



**The Woman in Battle: A Narrative of the Exploits, Adventures, and Travels of Madame Loreta Janeta Valezquez, Otherwise Known as Lieutenant Harry T. Buford, Confederate States Army .. (1876)**

*Loreta Janeta Velazquez*

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If I expected by this story of my adventures to achieve any literary reputation, I might be disposed, on account of its many faults of style, to ask the indulgence of those who will do me the honor to undertake its perusal. As, however, I only attempted authorship because I had, as others assured me, and as I myself believed, something to tell that was worth telling, I have been more concerned about the matter than the manner of my book, and I hope that the narrative will prove of sufficient interest to compensate for a lack of literary elegance in setting forth. Mine has been a life too busily occupied in other matters for me to cultivate the graces of authorship; and the best I can hope to do is to relate my story with simplicity and truth, and then let it find its fate, whether it be praise or condemnation.

The composition of this book has been a labor of love, and yet one of no ordinary difficulties. The loss of my notes has compelled me to rely entirely upon my memory; and memory is apt to be very treacherous, especially when, after a number of years, one endeavors to relate in their proper sequence a long series of complicated transactions. Besides, I have been compelled to write hurriedly, and in the intervals of pressing business, the necessities I have been under of earning my daily bread being such as could not be disregarded, even for the purpose of winning the laurels of authorship. To speak plainly, however, I care little for laurels of any kind just now, and am much more anxious for the money that I hope this book will bring in to me than I am for the praises of either critics or public. The money I want badly, while praise, although it will not be ungratifying, I am sufficiently philosophical to get along very comfortably without.

I do not know what the good people who will read this book will think of me. My career has differed materially from that of most women; and some things that I have done have shocked persons for whom I have every respect, however much my ideas of propriety may differ from theirs. I can only say, however, that in my opinion there was nothing essentially improper in my putting on the uniform of a Confederate officer for the purpose of taking an active part in the war; and, as when on the field of battle, in camp, and during long and toilsome marches, I endeavored, not without success, to display a courage and fortitude not inferior to the most courageous of the men around me, and as I never did aught to disgrace the uniform I wore, but, on the contrary, won the hearty commendation of my comrades, I feel that I have nothing to be ashamed of. Had I believed that my book needed any apologies on this score, it would never have been written; and, having written it, I am willing to submit my conduct to the judgment of the public, with a confidence that I will at least receive due credit for the motives by which I was animated.

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