

A BOOK
OF
NONSENSE.



ROULEDGE,
LONDON:
AND

These various Old Poetry books, being
So far made known to all, and with
LONDON: at the end of the



EDWARD LEAR.
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.
THE NEW YORK PUBLISHED AND VARIOUS.

LEDDGE.

own Digg!

Lear

A Book of Nonsense

Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details

A Book of Nonsense

“Surely the most beneficent and innocent of all books yet produced is the *Book of Nonsense*, with its corollary carols, inimitable and refreshing, and perfect in rhythm. I really don’t know any author to whom I am half so grateful for my idle self as Edward Lear. I shall put him first of my hundred authors.”

John Ruskin

“A magic song-writer, with something like a reverence for the absurd.”

The Times Literary Supplement

Edward Lear

A Book of Nonsense



London and New York

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The arrangement whereby Routledge became the publishers of *The Book of Nonsense* is summarized below in an extract from *The Brothers Dalziel: A Record of Fifty Years' Work in Conjunction with Many of the Most Distinguished Artists of the Period 1840–1890* (Methuen, London 1901).

Early in the Sixties we made the acquaintance of Edward Lear, who was a landscape painter of great distinction, a naturalist, a man of high culture, and a most kind and courteous gentleman. He came to us bringing a original chromo-lithographic copy of his “Book of Nonsense”—published some years before by McLean of the Haymarket. His desire was to publish a new and cheaper edition. With this view he proposed having the entire set of designs redrawn on wood, and he commissioned us to do this, also to engrave the blocks, print, and produce the book for him. When the work was nearly completed, he said he would sell his rights in the production to us for £100. We did not accept his offer, but proposed to find a publisher who would undertake it. We laid the matter before Messrs. Routledge & Warne. They declined to buy, but were willing to publish it for him on commission, which they did. The first edition sold immediately. Messrs. Routledge then wished to purchase the copyright, but Mr. Lear said, “Now it is a success they must pay me more than I asked at first.” The price was then fixed at £120, a very modest advance considering the mark the book had made. It has since gone through many editions in the hands of F. Warne & Co. Lear told us how “*The Book of Nonsense*” originated.

When a young man he studied very much at the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park. While he was engaged on an elaborate drawing of some “Parrots,” a middle-aged gentleman used to come very frequently and talk to him about his work, and by degrees took more and more interest in him. One day he said, “I wish you to come on a visit to me, for I have much that I think would interest you.” The stranger was the Earl of Derby. Lear accepted the invitation, and it was during his many visits at Knowsley that these “Nonsense” drawings were made, and the inimitable verses written. They were generally done in the evening to please the Earl's young children, and caused so much delightful amusement that he redrew them on stone, and published them as before stated. That is how this clever, humorous book came into existence; a work that will cause laughter and pleasure to young and old for all time.

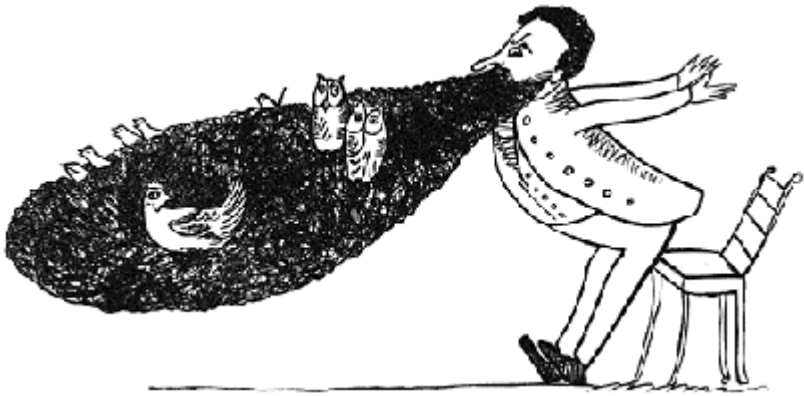
Percy Muir, in his *Victorian Illustrated Books* (Batsford, 1971), offers some amendments to this: 'it was not a "chromo-lithograph" original that Lear brought to Dalziels, but the black-and-white original edition of 1846. He also added 45 new limericks, which brought the number up to 112—wonderful value for the 3s 6d that Routledge charged for the new edition.'

F.A.Mumby records, in *The House of Routledge 1834–1934* (George Routledge & Sons, 1934), the agreement with Lear that was bound in the Routledge Registers:

Memorandum of an agreement entered into this fifth day of November [1861] between Edward Lear, Esq. On the one part and Routledge, Warne & Routledge on the other —Messrs. Routledge, Warne & Routledge agree to purchase from Edward Lear, Esq., a work entitled "The Book of Nonsense" at the rate of 2/6d per copy, 13 as 12 less 15%—Accounts to be rendered the 15th of January and the 15th of July in each year.

This edition, from which the pages have been reproduced for the Routledge Classics edition, is the fifth published by Routledge, Warne & Routledge in 1862. Frederick Warne, who had been recruited by George Routledge, his brother-in-law, to be a partner in his publishing house, set up independently in 1865, and subsequently took over publication of the work, though new largeformat children's editions appeared as part of Routledge's Stuwwelpeter Series later in the century. This current edition therefore restores to the house of Routledge a book that it has not published since the late nineteenth century.

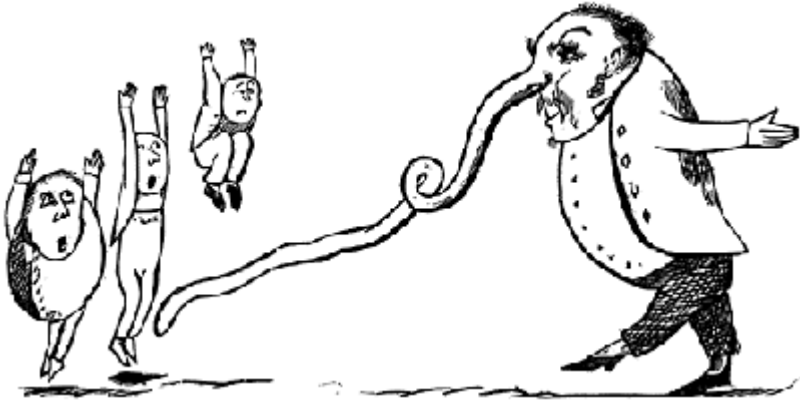
ROGER THORP



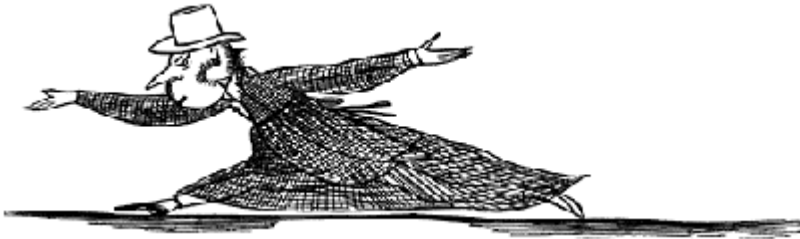
There was an Old Man with a beard,
who said, "It is just as I feared!—Two
Owls and a Hen, four Larks and a
Wren, Have all built their nests in my
beard!"



There was a Young Lady of Ryde,
whose shoe-strings were seldom
untied; She purchased some clogs, and
some small spotty dogs, And
frequently walked about Ryde.



There was an Old Man with a nose,
who said, "If you choose to suppose,
That my nose is too long, you are
certainly wrong!" That remarkable
Man with a nose.



There was an Old Man on a hill, who
seldom, if ever, stood still; He ran up
and down, in his Grandmother's gown,
Which adorned that Old Man on a hill.



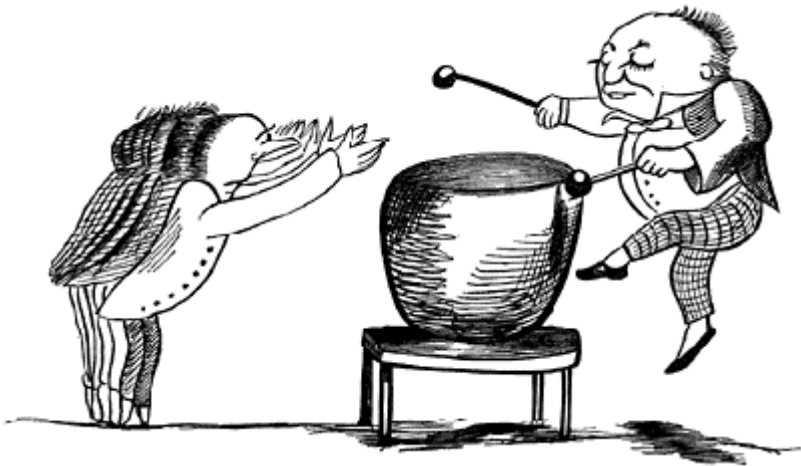
There was a Young Lady whose
bonnet, came untied when the birds
sate upon it; But she said, "I don't
care! all the birds in the air Are
welcome to sit on my bonnet!"



There was a Young Person of Smyrna,
whose Grandmother threatened to burn
her; But she seized on the Cat, and
said, "Granny, burn that!" "You
incongruous Old Woman of Smyrna!"



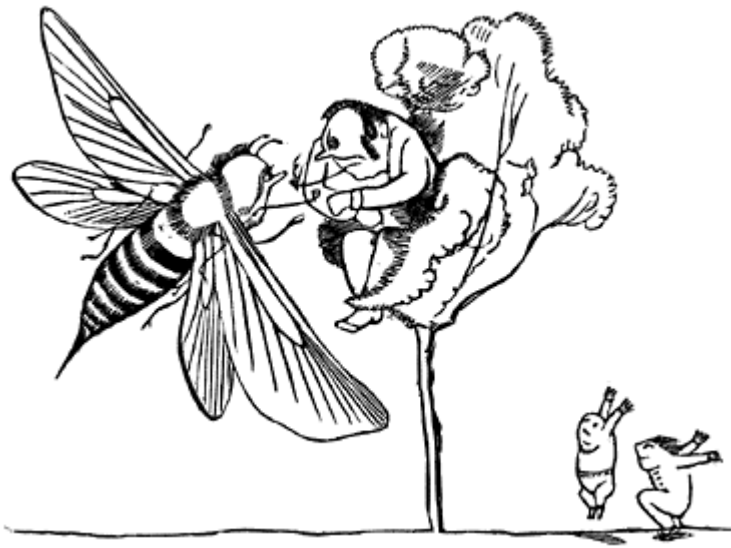
There was an Old Person of Chili,
 whose conduct was painful and silly;
 He sate on the stairs, eating apples and
 pears, That imprudent Old Person of
 Chili.



There was an Old Man with a gong,
 who bumped at it all the day long; But
 they called out, "O law! you're a
 horrid old bore!" So they smashed that
 Old Man with a gong.



There was an Old Lady of Chertsey,
 who made a remarkable curtsy; She
 twirled round and round, till she sunk
 underground, Which distressed all the
 people of Chertsey.



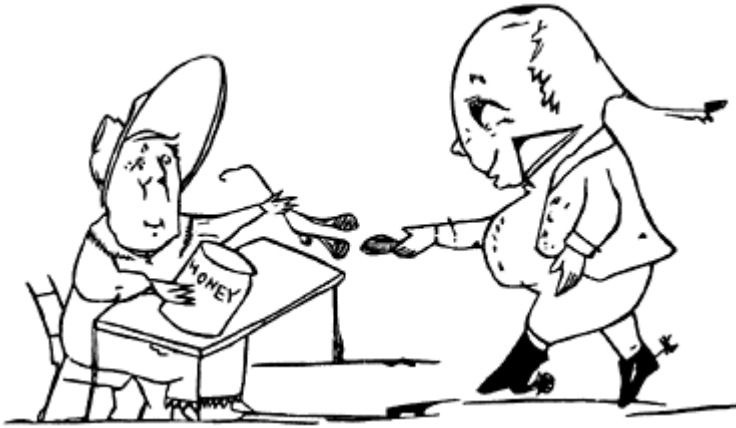
There was an Old Man in a tree, who
 was horribly bored by a Bee; When
 they said, "Does it buzz?" he replied,
 "Yes, it does!" "It's a regular brute of a
 Bee!"



There was an Old Man with a flute, a
sarpint ran into his boot; But he played
day and night, till the sarpint took
flight, And avoided that man with a
flute.



There was a Young Lady whose chin,
resembled the point of a pin; So she
had it made sharp, and purchased a
harp, And played several tunes with
her chin.



There was an Old Man of Kilkenny,
who never had more than a penny; He
spent all that money, in onions and
honey, That wayward Old Man of
Kilkenny.



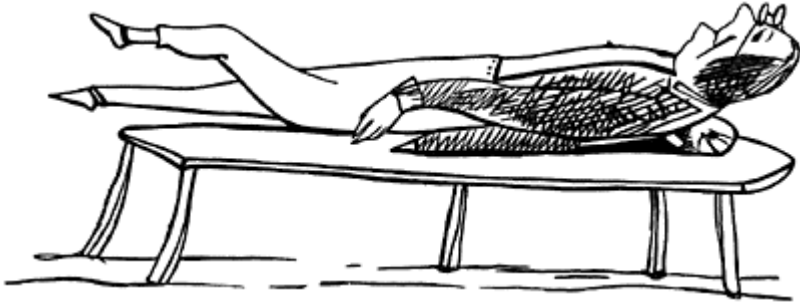
There was an Old Person of Ischia,
whose conduct grew friskier and
friskier; He danced hornpipes and jigs,
and ate thousands of figs, That lively
Old Person of Ischia.



There was an Old Man in a boat, who
said, "I'm afloat! I'm afloat!" When
they said, "No! you ain't!" he was
ready to faint, That unhappy Old Man
in a boat.



There was a Young Lady of Portugal,
whose ideas were excessively nautical;
She climbed up a tree, to examine the
sea, But declared she would never
leave Portugal.



There was an Old Man of Moldavia,
who had the most curious behaviour;
For while he was able, he slept on a
table. That funny Old Man of
Moldavia.



There was an Old Man of Madras, who
rode on a cream-coloured ass; But the
length of its ears, so promoted his
fears, That it killed that Old Man of
Madras.



There was an Old Person of Leeds,
 whose head was infested with beads;
 She sat on a stool, and ate goosberry
 fool, Which agreed with that person of
 Leeds.



There was an Old Man of Peru, who
 never knew what he should do; So he
 tore off his hair, and behaved like a
 bear, That intrinsic Old Man of Peru.



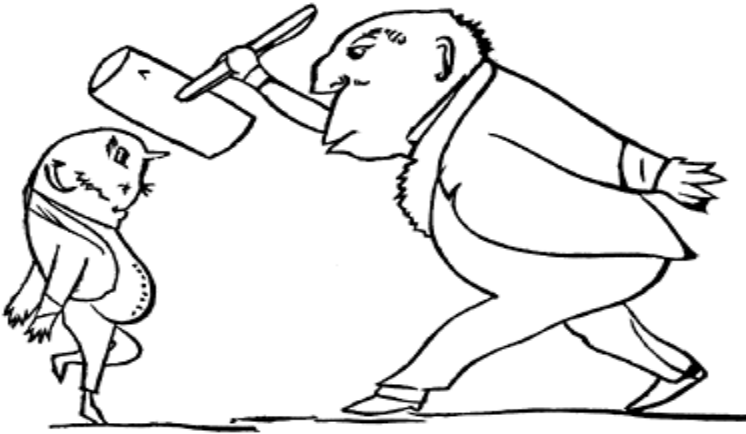
There was an Old Person of Hurst,
who drank when he was not athirst;
When they said, "You'll grow fatter,"
he answered, "What matter?" That
globular Person of Hurst.



There was a Young Person of Crete,
whose toilette was far from complete;
She dressed in a sack, spickle-speckled
with black, That ombliferous person of
Crete.



There was an Old Man of the Isles,
whose face was pervaded with smiles;
He sung high dum diddle, and played
on the fiddle, That amiable Man of the
Isles.



There was an Old Person of Buda,
whose conduct grew ruder and ruder;
Till at last, with a hammer, they
silenced his clamour, By smashing that
Person of Buda.



There was an Old Man of Columbia,
who was thirsty, and called out for
some beer; But they brought it quite
hot, in a small copper pot, Which
disgusted that man of Columbia.



There was a Young Lady of Dorking,
who bought a large bonnet for
walking; But its colour and size, so
bedazzled her eyes, That she very soon
went back to Dorking.



There was an Old Man who supposed,
that the street door was partially
closed; But some very large rats, ate
his coats and his hats, While that futile
old gentleman dozed.



There was an Old Man of the West,
who wore a pale plum-coloured vest;
When they said, "Does it fit?" he
replied, "Not a bit!" That uneasy Old
Man of the West.



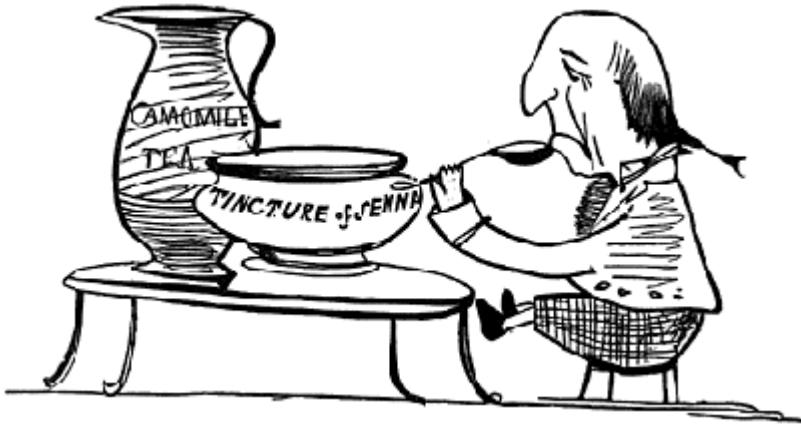
There was an Old Man of the Wrekin,
whose shoes made a horrible creaking
But they said, "Tell us whether, your
shoes are of leather, Or of what, you
Old Man of the Wrekin?"



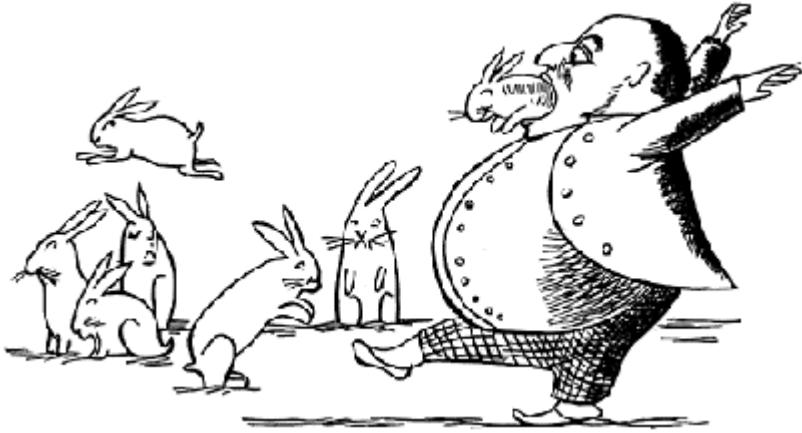
There was a Young Lady whose eyes,
were unique as to colour and size;
When she opened them wide, people
all turned aside, And started away in
surprise.



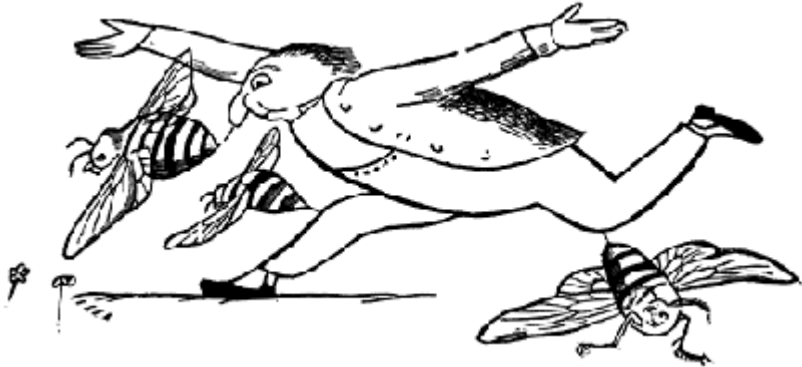
There was a Young Lady of Norway,
who casually sat in a doorway; When
the door squeezed her flat, she
exclaimed, “What of that?” This
courageous Young Lady of Norway.



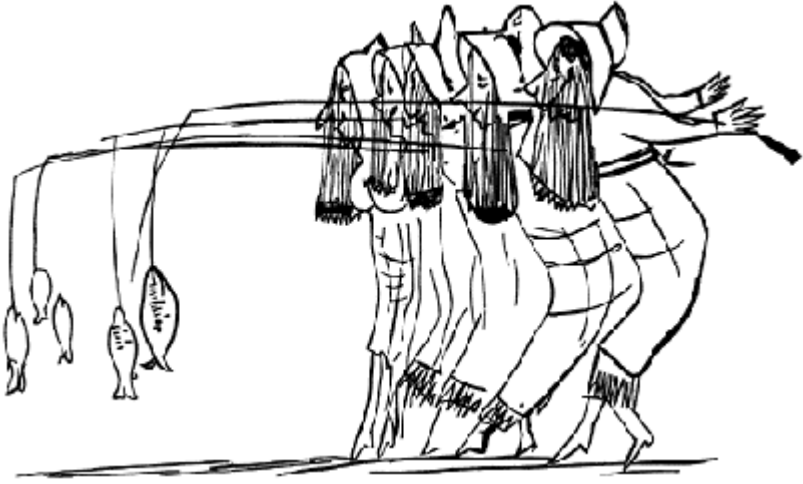
There was an Old Man of Vienna, who
lived upon Tincture of Senna; When
that did not agree, he took Camomile
Tea, That nasty Old Man of Vienna.



There was an Old Person whose habits,
induced him to feed upon Rabbits;
When he'd eaten eighteen, he turned
perfectly green, Upon which he
relinquished those habits.



There was an old person of Dover,
who rushed through a field of blue
Clover; But some very large bees,
stung his nose and his knees, So he
very soon went back to Dover.



There was an Old Man of Marseilles,
 whose daughters wore bottle-green
 veils; They caught several Fish, which
 they put in a dish, And sent to their Pa'
 at Marseilles.



There was an Old Person of Cadiz,
 who was always polite to all ladies;
 But in handing his daughter, he fell
 into the water, Which drowned that
 Old Person of Cadiz.



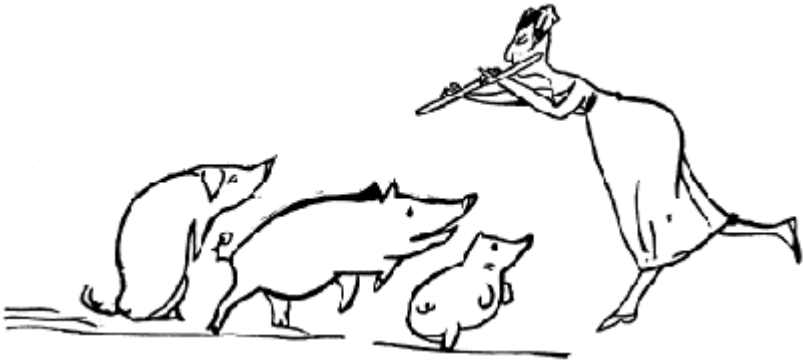
There was an Old Person of Basing,
whose presence of mind was amazing;
He purchased a steed, which he rode at
full speed, And escaped from the
people of Basing,



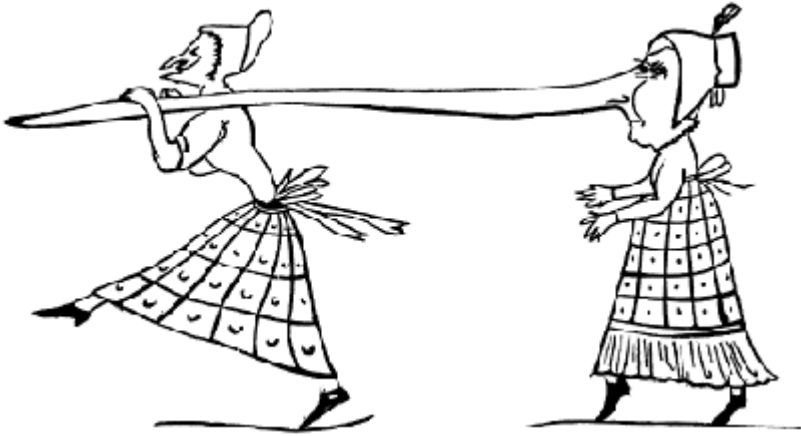
There was an Old Man of Quebec, a
beetle ran over his neck; But he cried,
“With a needle, I’ll slay you, O
beadle!” That angry Old Man of
Quebec.



There was an Old Person of Philœ,
whose conduct was scroobious and
wily; He rushed up a Palm, when the
weather was calm, And observed all
the ruins of Philœ.



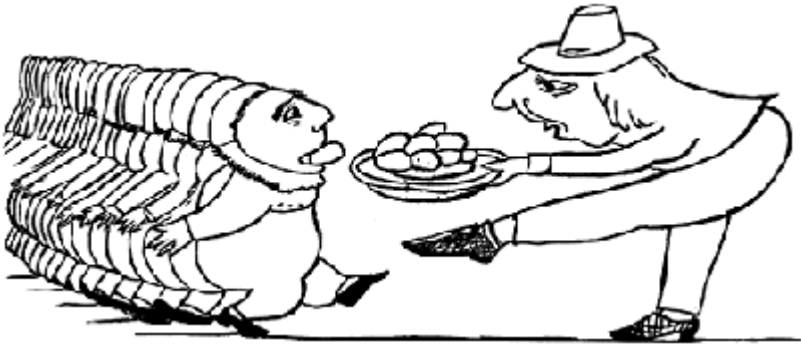
There was a Young Lady of Bute, who
played on a silver-gilt flute; She played
several jigs, to her uncle's white pigs,
That amusing Young Lady of Bute.



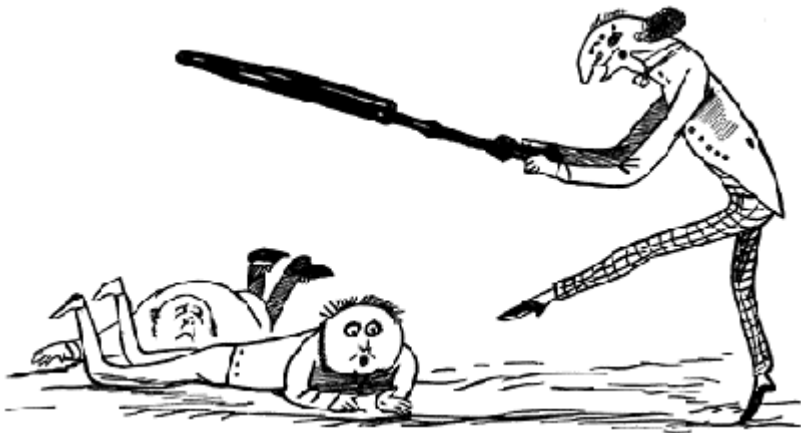
There was a Young Lady whose nose,
 was so long that it reached to her toes;
 So she hired an Old Lady, whose
 conduct was steady, To carry that
 wonderful nose.



There was a Young Lady of Turkey,
 who wept when the weather was
 murky; When the day turned out fine,
 she ceased to repine, That capricious
 Young Lady of Turkey.



There was an Old Man of Apulia,
whose conduct was very peculiar He
fed twenty sons, upon nothing but
buns, That whimsical Man of Apulia.



There was an Old Man with a poker,
who painted his face with red oker
When they said, "You're a Guy!" he
made no reply, But knocked them all
down with his poker.



There was an Old Person of Prague,
 who was suddenly seized with the plague;
 But they gave him some butter,
 which caused him to mutter, And
 cured that Old Person of Prague.



There was an Old Man of the North,
 who fell into a basin of broth; But a
 laudable cook, fished him out with a
 hook, Which saved that Old Man of
 the North.



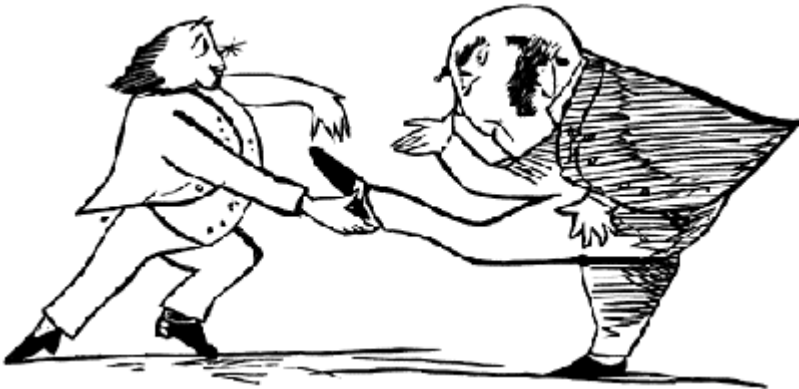
There was a Young Lady of Poole,
 whose soup was excessively cool; So
 she put it to boil, by the aid of some
 oil, That ingenious Young Lady of
 Poole.



There was an Old Person of Mold, who
 shrank from sensations of cold; So he
 purchased some muffs, some furs and
 some fluffs, And wrapped himself
 from the cold.



There was an Old Man of Nepaul,
from his horse had a terrible fall; But,
though split quite in two, by some very
strong glue, They mended that Man of
Nepaul.



There was an old Man of th' Abruzzi,
so blind that he couldn't his foot see;
When they said, "That's your toe," he
replied, "Is it so?" That doubtful old
Man of th' Abruzzi.



There was an Old Person of Rhodes,
who strongly objected to toads; He
paid several cousins, to catch them by
dozens, That futile Old Person of
Rhodes.



There was an Old Man of Peru, who
watched his wife making a stew; But
once by mistake, in a stove she did
bake, That unfortunate Man of Peru.



There was an Old Man of Melrose,
 who walked on the tips of his toes; But
 they said, "It ain't pleasant, to see you
 at present, You stupid Old Man of
 Melrose.



There was a Young Lady of Lucca,
 whose lovers completely forsook her;
 She ran up a tree, and said, "Fiddle-de-
 dee!" Which embarassed the people of
 Lucca.



There was an old Man of Bohemia,
whose daughter was christened
Euphemia; Till one day, to his grief,
she married a thief, Which grieved that
old Man of Bohemia.



There was an Old Man of Vesuvius,
who studied the works of Vitruvius;
When the flames burnt his book, to
drinking he took, That morbid Old of
Vesuvius.



There was an Old Man of Cape Horn,
who wished he had never been born;
So he sat on a chair, till he died of
despair, That dolorous Man of Cape
Horn



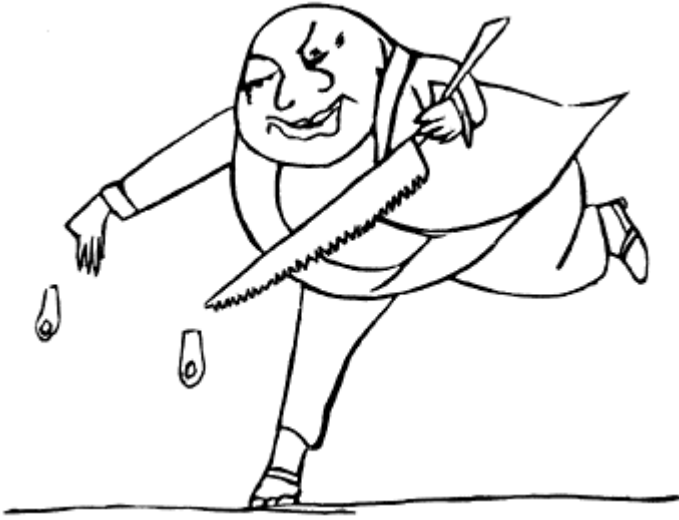
There was an Old Lady whose folly,
induced her to sit in a holly; Whereon
by a thorn, her dress being torn, She
quickly became melancholy.



There was an Old Man of Corfu, who
never knew what he should do; So he
rushed up and down, till the sun made
him brown, That bewildered Old Man
of Corfu.



There was an Old Man of the South,
who had an immoderate mouth; But in
swallowing a dish, that was quite full
of fish, He was choked, that Old Man
of the South.



There was an Old Man of the Nile,
who sharpened his nails with a file;
Till he cut off his thumbs, and said
calmly, "This comes—Of sharpening
one's nails with a file!"



There was an Old Person of Rheims,
who was troubled with horrible
dreams; So, to keep him awake, they
fed him with cake, Which amused that
Old Person of Rheims.



There was an Old Person of Cromer,
who stood on one leg to read Homer;
When he found he grew stiff, he
jumped over the cliff, Which
concluded that Person of Cromer.



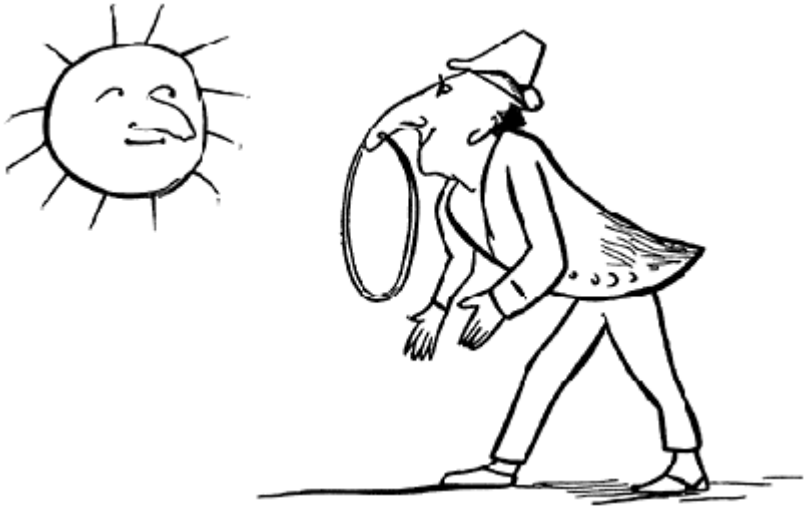
There was an Old Person of Troy,
whose drink was warm brandy and
soy; Which he took with a spoon, by
the light of the moon, In sight of the
city of Troy.



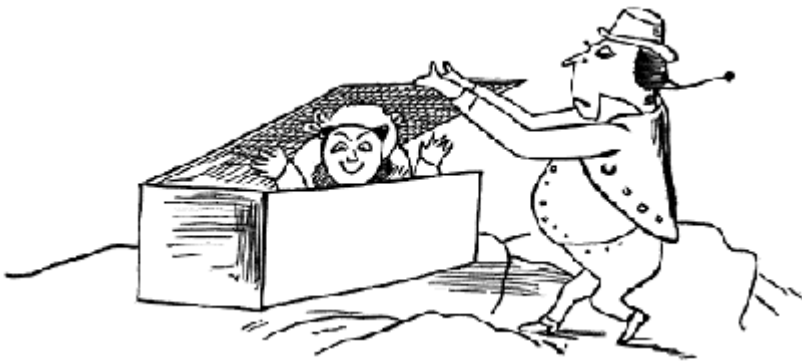
There was an Old Man of the Dee,
who was sadly annoyed by a flea;
When he said, "I will scratch it,"—
they gave him a hatchet. Which
grieved that Old Man of the Dee.



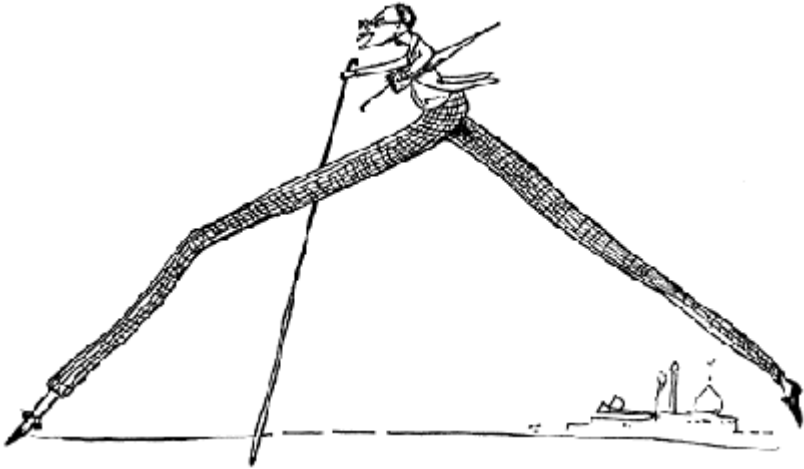
There was an Old Man of Dundee,
who frequented the top of a tree; When
disturbed by the crows, he abruptly
arose, And exclaimed, "I'll return to
Dundee."



There was an Old Person of Tring,
who embellished his nose with a ring;
He gazed at the moon, every evening
in June, That ecstatic Old Person of
Tring.



There was an Old Man on some rocks,
who shut his wife up in a box, When
she said, "Let me out," he exclaimed,
"Without doubt, You will pass all your
life in that box."

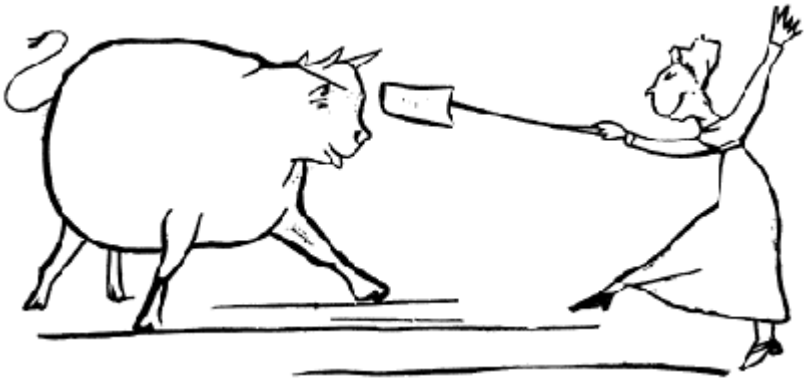


There was an Old Man of Coblenz, the
length of whose legs was immense; He
went with one prance, from Turkey to
France, That surprising Old Man of
Coblenz.



There was an Old Man of Calcutta,
who perpetually ate bread and butter;
Till a great bit of muffin, on which he

continue to smile. Which may soften
the heart of that Cow.”



There was a Young Lady of Hull, who
was chased by a virulent Bull; But she
seized on a spade, and called out—
“Who’s afraid!” Which distracted that
virulent Bull.



There was an Old Man of Whitehaven,
who danced a quadrille with a Raven;
But they said—“It’s absurd, to

encourage this bird!" So they smashed
that Old Man of Whitehaven.



There was an Old Man of Leghorn, the
smallest as ever was born; But quickly
snapt up he, was once by a puppy,
Who devoured that Old Man of
Leghorn.



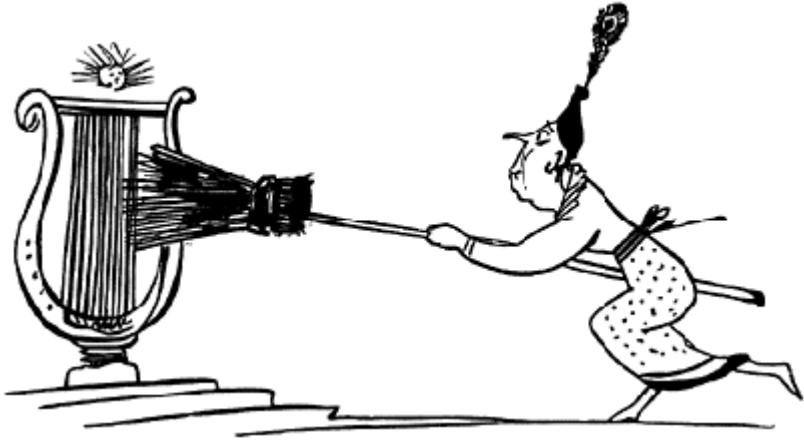
There was an Old Man of the Hague,
whose ideas were excessively vague;
He built a balloon, to examine the
moon, That deluded Old Man of the
Hague.



There was an Old Man of Jamaica,
who suddenly married a Quaker! But
she cried out—"O lack! I have married
a black!" Which distressed that Old
Man of Jamaica.



There was an old person of Dutton,
whose head was so small as a button;
So to make it look big, he purchased a
wig, And rapidly rushed about Dutton.



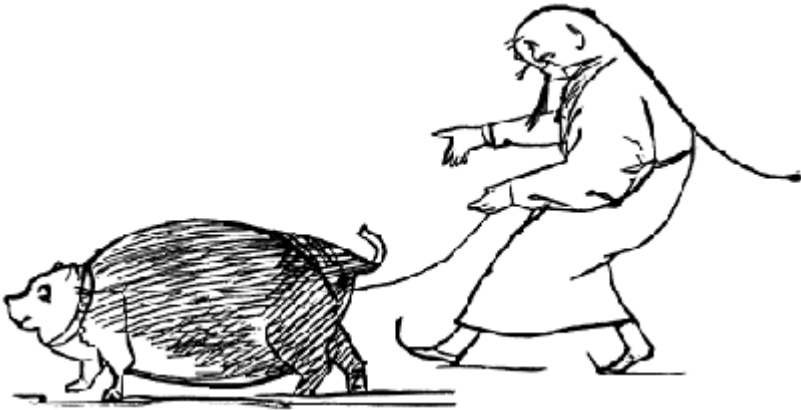
There was a Young Lady of Tyre, who
swept the loud chords of a lyre; At the
sound of each sweep, she enraptured
the deep, And enchanted the city of
Tyre.



There was an Old Man who said,
“Hush! I perceive a young bird in this
bush!” When they said—“Is it small?”
He replied—“Not at all! It is four
times as big as the bush!”



There was an Old Man of the East,
 who gave all his children a feast; But
 they all eat so much, and their conduct
 was such, That it killed that Old Man
 of the East.



There was an Old Man of Kamschatka,
 who possessed a remarkably fat cur;
 His gait and his waddle, were held as a
 model, To all the fat dogs in
 Kamschatka.



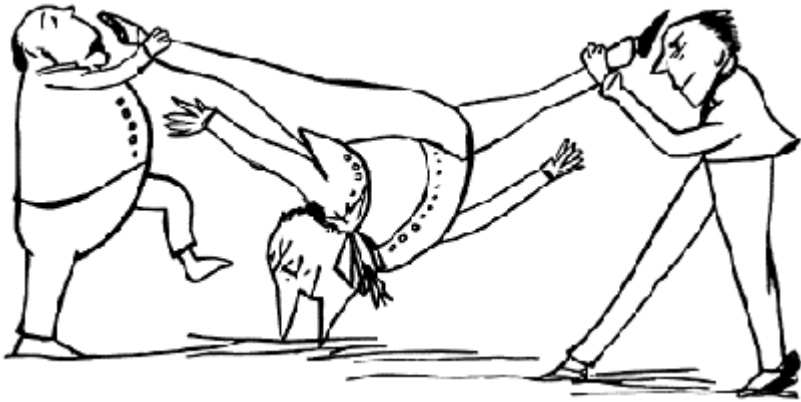
There was an Old Man of the Coast,
who placidly sat on a post; But when it
was cold, he relinquished his hold,
And called for some hot buttered toast.



There was an Old Person of Bangor,
whose face was distorted with anger;
He tore off his boots, and subsisted on
roots, That borascible person of
Bangor.



There was an Old Man with a beard,
who sat on a horse when he reared; But
they said, "Never mind! you will fall
off behind, You propitious Old Man
with a beard!"



There was an Old Man of the West,
who never could get any rest; So they
set him to spin, on his nose and his
chin, Which cured that Old Man of the
West.



There was an Old Person of Anerly,
whose conduct was strange and
unmannerly; He rushed down the
Strand, with a Pig in each hand, But
returned in the evening to Anerley.



There was a Young Lady of Troy,
whom several large flies did annoy;
Some she killed with a thump, some
she drowned at the pump, And some
she took with her to Troy.



There was an Old Man of Berlin,
whose form was uncommonly thin;
Till he once, by mistake, was mixed up
in a cake, So they baked that Old Man
of Berlin.



There was an Old Person of Spain,
who hated all trouble and pain; So he
sate on a chair, with his feet in the air,
That umbrageous Old Person of Spain.



There was a Young Lady of Russia,
who screamed so that no one could
hush her; Her screams were extreme,
no one heard such a scream, As was
screamed by that Lady of Russia.



There was an Old Man, who said,
“Well! will *nobody* answer this bell? I
have pulled day and night, till my hair

has grown white, But nobody answers
this bell!"



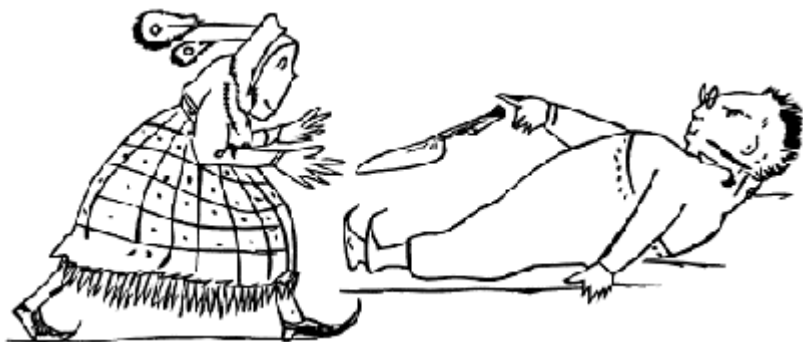
There was a Young Lady of Wales,
who caught a large fish without scales;
When she lifted her hook, she
exclaimed, "Only look!" That extatic
Young Lady of Wales.



There was an Old Person of Cheadle,
was put in the stocks by the beadle;
For stealing some pigs, some coats,
and some wigs, That horrible Person of
Cheadle.



There was a Young Lady of Welling,
 whose praise all the world was a
 telling; She played on the harp, and
 caught several carp, That accomplished
 Young Lady of Welling.



There was an Old Person of Tartary,
 who divided his jugular artery; But he
 screeched to his wife, and she said,
 "Oh, my life! Your death will be felt
 by all Tartary!"



There was an old Person of Chester,
whom several small children did
pester; They threw some large stones,
which broke most of his bones, And
displeased that old person of Chester.

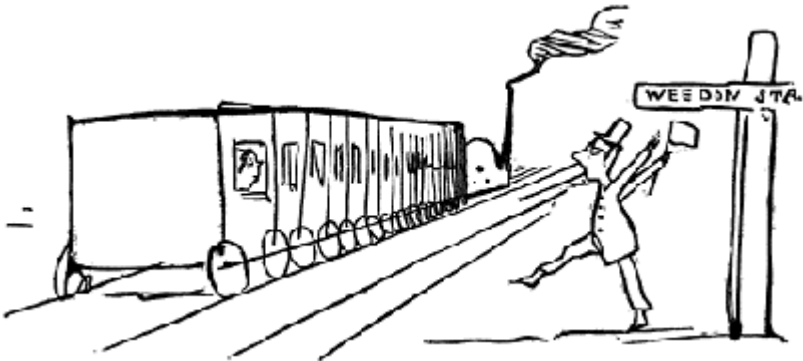


There was an Old Man with an owl,
who continued to bother and howl; He
sate on a rail, and imbibed bitter ale,

Which refreshed that Old Man and his owl.



There was an Old Person of Gretna,
who rushed down the crater of Etna;
When they said, "Is it hot?" He replied,
"No, it's not!" That mendacious Old
Person of Gretna.



There was a Young Lady of Sweden,
who went by the slow train to Weedon
When they cried, "Weedon Station!"
she made no observation, But thought
she should go back to Sweden.



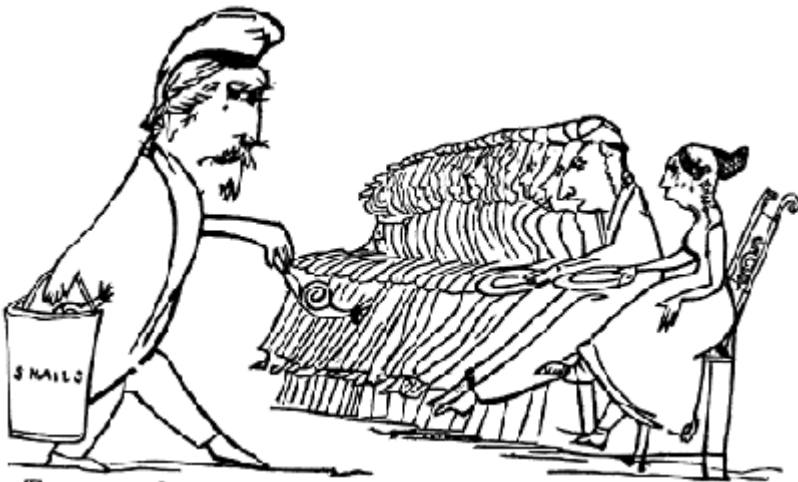
There was a Young Girl of Majorca,
whose aunt was a very fast walker; She
walked seventy miles, and leaped
fifteen stiles, Which astonished that
Girl of Majorca.



There was an Old Man of the Cape,
who possessed a large Barbary Ape;
Till the Ape one dark night, set the
house on a light, Which burned that
Old Man of the Cape.



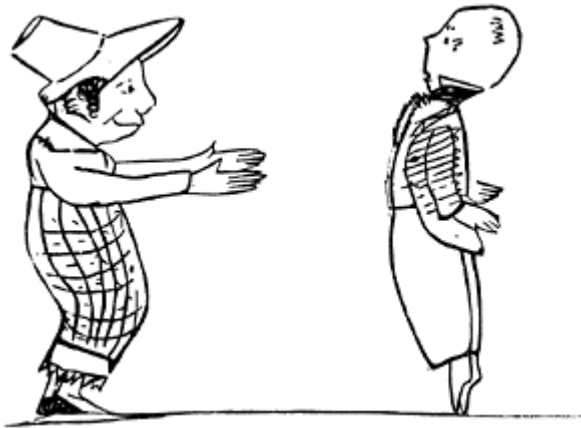
There was an Old Lady of Prague,
whose language was horribly vague;
When they said, "Are these caps?" she
answered, "Perhaps!" That oracular
Lady of Prague.



There was an Old Person of Sparta,
who had twenty-five sons and one
daughter; He fed them on snails, and
weighed them in scales, That
wonderful person of Sparta.

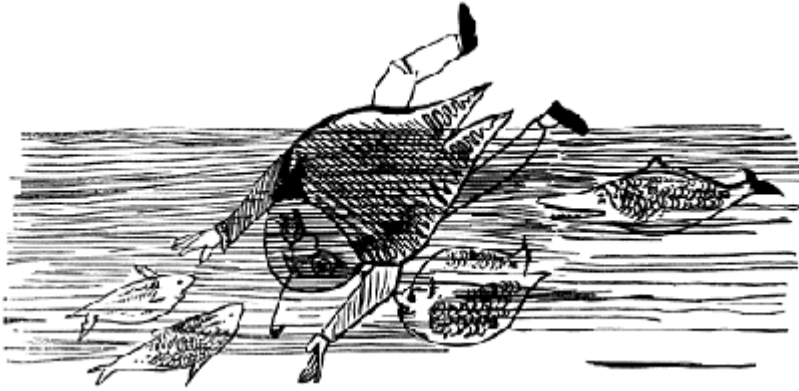


There was an Old Man at a casement,
 who held up his hands in amazement;
 When they said, "Sir! you'll fall!" he
 replied, "Not at all!" That incipient Old
 Man at a casement.



There was an old Person of Burton,
 whose answers were rather uncertain;
 When they said, "How d'ye do?" he

replied, "Who are you?" That
distressing old person of Burton.



There was an Old Person of Ems, who
casually fell in the Thames; And when
he was found, they said he was
drowned, That unlucky Old Person of
Ems.



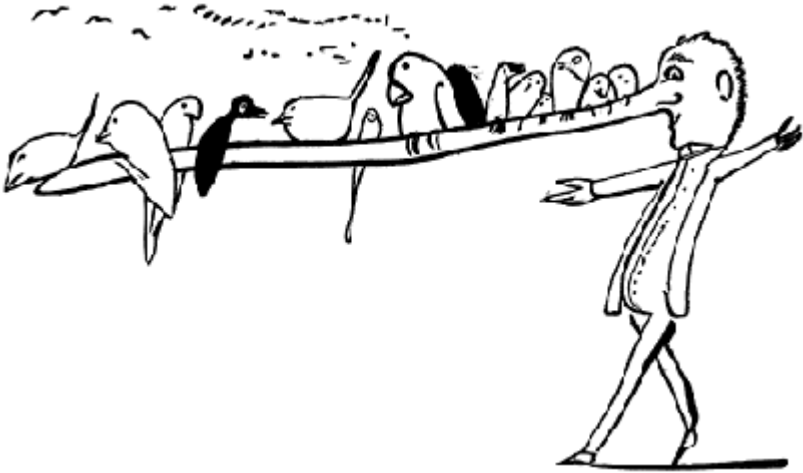
There was an Old Person of Ewell,
who chiefly subsisted on gruel; But to
make it more nice, he inserted some
mice, Which refreshed that Old Person
of Ewell.



There was a Young Lady of Parma,
whose conduct grew calmer and
calmer; When they said, "Are you
dumb?" she merely said, "Hum!" That
provoking Young Lady of Parma.



There was an Old Man of Aôsta, who
possessed a large Cow, but he lost her;
But they said, "Don't you see, she has
rushed up a tree? You invidious Old
Man of Aôsta!"



There was an Old Man, on whose
nose, most birds of the air could
repose; But they all flew away, at the
closing of day, Which relieved that
Old Man and his nose.



There was a Young Lady of Clare,
who was sadly pursued by a bear;
When she found she was tired, she
abruptly expired, That unfortunate
Lady of Clare.