

Preface

That all Defoe's novels, with the exception of "Robinson Crusoe," should have been covered with the dust of neglect for many generations, is a plain proof of how much fashions in taste affect the popularity of the British classics. It is true that three generations or so ago, Defoe's works were edited by both Sir Walter Scott and Hazlitt, and that this masterly piece of realism, "Captain Singleton," was reprinted a few years back in "The Camelot Classics," but it is safe to say that out of every thousand readers of "Robinson Crusoe" only one or two will have even heard of the "Memoirs of a Cavalier," "Colonel Jack," "Moll Flanders," or "Captain Singleton." It is indeed distressing to think that while many scores of thousands of copies of Lord Lytton's flashy romance, "Paul Clifford," have been devoured by the public, "Captain Singleton" has remained unread and almost forgotten. But the explanation is simple. Defoe's plain and homely realism soon grew to be thought vulgar by people who themselves aspired to be refined and genteel. The rapid spread of popular education, in the middle of last century, was responsible for a great many aberrations of taste, and the works of the two most English of Englishmen, Defoe and Hogarth, were judged to be hardly fitting for polite society, as we may see from Lamb's Essay on Hogarth, and from an early edition of Chambers's "Cyclopaedia of English Literature" (1843), where we are told: "Nor is it needful to show how elegant and reflective literature, especially, tends to moralise, to soften, and to adorn the soul and life of man." "Unfortunately the taste or *circumstances of Defoe led him mostly into low life*, and his characters are such *as we cannot sympathise with*. The whole arcana of roguery and villany seems to have been open to him.... It might be thought that the good taste which led Defoe to write in a style of such pure and unpretending English, instead of the inflated manner of vulgar writers, *would have dictated a more careful selection of his subjects*, and kept him from wandering so frequently into the low and disgusting purlieus of vice. But this moral and tasteful discrimination seems to have been wholly wanting," &c. The 'forties were the days when critics still talked learnedly of the "noble style," &c., "the vulgar," of "sinking" or "rising" with "the subject," the days when Books of Beauty were in fashion, and Rembrandt's choice of beggars, wrinkled faces and grey hairs, for his favourite subjects seemed a low and reprehensible taste in "high art." Though critics to-day still ingenuously confound an artist's subject with his treatment of it, and prefer scenes of life to be idealised rather than realised by writers, we have advanced a little since the days of the

poet Montgomery, and it would be difficult now to find anybody writing so confidently—"Unfortunately the taste or circumstances of Defoe led him mostly into low life," however much the critic might believe it. But let us glance at a few passages in "Captain Singleton," which may show us why Defoe excels as a realist, and why his descriptions of "low life" are artistically as perfect as any descriptions of "higher life" in the works of the English novelists. Take the following description of kidnapping:—

"The woman pretending to take me up in her arms and kiss me, and play with me, draws the girl a good way from the house, till at last she makes a fine story to the girl, and bids her go back to the maid, and tell her where she was with the child; that a gentlewoman had taken a fancy to the child and was kissing it, but she should not be frightened, or to that purpose; for they were but just there; and so while the girl went, she carried me quite away.—Page 2.

Now here, in a single sentence, Defoe catches for us the whole soul and character of the situation. It *seems* very simple, but it sums up marvellously an exact observation and knowledge of the arts of the gipsy child-stealer, of her cunning flattery and brassy boldness, and we can see the simple little girl running back to the house to tell the nurse that a fine lady was kissing the child, and had told her to tell where they were and she should not be frightened, &c.; and this picture again calls up the hue and cry after the kidnappers and the fruitless hopes of the parents. In a word, Defoe has condensed in the eight simple lines of his little scene all that is essential to its living truth; and let the young writer note that it is ever the sign of the master to do in three words, or with three strokes, what the ordinary artist does in thirty. Defoe's imagination is so extraordinarily comprehensive in picking out just those little matter-of-fact details that suggest all the other aspects, and that emphasise the character of the scene or situation, that he makes us believe in the actuality of whatever he is describing. So real, so living in every detail is this apocryphal narrative, in "Captain Singleton," of the crossing of Africa by a body of marooned sailors from the coast of Mozambique to the Gold Coast, that one would firmly believe Defoe was committing to writing the verbal narrative of some adventurer in the flesh, if it were not for certain passages—such as the description of the impossible desert on page 90, which proves that Defoe was piecing together his description of an imaginary journey from the geographical records and travellers' tales of his contemporaries, aided perhaps by the confused yarns of some sailor friends. How substantially truthful in spirit and in detail is Defoe's account of Madagascar is proved by the narrative of Robert Drury's

"Captivity in Madagascar," published in 1729. The natives themselves, as described intimately by Drury, who lived amongst them for many years, would produce just such an effect as Defoe describes on rough sailors in their perilous position. The method by which Defoe compels us to accept improbabilities, and lulls our critical sense asleep, is well shown in the following passages:—

"Thieving, lying, swearing, forswearing, joined to the most abominable lewdness, was the stated practice of the ship's crew; adding to it, that with the most unsufferable boasts of their own courage, they were, generally speaking, the most complete cowards that I ever met with."—Page 7.

"All the seamen in a body came up to the rail of the quarter-deck, where the captain was walking with some of his officers, and appointing the boatswain to speak for them, he went up, and falling on his knees to the captain, begged of him in the humblest manner possible, to receive the four men on board again, offering to answer for their fidelity, or to have them kept in chains, till they came to Lisbon, and there to be delivered up to justice, rather than, as they said, to have them left, to be murdered by savages, or devoured by wild beasts. It was a great while ere the captain took any notice of them, but when he did, he ordered the boatswain to be seized, and threatened to bring him to the capstan for speaking for them.... Upon this severity, one of the seamen, bolder than the rest, but still with all possible respect to the captain, besought his honour, as he called him, that he would give leave to some more of them to go on shore, and die with their companions, or, if possible, to assist them to resist the barbarians."—Page 18.

Now the first passage we have quoted about the cowardice, &c., of the Portuguese crew is not in keeping with the second passage, which shows the men as "wishing to die with their companions"; but so actual is the scene of the seamen "in a body coming up to the rail of the quarter-deck," that we cannot but believe the thing happened so, just as we believe in all the thousand little details of the imaginary narrative of "Robinson Crusoe." This feat of the imagination Defoe strengthens in the most artful manner, by putting in the mouths of his characters various reflections to substantiate the narrative. For example, in the description, on page 263, of the savages who lined the perilous channel in a half-moon, where the European ship lay, we find the afterthoughts are added so naturally, that they would carry conviction to any judge or jury:—

"They little thought what service they had done us, and how unwittingly, and by the greatest ignorance, they had made themselves pilots to

us, while we, having not sounded the place, might have been lost before we were aware. *It is true we might have sounded our new harbour, before we had ventured out; but I cannot say for certain, whether we should or not; for I, for my part, had not the least suspicion of what our real case was; however, I say, perhaps, before we had weighed, we should have looked about us a little.*"

Turning to the other literary qualities that make Defoe's novels great, if little read, classics, how delightful are the little satiric touches that add grave weight to the story. Consider the following: "My good gipsy mother, for some of her worthy actions, no doubt, happened in process of time to be hanged, and as this fell out something too soon for me to be perfected in the strolling trade," &c.(p. 3). Every other word here is dryly satiric, and the large free callousness and careless brutality of Defoe's days with regard to the life of criminals is conveyed in half a sentence. And what an amount of shrewd observation is summed up in this one saying: "Upon these foundations, William said he was satisfied we might trust them; for, says William, I would as soon trust a man whose interest binds him to be just to me, as a man whose principle binds himself" (p. 227). Extremely subtle is also this remark: "*Why, says I, did you ever know a pirate repent? At this he started a little and returned, At the gallows I have known one repent, and I hope thou wilt be the second.*" The character of William the Quaker pirate is a masterpiece of shrewd humour. He is the first Quaker brought into English fiction, and we know of no other Friend in latter-day fiction to equal him. Defoe in his inimitable manner has defined surely and deftly the peculiar characteristics of the sect in this portrait. On three separate occasions we find William saving unfortunate natives or defenceless prisoners from the cruel and wicked barbarity of the sailors. At page 183, for example, the reader will find a most penetrating analysis of the dense stupidity which so often accompanies man's love of bloodshed. The sketch of the second lieutenant, who was for "murdering the negroes to make them tell," when he could not make them even understand what he wanted, is worthy of Tolstoy. We have not space here to dwell upon the scores of passages of similar deep insight which make "Captain Singleton" a most true and vivid commentary on the life of Defoe's times, but we may call special attention to the passage on page 189 which describe the sale of the negroes to the planters; to the description of the awakening of the conscience of Captain Singleton through terror at the fire-cloud (page 222); and to the extraordinarily picturesque conversation between William and the captive Dutchman (page 264). Finally, if the reader wishes to taste Defoe's flavour in its perfection let him examine carefully those passages in the

concluding twenty pages of the book, wherein Captain Singleton is shown as awakening to the wickedness of his past life, and the admirable dry reasoning of William by which the Quaker prevents him from committing suicide and persuades him to keep his ill-gotten wealth, "with a resolution to do what right with it we are able; and who knows what opportunity Providence may put into our hands.... As it is without doubt, our present business is to go to some place of safety, where we may wait His will." How admirable is the passage about William's sister, the widow with four children who kept a little shop in the Minories, and that in which the penitent ex-pirates are shown us as hesitating in Venice for two years before they durst venture to England for fear of the gallows.

"Captain Singleton" was published in 1720, a year after "Robinson Crusoe," when Defoe was fifty-nine. Twenty years before had seen "The True-Born Englishman" and "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters"; and we are told that from "June 1687 to almost the very week of his death in 1731 a stream of controversial books and pamphlets poured from his pen commenting upon and marking every important passing event." The fecundity of Defoe as a journalist alone surpasses that of any great journalist we can name, William Cobbett not excepted, and we may add that the style of "Captain Singleton," like that of "Robinson Crusoe," is so perfect that there is not a single ineffective passage, or indeed a weak sentence, to be found in the book.

EDWARD GARNETT.

The Life, Adventures & Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton

As it is usual for great persons, whose lives have been remarkable, and whose actions deserve recording to posterity, to insist much upon their originals, give full accounts of their families, and the histories of their ancestors, so, that I may be methodical, I shall do the same, though I can look but a very little way into my pedigree, as you will see presently.

If I may believe the woman whom I was taught to call mother, I was a little boy, of about two years old, very well dressed, had a nursery-maid to attend me, who took me out on a fine summer's evening into the fields towards Islington, as she pretended, to give the child some air; a little girl being with her, of twelve or fourteen years old, that lived in the neighbourhood. The maid, whether by appointment or otherwise, meets with a fellow, her sweetheart, as I suppose; he carries her into a public-house, to give her a pot and a cake; and while they were toying in the house the girl plays about, with me in her hand, in the garden and at the door, sometimes in sight, sometimes out of sight, thinking no harm.

At this juncture comes by one of those sort of people who, it seems, made it their business to spirit away little children. This was a hellish trade in those days, and chiefly practised where they found little children very well dressed, or for bigger children, to sell them to the plantations.

The woman, pretending to take me up in her arms and kiss me, and play with me, draws the girl a good way from the house, till at last she makes a fine story to the girl, and bids her go back to the maid, and tell her where she was with the child; that a gentlewoman had taken a fancy to the child, and was kissing of it, but she should not be frightened, or to that purpose; for they were but just there; and so, while the girl went, she carries me quite away.

From this time, it seems, I was disposed of to a beggar woman that wanted a pretty little child to set out her case; and after that, to a gipsy, under whose government I continued till I was about six years old. And this woman, though I was continually dragged about with her from one part of the country to another, yet never let me want for anything; and I called her mother; though she told me at last she was not my mother, but that she bought me for twelve shillings of another woman, who told her how she came by me, and told her that my name was Bob Singleton, not Robert, but plain Bob; for it seems they never knew by what name I was christened.

It is in vain to reflect here, what a terrible fright the careless hussy was in that lost me; what treatment she received from my justly enraged father and mother, and the horror these must be in at the thoughts of their child being thus carried away; for as I never knew anything of the matter, but just what I have related, nor who my father and mother were, so it would make but a needless digression to talk of it here.

My good gipsy mother, for some of her worthy actions no doubt, happened in process of time to be hanged; and as this fell out something too soon for me to be perfected in the strolling trade, the parish where I was left, which for my life I can't remember, took some care of me, to be sure; for the first thing I can remember of myself afterwards, was, that I went to a parish school, and the minister of the parish used to talk to me to be a good boy; and that, though I was but a poor boy, if I minded my book, and served God, I might make a good man.

I believe I was frequently removed from one town to another, perhaps as the parishes disputed my supposed mother's last settlement. Whether I was so shifted by passes, or otherwise, I know not; but the town where I last was kept, whatever its name was, must be not far off from the seaside; for a master of a ship who took a fancy to me, was the first that brought me to a place not far from Southampton, which I afterwards knew to be Bussleton; and there I attended the carpenters, and such people as were employed in building a ship for him; and when it was done, though I was not above twelve years old, he carried me to sea with him on a voyage to Newfoundland.

I lived well enough, and pleased my master so well that he called me his own boy; and I would have called him father, but he would not allow it, for he had children of his own. I went three or four voyages with him, and grew a great sturdy boy, when, coming home again from the banks of Newfoundland, we were taken by an Algerine rover, or man-of-war; which, if my account stands right, was about the year 1695, for you may be sure I kept no journal.

I was not much concerned at the disaster, though I saw my master, after having been wounded by a splinter in the head during the engagement, very barbarously used by the Turks; I say, I was not much concerned, till, upon some unlucky thing I said, which, as I remember, was about abusing my master, they took me and beat me most unmercifully with a flat stick on the soles of my feet, so that I could neither go or stand for several days together.

But my good fortune was my friend upon this occasion; for, as they were sailing away with our ship in tow as a prize, steering for the Straits,

and in sight of the bay of Cadiz, the Turkish rover was attacked by two great Portuguese men-of-war, and taken and carried into Lisbon.

As I was not much concerned at my captivity, not indeed understanding the consequences of it, if it had continued, so I was not suitably sensible of my deliverance; nor, indeed, was it so much a deliverance to me as it would otherwise have been, for my master, who was the only friend I had in the world, died at Lisbon of his wounds; and I being then almost reduced to my primitive state, viz., of starving, had this addition to it, that it was in a foreign country too, where I knew nobody and could not speak a word of their language. However, I fared better here than I had reason to expect; for when all the rest of our men had their liberty to go where they would, I, that knew not whither to go, stayed in the ship for several days, till at length one of the lieutenants seeing me, inquired what that young English dog did there, and why they did not turn him on shore.

I heard him, and partly understood what he meant, though not what he said, and began then to be in a terrible fright; for I knew not where to get a bit of bread; when the pilot of the ship, an old seaman, seeing me look very dull, came to me, and speaking broken English to me, told me I must be gone. "Whither must I go?" said I. "Where you will," said he, "home to your own country, if you will." "How must I go thither?" said I. "Why, have you no friend?" said he. "No," said I, "not in the world, but that dog," pointing to the ship's dog (who, having stolen a piece of meat just before, had brought it close by me, and I had taken it from him, and ate it), "for he has been a good friend, and brought me my dinner."

"Well, well," says he, "you must have your dinner. Will you go with me?" "Yes," says I, "with all my heart." In short, the old pilot took me home with him, and used me tolerably well, though I fared hard enough; and I lived with him about two years, during which time he was soliciting his business, and at length got to be master or pilot under Don Garcia de Pimentesia de Carravallas, captain of a Portuguese galleon or carrack, which was bound to Goa, in the East Indies; and immediately having gotten his commission, put me on board to look after his cabin, in which he had stored himself with abundance of liquors, succades, sugar, spices, and other things, for his accommodation in the voyage, and laid in afterwards a considerable quantity of European goods, fine lace and linen; and also baize, woollen cloth, stuffs, &c., under the pretence of his clothes.

I was too young in the trade to keep any journal of this voyage, though my master, who was, for a Portuguese, a pretty good artist, prompted

me to it; but my not understanding the language was one hindrance; at least it served me for an excuse. However, after some time, I began to look into his charts and books; and, as I could write a tolerable hand, understood some Latin, and began to have a little smattering of the Portuguese tongue, so I began to get a superficial knowledge of navigation, but not such as was likely to be sufficient to carry me through a life of adventure, as mine was to be. In short, I learned several material things in this voyage among the Portuguese; I learned particularly to be an arrant thief and a bad sailor; and I think I may say they are the best masters for teaching both these of any nation in the world.

We made our way for the East Indies, by the coast of Brazil; not that it is in the course of sailing the way thither, but our captain, either on his own account, or by the direction of the merchants, went thither first, where at All Saints' Bay, or, as they call it in Portugal, the Rio de Todos los Santos, we delivered near a hundred tons of goods, and took in a considerable quantity of gold, with some chests of sugar, and seventy or eighty great rolls of tobacco, every roll weighing at least a hundredweight.

Here, being lodged on shore by my master's order, I had the charge of the captain's business, he having seen me very diligent for my own master; and in requital for his mistaken confidence, I found means to secure, that is to say, to steal, about twenty moidores out of the gold that was shipped on board by the merchants, and this was my first adventure.

We had a tolerable voyage from hence to the Cape de Bona Speranza; and I was reputed as a mighty diligent servant to my master, and very faithful. I was diligent indeed, but I was very far from honest; however, they thought me honest, which, by the way, was their very great mistake. Upon this very mistake the captain took a particular liking to me, and employed me frequently on his own occasion; and, on the other hand, in recompense for my officious diligence, I received several particular favours from him; particularly, I was, by the captain's command, made a kind of a steward under the ship's steward, for such provisions as the captain demanded for his own table. He had another steward for his private stores besides, but my office concerned only what the captain called for of the ship's stores for his private use.

However, by this means I had opportunity particularly to take care of my master's man, and to furnish myself with sufficient provisions to make me live much better than the other people in the ship; for the captain seldom ordered anything out of the ship's stores, as above, but I snipt some of it for my own share. We arrived at Goa, in the East Indies,

in about seven months from Lisbon, and remained there eight more; during which time I had indeed nothing to do, my master being generally on shore, but to learn everything that is wicked among the Portuguese, a nation the most perfidious and the most debauched, the most insolent and cruel, of any that pretend to call themselves Christians, in the world.

Thieving, lying, swearing, forswearing, joined to the most abominable lewdness, was the stated practice of the ship's crew; adding to it, that, with the most insufferable boasts of their own courage, they were, generally speaking, the most complete cowards that I ever met with; and the consequence of their cowardice was evident upon many occasions. However, there was here and there one among them that was not so bad as the rest; and, as my lot fell among them, it made me have the most contemptible thoughts of the rest, as indeed they deserved.

I was exactly fitted for their society indeed; for I had no sense of virtue or religion upon me. I had never heard much of either, except what a good old parson had said to me when I was a child of about eight or nine years old; nay, I was preparing and growing up apace to be as wicked as anybody could be, or perhaps ever was. Fate certainly thus directed my beginning, knowing that I had work which I had to do in the world, which nothing but one hardened against all sense of honesty or religion could go through; and yet, even in this state of original wickedness, I entertained such a settled abhorrence of the abandoned vileness of the Portuguese, that I could not but hate them most heartily from the beginning, and all my life afterwards. They were so brutishly wicked, so base and perfidious, not only to strangers but to one another, so meanly submissive when subjected, so insolent, or barbarous and tyrannical, when superior, that I thought there was something in them that shocked my very nature. Add to this that it is natural to an Englishman to hate a coward, it all joined together to make the devil and a Portuguese equally my aversion.

However, according to the English proverb, he that is shipped with the devil must sail with the devil; I was among them, and I managed myself as well as I could. My master had consented that I should assist the captain in the office, as above; but, as I understood afterwards that the captain allowed my master half a moidore a month for my service, and that he had my name upon the ship's books also, I expected that when the ship came to be paid four months' wages at the Indies, as they, it seems, always do, my master would let me have something for myself.

But I was wrong in my man, for he was none of that kind; he had taken me up as in distress, and his business was to keep me so, and make

his market of me as well as he could, which I began to think of after a different manner than I did at first, for at first I thought he had entertained me in mere charity, upon seeing my distressed circumstances, but did not doubt but when he put me on board the ship, I should have some wages for my service.

But he thought, it seems, quite otherwise; and when I procured one to speak to him about it, when the ship was paid at Goa, he flew into the greatest rage imaginable, and called me English dog, young heretic, and threatened to put me into the Inquisition. Indeed, of all the names the four-and-twenty letters could make up, he should not have called me heretic; for as I knew nothing about religion, neither Protestant from Papist, or either of them from a Mahometan, I could never be a heretic. However, it passed but a little, but, as young as I was, I had been carried into the Inquisition, and there, if they had asked me if I was a Protestant or a Catholic, I should have said yes to that which came first. If it had been the Protestant they had asked first, it had certainly made a martyr of me for I did not know what.

But the very priest they carried with them, or chaplain of the ship, as we called him, saved me; for seeing me a boy entirely ignorant of religion, and ready to do or say anything they bid me, he asked me some questions about it, which he found I answered so very simply, that he took it upon him to tell them he would answer for my being a good Catholic, and he hoped he should be the means of saving my soul, and he pleased himself that it was to be a work of merit to him; so he made me as good a Papist as any of them in about a week's time.

I then told him my case about my master; how, it is true, he had taken me up in a miserable case on board a man-of-war at Lisbon; and I was indebted to him for bringing me on board this ship; that if I had been left at Lisbon, I might have starved, and the like; and therefore I was willing to serve him, but that I hoped he would give me some little consideration for my service, or let me know how long he expected I should serve him for nothing.

It was all one; neither the priest nor any one else could prevail with him, but that I was not his servant but his slave, that he took me in the Algerine, and that I was a Turk, only pretended to be an English boy to get my liberty, and he would carry me to the Inquisition as a Turk.

This frightened me out of my wits, for I had nobody to vouch for me what I was, or from whence I came; but the good Padre Antonio, for that was his name, cleared me of that part by a way I did not understand; for he came to me one morning with two sailors, and told me they must

search me, to bear witness that I was not a Turk. I was amazed at them, and frightened, and did not understand them, nor could I imagine what they intended to do to me. However, stripping me, they were soon satisfied, and Father Antony bade me be easy, for they could all witness that I was no Turk. So I escaped that part of my master's cruelty.

And now I resolved from that time to run away from him if I could, but there was no doing of it there, for there were not ships of any nation in the world in that port, except two or three Persian vessels from Ormus, so that if I had offered to go away from him, he would have had me seized on shore, and brought on board by force; so that I had no remedy but patience. And this he brought to an end too as soon as he could, for after this he began to use me ill, and not only to straiten my provisions, but to beat and torture me in a barbarous manner for every trifle, so that, in a word, my life began to be very miserable.

The violence of this usage of me, and the impossibility of my escape from his hands, set my head a-working upon all sorts of mischief, and in particular I resolved, after studying all other ways to deliver myself, and finding all ineffectual, I say, I resolved to murder him. With this hellish resolution in my head, I spent whole nights and days contriving how to put it in execution, the devil prompting me very warmly to the fact. I was indeed entirely at a loss for the means, for I had neither gun or sword, nor any weapon to assault him with; poison I had my thoughts much upon, but knew not where to get any; or, if I might have got it, I did not know the country word for it, or by what name to ask for it.

In this manner I quitted the fact, intentionally, a hundred and a hundred times; but Providence, either for his sake or for mine, always frustrated my designs, and I could never bring it to pass; so I was obliged to continue in his chains till the ship, having taken in her loading, set sail for Portugal.

I can say nothing here to the manner of our voyage, for, as I said, I kept no journal; but this I can give an account of, that having been once as high as the Cape of Good Hope, as we call it, or Cabo de Bona Speranza, as they call it, we were driven back again by a violent storm from the W.S.W., which held us six days and nights a great way to the eastward, and after that, standing afore the wind for several days more, we at last came to an anchor on the coast of Madagascar.

The storm had been so violent that the ship had received a great deal of damage, and it required some time to repair her; so, standing in nearer the shore, the pilot, my master, brought the ship into a very good

harbour, where we rid in twenty-six fathoms water, about half a mile from the shore.

While the ship rode here there happened a most desperate mutiny among the men, upon account of some deficiency in their allowance, which came to that height that they threatened the captain to set him on shore, and go back with the ship to Goa. I wished they would with all my heart, for I was full of mischief in my head, and ready enough to do any. So, though I was but a boy, as they called me, yet I prompted the mischief all I could, and embarked in it so openly, that I escaped very little being hanged in the first and most early part of my life; for the captain had some notice that there was a design laid by some of the company to murder him; and having, partly by money and promises, and partly by threatening and torture, brought two fellows to confess the particulars, and the names of the persons concerned, they were presently apprehended, till, one accusing another, no less than sixteen men were seized and put into irons, whereof I was one.

The captain, who was made desperate by his danger, resolving to clear the ship of his enemies, tried us all, and we were all condemned to die. The manner of his process I was too young to take notice of; but the purser and one of the gunners were hanged immediately, and I expected it with the rest. I do not remember any great concern I was under about it, only that I cried very much, for I knew little then of this world, and nothing at all of the next.

However, the captain contented himself with executing these two, and some of the rest, upon their humble submission and promise of future good behaviour, were pardoned; but five were ordered to be set on shore on the island and left there, of which I was one. My master used all his interest with the captain to have me excused, but could not obtain it; for somebody having told him that I was one of them who was singled out to have killed him, when my master desired I might not be set on shore, the captain told him I should stay on board if he desired it, but then I should be hanged, so he might choose for me which he thought best. The captain, it seems, was particularly provoked at my being concerned in the treachery, because of his having been so kind to me, and of his having singled me out to serve him, as I have said above; and this, perhaps, obliged him to give my master such a rough choice, either to set me on shore or to have me hanged on board. And had my master, indeed, known what good-will I had for him, he would not have been long in choosing for me; for I had certainly determined to do him a mischief the first opportunity I had for it. This was, therefore, a good providence for

me to keep me from dipping my hands in blood, and it made me more tender afterwards in matters of blood than I believe I should otherwise have been. But as to my being one of them that was to kill the captain, that I was wronged in, for I was not the person, but it was really one of them that were pardoned, he having the good luck not to have that part discovered.

I was now to enter upon a part of independent life, a thing I was indeed very ill prepared to manage, for I was perfectly loose and dissolute in my behaviour, bold and wicked while I was under government, and now perfectly unfit to be trusted with liberty, for I was as ripe for any villainy as a young fellow that had no solid thought ever placed in his mind could be supposed to be. Education, as you have heard, I had none; and all the little scenes of life I had passed through had been full of dangers and desperate circumstances; but I was either so young or so stupid, that I escaped the grief and anxiety of them, for want of having a sense of their tendency and consequences.

This thoughtless, unconcerned temper had one felicity indeed in it, that it made me daring and ready for doing any mischief, and kept off the sorrow which otherwise ought to have attended me when I fell into any mischief; that this stupidity was instead of a happiness to me, for it left my thoughts free to act upon means of escape and deliverance in my distress, however great it might be; whereas my companions in the misery were so sunk by their fear and grief, that they abandoned themselves to the misery of their condition, and gave over all thought but of their perishing and starving, being devoured by wild beasts, murdered, and perhaps eaten by cannibals, and the like.

I was but a young fellow, about seventeen or eighteen; but hearing what was to be my fate, I received it with no appearance of discouragement; but I asked what my master said to it, and being told that he had used his utmost interest to save me, but the captain had answered I should either go on shore or be hanged on board, which he pleased, I then gave over all hope of being received again. I was not very thankful in my thoughts to my master for his soliciting the captain for me, because I knew that what he did was not in kindness to me so much as in kindness to himself; I mean, to preserve the wages which he got for me, which amounted to above six dollars a month, including what the captain allowed him for my particular service to him.

When I understood that my master was so apparently kind, I asked if I might not be admitted to speak with him, and they told me I might, if my master would come down to me, but I could not be allowed to come

up to him; so then I desired my master might be spoke to to come to me, and he accordingly came to me. I fell on my knees to him, and begged he would forgive me what I had done to displease him; and indeed the resolution I had taken to murder him lay with some horror upon my mind just at that time, so that I was once just a-going to confess it, and beg him to forgive me, but I kept it in. He told me he had done all he could to obtain my pardon of the captain, but could not and he knew no way for me but to have patience, and submit to my fate; and if they came to speak with any ship of their nation at the Cape, he would endeavour to have them stand in, and fetch us off again, if we might be found.

Then I begged I might have my clothes on shore with me. He told me he was afraid I should have little need of clothes, for he did not see how we could long subsist on the island, and that he had been told that the inhabitants were cannibals or men-eaters (though he had no reason for that suggestion), and we should not be able to live among them. I told him I was not so afraid of that as I was of starving for want of victuals; and as for the inhabitants being cannibals, I believed we should be more likely to eat them than they us, if we could but get at them. But I was mightily concerned, I said, we should have no weapons with us to defend ourselves, and I begged nothing now, but that he would give me a gun and a sword, with a little powder and shot.

He smiled, and said they would signify nothing to us, for it was impossible for us to pretend to preserve our lives among such a populous and desperate nation as the people of this island were. I told him that, however, it would do us this good, for we should not be devoured or destroyed immediately; so I begged hard for the gun. At last he told me he did not know whether the captain would give him leave to give me a gun, and if not, he durst not do it; but he promised to use his interest to obtain it for me, which he did, and the next day he sent me a gun, with some ammunition, but told me the captain would not suffer the ammunition to be given us till we were set all on shore, and till he was just going to set sail. He also sent me the few clothes I had in the ship, which indeed were not many.

Two days after this, we were all carried on shore together; the rest of my fellow-criminals hearing I had a gun, and some powder and shot, solicited for liberty to carry the like with them, which was also granted them; and thus we were set on shore to shift for ourselves.

At our first coming into the island we were terrified exceedingly with the sight of the barbarous people, whose figure was made more terrible to us than it really was by the report we had of them from the seamen;

but when we came to converse with them awhile, we found they were not cannibals, as was reported, or such as would fall immediately upon us and eat us up; but they came and sat down by us, and wondered much at our clothes and arms, and made signs to give us some victuals, such as they had, which was only roots and plants dug out of the ground for the present, but they brought us fowls and flesh afterwards in good plenty.

This encouraged the other four men that were with me very much, for they were quite dejected before; but now they began to be very familiar with them, and made signs, that if they would use us kindly, we would stay and live with them; which they seemed glad of, though they knew little of the necessity we were under to do so, or how much we were afraid of them.

However, upon second thoughts we resolved that we would only stay in that part so long as the ship rid in the bay, and then making them believe we were gone with the ship, we would go and place ourselves, if possible, where there were no inhabitants to be seen, and so live as we could, or perhaps watch for a ship that might be driven upon the coast as we were.

The ship continued a fortnight in the roads, repairing some damage which had been done her in the late storm, and taking in wood and water; and during this time, the boat coming often on shore, the men brought us several refreshments, and the natives believing we only belonged to the ship, were civil enough. We lived in a kind of a tent on the shore, or rather a hut, which we made with the boughs of trees, and sometimes in the night retired to a wood a little out of their way, to let them think we were gone on board the ship. However, we found them barbarous, treacherous, and villainous enough in their nature, only civil from fear, and therefore concluded we should soon fall into their hands when the ship was gone.

The sense of this wrought upon my fellow-sufferers even to distraction; and one of them, being a carpenter, in his mad fit, swam off to the ship in the night, though she lay then a league to sea, and made such pitiful moan to be taken in, that the captain was prevailed with at last to take him in, though they let him lie swimming three hours in the water before he consented to it.

Upon this, and his humble submission, the captain received him, and, in a word, the importunity of this man (who for some time petitioned to be taken in, though they hanged him as soon as they had him) was such as could not be resisted; for, after he had swam so long about the ship, he

was not able to reach the shore again; and the captain saw evidently that the man must be taken on board or suffered to drown, and the whole ship's company offering to be bound for him for his good behaviour, the captain at last yielded, and he was taken up, but almost dead with his being so long in the water.

When this man was got in, he never left importuning the captain, and all the rest of the officers, in behalf of us that were behind, but to the very last day the captain was inexorable; when, at the time their preparations were making to sail, and orders given to hoist the boats into the ship, all the seamen in a body came up to the rail of the quarter-deck, where the captain was walking with some of his officers, and appointing the boatswain to speak for them, he went up, and falling on his knees to the captain, begged of him, in the humblest manner possible, to receive the four men on board again, offering to answer for their fidelity, or to have them kept in chains till they came to Lisbon, and there to be delivered up to justice, rather than, as they said, to have them left to be murdered by savages, or devoured by wild beasts. It was a great while ere the captain took any notice of them, but when he did, he ordered the boatswain to be seized, and threatened to bring him to the capstan for speaking for them.

Upon this severity, one of the seamen, bolder than the rest, but still with all possible respect to the captain, besought his honour, as he called him, that he would give leave to some more of them to go on shore, and die with their companions, or, if possible, to assist them to resist the barbarians. The captain, rather provoked than cowed with this, came to the barricade of the quarter-deck, and speaking very prudently to the men (for had he spoken roughly, two-thirds of them would have left the ship, if not all of them), he told them, it was for their safety as well as his own that he had been obliged to that severity; that mutiny on board a ship was the same thing as treason in a king's palace, and he could not answer it to his owners and employers to trust the ship and goods committed to his charge with men who had entertained thoughts of the worst and blackest nature; that he wished heartily that it had been anywhere else that they had been set on shore, where they might have been in less hazard from the savages; that, if he had designed they should be destroyed, he could as well have executed them on board as the other two; that he wished it had been in some other part of the world, where he might have delivered them up to the civil justice, or might have left them among Christians; but it was better their lives were put in hazard than his life, and the safety of the ship; and that though he did not know that he had deserved so ill of any of them as that they should leave the ship

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