

**ROMANCES AND NARRATIVES IN
SIXTEEN VOLUMES, VOL. VII. THE
FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES
OF THE FAMOUS MOLL
FLANDERS, VOL. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649695096

Romances and Narratives in Sixteen Volumes, Vol. VII. The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, Vol. I by George A. Aitken & Daniel Defoe

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GEORGE A. AITKEN & DANIEL DEFOE

**ROMANCES AND NARRATIVES IN
SIXTEEN VOLUMES, VOL. VII. THE
FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES
OF THE FAMOUS MOLL
FLANDERS, VOL. I**

0

ROMANCES AND NARRATIVES BY
DANIEL DEFOE

EDITED BY GEORGE A. AITKEN

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

VOL. VII

◇

MOLL FLANDERS

VOL. I



CHILD
MEMORIAL
LIBRARY

Begin to consider things very seriously.

THE Fortunes and
Misfortunes of the
Famous MOLL FLAN-
DERS * * * By DANIEL
DEFOE

Edited by GEORGE A. AITKEN
with
Illustrations by J. B. YEATS

↑ LONDON * * * * Published by
J. M. DENT & Co. Aldine House
69 Great Eastern Street, E.C.
M D C C C X C V



INTRODUCTION.

DEFOE seems to have published only one pamphlet during 1721, though he was no doubt busy writing books which were to appear in the following year. The first edition of "Moll Flanders" is dated 1721, but it was not issued by the publishers, Chetwood and others, until the 27th of January 1722. Its popularity is shown by the appearance of a "second edition, corrected" (printed for John Brotherton) in July, and of a third edition, again published by Chetwood, in December. By January 1723, Thomas Edlin, as we learn from an entry at Stationers' Hall, was proprietor of the whole copyright; and in July 1723 an abridged pocket edition was issued by J. Read.

The full title of this remarkable book ran as follows:—"The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the famous Moll Flanders, &c., who was born in Newgate, and during a life of continued variety, for 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, lived honest, and died a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums." To take this last point first, Defoe says that from prudential motives Moll Flanders could not publish her

real name; and that the original narrative had been put into new words, and the style a little altered by "the pen employed in finishing her story;" and he admitted that, owing to the number of novels and romances before the public, it would "be hard for a private history to be taken for genuine" where the real names are concealed. "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."

It will be seen that Defoe's testimony to the authenticity of the narrative is rather half-hearted, and efforts to trace the original of *Moll Flanders* have been unsuccessful. A chap-book appeared at Dublin in 1730 called "*Fortune's Fickle Distribution: In Three Parts. Containing, First, The Life and Death of Moll Flanders. Secondly, The Life of Jane Hackabout, her Governess. Thirdly, The Life of James MacFaul, Moll Flanders' Lancashire Husband.*" The compiler of this book made *Moll Flanders* say that, as she was drawing near her end, she would now give particulars of her birth and parentage. Her grandfather was born at Carrickfergus; her father, James Fitzpatrick, was driven to vice by want, and subsequently met *Moll's* mother, *Mary Flanders*, in Whetstone Park. He took to highway robbery, and was executed. As for the close of *Moll Flanders' life*, we are told that she and her husband settled ultimately in Galway, and bought property there. On the 30th of March 1722 she made a will, in the name of Elizabeth Atkins, her late husband being called William Carroll; and she died on the 10th of April 1723, in her seventy-fifth year, being very penitent. She had been attended by Mr Price, master of the Free School at Galway, and she was buried at St Nicholas' Church, with much ceremony.

Defoe himself says that the life of *Moll Flanders'*

husband had been written by another hand ; but unfortunately for the circumstantial account in the Dublin volume, Mr J. Digges la Touche, of the Dublin Record Office, who has been good enough to make inquiry, cannot find the alleged Galway will, or any other information respecting a woman of the name given. The Rev. J. F. Berry, of Galway, states that the St Nicholas registers reach back only to 1790. In the absence of further proof, we must, then, regard the supposed identification of Moll Flanders as imagination ; though the story was repeated, many years later—in 1776—in a worthless compilation entitled, “The History of Laetitia Atkins, vulgarly called Moll Flanders. Published by Mr Daniel Defoe ; and from papers found since his decease it appears greatly altered by himself ; and from the said papers the present work is produced.” At the end of this little book there is the will of Laetitia Atkins, widow of James Carrol, of Galway, dated March 30, 1722 ; and we are told that this woman died on December 10, 1722, in her seventy-fifth year. According to Defoe, however, Moll Flanders was dead when he wrote his preface, at the end of 1721 ; and the “papers” used by the editor of this volume are certainly imaginary. But in spite of the difficulties of identification, the idea of Defoe’s story was probably taken from the life of some real criminal, and it is quite possible that this person’s name will some day be traced. For the present, we must consider the tale merely as a work of fiction ; it is evident that the whole book was written by Defoe, and that he did not merely revise the narrative told by the woman herself.

Moll Flanders’ mother was transported after conviction of a petty theft, and the baby fell into the hands of the gypsies, who deserted Moll, when she was three years old, at Colchester—a town which was

familiar to Defoe. In due time the girl obtained a situation, but was ruined by her mistress's eldest son. An honourable suit by the second son afforded a means of escape from her troubles, and she married this young man. After five years, however, he died, and Moll married a draper of extravagant habits. For a time they lived as gentlefolks, and then the draper became bankrupt, absconded to France, and dropped out of his wife's life. Moll Flanders next took lodgings in the Mint, passing for a widow with some means, by which device she was enabled to secure as her husband a sea-captain, with whom she went to Virginia. There she was distressed at discovering that she had married her own half-brother; and she agreed with her husband that she would return to England, when he could pretend she had died, and marry again if he wished.

For some time Moll Flanders lived in Bath, where she made the acquaintance of a man of means whose wife was insane, nursed him in his illness, lived with him, and ultimately became his mistress. He gave her plenty of money, but she secretly took care to lay up as much as she could for a rainy day. In due time this gentleman repented of his conduct, and parted with Moll Flanders, who was now "left desolate, and void of counsel." However, she met with a banker's clerk, who wished to marry her, but she put him off on account of a Roman Catholic gentleman in Lancashire, who was stated to be rich. She married this man, only to find that he, like herself, was a fortune-hunter. Both parties had been deceived, and they agreed to separate, the man to return to highway robbery, the woman to go to London, where her child was born at a midwife's, and placed out to nurse. The bank clerk now came forward again, and was gladly accepted, after "an abominable life of twenty-four years."