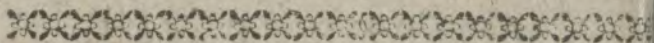


THE  
MERRY FROLICS;  
OR, THE COMICAL CHEATS OF  
SWALPO,  
A NOTORIOUS PICK POCKET:  
AND THE MERRY PRANKS OF  
JACK *the* CLOWN.



Stirling, Printed this present Year.



THE  
 MERRY FROLICS,  
 OR, THE  
 COMICAL CHEATS OF SWALPO.

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CHAP. I.

**S**WALPO dressed himself like a country man, with a pair of dirty boots, and a whip in his hand, and going into Bartholomew fair, met with no prize worth speaking of, he walked out of the fair. At the entrance into the fair he met a countryman and said to him, "Honest friend, have a care of your pockets; you are going into a cursed place, where there are none but rogues, whores, and pickpockets; I am almost ruined by them, and am glad they have not picked the teeth out of my head; Let one take never so much care of their pockets they'll be sure of the money; I am sure the Devil helps them." "I defy all the devils in hell, says the countryman, to rob me of any thing."

thing of value. I have a broad piece, and that I'll secure. So clapping it into his mouth, he went confidently into the fair.

Swalpo desired no more than to know if he had money, and where it lay. He gives a sign to a hopeful boy of his, and giving him out some sixpences and groats, told him what he should do. The boy immediately runs, and falls down just before the countryman, and scattering the money, starts up and roars like a bedlamite, crying he was undone, he must run away from his apprenticeship; his master was such a furious fellow, he would certainly kill him. The countryman with other people gathered about, helping the boy to take the money. One of them says, have you recovered all? Yes, all the silver, says the boy, but what does that signify? There is a broad piece of gold that I was carrying to my master for a token sent him from the country, and I, like a fool, must come through this unlucky place to lose it: I shall be killed. What shall become of me?

Swalpo coming up, tells some of the bystanders, who were pitying of the boy, that he observed that country fellow there to stoop, and put something into his mouth. Whereupon they flew upon him, and one of them wresting open his mouth, made him

him spit out the gold, and some blood along with it. When the countryman endeavoured to speak for himself, they kicked him, punched him, and tossed him about, and some calling to the privy and pump, he was glad to call for mercy, and thought himself richer than the Great Turk when he got out of their clutches. The boy, in the meantime, slips from the croud, and goes to Swalpo with the gold, where he used to find him.

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CHAP. II.

**S**WALPO and his boy changing clothes, and going into the crowd, heard some talking of the country fellow, how he had got into a house, and had sent for some responsible people that knew him and his master, a knight of vast estate in the north, who was come to town upon great business with some Merchants. Swalpo knew the Gentleman and his estate very well, and, by what he heard, expecting to see him at the Exchange, went immediately thither, and picked his pocket of a great many guineas, having left the Gentleman none but one to pay for his dinner or other charges, until he should receive a recruit.

The knight going to the tavern, laughed heartily, when his tenant came and told him  
how

how he had been served at the fair; but calling for the reckoning, and telling the company that he was robbed too, it was comical to see how the countryman laughed. Zooks *Sir*, (says he) let us make our escape from this roguish place, for I am afraid that they will steal our small guts to make fiddle strings.

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CHAP. III.

**T**HE Gentleman lining his pockets a second time with gold, went next day to the Exchange, and notwithstanding all the care he took, he was robbed again. But Swalpo being not an ordinary rogue, and having something of a generous principle in him, would not take all, but always left him some little money. The knight wondered how it was possible for the wit of man to rob one that had been so well forwarned as he was. At last, looking hastily about, he perceived Swalpo standing beside him, and remembering that he had seen him near him several times before, he had a strong suspicion he was the man, and coming to him, took hold of his buttons, and told him that he had good ground to think that he was the man that robbed him several times; but being a Gentleman of a great estate, his loss did not much trouble him; and if he would be  
so

so generous as to tell him by what means he had so served him. he would not only forgive him, but treat him well at a tavern, and help him to a better way of living, if he pleased, and his says he, I promise upon my word of honour.

Sir, says Swalpo, your word of honour is sufficient; I know the greatness of your estate, and where it lies: I am the man: I'll wait on your worship to the tavern, and there shew you some of my art more freely than I would do to my fellow rogues. As they walked towards the tavern, the Gentleman told him, he resolved to make a frolic of it, and to that end he would send for some Gentlemen of his acquaintance, and would take care he should come to no harm by any discovery he should make to them. I know that you are a Gentlemen, says Swalpo, and men of honour scorn to keep base company; call as many as you please, I'll take their words, and I know I am safe.

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CHAP. IV.

**W**HEN the gentry came, Swalpo told them a great many things to their admiration and satisfaction; and when he had pulled out the piece of gold, and told them how he had served Roger, the Gentleman's

man's tenant, he was immediately sent for to make up the frolic. When he came in, it was good sport to see how he scraped on the ground. His master, smiling, asked him of whom he learned to make such a handsome leg. O! Jowley my brown cow, sir, says Roger. What would you say, says the Gentleman, if you saw your gold again. Ah, says Roger, I would I could see it: but then, if my mouth can't keep it, where should I put it? Shud, I would rather see the rogue, I would then make a jelly of his bones. There he is, says the knight, and there is your broad piece. As Roger began to heave and jump, his master commanded him to take his gold and sit down by him. Roger seeing which way things went, drank to Swalpo.

One of the Gentlemen pulling out a curious watch, another said he wondered how it was possible for them to pick a watch, when it stuck so close in the fob, and that it was certainly a man's own carelessness. No, says Swalpo, if the Gentleman will take a turn or two in Moorfields, I'll wager a guinea I'll have the watch before he return, let him take what care he pleases, and I shall not stir out of the room. Done, says the Gentleman; done says Roger; Shud, he'll steal your liver, if he says he'll do it. However,  
every

every gentleman in the room laying down a guinea, Roger down with his broad piece and bore his half. The gentleman went out with his watch, and as he walked, was very careful not to suffer man, woman, or child to come within arms length of him, thinking the devil was in it if any body could rob him at a distance. When it was almost time he should return, a boy came softly behind him, yet not so near as to give the gentleman suspicion. As he past by, he looked over his shoulder, and tells the Gentleman his back was covered with huge lice, which he perceiving, and wondering where he had been that day. Good boy, says the gentleman, take them off, and I'll give you a shilling. The boy does so, and picking the lice off his back, and the watch out of the fob, he received his reward and run off.

The gentleman returns to the tavern, wondering all the way how he came by such, which he perceiving, loathed the sight, fretting him all the way. When he returned, Swalpo enquired at him what o'clock it was by his watch, which thinking to pull out, he was amazed to find it gone. Swalpo pulls it out, asking if that was it? The gentleman stood as dumb as a fish, turning up the white of his eyes. Roger laughed so outrageously, that after the gentleman had endured



endured his noise a long time, the knight was forced to command him to silence, for he would have laughed all night. The gentleman said, certainly he must have the assistance of the devil; of a boy, says Swalpo; did not a boy pick you clean? There's the devil, says the gentleman, and threw on the vermin too I suppose. Ay, through a quill, says Swalpo.

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CHAP. V.

THE whole company was mightily pleased with the ingenuity of the last trick, especially Roger, who could not forget how the gentleman looked when he came to and missed his watch, and was now and then bursting out into a laughter. Swalpo says, alas, gentlemen this trick is not worth talking of! 'tis such a thing as we send our boys about; there's a nobleman going now past the window, with a very rich coat on his back, I'll wager, as before, to steal it from off his back before all his followers, and bring it hither on my back. The gentlemen staked each their guinea, and Swalpo and Roger covered them as before. Now, says Swalpo, I am to shew you a masterpiece of my art: I must not send a boy about it, but crave leave to go myself; neither can I set a time for my return, but I hope  
to

to do it sooner than you can easily imagine. So out he runs, and dogging the nobleman from street to street, at last followed him into a tavern. The nobleman was conducted up stairs; Swalpo goes to the bar-keeper, and desires he would lend him an apron, for, says he, the nobleman, my master, wherever he comes, will be served with none but myself; he is an extraordinary good customer, and expects the best of wine. I must go down to the cellar and taste it for him. Whereupon they let him have the apron, and he went into the cellar, and found out the best of every sort. He ran so nimbly up and down stairs, and was so quick at his work, that none of the servants of the house could keep pace with him. The company looked upon him to be a servant belonging to the house, and were mightily pleased with his quickness and diligence, and the goodness of the wine, and every thing he brought them. Swalpo promised him that he should have attended the room for very large vails, and he was very well satisfied to receive money for doing of nothing. Swalpo never came into the room but he passed some merry jests, which pleased them wonderfully; and when they spoke to him, his answers were so smart, and when he went for more wine, they

they said one to another, this is a merry, witty, careful fellow, such a one as he is fit to make a house, he deserves double wages.

When Swalpo had sufficiently amused the company, and saw his project ripe for execution, he was resolved to trifle no longer: wherefore when he returned into the room with some wine and as he passed by my Lord, he laid hold of the opportunity, and with his incision-knife, which he used in pocket-picking, he nicely, and with admirable dexterity, made a slit in the back seam of my Lord's coat, and runs down stairs for more liquor. When he returned with a bottle in one hand, and the other full of glasses, before he came near my Lord, Swalpo starts, saying, what cobling fellows are they that made this coat, could they not sew a coat to hold but one day? This cabbage monger deserved the pillory before for filching; but now grudging to allow a stitch or two more, he has committed a scandalum magnatum, and caused my Lord to go in a rent coat, the first day of wearing perhaps. Some of the company rising, and seeing the great slit, told my Lord the taylor had affronted him. Says my Lord, I gave the fellows sufficient vails, and both they and their master shall hear on't. My Lord, says Swalpo, 'tis only the end of a thread slipped. Such

Such things will happen sometimes; the coat may be faithfully sewed in other places, 'tis not a farthing the worse: there is a curious drawer of my acquaintance lives in the next lane, be pleased to let me carry it to him, he will make it as good as at first. I'll carry it secretly under my master's cloak, and return with it before you want more wine.

The Nobleman borrows a great coat of one of the company, and lets him have his coat. Swalpo coming down to the landlord, told him what had happened to his Lord's coat, and to prevent its being seen in the street, he requested of him to let him have a cloak, and he would return immediately. The Vintner shewed him where the cloak was, which Swalpo puts on, and claps the Vintner's beaver upon his head, which hung on the coat pin. Thus he troops off with them, and coming to the tavern where the Gentlemen were, he went into a chamber, and having put on the Nobleman's coat, the cloak and beaver, he came into the room where they sat, saluting them very civilly. Says one of them, What! instead of a coat you are come with a cloak, and great need for it, for there's a deal of knavery under it. So opening the cloak, they were all amazed to see the rich embroidered coat, besides the  
cloak.

cloak and beaver, which he told them he had got into the bargain. Roger laughed as loud as a dozen of trumpets; but when Swalpo told them how he had performed the exploit, and related all the comical circumstances attending it with a great deal of air and wit, there was as great a noise of laughter as ever was heard, and Roger, with his great bass, made up the concert.

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CHAP. VI.

**M**Y Lord and his company waited so long a time, that they were quite out of patience, the people of the house likewise wondering they sat so long without calling, ordered the fellow that should have waited on the room, to go up stairs and force a trade. The fellow comes in and said, Call here, call here, Gentlemen. Yes, says one of them, where is your fellow servant that waited on us? My fellow servant! says the other, he told me he was my Lord's servant, and that my Lord would be attended by none but himself, and I should have good vails notwithstanding. But, says my Lord, how can that be? I have but one Gentleman here of my own retinue: the rest are with my lady; he that served us came in with an apron, and is a servant of the house. Call up the landlord. The  
Vintner

Vintner coming up, a Gentleman of the company asked him if he kept sharpers in the house, to affront Gentlemen and rob them? Nay, says the Vintner, (who was a very passionate man) do you bring sharpers along with you, to affront me and rob my house? I'm sure I have lost a fine new cloak and beaver, and, for ought I know though you look like Gentlemen, you may be sharpers yourselves, and of you I expect to be paid for my losses and your reckoning also.

Immediately one of the company drew upon him, but the Vintner ran down stairs, and called all the house together, bidding them get what they could, and not suffer one to come down stairs; and snatching his sword in a fury, ran up stairs again. The servants arming themselves with spits and fire-forks, and such weapons as they could find, followed him. The uproar was very great, and my Lord coming out first to force his way down, made a push at the landlord, but was put by with a fire-shovel, which was in one of the drawers hands, narrowly escaping being thrust into the guts with a long spit, which Margery, the cook wench, carried; so that my Lord, seeing the door so well guarded with stout fellows and sturdy wenches, retired into the room, and told the company he had almost died by the hands

of a wench, with a spit in her hand. They seeing it neither safe nor honourable to fall out, shut the door, and standing upon the defensive part, began to consult what to do.

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CHAP. VII.

**T**HE Gentlemen foreseeing a quarrel betwixt my Lord and the Vintner, immediately dispatched their own landlord to tell them both, that they had caught the rogue that had abused them, and that they had him in safe custody, praying my Lord to know if they should wait upon him. The Landlord runs in all haste, and coming to the house, and found it all in a horrid uproar; the servant knowing him, allowed him to go up stairs, where he no sooner came, but he told his brother vintner that they were all in a mistake, that the rogue was caught, and in his house; whereupon calling aloud to my Lord, informed him of the whole business. Immediately a cessation of arms was proclaimed, the swords sheathed, the Spits, Fire-forks and Fire-shovels disbanded, and an end happily made of a terrible war. The nobleman and his company drinking friends with the vintner, promised to be a friend to his house for the time to come, but resolved to go along with their peace-maker to the Tavern where Swalpo was,

was, to mend the frolic. The vintner being as well pleased with the conceit as any of them filled his pockets and went along with them.

When they were come to the place, after passing some compliments, they sat down, and Swalpo delivering the coat, cloak, and beaver, they desired him to give them an account of all the rogueries that he and his comrades had committed, which he did freely; and as for what he told them, and the other tricks he shewed them at that time, not having room here to relate them, we must refer them to a second part, if this meets with encouragement. But the nobleman and gentry considering, that when all was done, honesty is the best policy, told Swalpo, that it was a great pity that so much wit and courage should be so ill employed, and that if he would alter his course of life, he had now an opportunity to do it. He answered them, he was very sensible of what they said, and gave them hearty thanks.

Well, says the nobleman, I have a place of a hundred a year, if that will satisfy you, you shall have it. Swalpo thanked him with great reverence, and when the frolic was over, went along with the nobleman, and proving a very honest man, married to great advantage, and lived happily and in great esteem with the gentry of the country.



## CHAP. VIII.

THE Nobleman hearing him talk of picking of watches, desired him to do it in his sight, Swalpo bid the Nobleman stand on his guard, and keep his watch with all the care he could, he would have it from him.

The Nobleman was then walking up and down the room for his ease; Swalpo was on his feet too. but it was good sport to see my Lord give him the way every time they met. Swalpo desired some of the gentry to enter into a hot dispute with my Lord, which they doing, my Lord began to be very earnest, but still kept his hand upon his watch. Swalpo laying hold on the first opportunity, gently tickles my lord with a Hen's feather under the right ear, which made him on a sudden quit the watch to scratch himself, and, upon clapping his hand on his sob again, and perceiving it was gone, he immediately looks behind him, and sees Swalpo bowing to him with the watch in his hand, and Roger laughing so loud, that for a quarter of an hour, it was in vain to speak a word, he making so much a noise, one would have thought, as if it had been a man of war firing a broadside, insomuch that the company

pany were forced to do as he did, until Roger was sufficiently tired.

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CHAP. IX.

ONE of the company looking out at the window, saw in another window over the way, a large tankard, but very old fashioned. Swalpo being called, was asked if he could steal that tankard? he told them that he would go over the way and fetch it, but he must not be confined to time, and Roger must go along with him. Roger hearing thus, was overjoyed, fancying that he should gain the reputation of a second Swalpo.

When they went out, Swalpo desired him to go to such a Poulterer's, and buy a couple of pheasants the best he could find, and return to him to such a tavern. When Roger returned, he found Swalpo with an apron about him, like a drawer. Swalpo takes the pheasants, and goes to the merchant's house where the tankard was: he was certain the merchant was not within, because Swalpo's boy had followed him to the Exchange. He desires to speak with the merchant's lady, and tells her, that the gentleman (naming her husband) was in a tavern near the Exchange, engaged in some important business; and a Goldsmith hap-  
pening

opening to be in the company, had persuaded him to send for the old-fashioned tankard, to be changed for a fashionable one; and because there was a couple of gentlemen in the company he had invited to dine with him, he desired the dinner should be carefully dressed, and the pheasants roasted, and the new tankard should be sent home by that time.

\Pray heavens bless my husband, says the lady, and continue the good temper he is in. I have talked to him these seven years past about this lumbering cup, and he did nothing but banter me about it: heavens preserve him from sudden mischief! I'll either have it as good as my lady such a one's, in St. James's, -or I'll send it back again. Full of joy she received the pheasants, and delivered the tankard to Swalpo. When the merchant came home, his lady met him full as well dressed, and as well pleased as a young bride. She flew about his neck, kissed him twenty times, and gave him a hundred thousands thanks for the tankard and pheasants; and pray honey, says she, where are the gentlemen? and, pray honey, says he, where are your wits? Hey day, my wife's run distracted.

It was a pretty while before they could understand one another, and, instead of dining, the

she went into her chamber to cry, and he went to Lombard-street, to cause the tankard to be seized if offered to sale.

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CHAP. X.

**R** OGER seeing so much ingenuity, was inflamed with a desire of shewing his parts too. What, says he, shall I come to London, and be in such good company, and see and hear of so much wit, and have nothing to say of my own exploits when I get home? how will Joan and the whole parish stare at me if I can do such things as these? Away he goes, and dresses himself like a porter, and coming in haste to the merchant's lady, told her that her husband was at the Swan, in Cornhill, with a goldsmith who had stopped a tankard of his, and had caught the rogue, and prayed her to come immediately to the Swan, and see the rogue before he should be sent to Newgate. Dear heart, says she, what a happy woman am I! See him! I'll go see him there, I'll see him in Newgate, I'll see him at Tyburn, with a vengeance to him. But, says Roger, my master is very hungry, and would have you send him the couple of pheasants, that the thief may see you and my master eat them before his eyes, and come along with me. Roger receiving them, and the

the lady having her head to dress a little, told him, she knew the place well enough, and would be there instantly.

Roger brings the pheasants to my lord and his company, which action caused as much mirth as any thing that had been before, especially considering how clownishly he looked and spoke; but they had been mistaken as to him, for he was more knave than fool; a sly dog, as you shall know in the following chapter.

The lady coming to the Swan, enquired for her husband, they told her he had not been there that day. This answer struck her dumb for a short space, and they seeing her in great confusion, thought she was some whore that had missed her spark, and began to banter her; then she telling a lame story of her being robbed, and asking them some impertinent questions, as they fancied, about a tankard and pheasants, they fell a laughing at her. Being of a high spirit, she raged extremely at them, but could not help herself, and fearing to be mobbed for a whore, she posted home to vent her grief there, and finding her husband just come in, she told him how she had been served.

While they were fretting and talking thus, and the lady roaring as loud as she could, the master of the tavern where my lord

lord was, comes in and tells them, that the two rogues who had cheated them were in safe custody in his house. and if they pleased to walk over, they should see them, and drink out of their own tankard, and eat their share of the pheasants. Fearing no more danger, they joyfully went over the way to their neighbour's house, where the gentlemen were just going to dine, but they wondered what was the meaning of the rogues sitting at table with them, and especially clownish Roger, whom they had for jests sake, set at the head of the table, with his hat on, whereas all the rest were uncovered. The lady not enquiring into the meaning of all this, was a little uneasy at the sight of them that put so great an affront and abuse upon her; but she was wonderfully satisfied when one of the company told her all from the beginning to the end. Never was a dinner more merrily eaten than that was.

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CHAP. XI.

**T**HE dinner was exceeding rich, attended with the choicest wines of France, Germany, Italy, and Portugal. Roger usually put in with a comical proverb or blunder. One of the company telling him

( 24 )  
he had improved mightily since he was at Barnolemew Fair. Ay, says Roger, Swalpo could not cheat me now of my broad piece. How! says Swalpo, do you challenge your master? observe what a saucy scholar I have got. Well, Roger, to shew the lady you afforded some sport, let us conclude with a droll. Your piece is mine in a quarter of an hour, keep it as well as you can. All the craft lies in the catching of it, says Roger, threatned folks live long, do your worst, devil. With that he jumps from the table, and runs into the next room. He soon comes in again without his breeches, for he carried them at the top of his long oaken plant, so that Swalpo could not reach them. The gentry laughed at the sight, but when he turned his back, they saw his shirt was painted behind with a deal of yellow, brown and black, the black was by drinking over night; then they redoubled their laughter.

In the mean time Swalpo causes his boy to bring him some cow itch, mixed with a little horse-hair. After they had both shewed many antic postures, Swalpo pretended to make for the breeches; and Roger avoiding him, Swalpo, by a sign, caused his boy to lift up the tail of Roger's shirt, and anoint him well with the cow-itich; then  
pretending

pretending to be vanquished he sat down. Roger still keeping the field of honour, going up and down, strutting as a new ensign, or a crow in a gutter, and waving his breeches about his head, he proclaimed the victory. The ointment then began to work a little upon his buttocks, which set him a rubbing and scratching—and as scratching, eating, and fighting, wants nothing but a beginning, the more he clawed, the more he might.

Roger made several wry faces, and runs to the next room, where he cut away the flap of his shirt, and put on his breeches; he returned again to the company, and continuing to scratch a good while after, he told them he deserved what he had got, and for the time to come would remember these proverbs, viz.

He that looks too high,  
Gets a chip in his eye.

Let not a Shoe-maker go beyond his last.

The reckoning being paid, the Gentlemen departed, and Roger went down into the country to his wife Joan.

F I N I S.