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1809

## The Life and Surprising Adventures of Mary Ann Talbot, in the Name of John Taylor (1809)

Mary Ann Talbot

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## ABSTRACT

An important document in the history of cross-dressing, transvestism, male impersonators, and women soldiers, this autobiographical narrative tells the life story of an orphan girl who was trapped into service in the British army and navy (as well as on a French privateer) in the 1790s, and saw action and was wounded at the siege of Valenciennes and again in the naval battle of “the Glorious 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 1794.” She also describes episodes in which she was a prisoner of war in France, a steward and officer aboard an American merchant vessel, an abortive highwayman, a pensioner and petitioner in London, a jewelry-maker, an actress, a hospital patient and worker, both a successful and unsuccessful litigant in a series of lawsuits, and a prisoner for debt in Newgate.

At least one scholar has argued that the narrative is a sensational fabrication, but questions of its veracity aside, it is a fascinating portrait of an unusual life in the Georgian era with a unique perspective on gender and class. Miss Talbot spent the last twelve or so years of her life frequenting taverns in sailor’s dress, calling on wealthy and noble persons for charity, relating her sufferings from the effects of her military service, meeting with a seemingly endless string of misfortunes, and engaging in numerous legal proceedings.

Among the persons portrayed or referenced are her deceitful guardian Mr. Sucker and the degenerate Captain Essex Bowen, and a host of known historical figures, including Admiral Lord Howe, the Duke of York, General Sir Ralph Abercromby, Captain John Harvey, Captain Sir Henry Harvey, Admiral Sir William Sydney Smith, King George III, Georgiana Cavendish (the Duchess of Devonshire), Sir William Pulteney, Frederica Duchess of York, Queen Charlotte, Sir James Pulteney, Henry Dundas (first Viscount Melville), Charles Howard (Duke of Norfolk), and Sir Evan Nepean.

Mary Ann Talbot (sometimes spelled Mary Anne Talbot) was born in 1778 and died in 1808. Her narrative first appeared in *The Wonderful and Scientific Museum: or Magazine of Remarkable Characters* (also known as *Kirby’s Wonderful Museum*) in 1804 and was published posthumously in book form in 1809 by Robert S. Kirby, in whose household she and her longtime female companion had lived for several years before her death.

This online electronic text contains the complete work as published in book form in 1809, along with some explanatory notes and references, a discussion of the textual source, and a list of editorial emendations. It can be printed out on 34 sheets of letter-sized paper.

## THE LIFE AND SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF MARY ANN TALBOT

[1809]



MARY ANNE TALBOT,

*Who served Several Years*

*In His Majesty's Service by Sea & Land*

*In the Name of*

JOHN TAYLOR,

Died Feb<sup>y</sup>. 4<sup>th</sup>. 1808, Aged 30

*Pub<sup>d</sup>. June 16. 1809 by R. S. Kirby London House Yard Paternoster Row.*

THE  
LIFE  
AND  
SURPRISING ADVENTURES  
OF  
MARY ANN TALBOT,  
IN THE NAME OF  
JOHN TAYLOR,  
A NATURAL DAUGHTER OF THE LATE  
EARL TALBOT;

*Comprehending an Account of her extraordinary Adventures in the Character of Foot-Boy, Drummer, Cabin-Boy, and Sailor. Also of her many very narrow Escapes in different Engagements, while in the Land and Sea Services, and of the Hardships which she suffered while under cure of the Wounds received in the Engagement under Lord Howe, June 1, 1794, &c. &c. &c.*

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RELATED BY HERSELF.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. S. KIRBY, No. 11, LONDON HOUSE YARD,  
PATERNOSTER ROW.

*Price One Shilling.*

J. G. Barnard, Printer, Skinner Street, London.

[ 1809 ]

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Biographical Memoir contained in the following sheets, was originally presented to the Public in the second volumes of KIRBY'S WONDERFUL MUSEUM of *Remarkable Characters, &c.* for which work the copyright of it was exclusively purchased.

In consequence of the numerous applications which he has received from various quarters, the publisher has been induced to reprint it in a separate form, with the additions and corrections made by the writer herself, during the last months of her life. These were designed to have been more extensive; but extreme ill-health prevented her from bestowing the necessary attention on the subject.

The new portrait expressly engraved to accompany this account, must be allowed by all to whom the author was known, to be an accurate and striking resemblance.

## THE LIFE AND *ADVENTURES* OF MARY ANN TALBOT, &c. &c

I WAS born to experience a large portion of the disagreeable circumstances incident to human nature; and if the reader of the following pages should judge harshly of the circumstances that precipitated me into the early part of the misfortunes which have attended each succeeding year of my life, I have only to supplicate commiseration towards a female, bred in a country village, and thence sent to a boarding-school 180 miles from the metropolis, on leaving which, after nine years careful attention to my education and morals, I have to date the commencement of my subsequent troubles.

I am the youngest of sixteen natural children, whom my mother had by Lord William Talbot, Baron of Hensol, steward of his Majesty's household, and Colonel of the Glamorganshire militia, with whom she maintained a secret

correspondence for several years. I never learned that any particular event occurred at my birth, unless it was the circumstance of my being a surviving twin, nor do I know any thing relative to the juvenile part of my life, but from the information of an only sister considerably older than myself, and whom indeed I had taken to be my mother. From her I learnt that I was born in London, on the 2d day of Feb. 1778, in the house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, now in part occupied by Mr. Gosling the banker. The hour which brought me into the world deprived me of the fostering care of a mother, whose loss I can never sufficiently regret. In a short time I was sent to nurse at a small village called Worthen, about twelve miles from Shrewsbury, where I remained until I attained my fifth year, under the care of an excellent woman, without feeling the irreparable loss I had sustained in the death of the only parent who might have been my protector and guide through life.

At the expiration of my fifth year I was removed, (I know not by whose orders, but am inclined to imagine by some friend of Lord Talbot's, who died before I left my nurse) to Mrs. Tapperly's boarding-school, Foregate-street, Chester, in order to receive a liberal education. Here I remained nine years, unacquainted with the vices of the world, and knew no unhappiness but that of seeing children more fortunate than myself receiving the embraces of their parents and friends. During my residence at Mrs. Tapperly's, I found a kind protector in my only surviving sister, who was married to a Mr. Wilson of Trevalyn, in the county of Denbigh, North-Wales.

From this relative I experienced every attention and care expected from a parent; and indeed, as I have before stated, I always looked upon her and addressed her as such. When I was about nine years of age, she took me from Chester to Trevalyn, on a visit. One day while in her own room she

opened a kind of cabinet, and took a miniature of a lady from a drawer. I asked her who it was? She burst into tears and told me she was not my mother, but that I owed my existence to the lady represented in the picture, whose daughter she also was, and my only surviving sister; adding, that she would endeavour to discharge the duty of both a sister and a mother towards me. The miniature represented a female of small size and very delicate appearance, with a remarkable blue spot on the forehead between the eyes; though I never saw it afterwards, the physiognomy is so strongly imprinted on my mind, that nothing has been able to erase from my memory. My sister was so much agitated on the occasion, as not to have told me my mother's name and family, of which I remain in ignorance to the present hour; though I have been informed that she belonged to a family whose name, I do not think proper to mention, not having as I think sufficient evidence of the fact.

In the society of my sister I enjoyed the only gleam of happiness that I was doomed to experience, from the moment of my coming into the world to the present instant; but even this was of short duration; for alas! in the bloom of her youth and the flower of her age, she unfortunately fell a victim to childbirth, leaving me to regret, by the same visitation of Providence, the loss of a second parent, in that of a sister and friend united. She informed me that the name by which she was known before her marriage, was the Hon. Miss Dyer, being the name of the family she was brought up in; and that she possessed a fortune of 30,000 l. besides an income of fifteen hundred pounds per annum.

Deprived thus of the only relation and friend whom I knew in the world; and at an age too when I stood most in need of her advice and assistance, I felt a vacuity in my heart, which rendered existence irksome. The care of me now devolved solely on a gentleman of the name of Suck-



er, who resided at Newport in the county of Salop, and who within three months after the decease of my sister, taking on himself the authority of a guardian, removed me from the school at Chester, and placed me in his own family. Here I soon became more sensible than ever of the loss I had sustained in the death of my dear sister, as the severity of Mr. Sucker seldom permitted me to quit the room allotted me but at meal-times; and he seemed by his general conduct and manners, to wish to inspire me with a dread of his person, and consequently to avoid as much as possible any conversation on my circumstances, or those of my deceased sister. I must confess I was at a loss during the period I resided with him, to assign any reason for his conduct towards me; but have been since perfectly satisfied of its being a premeditated plan to throw me in the way of any person whatever, who would remove from his care a charge, the sight of which, for reasons only known to himself, was intolerable.

I had not long been under the roof of this inhospitable man, before he introduced me to Captain Essex Bowen of the 82d regiment of foot, whom I had once before seen at Chester, in company with Mr. Sucker; and who as I understood from the latter was then on the recruiting service. This was about a week previous to my quitting the house of Mrs. Tapperly, who then appeared to be well acquainted with the particulars of my birth and family.

From the moment of his introduction to me at Mr. Sucker's, Captain Bowen paid me particular attention, which I accounted for in consequence of Mr. Sucker's observing that I was to consider him as my future guardian, he being appointed to superintend my education abroad; and requested me to pay him every possible regard, as the person to whose care I was entrusted.

In a few days I quitted Mr. Sucker's in company with

Captain Bowen, who, on our departure, pretended to my late guardian, the most inviolable attachment to my family; and assured him in my hearing, that he would on his arrival in town, place me under the care of a female friend, in order to complete my education, and knowledge of the world; without which, he declared I should be considered as an alien by my own family.

Unexperienced in the ways of a deceitful world, my youthful mind was elated at the thoughts of visiting London, a place of which I had heard so much, and I was highly delighted with the varying scenes which presented themselves to my view on the road, though the season of the year was rather inauspicious, it being in January, 1792. On our arrival in the capital, which we reached without any remarkable circumstance, I was conveyed by Captain Bowen to the Salopian coffee-house, Charing-Cross, kept at that time by a Mrs. Wright, to whom I was introduced as his charge. Here I soon after experienced a visible change in the manners of my pretended protector; who in a very short period put in practice the villainous scheme which he had, no doubt, before our arrival in town, resolved on. Instead of exhibiting the least remorse, or endeavouring to sooth a mind agitated by his proceedings, he threw off the mask which had hitherto concealed the villain, and placed in my view the determined ruffian. Intimidated by his manners, and knowing that I had no friend near me, I became every thing he could desire; and so far aided his purposes as to become a willing instrument to my future misfortunes.

It was not long before I was destined to become the object of still greater degradation. In consequence of an order from the regiment to which Captain Bowen belonged, he was obliged to embark for St. Domingo, and conceiving me properly subjugated to his purpose, and remarking that my figure was extremely well calculated for the situation he had

projected for me, he produced a complete suit of male attire; and for the first time made me acquainted with the unmanly design he had formed, of taking me with him to the West-Indies, in the menial capacity of his foot-boy.

I had not much time to deliberate how to act; and by this time knowing his peremptory disposition, in a fit of phrenzy and despair, I yielded to the base proposal, and assumed the character he had thought fit to assign me, together with the name of John Taylor, which I ever after retained.

Thus equipped, I travelled with him to Falmouth, where soon after our arrival, we embarked on board the Crown transport, Captain Bishop, and set sail for the West Indies on the 20th day of March, 1792. We had not long been on our voyage before I began to experience the hardships of my situation: A ship even to the most robust and daring of the male sex, is at first a very unpleasant dwelling; and it must naturally be supposed, that to one like myself it was particularly disagreeable; as the novelty of my new attire did not exempt me from being compelled to live and mess with the lowest of the ship's company, for Captain Bowen never suffered me once after I was on board to eat with him, but forced me to put up with what he left at his meals.

Fearful of incurring the raillery which detection would have occasioned, I resolved to endure the hardships which I suffered with patience, rather than discover my sex.

During our voyage we encountered a most tremendous gale, which continued several days with such fury, that we were obliged to throw our guns overboard, in order to lighten the ship, and were reduced to such distress, as to render it necessary for the pumps to be kept at work continually; in consequence of which every person without distinction, (officers excepted) was obliged to assist in the laborious office. It was in this extremity that I first learnt the duty of a sailor; being obliged on some necessary occasion, to go

aloft, which frequent use rendered at last familiar, and by no means irksome.

In addition to our affliction, the storm had driven us considerably out of our latitude. Having in our eagerness to lighten the ship, thrown overboard besides the guns, casks of water, bags of biscuit, and many articles of indispensable necessity to our future comfort, which we afterwards severely missed, we were compelled to put ourselves on the short allowance of a biscuit per day; and for water we were so much distressed as to be wholly without it for the space of eight days, during which period we were happy in consequence of some favourable showers, to wring the rain water from our watch coats, which, on such occasions, we never failed to hand out, in order to catch as much as possible of the providential succour. Nay, to such extremity were we reduced for want of this necessary article of life, that I have gladly flown to any little settlement of water on the deck, and eagerly applied my lips to the boards to allay the parching thirst which I experienced.

As if the measure of our troubles were not yet accomplished, our main-top-gallant mast was broken asunder, and swept into the sea four men busily engaged at the windlass for our preservation, whom we never saw more.

Whether in consequence of the agitation I underwent, in the exertion of what I now conceived my duty, or the want of necessary provision, I know not; but the sudden loss of appetite I experienced, threatened to bring on me a fit of illness. After the storm was abated, a strong gale sprung up, and being in favour of our course we proceeded at the rate of thirteen and fourteen knots an hour.

We put in for repairs, up the Windward Passage, on the Musquito shore, and on one of the islands that distinguish this place, I went with the boatswain and five others of the ship's company, on shore to forage, and perceiving a bear

approaching us in a retrograde position, the boatswain fired at the animal when near us, and killed it. Having been so long kept on scanty allowance, we immediately opened our prize, and took out the heart, for fresh provision: the hams also we conveyed on board, and committed them to the pickle tub for curing. Before quitting the island, we proceeded farther in search of water, and fell in with a party of the barbarous natives, who make a practice of scalping the unfortunate victims that fall into their hands. These people approaching us in a menacing manner, we fired on them, and killed one, on which the remainder fled with precipitation towards the sea. On coming up to the dead man, we found that he was naked, except a wisp round his body, like a hay-band; his hair was long, black, and strong as that of a horse. He was about six feet in height, and proportionably lusty; armed with a tomahawk, or scalping hatchet, with which each of his companions that fled was furnished. They were of a tawny complexion, and had no more clothing than their deceased comrade. Their weapons hung dangling to their hay-bands, resembling girdles.

We arrived early in the month of June, at Port-au-Prince, in the island of St. Domingo, where, after the fatigue and distress I suffered on the voyage, by fortunate opportunities of taking moderate rest, my health and spirits were quickly restored, except a little weakness and debility brought on afterwards by the heat of the climate, and occasional melancholy reflections on my own unfortunate situation; as during my continuance on this island I avoided as much as possible the sight and company of my abandoned betrayer.

Our stay at St. Domingo was but of short duration, owing to the arrival of a packet from England, which had been directed, if possible to overtake us, with orders to countermand our destination, and to join the troops on the Continent, under the command of his Royal Highness the Duke

of York, but had missed us in consequence of the gale before described. I was now doomed to undergo another change of character; for Captain Bowen, judging it not convenient to continue me in the situation of his foot-boy, proposed my being enrolled in the regiment as a drummer. On my objecting to this, he threatened to have me conveyed up the country, and sold as a slave. From the dread of his really putting his threat into execution, I reluctantly acquiesced in his desire, and was immediately equipped in the dress of a drummer, and learnt the art of beating the drum from the instructions of drum-major Rickardson. In pursuance of the orders brought by the packet, we immediately embarked on board some transports appointed for that service; and, being favoured with a brisk gale during the greatest part of our voyage, we arrived in safety at the place of our destination, a port on the coast of Flanders, the name of which I cannot remember. Immediately after our debarkation, we were marched off to join the main army at head quarters; previous to reaching which, I found I was to answer the purpose of Capt. Bowen, as before, in the capacity of his drudge and foot-boy, whenever opportunity would allow the dispensing with my duty as drummer. This mode of life was by no means congenial to my feelings; and, indeed, was in my eyes worse than the situation which I was in while foot-boy only, although I was more immediately compelled to endure the sight of a man, now become detestable to me.

I perfectly remember one, among a multitude of harassing excursions, which had nearly proved fatal to his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and a part of his army, as well as to myself. After a long and heavy march of thirty miles in one day, without halting more than once for refreshment, while pitching our tents and making entrenchments, a part of our troops taking a temporary rest, were surprised and surrounded by the enemy, excepting a small space which led



to an adjacent wood, and furnished a means of retreat to a part of the army, with which I was, though without other apparel than my small clothes. The enemy observing our camp at rest, made the attempt in the middle of the night, owing to which circumstances many others, as well as myself, were equally unprepared in point of accoutrements, though the most we suffered on this occasion was the alarm, as a large party of Austrians, who had doubtless watched the motions of our adversaries, came timely to our assistance, and compelled the unwelcome intruders to make a precipitate retreat, by which we regained our former station.

We continued to have frequent skirmishes with the enemy previous to the grand object of our royal commander, namely, the celebrated siege of Valenciennes, at which place I was exposed to greater hardships than any that I had hitherto experienced. Compelled to remain among my comrades wherever duty called, in the various struggles which preceded the surrender of the place, an eye-witness to hundreds of friends and foes indiscriminately falling around me; where the 11th dragoons, conspicuous above the rest, fought with their broad-swords hand to hand, over heaps of dead and dying soldiers, I was shocked to see many a brave fellow at first but slightly wounded, meet his death by the trampling of horses, spurred on by the contending antagonists. During these conflicts, I was obliged to keep a continual roll to drown the cries and confusion on the various scenes of action. The infantry equally distinguished themselves; as, wherever the enemy, how superior soever in number, opposed their progress, they never failed to meet their fate on the point of the British bayonet.

Towards the end of this memorable siege, I received two wounds, though fortunately neither deep nor dangerous: the first from a musquet ball, which glancing between my breast and collar bone, struck my rib; and the other on

the small of my back, from the broad-sword of an Austrian trooper, which, I imagine, rather proceeded from accident than design, the marks of which two wounds I still bear. I carefully concealed them, from the dread of their discovering my sex, and effected a perfect cure, by the assistance of a little basilicon, lint, and a few Dutch drops. These accidents happened on the same day the Hon. Mr. Tollemache was killed by a musquet ball.

Soon afterwards Valenciennes surrendered, and we in consequence marched in and took possession of the town. Most of the women and children had taken refuge in cellars and places underground. I need scarcely observe, that every possible protection was afforded to these unfortunate sufferers. In the place was found a young man who had deserted from the 14th light dragoons. A summary punishment was inflicted; he was immediately elevated on a powder cask and hanged upon a tree. All the troops were drawn out to witness the execution; and General Abercromby wept at the idea that an Englishman could be guilty of so unnatural a crime. The same day this unfortunate man deserted, our powder magazine was accidentally removed, otherwise it would in all probability have been destroyed; for no sooner had he reached the town than the enemy began to fire shells and bombs on the building that had been used for the magazine, which, with three young men who were playing at Casino, was blown to atoms. On our arrival in the town I learnt that my persecutor, Captain Bowen, was no more, having fallen in the attack; this I was informed of by one of my comrades: and though I had every reason rather to rejoice at such an event than grieve, yet it was with the greatest difficulty I could smother the sudden emotion which I experienced on the intelligence, or conceal the hidden character of a woman, in shedding a tear over his fate, however unworthy. I had no great difficulty in discovering his

body; nor was it thought strange that I should endeavour to find him out, being always in the habit of attending him at his tent, when I was off duty.—I took from his pocket the key of his desk, out of which I took some letters, which on perusing in private, I found chiefly relating to myself; being the correspondence of my former guardian, Mr. Sucker: these I carefully preserved, and sewed up under the shoulder straps of my shirt.

I now felt my situation truly distressing; left in a strange country without a friend to consult, or a place where I could find an asylum, I suffered under the most poignant grief, at the same time labouring under excruciating pain, and my wounds so situated, that I durst not reveal them without a discovery of my sex, which I ever carefully avoided. I hazarded every thing to keep my secret inviolable, and committed the care of my wounds to my own single endeavour and the hand of time. Thus situated, I formed a resolution to desert from a duty at best imposed on me, and endeavour to return to England. This step I might not have thought on, had I not discovered by Mr. Sucker's letters that I had been grossly imposed on, as money had been remitted to Captain Bowen, and my name was mentioned in a way which gave rise to suspicions to which I had hitherto been a stranger. Having formed my plan, little time was necessary to put it in execution. I set out on foot the same morning for the first place that providence might point out. However inexperienced I might be in some respects, I had the precaution to change my drummer's dress for one which I had been accustomed to wear when on board, and which bore evident marks of the service it had seen; and during my journey I carefully avoided any town, or place of considerable appearance; always on such occasions taking a circuitous route, frequently sleeping in a tree, under a hay-stack, and sometimes in places much less convenient.

The diminutive and insignificant figure which I made in my sailor's attire, served me as a passport among the peasantry of the country villages, through which I was under the necessity of passing, to obtain refreshment from any straggling boy I could meet with on the skirts of the place; for no one thought it worth while to question a person of my mean appearance.

In this manner I arrived at Luxemburg in September, without experiencing the least molestation; here I soon found my ignorance had led me into an error of a very awkward nature; and that being a town in possession of the French, they would not suffer me to proceed farther on my journey. Had I fortunately taken the contrary route, I should most probably have reached Dunkirk or Calais in one third of the time it occupied me, in traversing that part of the country; as I have since learnt that the distance from Valenciennes to either of the last mentioned parts, is small in comparison to that of the route which I had inadvertently taken to Luxemburg. Finding myself thus situated, destitute of every necessary of life, and in the midst of a country where no one paid me the smallest regard, I was constrained through mere necessity, though sorely against my wish, to engage with a Captain Le Sage, commander of a French lugger, on board which I embarked on the 17th of September, 1793. Soon afterwards we dropped down the Rhine, and sailed on a cruise, when I was put to the most common drudgery of the vessel; but even this I could have borne with patience, had not the painful idea occurred to my mind, that in this new situation, I should be doomed to raise my arm against my countrymen, which I learnt too late was the purpose of Le Sage, whom I had taken for a captain of a merchantman, but found no other than commander of a kind of privateer. Fortune however, in this one instance, proved kinder to me than she had hitherto been accus-

tomed. Instead of falling in with some of the English merchantmen, as it was generally thought we should, and according to the ardent wish of Le Sage, our commander, we cruised about four months without any success, or meeting with any thing worthy of notice, and then fell in with the British fleet, under the command of Admiral Lord Howe, then in the Channel.

On our first sight of the British, Le Sage ordered all hands to their duty; and observing me to be missing, he followed me to the place where I was concealed among the ballast, to which I had contrived to gain access through the cabin, for fear of being obliged to act against my country; and finding that I persisted in an obstinate refusal to come on deck, he beat me on the back and sides with a rope in a most inhuman manner, and drove me before him up the cabin stairs; but when on deck I absolutely refused to assist in defence of his vessel, and he being too much occupied to think only of me, left me to my own meditations. The British now bore down upon us, and, after a trifling resistance from the French, through desperation only, we were captured, and I being considered as an English boy acting against my country, was carried with Le Sage and his companions before Lord Howe, on board the *Queen Charlotte*, to be examined.

Being interrogated by his Lordship respecting the cause of serving on board an enemy ship, I briefly told him, "That being without friends in England, I had accompanied a gentleman to the Continent in the capacity of foot-boy, on whose death, I had in the greatest distress reached Luxemburg, in hopes of obtaining a passage to my native country; but finding it impossible, as the place was at that time in possession of the French, I was constrained, though much against my inclination, to enter into Le Sage's vessel, having experienced during the short stay I made in the town, no attention to my distress, chiefly, as I imagined, from be-

ing English; and that my determination from the moment I engaged with Captain Le Sage was to desert the first opportunity that offered to forward my passage to England; but I assured his Lordship, that had I known that the intention of Le Sage was to act offensively against my countrymen, I would rather have perished than have set my foot on board his vessel; having, previous to sailing, taken him to be the commander of a merchantman, and as such engaged with him."

Fortunately, his Lordship did not think of questioning me concerning the place where my late master died; as in such an event I must unquestionably have acknowledged myself a deserter from the British forces at Valenciennes, being totally unprepared for such an enquiry, as my readers will be convinced that the whole of my answers to his Lordship's questions were a true representation of the hardships which I had experienced, and in no shape framed to deceive. This statement joined no doubt to the Frenchman's declaring my unwillingness to act in defence of the lugger, with the beating I had a little before experienced from Le Sage, gained me a favourable dismissal from Lord Howe, and served as a passport to a situation in one of the ships in his Lordship's fleet, on board of which I was immediately sent.

My heart expanded with joy on beholding myself placed once more among my countrymen. The ship to which I was assigned was the *Brunswick*, Captain John Harvey, where the story of my adventures, and of the hardships I had suffered, particularly those which I had undergone while on board the *Frenchman*, gained me among the seamen as many friends as hearers. Our object in this cruise was to seek the fleet of the enemy, and bring on an engagement. The service allotted to me, was to serve at the second gun on the quarter deck, and hand cartridge to the men; or, to speak in the seamen's phrase, to act in the capacity of *powder-mon-*

*key*. I had not however been long on board before Captain Harvey observing my cleanliness, and that my manner was very different from that of many lads on board, called me to him, and questioned me as to my friends, and whether I had not run away from some school, to try the sea. Finding by my answers that I had been better brought up and educated than most in the like situation, he assured that if I would consider him as a confidential friend, and tell him the whole truth, I should find a protector in him, as he had children of his own, and could not tell what hardships they might encounter if he were dead. On this I told him I had neither father nor mother living; that the oppression of the person to whose care I was entrusted, had first caused me to quit my home; and that in short, I was wholly destitute of any friend in the world. He appeared concerned at my early misfortunes in life, and promoted me immediately to be his principal cabin boy, in which capacity I continued to serve him until our fleet came within sight of the enemy.

Three months after my coming on board the Brunswick, our fleet fell in with that of the French, which brought on the ever memorable action of the 1st of June; an event which will ever be remembered with heartfelt satisfaction by the brave fellows who shared the toils of that auspicious day, and indeed by every lover of our glorious constitution and country. I cannot give from my own observation a minute description of the action, being in the beginning so busily engaged, and toward the conclusion so much wounded; and shall, in consequence, introduce an account of the part which our gallant crew took in this exploit, from information obtained when lying under cure of the wounds I received while employed on board the Brunswick.

This ship was chosen by Lord Howe for his second on this occasion, and contributed perhaps more than any other to the glorious result of the day. The instant the signal

was made for engaging, she bore down in company with the *Queen Charlotte* for the centre of the French line, by the galling fire of which, the Brunswick suffered so severely, that her cockpit was filled with wounded before she had fired a single shot.

The *Vengeur* was the ship to which the Brunswick was opposed, and the two antagonists were laid alongside each other in such a manner, that the starboard anchors of the latter hooked into the forechains of the *Vengeur*. The master having informed Captain Harvey of this circumstance, and asked whether he should cut the *Vengeur* clear.—“No,” replied the gallant captain, “we have got her and we will keep her.” So closely were they grappled, that the crew of the Brunswick, unable to haul up eight of her starboard ports, were obliged to fire through them. Thus hotly engaged they went off to the distance of a mile from the hostile fleets, and in about an hour, the smoke dispersing a little, our people perceived the *Achille*, another French seventy-four, bearing down upon them with her rigging and decks covered with men ready for boarding. Captain Harvey immediately ordered the lower deck to prepare for her reception. The *Achille* being within musket reach, a double-headed shot was added to each gun, already loaded with single thirty-two pounders, and a broadside was poured in with most destructive effect; the action with the *Vengeur* being at the same time continued. Five or six rounds brought all the masts of the *Achille* by the board, and scattered her crew like mice upon the ocean.

About an hour after the Brunswick had disabled this new assailant, the *Ramillies*, commanded by Captain Harvey's brother, came up to her assistance. After pouring two tremendous broadsides into the *Vengeur*, the *Ramillies* made sail for another French ship bearing down upon them, and went off engaging her.



Soon after the departure of the *Ramillies*, the *Brunswick* swung clear of the *Vengeur*, tearing away three anchors from her bow. A steady raking fire carried the fore and main-mast of the latter by the board, and she had otherwise sustained so much damage, that after a conflict of two hours and a half, she was obliged to yield. All our boats having been shot to pieces, no relief could be afforded by us to our vanquished opponent, which foundered soon after the action. Though every possible exertion was made, only two hundred of the crew were saved; the rest, in number about six hundred, went to the bottom in the ship.

The *Brunswick* was herself reduced to a perfect wreck, and of her crew forty-seven were killed, and one hundred and eighteen badly wounded.\* In this forlorn state it was deemed impossible to rejoin the British fleet, and judged necessary, in order to save the ship, to bear away for port.

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\*Among these was her gallant commander, Captain Harvey, who was wounded early in the action by a musket ball, which carried away part of his right hand; but this he carefully concealed and bound up the wound with his handkerchief.—Some time afterwards he received a violent contusion in the loins, which extended him almost lifeless on the deck. Rallying his strength, however, he still continued at his post, directing the engagement, till his right arm was shattered to pieces. Faint from loss of blood he was now compelled to retire; but when assistance was offered to conduct him below, he refused it. "I will not," said he, "have a single man leave his quarters on my account; my legs still remain to bear me down to the cock-pit." Casting an affectionate look on his brave crew, he thus addressed them: "Persevere my brave lads in your duty. Continue the action with spirit, for the honor of our king and country, and remember my last words: The colours of the *Brunswick* shall never be struck." It was found necessary to amputate his arm the same evening, and after sustaining the most excruciating pain; he expired at Portsmouth on the 30th of June.

During the whole of this engagement, in which I was either actor or spectator, I felt not in the least intimidated. Just before the coming up of the *Ramillies*, I received a severe wound above the ankle of my left leg, from a grape-shot, that struck on the aftermost brace of the gun, and rebounding on the deck, lodged in my leg; notwithstanding which I attempted to rise three times, but without effect, and in the last effort part of the bone projected through the skin, in such a manner as wholly to prevent my standing, if I had been able to rise. To complete my misfortune, I received another wound by a musket-ball, that went completely through my thigh, a little above the knee of the same leg, and lay in this crippled state till the engagement was over; every person on board not wounded, being too much occupied to yield me the least assistance. I remained in this situation during the rest of the action; but at length was conveyed, with many other wounded, to the cock-pit; where the surgeon, after making me suffer the most excruciating pain, could not extract the grape-shot from above my ankle, so completely was it lodged, and surrounded by the swelling which soon took place, and prevented his endeavours, through fear of injuring the tendons, among which he declared that it lay.

On the 12th of June we reached Spithead, but the severity of my wounds obliged me to keep close to my berth, and I was thus deprived of the gratification of being hailed with those of my gallant messmates, who, on their arrival, were greeted with the loudest acclamations of applause, by their grateful countrymen. With the first convenient opportunity, I was conveyed to Haslar hospital, at Gosport, and placed under the care of surgeon Dodd, as out-patient, there not being sufficient room, from the number of wounded seamen, to admit me into the hospital. During the time I lay under his hands, I lodged at No. 2, Riemes Alley,



Gosport, and supported myself with money I had received from Captain Harvey prior to the engagement. After four months attendance, I obtained a partial cure; for surgeon Dodd, though the utmost of his skill was exerted, could not extract the ball, it having lodged, as before stated, among the tendons; to have cut among which, he said, would make me a cripple for life.

At length, little remaining but the scars which I shall carry to my grave, and having obtained in a great measure the use of my leg, I was discharged from the hospital, and soon after entered on board the *Vesuvius* bomb, Capt. Tomlinson, then belonging to the squadron under the command of Sir Sydney Smith, lying at Spithead, and immediately commenced a cruise, in hopes of making prizes. After cruising some weeks on the French coast without success, we steered for the Mediterranean, and, on our arrival at Gibraltar, came to an anchor, and there remained for three days. During this interval we received an order to join the squadron under Sir Sydney Smith; on which we immediately weighed, and proceeded according to directions. Nothing worth notice occurred until we fell in with Sir Sydney and the ships under his command, in company of which we proceeded off Havre-de-Grace, where we were soon after separated in a gale.

While on board the *Vesuvius*, we encountered a most tremendous storm, in which I was employed on an occasion that I can never think of, without being astonished at the hardships which, in youth, a human being is capable of sustaining. It was necessary for some one on board, to go to the jib-boom, to catch the jib-sheet, which in the gale had got loose. The continual lungeing of the ship rendered this duty particularly hazardous, and there was not a seaman on board, but rejected this office. I was acting in the capacity of Midshipman, though I never received pay for my ser-

vice in this ship, but as a common man. This circumstance I mention only, to shew that it was not my particular duty to undertake the task; which on the refusal of several who were asked, I voluntarily undertook. Indeed the preservation of us all depended on this exertion. On reaching the jib-boom, I was under the necessity of lashing myself fast to it; for the ship every minute making a fresh lunge, without such a precaution I should inevitably have been washed away. The surges continually breaking over me, I suffered an uninterrupted wash and fatigue for six hours, before I could quit the post I occupied. When danger is over, a sailor has little thought or reflection; and my messmates, who had witnessed the perilous situation in which I was placed, passed it off with a joke, observing, "that I had only been *sipping sea-broth*," but it was a broth of a quality, that though most seamen relish, yet few I imagine would like to take in the quantity I was compelled to do.

Continuing on the French coast with intent to rejoin Sir Sidney, we fell in with two privateers near Dunkirk; from whom, observing their superior force, Captain Tomlinson endeavoured to make sail. The Frenchman observing his determination, crowded all the sail he could make, in chace; and we instantly commenced a running fire, which continued seven hours; at the end of which their superior weight of metal brought us to; we were in consequence immediately boarded. What became of Captain Tomlinson, the vessel, and part of the crew, I know not, as myself, and William Richards, a young midshipman, were separated from the rest, and carried on board one of the privateers that captured us. We imagined that the rest were conveyed on board the other; but I have since reason to think the *Vesuvius* was recaptured, as she is now again in the British service.

When on board the privateer, we were deprived of our dirks, and conveyed to Dunkirk, where we were lodged in

the prison of St. Clare, in Church-street, which had a little before belonged to the nuns of St. Clare, some of whom, since the revolution, have settled in England. Here I experienced the hardships of a French prison for the tedious space of eighteen months; in the course of which time Richards and myself projected a plan for our escape, by getting to the top of the prison, in order to jump off; but being observed by a centinel on duty, we were both confined in separate dungeons, where it was so dark, that I never saw day-light, during the space of eleven weeks; and the only allowance I received, was bread and water, let down to me from the top of the cell. My bed consisted only of a little straw, not more than half a truss, which was never changed. For two days I was so ill in this dreadful place that I was unable to stir from my wretched couch to reach the miserable pittance; which, in consequence, was drawn up in the same state as it had been let down. The next morning a person, who I suppose, was the keeper of the place, came into the dungeon without a light, (which way he came I know not, but suppose by a private door, through which I afterwards passed to be released) and called out to me, "Are you dead?" To this question I was only able to reply, by requesting a little water, being parched almost to death by thirst, resulting from the fever which preyed on me: he told me he had none, and left me in a brutal manner, without offering the least relief. Nature quickly restored me to health, and I sought the bread and water with as eager an inclination as a glutton would seek a feast. About five weeks after my illness, an exchange of prisoners taking place, I obtained my liberty, but did not see any thing of Richards till after my arrival in England, where I met him by chance, near Covent-Garden.

During my residence in the prison of St. Clare, I observed among the rest of the prisoners, a very ingenious man, a German, who employed his time, and obtained more

comforts in this place, than most others, by working gold wire in a particular manner, and which he disposed of, in the various shapes of bracelets, rings, and ornamental chains for ladies dresses. This man seemed fearful lest I should learn his method of workmanship, and was angry whenever I particularly noticed him at his work; notwithstanding, I contrived by frequent sight of the method he used, to bring the secret with me to England.

On my deliverance from prison, I was extremely weak, though in excellent spirits, but could scarcely bear the light for some days afterwards, it having an effect on my eyes, as if every thing round me was chalk. I had thoughts of returning to England by the means of those who effected my release, but was diverted from this intention by an unexpected circumstance.

Following my fellow prisoners just released, and from the pain in my leg, being considerably behind them, it was my chance to overhear the conversation of a gentleman making inquiries in English, of some seafaring men (by appearance) in Church-street, near the market, respecting any lad they knew, willing to make a voyage to America, in quality of ship's steward. I immediately accosted him, and proffered my service, being destitute of necessaries, and preferring such a situation, if I could obtain it, to a return to England with the rest of my countrymen lately exchanged. The gentleman immediately asked me my present situation at Dunkirk, which I briefly explained; in consequence of which I accompanied him back to the prison of St. Clare, where finding from the keepers of the prison that I had given him a true relation, he engaged me in the above capacity to perform the voyage to New-York, and thence to England (which he informed me would be his next voyage) for 50 *l.* and all I could make, at the same time advancing me sufficient cash in part, to fit me out. His name was Cap-

tain John Field, of the *Ariel*, merchantman, New-York, on board which vessel I immediately embarked; and during our short stay at Dunkirk, was employed in correcting the ship's books, paying the men, victualling the ship, and taking in the cargo. Our vessel was chiefly laden with bale-goods, among which was French lace to the value of 5000 *l*. We set sail for New-York, in the month of August 1796, and arrived after a successful and expeditious voyage of not more than a month, at the place of our destination, which, on going on shore I mistook for London, and particularly remarked a church, so like that in Covent-garden, that I was absolutely confirmed in the idea. I was detained little more than a fortnight at New-York, and was chiefly employed in taking an account of the goods delivered to the respective owners; after which duty, I accepted an invitation to accompany my Captain in an excursion to Providence, in Rhode Island, where his family resided. During this journey, and indeed the whole of the voyage, I was treated rather as a friend and companion, by Captain Field, than a person in his pay, and under his command.

On our arrival at Rhode Island, we found Captain Field's family in good health; it consisted of his wife, four children and a niece. Here I spent the most agreeable fortnight of my life; as the Captain neither paid nor received any visits, but I made one of the party: Mrs. Field also appeared equally attached to me, which made the short time I continued among this worthy family, appear to me but as a dream, so few and transient were my days of happiness. Among other visits, we made one to Mr. Field, the Captain's father, a very agreeable and worthy gentleman. The only circumstance of an unpleasant nature that occurred during my stay in America, arose from the strong partiality which the Captain's niece conceived to my company, and which proceeded to such an extent, as to induce her to make me an offer of her hand in

marriage.—I made several excuses, but could not divert her attention from what she proposed. Mrs. Field at length becoming acquainted with the circumstance, made great objection to my youth and inexperience of the world; but neither my excuses, nor Mrs. Field's remonstrances had any weight, opposed to the young lady's inclination, which she fondly cherished to the last hour of my residence at Rhode Island. She requested before Mrs. Field, that I would make her a present of my picture; for which purpose I sat for a miniature at New York, in the full uniform of an American officer—for this picture I paid eighteen dollars. The time of our departure for England being arrived, I took my leave, not without regret, of Mrs. Field, and family; but had scarcely proceeded two miles on the way to New York, before I was summoned back, being overtaken by a servant, who informed the Captain and myself, that we must return, as the young lady was in strong fits. We returned, and found her still in a fit, out of which, with great difficulty, we recovered her; and by making her a promise of a speedy return from England, she very reluctantly allowed me to depart.

Our stay at New York was but short; the mate, in the absence of Captain Field and myself, having taken charge of the cargo consigned to England, and obtained the necessary invoices of the goods; chiefly manufactured cotton and camblets. This, had I remained on board, would have been part of my duty; but through the indulgence of the captain, it was performed by another. We proceeded on our voyage to England with a favourable wind, and arrived at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, without meeting with any thing particular on the way. Our provisions falling short, we took in some fresh, and after waiting three days for a convoy, proceeded to the river Thames, where we safely cast anchor on the 20th of November, 1796, and came to a mooring in the tier off Church-hole, Rotherhithe. We delivered our cargo,

and began to take in a fresh one, as it was Captain Field's intention to stay no longer in England than was absolutely necessary for shipping an outward bound cargo. The many acts of friendship which I had experienced from this gentleman, determined me to accompany him in any voyage which he might undertake; particularly as he had often informed me that if I continued with him a voyage or two more, he would resign the command of the vessel to me; it being his intention to retire from the sea service in a short time. He told me that he had an idea of making a trading voyage up the Mediterranean, and commissioned me to purchase some maps, charts, &c. necessary for such an undertaking, which I in consequence bought (at Faden's, who then resided at the corner of St. Martin's Lane, Strand,) by his direction.

Being short of men to work the ship, the Captain had engaged two fresh hands, who came on board the afternoon of the same day, myself being the only officer on board; I took the description of their persons, and entered their names on the ship's books, being employed at the same time in settling my accounts in the cabin, and having some loose cash, and bank-notes lying on the desk. After giving them orders to assist in swabbing the decks the first thing in the morning, I dismissed them. Soon after twelve o'clock at night, I was awakened by a violent noise at the upper cabin door, with a crash, as if some part of it had given way. Alarmed at the moment, I searched for a tinder-box, to strike a light, but through hurry could not lay my hand on it. Almost at the same instant I caught hold of a brace of pistols, which hung on the side of the cabin fire-place; these, to my great surprize, I found unloaded. A second attempt of a more violent nature than the first, being made at the inner door, I recollected a sword which hung over the captain's birth, and which I took down, at the instant the cabin door had given way, by a wrench from an iron crow, or some such in-

strument. Knowing the situation of the door, I advanced towards it, with the sword in my hand, and immediately made a thrust which I knew must wound deep, from the difficulty I found in drawing it back. I heard neither groan, nor noise; but found that the intruder, whoever he was, had retired. I now sought the tinder-box, and struck a light, secured the door, and sat up the remainder of the night. The first thing in the morning the men observed a quantity of blood on the deck, in a track from the cabin door, which they noticed as being broken, and asked me if any thing particular had happened; to which I made no reply; but on finding Thomas Honarton, one of the new engaged hands, to be absent, I inquired after him, and was informed that he was unwell from an accident he had met with the night before in getting into his birth. I made no other inquiries; but waited until the captain should come on board, which he did about eleven o'clock the same morning; and on entering the cabin, he noticed the shattered condition of the door. When I informed him of the particulars, adding, that the man whom I suspected, Thomas Honarton, still remained in the ship; the captain instantly ordered him to be brought forward, when his thigh was discovered to be dreadfully swelled, and the marks of the wound shewed a sword or some such weapon to have passed through his thigh. He could make no defence to my accusation of his attempt to rob the cabin, and breaking the door. Captain Field finding his wound dangerous, sent him to St. Thomas's hospital, where he escaped prosecution, by the ship's sailing before he could obtain a cure. The other man engaged, named Mac Gregory, we rather suspected of being a deserter. He denied it, but one of the lads had an opportunity one night, of observing his back to be marked, as if he had been flogged, which confirmed our suspicion; but not being able to get the ship cleared, for want of hands, we were glad of him.



A few days after this affair, the mate, John Jones, (a native of New Providence) and myself, agreed on a little excursion on shore, previous to our leaving England, to which purpose we put on a plain seaman's dress, knowing the prejudice of most of the lower people about Wapping, against officers of any description, whom in general they consider as little better than spies on their actions. But while about to land at St. Catherine's, we were attacked by a press-gang, whom we resolutely opposed; I in my defence taking up one of the skullers of the boat, with which I struck one or two who attempted to secure me. In this contest I received a wound on my head by a cutlass, a large seam from which remains to the present hour. After a long struggle, during which I was tumbled out of the boat up to my armpits in water, the mate and myself were both secured. Fortunately for him, he had his warrant as an American officer about him, which procured his discharge, when taken on board the tender. On my examination, being unprepared for such an event, I had inadvertently left my protection as an American on board the Ariel, behind me. This circumstance, with the treachery of Jones, who informed the regulating captain that I was an Englishman, thereby thinking to get rid of a dangerous rival, (for he was particularly attached to the niece of Captain Field, but had lost all hope of success with her, from her known partiality for me) and moreover stated I was the best seaman on board their vessel. This declaration, joined with the want of the certificate I had left in the Ariel, occasioned my detention on board the tender for three days and nights. In this situation my indignation at the treachery of Jones, agitated me beyond any thing I had hitherto suffered; and I thought of various schemes, but without putting any in practice, to effect my deliverance. At length there being a sufficient number of impressed men collected to clear the tender for the reception of others, myself and

the rest of the men confined were brought upon deck, in order to be sent to different ships. Finding I had nothing to prevent this, but a disclosure of what I had so long kept within my own breast, I accosted the inspecting officers, and told them I was unfit to serve his Majesty in the way of my fellow-sufferers, being a female. On this assertion they both appeared greatly surprized; and at first thought I had fabricated a story to be discharged, and sent me to the surgeon, whom I soon convinced of the truth of my assertion. The officers upbraided each other with ignorance at not discovering before, that I was a woman, and readily gave me a discharge.

Resolved never to go on board the Ariel, after the disclosure of my sex, I wrote to Captain Field, without mentioning the way in which I obtained a discharge from the tender, only requesting he would meet me as soon as possible at a house at the corner of Tower Street, Tower Hill. Being on board at the time, my letter had not been dispatched long, before he gave me the meeting, and was astonished, at my disclosing to him the manner in which I obtained my liberty. It was some time before I could convince him that I was really a woman; having for such a length of time known me experience hardships so opposite to the delicacy of the female sex. He endeavoured to prevail on me to accompany him in his intended voyage, but no arguments could induce me (after acknowledging former favours received) to accompany him, or indeed for the present to think of the sea-service, in any way whatever. Finding his applications fruitless, he honourably paid me every shilling due on our engagement, and besides made me a very handsome present. After this interview I saw him but twice, nothing material passing between us, except his earnest desire of my disguising my sex, and resuming my former situation, which he could never prevail on me to accede to.



I had not been released above a day or two from the tender, when, in November 1796, the King was attacked on his way to the Parliament-house, by the mob, and the glasses of his carriage were broken in pieces. The horse-guards had just left him proceeding along the park in his private carriage from the gate of St. James's Palace. I had climbed a tree opposite to the small gate that leads to the Green Park, so that I had a complete view of the whole of this extraordinary scene. Just as the carriage was passing, it was most furiously attacked. The coach-door was opened, the coachman thrown off his box, and the three footmen were pulled down from behind, and one desperado had even seized his Majesty by the collar, and was in the act of pulling him out, while others of the mob were spitting in his face. Just at this moment was heard the cry of—"Help! for God's sake! the King is in danger! the King will be killed!" At this cry, Lieutenant Beauclerc, commanding the troop of horse, who had just left the court at the King's Palace, ordered his men to wheel and galloped off to rescue his Majesty from the hands of his infuriated assailants. He struck with his sword on the shoulder, the man who had hold of the king, but the villain contrived to escape. As I was in the tree, I was asked if I knew any of the persons concerned in this outrage, and on my replying that I should certainly recognize the man who had been struck, if I were to see him again, I was ordered to follow to Buckingham House, which I did among the horse soldiers. No person was then apprehended; but as I was afterwards going along Chandos-street to Bow-street, to give a description of the fellow, I saw the very man led between two others, and pointed him out to the officer, by whom he was secured; but his companions escaped. He was so badly wounded, that he was immediately sent to the hospital, where I believe he died, for no examination ever took place, though I was bound over to appear against him.

With money in my pocket, I was undetermined how to act, but for the present took a lodging in East-Smithfield. I frequented the theatres, and houses about Covent-garden, where I became known to persons of every description as a good companion. Among others, I had formed an acquaintance with Haines, the well-known highwayman, who was some time afterwards hung in chains on Hounslow Heath, for shooting one of the Bow-street officers, when about to apprehend him. I did not know that this man followed so dangerous an occupation; but one evening, when my cash was nearly exhausted, I met him at a house in Covent-garden, known by the name of the *Finish*. Being out of spirits, he questioned me as to the cause; I told him, I had lived so freely since I came on shore, that my cash was quite exhausted, and I was racking my imagination to get a fresh supply. He clapped his hand on my shoulder and exclaimed, "D—n it, my fine fellow, I'll put you up to the best way in the world to get the supply you stand in need of." We left the house, and while walking, he proposed that I should join him on an excursion to take a purse on the road; and observing that my sailor's habit was not calculated for the occasion, he furnished me with money to buy buckskin small clothes, &c. necessary for the purpose. The road we were to take was not settled, but our meeting was fixed for the next night; I purchased the buckskin small clothes at Ford's, in the Strand, and a pair of boots from Newcomb, in Pall Mall. At the hour appointed, I met Haines at a livery stable behind the New Church, in the Strand, and found him in company with six more persons, all of whom I understood had met on the same business, though intending to take different roads. I was to accompany Haines, who furnished me with a pair of pistols, which he told me cost three guineas. When every thing was ready for our departure, a sudden recollection of the danger and dishonour of

this undertaking, providentially occurred to my mind; and I informed Haines how very reluctant I was to break an engagement, or my word in any particular, yet when I considered the probable consequences of the business in question, I could not think of accompanying him, however far I had gone on the occasion. At the same time I remarked, it was not the danger of the enterprise that I dreaded, but the certain shame attached to a dishonourable action; the principles of a state of warfare I should not mind, but never deliberately would act the part of a *Pirate*. He endeavoured to divert my resolution, seemed highly exasperated, and shewed an inclination to quarrel, which I think was only suppressed by a knowledge of the situation in which he stood. I left the place without farther opposition, congratulating myself on so narrow an escape.—Though I saw Haines afterwards, he never took the least notice of the affair, and I took care for the future what company I connected myself with.

During my residence in East-Smithfield, I made several applications at the Navy-pay office, Somerset-House, for money due to me for service on board the Brunswick and the Vesuvius bomb, in which I was taken by the French, besides prize-money to which I was entitled by the captures on the first of June. At length I was directed to apply respecting the prize-money to the agent, in Arundel-street, Strand, whither I immediately went, and was desired to call another time. Being vexed at the disappointment, I returned to Somerset-House; where, through many disappointments, I made use of language which gave offence to some of the gentlemen, and was immediately conveyed to Bow-street, on the 31st of December, 1796. Here I underwent a long examination, which lasted till near twelve o'clock, before the sitting magistrate, now Sir Richard Ford, to whom I produced my discharge from the tender, and other documents

to prove the sufferings and hardships which I had undergone, so much to his satisfaction, that I obtained a discharge, and was requested to attend the Monday following at two o'clock, which I did, and found several magistrates assembled. Having undergone a long private examination, the consequence was, a subscription was immediately made, and by the recommendation of some gentlemen present, I was placed in a lodging at the house of Mrs. Jones, Falcon-court, Shoe-lane, with a strict injunction, if possible, to break me of the masculine habit to which I was so much used. I received twelve shillings a week for my support till I could obtain the money due to me from Government. That sum was regularly paid me from the above subscription, by a Mr. Pritchard of New-Inn, who was present at my last examination, and to whom Mrs. Jones was laundress.

I had not yet changed my seaman's attire; but during the stay I made with Mrs. Jones, I resumed the dress of my own sex, though at times I could not entirely forget my seafaring habits, but frequently dressed myself, and took excursions as a sailor. In less than a month, I received the greater part of the money due to me from the Navy-pay-office, which I cheerfully shared with the family of Mrs. Jones; who, notwithstanding, treated me in an ungrateful manner, misrepresenting me to the gentlemen who had raised the subscription, as a person on whom their bounty was thrown away, and more inclined to masculine propensities, such as smoking, drinking grog, &c. than what became a female, though I never took any of the latter, but she was always invited to a part, and of which I never found her backward in taking a good allowance. Whenever I dressed myself as a sailor, I sought the company of some messmates I had known on board the Brunswick, and as long as my money lasted, spent it in company with the brave fellows, at the Coach and Horses, opposite Somerset-House, a place where they mostly frequented.

I removed from Mrs. Jones's to Chichester Rents, Chancery-lane, and lodged with a very decent woman, named Higgins, where the grape-shot which had remained in my leg from the time of our engagement in the Brunswick, June 1794, worked itself out in February 1797—the reason I imagine, proceeded from the wounds breaking out afresh, in consequence of my too free use of spirituous liquors, since my residence on shore. The ball, to which there adhered a quantity of flesh, I kept by me for some time, but was obliged at last to throw it in the fire, from the offensive smell of the flesh, which soon putrefied. My leg, notwithstanding the ball was out, continued so bad, that I applied for admission to St. Bartholomew's hospital, and went in as a female, though I frequently wore, while under cure, my sailor's dress, and was in consequence taken, by strangers, for a man in the woman's ward. I remained in Watt's ward, under surgeon Blake four months, and during the time had several pieces of shattered bone taken from my leg; at length it being to all appearance well, I was discharged.—The cure, however, did not prove of any long duration, the bone being very much injured, and my blood continuing in a bad state, it soon broke out again. In this situation, without any place of refuge, or means of subsistence, I was advised to petition his Royal Highness the Duke of York for relief; and accordingly applied to a gentleman, who drew up a petition, stating the various hardships which I had undergone by sea and land. Having obtained the signatures of her Grace the Duchess of Devonshire, and Sir William Pulteney, I left it at the Horse Guards, with Captain Nowell, secretary to his Royal Highness. In less than a fortnight, I called at the Horse Guards, and received from Captain Nowell five guineas, with my petition signed by his Royal Highness, as well as her Royal Highness the Duchess of York, and directions, when I called, that I should pres-

ent it to her Majesty. I afterwards got it signed by Sir James Pulteney; and through Mr. Dundas, meant to have presented it to her Majesty; taking the opportunity of a court day to give it to him for that purpose, as he was passing to the royal apartments. He remarked it was not intended for him, I told him no—but I wished him to present it to her Majesty from myself, and accordingly left it with him.

Not hearing any thing in consequence of my petition, and the money I had received from his Royal Highness the Duke of York, being expended, the idea struck me that if I could obtain a machine similar to the one I observed the German use in the prison of St. Clare, with which he manufactured the gold wire, I might obtain a comfortable subsistence. For that purpose I called on Mr. Loyer, a jeweller, in Denmark-street, St. Giles's, in order, if possible, to get a machine made from my description. Mr. Loyer, from my instructions, soon produced an instrument that every way answered the purpose; and having informed him of the use for which it was intended, he informed me, if I would manufacture it in his house, he had no doubt he could from his connection, dispose of enough to keep me constantly employed. I made no objection to his proposal, and worked gold wire in various shapes, so much to his satisfaction, that I continued in his employ some time. Mr. Loyer keeping a number of persons employed, I worked in the same apartment with some others; among whom was a German, named Hieronimo, who, observing the manner in which I worked, afterwards practised it as part of his profession, and worked on the same, during the time I continued in Mr. Loyer's employ. Finding the money I received not adequate to support me in a proper manner, my wounded leg getting so bad as to put me to considerable inconvenience, I applied to Mr. Loyer for an advancement of price, which, he objecting to, knowing that he had Hieronimo to do the same kind

of work if I left him, we parted. Being jealous lest I should learn every thing in the jewellery business, having been able to work in more branches than that for which he engaged me, he removed me for some time previous to my quitting him, to a separate apartment from the shop, where I worked by myself.

About the time of my working at Mr. Loyer's, I formed an acquaintance in my male dress, with a person who informed me he was Vice-grand of a lodge of Odd Fellows, held at the Harlequin, near the stage-door of Drury-lane Theatre. This person discovering in me, a conviviality, suitable to such an undertaking, proposed my becoming one of their members; and as there was to be a meeting of the Lodge that evening, he said he would propose me as a new member. On my ready acquiescence, we adjourned to the place, where I went through the whole of the forms used on such occasions, and became a free member of the society of Odd Fellows, Lodge 21. Neither the person who introduced me, nor any of the members knew my sex. It is the boast of free-masonry, that they never had more than one female belonging to their institution (namely, Queen Elizabeth); and I think I may fairly challenge any Lodge of Odd Fellows, to produce another female member: it being generally thought that there is not a female in England (myself excepted) belonging to this society.

At the time of my employ by Mr. Loyer, I put on my seaman's dress and accompanied the procession, when their Majesties went to St. Paul's, and the different colours of the enemy, were carried to be hung up in that Cathedral Church, as trophies of the victories obtained over their arms, by Howe, St. Vincent, and Duncan. I was one of Lord Howe's attendants with his colours, and, rode on the car, and the chains of the bracelets which her Majesty wore on the occasion, were made by me, at Mr. Loyer's, by

order from Messrs. Gray and Constable, Jewellers, of Sackville Street, Piccadilly.

On my quitting Mr. Loyer's, my leg getting worse, I obtained admission into St. George's hospital, and experienced a tedious confinement of seven months, being carefully attended by surgeons Keate and Griffiths. While thus situated, I was enabled to enjoy many comforts which this charitable institution does not supply, from the benevolent attention of Mrs. Emma Raynes, a lady to whom I shall ever confess my obligations, as, immediately on my obtaining a discharge from the hospital, she provided me with a decent lodging in Tottenham Court Road, and supported me for a considerable time at her own expence, though I had no other claim to her protection than my necessitous condition. Previous to my finding a friend in this lady, it was judged by several in the hospital, from the low state I was reduced to, (my bones coming almost through the skin) that I should not survive the illness under which I laboured, from the pain of my wounded limb, and I procured some little necessaries from a subscription made by the young gentlemen, pupils, who attended the hospital; one of whom, named Scaife, in joke, I imagine, offered me half-a-crown a week while I lived, to have my body when dead. However he might mean it, I know not, but this circumstance produced in me such an aversion to physic, that while I remained under cure, I would take no more medicine, fearing it would hasten my death; and I remarked that my wound healed faster than before. Weary of the hospital, I solicited a discharge, though my leg was by no means well; and through the kindness of Mrs. Raynes, had every necessary provided for my use. Unwilling to remain a burthen on the generosity of this lady, longer than I could possibly help myself, I came to a resolution of making my sufferings known to some persons of distinction, having heard nothing relative



to the petition I had left in the hands of Mr. Dundas, to be presented to her Majesty.—I wrote immediately to his grace the Duke of Norfolk, whose humane and charitable disposition is so well known, that it is totally unnecessary for me to enlarge on that subject. The result of my application was successful, as I received a very handsome present from his grace.

This seasonable relief was to me of the greatest service, though it contributed to place me under a very embarrassing circumstance. Fearing that my little fund would be exhausted before I could obtain another supply, I endeavoured, as far as my circumstances would admit, to make as decent an appearance as possible, that I might more readily appear before the illustrious personages who had recommended the presentation of my petition to her Majesty, and to obtain, if possible, a knowledge, whether it had been presented by Mr. Dundas, or not. At this time I had removed from the lodging provided me by Mrs. Raynes to another near Rathbone Place; and having at times, previous to my removal, worn a little powder in my hair whenever I had occasion to call at the houses of Noble persons, to whom I had made my case known, I was informed against as an unqualified person, having no licence, through the malice of my last landlady's sister, and in February 1799, received a summons to attend the Commissioners of the Stamp Office, from the solicitor, Mr. Estcourt, to answer to the accusation. Without money or a friend to come forward on my behalf, I attended on the day mentioned, in the notice which I had received, and set up in my defence to the accusation, that I had never worn powder as an article of dress though I had frequently made use of powder in defence of my King and country. This assertion from a female excited the curiosity of the Commissioners; who questioned me, under what circumstance, I could make use of powder in the way un-

derstood from my speech; when I related the several incidents of my life, in the land, as well as sea service, likewise my examination at Bow-street, after applying for my pay at the Navy Office. On concluding my defence, and remarking the distress of my present situation, the Commissioners, and other gentlemen present made a handsome collection, and presented me with it to the extreme mortification of the informer, who rather expected a share of the penalty, which she supposed I should be under the necessity of paying, than, that her spite against me should turn out so much to my advantage. On the contrary, my late landlady, her sister, expressed herself greatly pleased with the fortunate turn in my favour; and her sincerity I did not doubt, from the many little kindnesses I had before experienced from her. Mr. Estcourt gave me a letter to Evan Nepean, Esq. of the Admiralty, on what subject I knew not, but imagined it to be in relation to myself; which, though I delivered it at the Admiralty office, I never afterwards heard any thing of. Considering in what way to obtain a sum which might enable me to establish myself in a little comfort, I thought of the petition which I had long since left in the hands of Mr. Dundas; and as it was originally recommended to be presented to her Majesty, by the message I had received from the Duke of York, I resolved to wait on his Royal Highness at Oatlands, to inform him that I had never received an answer to his recommendation. On my arrival I sent in my name and business, by one of the attendants on his Royal Highness; and received in answer a guinea, and a message that his Royal Highness would make an immediate enquiry concerning where the petition lay; and as I had left a direction where I lodged in town, I received a few days afterwards, a quantity of female apparel from Oatlands, sent, as I imagine, by order of her Royal Highness the Duchess of York.



The long silence which I have kept with regard to Mr. Sucker, particularly as he was the only person, who could have informed me of many circumstances relative to my family and interests, will naturally strike many of my readers. I need not offer as an excuse for my negligence in this particular, that I had been so much occupied by a variety of circumstances, each following the other with such rapidity as wholly to prevent me, had it been my intention, from seeking an earlier explanation. I had in a great measure been induced to defer my application to Mr. Sucker, in consequence of Messrs. Winter and Hay, of Long Acre, through the recommendation of Justice Bond, having taken the trouble of writing to Mr. Wilson of Trevallyn several times, for the particulars relating to my birth and expectations; but as no answer was obtained to either of the letters sent, I thought it best to apply to Mr. Sucker in person. During the suspense in which I remained with respect to the success of my petition, I determined to pay this gentleman a visit, and went to Shrewsbury, by the mail; and put up at the Talbot, kept at that time by Mr. Purslow. I then proceeded to Newport, Mr. Sucker's residence, in a return chaise; but finding a difficulty of being introduced to him as a female, as I did not chuse to send in my name, I returned to Shrewsbury, and procured an ensign's uniform of a person in Dog Lane, who dealt in cloaths from London. Unwilling to change my dress at Mr. Purslow's, where I was known, I went to the Raven Inn, in Raven Street, where I substituted for female attire, the dress which I had procured the loan of—in which I walked to the Elephant and Castle, in Mardol, and hiring a horse, rode back to Newport. On my arrival at Mr. Sucker's house, I sent a message in by a servant, that a gentleman wished to speak with Mr. Sucker, and in return received an answer to send in my name and business; I replied, that I waited on him, having known

Captain Bowen of the 82d regiment, and had something particular to communicate; on which I was immediately introduced to him, and though labouring under considerable agitation, I asked him if he knew a Miss Talbot, or could inform me what had become of her. He said he had known her well, but that she died abroad in the year 1793, of which he was well informed by letters in his possession. I told him I doubted the fact, and wished to see the letters mentioned, which he evaded. I then asked him if she had any particular mark, or if he had known her well enough to swear to her person, if she were alive? He replied that he could identify her, among a thousand, that she was a twin, and had a deficiency on the left side of her forehead, I immediately put my hair aside, and pointed my finger, to the part of my forehead he had described, and briskly drawing my sword, declared he was my prisoner, and should account to me for the property of which I supposed that he had defrauded me. I informed him that I was Miss Talbot, and had visited him, for this express purpose, knowing, that when I was entrusted to his care, he had a sufficient indemnification for what trouble or expence he might be put to, and had no doubt something considerable in trust for my use? He appeared surprised and confounded, trembled exceedingly, and after repeatedly declaring that he was a ruined man, abruptly quitted the room. I was myself greatly agitated, but conceiving myself so much injured, I immediately went to Shrewsbury, in order to consult a lawyer how to proceed. Mr. Loxdale, to whom I intended to apply, being unfortunately from home, I returned to Newport with a determination if possible, to obtain from Mr. Sucker, some information respecting my family, connections, and expectations. When I arrived at Newport, I learnt to my great disappointment, that Mr. Sucker had suddenly retired from his house, and in less than three days from the time, was found dead in his

bed at Longford, near Newport, without any previous appearance of illness. Thus frustrated in gaining the intelligence I so much needed, I left the place in great distress of mind, with so scanty a sum in my pocket, that I was prevented from proceeding to Mr. Wilson's at Trevallyn, which I otherwise should have done, though his wilful neglect to answer the letters sent by Messrs. Winter and Hay, left me in great doubt as to the reception he might have given me. I now again took the road to London, where I soon arrived without any other prospect than the uncertain hope of better success with my petition, and thinking some money was still due to me for pay, I applied to Lord Spencer, then first Lord of the Admiralty, and saw his Lordship, who presented me with a guinea, and ordered me some refreshment.

My existence now chiefly depended on the liberality of many noble and generous persons, to whom I was necessitated to make my case known; and the frequent walks I was obliged to take when thus employed, caused the wounds of my leg to break out afresh, so as wholly to deprive me of the power of walking, many pieces of the shattered bone occasionally coming out of my leg. On this, I obtained admission into Middlesex hospital, and about a fortnight afterwards received a message from Mr. Justice Bond, to attend if possible at Bow Street, to confront a female, who, in the dress of a light horseman, had assumed the name of John Taylor, and represented herself in a way to be mistaken for me. I accompanied the person who brought me the letter to Bow Street, and saw a fine looking woman about five feet ten inches high, whom Mr. Bond desired me to interrogate as to the situation she had occupied on board the Brunswick, where she reported to have been wounded. A very few questions brought her to a confession, that she was not the person she had pretended, and not giving a satisfactory account of herself, she was committed to the House of

Correction for three months, as a vagrant. William Richards, my fellow prisoner in France, chancing to pass in Bow Street, I called to him from the coach, and he went in with me into the office and offered to make oath as to my identity; but Mr. Bond informed him that he was sufficiently satisfied who was the impostor. Several persons in the office informed me that this woman had been imposing on the public in my name for some time past, and congratulated me on her detection.

On my return from Bow Street, while getting out of the coach at the door of my lodging where I called previous to my return to the hospital, I was followed into the passage by a hair-dresser, named Spraggs, of Cleveland Street, who mistaking me for a lodger in the same house with whom he had a dispute respecting a wig which she had purchased of him, struck me a violent blow which brought me to the ground, and cut my head in a shocking manner, and materially hurt my wounded leg by kicking me in the passage. I afterwards learnt that the cause of this violence was as follows: Spraggs had sold a wig to a lady, and she was prevented from paying him, by the assertion of another hair-dresser of the name of Kennedy, that the wig was not the property of Spraggs, but belonged to him. Spraggs in consequence when he applied for payment, was informed of this circumstance, and not receiving the money as he expected, he brought an action in the Marshalsea court, but was nonsuited, by not attending to prove the wig his property. Thus disappointed, he took the above method of revenge, and in his rage mistook the person. My friends advised me to procure a warrant against him for the assault, and I immediately returned to Bow Street, where a warrant was granted me. Spraggs however kept out of the way for several days, but at last it was served on him, and he was obliged to find bail for his appearance at the Quarter Sessions, Clerkenwell. This

business detained me till it was too late to return to the hospital that night, so that I was obliged to wait till the regular day of taking in patients, before I could regain my former place. When the trial came on at Clerkenwell, I was still in the hospital, but having been apprized of the time when it was to come on, I obtained leave of absence from Surgeon Miners, and attended three days before my cause came on. Mr. Sylvester, the present Recorder of London, pleaded in my behalf without taking the least gratuity; on the contrary, when I attended him to state the case, he made me a handsome present. Very little defence was attempted on the part of Spraggs, who was found guilty of the assault, and sentenced to pay me 10*l.* for the injury he had done. I then returned to the hospital, and through the skill and attention of Surgeon Miners, was once more enabled to use my wounded leg, though by no means given to understand that I had obtained a radical cure. Soon after quitting the hospital, I received a notice to attend at the War Office, where I was directed to deliver a letter addressed to Lord Morton, at Buckingham House. I had no doubt that this letter related to the petition which I had left for her Majesty's inspection, and which I imagined his Royal Highness the Duke of York had sought after, agreeably to the message I received at Oatlands. I went to Buckingham House, and saying I had a letter from the War Office for Lord Morton, was immediately introduced to his Lordship, who, on reading it, informed me that it related to my petition, and conducted me to another apartment, where I saw a lady seated, whose hand Lord Morton desired me to kiss; after which, I returned with his Lordship to the apartment where I had found him, and received five guineas from his Lordship's hands, on quitting Buckingham House.

The Lady whose hand I kissed did not ask me a question, or speak a word: I imagined it might be her Majesty,

though Lord Morton had not mentioned any thing concerning her title or rank. I was soon afterwards confirmed in this conjecture, for having an opportunity of seeing her Majesty in public, I recognised in her the lady whose hand I had the honour of kissing at Buckingham House. Lord Morton directed me to apply to the War Office, where I was informed that I must attend on a future day, in my sailor's dress, to receive a half-year's payment of her Majesty's bounty, which I afterwards did, in the name of John Taylor. This was in August, 1799.

On my quitting Middlesex Hospital, Surgeon Miners informed me, that my leg was not in a state to bear much walking, and indeed the obligation I was under to attend in person, on many occasions, soon rendered it as bad as ever. I was recommended by John Bond, Esq. a Magistrate, of Hendon, in Middlesex, to go a second time into Middlesex Hospital. Surgeon Miners was at Mr. Bond's at the time I was thus advised, and informed me that I must in all probability have my leg amputated. With this impression on my mind I again entered the hospital, and only escaped from it without the loss of a limb, by a singular, though in the first part, unfortunate circumstance:—I had, previous to going into the hospital, taken under my care a motherless child about three years of age, which when out of my power now to attend, was protected by two young women, who soon after having an engagement to dine on board the *Sophia*, a West-Indiaman, lying off Hermitage Stairs, unfortunately took their little charge on the party. Not being sufficiently attended to, the child fell overboard and was drowned. The intelligence no sooner reached me at the hospital, then frantic at the loss, although my leg was surrounded with bandages preparatory to amputation, I the next morning by seven o'clock, October 24th, 1799, quitted the hospital, after taking off the screw bandage, and walked to Hermitage

Stairs, in such distraction of mind, that I felt neither pain nor impediment in my leg the whole way. But on my arrival where the ship lay, I could gain no information concerning the body, notwithstanding I offered every thing I had in the world as a reward to any person who should find it.—All my exertions were ineffectual, the child was never seen afterwards; but it was suggested, and on reasonable grounds, that he was not drowned, but carried to the West Indies; for a black boy on board, as well as he could be understood, gave me to understand, that he was not drowned, but carried away. His name was George Lacon Griffin, and he was heir to a considerable estate in Shropshire, as I was informed by his father, Mr. George Griffin, carver and gilder, Charing Cross, who entrusted him to my care; being himself under pecuniary embarrassment, and in confinement at that time, on account of a bill which he had accepted for a friend.

I had not left Middlesex Hospital more than a fortnight, before I experienced new trouble and inconvenience in my leg; which, previous to my so sudden departure, on the melancholy loss of the unfortunate child, had been doomed to amputation, by the universal opinion of the surgeons; and to the general conversation on this subject, I attribute a spurious account of my adventures, which at this time found its way into the Morning Herald. As I did not wait for a discharge from Middlesex Hospital, I felt a reluctance to apply there again for relief, but obtained an order to the St. Mary-le-bone Infirmary, and was of course admitted. Here I continued almost four months; and after many pieces of the shattered bone had been extracted, and the flesh by continued rest, a little grown over, I consulted with Mr. Phillips, the principal surgeon, whether I was not in a situation to quit the Infirmary. He told me that with care, and the use of bandages, which he would give me, I might do as well out as where I was, but desired I would walk as lit-

tle as possible, while I found the least pain, as it would retard the healing of the flesh round the bone. Having obtained the bandages of Mr. Waller, the house surgeon, I thought of quitting the Infirmary immediately, but having made myself useful towards the latter part of the time I was there, in keeping account of clothes, and marking a variety of articles, for the use of the Infirmary and parish, Dr. Hooper, the principal of the house, objected to my departure. I persisted, nevertheless, in my purpose, and in consequence came away; as the Doctor threatened to report me to the Board, I told him I would save him the trouble, and went the following Friday, and stated the whole affair myself, which being satisfactory to the gentlemen present, I received two guineas, and left the place highly pleased. One of the gentlemen said, he knew Mrs. Tapperley, of Chester well, and that he had a daughter under her care, at the time I was with her, adding, that he knew I was related to the family whose name I bore. He followed me out, when I withdrew, and made me a present of a guinea; and I have since, whenever he met me, experienced some mark of his liberality.

Having engaged a lodging in that neighbourhood, I removed the whole of my wearing apparel, which in all situations I had hitherto taken the utmost care of, to this place. But as if I was to be stripped and persecuted through life, one morning while in bed, I was robbed of every thing I possessed in the world, and but for the kindness of some ladies at the next house, should have been without an article to wear. A woman who lived with a trumpeter of the Dragoon Guards, was soon afterwards taken up on suspicion of robbing another person, and having in her possession a great quantity of false keys, and duplicates of property in pawn, I attended her examination at Marlborough-street, and having discovered that several of the duplicates described my



property, I was desired to attend on her trial, as a witness; but on application to the pawnbrokers, with whom she had pledged the different articles, I was informed that they had been taken away, on an affidavit being made of the loss of the duplicates. She was, however, found guilty of the robbery for which she was apprehended, and sentenced to be transported for seven years.

Many professions presented themselves to my choice, as the means of obtaining a livelihood, but none appeared more congenial to my mind than the theatrical line, to which I was ever particularly attached. Knowing a person belonging to the Thespian Society, held in Tottenham-court-road, I procured an introduction to perform a character, and attempted that of Floranthe, in the *Mountaineers*, which I got through with considerable applause. Mr. Talbot, afterwards of Drury-lane Theatre, performed the part of Octavian, and Miss Mortimer of Covent-garden, played Agnes. I afterwards performed the parts of Adeline, in the *Battle of Hexham*; Lady Helen, in the *Children in the Wood*; Juliet, in *Romeo and Juliet*; Irene, in *Barbarossa*; Thyra, in *Athelstan*; the Queen, in *Richard the Third*; Mrs. Scout in the *Village Lawyer*, and Jack Hawser in *Banyan Day*. Finding this pursuit, however, more pleasant than profitable, I was compelled to relinquish it, and solicit assistance towards my support, from several respectable persons to whom I had made known my adventures and my sufferings.

I must not omit a circumstance which had nearly involved me in a situation, more dangerous than any to which I had hitherto been exposed. When my adventures began to attract the attention of the first characters in the kingdom, I received several sums of money from persons, who at the time, did not discover to whom I was obliged. One evening a gentleman called at my lodgings, and on being

introduced to my apartments, asked me if I was the person who had suffered so many hardships abroad? I replied in the affirmative; when he informed me Colonel Gerrit Fisher, of the 9th regiment of foot, had been particularly inquiring concerning me, and he had no doubt it would produce something considerable to my advantage. He soon took his leave, and about a month afterwards, called in my absence, and left with Mrs. Cornish, of Suffolk-street, at whose house I lodged, an order signed by Colonel Fisher, on Messrs. Cox and Co. Craig's Court, Charing Cross, for nine guineas, saying at the same time, it was the amount of money received in subscription for my use, by Colonel Fisher. He also left a complimentary note, in which he styled himself Captain Grant, and was accompanied by a person who was introduced to me as a servant of Colonel Fisher's, and confirmed what Grant said. This order came as I then thought, providentially to my aid, but it being holiday time, I waited a few days, after which, in company with Mrs. Cornish, I presented it for payment as directed, but was informed that Colonel Fisher was out of town, and that it could not then be paid. Very much disappointed, I returned home, and as I did not hear when the Colonel was expected in town, it was some time before I thought of calling on him respecting the transaction, which at length I did, on the 2d of February, 1802, at his house in Manchester Square. On saying that I wished to speak with Colonel Fisher on business, he came into the passage, and understanding in part what I had to say, introduced me into the parlour, where I saw a lady seated, whom I afterwards found to be Mrs. Fisher. I now presented the note to him, and asked him if it was his hand-writing. He read it, and enquired how I came by it, when I told him it was left at my apartments by a gentleman, who said it was the amount of what Colonel Fisher had raised in subscription

for me.—The Colonel requested a description of the gentleman's person, and gave me pen and ink to write it, on which I first described the gentleman who had called, and reported Colonel Fisher's interesting himself on my account, and was about to write down the particulars, when Mrs. Fisher prevented me, by saying to the Colonel, "It surely must be Gardiner." To this he made no reply, but putting the order into his waistcoat pocket, said he would take care of it, though he did not give me a shilling. A few days afterwards, he called at my lodgings, and seeing Mrs. Cornish, asked her who, and what I was, and whether she did not think I had forged the order? Mrs. Cornish then related the same particulars I had before given him, respecting the manner in which the order came into my possession. He then left the house, telling Mrs. Cornish if she had not given a good account of the way the draft was left, he should have prosecuted us both for a forgery.— I afterwards called at his house, and sent up my name by a servant, who returned with the message, that my business required no answer, since which time, I have never heard any thing of him or his order.

Whether or not the order was in Colonel Fisher's handwriting, or a trick played on me by the man who styled himself Captain Grant, I never could learn, but as the clerks of Cox and Co. must have been acquainted with the Colonel's writing, and never attempted to stop the draft, which they certainly would have done, on the slightest suspicion of forgery, I cannot bring myself to think it was so.— Indeed the Colonel himself never denied it to be his writing, but only inquired how I came by it.

With the certainty of my income from her Majesty's bounty, I removed to the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, some time previous to my waiting on Colonel Fisher;

and having been ever more remiss in my own accounts than those of others, Mrs. Nicklin, my landlady, brought me in a bill for lodging, &c. amounting to 111. 3s. 6d. Being incapable of paying, I was arrested at her suit in the court of Exchequer, and after remaining at a lock-up house, in Carey-street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, a week, and being sufficiently tired of the expence, I was removed to Newgate, though not before I had been enabled by a friend to make an offer of six guineas in part of the debt, which was rejected. A new scene in life now opened to my view, and finding many of my fellow prisoners of a congenial temper with my own, I frequently joined in parties of conviviality that would scarcely be supposed to exist in this place. These pleasures, however, were confined to a certain time, as my station in the women's ward, compelled a separation by ten o'clock, at which hour, the respective wards are locked.

At one of these meetings I was very near being turned out of the prison, as a stranger. After passing a few pleasant hours in the midst of our merriment, the time of separation arrived; when returning to the woman's side, I was followed in by Mr. White, the principal turnkey, who asked my business, and mistaking me for a stranger, visiting some of the prisoners, conducted me into the lobby in order to turn me out. On my remonstrance that I was a prisoner, and telling my name, he threatened to send me to the felons' side, for attempting an escape in disguise; to which purpose he went and informed Mr. Kirby, the keeper, who shortly after coming into the lobby, I explained to him the whole of the transaction, adding, that having been used to a male dress in defence of my country, I thought I was sufficiently entitled to wear the same whenever I thought proper; at the same time shewing him the wounds I had received. He directed Mr. White to conduct me to the women's side as usual, and in a day or two, sent for me

to relate to him the whole of my adventures, with which he seemed so well pleased, that he sent for me two or three times afterwards when he had company, from whom I received some handsome presents.

I was advised to petition the Society for the relief of persons confined for small debts, and having obtained the necessary form of a letter, I sent it, with respectable vouchers as to the truth of my memorial. This had so good an effect, that five pounds was sent to Mr. Kirby for the purpose of settling the debt, but if the plaintiff refused that sum, it was to be returned to that charitable institution. Mrs. Nicklin, was however too good a judge to refuse so good an offer, and accordingly took the money, which was given to her friend Mr. Edmonds, on bringing my discharge. His expences must have swallowed the greatest part of the above sum; and my landlady was well off in not being troubled herself by her own attorney, which must have been the case, if she had refused the sum offered, as I was determined to have sued her as soon as I could, for the sixpences.

My time in Newgate was rendered more comfortable than I had any reason to expect, from the constant attention of a female who had lived with me some time previous to my being arrested: for when no longer in my power to support her in the way I had been accustomed, instead of quitting me, she remained in the prison, and by needle-work which she obtained, contributed greatly to my support.— She has remained a constant friend in every change that I have since experienced.

Soon after I quitted Newgate, my troubles again commenced. A Mr. E—, not far from Pump-Court, in the Temple, having employed me to wash, mend, &c. till he was indebted to me thirty-eight pounds for that, and money which I had obtained by pledging my wearing apparel to lend him (though I have reason to think he is a man of

property) I was under the necessity of arresting him to recover the amount. I had received five pounds, and a letter from him at the same time, saying, “he would settle with me honourably.” He did not, however, keep his word, and being at this time in the greatest distress, for want of money and clothes, I took lodgings at the house of Mr. Joseph Bradley, Little St. Mary-le-bone street, who has been for many years butler to a gentleman in Gloucester Place, Hyde Park Corner. Being in arrear for one week’s rent, five shillings and sixpence, Mrs. Bradley, his wife, stopped not only my trunk, containing the whole of my letters and papers, but some needlework which I had to do for another person, which had she suffered me to carry home, would have nearly paid her demand. I summoned her for the work to Marlborough-street, but the Magistrate saying, they had a right to stop all they could lay their hands on, I was advised to arrest Mr. Bradley in an action of trover, as being deprived of the work, which they still hold, with my letters and papers, which would have proved my debt against Mr. E—. I employed Mr. Worley, an attorney, in Wells-street, Oxford Road, who immediately sued out a writ against Bradley, which by some means was not served on him that term; before the next, he was arrested at my suit, and gave bail to Mr. Weekly the officer, for his appearance, which was entered at the commencement of the term, in order to go to trial. My attorney, Mr. Worley, on whom I called several times, informed me, that he would let me know, when I should be wanted to attend, and in the mean time said, if I would procure two pounds, he would establish me as a pauper, that I might proceed, without a necessity for more money. The above sum a gentleman advanced me for the purpose, and on my paying it into Mr. Worley’s hands, he said, he would immediately proceed in the cause, and told me it would come on that

term. The money I gave him on Wednesday, April 11th, 1804, and called by his appointment on Friday the 13th; not seeing him, I called repeatedly, with no better success, till the morning of the 17th, when he told me my action had suffered a non-pros on the 7th of March. Though I had repeatedly seen him before and since that time, he never informed me of the circumstance till that moment; greatly shocked and disappointed, I told him I should inform the gentleman from whom I had received the money, of the whole transaction. The latter accordingly waited on Mr. Worley, and was informed that the money which I had given him, he had carried to my account, and no other redress was I ever able to obtain.

Nothing but troubles and misfortunes for the two last years of my life, having occurred, and followed me step by step, I have only to apologize to my readers, for any deviation from the paths of propriety, which have only been occasioned by the greatest necessity, and the deepest distress. I trust that I shall gain their pity, rather than censure, when I assert, that had I been brought up in a workhouse, or any other situation to have earned my bread in the most humble manner, I should have preferred it, to the number of misfortunes and difficulties, I have been doomed to encounter, as my wounds and other afflictions have rendered me incapable of almost every exertion to procure a livelihood.

Having described as minutely as possible, the leading circumstances of my adventures, I submit the whole to the decision of my readers, with a solemn assurance, that in no particular have I advanced any thing but matters of fact; which, if they should in any way serve as a lesson to future guardians and those under their care, in avoiding the troubles I have experienced, will answer one end to which they were made public by an unfortunate sufferer,

MARY ANN TALBOT.



Here terminates the account given by the writer of her chequered life up to the commencement of the year 1804. The remainder of her history is short, and not much less gloomy than the preceding portion. Misfortune still seemed to pursue her with unrelenting severity. One night in September, in the last mentioned year, she was thrown from a coach which fell into a hole left in Church Lane, Whitechapel, by the negligence of the firemen belonging to one of the offices, and besides various contusions, sustained such a serious injury in the fracture of one of her arms, as to be deprived of the use of it for some months. Various applications, accompanied with the attestations of several respectable inhabitants of the place, who saw the accident, were made in her behalf to the Directors of the Fire Office in question, who were certainly bound in law and equity to make some compensation; but inferring probably from the lowness of her circumstances her inability to obtain legal redress, they peremptorily refused to afford any relief.

In this helpless situation she was received into the house of the publisher, with whom, after her recovery from the effects of the accident, she continued to reside above three years in the capacity of a domestic. In 1807, a general decline, induced partly by the sufferings and hardships she had undergone, and partly, no doubt, by free and irregular living, rendered her, in a great measure, incapable of following her usual occupations. Towards the end of the year, she was reduced so low, that she resolved, in the hope of a favourable change, to remove to the house of an acquaintance in a distant part of the country: but nature was completely exhausted, and in a few weeks she expired on the 4th of February 1808, having just completed her 30th year.



The history of this unfortunate young woman naturally suggests some important reflections. It belongs to a class, which, perhaps, affords one of the strongest arguments in favour of a future state. The reader here beholds a female born to better prospects, reduced, while yet a child, by a series of circumstances, over which she could have no control, and without any concurrence of her will, to a state of degradation, which drew down upon her all the train of calamities that successively embittered the remainder of her existence. Can it then be imagined, that the Being, whom we are taught to consider as love itself, has formed any of his creatures expressly to be miserable?—It were blasphemy to harbor such an idea. How then can they be compensated for sufferings, persecution, and a thousand evils incident to this mortal life, unless by the felicity of an hereafter, by the enjoyments of a state “where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest.”

It has been remarked, that females who have assumed the male character, have in general renounced with their sex, the virtues which distinguish it, and, with the dress and manners of the other, have adopted only its vices. This censure, though in general well founded, must not, however, be admitted without certain exceptions. In the subject of these pages, if long habits of association had blighted the delicacy and modesty which are such ornaments to a female; she had nevertheless contracted (if however she did not possess from nature) all that blunt generosity of spirit and good-nature peculiar to British seamen, accompanied likewise, it is true, with all their thoughtlessness and improvidence. She retained, notwithstanding her long metamorphosis, much of the sensibility of her sex; and to a friend or acquaintance, she was ever willing, when able, to render either pecuniary assistance or personal service.—But here let us pause, and

No farther seek her merits to disclose,  
Or draw her frailties from their dread abode  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)  
The bosom of her Father and her God.

FINIS.

## Notes

- 5.19-21 Hensol ... Glamorganshire] In southeastern Wales.
- 6.12-13 Worthen ... Shrewsbury] In Shropshire, North West England.
- 6.21 Chester] In Cheshire, North West England.
- 8.1 Newport ... Salop] “Salop” is the abbreviation of Shropshire.
- 9.32 St. Domingo] Santo Domingo, on the island of Hispaniola (now in the Dominican Republic).
- 11.31-32 Windward Passage] Between the islands of Cuba and Hispaniola.
- 11.32 Musquito shore] In present-day Nicaragua.
- 12.34-13.1 his Royal Highness the Duke of York] The Prince Frederick Augustus (1763-1827), second son of King George III.
- 14.14 siege of Valenciennes] In northern France, on the present border with Belgium; the siege lasted from May 24 to August 1, 1793.
- 15.6 basilion, lint, and a few Dutch drops] Basilion was a medicinal ointment; lint was used in bandages; the active ingredients of Dutch drops were turpentine and sulphur.
- 15.7 Hon. Mr. Tollemache] Lionel Robert Tollemache (1774-1793), grandson of Lionel Tollemache, 4th Earl of Dysart, was killed by a bursting shell at Valenciennes on July 14.
- 15.18 General Abercromby] Sir Ralph Abercromby KB (1734-1801) commanded a brigade under the Duke of York.
- 17.25-26 dropped down the Rhine] Apparently via the Moselle River, which joins the Rhine at Koblenz. The city and duchy of Luxembourg are landlocked.
- 18.6 Admiral Lord Howe] Richard Howe, 1st Earl Howe (1726-1799).
- 18.23 Queen Charlotte] The admiral’s flagship, 100 guns.
- 19.26 Brunswick] A ship of the line, carrying 74 guns or cannon, Captain John Harvey (1740-1794).
- 20.21 action of the 1st of June] Known as “The Glorious First of June,” or the Third Battle of Ushant.
- 21.6 Vengeur] The *Vengeur de Peuple*, 74 guns, Captain Renaudin.
- 21.30-31 Ramillies ... brother] The *Ramillies* carried 74 guns, Captain Sir Henry Harvey (1737-1810).
- 24.11 bomb] A bomb ketch or bomb vessel, designed to carry and fire heavy mortars rather than cannon.
- 24.13 Sir Sydney Smith] Sir William Sydney Smith (1764-1840).
- 27.33 50 £] At that time British pounds and American dollars exchanged at an approximate rate of £1 = \$4.50. (See Lawrence H. Officer, “Exchange rate between the United States dollar and the British pound, 1791-2004.” Economic History Services, EH.Net, 2004. URL: <http://www.eh.net/hmit/exchangerates/pound.php>). To approximate present-day (2005) “purchase power,” one may multiply dollar amounts by roughly 15.5—so that £1 in 1795 is equivalent to about \$70 US (or 37 GBP) in current values, and one guinea is equivalent to \$75 (or 40 GBP) in current value (see John J. McCusker, “Comparing the Purchasing Power of Money in the United States (or Colonies) from 1665 to 2005” Economic History Services, 2006, URL: <http://www.eh.net/hmit/pppowerusd/>). So “50 £.” at that time would have represented \$225, or a present equivalent of \$3,500.
- 34.2 the King was attacked] The attack occurred on October 29, 1795. A political cartoon depicting the attack can be seen at [http://www.bucknell.edu/The\\_Bucknell\\_Difference/Arts\\_at\\_Bucknell/Samek\\_Art\\_Gallery/Collection/Gillray/Plates/Republican\\_Attack.html](http://www.bucknell.edu/The_Bucknell_Difference/Arts_at_Bucknell/Samek_Art_Gallery/Collection/Gillray/Plates/Republican_Attack.html)
- 38.28 Duchess of Devonshire] Georgiana Cavendish (née Spencer) (1757-1806), political hostess; wife of William Cavendish, fifth duke of Devonshire (1748-1811), daughter of John Spencer, first Earl Spencer and his wife, Margaret Georgiana Spencer (née Poyntz).

- 38.28-29 Sir William Pulteney] (1729-1805), politician and property developer; born William Johnstone, he assumed the name and title by inheritance in 1767.
- 38.33-34 Duchess of York] Frederica Charlotte Ulrica Catherina (Princess Frederica of Prussia) (1767-1820), daughter of Frederick William II, king of Prussia, and his first wife, Elizabeth of Brunswick; wife of Prince Frederick Augustus, Duke of York (*see note* 12.34).
- 39.1 her Majesty] Queen Charlotte (1738-1820), wife of George III, born Duchess Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.
- 39.1-2 Sir James Pulteney] Sir James Murray Pulteney, seventh baronet (c.1755-1811), army officer and member of Parliament from Weymouth and Melcombe Regis 1790-1811.
- 39.2 Mr. Dundas] Henry Dundas (1742-1811), first Viscount Melville (from 1802), was home secretary from 1791 to 1801.
- 40.31 Howe, St. Vincent, and Duncan] For Howe, *see note* 18.6; John Jervis, Earl of St. Vincent (1735-1823), admiral of the Mediterranean fleet, defeated the Spanish in the battle of Cape St. Vincent, 14 February 1797; Admiral Adam Duncan (1731-1804), Viscount Duncan (from 1797), defeated the Dutch fleet at the naval battle of Camperdown, 11 October 1797.
- 42.3 Duke of Norfolk] Charles Howard, eleventh duke of Norfolk (1746-1815).
- 42.23-25 unqualified person ... Stamp Office] In 1795, the government put a tax on hair powder of one guinea per year.
- 43.15 Evan Nepean, Esq] Sir Evan Nepean (1752-1822), under-secretary in the Home Office, associate of Henry Dundas (*see note* 39.2), and secretary of the Admiralty 1795-1796.
- 48.19-20 Lord Morton] Perhaps, George Douglas, 16th Earl of Morton (1761-1827).
- 51.32 duplicates of property in pawn] Pawn tickets.

- 52.14-15 the Mountaineers] *The Mountaineers; a play, in three acts; written by George Colman (the younger), and first performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on Saturday, August 3, 1793.*
- 52.19 the Battle of Hexham] *The Battle of Hexham. A comedy. In three acts* (1789) by George Colman (1762-1836)
- 52.19-20 the Children in the Wood] Play (1794) by Thomas Morton (1764?-1838)
52. 20-21 Barbarossa ... Athelstan] Plays by John Brown (1715-1766).
- 52.22 the Village Lawyer] *The Farce of the Village Lawyer. In two acts ... , etc.* (1792).
- 52.22-23 Banyan Day] No published play by this title has been located; in the Navy, a "banyan day" was a day no meat was served; more recently, it refers to a picnic or excursion.
- 60.16 "where the wicked ... at rest"] Job 3:17.
- 61.1-4 No farther ... her God.] From "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray (1716-1771).

## Editorial Note

This edition of *The Life and Surprising Adventures of Mary Ann Talbot* is based on the first book edition published in London by R. S. Kirby in 1809. That edition derived from and expands upon an earlier periodical appearance in *The Wonderful and Scientific Museum: or Magazine of Remarkable Characters* (also known as *Kirby's Wonderful Museum*), volume II (1804), pages 160-225, under the title "The Intrepid Female, or surprising life and adventures of Mary Anne Talbot, otherwise John Taylor." The text presented here was transcribed from a print from microfilm of a copy of the book held by the Cleveland Public Library, John Griswold White Collection (W 381.52A T142L). The spellings, punctuation, italics, and language of the original have been retained, except for the correction of a few typographical errors, which are listed below.

The book, a duodecimo volume running 60 pages, is extremely rare. WorldCat lists only eight copies held in libraries worldwide, one of which (at Yale) bears no date and gives the place of publication as Birmingham. The narrative was reprinted in 1893 in a collection edited by M<sup>é</sup>nie Muriel Dowie, titled *Women Adventurers*.

When and how the final "e" was dropped from Miss Talbot's middle name is not known. The caption of the frontispiece engraving in the book edition of 1809 spells the name "Anne," but it is written throughout the text as "Ann."

Julie Wheelwright has written the entry "Talbot, Mary Anne [John Taylor] (1778-1808)," for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; available online to subscribers, article #26935). See also her *Amazons and Military Maids: Women who Dressed as Men in the Pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness* (London: Pandora, 1989), and the Wikipedia article "Mary Anne Talbot," by "Skysmith," online at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Anne\\_Talbot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Anne_Talbot).

Suzanne J. Stark has argued that *The Life and Surprising Adventures of Mary Ann Talbot* is a spurious autobiography, fabricated by its subject and ghost-written by Robert Kirby or someone hired by him; see *Female Tars: Women Aboard Ship in the Age of Sail* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996), pp. 107-110.

The National Portrait Gallery (London) holds two engravings, both captioned "Mary Anne Talbot": a full-length portrait in female dress (but with a man's hat), and a head-and-shoulders portrait in male attire. These may be seen online at <http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/person.asp?LinkID=mp54629>

The following is a list of typographical errors corrected, keyed to page and line of this edition:

Page, line	1809 reading	emended to
16.25	I I set	I set
19.25	countrymen	countrymen.
21.20	board ing	boarding
21.22	be ing	being
22.4	b the	by the
25.20	oberving	observing
26.21	dead "	dead ?"
45.23-24	afte rrepeatedly	after repeatedly
48.26	imdiately	immediately
49.17	Hospital,	Hospital.

Paul Royster  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
May 24, 2006