

A close-up, warm-toned photograph of a woman's face, focusing on her closed eyes and forehead. Her hair is dark and pulled back. The lighting is soft and intimate, creating a serene and contemplative mood. The background is blurred, showing hints of other people in a similar setting.

***JOHN  
ARBUTHNOT***

***THE HISTORY  
OF JOHN  
BULL***

**John Arbuthnot**

# **The History of John Bull**

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POSTSCRIPT.

# **INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY.**

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This is the book which fixed the name and character of John Bull on the English people. Though in one part of the story he is thin and long nosed, as a result of trouble, generally he is suggested to us as "ruddy and plump, with a pair of cheeks like a trumpeter," an honest tradesman, simple and straightforward, easily cheated; but when he takes his affairs into his own hands, acting with good plain sense, knowing very well what he wants done, and doing it.

The book was begun in the year 1712, and published in four successive groups of chapters that dealt playfully, from the Tory point of view, with public affairs leading up to the Peace of Utrecht. The Peace urged and made by the Tories was in these light papers recommended to the public. The last touches in the parable refer to the beginning of the year 1713, when the Duke of Ormond separated his troops from those of the Allies and went to receive Dunkirk as the stipulated condition of cessation of arms. After the withdrawal of the British troops, Prince Eugene was defeated by Marshal Villars at Denain, and other reverses followed. The Peace of Utrecht was signed on the 31st of March.

Some chapters in this book deal in like manner, from the point of view of a good-natured Tory of Queen Anne's time, with the feuds of the day between Church and Dissent. Other chapters unite with this topic a playful account of another chief political event of the time—the negotiation leading to the Act of Union between England and Scotland,

which received the Royal Assent on the 6th of March, 1707; John Bull then consented to receive his "Sister Peg" into his house. The Church, of course, is John Bull's mother; his first wife is a Whig Parliament, his second wife a Tory Parliament, which first met in November, 1710.

This "History of John Bull" began with the first of its four parts entitled "Law is a Bottomless Pit, exemplified in the case of Lord Strutt, John Bull, Nicholas Frog, and Lewis Baboon, who spent all they had in a Law-suit." For Law put War—the War of the Spanish Succession; for lawyers, soldiers; for sessions, campaigns; for verdicts, battles won; for Humphry Hocus the attorney, Marlborough the general; for law expenses, war expenses; and for aim of the whole, to aid the Tory policy of peace with France. A second part followed, entitled "John Bull in his Senses;" the third part was called "John Bull still in his Senses;" and the fourth part, "Lewis Baboon turned Honest, and John Bull Politician." The four parts were afterwards arranged into two, as they are here reprinted, and published together as "The History of John Bull," with a few notes by the author which sufficiently explain its drift.

The author was John Arbuthnot, a physician, familiar friend of Pope and Swift, whom Pope addressed as "Friend to my life, which did not you prolong,  
The world had wanted many an idle song;"

and of whom Swift said, that "he has more wit than we all have, and his humanity is equal to his wit." "If there were a dozen Arbuthnots in the world," said Swift, "I would burn 'Gulliver's Travels.'"

Arbuthnot was of Swift's age, born in 1667, son of a Scotch Episcopal clergyman, who lost his living at the



Revolution. His sons—all trained in High Church principles—left Scotland to seek their fortunes; John came to London and taught mathematics. He took his degree of Doctor of Medicine at St. Andrews in 1696; found use for mathematics in his studies of medicine; became a Fellow of the Royal Society; and being by chance at Epsom when Queen Anne's husband was taken ill, prescribed for him so successfully that he was made in 1705 Physician Extraordinary, and upon the occurrence of a vacancy in 1709 Physician in Ordinary, to the Queen. Swift calls him her favourite physician. In 1710 he was admitted Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians. That was Arbuthnot's position in 1712-13 when, at the age of forty-five, he wrote this "History of John Bull." He was personal friend of the Ministers whose policy he supported, and especially of Harley, Earl of Oxford, the Sir Roger of the History.

After Queen Anne's death, and the coming of the Whigs to power, Arbuthnot lost his office at Court. But he was the friend and physician of all the wits; himself without literary ambition, allowing friends to make what alterations they pleased in pieces that he wrote, or his children to make kites of them. A couple of years before his death he suffered deeply from the loss of the elder of his two sons. He was himself afflicted then with stone, and retired to Hampstead to die. "A recovery," he wrote to Swift, "is in my case and in my age impossible; the kindest wish of my friends is euthanasia." He died in 1735.

# AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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When I was first called to the office of historiographer to John Bull, he expressed himself to this purpose:—"Sir Humphrey Polesworth,\* I know you are a plain dealer; it is for that reason I have chosen you for this important trust; speak the truth and spare not." That I might fulfil those his honourable intentions, I obtained leave to repair to, and attend him in his most secret retirements; and I put the journals of all transactions into a strong box, to be opened at a fitting occasion, after the manner of the historiographers of some eastern monarchs: this I thought was the safest way; though I declare I was never afraid to be chopped\*\* by my master for telling of truth. It is from those journals that my memoirs are compiled: therefore let not posterity a thousand years hence look for truth in the voluminous annals of pedants, who are entirely ignorant of the secret springs of great actions; if they do, let me tell them they will be nebused.\*\*\*

\* A Member of Parliament, eminent for a certain cant in his conversation, of which there is a good deal in this book.

\*\* A cant word of Sir Humphrey's.

\*\*\* Another cant word, signifying deceived.

With incredible pains have I endeavoured to copy the several beauties of the ancient and modern historians; the impartial temper of Herodotus, the gravity, austerity, and strict morals of Thucydides, the extensive knowledge of Xenophon, the sublimity and grandeur of Titus Livius; and to avoid the careless style of Polybius, I have borrowed

considerable ornaments from Dionysius Halicarnasseus, and Diodorus Siculus. The specious gilding of Tacitus I have endeavoured to shun. Mariana, Davila, and Fra. Paulo, are those amongst the moderns whom I thought most worthy of imitation; but I cannot be so disingenuous, as not to own the infinite obligations I have to the "Pilgrim's Progress" of John Bunyan, and the "Tenter Belly" of the Reverend Joseph Hall.

From such encouragement and helps, it is easy to guess to what a degree of perfection I might have brought this great work, had it not been nipped in the bud by some illiterate people in both Houses of Parliament, who envying the great figure I was to make in future ages, under pretence of raising money for the war,\* have padlocked all those very pens that were to celebrate the actions of their heroes, by silencing at once the whole university of Grub Street. I am persuaded that nothing but the prospect of an approaching peace could have encouraged them to make so bold a step. But suffer me, in the name of the rest of the matriculates of that famous university, to ask them some plain questions: Do they think that peace will bring along with it the golden age? Will there be never a dying speech of a traitor? Are Cethegus and Catiline turned so tame, that there will be no opportunity to cry about the streets, "A Dangerous Plot?" Will peace bring such plenty that no gentleman will have occasion to go upon the highway, or break into a house? I am sorry that the world should be so much imposed upon by the dreams of a false prophet, as to imagine the Millennium is at hand. O Grub Street! thou fruitful nursery of towering geniuses! How do I lament thy downfall? Thy ruin could never be meditated by any who

meant well to English liberty. No modern lyceum will ever equal thy glory: whether in soft pastorals thou didst sing the flames of pampered apprentices and coy cook maids; or mournful ditties of departing lovers; or if to Maeonian strains thou raisedst thy voice, to record the stratagems, the arduous exploits, and the nocturnal scalade of needy heroes, the terror of your peaceful citizens, describing the powerful Betty or the artful Picklock, or the secret caverns and grottoes of Vulcan sweating at his forge, and stamping the queen's image on viler metals which he retails for beef and pots of ale; or if thou wert content in simple narrative, to relate the cruel acts of implacable revenge, or the complaint of ravished virgins blushing to tell their adventures before the listening crowd of city damsels, whilst in thy faithful history thou intermingledst the gravest counsels and the purest morals. Nor less acute and piercing wert thou in thy search and pompous descriptions of the works of nature; whether in proper and emphatic terms thou didst paint the blazing comet's fiery tail, the stupendous force of dreadful thunder and earthquakes, and the unrelenting inundations. Sometimes, with Machiavelian sagacity, thou unravelledst intrigues of state, and the traitorous conspiracies of rebels, giving wise counsel to monarchs. How didst thou move our terror and our pity with thy passionate scenes between Jack Catch and the heroes of the Old Bailey? How didst thou describe their intrepid march up Holborn Hill? Nor didst thou shine less in thy theological capacity, when thou gavest ghostly counsels to dying felons, and didst record the guilty pangs of Sabbath breakers. How will the noble arts of John Overton's\*\*

painting and sculpture now languish? where rich invention, proper expression, correct design, divine attitudes, and artful contrast, heightened with the beauties of Clar. Obscur., embellished thy celebrated pieces, to the delight and astonishment of the judicious multitude! Adieu, persuasive eloquence! the quaint metaphor, the poignant irony, the proper epithet, and the lively simile, are fled for ever! Instead of these, we shall have, I know not what! The illiterate will tell the rest with pleasure.

\* Act restraining the liberty of the press, etc.

\*\* The engraver of the cuts before the Grub Street papers.

I hope the reader will excuse this digression, due by way of condolence to my worthy brethren of Grub Street, for the approaching barbarity that is likely to overspread all its regions by this oppressive and exorbitant tax. It has been my good fortune to receive my education there; and so long as I preserved some figure and rank amongst the learned of that society, I scorned to take my degree either at Utrecht or Leyden, though I was offered it gratis by the professors in those universities.

And now that posterity may not be ignorant in what age so excellent a history was written (which would otherwise, no doubt, be the subject of its inquiries), I think it proper to inform the learned of future times, that it was compiled when Louis XIV. was King of France, and Philip his grandson of Spain; when England and Holland, in conjunction with the Emperor and the Allies, entered into a war against these two princes, which lasted ten years, under the management of the Duke of Marlborough, and was put to a conclusion by

the Treaty of Utrecht, under the ministry of the Earl of Oxford, in the year 1713.

Many at that time did imagine the history of John Bull, and the personages mentioned in it, to be allegorical, which the author would never own. Notwithstanding, to indulge the reader's fancy and curiosity, I have printed at the bottom of the page the supposed allusions of the most obscure parts of the story.

# **THE HISTORY OF JOHN BULL.**

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# CHAPTER I. The Occasion of the Law Suit.

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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.