

to-morrow. I went immediately and told the mother and her what I had done in the matter. The mother was glad to hear of my success in it; but desired (tho' she was her child) that she would not come near her again.

To return to my old sweetheart Sarah. The next day when I was going from work, she came up to the dock-yard, and asked me if I would go along with her to a christening? After a short pause, I told her I did not care to stand for the child. Whereupon she went and gave the people notice of my dislike to the proposal, who took care to provide a godfather in my room. But notwithstanding my refusal to answer for the child, I could not be excused from going with her to the house: so that when I came from the dock after dinner, I was obliged to lose half a day's work to please her. We were very merry together: everything was conducted in tolerable order; and we broke up in good time, which gave me an opportunity of seeing her home; which caused a report to be spread all over the town, that we were going to be married next day; and there were many that believed it. For my part I was glad that I was so near the expiration of my time, because I should then be my own master; for I still went to Mr. L___'s, and met with a very good sort of gentlewoman who lived there. She asked me if I went to church? I told her, Yes, when I had an opportunity. She afterwards gave me many useful admonitions,

which disposed me to be very thankful to God for his goodness, in protecting me amidst the many dangers I had brought upon myself: and I flattered myself that I should some time or other be enabled to make amends to my parents for all the trouble I had brought upon them. But the worst embarrassment I had involved myself in, was my being so intimate with Sarah. Indeed I had almost taken a resolution to break off correspondence, not only with Sarah, but even with every one of those with whom I had contracted an acquaintance of that sort; for I found it almost impossible to free myself from their importunities any other way.

I considered it as a very surprizing event that Mrs. L___ should pretend to have such a regard for my interest, and at length betray me. She told me, I should be welcome to come and lodge with her, when I was out of my time; and by continually repeating this profession of her kindness towards me, I thought she was the best friend I had; for I could not form the least idea of her being so deceitful as to discover me, after she had given my mother an absolute promise to the contrary. Indeed I esteemed myself happy in having met with a person I could freely unbosom myself to, being perfectly satisfied of her fidelity; on which account I really thought I could not make her a too grateful

return; which consideration often induced me to carry her a bundle of chips.

I shall now proceed to the concluding scenes of my folly. Being but very indifferently accommodated in regard to cloathing, my master aggravated my distress, by not permitting me to receive the three pounds a year; neither would he procure me any apparel, though the money was regularly paid him: and, notwithstanding he enjoyed every advantage he could possibly expect, yet was so unkind as to refuse me even a pair of shoes, when I was barefooted.

On the day before my time expired, being at work upon the Pallas frigate, Sarah came and invited me to breakfast with her the next morning, which I did. Having afterwards cleaned myself, I went to the builder's office, and told him, it was the last day of my time, and hoped he had no objection against my certificate's being allowed me. On asking to whom I served my time? I told him. He then called his clerk, and ordered him to prepare my certificate, which he accordingly did; after which, I went to each of the proper persons, who readily signed it. I then carried the certificate to the clerk of the cheque's office, where I was entered as a man.

After this I went to reside upon the Common, as I supposed it would be most satisfactory to my mother. I

lived there as retired as I could, and kept to my work. Soon after which, the company that I belonged to were ordered to go and break up an old ship that lay in the dock: but we found it very hard to demolish her; and I likewise found the labour much too hard for me, tho' I never gave out; for at the best of times the work was very fatiguing. But the money we earned was acceptable to me, since having owed some during my apprenticeship, I was glad to have it in my power to pay every one as fast as I could: and, beside, I was willing, if I could, to make a creditable appearance.

Being now out of my time, I resolved to send down for my mother to come to me, believing it to be best for both, that no time might be lost. So I wrote the following letter to my parents:

Portsmouth, May 15, 1770.

"Hond. Father and Mother,

"I hope these few lines will find you both in perfect health, as I am at present, thanks be to God for it. I have the pleasure to let you

know I am out of my time, and live along with Mrs. L___w, and shall be very glad if you will come down and see me; which if you are inclined to do, pray write me word, and my answer shall contain directions for the best road you are to take. Pray give my kind love to my brother and sister, and all friends that know me. I conclude, with my prayers to God for for you both,

*"your dutiful daughter,
"MARY LACY.*

*"P.S. DIRECT to me as follows:
"To William Chandler, at Mrs. Low's, in the
"Tree Rope-Walk, Portsmouth Common".*

Next day as I lay in my bed, I heard the dock-bell ring, on which I got up, and dressed myself as fast as I could, lest I should be too late to the call. But notwithstanding the haste I made, the bell still kept ringing, which raised my wonder at the reason it rang so long. As soon as I came up to the dock-wall I met a boatswain running with his coat off, which made me conclude something very extraordi-

nary was the matter. When I came up to the dock gate, I found that all the yard was in a blaze, and the engines getting out; for the fire was so great and powerful that its heat almost resembled that of a furnace: and I think I never in my life suffered so much for want of drink, as I did during the hurry and confusion it occasioned; the yard and taphouse being crowded with people, there was no getting any liquor.

While the fire was burning, a quartermen was dispatched to London with an account of it; and I was appointed to guard his house till he returned. After it was extinguished, we had orders to work a day and two tides; and were in a very great hurry at Portsmouth. The reason why I left Mrs. L___w was, because, after taking her for my friend, I at length discovered she had been all along the greatest enemy I ever had, having done many pitiful mean actions to me; but the betraying me exceeded all the rest, and was almost equal to the depriving me of life. It is most certain, she was an inveterate enemy to me, which she evidenced by endeavouring to do me all this disservice in her power, and that at a time when I was not possessed of a penny of money in the world, which I could call my own. However, all other injuries I should have regarded but little, if she had not discovered me to the men; for when

Mrs. F___s told me what I was, I fretted myself quite sick, and thought I should have broke my heart; but could not tell who she had told: and the apprehensions I felt from persons meddling with me, greatly affected me. So that by fretting and hard working, I was reduced very low, and thrown into a fit of illness; which those people who were ignorant of the real cause, construed to be love.

About this time an order came down for us to leave off working double tides, and only to work one day and two tides, which I was not sorry for; particularly on one account, as I was almost spent with working so close; for in a little time afterwards, I was seived with so bad a swelling in my thighs that I was not able to walk, and was unwilling the doctor should look at it, lest he should find me out: I therefore sent for the quartermen to answer for me that I was sick; which he accordingly did; and I continued a week before I was able to go into the yard again, and was then incapable of doing any work.

In a short time after I became better, and resumed my labour; after which we were ordered to go to Spithead to work, where we were in as bad a situation as before, having no other place to lie on but the softest plank we could find: so that such a wretched accommodation during that time

made me catch cold again in my thighs, and occasioned my illness to return; however, I soon mended. But as the people were shifted about from one company to another, on the first of April I became very uneasy, lest something disastrous should happen to me.

A short time after this, I was, on account of lameness, forced to go upon the doctor's list for a fortnight: but thank God I got the better of this, and went to work again, though continually apprehensive of being surprised unawares; for I did not know the particular persons my false friend had betrayed me to.

Soon afterwards our company was ordered to tear up an old forty gun ship, which was so very difficult to take to pieces that I strained my loins in an attempt; the effects of which I felt very sensibly at night when I went home, for I could hardly stand; and had no appetite to my victuals. But, notwithstanding my legs would scarce support me, I continued working till the ship was quite demolished, and then we were ordered on board the *Sandwich*, to bring on her waleing, which was very heavy. This increased my weakness to such a degree, that the going to work proved very irksome to me, insomuch that every body wondered what was the matter: however, I still continued my labour, till want of strength obliged me to quit it; and then I went to the doctor's shop, and told

him I had strained my loins, which disabled me from working. Whereupon he gave me something which he thought would relieve me. I took it; but had it not been for the infinite mercy of God towards me, I should certainly have been killed by it, the medicine being altogether improper for my complaint; in consequence whereof, instead of growing better, I became every day worse than the former, which made me think I could not live long. However, in process of time my complaint abated, but not so as to enable me to work as I had done before, nor could I carry the same burdens as usual, which made me very uneasy.

While I continued in this weak condition, I imagined that if I could go down to Kent I might get a friend to help me out of the yard: but growing somewhat better, I went to work as well as I could. The loss of my father and mother like-wife greatly aggravated my concern; and I began to think of endeavouring to obtain liberty of the builder to go into Kent for a fortnight, which he readily granted. I went accordingly in one of the transports to Dover, from thence to Ash, and afterwards to the house of Mrs. Deverton, who was very much surprised at seeing me, and told me she had been up to London last week; and that her brother and sister at Kensington would be glad to see me.

On hearing this, I took my leave of Ash and set off for London; and when I came to Deptford, I met with William L___y, who was glad to see me. I told him I had got a letter for him from Betty S___e. I went home, and lay all night with him; for as I had done so before, I was not afraid of him. Having talked much to him about his girl, the next day he went with me to London; for I wanted to go to the Navy Office to get my liberty prolonged, where they told me I must come again some other day.

From the Navy Office my companion went with me to Kensington: but when I came there, I was apprehensive Mr. Richardson would betray me to the young man who did not know what I was: to prevent which, I immediately enquired for the gentleman's house; which being directed to, the people belonging to it informed me that he lived there; but I did not know any of them, as it was seventeen years since I had seen them before.

I told Mrs. Richardson that I had brought her a letter from Ash; and almost as soon as she had looked on it, she recollected who I was: but I desired her to be careful what she said before the young man, otherwise it would be the means of betraying me. She strictly complied with my request till he was gone. This was on Thursday; and I staid there until the Sunday night following, then set off; for I did not know that my liberty was renewed at

the Navy Office. I got to Portsmouth on Monday; and I immediately informed the builder I was come back. Whereupon he told me that my liberty was renewed. However, I went to work; but was in a short time after taken as ill as ever.

As soon as I heard that Mrs. L___w had told everybody who I was, I was ready to break my heart; and immediately wrote to Mr. Richardson at Kensington, to desire him, if possible, to assist me. He sent me word he could not do any thing for me at that time, because all the gentlemen were out of town; but that in a month's time he would write, and let me know farther.

I endeavoured to keep up my spirits under these discouragements as well as I could; but still found the work proved harder and more fatiguing to me: Nor had I been from London a month before I was entered to the doctor's lift; for we had been putting the Sandwich in thorough repair, the working on which gave me such a pain in my side, that I was obliged to have a blister applied to it; and though the doctor's mate dressed it every day, he never discovered that I was a woman but often asked me why I did not marry.

In this condition I continued for some time; during which Mrs. L___w came from Woolwich. The very mention of this traitorous woman's name made me worse (for three

or four days) than I was before. She had been but a short time in Portsmouth before Mr. Richardson sent for me to come up to Kensington; for as they new my father and mother, they were very much concerned about my welfare. This news in a few days gave a happy turn to my disorder, and almost restored me to health: so that I embraced the first opportunity of going over to Gosport, to take leave of them all; and went directly home to make myself ready to go with the coach.

My parting with the young women occasioned a scene of great perplexity and distress; and indeed one of them was ready to break her heart. This was poor Sarah, whose pitiable case affected me very much. However, I set off from Portsmouth the second day of December, 1771, and reached Kensington the next day; when Mr. Richardson advised me that the best step I could take was, to present a petition to the lords of the admiralty; which I accordingly did: and, their lordships, in consideration of my extraordinary sufferings and services, circumstanced as I was, have been so generous as to settle 20 *l.* a year upon me: for which, as in gratitude and duty bound, I shall pray for them as long as I live.

After the lords of the admiralty had granted my superannuated pension, I continued with the above mentioned Mr. Richardson as Kensington for about the space

of ten months, during which time, on going to Deptford to receive my money, I was met by one Mr. Slade, who had removed thither from Portsmouth yard by order of the board. He has not seen me before in womens apparel; yet having heard of my metamorphosis, he enquired kindly after my health, and offered his service to conduct me back to Kensington.

On the road thither, he expressed a great affection for me; and at the same time requested me to give him my hand at the altar, allowing me a proper time to consider of his offer. Though I had repeatedly declared that I would remain single, yet afterwards having the utmost reason to believe that there subsisted a real and mutual affection betwixt us, and that the hand of Providence was engaged in bringing about our union, I at length gave my consent; in consequence of which, we were married, and now enjoy the utmost happiness the state affords; which I have the most sanguine hopes of a continuance of, since my husband is not only sober and industrious, but having been convinced, ever since the year 1762, of the important truths of Christianity, his conduct towards mankind in general, founded on a love of virtue, is upright and exemplary; at the same time that in his conjugal relation he behaves in the most endearing and indulgent manner. Thus united, I have, by the blessing of God, attained more than a bare

chance for happiness in my present state, and have also the most solid grounds to look for the permanent enjoyment of it in future.

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Come on Mary
This can't be
The end??!!