

Modernizing Mother Goose

How Dear Old Nonsense Might Be Made Instructive.

The vandal hand of progress, which never rests and holds nothing sacred, is now stretched out toward that precious heritage of childhood, the fairy tale. "Why," demands the educational reformer, "confuse the minds of children by encouraging them to live in an impossible world peopled with gnomes and fairies and goblins, when the same enjoyment can be given and more improvement assured by true stories from the lives of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, Richard Arkwright and James Watt, and a host of later worthies?"

Why, indeed? Nature doubtless had the same double purpose in view in planting an imagination in the mind of man as in burdening his body with a vermiform appendix; to prevent his becoming too well satisfied with life, and to give the scientific men something to dig out. The myths of the classic era, the miracles of the Middle Ages, have gone their way before the onslaughts of the higher criticism, and now Cinderella and Santa Claus, Aladdin and Jack the Giant Killer must follow.

To old fables there is something pathetic about all this destruction; but if we are bound to have it, why stop short of a complete job? Let us go back to the roots of things and modernize the Mother Goose melodies taught to infants on their nurse's knee, so that even at that early age they may scrape acquaintance with the real world in which they are doomed to live. It will be necessary to call in the service of poetical experts for this task; almost anyone who can handle a literary jack-knife is capable of whittling out new tail pieces for the old familiar jingles. The rhymes and meter of the revised versions are sure to be at least as good as the original forms. For instance, it is never too soon to begin impressing sanitary impressions upon the young, so we might sing this while clasping baby's fat palms together:—

Put-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man!
Pat it, and bake it, as fast as you can.
But sterilize everything first, for my wish is

To keep all bacteria out of my dishes.
Next to its introduction to the details of everyday domestic life, the best thing we can give the infant mind is a bent toward patriotism, through some unobtrusive suggestion like this:

Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been?
I've been to London, to see the queen.
Well, pussy, comparing their relative powers,
Is monarchical government better than ours?

That will make easier, perhaps, the succeeding educational step, an economic lesson from an old master:—

Bah! bah, black sheep, have you any wool?
Yes, sir, that I have three bags full;
One for my master, and one for the mill,
And one for the congressman who framed the tariff bill.

Of course, among the first questions to which the child will have to address his intellect as it matures, is the cause of the continued increase in the cost of living. Why not then equip him at once with the terminology of the subject, while he is still so unsophisticated as to look upon the whole thing as fun? Let us try this stanza, which brings in our familiar bogies, the middleman and the stockyard barons:

Hi diddle, diddle, the man in the middle
Made cows jump over the moon.
The Beef Trust roared, while prices soared
Where they won't come down again soon!

Or we might take a shy at the same general theme in a somewhat broader aspect:—

Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard
To get her poor dog a bone;
But when she got there the cupboard was bare,
And so her poor dog had none.

Although Mother Hubbard marveled at this,
The simple fact, of course, is
That she'd neglected to conserve
Her natural resources.

There is another view of a kindred situation which we cannot in these days afford to ignore:—

This little pig had roast beef for dinner,
This little pig had none.
The last little pig is a tolling serf
Who must feed on crusts and sin;
While the one with the well-filled paunch belongs
To the predatory rich.

Passing from economics to morals, here's a ditty on the enforcement of the liquor laws in up-to-date vernacular:—

Sing a song of sixpence, bottle full of rye,
Four and twenty bar-keeps captured by a spy.
When the court is opened, they'll be sent to jail—
All except a few who skipped and forfeited their bail.

But why not, by lengthening somewhat the accustomed version as well as adding the desired edifying touches, combine in one jingle two modern socio-economic phenomena? Let us see:—

Old King Cole was a merry old soul;
A merry old soul was he!
He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl,
And he called for his fiddlers three.

But only two of the fiddlers came;
The third they said, was barred
From earning his living thenceforth, because
He carried no union card.

Nor came the pipe with its fragrant weed,
Nor the bowl with its golden brew;
For all such things had been driven from court
By the W. C. T. U.

Here are a few lines indicative of the state of mind of Roosevelt partisan associates six months ago. The historic significance of the epoch is

Illinois Senator Proposes to Give \$100 Bonus For Each Baby



EDMOND BEALL is a member of the Illinois state senate. He used to be mayor of the city of Alton, where he was known as the "stork mayor" because of his friendly actions toward that fabled bird. Mr. Beall believes in babies. He has six in his family, two being twins. Some years ago attention was called to the fact that in Alton, as elsewhere, children were not welcomed in apartment houses. Mr. Beall had a few thousand dollars not needed in his machine shops—he has three of them—and he built an apartment house in which he announced that children would be encouraged. He did not make a rule requiring tenants to have children, but he did say that inducements would be offered to couples that were visited occasionally by the stork. So the apartment house became known as the "stork flats," and Mr. Beall was praised by young parents. When Mr. Beall recently began his duties as an Illinois senator he introduced a bill providing for the payment from the public funds of \$100 for each baby born within two years after the marriage of the parents, and in order to encourage further increases in population the bill provides a similar bounty for each baby born at intervals of not more than two years. The bill has not yet become a law, but the stork mayor, now a stork senator, is hopeful. A Chicago statistician has investigated, and he reports that Mr. Beall's plan would cost the state more than \$2,000,000 annually in Chicago alone.

my apology for proposing their use in the nursery:—
Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn—
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn;
Insurgents are everywhere; nothing's the same

As when you went off to hunt African game.
On his return to his native land, cannot we hear the prophet singing:
Hush-a-bye Party, upon the treotop!
Factional winds cause the cradle to rock.

If a split follows, the Party will fall;
Then down will come Standpats, Insurgents and all.
Speaking of insurgency—for somehow, politics will thrust themselves into every modern jingle, whether for babies or grown-ups—we can hardly escape from a transformed Humpty-Dumpty:—

Uncle Joseph sat on a wall,
Uncle Joseph had a great fall,
Not all the standpat congressmen
Could make Uncle Joseph Speaker again.

If we find, as I am sure we shall, that the modernization of our nursery jingles is as fine a thing for the infant in arms as the substitution of real for fictitious heroes in juvenile folklore for the learner in the next higher grade, we might carry our overhauling into the school readers, and revamp one favorite metrical compendium of useful information in this style:—

What is that mother?
A horse, my child;
It was used while our ancestors still wore wild,
And knew nothing of flying through space by machine and gasoline.
With gongs and sirens and gasoline.
—[New York Evening Post.]

Dr. Seargent is Wrong About Woman

"Woman is nearer the savage state than man," asserts Prof. Dudley A. Seargent, director of physical culture at Harvard. "Her development is more primitive than man's, just as the Indian is more primitive than the white man." He goes on to state that as woman is, biologically, "more of a barbarian than man," she has "a greater proportion of physical endurance."
Few of us will agree with the Professor's conclusions. For generations we have considered woman the embodiment of refinement, as much superior to average man in delicacy and the finer qualities as civilized man is superior to the savage. She will not even concede to man intellectual superiority, save in such quantities as logic and mathematics. Dr. Seargent's explanation that "women have been developing their muscles while men have been developing their brains" will not be accepted as evidence in support of his contention. Sweeping generalities are usually inaccurate, and in this case his statement is contrary to the facts. Women in recent times have been cultivating their brains with an energy and earnestness that have made heavy drains upon their vitality.

an' bury it. Ponto'd dig an hour to get it now; he's sure it's a treasure, just because the other dog wanted it.

"Well, ain't that a good deal the way with us humans? We work harder to supply ourselves with things that other folks want than for what we really want ourselves—wouldn't want, I mean, if we was left to set our own value on things. Houses an' clothes an' pleasures an' business—we judge 'em all by what somebody else thinks of 'em. Even our goodness is too often what somebody else thinks is right instead of what we've thought out for ourselves. I suppose we'll all grow into a braver an' more honest way of livin' some time, but just now we're like Ponto—we do a sight of diggin' for things we'd never want if somebody else hadn't set the fashion.—Agricultural Epitomatist.

THE BOSS.
Imperious baby foot, so small,
When you have stamped, we haste indeed;
Imperious baby voice, your call
Shall send us questing with all speed;
Your ball has disappeared—the loss
Shall be repaired—you are the boss.
Imperious hand, so warm and plump—
From candy somewhat sticky, too—
You point, and instantly we jump;
Your bidding we must quickly do,
Nor linger, lest our king grow cross;
You are the boss, you are the boss.
Imperious eyes of deepest blue,
Who, then, could dally and be child
When you command? We haste for you—
Each task is done ere you have bid;
With hearts you play at pitch and toss—
You are the boss, you are the boss.

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Open to everyone alike, men, women and children, subscribers and non-subscribers. Old and young, rich and poor. Remember two cents a word for the three best kicks.

There must be something you don't like. Kick about it. What good is an editor anyway except to fix up the kicks of his readers?

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A few suggested subjects at which to kick! The weather, of course. Tight fitting shoes. The high cost of living. The hobble skirt and the Harem trousers. High hats on week days. Suffragism, etc., etc., etc. The tumbler the better.

Several people have asked us if the fifty-word letters containing kicks have to be signed. How else will we know to whom to award the prizes? Whether in the event of the letter winning a prize and being published, the name of the kicker would appear is another question. Undoubtedly the writer's wishes would be followed on that score. Our idea of the "Kick Contest" includes everything except direct and offensive personalities. Sit right down now and dash off fifty words about anything you don't like and want to register a kick against. It won't take you five minutes and you may win a prize. The more original the subject the better chance for a prize. One dollar for less than five minutes work is pretty good pay. Of course you can make your kick as short as you wish. A clever fifteen-word kick may win a prize over a full-length fifty-word one. The shorter the better.

For the best kick of ten words or less The Citizen will pay an additional prize of one dollar. Now then, lace up your shoes and let drive!