

A brief Relation of the

# ADVENTURES

OF

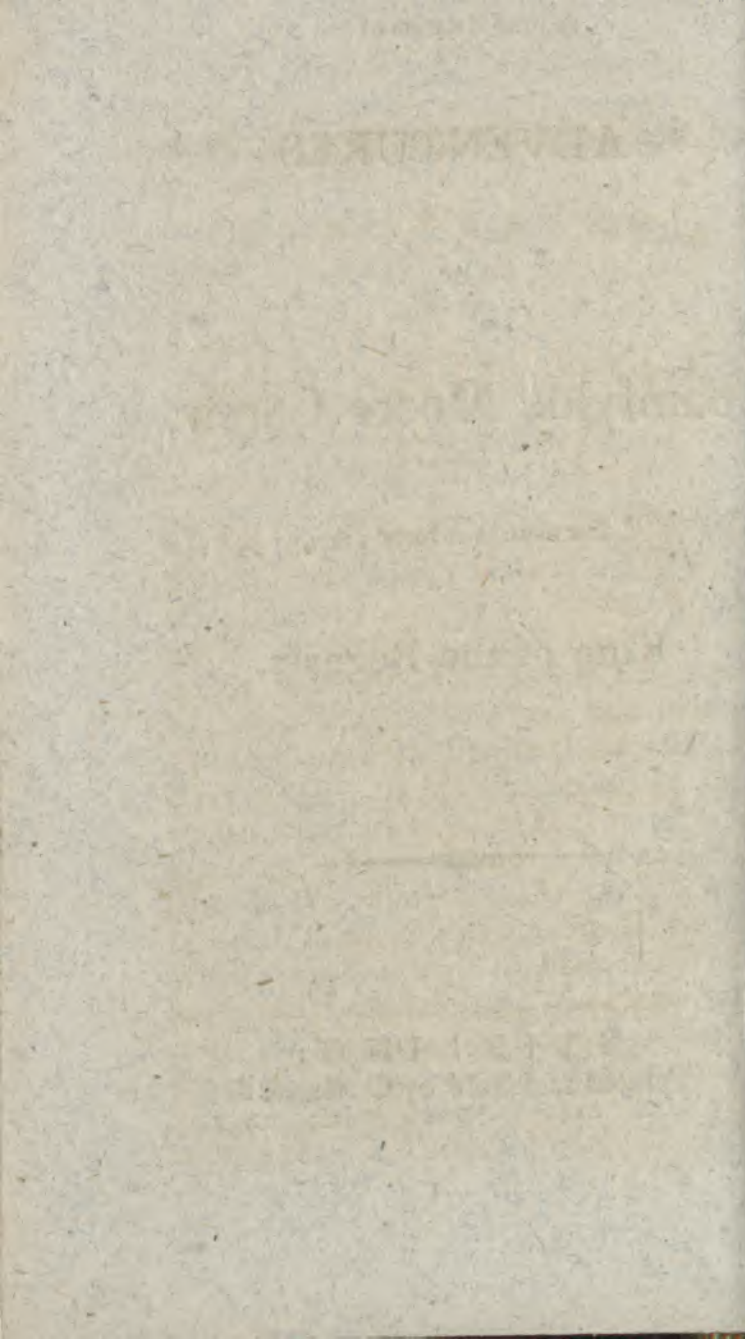
Bamfylde Moore Carew,

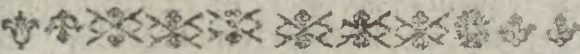
For more than forty years,

King of the Beggars.



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A D V E N T U R E S

O F

Bamfylde Moore Carew.

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**M**R Bamfylde Moore Carew was the son of a clergyman near Fiverton in Devonshire, and born in 1693. He was tall and Majestic, his limbs strong and well proportioned, his features regular, and his countenance open and ingenuous, bearing the resemblance of a good-natured mind. At twelve years old he was put to Fiverton school, where he soon got a considerable knowledge of the Latin and Greek tongues, so as to be fitted for the university, that in due time he might make a figure in the church, for which his father designed him; but here a new exercise engaged his attention, namely that of hunting, in which he soon made a prodigious progress. The Fiverton scholars had command of

a fine cry of hounds, which gave Carew a frequent opportunity of exercising his beloved employment, and getting acquainted with John Martin, Thomas Coleman, and John Escott, young gentlemen of the best rank and fortune. One day a farmer came to the school and complained of a deer, with a collar round his neck, that he had seen running about his grounds and had done him much damage, desiring them to hunt it down and kill it; they, desiring no better sport on the next day put the old farmer's request into execution, in doing of which they did much damage to the neighbouring grounds, whose owners together with Colonel Nutcomb, to whom the deer belonged, came and complained to the school-master of the injuries they had suffered by his scholars they were very severely reprimanded and hard threatened for the same. The resentment of the present reproof, and the fear of future chastisement, made them abscond from the school; and, going into a brick aishouse, about half a mile from Tiverton, there they accidentally fell into company with some gypies, who were then feasting and carousing: this company consisted of seventeen, who

were met on purpose for festivity and jollity, which by plenty of meat, fowl flowing cups of beer, cyder, &c. they seemed to enjoy to their hearts content. In short the freedom, mirth, and pleasure that appeared among them, invited our youngsters to enlist into their company; which, on communicating to the gypsies, they would not believe them, as thinking they jested; but on tarrying with them all night, and continuing in the same mind the next morning, they at length began to think them serious, encouraged them; and after going through the requisite ceremonials, and administering to them the proper oath, they admitted them into their number.

The reader will no doubt wonder to hear of the ceremonials and oaths among gypsies and beggars. but that will cease on being informed, that these people are subject to a form of government and laws peculiar to themselves, and pay due obedience to one who is stiled their King; to which honour Carew, in a short time arrived, after having by many acts, proved himself worthy of it. The substance of them are these; Strong love and mutual regard for each member in particular, and the whole community

in general ; which being taught them in their infancy, grows up with them, prevents oppressions, frauds, and overreaching one another, which is common among other people, and tends to the very worst of evils. This happiness and temper of mind so wrought on Carew, as to occasion the strongest attachment to them for forty years, refusing very large offers that had been made him to quit their society.

Being thus initiated into the ancient society of gypsies, who take their name from Egypt, a place well known to abound in learning, and whose inhabitants travelled about from place to place to communicate knowledge to mankind. — Carew did not continue long in it before he was consulted in important matters, particularly Madam Musgrove, of Monkton, near Taunton, hearing of his fame, sent for him to consult him in an affair of difficulty. When he was come, she informed him, that she suspected a large quantity of money was buried somewhere about her house, and if he would acquaint her with the particular place she would handsomely reward him. Carew consulted the secret of his art on this occasion, and after

ong study informed the lady, That under a laurel tree in the garden lay the treasure she sought for; but that she must not seek it till such a day and hour.—The lady rewarded him with twenty guineas; but whether Carew mistook his calculation, or the lady mistook her lucky hour, we cannot tell; but truth obliges us to say the lady having dug below the root of the laurel tree, she could not find the treasure.

When he was farther initiated, he was consulted in important matters, and met with better success, generally giving satisfaction by his wise and sagacious answers.—In the mean time his parents sorrowed after him, as one that was no more, having advertised him in all the public papers, and sent messengers after him to almost every part of the kingdom; till about a year and a half afterwards, when Carew hearing of their grief, and being struck with tenderness thereat, repaired to his father's house.—He was so disguised they did not know him, but when they did their joy was beyond expressing, tenderly embracing him, bedewing his cheeks with tears and kisses; and all his friends and neighbours shewed every demonstration of joy at

his return. His parents did every thing to render home agreeable to him: but the uncommon pleasure he had enjoyed in the community he had left, their simplicity, freedom, sincerity, mirth, and frequent change of habitation, and the secret passages of the honour he has since arrived at, sickened and palled all other diversions, and at last prevailed over his filial duty; for one day, without taking leave of his friends or parents he went back to them again, where he was heartily welcomed, both to his own and their satisfaction, they being glad to regain one who was likely to become so useful a member of their community.

#### Carew's first adventure in his profession.

**C**AREW being again initiated among them, at the first general assembly of the gypsies took the oaths of allegiance to their sovereign, by whom he was soon set out on a cruise against their enemies. Carew now set his wits to work how to succeed: so equipping himself with an old pair of trousers a piece of a jacket just enough to cover his nakedness, stockings full of holes, and an old



woollen cap, he forgot both friends and family, and became nothing more or less than an unfortunate shipwrecked seaman. — In this his first excursion, he gained much credit, artfully imitating passes and certificates that were necessary for him to travel unmolested. After a month's travel he happened to meet with his old school-fellow Coleman, who had once left the gypsies' society, but for the same reason as himself, returned to them again. Great was their joy at meeting and they agreed to travel some time together; so entering Exeter, they in one day raised a contribution of several pounds.

Having obtained all he could from this stratagem, he then became a plain honest farmer, whose grounds had been overflowed and cattle drowned; his dejected countenance and mournful tale, together with a wife and seven helpless infants being partakers of his misfortunes, gained him both pity and profit.

Having obtained a considerable booty by these two stratagems, he returned to his companions, where he was received with great applause; and as a mark of their respect, seated him next the king. He soon became a great man in the pro-

cession, and confined not himself from doing good to others when it did not infringe upon the community of which he was a member.

His next stratagem was to become a mad man; so stripping himself quite naked he threw a blanket over him, and then he was, "Poor mad Tom, whom the foul fiend has led through fire and through flame! through fire and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane for his porridge and made him proud at heart, to ride on a bay trotting horse over four inch bridges; to curse his own shadow for a traitor; who eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water newt: that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, swallows the old rat and ditch dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool;

And mice and rats, and such like gear,  
Have been Tom's food, for seven long  
year.

O do de, do de do de! bless them from whirlwind, star-blasting, and raking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes—There I could have him

now—and there !—and there !—and here again !—and there !—Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind—Tom's a cold !—who gives any thing to poor Tom !”

In this character, with such like expressions, he entered the houses of both small and great, claiming kindred to them, and committing all kinds of frantic actions, such as beating himself, offering to eat coals of fire, running against the wall; and tearing to pieces whatever garments were given to him to cover his nakedness; by which means he raised very considerable contributions.

He never was more happy than when he was engaged in some adventure; therefore he was always very diligent to enquire when any accident happened, especially fire, to which he would immediately repair, and getting information of the causes, names, trades, and circumstances of the unhappy sufferers, he would assume one of them, and burning some part of his clothes, by way of demonstration, run to some place distant, pass for one of them, gain credit; & get much profit. Under this character he had once the boldness to address a

justice, who was the terror and the professed enemy of the gypsies, yet he so well managed the affair, that in a long examination he made him believe he was an honest miller, whose house, mill, and substance had been consumed by fire, occasioned by the negligence of the 'prentice, and accordingly got a bountiful sum for his relief, the justice not in the least suspecting a defraud.

He had such a wonderful facility in every character he assumed that he even deceived those who thought themselves so well acquainted with him that it was impossible for him to impose on them.

Coming one day to 'Squire Portman's house at Blandford, in the character of a rat catcher with a heir cap on his head, a buff girdle about his waist, a little box by his side, and a tame rat in his hand, he goes boldly up to the house where he had been well known before, and meeting the 'squire, person Bryant, and one Mr Pleydell of Milbourn and some other gentlemen, he asked them, if they had any rats to kill? Do you understand the business well, says the 'squire. Yes, an' please your honour, I have been a rat-catcher many years, and have been employed in his Majesty's yards and

ships.—Well, says the 'squire, go in and get some victuals, and after dinner we will try your abilities. He was accordingly called into the parlour, where were a large company of gentlemen and ladies. Well honest rat catcher, says the 'squire, can you lay any scheme to kill the rats without hurting my dogs? Yes, yes, cries Carew, I can lay it where even the rats cannot climb to reach it.—What countryman are you?—A Devonshireman, an please your honour.—What is your name? (Here our hero began to perceive that he was discovered by the smilings and whilperings of several gentlemen,) and he very composedly answered; My name is Bamfylde Moore Carew. This occasioned much mirth and Mr Pleydell expressed extraordinary pleasure. He had often wished to see him, but never had,—Yes, you have, replies Carew, and given me a suit of clothes. Do you not remember meeting a poor wretch one day at your stable door, with a stocking round his head, an old mantle over his shoulders, without shirt stockings, or scarce any shoes, who told you he was a poor unfortunate man, cast away upon the coast, with sixteen more of the crew, who were all

drowned; you, believing this story generously relieved me with a guinea and a good suit of clothes. Mr. Pleydell said, he well remembered it, but on this discovery, it is impossible to deceive me so again, come in whatever shape you will. The company blamed him for thus boasting, and secretly prevailed upon Carew to put his art into practice, to convince him of the fallacy thereof; to which he agreed, and in a few days after appointing the company present to be at Mr Pleydell's house, he put the following scheme into execution.

He shaved himself closely, and clothed himself in an old woman's apparel, with a high crowned hat, and a large dowd under his chin; then taking three children from among his fraternity, he tied two on his back and one under his arm. Thus accoutred, he comes to Mr Pleydell's door, and pinching one of the brats, set it a roaring; this gave the alarm to the dogs, who came out with open mouths, so that the whole company was soon alarmed. Out came the maid saying, Carry away the children, good woman, they disturb the ladies. God bless their ladyships I am the poor unfortunate grandmother of these helpless

infants, whose mother and all they had were burnt at the dreadful fire at Kirton, and hope the good ladies for God's sake will bestow something on the poor famishing, starving infants. In goes the maid with this affecting story to the ladies while our grandmother keeps pinching the children to make them cry and the maid soon returned with half a crown and some good broth, which he thankfully received, and went into the court-yard to sit down to eat them, as perceiving the gentlemen were not at home. He had not long been there before they came, when one of them accosted him thus: Where did you come from, old woman?—From Kirton, please your honours, where the poor unhappy mother of these helpless infants was burnt in the flames and all he had consumed.—D——n you said one of them, there has been more money collected for Kirton than ever Kirton was worth. However they gave the old grandmother a shilling, commiserating the hard case of her and her poor helpless infants, which he thankfully received, pretending to go away; but the gentlemen were hardly got into the house, before their ears were suddenly

saluted with a tantivee, tantivee, and a huloo to the dogs on which they turned about, supposing it to be some other sportsmen, but seeing nobody, they directly supposing it to be Carew in the disguise of the old Kirton grandmother, so bidding the servants fetch her back, she was brought into the parlour among them all, and confessed himself to be the famous Mr Bamfylde Moore Carew, to the astonishment and mirth of them all, who well rewarded him for the diversion he had afforded them.

In like manner he raised a contribution twice in one day, of Mr Jones, near Bristol. In the morning with a sooty face, leather apron, a dejected countenance, and a woollen cap, he was generously relieved as an unfortunate blacksmith, whose all had been consumed by fire. In the afternoon he exchanged his legs for crutches, and with a dejected countenance, pale face, and every sign of pain, he became a disabled tinner, incapable of maintaining a wife and seven small children, by the damps and hardships he had suffered in the mines; and so well acted his part that the tinner got as well relieved in the afternoon as the blacksmith in the morning.



These successful stratagems gained him high applause and honour in the community of gypsies. He soon became the favourite of their king, who was very old and decrepid, and had always some honourable mark of distinction assigned him at their assemblies.

Being one morning near the seat of his good friend Sir William Courtney, he was resolved to pay him three visits that day.—He therefore puts on a parcel of rags, and goes to him with a piteous, mean, dismal countenance, and deplorable tale, and got half a crown from him, telling him he had met with great misfortunes at sea. At noon puts on a leather apron scorched with fire, and goes to him again, and with a dejected countenance was relieved as an unfortunate shoemaker, who had been burnt out of his house and all he had. In the afternoon he goes again in trimmed clothes and desiring admittance to Sir William, with a modest grace and submissive eloquence, he repeats his misfortunes, as the supercargo of a vessel which had been cast away, and his whole effects lost.

Sir William, seeing his genteel appearance and behaviour, treated him with

respect, and gave him a guinea at his departure. There were several gentlemen at dinner with Sir William at the time, none of whom had any knowledge of him except the Rev. Mr Richard's who did not discover him till he was gone upon which a servant was dispatched to desire him to come back, which he did; and when he entered the room they were very merry with him and desired him to give an account how he got his fine clothes, and of his stratagems, with the success of them. He asked Sir William if he had not given half a crown in the morning to a beggar, and about noon relieved a poor unfortunate shoemaker? I did, said Sir William; Behold him before you, said Carew, in this fine embroidered coat, as a broken merchant. The company would not believe him;—so, to convince them, he re-assumed those characters again, to their no small mirth and satisfaction.

#### Carew made King of the Beggars.

**O**N the death of the King of gypsies named Cause Patch, our hero was a candidate to succeed him and exhibited to the electors a long list of bold and ingenious stratagems which he had execu-

ed, and made so graceful and majestic an appearance in his person, that he had a considerable majority of voices, though there were ten candidates for the same honour; on which he was declared, duly elected, and hailed by the whole assembly—King of the Gypsies—The public register of their acts being immediately committed to his care, and homage done him by all the assembly, the whole concluded with rejoicings.

Though Mr Carew was now privileged, by the dignity of his office from going on any cruise, and was provided with every thing necessary; by the joint contribution of the community, yet he did not give himself up to indolence. Our hero, though a king, was as active in his stratagemas as ever, and ready to encounter any difficulty which seemed to promise success.

Mr Carew being in the town of South Molton, in Devon, and having been ill used by an officer there, called the Bellman resolving the following stratagem, by way of revenge. It was at that time reported that a gentleman of the town, lately buried, walked nightly in the church-yard, and as the bellman was obliged by his nightly duty to go

through it just at the very hour of one, Mr Carew repaired thither a little before the time, and stripping in his shirt, lay down upon the gentlemen's grave. Soon after, hearing the bellman approach he raised himself up with a solemn slowness, which the bellman beholding, by the glimmerings of the moon through a dark cloud, was terribly frightened, so took to his heels and ran away. In his flight he looked behind him and seeing the ghost following him, dropped his bell, and ran the faster, which Carew seized on as a trophy, and forebore any further pursuit. The bellman did not stop till he reached home, where he obstinately affirmed he had seen the gentleman's ghost, who had taken away the bell, which greatly alarmed the whole town.

Coming to the seat of 'squire Rhodes, in Devonshire, and knowing he had lately married a Dorsetshire lady, he thought proper to become a Dorsetshire man, of Lyme, the place of the lady's nativity, and meeting the 'squire and his bride, he gave them to understand that he was lost in a vessel belonging to Lyme Captain Courtney, commander. The 'squire and his lady gave him half a

crowns each, for country sake, and very well entertained him at their house.

Our hero exercising his profession at Millbury, where the 'squire's father live, and to whom the son was come on a visit, Mr Carew made application to him, and knocking at the door, on its being open. saw the young 'squire sitting alone, whom Mr Rhodes interrupted by saying he was twice in one day imposed upon by that rogue, Carew, of whose gang you may likely be; besides, I do not live here, but am a stranger. In the mean time comes the old 'squire with a bottle of wine in his hand, giving Carew a wink to let him understand he knew him, and then very gravely enquired into the circumstances of his misfortunes, and also of the affairs and inhabitants of Dartmouth, from whence he pretended to have sailed several times of all which he gave a full and particular account; whereupon the old 'squire gave him half a crown, and the young one the same; on which Carew and the old man burst into a laughter, and discovered the whole affair, at which, 'squire Rhodes was a little chagrined at being imposed on a third time; but on recollecting the expertness of the per-

former, was well satisfied, and then spent the remainder of the day in mirth and jollity.

At Bristol he dressed himself like a poor mechanic, and then going out into the streets, acted the religious madman, talking in a raving manner about Messrs Whitfield and Wesley, as though he was disordered in his mind by their preaching; calling in a furious manner every step, upon the Virgin Mary, Pontius Pilate and Mary Magdalen, and acting every part of a man religiously mad. Sometimes walking with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and then of sudden he would break out into some passionate expression about religion. This behaviour greatly excited the curiosity and compassion of the people, some of them talked to him, but he answered every thing they said in a wild and incoherent manner and as compassion is generally the forerunner of charity, he was relieved by most of them.

Next morning he appeared in a morning gown, still acting the madman, and addressed himself to all the posts in the street, as if they were saints, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, in

ervert but distracted manner, and making use of so many extravagant gestures, that he astonished the whole city. Going through Castle-street, he met the Rev. Mr. B——e, whom he accosted with his arms thrown round him, and insisted in a raving manner, he should tell him who was the father of the morning-star;—which frightened the parson so much that he took to his heels and ran for it, Carew running after him, till the parson was obliged to take shelter in a house.

Having well recruited his pocket by his stratagem, he left Bristol next day, and travelled towards Bath, acting the madman all the way till he came to Bath: as soon as he came there he inquired for Dr. Coney's, and being directed to his house, found two brother mendicants at the door; after they had waited sometime, the servant brought out each of them a halfpenny, for which his brother mendicants were very thankful; but Mr Carew gave his halfpenny to one of them; then knocking the door, and the maid coming out again, tell your master, says he, I am not a halfpenny man, but that my name is Bamfylde Moore Carew, king of the

mendicants; which being told, the Doctor came out with one of his daughters; and gave him sixpence and a mug of drink, for which he returned them thanks.

Here we shall put an end to this short history of our hero, and we hope the reader is convinced that he has as good, if not a better, claim to fame and immortality, than most of the present heroes of the age.

FINIS.