

**JOE MILLER'S JESTS:
WITH COPIOUS
ADDITIONS**

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Joe Miller's Jest: With Copious Additions by Joe Miller

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1836.

132.

P R E F A C E.

"A man is killed at Waterloo, his name is Grose, and they print it *Grove*; that is Fame!" said Byron. But if there be any truth in the current tradition respecting the author of this celebrated Jest Book, Fame is even a more strange and accidental thing—for MR. JOSEPH MILLER, JOE MILLER—JOE, as he is generally called, with a familiarity that smacks of immortality—whose name, as a wit, is now current wherever the English language is spoken, was, when living, himself a jest for dulness. According to report, Miller, who was an excellent comic actor, but taciturn and saturnine, "was in the habit of spending his afternoons at the Black Jack, a well-known public-house in Portsmouth Street, Clare Market, which was at that time frequented by most of the respectable tradesmen in the neighbourhood, who, from Joe's imperturbable gravity, whenever any risible saying was recounted, derisively ascribed it to him. After his death, having left his family unprovided for, advantage was taken of this *badinage*. A Mr. Motley, a well-known dramatist of that day, was

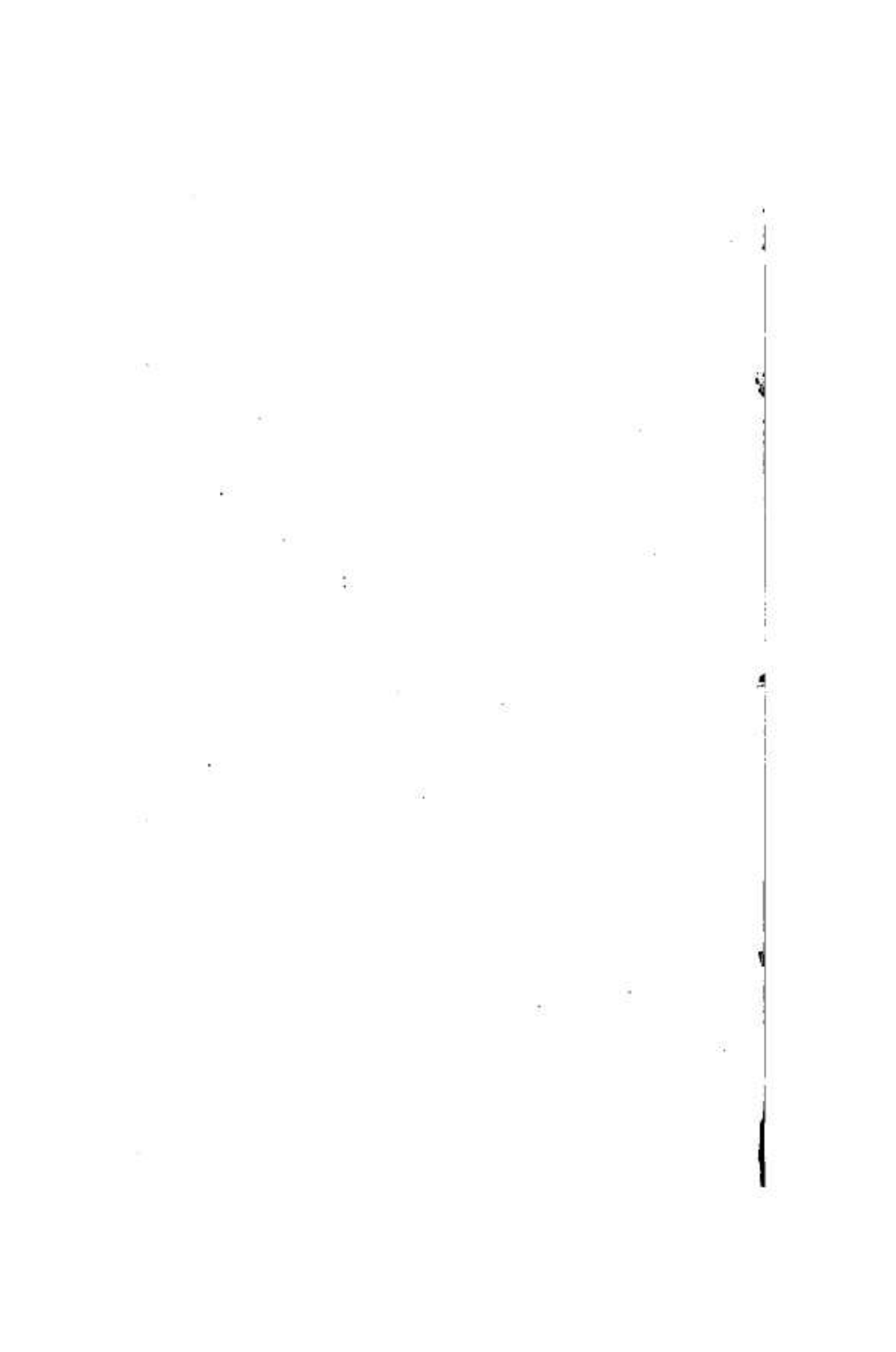
employed to collect all the stray jests, then current on town. Joe Miller's name was prefixed to them, and from that day to this, the man who never uttered a jest, has been the reputed author of every jest, past, present, and to come."

Another strange circumstance connected with this work is, that everybody presumes that he himself and every other person is perfectly familiar with its contents, as if it had been a text-book in our schools; and yet, if the reader will ask his acquaintance, it will appear that not one in five hundred ever set eyes on a copy. It is in consequence of like questioning, that this edition is published. A short time since, a story, and a good one, current in the papers relating to a nobleman, name, date, and place being given, was pronounced, at a large party, in the established phrase, to be an "old Joe." On this, a warm discussion took place, when it came out incidentally, that not one of those present had ever seen the book so familiarly referred to. The fact roused the curiosity of the compiler, and he resolved to procure a copy—this he found to be a difficult matter, and somewhat costly, and therefore he decided on re-publishing it. The first 198 jokes comprise the whole of the genuine edition, such omissions and alterations only having been made, as were required by the greater delicacy observed in modern society and conversation. But that the volume might have some substance, and be a good table or

travelling book, serviceable as well as curious, copious additions have been made from the volumes of *Facetiae* previously and since published, and other sources.

The following is a copy of the title-page to the first edition :—

JOE MILLER'S JESTS; OR, THE WIT'S VADE-MECUM: being a collection of the most brilliant *Jests*; the politest *Repartees*; the most elegant *Bon mots*, and most pleasant short Stories in the *English* language. First carefully collected in the company, and many of them transcribed from the mouth of the Facetious *Gentleman*, whose name they bear; and now set forth and published by his lamentable friend and former companion, Elijah Jenkins, Esq. Most humbly inscribed to those Choice Spirits of the Age, Captain Bodens, Mr. Alexander Pope, Mr. Professor Lacy, Mr. Orator Henley, and Job Baker, the Kettle-Drummer. London: Printed and sold by T. Read, in Dogwell Court, White's Fryars, Fleet Street. MDCCKXXXIX.



JOE MILLER'S JESTS.

1. THE Duke of Atholl, who says more good things than anybody, being behind the scenes the first night of the Beggars' Opera, and meeting Cibber there, Well Colley, said he, how do you like the Beggars' Opera? Why it makes one laugh, my lord, answered he, on the stage; but how will it do in print? O! very well, I'll answer for it, said the duke, if you don't write a preface to it. [*.* See Cibber's preface to Provoked Husband.]

2. There being a great disturbance one night at Drury Lane play-house, Mr. Wilks, coming upon the stage to say something to pacify the audience, had an orange thrown full at him, which he having taken up, making a low bow, This is no civil orange, I think, said he.

3. Joe Miller sitting one day in the window at the Sun Tavern in Clare Street, a fishwoman and her maid passing by, the woman cried, "Buy my souls, buy my maids." Ah! you wicked old creature, said honest Joe, what are you not content to sell your own soul, but you must sell your maid's too?

4. A poor man who had a termagant wife, after a long dispute, in which she was resolved to have the last word, told her, If she spoke one more crooked word, he'd beat her brains out. Why then, ram's-horns, you rogue, said she, if I die for it.

5. A hackney-coachman, who was just set up, had heard that the lawyers used to club their threepence a-piece, four of them, to go to Westminster; and being called by a lawyer at Temple Bar, who, with two others in their gowns, got into his coach, he was bid to drive to Westminster Hall; but the

coachman still holding his door open, as if he waited for more company, one of the gentlemen asked him, why he did not shut the door, and go on? The fellow, scratching his head, cried, You know, master, my fare 's a shilling; I can't go for ninepence.

6. Two free-thinking authors proposed to a bookseller, that was a little decayed in the world, That if he would print their works, they would set him up; and, indeed, they were as good as their word, for in six weeks time he was in the pillory.

7. A gentleman was saying one day at the Tilt Yard Coffee-house, when it rained exceedingly hard, that it put him in mind of the general deluge. Zoons, sir, said an old campaigner, who stood by, who's that? I have heard of all the generals in Europe but him.

8. A certain poet and player, remarkable for his impudence and cowardice, happening many years ago to have a quarrel with Mr. Powel, another player, received from him a smart box on the ear; a few days after, the poetical player having lost his snuff-box, and making strict inquiry if anybody had seen his box, What, said another of the buskined wits, that which George Powel gave you the other night?

9. Gun Jones, who had made his fortune himself, from a mean beginning, happening to have some words with a person who had known him some time, was asked by the other, how he could have the impudence to give himself so many airs, when he knew very well, that he remembered him seven years before with hardly a rag to his back. You lie, sirrah, replied Jones, seven years ago I had nothing but rags to my back.

10. Lord R— having lost fifty pistoles one night at the gaming-table in Dublin, some friends condoling with him upon his ill luck: Faith, said he, I am very well pleased at what I have done; for I have bit them, there is not one pistole that don't want six-pence of weight.

11. A gentleman saying something in praise of Mrs. C—m, who is, without dispute, a good player, though exceeding saucy and exceeding ugly; another said, her face always put him in mind of Mary-bone Park; being desired to explain himself, he said, It was vastly rude, and had not one bit of pale about it.

12. A pragmatistical young fellow, sitting at table over against the learned John Scott, asked him, What difference there was