by Edward Wagenknecht as "possibly the most prolific writer that ever lived," a claim which takes in a lot of territory. A more valid claim would seem to be George Sampson's, that Defoe was "the most extraordinarily prolific *old man* (italics mine) in the history of English literature." A satirist, a pamphleteer, a writer on political and religious subjects (with a strong Whig and Dissenting bias), Defoe began to write fiction only when he was about sixty years old. The year 1722 was his *annus mirabilis,* beginning with *Moll Flanders* and including four other major works, one of them his *Journal Of The Plague Year.*

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THE PREFACE

THE WORLD is so taken up of late with novels and romances, that it will be hard for a private history to be taken for genuine, where the names and other circumstances of the person are concealed, and on this account we must be content to leave the reader to pass his own opinion upon the ensuing sheets, and take it just as he pleases.

The author is here supposed to be writing her own history, and in the very beginning of her account she gives the reasons why she thinks fit to conceal her true name, after which there is no occasion to say any more about that.

It is true that the original of this story is put into new words, and the style of the famous lady we here speak of is a little altered; particularly she is made to tell her own tale in modester words than she told it at first, the copy which came first to hand having been written in language more like one still in Newgate than one grown penitent and humble, as she afterwards pretends to be.

The pen employed in finishing her story, and making it what you now see it to be, has had no little difficulty to put it into a dress fit to be seen, and to make it speak language fit to be read. When a woman debauched from her youth, nay, even being the offspring of debauchery and vice, comes to give an account of all her vicious practices, and even to descend to the particular occasions and circumstances by which she first became wicked, and of all the progression of crime which she ran through in threescore years, an author must be hard put to it to wrap it up so clean as not to give room, especially for vicious readers, to turn it to his disadvantage.

All possible care, however, has been taken to give no lewd ideas, no immodest turns in the new dressing up of this story; no, not to the worst parts of her expressions. To this purpose some of the vicious part of her life, which could not be modestly told, is quite left out, and several other parts are very much shortened. What is left 'tis hoped will not offend the chastest reader or the modestest hearer; and as the best use is made even of the worst story, the moral 'tis hoped will keep the reader serious, even where the story might incline him to

be otherwise. To give the history of a wicked life repented of, necessarily requires that the wicked part should be made as wicked as the real history of it will bear, to illustrate and give a beauty to the penitent part, which is certainly the best and brightest, if related with equal spirit and life.

It is suggested there cannot be the same life, the same brightness and beauty, in relating the penitent part as is in the criminal part. If there is any truth in that suggestion, I must be allowed to say, 'tis because there is not the same taste and relish in the reading, and indeed it is too true that the difference lies not in the real worth of the subject so much as in the gust and palate of the reader.

But as this work is chiefly recommended to those who know how to read it, and how to make the good uses of it which the story all along recommends to them, so it is to be hoped that such readers will be more pleased with the moral than the fable, with the application than with the relation, and with the end of the writer than with the life of the person written of.

There is in this story abundance of delightful incidents, and all of them usefully applied. There is an agreeable turn artfully given them in the relating, that naturally instructs the reader, either one way or other. The first part of her lewd life with the young gentleman at Colchester has so many happy turns given it to expose the crime, and warn all whose circumstances are adapted to it, of the ruinous end of such things, and the foolish, thoughtless, and abhorred conduct of both the parties, that it abundantly atones for all the lively description she gives of her folly and wickedness.

The repentance of her lover at the Bath, and how brought by the just alarm of his fit of sickness to abandon her; the just caution given there against even the lawful intimacies of the dearest friends, and how unable they are to preserve the most solemn resolutions of virtue without divine assistance; these are parts which, to a just discernment, will appear to have more real beauty in them than all the amorous chain of story which introduces it.

In a word, as the whole relation is carefully garbled of all the levity and looseness that was in it, so it is all applied, and with the utmost care, to virtuous and religious uses. None can, without being guilty of manifest injustice, cast any reproach upon it, or upon our design in publishing it.

The advocates for the stage have, in all ages, made this the great argument to persuade people that their plays are useful, and that they ought to be allowed in the most civilised and in

the most religious government; namely, that they are applied to virtuous purposes, and that, by the most lively representations, they fail not to recommend virtue and generous principles, and to discourage and expose all sorts of vice and corruption of manners; and were it true that they did so, and that they constantly adhered to that rule, as the test of their acting on the theatre, much might be said in their favour.

Throughout the infinite variety of this book, this fundamental is most strictly adhered to; there is not a wicked action in any part of it, but is first and last rendered unhappy and unfortunate; there is not a superlative villain brought upon the stage, but either he is brought to an unhappy end, or brought to be a penitent; there is not an ill thing mentioned but it is condemned, even in the relation, nor a virtuous, just thing but it carries its praise along with it. What can more exactly answer the rule laid down, to recommend even those representations of things which have so many other just objections lying against them? namely, of example, of bad company, obscene language, and the like.

Upon this foundation this book is recommended to the reader, as a work from every part of which something may be learned, and some just and religious inference is drawn, by which the reader will have something of instruction, if he pleases to make use of it.

All the exploits of this lady of fame, in her depredations upon mankind, stand as so many warnings to honest people to beware of them, intimating to them by what methods innocent people are drawn in, plundered and robbed, and by consequence how to avoid them. Her robbing a little innocent child, dressed fine by the vanity of the mother, to go to the dancing-school, is a good memento to such people hereafter, as is likewise her picking the gold watch from the young lady's side in the Park.

Her getting a parcel from a hare-brained wench at the coaches in St. John Street; her booty made at the fire, and again at Harwich, all give us excellent warnings in such cases to be more present to ourselves in sudden surprises of every sort.

Her application to a sober life and industrious management at last in Virginia, with her transported spouse, is a story fruitful of instruction to all the unfortunate creatures who are obliged to seek their re-establishment abroad, whether by the misery of transportation or other disaster; letting them know that diligence and application have their due encouragement, even in the remotest parts of the world, and that no case can

be so low, so despicable, or so empty of prospect, but that an unwearied industry will go a great way to deliver us from it, will in time raise the meanest creature to appear again in the world, and give him a new cast for his life.

These are a few of the serious inferences which we are led by the hand to in this book, and these are fully sufficient to justify any man in recommending it to the world, and much more to justify the publication of it.

There are two of the most beautiful parts still behind, which this story gives some idea of, and lets us into the parts of them, but they are either of them too long to be brought into the same volume, and indeed are, as I may call them, whole volumes of themselves, viz.: 1. The life of her governess, as she calls her, who had run through, it seems, in a few years, all the eminent degrees of a gentle-woman, a whore, and a bawd; a midwife and a midwife-keeper, as they are called; a pawnbroker, a child-taker, a receiver of thieves, and of thieves' purchase, that is to say, of stolen goods; and, in a word, herself a thief, a breeder up of thieves and the like, and yet at last a penitent.

The second is the life of her transported husband, a highwayman, who, it seems, lived a twelve years' life of successful villainy upon the road, and even at last came off so well as to be a volunteer transport, not a convict; and in whose life there is an incredible variety.

But, as I have said, these are things too long to bring in here, so neither can I make a promise of their coming out by themselves.

We cannot say, indeed, that this history is carried on quite to the end of the life of this famous Moll Flanders, as she calls herself, for nobody can write their own life to the full end of it, unless they can write it after they are dead. But her husband's life, being written by a third hand, gives a full account of them both, how long they lived together in that country, and how they both came to England again, after about eight years, in which time they were grown very rich, and where she lived, it seems, to be very old, but was not so extraordinary a penitent as she was at first; it seems only that indeed she always spoke with abhorrence of her former life, and of every part of it.

In her last scene, at Maryland and Virginia, many pleasant things happened, which makes that part of her life very agreeable, but they are not told with the same elegancy as those accounted for by herself; so it is still to the more advantage that we break off here.

MY TRUE NAME is so well known in the records or registers at Newgate, and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there, relating to my particular conduct, that it is not to be expected I should set my name or the account of my family to this work; perhaps, after my death, it may be better known; at present it would not be proper, no, not though a general pardon should be issued, even without exceptions and reserve of persons or crimes.

It is enough to tell you, that as some of my worst comrades, who are out of the way of doing me harm (having gone out of the world by the steps and the string, as I often expected to go), knew me by the name of Moll Flanders, so you may give me leave to speak of myself under that name till I dare own who I have been, as well as who I am.

I have been told that in one of our neighbour nations, whether it be in France or where else I know not, they have an order from the king, that when any criminal is condemned, either to die, or to the galleys, or to be transported, if they leave any children, as such are generally unprovided for, by the poverty or forfeiture of their parents, so they are immediately taken into the care of the government, and put into an hospital called the House of Orphans, where they are bred up, clothed, fed, taught, and when fit to go out, are placed out to trades or to services, so as to be well able to provide for themselves by an honest, industrious behaviour.

Had this been the custom in our country, I had not been left a poor desolate girl without friends, without clothes, without help or helper in the world, as was my fate; and by which I was not only exposed to very great distresses, even before I was capable either of understanding my case or how to amend it, but brought into a course of life which was not only

scandalous in itself, but which in its ordinary course tended to the swift destruction both of soul and body.

But the case was otherwise here. My mother was convicted of felony for a certain petty theft scarce worth naming, viz. having an opportunity of borrowing three pieces of fine holland of a certain draper in Cheapside. The circumstances are too long to repeat, and I have heard them related so many ways, that I can scarce be certain which is the right account.

However it was, this they all agree in, that my mother pleaded her belly, and being found quick with child, she was respited for about seven months; in which time having brought me into the world, and being about again, she was called down, as they term it, to her former judgment, but obtained the favour of being transported to the plantations, and left me about half a year old; and in bad hands, you may be sure.

This is too near the first hours of my life for me to relate anything of myself but by hearsay; it is enough to mention, that as I was born in such an unhappy place, I had no parish to have recourse to for my nourishment in my infancy; nor can I give the least account how I was kept alive, other than that, as I have been told, some relation of my mother's took me away for a while as a nurse, but at whose expense, or by whose direction, I know nothing at all of it.

The first account that I can recollect, or could ever learn of myself, was that I had wandered among a crew of those people they call gypsies, or Egyptians; but I believe it was but a very little while that I had been among them, for I had not had my skin discoloured or blackened, as they do very young to all the children they carry about with them; nor can I tell how I came among them, or how I got from them.

It was at Colchester, in Essex, that those people left me; and I have a notion in my head that I left them there (that is, that I hid myself and would not go any farther with them), but I am not able to be particular in that account; only this I remember, that being taken up by some of the parish officers of Colchester, I gave an account that I came into the town with the gypsies, but that I would not go any farther with them, and that so they had left me, but whither they were gone that I knew not, nor could they expect it of me; for though they sent round the country to inquire after them, it seems they could not be found.

I was now in a way to be provided for; for though I was not a parish charge upon this or that part of the town by law,

yet as my case came to be known, and that I was too young to do any work, being not above three years old, compassion moved the magistrates of the town to order some care to be taken of me, and I became one of their own as much as if I had been born in the place.

In the provision they made for me, it was my good hap to be put to nurse, as they call it, to a woman who was indeed poor but had been in better circumstances, and who got a little livelihood by taking such as I was supposed to be, and keeping them with all necessaries, till they were at a certain age, in which it might be supposed they might go to service or get their own bread.

This woman had also had a little school, which she kept to teach children to read and to work; and having, as I have said, lived before that in good fashion, she bred up the children she took with a great deal of art, as well as with a great deal of care.

But that which was worth all the rest, she bred them up very religiously, being herself a very sober, pious woman, very housewifely and clean, and very mannerly, and with good behaviour. So that in a word, excepting a plain diet, coarse lodging, and mean clothes, we were brought up as mannerly and as genteelly as if we had been at the dancing-school.

I was continued here till I was eight years old, when I was terrified with news that the magistrates (as I think they called them) had ordered that I should go to service. I was able to do but very little service wherever I was to go, except it was to run of errands and be a drudge to some cookmaid, and this they told me of often, which put me into a great fright; for I had a thorough aversion to going to service, as they called it (that is, to be a servant), though I was so young; and I told my nurse, as we called her, that I believed I could get my living without going to service, if she pleased to let me; for she had taught me to work with my needle, and spin worsted, which is the chief trade of that city, and I told her that if she would keep me, I would work for her, and I would work very hard.

I talked to her almost every day of working hard; and, in short, I did nothing but work and cry all day, which grieved the good, kind woman so much, that at last she began to be concerned for me, for she loved me very well.

One day after this, as she came into the room where all we poor children were at work, she sat down just over against

me, not in her usual place as mistress, but as if she set herself on purpose to observe me and see me work. I was doing something she had set me to; as I remember, it was marking some shirts which she had taken to make, and after a while she began to talk to me. "Thou foolish child," says she, "thou art always crying" (for I was crying then); "prithee, what dost cry for?" "Because they will take me away," says I, "and put me to service, and I can't work housework." "Well child," says she, "but though you can't work housework, as you call it, you will learn it in time, and they won't put you to hard things at first." "Yes, they will," says I, "and if I can't do it they will beat me, and the maids will beat me to make me do great work, and I am but a little girl and I can't do it"; and then I cried again, till I could not speak any more to her.

This moved my good motherly nurse, so that she from that time resolved I should not go to service yet; so she bid me not cry, and she would speak to Mr. Mayor, and I should not go to service till I was bigger.

Well, this did not satisfy me, for to think of going to service was such a frightful thing to me, that if she had assured me I should not have gone till I was twenty years old, it would have been the same to me; I should have cried, I believe, all the time, with the very apprehension of its being to be so at last.

When she saw that I was not pacified yet, she began to be angry with me. "And what would you have?" says she; "don't I tell you that you shall not go to service till you are bigger?" "Ay," says I, "but then I must go at last." "Why, what?" said she; "is the girl mad? What would you be—a gentlewoman?" "Yes," says I, and cried heartily till I roared out again.

This set the old gentlewoman a-laughing at me, as you may be sure it would. "Well, madam, forsooth," says she, gibing at me, "you would be a gentlewoman; and pray how will you come to be a gentlewoman? What! will you do it by your fingers' ends?"

"Yes," says I again, very innocently.

"Why, what can you earn?" says she; "what can you get at your work?"

"Threepence," said I, "when I spin, and fourpence when I work plain work."

"Alas! poor gentlewoman," said she again, laughing, "what will that do for thee?"

"It will keep me," says I, "if you will let me live with you." And this I said in such a poor petitioning tone, that it made

the poor woman's heart yearn to me, as she told me afterwards.

"But," says she, "that will not keep you and buy you clothes too; and who must buy the little gentlewoman clothes?" says she, and smiled all the while at me.

"I will work harder, then," says I, "and you shall have it all."

"Poor child! it won't keep you," says she; "it will hardly keep you in victuals."

"Then I will have no victuals," says I, again very innocently; "let me but live with you."

"Why, can you live without victuals?" says she.

"Yes," again says I, very much like a child, you may be sure, and still I cried heartily.

I had no policy in all this; you may easily see it was all nature; but it was joined with so much innocence and so much passion that, in short, it set the good motherly creature a-weeping too, and she cried at last as fast as I did, and then took me and led me out of the teaching-room. "Come," says she, "you shan't go to service; you shall live with me"; and this pacified me for the present.

Some time after this, she going to wait on the Mayor, and talking of such things as belonged to her business, at last my story came up, and my good nurse told Mr. Mayor the whole tale. He was so pleased with it, that he would call his lady and his two daughters to hear it, and it made mirth enough among them, you may be sure.

However, not a week had passed over, but on a sudden comes Mrs. Mayoress and her two daughters to the house to see my old nurse, and to see her school and the children. When they had looked about them a little, "Well, Mrs. ——," says the Mayoress to my nurse, "and pray which is the little lass that intends to be a gentlewoman?" I heard her, and I was terribly frightened at first, though I did not know why neither; but Mrs. Mayoress comes up to me. "Well, miss," says she, "and what are you at work upon?" The word miss was a language that had hardly been heard of in our school, and I wondered what sad name it was she called me. However, I stood up, made a curtsy, and she took my work out of my hand, looked on it, and said it was very well; then she took up one of my hands. "Nay," says she, "the child may come to be a gentlewoman for aught anybody knows; she has a gentlewoman's hand," says she. This pleased me mightily, you may be sure; but Mrs. Mayoress did not stop there, but giving

me my work again, she put her hand in her pocket, gave me a shilling, and bid me mind my work, and learn to work well, and I might be a gentlewoman for aught she knew.

Now all this while my good old nurse, Mrs. Mayoress, and all the rest of them did not understand me at all, for they meant one sort of thing by the word gentlewoman, and I meant quite another; for, alas! all I understood by being a gentlewoman was to be able to work for myself, and get enough to keep me without that terrible bugbear going to service, whereas they meant to live great, rich and high, and I know not what.

Well, after Mrs. Mayoress was gone, her two daughters came in, and they called for the gentlewoman too, and they talked a long while to me, and I answered them in my innocent way; but always, if they asked me whether I resolved to be a gentlewoman, I answered Yes. At last one of them asked me what a gentlewoman was? That puzzled me much; but, however, I explained myself negatively, that it was one that did not go to service, to do housework. They were pleased to be familiar with me, and liked my little prattle to them, which, it seems, was agreeable enough to them, and they gave me money too.

As for my money, I gave it all to my mistress-nurse, as I called her, and told her she should have all I got for myself when I was a gentlewoman, as well as now. By this and some other of my talk, my old tutoress began to understand me about what I meant by being a gentlewoman, and that I understood by it no more than to be able to get my bread by my own work; and at last she asked me whether it was not so.

I told her, Yes, and insisted on it, that to do so was to be a gentlewoman; "for," says I, "there is such a one," naming a woman that mended lace and washed the ladies' laced-heads; "she," says I, "is a gentlewoman, and they call her madam."

"Poor child," says my good old nurse, "you may soon be such a gentlewoman as that, for she is a person of ill fame, and has had two or three bastards."

I did not understand anything of that; but I answered, "I am sure they call her madam, and she does not go to service nor do housework"; and therefore I insisted that she was a gentlewoman, and I would be such a gentlewoman as that.

The ladies were told all this again, to be sure, and they made themselves merry with it, and every now and then the young ladies, Mr. Mayor's daughters, would come and see