

FICTION

Carolyn Wells

The Jingle Book

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION

THE JINGLE BOOK



The Tutor

A tutor who tooted the flute
Tried to teach two young tooters to toot.
Said the two to the tutor,
"Is it harder to toot, or
To tutor two tooters to toot?"

THE JINGLE BOOK

BY
CAROLYN WELLS

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OLIVER HERFORD

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To Hilda's Child

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The Jingle Book

A Serious Question

A kitten went a-walking
 One morning in July,
 And idly fell a-talking
 With a great big butterfly.

The kitten's tone was airy,
 The butterfly would scoff;
 When there came along a fairy
 Who whisked his wings right off.

And then--for it is written
 Fairies can do such things--

Upon the startled kitten
She stuck the yellow wings.



The kitten felt a quiver,
She rose into the air,
Then flew down to the
river

To view her image
there.

With fear her heart was
smitten,

And she began to
cry,

"Am I a butter-kitten?
Or just a kitten-fly?"



Two Old Kings



Oh! the King of Kanoodledum
And the King of Kanoodledee,
They went to sea
In a jigamaree--
A full-rigged jigamaree.

And one king couldn't steer,
And the other, no more could he;
So they both upset
And they both got wet,
As wet as wet could be.



And one king couldn't swim
And the other, he couldn't, too;
 So they had to float,
 While their empty boat
Danced away o'er the sea so blue.

Then the King of Kanoodledum
He turned a trifle pale,
 And so did he
 Of Kanoodledee,
But they saw a passing sail!

And one king screamed like fun
And the other king screeched like mad,
 And a boat was lowered
 And took them aboard;
And, my! but those kings were glad!





A Day Dream

Polly's patchwork--oh, dear me!--
Truly is a sight to see.
Rumpled, crumpled, soiled, and frayed--
Will the quilt be ever made?
See the stitches yawning wide--
Can it be that Polly *tried*?

Some are right and some are wrong,
Some too short and some too long,
Some too loose and some too tight;
Grimy smudges on the white,
And a tiny spot of red,
Where poor Polly's finger bled.
Strange such pretty, dainty blocks--
Bits of Polly's summer frocks--
Should have proved so hard to sew,
And the cause of so much woe!

One day it was *very* hot,
And the thread got in a knot,
Drew the seam up in a heap--
Polly calmly fell asleep.
Then she had a lovely dream;
Straight and even was the seam,
Pure and spotless was the white;
All the blocks were finished quite--
Each joined to another one.
Lo, behold! the quilt was done,--
Lined and quilted,--and it seemed

To cover Polly as she dreamed!

Our Club

We're going to have the mostest fun!
It's going to be a club;
And no one can belong to it
But Dot and me and Bub.



We thought we'd have a Reading Club,
But couldn't 'cause, you see,
Not one of us knows how to read--
Not Dot nor Bub nor me.

And then we said a Sewing Club,
But thought we'd better not;
'Cause none of us knows how to sew--
Not me nor Bub nor Dot.

And so it's just a Playing Club,
We play till time for tea;
And, oh, we have the bestest times!
Just Dot and Bub and me.

Puzzled

There lived in ancient Scribbletown a wise old writer-man,
Whose name was Homer Cicero Demosthenes McCann.
He'd written treatises and themes till, "For a change," he said,
"I think I'll write a children's book before I go to bed."



He pulled down all his musty tomes in Latin and in Greek;
Consulted cyclopaedias and manuscripts antique,
Essays in Anthropology, studies in counterpoise--
"For these," he said, "are useful lore for little girls and boys."

He scribbled hard, and scribbled fast, he burned the midnight oil,
And when he reached "The End" he felt rewarded for his toil;
He said, "This charming Children's Book is greatly to my credit."
And now he's sorely puzzled that no child has ever read it.



An Intercepted Valentine

Little Bo-Peep, will you be mine?
I want you for my Valentine.
You are my choice of all the girls,
With your blushing cheeks and your fluttering curls,

With your ribbons gay and your kirtle neat,
None other is so fair and sweet.
Little Bo-Peep, let's run away,
And marry each other on Midsummer Day;
And ever to you I'll be fond and true,

Your faithful Valentine,
LITTLE BOY BLUE.

A Long-Felt Want



One day wee Willie and his dog
Sprawled on the nursery floor.
He had a florist's catalogue,
And turned the pages o'er,

Till all at once he gave a spring,
"Hurrah!" he cried with joy;
"Mamma, here's just the very thing
To give your little boy!

"For when we fellows go to school,
We lose our things, you know;
And in that little vestibule
They do get mixed up so.

"And as you often say you can't
Take care of 'em for me,
Why don't you buy a *rubber plant*,
And an *umbrella tree*?"

The Musical Carp

There once was a corpulent carp
Who wanted to play on a harp,
But to his chagrin
So short was his fin
That he couldn't reach up to C sharp.



The Intelligent Hen

'Twas long ago,--a year or so,--
In a barnyard by the sea,
That an old hen lived whom you may know
By the name of Fiddle-de-dee.
She scratched around in the sand all day,
For a lively old hen was she.

And then do you know, it happened this way
In that barnyard by the sea;
A great wise owl came down one day,
And hooted at Fiddle-de-dee,
Just hooted at Fiddle-de-dee.
And he cried, "Hi! Hi! old hen, I say!
You're provincial, it seems to me!"

"Why, what do you mean?" cried the old red hen,
As mad as hops was she.
"Oh, I've been 'round among great men,
In the world where the great men be.
And none of them scratch with their claws like you,
They write with a quill like me."

Now very few people could get ahead
Of that old hen, Fiddle-de-dee.
She went and hunted the posy-bed,
And returned in triumphant glee.
And ever since then, that little red hen,
She writes with a jonquil pen, quill pen,
She writes with a jonquil pen.





The Happy Hyena

There once was a happy Hyena
Who played on an old concertina.
He dressed very well,
And in his lapel
He carelessly stuck a verbena.



A Great Lady

This is the Queen of Nonsense Land,
She wears her bonnet on her hand;
She carpets her ceilings and frescos her floors,
She eats on her windows and sleeps on her doors.
Oh, ho! Oh, ho! to think there could be
A lady so silly-down-dilly as she!

She goes for a walk on an ocean wave,
She fishes for cats in a coral cave;
She drinks from an empty glass of milk,
And lines her potato trees with silk.
I'm sure that for ever and never was seen
So foolish a thing as the Nonsense Queen!

She ordered a wig for a blue bottle fly,
And she wrote a note to a pumpkin pie;
She makes all the oysters wear emerald rings,
And does dozens of other nonsensible things.
Oh! the scatterbrained, shatterbrained lady so grand,
Her Royal Skyhighness of Nonsense Land!

Opulent Ollie

One Saturday opulent Ollie
Thought he'd go for a ride on the trolley;
But his pennies were few,--
He only had two,--
So he went and made mud-pies with Polly.



The Two Bears

Prince Curlilocks remarked one day
To Princess Dimplecheek,
"I haven't had a real good play
For more than 'most a week."

Said Princess Dimplecheek, "My dear,
Your majesty forgets--
This morning we played grenadier
With grandpa's epaulets.

"And yesterday we sailed to Spain--
We both were pirates bold,
And braved the wild and raging main
To seek for hidden gold."

"True," said the prince; "I mind me well--
Right hardily we fought,
And stormed a massive citadel
To gain the prize we sought.

"But if your ladyship agrees,
Methinks we'll go upstairs
And build a waste of arctic seas,
And we'll be polar bears."

"Yes, if you'll promise not to bite,"
Fair Dimplecheek replied,
Already half-way up the flight,
His highness by her side.

"Princess, on that far window-seat,
Go, sit thee down and wait,
While I ask nursie for a sheet,

Or maybe six or eight."

A pile of sheets his highness brought.

"Dear princess, pray take these;
Although our path with danger's fraught,
We'll reach the polar seas."

Two furry rugs his lordship bore,
Two pairs of mittens white;
He threw them on the nursery floor
And shouted with delight.

He spread those sheets--the funny boy--
O'er table, floor, and chair.

"Princess," said he, "don't you enjoy
This frosty, bracing air?"

"These snowy sheets are fields of ice,
This is an iceberg grim."

"Yes, dear, I think it's very nice,"
She said, and smiled at him.

And then they donned the rugs of fur,
The mittens, too, they wore;
And Curlilocks remarked to her,
"Now you must roar and roar."

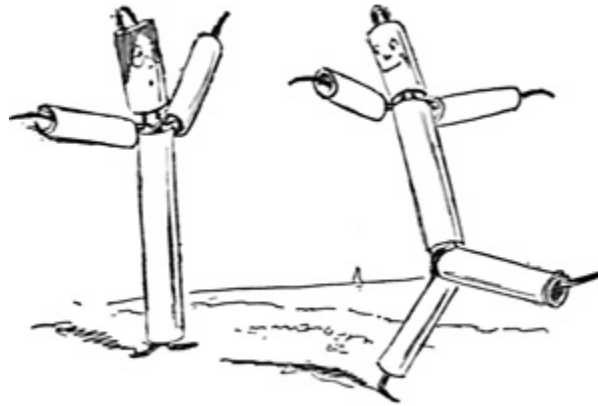


Dimplecheek looked out from the cowl
Formed by her furry rug.
"I'm 'fraid of bears that only growl--
I like the kind that hug."

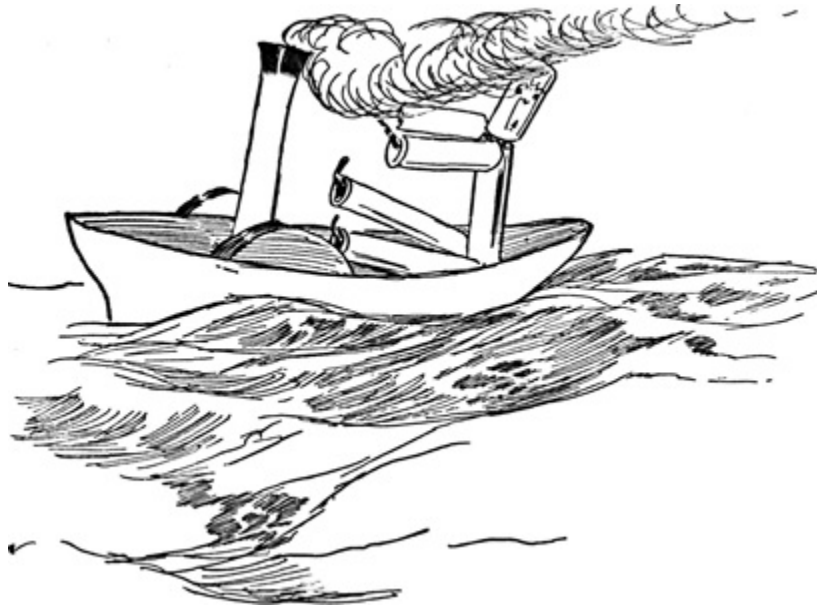
The Very Merry Voyage of the Macaroni Man

This figure here before you is a Macaroni Man,

Who is built, as you may notice, on a most ingenious plan.
His skeleton, I beg to state, is made of hairpins three,
Which are bent and curved and twisted to a marvellous degree.
His coat-sleeves and his trouser-legs, his head and eke his waist
Are made of superfine imported macaroni paste.
And if you care to listen, you may hear the thrilling tale
Of the merry Macaroni Man's extraordinary sail.
One sunny day he started for a voyage in his yacht,
His anxious mother called to him, and said, "You'd better not!
Although the sun is shining bright, I fear that it may rain;
And don't you think, my darling boy, you'd better take the train?"
"Oh, no," said he, "no clouds I see,--the sky is blue and clear,
I will return in time for tea--good-by, my mother dear."



Full merrily he started off, the day was fine and fair,
And to his great delight he found no dampness in the air.
You know if he gets wet, a Macaroni Man is spoiled,
And if he stands too near the steam, of course he may get boiled.
But our hero used precautions,--carefully he shunned the spray,--
And when the steam blew toward him, he just steered the other way.
Now, as the breeze was from the land, his course lay out to sea;
He sailed so far that he felt sure he would be late for tea.
He sailed, and sailed, and sailed, and sailed,--he feared the dew would fall--
He tried to turn,--but oh, that steam! it would not do at all!



A single puff blew toward him, and it nearly cooked his face!
The mournful Macaroni Man felt sadly out of place.
But a happy thought occurred to him, "Ha, ha,--ho, ho!" said he,--
"I'll just sail on around the world,--and then, it seems to me,
I'll reach my home (according to a careful estimate)
In time for tea, although I'll be perhaps a trifle late."
Then merrily his gallant ship sped o'er the bounding main,
Quickly he crossed the ocean wide, he flew by France and Spain;
Covered the Mediterranean, spanned the Suez Canal,--
"I'll reach my home to-night," he thought, "oh, yes, I'm sure I shall."
He skimmed the Red Sea like a bird,--the Indian Ocean crossed
(But once, in Oceanica, he feared that he was lost).



He passed Australia on the fly,--cut over Capricorn,
And as the sunset gun he heard, he swung around Cape Horn.
Still at full speed, he sailed due north, he rounded Cape St. Roque,
Crossed the equator, and found out the Gulf Stream was no joke.

He coasted by the seaboard States. Hurrah! all danger past,
Quickly he sailed the last few miles and reached his home at last;
His mother welcomed him, and said, "I'm glad there was no shower;
But hurry in, my bonny boy, I've waited tea an hour."



The 4.04 Train

"There's a train at 4.04," said Miss Jenny;
"Four tickets I'll take. Have you any?"
Said the man at the door:
"Not four for 4.04,
For four for 4.04 is too many."



A Valuable Gift

Old Father Time, one day
In his study, so they say,
Was indulging in a surreptitious nap,
When from his drowsy dreams
He was wakened, as it seems,
By a timid but persistent little rap.

He yawned and rubbed his eyes
In indolent surprise,
Then slowly he arose from where he sat;
He opened wide his door,
And nearly tumbled o'er
The figure that stood waiting on the mat.

A tiny little dog,
With excitement all agog,
And angry eyes that seemed to flash and glower.
His manner was polite,
But he said, "I claim my right!
And I've called, sir, to demand of you my hour."

"Your what?" the old man said,
As he shook his puzzled head;
And the pertinacious puppy spoke with force:
"Well, sir, they often say,
'Every dog must have his day,'
So a puppy ought to have an hour, of course!"

The old man shook with glee,
But he said obligingly,
"The dog days are all gone, I grieve to say;
But since you've come so far,
And so mannerly you are,
I'll give you just an hour--to get away."





The Grandiloquent Goat

A very grandiloquent Goat
Sat down to a gay table d'hote;
He ate all the corks,
The knives and the forks,
Remarking: "On these things I dote."

Then, before his repast he began,
While pausing the menu to scan,
He said: "Corn, if you please,
And tomatoes and pease,
I'd like to have served in the can."

How the Cat was Belled

A fable told by La Fontaine,
Two centuries or more ago,
Describes some rats who would arraign
A cat, their direst foe,
Who killed so many rats
And caused the deepest woe,
This Catiline of cats.

The poor rats were at their wits' end
Their homes and families to defend;
And as a last resort
They took the case to court.

It seems they called a caucus wise
Of rats of every age and size,
And then their dean,
With sapient mien,
A very Solon of a rat,

Said it was best to bell the cat.

The quaint old tale goes on to tell
How this plan would have worked quite well,
 But, somehow, flaws
 Appeared, because
No one would hang the bell.

Though there the ancient fable ends,
Later report the tale extends,
 No longer is the truth withheld;
 Developments appear,
 And so you have it here.
 For the first time
 Set down in rhyme
Just how that cat was belled.

The council, as 'twas getting late,
Was just about to separate,
 When suddenly a rat arose
 Who said he could a plan propose
 Which would, he thought, succeed
 And meet their urgent need.

Now as this rat was very small,
And had no dignity at all,
 Although his plan was well advised,
 We really need not be surprised
That all the rats of riper years
Expressed the gravest doubts and fears;
 Till suddenly
 He said, said he,
"If you will leave it all to me,
 I will avow
 Three days from now
That you shall all be free."
The solemn council then adjourned.
Each rat to home and fireside turned;
 But each shook his wise head
 And to his neighbor said:
"It is a dangerous job, in truth,
Though it seems naught to headstrong youth."

Now young Sir Rat we next behold,
With manner brave and visage bold,
 Go marching down
 To London town,
Where wondrous things are sold.
 We see him stop
 At a large shop,
And with the bland clerk's courteous aid
This was the purchase that he made:

A bicycle of finest make,
With modern gear and patent brake,
Pedometer, pneumatic tire,
And spokes that looked like silver wire,
 A lantern bright
 To shine at night,
Enamel finish, nickel plate,
And all improvements up to date.
Said sly Sir Rat: "It suits me well,
Especially that sweet-toned *bell*."



The shades of night were falling fast
When Sir Rat turned toward home at last.
The neighbors watched him as he passed
And said: "What is that queer-shaped thing?
Surely that can't be made to ring."

 Sir Rat went on, nor stayed
 To hear the jests they made;
And just outside the old cat's gate
He stopped and boldly braved his fate,
 For if that cat
 Should smell a rat
How quickly he'd come out and catch him,
And with what gusto he'd despatch him!
Sir Rat, against the picket-fence
Leaned the machine, then hurried hence,
 And hid himself with glee,
 And waited breathlessly
 To see what that
 Cantankerous cat
Would say, when in the twilight dim
He saw that brightly shining rim.

 Sir Rat, though hidden quite,

And safely out of sight,
Had scarcely time to wink his eye,
When Mr. Cat came sauntering by.

"Ha! Ha!" said he,
"What's this I see,
A bicycle! and just my size!
Well, this, indeed, is a surprise!
I'll confiscate
This treasure great;
How quickly I'll fly o'er the ground
When I pursue my hunting round!"

He mounted it with eager haste,
It suited well his sporting taste;
He guided it at will,
And used the brake with skill,
He grasped the handle-bars, and then--
You see it was his custom when
He did a thing, to do it well--
Of course he used the clear-toned bell!



Victory now! the deed is done!
No longer at the set of sun
The rats fly shrieking to their nests,
They saunter round with merry jests
And ne'er a thought of fear,
Knowing full well
They'll hear the bell
When Mr. Cat draws near.



And young Sir Rat who did the deed,
Whose cleverness relieved their need,
His wondrous enterprise
Was lauded to the skies.
And everywhere his name
Was hailed with shouts of fame.

In difficulties, oft we see
Modern improvements frequently
Will prove a happy remedy.

The Rhyme of Triangular Tommy



Triangular Tommy, one morning in May,
Went out for a walk on the public highway.
Just here I will say,
'Twas a bright sunny day,
And the sky it was blue, and the grass it was green,
The same sky and grass that you've all of you seen;
And the birds in the trees sang their usual song,
And Triangular Tommy went trudging along.

But I can tell you
He cared naught for the view.
He did just what small boys of his age always do:
He shouted out "Scat!"
At a wandering cat,
And he picked a big daisy to stick in his hat;
The clovers he topped,
And the toadstools he cropped,
And sometimes he scuffled and sometimes he hopped.



He took an old stick and poked at a worm,
And merrily chuckled to see the thing squirm;
When he chanced to look up, and in gorgeous array
Triangular Tilly was coming his way.
Triangular Tom straightened up in a jiff,
And put on his best manner--exceedingly stiff;
And as far as his angular shape would allow
Triangular Tom made a beautiful bow.

Triangular Tilly went smilingly by,





With a glance that was friendly, but just a bit shy.
And Tom so admired her that after she passed,
A backward look over his shoulder he cast.
And he said, "Though I think many girls are but silly,
I really admire that Triangular Tilly."

But soon all such thoughts were put out of his head,
For who should come by but Triangular Ted,
The very boy Tom had been wishing to see!
"Hello!" said Triangular Tommy, said he.
"Hello!" said Triangular Ted, and away
Those two children scooted to frolic and play.

And they had, on the green,
Where 'twas all dry and clean,
The best game of leap-frog that ever was seen.
Triangular Tom beat down this way, you know,
And Triangular Ted stood beside him, just so,



When one, two, three--go!
With the greatest gusto,
flew over Tom in a manner not slow.

They played hide-and-seek, they played marbles and tag,
They played they were soldiers, and each waved a flag;
Till at last they confessed,
They wanted to rest;
So they sat down and chatted with laughter and jest;



When Schoolmaster Jones they suddenly spied,
Come clumping along with his pedagogue stride,
As usual, with manner quite preoccupied;

With his hat on one side,
And his shoe-lace untied--
A surly old fellow, it can't be denied;
And each wicked boy
Thought that he would enjoy
An occasion the thoughtful old man to annoy,
And all of his wise calculations destroy.

So they thought they'd employ
A means known to each boy.
And across the wide pavement they fastened a twine
Exceedingly strong but exceedingly fine;
And Triangular Tommy laughed out in his glee,
To think how upset the old master would be!

Although very wicked, their mischievous scheme
Was a perfect success; and with a loud scream,
A horrible clash,
A thump and a smash,
Old Schoolmaster Jones came down with a crash.
His hat rolled away, and his spectacles broke,
And those dreadful boys thought it a howling good joke.



And they just doubled up in immoderate glee,
Saying, "Look at the Schoolmaster!
Tee-hee! tee-hee!"



Tom gave a guffaw,
And Ted roared a "haw-haw";
But soon their diversion was turned into awe,
For old Schoolmaster Jones was angry, they saw.



Triangular Ted
Turned swiftly and fled,
And far down the street like a reindeer he sped,
Leaving Tommy to face the old gentleman's rage,
Who quickly jumped up,--he was brisk for his age,--
And with just indignation portrayed on his face,
To Triangular Tommy he quickly gave chase.



And hearing his squeals
And his frantic appeals,
Triangular Tommy fast took to his heels.
Now Tommy was agile and Tommy was spry;
He whizzed through the air--he just seemed to fly;
He rushed madly on, until, dreadful to say!
He came where the railroad was just in his way--



And alas! and alack!
He tripped on the track
And then with a terrible, sudden ker-thwack!
Triangular Tommy sprawled flat on his back--
And the train came along with a crash, and a crack,
A din, and a clatter, a clang, and a clack,
A toot, and a boom, and a roar, and a hiss,
And chopped him up all into pieces like this--
If *you* cut out papers just like them, why, then,
If you try, you can put him together again.



A Modern Invention

Old Santa Claus is up-to-date,
And hereafter, rumors say,
He'll come with his pack of glittering toys,
And visit the homes of girls and boys,
In a new reindeerless sleigh.



An April Joke



Oh, it was a merry, gladsome day,
When the April Fool met the Queen of May;
She had roguish eyes and golden hair,
And they were a mischief-making pair.
They planned the funniest kind of a joke
On the poor, long-suffering mortal folk;
And a few mysterious words he said,
His fool's cap close to her flower-crowned head.
Then he laughed till he made his cap-bells ring,
At the thought of the topsy-turvy Spring.
"Tis a fair exchange," he said, with a wink--
"It is!" she said, and what do you think?
The flowers that should bloom in the month of May
Every one of them came on an April day!
And they looked for April showers in vain,
But all through May it did nothing but rain!

An Alice Alphabet



A is for Alice a-dressing the Queen.

B is for Borogoves, mimsy and lean.



C is the Cheshire Cat, wearing a grin.

D is the Duchess who had a sharp chin.



E is the Eaglet who barred out long words.

F, the Flamingo, the queerest of birds.



G is the Gryphon, loquacious and gay.

Humpty Dumpty in gorgeous array.

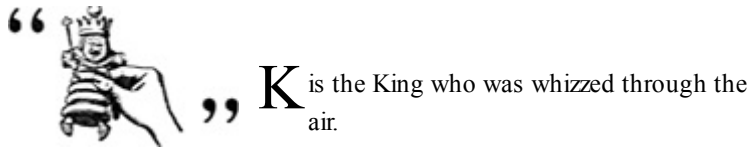
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I is for Insects with curious names.

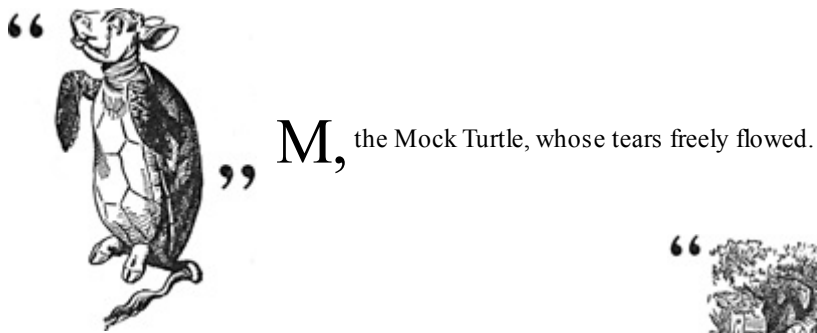


J is the Jabberwock burbling with flames.



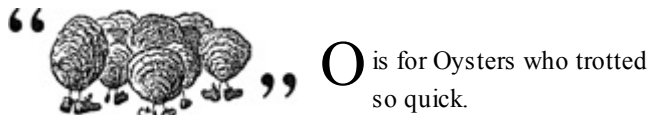
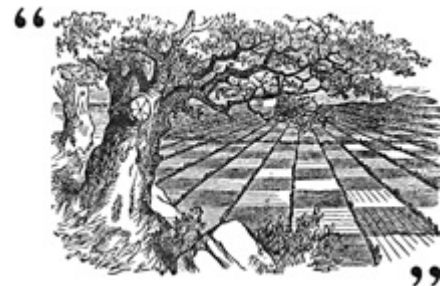
K is the King who was whizzed through the air.

L is the Lobster who sugared his hair.



M, the Mock Turtle, whose tears freely flowed.

N is for Nobody seen on the road.



O is for Oysters who trotted so quick.

is the Puppy who played with a stick.

P



Q is the Queen
who ran very
fast.



R is the Rabbit who blew a great blast.



S is the Sheep, on her knitting intent.



T, Tweedledum, with his noisy lament.



U is the Unicorn, valiant in feud.



V is the Violet, saucy and rude.



W, the Walrus, addicted to chat.

Executioner, seeking the cat.

X,



Y is the Youth Father William surveyed.



Z is the Zigzag the mouse's tail made.



The Funny Kittens



Once there were some silly kittens,
And they knitted woolly mittens
To bestow upon the freezing Hottentots.
But the Hottentots refused them,
Saying that they never used them
Unless crocheted of red with yellow spots.



So the silly little kittens
Took their blue and white striped mittens
To a Bear who lived within a hollow tree;
The Bear responded sadly,
"I would wear your mittens gladly,
But I fear they are too gay for such as me."



Then the kittens, almost weeping,
Came to where a Cow lay sleeping,
And they woke her with this piteous request,
"Won't you wear our mittens furry?"
Said the Cow, "My dears, don't worry;
I will put them on as soon as I am dressed."



Then the Cow put on her bonnet
With a wreath of roses on it,
And a beautiful mantilla fringed with white;
And she donned the pretty mittens,
While the silly little kittens
Clapped their paws in admiration at the sight.

The Strike of the Fireworks

'Twas the night before the Fourth of July, the people slept serene;
The fireworks were stored in the old town hall that stood on the village green.
The steeple clock tolled the midnight hour, and at its final stroke,
The fire in the queer old-fashioned stove lifted its voice and spoke;
"The earth and air have naught to do, the water, too, may play,
And only fire is made to work on Independence Day.

"I won't stand such injustice! It's wrong, beyond a doubt,
And I shall take my holiday. Good-by, I'm going out!"
Up spoke a Roman candle then, "The principle is right!
Suppose we strike, and all agree we will not work to-night!"
"My stars!" said a small sky-rocket. "What an awful time there'll be,
When the whole town comes together to-night, the great display to see!"

"Let them come," said a saucy pinwheel, "yes, let them come if they like,
As a delegate I'll announce to them that the fireworks are going to strike!"

"My friends," said a small cap-pistol, "this movement is all wrong,--
Gunpowder, noise, and fireworks to Fourth of July belong.
My great ancestral musket made Independence Day,
I frown on your whole conspiracy, and you are wrong, I say!"

And so they talked and they argued, some for and some against,--
And they progressed no further than they were when they commenced.
Until in a burst of eloquence a queer little piece of punk
Arose in his place and said, "I think we ought to show some spunk.
And I for one have decided, although I am no shirk,
That to-day is a legal holiday and not even fire should work.

"And I am of some importance,"--here he gave a pretentious cough,
"For without my assistance none of you could very well be put off."
"You are right," said the Roman candle, "and I think we are all agreed
To strike for our rights and our liberty. Hurrah! we shall succeed!"
The dissenters cried with one accord, "Our objections we withdraw.
Hurrah, hurrah for the fireworks' strike!" and they cried again, "Hurrah!"

Then a match piped up with a tiny voice, "Your splendid scheme I like.
I agree with all your principles and so I, too, will strike!"
Suiting the action to the word, the silly little dunce
Clambered down from his matchesafe and excitedly struck at once.
He lost his head, and he ran around among the fireworks dry,
And he cried, "Hurrah for the fireworks' strike! Hurrah for the Fourth of July!"

With his waving flame he lit the punk--a firecracker caught a spark,--
Then rockets and wheels and bombs went off--no longer the place was dark!
The explosions made a fearful noise, the flames leaped high and higher,
The village folk awoke and cried, "The town hall is on fire!"
So the strike of the fireworks ended in a wonderful display
Of pyrotechnic grandeur on Independence Day!

The Arch Armadillo



There once was an arch Armadillo
Who built him a hut 'neath a willow;
He hadn't a bed
So he rested his head
On a young Porcupine for a pillow.

A Dream Lesson

Once there was a little boy who wouldn't go to bed,
When they hinted at the subject he would only shake his head,
When they asked him his intentions, he informed them pretty straight
That he wouldn't go to bed at all, and Nursesey needn't wait.

As their arguments grew stronger, and their attitude more strict,
I grieve to say that naughty boy just yelled and screamed and kicked.
And he made up awful faces, and he told them up and down
That he wouldn't go to bed for all the nurses in the town.

Then Nursesey lost her patience, and although it wasn't right,
Retorted that for all she cared he might sit up all night.
He approved of this arrangement, and he danced a jig for joy,
And turned a somersault with glee; he *was* a naughty boy.

And so they all went off to bed and left him sitting there,
Right in the corner by the fire in Grandpa's big armchair.
He read his books and played his games,--he even sang a song
And thought how lovely it would be to sit up all night long.

But soon his games grew stupid, and his puzzles
wouldn't work;
He drew himself up stiffly with a sudden little jerk,
And he said, "I am not sleepy, and I love to
play alone--
And--I--think--" the rest was mumbled in
a drowsy monotone.

He leaned back on the cushions like that night
he had the croup;
His head began to wobble and his eyes began
to droop;
He closed them for a minute, just to see how
it would seem,
And straightway he was sound asleep, and dreamed this awful dream!

He thought he saw a garden filled with flowers and roses gay,
A great big gardener with a hoe came walking down his way;
"Ah, ha!" exclaimed the gardener, as he clutched him by the head,
"Here's a fine specimen I've found; I'll plant him in this bed!"





He held the boy in one big hand, unheeding how he cried,
And with the other dug a hole enormous, deep, and wide.
He jammed the little fellow in, and said in gruffest tone,
"This is the bed for naughty boys who won't go to their own."

And then the dirt was shovelled in,—it covered up his toes,
His ankles, knees, and waist and arms, and higher yet it rose.
For still the gardener shovelled on, not noticing his cries;
It came up to his chin and mouth—it almost reached his eyes;

Just then he gathered all his strength and gave an awful scream,
And woke himself, and put an end to that terrific dream.
And he said, as Nursey tucked him up and bade him snugly rest,
"When I am planted in a bed, I like my own the best."

The Rivals

Two well-built men, neither giant nor dwarf,
Were Monsieur Elims and Mynheer Nworf.
They lived in a town not far away,
And spent their time in work and play.
Now Monsieur Elims was loved by all—
By rich and poor, by great and small.
And Mynheer Nworf remarked one day,
"Brother, explain to me, I pray,
Why no one likes me as well as you,
No matter what I may say or do.
I have stores of knowledge packed in my head;
I am learned and wise and very well read;

I can dance, I can sing, I'm extremely polite;
I am worth a large fortune all in my own right.
But still,--and this question has caused me much thought,--
While I am neglected, you're everywhere sought."
Monsieur Elims replied: "My dear sir, that is true,
But you see, I am I, and you see, you are you.
If I receive praises and you receive blame,
'Tis doubtless because each lives up to his name."



You'll find his defence rather puzzling, I fear;
But read their names backward--the meaning is clear.



The New Cup

"I've a lovely new cup from Uncle John,"
Said Dorothy; "only see--
It has beautiful golden letters on,
And they spell '*Remember Me*.'"

"Oho!" laughed Fred. "Why, Dorothy dear,
They put that on mugs and plates:
I've studied jography 'most a year,
And I know the names of the States.

And when you see that anywhere,--
At least, since this fuss with Spain,--
It's the President who puts it there,
And it means 'Remember the Maine!'"

A Photographic Failure

Mr. Hezekiah Hinkle
Saw a patient Periwinkle
With a kodak, sitting idly by a rill.
Feeling a desire awaken
For to have his picture taken,
Mr. Hezekiah Hinkle stood stock-still.

Mr. Hezekiah Hinkle
Felt his brow begin to wrinkle,
And his pose assume a sad and solemn style;
But the Periwinkle trusted,
As the focus he adjusted,
That his customer would kindly try to smile.

Mr. Hezekiah Hinkle
Felt his eyes begin to twinkle,
And his mouth took on a broad and open grin;
Said the Periwinkle, sadly,
"If you stretch your jaw so madly,
I fear perhaps that I shall tumble in."

Mr. Hezekiah Hinkle
Felt his hair begin to crinkle,
As it rose up on his forehead in affright;
Though his comrade spoke so mildly,
Mr. Hinkle wondered wildly,
How he could escape this dire and awful plight.

Mr. Hezekiah Hinkle
Said, "I fear it's going to sprinkle,
And really for a storm I'm not prepared."
Then without a further warning
He politely said, "Good morning,"
And the patient Periwinkle stood and stared.



Christmas Gifts

Ten Christmas presents standing in a line;
Robert took the bicycle, then there were nine.
Nine Christmas presents ranged in order straight;
Bob took the steam engine, then there were eight.
Eight Christmas presents--and one came from Devon;



Robbie took the jackknife, then there were seven.
Seven Christmas presents direct from St. Nick's;
Bobby took the candy box, then there were six
Six Christmas presents, one of them alive;
Rob took the puppy dog, then there were five.
Five Christmas presents yet on the floor;
Bobbie took the soldier cap, then there were four.
Four Christmas presents underneath the tree;
Bobbet took the writing desk, then there were three.
Three Christmas presents still in full view;
Robin took the checker board, then there were two.
Two Christmas presents, promising fun,
Bobbles took the picture book, then there was one.
One Christmas present--and now the list is done;
Bobbie took the sled, and then there were none.
And the same happy child received every toy,
So many nicknames had one little boy.



Young America

Wee Willie sat a-thinking,
And he shook his curly head.
Around him on the nursery floor
His treasures lay outspread.

Firecrackers and torpedoes,
Trumpet and flag and drum,
Rockets and pinwheels and paper caps,
For Fourth of July had come.

"But it makes me sort o' sorry,"
Wee Willie said with a sigh,
"To think of those poor little English boys
Without any Fourth of July."



A Bicycle built for Two

There was an ambitious young eel
Who determined to ride on a wheel;
But try as he might,
He couldn't ride right,
In spite of his ardor and zeal.

If he sat on the saddle to ride
His tail only pedalled one side;
And I'm sure you'll admit

That an eel *couldn't* sit
On a bicycle saddle astride.

Or if he hung over the top,
He could go, but he never could stop;
For of course it is clear
He had no way to steer,
And under the wheel he would flop.

His neighbor, observing the fun,
Said, "I think that the thing can be done,
If you'll listen to me,
You'll quickly agree
That two heads are better than one.

"And this is my project, old chap,
Around our two waists I will wrap
This beautiful belt
Of bottle-green felt
And fasten it firm with a strap."



This done, with a dignified mien
The two squirmed up on the machine,
And rode gayly away,
Or at least, so they say,
Who witnessed the wonderful scene.



Dorothy's Opinion

Mamma has bought a calendar,
And every single page
Has pictures on of little girls
'Most just about my age.

And when she bought it yesterday,
Down at the big bazaar,
She said, "What lovely little girls,
How true to life they are."

But I don't think they're true to life,
And I'll just tell you why;
They never have a rumpled frock
Or ribbon bow awry.

And though they play with cats and dogs,
And rabbits and white mice,
And sail their boats and fly their kites,
They always look so nice.

And I am sure no little girl
That ever *I* have seen,
Could play with dogs or sail a boat
And keep her frock so clean.



The Roll of Roly Poly Roy

Once on a time a lad I knew--
His sister called him Bubby;
His cheeks were red, his eyes were blue,

And he was plump and chubby.
Indeed, he was so stout a boy,
Some called him Roly Poly Roy;
They called him that
For he was fat
And very plump and chubby.



He caused his father grief profound,
And made his mother worry,
Because he'd roll along the ground
When he was in a hurry.
For as he couldn't see his toes,
He often tumbled on his nose;
So, on the whole,
'Twas best to roll
When he was in a hurry.

"Get up!" the people urged, but he
Replied, "There's no use talking;
I roll around because, you see,
It's easier than walking."
And though it looked extremely droll
To see the lad lie down and roll,
It was, forsooth,
For that fat youth
Far easier than walking.



One day he thought he'd try to ride;
Alas, he was so bulky,
He tumbled off the other side,
Which made him rather sulky.
He heard his comrades jeer and scoff,
Again he tried and tumbled off,
And when he fell
They'd shout and yell--
Of course it made him sulky.

Just out of town there was a place

With rolling ground and hilly,
And here Roy started for a race
With Dick and Tom and Willy.
You'll know of course before you're told
That Roy just laid him down and rolled;
And so, you see,
He easily
Beat Dick and Tom and Willy.

That day two giants came along
From Huncamunca Valley,
Seeking some tenpins good and strong
For their new bowling alley.
They reached the hilly sort of place
Just as our hero won the race;
"Look at him roll!"
They said. "He'll bowl
On our new bowling alley.

"The other boys are squarely built;
For tenpins they'll do finely!
No matter if a few get kilt,"
And then they smiled benignly.
Quickly they kidnapped ten small boys,
All howling with a fearful noise;
They took them all,
And Roy for ball,
And then they smiled benignly.



They hurried to their home and then
Began their barbarous bowling.
They set in rows the children ten
And then set Roy a-rolling.
But as the giants were strong and great,
They shot poor Roy at such a rate,
And with such might,
That out of sight
Poor Roy was set a-rolling.



He rolled and rolled and rolled and rolled,
But soon, his fears dispelling,
With happiness he did behold
He'd safely reached his dwelling.
Secure and safe from further harms,
His mother caught him in her arms,
And said with joy,
"My darling boy,
You've safely reached your dwelling."

Now rolling seems to him to be
More dangerous than walking.
And Roly Poly Roy you'll see
Along the sidewalks stalking.
He'll always have a certain fear
That giants may be lurking near,
And so he'll go
With motion slow
Along the sidewalk stalking.



My Barometer

My little maid with golden hair
Comes each morning for a kiss;
And I know the day will be fine and fair
When Polly looks like this.



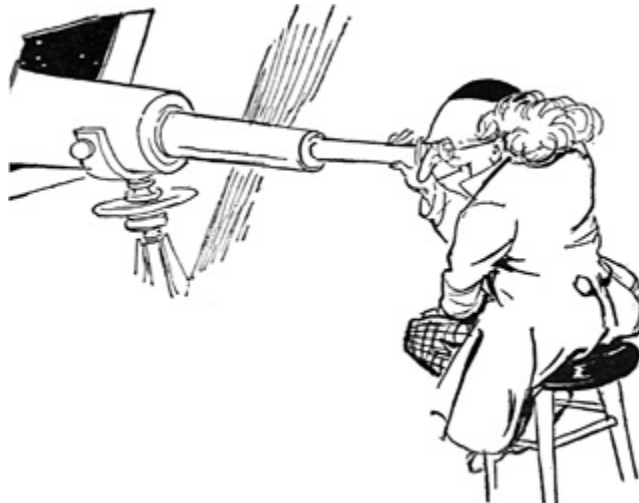
Or I know the clouds will frown and lower,
The skies will be dull and gray,
And perhaps there'll be a passing shower,
When Polly looks this way.

But a violent storm of rain or snow
I can prognosticate,
For the sign will never fail, I know,
When this is Polly's pate.



The Butter Betty Bought

Betty Botta bought some butter;
"But," said she, "this butter's bitter!
If I put it in my batter
It will make my batter bitter.
But a bit o' better butter
Will but make my batter better."
Then she bought a bit o' better
Better than the bitter butter,
Made her bitter batter better.
So 'twas better Betty Botta
Bought a bit o' better butter.



A Marvel

An old astronomer there was
Who lived up in a tower,
Named Ptolemy Copernicus
Flammarion McGower.
He said: "I can prognosticate
With estimates correct;
And when the skies I contemplate,
I know what to expect.
When dark'ning clouds obscure my sight,
I think perhaps 'twill rain;
And when the stars are shining bright,
I know 'tis clear again."
And then abstractedly he scanned
The heavens, hour by hour,
Old Ptolemy Copernicus
Flammarion McGower.

An Alphabet Zoo

A was an apt Alligator,
Who wanted to be a head-waiter;
He said, "I opine
In that field I could shine,
Because I am such a good skater."
B was a beggarly Bear,
Who carefully curled his front hair;
He said, "I would buy
A red-spotted tie,--
But I haven't a penny to spare."
C was a cool Chimpanzee,
Who went to an afternoon tea.
When they said, "Will you take
A caraway cake?"
He greedily took twenty-three!
D was a diligent Doe,
In summer she shovelled the snow;
In the spring and the fall
She did nothing at all,
And in winter the grass she would mow.
E was an erudite Ermine,
Who tried very hard to determine
If he *should* earn a cent,
How it ought to be spent,
And decided to purchase a sermon.

was a fussy Flamingo,
Fwho remarked to his family, "By jingo!
I think I would go
To that animal show,
But they all talk such barbarous lingo."

Gwas a giddy Gazelle,
Who never could learn how to spell;
But she managed to pass
To the head of her class,
Because she did fractions so well.

Hwas a haughty young Hawk,
Who affected society talk;
But when introduced
At a large chicken roost
He excitedly screamed out, "Oh, Lawk!"

Iwas an idle Iguana,
Who lived upon curried banana;
With tears he'd protest
That he never could rest
Till he learned to sing "Eileen Alanna."

Jwas a jimp Jaguar,
Who purchased a Spanish guitar;
He played popular airs
At *fetes* and at fairs,
And down at the Fancy Bazaar.

Kwas a kind Kangaroo,
Whose bonnet was always askew;
So they asked her to wait
While they put it on straight
And fastened it firmly with glue.

Lwas a lachrymose Leopard,
Who ate up twelve sheep and a shepherd,
But the real reason why
He continued to cry
Was his food was so lavishly peppered.

Mwas a mischievous Marten,
Who went to the Free Kindergarten;
When they asked him to plat
A gay-colored mat,
He tackled the job like a Spartan.

Nwas a naughty Nylghau,
Who wandered too near a buzz saw.
It cut off his toes,
And the shrieks that arose
Filled all of the neighbors with awe.

O was an ossified Oyster,
Who decided to enter a cloister.
He could not return,
So continued to yearn
For his home in the sea, which was moister.

P was a poor old Poll Parrot,
Who had nothing to eat but a carrot,
And nothing to wear
But a wig of red hair,
And nowhere to live but a garret.

Q was a querulous Quab
Who at every trifle would sob;
He said, "I detest
To wear a plaid vest,
And I hate to eat corn from the cob!"

R was a rollicking Ram,
Attired in an old pillow sham.
When asked if he'd call
At the masquerade ball,
He said, "I'll go just as I am."

S was a shy Salamander,
Who slept on a sunny veranda.
She calmly reposed,
But, alas! while she dozed
They caught her and killed her and canned her.

T was a tidy young Tapir,
Who went out to bring in the paper;
And when he came back
He made no muddy track,
For he wiped his feet clean on the scraper.

U was a young Unicorn,
The bravest that ever was born.
They bought him a boat
And they set him afloat,
And straightway he sailed for Cape Horn.

V was a vigorous Vulture,
Who taught animals physical culture;
When a pupil dropped dead,
The kind teacher said,
"You needn't consider sepulture."

W was a wild Worm,
All day he did nothing but squirm.
They sent him to school,
But he broke every rule,
And left at the end of the term.

X was a Xiphias brave,
Who lived on the crest of the wave.

To each fish he would say,
"Good day, sir, good day!"

And then a polite bow he gave.

Y was a young Yellowhammer,
Who raised a ridiculous clamor;

And he chattered until
An owl said, "Keep still!

I'm trying to study my grammar."

Z was a zealous old Zibet,
Toboggans he tried to prohibit.

If any one tried
To take a sly slide,

He ordered him hanged on a gibbet.

Found Wanting

There lived a wondrous sculptor once, a genius in his way,
Named Phidias Praxiteles Canova Merryday.
He sat within his studio and said, "I really must
Begin a Rhodian anaglyptic ceroplastic bust.

"My customers demand them, their fame rings near and far,
But then, alas, the trouble is, I don't know what they are.
Though I could carve a Venus or a Belvedere with ease,
My wondrous skill is lacking when it comes to carving these.

"I cast and cut and chisel, I model and I mould,
I copy poses picturesque from studies new and old;
In marble, bronze, and potter's clay, in wax and wood and stone
I carve the old-time statues with improvements of my own.

"
Icarus going fishing with his basket and his reel.
A Mercury on roller-skates, Diana with a hat,
And Venus playing tennis with Achilles at the bat.

"Yet these my customers pass by, and ask with interest keen,
For things with long and tiresome names,--I don't know
what they mean.

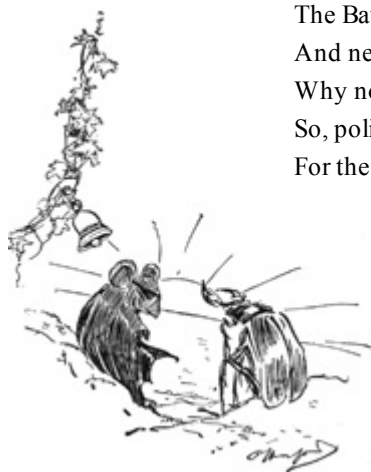
And so I let my hammers hang, and let my chisels rust,
For I cannot do an anaglyptic ceroplastic bust."



A Tragic Tale of Tea



The Beetle was blind, and the Bat was blinder,
And they went to take tea with the Scissors-grinder.
The Scissors-grinder had gone away
Across the ocean to spend the day;
But he'd tied his bell to the grapevine swing.
The Bat and the Beetle heard it ring,
And neither the Beetle nor Bat could see
Why no one offered them any tea.
So, polite and patient, they're waiting yet
For the cup of tea they expect to get.



The Erratic Rat

There was a ridiculous Rat
Who was awfully puffy and fat.
"I'll carry," he said,
"This plate on my head,
'Twill answer in place of a hat."

And then he remarked with a frown,
"I suppose that I must have a gown;
I'll make me a kilt
Of this old crazy-quilt,
To wear when I'm going to town.

"And of course, though the weather is warm,
It may be there'll come up a storm;
An umbrella I'll make

Of a caraway cake,
It'll match with my whole uniform.

And I'll carry a bottle of ink
In case I should wish for a drink;
And this flat-iron so sweet



I'll take with me to eat,
And now I am ready, I think."



The Two Friends

A Spider and a Centipede went out to take a walk;
The Centipede said frankly, "I will listen while you talk,
But I may appear distracted, or assume a vacant stare,
Because to keep my feet in step requires my constant care."

Said the Spider: "I appreciate your most peculiar case,
And your feet must be quite handy when you want to run a race;
But though you gain in some ways, in some other ways you lose;
And, of course, my friend, you must be quite extravagant in shoes."

"Ah! yes. Ah! yes," a heavy sigh escaped the Centipede;
"And I have other trials, too;--my life is hard indeed!
Why, sometimes when I'm very tired, a long, long time it takes
To ascertain with certainty which foot it is that aches.

"And when I go to dancing-class on Saturdays at three,
I find the First Position very difficult for me.
Though I put my best foot foremost, and good time I try to keep,
To my chagrin, I often find a foot or two asleep.

Athletics I attempted, but, alas! I must admit
That every exercise I tried I put my foot in it.

I think I'll join a foot-ball team,--as many friends suggest,--
Before I've one foot in the grave and gout in all the rest.

But now I'll say good-morning; for, my friend, I have to stop
To get my boots blacked neatly at this little boot-black's shop;
And, as you may imagine, it will keep me here some time,
But, what is worse, I'll have to pay him many a hard-earned dime."

The Spider said good-morning, and pursued his way alone,
And as he went he murmured, in a thoughtful undertone:
"I'm a happy little Spider, and I'm very glad indeed,
That I was born an octoped and not a centipede!"



The Smiling Shark

There was an old Shark with a smile
So broad you could see it a mile.
He said to his friends,
As he sewed up the ends,
"It was really too wide for the style."



The Mercury's Plaint

I don't know why I'm slandered so,
If I go high,--if I go low,--
There's always some one who will say,
"Just see that mercury to-day!"

And whether toward the top I crawl
Or down toward zero I may fall,
They always fret, and say that I
Am far too low or far too high.
Although I try with all my might,
I never seem to strike it right.
Now I admit it seems to me
They show great inconsistency.
But *they* imply *I* am to blame;
Of course that makes my anger flame,
And in a fiery fit of pique
I stay at ninety for a week.
Or sometimes in a dull despair,
I give them just a frigid stare;
And as upon their taunts I think
My spirits down to zero sink.
Mine is indeed a hopeless case;
To strive to please the human race!



The Pirate Poodle

Once there was a Pirate Poodle,
And he sailed the briny seas
From the land of Yankee Doodle
Southward to the Caribbees.



He would boast with tales outlandish,
Of his valor and renown;
And his cutlass he would brandish
With a fearful pirate frown.

So ferocious was his manner
All his crew looked on, aghast;
And his fearful pirate banner
Floated from his pirate mast.

He reiterated proudly
Naught had power to make him quail;
Yet when thunder roared *too* loudly
He would turn a trifle pale.

And he turned a little paler
When there came a sudden squall;
For this funny little sailor
Was ridiculously small.



And when'er a storm portended
He'd betake himself below.
So much fear and courage blended
Did a pirate ever show?



An Old Love

Priscilla, Auntie's promised me
A brand-new Paris doll;
And though I love you, yet you see
I cannot keep you all.

Nursey declares I really must
Throw one of you away;
And you're the oldest, so I trust
You will not care to stay.

You've lost an arm, your dress is torn,
Your wig is all awry;
Priscilla, you are so forlorn,
We'll have to say good-by.

And yet--oh, don't! my dolly dear,
Don't look so sad, I pray!
You precious dolly, come right here,
You *shan't* be thrown away!

You're ragged, yes, and lame and blind,
You're really but a wreck;
But, dear Priscilla, never mind,
I do not care a speck.

Your eyes do nicely when they're shut,
And I can mend the rest;
Well--p'raps I'll love the new one--but
I'll always love *you* best.

Bobby's Pocket

Our Bobby is a little boy, of six years old, or so;
And every kind of rubbish in his pocket he will stow.
One day he thought he'd empty it (so he again could stock it);

And here's an alphabet of what was found in Bobby's pocket.

A was a rosy Apple, with some bites out, here and there;

B was a bouncing rubber Ball that bounded in the air.

C was a crispy crusty Cake with citron on the top;

D was a dancing Donkey that could jump around and hop.

E was a little robin's Egg, all speckled blue and brown;

F was a fluffy Feather that was white and soft as down.

G was a lively Grasshopper, whose legs and wings were green;

H was a grimy Handkerchief that once perhaps was clean.

I was a plaster Image that had lost its plaster head;

J was a jolly Jumping-Jack all painted blue and red.

K was a keen and shining Knife, 'twould cut the toughest bark;

L was a little wooden Lion, strayed out of Noah's Ark.

M was a Marble, large and round, with colors bright and clear;

N was a bent and rusty Nail, of little use, I fear.

O was a tiny Oil-can, which was always upside down;

P was a Penny Bob had saved to spend some day in town.

Q was a Quilted ear-tab, which had lost its velvet mate;

R was a Ring with a glassy gem of wondrous size and weight.

S was a String, a piece of Soap, a Stone, a Sponge, a Stick;

T was a lump of Taffy, exceeding soft and thick.

U, an Umbrella-handle, of silver-mounted horn;

V was a comic Valentine, a little creased and worn.

W was some sticky Wax, lovely to pinch and mould;

X was an old Xpress receipt, worn out in every fold.

Y was a lot of Yellow Yarn, all bunched up like a mop;

Z was a jagged piece of Zinc, found in a plumber's shop.

All these are Bob's possessions; he loves every single thing;

And owning all these treasures he's as happy as a King!

The Instructiphone

There was a youthful genius once, a boy of thirteen years,

Named Cyrus Franklin Edison Lavoisier De Squeers.

To study he was not inclined, for fun he had a bent;

But there was just one article he wanted to invent.

"It's a sort of a contraption which will work itself," he said,

"And, without studying, will put my lessons in my head."

He thought and puzzled o'er his plan, he worked with might and main

To utilize the wondrous schemes within his fertile brain:



Until at last the thing was done, and to his friends said he:
"It is the wonder of the age! Success I can foresee!
My great invention is complete, and--'tis no idle vaunt--
I'm sure that my Instructiphone will fill a long-felt want.

"The action is quite simple--I will try to make it clear:
This funnel-shaped receiver I apply to my left ear;
Then in this hopper I will put whate'er I wish to learn--
A page of history or of Greek,--and then this crank I'll turn.

"The topic goes into this tube, a sort of phonograph
Which acts directly on my mind,--it *does*, you needn't laugh!
I do not have to think at all, for, as I pull this chain,
My wonderful machine transmits the knowledge to my brain."

The plan was good, the works were fine, and yet there was a flaw;
When Cyrus turned the crank around, the neighbors watched with awe.
He confidently pulled the chain with motion quick and deft;
The knowledge entered his right ear--and came out at his left.

He tried again,--a page of Greek; he tried a theme occult,--
A message and an errand,--every time the same result!
Then Cyrus knew that somehow his machine had missed its aim;
For though the works ran smoothly it was always just the same.

No matter what the book might be, or what it was about,
It would go in at one ear,--at the other 'twould come out!
So in his laboratory, baffled Cyrus sitting lone,
Strives to correct the sad defect in his Instructiphone.

But it is my opinion, there's no fault in the machine:
The trouble is that Cyrus is like other boys I've seen.

The Lay of the Lady Lorraine

The Lady Lorraine was sweet and fair;
The Lady Lorraine was young;
She had wonderful eyes and glorious hair,
And a voice of a cadence rich and rare;
Oh, she was a lady beyond compare--
By all were her praises sung,
Till valley and plain
Took up the refrain,
And rang with the praise of the Lady Lorraine.

And besides all charms of form and face,
There were other attractions about Her Grace;
Besides her delicate, lily-white hands,
She had rolling acres and broad, rich lands;
Besides her patrician coat of arms,
She had far-reaching forests and fertile farms;
And of many an ancient and wide domain

The beautiful lady was chatelaine.
So of course at her door
There were suitors galore;
They came by the dozen, and came by the score.



They came in droves, and they came in hordes,
Titled nobility,—princes, lords,
Dukes and marquises, viscounts and peers,
Ambassadors, marshals, grandees, grenadiers,
Barons and baronets, earls, and esquires,
Illustrious sons of illustrious sires:
But 'twas ever in vain
They sought to attain
The heart and the hand of the Lady Lorraine.
And day after day
They turned sadly away;
For the Lady Lorraine continued to say,
Decidedly, certainly, stubbornly, "Nay!"
She cared not for wreaths of laurel or bay,
Their titles or rent rolls or uniforms gay,
Their medals or ribbons or gaudy display,
Their splendid equipment, demeanor, or bearing;
She observed not their manners, nor what they were wearing;
Their marvellous exploits for her had no charms:
Their prowess in tourney, their valor at arms;
Their wondrous achievements of brawn or of brain,—
All, all were as naught to the Lady Lorraine.
To each suitor she'd say, with her hand on her heart,
"Sir, I ask of you only that you will depart."
In vain they entreated, they begged and they plead,

They coaxed and besought, and they sullenly said
That she was hard-hearted, unfeeling, and cruel.
They challenged each other to many a duel;
They scowled and they scolded, they sulked and they sighed,
But they could not win Lady Lorraine for a bride.

Now the reason for this, as you may have divined,
Was because in her maidenly heart was enshrined
The image of one who was just to her mind:
Who was loving and kind,
To whose faults she was blind,--
The lord of her heart, and the love of her life,
To whom she had promised to be a fond wife.
Her Highness was happy, for even now he
Was hastening to her across the blue sea.
He had written to say he was then on the way,
And would greet his fair lady on Christmas day.



'Twas Christmas eve. In the old oak hall
Preparations were made for the Christmas ball.
Gay garlands were hung from ceiling and wall;
The Yule log was laid, the tables arrayed,
And the Lady Lorraine and her whole cavalcade,
From the pompous old steward to the scullery-maid,
Were all in a fluster,
Excitement and bluster,
And everything shone with a marvellous lustre.

Such savory viands the larders presented;
Such wondrous confections the bakers invented:
Such pasties and cates of eccentric design;
Such sparkling decanters of rarest old wine;
And ready at hand was the great wassail-bowl,
And the jolly old boar's head, with lemon, so droll.
The nook for musicians was carefully planned,
And carols and glees would be played by the band.

At last all was ready. The workmen were done;
And awaiting the jollity, mirth, and frivolity,
The games and the dancing, the feasting and fun,
The old hall was empty,--save only for one,--
The Lady Lorraine, who surveyed it with pride,
And said, "It is worthy of Lord Cecil's bride!"
Then a bright smile illumined her happy young face,
Her roguish eyes twinkled, and gayly Her Grace
Crossed the old polished floor with a step light and quick,
And her high slipper heels went clickety-click.
She looked cautiously round,--she was all by herself;
Like a mischievous elf,
She took from a shelf

A mistletoe spray with its berries like pearls;
Then tossing her head and shaking her curls,
In a manner half daring and yet half afraid,
The madcap maid, with a smile that betrayed
Expectant thoughts of her lover dear,
Fastened the spray to the chandelier.

Then in a merry, fanciful mood,
Inspired by the time and the solitude,
The Lady Lorraine,
In whimsical vein,
Said, "On Christmas eve, 'neath this mistletoe bough,
I'll solemnly make an immutable vow."

With a glance at the portraits that hung on the wall,
She said, "I adjure ye to witness, all:

I vow by the names that I've long revered,--
By my great-great-grandfather's great gray beard,
By my father's sword, by my uncle's hat,
By my spinster aunt's Angora cat,
By my ancient grandame's buckled shoes,
By my uncle Gregory's marvellous brews,
By Sir Sydney's wig,
And his ruff so big,--

Indeed, by his whole preposterous rig,--
By the scutcheon and crest, and all the rest
Of the signs of my house, I vow this vow:
That whoever beneath this mistletoe bough
Shall first kiss me, he--none but he--
My partner for life shall henceforth be."

She had scarcely ceased when she heard a sound.

She looked around,

And, startled, found

From the old oak chimney place it came.
For there, as if in an old oak frame,
A figure quaint, yet familiar too,
Met her astonished, bewildered view.
Of aspect merry, yet something weird,
With kind blue eyes and a long white beard,
Fur-trimmed cloak, and a peaked cap,
Rosy cheeks,--a jolly old chap;
And, though surprised, she recognized
St. Nicholas, dear to her childhood days,
And she met his smile with a welcome gaze.

The jolly old man beheld Her Grace,
With her laughing eyes and her winsome face;

He couldn't resist her,--

Indeed, who could?--

And he heartily kissed her

Where she stood!



And exultingly cried, "I heard your vow;
And Lady Lorraine shall be *my* bride now!"

The lady trembled, as in a daze;
With a startled gaze of blank amaze,
She looked at the figure who stood by her side
And audaciously claimed her for his bride.

Then she bowed her head
And the color fled
From the cheeks that his kiss had flushed rosy red.
Her heart was filled with a sad despair
As she thought of her lover, Lord Cecil Clare,
And his dire dismay
When on Christmas day
He should ride up gayly in brave array,
And find his sweetheart stolen away.

But the honor and pride of her race were at stake;
And for conscience' sake
She dared not break
Her solemn vow, though her heart might ache.
To be true to her word, her sire had taught her,
And she was a loyal, obedient daughter.
She appealed to the portraits of squires and dames,
Who looked sternly down from their gilded frames;
But they seemed to say, "There must ne'er be broken
A promise or vow a Lorraine has spoken."

With stifled sighs, and with tears in her eyes,
Though she tried to assume a cheerful guise,
She turned to the suitor who stood apart,
Awaiting the gift of her hand and heart;
And she said with a gentle, dignified air:
"My heart belongs to Lord Cecil Clare;
But my fatal vow,
Though I rue it now,
I dare not break. So, at your command,
I fulfil it! On you I bestow my hand."

"O noble lady!" her suitor cried,
"'Twas only a merry test I tried.
Full well I knew
That your heart was true.
Behold your lover, my bonny bride!
I assumed this guise for a Christmas joke."
And as he spoke,
He threw off his cloak,
He flung to the floor his peaked hood,
And a gallant knight before her stood!





He doffed his wig and his long white beard;
All signs of St. Nicholas disappeared;
And smiling there, in the firelight's glare,
Was the gay and noble Lord Cecil Clare!

The lady marvelled--a glad surprise
Betokened itself in her lovely eyes;
And with her merriment quite restored,
She said, "You are welcome home, my lord;
And I'm thankful, now,
That I kept my vow."

Lord Cecil raised her hand to his lips,
And gallantly kissed her finger tips;
While the squires and dames
Looked down from their frames,
And "Bless you, my children!" they seemed to say.
Then the band appeared, and began to play;
The guests arrived, and without delay
The fun commenced, and the old oak hall
Never had known such a Christmas ball!
The feast was spread,
And the dance was led
By the knight and the lady, and every one said,
With a shout that rent the midnight air,
"Long live Lord Cecil and Lady Clare!"

