

Classic Poetry Series

John Arbuthnot

- poems -

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The Occasion of the Law Suit. chapter I

I need not tell you of the great quarrels that have happened in our neighbourhood since the death of the late Lord Strutt; how the parson and a cunning attorney got him to settle his estate upon his cousin Philip Baboon, to the great disappointment of his cousin Esquire South. Some stick not to say that the parson and the attorney forged a will; for which they were well paid by the family of the Baboons. Let that be as it will, it is matter of fact that the honour and estate have continued ever since in the person of Philip Baboon.

Late King of Spain.

* Cardinal Portocarero.

You know that the Lord Strutts have for many years been possessed of a very great landed estate, well conditioned, wooded, watered, with coal, salt, tin, copper, iron, etc., all within themselves; that it has been the misfortune of that family to be the property of their stewards, tradesmen, and inferior servants, which has brought great incumbrances upon them; at the same time, their not abating of their expensive way of living has forced them to mortgage their best manors. It is credibly reported that the butcher's and baker's bill of a Lord Strutt that lived two hundred years ago are not yet paid.

When Philip Baboon came first to the possession of the Lord Strutt's estate, his tradesmen, as is usual upon such occasions, waited upon him to wish him joy and bespeak his custom. The two chief were John Bull,* the clothier, and Nic. Frog, * the linendraper. They told him that the Bulls and Frogs had served the Lord Strutts with draperyware for many years; that they were honest and fair dealers; that their bills had never been questioned; that the Lord Strutts lived generously, and never used to dirty their fingers with pen, ink, and counters; that his lordship might depend upon their honesty that they would use him as kindly as they had done his predecessors. The young lord seemed to take all in good part, and dismissed them with a deal of seeming content, assuring them he did not intend to change any of the honourable maxims of his predecessors.

The first letters of congratulation from King William and the States of Holland upon King Philip's accession to the crown of Spain.

* The English.

** The Dutch.

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