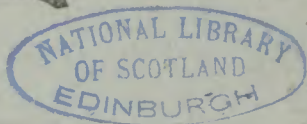


# JOE MILLER'S

## NEW JEST BOOK,

CONTAINING A COLLECTION OF

NECDOTES, JOKES, JESTS, AND STORIES.



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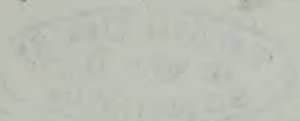
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JOHN MILLER'S

STANDARD BOOK

REVISED EDITION, WITH TESTS AND STUDIES



PUBLISHED BY

THE AMERICAN BOOK CONCERN

1880

NEW YORK

## JOE MILLER.

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WHEN Lieutenant O'Brien (who was called skyrocket Jack) was blown up at Spithead, in the Edgar, he was on the carriage of a gun, and when brought to the admiral, all black and wet, he said with pleasantry, "I hope, sir, you will excuse my dirty appearance, for I came out of the ship in so great a hurry, that I had not time to shift myself."

Two sailors, the one Irish, the other English, agreed reciprocally to take care of each other, in case of either being wounded in an action then about to commence. It was not long before the Englishman's leg was shot off by a cannon-ball; and on asking Paddy to carry him to the doctor, according to their agreement, the other very readily complied; but had scarcely got his wounded companion on his back when a second ball struck off the poor fellow's head. Paddy, through the noise and bustle, had not perceived his friend's greatest misfortune, but continued to make the best of his way to the surgeon. An officer observing him with his headless trunk, asked him where he was going? "To the doctor," says Paddy.—"The doctor!" says the officer, "why, blockhead, the man has lost his head." On hearing this, he flung the body from his shoulders, and looking at it very attentively, "By my own soul," says he, "he told me it was his leg, but I was a fool to believe him, for he was always a great liar."

A clergyman was reading the burial service over an Irish corpse, and having forgot which sex it was, on coming to that part of the ceremony which reads thus, "our dear brother or sister," the reverend gentleman stopped, and seeing that stand by, stepped back, and whispering to him, said, "Is it a brother or a sister?" Pat says, "Friend, 'tis neither, 'tis only a *relation*."

A very ignorant, but very foppish young fellow, going into a bookseller's shop with a relation, who went thither to buy something he wanted, seeing his cousin look into a particular book and smile, asked him what there was in that book that made him smile? "Why," answered the other, "this book, is dedicated to you, cousin Jaek."—"Is it so," said the first, "pray let me see it, for I never knew before that I had such an honour done to me." Upon which, taking it into his hands, he found it to be Perkins' Catechism, dedicated to all ignorant persons."

A great crowd being gathered about a poor cobbler, who had just died in the street, a man asked Alexander Steven what he had seen? Only a cobbler's end, replied he.

A tall minister said scoffingly to a short one, when in the pulpit, you look like a collar of brawn in a dish. And, you replied the other, like a pestle in a mortar.

A man being asked by his neighbour, how his sick wife did? made this answer: indeed, neighbour, the case is pitiful; my wife fears she shall die, and I fear she will not, which makes a most disconsolate house.

A thief, having stolen a cup out of a tavern, was pursued and a great mob was raised around him. A bystander was asked, what was the matter? Nothing. A poor fellow has only taken a cup too much.

Three gentlemen ordering a supper at a tavern, one of them wished for a partridge; a brace were brought, and he who had ordered them was requested to divide them; which accordingly did, by taking one to his own plate, and leaving the other for his friends. Stop, cried one of them, this is unequal division! Not so, replied he, there is one for you too and one for me too.

A runaway couple were married at Gretna Green. The Smith demanded five guineas for his services. How is that said the bridegroom, the gentleman you last married assured me he only gave you a guinea. True, said the Smith, but he was an Irishman. I have married him six times. He is a customer. You I may never see again.

Do not send for Dr. S——, said Captain O'Neal; do not send for Dr. S——, for he once attended a young officer of our regiment, and, upon my conscience, he stuffed the poor lad so unmercifully with potions and draughts, that he continued sick a fortnight after he was quite well.

King Charles II. on a certain time paying a visit to Busby, the doctor is said to have strutted through his self with his hat upon his head, while his majesty walked complaisantly behind him, with his hat under his arm; when he was taking his leave at the door, the doctor, with great humility, thus addressed the king: I hope your majesty will excuse my want of respect hitherto; but if my boys were to imagine there was a greater man in the kingdom than myself. I should never be able to rule them.

A conversation happening to turn upon the reluctance shown by many to tell their age, pray, sir, said a lady friend, if I am asked how old I am, what answer should I make? Madam, when you are asked that question, answer that you are not yet come to the years of discretion

A gentleman on circuit narrating to Lord Norbury some extravagant feat in sporting, mentioned that he had lately got thirty-three hares before breakfast. Thirty-three hairs! claimed his lordship; zounds, sir, then you must have been ing at a wig.

A witty knave going into a lace-shop upon Ludgate-hill, and he had occasion for a small quantity of very fine lace. And having pitched upon that he liked, asked the woman of the shop what she would have for as much as could reach from one of his ears to the other, and measure which way she pleased, either over his head or under his chin. After some words, they agreed, and he paid the money down, and began to measure, saying, one of my ears is here, and the other is nailed to a pillory in Bristol, therefore I fear you will not be able to make good your bargain; however. I will take this piece in part, and desire you will provide the rest with all expedition.

Sir John Stuart Hamilton, lounging one day in Dalby's peolate-house, when, after a long drought, there fell a torrent of rain; a country gentleman observed, this is a most plentiful rain; I hope it will bring up every thing out of the ground. By Jove, sir, said Sir John, I hope not, for I have sowed three wives in it, and I should be very sorry to see them come up again.

Pray, Mr. Abernethy, what is the cure for gout? asked an indolent and luxurious citizen. Live upon sixpence a day, and earn it! was the pithy answer.

A friend was complaining to Colman that he should be obliged to change his tailor, as he found that a suit of clothes would not last him above one half of the time that it ought to do; and inquired if he could recommend him any place where he could meet with apparel more durable. Yes, said Colman, I could recommend you to Chancery, and there you may have a *suit* that will last you your life.

An Irish gentleman going to the Post-Office, inquired if there were any letters for him? Your name, sir, said the clerk. There is a good one, now, said the Hibernian; why! won't you see it on the back of the letter.

Mother Hopkins told me, that she heard Green's wife say, that John Glarrie's wife told her, that granny Hopkins heard widow Bashan say, that Captain Weed's wife thought Colonel Hodkin's wife believed that old Miss Lamb reckoned that Samuel Dunham's wife had told Spalding's wife that she had heard John Franks say, that her mother told her, old Mrs. Jenks heard granny Cook say, that it was a matter of fact! — *American Paper.*

A servant girl, who always attended divine service, but who also could not read, had, from constant attendance, got the service by rote, and could repeat it extremely well. But a few Sundays previous to her marriage, she was accompanied by her beau, to whom she did not like it to be known that she could not read; she, therefore, took up the prayer-book, and held it before her. Her lover wished to have a sight of it also, but, unfortunately for her, she held it upside down. The man, astonished, said, Good heavens! why, you have the book wrong side upwards. I know it, sir, said she, confusedly, I always read so, for I am left-handed.

A gentleman, who, on account of his ugliness, was called Cupid, had the evil custom of still more disfiguring his grotesque person, by a striking negligence in his clothes and linen. One day he had a desire of going to a masquerade, and asked the advice of a friend, how he should disguise himself, so that no one might know him. Nothing in the world can be more easy, replied the latter; put on clean linen.

A certain poor unfortunate gentleman was so often pulled by the sleeve by the bailiffs, that he was in continual apprehension of them; and going one day through Tavistock-street, his coat sleeve happened to hitch upon the spike of one of the rails; whereupon he immediately turned about in a great surprise, and cried out, At whose suit, sir? at whose suit?

The late Dr. Young of Birmingham, having one day forgotten to bury the corpse of a Dissenter, was accused of neglecting the funeral in consequence of the creed professed by the departed. I have heard, said a Quaker to the reverend gentleman, I have heard, friend Young, that thou wouldst not bury—, because he was of the Dissenters. You're misinformed, replied the other; I should be happy to bury them all.

A little boy having been much praised for his quickness of reply, a gentleman present observed, that when children were keen in their youth, they were generally stupid and dull when they advanced in years, and vice versa. What a very sensible boy, sir, must you have been! returned the child.

When James the First went to Salisbury, one of the active adventurers of those days climbed up the outside of the spire of the cathedral, and at the top made three somersets in honour of his majesty; who being applied to for a reward, gave him a patent, whereby every other of his subjects except the aforesaid bold man, and his heirs male, being protestants, were prohibited from doing the like under the severest penalties.

A thief being brought to Tyburn to be executed, the ordinary of Newgate, in taking his last confession, asked him if he was not sorry for having committed the robbery for which he was going to suffer? The criminal answered, yes, but that he was more sorry for not having stolen enough to bribe the jury.

A couple of sweeps, having occasion to pass the new bridge at Manchester, unluckily could muster only a single halfpenny between them. How to raise the other halfpenny to pay the toll they knew not, till one of them proposed to toss for which should carry the other over. This was done—one was instantly crammed into the bag, and lugged over on the shoulders of the other as a burden of soot.

A Jew, who was condemned to be hanged, was brought to the gallows, and was just on the point of being turned off, when a reprieve arrived. Moses was informed of this, and it was expected he would instantly have quitted the cart, but he staid to see his fellow-travellers hanged; and being asked why he did not get about his business, he said, he waited to see if he could bargain with Maister Ketch for the two gentlemen's clothes.

An Hibernian schoolmaster, settled in a village near London, who advertised that he intended to keep a Sunday-school twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursday, reminds us of the moek mayor of a place in the west, who declared on his election that he was resolved to hold his Quarter Sessions monthly.

When Sir Elijah Impey was on his passage from India, as he was one day walking the deck, it having blowed pretty hard the preceding day, a shark was playing by the ship. Having never seen such an object before, he called to one of the sailors to tell him what it was. Why, replied the tar, I don't know by what name they know 'em on shore, but here we call 'em sea lawyers.

Louis XIV., playing at backgammon, had a doubtful throw, a dispute arose, and the surrounding courtiers all remained silent. The Count de Grammont happened to come in at that instant. Decide the matter, said the king to him. Sire, said the count, your majesty is in the wrong. How! replied the king, can you thus decide, without knowing the question? Because, said the count, had the matter been doubtful, all these gentlemen present would have given it for your majesty.

A felon who was just on the point of being turned off, asked the hangman, if he had any message to send to the place where he was going? I will trouble you with a line, replied the finisher of the law, placing the cord under his left ear.

A Scotch bag-piper travelling in Poland, opened his wallet by a wood side, and sat down to dinner: no sooner had he said grace, but three wolves came about him; to one he threw bread, to another meat, till his provender was gone; at length he took up his bag-pipes, and began to play, at which the wolves ran away. "The de'el saw me," said Sawney, "an' I had kenn'd you lo'ed music sa weel, you should ha'e had it afore dinner."

The proverb says, "that idleness covers a man with rags." An Irish schoolmaster thought the sentence might be improved; in consequence of which, he wrote for his pupil, "Idleness covers a man with nakedness."

A Scotchman and an Irishman were sleeping at an inn together. The weather being rather warm, the Scotchman in his sleep put his leg out of the bed. A traveller in passing the room door, saw him in this situation, and having a mind for a frolic, gently fixed a spur upon Sawney's heel; who, drawing his leg into the bed, so disturbed his companion, that he exclaimed, "Arrah honey, have a care of your great toe, for you have forgot to cut your nails I helaiiv." The Scotchman being sound asleep, and sometimes, perhaps, not a little disturbed by other companions, still kept scratching poor Pat, till his patience being quite spent, he succeeded in rousing Sawney, who not a little surprised at finding the spur on his heel, loudly exclaimed, "Deil tak' the daft chiel of an ostler, he's ta'en my boots off last night, and left on the spur."

During the American war, whilst Colonel Burgoyne commanded in Cork, he saw a corpulent soldier among the spectators on the parade, whom he addressed as follows:—"Who are you, sir? you must be drilled twice a day to bring down your *corporation*. Who are you, sir!"—"Please your honour," replied Pat, "I am, sir, the *skeleton* of the 5th regiment of foot, who has just marched over from America." The fact was so, for such was the carnage of the disastrous war, that only this fat soldier and Captain Webb returned to Europe, out of a full regiment that landed in America.

An Irish footman having carried a basket of game from his master to a friend, waited a considerable time for the customary fee, but not finding it likely to appear, scratched his head, and said, "Sir, if my master should say, Paddy, what did the gentleman give you, what would your honour have me to tell him?"

A Frenchman, having a violent pain in his breast and stomach, went to a physician for relief. The doctor, inquiring where his trouble lay, the Frenchman, with a dolorous accent, laying his hand on his breast, said, "Vy, sare, I have one very bad pain in my *portmanteau*," (meaning his chest).



A man cannot abuse his wife without proving himself a fool or a bully; a man cannot strike his wife without proving himself a fool or a ruffian. If she deserves abuse and beating, he must be a fool to have such a wife; and if she do not, he must be a bully and a ruffian to abuse and beat her.

When Citizen Thelwall was on his trial at the Old Bailey for high treason, during the evidence for the prosecution, he wrote the following note, and sent it to his counsel, Mr. Erskine: I am determined to plead my cause myself. Mr. Erskine wrote under it—If you do you'll be hanged:—to which Thelwall immediately returned this reply—I'll be hanged if I do.

A cantab one day observing a ragamuffin-looking boy scratching his head at the door of Alderman Purchase, in Cambridge, where he was begging, and thinking to pass a joke upon him, said, so, Jack, you are picking them out are you? Nah, sar, retorted the urchin, I takes 'em as they come!

The Irish nation have long being supposed to enjoy the exclusive privilege of making bulls. A French gentleman, who lately died at Province, whose name was M. Cleante, affords an instance to the contrary, as will appear by the following anecdotes of him—

He bid his valet-de-chambre, very early one morning look out of the window, and tell him if it was day-light. Sir, said the fellow, it is so dark I can see nothing as yet. Beast, that you are, replied the master, why don't you take a candle, to see if the sun rises or no?

He was ill of a fever: his physician forbade him the use of wine, and ordered him to drink nothing but barley-water. That I would, said the patient, with all my heart, provided it had the relish of wine; for, I assure you, I had as soon eat beef as partridge if it had the same taste.

He paid a visit to a painter, who was busy in drawing a landscape, where a lover and his mistress were in conversation. Let me beg of you, said M. Cleante, to draw me in a corner, where I can hear every word these lovers are saying, without any body seeing me!

A gentleman told him that he had dined with a poet, who had regaled him with an excellent epigram for the dessert. Cleante immediately called for his cook, and asked him why he had never brought a dish of epigrams to his table.

He desired a painter, who was taking his portrait, to draw him with a book in his hand, which he should read out loud.

Your sword, sir, is very troublesome, said a man very surlily to a young officer in a crowd. My enemies are of the same opinion, replied the young man.

John Barth, the Dunkirk fisherman, rose by his courage and naval skill to the rank of commodore of a squadron in the navy of France. When he was ennobled by Louis XIV. the king said to him, John Barth, I have made you a commodore. John replied, You have done right.

The late Earl of S— kept an Irish footman, who, perhaps, was as expert in making bulls as the most learned of his countrymen. My lord having sent him one day with a present to a certain judge, the judge in return sent my lord half-a-dozen live partridges with a letter: the partridges fluttering in the basket upon Teague's back, as he was carrying them home, he set down the basket, and opened the lid of it to quiet them, whereupon they all flew away. Oh, the devil burn you, said he, I am glad you are gone. But when he came home, and my lord had read the letter, well, Teague, said my lord, I find there are half-a-dozen partridges in the letter. Arrah now, dear sir, said Teague, I am glad you have found them in the letter, for they are all lost out of the basket.

Gentlemen and ladies, said the facetious Beau Nash, the then master of the ceremonies for Bath, introducing a most lovely woman in the ball-room, this is Mrs. Hobson. I have often heard of Hobson's choice, but never had the pleasure to view it until now, and you must coincide with me that it reflects great credit on his taste.

A consequence of a wager, a letter was some years since put into a country post-office, and was delivered by the postman. The direction, according to the terms of the wager, consisted of these lines from Pope:—

Where London's column, pointing to the skies,  
Like a tall bully lifts its head and lies,  
There dwelt a citizen of sober fame,  
A plain good man, and Balaam was his name.

This letter came safe to Mr. Balaam, who was then a fishmonger near the monument.

A crooked gentleman, on his arrival at Bath, was asked by another, what place he had travelled from? I came straight from London, replied he. Did you so said the other, then you must have been terribly warped by the way.

An obscure physician, quarrelling with a neighbour, swore, in a great rage, that some time or other he would be the death of him. No, doctor, replied the other, for I shall never send for you.

A beggar, in Dublin, had been a long time besieging an old gouty, testy, limping gentleman, who refused his mite with irritability; on which the medicant said, Ah, please your honour's honour, I wish your heart was as tender as your toes.

Scottish churches, the precentor (Anglice clerk) always gives out the line during the singing of the psalm. For instance, in the hundredth psalm, the officiating Amen, would read with nasal twang,—All people that on earth do dwell. When the congregation had sung this line, he would proceed with—Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, and so on till the psalm concluded. A few years ago a sudden cloud darkened the interior of a certain parish church just as the precentor—a very old man—rose for the purpose of discharging this part of his duty. He looked up towards the parson, and exclaimed, My eyes are dim, I cannot see. The congregation, (as much in the dark as himself) instinctively sung the words. I cannot see at all, said the clerk. We cannot see at all, responded the hearers. I really think the folks are mad, exclaimed the leader. Echo as before! The devil burn you all, roared the clerk, and threw down the book with becoming indignation. We have been led to understand that the congregation did not join in the last line.

A loquacious lady, ill of a disease of forty years' standing, applied to Mr. A. for advice, and had begun to describe its progress from the first, when Mr. A. interrupted her, saying, as he wanted to go into the next street to see a patient, he begged the lady to inform him how long it would take her to tell her story. The answer was twenty minutes: he asked her to proceed, and hoped she would endeavour to finish by the time he returned.

A country justice of the peace, when upwards of seventy years of age, married a girl about nineteen, and being well aware that he was likely to be rallied on the subject, he resolved to be prepared. Accordingly, when any of his intimate friends called upon him, after the first salutations were passed, he was sure to begin the conversation, by saying, he believed he could tell them news. Why, said he, I have married my tailor's daughter. If he was asked why he did so? the old gentleman replied, Why, the father suited me so well for forty years past, that I thought the daughter might suit me for forty years to come.

Sarah Duchess of Marlborough was accustomed to make an annual feast, to which she invited all her relations. At one of these family meetings she drank all their healths, adding, What a glorious sight it is to see such a number of branches flourishing from the root! but observing Jack Spencer laugh, insisted on knowing what occasioned his mirth, and promised to forgive him be it what it would. Why, then, madam, said he, I was thinking how much more all the branches would flourish if the root were under ground.

The following is a correct report of an address delivered by the manager of a small theatre in Ireland, where Mr. Hee was engaged to perform. There were only three persons in the house:—Ladies and Gentlemen, as there is nobody here, I'll dismiss you all; the performances of this night will be repeated again to-morrow evening.

A gentleman was introduced to a lady, who was a great tattler, as a man of learning. The lady talked incessantly, and was unconscious that no answer was given her. On praising the talents of the gentleman next day, she was told that this learned person was deaf and dumb, and the introduction a trick.

A young fellow, not quite so wise as Solomon, eating some Cheshire cheese full of mites, one night at the tavern: now, said he, have I done as much as Sampson, for I have slain my thousands and my ten thousands. Yes, answered one of the company, and with the same weapon too, the jaw-bone of an ass.

A Londoner told his friend he was going to Margate for a change of hair. You had better, said the other, go to the wig-maker's.

A respectable surgeon in London, making his daily round to see his patients, had occasion to call at a house in Charing-cross, where he left his horse to the care of a Jew boy, whom he casually saw in the streets. On coming out of the house, he naturally enough expected to find his trusty servant treating himself to a ride; but no—Mordecai knew the use of time and value of money a little better;—he was letting the horse to little boys in the street, a penny a ride to the Horse-guards and back!

A gentleman being at an inn, and seeing the ostler expert about the horses, asked him what countryman he was. I'm Yorkshire, said the fellow. And how long have you lived here? Sixteen years. I wonder that in all that time so clever a fellow as you have not made enough to set up an inn yourself! Ah, sir, but maister's Yorkshire too.

A fellow walking down Holborn-Hill, on a sultry summer evening, observed an old gentleman without his hat, panting and leaning upon a post, and courteously asked him what was the matter? Sir, says the man, an impudent rascal has just snatched my hat off, and ran away with it; I have run after him until I have quite lost my breath, and cannot, if my life depended on it, go a step farther. What, not a step? says the fellow. Not a step, returned he. Why, then by Jupiter, I must have your wig; and, snatching off his fine flowing caxon, the thief was out of sight with it in a minute.