

THE  
Muse in Good Humour:  
A  
COLLECTION  
OF  
COMIC TALES.

By the most Eminent Poets.

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VOL. I.

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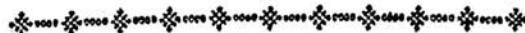
The SEVENTH EDITION.

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London:

Printed for F. NOBLE, opposite *Gray's-Inn-Gate*,  
Holborn; W. BATHOE, near *Exeter Change*, in the  
*Strand*; and J. NOBLE, in *St. Martin's Court*,  
near *Leicester-Square*. M. DCC. LXVI.



*The MILLER of TROMPTINGTON.*

A T A L E.

AT *Trompington*, not far from *Cambridge*  
stood  
Across a pleasant stream, a bridge of wood ;  
Near it a mill, in low and plashy ground ;  
Where corn from all the neighb'ring parts was  
ground.

The sturdy *Miller*, with his powder'd locks,  
Proud as a peacock, subtile as a fox,  
Could pipe, and fish, and wrestle, throw a net,  
Turn drinking cups, and teach young dogs to set ;  
Brawny, big-bon'd, strong made was ev'ry limb,  
But few durst venture to contend with him.  
A dagger hanging at his belt he had,  
Made of an ancient sword's well temper'd blade ;  
He wore a *Sheffield* whittle in his hose ;  
Broad was his face, and very flat his nose ;  
Bald as an ape behind was this man's crown ;  
No one could better beat a market down :  
But Millers will be thieves ; he us'd to steal,  
Slyly and artfully, much corn and meal.

This *Miller's* wife came of a better race,  
The *Parson's* daughter of the town she was :  
Her portion small, her education high,  
She had her breeding in a nunnery.

‘ Whoe’er he marry’d (*Simkin* boldly said)  
 ‘ Should be a maid well-born, and nicely bred.  
 You’d laugh to see him in his best array,  
 Strutting before her on a holy day.  
 If any boldly durst accost his wife,  
 He drew his dagger, or his *Sheffield* knife.  
 ‘Tis dang’rous to provoke a jealous fool;  
 She manag’d cunningly her stubborn tool.  
 To all beneath her, insolently high;  
 Walk’d like a duck, and chatter’d like a pye:  
 Proud of her breeding, froward, full of scorn,  
 As if she were of noble parents born;  
 With other virtues of the same degree,  
 All learn’d in that choice school, the *Nunnery*.

Their daughter was just twenty, coarse and bold;

A boy too in a cradle, six months old.  
 Thick, short, and brawny, this plump damsel was,  
 Her nose was flat, her eyes were grey as glass;  
 Her haunches broad, with breasts up to her chin;  
 Fair was her hair, but tawny was her skin.

A mighty trade this lusty Miller drove,  
 All for convenience came, not one for love,  
 Much grist from *Cambridge* to his lot did fall,  
 And all the corn they us’d at *Scholar’s-ball*.  
 Their *Manciple* fell dangerously ill;  
 Bread must be had, their grist went to the mill:  
 This *Simkin* moderately stole before,  
 Their steward sick, he robb’d them ten times  
 more.

Their

Their bread fell short ; the *Warden* storm'd, with  
skill

Examined those who brought it from the mill.  
The Miller to a strict account they call :  
He impudently swears he gave them all.

Two poor young scholars, hungry, much  
distress'd,  
(Who thought themselves more wise than all  
the rest)

Intreat the *Warden*, the next corn he sent,  
To trust it to their prudent management :  
Both would attend him with such care and art,  
Defy him then to steal the smalleſt part.

At last the *Warden* grants what they desire ;  
All is got ready as these two require.  
Bold men, tho' disappointed, ne'er are sham'd ;  
One was call'd *Allen*, t'other *John* was nam'd,  
Both Northern men, both in one town were  
born,

They mount, and lead the horse that bears the  
corn.

‘ Be careful, *Allen* cries, and do not stray.’  
“ Fear nothing, he replies, I know the way.”  
Thus they jog on, and on the road contrive  
To catch the thief ; till at the mill they 'rive.  
“ Ho, *Sim*, says *John*, what ho, the Miller there,  
‘ Who calls ? says *Simkin*, tell me who you are.  
“ How farcs your comely daughter and your  
“ wife ?”  
‘ What, *John* and *Allen* ? welcome by my life ;

H 3 The

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The Miller said, ' What wind has brought you hither ?'  
" That which makes old wives trudge, brought " us together.  
" Who keeps no man, must his own servant be ;  
" Our *Manciple* is very sick, and we  
" Are with the corn from our good *Warden* come,  
" To see it ground, and bring it safely home :  
" Dispatch it, *Sim*, with all the haste you may."  
" It shall be done (he says) without delay.  
" What will you do while I have this in hand ?"  
Says *John*, " Just at the hopper will I stand,  
" (In my whole life I never saw grist ground,)  
" And mark the clack how justly it will sound."  
" Ah ! Chum *John*, cries *Allen*, will you so ?  
" Then will I watch how it steals out below."  
*Sim*, at their plot maliciously did smile ;  
None could, they thought, such learned clerks beguile.

He meant to cast a mist before their eye,  
In spite of all their fine philosophy ;  
Neither should find where he convey'd the meal ;  
The narrower they-watch'd, the more he'd steal.  
These scholars for their flour shall have the bran ;  
The learned'st clerk is not the wisest man.  
Then out he steals, and finds, where, by the head,  
Their horse hung fasten'd underneath a shed ;  
He slips the bridle o'er his neck ; the steed  
Makes to the fens, where mares and fillies feed.  
Unmis'd

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Unmiss'd comes *Sim*, finds *John* fix'd at his post,  
And *Allen* diligent, no meal was lost :  
‘ Now do me justice, friends, he says, you can  
‘ Convince your *Warden* I'm an honest man.’  
Now the great work is done the corn is ground,  
The grist is sacked, and every sack well bound :  
*John* runs to fetch the horse ; aloud he cries,  
“ Come hither *Allen* ;” *Allen* to him flies.  
“ O friend, we are undone !”—“ What mean  
‘ you, *John* ?”  
“ Look there's the *Bridle*, but our *Horse* is gone !”  
“ Gone ! whither ? says he.—“ Nay, *Heav'n*  
“ knows, not I”—  
Out bolts *Sim*'s wife, and (with a ready lye)  
She cries, “ I saw him toss his head, and play,  
“ Then slip the loosen'd reins, and trot away.”  
“ Which way ? they both demand --- “ With  
“ wanton bounds,  
“ I saw him scamp'ring tow'rd yon fenny grounds ;  
“ Wild mares and colts in those low marshes feed.”  
Away the scholars run with utmost speed,  
Forget their former cautious husbandry ;  
Their sack does at the Miller's mercy lie.  
He half a bushel of their flour does take,  
Then bids his wife secure it in a cake.  
“ I'll send these empty boys again to school,  
“ To plot and study who's the greater fool :  
“ Look where the learned blockheads make their  
“ way,  
“ Let us be merry, while those children play.’

These silly scholars ran from place to place;  
 Now here, now there, unequal was the chace.  
 They call him by his name, whistle and cry,  
 Ho Ball ! but Ball is pleas'd with liberty.  
 At night into a narrow place they brought him,  
 Drove him into a ditch, and there they caught him.

Weary and wet, as cattle in the rain,  
*Allen*, and simple *John*, come back again.  
 " Alas ! cries *John*, wou'd I had ne'er been born !  
 " When we return, we shall be laugh'd to scorn.  
 " Call'd by the *Fellows*, and our *Warden*, fools ;  
 " Our grift is stolen, and we the Miller's tools."  
 Thus *John* complains : *Allen* without remorse,  
 Goes to the barn, and in he turns his horse.  
 Both cold and hungry, wet and daub'd with mire ;  
 They find the Miller sitting at his fire.  
 " We can't return, they say, before 'tis light,  
 " So beg for lodging in your mill to-night."  
*Sinkin* replies, ' Welcome with all my heart,  
 ' I'll find you out the most convenient part.  
 ' My house is straight, but you are learned men ;  
 ' You can by dint of argument maintain,  
 ' That twenty yards a mile in breadth comprise :  
 ' Now show your art, and make a Miller wife.'  
 " You're merry, friend ; but wet and clammy  
 " earth,  
 " Hunger and cold, provoke few men to mirth.  
 " A man complies with necessary things,  
 " Content with what he finds, or what he brings.  
 " 'Tis

“ ‘Tis meat and drink we earnestly desire ;  
“ To warm and dry us with a better fire.  
“ Look, we have coin to pay what you demand,  
“ We ne’er catch falcons with an empty hand.

*Sim* sends his daughter to a neighb’ring house,  
For good strong ale, and roasts a well fed goose.  
Tho’ homely was his room, it was not small ;  
They had no other, it must serve them all.  
The daughter makes for these two youths a bed,  
Lays on clean sheets, with blankets fairly spread.  
Twelve foot beyond, in the remotest place,  
There stood another for their daughter *Grace*.  
The supper does with sprightly mirth abound,  
Each has his jest, the nappy ale goes round ;  
Nor the squab daughter, nor the wife were nice,  
Each health the youths began, *Sim* pledg’d it  
twice.

The heady liquor stupifies their care,  
But midnight past, they all to rest repair.  
The Miller yawn’d, his eyes began to close ;  
The wife got *Sim* to bed, he had his dose.  
She follow’d him ; but she was gay and light,  
Her whistle had been wetted too that night ;  
She plac’d the child in cradle by her side,  
To give it suck, or rock it if it cry’d.  
The daughter too, when once the ale was gone,  
Retir’d to bed ; so *Allen* did, and *John*.  
Sleep on the most did instantly prevail ;  
The Miller’s lusty dose of potent ale

Made him like any stone-horse snort and snore,  
 The treble was behind, the base before :  
 The wife's horse-tenor vacant parts did fill, }  
 Thedaughter bore her part withwond'rousskill, }  
 They might be heard a furlong from the mill.

When this melodious confort first began,  
 Young *Allen* tumbling, pushes his friend *John* :  
 ' It is impossible to sleep, he says,  
 ' I'll up and dance, while this choice music plays.  
 He cries, " What means my b;other?" -- *Allen* said,  
 ' I mean to steal into the daughter's bed.  
 ' 'Tis said, the man who in one point is griev'd,  
 ' Ought in another point to be reliev'd.  
 ' Our corn is stol'n, and we like fools are caught ;  
 ' The daughter shall repay the father's fault.'  
 ' O *Allen*, he replies, think while you can,  
 ' Fore heav'n the Miller is a dang'rous man !  
 ' Should he discover you, I would be loth  
 ' The thief should wreak his vengeance on us  
 both."  
 ' I fear him not, says *Allen*, I am young ;  
 ' Tho' he's well set, my sinews are as strong.  
 Then up he gets ; now friend good luck (he said)  
 The daughter's trumpet led him to her bed ;  
 Half stupify'd with ale, she sprawling lay ;  
 He softly creeping in, soon hit his way ;  
 Soon put all knotty questions out of doubt,  
 Stopping her mouth, prevented crying out.  
*John* grumbling lay, while *Allen*'s place was void.  
 " Am I then idle, while my friend's employ'd ?  
 " He

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“ He can revenge himself for all his harms,  
“ He has the Miller’s daughter in his arms,  
“ While I lie spiritless, benumb’d and cold ;  
“ I shall be fear’d to death, when this is told ;  
“ They nothing can perform, who ne’er begin ;  
“ Faint heart they say, did ne’er fair lady win.”

Then up he rose, and softly groping round,  
He found the cradle standing on the ground,  
Close by the Miller’s bed ; this unespy’d  
He took, and set it by his own bed-side.

The Miller’s wife had now more grists to grind,  
(Some mills by water move, and some by wind)  
The proper utensil not plac’d at hand,  
She rose, by pure necessity constrain’d.

The grand affair dispatch’d, and feeling round  
Her husband’s bed, no cradle could be found.

“ Where am I? *Benedicite!* she said,  
“ This is undoubtedly the scholar’s bed.”

Then turning t’other way, her hand did light  
Full on the cradle.—*Now, she cry’d, I’m right.*  
Lifting the clothes, into the bed she leap’d,  
And close to *John* full harmlessly she crept :  
In a short time he takes her in his arms,  
And kindly treats her with unusual charms.  
She thought (strange fancies working in her  
mind)

Some *Saint* had made her husband over-kind.  
Propitious stars this fortune did bestow  
On both, till the third cock began to crow.

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Now *Allen* fancy'd light would soon appear,  
He kis'd the wench, and said, ' My *Grace*, my  
dear !  
' Thou kindest of thy sex, the day comes on,  
' And we must part—" Alas, will you be gone,  
" She said, and leave poor harmless me alone ?"  
' If I stay longer, we are both undone ;  
' For should your father wake, and find me here,  
' What will become of me and you, my dear ?'  
" That dreadful thought (she cries) distracts  
" my heart,  
" Too soon you won me, and too soon we part."  
Then clinging round his neck, with weeping  
eyes,  
She says, " Remember me !" *Allen* replies,  
' I'll quickly find occasion to return ;  
' You shall not long for *Allen*'s absence mourn.  
" Farewell, she cries ! But, dearest, one word  
" more ;  
" You'll find upon a sack behind the door  
" A cake, and under it a bag of meal ;  
" The flour my father and myself did steal  
" Out of your sack ; but take it, 'tis your own ;  
" Be careful, love—not a word more, be gone."  
Now *Allen* softly feeling for his bed,  
By chance his hand laid on the cradle-head.  
And shrinking from it, said, with no small fear,  
' That rogue the Miller and his wife lie there.  
Turning, he finds *Sim*'s palate, in he crept ;  
' I'm right, he says, dull *John* all night has slept.

Then

Then shaking him, 'Wake, Swincherd, *Allen*cries,  
' I've joyful news.'—" What?" grumbling *Sim*  
replies.

' I am the luckiest rogue—by this *no Light*,  
' I have had full employment all the night :  
' The daughter kindly paid her father's score,  
' All night I have embrac'd her.'—" O the  
" whore !

" O thou false traytor, Clerk ! thou hast defil'd  
" Our honest family, deflow'r'd our child !  
" Thy life shall answer it."—With that he caught  
At *Allen*'s throat : Young *Allen* stoutly fought.  
Both give and take, returning blows with blows;  
But *Allen* struck the *Miller* on the nose  
With all his force ; out flies the streaming gote,  
And down it runs : They tumble on the floor;  
Then up they get, lab'ring with equal strife :  
*Sim* stumbling backwards quite across his wife.  
She, fast asleep, none of this scuffle heard ;  
Wak'd by his fall, and heartily afear'd :  
" Help, *Holy Cross of Broholme* ! (O I faint !)  
" Help my good *Angel* ! help my *Patron Saint* !  
" The *Fiend* lies on me like a load of lead !  
" Remove this Dev'l, this night-mare, or I'm  
" dead !"

Then up starts *John*, and turns 'em from the wife,  
Hunts for a cudgel to conclude the strife.  
Up gets the *Miller*, *Allen* grasps him close,  
Both play at hard-head, struggling to get loose.

Out

Out slept the wife, well knowing where there stood,

In a by-corner, a tough piece of wood ;  
On this she seiz'd, and by a glimm'ring light  
Which enter'd at a chink, saw something white:  
But by a foul mistake, 'twas her ill hap  
To take *Sim*'s bald pate for the scholar's cap.  
She lifts the staff, it fell on his bare crown,  
Strong was the blow, she knock'd her husband down.

‘ O, I am slain ! the *Miller* loudly cry'd ;  
‘ Live to be hang'd thou thief,’ *Allen* reply'd.  
Away they go, first take their meal and cake,  
Then lay the grist upon their horse's back.  
To *Scholars-hall* they march, for now 'twas light,  
Pleas'd with the strange adventures of the night.

The wife the scholars curses, binds *Sim*'s head,  
Then lifts him up, and lays him on the bed.  
‘ O wife, says he, our daughter is defil'd !  
‘ That villain *Allen* has debauch'd our child !  
‘ Mistaking me for *John*, he told me all ;  
‘ Ten thousand furies plague that *Scholars-hall*.  
‘ O false abusive knave ; (the wife reply'd)  
‘ In ev'ry word the villain spake, he ly'd.  
‘ I wak'd and heard our harmless child complain,  
‘ And rose to know the cause, and ease her pain.  
‘ I found her torn with gripes, a dram I brought,  
‘ And made her take a comfortable draught ;  
‘ Then lay down by her, chaf'd her swelling breast,  
‘ And lull'd her in these very arms to rest.

“ All

“ All was contrivance, malice all, and spite ;  
“ I have not parted from her all this night.”  
*Then is she innocent?* “ Ay, by my life,  
“ As pure and spotless—as thy bosom wife.”  
*I’m satisfy’d, says Sim.* *O that damn’d Hall!*  
*I’ll do the best I can to starve them all.*  
And thus the miller of his fear is eas’d,  
The mother and the daughter both well-pleas’d.

