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Whistlewell, Roger (?-?)

**[Letter specimen in the Southwestern dialect]
(1733)**

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Grubstreet Journal, Oct. 18 No. 199

Vor master zecretary Baviz, Asq; at the zine of the Pig-Asses, in Grub-street, Lundun.

Thick present, with care.

Taunton Dean, the zeventh dat of October, one thousand zeven hundred, and three and thirty.

If your worship pleaseth,

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Che wou'd beg yaur divershon vor zaying, what 'cham going to convorme yaur worship conzarning. But virst and voremost, 'che must zay one thing (and that's not two) and that iz, az touching yaur Jurnal, that comes here onze a week: It iz zo witty, and zo huge clever, that aul the tawne liketh it, and zay, that zartainly yaur worship muzt be vaztly learned: and when 'che readeth it to my wif: Joane, we both laff till we are welly ready to bepiz aur zelves for joy. But that iz not what 'che writeth about to yaur worship, only that, by the by: ant that to make zort o' my story, 'che must convorm ye, that my spouze and me have gotten betwizt uz one only zon, who is kalled Nathan, and who commeth wentry tree next grass: and thoft 'che zayeth it, he iz az sprunny a buoy of his age as onny iz in the tawne of Taunton Deane, or vive miles round it. Now az he iz my only cheeld, 'che hath broft'n up a schollard: an 'che thoft vor to zend 'n to the versity at Kambridge, and make a doctor of visick of 'n; but only 'che thoft, he had too much learning vor that; vor he has gon thro' In speech, Qui, que, quod, Di, do and dum, and all those kind of thingz, and haz lately learn'd, Ass in per centum, and Property que marrowbuz, and Queen Janus; and hiz measter zayeth, he can learn'n no varder. Bezidez al thiz, he can write, zo as vor many People to read it; and can vigger, and canst countz main well; he understands distraction, and part of the multiplication table, zo far as vour times vour, and zeven times two, which you'll zay iz a vilthy deal to learn, in zix weeks times. The buoy has partz, and a woundy memory; vor lazt zabbath day, a stranger preach'd to aur church, and took hiz text out of the gozpell of Bell and the dragon, and said a deale about Genesis and the Revelations, and about Belzhazzer ('che thinkz hiz name waz) King of Babbleon, and zaid zeveral things about circumcission, and Zimon Maguz, and Lott's wife, and Jerico, and Jerusalem; and 'che heard Mr Wimbleton, and Mr Peppercorn zay, that they never herd such a braave zarmond in al their borne dayez. Vor my own part, 'che believeth, 'twas a special good one, vor it mad the old women cry: but what 'che bringeth the story vor, iz, that Nathan took the hed, and tailez of it, in his memory, and repeated a good deal ot it extrumpere, that evening at the dog and duck, ('che believeth) to ten volk, that were smoaking and drinking there.

Now may hap, Zir, what does ael this magnify? Why, if you will hace patience, 'che will tell ye; Nathan knoweth hiz own accomplishmentz, that he haz learning, and aul that; and haz had hiz nativity cazt in the coffee groundz by a wife woman, that telleth

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vortunes, and she zayeth, Nathan iz boarn to great varment, if he goeth to Lundun. Zo now nothing runneth in his head, but Lundun, Lundun; and ov all thingz, he hankereth after being a zecretary, the cheeld hath a proud stomach (he taketh avter his mother vor that) and aymeth at great thingz. He hath now an offer to be zecretary to a brick kilner, (vor as he iz known to have wit at will, and to be a schollard, every body iz vor katching at'n) but nothing will zarve hiz turn, but to Lundun he will go; or if we won't let'n do that, he voweth most bitterly, that he will go to zea. Now you muzt know, that him is my wivez doating piece, and she feareth if he should go to zea, that him would be a captain, and zo be kill'd as dead as a doare naile. And whereas 'cham convorm'd, that yaur worship

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iz zoone to be wedded, and keep a coach, and to joine with Mrs Mambrino to cut simpletons, wherevore and therevore, in order to make my son Nathan a zecretary, she dezireth yaur worship to take 'n 'prentice: and now the zecret iz out, and e'en let it goo. If you'l tak'n, no money shall peart uz, and our Joane will zend you a couple ov rabbitz, and a new milk cheeze againzt yaur wedding dat. 'Che doth knaw, that with a little matter ov showing, in a little time, the buoy wou'd ov his own zelfe, be able to write Jurnalz, as vazt as hopz: therevore if you'l tak'n, zay zo, by the next poaz[t]. 'Che be a mon ov zome zubstance, 'che keepeth nine kowez, and a boare; and our Joane maketh butter and cheeze and eggs, and chickbirdz, and goosychickz, and thicky kind ov thingz. Moreoever and likewise, 'che liveth in my owne, payeth scott and lott hath been twize constable, ant 'cham now churchwarden over the high-wais: and bezidez aul think, 'che have two hundred good shillingz in a bag, in my hutch, and do owe no mon a vour penny piece; nor do care one zingle zixpence vor my lord mare to be my unkle; but shault be huge glad, if you wou'd make my zon Nathan a zecretary. The buoy resentz his serviz on you, and zo doth my wife, and my own zelf bezidez. The boy's vinverz itch to be wit you; but uz shall expect that you will bind'n at zecretary's hall, that he may be a vreeman to Lundun. And he zayeth, that him believeth, that him can help ye to the cutting ov a hundred and vifty simple people in hiz tawne, bezidez what may be in

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the parishez about uz. No more at prezant, but ‘cham vary wonderfully and wid aul
mine heart and zoule, Sir,
yaur zarvant, and zo forth,
Roger Whistlewell

‘Che vargott to tell ye, (and ‘che was to blame vor it) that besidez the buoy’z latine, him
understandz something ov ‘losofy, and can tell (within an haure or two) what ‘tiz a
clock by the almanack; and zayeth, that if him had but Littletonz dickzionario and Esops
fables with cutts, him believeth that him could vind out the longitude, vor him iz, az
sharo ommost, az a new-ground hatchet; and zo witty, that uz feareth, him will not live.

R.W.

