

Chap Book,
1816.

an
affecting Narrative
of

Louisa Baker.

The Female Sailor.

Portsmouth N. H.
1816

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AN
AFFECTING NARRATIVE
OF
LOUISA BAKER,
A NATIVE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

WHO, IN EARLY LIFE HAVING BEEN SHAMEFULLY
SEDUCED, DESERTED HER PARENTS, AND ENLISTED,
IN DISGUISE, ON BOARD AN

AMERICAN FRIGATE
AS A MARINE,

WHERE, IN TWO OR THREE ENGAGEMENTS, SHE DIS-
PLAYED THE MOST HEROIC FORTITUDE, AND WAS
HONORABLY DISCHARGED THEREFROM, A FEW
MONTHS SINCE, WITHOUT A DISCOVERY OF
HER SEX BEING MADE.

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.
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1816.

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LOUISA BAKER,

(A NATIVE OF MASSACHUSETTS.)

Who, in disguise, served three years as a Marine,
on board an American Frigate.

— ♦ —
*"This was her parents' only joy :
 They had but one—one darling child,
 But ah ! the cruel spoiler came.*

THE ADVENTURES OF LOUISA BAKER,

Whose life and character are peculiarly distinguished....Having in early life, been shamefully seduced by a pretended suitor, and having lost all hopes of regaining her former state of respectability, became a voluntary victim to Vice....But at length becoming weary of that mode of living, she formed the curious project of rendering her services more to the benefit of her country's cause, in her late rupture with Great-Britain....she dressed like a male, and under a fictitious name, in 1813, entered as a MARINE on board an AMERICAN FRIGATE, where she performed the duties of her department with punctual exactness, fidelity and honor, without any discovery being made of her sex while on board, from which she was honorably discharged in 1815, when she re-assumed her former dress, and like a true penitent, has since returned to her parents from whom she has been nearly six years absent.

NARRATIVE OF LOUISA BAKER.

TO reputable parents who reside in the State of Massachusetts, and within forty miles from its capital, I owe my existence—but, the regard which I have for them, whose feelings have already been too much wrought upon by the rude behaviour of their daughter, forbids that I should disclose their real name, as well as that of the place of my nativity. At the age of sixteen, by the deceptive arts of one whom I could not think capable of a base action, I was most shamefully robbed of that which is rightly esteemed of inestimable value to my sex—of that, which although it did not enrich the monster, made me poor indeed! I was young, and forward to listen to the vows of unfeigned love of a youth, but a few years older than myself, who was the son of a respectable trader residing within a short distance of my father's house—hap-
 could it have been for me, had I improved by the in-
 ou and wise council of those who felt an interest in
 self—my parents saw my growing attachment to
 him, who afterwards proved my seducer, and trembled for
 the issue—they admonished me for my credulity, but
 admonished in vain; already had the solemn declarations
 of my false friend made too great an impression upon my
 fickle mind; I felt a due regard for my parents and be-
 lieve myself tenderly beloved by them, but, although I
 blush to acknowledge it, I conceived it impossible that
 their love and regard for me could be equal to that of my
 then dear Henry! O love! how powerful is your influ-
 ence! how unlimited your domain!

Happy until the fatal moment was I, no intruding cares
 disturbed me by day, no busy thoughts interrupted my
 repose by night; as I can solemnly protest that ere this,
 no vicious desires ever prompted me to lose my virtue; I
 was all innocence, and knew no sin, until that fatal period
 when the vile and insinuating author of my ruin, deluded
 and deceived me! but I have the pleasing reflection that
 the immoral life that I have since led, brought me early un-
 der affliction, and that affliction, I thank Providence, to
 an early repentance.

I never once reflected that the man who could stoop to seduction, would not hesitate to forsake the wretched object of his passion, whenever his capricious heart grew weary of her tenderness. When he made his solemn vows, I vainly expected him to fulfil his engagements; but was too late convinced he had never intended to make me his wife, or if he had once thought of it, his mind was now altered. I scorned to claim from his humanity what I could not obtain from his love: I was conscious of having forfeited the only gem that could render me respectable in the eyes of the world. I locked my sorrow in my own bosom, and bore my injuries in silence.

Alas! how could I at this melancholy period reveal to my injured parents the important secret! I could not for a moment harbor the idea of being myself the bearer of the heart-piercing tidings of an event, of which they had so repeatedly warned me; too well I knew that I could plead nothing in excuse for my conduct; that I loved my seducer was but too true! yet powerful as that passion was, when operating in a young heart glowing with sensibility, it never would have conquered my affection for my beloved parents, had I not been deceived by the specious appearance of my betrayer, and every suspicion lulled asleep by the most solemn promises of marriage, I thought not those promises would be so easily forgotten.

After a series of reflections, I unwisely formed the determination, that if I hazarded my life, my parents and friends should not partake of the shame and disgrace which I was soon to incur; but how was it to be avoided; I was young and inexperienced, without a friend of my own sex with whom I could advise and unburthen my full heart! an hundred different projects filled my head how I ought to proceed in my critical situation; as there was no time to be lost, I at length resolved to elope from my parents and friends, and seek among strangers some hospitable mansion, where I might possibly be permitted to remain until I could with safety return; I had no sooner formed this resolution, than I resolved immediately to put it in execution; accordingly at twelve the succeeding night, having privately prepared a few necessaries against my expected confinement I set off alone and unprotected

for Boston, where I flattered myself among the multitude I might be enabled to escape the researches of my friends.

The distance was nearly forty miles from the peaceable mansion of my father, the country thinly inhabited, and the cold so intense, that being from my situation unable to walk quick, I found myself almost sinking with cold and fatigue before I reached the town. I had now indeed succeeded in reaching the place of my destination, but what was now my situation; a miserable fugitive wanderer among strangers; cold and hungry, and without fortitude to solicit a shelter for the approaching night, I began seriously to relent and reproach myself for my imprudence and folly in deserting my tender parents, thus to expose myself to the cold ingratitude of unfeeling strangers; I wept bitterly and more than once half resolved to return to my friends, make known to them the cause of my flight, and upon my knees solicit their forgiveness; happy would it have been for me, and them had not the dread of shame induced me finally to determine otherwise.

At the close of the day passing down Cambridge-street, a few cents which I possessed obtained me a morsel of cake, it was at a small grocery shop, and as I sat upon a wooden bench partaking of this humble pittance, the grocer's lady entered, who probably very justly judging by my appearance that my situation was not the most enviable, enquired of me if I lived in town, to which I answered in the negative; I told her that I had recently come from the country, to seek a situation as chamber maid, in town, as I had been informed that wages were much higher here than in the country; she enquired of me my name and the place of my late residence, to which I gave evasive answers and when I informed her that I was alone and unattended, and without a friend or an acquaintance in town, I thought, while she surveyed me more minutely and with a degree of suspicion, it was not without an emotion of pity. Retiring for a few moments she returned and informed me that she could furnish me with lodgings for the night, if I would accept of such as she could provide; I thanked her, and as the reader may suppose was not backward to accept of her kind offer.

With this truly excellent woman, whose kind services to

me at this distressing moment, time cannot obliterate from my memory. I tarried the night and was furnished with supper and breakfast, and not a cent exacted therefor. I really lament that my situation is such; that in honor to my dear friend, I cannot here record her name, for the most excellent council which she gave me, every word of which I have since by sad experience found to be true, or rather the incidents which she warned me to beware of, was such as would have done honor to the most noble of her sex; I would to God it was recorded upon the tablet of the hearts of all young and inexperienced females who like me, should hereafter have occasion, unprotected, to visit the capitals of our country; nor does it less become, as my wicked situation in life has since taught me, youths of the male sex, unhacknied in the vices of the world, to be on their guard! For the benefit of both sexes, I would therefore attempt here to repeat the most excellent advice of this lady, which, should the kind reader pass over with an eye of indifference, and discard the remaining pages of the record of my adventures, I would most humbly conjure him, whoever he may be, carefully to peruse and peruse this, as a just description of not only a class which are ornamental to human nature, but to the reverse of a corrupted race, who are prone to wickedness, and are very justly esteemed the pests of society.

After I had partook of an excellent breakfast, and was preparing for my departure, for what place I knew not, my good lady desiring me to be seated for a few moments, thus addressed me: "Miss BAKER, for that was the name I had assumed, you inform me that you have come to this town for the purpose of procuring for yourself a place as chamber maid, and as you are destitute of acquaintance here and are apparently young and inexperienced in the world, you will not, I presume, deem it presumption in me, should I give you such advice as may possibly be of advantage to you in your new situation in life."

With this town and its inhabitants I profess to be well acquainted, having been an inhabitant from my infancy; with regard to the former, I believe I may safely say, that there is not a city or town in any of the United States, that can boast of a greater proportion of Lunest,

kind and hospitable inhabitants, ever forward to protect the innocent from injury, and to afford assistance to such as require it, and whose course of life has not been such as to debar them from it—it is here, I assure you, that good behaviour will receive its reward, and virtue and innocence be esteemed, even in the humbler walks of life; while vice, in whatever form it may appear, is as justly discountenanced: Yes, my dear, should you succeed in obtaining a respectable situation, you will not fail, by good behaviour, to gain the applause of such whose friendship may prove of essential service to you, destitute as you are of connexions in town. But, continued my worthy friend, I am sorry to inform you, that such are not the characters of all those who compose the inhabitants of the town; there is indeed another class, whose society I would have you shun as you regard liberty and life; for permit me, my dear, to assure you, that a connexion with these will ultimately cost you one or the other; it is a class composed of such as are by many justly esteemed the bane of society, while by some few they are viewed as a "necessary evil!" they are a shameful race, whose detestable habits and vices sink them infinitely below the beasts that perish; they are such as abound more or less in all our large cities, and of whom this town has a great proportion; among whom, I blush to say, there are a great proportion of our own sex; who, by the vilest prostitution, obtain their livelihood; among these there are many of respectable parentage, and yet so young, that you could scarcely suppose them capable of conforming to such shameful vice: these poor deluded wretches, by those older in iniquity than themselves, are by false allurements enticed from their homes, and by contracting their fatal and cursed habits, ruin themselves forever; for of all vices there is none so incurable as this when it is once contracted; step by step they descend to the lower class of prostitutes, with whom all great cities swarm in the midnight hours! creatures covered with rags, and devoured with vermin; there is hardly any vice which entails more complicated miseries upon the unhappy wretches who are subject to it.

Thus, my dear, have I attempted briefly to delineate

human life as you will find it here, the picture I assure you is not too highly colored, for while I conceive it impossible to extol or bestow too much praise upon those exemplary characters which I first spoke of, I am confident that we cannot too much execrate the vile deeds which characterises the latter class. You are now, Miss BAKER, in their very neighbourhood, and as their pimps are continually in search of new victims, and you young and unattended, beware my dear girl, I beseech you beware, that you are not deceived and like thousands allured from the paths of virtue and innocence."

Here my worthy friend concluded, and here kind reader, permit me humbly to request you for a moment to pause; and blush at the depravity of one of your fellow creatures, to whom this wise counsel was given, yea, it was really so, lulled in the languors of pleasure, the impression which it made upon my unstable mind, was like the trace of an arrow through the penetrated air, or the path of the keel through furrowed waves.

With a heavy heart, at nine in the morning, I quit the hospitable mansion of my benefactress, in hopes ere the close of another day, to obtain in some capacity or other, a permanent situation in some respectable family, whom in my approaching illness I conceived might have the humanity to suffer me to remain with them until such time as my strength would enable me to return to my friends. But whether the appearance of a young and slender female thinly clad, and in a tedious snow storm, with a handkerchief in one hand containing a few articles of clothing excited their suspicion that all was not right, or whether it was really so as they repeatedly informed me, that they were already supplied with help, I know not, in vain were my applications for a place at almost every house that I passed. Alas! it is impossible to describe correctly what where my feelings at this moment, night was approaching, the snow, which was already of an unusual depth, was fast descending, my feeble limbs were very sensibly affected by the cold, while the tears which occasionally gushed from my weeping eyes, formed icicles upon my cheeks, once more did I reproach myself for my folly in deserting a peaceful home and the best of parents, and once more resolved to return penitent to their arms.

The light of day began now to grow more and more invisible, and I yet unprovided with a shelter for the night; it was thus I roamed until the clock struck seven, when cold and hunger forced me into the bar room of a public inn, situated near the centre of the town, at the bar I made application for lodging, and was informed that for twenty cents I could be furnished with a bed. Fortunate indeed did I conceive myself to obtain lodgings for a night so boisterous, and at so late an hour—superfluous I retired to rest, and early the ensuing morning again set out in quest of a temporary home, the storm yet continued to rage, and the snow which during the night had astonishingly increased in depth, rendered the roads almost impassible, but the pressing calls of hunger began now to operate so powerfully as to render me careless as to what part of the town I resorted, or to whom I applied for relief.

About noon I unconsciously ascended the heights of West Boston, where I renewed my applications for a place. Never could the hydra wish for a better chance for his prey, within the walls of a house, the external appearance of which was spacious, I was welcomed and treated with the attention and with that apparent cordiality, which my depressed spirits at that moment really required. Never ought I to forget with what feigned kindness I was received by the "good mother," who expressed great surprise that the good and pious people of the town could see a young and tender female travelling in so tedious a storm, or did her daughters, of which there appeared a considerable throng, appear less disposed to serve the "poor female wanderer," by the direction of their good "ma'am," tea was early provided, and many restoratives prescribed and kindly administered for the benefit of my health, &c. although I at that time remarked that there was no visible resemblance in the features of "ma'am's darling daughters," whose wan cheeks and sunken eyes, were evident marks of their dissipation, yet so completely decoyed was I, that I did not dream of deception; the girls appeared adepts in their business, they apparently strove to out do each other in their kind offices, nor will the reader be surprised that a heart open to every gentle,

generous sentiment, should feel itself warmed by gratitude for those of her sex, who professed to feel so much for her.

Here let me stop to remark, that when once a woman has stifled the sense of shame in her own bosom, when once she has lost sight of the basis on which reputation, honor, every thing that should be dear to the female heart rests; she grows hardened in guilt, and will spare no pains to bring down innocence and beauty to the shocking level with herself: and this proceeds not only from a disposition to reap a reward by the seduction of innocence, but from a diabolical spirit of envy, which repines at seeing another in the full possession of that respect and esteem which she can no longer hope to enjoy.

In the evening the girls having withdrawn each to their apartment, and probably each with a lover, I was left alone with their matron, who, by her ingenious interrogatories, succeeded in drawing from me every particular relative to my situation: at the recital of the difficulties that I had encountered since I left my parents she, letting fall a few hypocritical tears, assured me "that I need not give myself any uneasiness, for until the time that I expected to be confined, and until the time that I should recover my strength to return to my friends, her house should serve me as an asylum, and as for my infant, that she would adopt and rear it up to an age that would enable it to provide for itself. She thought me perfectly wise in quitting my parents and friends, as thereby they would most probably avoid the shame and disgrace which generally attended such unfortunate cases; no pains, she assured me, should be spared to keep the whole affair from their knowledge.

The reader will probably be surprised that I should so easily be made the dupe of these detestable harlots, yet so ingeniously did they conceal every thing from me that would give rise to suspicion, that I remained totally ignorant of my real situation, until the melancholy period when I brought into the world an innocent victim of my guilt; which happily for it and its wretched mother, did not survive its birth but a few moments. A few weeks restored me to my former state of health and spirits, when I began

to harbour thoughts of returning to my friends, which thoughts I innocently communicated to my pretended benefactors:—Unhappy moment; it was that in which I first suspected that I had been by false friendship decoyed upon those dangerous shoals, which my friend the grocer's lady, had warned me to beware of. The mask of friendship was now thrown aside, which had been so successfully worn by this perfidious woman, and her accursed votaries. No sooner had I made my intentions known, than a thousand objections were started, and a thousand obstacles thrown in the way; the principal of which, was, that my sickness had incurred a debt which ought to be discharged before I quit the house, which, should I presume to do, a suit would ensue, and I should thereby expose myself, not only to my friends, but to the world.

Unfortunately for me, I had too unwisely unbosomed myself to those, who now by threatening exposure, too well knew that they could compel me to conform to almost any thing that they should propose. To conceal from my parents and friends the fatal effects of my misplaced confidence, was all that induced me to quit the peaceful roof of the former, and to expose myself, not only to the chilling blasts of winter, but to every misfortune incident to an unhappy female in my situation. If thus much I had hazarded to avoid wounding the feelings of my friends, what would I not now sacrifice to prevent it.

This artful woman, and her not less cunning favourites, began now the difficult task of drawing me over by degrees to their nefarious purposes! the former by representing to me the importance of receiving the addresses of the first gentleman in town, if offered, provided I should wish to rise from the low condition I was in to a state of affluence! and the latter by suggesting to me the propriety of conforming to the "customs of the town," which was to act with less reserve, and allow the beaux to take greater liberties than what the bashful country rustics were in the habit of doing: that by their proper management they had each obtained a suitor, and of the first respectability, and that if I would condescend to be dictated by them, they would insure me that I should be not less fortunate.

Such was the language and such the means used by my

conscientious benefactress, and her arch pupils to fit me for their market. Alas! how justly shall I be reprobated by my readers when they learn from me, that I at length became less inflexible in my determination to support my chastity. From this unhappy period of my life, ought my iniquities to receive their date;—modesty forbids that I should state every particular, relative to my sinful career; let it suffice to say, that I, after receiving the proper lessons from my tutoress, became perfected in those fascinating powers which seldom fail to decoy the amorous youth to practice vices perhaps before unthought of, and then leave him to deplore his thoughtless credulity. Could those young fellows who devote too great a portion of their time at the midnight revel, but once reflect what a complication of disease and wretchedness they heap upon themselves and that it is their money alone that gains them admittance, I am certain they would cease to visit those houses of ill fame.

My long residence in one of those brothels, will enable me to describe to such of my readers who have too much delicacy even to gratify a curiosity ever to visit this modern Sodom, the seat of riot and dissipation, a continual round of vice and wickedness which mark a considerable portion of its lewd inhabitants; in performing this all immodest expressions will be carefully avoided, as it is my object to record such incidents only as may be perused by the most virtuous of my sex, without putting modesty to the blush.

This corrupted spot, which fortunately for the town comprises but a few acres, appears to have been a department allotted to the people of colour, as most of the inhabitants are of this description; the tenements erected thereon, like its wretched inhabitants, are of every description, from the comfortable dwelling to the most miserable cell, apparently erected and propped up for a temporary purpose only; in those of the first class the ladies, strumpets, of distinction claim a residence, while the latter are inhabited by a lower order, apparently composed of the worst of creation. If there can reasonably be any distinction made in grades of harlotry, the former ought to receive the preference as being generally supported as private misses, who expose themselves less in public, go

more decently clad, and make use of less indecent expressions; they have generally at the head of their mess, a matron, who receives from all, the appellation of "ma'am," and passes for the mother of all who resides under her roof, and who seem to regard her as their tutoress; with her they regularly board at an exorbitant price and each are provided with ready furnished apartments; the old Bel-dam is generally too a retailer of wines, sweet meats, &c. which she keeps merely for the accommodation of gentlemen lodgers, from whom with the aid of her fair pupils she seldom fails to sponge a round sum therefor. I have known many bottles of wine privately upset by these arch girls, that had been called and paid for, that their collies might apply to their "good ma'am" for more; it is by their expertness in playing at such games that their conscientious goodness appreciates their worth and knowledge of the world; if they prove themselves adepts in their business, they are sure to receive "ma'am's" carresses; but, if to the reverse, they prove themselves unprofitable servants in the renegeard, it is then that this guardian angel becomes their infuriated enemy, taxes them with the crime of departing from the precepts and examples set them, and loads them with the most opprobrious epithets. These arch hags value nothing but money, and value not how they obtain it; they are very civil to strangers, who visits them with well lined pockets, and will contrive many plans to put them fairly out of the way for the lure of their cargo; and many have been made rich by such windfalls.

The girls seldom quit their beds till noon, when they hobble down stairs and refresh themselves with bittern, toast and coffee; at three they commence the arduous task of dressing themselves for their evening revels; their object is to disguise themselves as much as possible from what they really are; which they so effectually do, with the aid of paint, patches, false teeth and hair, that a stranger to view them by candle light, would suppose that some modern Solomon had been collecting beauties from the four corners of the world; but could he but have a peep at these bewitching girls in their dishabille, their awkward gestures, their blotched faces, their crimsoned eyes, their rotten teeth and stenchful breath, would, I

think, effectually wean him from every thing like an amorous assault.

Such are the characters who compose the higher grade of the false fair. There is still another, who, if possible, are not only far more disgusting to the sight, but whose actions may well be said to vie in wickedness with the evil one; and impudent air being the only charms of their countenance, and a lewd carriage the studied grace of their primpment. Swearing, drinking and obscenity are their principal qualifications; and she that wants a perfection in those admirable acquirements, is as much ridiculed by her associates for her modesty, as a plain dealing man among a gang of knaves for his honesty; these are the creatures who inhabit those wretched brothel houses of the second class; they are of every age and complexion; but black is far the most respectable color among them! It is not unfrequently that you here see white girls of not more than 17 years of age throwing their scarified arms round the neck of an ugly looking black, and bringing their ulcerated faces in contact with his! The respectable part of the people of color, however, of whom there is a considerable portion who reside in the vicinity, as much despise and avoid the company of these filthy strumpets, as the real gentleman does that of a convicted jail bird! Their companions are principally composed of sailors of the lowest grade and straggling mulattoes and blacks, and who generally are never without those unpleasant proofs of their imprudence and folly in forming so dangerous a connexion. There are but few of these girls, however young, but can boast of having been half a dozen times under the hands of a doctor, as many times in prison, and probably three or four times an inmate of the almshouse.

As soon as the day closes these filthy hags, like the vermin that burrow in the earth, creep from their rotten cells, or mud holes, in search of their nocturnal prey. Then the grand revel commences: six or eight filthy hovels, which the grand revel commences: six or eight filthy hovels, which they term "dancing-halls," are resorted to by tag rag and bobtail, and shoals of those pretty misses, who with their artificial faces and sweet perfumes never fail to grace this respectable assemblage, and who like the dancing girls of Egypt, strive to please by their obscene gestures; they are

not over scrupulous in the choice of their beasts, as it frequently happens that the most contemptible misshaped person, bears off the prize, provided he has cash to pave the way; but few of these creatures are called by their proper names, having assumed fictitious ones, are almost all "Ann Eliza's," "Ann Maria's," "Malissa Matilda's," &c.

The terrific and perpetual yells of these nocturnal disturbers of the public repose ever attended by the howlings of their affrighted dogs, is not perhaps equalled by that of the numerous hordes of the wild inhabitants of the Ganges; this continues with little intermission from the setting until the rising of the sun. The unsuspecting stranger who accidentally becomes a spectator of these midnight scenes is not only filled with disgust but trembles for his personal safety.

It was even here, sad to relate, the narrator spent three years of her youthful days. Alas! may Stern's recording angel drop a tear of pity, and obliterate her faults.

In 1812, forming an acquaintance with a young man, the first lieutenant of a privateer then lying in a neighboring port, who in the course of an evening's conversation humorously observing that had he been born a female, his disposition would have been the same to rove about and see the world, I suggested to him the difficulties that must attend him exposed as he must be to the insults of such who would presume thus to venture abroad alone and unprotected; to which he replied, "was I a female and disposed to travel, I would assume a different dress from that usually worn by your sex, which I am confident would rather expose me to injury than afford me protection: I would garb myself as a male, and for such pass among all those with whom I might have occasion to associate, this I am confident I could effect and travel abroad by sea and land, with proper precaution, without exposing my sex, that a female can do this and from the knowledge of her most intimate acquaintance conceal her real situation. History furnishes us with many instances. Here my friend referred to the remarkable instance of Miss Sampson, who during the revolutionary war disguised like a male by the name of Robert Shuriff, and as such, by the most scrupulous

ious concealment of her sex, served her country as a private Soldier, and performed her duty without a stain on her virtue and honor.

From this moment I became dissatisfied with my situation in life; for three years I had trod the detestable rounds of dissipation, it was enough: those vicious scenes in which I had taken so distinguished a part I now began to view in their proper light, new projects occupied my mind, ashamed to return to my abused parents, whom I had so long deserted, I felt now no other disposition than in disguise to visit other parts of the country, and to pursue a course of life less immoral and destructive to my peace and happiness in this life.

Fortunately for me, the inadvertent remarks of my friend, impressed my mind with new ideas relative to my situation, and with the possibility of my escaping by stratagem from the clutches of my shepherdess, for had I publicly attempted to have strayed from the flock, prosecution and probably a jail, would have been my deserts: I was positive that I now saw my way clear, for by garbing myself in the habiliments of a male, I should be enabled to escape their vigilance.

Having provided every thing necessary for my entrance in a new character on the stage of life; I seized upon a favourable opportunity early one morning to equip myself therefor, being garbed complete in a sailor's suit, I quit unnoticed my lodgings and passed into the public street. From my awkward appearance in attempting to assume the character of a male, I was not without my fears that I should be suspected, nor were my apprehensions relieved until passing through Court-street, I reprinted to accost one of my own sex, who answered with a ready "yes sir," strengthened my confidence that I should pass for a male!

I bent my course toward the old market, where entering a victualing cellar, I procured breakfast—the remainder of the day I spent in rambling about the town, highly pleased in being enabled to visit public places, where females, if known, would not have been admitted—lodging obtained without difficulty, and the next morning sought a passage for the southward—this was difficult to obtain

at this time as the harbour being closely blockaded by the enemy, no vessel would venture abroad, and for want of funds not being enabled to travel by land, was compelled reluctantly to give up the idea of a southern excursion.

Passing through Fish-street, I entered a house where there was a public rendezvous for the enlistment of men to go on board one of the United States frigates then lying in the harbour, and shortly bound on a cruise.

Encouraged by the active part which one of my sex had taken in the late American war, without exposing herself, I viewed this as a favourable opportunity to try my fortune in the public service of my country, provided I could avoid the search which new recruits most generally undergo—this I succeeded in doing by an artful stratagem, and entered as a Marine, received my advance and clothing and the next day was taken on board!

New scenes now opened to my view—pains were taken by the officer of marines to instruct me in the manual exercise, of which I had no necessity of pleading ignorance, I had taken the precaution to provide myself with a tight pair of under drawers, which I never shifted but with the greatest precaution, which together with a close waistcoat or bandage around my breasts, effectually concealed my sex from all on board; my good fortune in having for my commander, one of the most humane and experienced officers in the American Navy, was much in my favor, as the respect entertained for him and the under officers caused the utmost harmony to prevail among the ship's crew.

In August we set sail with a fair wind and in good spirits; we first stood an easterly course in hopes of falling in with a British ship cruising in that direction. I suffered a little confinement by sea sickness so peculiar to fresh hands, which was all the illness I experienced during the whole cruise. In the use of arms I made great proficiency which I soon learnt to load and discharge with an expertness not surpassed by any in my corps.

We passed near the Isle of Sables, and took a station off the gulf of St. Lawrence, near Cape Race, to intercept vessels bound either to or from Canada. While cruising off this station, we captured two merchant vessels. Har-

ing received information that the British squadron were off the Grand Bank, and not far distant, our brave commander determined to change his cruising ground; he accordingly stood to the southward. On the 17th he was informed by the commander of an American privateer, that a British ship of war had been seen the day before standing to the S. E. and that she could not be far off. Our intrepid commander immediately made sail, intending if possible, to fall in with her.

On the 19th at 2 P. M. a vessel was discovered at the southward; our ship instantly gave chase, and soon gained on her. At 3 P. M. it could be plainly perceived that she was a ship, under easy sail, close hauled to the wind, soon after she was ascertained to be a frigate; our ship continued the chase. At about three miles distance, our commander ordered the light sails to be taken in, the courses to be hauled up, and the ship to be cleared for action. The chase now backed her main top sail, and waited for our ship to come down.

It is frequently observed by those who have been in battle, that at the commencement of an engagement, the most resolute feel daunted in some degree; but I can solemnly declare, that I never felt more composed; as every person on board, even to the youngest lad, are on such occasions anxious to distinguish themselves at their post, so I felt an extreme desire to render myself conspicuous, and to perform that which woman never before achieved, stationed in the tops, I waited only with impatience for the battle to commence.

As soon as our ship was ready for action, she bore down, intending to bring immediately to close action the British frigate, which about this time had hoisted her ensign. As soon as our ship came within gun shot, the British ship fired her broadside, then filled away, wore and gave a broadside on the other tack. They however produced no effect; her shot fell short. The British frigate manoeuvred and wore several times for about three quarters of an hour, in order to obtain a raking position. But not succeeding in this, bore up under her top sails and jib, with the wind on the quarter. Our brave commander immediately made sail to bring his ship up

with her. At 5 minutes before 6 P. M. our ship being along side, within pistol shot, he ordered a brisk firing to be commenced from all her guns, which were double shot with round and grape shot, and so well directed, and so warmly kept up was our fire, that in 15 minutes, the main mast of the British frigate went by the board, her hull was much injured; and her rigging and sails torn to pieces. I was at this time busily employed in the top plying my faithful musket with the best success, whenever the smoke would permit me to see a blue jacket of the enemy; in the heat of the action a grape shot striking and splintering the butt of my musket, it was noticed by one of my comrades who stood within a few feet from me who, patting me upon the shoulder, exclaimed "never mind it George, you have already won laurels sufficient to recommend you to the pretty girls, when you return to port!"

The grape shot and small arms of our ship completely swept the deck of the British frigate; 30 minutes after the commencement of the action the mainmast and foremast of the British frigate went by the board, taking with them every spar except the bowsprit; she then struck her colors, and as soon as her crew could be removed, and in consequence of her sinking condition, was set fire to and blew up a quarter past three. She had 15 men killed and 61 wounded; while our loss amounted to no more than 7 killed and 8 or 10 wounded.

Soon after this noble achievement our gallant ship returned to port, where she remained for some time undergoing necessary repairs. While here I had frequent opportunities to go on shore, and in more than one instance was actually in company with girls who were lately my associates, but who did not identify my person, so artfully did I disguise myself; I felt no disposition to resume my former dress, or to return to that wicked course of life which I now more than ever detested; it was from some of my old acquaintance that I learnt that as soon as it was discovered that I had fled, the "blood hounds" were unkenneled and sent in every direction after me! I conversed familiarly with many who in my late situation knew me well, but to whom I was now a stranger, as I

did not disclose the important secret. Curiosity alone induced me to visit a place at which I had already spent too great a portion of my life, it was here I resorted for an evening's amusement with my shipmates, where, over the cheerful glass, we could boast of the superior skill and judgment of our officers, and of the superior sailing of our ship.

As soon as refitted, our ship was ordered upon another cruise, during which I had another opportunity to assist my brethren in revenging their injuries. In December, while cruising along the coast of South America, two strange vessels were discovered on our weather bow. At 10 they were discovered to be ships. One of them stood in for the land, the other stood off shore towards our ship. At 11 our commander tacked to the southward and eastward, hauled up the mainsail and took in the royals.

At quarter past one the ship in sight proved to be an English frigate, and being sufficiently distant from land, our commander ordered the mainsails and royals to be taken in, to tack ship and stand for the enemy, who soon bore down with an intention of raking our ship, which we avoided by wearing. A general action now commenced with round and grape shot. Both vessels for some time maneuvered to obtain a position that would enable them to rake, or avoid being raked. About 3 o'clock the head of the British vessel's bowsprit and jib boom, were shot away; and in the space of an hour, her foremast was shot away by the board, her main-top-mast just above the cap, &c.

About 4 o'clock, the fire of the British vessel being completely silenced, and her colors in the main rigging being down, she was supposed to have struck, but her flag was soon after discovered to be still flying. About a quarter of an hour after, the main-mast of the British vessel went by the board. About three quarters of an hour after 4, our ship got into a very good position for raking, when the enemy prudently struck her flag, being then almost a wreck. She was a frigate mounting 49 guns, with a compliment of 400 men, of which 60 were killed, and about 150 wounded. Our loss was comparatively small.

In this engagement I did not attempt to signalize myself less than in the former. From the ship's top I discharged

my piece nineteen times, which, I had now learnt to take pretty exact aim, must, I think, have done some execution. An accident, soon after the conclusion of the engagement, occurred, which was near betraying my sex to the whole ship's crew. Attempting to go below, I made a misstep and fell from the shrouds overboard; not knowing how to swim, I sunk immediately, a boat was sent to my relief, but before they could recover me and get me on board, life had become nearly extinct: As soon as they succeeded in getting me on deck, for I had not strength to do it myself, some of my shipmates were ordered to strip off my clothes and to furnish me with a dry suit, and they had nearly divested me of my out dress, when I mustered sufficient strength to beg of them to desist, as I then felt able to effect it myself.

Not long after our late engagement we returned to the United States, where our brave officers and whole ship's crew were received by our countrymen with every demonstration of joy and esteem, for our late gallant exploit.

So closely were all our harbours blockaded at this time for us to attempt then to get out; we consequently lay along while in port, during which, the time for which I had entered, expired, but I again immediately re-entered, and before the conclusion of peace, made two more successful cruises, at the expiration of which, I received a regular discharge.

Thus for nearly THREE YEARS have I passed for and performed the duty of a MARINE, on board a FRIGATE the most celebrated of any in the AMERICAN NAVY: during which time I have been in THREE SEVERE ENGAGEMENTS, and never absented myself from my post in time of danger. I have like others of the ship's crew, freely and yet as extraordinary as it may appear, I have not the least distant idea that a single soul on board ever had the memoirs of my sex. I had thoroughly studied the precautionary means by which she was enabled to avoid an exposure of her sex, I was too enabled to conceal mine.

I now more than ever felt a disposition to return to my

parents, from whom I had been nearly SIX YEARS absent, having received my prize money and wages. I now determined once more to re-assume the female character and to clad myself accordingly, and to furnish myself with a few necessary articles of clothing, I went, as the ladies term it, "shopping," and having made a purchase of a suit entire in Cornhill, with the assistance of a mantua maker and milliner, was enabled once more to appear in my original character.

As I was under some apprehensions that some one might possibly recognize my person in one of the two characters in which I had appeared, I did not think it advisable to continue long in Boston, I therefore a few days after set out for ~~my~~ my native home, which place I reached the succeeding day with safety.

I entered my parents' house at noon day, they were at dinner, I smiled, they gazed, but knew me not. By my mother I was invited to partake with them, and not until I had thrown out hints relative to some past affairs of the family, did they recognize in me their long lost child.—Happy meeting!—It was the return of the prodigal, penitent to her afflicted parents.

My friends soon after my departure traced me to Boston, but could never there obtain any further information of me; they listened with attention to the sorrowful tale of my adventures, while the tears trickled down the cheeks of my parents, at the recital of my adversities.

It was first my determination never to make public the unpleasant traits of my character; but I have since been persuaded to disclose so much as is contained in the foregoing pages, by a friend in whom I could confide. Every circumstance, however trivial, which could possibly lead to a discovery of my real name, that of my parents, or of the place of my nativity, will be withheld; as a disclosure can profit the reader nothing, but may do me essential injury. If what I have exposed to public view is sufficient to induce youths of my sex never to listen to the voice of love, unless sanctioned by paternal approbation: and to resist the impulse of inclination, when it runs counter to the precepts of Religion and Virtue, then, indeed, have I not written in vain.—FINIS.