



## PREFACE

*The reality of the facts contained in the following History will, it is presumed, conduce in a great measure to recommend the perusal of it to the Public; and it will, I doubt not, with every candid and considerate reader, prove a sufficient apology for the inaccuracies of stile and sentiment which I may be justly chargeable with as the author, that I laboured under many inconveniences in collecting the various materials which compose it. The great number of incidents related therein are presented to public inspection in a plain and simple garb, that being judged the most suitable dress for a narrative of this kind.*

*The reader will find herein,*

1. *A circumstantial account of what happened to me during my childhood, wherein will appear many evident tokens of that restless and untractable disposition in an early period of life, which gave rise to all my succeeding adventures and misfortunes.*

2. *The method made use for leaving my parents, by disguising myself in man's apparel, principally for the sake of withdrawing myself from the company of a young man, for whom I found I had conceived too great an attachment, and who was the primary, though involuntary cause of my departure – The uncommon embarrassments and difficulties I struggled with during the first four years of my service, in order to conceal my sex when at sea, where I was almost continually in company with 700 men for that time, without incurring the least suspicion of being a woman: for which, and the many narrow escapes I afterwards had, I cannot but acknowledge myself indebted to the goodness of Divine Providence, who endued me with prudence and discretion to conduct myself under every circumstance, and carried me through all.*

3. *Of my serving seven years as an apprentice to a shipwright, with the numerous sufferings I endured from ill treatment under different masters, and the various scenes of immorality and profaneness my situation amongst*

*sea-faring people made me a constant, though disgusted, witness to. And,*

4. *The hardships I went through in being forced to cross the water at Gosport in the most inclement of seasons for the space of five years and a half; the severe labour I was employed in since that time, attended with illness, amidst the dreadful apprehensions of a discovery of my sex through the baseness of the woman who betrayed me.*

*It will not be amiss to conclude this address by explaining my motives for endeavouring to be as frequently as possible in the company of women, in the way of courtship; which were, In the first place, to avoid the conversation of the men, which I need not observe, was amongst those of this class especially, in many respects very offensive to a delicate ear: and, 2ndly, For the sake of affording me a more agreeable repast amongst persons of my own sex, many of whom, I am sorry to say, were too much addicted to evil practices by their unlawful commerce with the other, as will on many occasions appear in the course of the story.*

*Deptford, July 1, 1773.*

*M. SLADE.*