

**SOUTH SEA  
SKETCHES:  
A NARRATIVE**

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South Sea Sketches: A Narrative by Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren

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**MADELEINE VINTON DAHLGREN**

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SKETCHES:  
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# SOUTH SEA SKETCHES

*A NARRATIVE*

BY

MRS. MADELEINE VINTON DAHLGREN



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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS narrative of South Sea life gives an accurate account of the incidents of a residence in South America, and of the observations made by the writer, of the countries she visited.

The Sketches were originally written in epistolary form, and were addressed by the author to her elder children, who had remained in the United States, while she accompanied her husband, Admiral Dahlgren, when he was in command of the South Pacific squadron. The present tense was used because it was desired to give a vivid and graphic description of all that transpired.

These Sketches are now published for the first time under cover, and in book form.

The writer has been repeatedly assured, by those who know, that they present an entirely correct view of the social life—of men and manners—of the countries described, as well as of the grand

scenery and remarkable natural features of this portion of the world.

The first aim of the author was to be positively accurate.

Her stay in Lima was especially interesting, owing to the great social advantages she enjoyed in this quaint old city, which has always been exclusively rigorous against admitting the *estranjero* to its society; but a combination of circumstances gave her very unusual privileges.

Since these Sketches were written, war has devastated unhappy Peru, and for the moment this unfortunate nation would seem to be on the verge of annihilation.

If, indeed, such a catastrophe should occur as an actual loss of autonomy, these Sketches would still remain as a true picture of Peru before her disintegration, and would serve as a pendant, or companion picture, to those Marmontel has given us of the "Last Days of the Incas."

The enervating air of this unfortunate country must always render its conquest possible by a nation like Chili, which is invigorated by more favored climatic influences.

M. V. D.



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## SOUTH SEA SKETCHES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### FIRST SEA VOYAGE.

ON the 1st day of June, 1867, about one o'clock, the California mail steamer "Ocean Queen" leaves her wharf at New York and steams down the harbor. It is nearly three o'clock when we pass Sandy Hook and are out on the blue ocean. The ship is terribly crowded, said to have one thousand souls on board; but we are comfortably provided for.

Late on the 5th, Watling's Island is to be seen, dimly enough, by the fading light of day and in the gray mist of the watery clouds. Cool weather has gone, for the air was pleasantly refreshing when we left New York. The next evening the high land of Cuba is in sight, and soon after dark we are passing the bright light off Cape Maira. These steamers run with great certainty and make the land just