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# The Perpetual Almanack

Author Unknown

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# THE PERPETUAL ALMANACK,

Or, GENTLEMAN SOLDIER'S PRAYER BOOK.



Showing how one Richard Middleton was taken before the Mayor of the city he was in, for using Cards in Church during Divine Service; being a Droll, Merry, and Humorous Account of an odd affair that happened to a private Soldier in the 60th Regiment of Foot.



THE serjeant commanded his party to the church, and when the parson had ended his prayer, he took his text; and all of them that had a Bible, pulled it out to find the text, but this soldier had neither Bible, Almanack, nor common Prayer Book, but he put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a pack of Cards, and spread them before him as he sat, while the parson was preaching, he first kept looking at one card and then at another. The serjeant of the company saw him, and said, Richard, put up your cards, for this is no place for them—never mind that, said the soldier, for you have no business with me here.

When the parson had ended his sermon, and all was over, the soldiers repaired to the church-yard, and the commanding officer gave the word of command to fall in, which they did. The serjeant of the city came and took the man prisoner. Man, you are my prisoner, said he. Sir, said the soldier, what have I done that I am your prisoner?—You have play'd a game of cards in the church. No, said the soldier, I have not play'd a game, for I only looked at a pack. No matter for that, you are my prisoner. Where must we go said the soldier. You must go before the mayor said the serjeant.

So he took him before the mayor, and when they came to the mayor's house, he was at dinner. When he had dined, he came to them and said—well, serjeant, what do you want with me? I have brought a soldier before your honour for playing at cards in the church. What! that soldier? Yes. Well, soldier, what have you to say for yourself? Much sir, I hope. Well and good, but if you have not you shall be punished the worst that ever man was. Sir, said the soldier, I have been five weeks upon the march, and have but little to subsist on, and am without either Bible, Almanack, or common Prayer Book, or anything but a pack of cards. I hope to satisfy your honour of the purity of my intention.

Then the soldier pulled out of his pocket the pack of cards, which he spread before the mayor, and then began with the ace.

When I see the ace, said he, it puts me in mind that there is one God only; and when I see the deuce, it puts me in mind of the Father and the Son; when I see the trey, it puts me in mind of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; when I see the four, it puts me in mind of the four Evangelists that preached the gospel, viz:—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; when I see the five, it puts me in mind of the five wise virgins, that trimmed their lamps; there were ten, but five were foolish, who were shut out, when I see the six, it puts me in mind that in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth; when I see the seven, it puts me in mind that the seventh day God rested from all the works which he had created and made, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it; when I see the eight, it puts me in

mind of the eight righteous persons that were saved when God drowned the world, viz:—Noah, his wife, three sons and their wives; when I see the nine it puts me in mind of the nine lepers that were cleansed by our Saviour, there were ten, but nine never returned God thanks; when I see the ten, it puts me in mind of the ten Commandments that God gave Moses on Mount Sina, on the two tables of stone.

He took the knave and laid it aside.

When I see the queen, it puts me in mind of the Queen of Sheba, who came from the furthest parts of the world to hear the wisdom of King Solomon, and who was as wise a woman as he was a man, for she brought fifty boys and fifty girls, all clothed in boys' apparel, to show before King Solomon, for him to tell which were boys and which were girls, but he could not until he called for water for them to wash themselves, the girls washed up to their elbows, and the boys only up to their wrist, so King Solomon told by that; and also of Queen Victoria to pray for her. And when I see the king, it puts me in mind of the great King of Heaven and Earth, which is God Almighty.

Well said the mayor, you have given a very good description of all the cards except one, which is lacking. Which is that? said the soldier. The knave said the mayor. Oh, I can give your honour a good description of that, if your honour won't be angry. No I will not, says the mayor, if you will not term me the knave.

Well, said the soldier, the greatest that I know of is the serjeant of the city, that brought me here. I don't know, said the mayor, that he is the greatest knave, but I am sure he is the greatest fool.

I shall now show your honour how I use the cards as an Almanack. You certainly are a clever fellow, said the mayor, but I think you'll have a hard matter to make that appear.

When I count how many spots there are in a pack of cards I find there are three hundred and sixty-five, there are so many days in the year.

Stop, said the mayor, that's a mistake. I grant it, said the soldier, but as I have never yet seen an Almanack that was thoroughly correct in all points, it would have been impossible for me to imitate an Almanack exactly without a mistake. Your observations are very correct, said the mayor, go on. When I count how many cards there are in a pack, I find there are fifty-two; there are so many weeks in the year; when I count how many tricks there are in a pack, I find there are thirteen, there are so many months in the year. You see sir, that this pack of cards is a Bible, Almanack, common Prayer Book, and Pack of Cards to me.

Then the mayor called for a loaf of bread, a piece of cheese, and a pot of good beer, and gave to the soldier a piece of money, bidding him to go about his business, saying he was the cleverest man he had ever seen.

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