ECKENSTEIN LINA

COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN NURSERY RHYMES

Lina Eckenstein

Comparative Studies in Nursery Rhymes

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TO THE GENTLE READER

The walls of the temple of King Sety at Abydos in Upper Egypt are decorated with sculptured scenes which represent the cult of the gods and the offerings brought to them. In a side chapel there is depicted the following curious scene. A dead figure lies extended on a bier; sorrowing hawks surround him; a flying hawk reaches down a seal amulet from above. Had I succeeded in procuring a picture of the scene, it would stand reproduced here; for the figure and his mourners recalled the quaint little woodcut of a toy-book which told the tale of the Death and Burial of Cock Robin. The sculptures of Sety date from the fourteenth century before Christ; the knell of the robin can be traced back no further than the middle of the eighteenth century A.D. Can the space that lies between be bridged over, and the conception of the dead robin be linked on to that of the dead hawk? However that may be, the sight of the sculptured scene strengthened my resolve to place some of the coincidences of comparative nursery lore before the gentle reader. It lies with him to decide whether the

wares are such as to make a further instalment desirable.

23 September, 1906.

… To my gaze the phantoms of the Past,
The cherished fictions of my boyhood, rise:

…

The House that Jack built – and the Malt that lay
Within the House – the Rat that ate the Malt —
The Cat, that in that sanguinary way
Punished the poor thing for its venial fault—
The Worrier-Dog – the Cow with crumpled horn—
And then – ah yes! and then – the Maiden all forlorn!

O Mrs. Gurton – (may I call thee Gammer?)
Thou more than mother to my infant mind!
I loved thee better than I loved my grammar—
I used to wonder why the Mice were blind,
And who was gardener to Mistress Mary,
And what – I don't know still – was meant by "quite contrary."

C. S. C.

CHAPTER I
FIRST APPEARANCE OF RHYMES IN PRINT

THE study of folk-lore has given a new interest to much that seemed insignificant and trivial. Among the unheeded possessions of the past that have gained a fresh value are nursery rhymes. A nursery rhyme I take to be a rhyme that was passed on by word of mouth and taught to children before it was set down in writing and put into print. The use of the term in this application goes back to the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1834 John Gawler, afterwards Bellenden Ker, published the first volume of his *Essay on the Archaiology of Popular English Phrases and Nursery Rhymes*, a fanciful production. Prior to this time nursery rhymes were usually spoken of as nursery songs.

The interest in these "unappreciated trifles of the nursery," as Rimbault called them, was aroused towards the close of the eighteenth century. In a letter which Joseph Ritson wrote to his little nephew, he mentioned the collection of rhymes known as *Mother Goose's Melody*, and assured him that he also would set about collecting rhymes.[1] His collection of rhymes is said, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, to have been published

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[1] *Letters of Joseph Ritson*, edited by his Nephew, 1833. 27 April, 1781.

at Stockton in 1783 under the title *Gammer Gurton's Garland*. A copy of an anonymous collection of rhymes published by Christopher and Jennett at Stockton, which is called *Gammer Gurton's Garland or the Nursery Parnassus*, is now at the British Museum, and is designated as a "new edition with additions." It bears no name and no date, but its contents, which consist of over seventy rhymes, agree with parts 1 and 2 of a large collection of nursery rhymes, including over one hundred and forty pieces, which were published in 1810 by the publisher R. Triphook, of 37 St. James Street, London, who also issued other collections made by Ritson.

The collection of rhymes known as *Mother Goose's Melody*, which aroused the interest of Ritson, was probably the toy-book which was entered for copyright in London on 28 December, 1780. Its title was *Mother Goose's Melody or Sonnets for the Cradle*, and it was entered by John Carnan, the stepson of the famous publisher John Newbery, who had succeeded to the business in partnership with Francis Newbery.[2] Of this book no copy is known to exist. Toy-books, owing to the careless way in which they are handled, are amongst the most perishable literature. Many toy-books are known to have been issued in hundreds of copies, yet of some of these not a single copy can now be traced.

The name Mother Goose, its connection with nursery rhymes, and the date of issue of *Mother Goose's Melody*, have been the

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[2] Welsh, Ch., *A Publisher of the Last Century*, 1885, p. 272.

subject of some contention. Thomas Fleet, a well-known printer of Boston, Mass., who was from Shropshire, is said to have issued a collection of nursery rhymes under the following title, *Songs for the Nursery, or Mother Goose's Melodies for Children*, printed by Thomas Fleet at his printing-house, Pudding Lane, 1719, price two coppers.[3] The existence of this book at the date mentioned has been both affirmed and denied.[4] John Fleet Eliot, a great-grandson of the printer, accepted its existence, and in 1834 wrote with regard to it as follows: "It is well known to antiquaries that more than a hundred years ago there was a small book in circulation in London bearing the name of *Rhymes for the Nursery or Lulla-Byes for Children*, which contained many of the identical pieces of *Mother Goose's Melodies* of the present day. It contained also other pieces, more silly if possible, and some that the American types of the present day would refuse to give off an impression. The cuts or illustrations thereof were of the coarsest description." On the other hand, the date of 1719 in connection with the expression "two coppers," has been declared impossible. However this may be, no copy of the book of Fleet or of its presumed prototype has been traced.

The name Mother Goose, which John Newbery and others associated with nursery rhymes, may have been brought into England from France, where *La Mère Oie* was connected with

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[3] Appleton, *Cyclopædia of American Biography*, 1887: Fleet, Thomas.

[4] Whitmore, W. H., *The original Mother Goose's Melody*, 1892, p. 40 ff.

the telling of fairy tales as far back as 1650.[5] *La Mère Oie* is probably a lineal descendant of *La Reine Pédauque*, otherwise *Berthe au grand pied*, but there is the possibility also of the relationship to *Fru Gode* or *Fru Gosen* of German folk-lore. We first come across Mother Goose in England in connection with the famous puppet-showman Robert Powell, who set up his show in Bath and in Covent Garden, London, between 1709 and 1711. The repertory of his plays, which were of his own composing, included *Whittington and his Cat*, *The Children in the Wood*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *Robin Hood and Little John*, *Mother Shipton*, and *Mother Goose*.[6] A play or pantomime called *Mother Goose* was still popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century, for the actor Grimaldi obtained his greatest success in it in 1806.[7]

The name Gammer Gurton which Ritson chose for his collection of rhymes, was traditional also. *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is the name of a famous old comedy which dates from about the year 1566. The name also appears in connection with nursery rhymes in a little toy-book, issued by Lumsden in Glasgow, which is called *Gammer Gurton's Garland of Nursery Songs, and Toby Tickle's Collection of Riddles*. This is undated. It occurs also in an insignificant little toy-book called *The Topbook*

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[5] Lang, A., *Perrault's Popular Tales*, 1888. Introduction, XXIV.

[6] Collier, J. P., *Punch and Judy, citing "A Second Tale of a Tub or the History of Robert Powell, the puppet-showman, 1715."*

[7] *Dictionary of National Biography*, Grimaldi.

of all, in connection with Nurse Lovechild, Jacky Nory, and Tommy Thumb. This book is also undated, but contains the picture of a shilling of 1760 which is referred to as "a new shilling."

The date at which nursery rhymes appeared in print yields one clue to their currency at a given period. The oldest dated collection of rhymes which I have seen bears the title *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*, vol. II, "sold by M. Cooper according to Act of Parliament." It is printed partly in red, partly in black, and on its last page bears the date 1744. A copy of this is at the British Museum.

Next to this in date is a toy-book which is called *The Famous Tommy Thumb's Little Story-Book*, printed and sold at the printing office in Marlborough Street, 1771. A copy of this is in the library of Boston, Mass. It contains nine nursery rhymes at the end, which have been reprinted by Whitmore.

Other collections of rhymes issued in America have been preserved which are reprints of earlier English collections. Among these is *Tommy Thumb's Song Book for all Little Masters and Misses*, by Nurse Lovechild, which is dated 1788, and was printed by Isaiah Thomas at Worcester, Mass. A copy is at the British Museum.

Isaiah Thomas was in direct connection with England, where he procured, in 1786, the first fount of music type that was carried to America. Among many toy-books of his that are reprints from English publications, he issued *Mother Goose's*

Melody, Sonnets for the Cradle. A copy of this book which is designated as the third Worcester edition, bears the date 1799, and has been reprinted in facsimile by Whitmore. It was probably identical with the collection of rhymes for which the firm of Newberry received copyright in 1780, and which was mentioned by Ritson. Other copies of *Mother Goose's Melody*, one bearing the watermark of 1803, and the other issued by the firm of John Marshall, which is undated, are now at the Bodleian.[8] Thus the name of Mother Goose was largely used in connection with nursery rhymes.

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed a great development in toy-book literature. The leader of the movement was John Newbery, a man of considerable attainments, who sold drugs and literature, and who came from Reading to London in 1744, and settled in St. Paul's Churchyard, where his establishment became a famous centre of the book trade. Among those whom he had in his employ were Griffith Jones (d. 1786) and Oliver Goldsmith (d. 1774), whose versatility and delicate humour gave a peculiar charm to the books for children which they helped to produce.

In London Newbery had a rival in John Marshall, whose shop in Aldermary Churchyard was known already in 1787 as the *Great A, and Bouncing B Toy Factory*. This name was derived from a current nursery rhyme on the alphabet, which occurs as follows: —

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[8] Whitmore, loc. cit., p. 6.

Great A, little a, Bouncing B,
The cat's in the cupboard, and she can't see.

(1744, p. 22.)

A number of provincial publishers followed their example. Among them were Thomas Saint, in Newcastle, who between 1771 and 1774 employed the brothers Bewick; Kendrew, in York; Lumsden, in Glasgow; Drewey, in Derby; Rusher, in Banbury; and others. The toy-books that were issued by these firms have much likeness to one another, and are often illustrated by the same cuts. Most of them are undated. Among the books issued by Rusher were *Nursery Rhymes from the Royal Collections*, and *Nursery Poems from the Ancient and Modern Poets*, which contain some familiar rhymes in versions which differ from those found elsewhere.

Besides these toy-book collections, there is a large edition of *Gammer Gurton's Garland*, of the year 1810, which contains the collections of 1783 with considerable additions. In the year 1826, Chambers published his *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, which contained some fireside stories and nursery rhymes, the number of which was considerably increased in the enlarged edition of 1870. In the year 1842, Halliwell, under the auspices of the Percy Society, issued the *Nursery Rhymes of England*, which were reprinted in 1843, and again in an enlarged edition in 1846. Three years later he supplemented this book by a collection of *Popular Rhymes* which contain many traditional game rhymes

and many valuable remarks and criticisms.

These books, together with the rhymes of Gawler, and a collection of *Old Nursery Rhymes with Tunes*, issued by Rimbault in 1864, exhaust the collections of nursery rhymes which have a claim on the attention of the student. Most of their contents were subsequently collected and issued by the firm of Warne & Co., under the title *Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes, Tales and Jingles*, of which the issue of 1890 contains over seven hundred pieces. In the list which follows, I have arranged these various collections of rhymes in the order of their issue, with a few modern collections that contain further rhymes. Of those which are bracketed I have not succeeded in finding a copy.

(1719. *Songs for the Nursery, or Mother Goose's Melodies.* Printed by T. Fleet.)

1744. *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book.*

c. 1760. *The Topbook of all.*

(1771. *Tommy Thumb's Little Story Book.* The nine rhymes which this contains are cited by Whitmore.)

(1780. *Mother Goose's Melody*, for which copyright was taken by John Carnan.)

c. 1783. *Gammer Gurton's Garland.*

1788. *Tommy Thumb's Song Book*, issued by Isaiah Thomas.

(1797. *Infant Institutes*, cited by Halliwell and Rimbault.)

1799. *Mother Goose's Melody.* Facsimile reprint by Whitmore.

1810. *Gammer Gurton's Garland.* The enlarged edition,

published by R. Triphook, 37 St. James Street, London.

1826. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*.

1834-9. Ker, *Essays on the Archaiology of Nursery Rhymes*.

1842-3. Halliwell, *The Nursery Rhymes of England*.

1846. Halliwell, ditto. Enlarged and annotated edition.

1849. Halliwell, *Popular Rhymes*.

1864. Rimbault, *Old Nursery Rhymes with tunes*.

1870. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*. Enlarged edition.

1876. Thiselton Dyer, *British Popular Customs*.

1890. *Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes, Tales and Jingles.* Issued by Warne & Co.

1892. Northall, G. F., *English Folk Rhymes*.

1894. Gomme, A. B., *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*.

In the studies which follow, the rhymes cited have attached to them the date of the collection in which they occur.

CHAPTER II
EARLY REFERENCES

INDEPENDENTLY of these collections of nursery rhymes, many rhymes are cited in general literature. This yields a further clue to their currency at a given period. Thus Rimbault describes a book called *Infant Institutes, part the first, or a Nurserical Essay on the Poetry Lyric and Allegorical of the Earliest Ages*, 1797, perhaps by B. N. Turner, the friend of Dr. Johnson, which was intended to ridicule the Shakespeare commentators (*N. & Q.*, 5, 3, 441). In the course of his argument, the author cites a number of nursery rhymes.

Again, the poet Henry Carey, about the year 1720, ridiculed the odes addressed to children by Ambrose Philips by likening these to a jumble of nursery rhymes. In doing so he cited the rhymes, "Namby Pamby Jack a Dandy," "London Bridge is broken down," "Liar Lickspit," "Jacky Horner," "See-saw," and others, which nowadays are still included among the ordinary stock of our rhymes.

Again, in the year 1671, John Eachard, the divine, illustrated his argument by quoting the alphabet rhyme "A was an apple pie," as far as "G got it."[9] Instances such as these do not, however, carry us back farther than the seventeenth century.

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[9] Eachard, *Observations, etc.*, 1671, cited. Halliwell, *Popular Rhymes*, 1849, p. 137.

Another clue to the date of certain rhymes is afforded by their mention of historical persons, in a manner which shows that the rhyme in this form was current at the time when the individual whom they mention was prominently before the eyes of the public. Halliwell recorded from oral tradition the following verse: —

> Doctor Sacheverel
> Did very well,
> But Jacky Dawbin
> Gave him a warning.
>
> *(1849, p. 12.)*

The verse refers to Dr. Sacheverel, the nonconformist minister who preached violent sermons in St. Paul's, pointing at the Whig members as false friends and real enemies of the Church. John Dolben (1662-1710) called attention to them in the House of Commons, and they were declared "malicious, scandalous, and seditious libels."

Again there is the rhyme: —

> Lucy Locket lost her pocket,
> Kitty Fisher found it,
> But the devil a penny was there in it,
> Except the binding round it.
>
> *(1849, p. 48.)*

This is said to preserve the names of two celebrated courtesans of the reign of Charles II (1892, p. 330).

The first name in the following rhyme is that of a famous border hero who was hanged between 1529 and 1530: —

> Johnny Armstrong killed a calf;
> Peter Henderson got half;
> Willy Wilkinson got the head, —
> Ring the bell, the calf is dead.
>
> *(1890, p. 358.)*

Among the pieces collected by Halliwell, and told in cumulative form, one begins and ends with the following line, which recurs at the end of every verse: —

> John Ball shot them all.

Halliwell is of opinion that this may refer to the priest who took a prominent part in the rebellion at the time of Richard II, and who was hanged, drawn, and quartered in 1381.

But a historical name does not necessarily indicate the date of a rhyme. For a popular name is sometimes substituted for one that has fallen into contempt or obscurity. Moreover, a name may originally have indicated a person other than the one with whom it has come to be associated.

A familiar nursery song printed in the collection of c. 1783, and extant in several variants, is as follows: —

When good King Arthur rul'd the land,
He was a goodly king,
He stole three pecks of barley meal
To make a bag pudding.
A bag pudding the king did make
And stuff'd it well with plumbs,
And in it put great lumps of fat,
As big as my two thumbs.
The king and queen did eat thereof,
And noblemen beside,
And what they could not eat that night
The queen next morning fry'd.

(c. 1783, p. 32.)

Mr. Chappell, as cited by Halliwell, considered that this version is not the correct one, but the one which begins: —

King Stephen was a worthy king
As ancient bards do sing…

The same story related in one verse only, and in simpler form, connects it with Queen Elizabeth, in a version recovered in Berkshire.

Our good Quane Bess, she maayde a pudden,
An stuffed un well o' plumes;
And in she put gurt dabs o' vat,
As big as my two thumbs.

(1892, p. 289.)

On the face of it the last variant appears to be the oldest.

An interesting example of a change of name, and of the changing meaning of a name, is afforded by the nursery song that is told of King Arthur, and *mutatis mutandis* of Old King Cole. The poem of King Arthur is as follows: —

When Arthur first in Court began
To wear long hanging sleeves,
He entertained three serving men
And all of them were thieves.

The first he was an Irishman,
The second was a Scot,
The third he was a Welshman,
And all were knaves, I wot.

The Irishman loved usquebaugh,
The Scot loved ale called blue-cap.
The Welshman he loved toasted cheese,
And made his mouth like a mouse-trap.

Usquebaugh burnt the Irishman,
The Scot was drowned in ale,
The Welshman had liked to be choked by a mouse,
But he pulled it out by the tail.

In this form the piece is designated as a glee, and is printed in the *New Lyric* by Badcock of about 1720, which contains "the best songs now in vogue."

In the nursery collection of Halliwell of 1842 there is a parallel piece to this which stands as follows: —

Old King Cole was a merry old soul
And a merry old soul was he;
Old King Cole he sat in his hole,
And he called for his fiddlers three.

The first he was a miller,
The second he was a weaver,
The third he was a tailor,
And all were rogues together.

The miller he stole corn,
The weaver he stole yarn,
The little tailor stole broadcloth
To keep these three rogues warm.

The miller was drowned in his dam,
The weaver was hung in his loom,
The devil ran away with the little tailor
With the broadcloth under his arm.

(1842, p. 3.)

Chappell printed the words of the song of Old King Cole

in several variations, and pointed out that *The Pleasant Historie of Thomas of Reading, or the Six Worthie Yeomen of the West* of 1632, contains the legend of one Cole, a cloth-maker of Reading at the time of King Henry I, and that the name "became proverbial owing to the popularity of this book." "There was some joke or conventional meaning among Elizabethan dramatists," he says, "when they gave the name of Old Cole, which it is now difficult to recover." Dekker in the *Satiromatrix* of 1602, and Marston in *The Malcontent* of 1604, applied the name to a woman. On the other hand, Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* gave the name of Old Cole to the sculler in the puppet-play *Hero and Leander* which he there introduces.[10] In face of this information, what becomes of the identity of the supposed king?

On the other hand a long ancestry is now claimed for certain characters of nursery fame who seemed to have no special claim to attention. The following verse appears in most collections of rhymes, and judging from the illustration which accompanies it in the toy-books, it refers sometimes to a boy and a girl, sometimes to two boys.

> Jack and Gill went up the hill
> To fetch a bottle of water;
> Jack fell down and broke his crown,
> And Gill came tumbling after.

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[10] Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 1893, p. 633.

(c. 1783, p. 51.)
[Later collections have Jill and pail.]

This verse, as was first suggested by Baring-Gould,[11] preserves the Scandinavian myth of the children Hjuki and Bill who were caught up by Mani, the Moon, as they were taking water from the well Byrgir, and they can be seen to this day in the moon carrying the bucket on the pole between them.

Another rhyme cited by Halliwell from *The New Mad Tom o'Bedlam* mentions Jack as being the Man in the Moon: —

The Man in the Moon drinks claret,
But he is a dull Jack-a-dandy;
Would he know a sheep's head from a carrot,
He should learn to drink cider or brandy.
(1842, p. 33.)

According to North German belief, a man stands in the moon pouring water out of a pail (K., p. 304), which agrees with expressions such as "the moon holds water." In a Norse mnemonic verse which dates from before the twelfth century, we read, "the pail is called Saeg, the pole is called Simul, Bil and Hiuk carry them" (C. P., I, 78).

The view that Jack and Jill are mythological or heroic beings finds corroboration in the expression "for Jak nor for Gille," which occurs in the Townley Mysteries of about the year

[11] Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, 1866, p. 189.

1460.[12] By this declaration a superhuman power is called in as witness. The same names are coupled together also in an ancient divination rhyme used to decide in favour of one of two courses of action. Two scraps of paper slightly moistened were placed on the back of the hand, and the following invocation was pronounced before and after breathing upon them to see which would fly first. The sport was taught by Goldsmith to Miss Hawkins when a child, as she related to Forster.[13]

> There were two blackbirds sat upon a hill
> The one was named Jack, the other named Jill.
> Fly away Jack! Fly away Jill!
> Come again Jack! Come again Jill!
>
> *(1810, p. 45.)*

The lines suggest the augur's action with regard to the flight of birds. The same verse has been recited to me in the following variation: —

> Peter and Paul sat on the wall,
> Fly away Peter! Fly away Paul!
> Come again Peter! Come again Paul!

In this case the names of Christian apostles have been substituted for heathen names which, at the time when the *names*

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[12] Cited *Murray's Dictionary*: Jack.

[13] Forster, J., *Life of Goldsmith*, II, p. 71.

were changed, may still have carried a suggestion of profanity. The following rhyme on Jack and Gill occurs in an early nursery collection: —

I won't be my father's Jack,
I won't be my mother's Gill,
I will be the fiddler's wife
And have music when I will.
T'other little tune, t'other little tune,
Pr'ythee, love, play me, t'other little tune.

(c. 1783, p. 25.)

CHAPTER III
RHYMES AND POPULAR SONGS

ON looking more closely at the contents of our nursery collections, we find that a large proportion of so-called nursery rhymes are songs or snatches of songs, which are preserved also as broadsides, or appeared in printed form in early song-books. These songs or parts of songs were included in nursery collections because they happened to be current at the time when these collections were made, and later compilers transferred into their own collections what they found in earlier ones. Many songs are preserved in a number of variations, for popular songs are in a continual state of transformation. Sometimes new words are written to the old tune, and differ from those that have gone before in all but the rhyming words at the end of the lines; sometimes new words are introduced which entirely change the old meaning. Many variations of songs are born of the moment, and would pass away with it, were it not that they happen to be put into writing and thereby escape falling into oblivion.

In *Mother Goose's Melody* stands a song in six verses which begins: —

> There was a little man who woo'd a little maid,
> And he said: "Little maid, will you wed, wed, wed?
> I have little more to say, will you? Aye or nay?

For little said is soonest mended, ded, ded."

(1799, p. 46.)

Halliwell's collection includes only the first and the fourth verse of this piece. (1842, p. 24.)

In the estimation of Chappell this song was a very popular ballad, which was sung to the tune of *I am the Duke of Norfolk*, or *Paul's Steeple*.[14] It appears also in the *Fairing or Golden Toy for Children of all Sizes and Denominations* of 1781, where it is designated as "a new love song by the poets of Great Britain." Its words form a variation of the song called *The Dumb Maid*, which is extant in a broadside of about 1678,[15] and which is also included in the early collection of *Pills to Purge Melancholy* of 1698-1719. The likeness between the pieces depends on their peculiar repeat: —

There was a bonny blade had married a country maid,
And safely conducted her home, home, home;
She was neat in every part, and she pleased him to the heart,
But alas, and alas, she was dumb, dumb, dumb.

The same form of verse was used in another nursery song which stands as follows: —

There was a little man, and he had a little gun,

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[14] Chappell, loc. cit., p. 770.

[15] *Roxburgh Collection of Ballads*, IV, p. 355.

And the ball was made of lead, lead, lead.
And he went to a brook to shoot at a duck,
And he hit her upon the head, head, head.

Then he went home unto his wife Joan,
To bid her a good fire to make, make, make,
To roast the duck that swam in the brook,
And he would go fetch her the drake, drake, drake.

(1744, p. 43; with repeat, 1810, p. 45.)

Again, a song which appears in several early nursery collections is as follows: —

There was an old woman toss'd in a blanket,
Seventeen times as high as the moon;
But where she was going no mortal could tell,
For under her arm she carried a broom.

"Old woman, old woman, old woman," said I,
"Whither, ah whither, ah whither, so high?"
To sweep the cobwebs from the sky,
And I'll be with you by and by.

(c. 1783, p. 22.)

This song was a favourite with Goldsmith, who sang it to his friends at dinner on the day when his play *The Good-natured Man* was produced.[16] It was one of the numerous songs that were

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[16] Forster, *Life of Goldsmith*, II, 122.

sung to the tune of Lilliburlero, which goes back at least to the time of Purcell.[17] A Scottish version of this piece was printed by Chambers, which presents some interesting variations: —

There was a wee wifie row't up in a blanket,
Nineteen times as hie as the moon;
And what did she there I canna declare,
For in her oxter she bure the sun.
"Wee wifie, wee wifie, wee wifie," quo' I,
"O what are ye doin' up there sae hie?"
"I'm blowin' the cauld cluds out o' the sky."
"Weel dune, weel dune, wee wifie!" quo' I.

(1870, p. 34.)

I have come across a verse sung on Earl Grey and Lord Brougham, written in 1835, which may have been in imitation of this song: —

Mother Bunch shall we visit the moon?
Come, mount on your broom, I'll stick on a spoon,
Then hey to go, we shall be there soon … etc.

Mother Bunch is a familiar character of British folk-lore, who figures in old chapbooks as a keeper of old-world saws, and gives advice in matters matrimonial. One of the earliest accounts of her is *Pasquill's Jests with the Merriments of Mother Bunch*, extant

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[17] Chappell, loc. cit., p. 569.

in several editions, which was reprinted by Hazlitt in *Old English Jestbooks*, 1864, Vol. III. There are also *Mother Bunch's Closet newly broke open*, *Mother Bunch's Golden Fortune Teller*, and *Mother Bunch's Fairy Tales*, published by Harris in 1802. The name also occurs in *Mother Osborne's Letter to the Protestant Dissenters rendered into English Metre by Mother Bunch*, 1733. Mother Bunch, like Mother Goose and Mother Shipton, may be a traditional name, for Mother Bunch has survived in connections which suggest both the wise woman and the witch.

Another old song which figures in early nursery collections is as follows: —

> What care I how black I be?
> Twenty pounds will marry me;
> If twenty won't, forty shall —
> I am my mother's bouncing girl.
>
> *(c. 1783, p. 57.)*

Chappell mentions a song called, *What care I how fair she be*, which goes back to before 1620.[18] The words of these songs seem to have suggested a parody addressed to Zachary Macaulay, the father of the historian, who pleaded the cause of the slaves. The Bill for the abolition of slavery was passed in 1833, and the following quatrain was sung with reference to it: —

> What though now opposed I be?

[18] Chappell, loc. cit., p. 315.

Twenty peers will carry me.
If twenty won't, thirty will,
For I'm His Majesty's bouncing Bill.

(N. & Q., 8, XII, 48.)

Another so-called nursery rhyme which is no more than a popular song has been traced some way back in history by Halliwell, who gives it in two variations: —

Three blind mice, see how they run!
They all run after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife,
Did you ever see such fools in your life —
Three blind mice!

(1846, p. 5.)

In *Deuteromalia* of 1609 this stands as follows: —

Three blind mice, three blind mice!
Dame Julian, the miller and his merry old wife
She scrapte the tripe, take thow the knife.

Among the popular songs which have found their way into nursery collections is the one known as *A Frog he would a wooing go*, the subject of which is old. Already in 1549 the shepherds of Scotland sang a song called, *The Frog cam to the Myldur*. In the year 1580 there was licensed, *A most strange Wedding of the Frog and the Mouse*, as appears from the books

of the Stationers' Company cited by Warton.[19] The song has been preserved in many variations with a variety of burdens. These burdens sound like nonsense, but in some cases the same words appear elsewhere in a different application, which shows that they were not originally unmeaning.

The oldest known version of the song begins: —

> It was a frog in the well, *humble dum, humble dum*,
> And the mouse in the mill, *tweedle tweedle twino*.[20]

The expression *humble dum* occurs in other songs and seems to indicate triumph; the word *tweedle* represents the sound made by the pipes.

A Scottish variation of the song begins: —

> There lived a Puddy in a well, *Cuddy alone, Cuddy alone*,
> There lived a Puddy in a well, *Cuddy alone and I*.[21]

In the nursery collection of *c.* 1783 the song begins: —

> There was a frog liv'd in a well, *Kitty alone, Kitty alone*,
> There was a frog liv'd in a well.
> There was a frog liv'd in a well, *Kitty alone and I*.
> And a farce mouse in a mill,

---

[19] Warton, *History of English Poetry*, 1840, III, 360.

[20] Chappell, loc. cit., p. 88.

[21] Sharpe, Ch. K., *Ballad Book*, 1824, p. 87.

Cock me cary, Kitty alone, Kitty alone and I.

(c. 1783, p. 4.)

The origin and meaning of this burden remains obscure.

The antiquity and the wide popularity of these verses are further shown by a song written in imitation of it, called *A Ditty on a High Amore at St. James*, and set to a popular tune, which dates from before 1714. It is in verse, and begins: —

> Great Lord Frog and Lady Mouse, *Crackledom hee, crackledom ho*,
> Dwelling near St. James' house, *Cocki mi chari chi*;
> Rode to make his court one day,
> In the merry month of May,
> When the sun shone bright and gay, *twiddle come, tweedle dee*.[22]

In the accepted nursery version the song begins: —

> A frog he would a wooing ride, *heigho, says Rowley*,
> Whether his mother would let him or no,
> *With a roly-poly, gammon and spinach*,
> *Heigho, says Anthony Rowley*.

This burden is said by a correspondent of *Notes and Queries* to have been first inserted in the old song as a burden by Liston. His song, entitled *The Love-sick Frog*, with an original tune by C. E.

[22] Chappell, loc. cit., p. 561.

H., Esq. (perhaps Charles Edward Horn), and an accompaniment by Thomas Cook, was published by Goulding & Co., Soho Square, in the early part of the nineteenth century (*N. & Q.*, I, 458). The burden has been traced back to the *jeu d'esprit* of 1809 on the installation of Lord Grenville as Chancellor of Oxford, which another correspondent quotes from memory: —

Mister Chinnery then an M. A. of great parts,
Sang the praises of Chancellor Grenville.
Oh! He pleased all the ladies and tickled their hearts,
But then we all know he's a Master of Arts.
With a rowly, powly, gammon and spinach,
Heigh ho! says Rowley.

(N. & Q., 11, 27.)

Another variation of the song of *The Frog and the Mouse* of about 1800 begins: —

There was a frog lived in a well, *heigho, crowdie*!
And a merry mouse in a mill, *with a howdie, crowdie*, etc.

(N. & Q., 11, 110.)

This expression, *heigho, crowdie*, contains a call to the crowd to strike up. The crowd is the oldest kind of British fiddle, which had no neck and only three strings. It is mentioned as a British instrument already by the low Latin poet Fortunatus towards the close of the sixth century: "Chrotta Britannia canat." The

instrument is well known to this day in Wales as the *crwth*.

The word crowdy occurs also as a verb in one of the numerous nursery rhymes referring to scenes of revelry, at which folk-humour pictured the cat making music: —

> Come dance a jig to my granny's pig,
> With a rowdy, rowdy, dowdy;
> Come dance a jig to my granny's pig,
> And pussy cat shall crowdy.
>
> *(1846, p. 141.)*

This verse and a number of others go back to the festivities that were connected with Twelfth Night. Some of them preserve expressions in the form of burdens which have no apparent sense; in other rhymes the same expressions have the force of a definite meaning. Probably the verses in which the words retain a meaning have the greater claim to antiquity.

Thus among the black-letter ballads is a song[23] which is found also in the nursery collection of 1810 under the designation *The Lady's Song in Leap Year*.

> Roses are red, *diddle diddle*, lavender's blue,
> If you will have me, *diddle diddle*, I will have you.
> Lillies are white, *diddle diddle*, rosemary's green,
> When you are king, *diddle, diddle*, I will be queen.
> Call up your men, *diddle, diddle*, set them to work,

---

[23] *Roxburgh Collection*, IV, 433.

Some to the plough, *diddle, diddle*, some to the cart.
Some to make hay, *diddle, diddle*, some to cut corn,
While you and I, *diddle, diddle*, keep the bed warm.

(1810, p. 46.)

Halliwell cites this song in a form in which the words are put into the lips of the king, and associates it with the amusements of Twelfth Night: —

Lavender blue, *fiddle faddle*, lavender green.
When I am king, *fiddle faddle*, you shall be queen, etc.

(1849, p. 237.)

The expression *diddle diddle* according to Murray's Dictionary means to make music without the utterance of words, while *fiddle faddle* is said to indicate nonsense, and to fiddle is to fuss. But both words seem to go back to the association of dancing, as is suggested by the songs on Twelfth Night, or by the following nursery rhyme which refers to the same celebration.

A cat came fiddling out of the barn,
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm,
She could sing nothing but fiddle cum fee,
The mouse has married the humble bee;
Pipe, cat, dance, mouse;
We'll have a wedding in our good house.

(1842, p. 102.)

The following variation of this verse occurs in the *Nursery Songs* published by Rusher: —

A cat came fiddling out of a barn,
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm,
She sang nothing but fiddle-de-dee,
Worried a mouse and a humble bee.
Puss began purring, mouse ran away,
And off the bee flew with a wild huzza!

In both cases the cat was fiddling, that is moving to instrumental music without the utterance of words, and called upon the others to do so while she played the pipes. Her association with an actual fiddle, however, is preserved in the following rhyme which I cite in two of its numerous variations: —

Sing hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jump'd over the moon!
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the dish lick't up the spoon.

(1797, cited by Rimbault.)

Sing hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed to see such craft,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

(c. 1783, p. 27.)

This rhyme also refers to the revelry which accompanied a feast, probably the one of Twelfth Night also.

CHAPTER IV
RHYMES IN TOY-BOOKS

MANY of our longer nursery pieces first appeared in print in the diminutive toy-books already described, which represent so curious a development in the literature of the eighteenth century. These books were sometimes hawked about in one or more sheets, which were afterwards folded so as to form a booklet of sixteen, thirty-two, or sixty-four pages. Others were issued sewn and bound in brilliant covers, at a cost of as much as a shilling or eighteen pence. Usually each page contained one verse which was illustrated by an appropriate cut. In the toy-books which tell a consecutive story, the number of verses of the several pieces seem to have been curtailed or enlarged in order to fit the required size of the book.

It is in these toy-books that we first come across famous nursery pieces such as the *Alphabet* which begins: —

> A was an Archer, who shot at a frog,
> B was a blind man, and led by a dog … etc.

This first appeared in *A Little Book for Little Children* by T. W., sold at the Ring in Little Britain. It contains a portrait of Queen Anne, and probably goes back to the early part of the eighteenth century.

The Topbook of all, already mentioned, which is of about 1760, contains the oldest version that I have come across of the words used in playing *The Gaping, Wide-mouthed, Waddling Frog*, each verse of which is illustrated by a rough cut. Again, *The Tragic Death of A, Apple Pie*, which, as mentioned above, was cited as far back as 1671, forms the contents of a toy-book issued by J. Evans about the year 1791 at the price of a farthing. *The Death and Burial of Cock Robin* fills a toy-book which was published by J. Marshall, London, and again by Rusher at Banbury; both editions are undated. Again *The Courtship, Marriage, and Picnic Dinner of Cock Robin and Jenny Wren* form the contents of a toy-book dated 1810 and published by Harris, and *The Life and Death of Jenny Wren* appeared in a toy-book dated 1813, issued by J. Evans.

Another famous toy-book contained *The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard and her Dog*. This story was first issued in toy-book form by J. Harris, "successor to E. Newbery at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard," probably at the beginning of 1806, at the cost of eighteen pence. A copy of the second edition, which mentions the date 1 May, 1806, is at the British Museum. It contains the words "to T. B. Esquire, M.P. county of XX, at whose suggestion and at whose house these notable sketches were first designed, this volume is with all suitable deference dedicated by his humble servant S. C. M." The coffin which is represented in one of the cuts in the book bears the initials S. C. M., and the date 1804. This inscribing of the author's initials on a coffin is

quite in keeping with the tone of toy-book literature.

In October, 1805, J. Harris had published *Whimsical Incidents, or the Power of Music, a poetic tale by a near relation of Old Mother Hubbard*, which has little to recommend it, and contains nothing on the dog. On its first page stands a verse which figures independently as a nursery rhyme in some later collections: —

> The cat was asleep by the side of the fire,
> Her mistress snor'd loud as a pig,
> When Jack took the fiddle by Jenny's desire,
> And struck up a bit of a jig.
>
> *(1810, p. 33.)*

J. Harris also published in March, 1806, *Pug's Visit, or the Disasters of Mr. Punch*, a sequel to the *Comic Adventures of Mother Hubbard and her Dog*. This has a dedication framed in the same style, "To P. A. Esquire … by his humble servant W. F."

The success of the *Comic Adventures of Mother Hubbard and her Dog* was instantaneous and lasting. In *The Courtship of Jenny Wren*, which is dated 1810, while its cuts bear the date 1806, Parson Rook is represented carrying "Mother Hubbard's book," and a foot-note is added to the effect that "upwards of ten thousand copies of this celebrated work have been distributed in various parts of the country in a few months." The *Comic Adventures* were read all over London and in the provinces,

both in the original and in pirated editions, of which I have seen copies issued by J. Evans of Long Lane, West Smithfield; by W. S. Johnson of 60 St. Martin's Lane; by J. Marshall of Aldermary Churchyard; and by others. A very diminutive toy-book containing verses of the tale of Mother Hubbard, illustrated with rough cuts, is on view at South Kensington Museum among the exhibits of A. Pearson. I do not know its publisher.

The *Comic Adventures of Mother Hubbard* are usually told in fourteen verses, which refer to the dame's going to the cupboard, to her going for bread, for a coffin, for tripe, beer, wine, fruit, a coat, a hat, a wig, shoes, hose, and linen. The story ends: —

> The dame made a curtsey, the dog made a bow,
> The dame said, "Your servant," the dog said "Bow-wow."

But some editions have an additional rhyme on the dame's going for fish; and the edition at South Kensington has the verse: —

> Old Mother Hubbard sat down in a chair,
> And danced her dog to a delicate air;
> She went to the garden to buy him a pippin,
> When she came back the dog was skipping.

In the edition of Rusher, instead of "the dog made a bow," we read "Prin and Puss made a bow."

In Halliwell's estimation the tale of Mother Hubbard and her

dog is of some antiquity, "were we merely to judge," he says, "of the rhyme of laughing to coffin in the third verse."

> She went to the undertaker's to buy him a coffin,
> When she came back the poor dog was laughing.

But it seems possible also that the author of the poem had running in his mind a verse containing this rhyme, which occurs already in the *Infant Institutes* of 1797, where it stands as follows:—

> There was a little old woman and she liv'd in a shoe,
> She had so many children, she didn't know what to do.
> She crumm'd 'em some porridge without any bread
> And she borrow'd a beetle, and she knock'd 'em all o' th' head.
> Then out went the old woman to bespeak 'em a coffin
> And when she came back she found 'em all a-loffing.

This piece contains curious mythological allusions, as we shall see later.

It may be added that the nursery collection of 1810 (p. 37) contains the first verse only of Mother Hubbard, which favours the view expressed by Halliwell, that the compiler of the famous book did not invent the subject nor the metre of his piece, but wrote additional verses to an older story.

The association of Mother Hubbard and the dog may be relatively new, but the name Mother Hubbard itself has some

claim to antiquity. For a political satire by Edmund Spenser was called *Prosopopeia or Mother Hubberd's Tale*. It was a youthful effort of the poet, and was soon forgotten. In this piece "the good old woman was height Mother Hubberd who did far surpass the rest in honest mirth," and who related the fable of the fox and the ape. Also Thomas Middleton in 1604 published *Father Hubburd's Tale, or the Ant and the Nightingale*, in the introduction to which he addressed the reader as follows: – "Why I call these Father Hubburd's tales, is not to have them called in again as the Tale of Mother Hubburd. The world would shew little judgment in that i' faith; and I should say then *plena stultorum omnia*; for I entreat (*i. e.* treat) here neither of rugged (*i. e.* ragged) bears or apes, no, nor the lamentable downfall of the old wife's platters – I deal with no such metal … etc."

We do not know that Spenser's tale was "called in again," nor does it mention ragged bears and platters. Middleton must therefore be referring to a different production to which obstruction was offered by the public authorities. In any case the name of Mother Hubburd, or Hubbard, was familiar long before the publication of the story of the dame and her dog.

Father Hubberd, who is mentioned by Middleton, figures in nursery lore also. A rhyme is cited which mentions him in connection with the traditional cupboard: —

> What's in the cupboard? says Mr Hubbard;
> A knuckle of veal, says Mr Beal;

Is that all? says Mr Ball;
And enough too, says Mr Glue;
And away they all flew.

(N. & Q., 7, IV, 166.)

Were they figured as cats?

The form of verse of this piece on Father Hubbard reproduces the chiming of bells. The same form of verse is used also in the following: —

"Fire! Fire!" says the town-crier;
"Where, where?" says Goody Blair;
"Down the town," said Goody Brown;
"I'll go and see't," said Goody Fleet,
"So will I," said Goody Fry.

(1890, p. 315.)

The old play of *Ralph Roister Doister*, written about the year 1550, ends with a "peele of bells rung by the parish clerk," which is in the same form of verse: —

First bell: When dyed he, when dyed he?
Second bell: We have him! We have him!
Third bell: Roister doister, Roister doister.
Fourth bell: He cometh, he cometh.
Great bell: Our owne, our owne.

CHAPTER V
RHYMES AND BALLADS

VARIOUS nursery pieces deal with material which forms the subject of romantic ballads also. Romantic ballads, like popular songs, are preserved in a number of variations, for they were sung again and again to suit the modified taste of succeeding ages. Many romantic ballads retain much that is pre-Christian in disposition and sentiment. The finest collection of romantic ballads during recent times was made by Child,[24] who included the fireside versions of ballads that have come down to us through nursery literature. Child puts forward the opinion that where we are in possession of a romantic and a fireside version of the same ballad, the latter is a late and degraded survival. But this hardly seems probable, considering that the nursery version of the tale is usually simpler in form, and often consists of dialogue only.

In the estimation of Gregory Smith, the oldest extant examples of romantic ballads "do not date further back than the second and third quarter of the fifteenth century" (that is between 1425 and 1475), "since the way in which the incidents in these are presented, reflects the taste of that age."[25] This applies to

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[24] Child, F. G., *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* 1894.

[25] Smith, G., *The Transition Period*, 1897, p. 180, in Saintsbury, *Periods of European Literature*.

romantic ballads that are highly complex in form. The fireside version of the same story may have flowed from the same source. The question hangs together with that of the origin of the ballad, which may have arisen in connection with dancing and singing, but the subject needs investigation.

Among our famous early ballads is that of *The Elfin Knight*, the oldest printed copy of which is of 1670.

It begins as follows: —

> My plaid awa', my plaid awa',
> And o'er the hill and far awa',
> And far awa' to Norrowa,
>
> My plaid shall not be blown awa'.
> The Elfin Knight sits on yon hill,
> Ba, ba, ba, lilli ba,
> He blaws his horn both loud and shrill,
> The wind has blawn my plaid awa',
> He blows it east, he blows it west,
> He blows it where he liketh best.[26]

The ballad goes on to describe how problems were bandied between the Elfin Knight and a lady. The one on whom an impossible task was imposed stood acquitted if he devised a task of no less difficulty, which must first be performed by his opponent. Such flytings go far back in literature. In this case the

[26] Child, loc. cit., I, 6 ff.

Elfin Knight staked his plaid, that is his life, on receiving the favour of the lady, and he propounded to her three problems, viz. of making a sack without a seam, of washing it in a well without water, and of hanging it to dry on a tree that never blossomed. In reply, she claimed that he should plough an acre of land with a ram's horn, that he should sow it with a peppercorn, and that he should reap it with a sickle of leather. The problems perhaps had a recondite meaning, and the ballad-monger probably found them ready to hand. For Child cites a version of the ballad in which the same flyting took place between a woman and "the auld, auld man," who threatened to take her as his own, and who turned out to be Death. The idea of a wooer staking his life on winning a lady is less primitive than that of Death securing a victim.

The same tasks without their romantic setting are preserved in the form of a simple dialogue, in the nursery collections of *c.* 1783 and 1810. In this case also it is the question of a wooer.

Man speaks

Can you make me a cambrick shirt,
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme,
Without any seam or needlework?
And you shall be a true lover of mine.
Can you wash it in yonder well? Parsley, etc.,

Where never spring water or rain ever fell.
Can you dry it on yonder thorn,
Which never bore blossom since Adam was born?

Maiden speaks

Now you have asked me questions three,
I hope you will answer as many for me.
Can you find me an acre of land,
Between the salt water and the sea sand?

Can you plow it with a ram's horn,
And sow it all over with peppercorn?
Can you reap it with a sickle of leather,
And bind it up with a peacock's feather?

When you have done and finished your work,
Then come to me for your cambrick shirt.

(c. 1783, p. 10.)

On the face of it, it hardly seems likely that this version is descended from the romantic ballad.

The tasks that are here imposed on the man are set also in the form of a boast in a nursery song, in which they have so entirely lost their meaning as to represent a string of impossibilities.

My father left me three acres of land,
Sing sing, sing sing,
My father left me three acres of land,
Sing holly, go whistle and sing.
I ploughed it with a ram's horn,
And sowed it with one pepper corn.
I harrowed it with a bramble bush,
And reaped it with a little pen knife.
I got the mice to carry it to the mill,
And thrashed it with a goose's quill.
I got the cat to carry it to the mill,
The miller swore he would have her paw,
And the cat she swore she would scratch his face.

(N. & Q., VII. 8.)

Another nursery piece is recorded by Halliwell which, in simple form relates concerning *Billy my son* the sequence of events which underlies the famous romantic ballad of Lord Randal.[27] The story is current also in Scotland relating to *The Croodin Doo* (1870, p. 51); it was told also some eighty years ago in Lincolnshire, of *King Henry my son* (*N. & Q.*, 8, VI, 427). The romantic ballad in five verses, as told of Lairde Rowlande, relates how he came from the woods weary with hunting and expecting death. He had been at his true love's, where he ate of the food which poisoned his warden and his dogs. In the nursery version the tragedy is told in the following simple form: —

[27] *Ibid.*, I, 157: Lord Randal.

Where have you been to-day, Billy my son?
Where have you been to-day, my only man? —
I've been a wooing, mother; make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at heart, and fain would lie down.

What have you ate to-day, Billy my son?
What have you ate to-day, my only man? —
I've eat eel pie, mother; make my bed soon,
For I am sick at heart, and shall die before noon.

(1849, p. 259.)

Other nursery pieces deal with Tommy Linn, the Tam Linn of romance, who is the hero of many famous romantic ballads. The name of Tam Linn goes some way back in history. For the *Tayl of young Tamlene*, according to Vedderburn's *Complaint of Scotland*, of 1549, was told among a company of shepherds, and the name appears also as that of a dance, *A Ballett of Thomalyn*, as far back as 1558.[28]

According to the romantic ballads, Tam Linn fell under the influence of the fairies through sleeping under an apple tree, and they threatened to take him back as their own on Hallowe'en, when they rode abroad once in seven years and had the right to claim their due. Tam Linn told the woman who loved him that she must hold him fast, whatever shape he assumed owing to the enchantment of the witches, and that she must cast him into

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[28] *Ibid.*, I, 256: Tamlene.

water as soon as he assumed the shape of a *gled*. He would then be restored to human form.

Tam Linn of romance figures in nursery lore as Tommy Linn. His exploits were printed by Halliwell in one of the numerous versions that are current in the north. In these pieces Tommy Linn has only this in common with Tam Linn of romance, that he too is ready with a suggestion whatever mishap befalls.

Tommy Linn is a Scotchman born,
His head is bald and his beard is shorn;
He has a cap made of a hare skin,
An alderman is Tommy Linn.

Tommy Linn has no boots to put on,
But two calves' skins and the hair it was on.
They are open at the side and the water goes in,
Unwholesome boots, says Tommy Linn.

Tommy Linn had no bridle to put on,
But two mouse's tails that he put on.
Tommy Linn had no saddle to put on,
But two urchins' skins and them he put on.

Tommy Linn's daughter sat on the stair,
O dear father, gin I be not fair?
The stairs they broke and she fell in,
You're fair enough now, says Tommy Linn.

Tommy Linn had no watch to put on,
So he scooped out a turnip to make himself one;
He caught a cricket and put it within,
It's my own ticker, says Tommy Linn.

Tommy Linn, his wife, and wife's mother,
They all fell into the fire together;
Oh, said the topmost, I've got a hot skin,
It's hotter below, says Tommy Linn.

(1849, p. 271.)

Several short nursery rhymes are taken from this, or other versions of this poem. Among the pieces printed by Chambers we read —

Tam o' the Lin and his bairns,
Fell i' the fire in others' arms!
Oh, quo' the bunemost, I ha'e a hot skin!!
It's hotter below, quo' Tam o' the Lin!!!

(1870, p. 33.)

Sir Walter Scott in *Redgauntlet* cites a catch on *Sir Thom o' Lyne*.

In some nursery collections the adventures of Tommy Lin, the Scotchman, are appropriated to Bryan O'Lin, the Irishman.

Bryan O'Lin had no watch to put on,
So he scooped out a turnip to make himself one:

He caught a cricket and put it within,
And called it a ticker, did Bryan O'Lin.

Bryan O'Lin had no breeches to wear,
So he got a sheepskin to make him a pair:
With the skinny side out and the woolly side in,
Oh! how nice and warm, cried Bryan O'Lin.

(1842, p. 212.)

Many nursery rhymes which dwell on cats are formed on the model of these verses. A rhyme that comes from America is as follows: —

Kit and Kitterit and Kitterit's mother,
All went over the bridge together.
The bridge broke down, they all fell in,
"Good luck to you," says Tom Bolin.

A modern collection of rhymes (1873, p. 136) gives this as follows: —

The two grey cats and the grey kits' mother,
All went over the bridge together;
The bridge broke down, they all fell in,
May the rats go with you, sings Tom Bowlin.

The association of cats with Tommy Linn reappears in the rhyme in which Tommy, who in the romantic ballad begged

immersion for himself, practised immersion on a cat. Perhaps the cat was figured as a witch, who, being suspected, was cast into the water in order to prove her witchcraft.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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