

Lincoln was not above using a switch on an old Joe when occasion called for it:

Old Abe was once canvassing for himself, for a local office, when he came to a blacksmith's shop. "Sir," said he to the blacksmith, "will you vote for me?" "Mr. Lincoln," said the son of Vulcan, "I admire your head, but damn your heart!" "Mr. Blacksmith," returned Abe, "I admire your candor, but damn your manners!"

This parallels No. 58 in the 1739 *Joe Miller*, concerning a well-shaped young lady, wearing a mask, who was followed by a gentleman. When she pulled off her mask at his request, and asked:

Well, Sir . . . what is it you would have with me? The Man at first Sight of her

Face, drew back, and lifting up his Hands, O! *Nothing!* Madam, *Nothing*, cry'd he; I cannot say, said my Lady, but I like your Sincerity, tho' I hate your Manners.

The title page of *Old Abe's Jokes* stated that the volume contained "All his Issues, Excepting the 'Greenbacks,' To Call in Some of Which, This Work Is Issued." Truly, this was a poetically apt idea! Lincoln brought forth his jokes just as the Government issued its Greenbacks, and some of them were never recalled — they became a part of the life of the country. The same is true of the Greenbacks issued by the "Joe Miller" editors — some of them passed into the language. Too many of them, perhaps, have never been recalled.

PHRASE ORIGINS—21

GUN-TURN: *When a faro dealer draws a pair of fives out of the tell-box, professional gamblers refer to the draw as a gun-turn. The gun referred to here is not a firearm; it is a pickpocket (derived from the Yiddish word gonof, or thief), and the phrase is connected with pickpockets through an old thieves' saw which runs: "Two fives together/ What the mark had in his leather. . . ." The victim, in other words, had only two five-dollar bills in his wallet. This compound is analogous to others made with gun, such as gun-moll, gun-shirt, gun-mob, to beef gun, etc., all of which are subject to varying and usually erroneous interpretation outside the underworld.*

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FORCED LABOR IN SOVIET RUSSIA¹

by *BERTRAM D. WOLFE*

The Middle Ages left Russia with a heritage of torture, knout and exile. The eighteenth century abolished torture, in the nineteenth the knout was done away with, and the first day of the twentieth will be the last day of the penal system based on exile.

WITH these words the Russian delegate to the International Congress of Prison Officials held in Brussels in 1900 gave expression to a dream which had been animating all the best public servants of Tsarist Russia during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Russia, they knew, had been the last stronghold of slavery (aside from the United States and certain colonial lands) in the modern world. Forced penal labor for the profit of the state they rightly judged to be the reflection in prison of serfdom or slavery in the outside world. But in 1861 Alexander II had emancipated the serfs, even endowing

them with some land, and in 1863 Lincoln had freed the Negro slaves. Thus Russia was putting an end to the fixity or bondage (*krepost'*) which had been decreed by the enlightened autocrats, Peter and Catherine and their successors. That bondage had been primarily a military device to fix every man to his post, where the tax-gatherer and the recruiting sergeant could find him. Then had come the internal passport, the universal obligation of service to the state, the conscription of capital and labor for military industrialization. Peter the Great, Russia's foremost industrializer before the Bolsheviks, had begun by ordering "the gathering of a few thousand thieves from all over the provinces and cities" to aid in the building of his capital. Then he and his successors had added debtors, vagabonds and political malcontents. Thus the institution of penal forced labor on public works had arisen as the state's industrial counterpart of agricultural serfdom: to build ports, fortresses and roads, to work salt mines and metal mines, to clear forests, to populate the frozen north and the otherwise almost unin-

¹By David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky. \$3.75.
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