

THE  
COLONISTS;

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF  
ALEXANDER SELKIRK.



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THE  
COLONISTS.



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THE COLONISTS.



‘COME,’ said Mr. Barlow to his boys, ‘I have a new play for you. I will be the founder of a colony, and you shall be people of different trades and professions, coming to offer yourselves to go with me—What are you, Arthur?’

A. I am a farmer, sir.



*Mr. B.* Very well! Farming is the chief thing we have to depend upon. 'The farmer puts the seed into the earth, and takes care of it when it is grown to the ripe corn; without the farmer we should have no bread. But you must work very hard; there will be trees to cut down, and roots to drag, and a great deal of labor.

*A.* I shall be ready to do my part.

*Mr. B.* Well, then, I shall take you willingly, and as many more such good fellows as you can find. We shall have land enough; and you may fall to work as soon as you please. Now for the next.

*Beverly.* I am a miller, sir.

*Mr. B.* A very useful trade! our corn must be ground, or it will do us little good, but what must we do for a mill, my friend?

*B.* I suppose we must make one.

*Mr. B.* Then we must take a *millwright* with us, and carry mill stones. Who is next?

*Charles.* I am a carpenter, sir.



*Mr. B.* The most necessary man that could offer. We shall find you work enough, never fear. There will be houses to build, fences to make, and chairs and tables besides. But all our timber is growing; we shall have hard work to fell it, to saw planks and to shape posts.

*C.* I will do my best, sir.

*Mr. B.* Then I engage you, but you had better bring two or three *able hands* along with you.

*Dellville.* I am a blacksmith.



*Mr. B.* An excellent companion for the carpenter. We cannot do without either of you. You must bring your great bellows, and anvil, and we will set up a *forge* for you, as soon as we arrive. By the by, we shall want a mason for that.

*Edward.* I am one, sir.

*Mr. B.* Though we may live in log houses at first, we shall want brick work, or

stone work, for chimneys, hearths, and ovens, so their will be employment for a mason. Can you make bricks, and burn lime?



*E.* I will try what I can do, sir.

*Mr. B.* No man can do more. I engage you. Who is the next?

*Francis.* I am a shoe maker.



*Mr. B.* Shoes we cannot do well without, but I fear we shall get no leather.

*E.* But I can dress skins, sir.

*Mr. B.* Can you? Then you are a clever fellow. I will have you, though I give you double wages.

*George.* I am a tailor, sir.



*Mr. B.* We must not go naked ; so there will be work for a tailor. But, you are not above mending, I hope, for we must not mind wearing patched clothes while we work in the woods.

*G.* I am not, sir.

*Mr. B.* Then I engage you, too.

*Henry.* I am a silversmith, sir.

*Mr. B.* Then, my friend, you cannot go to a worse place than a new colony to set up your trade in.

*H.* But I understand clock and watch making too.

*Mr. B.* We shall want to know how time goes, but we cannot afford to employ you. At present, you had better stay where you are.

*Jasper.* I am a barber, and hair dresser.

*Mr. B.* What can we do with you ? If you will shave our men's rough beards once a week, and crop their hair once a quarter, and be content to help the carpenter the rest

of the time, we will take you. But you will have no ladies to curl, or gentlemen to powder, I assure you.

*Lewis.* I am a doctor.



*Mr. B.* Then, sir, you are very welcome ; we shall some of us be sick, and we are likely to get cuts, and bruises, and broken bones. You will be very useful. We shall take you with pleasure.

*Maurice.* I am a lawyer, sir.

*Mr. B.* Sir, your most obedient servant. When we are rich enough to go to law, we will let you know.



*Oliver.* I am a schoolmaster.



*Mr. B.* That is a very respectable profession ; as soon as our children are old enough, we shall be glad of your services. Though we are hard working men, we do not mean to be ignorant ; every one among us shall be taught reading and writing. Until we have employment for you in teaching, if you will keep our accounts, and read sermons to us on Sundays, we shall be glad to have you among us. Will you go ?

*O.* With all my heart, sir.

*Mr. B.* Who comes here ?

*Philip.* I am a soldier, sir ; will you have me ?



*Mr. B.* We are peaceable people, and I hope we shall not be obliged to fight. We will learn to defend ourselves, if we have occasion.

*Robert.* I am a gentleman, sir.



*Mr. B.* A gentleman! And what good can you do us.

*R.* I mean to amuse myself.

*Mr. B.* Do you expect that we should pay for your amusement?

*R.* I expect to shoot game enough for my own eating; you can give me a little bread and a few vegetables; and the barber shall be my servant.

*Mr. B.* The barber is much obliged to you. Pray, sir, why should we do all this for you?

*R.* Why, sir, that you may have the credit of saying, that you have *one gentleman* at least in your colony.

*Mr. B.* Ha, ha, ha! A fine gentleman truly. Sir, when we desire the honor of your company we will send for you.

EVENINGS AT HOME.



HISTORY  
OF  
ALEXANDER SELKIRK.

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ALEXANDER SELKIRK, whose adventures gave rise to a well known historical romance, was born at Largo, in the county of Fife, about the year 1676, and was bred a seaman. He went from England, in 1703,

in the capacity of sailing-master of a small vessel called the Cinque Ports Galley ; and, in September, the same year, sailed from Cork, in company with another ship of 26 guns and 120 men, called the St. George, commanded by that famous navigator William Dampier, intending to cruise on the Spaniards in the South Sea. On the coast of Brazil, Pickering died, and was succeeded in his command by his lieutenant, Thomas Stradling. They proceeded on their voyage round Cape Horn to the island of Juan Fernandez, where Selkirk and his captain had a difference, which with the circumstance of the ship's being very leaky, and in bad condition, induced him to determine upon staying there alone ; but when his companions were about to depart, his resolution was shaken, and he desired to be taken on board again. The captain, however, refused to admit him, and he was obliged to remain, having nothing but his clothes, bedding, a gun, and a small quantity of powder and ball ; a hatchet, knife, and kettle ; his books, and mathematical and nautical instruments. He kept up his spirits tolerably till he saw the vessel put off, when—as he afterwards related—his heart yearned within him, and melted at parting with his comrades and all human society at once.



Thus left sole monarch of the island with plenty of the necessaries of life, he found himself in a situation hardly supportable. He had fish, goat's flesh, turnips and other vegetables; yet he grew dejected, languid, and melancholy, to a great degree. Eighteen months passed before he could, by reasoning, reading his Bible, and study, be thoroughly reconciled to his condition.

At length, learning to become resigned to his destiny, he set about building two huts of pimento wood, which he covered with long grass, and lined with the skins of goats. These animals he shot with ease while

his powder lasted, which, however, was no more than a pound, and therefore soon exhausted.

He procured fire by the violent friction of two pieces of pimento wood together, on his knee; and as there was plenty of fuel, he had thus one essential comfort always in



his own power. The lesser hut, which was built at some distance from the other, was used as his kitchen: in the large one he slept, and employed himself in reading and religious exercises; so that as he him-

self observed, he was a better christian in his solitude than he ever was before, and feared should ever be again.

At first he never eat any thing till pressed by the calls of hunger, which partly arose from his dejection of mind, and partly from his want of bread and salt; nor did he retire to rest, till he was able to watch no longer. The pimento wood, which burns very clear, not only supplied the place of fire and candle, but exhilarated his spirits with its fragrant odor.

Fish might have been procured in great plenty; but as he had no salt to cure them or to eat with them, and found them too relaxing, he abstained from their use. However, he indulged himself in crawfish, nearly as large as our lobsters, which he found very good. These he sometimes boiled, and at others broiled, as he did his goat's flesh, of which he made a very nutritive broth. The flesh of these animals is not so rank as with us. He kept an account of five hundred which he had killed during his residence here, and of his having caught above as many more, which he marked on the ear, and then gave them their liberty.

When Selkirk's ammunition failed, he caught the goat's by swiftness of foot;—for, being cleared of all gross humours by





the continual exercise of walking and running, and living almost in a state of nature; he ran with such fleetness through the woods, and up the hills and rocks, that the swiftest goat in the island was scarcely a match for him.

At first he was much pestered with rats, which having been conveyed hither by some European ships, had got on shore, and increased prodigiously. These sometimes gnawed his feet and clothes while he slept, which induced him to make friends with the cats, by feeding them liberally with

goats' flesh. By degrees they grew so tame, that he has been surrounded by hundreds at once; and by such powerful auxiliaries, he was soon freed from the depredations of the rats. He also found means to domesticate several kids; and to divert his langor, would now and then dance and sing with them and his cats; and amused himself by cutting his name and the date of his continuance in solitude on the trees.

By degrees he came to relish meat sufficiently, without the addition of bread or salt. Some of Dampier's men had sown a few turnips on this island, which had now overspread several acres, and yielded a grateful vegetable to the solitary lord of the spot. From the cabbage trees, he derived another useful aliment; and as he had plenty of pimento, or Jamaica pepper, he was at no loss for a seasoning to his viands. Here also, he found a species of black pepper, called malageta, which proved an excellent carminative, and a remedy in bowel complaints.

Selkirk soon wore out his shoes and clothes by running, and penetrating the tangled woods. When this original dress was gone, he furnished himself with a coat and cap of goats' skins, which he sewed with thongs of the same material. Instead

of a needle, he made use of a pointed nail ; and when his knife, with which he cut these thongs, was worn to the back, he fabricated others out of iron hoops that were left ashore, by beating them straight, and grinding them on stones to something like an edge.

The necessity of his circumstances put him upon several curious devices. Having some linen by him, he contrived, by the assistance of a nail and the worsted of his old stockings, to make it up into shirts. When providentially discovered, he had his last shirt on.

Being obliged to go barefoot, his feet had become so callous as to render the use of shoes and stockings not only useless but irksome at first. Indeed, it was sometime before he could submit to wear them, as his feet swelled on his attempt to conform himself to original usages.

Though he constantly performd his devotions at stated hours, and read aloud, yet when he was taken off the island, his language, from disuse of conversation, was become scarcely intelligible.

In this solitude he continued four years and four months ; during which time two incidents happened which he thought well worth relating. The one was, that his agil-

ity in pursusng a goat, had once well nigh cost him his life; for being eagerly engaged in the pursuit, he caught his prey just on the verge of a precipice, of which he was not aware, and tumbled down together with it, a prodigious height. He was so stunned and bruised with the fall, that he lay nearly twenty-four hours in a state of insensibility; and on recovering his recollection, he found the goat dead under him. He was so much hurt by the accident, that he found great difficulty in crawling to his hut, which was about a mile distant; nor was he able to stir abroad again for ten days.

The other event was the arrival of a ship, which he at first supposed to be French: and such is the natural love of society in the human mind, that he was eager to abandon his solitary felicity, and surrender himself to them, although enemies; but upon their landing, approaching them, he found them to be Spaniards, of whom he had too great a dread to trust himself in their hands. They were by this time so near that it required all his agility to escape, which he effected by climbing into a thick tree, being shot at several times as he run off. Fortunately, the Spaniards did not discover him, though they stayed some time under the tree where he was hid, and killed some goats



just by. In this solitude, Selkirk remained until the 2nd of February, 1709, when he saw two ships come into the bay, and knew them to be English. He immediately lighted a fire as a signal; and, on their coming on shore, found they were the Duke, captain Rogers, and the Dutchess, captain Courtney, two privateers from Bristol. He gave them the best entertainment he could afford; and, as they had been a long time at sea without fresh provisions, the goats which he caught were highly acceptable. His habitation was so obscurely situated, and so difficult of access, that only one of the ships' officers would accompany him to it.

A dram being offered him, he declined it with evident aversion; for being habituated to water, he could not endure any thing of a spirituous nature: and, indeed, it was some time before he could relish the ordinary provisions of the ship.

With regard to the productions of the island, he could make but a small addition to what had been known before by Europeans. He said there was a kind of black plum, of excellent flavor, but difficult to be procured, as they were only to be found on rocks and high mountains. Pimento trees, he observed, were very numerous, and of great mag-

nitude ; and cotton trees were of still greater height and dimensions.

The climate is so propitious, that the trees and grass preserve a perpetual verdure. The winter lasts no longer than June and July, and is then not severe. There is but little frost and snow ; but the rains are sometimes excessively heavy. The heat of the summer is moderate, and there is not much thunder or tempestuous weather of any sort.

Selkirk saw no venomous or savage creature on his dominion ; nor any large quadruped, except goats, the breed of which had been set on shore here by Juan Fernandez, a Spaniard, who, with a few families, attempted to colonize the island ; but afterwards removed to Chili, a situation more lucrative and eligible. The goats, however, having got possession of the remote and almost inaccessible spots of the island, could not be dislodged ; and to this day furnish supplies for vessels that occasionally visit the place.

Dampier, who was pilot on board the Duke, and knew Selkirk very well, told captain Rogers, that when on board the Cinque Ports, he was the best seamen on board that vessel ; upon which captain Rog-

ers appointed him master's mate of the Duke.

After a fortnight's stay at Juan Fernandez, the ships proceeded on their cruise, and returned to England, where they arrived the 1st of October, 1711; Selkirk having been absent eight years, more than half of which time he had spent alone in the island.

From this account of Selkirk, Defoe took the idea of writing a more extensive work—the romance of Robinson Crusoe.

