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ADVENTURES OF A ROBINSON CRUSOE.

WRITTEN BY ITSELF.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE YOUNG GENTLEMAN'S AND
LADY'S MAGAZINE.

WHERE injury has been received, it is natural to complain; where insult has been given, the most liberal feel indignation, even should their principles keep them from revenge. Though I acquit you of an intentional wrong, you have been the fatal cause of my ruin; and as I am drawing near the close of my existence, I hope you will, by way of retribution, lend a few pages to perpetuate my name. The love of posthumous reputation is universally allowed to actuate authors; and why should it have no effect

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on books? I have been of some utility in my day, and have enjoyed as much favour from the public as your Magazine can ever hope to obtain, though its novelty has now supplanted me, and led to the crisis which is the cause of my troubling you with this.

It is well known I was originally the foster son of De Foe, who stole me from Alexander Selkirk, and fashioned and new-modelled me with so much skill, that it was impossible my real father could claim me as his own. I have had sons and grandsons without end, and without number; but I have reason to think that I am one of the ancient stock, or at least not one of the puny breed that is daily produced to amuse little boys and girls who love reading better than a sixpenny piece, which all good children ought to do.

My front, till a recent misfortune, was adorned with the real Robinson Crusoe, crowned with his fur cap, and armed with his gun. His man Friday and some goats frisking round, heightened the group; and often has this been more admired than all the curious circumstances that are crowded into my history. I was clothed in a most elegant and substantial manner, in what might be called a military dress; for it was red laced with gold.

As I lay many years ago on a bookseller's counter, along with several of my brethren, a lady, leading a little girl by the hand, entered the shop, and asked if I were sold there. Being answered in the affirmative, I was shown with the rest, and Miss, on account of my gay dress, preferred me. She was not the only young lady that has been captivated with scarlet and gold!

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Being carried home, she was for some time so fond of me, that she was constantly tumbling over my leaves by day, and even took me to bed with her at night. She was quickly mistress of my story; and I have the happiness to reflect, that no one who has read me has ever been the worse for it. Let other romances say as much if they dare! From me she learned a dutiful regard for the advice of parents, resignation to the dispensations of Providence, pity for misfortune, and hope amidst every ill.

By degrees, however, I became more estranged from my young mistress, or rather she from me. I was sometimes left in the parlour-window, sometimes put into the bookcase; and at last I was so little noticed, that for months and years together I lay dormant in the drawer of a bureau.

Affection, however, when once sincere and deep, is seldom wholly lost. In process of time my mistress had a son old enough to look at me. He was first shown my frontispiece, which he vastly admired. His mother took some pains to explain my history before he could read; and when he was capable of this, he used to be indulged with me as a particular favour, with cautions to use me well, and a promise that, when he was more advanced in age, he should receive me as a present.

When he found his mamma in a good humour, he frequently tried to prevail on her to part with me; but she still retained some regard for me herself, and thought the youngster was yet incapable of taking care of me. At last the time arrived when he was to be sent to a boarding-school. Many tears were shed on the occasion; and I was offered up at the shrine of maternal love as a pledge of affection-
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ate remembrance. The youth was not a little soothed by this gift: he packed me up in his box with grammars, spelling-books, and such scholastic apparatus, and I was hurried to a considerable distance from my former haunts. I must confess that I anticipated misfortunes when I was torn from my beloved mistress, and consigned to the care of a giddy boy of ten; but it is happy for us all, that we are unable to pierce the veil of futurity, and therefore are capable of enjoying the present with the higher relish.

Hitherto my coat was not much the worse for the wear. The red was indeed a little faded, and the gold tarnished; a few wrinkles and spots deformed my substance; but still I would have passed for a middle-aged book, and among younger competitors would not have appeared to much disadvantage.

For a few days the thoughts of home absorbed the whole attention of my young master; and though he occasionally visited the box where I was lodged, to supply himself with slices of cake and sweetmeats, which his mother had liberally stowed there, I only caught a casual glance, and lay snug among the literary lumber I have already mentioned. I own I felt it some degradation to be confined with such dull companions; but no doubt they have their use, and may have some important services to boast of, as well as myself. They certainly qualify children to read such books as myself to advantage, and therefore they ought not to be despised. Vanity, alas! has too much influence on men as well as their works. I have since learned to sympathize with the objects I then despised. The tie of misfortune is stronger than that of happiness. When

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I reflect on the shortness of their duration, I have reason to be thankful for the longevity that has fallen to my lot.

My little master gradually recovered his spirits, and contracted an acquaintance with his associates in the school. Their leisure hours were generally spent in play; but at intervals they mutually exhibited their stores of playthings and books to each other, and my owner was not a little proud of me, when he perceived how much some of his school-fellows admired me, and how solicitous they seemed to read me. I was lent from one to another all round the school; and Robinson Crusoe with his fur cap was a person of no small consideration in their eyes.

The more I became a favourite, however, the harder was my usage. I was thumbed without mercy, my leaves began to curl, my binding to break, and when any little fracas arose, I was sometimes hurled with such vengeance at the head of the offending party as to shake my very frame, and threaten instant dissolution. By good luck I escaped pretty well. I had been used till novelty was no more; and was returned to the box quietly to rest, with diminished beauty indeed, but still perfect in all my parts.

The holydays came on, and my master returned home. After the usual greetings and salutations, during which I was not of sufficient importance to be thought of, my old mistress began to recollect me, and asked how I fared. I was produced, and I instantly perceived she was not well pleased with my appearance. "Jackey," said she, "you have been a bad master to poor Robinson Crusoe. He
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suffered less in my keeping for more than twenty years." The youngster hung down his head, threw the blame on his companions, and promised he would take better care of me in future.

My mistress would have been glad to recover me out of his hands; but she was afraid to urge this, as he pretended to be vastly fond of me, and begged to carry me back with him to school. It is easy to give up our own lighter prejudices or partialities to those we really love: the son was unwilling to part with me, and the mother was too fond to deny him this satisfaction.

My history is now approaching to its conclusion. Perhaps my readers will think it time; yet I have omitted numerous anecdotes, which some writers would have swollen to importance, and made them appear as new, though told a thousand times before. I never dealt in very flimsy details, and therefore will not now indulge in them, but hasten to the catastrophe.

About two months after my master's return to school, his pocket-money being all spent, and being disappointed in expected remittances from home, he was driven to some difficulties, when tempted by the sight of fruit and tarts. He had borrowed of his schoolfellows till his credit was wholly gone; and his desire for indulgence was only whetted by the obstacles in the way of gratifying it.

One unpropitious day, the fruit-woman brought a dish of baked apples, smoking hot. Their delicious fumes I suppose got the better of his reason. He ran and fetched me from my dormitory, and asked how many apples she would give him for Robinson Crusoe? The most ignorant and illiterate
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have heard of my name; and the old woman seeing I was still in pretty good condition, offered him a dozen. The bargain was instantly struck; and till my late master had devoured his apples, he never once reflected how poor was his gratification, when he was sensible it must wound the feelings of a tender mother to part with me on such easy terms, and for such an ignoble end. The boy who can sacrifice his duty to his appetite will never make a shining figure; yet I learnt he was sensible of his error when it was too late to recover me—when my destiny was sealed for ever.

The fruit-woman having amused herself with me two or three evenings, carried me to another school along with her usual wares: now I must observe by the by, that she ought to have been banished from attending at any school, for buying what ought not to have been sold. A boy pulling out a fine new shilling to pay for a penny tart, she was so charmed with its appearance, that she wished to have the whole, and made a tender of me and the tart, that she might be mistress of the shining treasure. The lad looked at me, and told her if she would throw in another tart, it was a bargain. No more words passed, and I was again in the hands of a scholar.

As ill fortune would have it, however, he had got one of my brothers in better plight than myself, and only bought me on speculation. The first number of your Magazine appeared in the school. Novelty has always charms; besides, he had a taste for colouring, and the Moss Rose was irresistible. He had bought me for tenpence, and in order to be on the par of exchange, he offered the boy who possessed your work to assist him in his task for a month,

month, besides giving me up. Indolence is as bad as appetite: to be assisted for a month was a tempting proposal. The Young Gentleman's and Lady's Magazine was readily resigned on such conditions, and I became the property of the most careless and stupid master that ever book served. I had already gone through so many revolutions, that I now began to look old: but in good hands I might still have been long useful. The first evening I was turned over with some attention; but my possessor growing sleepy, dropt me as he was passing through a lumber-room to bed, and in the morning I was found more than half consumed by the rats: my poor remains were gathered up, and I was sold to a chandler for a penny.

Such is my history, and I fear it is similar to many of my kind. I had been bartered for apples, sold for tenpence and two tarts; but it mortified me most of all, probably because the event has proved so fatal, that a little new flaunting pamphlet in a French grey patent paper wrapper, tricked out with painted flowers, and composed of more subjects than there are colours in the rainbow, however captivating they may be, should be preferred to that old faithful servant and long-established favourite of the public,

ROBINSON CRUSOE.

NUMERICAL AMUSEMENTS.

~~1. THIRTY boys in a school having misbehaved, and it being resolved that fifteen are to be punished by way of example, to place them in a ring, in such a manner that any fifteen may be saved without apparent partiality. In order to effect this, the boys must be arranged~~