



Newton Forster

Frederick Marryat

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Captain Marryat (1792 - 1848) was a contemporary of Charles Dickens noted for his sea stories. Marryat began writing after a distinguished career in the British Navy. His time and personal experience in the Navy enhance his stories. Newton Forster is a young man pressed into the Royal Navy. Forster experiences sea battles, shipwrecks, and imprisonment. Eventually he joins the British East India Company. Forster finds love, but this may cause him to lose his inheritance.

Newton Forster Details

Date : Published by J. M. Dent (first published November 30th 1864)

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Author : Frederick Marryat

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From Reader Review Newton Forster for online ebook

K. says

Another fabulous Marryat.

Four stars for one reason. Digression. Digression can be good, and actually most of the digressions here are funny and interesting. However, it appears that early in his career, (this was his 3rd novel) Marryat had yet to master the art of blending the digression into the story. In his later years he left out the digression completely and his stories flow much better.

The only other objectionable part is when the hero, Newton, visits some slave plantations and the slaves look so happy and the owners expound on the virtues of slavery. Newton does not give his opinion, nor really does Marryat. I couldn't tell if he believed it or not. Be that as it may, if he condoned or just tolerated slavery early in his life, his later works do not show it in a positive light at all. However, the ending paragraph has a character remembering how slavery of Israel always brought them to the Lord and wondering if the slavery of Africa would tend in the same direction. Mysterious are the ways of the Lord.

It is always interesting to read early books of one's favorite authors. I could see the later magnificent wit and story-telling talent seeping through everywhere, but it wasn't as polished.

In most of Marryat's books he portrays the joys and evils of family life and the virtue of hard work. All of his heroes (that I have yet met) are resourceful, hard-working, honest and courageous.

This book shows all the promise of the great things to come in his later books. The beginning sequence with Newton's mother is hilarious.

This book contains probably the best treatise on the education of a child I have read in a novel. It's long, but worth inserting:

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Aware that more knowledge is to be imparted to a child by conversation than by any other means (for by this system education is divested of its drudgery), during the first six years of her life Amber knew little more than the letters of the alphabet. It was not until her desire of information was excited to such a degree as to render her anxious to obtain her own means of acquiring it that Amber was taught to read; and then it was at her own request. Edward Forster was aware that a child of six years old, willing to learn, would soon pass by another who had been drilled to it at an earlier age and against its will, and whose mind had been checked in its expansive powers by the weight which constantly oppressed its infant memory. Until the above age, the mind of Amber had been permitted to run as unconfined through its own little regions of fancy, as her active body had been allowed to spring up the adjacent hills and both were equally beautified and strengthened by the healthy exercise.

Religion was deeply impressed upon her grateful heart; but it was simplified almost to unity, that it might be clearly understood. It was conveyed to her through the glorious channel of nature, and God was loved and feared from the contemplation and admiration of His works.

Did Amber fix her eyes upon the distant ocean, or watch the rolling of the surf; did they wander over the verdant hills, or settle on the beetling cliff; did she raise her cherub-face to the heavens, and wonder at the

studded firmament of stars, or the moon sailing in her cold beauty, or the sun blinding her in his warmth and splendour she knew that it was God who made them all. Did she ponder over the variety of the leaf; did she admire the painting of the flower, or watch the motions of the minute insect, which, but for her casual observation, might have lived and died unseen; he felt, she knew that all was made for man's advantage or enjoyment, and that God was great and good. Her orisons were short, but they were sincere; unlike the child who, night and morning, stammers through a "Belief" which it cannot comprehend, and whose ideas of religion are, from injudicious treatment, too soon connected with feelings of impatience and disgust.

Curiosity has been much abused. From a habit we have contracted in this world of not calling things by their right names, it has been decried as a vice, whereas it ought to have been classed as a virtue. Had Adam first discovered the forbidden fruit he would have tasted it, without, like Eve, requiring the suggestions of the devil to urge him on to disobedience. But if by curiosity was occasioned the fall of man, it is the same passion by which he is spurred to rise again, and reappear only inferior to the Deity. The curiosity of little minds may be impertinent; but the curiosity of great minds is the thirst for knowledge the daring of our immortal powers the enterprise of the soul, to raise itself again to its original high estate. It was curiosity which stimulated the great Newton to search into the laws of heaven, and enabled his master-mind to translate the vast mysterious page of Nature, ever before our eyes since the creation of the world, but never, till he appeared, to be read by mortal man. It is this passion which must be nurtured in our childhood, for upon its healthy growth and vigour depends the future expansion of the mind.

How little money need be expended to teach a child, and yet what a quantity of books we have to pay for! Amber had hardly ever looked into a book, and yet she knew more, that is, had more general useful knowledge than others who were twice her age. How small was Edward Forster's little parlour. How humble the furniture it contained! A carpet, a table, a few chairs, a small China vase, as an ornament, on the mantel-piece. How few were the objects brought to Amber's view in their small secluded home! The plates and knives for dinner, a silver spoon or two, and their articles of wearing apparel. Yet how endless, how inexhaustible was the amusement and instruction derived from these trifling sources! For these were Forster's books.

The carpet its hempen ground carried them to the north, from whence the material came, the inhabitants of the frozen world, their manners and their customs, the climate and their cities, their productions and their sources of wealth. Its woollen surface, with its various dyes, each dye containing an episode of an island or a state, a point of natural history, or of art and manufacture.

The mahogany table, like some magic vehicle, transported them in a second to the torrid zone, where the various tropical flowers and fruit, the towering cocoa-nut, the spreading palm, the broad-leaved banana, the fragrant pine, all that was indigenous to the country, all that was peculiar in the scenery and the clime, were pictured to the imagination of the delighted Amber.

The little vase upon the mantel-piece swelled into a splendid atlas of eastern geography, an inexhaustible folio describing Indian customs, the Asiatic splendour of costume, the gorgeous thrones of the descendants of the Prophet, the history of the Prophet himself, the superior instinct and stupendous body of the elephant; all that Edward Forster had collected of nature or of art, through these extensive regions, were successively displayed, until they returned to China, from whence they had commenced their travels. Thus did the little vase, like the vessel taken up by the fisherman in the "Arabian Nights," contain a giant confined by the seal of Solomon. Knowledge.

The knife and spoon brought food unto the mind as well as to the body. The mines were entered, the countries pointed out in which they were to be found, the various metals, their value, and the uses to which

they were applied. The dress again led them abroad; the cotton hung in pods upon the tree, the silkworm spun its yellow tomb, all the process of manufacture was explained. The loom again was worked by fancy, until the article in comment was again produced.

Thus was Amber instructed and amused: and thus, with nature for his hornbook, and art for his primer, did the little parlour of Edward Forster expand into the "universe."

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I think that's sufficient for this book. I enjoyed it tremendously and look forward to spending more time with Captain Frederick Marryat. Who, by the way, experienced most if not all the tremendous things his characters did during his 25 years at sea, had 11 children, created the first international maritime flag signalling protocol, invented a new and better lifeboat, and wrote 27 novels.

Daniel Garrison says

Okay, okay, for all you other Marryat lovers out there, I promise this will be my last post on one of his pages that I say, yet again, Marryat is awesome! I'll never understand why he isn't much more popular than he is. C.S. Forester has nothing on this guy.

Xdw says

another of his good ones. not as many sea anecdotes as one might want.
