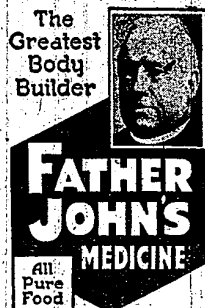


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In the  
Days  
of Poor  
Richard

by  
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"A MEAN CUSS"

**SYNOPSIS.**—Solomon Blinks, veteran scout and interpreter, and his young companion, Jack Irons, passing through Horse Valley, New York, in September, 1776, to warn the British of an Indian uprising, rescue from a band of redskins the wife and daughter of Colonel Hare of England. Jack distinguishes himself in the fight and later rescues Margaret Hare from the river. Jack and Margaret fall in love. On reaching Port Stanwix, Colonel Hare says both are too young to marry. The Hare family sail for England, and the Irons family move to Albany. Unrest grows in the colonies because of the oppressive measures of the English government. Ben and Jack visit Boston, in November, 1776. Jack goes to Philadelphia and works in Benjamin Franklin's printing plant. Nearly three years later Margaret writes him from London, reminding him that her youth is passing and saying she has accepted to Doctor Franklin. Blinks has received a letter from Washington to be carried across the ocean and Jack sails with him. Arriving in England, Blinks is arrested, but Jack has the letter and proceeds to London. Jack delivers the papers to Franklin in London. Blinks is released and joins them in the great city. Jack orders fashionable clothes. Jack and Margaret meet and are more in love than ever, but Colonel Hare is not eager for the marriage. Franklin's efforts to obtain release of the Irons from the colonies are futile. He evades the attempt of the king's men to "tow him into port."

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Then said Lady Howe: "I wish, my brother Franklin, that you were to be sent thither. I should like that much better than General Howe's going to command the army there."

A rather tense moment followed. Franklin broke his silence by saying in a gentle tone:

"I think, madame, they should provide the general with more honorable employment. I beg that your ladyship will not misjudge me. I am not capable of taking an office from this government while it is acting with so much hostility toward my country."

"The ministers have the opinion that you can compose the situation if you will," Lord Howe declared. "Many of us have unbounded faith in your ability. I would not think of trying to influence your judgment by a selfish motive, but certainly you are, for reason, expect and reward which it is in the power of the government to bestow."

Then came an answer which should have been a surprise. One of the great credits of human nature is that it is especially those of English blood, should feel a certain pride in it. The answer was:

"Your lordship, I am not looking for rewards, but only for justice."

"Let us try to agree as to what is the justice for the matter," Howe answered. "Will you not draft a plan on which you would be willing to cooperate?"

"That I will be glad to do."

Persisting in his misjudgment, Howe suggested:

"As you have friends here and constituents in America to keep well with, perhaps it would better not be your handwriting. Let it to Lady Howe and she will copy it and return the original."

Then said the sturdy old Yankee: "I desire, my friends, that there shall be no secrecy about it."

Lord and Lady Howe showed signs of great disappointment as he bade them good night and begged to be sent to his room.

Howe was not willing to leave a stone unturned. He could not dismiss the notion from his mind that the purchase could be effected if the bid were raised. He drew the Doctor aside and said:

"We do not expect your assistance without proper consideration. I shall insist upon generous and ample appointments for the men you take with you and especially for you as well as a firm promise of subsequent rewards."

What crown had he in mind for the white and tenebrous brow of the man who stood before him? Beneath that brow was a new type of statesman, born of the hardships and perils and high faith of a new world, and then there lay the man of the old world, the soul of the past and the soul of the future—a moment was, come then which there had been no greater in human history. In America, France and England the cocks had been crowing and now the first light dawned of a new day fell upon the figure of the man who in honor and understanding towered above his fellows. Now, for a moment, on the character of this

man the unfathomable plan of God for future ages would seem to have been resting.

In his sixty-eight years he had discovered, among other things, the vanity of wealth and splendor. It was no more to him than the idle wind. There were his exact words as he stood with a gentle smile on his face: "If you wish to use me, give me the propositions and dismiss all thoughts of rewards from your mind. They would destroy the influence you propose to use."

The old gentleman climbed the great staircase and went to his chamber, while Lord Howe was, no doubt, communicating the result of his interview to his other guests. There were those among them who freely predicted that war was inevitable.

## CHAPTER VIII

An Appointment and a Challenge.

Solomon Blinks had left the city with the intention to visit Sir Jeffrey Amherst in his country seat near London. Sir Benjamin had taken Jack to dine with him at two of his clubs and after dining they had gone to see the great actor Robert Benney as Malvolio and the comedian Dodd as Sir Andrew Aguecheek. The Britisher had been most polite, but had seemed studiously to avoid mention of the subject nearest the heart of the young man. After that the latter was invited to a revel and a cock fight, but declined the honor and went to spend an evening with his friend, the philosopher. For days Franklin had been shut in with gout. Jack had found him in his room with one of his feet wrapped in bandages and resting on a chair.

"I am glad you came, my son," said the "good Doctor." "I am in need of better company than this foot. Sol-

And here is mine, said Jack.



tude is like water—good for a dip, but you cannot live in it. (Margaret has been here trying to give me comfort, although she needs it more for herself.)

"Margaret" the boy exclaimed. "Why does she need comfort?"

"Oh, largely on your account, my son! Her father is obdurate and the cause is clear to me. This courtship of yours is taking an international aspect."

"I only fear that I may not be able to provide for her in a suitable manner," said Jack.

"Oh, you are well off," said the philosopher. "You have some capital and recognized talent and occupation for it. When I reached Philadelphia I had an empty stomach and also a Dutch dollar, a few pennies, two soiled shirts and a pair of dirty stockings in my pockets. It may be the case with you, but I had a family before I was as well off as you are."

As Jack was saying good night to his venerable friend the latter remarked:

"I shall go to Sir John Pringle's in the morning for advice. He is a noted physician. My man will be having a day off. Could you go with me on a tent?"

"Gladly," said Jack.

"Then I shall pick you up at your lodgings. You will see your rival at Pringle's. He is at home on leave and has been going to Sir John's office every Tuesday morning at ten-thirty with his father, General Clarke, a gruff, gouty old hero of the French and Indian wars and an aggressive Tory. He is forever teasing and goading the Whigs. It may be the only chance you will have to see that rival of yours. He is a handsome lad."

Doctor Franklin, with his crutch beside him in the cab, called for his young friend at the hour appointed.

The office of the doctor baronet was on the first floor of a large building in Gough square, Fleet street. A number of gentlemen sat in comfortable chairs in a large waiting room.

"Sir John will see you in a moment, sir," an attendant said to Doctor Franklin as they entered. The moment was a very long one.

At last the door to the private room of the great physician creaked on its hinges with a kind of groan and he came out accompanied by a limping patient.

"Wait here for a minute—a gout minute," said Franklin to his young friend. "When Pringle dismisses me, I will present you."

Jack sat and waited while the room filled with ruddy, crochey gentlemen supported by canes or crutches—elderly, old and of middle age. Among those of the latter class was a giant of a man, erect and dignified, accompanied by a big blond youngster in a lieutenant's uniform. He sat down and began to talk with another patient of the troubles in America.

"I see the 4-4 Yankees have thrown another cargo of tea overboard," said he in a tone of anger. "This time it was in Cape Cod. We must give these Yankees a lesson."

Jack smiled now that here, was the aggressive Tory general or whom the Doctor had spoken and that the young man was his son.

"I am glad to see a costly business sending men to fight across three thousand miles of sea," said the other. "Bosh! There is not one Yankee in a hundred that has the courage of a British grenadier."

With a thousand British grenadiers, I would undertake to go from one end of America to another and amputate the heads of the males, partly by force and partly by coaxing."

A laugh followed these insulting words. Jack from his seat quickly approached the man who had uttered them. The young American was angry, but he managed to say with good composure:

"I am an American, sir, and I demand a retraction of those words or a chance to match my courage against yours."

A murmur of surprise greeted his challenge.

The Britisher turned quickly with color mounting to his brow and surveyed the sturdy form of the young man.

"I take back nothing that I say," he declared.

"Then, in behalf of my slandered countrymen, I demand the right to fight you or any Britisher who has the courage to take up your quarrel."

Jack from his seat quickly approached the man who had uttered them. The young American was angry, but he managed to say with good composure:

"I will take up your quarrel, sir. Here is my card."

"And here is mine," said Jack. "When will you be at home?"

"At noon tomorrow."

"Some friend of mine will call upon you," Jack assured the other.

A look of surprise came to the face of the lieutenant as he surveyed the card in his hand. Jack was prepared for the name he read which was that of Lionel Clarke.

That evening Solomon arrived with Preston. Jack told them in detail of the unfortunate event of the morning. Solomon whistled while his face began to get ready for a spot.

"Neviations!" he exclaimed. "Here's a sharp shell! I am to be 'tended to' for I take the water."

"Clarke is full of heartiness and vinegar," said Preston. "He was like that in America. He could make more trouble in ten minutes than a regiment could mend in a year. He was what you would call a mean cuss. But for him and Lord Cornwallis, I should be back in the service. They blame me for the present posture of affairs in America."

"Jack, I'm glad that young pup ain't me," said Solomon. "That never was a man better calculated to please a friend or hurt an enemy. If he was to say please I guess that ol' sling of yours would be a cut above an' I ain't no idee he could stir a miant in front of your hanger."

"It's bad business, and especially for you," said Preston. "Duelling is not so much in favor here as in France. Of course there are duds, but the best people in England are set against the practice. You would be sure to get the worst of it. The old general is a favorite of the King. He is booked for knighthood. If you were to tell his son in the present state of feeling here, your neck would be in danger. If you were to injure him you would have to make a lucky escape, or go to prison. It is not a pleasant outlook for one who is engaged to an English girl. He has a great advantage over you."

"Ye shoot quick, Jack, an' mebbe that's what saved ye."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Peculiar Bark on Tree

The characteristic of the shagbark hickory from which it derives its name, is the peculiar manner in which the bark is attached to the trunk, says the American Tree Association of Washington. This is a light gray bark from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in thickness. It separates from the trunk in thick strips from a few inches in length to two to three feet and from it is its insulating quality. These strips retain their attachment to the tree at the middle and usually curl up at each end, giving a decidedly rough and shaggy appearance to the trunk.

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### Stitches and Stitches

Mrs. Lafferty—Tin stitches did th' doctor have to put in me onld man after that fight w' them policemen last night!

Mrs. O'Hara—Tin, was it, only tin? Sure, when th' doctor seen me poor husband carried in this mornin' he sez, sez he, 'Do there me no vin here wid such a ting as a sewing machine!'

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More than 1,000,000 years would be required for all the water of the earth's seas to pour over the falls of Niagara, according to one statistician.

**Fruitful Day**  
Tommy—What did yer have ter eat on de picnic, Mike?  
Mike—Fried chicken, lemonade, two kinds of pie, tea cream with strawberries on it, and the minister's cake when he was returnin' home.

When a woman goes shopping the pitch of her voice depends on what she is asking for.



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