

# JACOB BIGELOW

CHENODIA

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**Chenodia**

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## Chenodia / Or, the Classical Mother Goose

### PREFACE

The work familiarly known as “Mother Goose’s Melodies” has the dignity of being already an undoubted classic among the most incipient cultivators of literature in the United States. It is a compilation taken mostly from “Gammer Gurton’s Garland” or the “Nursery Parnassus,” an English child’s book about a century old, of which various editions have been published in London, Glasgow, and other places. It is stated in one of its late prefaces that it was originally issued at Stockton in a small twopenny brochure, without date, printed by and for R. Christopher. Sir Harris Nicholas says it appeared in the year 1783. The American “Mother Goose” contains many interpolated articles indigenous in the Western hemisphere, which are of various, and some even of doubtful merit.

In England, the “*Arundines Cami*,” the “*Sabrinæ Corolla*,” and other representative works of distinguished seminaries, have occasionally drawn on “Gammer Gurton” for materials of their classic versions. These versions are sometimes stately in their prosodial exactness, and at other times as playfully loose as the original English ditties first set to rhyme by Gurton and afterwards copied by Goose.<sup>1</sup>

The *Chenodia*, now first printed, an experiment for the author’s own amusement, partly in classic verse of various metres, partly in mediæval and unclassic rhyme, and partly, like the original English, in no metre at all, is tendered as an offset for any disparagement of the dead languages contained in two essays read in 1865 and 1866, at a time when classical studies were paramount in Harvard University and other colleges of the United States.

J. B.

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<sup>1</sup> There appears to be some reason for believing that at least a century before Gammer Gurton’s works were published in England, a bodily “Mother Goose” was at work on the other side of the Channel. In Scott’s novel of “Woodstock,” chapter 28, Charles II., then a fugitive, says: “It reminds me, like half the things I meet with in this world, of the ‘Contes de Commère l’Oye.’” Not having been able to obtain a sight of “Commère l’Oye,” we must leave the original claim for authorship as a field for future controversy.

## SPRATTUS ET UXOR

Jack Spratt could eat no fat,  
His wife could eat no lean,  
And so between them both  
They licked the platter clean.

Sprattus horrescens adipem recusat,  
Uxor et non vult tolerare macrum:  
Conjuges digni! potuêre sic de-  
tergere lancem.

Σπράττος ὠμησθῆς στέαρ ἐξέλειπεν·  
Ἡ γυνὴ σφοδρῶς ἀπέφευγεν ἰσχνόν·  
Εὗγαμοι, δείπνῳ ταχέως ἔκαστος  
Πάντ' ἀπολείχει.

## PAR AVIUM

Two little birds were sitting on a stone,  
One flew away and then there was one,  
T' other flew away and then there was none,  
So the poor stone was left all alone.

One of the little birds back again flew,  
In came t' other and then there were two;  
Says one bird to t' other, "How do you do?"  
"Very well, I thank you; pray how do you?"

Fama est par avium venisse insistere saxo,  
Quarum primâ abeunte superstitit inde secunda:  
Illa autem fugiens jam vix vestigia liquit,  
Et saxum mœrens in campo luget inani.

Ecce autem rediens avium comparuit una,  
Altera non segnis sociam complectitur almam:

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