



FRONTPIECE to "The Old Joe Miller: Being a Complete and Correct Copy from the Best Edition of his Celebrated Jestes," Wilson & Co., London, 1800. "Ride si sapi" (Laugh if you know.)

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## A REVOLUTIONARY JOE MILLER

*An assortment of choice Bon Mots, Jestes, & Repartees from the pages of Almon, Garden, and Lyman Draper, et al.*

1. In the beginning of the war, an American cruizer having captured a rich British ship, the master coming on board the cruizer, and not having heard of any reprisals made by the Americans at sea, seemed in no little surprise, -- and asked the commander whether he really meant and had authority to make prize of him; upon being assured that it was truly so, he cast his eyes upon the Colours, and inquired further, what motto the flag had, and what was particularly intended by the STRIPES. Oh, Sir, replied the American commander, the meaning of our colours is to be found among the maxims of the wisest Prince that ever reigned -- STRIPES for the back of fools.

2. *Ethan Allen*: "Among the great numbers of people, who came to the castle<sup>1</sup> to see the prisoners, some gentlemen told me that they had come fifty miles on purpose to see me, and desired to ask me a number of questions, and to make free with me in conversation. I gave for answer that I chose freedom in every sense of the word. Then one of them asked me what my occupation in life had been? I answered him, that in my younger days I had studied *divinity*, but was a *conjuror* by profession. He replied, that I conjured *wrong* at the time I was taken; and I was obliged to own, that I mistook a figure at that time, but that I had *conjured* them out of Ticonderoga."

3. *The following is found in T.R. Saffell's* (American) Records of the Revolutionary War:

"Pay Office, Main Army, Nov. 8, 1780. Sir. -- Inclosed I transmit you my last month's account, and a letter of stoppages in the Southern department, which I wish you to forward. Money! money! money! or rather the want of it, is the word. It will oblige me much to hear what prospects you have of obtaining any. I am, with much respect and friendship, yours, John Pierce. Col. Palfeet, P. M. Gen."

4. A British officer was sent from the garrison at Georgetown, to negotiate a business interesting to both armies; when this was concluded, and the officer about to return, the general said, "If it suits your convenience sir, to remain for a short period, I shall be glad of your company to dinner." The mild and dignified simplicity of Marion's manners, had already produced their effect; and, to prolong so interesting an interview, the invitation was accepted. The entertainment was served

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<sup>1</sup> Pendennis Castle, just on the outskirts of Falmouth, England.

upon pieces of bark, and consisted entirely of roasted potatoes, of which the general eat heartily requesting his guest to profit by his example, repeating the old adage, that "hunger was an excellent sauce." "But surely general," said the officer, "this cannot be your ordinary fare." "Indeed it is sir," he replied, "and we are fortunate on this occasion, *entertaining company* to have more than our usual allowance."

5. A detachment of mounted militia, had been sent out by the General to watch the movements of the enemy, hastening, under the command of Lord Rawdon, to the relief of Ninety-Six, and came up with their rear guard at a place called the Juniper Springs, about fifteen miles distant from Granby. The British cavalry, who composed it, were of much superior force, and being in every respect better prepared for action, quickly disconcerted the American detachment, and put them to flight. A poor German, named Loaster, belonging to the American party, mounted on a sorry poney, with a rope bridle, and corresponding equipments, with no other arms than a musket, which he had already fired off, was assailed by a British dragoon, who aimed several desperate blows at him with his sabre, which were warded off with extraordinary dexterity, Loaster calling out alter every parry, "Huzza for America." While in this perilous situation, a Mr. Fitzpatrick, determining, if possible, to save him, rode up, and with the butt end of his pistol, which had been previously discharged, struck the dragoon so violent a blow in the face as to fell him to the ground. Loaster, thus happily rescued, rode off and escaped, vowing most earnestly never again to go into action Without a cutting iron, his musket being nearly severed in two, in five different places.

6. The haughty Tarleton, vaunting his feats of gallantry to the great disparagement of the Officers of the Continental Cavalry, said to a lady at Wilmington, "I have a very earnest desire to see your far-famed hero, Colonel Washington," "Your wish, Colonel, might have been fully gratified," she promptly replied, "had you ventured to look behind you after the battle of the Cowpens." It was in this battle, that Washington had wounded Tarleton in the hand, which gave rise to a still *more pointed* retort. Conversing with *Mrs. Wiley Jones*, Colonel Tarleton observed – "You appear to think very highly of Colonel Washington; and yet I have been told, that he is so ignorant a fellow, that he can hardly write his own name." "It may be the case," she readily replied, "but no man better than yourself, Colonel, can testify, that he knows how to make *his mark*."

7. About the period of the final departure of the British from New-York, an excellent repartee made by Major Upham, Aid-de-Camp to Lord Dorchester, to Miss Susan Livingston, has been much celebrated. "In mercy, Major," said Miss Livingston, "use your influence with the Commander in Chief, to accelerate the evacuation of the city; for among your incarcerated belles, your Mischianza Princesses, the *Scarlet* fever must continue to rage till your departure." "I should studiously second your wishes," replied the Major, "were I not apprehensive, that freed from the prevailing malady, a worse would follow, and that they would be immediately tormented with the *Blue Devils*."

8. At the battle of Eutaw, when General Marion's Brigade was displaying in face of the enemy. Captain Gee, who commanded the front platoon, was shot down, and supposed to be mortally wounded. The ball passed through the cock of a handsome hat, that he had recently procured, tearing the crown very much, and in its progress, the head also. He lay for a considerable time insensible; the greater part of the day had passed without a favourable symptom; when, suddenly reviving, his first inquiry was after his beaver, which being brought him, a friend, at the same time, lamenting the mangled state of the head, he exclaimed – "O, never think of the head; time and the Doctor will put that to rights; but it grieves me to think, that the rascals have ruined my hat for ever!"

9. When on his last visit to America, while at Montgomery, in the State of Alabama, he [Lafayette] was visited by a veteran who had served under him in many battles, whom he immediately recognized, as an orderly and most gallant soldier. After much interesting and familiar conversation, the old man said, "there is one thing, General, which it puzzles me to account for when we served together, I believed myself to be the youngest man of the two. But my locks are now perfectly grey, and you do not appear to have a grey hair in your head." "My good friend," replied the General, "you are altogether in error, the advantage is totally on your side. The hair of your head is grey while I cannot boast a single hair on my head I wear a wig!"

10. It happened during the Revolutionary war, that a treaty was held with the Indians, at which La Fayette was present. The object was to unite the various tribes in amity with America. The majority of the Chiefs were friendly, but there was much opposition made to it, more especially by a young warrior, who declared that when an alliance was entered into with America, he should consider the sun of his country as set forever. In his travels through the Indian Country, when lately in America, it happened at a large assemblage of Chiefs, that La Fayette referred to the treaty in question, and turning to Red Jacket, said, "pray tell me if you can, what has be come of that daring youth, who so decidedly opposed all our propositions for peace and amity? Does he still live and what is his condition?" "I, myself, am the man," replied Red Jacket, "the decided enemy of the Americans, as long as the hope of opposing them with success remained, but now their true and faithful ally until death."

11. Samuel Clowney...was a most determined Whig, and had joined Colonel Thomas at the Cedar Spring, early in July. Obtaining with several others a brief leave of absence, to visit their friends, and procure a change of clothing, they set off for the settlement on the waters of Fair Forest, known as Ireland or the Irish Settlement, on account of the large number of settlers from the Emerald Isle. On their route, the party left, with a Mrs. Foster, some garments to be washed, and appointed a particular hour, and an out-of-the-way place, where they should meet her, and get them, on their return to camp.

In accordance with this arrangement, when the party reached Kelso's creek, about five miles from Cedar Spring, they diverged from the road through the woods to the appointed place, leaving Clowney, and a negro named Paul, to take charge of their horses until they should return with the washing. Presently five Tories, making their way to a Loyalist encampment in that quarter, came to the creek; when Clowney, conceiving himself equal to the occasion, and giving the negro subdued directions of the part he was to act, yelled out in a commanding tone: "Cock your guns, boys, and fire at the word;" and then advancing to the bank of the stream, as the Tories were passing through it, demanded who they were? They answered: "Friends to the King." To their utter astonishment, not dreaming of a Whig party in the country, they were peremptorily ordered by Clowney to come upon the bank, lay down their arms, and surrender, or "every bugger of them would be instantly cut to pieces." Being somewhat slow in showing signs of yielding, Clowney sternly repeated his demand, threatening them, with his well-poised rifle, of the fatal consequences of disobedience; when the terror-stricken Tories, believing that a large force was upon them, quietly surrendered without uttering a word.

Paul took charge of their guns, when Clowney, giving some directions to his imaginary soldiers to follow in the rear, ordered the prisoners "right about wheel," when he marched them across the creek, directly before him, till he at length reached the rest of his party at Mrs. Foster's washing camp. They were then conducted to Colonel Thomas' quarters. The prisoners were not a little chagrined, when they learned that their captors consisted of only two persons -- one of whom was an unarmed negro. After arriving safely at Cedar Spring, his Colonel, when told that Clowney and the negro alone had captured the whole party, seemed at first a

little incredulous that they could accomplish such a feat.

“Why, Paddy,” said the Colonel, “how did you take all these men?”

“May it please yer honor,” he replied, exultingly, “by me faith, I *surrounded* them!”

12. Francois-Jean de Beauvoir, *The Marquis de Chastellux* (1734-1788), who served on Major-General Rochambeau's staff at Yorktown, in his justly celebrated journal and memoir, furnishes the following singular description of American living at the time of the Revolution. In addition are appended here two accompanying footnotes: the first by Chastellux's translator (who happened to be an Englishman), and the second by an American annotating an 1828 edition of the work.

[p. 296] “The Virginians have the reputation, and with reason, of living nobly in their houses, and of being hospitable; they give strangers not only a willing, but a liberal reception. This arises, on one hand, from their having no large towns, where they may assemble, by which means they are little acquainted with society, except from the visits they make; and, on the other, their lands and their negroes furnishing them with every article of consumption, and the necessary service, this renowned hospitality costs them very little. Their houses are spacious, and ornamented, but their apartments are not commodious; they make no ceremony of putting three or four persons into the same room;\*[1] nor do these make any objection to their being thus heaped together; for being in general ignorant of the comfort of reading and writing, they want nothing in their whole house but a bed, a dining-room, and a drawing-room for company...

“[English Translator: 1]\* Throughout America, in private houses, as well as in the inns, several people are crowded together in the same room; and in the latter it very commonly happens, that after you have been some time in bed, a stranger of any condition, (for there is little distinction,) comes into the room, pulls off his clothes, and places himself, without ceremony, between your sheets. Trans.

“[American editor's footnote: 2] This was probably the case at the time the translator wrote; but at the present day there is no country in which travellers can be more retired, or better accommodated than in the United States.”

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1. Almon's *Remembrancer* (1780) part 1 pp. 21-22, 2. Ethan Allen's *Narrative* (1779), 3. Saffell's *Records of the Revolutionary War* (1894) pp. 83-84, 4. Garden's *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (1822) pp. 21-22, 5. Garden's *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (1822) pp. 403-404, 6. Garden's *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (1822) p. 237, 7. Garden's *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (1822) p. 417, 8. Garden's *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (1822) pp. 385-386, 9. Garden's *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (1828) p. 185, 10. Garden's *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (1828) pp. 185-186, 11. Draper's *King's Mountain and Its Heroes* pp. 126-128. 12. *Travels in North America in the Years 1781-1782*, Part II, ch. V.

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For Lee's Legion on Face Book, see:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=121637007849696>