

THE
PLEASANT HISTORY

OF

POOR ROBIN,

THE

MERRY SÄDLER OF WALDEN.

SHEWING

The Merry Pranks he played during his
Apprenticeship, and how he Tricked
a Rich Miser, &c. &c.

*Very diverting for a Winter-Evening
Fire-side.*



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THE PLEASANT

HISTORY

OF

POOR ROBIN.

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CHAP. I.

The Birth of Poor Robin, how he was bound Apprentice to a Saddler, and what a trick he served his Master.

POOR Robin was born in Saffron-Walden, in the County of Essex, of honest plain parents, who brought him up not as our nice dames do now-a-days, by directing him how much he should eat, but as the fashion was then, full fed with gross meats; so that in a few years he grew a sturdy lad; and, considering his growth and manners, a man might well say better fed than taught. His father being willing he should be able to live in

he world another day, bound him an apprentice to a sadler, one who fitted Poor Robin's humour to a hair; for the master loving drink, he thought it should go hard if the man likewise did not also wet his lips with it. It fortun'd one time his master had brewed a barrel of beer stronger than ordinary, to the drinking of which, Poor Robin one night invites five or six of his comrades, who, before the next morning, drank it all up. Poor Robin to excuse himself, draws the spiggot out, and throws a pail full of small beer and two or three pales full of water under the Tap, and by a wile gets a great sow into the cellar: so the next morning when his master arose all was quiet, and the sow was blamed for what the boar pig had done.

CHAP. II.

How Poor Robin served his Master for sitting up late at night.

Poor Robin's master had gotten a custom that the man did not at all like, which was, that after he had tippled all day sometimes till ten or eleven o'clock at night, he would then come home and fall asleep in a chair; during which time his man

must not go to bed, but wait until his master awakened. Poor Robin to break him of this evil custom, one night when his master came home soundly fuddled, and falling asleep in his chair as usual; so he made a great fire, and then drew his master's legs so near thereto, that his toes touched some of the coals; which being done, he sits him down in the other corner, to observe the sequel. He had not sat long, till his master's shoes began to fry; whereupon he suddenly awakes, and jumps about, as if he had been mad! the man all the while counterfeits himself asleep, and seem'd not to awake for a good space. At last, seeming much to pity his master's misfortune, they went to bed.— But never after that, would his master sit up to sleep in his chair.

CHAP. III.

How Poor Robin served a rich Miser.

In the same town lived a rich Miser, who had wealth enough to have been treasurer of the town, and wisdom answerable to a beadle of a parish: This man, fuller of faith than good works, would neither feast the poor nor relieve their wants; nor hold brotherly unity with any. Poor Robin

being resolved to put a trick upon him, it being then Christmas, made it fit for his purpose; and so counterfeiting himself to be the gentleman's man, about ten or eleven o'clock at night, just when people were in bed, he calls at sundry men's doors, inviting them the next day to his master's (naming the gentleman's name) to dinner. Whereupon the next day appeared the number of two and twenty in their roast-meat apparel; but, contrary to their expectations, finding small preparations towards a dinner, they began to wonder wherefore he had invited them; the gentleman as much wondered wherefore they came. At last the truth was cleared on both sides, some laugh, and some frowned; and so they all departed home.

CHAP. IV.

How Robin Married and set up for himself.

Poor Robin having served out his apprenticeship, would needs set up for himself, and thereupon hires a house and shop: Yet, thinking it inconvenient for him to live alone, and that two heads was better than one, he resolved to do as many others did, marry in haste, though he should repent at leisure. But his fortune was bet-

ter than his deserts; for tho' she was but a homely woman with whom he joined in matrimony, yet she was provident to live in the world, and for his own part he stood not much on beauty, but had rather have a fat purse than a fair wife, seeing there was great profit in the one, and less danger of being made a cuckold by the other; never did a couple more lovingly agree together, than did this pair at first; insomuch that duck and lamb were the ordinary terms he bestowed upon her; whereupon a wit of the town hearing this loving language betwixt them, made this epigram to be read by any that can understand it.

Poor Robin thinks his wife exceeds most dames,
 And calls her duck & lamb with such kind names,
 A duck's a bird, a lamb's a beast we know,
 Poor Robin's wife's a foul beast then I trow.

CHAP. V.

How Poor Robin served one of his Companions a slevinous Trick.

Poor Robin having set up for himself (as you have heard) he would oftentimes travel abroad in the country to get acquaintance amongst the gentry; It happened one time being belated homeward, and his brain intoxicated with the juice of Bacchus, that he took up his quarters in

a country ale-house ; where notwithstanding he had gotten a lusty jug before, yet fell he to drinking of beer and cyder, as if his belly was bottomless. At last, growing sleepy, he went to bed, where it was his chance to be lodged in the same chamber where one of his acquaintances was already in bed : Who as he lay down sooner than Poor Robin, so the next morning was he no sooner got up providing a pot and toast ready against Poor Robin arose, but a foul mischance befel Poor Robin in the meantime, for the wine, beer, and cyder not agreeing in his belly, he very mannerly, sir-reverence beshit the bed : Whereupon not knowing what to do, and being loth to be discredited, a crotchet came into his crown, which he presently put in execution : He takes the stinking sheets from off his own bed and lays them on his friend's, and then takes his and lays them on his own bed ; so, spreading the coverlet as if nothing was amiss, he makes himself ready, and down stairs he goes. No sooner was he below but his friend arrest him at Mr Fox's suit, and by all means would make him pay his groat for being drunk. Poor Robin excused himself as well as he could, and would be judged by the landlord whether

he was fuddled or no: Whilst they were wrangling about paying the groat, the maid went up into the chamber to make the beds; but finding one of them in a pitiful pickle, she came chasing down, calling the man beastly fellow and nasty knave, with other Billingsgate language, such as came first to her tongue's end. The man thought her mad, thus to scold for nothing, till at last she told him plainly he had beslitt the bed. "Nay," quoth Poor Robin, "I will be judged by my landlord, which of us was most fuddled last night." "Truly," said the host, "I can judge no otherwise but that he was, or he would not have played such a nasty trick." Whereupon it was judged by all the company that the man should pay his groat, and Poor Robin got free.

CHAP. VI.

Of a sad Disaster that besel Poor Robin.

It happened on a time, during the late unhappy wars, that all the Essex Trainbands were assembled at Walden, to resist the King's forces, who, in a bravado, had made their excursions as far as Huntingdon. Amongst other military weapons of destruction, they brought a Drake,

which they planted under poor Robin's chamber-window, to be shot off at nine o'Clock at night, for a warning for all people to repair home. Poor Robin and his wife were at that time newly gone to bed; now it is to be understood, the chamber where they lay, went out half over the room below, a rail of about four feet high, being set up the side, to keep them from falling, close by the rail was Poor Robin's bed: The season then being very warm, and Poor Robin apt for venereal exercises, he would needs have a touch upon croquet with his wife; but whilst they were busy at their sport, the Drake was shot off, which poor Sarah, his wife, hearing, with the fright gave a sudden start! and threw Poor Robin quite over the rail, into the room below, and very foully bewrayed the bed. Poor Robin was much bruised in body, and half dead. At length he got up, but his courage was so cool'd with the greatness of the fall, that he had more need of a Doctor than a woman.

CHAP. VII.

How Poor Sarah was cheated of her Metton-pye.

Poor Sarah on a time made a very great

pye, into which she had put a whole loyn of mutton, besides other things, so that it was valued worth five or six shillings at least: This pye she sent to the common oven to bake; which being perceived by three or four merry blades, they resolved if they could possibly to cheat her of the pye, which at last they brought to pass on this manner; at such time as the baker used to draw, two of them went and held poor Sarah in a tale, whilst the other sent one of her neighbour's boys to the baker's with a pail, a napkin and money to pay for the baking. The baker mistrusting no knavery, delivered the boy the pye, which was presently carried to the next alehouse, where, inviting some more of their companions unto them, with much mirth and laughter; and because the jest should be publickly known they set the cryer to work, who published the same in every corner of the town.

CHAP. VIII.

How Poor Robin kissed his wife's Back-side instead of her mouth.

Poor Robin having been out very late one night his understanding being eclipsed, he mistook himself, and went in at the bed's

foot instead of the head of it; where remembering how by his ill husbandry he had offended his wife, to appease her anger he falls to kissing her posteriors imagining it had been her mouth, but finding the platform bigger than his face, asked her the question if her cheeks were swell'd? She for answer returns him a foist, which makes him to ask her again if her breath did stink, whereupon she burst into a very great laughter, let such a crack that the grains flew about his face; whereupon in a great rage turning him on the other side, "you beastly quean, (quoth he) must you spit in my face, the devil himself shall kiss you e'er I'll kiss you again."

CHAP. IX.

How Poor Robin eat Dog-stones instead of Lamb-stones.

As Poor Robin was more addicted to flesh than fish, so of all sorts of flesh he loved a dish of lamb-stones best; a merry disposed companion knowing his appetite, resolved to put a trick upon him; a gentleman of the town who kept a pack of hounds, having gelt his dogs, he gets the stones and with a few sweet-breads presents them to Poor Robin, as a dainty

dish. Poor Robin, very thankful for so great kindness, would not stay, but presently had them drest; making all the haste he could, for fear any should come in, to be partakers with him in his dinner: But having eaten them, and understood the truth, he fell a-speuing, as if his gall would come up with it. Poor Sarah, in like manner, disgorged her stomach, so that who would have seen them, would have concluded them drunk with eating.

CHAP. X.

A witty Jest that Poor Robin gave a Serjeant.

The Blue Regiment of Train-Soldiers being on a time at Walden, one of the Serjeants, to shew his bravery, had gotten a great blue scarf about his middle, being as much, or more, than the Ensign had in his colours. Poor Robin thinking him to be too fine to fight, would venture to put a jeer upon him, and calling him, asked if he wanted any work? "Why," said the Serjeant, "what makes you ask?" Pray your pardon, quoth Poor Robin, "I was mistaken in you; I took you for a shoemaker, because you had gotten your blue apron before you."

CHAP. XI.

How Poor Robin won Five Shillings by kissing his Hostess.

Poor Robin, with some other of his mates, being drining in an ale-house where was an exceeding tall hostess, one of them offered to lay five shillings, (because Poor Robin was low) that he should not kiss her as he stood on the ground.—Poor Robin accepted the challenge, and covered the money. But when he went to kiss her, his mouth would not reach higher than her apron string. Whereupon offering as though he would put his hand under her coats, he made her stoop to put it by; than he clasped his arms round her neck, gave her a kiss, and so won the wager.

CHAP. XII.

Poor Robin's Sayings of ambitious Men.

Poor Robin being in company with some gentleman who were talking of the ambition of some men now-a-days, that would venture the loss of their souls for the sake of a kingdom; yea, (quoth Poor Robin) but the success of many of them is far differ-

ent from king Sauls ; for he seeking asses found a kingdom, and they seeking a kingdom find themselves to be asses.

CHAP. XIII.

Poor Robin's Journey to London.

Poor Robin having never been at London in his life, and being very desirous to see the city, whose fame rang so loud in every man's mouth, he resolv'd to make a journey thither, and spend some time in viewing the rareties of the same ; but because he was unacquainted with the city customs, he got a companion of his to go along with him : No sooner were they past Aldgate, but Poor Robin seeing such a number of signs, he whispered with his friend, "Certainly, (quoth he) they must needs be all drunkards that live in this place. I never saw so many-alehouses together in my life." And thereupon beckoning to his companion, enters one of the shops and calls for a jug of beer ; but they making him acquainted with his error, how they sold no drink, but if he wanted any thing else they could furnish him with it ; he presently without any studying asks them to show him a pair of hedging gloves, whereupon changing their

opinion instead of a fool they took him for a jeering companion: And to fit him for his gloves, had him to the pump and soundly bedrencht him from head to foot: having occasion to go through Birching Lane, and being ask'd by the salesmen, "Country-men, what lack'ye?" "Marry," quoth he, "that which I fear you cannot furnish me withal," and being importuned of them to know what it was: "why," quoth he, "that which you have none of: I want honesty." Night approaching, Poor Robin and his walking mate repaired to their Inn, where, after they had suppt. and drunk five or six jugs of beer with the host of the house, and some of his men, (for inn-keeper's servants drink most of their beer at other men's cost), his friend loving no tobacco, and Poor Robin desiring the heathenish weed, to pass away the time, they agreed among themselves that every one of the company should either tell a tale or sing a song. Poor Robin who first mentioned the same, beginning in this manner,

CHAP. XIV.

A Tale of a Pair of Cards.

Not many ages since, a parson of a country village was accused to a committee,

that he was a great gamester at cards, being addicted thereunto, that he would oft-times play on Sundays: The committee thus informed, sent for the parson to answer this accusation; who receiving the warrant, made no excuse nor delay, but with all haste made his appearance before them; with him also came the informer, to justify his accusation. Being thus met together, the committee began to reprove the parson for being addicted to such a vice, as to be noted for a common player at cards. "Indeed," said the parson, "I am so far from it, that I know not what a pair of cards meaneth." "Sir," quoth the informer, if you please to search his pockets, I believe you will find a pair there at present, for he seldom goeth without such tackling. Whereupon the committee commanding his pockets to be searched, they found a pair of cards there indeed; but the parson denied them to be cards, saying, "They may be cards to you but to me they are an Almanack." And and being demanded how he could make it appear he answered thus: "First," quoth he, "here is as many suits of cards as there be quarters in a year; and as many Court-cards as there be months in a year; and as many cards as there be weeks in a year;

ad as many spots as there be days in a year: Then, when I look upon the King, puts me in mind of the allegiance that owe to my sovereign Lord the King: Looking upon the Queen, puts me in mind of the allegiance that I owe to the Queen: The Ten puts me in mind of the Ten Commandments; The Nine, of the nine muses: The Eight, of the Eight Altitudes: The Seven, of the Seven Liberal Sciences: The Six, of the Six days we ought to labour in: The Five of the Five senses: The Four, of the Four Evangelists: The Three of the Trinity: The Two, of the Two Sacraments: And the Ace, that we ought to worship but one God." Quoth the committee, "If this be all the use you make of them, we can find no fault with you. But, Mr Parson, of all the Cards that you laye nominated, you have forgot the Knave; pray, what use make you of him?" "O Sir, said he, (pointing to his accuser) that is your Worship's informer."

Poor Robin having ended his tale, says his friend, I suppose that was the same Parson that used to read his Littany every day of the week excepting Sundays; and I being a constant hearer of him, learnt it as perfectly as my Pater-Noster.

CHAP. XV.

Poor Robin's Litaney.

From being turned out of doors,
 From town-rats, and ale-house scores,
 From lowsie queans and pocky whores,
 Libera nos.

From taylor's bills and draper's books,
 From sluttish maids and nasty cooks,
 From froward wives and crabbed looks,
 Libera nos.

From breaking pipes, and broken glasses,
 From drinking healths and drunken asses,
 From lying lubbers and lipping lasses,
 Libera nos.

From paying of lawyer's fees,
 From mouldy bread and musty cheese,
 From trotting jades and scorning shea,
 Libera nos.

From fetters, chains, bolts and gyves,
 From pointless needles and broken knives,
 From thievish servants and drunken wives,
 Libera nos.

From taylor's bodkins and butchers pricks,
 From tenpenny nail and headless spikes,
 And from attornies' knavish tricks,
 Libera nos.

From being taken in disguise,
 From believing of a poet's lyes,

And from the devil and the excise,
 Libera nos,
 From brown bread and small beer,
 From being taken stealing deer,
 From all that hath been named here.
 Quesemus te.

The littyany being ended, the tapster comes for his reckning; but Poor Robin made answer that he should do as the rest had done, either tell a tale or sing a song. Says he, "Sing I cannot, but I will tell you how they marry in Scotland, as a Scotch priest told me that lay here, and got me to engage for him to my master for twenty shillings; and he running away, I was forced to pay his score for him."

CHAP. XVI.

A Scotch Marriage.

We don't use to wad in Scotland as you wad in England; Jockey comes to the kirk and takes sir Donkyn by the rocket, and says, "Goodmorn, sir Donkyn," "what's the matter Jockey, what's the matter?" "A wadding, a wadding," says he, "don't you see the hoppers and the skippers, and all the lads of the gang? I'se don't, I'se come to you belyve." Then Sir Donkyn

gangs to the kirk I spee and I spee! Wha a deel do you spee. "Jockey of the high lane, and Jenny of the long cliff; if any know why these twa may not be wadded together, let them now speak or hold their tongue in the deel's name. Jockey wilt thou hae Jenny to thy wadded wife? I say Jockey say after me, Jockey wilt thou hae Jenny to thy wadded wife? forsaking all joons, luberboons, swing-bellied calves, black lips, and blue noses? Ay forsooth. If these twa be not well wadded as e'er I wadded twa these seven years, the deel and St. Andrew part them."

The wedding being ended, all the company went to bed, where we will leave them till the next morning, to relate Poor Robin's perambulation about the city.

CHAP. XVII.

Poor Robin's Perambulation about the city.

No sooner did Apollo begin to appear in the Eastern Horizon, but Poor Robin, shaking off melancholly sleep, his companion to prepare himself for their intended perambulation, and having armed themselves with a pot of nappy ale, they took their first walk to see the Royal Exchange, a most magnificent structure,

built by Sir Thomos Gresham. From
 thence they went to take a view of Lead-
 en-hall; but the exceeding bravery of the
 Exchange had so dimmed the beauty of
 the place, that it was nothing pleasing to
 Poor Robin's eye, he made no tarrying
 here, but went presently down to the
 Tower, where having seen the Lions, and
 from the Wharf taken a superficial view
 of the bridge, as also the ships upon the
 river Thames, he became weary of be-
 holding so many surprising objects; he
 had however far more content in seeing
 the ships, so admirably pleasing to his
 fancy, it was to see how these little pretty
 things hopt about. But lest he should
 take a surfeit with such ravishing delights,
 his friend persuaded him to go to see the
 ancient Cathedral of St. Paul's, being at
 present made a horse-guard by the sol-
 diers; which Poor Robin beholding
 "What a blessed reformation," quoth he,
 "have we here! for in our country, we can
 scarce persuade men to go to church, but
 here come men and horses too." Having
 satisfied himself with the sight of St.
 Paul's, they would in the next place, go
 to visit Westminster, the rather because
 it was at term-time; where beholding so
 great a number of Lawyers in their gowns,

he cried out, "O let us be gone from this place! for if two or three make such a quarrel in our town, certainly there is no abiding here for men in their wit." A country gentleman over-hearing him, "I remember," quoth he, "once I heard a story of a man that went down to hell, wherein he beheld men of all professions, ages and conditions, saving only lawyers, which made him the more to wonder, because he imagined them all there, and asking the devil the reason, he made this reply, 'We have them here, tho' you see them not, but we are forc'd to keep them in a room by themselves, lest they should set all the devils in hell at variance.'" Poor Robin laughed very heartily at this tale, and having now satisfied his inn, and having discharged all reckonings his friend, and he returned home.

CHAP. XVIII.

Many odd Whimsies and Conceits of Poor Robin.

Poor Robin daily frequenting the tavern and ale-house had learned of his companions many drunken whimsies and other odd conceits, as the five properties that belong to any host,—that he must have

the head of a stag, the bag of a nag, the belly of a hog, skip up and down like a frog, and fawn like a dog. As also the four ingredients whereof a woman's tongue is made, *viz.* The sound of a great bell, the wagging of a dog's tail, the shaking of an aspen leaf tempered with running water.

When Poor Robin had gotten a cup in his crown, as it oftentimes happen'd, he could be then playing the poet, and nothing but rhymes could then come out of his mouth; for as one writes,

Poet and pot doth differ but one letter,
And that makes poets love the pot the better.

Amongst other of his conceits, this following comparison was much used by him.

Like a purse that hath no chink in't;
Or a cellar and no drink in't,
Like a jewel never worn,
Or a child untimely born,
Like a song without a foot,
Or a bond and no hand to't,
Such doth she seem unto mine eyes,
That lives a virgin till she dies.

The money doth entice the purse,
The drink in the cellar quenbeth thirst;

The jewel decks if worn it is ;
 The child soon dies, abortive is ;
 The end o' the song, doth sweetest sound ;
 The hand doth make the party bound,
 So she that marries e'er death takes her,
 Answers that for which Nature makes her.

“ Women,” said he, “ are all extremes either two willing, or too wilful ; two forward, or too froward ; too courteous, or too coy ; too friendly, or too fiendly. This made Arminius, a ruler in Carthage, refuse to marry ; saying, ‘ If I marry a wise wife, she will be wilful ; if wealthy, then wanton ; if poor, then peevish ; if beautiful, then proud ; if deformed, then loathsome ; and the least of these is able to kill a thousand men.’ ”

F I N I S.