

❖POSTSCRIPT❖

Pepys never kept another diary comparable in scale and character with this, although his eyes quickly recovered from the worst effects of the strain which had led him to end it. He later composed other journals, which were for the most part not personal diaries but memoranda arranged in diary form and written out by clerks. But in July 1683 when he was sent to Tangier as secretary of the Commission which supervised the evacuation of the colony, the occasion called for a descriptive diary. He wrote it in shorthand and it covers the voyage there and back, his time in Tangier, and a trip he took in mid-winter to S.W. Spain. It has passages that are reminiscent of his diary keeping at its best. But it suffers from its shortness and from the limitations of its purpose: he does not attempt in its pages to lay bare his life. What readers of Pepys must regret is that he did not resume his great diary in the 1670s and '80s. His version of those critical years, which included the Popish Plot and Glorious Revolution of 1688 (in both of which he was closely involved), told in diary form and in Pepysian detail by one who knew James II so well, would have been an historical source of incomparable value. It must rank as one of the most interesting books never written.