



(Continued from last week.)

## CHAPTER XXV.

As your guide, showing you an exhibition of paintings, will linger over the first room and then pass the second in hurried review to come the quicker to a third of greater interest, so I, having dwelt maybe at undue length upon some passages in this history, must economize by touching lightly on the events that came immediately before Moll's marriage, and so get to those more moving accidents which followed. Here therefore will I transcribe certain notes, forming a brief chronicle, from that secret journal which, for the clearer understanding of my position, I began to keep the day I took possession of Simon's lodge and entered upon my new office:

Dec. 8.—Very busy all this forenoon setting my new house in order, conveying, with the help of the gardener, all those domestic and personal goods that belong to Simon into the attic, but, Lord, so few these things, and they so patched and worn, that altogether they are not worth 10 shillings of anybody's money. I find the house wondrous neat and clean in every part, but so comfortable and prisonlike, that I look forward

in bribery, and he thinks we may certainly look to have it in a month at that price. Home late, and very sore.

Dec. 11.—Much astonished this morning on going to my house to find all changed within as if by enchantment—fine hangings to my windows, handsome furniture in every room, all arranged in due order (with a pair of pictures in my parlor), the linen press stocked with all that is needful and more, and even the cellar well furnished with wines, etc. And truly thus embellished my house looks no longer like a prison, but as cheerful and pleasant a dwelling place as the heart of man could desire (in moderation), and better than any I have yet dreamed of possessing. And 'twas easy to guess whose hands had worked this transformation, even had I not recognized certain pieces of furniture as coming from the court, for 'twas of a piece with a Moll's loving and playful spirit to prepare this surprise for me while I was gone yesterday to Maid-



Dawson looks him full in the face. Henceforth—there being two bedrooms all properly furnished—as being more in keeping with my new position.

Dec. 13.—This day a little before dinner time came Dawson to the court, quite sober and looking as like a rough, honest seaman as anything could be, but evidently with his best shore going manners on. And when Moll very graciously offers him her hand, he whips out a red handkerchief and lays it over her hand before kissing it, which was a piece of ceremony he must have observed at Greenwich, as also many odd phrases and sea expressions with which he garnished his conversation.

"Captain Evans," says Moll, taking her lover's hand, "this is Mr. Godwin, my cousin, and soon to be my husband." Mr. Godwin holds forth his hand, but ere he would take it Dawson looks him full in the face a good minute; then, taking it in his great grimy hand, and grasping it firmly, "Master," says Jack, "I see thou art an honest man, and none lives who hath ever sold me tar for pitch, be he never so double faced, and so I wish you joy of your sweet wife. As for you, mistress," turning to Moll, "who have ever been kind to me beyond my deserts, I do wish you all the happiness in the world, and I count all my hardships well paid in bringing you safely to this anchorage. For sure I would sooner you were still and all a mollah and a slave in Barbary than the queen of China and ill mated, and so Lord love the both of you!"

After staying a couple of hours with us, he was for going, but not before he had given us the instructive history of the torment he had endured by telling his wife, in an unguarded moment, of his gallantries with Sukey Taylor, nor would he be persuaded to sleep at the court and leave next day, maintaining that while he had never a penny in the world he could very honestly accept Moll's hospitality, but that now being well to do, thanks to her bounty, he thanked Heaven he had sufficient good breeding, and valued himself well enough not to take advantage of her beneficence. However, hearing I had a house of my own, and could offer him a bed, he willingly agreed to be my guest for the night, regarding me as one of his own kindred. We staid to

adap at the court, where he entertained us with a lengthy account of his late voyage, and how being taken in a tempest, his masts had all been swept by the board, and his craft so damaged that 'twas as much as she would hold together till he brought her into Falmonth, where she must lie a-repairing a good two months ere he could again venture to sea in her. And this story he told with such an abundance of detail and so many nautical particulars that no one in the world could have dreamed he was lying.

He explained to me later on that he had refused to lie at the court for fear a glass or two after supper might lead his tongue astray, telling me that he had touched nothing but penny ale all his long journey from London for fear of losing his head, and on my asking why he had fabricated that long history of shipwreck he vowed I had put him to it by saying I had a house of my own where he could lie. "For," says he, "my ship being laid up will furnish me with a very good excuse for coming to spend a day or two with you now and then. So may I get another glimpse of my own dear Moll, and see her in the fullness of her joy."

He could not sufficiently cry up the excellence of Mr. Godwin, his noble bearing, his frank, honest countenance, his tenderness for Moll, etc., and he did truly shed tears of gratitude to think that now, whatever befell him, her welfare and happiness were assured, but this was when he had emptied his bottle and had got to that stage of emotion which usually preceded boisterous hilarity when he was in his cups.

And while I am speaking of bottles it will not be amiss to note here, for my future warning, a grave imprudence of mine, which I discovered on leaving the room to seek more wine. On the flame of my candle blowing aside I perceived that I had left my door unfastened, so that it now stood ajar. And truly this

with little relish to living here when the time comes for me to leave the court, after this to examining books, papers, etc., and the more closely I look into these the more assured I am that never was any servant more scrupulously exact and honest in his master's service than this old steward, which put me to the hope that I may be only half as faithful to my trust as he, but I do fear I shall not.

Conversing privily with Don Sanchez after dinner, he gave me his opinion that we had done a very unwise thing in turning out old Simon, showing how by a little skill I might have persuaded Moll to leave this business to Mr. Godwin as the proper ruler of her estate; how by such delay Mr. Godwin's resentment would have abated and he have been willing to listen to argument in the steward's favor; how we should have made Simon more eager than ever to serve us in order to condone his late offense, and how by abusing our opportunities we had changed this useful servant to a dangerous enemy whose sole endeavor must be to undo us and recover his former position, etc. "Why, what have we to fear of this miserable old man?" says I. "Unless he fetch Mrs. Godwin from Barbary, he cannot disprove Moll's right to the estate, and what else can he do?"

"There's the mischief of it," answers he. "'Tis because you know not how he may attack you that you have no means of defending yourself. 'Tis ever the unseen trifle in our path which trips us up." And dismissing this part of the subject with a hunch of his shoulders he advises me seriously to sell as many more farms as I may for ready money and keep it in some secret convenient corner where I may lay hands on it at a moment's warning.

This discourse coming atop of a night's ill rest depressed my mind to such a degree that I could take no interest in my work, but sat there in my naked room with my accounts before me and no spirit to cast 'em up. Nor was I much happier when I gave up work and returned to the court. For, besides having to wait an hour later than usual for dinner, Moll's treatment of me was none of the best, she being particularly perverse and contrary, she having dressed herself in her best in expectation of her lover's return, and he not coming, when at last she permitted supper to be dishes. We were scarcely seated, however, when she springs up with a cry of joy and runs from the room, crying she hears her Richard's step, which was indeed true, though we had heard nothing more pleasant than the rattle of our plates.

Presently they come in all radiant with happiness, hand in hand, and thenceforth naught but sweetness and mirth on the part of Mistress Moll, who before had been all frown and pout. At supper Mr. Godwin tells us how his sweetheart hath certainly dispelled the clouds that have hung so long over him, he having heard in London that Sir Peter Lely, having seen one of his pieces, desires to see him at Hatfield, where he is painting, on good business, and to Hatfield he will go to discharge this matter before his marriage, which pleaseth Moll less than me, I being pleased to see he is still of the same, stout disposition to live an active life. In the evening he gives Moll a very beautiful ring for a troth token, which transports her with joy, so that she cannot enough caress her lover or this toy, but falls first to kissing one and then 't'other in a rapture. In return she gives

him a ring from her finger. "This small for my finger, love," says she, "but I will wear it against my heart as long as it beats." After that he finds another case and puts it in Moll's hand, and she, opening it, fetches her breath quickly and can say nothing for amazement. Then, turning it in the light, she regards it with winking eyes, as if dazzled by some fierce brilliancy. Then, closing the case as if it were too much for her, she lays her face upon Mr. Godwin's breast, he having his arm about her, murmuring some inarticulate words of passionate love. Recovering her energies presently, she starts up, and putting the case in her lover's hand she bids him put on his gift, therewith pulling down her kerchief to expose her beautiful bare neck, whereupon he draws from the box a diamond collar and clasps it about her throat with a pretty speech. And truly this was a gift worthy of a princess, the most beautiful bauble I have ever seen, and must have cost him all he had of me to the last shilling.

Dec. 10.—Finding among Simon's quittances a bill for law expenses of one John Pearson, attorney, at Maidstone, I concluded this must be the most trustworthy man of his kind in the country, and so set forth early this morning to seek him—a tedious, long journey, and the roads exceedingly foul. By good luck I found Mr. Pearson at home, a very civil, shrewd man, as I think. Having laid my business before him, he tells me there will be no difficulty in dividing the estate according to the wish of Mr. Godwin and Moll, which may be done by a simple deed of agreement, and this he promises to draw up and send to us for signature in a couple of days. But to get the seal to Moll's succession will not be such an easy matter, and unless we are willing to give £700 or £800 in fees we may be kept waiting a year, with the chance of being put to greater expense to prove our right, for he tells me the court and all about it are so corrupt that no minister is valued if he do not, by straight or crooked ways, draw money into the treasury, and that they will rather impede than aid the course of justice if it be to the king's interest, and that none will stir a hand to the advantage of any one but the king, unless it be secretly to his own, etc. And, though he will say nothing against Simon, save, by way of hint, that all men must be counted honest till they are proved guilty, yet he do apprehend he will do all in his power to obstruct the granting of this seal, which it is only reasonable to suppose he will. So, to close this discussion, I agree he shall spend as much as £1,000

come to be paid. Yet I conceived that this feast would incline our tenants to regard us kindly; but, on the other hand, thinks I, supposing they regard this as a snare, and do avoid us altogether! Then shall we be nipped another way, for, having no one to eat our feast but a few idle rogues, who would get beef and ale for nothing, we shall but lay ourselves open to mockery and get further into discredit. Thus, betwixt one fear and another, I lay like a toad under a harrow all night in a mortal sweat and perturbation of spirit.

Nor has this day done much to allay my apprehension. For at the court all is still at sixes and sevens, none of a very cheerful spirit, but all mighty anxious, save Moll, who throughout has kept a high, bold spirit. And she does declare they will work all night but everything shall be in its place before her lover comes tomorrow. And truly I pray they may, but do think they will not. For such a mighty business as this should have been begun a full month back. But she will not endure me in the house (though God knows I am as willing as any to help), saying that I do hinder all, and damp their spirit for work with my gloomy countenance, which is no more than the truth, I fear. The sky very overcast, with wind in the south, and the air very muggy, mild and close, so that I do apprehend our geese will be all stinking before they are eat. And if it pour of rain on Christmas day how will the ox be roast, and what sort of company can we expect? This puts me to another taking for dread of a new fiasco.

Dec. 23.—Going to the court about midday, I was dumfounded to find no sign of the disorder that prevailed there yesterday, but all swept and garnished, and Moll in a brave new gown seated at her fireside, reading a book with the utmost tranquillity, though I suspect she did assume something in this to increase my astonishment. She was largely diverted by my amazement, and made very light of her achievement, but she admitted that all had worked till day-break, and she had slept but two hours since. Nevertheless no one could have looked fresher and brighter than she, so healthy and vigorous were her natural parts. About 1 comes Mr. Godwin to cap her happiness and give fresh glory to her beauty. And sure a handsomer or better mated couple never was, Mr. Godwin's shapely figure being now set off to advantage by a very noble clothing, as becoming his condition. With him came also by the morning stage Don Sanchez, mighty fine in a new beard, of the latest mode, and a figured silk coat and waistcoat. And seeing the brave show they made at table, I was much humbled to think I had gone to no expense in this particular. But I was yet more mortified when Don Sanchez presents Moll with a handsome set of jewels for a wedding gift, to see that I had nothing in the world to offer her, having as yet taken not a penny of her money, save for the use of others and my bare necessities. Moll, however, was too full of happiness to note this omission on my part; she could think of no one now but her dear husband, and I counted for nothing.

However, this little chagrin was no more than a little cloud on a summer's day, which burns no one and is quickly dispelled by generous heat, and the tender affection of these two for each other did impart a glow of happiness to my heart. 'Tis strange to think how all things tonight look bright and hopeful.

which yesterday were gloomy and awesome. Even the weather hath changed to keep in harmony with our condition. A fresh wind sprang up from the north this morning, and tonight every star shines out sharp and clear through the frosty air, promising well for tomorrow and our Christmas feast. And smelling of the geese, I do now find them all as sweet as nuts, which contents me mightily, and so I shall go to bed this night blessing God for all things.

Dec. 24.—Now this blessed day hath ended, and Moll is sure and safely bound to Mr. Godwin in wedlock, thanks to Providence. Woke at day-break and joyed to find all white with-out and covered with rime, sparkling like diamonds as the sun rose red and jolly above the firs, and so I thought our dear Moll's life must sparkle as she looked out on this, which is like to be the brightest, happiest day of her life. Dressed in my best with great care, and put on the favor of white ribbons given me by Moll's woman last night and so very well pleased with my looks, to the



I perceived old Simon.

court where Moll is still a-dressing, but Mr. Godwin and Don Sanchez, nobly arrayed, conversing before the fire. And here a great bowpot on the table (which Mr. Godwin had made to come from London this morning) of the most wondrous flowers I have ever seen at this time of the year, so that I could not believe them real at first, but they are indeed living, and Mr. Godwin tells me they are raised in houses of glass very artificially heated. Presently comes in Moll with her maids, she looking like any pearl, in a shining gown of white satin decked with rich lace, the collar of diamonds glittering about her white throat, her face suffused with happy blushes and past everything for sprightly beauty. Mr. Godwin offers his bow-

was as culpable a piece of oversight as I could well have committed, for here had an enemy, or even an idle busybody, been passing he might very well have entered the little passage and overheard that which had been our undoing to have made known.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Dec. 14.—Dawson left us this morning. In parting Mr. Godwin graciously begged him to come to his wedding feast on Christmas day—they having fixed upon Christmas eve to be married—and Dawson promised he would, but he did assure me afterward, as we were walking along the road to meet the stage wagon, that he would certainly feign some reason for not coming. "For," says he, "I am not so foolhardy as to jeopardize my Moll's happiness for the pleasure this feast would give me. Nay, Kit, I do think 'twould break my heart indeed if anything of my doing should mar my Moll's happiness." And I was very well pleased to find him in this humor, promising him that we would make amends for his abstinence on this occasion by cracking many a bottle to Moll's joy when we could come together again secretly at my house. In the afternoon Mr. Pearson's clerk brought the deed of agreement for the settlement of the estate upon Moll and Mr. Godwin, which they signed, and so that is finished as we would have it. This clerk tells me his master hath already gone to London about getting the seal. So all things look mighty prosperous.

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Dec. 17.—Fearing to displease Sir Peter Lely by longer delay, Mr. Godwin set out for Hatfield Tuesday, we—that is, Moll, Don Sanchez and I—going with him as far as the borough, where Moll had a thousand things to buy against her wedding. And here we found great activity of commerce and many shops filled with excellent good goods—more than ever there were before the great fire drove out so many tradesmen from the city. Here Moll spends her money royally, buying whatever catches her eye that is rich and beautiful, not only for her own personal adornment, but for the embellishment of her house (as hangings, damasks, toys, etc.), yet always with a consideration of Mr. Godwin's taste, so that I think she would not buy a pair of stockings but she must ask herself whether he would admire 'em. And the more she had the more eager she grew to have, buying by candlelight, which was an imprudence, and making no sort of bargain, but giving all the shopkeepers asked for their wares, which, to be sure, was another piece of recklessness. This business seemed to me the most wearisome in the world, but it served only to increase her energies, and she would not be persuaded to desist until the shops closing, she could lay out no more money that night. Supped very well, but mightily late, at the Tabard inn, where we lay all night. And the next morning, Moll's fever still unabated, we set out again a-shopping, and no rest until we caught the stage, and that by a miracle, at 4, and so home, dead beat.

Dec. 18.—Moll mad all day because the carrier hath brought but half her purchases, and they not what she wanted. By the evening wagon come three seamstresses she engaged yesterday morning, and they are to stay in the house till all is finished, but as yet nothing for them to do, which is less grievous to them than to poor Moll, who, I believe, would set them working all night for fear she shall not be fitted against her wedding.

Dec. 19.—Thank God, the carrier brought all our packages this morning, and they being all undone and laid out there is no sitting down anywhere with comfort, but all confusion, and no regularity anywhere, so I was content to get my meals in the kitchen the best I could. And here I do perceive the wisdom of Don Sanchez, who did not return with us from London, and does intend (he told me) to stay there till the wedding eve.

Dec. 20.—Moll, bit by a new maggot, tells me this morning she will have a great feast on Christmas day, and bids me order matters accordingly. She will have a whole ox roasted before the house by midday, and barrels of strong ale set up, that there may be meat and drink for all who choose to take it, and at 4 she will have a supper of geese, turkeys and plum puddings for all her tenants, their wives and sweethearts, with fiddles afterward for dancing, etc. Lord knows how we shall come out of this madness, but I have got the innkeeper, a busy, capable man, to help me, and he does assure me all will go well enough, and I pray he be right.

Dec. 21.—Sick with fears that all must end ill. For the place is a very babel for tradesmen and workpeople bringing in goods, and knowing not where to set them, servants hurrying this way and that, one charged with a dozen geese, another with silk petticoats, jostling each other, laughing, quarreling, and no sort of progress, at it seems, anywhere, but all tumult and disorder.

Dec. 22.—Could not sleep a wink all last night for casting up accounts of all this feasting and finery will cost us, and finding it must eat up all that money we had of poor Mr. Goodman, and make a deep hole in our quarter's rents besides. I fell a-speculating whether our tenants would pay me with the same punctuality they have used to pay old Simon, with grievous fears to the contrary. For assuredly Simon hath not been idle these past days, and will do us an ill turn if he can by throwing doubts before these same tenants whether they should pay or not before Moll's succession is made sure.

And I have good reason to fear they will not, for I observed yesterday when I called upon Farmer Giles to invite him to our feast he seemed very jerky and ill at ease, which perplexed me greatly, until, on quitting, I perceived through a door that stood ajar old Simon seated in a side room. And 'tis but natural that if they find prudent excuse for withholding their rents they will keep their money in pocket, which will pinch us smartly when our bills

manly not to fling any at Moll or us. Then more shouting for joy when the bowls of ale and posset come in, and all, standing, give three times three for their new mistress and her husband. Hearing of which the beggars without (not tired of dancing about the embers) troop up to the door and give three times three as well, and end with crying joy and long life to the wedded pair. When this tumult was ended and the door shut, Mr. Godwin gave a short oration, thanking our tenants for their company and good wishes, and then he told them how his dear wife and he, wishing others to share their joy and remember this day, had resolved to forgive every tenant one-half of his quarter's rent. "And so, Mr. Hopkins," says he, addressing me, "you will think of this tomorrow."

At first I was disposed to begrudge this munificence—thinking of my accounts and the bills I should have to pay ere rent day came again—but on second thoughts it rejoiced me much as being a counterblast to anything Simon could do against us. For no tenant, thinks I, will be fool enough to withhold payment when he may get his quittance tomorrow for half its value. And herein was I not mistaken, for today every tenant hath paid with a cheerful countenance. So that this is very good business, and I am not in any way astonished to find that our subtle Spaniard was at the bottom of it, for indeed it was Don Sanchez, who (knowing my fears on this head and thinking them well grounded) suggested this act of

generosity to Moll, which she in her fullness of heart, seized on at once. (Truly I believe she would give the clothes off her back, no matter what it cost her, to any one in need, so reckless is she in love and pity.)

Dec. 27.—Don Sanchez took leave of us this day, he setting forth for Spain tomorrow, with the hope to reach his friends there for their great feast of the new year. And we are all mighty sorry to lose him, for not only hath he been a rare good friend to us, but also he is a most seemly gentleman (to keep us in countenance), and a very good, staunch and reliable companion. But this comprises not all our loss, he having, as I confess, more wit in his little finger than we in all our bodies, and ever ready with an expedient in the hour of need, and I know not why, but I look in his going as a sign of coming evil, nor am I greatly comforted by his telling me privily that when we want him he shall be found by a letter sent to the Albero Puerto del Sole, Toledo, in Spain. And I pray heaven we may have no occasion to write to him.

Tonight at supper I find Moll all cock-a-hoop with a new delight, by reason of her dear husband offering to take her to London for a month to visit the theaters and other diversions, which put me to a new quirk for fear Moll should be known by any of our former playhouse companions. But this I now perceive is a very absurd fear, for no one in the world who had seen Moll three years ago—a half starved, long legged, raw child—could recognize her now, a beautiful, well proportioned woman in her fine clothes, and so my mind is at ease on this head.

When Moll was retired, Mr. Godwin asked if I could let him have a few hundreds upon his account, and I answered very willingly he shall. And now, setting aside enough to pay all bills and furnish our wants till next quarter day, I am resolved to give him every farthing left of the rents paid yesterday, and shall be most hearty glad to be rid of it, for this money do seem to scar my hands every time I touch it, nor can I look at it but my heart is wrung with pity for those poor tenants who paid so gleefully yesterday, for surely their quittances will hold good for no more than spoiled paper if ever our rognery is discovered.

Dec. 28.—This day Moll and Mr. Godwin set out for London, all smiles and gladness, and Moll did make me promise to visit them in London and share their pleasures. But if I have no more appetite for gaiety than I feel at this moment I shall do better to stay here and mind my business, though I do expect to find little pleasure in that, and must abide by a month of very dull, gloomy days.

(To Be Continued.)

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