

The Story of Robinson Crusoe.



Printed in Bavaria.

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Robinson Crusoe was born in the city of York, in the year 1635. His parents sent him to school and it was their wish, that he should be a clergyman, but one day, in an evil hour, he went on board of a vessel starting for Africa.

When they had been out about ten weeks, a great storm came up, and the ship was tossed about for many days, until they did not know where they were. Suddenly they struck a bank of sand, and the sea broke over the ship in such a way that they could not hope to have her hold many moments without breaking into pieces. In this distress the crew launched a boat; after they had been driven ten miles, a wave struck them so furiously that it upset the boat at once. Though Robinson swam well, the waves were so strong, that he was dashed against a rock with such force that it left him senseless. But he recovered before the waves returned and got to the mainland in safety. Next morning the sea was calm, Robinson could see the ship about a mile from the shore and he swam out to her when the tide ebbed. He found all the provisions were dry, he filled his pockets with biscuits, threw overboard several spare yards and spars. Then he went down the ship's side and tied them together, and laying a few short pieces of plank upon them, he had a raft strong enough to bear him with a moderate weight. Next he lowered some chests, filled them with provisions, fetched guns and gunpowder and started with this cargo for the shore.

Every day he made a trip to the vessel bringing ashore all that he thought would be useful to him. The night of the twelfth day there was a great storm and when he awoke in the morning the ship was vanished.

Then he gave his thoughts to providing himself with a safe habitation. He pitched a tent, which he made of sails, that he had brought from the ship. He had found aboard a dog and a goat, which were trusty servants to him for many years; besides them he had a parrot, which he caught and taught to speak and which often gave him much amusement. He went out every day with his gun to hunt for food and found that there were goats running wild on the island and often succeeded in shooting one, but being afraid that his ammunition would, in time, all be gone, he set a trap to take some alive and succeeded in catching several. He made chairs and tables; to provide himself with clothes he saved the skins of all the creatures and dried them, and made garments for himself out of them; he made also of skins an umbrella, which he needed to keep off sun and rain.

For a long time he brooded over the idea of making a canoe out of the trunk of a tree, as the Indians do, and at last set to work at the task. He cut a large tree, and spent over two months shaping it into the form of a boat, he succeeded in launching it and made a tour around the island, but when he had been out three days a storm arose that he was near to be lost. At last he was able to bring his boat to the shore.



Looking out to sea.



Friday at Robinson's Feet.

Thus years and years passed away. Although he had, to some extent, become contented with his solitary lot, yet at times a terrible sense of loneliness and desolation came over him. Many times he went to the top of a hill, where he could look out to sea, in hopes of catching sight of a ship.

But one day he saw a sight which turned his thoughts in a new direction. It was the print of a naked foot upon the sand near the shore; it filled him with fear for it showed that the island must sometimes be visited by savages.

One day, quite early in the morning, he could see the light of a fire about two miles away; going to the top of a hill he saw that six canoes were drawn up on the shore, while a swarm of naked savages were dancing round the fire. Presently they dragged two poor wretches from the boats; one of them was knocked down at once, and several of the savages set to work to cut him up. They were evidently cannibals, and were going to hold one of their horrible feasts on their captives. The other captive was left standing for a moment, and seeing a chance to escape, started to run. Robinson was greatly alarmed when he saw that the man was running directly towards him, but seeing that only two pursued him, Robinson made up his mind to help him. When they were near enough, he took a short cut down the hill and placed himself between pursuers and pursued. Then he advanced on the foremost, and knocked him down; the other was going to shoot, when he fired at him and killed him. Then he made signs to the poor runaway to come

to him, and he did so in fear, kneeling at Robinson's feet. He was a handsome fellow with good features and was now Robinson's companion. He soon began to teach him to speak English and gave him the name Friday, for that was the day he had saved his life. Then he taught him everything that he thought would make him useful.

One morning Friday brought alarming news that a ship was in sight. Robinson thought, he would not show himself, until he could learn, what had brought the ship there, and it was well that he did not. He watched in concealment and saw a boat leaving the ship and making for the shore.

Ten men landed and left three of them on the island. Robinson approached these three and heard that they were the captain of the ship and two passengers and that there had been a mutiny on board. Robinson offered to aid them to recover the ship, brought guns and they shot the leaders. The others were much surprised and were happy to be allowed to return to their duty.

Robinson returned with this ship, taking aboard with himself Friday, his parrot and his umbrella, leaving the island twenty-five years, after he had landed upon it. He was glad to be back in his old home and to meet his parents in good state of health.



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