

Nursery rhymes live when novels are dust and ashes. 'Three Blind Mice' is in a music book of 1609, while 'Little Jack Horner' is more than three hundred years old. 'Humpty Dumpty' had his origin in a bad baron who lived when John was king; and 'The Babes in the Wood' was founded on an actual crime committed over five hundred years back. 'Lucy Locket Lost her Pocket' in the reign of Charles II. 'Cinderella,' 'Jack, the Giant Killer,' 'Bluebeard,' and 'Tom Thumb,' were given to the world in Paris in 1697.

'Let me see some of your black kid gloves,' said a lady to an Auckland shopman. 'These are not the latest style, are they?' she asked, when the gloves were produced.

'Yes, madam,' replied the shopman; 'we have had them in stock only two days.'

'I didn't think they were, because the fashion paper says black kids have tan stitchings, and vice versa. I see the tan stitchings, but not the vice versa.'

The shopman explained that vice versa was French for four buttons, so she bought three pairs.

They were trying the case over in Bringalong (Victoria) the fourth time. Three times had the jury disagreed, and neither judge nor counsel believed that the present occupants of the box would come to any understanding. The jury filed out, and the parties interested in the case prepared themselves for a long wait. What was their surprise when, ten minutes after retiring, the jury signified their readiness to announce a verdict. When the verdict had been given and the excitement somewhat quieted down, the judge turned to the jury.

'Gentlemen,' he remarked, 'this may be an unprecedented act on my part, but I want to express to you my appreciation of the willingness with which you came to an agreement. When I remember that three previous juries spent at least six days in determining that they couldn't harmonise, the promptness with which you agreed stands out in most agreeable contrast.'

'We didn't have any trouble about agreeing,' said the smiling foreman—and his eleven fellow-jurors smiled with him, 'as soon as we had established one point, your honor.'

'And what point was that?' inquired the judge.

'A very simple one, your honor. It didn't take us five minutes to find out that every man of the twelve rode the same kind of bike.'

FAMILY FUN

The head of an eagle and tail of a pig,
Take you, and add to the end of a wig;
Pin all together, and then you'll be able
To set a nice dainty before those at table.

An Egg.

You never go to school but I am there,
In all your holidays I claim a share,
Or if you buy a ball or top,
I meet you in the shop;
And when you go to church
I am waiting in the porch;
In harvest home I always appear,
And join in the parting cheer.

The letter H.

Undertake that you will give a person three articles to hide, one after the other, and will tell him where he conceals the last. Probably he will wish to hide them out of the room. Agree to this. He will go out and leave the first two in some secret place. During his absence, put the poker-handle into the fire, so that it will be moderately heated by the time he returns. On taking it, he will very naturally drop it on the floor, when you remark: 'There, you have placed the last on the floor.'

Here is an experiment which will interest boys during the long winter evenings, when the home lessons have been learnt, and school books put away until morning:—Thoroughly dry before the fire a quarter of a sheet of rather strong brown paper; place it on your thigh, holding it at the edge, while, with the cuff on your sleeve on the other hand, you rub it smartly backward and forward for about a minute. If the knuckle be then placed near the paper it will emit a brilliant spark, accompanied by a snapping noise; the prongs of a fork similarly placed will produce three distinct streams of light. The experiment must, of course, be performed in the dark, and the trousers and coat be of woollen cloth.

All Sorts

The British Museum has books written on bricks, tiles, oyster shells, bones, and flat stones, together with manuscripts on bark, ivory, leather, parchment, papyrus, lead, iron, copper, and wood.

Under the Belgian law unmarried men over twenty-five have one vote, married men and widowers with families have two votes, and priests and other persons of position and education have three votes.

A horse can live twenty-five days without solid food, merely drinking water; seventeen days without either eating or drinking; and only five days when eating solid food without drinking.

The largest ocean in the world is the Pacific; river, the Amazon; gulf, Mexico; cape, Horn; lake, Superior; bay, Bengal; island, Australia; city, London; public building, St. Peter's, Rome; desert, Sahara; State, Texas; highest mountain, Mount Everest, Hindostan, Asia; largest sound, Long Island; canal, Grand Canal, China; bridge, that over the Tay at Dundee, Scotland.

A lady going from home for the day locked everything up well, and for the grocer's benefit wrote on a card:—

'All out. Don't leave anything.'

This she stuck on the front door. On her return home she found her house ransacked and all her choicest possessions gone. To the card on the door was added

'Thanks; we haven't left much.'

In connection with the discovery of payable oil in Taranaki, it is interesting to note that the first who made known the existence of petroleum in America was the Franciscan Father Joseph de la Roche d'Allion, who was at Niagara in 1629. The first who discovered the salt springs of Salina, New York, was the Jesuit Father Le Moyne, in 1654. The first who worked the copper of Lake Superior was the Jesuit lay Brother Giles Mezier, about 1675. The Jesuits were the first who raised a crop of wheat in Illinois, and the first who introduced sugar cane into Louisiana.

One of the stories in Katherine Tynan's recent collection of Irish wit, is as follows:—

'A well-known Dublin citizen, also prominent on the temperance platforms in Dublin, was addressing a crowded meeting and arguing against the assumption that stimulants were necessary to health

"Look at me, boys," he said. "Here I am, 80 years old. I've been a total abstainer all my life, and could you see any man of 80 healthier than I am?"

"Yerra, Mr. B.," said a voice in the crowd, "if you'd taken your glass like a man, 'tis a hundred you'd have been by now."

In connection with the recent recent revelations regarding the methods of the meat-packers of Chicago the following little story is interesting:—A certain lecturer says that the Indians of Alaska regard white men and canned goods as so closely associated that they are nearly synonymous. Wherever the white man is seen, canned meats, fruits, and vegetables are found. When the lecturer visited Alaska recently one of his fellow-travelers carried with him a phonograph, and it was exhibited for the especial benefit of the head man of one of the local Indian tribes. The old chief, who had never seen a talking machine before, showed marked interest in the performance, and when the sound of a human voice came from the trumpet of the phonograph, he listened gravely for a time, and then approached and peered into the trumpet. When the cylinder was finished, and the voice stopped, the old chief pointed at it, smiled broadly, and remarked: 'Huh! Him canned white man!'

The following cable message appeared in Thursday's daily papers:—An inquiry regarding the alleged extravagance in the Poplar Workhouse showed that the paupers on the country farm colony were allowed three meat meals daily, much more expensive tea than the House of Commons uses, week-end trips to London with fares paid and pocket money, which they were allowed to spend in hotels. Speaking in the House of Commons the other day advocating an inquiry into the expenditure and administration of Poplar Union Lord Balfour of Burleigh said that one out of every 16 of the population in the district was in receipt of poor law relief in some form or other, and the actual increase of cost per head per week of paupers had risen by 2s, a very alarming increase. The rates were 12s in the £, and the actual cost of out-door relief alone had risen from £16,000 in 1891 to £35,000 in 1905. These facts, taken together, established a prima facie case that something was wrong with the administration.