


***DAVID
ROBERTS***



***THE MILITARY
ADVENTURES
OF JOHNNY
NEWCOME***

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ADVENTURES
OF JOHNNY
NEWCOME***

David Roberts

The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome

**With an Account of his Campaign on the Peninsula
and in Pall Mall**

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**THE MILITARY ADVENTURES
OF
JOHNNY NEWCOME**

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ON Ludgate Hill, a traveller may see
John *Newcome*, Grocer, No. Fifty-three;
Now, sober reader, don't turn up your nose,
But profit by the truths I shall disclose.
The *Newcome* family, you may believe,
Straitways descended from good Madam Eve;
Adam, a *Newcome*, when in Paradise,
The wily serpent did Dame Eve entice
To touch forbidden fruit; and to his shame,
Poor Adam *Newcome* slyly did the same:
For this, from Paradise they soon were hurl'd,
And thus Cain *Newcome* came into the World.
'Twould be an endless job were I to trace
All the descendants of the *Newcome* race:
Let it suffice that I curtail my rhymes,
To scenes connected with the present Times.
Widely extended is the *Newcome* Name,
Some scoff'd for Folly, some renown'd for Fame;
Did we in Foreign Courts but look askance,
We find they've play'd the very Devil in France.
Each in his turn assum'd the Sovereign Sway,
'Till Boney *Newcome* drove them all away;
Mighty in deeds, his Mighty power evinces,

And makes his tribes of *Newcomes* Kings and Princes.
Louis to Holland went with State Regalia,
And silly Jerome king'd it at Westphalia:
Poor foolish Joe went slily into Spain,
But Paddy *Newcome* whipt him out again.
Ah! Honey, that's a *Newcome*, if you please,
Makes Boney tremble in his Thuilleries.
His fame—but, let me onward with my story,
My humble rhymes would only mock his Glory.
In London *Newcomes* every where are seen,
Newcome's a Lord, a General, Knight or Dean—
Newcomes, where'er you go, you're sure to meet,
The Park, the Playhouse, or St. James's Street.
Amongst our Quality, you'll find a few,
And Carlton House has got its *Newcome* too.
At both the Universities you find 'em,
But in such numbers that they never mind 'em.
In all Professions, Lawyers, Fiddlers, Bards,
Lots in the Line, and many in the Guards.
This leads me to the subject of my story,
Tho' first I thought it right to lay before ye,
By way of preface, or of introduction,
Or, if you please, a smattering of instruction;
Go as you will, no matter when, or where,
You're sure to see a Johnny *Newcome* there.
Now this same Grocer was a man of weight,
Eat turtle soup, and talked of Church and State,—
For twenty years had bustled well through life,
Blest with one son by Doll his loving Wife:
The Youth, a lankey, awkward, shuffling Blade,

Bred by the old ones to pursue the Trade,
School'd by Mamma, who thought all learning stuff,
'Young John will have the Cash, and that's enough.'
By Martial ardour fired, John scorn'd to stop
And retail sugar in his father's Shop!
In spite of Daddy's wrath, and Mother's tears,
Strutted an Ensign in the Volunteers;
But the good souls were quickly reconcil'd
In admiration of their darling Child.
Old Johnny seem'd afraid he'd be too rash,
But Mother doated on the Sword, and Sash.
Soon Johnny grew ambitious of renown,
And sigh'd to flourish in some Country Town;
In some Militia Corps, at distant Quarters,
Act the Lothario with the Wives and Daughters.
Money, or Interest, never-failing friends,
Soon did the job, and Johnny gain'd his ends.
Translated then to a Militia Beau,
Dear, lively Captain *Newcome's* all the go!
Sports a gay Curricule and pair of Tits,
Damns smokey London, and the frowsy Cits;
With ardour talks of Marches, Camps, and Fight;
Such scenes as these would be his soul's delight.
At length, one day, his spirits flush'd with Wine,
Johnny resolved to go into the Line;
Writes to Mamma a coaxer to Petition
She'd make his Father buy him a Commission.
The doating Mother dwells with anxious pause,
Ere she could send her darling to the Wars.
But as she'd ne'er refused him what he wanted,

She paid the Cash, and his request was granted:
Soon now the Official letter made it known
That Ensign *Newcome*, Fourth of the King's Own,
Would on receipt immediately go,
And quick present himself at the Depôt.
What thrilling tumults in his bosom came
To see amongst the Regulars his name!
So dash'd away in wondrous haste and pother,
To take a flying leave of Dad and Mother.
A soldier bold, now Johnny vaunts and vapours,
Anticipates his name in London papers.
'From admiration we cannot refrain,
'The gallant Ensign *Newcome's* going to Spain;
'To shew our gratitude we don't dissemble,
'Heroes like him must make Massena tremble.'
Or, should a Battle ease him of his breath,
His Name's recorded in the list of Death;
The *Mortuum Caput* then they thus would fill,
'Died Ensign *Newcome*, late of Ludgate Hill—
'Of twenty wounds receiv'd in an attack,
'All in his front, he scorn'd to turn his back.
'This sad event will be a grievous blow, Sir,
'To Johnny *Newcome*, Alderman and Grocer.'¹
Young John was well aware to what extent
To purchase fame a golden guinea went;
At all the Shops where characters were sold,
He could be made a Hero for his gold;
A valiant Hero then at any rate,
Our John resolv'd to be or soon, or late.
An Order now arriv'd at the Depôt,

'That Ensign *Newcome* should to Hilsea go.'
Altho' John relish'd not these hasty ways,
He bolted off to Hilsea in a chaise;
And then a Note was handed to our Spark,
'That without loss of time he should embark.'
'Upon my soul,' says John, 'this is no jest,
'They won't allow a man a little rest.'
Boxes and trunks were cramm'd into a Boat,
And Johnny *Newcome* found himself afloat.
John star'd with wonder when he got on Board,
To see himself surrounded by the Flood.
The rapid movements so confused his head,
He knew not what he did, nor what he said;
Had not his appetite, which never fail'd him,
With certain griping, knawing hints assail'd him:
For John to certain forms was true, and steady,
So eager ask'd when dinner would be ready?
'Dinner² I'll warrant,' says a churlish Elf,
'If you want dinner, pray provide yourself;
'You'll get no dinner here, 'tis not the fashion,
'We only find you Cabin, Berth, and Ration!'
'Damme,' says John, 'is this your Transport way?
'What starve a body?—rot me if I stay!'
John's resolution now began to shake;
Did he for this his happy home forsake?
A brother Sub seeing Johnny so distrest,
Said, 'Come, Sir, let us council for the best;
'Money you have no doubt, and as 'tis fine
'Let us together go on shore to dine—
'Buy what we want, and send it to the Ship,

'Nor ask a favour of this Savage Rip.'
John liked the offer—shook him by the hand—
Jump'd in the Boat, and off they made for Land;
Din'd, drank their Bottle, and in merry glee
Purchas'd their Stock, and went next day to Sea.
But now friend John, when tossing on the Ocean,
Felt his poor bowels in a strange commotion;
Grew serious, then grew sick, and hung his head,
Reach'd, grunted, groan'd, and stagger'd to his bed;
A prey to sorrow, sickness, and dejection,
Restless he lay, imbitter'd with reflection—
Curs'd his own folly—had he but his will,
He'd sooner retail figs on Ludgate Hill.
Poor John thus lay, till by propitious blast,
The ready Anchor's in the Tagus cast.
Now motionless the Ship, the sickness flew,
His wondering eyes successive objects drew.
Saw the proud Tagus in smooth torrent Flow,
Greeting fair Lisbon, with its breast of Snow;
Saw Churches, Convents, o'er each other rise,
With stern devotion tow'ring to the Skies.
Our youthful Hero now we introduce,
Deck'd off in Uniform, and fiercely spruce,
With Hat of Wellington, stuck fore, and aft,
And crimson sash tied carelessly abaft.
Black Stock, Reg'mental Sword, and natty Spurs—
Without the latter there's no Hero stirs.
Spurs³ to a gallant youth are things of course,
To make folks fancy he has got a Horse;
But as in this, opinions may divide,