

# JOHN THE SHOPKEEPER TURNED SAILOR;

OR,

*The Folly of going out of our Element.*

IN FOUR PARTS.



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# JOHN *the* SHOPKEEPER, &c.

A TALE I tell whose first beginning,  
May set some giddy folks a grinning;  
But, only let it all unfold,

A sadder tale was never told.

Some people, who for years before  
Had seldom pass'd their outer door  
For once determin'd to be gay,  
And have one merry-making day.  
Agreed, "a sailing we will go;"  
Thus all was settled at a blow.  
With hats and bonnets duly ty'd,  
They bustle to the water-side,  
And as the women stem the gale,  
They seem already under sail;  
Here, while we find them safe and sound,  
A sailing only on dry ground,  
We'll take occasion to declare  
Who all these merry people were.

First there was John; a trader he  
Clever and smart as you shall see;  
High on the shelf in nice array,  
His various wares and patterns lay;  
Call when you will the thing's at hand,  
And John is ever at his stand.  
I grant indeed his price was high,  
But then his shew-glass caught the eye,  
Besides, 'twas known and understood,  
His things were all extremely good.  
Walk in, and if you talk with John,  
I warrant, he will draw you on;  
Not that he ventur'd on the sin,  
Of taking any strangers in;  
For John, dispute it he who can,  
Was a plain, open, honest man;  
You saw it written in his face;  
And then he serv'd you with a grace;  
With gentle air and accent sweet,  
Powder'd and dress'd so spruce and neat,

And most obliging in his speeches,  
 Unnumber'd ribbons down he reaches;  
 Presents before the lady's view,  
 Each flowery edge, each beauteous hue,  
 Rolls and unrolls the slippery things,  
 And every finger has it's wings;  
 Then waits, with rare command of face,  
 While Miss, in sad distressful case,  
 Puzzles, and frets, and doubts between  
 A greenish blue and blueish green,  
 At length each anxious mind is eas'd,  
 The bargain's struck, the lady's pleas'd;  
 John humbly bows, then takes his flight  
 To write his bill as swift as light;  
 And ere the stranger's march'd away  
 He next as sweetly asks for pay.  
 Yet if there enter'd one he knew,  
 John always gave the credit due;  
 Welcom'd the friend with joyful looks,  
 Yet clapp'd the debt into his books;  
 And tho' he begg'd the bill might wait,  
 'Twas sent at Christmas sure as fate.

At Christmas too (I tell his fame  
 That traders all may do the same)  
 John calmly takes his book up stairs,  
 And balances his whole affairs;  
 Sees how his total credits stand,  
 And values all his stock in hand;  
 Then fairly puts on 'tother side,  
 The debts he owes both far and wide?  
 The diff'rence is the sum he's worth,  
 'Tis all he has this year on earth;  
 Compares it with the year before,  
 'Tis less than then' — 'O no, 'tis more.' —  
 'Tis vastly more,' he says with glee,  
 'Tis right, 'tis right, my books agree!  
 But who except a trader's self,  
 Can paint these joys of growing pelf?  
 Or rather, to correct my song,  
 Who paint the pleasures that belong  
 To honest industry and thrift,  
 While God is thank'd for every gift!  
 Ah! foolish John! so blest at home,  
 What need had'st thou so far to roam?

Could thy new-fangled joys out-top  
 The hourly pleasures of thy shop ;  
 Or if thy health an aring need,  
 And one grand holiday's decreed  
 Coul'st thou not go, to change the scene,  
 And take a turn upon the green ?  
 Ah! foolish John! from what strange quarter  
 Could come this fancy for the water!  
 Well hast thou prosper'd while on shore,  
 Their lab'ring nobly at the oar ;  
 But if the wat'ry flood should ride thee,  
 Methinks some evil will betide thee :  
 And should'st thou dare, when once afloat,  
 Thyself to STEER or ROW the boat,  
 The hour shall come—I see it nigh  
 With my prophetic poet's eye,  
 When know, vain man, that thou shalt smart,  
 And all thy glory shall depart.  
 Then hear, ye Britons, while I preach,  
 This is the truth I mean to teach—  
 That he who in his shop is bright,  
 And skill'd to keep his reck'ning right,  
 Who steers in the good middle way,  
 And gets some custom and some pay,  
 Marks when sad bankrupt times prevail,  
 And carefully draws in his sail,  
 Keeps watch, has all his lanterns out,  
 And sees the dangers round about,  
 Pushes his trade with wind and ore,  
 And still gets forward more and more—  
 This trader, skill'd as he may be,  
 On shore a man of high degree,  
 May prove a very dunce at sea. }  
 Ah! foolish John! no thoughts like these  
 Once enter to disturb his ease ;  
 Onward he goes, and thinks it grand  
 To quit the plain and simple land ;  
 Leavs a good house of brick and mortar  
 To try mere wood upon the water.

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PART II.

**T**WAS told you in a former lay,  
 How on a luckless evil day,

The trader John, a landsman brave,  
Left the dry ground to try the wave.

But here the poet must rehearse,  
In soft, and sweet, and tender verse,  
How gently Johnny had a wife,  
The joy and solace of his life,  
The sharer of his griefs and cares,  
Privy to all his great affairs ;  
One who when ty'd in wedlock's noose  
Had prov'd a helpmate fit for use ;  
One whom he married—not for whim—  
But who could keep his house in trim ;  
No high flown miss, or belle, or beauty,  
A simple girl that knew her duty :  
Had well obey'd her father, mother,  
And counsel'd well her youngest brother ;  
Healthy when young, and rather stout :  
Moral ;—nay more, she was devout :  
And now a Christian quite at heart,  
She carefully fulfils her part,  
Well skill'd alike her house to guide,  
And serve the shop at Johnny's side,  
See now she works to help the trade,  
And now instructs her under maid ;  
But 'tis her chief and special care,  
Her husband's daily toil to spare ;  
When sick, or weary and opprest,  
To ease the troubles of his breast,  
To soothe his sorrow, calm his fears,  
And help him through this vale of tears ;  
Remind him where his treasure lies,  
And point to realms above the skies,  
Where, when this shifting scene is o'er  
The faithful meet to part no more.

Now twenty summers or above  
Have glided by and prov'd her love ;  
And though they may have marr'd her face,  
Have ripend many a christian grace ;  
Hence it may now be fairly guess'd,  
Her latest days shall be her best.

John knows her worth, and now-a-days,  
He grows quite eager in her praise ;  
For ever'y calling friend is told,

“ My wife is worth her weight in gold.”

To this blest couple there was born,  
One daughter cheerfull as the morn;  
A maiden she of spotless fame,  
E'en in her mirth quite clear from blame,  
Train'd in religion's "narrow way,"  
Her mind untainted by a play,  
She hates her giddy glitt'ring scenes,  
Tho' long time since enter'd on her teens;  
See all things in a proper light,  
And vice quite puts her in a fright.  
Prompt and obedient from a child,  
Obliging, humble, meek and mild;  
Still before strangers as a mouse;  
Yet vastly useful in the house—  
Toils for the shop, tho' seldom seen;  
—Ah!—there she sits behind the screen,  
There, like some flow'r, both sweet and gay,  
She shuns as yet the blaze of day,  
(Well does her praise adorn my tale)  
A new blown lily of the vale.

Now should perchance some fool draw near  
And get to whisper in her ear,  
Of plays, and balls, and fairs, and races,  
Fine midnight routs, and public places,  
And wonder how she can endure,  
A life so useful and so pure—  
Extol her from, her piercing eyes,  
And tell a hundred flatt'ring lies;  
—While the sweet praise he thinks she sips,  
The tortur'd maiden bites her lips;  
Thinks his fine flatt'ry mere pretence,  
And longs to tell him to talk sense;  
Yet dreads to take the dunce in hand,  
Lest he should still not understand.  
But should he let his vice peep out,  
The meek-ey'd girl can then turn stout;  
For once, 'tis said, in terms direct,  
A spruce and saucy spark she check'd;  
(She grew so solemn in her speeches  
The bucks give out that "Nancy preaches,")  
And once put on the sweetest air,  
And begg'd a carman not to swear.  
Thus while she ends her peaceful days,  
Her parent's care she well repays;

Honors her father loves her mother,  
She'll prove, methinks, just such another ;  
And tho' scarce seen, except at church.  
The men won't leave her in the lurch ;  
Some honest christian man she'll strike,  
No buck or blood—for like loves like.

Next in my song of equal fame,  
Comes a good honest antient dame ;  
John's mother—with no fault but one—  
I mean—she doated on her son ;  
For when her own dear spouse was gone,  
Her whole affections fell to John ?  
'Twas then, the widows age so great  
Her prospects small, her income strait,  
That Johnny weigh'd the matter well,  
And took her to his home to dwell :  
No costs or trouble did he grudge,  
For John had rightly learnt to judge  
That people, once of little fame,  
But now of high and mighty name,  
Oft owe the glory of their station,  
To the mere help of education.

Quoth he—' Were all men good and true,  
' Their wealth, methinks, might half be due,  
' To some good dame who now his found  
' Quite thrust upon the mere back ground :  
' Besides,' he added, half in tears,  
' A child is always in arrears,  
' In debt, alas, o'er head and ears.'

Oh with what joy, what thanks and praise,  
To the great length'ner of her days,  
What feelings not to be outdone,  
Tow'rds her dear John, her only son,  
Did the good parent take her station,  
And kindly own the obligation ;  
And now his tenderness she pays,  
By helping in a thousand ways,  
Deck'd in her best she comes in view,  
And serves the shop from twelve to two ;  
Knows not each price perhaps quite pat,  
Yet keeps the croud in civil chat,  
'Till John himself comes up to sell  
A yard of lutestring, or an ell :

Next to the cook her aid she brings,  
And does a hundred little things :  
Loves her own self to lay the cloth,  
To dress the sallad, skim the broth,  
At shelling pease is quick and nimble,  
Tho' now grown tardy with her thimble ;  
And always puts you quite at ease,  
Walks out and leaves you if you please ;  
Plain as she seems, as much good sense,  
And hence she never takes offence ;  
And all agree, for all are lenient,  
The good old lady's quite convenient.

Yet let me add if things grow wrong,  
Madam soon shews her fears are strong ;  
And then she gives a certain spice  
Of plain and downright good advice ;  
Talks in a most convincing tone,  
Of what SHE'S seen and what SHE'S known ;  
And, in a way that vastly wins,  
Will warn you of her own past sins :  
Tranquil at eve, in elbow chair,  
Tells what her former follies were ;  
Recounts her dangers, nice escapes,  
Sad sufferings once, and aukward scarpes ;  
And while she paints her varid life,  
Adds wisdom e'en to Johnny's wife :  
John, warn'd of her, each matter weighs,  
And Nancy trembles and obeys.

Thus some old seaman, once so brave,  
And buffeted by wind and wave,  
Of the rude seas too long the sport,  
Enters at length some peaceful port ;  
Rejoices now no more to roam,  
Yet acts as pilot nearer home.

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### PART . III.

**L**ONG has the muse her tale delay'd,  
Has stopt to talk of Johnny's trade ;  
Wife, daughter, mother too, of John,  
And quite forgot to travel on.  
Long has the muse with trembling fear,  
View'd the sad scene that now is near,



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Hung back indeed from very fright,  
And shrunk and star'd at the sight.  
As the tall steed, if he should spy,  
Some unknown form of danger nigh,  
Starts from his paths, his eye-balls glare,  
His feet fly prancing in the air,  
Round on the spot and round he wheels,  
Upright upon his mere hind heels ;  
So have we started at the view  
Of what our John is now to do,  
Have gaily frisk'd it round and round,  
Nor gain'd as yet an inch of ground,  
Come, gentle Muse, the tale declare,  
Sing how this bold advent'rous pair,  
With mother brave and willing daughter,  
March'd to the borders of the water.  
Sing how they trod the beech so steep,  
Gaz'd at the wonders of the deep,  
And stop to view, as in a trance,  
The awful ocean's vast expanse.  
Then gaz'd at ev'ry passing boat,  
Till they quite long'd to get a-float,  
The boatmen as they cross the Strand,  
Spring from an alehouse just at hand,  
All on the party down they burst,  
And each is sure that he was first.  
Oh ! how they press and fill the ground,  
And push and elbow all around !  
Each to a lady makes his suit,  
Till Nancy starts, as at a brute :  
While prudent Johnny marching down,  
Hires a snug boat for half-a-crown,  
Of smaller size, but stiff and tight ;  
And having seen that all is right,  
Rallies his daughter, claims his wife,  
Bursts thro' the croud, and ends the strife,  
And now with self-complacent grin,  
The favor'd boatman hands them in ;  
But first he plants as is his rule,  
On the waves edge is little stool,  
And while he begs them to take care,  
Presents his elbow high in air.  
All in they step, all down they sat ;  
All safe, all even, and all flat ;

The boatman pushes off the boat ;  
 Was e'er such treasure all afloat !  
 And now amid the suns bright gleam,  
 See how they cut the silver stream ;  
 See how the breeze begins to play ?  
 See how it wafts them far away !

Scarce had the party left the shore,  
 When Ruffman longs to spare his oar,  
 Points to the bench were lies a sail,  
 And begs to profit by the gale.  
 At first the boatmans words appal,  
 And all the female faces fall ;  
 And Madam bets ten thousand pound,  
 ' This instant we shall all be drown'd',  
 Mean time old Ruffman, with a sneer,  
 Forbids each vain and silly fear ;  
 Talks of the seas that he had cross'd,  
 Beaten, and blown, and tempest tost ;  
 Tells of his danger now no more,  
 While a green youth in days of yore,  
 Of feats perform'd by way of fun,  
 And boasts of matches he has won :  
 Then drops his tone, and quite allays,  
 All the new fears he seem'd to raise ;  
 Pleads his great care, asserts his skill,  
 Begs each dear lady'll dread no ill ;  
 For if he keeps the rope in hand,  
 The water's just as safe as land.

Thus all objections down he beat,  
 And now the awful sail is set ;  
 Ah, how they plough the whit'ning seas,  
 So fine, so glorious is the breeze ;  
 How fresh and cooling too the air,  
 While the sail shades them from the glare ;  
 The boatman who a while before,  
 Sat coatless heated at the oar,  
 Now lolls his ease, observes the wind,  
 Steers with one careful hand behind ;  
 While his right fist holds hard the sail,  
 Resists or humours well the gale ?  
 Then half-appearing to turn back,  
 At once he stops and makes a tack ;  
 Points at the distant land once more,  
 And seems to run you right on shore :

But ere he lets you quite touch ground,  
Again he spins his vessel round,  
And shifts across, with skill so nice,  
The flutt'ring canvas in a trice,  
Scuds o'er the spacious seas again;  
Again he plows the mighty main;  
Again the less'ning shore retires,  
Woods, hills depart, and distant spires;  
While the bright sun, yon clouds between  
Shines forth and gilds the glorious scene.

The party, eas'd of all their fright,  
Gaze round and round with sweet delight;  
Praise with one voice both land and seas,  
And now they languish for a breeze:  
Dread lest the slack'ning wind should fail,  
And welcome every growing gale:  
Swift o'er the swelling waves they fly,  
And pleasure beams on every eye.

But ah! how oft with genial sun,  
While the great course of life we run,  
And fancy, as we taste the treat,  
Our human bliss is now compleat;—  
How oft in that same favor'd hour,  
Does the whole sky begin to lour,  
The cheering sun-shine's past away,  
There comes a dreary doleful day:  
Afflictions gather like a cloud;  
The swelling tempest roars aloud;  
While from yon threat'ning heav'ns so dark,  
It thunders round our little bark:  
Unskill'd to struggle thro' the breeze,  
We toss in new and troubled seas,  
And life's gay morning all so bright,  
Ends in some woeful tale at night.

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#### P A R T IV.

COME, mournful Muse, and now relate,  
The awful change in Johnny's fate,  
And while the doleful song is sung,  
Tell from what cause the ruin sprung.

Cool'd by the breeze, and half undrest,  
The rough gale blustering round his breast.

Robb'd of the sun's bright noon tide ray,  
 And oft bresprinkl'd by the spray,  
 Forth from yon bottom of the boat  
 Old Ruffman lugs is sailor's coat,  
 And while he casts the jacket on,  
 Leaves ropes and rudder all to John.  
 Ah! now begins the tragic tale,  
 For now the landsman holds the sail!  
 He sees around the watery realm,  
 Yet goes and seizes on the helm,  
 And seated just in Ruffman's place,  
 Shews his cock'd hat and tradesman's face;  
 And now without one sailing art,  
 E'en simple Nancy bears a part:  
 Sits playful by her father's side,  
 And light, and gay, and merry-ey'd.  
 Holds with that hand that held a fan,  
 Rude ropes, as if she were a man,  
 While idle Ruffman, freed from care,  
 Half-sleeping, earns his easy fare.  
 —But hark! from yonder distant shore,  
 Did you not hear the thunder roar?  
 See! see! the vivid lightnings play  
 And the dark cloud deforms the day:  
 Now too there comes the whistling breeze,  
 And sweeps the rudely swelling seas,  
 Fills with one blast the sail so full,  
 Wife, mother, daughter, help to pull.  
 Now sailors, if it seems to blow,  
 For safety let the canvas go,  
 But women, not like passive men,  
 In vengeance always pull again.  
 Besides, as each her strength applied,  
 Each crouded on the leeward side;  
 And though a lady's like a feather,  
 E'en feathers weigh when heap'd together.  
 Fierce blows the whirlwind, and of course  
 The ladies double all their force;  
 Each pulls and strains, and tugs and strives,  
 Like people pulling for their lives;  
 John, honest landsman, simply lets them,  
 Fear lends them strength, and oversets them  
 Fain would I urge the frightened Muse  
 To paint the scene which next ensues—

To tell how Ruffman rous'd from sleep,  
 Fell headlong down amid the deep ;  
 Then mounting, ey'd the distant shore,  
 How Nancy sunk to rise no more—  
 But ah ! we'll leave it quite alone,  
 'Twould break methinks a heart of stone.  
 —Plung'd in the deep, half lost in death,  
 Struggling and panting hard for breath ;



John thought to struggle now no more,  
 When his hand lights upon an oar ;  
 His chin uplifted o'er the wave,  
 He thus escapes a watery grave ;  
 Saves, scarcely saves his wretched life—  
 Bereft of mother, daughter, wife !  
 Thus dearly for his fault he pays,  
 Henceforth a mourner all his days.

Here ends the tale—My friends arise  
 And wipe, I pray, your weeping eyes ;  
 My fable did you think it true ?  
 Was fram'd, in fact, to picture you ;  
 So next I'll preach to all the nation ;  
 And first, ye Sons of Innovation !  
 When Britons, wearied with their lot,  
 Grow wild to get they know not what,  
 And quit, through love of Revolution,  
 Our good old English Constitution ;  
 When Frenchmen lead the mazy dance,  
 And Britons ape fantastic France ;  
 Methinks, like Johnny once so brave,  
 They're leaving land to try the wave :  
 They're quitting ancient house and home,  
 Mid the wild winds and seas to roam.

When cobblers meet in grand debate,  
 And little folks feel vastly great ;  
 When each, forsooth, would quit his station,  
 And Jack and Will would rule the nation,  
 Methinks we're then in evil case—

Here's Johnny perch'd in Ruffinan's place

When women too make free to mix,  
 And try their hand in politics,  
 Set England right while drinking tea,  
 And shew how all things ought to be ;  
 Reprove, pass sentence, or acquit,  
 And talk as grand as Fox or Pitt :  
 Such ladies never mend my hopes—  
 Here's Nancy handling all the ropes.

When Parker rules as grand dictator,  
 And each Jack tar's a legislator ;  
 When seamen sit like kings in state,  
 While lords come down and captains wait :  
 Again I say, 'tis just the case,  
 Of Johnny perch'd in Ruffinan's place.  
 Help ! Britons, help ! we sink, we drown !  
 They've turn'd our vessel upside down.

When some raw lad, with jockey face,  
 Has gain'd five thousand at a race,  
 And flush'd with joy, resolves to stand,  
 For some vile borough, purse in hand ;  
 Rains ribbons round him, half for fun,  
 At once bids all the barrels run,  
 Drinks his poor dull opponent down,  
 And at one onset storms the town ;  
 Then pays with honor half his debts,  
 And off he flies to mind his bets ;  
 Loses at next Newmarket stand,  
 Stocks, money, horses, house, and land,  
 With jockey speed runs up to town  
 Votes some great question, and runs down ;  
 Grows now a red-hot party prater,  
 And calls himself a legislator.

—Why this, I'd tell him to his face,  
 Is Johnny perch'd in Ruffinan's place.

When college youths, well vers'd in vice,  
 Turn all so reverend in a trice,  
 From deacon duly rise to priest,  
 Then run to play, to ball, to feast,

Give their poor flocks no christian light,  
While Paine must set our morals right:  
Indeed, indeed, it makes me fret,  
For then the church is overset;  
But should these heads some pulpit grace,  
Why then 'tis John in Ruffman's place.

When hair-brain'd quacks, without degree,  
Presume to take the doctors fee;  
Cure all disorders every day,  
In some plain, easy, simple way;  
Colds and catarrhs, all aching pain,  
Consumption, fever in the brain;  
All nervous maladies to boot,  
With some soft syrup or new root,  
—Oh! dunces, tell them not your case,  
'Tis Johnny perch'd in Ruffman's place.

When men of rank and talents rare,  
Make some fine stud their only care,  
Though form'd to rule and guide the land,  
Love better guiding four in hand,  
Pass in the stable half their lives,  
Are more with Will than with their wives;  
Or when my lady quite descends,  
And turns her servants into friends,  
Of all her equals seems afraid,  
And whispers secrets to her maid:  
With Betty dwells on this and that,  
And dearly loves some kitchen chat.—  
—When servants too get much too smart,  
And each must act the master's part;  
Just like their master when they dine,  
Sit long, eat venison, and drink wine;  
When footmen get above their plac,  
And butler's shew their lordly face;  
When Betty too disdains her pattens,  
And flaunts about in silks and satins.  
Or should she find the fasion varies,  
Then follow all the new vagaries,  
Adopts at once my lady's taste,  
And scarce can bear a inch of waist;  
Has ear-rings, just the self same pair,  
Binds the same turban round her hair;  
Apes in each part my lady quite,  
And trips in muslins just as white:

When such, alas! is all the case,  
'Tis Johnny got in Ruffman's place.

Again, when wives haae got victorious,  
And the poor husband sneaks inglorious;  
When John is gentle, Jenny coarse,  
And the gray mares the better horse;  
Or when you children have your ways,  
And strange to tell, papa obeys!  
When things are manag'd all so ill  
That little Tommy says, "I will;"  
Or lastly, let me tell you when—

When men turn women, women men,  
Men hate of all things to be rash,  
And womén, meek-eyed women, dash,  
Men down their forehead draw their looks,  
And women shew their color'd clocks,  
Discard their shame forget, their sex,  
And chuse to open all their necks;  
When such again is all the case,  
'Tis Johnny got in Ruffman's place.

Oh! would ye stop the nation's fall,  
Then every cobbler mind your awl:  
You labouring lads push home your spade;  
Ye trading Johnnies mind your trade:  
Ye seamen fight and don't debate;  
Watch stateman well the helm of state;  
Ye clergy mind your awful part,  
'Tis yours to turn the nation's heart,  
Keep parents to the good old way,  
And make your children all obey  
Claim not ye wives the chief command,  
Keep back ye Nancies of the land,  
Let women ne'er be over ready,  
You'll trim the boat by sitting steady,  
Instructed thus by Johnny's case,  
Let every Briton mind his place.

FINIS.