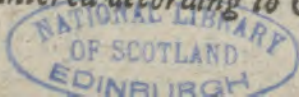


THE
Witty and Entertaining
EXPLOITS
OF
George Buchanan,
COMMONLY CALLED,
The King's Fool.



Entered according to Order.



THE
Witty Exploits

OF

Mr. GEORGE BUCHANAN.

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MR. GEORGE BUCHANAN was a Scotsman born, and though of mean parentage, made great progress in learning: As for his understanding and ready-wit, he exceeded all men then alive in that age, that ever proposed questions to him. He was servant or teacher to King James VI. of Scotland, and one of his privy counselors, but acted publicly as his fool.

I. ONE day an airy young nobleman went into the King's garden to pull a flower for a young lady whom he fancied: George followed at a distance; so, when the young man found a flower to his pleasure, he would not pull it himself, but that he might find it again, without any further searching, he covered it with his hat, and went away for his sweetheart. No sooner was he gone, but up goes George, lifts his hat, pulls the flower, then eases himself on the spot, and covers it with the hat again, and away he goes. In comes the young man, leading his sweetheart to pull the flower below the

hat; but as soon as he lifted the hat, and saw what was below it, he looked like a fool. The Lady flew in a passion, off she went, and never would countenance him any more. The young man, being sadly vexed at the affront done to him by George, sent him a challenge to fight him, appointing day and place where they were to meet. Being to fight on horseback, George gets an old stiff horse, and for harnessing, covers him about with blown bladders, with a small stone in each, without either sword or spear; and away to the field he goes, where the duel was appointed.— So, when George saw his enemy coming against him, all in glittering armour, armed with sword and spear, he rode up to him with all the speed his horse could carry him, when the small stones in the bladders, with which his horse was all covered over, made such a terrible noise, that the gentleman's fine gelding would not stand the battle, but ran away, and threw his master to the ground; which caused all the spectators to laugh, and say, the gentleman was more fool than George. The gentleman, then, being enraged at this second affront, would fight with George on foot; but his friends persuaded him, that it would be no honour for him to fight and kill the King's fool, and far less to be killed by the fool: So they were both advised to agree; but the

gentleman would try another exploit with George, for to have it said he was still the cleverest man, to hold him a jumping-beut publicly the next day. With all my heart, says George, and we will end in and about where we began; they not knowing his meaning in this. The place and hour being set, where they were to meet next morning, George, in the night, caused a deep pit to be made, and the earth of it carried away; then filled it up with dung from a privy, and covered it over with a green turf, so that it might not be known by the surrounding ground. According to promise, they both met in the morning against the appointed time: Now George being the oldest man, and by them counted the greatest fool, the young man permitted him to jump first, which he according to order performed, and jumpet within a foot of the place where the ground was falsified. Then, the young man seeing this, made his performance with the greatest airs, and all his might, so that he jumped a foot farther than George, but to his oxters among clean dung! Whereat the whole multitude of spectators cried out with huzzas and laughter. Now, says George, I told you we would end in and about where we began, and that is in clean dirt.

2. One time, after this, the King and his Court was going into the country, and they would have George to ride before them in the fool's dress; whereunto he seemed unwilling, but it being the King's pleasure, he was obliged to submit. So George was mounted upon an old horse, with a pair of old riven boots, the heels hanging down, and a palmer coat patched all over with pictures of divers kinds. — George rode before them in this posture, which caused great laughter and diversion, until they came to an inn, where they alighted to dine; and in the time they were at dinner, George went into the stables, and with a knife cut all their horse's chasts, not fore, but so as they might bleed. So, as soon as dinner was over, and they were mounted on their horses again, George riding before them as usual, in his palmer coat and old boots, they began to make their game of him: Then George turned about suddenly, clapping his hands, with a loud laughter! The King asked him, what made him laugh so? Laugh, says George, how can I but laugh, when horses cannot hold their peace? O my Sovereign, says he, don't you see how your horses have all rent their chasts laughing at my old boots? Then every man looking at his horse's mouth, they were all in a rage against George. The King caused him to

dismount directly, and charged him never to let him see his face on English ground. Now George knowing that nothing could reconcile the King at this time, he came to Scotland, where he caused make him a pair of great boots, and put a quantity of Scottish earth in each of them, and off he sets for London, to see the King once more. He hearing that the King and his Court were to pass through a country village, George places himself in an old window, and sets out his bare backside to the King and his Court as they passed by. The King, being greatly amazed to see such an unusual honour done to him, was curious to know the performer; so he called unto him, asking him to come down; and finding it to be George, Sir, says the King, did not I charge you never to let me see your face again? True, my Sovereign, says George, for which cause I let you see my a—se. Ay but, says the King, you was never to come on English ground again. Neither I did, says George, pulling off his boots before the King, behold, my Sovereign, it is all Scots earth I stand upon! The King and his Court being so diverted with this merry joke, George was admitted again to the King's favour.

3. After this, there arose a debate betwixt the King and the Queen about votes in the Parliament; as the King had two votes,

the Queen would have one, and would needs be a Parliamenter, or no peace without the preferment. This matter was submitted to George by the King; so it was agreed among the Parliamenters that the Queen should be admitted into Parliament for a day: And accordingly she came, and was received with all the honour and congratulations which were due and becoming her high station: But before any matter of consequence was brought to the board, George seated himself hard by the Queen's seat; all being silent, he rose up very quickly, and lifted up one of his legs; and then gave a great f—t! which set the whole house a-laughing; whereat the Queen was greatly offended, crying, Go take the rogue and hang him. To which George answered, A fine Parliamenter indeed, to hang a man for a sinless infirmity, and that's a f—t. The Queen being so much enraged at this affront put on her first appearance in Parliament, went off in a passion, and never would countenance them any more. But yet to be revenged on George, she would never give the King rest till he delivered up George into her hands, to be at her pleasure; which the King accordingly commanded to be done, knowing that George would rescue himself by some intrigue or other. No sooner was he delivered into her hands, to be at her disposal; but he was judged by

her Maries, who pronounced his doom, which was as follows: As he had affronted the Queen among so great an equipage, who ought to be honoured in chief, and above all women in the nation, that he should be stoned to death by the hands of women. Now, his time being come, that he was to die, according to their appoint, he was taken into a park, where a great number of woman was waiting, with their aprons full of stones, to fall upon him, and put him to death, according to the Queen's appointment.

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His Speech to his Executioners.

Here's a female band, with bags of stones,
To kill a man for rumples groans.
I'm clean of rapine, blood and thefts,
Could I convert my farts to rifts?
Since I the first for farting die,
Close up the place from whence they fly;
To commit my crime, I think ye'll scarce,
If once you do cork up your arse.
And now since women stones do carry,
Men need not in the world tarry.
Judge if such women be chaste complete,
With forty stones between their feet.
But since 'tis so, ye will come on,
The greatest whore throw the first stone.

When he had ended with these words, "The greatest whore throw the first stone," every one put it to another to cast the first stone; but knowing they would attain the character of a whore for so doing, they all refused, till the dying hour was past, and then he took a protest against them, and by that means gained his life. After this, he was admitted to the Queen's favour and presence, attending the Court as formerly.

4. THE French King, wishing to pick a quarrel with England, sent a letter to the King, desiring it to be read before the Parliament: The writing was as follows, Will I come? Will I come? Will I come? This letter being read before the King and his Courtiers, they all concluded that the French King designed to invade England. Therefore they wrote a letter, on purpose to send th him again, upbraiding him with the breach of peace, and putting him in mind of the last treaty. This letter being read over before the King and his Nobles, they all condescended that it should be sent as an answer. But George, smiling, and shaking his head, said,

Many men, many minds;

Who knows what he designs?

Then they asked George, what he thought the French King meant by such a letter? To which he answered: I suppose he wants an invitation to come over to dinner, and then go back in a friendly manner; but you are going to charge him with a breach of peace, before he has given a signal of war. His letter is indeed dark and myllical, but send him an answer accordingly. Now, George being ordered to write an answer, he did so as follows: "And ye come, And ye come, And ye come." This being sent to the French King, he admired it beyond expression, saying, It was an answer more valiant and daring than he expected. — So the enmity he intended was extinguished, and turned into love.

5. It happened, that a malignant party in Scotland sent up a great spokesman to the King and Parliament, for the seducing of the Church: George hearing of his coming, went and met him on the bridge; and the salutation that he gave him, was the cutting off his head, and throwing it over the bridge! Then he run to the King with all his might, falling down before him, and pleading most heartily for a pardon, or without it he was a dead man. The King most seriously asked George, what he had done now? To which he answered, He had only thrown the Scots bishop's hat

over the bridge. Which made the King to laugh, to hear him ask pardon for such a small fault. But he had no sooner got the pardon sealed by the King's hand, than he said, Indeed, my Sovereign, I threw his hat over the bridge, but his head was in it. O Geordy, Geordy! says the King, thou wilt never give over till thou be hanged.

6. A Nobleman in England agreed with the King, how to put a trick upon George, to try his manly courage, in sending him to a certain house for a bag of money.— On his way home thro' St. James's Park, they caused a sturdy fellow to go and beset the way upon him, and take the money: he being armed with sword and pistol, came up briskly, and attacked George with these words, You, Sir, deliver what money you have, or you are a dead man! To which George answered, Sir, I have money indeed, but 'tis not my own, and therefore I'm loath to part with it; nevertheless, since I'm not armed as you are, to exchange blows for it, you shall have it; but pray, do me the favour as to fire your pistol thro' the flap of my cloak, that the owners may see I have been in danger of my life before I parted with the money, which he accordingly performed. No sooner had he fired it, than George whips out his hanger from below his cloak, and with one stroke

cut off his right hand, wherein he held his sword, and the hand fell to the ground; but George lifted his hand, and carried it to the King. No sooner did he come before them, but they asked him, saying, Well, George, did you meet with any body to trouble you by the way? None, said he, but one fellow, who was going to take the money from me; but I made him give me his hand he would not do the like again. You did, says the fellow's master: Yes I did, says George, let work bear witness, throwing down the fellow's hand on the table before them all.

7. Now this last exploit of George's, caused many of the English to hate him; and, among the rest, a young nobleman fell a-joking of George, saying, he would be as famous a champion for Scotland as ever Sir William Wallace was. Ay, ay, says George, William Wallace was a brave man in his time. True, indeed, says the other, but when he came to London, we did him all manner of justice, and for the honour of the Scots, we have his effigy in our shit-houses to this very day. Do you not know the reason of that, says George? No, I don't, says he: Well, I'll tell you, says George, He was such a terror to the Englishmen when he was alive, that a sight of him: yet makes them bespite themselves.

The English took this answer as a great affront, and forthwith caused Wallace's picture to be taken out of that place.

8. THERE was a young English girl fell in love with a Scotsman, and petitioned him several times to marry her, but he refused; and out of revenge thereof, she went to a Justice, and swore a rape against him, which is death by the law. George hearing this, went into the prison where the young man was, and instructed him how to behave before the Judge. So in the time of the trial, George came in, while the Judge was crying to the man, but never a word he could get him to answer, to tell whether he was guilty or not. After the Justice had given him over to be deaf and dumb, others fell a-shouting in his ears, but never a word he could speak. Then the Judge perceiving George, called him, saying, George, do you know what is the matter with this man? Yes I do, very well, says George. What is it? says the Judge. Why, says George, the woman made such a noise and crying when he was ravishing her, it has put the poor man quite deaf, I assure you. Is it so? says the Justice. No, no, says the woman, my Lord Justice, you may believe me, I lay as mute as a lamb, and never spoke a word all the time. Very well confessed, said the Justice, and you

have sworn a rape upon him! Take the whore to prison, and let the poor man go about his business, and so it is ended.

9. GEORGE happened one time to be in company with a bishop, when they fell to dispute about education. George blailed the bishop remarkably, and he owned he was worsted. Then one of the company addressed himself to George in these words, Thou Scot, said he, should not have left thy country. For what? says George. Because thou hast carried all the wisdom that is in it thither with thee. No, no, says George, the shepherds in Scotland will dispute with any bishop in London, and exceed them very far in education. The bishops then took this as an affront, but several noblemen affirmed it to be as the Scot had said. Bates were laid thereon, and three of the bishops were then chosen, and sent away to Scotland, to dispute with the shepherds, accompanied with several others, who were to bear witness of what they heard between them. Now, George observing the way they went, immediately took another road, and was in Scotland before them. He then made acquaintance with a shepherd on the border, whose pasture lay by the way-side where the bishops were to pass; and there he mounted himself in a shepherd's dress: and when he saw the

bishops appear, he conveyed his flock to the road-side, and fell a-chanting at a Latin ballad. One of the bishops, to raise a dispute, asked George in French, What o'clock it was? To which George answered in Hebrew, It is directly about the time of the day it was yesterday at this time.— Another asked him in Greek, What country-man he was? To which he answered in Flemish, If you knew that, you would be as wise as myself. The third asked him in Dutch, Where was you educated? To which he answered in Earse, Herding my sheep, between this place and Lochaber.— This they desired him to explain in English, which he immediately did. Now, said they, one to another, We need not proceed any further. What, says George, are you butchers? I'll sell you a few sheep. To this they made no answer, but went away shamefully, and said, they believed the Scots had been through all the nations in the world for their education, or the devil had taught them. After that George had ended the dispute with the bishops, he strips off his shepherd's dress, and up through England with all the haste imaginable, so that he arrived at the place from whence they set out, three days before them, and went every day enquiring if they were come, so that he might not be suspected. Now, upon their arrival, all that were concerned in

the matter, and many more, came crowding to hear the news of the Scottish shepherds. No sooner had the three gentlemen declared what had pass between the bishops and the shepherds, whom they found on the Scots border, but the old bishop made answer: And do you think, that a shepherd could answer questions so readily? It has been none else but the devil; for the Scots ministers could not do it, they are but ignorant of such matters, a parcel of beardless boys. Then George thought it was high time to take speech in hand. Well, my Lord Bishop, says George, you call the Scots ministers a parcel of ignorant beardless boy; you have a great long beard yourself, my Lord Bishop, and if grace were measured by beards, you Bishops and the goats will have it all, and that will be quite averse to Scripture. What, says the Bishop, are you a Scot? Yes, says George, I am. Well, says the Bishop, and what is the difference between a Scot and a Sot?—Nothing at present, says George, but the breadth of the table, (there being a table betwixt the Bishop and George). So the Bishop went off in a high passion, while the whole company were like to split their jaws with laughter.

10. THERE was once an Act of Parliament in Scotland, for the benefit of mur-

derers, by which any person who committed murder, if they forfeited five hundred merks, which went under the name of **KINBOOT**, because so much of this fine went to the murdered person's nearest relations, as the price of blood, the murderer got a remit. Now, George knowing this to be contrary to Moses's laws, was very much grieved to see so many pardons sealed with the King's hand for murder, almost one every week; it being so usual for the King to subscribe them, that he would not read them, nor enquire what they were: For which cause George writes a right to the crown, and sent it in to the King to be subscribed; which he actually did, and, never looking what it was, returned it to George. No sooner had George received it, but he goes to the King, and told him that it was not proper for him now to be sitting there. Whereat the King, greatly amazed, started up! Then George, in a great haste, set himself down in the King's chair, and declared himself King, saying, You who was King, must be my fool, for I am now the wisest man. The King at this was greatly offended, until George shewed him his seal and superscription; but, from that day forth, the King took care what he subscribed. — The next pardon that came to be sealed by the King, was to a gentleman who had killed two men before, and

Had gotten pardons for them by money. This being the third, the King appeared very serious when looking over the petition. George standing by, asked his Majesty what he was going to seal now? To which he answered, It is a remit for a man who has killed three men at sundry times; I gave him two remits before. O, says George, he has killed but one man. And who killed the other two? says the King. You did, says George; for if you had given him justice when he killed the first, he would have killed no more. When the King heard these words, he threw down the pen, and declared that such an act, to save a murderer, should be null ever after.

11. ONE day George being in want of money, gets a pick and a spade, and falls a-digging at a corner of the King's palace; which the King perceiving from his window, call'd out, What are you wanting there? Are you going to undermine my house, and make it fall? No, my Sovereign, said George; but it is verily reported that there is plenty of money about this house, and I intend to dig for it: I cannot find any within the house, then surely it must be below it. O George, said the King, that is a crave after the new fashion: What money you want I'll order it for you. — O then, my Sovereign, says George, I'll dig no more.

12. ON a time the French King desired the King of Scotland to send him three men of different qualities; the first was to be a mighty strong man; the second, a very wise man; and the third a great fool: So that there might be none in all France to match them. Accordingly there were two men chosen, the one a strong man, and the other a wise man, but George was to act the fool; nevertheless he was the teacher of the other two. So out they set for France, and on the way, George asked the strong man, What will you answer the French King, if he ask if you be a strong man? Why, I'll say I am. But, says George, he may get a stronger man than you, who may kill you, and affront your country. What shall I say then? said the strong man. Why, says George, tell him you are strong enough untried. Then says George to the wise man, And what will you say to the King, when he asks if you are a wise man? Why, says he, I'll tell him I am, and answer all the questions I know. Very well, says George, and what if he ask you what you do not know? Then you'll affront your country, and be looked upon as a greater fool than me. What shall I answer then? said the wise man. Why, says George, tell him, He is only a wise man that can take care of himself; and I shall come in after you, and take care of you altogether. As soon

as they arrived in France, the King sent for them to come to his palace, that he might try their abilities. The strong man was first called for, and in he went. Then the King asked him if he was a strong man? To which he answered, O King, I am strong enough untried. Very well, said the King. After him the wise man was called in; and the King asked him, if he was a wise man? To which he answered, He is only a wise man that can take care of himself. Very well, says the King. On which George pushed pushed up the door, and in he went with loud laughter, and pisses directly in his Majesty's face, which blinded both his eyes, and set the whole Court in amaze! Now, now, said the King, it is true enough what the wise man said; for if I had taken care of myself, I would not have been pissed upon by the Scots fool. O ho! says George, fools always strive to make fools of others; but wise men make fools of themselves.—The King being greatly affronted by this, charged them forthwith to go home, for he wanted no more of Scotland's strength, wisdom or folly.

13. GEORGE being one night in company with some English noblemen, in presence of the King, who began to demonstrate how fine a place England was, both for beautiful buildings and fruitful fields. One of the

company said, he knew a place in it, where, if they cropped the grass even with the ground at night, and laid down a Crown piece on it, before a hundred witnesses, the next morning you would not know where to find it. That may seem very strange some, says George, but it is no mystery to me, knowing there might be some who saw the piece laid down, ready enough to come and take it up before to-morrow: But, says George, I know a place in the west of Scotland, where, if you would tether a horse at night, against the next morning you would not see him. What a pox will take him away? says the nobleman. Only such people, says George, as would take away your crown piece. O! says the nobleman, you know what I mean.

14. THEN, says George. you talk much of towns you have in your country; I know three towns in poor Scotland, for properties you have none such. Pray, says the nobleman, what are these properties? Why, says George, I know one town, where there is a hundred bone-bridges in it; another town, where, tho' a man commit murder, treason, or owes never so much money, if he run to that town, and get in below a stair, no law nor justice can harm him. The nobleman offered immediately to stake a hundred pounds there were no such towns in all

Europe, besides in Scotland. The whole company were amazed, and desired George to tell but the names of those towns, for they would search it out, and know the truth of what he asserted. So George told them the names of the towns, and two men were sent off to Scotland to see them.— The first was Duddingstone, near Edinburgh, where they came and enquired for the bone-bridges there; the people shewed them steps almost between every door and the road, of the skulls of sheep-heads, which they used as stepping stones. The second was a little country village between Stirling and Perth, called Auchterardoch, where there is a large strand runs through the middle of the town, and almost at every door there is a long stock or stone laid over the strand, whereupon they pass to their opposite neighbours; and when a flood came, they would lift their wooden bridges, in case they should be carried away with the stream, and these they called their draw-bridges. The third was a village near Cambusbarron, which they passed through; but saw not a stair in it all, from the one end to the other.— So they returned to England, and told what manner of bone and draw-bridges they saw, and that they saw no stair in all that town, for a man to run under.

15. As George was on the road travelling to London, the weather being very rainy and cold, he alighted at an inn to refresh and warm himself, but the fire-side was so surrounded with people, he could scarce see the fire: George finding he could not get near the fire, calls for the hostler, and orders him to give his horse at the door half a peck of oysters. You mean oats, Sir, says the hostler. No, no, says George, it is oysters; and base is that horse that will not eat oysters. The people at the fire hearing this, started all up, and ran to the door to see the horse eating oysters, and George thereby got room to sit down before the fire, with a covered table before him. In a little time they all came back again, one by one, saying, Sir, your horse will eat no oysters. Will he not! says George; he is either too full, or too saucy: You may bring them in, and I will eat them myself.

Now, George being far advanced in years, and finding his natural strength and state of health daily decaying, he petitioned King James to allow him to visit his friends in Scotland, and the land of his nativity, which he most willingly granted (not thinking his design was never to return): For George had a great desire to resign his soul and breath in that place of the world where he received them, and that his body and bones

might be laid among his ancestors, which, at that time, was counted a great honour. So, accordingly, George came to the parish of Buchanan, in the West of Scotland; where he visited all his friends and relations before his death: During which time the King sent several messages for him to return with all the haste he could; but he absolutely refused, telling him, that he would never see him again; which grieved the king very much to hear him express himself in that manner. After this, the King sent him a letter, threatening him very sharply, if he did not appear in London in the space of twenty days, he would send his lyon heralds, with a party, who would bring him whether he would or not. Unto which, as an answer, George sent him a famous letter of admonition, both anent the government of his kingdoms, and the well-being of his soul, which caused the king weep very bitterly, when he read it over; which concluded with the following verse:

My honour'd liege and sovereign King;
 Of your boasting great I dread nothing;
 On your feud & favour I'll fairly venture:
 Or that day I'll be where few kings enter.

F I N I S.