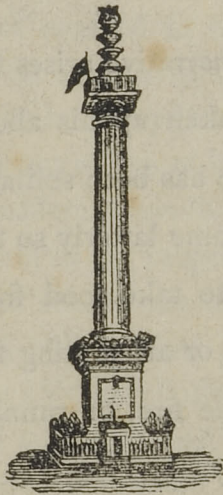


HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE AND ADVENTURES
OF
A MOUSE.



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HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE AND ADVENTURES
OF
A MOUSE

INSTEAD OF

A PREFACE.

THE following little narrative arises from the circumstance of a Mouse having taken up his abode at "THE MONUMENT," and where he has been solitarily located for nearly Two Years—and became latterly so tame as to suffer itself to be handled, and to take food from a person's hand, without showing fear or attempting to escape—and might be seen sitting by the fire, or running about during the greater part of the day.

HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A MOUSE.

ALTHOUGH I am not enabled to trace a long line of Ancestry, or give even an account of my immediate Parents, yet I have little doubt but they have figured on the stage of life, and filled various offices of importance in their own community, with considerable credit and ability. Nor have I ever heard of any act of my progenitors which has raised the blush of shame, or caused one to fear, in that respect, a moment's uneasiness. My present purpose, however, is to endeavour to give an able and faithful account of my own history, and which I will relate with as much conciseness as my chequered course of life will allow me to do ; and if I should fail to raise the tear of pity, or draw forth commiseration for my hapless fate, I can only console myself, with the knowledge that, from what I have heard and listened to, even from the tongue of man, that greater privations and misery than I have endured have failed to do so, even

in the superior state in which he is placed above the rest of creation. But I fear that moralising on a subject which must naturally be above my comprehension will not become me. I shall, therefore, hasten to the commencement of my history, and trace the earliest period which recollection enables me to do, as I had not the foresight, nor did I think it necessary, to journalize the proceedings of my youthful days; suffice it to be observed, that I found myself ensconced within a very comfortable place, and which my ancestors had previously occupied, and which no doubt they expected their progeny would enjoy unmolested and uncontrolled, as long as their generation existed.

It was in this domicile that I was first ushered into being, and during a lengthened period, in which I brought up a numerous family, I enjoyed every comfort which my state of life required, without troubling myself by whose or by what means I or my family, which rapidly increased, were sustained; we found plenty to satisfy every want, and, independent of those bickerings which unhappily take place in almost every family, we could not have desired a more comfortable abode, and although our fears were frequently raised by the narrow escapes which many of our diminutive race, and especially the juvenile branches of it, were subject to, from the occupiers which surrounded our domiciles, and sundry other inmates which they allowed to dwell with them, our delight was principally in recounting the hair-

breadth dangers we had escaped from, and the recital of which caused our little bosoms to palpitate most violently, as we often and often related in breathless anxiety, the perils we had avoided, and the congratulations we received, as well as paid to each other, on their happy result. There is, however, a restless anxiety which is often experienced by societies as well as individuals, and from which our own was unhappily not exempt, and we frequently had it under our serious consideration, whether it would not be advisable to search for an abode which might be more free from inquietudes than those we have already alluded to, and enable our little progeny to dwell with more safety, even should it be with less comforts. These ideas had occupied our thoughts and intentions for a considerable period, when our prospects of emigration were suddenly stopped, by our forcible ejection, of our once happy home, and from information we have since derived, we learn that similar ideas had been entertained by those residents with whom we were so long associated, and a sudden removal was about to take place by those, who as the immortal bard states, will not bear,

“ — The ills they know,—
But fly to others they know not of.”

I must therefore briefly state that on a very cold day in the month of December, which I conjectured to be about the period, from sundry additional preparations which had been

making, and which in our turn we had the good fortune to make free with, and from the frequent shoutings we heard around us, from other inmates which had just arrived from a place of confinement, and the word "School" being constantly repeated, we supposed must be the place meant, and that "Christmas came but once a year," and the enjoyment and pleasure they should have on that day, made me suppose that must be the period, when I was ejected in my own domicile (a large Chest of Drawers), and placed for further removal against a huge building of which I shall have to give further particulars in a future chapter; how it was, or where it was, that I became separated from all the rest of my Family I know not, whether I had partaken too freely of the good things above spoken of, whether in the quiet enjoyment of slumber, or from what other cause I am not aware, here I was placed—a solitary being! a Robinson Crusoe! or an Alexander Selkirk! without one counsellor to advise, or a companion of whom I might take sweet council. Feeling however the perilous situation in which I stood, I determined to leave my once happy dormitory and brave the only chances which were now left to me; scarcely however had I adopted this resolution and left my hiding place, when I was alarmed by an innumerable host of voices, exclaiming "*a Mouse! a Mouse!* just run from those *here* drawers, and is somewhere about,"—think therefore of my agitation, and place yourself if possible in a similar case,

and you will be better able to judge of the throes, the fears, the dread I experienced, lest I should be discovered before I could find a place of safety; fortunately, however, I escaped their anxious search, and in the shades of evening I crept under the door of an immense Building which I found to be after making it my abiding place for a considerable time,

“THE CELEBRATED MONUMENT OF LONDON.”

I had no sooner learnt the name of my new domicile, than the word “*London*,” was so associated with that of “*Whittington*” (*its thrice famed Mayor*) and his renowned *Cat*, that I had strong misgivings whether it might not be one of his residences, and that I might fall a sacrifice to the well-known antipathy of the latter to all my species — often did the instructions which were instilled into me in my juvenile, but thoughtless hours, that the utmost care and vigilance was necessary to be exercised against such bitter foes, and when I recalled these warnings to my memory, I felt a dread of fear and trembling words cannot express, and which embittered many a moment which would otherwise have passed in tranquility. It is from this wonderful and extraordinary place, that I intend to continue my history, which my want of materials only will prevent my making as perfect as I could wish, yet I trust, I shall so far render it worthy of notice that a lesson may be gleaned, even from a humble being like myself, that hospitality and kindness

will engender feelings which if more extensively exercised would be a mutual benefit to creation in general.

My first ideas on finding shelter within this abode, were like those of my Prototypes whom I have already noticed, and consider how I should find sustenance and means of support within a building that was not devoted to gastronomy. This, however, I happily found, for although I was a solitary creature as far as my own species existed, I found companions in two or three beings who had long been domiciled at this place, and who, although confined within their wiry homes, cheered me with their tuneful notes expressive of joy and pleasure ; would that I could truthfully relate the sensations which filled my throbbing breast, when I surveyed my solitary abode, my separation from those who had been my joy and comfort, my despair at never seeing, or hearing of them again, my dear mate and my little ones, whom I had carefully instructed to get their living in the best, as well as the easiest way they could, and the recollection of all those delightful feelings which make home so happy, so revered, these came over my thoughts so frequently, so sad, that I felt as if nature itself would give way to emotions which it was not in my power to suppress, and I even thought what must likewise be the feelings of those who were so suddenly and so forcibly parted from me. Similar feelings of distress doubtless actuated them, when they reflected the separation was

possibly for ever. It was necessary, however, those feelings should be restrained within proper bounds, and as my future life depended on my own exertions, it became necessary I should consider the best mode of acting under the circumstances where chance had placed me. And I found even within these bare walls a sufficiency of food for my daily support. It was some months before I ventured to expose myself, and it was only in the night season I could take my solitary ramble. My chief amusement to this period was in hearing and paying attention to remarks made by those who visited this noble Column; often have they been made in language or jargon that I could not comprehend, but I remember that on one occasion, an Hibernian I think they called him, as he came from that land

“—————great, glorious, and free,

First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea.”

on leaving the place remarked that he had hitherto thought sweet *Dublin* was the finest City in the world! but faith, now he saw that *Dublin* might be cut out of *London* without being missed at all at all! On another occasion, two young persons of the softer sex (from the Country) inquired whether the Building they were in was not “*Saint Paul’s*;” on another occasion, I heard the keeper asked whether it was not *St. Saviour’s Church*, as they had to meet a party there, and they understood it was near “*London Bridge*.” These and other instances of elementary knowledge (or

rather the want of it) have come within my own knowledge, and which I could multiply "*ad infinitum*"—I merely mention these circumstances that it may be understood I have been an attentive observer of various things, and wish to make my history as complete as possible, though I am well aware it must be sadly deficient in these days when Education is travelling by such rapid strides, that words, sentences, and almost histories, can be heard from one end of the land to the other quicker almost than thought, and which in course of time it will doubtless supersede. These few digressions will, I hope, be pardoned, whilst I recruit my memory in continuation of my memoirs. The lessons of adversity I had already experienced made me more solicitous respecting the future ; time, however, as it flowed onwards lessened the poignancy of my past feelings, and I began to feel myself quite renovated in my new abode ; here I found myself free from molestation, and in a short time free from fear. I began to mix in society, and to show myself amongst those who began to notice and caress me, and who took care to supply my little wants with every necessary I required ; this of course called forth my gratitude, and I experienced a pleasure my pen cannot faithfully describe in associating, without fear, with beings whom I had previously been taught to dread as my bitterest foes, and made me consider, how much evil might be avoided, and how much unhappiness might be spared if those we looked

upon as enemies we would consider in a different light, and how often the hand of friendship might be extended, and harmony exist, where animosity only prevailed before.

I must now record a circumstance or two which caused me the most dreadful alarm, and which brings the most painful feelings to my recollection. One morning, during the temporary absence of its owner, a strange animal—a determined enemy to my own species particularly, and sometimes called “Grimalkin”—took advantage of the opportunity, and, shocking to relate, flew with a ferocity incapable of explanation to one of my now loved companions, and with a malignity I cannot describe, seized the little innocent victim with its terrible claws, and in almost an instant, drew it from its wiry abode, and, with the rapidity of thought, devoured every atom of it. I shudder now as I think of its unhappy fate, and consider how fortunate it was for myself, that I had escaped so sudden, so dreadful an end. This melancholy circumstance operated much on my harrowed feelings for a considerable period, and made me of course more cautious than I might otherwise be; it often recurs to my thoughts, and I mourned as for a long lost beloved friend. Another event likewise occurred, which placed my own life in imminent peril, and this was caused by an entire act of carelessness. A visitor to this place (and which I am now quite accustomed to see without fear) threw down on the spot where I was

enjoying sweet repose by the side of the fire, a burning material he had been using, and it fell immediately on me ; the alarm it caused me was indescribable, for in a moment the little bed which had been so kindly provided for me, and which consisted of a warm, soft substance, instantly took fire, and I was enveloped in flames—luckily, I escaped with a burn only on my back, and the total loss of what in former times were denominated whiskers, but in these days of refinement *Moustache*. I cannot, of course, attempt to describe the agony of thought which perplexes me when I consider the danger I had escaped; the fumes arising from the burning substance which fell on me were most nauseous, and I cannot but reflect how serious a matter it is, and how many similar accidents may occur, and doubtless they often do, from acts of carelessness arising from a practice which I learnt with regret from the frequent remarks made on it, disagreeable and expensive as it is, is still rapidly extending, and that even the youthful progeny of the present day is not exempted from its wide-spreading contagion. These remarks will, I hope, have their good effect—my object in mentioning them is to guard against a recurrence of accident such as has been narrated, the domicile I fortunately was in was such as defied the possibility of Fire, though its origin and completion was solely caused by it !

I have now taken a short review of my little history, and

if it should afford the smallest portion of gratification or amusement to any one who may favour it by a perusal, I shall feel a pleasure I cannot well describe, and I shall feel equal pleasure in seeing any of my kind friends, who will favour me with a call personally at my present residence, and where they may learn and be convinced that my history is not one of romance, but a true and faithful one, and it is not improbable that if my history, imperfect as it is, may be favourably received, I may be induced to re-examine it, and publish it with additions, if not with corrections—and though I do not expect a throng of visitors equal to those who honour *Madame Tussaud* with a call, or the number who attended the frequent levees of *General Tom Thumb*, or the more recent attraction which caused crowds to assemble in thousands to hear the dulcet notes of a *Fenny Lind*, and which have been eclipsed only in fame by the delightful, wonderful, and melodious warblings of one of my own species, which caused at that period a sensation which, though it is not in my power to give a faithful account of, I have heard, in my parental circle, of the multitudes that assembled to convince themselves it was really *the Singing Mouse!* This, however, I can assure them, that in point of grandeur or sublimity of views, whether from the vastness or variety of their extent, or the unequalled splendour which surround them, I can promise them they will be amply gratified by surveying the abode

and examining the proud domain in which I consider it now as my good fortune to have adopted as my domicile. Remember, it was the unwearied exertions of a mouse that released the noble Lion from the Net which entangled him; *this* has been recorded by "*Dilworth*," an authority which in my youthful days was looked up to with veneration and respect—do not, therefore, despise the invitation so friendly given, though offered by so insignificant an animal as

A MOUSE.

Dated from

"*The Monument*," this 5th day of November, 1847.

The forgoing memoirs were scarcely recorded, or the pen dry with which they were indited, when the poor little object of them ceased to exist, and it is rather singular that its decease should have occurred on the anniversary of the day in which the *Successor* of the *Great Whittington*, whom he so pointedly alludes to in his memoirs, should be installed into the high and dignified Office of "*Lord Mayor of London*." There is little doubt but the death of the poor little animal arose from one of the circumstances he has so pathetically related, of a piece of burning cigar being thrown upon him, a few days previously, by accident, and from the effects of which its premature loss may be attributed.

Dated again from the "*Monument of London*,"

this *Eighth day of November, in the year 1847*.

FINIS.

THE MONUMENT OF LONDON.

The Hours of Admission

ARE

FROM EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING TILL SUN-SET

DAILY (Sundays excepted).

Admittance—Threepence each Person.

901578

THE MONUMENT OF LONDON

The Journal of the Commission

AND

THE POINT OF VIEW IN THE MONUMENT

By the Commission

London—Printed and Sold by the Commission