

**THE DIVERTING HISTORY
OF JOHN BULL AND
BROTHER JONATHAN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649668519

The Diverting History of John Bull and Brother Jonathan by James Kirke Paulding

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Cover @ 2017

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JAMES KIRKE PAULDING

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AND
BROTHER JONATHAN.

BY HECTOR BULL-US.

Paulding's John Bull

NEW EDITION.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,
NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET,
AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE
UNITED STATES.

1835.

AL 2928.15

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THE
DIVERTING HISTORY

OF

JOHN BULL AND BROTHER JONATHAN.

CHAPTER I.

How Squire Bull quarrelled with his youngest Son, Brother Jonathan, and forced him out in the woods; and how the Squire, when Jonathan had cleared away the woods, grew to be very fond of him, and undertook to pick his pockets, but got handsomely rib-roasted for his pains.

JOHN BULL was a choleric old fellow, who held a good manor in the middle of a great millpond, and which, by reason of its being quite surrounded by water, was generally called *Bullock Island*. Bull was an ingenious man, an exceeding good blacksmith, a dexterous cutler, and a notable weaver and pot-baker besides. He also brewed capital porter, ale, and small beer, and was, in fact, a sort of jack of all trades, and good at each. In addition to these, he was a hearty fellow, an excellent bottle-companion, and passably honest as times go.

But what tarnished all these qualities was a

devilish quarrelsome, overbearing disposition, which was always getting him into some scrape or other. The truth is, he never heard of a quarrel going on among his neighbours, but his fingers itched to be in the thickest of them; so that he was hardly ever seen without a broken head, a black eye, or a bloody nose. Such was Squire Bull, as he was commonly called by the country people his neighbours—one of those odd, testy, grumbling, boasting old codgers, that never get credit for what they are, because they are always pretending to be what they are not.

The squire was as tight a hand to deal with in doors as out; sometimes treating his family as if they were not the same flesh and blood, when they happened to differ with him in certain matters. One day he got into a dispute with his youngest son Jonathan, who was familiarly called BROTHER JONATHAN, about whether churches ought to be called churches or meeting-houses; and whether steeples were not an abomination. The squire, either having the worst of the argument, or being naturally impatient of contradiction (I can't tell which), fell into a great passion, and swore he would physic such notions out of the boy's noddle. So he went to some of his *doctors*, and got them to draw up a prescription, made up of *thirty-nine different articles*, many of them bitter enough to some palates. This he tried to make Jonathan swallow; and finding he made villanous wry faces,

and would not do it, fell upon him and beat him like fury. After this, he made the house so disagreeable to him, that Jonathan, though as hard as a pine knot and as tough as leather, could bear it no longer. Taking his gun and his axe, he put himself in a boat, and paddled over the millpond to some new lands to which the squire pretended some sort of claim, intending to settle them, and build a meeting-house without a steeple as soon as he grew rich enough.

When he got over, Jonathan found that the land was quite in a state of nature, covered with wood, and inhabited by nobody but wild beasts. But being a lad of mettle, he took his axe on one shoulder and his gun on the other, marched into the thickest of the wood, and clearing a place, built a log hut. Pursuing his labours, and handling his axe like a notable woodman, he in a few years cleared the land, which he laid out into *thirteen good farms*: and building himself a fine frame house, about half finished, began to be quite snug and comfortable.

But Squire Bull, who was getting old and stingy, and besides, was in great want of money, on account of his having lately been made to pay swingeing damages for assaulting his neighbours and breaking their heads—the squire, I say, finding Jonathan was getting well to do in the world, began to be very much troubled about his welfare: so he demanded that Jonathan should pay him a

good rent for the land which he had cleared and made good for something. He trumped up I know not what claim against him, and under different pretences managed to pocket all Jonathan's honest gains. In fact, the poor lad had not a shilling left for holyday occasions; and had it not been for the filial respect he felt for the old man, he would certainly have refused to submit to such impositions.

But for all this, in a little time, Jonathan grew up to be very large of his age, and became a tall, stout, double-jointed, broad-footed cub of a fellow, awkward in his gait, and simple in his appearance; but showing a lively, shrewd look, and having the promise of great strength when he should get his full growth. He was rather an odd-looking chap, in truth, and had many queer ways; but everybody that had seen John Bull saw a great likeness between them, and swore he was John's own boy, and a true chip of the old block. Like the old squire, he was apt to be blustering and saucy, but in the main was a peaceable sort of careless fellow, that would quarrel with nobody if you only let him alone. He used to dress in homespun trousers with a huge bagging seat, which seemed to have nothing in it. This made people to say he had no *bottom*; but whoever said so lied, as they found to their cost whenever they put Jonathan in a passion. He always wore a linsey-woolsey coat, that did not above half cover his breech, and the sleeves of

which were so short that his hand and wrist came out beyond them, looking like a shoulder of mutton. All which was in consequence of his growing so fast that he outgrew his clothes.

While Jonathan was outgrowing his strength in this way, Bull kept on picking his pockets of every penny he could scrape together; till at last, one day when the squire was even more than usually pressing in his demands, which he accompanied with threats, Jonathan started up in a furious passion, and threw the **TEA-KETTLE** at the old man's head. The choleric Bull was hereupon exceedingly enraged; and after calling the poor lad an undutiful, ungrateful, rebellious rascal, seized him by the collar, and forthwith a furious scuffle ensued. This lasted a long time; for the squire, though in years, was a capital boxer, and of most excellent bottom. At last, however, Jonathan got him under, and before he would let him up, made him sign a paper giving up all claim to the farms, and acknowledging the fee-simple to be in Jonathan for ever.