

The cabinet of curiosities, or wonders of the world displayed. No.5, The Spotted Negro Boy.

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THE CABINET OF CURIOSITIES, OR Wonders of the World Displayed.

A world of wonders where creation seems
No more the works of Nature but her dreams.—MONTGOMERY.

No. V.]

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE SPOTTED NEGRO BOY.



GEORGE ALEXANDER GRATTON, the Spotted Negro Boy, whose portrait embellishes our present number, was well known to the inhabitants of the metropolis and its vicinity, about twelve years ago, at which time he was exhibited at the fairs, by Richardson, a famous purveyor of objects of entertainment at those places of popular festivity.

Both the parents of George

Alexander were black, and natives of Africa. He was born in the island of St. Vincent, on the plantation of Mr. Alexander, of which one Gratton was overseer, about the month of June, 1808; and the curiosity of his appearance was such, that he was shewn, in the capital of his native island, at the price of a dollar each person. It is added, that the superstitious prejudices of the

negroes placed his life in some danger, and that he was, on that account, shipped for England. Probably the prospect of a profitable disposal of him, in this country, was an equally powerful motive for his removal.

The child was only fifteen months old, when, in September, 1809, being brought to Bristol, in the ship called the *Friends of Emma*, Mr. Richardson, the proprietor, as before intimated, of a travelling theatre, was applied to, and an engagement entered upon, by which he was consigned to Mr. Richardson's care for three years.

His skin and hair were everywhere party-coloured, transparent brown and white. On the crown of his head, several triangles, one within the other, were formed by alternations of the colours of his hair. In figure and countenance he might truly be called a beautiful child. His limbs were well proportioned, his features regular and pleasing, his eyes bright and intelligent, and the whole expression of his face both mild and lively. His voice was soft and melodious; and, as his mind began to develop itself, much quickness and penetration were betrayed.

When nearly five years of age, he was unfortunately attacked with a swelling in the jaw, and died on the 3d of February, 1813. Mr. Richardson, who had always treated him with a parental kindness while alive, was sincerely afflicted at his death. Soon after he had been placed with him, he had caused him to be baptized at the parish church of Newington, in the county of Surrey, and, on his death, he was buried at Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire, in a brick vault, which Mr. Richardson caused to be purposely con-

structed. Mr. Richardson, fearful that the body might be stolen, had previously kept it unburied for the space of three months.

In the vestry of the church of Great Marlow hangs a fine painting of this extraordinary natural phenomenon, executed from the life, by Coventry; and presented to the corporation of Buckingham by Mr. Richardson; who finally closed his displays of affectionate regard for a child, which was not originally more recommended to his attention by his curiosity, than he was afterward endeared to him by disposition and manners, by erecting a monument to his memory at Great Marlow, and placing upon it the following inscription and epitaph:—

TO THE MEMORY

OF

GEORGE ALEXANDER GRATTON,
THE SPOTTED NEGRO BOY,

From the Caribbee Islands, in the West Indies, died February 3d, 1813, aged four years and three quarters.

This Tomb, erected by his only Friend and Guardian, Mr. John Richardson, of London.

Should this plain simple tomb attract thine eye,

Stranger, as thoughtfully thou passest by,
Know that there lies beneath this humble stone,

A child of colour, haply not thine own.

His parents born of Afric's sun-burnt race,
Tho' black and white were blended in his face,

To Britain brought, which made his parents free,

And shew'd the world great Nature's prodigy.

Depriv'd of kindred that to him were dear,

He found a friendly Guardian's fostering care,

But, scarce had bloom'd, the fragrant flower fades,

And the lov'd infant finds an early grave,
To bury him his lov'd companions came,

And drop't choice flowers, and lisp'd his early fame;

And some that lov'd him most, as if unblest,

Bedew'd with tears the white wreath on his breast.

But he is gone, and dwells in that abode,
Where some of every clime must joy in God!