MOTHER GOOSE

CARVED BY

A COMMENTATOR.
(Thomas Manson Norwood)

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A preface, like grace before a feast, should be short. If the book be palatable, the reader should not be detained. If dull, he should know it at once so he can pass on.

He who reads this book “with the spirit and the understanding” will understand it. Should it be to him like Hamlet’s letter—“WORDS, WORDS, WORDS!”—he may wonder why he read it.

“May good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both.”

T. M. Norwood.

Savannah, Ga., July, 1900.
INTRODUCTION.

It is not usual for historians, biographers, or commentators to write or speak of themselves or their works, but I feel it due to myself to make a few remarks in explanation of my reasons for laying before the public the following commentaries on the multifarious writings and life of the world-renowned Mrs. Mother Goose. So far as I know, I am the first to venture on this great work; the first to attempt an analytical investigation and disclosure of her oracular enunciations. I have "searched creation round," as Charles Phillips, the Irish orator, advises everyone to do who is hunting for the equal of George Washington; I have read all histories from that in five books by Moses, down, including Thucydides, Josephus, Tacitus, Gibbon, Macaulay; I have examined many biographies, from that of Joseph by Moses, to this date; I have even read many plays, including those written by Lord Bacon and credited to Shakespeare, and the only writer I have found who has attempted to give a sketch of the life of Mrs. Goose, was Noah Webster. And he omitted to mention her in the body of his Unabridged Dictionary, but stuck her in a postscript among fictitious people, some of whom are very disreputable. I suppose, his only reason for mentioning her at all was, that his book being unabridged, he could not leave her out. I, therefore, claim
the honor of being the first to undertake the pleasing task of doing something approaching justice to the name and fame of the greatest and best of the innumerable Goose family.

I state frankly, I have been amazed "ever since the war," that no one has performed this duty. And my wonder is boundless when I think of the number of her children. The descendants of this most remarkable of intellectual women cover the earth. Blackstone, in his commentaries turns from his text to remark, that they are the most of mankind by a large majority. And yet, for some mysterious reason, not one in ten thousand will ever admit any relationship to the Goose family. My observation has been, however, that when a man denies ever having been, at any time in his life, even if only temporarily, a member of that family, he can be put down as one of the full blood.

Why is it that not one of the billions of Mrs. Goose's posterity has been willing to rescue himself from oblivion by telling the public that such a person once lived and wrote a book of poetry; and by calling public attention to its unique beauties? There must be some psychological reason for it. We read, almost daily, encomiums all just and merited I admit, on George Elliot, Mrs. Browning Charlottes Brontë and Corday, Mrs. Hemans and a hundred other noble women, but not a word in praise of our late lamented Mother, Mrs. Goose. Why is this? Is it because our beloved ancestor was not a Juno, or Helen, in beauty? It was never my good fortune to behold our immortal maternal in the prime of her beauty; and while I am free to
admit that the numerous Titians and Van Dykes of her that are to be seen in the millions of copies of her imperishable poems, do not suggest that she was ever in danger of being kidnapped by Paris and taken away to Troy, New York, still it requires but a glance at any one of the many portraits of her, to satisfy any one at all familiar with the science of physiognomy, that Mrs. Goose must have endured through life no ordinary features. If her fame had to be vindicated by her own sex, we might attribute her neglect to envy of her face, but this cannot account for neglect of her by her male descendants. Possibly it may be due to her plain, democratic style of living. Whether from poverty or choice, or to set her children a good example, is not known, but she was never seen in a Victoria, landau, or Brougham. Her favorite and I may safely say her only conveyance was a pale goose. In that one fact she resembled Death, except that he rides a pale horse. The resemblance is in the paleness.

This neglect may be due to her disregard of modern dress, for I venture the statement based solely on her general character and the singular similarity of garments in all portraits of her, that she never in her life wore a dress made by Worth; that she never knew even one milliner, or mantuamaker, in all Boston—(the alleged place of her nativity and the field of her genius according to her biographer, Noah Webster)—that she would have scorned a Gainsborough, or an ostrich plume, and any but white cotton stockings; and that she knew nothing of a bustle, except one of her own getting up while hustling around,
every night, in her leather mansion to corral her large family when she

"Gave them some broth without any bread,
And whipped them all round and sent them to bed."
CHAPTER II.

MRS. GOOSE'S MORAL CHARACTER.

This neglect cannot be due to any suspicion of her character, for it has never been questioned, nor even investigated by a committee of Congress which is *prima facie* evidence of innocence. Like Massachusetts, "there she stands and there she will stand forever." Her character needs no defense by me. So far as I know, there has never been a whisper that she was not a very proper person. It is true, that we detect some broad expressions in a few of her poems, but this is not surprising when we remember how much and how loosely, at times, she wrote. Her poems, including lyric, epic, sonnets, tragical, comical, historical-tragical, pastoral, historical-pastoral and pastoral-comical, number about 375; and yet, there are but two of doubtful propriety.

Her domestic life was exemplary. There is no intimation in any secular writings—historical or biographical—of any interruptions of her felicity. She tells of one instance of interruption in the felicity of her husband—the old, old story of the unequal distribution of wealth—and she sings of it with a cheerful spirit worthy of all imitation by those who have the money:

"My little old man and I fell out,
I'll tell you what it was all about;
I had money and he had none,
And that is the way the noise begun."
With what wonderful power, singularly her own, of expressing a volume of meaning in one word, does she describe the scene! It was something awful. Her “little old man” had evidently struck for higher wages as a nurse, and—there was “noise!” No detailed description of the encounter could give a more vivid picture of the little old man rushing down the main aisle of her leather mansion; steering from side to side, as he tried to dodge the broom; spreading dismay among the vast infantile population; treading on crying and squeaking dolls that burst into clouds of saw-dust; rubbing his head and legs where the blows fell hardest; then, finding escape by the toe of the shoe cut off, his retreat up the aisle, back to the heel, and his final exit by jumping head foremost through one of the portholes used for shoestrings.

There is no proof that she ever eloped but once, and that was when she flew away suddenly one day with a broom and another goose, or a gander, to “sweep some cobwebs off the sky.” She evidently meant no impropriety in going off, because she made that escapade the subject of one of her finest sonnets and gave it to her children. The truth is, that even after the old lady was eighty years old, she positively frowned on anything smacking of gayety or frivolity in younger people. It was after that sedate and retrospective period in her busy life that she composed the celebrated autobiographic poem so familiar to us all:

“Old woman! Old woman! shall we go a-shearing?”
“Speak a little louder—I’m very thick o’hearing.”
"Old woman! Old woman! shall I kiss you dearly?"

"Thank you, kind sir! I hear very clearly!"

Any man is either an infidel or a slanderer who, after reading the internal evidence given in that charming matrimonial epic, will insist that our blessed old maternal had any frivolous notions in her head, or that she was not like Mercutio, "the very pink of courtesy." For, though an invitation to "go-a-shearing" is somewhat vague, yet, she did not fly to pieces and insult the gentleman. On the contrary, she showed her gentility—not to say diplomacy—by adroitly affecting deafness. She knew that kind of talk was not business. She was not out hunting sheep. She was not wool-gathering. But, when, instead of beating the bush, as very many of her direct descendants do on like occasions, he thus made a positive declaration of his tender passion for her, by asking whether she desired to be kissed, the old lady "tumbled to the racket" at once. I had better explain to those more learned in oriental than occidental lore that that expression, "tumbled to the racket," comes from the Pacific Slope which, I am told, is very steep.

It may be asked how do I know that this epithalamic lyric was written by Mrs. Goose at the age of eighty or more. I know it, not from history but by induction. First: from her wrinkled countenance in all the paintings of that remarkable courtship; second, because the eager and experienced suitor, at such an anxious and critical moment would never have forgotten himself so far as to bawl out "old woman" four times, if he had not known that Mrs.
Goose had arrived at that stage of life when Father Time refuses longer to conceal the secret of woman's age; and, third, because no gentleman ever spoke of a woman as old who is under eighty, without her consent.

Having thus vindicated the purity of Mrs. Goose's character, I beg to say, that I shall not extol her with unqualified praise. She had faults and I shall not omit to point them out when I come to the dissection of her literary remains. She possessed wonderful genius, and that of itself is proof of some weakness.

Some commentators think she was uncharitable, yes, even slanderous, at times. As a careful student of her writings I do not think so, though I admit, there are some of her lighter, fugitive poems that appear to be unkind. For instance, it is believed by some commentators that she bore malice towards Peter White when she lampooned him thus:

"Peter White
Will ne'er go right,
Would you know the reason why?
He follows his nose,
Wherever he goes,
And that stands all awry."

I maintain, that is not slander. It is didactic philosophy taught through Peter White's nose. It is a warning to all men that, if they will persist in following their noses, they must hold them square to the front, or they—the men, not the noses—will go crooked. It is also a lesson in naval architecture that the bow of a ship must not be de-
flected to the right or the left. It is a deep moral, teaching us not to follow any man unless he is straight, up and down.

This interpretation of that poem is strongly supported by the last line in it. Mr. White's nose being "awry" was not a momentary or casual condition. It was not flexible like an elephant's trunk, or a ferret's, or a tapir's nose. It was "awry." It was all (the whole nose) awry, and, it "stood all awry." It had just the quality that Mr. Darwin was in search of during the many years of his study of the Descent of Man—to wit: "A CONSTANT CHARACTERISTIC." From the time when Peter was a boy at school learning geography, "with his face to the North and the East to the right hand," until the day of his death, his nose invariably pointed Nor-Nor-East or Nor-Nor-West. Now, any child can see, that if the course of a ship were due North, and Peter White's nose, or anything like it, were the bow of the ship, it (the ship I mean) could never arrive in port. Hence, I insist that this description of Peter White is not slanderous.

Her critics also cite as proof of her unkindness her charge against Tom Piper that he "stole a pig"; and, also, the charge against Peter that he "was a pumpkin eater," and "stole a wife and couldn't keep her." Let us remember that we do not know all the circumstances, nor do we know Peter or Tom Piper. Although these criminal events occurred in Boston, according to the Unabridged Webster, yet, I venture to assert, that there are people living now in Boston whose grand-parents knew nothing of them, and
never heard of Peter or Tom Piper. As a commentator I do not doubt that Tom Piper stole the pig because, it is a very common thing even in this day of materialism for pigs to be stolen—that is, "down South." And when a pig is stolen in a large city like Boston, that fact is prima facie evidence, that somebody, and not a bear, or wild cat, or an alligator, stole it. Besides, the learned author, as will appear further on, knew several Piper families and they were all disreputable people as she proves conclusively. In fact one of them was guilty of kissing another man's wife. That alone proves that there was theft in their blood. And it may be accepted as an axiom, that any man who will commit the big crime of kissing another man's wife, will commit a little one—such as stealing a pig. Besides all this, all the portraits of Tom Piper show, he had a very bad countenance; and why, therefore, may he not have stolen the pig on general principles?

Nor do I doubt that the two charges she made against Peter were true in every particular. That he was a "pumpkin eater" I consider as proved by the fact, that he lived in Boston and at a time when pumpkins were in great demand and highly respectable on Thanksgiving Day. Besides, the confident manner of this cautious writer in speaking of Peter implies that his reputation as a "pumpkin eater" had been already established either by trial and conviction, or by open confession. In fact, we are unable to decide by the context, whether "pumpkin eater" was descriptive of Peter's character, or want of character, (as
we say "Peter, the Great," and "Alfrèd, the Great")—or was his patronym or surname.

The accusation of not keeping his wife I am certain was true, because, nothing is more common even in this enlightened age except drinking and divorces. It is so common for the husband to be supported by the wife as to be considered almost respectable. In fact, it is considered quite so by the supported husbands.

Speaking for myself alone, I do not believe a malicious feeling ever dwelt in the bosom of Mrs. Goose. She was the milk of human kindness. She frequently paused in her great mental labors to notice children and to sing for them; and judging from the way she disciplined her offspring in that leather mansion, she was no doubt a good mother, provided, she told her children before she "whipped them all round," that the whipping hurt her feelings more than it hurt them. I do not mean that she actually spoke that consoling speech every night before each whipping. That, itself, would have exhausted her without the nightly whip-saw exercise of her right arm. She probably included it in a printed placard of rules and tacked one behind each one of the hundreds of bunks, just as hotel keepers do with their prices for board behind the door, in order not to frighten their guests away.

Some of her writings show that she was very cautious in attacking any body's character. For instance, in telling on Dingty Diddledy she sang:

"Dingty Diddledy, my mama's maid,
She stole oranges, I am afraid:"

Some in her pocket, some in her sleeve,
She stole oranges, I do believe.”

Now, that girl was caught with some of the oranges “in her sleeve”—the strongest evidence of theft—and yet Mrs. Goose refrains from charging her outright with stealing. We may be sure by this that she knew what she was saying about Peter and Tom Piper to be true.

The conduct of Dingty Diddledy recalls a trial before a Justice of the Peace in Georgia. A. sued B. on a note. B. pleaded that the Justice in that Militia District had no jurisdiction over him, as he B. resided in another district. A. proved that B. had recently moved into the District where he was sued. The Justice delivered his opinion thus: “It all depends on B’s. intention when he moved here. If he came without intending to stay, this court has no jurisdiction. But—and here is the whole case—if he came here animus furandi, this court has jurisdiction in this case.” Now, if Dingty Diddledy put the oranges in her sleeve, animo furandi (“with intent to steal”) Mrs. Goose was right in her belief.

Since writing the above, I have made further research to verify, if possible, those charges against Peter. I am now convinced of his guilt. I am sure, also, that he was the Peter Piper who “picked a peck of pickled pepper” that he has never accounted for.

Everybody knows that pepper does not grow already pickled, any more than pickled pepper grows. Nature does not pickle. It is the province of woman to pickle peaches, pears, plums, pines—while men pickle pork. Peter did
not pick pickled peppers from plants. He picked them in somebody’s pantry or cupboard. And so Mrs. Goose believed. She demanded to know of him, and his silence for more than a century is a confession of guilt. She asked, and millions since have taken up the question and thundered it at the silent Peter—

“Where’s the peck of pickled pepper
Peter Piper picked?”

Again: if Peter Piper, (the pickled pepper man), is the same Peter who passed under the assumed name, or alias, of “Pumpkin Eater,” then no other proof of guilt is needed. That Pumpkin-eating Peter was a notorious thief! He stole a woman once! Every one will agree, that was about as wicked as a man can be. But Peter did worse than that—he stole another man’s wife! To her honor, however, it must be said, (as we find nothing stated of intervention by a shot gun), “he couldn’t keep her.”
CHAPTER III.

Biography of Mrs. Goose.

Before I begin to discuss the heterogeneous writings of this great author, it is proper to give a brief biographical sketch of her. I do not say "brief" in imitation of lecturers who use that word to keep their audiences from becoming alarmed and dispersing, but because I cannot make a long sketch if I would, for want of material, unless I were to go into fiction and that I will not do.

An Irish orator once said: "It matters not what immediate spot may have been the birth place of such a man as Washington." I cannot agree with him. Just imagine the effect on the inflated enthusiasm of an American audience, should a Fourth-of-July orator, after inhaling about a peck of patriotic ether, proclaim that "George Washington, the Father of his country, first beheld the glorious light of Heaven in Timbuctoo!" So would it be as to the mother of our country—Mrs. Goose—if it were known that she was a native of the Feejee Islands, and not of the literary centre of the United States.

Noah Webster served notice on the world that Boston lays claim to the honor of the nativity of Mother Goose. Some people think Boston already has her share of this world's blessings. Still, if this one must be added, the outside world must submit and bear it. For one, I rather rejoice, because, having proper pride in ancestry, I feel prouder of this renowned relative when I consider how much
she achieved under such adverse circumstances. Had she been born and reared in a rural district, there is no telling what the old lady could have written. Even now some of her poems "pass all understanding."

But Boston's claim is not without doubt. As lawyers say, there is a "cloud on her title." Her claim rests on the biography given by Noah Webster. There is no parish record of her birth. Besides, Noah Webster was not what might be called an A, number 1, first-class, biographer like Boswell. He did not circulate among common people. He staid in his studio all his life, and I question, with all respect due to him, whether he knew as much of the Goose family as I do; for, if he was ever in politics I never heard of it. If Boston should try to strengthen its claim by making profert of ever so many of Mrs. Goose's descendants within its limits, that would make its case still worse; because, I can produce double Boston's number, in each of several cities that have not one-quarter of its population.

Her writings bear very strong evidence that Mrs. Goose was English. Remember that she flourished about the time of the Revolution of '76, or before the Deluge. All Bostonians were then (in '76) American to the core. Mrs. Goose, however, shows a strong monarchical bias. Her favorite subjects, after mathematics, are Kings, Queens and the nobility. There is not a democratic or republican sentiment in all her 375 poems. She sings of King Arthur, of Queen Elizabeth, Elspeth, Betsy and Bess, and of Old King Cole, that vile old debauchee who kept a pipe and a bowl and as many as three fiddlers who, in the community
where I passed my boyhood, were equal to three Satans. Indeed, I have often heard good men read complacently on Sunday of King Solomon and his 700 wives, and of King David and his Uriah wife, and the next day they would run away from the sound of a "fiddle." And, yet, this good woman had such admiration for old King Cole that she bursts out, in the peroration of this Macaenic ode, with the oft-quoted eulogium:

"Oh! there's none so rare,
As can compare
With King Cole and his fiddlers three!!"

Again, she sings of Shrewsbury Cross—Banbury Cross; of going to St. Ives where she met a man with only seven wives:—(what a stingy or modest man that was compared to Solomon!); of Primrose Hill, of the King of Hearts, Queen of Hearts and the Knave of Hearts; of Taffy, The Welshman; of the jolly miller on the river Dee; of pussy cat visiting the Queen; of a battle for the crown between the lion and the unicorn; of the dog that went to Dover; of a dainty dish to set before a King; of Hick—a-more on the King's kitchen floor; of the gentleman who tumbled out of the moon inquiring the way to Norwich. Now, that town was not Norwich in Connecticut, because, she says, that lunatic tourist "went south and burnt his mouth with eating cold peas-porridge." As I reside in the South, I know positively that nothing of the kind ever occurred here. No man in the South, citizen or stranger, ever burnt his mouth with anything short of hot-Scotch, or terrapin soup. Therefore, she spoke of Norwich, England.
Again her language shows her nationality. She calls a gate, a stile; a violin, a fiddle; a soldier, a grenadier. No educated American ever says "fiddle." Even the size of her dwelling—the shoe—is not Bostonian; and it could not be meant for Chicago, as nobody wore shoes in Chicago in the days of Mrs. Goose's minstrelsy. Still, though English, she did not think so well of the great King Arthur as she did of old King Cole. She ironically repeats the popular English opinion of King Arthur by singing:

"When good King Arthur ruled his land,
  He was a goodly King."

Then she becomes serious:

"He stole three pecks of barley meal,
  To make a bag pudding."

The poet then represents both King and Queen as cooks, and such cooks! I venture that the biggest snob in America would not have paid $10,000 a year for both together! The King made the pudding, stuffed it with plums and "great lumps of fat," each as "big as my two thumbs," and after the King, Queen and noblemen, all, ate of the three-peck pudding that night, the Queen herself went to the skillet the next morning and fried its dyspeptic remains for breakfast.

Still our author was intensely English. To show this I cite another poem:

"Fa, Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum!
  I smell the blood of an Englishman:
    Be he live, or be he dead,
  I'll grind his bones to make me bread."
It is difficult to imagine a more ravenous patriotism than hers. It amounted to cannibalism! “The old flag and an appropriation” was not an appetizer in comparison. If she were living now, her patriotism would easily exhaust the whole U. S. treasury.

On the other hand, she sings but twice of anything American, and each piece is a sheath of a Joab’s blade. One is in ridicule of the maritime pretensions of New York City. At that period there was hot maritime rivalry between England and America, and our author, in order to show how little Americans knew of navigation gave publicity, in a caustic ditty, to a very sad event that occurred, unfortunately, near that great seaport, and terminated fatally to three of its wisest and most skillful navigators. The publication, no doubt, gave England great advantage on the sea, for a time. I make no apology for quoting the whole poem, because, as a colored American citizen once described his cotton crop, “it is short, but brief:”

“Three wise men of Gotham,
Went to sea in a bowl—
If the bowl had been stronger,
My song would have been longer.”

The other reference was to Boston, of which I will speak further on in these commentaries.

But, the Deluge furnishes strong evidence that our honored ancestor lived in the time of Noah. My argument is this: It has never been denied that there was an immense number of the Goose family who continued business “at their old stands” outside the ark for a day or two after
Noah set sail; in fact, they continued until the humidity had done such damage to them and their goods that neither a Board of underwriters, nor of undertakers, was of any use. Now, as Mrs. Goose is the mother of the Goose family, it follows logically as well as genealogically, that she must have lived before her children were born. And to show she was living at that time, I will quote several stanzas from an anonymous poem that gives an account of the deluge and the embarkment aboard the ark:

“There were the elephant and bee,
The hippopotamus and flea,
The giraffe and chick-a-dee-dee.
Loddy, shoddy, whack fi oddy, Ki’ a.
“The Cock-a-doodle and the ass,
And three young men, each with his lass,
Shem, Ham, and Japheth, had a pass.
“Noah of old and Noah’s dame,
(I think I never heard her name),
But she went in, tho’, all the same.
“But, best of all, my little dears!
T’will most delight your listening ears,
So, give with me three hearty cheers.
“To hear that, sheltered by that truee,
Loved more than monkey, owl or moose,
In walked your precious Mother Goose.
Quack, quack, loddy, sis quack. whack, fi oddy, ki’a.”

I pause to remark, that we have here the first mention of “free passes” given to passengers, which are now so
common for travel on steamboats and railroads; but with this difference, that the dead-heads, in Noah's time, were not passengers.

I have produced this evidence bearing on the nativity of Mrs. Goose solely in the interest of truth. I have no intention nor desire to injure Boston. In fact, if Mr. Webster, (the Unabridged), were alive I would not have said a word on the nativity of Mrs. Goose. I dislike controversies, and my conclusion, after close observation of some men in private and public life, is, that the surest way to avoid controversies and disputes with any man, is to wait till he is dead. It is the safest way to establish your proposition. Besides, to be contradicted is always unpleasant, and sometimes very embarrassing.

So great has been the fame of Mrs. Goose that the public have entirely lost sight of her husband whose name, I suppose, was Mr. Goose—though I do not see why it was not Mr. Gander except that, wives usually take their husbands' names, unless they be actresses or circus-riders. But, there is no evidence in any of the great libraries—not even in the Lenox, the Astor, or Congressional—that our ancestor was ever an actress, though she wrote some thrilling dramas. One is on the tragic homicide of the gallant Cock Robin; and another is on the sudden demise of the rich Mrs. Duck who deceased after a brief "disorder" induced, I regret to say, by gluttony, as was certified up to the Board of Health and coroner of Boston by Doctor Drake, her attending physician, in order to insure decent sepulture without having to adjourn to "the little Church around the corner;"
and also to save her sacred remains from being exhumed and desecrated by an autopsy or *post mortem*.

But, as I was saying, Mr. Goose was never heard, nor heard of. A glance at our heroine's countenance and her constant attendant, the broom, is sufficient to explain why Mr. Goose, if a prudent man, was never heard; but the marvel is, that the father of billions of people was never heard of. He seems to have been entirely absorbed by his wife; and, yet, every portrait of her shows that she was a very thin person. My own theory is, that she smothered him by making him nurse while she, broom-stick in hand, swept the ministrel's lyre.

The last sentence may be open to criticism as a violation of correct rhetoric. Sweeping music out of a lyre with a broom, or a broomstick, is questionable—that is, as a method of rendering a score so as to produce its best effect. Still, it may be replied that one-fourth of the human race—the Chinese—make their orchestral music by beating with sticks much smaller than a broomhandle, and the music seems to be entirely satisfactory to them.

But, I have not time to answer critics. "Men may come and men may go, but they talk on forever," as some poet once said about a creek or a branch. Even admitting for argument's sake that my metaphor is somewhat mixed, I do not see why I may not be permitted to do what the great majority of mankind do, that is, to excuse or at least to palliate, my own shortcomings by pointing out greater sins or offenses committed by others.
Macaulay, in his severe but just criticism of Montgomery's poems, quotes the following couplet:

"The soul aspiring pants its source to mount,
    As streams meander level with their fount;"

and then says: "We take this to be, on the whole, the worst similitude in the world."

I fully agree with the learned and brilliant essayist that that was the very worst simile in the world at the date of his review—which was in the year 1830. But, a decade or more later there arose a poet in the community where I resided, wholly unknown to fame except within a radius of about sixteen miles, whose genius for crucifying metaphors has never been equaled. One quatrain, out of his numerous effusions, penetrated my boyish brain and owing to its excessive angularity, I found it more difficult to extract than to let it remain.

The poem was the offspring of patriotism, and had its birth during the war between Texas and Mexico in which the United States took part. The quatrain was, (for the whole poem is long since dead):

"See the lion in his lair
    Rise and shake his gory mane;
    Raise his battle-ax and swear!
    Texas shall be free again!"

The effect on my young imagination of that heroic picture—that lion lying down, then suddenly springing up and shaking his mane covered all over with blood; then swinging his battle-ax, and being so wicked or excited as to in-
dulge in profane language, and such a patriotic lion as to give his entire time and attention to Texas, and to die for Texas if his battle-ax should miss fire—the effect of that vivid picture was so thrilling that I wondered how any man who could shoot a gun was not ashamed to be seen hiding around home. I was enthusiastic in my admiration for the poet's wonderful knowledge of the language of lions by which he could tell whether they were just roaring for meat, or were swearing as patriots. I believe now that the poet was mistaken—that he had not that ability. Still, if he had, what a valuable assistant he would be to the gentleman who is now in Africa studying the etymology, orthography, syntax and prosody of the languages of the different tribes of monkeys.
CHAPTER IV.

MRS. GOOSE'S EDUCATION.

I regret the necessity for having to admit my ignorance of the name of the college or university in which Mrs. Mother Goose was educated. I know the pride a biographer feels in writing that his subject was graduated with the highest honors at Oxford or Cambridge, Harvard or Yale; especially, since those ancient institutions of learning have become full universities in the correct sense of the word, "universitas"—"the whole, or the universe." This remark requires a few words of explanation:

The origin of universities dates back to the time of Isocrates and Plato, but their schools were not strictly universities because, only the seven liberal arts and sciences as then known were taught therein. The first medieval schools called universities were, one at Bologna and the other at Paris. But neither was a university because, at Bologna, only the civil and canon laws were taught, and at Paris, education was restricted for a long period to the narrow limits of the arts. The trustees and the learned faculties of the colleges of Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Yale, after careful investigation into the meaning of the word "universitas," determined that their respective institutions were not entitled to be called universities, because the education therein imparted was confined or limited to the student's head, and they very properly and considerately concluded to adopt as an addition to their curri-
curricula, the sciences of football, baseball and boat racing, so that the heels and head, or the 'whole' or "universal" man, should receive a strictly university education.

Apart from the etymological necessity for a change in their systems of instruction to entitle them to the name of universities, the wisdom of this modern expansion of their curricula into universality has been demonstrated to the entire gratification of parents and students in three marked particulars. The first is, the signal enlargement and strengthening of the student's feet that are world-renowned for their intellectual kicking, and the second is in the improved hygienic results. For, although there has been a noticeable increase in the mortality of some of the students, still, the fortunate survivors have been protected from any possible congestion of the brain that formerly resulted from over-education of that end of the student's anatomy. An equilibrium of education is now easily maintained by an equable and equitable distribution which is effected by subtraction of a large percentage of education that formerly terminated to or in the head, and conferring it on the feet. Hence, a diploma from one of those universities means more than graduation in the civil and canon laws, as at Bologna; or in the arts, as at Paris, because, it embraces a thorough, impartial education of the "whole" physical man from head to heels—*a capite ad pedem, vel calcem Achillei*.

The third and most important advantage in this enlarged or universal education is, that it hardens the muscles of the student when trampled under the heels and sus-
taining the weight of ten or twenty of his playmates; and
inures them all to scenes of carnage and to broken ribs,
limbs and heads; and destroys that sensibility to the suf-
fering and death of others so unbecoming in a soldier. In
this respect this education is superior to that received in
war. Any regular soldier can slay an enemy without loss
of sleep or digestion, but it requires a superior degree of
hardihood to slay a friend in play without a qualm of stom-
ach or of conscience. But I must return to my discussion.
I was led off into this digression while in search for the
college or university wherein Mrs. Goose was educated.

After full investigation, I doubt that Mrs. Goose was a
graduate of any college or university. There is no affirm-
ative evidence except her styles of poetry and they are
not conclusive nor even strongly presumptive, because
much of her poetry is unquestionably original.

If she was a contemporary of Noah, (the one who had
no first or last name), then she did not receive a collegiate
education. The only college in Noah’s time was in the
Ark, but that was for navigation and transportation only,
and Mrs. Goose exhibits no knowledge of any kind of trans-
portation or navigation except on gooseback through the
air. And, even if she lived during the last century, as Noah
Webster asserts, she was not a collegian unless she at-
tended a college for males. There were no colleges for
females then. The universal opinion of men as late as the
last century was, that women were made to nurse children,
make clothes, cook, and go to church. It was not discov-
ered until this century, and first in America, that women
have brains. They were supposed to be all heart and muscle.

And I maintain that the genius of Mother Goose changed that judgment of men. Why I say so I will not stop to argue out. This is not an argument in the scholastic sense. It is a commentary. There are times when arguments are not only out of place, but are downright vulgar. For instance, a preacher who would stop in the middle of a marriage ceremony to make an argument on the doctrine of the "damnation of infants a span long," is not a gentleman. I will not imply any doubt of my proposition that Mrs. Goose produced this revolution in men's opinions, by arguing on it. I know a man who was considered a gentleman by all his acquaintances, but not being satisfied with that, he undertook one day to prove he was a gentleman, and ended by convincing his audience that he was a fool.

Unlike George the Third, who was warned by Patrick Henry to profit by the examples of Charles the First and Caesar, I profit by that gentleman's example. At least, I will wait until my opinion shall be questioned. I have learned by observation that the easiest and quickest way to get a reputation for wisdom is to lay down bold propositions without giving reasons to support them. As soon as reasons are given, some meddlesome fellow begins to think and then to ask impertinent and embarrassing questions. It is not the proposition that makes people think; it is the reasons given to support it. Beware of giving reasons if you wish to appear wise! Brass is more powerful than logic.
As I have somewhat digressed upon a small philosophical trail, I will further remark, that asking for reasons has caused more trouble for mankind than any other one thing. Asking for reasons is the very essence of heresy. Children get whippings because they ask, "why they can't." Communicants have been imprisoned, hanged, drawn and quartered, burnt at the stake and broiled on gridirons for demanding reasons. Husbands and wives disagree, quarrel, fight and get divorced because one asks for reasons; and men get mad, quarrel, and kill each other because reasons are demanded. It is exceedingly provoking to politician or priest to be called on to deliver what he has not and never had. If our statesmen would pass an Act to prevent people from asking for reasons, they would save themselves and, also, husbands and wives and children a great deal of trouble and sorrow.

The most satisfactory conclusion I can draw is, that Mother Goose was born educated. I do not mean she was born saying her alphabet, or reciting the multiplication tables, for that would be almost incredible. We can readily believe that a child may be born tired, or, immediately after birth, was heard to sing what sounded like a stave or two from Wagner's music, or a nursery song, but to affirm the other proposition would be preposterous.

Still, the evidence is strong that Mrs. Goose was born educated. One cogent fact is that there is no record of her name in any of the college or university catalogues. Another is the originality of her syntax and prosody. She could not possibly have been taught in these branches at
any school ranging from the "the old field log cabin" to the highest University.

Mrs. Goose made her own syntax and prosody. Her plan was very simple. It was to go ahead and make it. Who but her would have dared to write—

"And shot his head, with a pistol, off."

And, also, this line in a prandial song—

"To a leg, Sir! of mutton you may go?"

So much for her syntax. Now a few examples of her prosody. I take at random the following celebrated pastoral-epic:

"This little pig went to market.
This little pig stayed at home.
This little pig got roast beef.
This little pig got none.
This little pig cried 'wee, wee,' all the way home."

Now, I defy any prosodian to scan those five lines. It is true that the first three words in each of the five lines are beautifully metrical and euphonious, to wit: "this little pig," but, take the words in the two last lines, to wit: "got none,"

"cried 'wee, wee,' all the way home,"

and tell me, you devotee to spondees, dactyls, iambics, trochees, chori-ambics, ionics, sapphics. diameters, trimeters, tetrameters, pentameters, hexameters, heptameters. dactylic trimeters, catalectics, and enough more meters to run even Horace crazy, how can those two lines be
harmonized without stretching or splicing one, or cutting off the other?

Again: Let any prosodian try to adjust by any rules of prosody this remarkable poem:

"Thumb-bold, Thibithy thold,
Langman, Lickpan, mamma’s little man."

I have no criticism to make on the poem last quoted, except that, it seems to be a defiance of all recognized rules in prosody. To the ordinary mind it is original to the verge of perfect obscurity. Much of its etymology is original and, so far as I know, wholly unknown, unless Thumb-bold, Thibithy thold, Langman, Lickpan, are the christian names of “mamma’s little man.” The name “Lickpan” strongly supports this interpretation, while “Langman,” (Scotch, no doubt, for Longman), as strongly suggests some hidden and deeper meaning, because mamma’s man was little and, therefore, could not have been a long man at that time of life.

Another hypothesis is that those names are family surnames or patronyms. But, against this exegesis is the fact that there is no record or tradition of any families bearing those respective names except the Lickpan family. And as the Lickpans are so numerous and are scattered broadcast over the Earth, why is it that we have never heard since of even one Thumb-bold, or Thibithy Thold? The fact that the names begin with capital letters must be discarded as evidence of surnames, because Mother Goose writes pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, interjections, conjections —anything, with capital letters.
But, while criticising the prosody of this poem we must bear in mind that prosody is the art of measuring off poetry by the foot. It is a remarkable fact that neither yards nor inches have ever been used on poetry. And as measurement is a purely mathematical work, we can look charitably on the one defect in this truly original poem. The reader will see the reason for the last remark about charity when he or she shall read my commentary on Mrs. Goose’s mathematical poetry. I shall discuss hereafter her five-pig poem just spoken of above, as it cannot properly be classified and commented on under the head of “Mrs. Goose’s education.” Besides, a dissertation on five pigs requires a whole chapter.
CHAPTER V.

SAMPLES OF SUBJECTS AND OF HER STYLES.

This sketch of the Goose family brings me to the principal subject of these commentaries which is the literary remains of our great ancestor. However great may be her family, numerically, her reputation does not rest on them. Her fame, like many men's wealth, is on paper. It is in her writings. No one can have a proper conception of the length and breadth of her poems unless he has inspected them; and no one can understand and appreciate them unless he or she is or was once a child. I say this because I often hear it said, there are no children now.

Her poems vary in length from sonnets of seven words to epics of nearly two hundred. It is generally conceded that these small lays were her earliest incubations. One of the shortest and tersest is this:

"Charley Wag
Ate the pudding and left the bag."

And right here I beg to say, in justice to myself as a judge of poetry, that I do not claim for this poem any special beauty or sublimity. What I maintain is, that it's power is in the condensed argument. It demonstrates the mental capacity of its hero to distinguish the pudding from the bag; for it is written, he "left the bag." The poem further shows his great promise when very young—(the poet calls him by the diminutive, "Charley")—to become a
distinguished glutton because, any pudding of a size respectable enough to be boiled in a bag, must weigh at least three or four pounds and, yet, that infant ate it all! The wonder is that the young glutton “left the bag.”

It may be objected by some critics, or hypercritics, that gluttony is not a very grand subject for an epic or even a sonnet. I must admit that nothing but genius of the highest order would venture in such a field, or could sustain itself in so bold a flight. But, I answer in defense of my author, that her distinguished success in treating the subject is a complete vindication of her selection.

Besides, her theme compares favorably with those of any of the great epics. For instance, Homer, in the Iliad, celebrates, first, Achilles’ wrath; second, his sulking; and last, his fighting qualities. No one of the three is much, if to any degree, above eating which was Wag’s forte. Then, the next greatest epic, Paradise Lost, is based on eating alone. precisely as the great poem “Charley Wag” is. The only difference is that Eve and Adam ate too much fruit raw; whereas Charley ate too much cooked. Every one will admit that if Eve and Adam had not eaten too much, there could have been no “Paradise Lost.”

It may be said by a few that the brevity of the epic of Charley Wag makes a comparison between it and the Iliad and Paradise Lost, impossible. I suspect that those who may raise that objection have not devoted days and nights to a thorough study of the comprehensiveness of this comparatively brief epic. I will give in a compendious form my reasons for maintaining the fitness of the comparison.
The attentive reader will remember my commentary on the wonderful genius of this incomparably intellectual individual, Mrs. Goose, to express in one word what other poets fill volumes to communicate. This comment was made when considering the connubial poem—

"My little old man and I fell out; I'll tell you what it was all about: I had money and he had none, And that's the way the Noise begun."

I feebly endeavored to give an idea of what was comprehended in the word "noise." Now, the poet's genius is as much greater here than in the connubial drama just quoted, as an epic is greater than her graphic description of that family hairpulling and spanking. In this epic instead of beginning at the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve had just commenced house-keeping and coming on down, sweeping everything with her broom before her: or, dwelling on the most interesting event in the life of Charley Wag—his birth; then lingering pathetically over his infantile maladies; on what potion he was drenched with, for croup, measles, rash and mumps; on the dawn of his first crow, or smile; under which creed he was baptized—whether sprinkled, or soosed all over; the exact minute when he first squallled "M-a-a," and then pursuing him from his a, b, abs, through frocks to pants, this great writer began where most biographers usually leave off. She simply said her hero "ate the pudding."

What an inconceivable stretch of history; what a condensation of the course, rise and fall, successes and fail-
ures, of the human family, is in that word "Pudding." To get even a vague conception of what that word comprehends, we must elevate our thoughts and aspirations until we attain the glorified emotion of an Anglomaniac, and then, with the enviable humility of Uriah Heep, look upon the people of Great Britain as the highest type of all mankind, past and present. We must then bear in mind that the chief aim and end of mankind is eating. So true is this, that a sated, surfeited, dyspeptic Roman emperor offered a large reward to any one who could and should concoct, devise, or invent a new dish. It is necessary to remember, also, that great statesmen are universally adjudged to be the wisest of all men; that the wisest of these wise men are always selected to be diplomats, and that diplomacy is always conducted in and through the diplomat's stomach. Now when we further consider that a plum pudding is the highest achievement in all the arts that the English (the acme of civilization), have been able to reach, we at once get a glimpse of the genius of the poet when she sums up the life, the intellectual force, the advanced civilization and gastronomic aestheticism of her hero in the word "pudding."

Thus, this hero is described by a word as of the highest type of mankind. Can that be truthfully said, or plausibly maintained, of Milton's heroine, Eve, or his heroes, Adam, Lucifer, and the snake; or Homer's heroes and heroines, Paris, Helen, Achilles, Hector, Cassandra and the Wooden Horse? I will not discuss so plain a proposition.

It is an ancient rule of oratory and sound to-day, that
an argument shall be climacteric, that is, the strongest point must be reserved for the peroration. Therefore, after pressing the pudding point in my argument, which is as true as, and much more easily digested by the average reader than logarythms, it would not be good form to dwell on the fact that Wag “left the bag” as conclusive of his supreme civilization. Still, if that fact were the whole of Wag’s biography, it might be urged as evidence tending to show he had attained to a degree of self-denial, or of some control over his appetite, or, at least, that he was statesman enough to know when his stomach was ready to resist further invasion. That is a degree of wisdom that the majority of men and all kings and some other rulers do not possess. It is a grievous mistake made by rulers to believe that men rebel. It is their stomachs. They rebel at two stages, one when stuffed, the other when starved. Herein is food for the philosopher and the statesman, but it is not “plum pudding.”

This same youth was almost omnivorous. This she shows in another and longer sonnet:

"Charley loves good cake and ale,
   Charley loves good candy;
   Charley loves to kiss the girls,
   When they are clean and handy."

This poem, it will be observed, is not only necessarily sweet, (all its ingredients being delicacies), but it is also climacteric. It rises at each flight—good, better, best—Positive good, (cake); comparative, better, (candy); superlative, best, (girls).
The fourth line of this poem is either mere surplusage, or it was written of necessity. Historians and biographers are often forced by truth to write much they would gladly omit that dwarfs a hero, or mars a saint. I incline to the opinion that Mrs Goose as a biographer of that scamp, Charley, was compelled to write the fourth line. It is shocking even to intimate that any girl is ever in the condition she mentions. I don't believe it, but my belief does not alter the case. That wicked boy had become so abandoned by going around, eating pudding, cake and candy; drinking ale and kissing girls, that he had grown select from saiety, and impudent and blase, so much so that he would not kiss a girl that he thought was not clean—the wretch!—and would not kiss any of them at a distance, that is, when not "handy." For the latter, I do not think he was much to blame, as I do not see how he could except by telephone; and that way, though sometimes electrifying, is not so popular as the old system established by Adam and Eve—O. S.—which means the Old Style, or the Osculatory System.

In her third and last notice of this young glutton, his appetite had led him on to crime—almost the inevitable result of excessive indulgence of any appetite. She tells the sad story thus:

"Charley, Charley stole the barley,
Out of the Baker's shop;
The Baker came out and gave him a clout,
And made poor Charley hop."
It appears from this that the scapegrace had already lost one leg in some scrape, as he had to hop away.

Her longest poem is the one of the old woman who had a pig that refused to get over a stile. It was, probably, an ancestor of the “pigs in clover” and, unlike most of the human family, knew when it was well off. That poem contains 154 lines. That is, if we include the narrative of about one hundred lines, as we include the narrative and the criticism of Fadladeen as a part of Lalla Rookh.

There is another poem—properly a pastoral or bucolic—that is among the longest but which, if pruned of a vast amount of repetition, would be very short. It illustrates how a thing can grow by repetition—as scandal, for instance. The theme seems to be entirely pastoral, and the argument, so far as I can understand it, is to prove, that “once upon a time” a certain person named Jack Somebody, built a house. Judging from the builder’s name, I take this poem to be a parody on the proverb, “Fools build houses and wise men live in them.” This idea, or lesson, is emphasized by a repetition ten times of the words, “This is the house that Jack built.”

The next longest is the tragical-pastoral celebrating the disorder, decease, and sepulture of the rich Mrs. Duck, which events are sung in the brief space of 98 lines that vary in length from three to five metrical feet. This great irregularity of meter, or short and long lines, is due, of course, to the fact that the author was describing the whole Duck family, little and big, and the meter had to be adapted to the size and length of each Duck.
The subjects discussed by this world-renowned author take a wider range than those of any writer living or dead. They cover psychology, biology, physiology, astronomy, natural history, mathematics from addition to geometry, matrimony, moral philosophy, biography, history, medicine, pathology, gunnery, navigation, polite manners, alliteration, conundrums—in short, every subject worthy of her genius and of our meditation, except religion and divorce. Though a studious commentator I have never understood why she did not sing of divorce, unless it was, that, having absorbed Mr. Goose, she could see no sense in divorcees. And, as I have read rather widely the voluminous writing of Agnostics, I have concluded that she was silent on religion because she knew something about it.

It is always interesting to know an author's style, but, we can only acquaint ourselves with the many styles of this favorite of the Muses by studying her works. Her genius brooked no limitations. Her styles are almost as various and numerous as the subjects of her poems. She is, at times, as terse as Lacon; as wise, condensive, and inductive as Lord Bacon; as majestic and euphonious as Homer or Milton; as verbose and sesquipedalian as Doctor Johnson; as rollicksome as Byron in Don Juan; as incoherent as a lunatic, (I say it respectfully), and so irregular as to remind the reader of her own poem that runs:

"Leg over leg,  
As the dog went to Dover;  
When he came to a stile—  
Jump! he went over."
I have not space to give examples of all her styles, as I cannot quote every poem in her works.

Here is a fine specimen of Laconism:

"Bye, baby bumpkin.
Where's Tony Lumpkin?
My lady's on her death-bed,
With eating half a pumpkin."

It will be noticed that there is no apparent relevancy between the question and the answer—none whatever. But there must be, and it is my duty as a commentator to make my author's writings clear, if I can. I have given much study to this poem and it is, in my opinion, a brief history of a very sad love affair. I do not mean the lady's love of pumpkin, but of Lumpkin.

The enquiry—"Where's Tony Lumpkin?" clearly implies that guests had assembled to witness the marriage and that Tony Lumpkin had jilted the lady and had run away; while the answer is a laconic statement of the tragic consequence of his perfidy. The lady was evidently madly in love, and when Tony Lumpkin deserted her, having not even a photograph of him to dote on, she seized the object that most vividly recalled him to memory, to wit: a pumpkin, as it was exactly like Lumpkin (leaving Tony off, of course,) and devoured half of it.

Love is indeed a madness. If she had been rational, she would have known that the half of a raw pumpkin weighing 40 to 60 pounds would "her quietus make": that is, kill her. Bless the heart-broken lady—I fear it was deliberate suicide! I wish she had eaten the scoundrel,
Lumpkin! For, while he would have been just as hard to digest and as fatal as the pumpkin, still, she would have had the grim satisfaction of taking him with her.

Here is a poem that combines Lacon and Bacon:

"Barney Bodkin broke his nose,
Without feet we can't have toes,
Crazy folks are always mad,
Want of money makes us sad."

There is not one of the four distinct propositions enunciated in that poem that can be expressed in fewer words; nor one that can be controverted unless it be the first about Mr. Barney Bodkin's nose. And, as that historic fact was not disputed by any contemporary of Barney Bodkin, or of Mrs. Goose, it is too late now to question its correctness. That would be too much like the modern exercise in composition engaged in by a few persons to prove that Shakespeare wrote Lord Bacon's works and that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays. I do not believe that any such trade was ever made.

Besides, it is universally known that every first born child has his or her nose broken by the second; the second by the third and so on until the nose of every child in the family is broken except the nose of the last one; and knowing that fact, (for every child is always duly and kindly advised of his nose being broken), Barney decided, like a good brother, to break his own nose to save the next child from that unpleasant necessity; or, he might have been the last child and had to break his own nose to prove his family relationship.
The following poem is Homeric and Miltonic in rhythmic tread:

"Hark! hark! the dogs do bark,
The beggars have come to town,
Some in rags, some in tags,
And some in velvet gowns."

Nothing ever written or spoken is more euphonious.

The next, I regret to say, exhibits some incoherence, but it is a fine specimen of rhythm:

"We are all in the dumps
For diamonds and trumps,
The kittens have gone to St. Paul’s;
The babies are bit,
The moon’s in a fit,
And the houses are built without walls."

That is a sad state of affairs. "Take it for all in all we shall never look upon its like again," as some poet once remarked about a corpse.

The dumps, diamonds, trumps, kittens, St. Paul’s, the moon, babies, and houses without walls, all conglomerated, jumbled, packed, squeezed, mashed within eighteen and a half linear feet of poetry! This is difficult to defend. Still, although so badly mixed, they are not mixed metaphors. They are like "Orient pearls at random strung"—excluding the kittens of course. They are the tricks of Fancy "running a-muck." They typify the privileged familiarity, the abandon, the pell-mell of the carnival of Venice. But these remarks are critical and, and as I am...
writing a commentary, I must resume my work. A short
dissertation on the origin, progress and nosology of “The
Dumps” may throw some light on the first and second
lines of this eccentric flight.

Dumps is a most remarkable word. There is nothing
abstract about it. It is always concrete. It is singular in
that it is never singular. It is not the plural of dump and
yet dump has a plural which is dumps. To be in the dump
is to be in or on a pile of trash or dirt, but to be “in the
dumps” is a very different situation. The dumps is “a
condition and not a theory that confronts us.”

Dumps in its primitive life was very respectable. It
marched and kept time in the noble ranks marshalled and
commanded by John Milton. Holland, translator of Livy,
recognized its gentility. He says, the Romans after Han-
nibal beat them at Cannae were “in the dumps.” Hudib-
bras treated it with grave respect by describing a hero as
being in “doleful dumps.” Beaumont and Fletcher thought
it worthy of their recognition. Shakespeare employs
it twice, in the singular, in Romeo and Juliet. But,
words like people can be corrupted by association—can be
degraded by the company they keep. Dumps started out
in companionship and on social equality with grief, sorrow,
tribulation, distress—not the most hilarious but very digni-
fied associates—which have maintained their character con-
sistently, but the dumps have fallen away until it is now,
“but little better than one of the wicked.” In fact dumps
for many years, has not appeared in public or private with-
out being preceded by the distinguishing article “the,”
just as the bearer of the fasces always walked before a Roman magistrate to signify his rank and authority to try and to kill. "The dumps," in truth, seems to be a theosophic successor to that magistrate with all his power and authority.

But the medical profession have for a century recognized "the dumps" as a distinct disease. While that learned faculty are practically unanimous in their diagnoses and treatment of all other diseases, it is remarkable that they differ widely in their diagnosis of the dumps. Some locate it in a disordered liver, or spleen, or dyspeptic stomach. Others find it somewhere in the affections. The latter diagnosis is based on the admitted fact that the dumps are most prevalent with persons young in love. But that is not conclusive, because nearly all children are afflicted with this disorder. Besides, close observation of symptoms has discovered that the dumps attack married people oftener and more dangerously as their affections grow weakest.

The treatment for this malady that is confined, as are measles, appendicitis and small pox, to the human family, is the same the world over. Minors are treated by flagellation, a remedy very common with certain monks, who, if an emotion of pleasure, or joy, or happiness, came over them, suspected they were not true Christians and were possessed by Satan, and they proceeded forthwith to whip him out of the flesh. But the treatment for adults is to let the dumps run its course like measles, mumps, or small-pox. Unfortunately it is never fatal—I mean, it is unfortunate
for the people at large, because, if one fatal case were to occur, an autopsy could be held, the disease located, the patient treated, and thus give relief to the people; for the dumps is a disease that afflicts relatives and friends more than the patient.

The context veils the poet’s expression, “in the dumps,” with a doubtful meaning. It implies gambling or, at least, a game of cards. But as she says “we are all in the dumps” which includes husbands, wives, lawyers, doctors, poor and rich, preachers and Sunday school teachers, that construction must ex necessitate rei be rejected. In support of this view is the further consideration that diamonds here cannot mean one of the four suits of playing cards, because, when a player holds a strong hand of trumps, there is no possible reason why he should be in the dumps for diamonds, any more than for clubs, or spades, or hearts. Therefore, diamonds must be construed to mean crystalized carbon that certain persons—hotel clerks and a few others—are said to prize very highly. And the word “trumps” must be taken in the metaphorical sense of all things that, in the battle of life, enable us to take the odd trick and win. Indeed, the entire expression is but an amplification of the poet’s terse enunciation already considered, to wit: “Want of money makes us sad.”

It is supposed the kittens she speaks of as marching on to St. Paul’s, are the family of 2,401 kittens with their 343 mothers which the author says she met emigrating in seven sacks from St. Ives. If so, God help St. Paul! for the probability is that these are the kittens and cats that bit
those dear little babies. The moon having a fit is nothing remarkable with astronomers, as they have known for thousands of years that she is lunatic. She became so during the Kingdom of Rome. In fact the moon is believed to be the mother of Fits.

But, the most astonishing fact revealed by that poem is the building of houses without walls. My reading is very deficient if houses were built in that way during the period when Mrs. Goose flourished. I may be in fault in my reading or memory, but my recollection is that, that style of architecture was first introduced but a few years ago in New York city by an architect whose name escapes me at this moment. But the authorities of New York, after several houses of that style were erected and had fallen, came to the conclusion that "houses built without walls" were too expensive as places for burial, and told the architect he must not build any more.

For pathos unsurpassed I name without quoting, the pastoral-tragical on the illness and demise of the rich Mrs Duck.

I have heard that some persons talk faster than they think, and thus become incoherent and, at times, uninteresting and even tiresome; but whether that be truth or only imagination, it is true that our author had the capacity to think faster than she could write and, hence, apparent breaks or hiatuses are sometimes noticeable by the critical eye. The last poem is one in point. Here is another:
“Little Tommy Tittlemouse,
Lived in a little house;
He caught fishes
In other men’s ditches.”

Here are three meters in as many lines. Besides, “fishes” does not rhyme with “ditches.” Some commentators have suggested “dishes” for ditches because children are perfectly impartial as to whose dish they poke their hands into, but that reading is a reflection on the piscatorial knowledge of both the poet and Mr. Tittlemouse. Moreover, it is not in harmony with the ancient painting of this pastoral, which, true to nature, represents Tommy at the big end of the fishing pole, and the fishing line and bob in a ditch; that is, in one ditch, for the artist assumed most correctly that it was not necessary to paint more than one ditch, as Mr. Tittlemouse did not fish in more than one ditch at a time. And the artist knew that all readers of this author are as familiar with ditches as they are with mud pies.

Here is another poem in natural history that defies all rules of rhyme and meter:

‘Pussy sits beside the fire. How can she be fair? In walks little doggy—Pussy are you there? So, So, Mrs. Pussy, pray, how do you do? ‘Thank you! thank you! little dog— I’m very well just now.’”

I do not know another instance in all poetry of such disregard of the rules governing first-class composition, un-
less it be one I remember hearing when a boy. It is the first four lines of an acrostic elaborated by a friend aged then about fifty years, on the name of a fair maid of 15 summers to whom he intended to offer himself as an inducement to her to accept the acrostic. She was called, endearingly, “Miss Poss.” The acrostic ran—no runs, for it still lives:

“Memory is the recollection of the mind,
In its youth will expand like young vine,
So sagacious is it to grasp all things in,
Scarcely will it let one thing pass by.”
CHAPTER VI.

MRS. GOOSE’S EPITHALAMIUMS.

It was when Mother Goose turned her lyre to sing an epitaphalium that she made her best lay. I take the celebration of the courtship and wedding between the high contracting parties, the gallant Cock Robin and the beautiful and accomplished Miss Jenny Wren. With what melodicous notes the poet opens! How smoothly she glides to the protasis—then into the epitasis of that thrilling domestic drama! I quote a few stanzas to show her high art:

“It was on a merry time,
    When Jenny Wren was young,
So neatly as she danced,
    And so sweetly as she sung,

“‘Robin Redbreast lost his heart:
    He was a gallant bird,
He doffed his hat to Jenny—
    And thus to her he said:

“My dearest Jenny Wren!
    If you will but be mine,
You shall dine on cherry pie,
    And drink nice currant wine.

“I’ll dress you like a Goldfinch,
    Or like a Peacock gay;
So, if you ’ll have me, Jenny,
    Let us appoint the day?”
How naturally and charmingly the courtship begins! But, as one professing to know the Queensbury Rules that govern when two persons meet to settle an affair of the heart, I must say that Bob's first pass at Jenny was a foul blow. If I may be pardoned for using a phrase of the "Ring"—it was a right-hander planted on the heart in the first round. I refer to his promise of cherry pie and currant wine and, especially, to the dresses which were to be finer than those of her friend, Lady Goldfinch, or of the vain and haughty Miss Peacock. And, before Jenny had time to recover or catch her wind, Bob insisted that a day be appointed for the nuptials.

The effect of his promise was instantaneous, and suggestive that all the feminine world are kin! For,

"Jenny blushed behind her fan,
And thus declared her mind—
'Then let it be to-morrow, Bob,
I take your offer kind.'"

And the poor little soul, under a delirium caused by the ecstasy of the moment, went on to counter Bob's lovesick twaddle by a little more of the same sort.

"'Cherry pie is very good,
So is currant wine.
But, I'll wear my russet gown,
And never dress too fine.'"

It must be remembered that lovers will promise anything before marriage. But whether Bob would have been so sweet and liberal, and would have left off his extravagant
bachelor habits and stood square up to the pie, wine and
dresses, like a man; whether Jenny, after seeing the rich
dresses of her neighbors during her honeymoon spent at
Newport and Saratoga, would have stuck to her old russet
gown, must be conjectured by each one according to his or
her married experience; because, in the Providence that
watches over Robins and Wrens, neither the groom nor the
bride was given time or opportunity to prove his or her
fidelity. For, after Parson Rook had read the marriage
service from a book borrowed of Mother Hubbard; after
the Goldfinch had given Jenny away, and the Parson had
said: "You are married now;" after a Mr. Lark had sung
a Voluntary and 'the dinner things were removed" and
all the assembled guests had begun to sing in chorus, but
before Bob had opportunity to slip a thousand-dollar-note
into Parson Rook's grip-bag, a drunken wretch named
Cuckoo, who had not been invited, swaggered in and raised
a row by taking undue liberties with the bride by pulling
her around the drawing-room over briers and stumps. That
so enraged one of Bob's friends (from the South of course),
named Cock Sparrow, who always went armed to the teeth,
that he whipped out his weapon, shot at the rowdy, and,
alack! alas! killed the bridegroom, Bob!

From the heartrendering wails of the widow-bride, I
gladly escape by an appropriate diversion which is to re-
mark that here we have further evidence that Mrs Goose
was English. For, the young Hotspur who killed his
friend (per infortunium, of course), must have been of the
warlike family of Sparrows that of late years have invaded
this country like another William, the Conqueror, and are killing all other tribes of the aboriginal ornithological race, and are threatening to drive out the Anglo-Saxons themselves.

With one more of our author's writings on matrimony I will take up another subject. And, here, I regret to say, I have not a word of praise for our poet. All I can say for her is, that no mortal was ever great at all times and at every thing. Shakespeare's sonnets are far below his plays, and even his plays differ—but, "only as one star differeth from another star in glory." Macaulay, the historian, or poet, is not to be compared to Macaulay, the essayist. Byron, as a dramatist is scarcely read, but, in subjective analysis and objective description he is unsurpassed. And this great author, in this instance, has made the worst failure of any great writer that ever lived. The failure is so signal as to suggest that the poem is apocryphal. The failure is due to setting herself up as a matchmaker, and to the marriage she brought about between a certain beau of the Frog family of Frogton and a Miss Mouse.

It does seem that a moment's reflection—if matchmakers ever think—would have suggested to her the utter incongruity of that match. Never was there such a misalliance among royal families. She states a fact in the body of the poem that ought to have brought her to her senses. It is, that the bride had whiskers! She certainly knew that the groom not only had none, but that no member of his family, from the youngest named Tadpole, to the eldest who is named Bloody-Nouns, ever had a hair on his conceited mug.
That fact alone should have given Mrs. Goose pause. And she did seem to realize her mistake, for she tried to give this miscalled affair of the heart respectability by adding this stanza:

"And to that wedding feast there came,
Some Frogs of high degree,
And Mice of birth illustrious,
And first-rate pedigree."

But that does not—cannot—give respectability to such an outrage on society. No high degree of the Frog family, not even their commingling with the best blood of the French; no illustrious pedigree of the bride—not even the cordial welcome always extended to corpulent members of her family by the Chinese, can reconcile right thinking people to this misalliance!

First of all, the two families do not belong to the same race; the groom being an Oviporous Amphibian, and the bride being a Rodent Mammal. Second, their personal habits and tastes are wholly different, and their modes of life incompatible. The groom is a low creature—carnivorous—eats bugs and flies, while the bride is herbivorous. In fact, excepting a cultivated taste for cheese and bacon, she may be called a vegetarian. She could not, in any sense, be a helpmeet to him, for, to speak after the manner of soldiers, he must do his own foraging and she must do hers, and both on altogether separate strategic lines. He is a dirty fellow, and to speak plainly, lives in the dirt, while she has a retired little home in palaces, mansions, or humble dwellings, according to her circumstances, and sleeps on
a neat bed of straw, hair, or any small articles she can obtain of ladies at night, such as handkerchiefs, braids and silk hose. What time the groom is not in his lavatory or bath, he spends sitting around in his bathing suit, singing and calling for a "jug of rum" in a most doleful monotone, while the bride utterly despises water and never took a bath in her life!

His gait, too, is a long parabolic jump, while hers is a daintly, mincing canter; and how on the earth could they ever walk arm in arm, when he jumps and she canters? Yet, the poet says they did, and so records it in the 11th stanza of this epithalamic canto, which runs:

"No more was said, but arm in arm,
To church they hopped away,
Got married and prepared a feast,
To grace their wedding day."

Think of a cantering bride hopping to keep step with the jumping groom, or a hopping groom cantering to keep step with his bride!

Besides all that, this matchmaker must have known that their social circles are widely different. The bridegroom associates with low company— with reptiles in fact—while the bride, with an instinct that evinces great progress in evolution towards man's condition, seeks the society that keeps the best and fullest larder. Still, I must admit, that if we were to test their progress by the doctrine of evolution, we would have to give the groom precedence in rank, because his tail was evolved off very early in life.
Apropos to matrimony, I will discuss at this point a poem of meaning so doubtful as to have given rise to two schools of critics that may be designated the "Lake School" and the "Anti-Lake" or "Hymenal School." The poem is this:

"As Tommy Snooks and Bessie Brooks,
   Were walking out one Sunday,
  Says Tommy Snooks to Bessie Brooks,
   'To-morrow will be Monday.'"

The Lake School contend that the author intended thereby to publish her conviction that a man, though neck-deep in love, can sometimes talk sense. That she meant, also, to teach young men the wisdom of conversing with young girls on profound subjects, and to leave off their eternal gabble about base-ball, horse-racing, tally-ho, and "the 400;" that they must converse, as did Mr. Snooks, on matters that impart information and exhibit research and great intellect, and which the sweetheart can repeat with pride to her parents; or, by which she can excite the envy of other girls.

The Hymenal School contend that, that interpretation is absurd. first, because no one who could survive the name, Snooks, until he was big enough to walk out on Sunday, could be such a fool as to risk himself alone, in that feeble condition, with a girl who did not know that Monday follows Sunday. There is no telling what such a girl might do. She might kidnap him and force him to marry her and change his name so he could never be found by his parents.
They insist that Mr. Thomas Snooks was in love and made that most delicate offer of marriage so prevalent in “that good old time” (which is always in the past) when marriage was contracted as it is now in Western mining camps; when no jointure was demanded, no bank accounts nor tax returns were slyly examined into, and no ante-nuptial settlement on the wife was required as a fair market-price for her affections. It is true, that there is one apparent exception to that practice in “the good old times,” in the case of Robin Redbreast, who made a settlement on Miss Jenny Wren of pies, wine and fine dresses, but it was not reduced to writing, signed, witnessed and delivered; and to have enforced that contract Miss Wren would have been compelled to go to law and file what a client of mine once asked me to file for her, “a Bill of Iniquity.”

The Hymenial School contend that Miss Brooks declined Mr. Snooks’ offer. They say so, first, because she made no reply except, perhaps, that she “would always be a friend to him and love him as a brother,” which was so stale the poet would not record it; and, second, because, if she had accepted Mr. Snooks, she would suddenly have swung at least a hundred pounds of adoring avoir-du-pois on his arm and promptly answered,

“Then, let it be to-morrow, Tom—
I take your offer kind.”
CHAPTER VII.

MRS. GOOSE'S MATHEMATICAL POETRY.

Mrs. Goose's mathematical poems, if not her most luminous, are by far her most voluminous. Mathematics was her favorite field and she worked it for all the poetry she could find in it. The field of Pure Mathematics is certainly the finest of all regions for Pegasus to cultivate, so long as he keeps clear of the cube roots, square roots, conic sections and vulgar fractions that therein abound. It is my author's favorite theme for the reason, as I will show, that she knew less of it, and therefore got it more mixed than any theme to which she tuned her heavenly harp or winged her goosely flight. I can give but a few of these flights. I begin with one supposed to be the first effort of her fledgling fancy, as it opens with "One—two."

"One, two, buckle my shoe,
Three, four, open the door,
Five, six, pick up sticks,
Seven, eight, lay them straight,
Nine, ten, a good fat hen," etc.

This mathematical lyric ends, as all lovers of Goose poetry know, with the demonstration of the problem involved in it, which demonstration is in these words:

"Nineteen, twenty, my stomach's empty."

Now, as a candid commentator I must say that, while this demonstration may be correct, I have never been able
to understand the logic by which she reaches it. There is not a single premise or proposition relating to the stomach in the entire problem unless it may be the "good fat hen," and there is nothing to prove why anybody's stomach, much less the poet's should be empty except, perhaps, the proposition that the "18 maids" were kept "waiting," it may have been, long enough for their stomachs to become empty. Still, I fail to see how that could, logically, make the poet's stomach empty; because I cannot, by any process of reasoning, discover any connection between her stomach and the 18 stomachs of the maids. And, supposing there was a logical or even physiological connection between her stomach and the hen, still, the demonstration is not correct, because the demonstration rests solely on her empty stomach, and I do not admit that it is true mathematically, logically, or physiologically, that anybody's stomach is empty when a good fat hen is in it! She might still be hungry, but that is not the question. The question is one of emptiness, which I utterly deny!

That poem alone shows that mathematical poetry was not our author's forte. But, she herself frankly admits it. For once, in a moment of dejection she sang thus:

"Multiplication is vexation,
Division is as bad,
The Rule of Three perplexes me,
And Practice drives me mad."

What wonderful differences there are in the organization of the human body! What will destroy one will fatten another. This idiosyncrasy is the great obstacle that med-
ical science has to encounter. While Multiplication and Division almost took the life of our dear old Mother, the more Tweed-le-dum and Tweed-le-dee of New York city could "multiply and divide," the fatter and the stronger they grew.

Again she sings:

"Miss One, Two, Three, could never agree,
While they gossipped around a tea-caddy."

Here again the poet provokes scepticism; for it has always been supposed that at no other time were those young gossips so harmonious and happy. But, the truth of this proposition depends after all, on the kind of "tea" that was in that caddy; and as its flavor is not given and not even a sample produced, the argument is not conclusive.

Again she sings in mathematics:

'One, Two, Three, I love coffee.
And Billy loves tea.'

Often, when meditating on this mathematical poem, at the calm and witching hour of twilight, or while sipping languidly a cup of fragrant Young Hyson, I have thought how much of the beauty, power, and truth, perhaps, of this society-sonnet is lost by our ignorance as to which Billy the poet's phrenzied eye was on; that is, whether he was Shakespeare, Pitt, Thackeray, or one of the many Kings of England of that name from Billy, commonly called William, the Conqueror, down to William, or Billy, the Fourth. The mystery is greatly thickened by the word "tea." If the poet had sung. "Billy loves paper and rags, everything,
in fact, that he can find in the back yard, or hanging on clothes lines, or on the fence,” we could tell at once which Billy she meant.

The occultness of the passage is made still greater by the word “tea” being an equivoke. For, when we say “a man takes his tea,” we do not necessarily mean Oolong or Hyson. And I hold the opinion, that the correct rendition of that obscure passage, “Billy loves tea,” is only to be had by discarding all technical construction, and by interpreting “tea” in its ordinary, colloquial sense, and according to the customs or habits of men, which leads us to the conclusion that the minstrel was singing of “Billy Patterson.” It will be remembered, that he is the gentleman about whose welfare there was such intense national solicitude a few years ago that an inquiry was formulated and published, free of charge, by all the press in the United States—“Who struck Billy Patterson?”

There is a tradition, for the truth of which I am not just now prepared to vouch, that the condition of this Mr. William Patterson at the moment when he received the blow, was so obviously complicated that he was disqualified to perceive distinctly whether one or two antagonists inflicted the personal injury; and, also, that his evident inability to recognize his opposing belligerent or belligerents was the cause of his oft repeated inquiry made of the surrounding spectators for the gentleman or gentlemen who had given so grave an offense. It is well-known history that no one could inform him. It is a remarkable fact that a mystery of such national interest has never been satisfactorily
solved by our vast army of police and detectives. This failure is due, no doubt, to the neglect of the President and the Governors of all the States to offer an adequate reward for the apprehension of the criminal. Had they done so, it is safe to assume that some one would have been arrested and the reward claimed several years ago.

Again she sings:

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, I caught a hare alive;
6, 7, 8, 9, 10, I let her go again."

I confess frankly that I have never been able to penetrate the mystery of that pastoral, because, as she voluntarily emancipated the hare as soon as she could sing 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, I fail to see why she ever let herself cut to catch it. For I know from experience that to run a hare down in a fair race, even in an open field with no broom-sedge to jump, no briar-patches to dodge, and no skirts to hold up with both hands, requires more concentrated attention and devotion to business than any ordinary male poet cares to give on either an empty or a full stomach. I am so skeptical about the catching of that hare by the poet that, although I am not a betting man, and although it may be thought undignified in a commentator to speak of such things, yet, I will say this: if the old lady were alive and would consent to enter herself for a competitive race with an Arizona Jack-rabbit on a track up-hill through a grove of cactus, and would wear her every-day clothes—I know several Western sportsmen who would bet on the Jack-rabbit.
Here is another example of her blunders in mathematical poetry:

"Bryan O'Lin and his wife and wife's mother,
They all went over the bridge together;
The bridge broke down and they all fell in;
'The deuce go with all!' said Bryan O'Lin."

See how she gets things mixed! First, "they all" (the three) went over the bridge; second when the bridge broke down, they all fell in; and third, when all three are in the water, the poet makes Bryan O'Lin call out the "deuce" spot instead of the "tray!" One thing is certain, if "all three fell in," Bryan O'Lin did not know his alphabet in cards. Although I do not know Bryan O'Lin and never saw the man, yet, on his name alone, I would wager the odds given by the poet in the only bet she ever made of "ten thousand pounds to one penny," that Bryan O'Lin could teach the poet more in the science of "poker" or "seven-up," than she could teach him in mathematics, or even in the art of feeding babies. She fed her host of infants on broth and switches, or a leather strap, but listen to her direction to others for feeding their babies:

"Johnny's too little to whittle;
Give him some raspberry jam,
Take off his bib, put him into his crib,
And feed him on doughnuts and ham."

Think of such a diet for an infant "too little to whittle!" The youngest infant is old enough to whittle the father’s pocket-book. Think of such a diet for one too small to do
that! Why, in that diet of jam, doughnuts and ham there is a doctor's bill of one hundred dollars at least; that is to say, twenty visits at the reduced charge of five dollars a visit because the patient is very small, and a druggist's bill for paregoric, mustard plasters, soothing syrup, and twenty prescriptions at least in which water costs fifty cents an ounce.

There is another mathematical poem which I cannot forbear to notice. I give the poem in full that it may be better understood by those who can understand it. For myself, I confess, it has a meaning beyond my comprehension:

“Three children sliding on the ice
Upon a Summer’s day;
As it fell out, they all fell in,
The rest, they ran away.

“Now had these children been at home,
Or sliding on dry ground,
Ten thousand pounds to one penny,
They had not all been drowned.

“You parents all that children have,
And you that have got none,
If you would have them safe abroad,
Pray, keep them safe at home.”

Now, I do not think it egotistical for me to say I do not believe I am the stupidest man in the world, and, yet I am free to confess, that I am not altogether certain of the correctness of the grammar or the meaning of this poem. In
fact, I regret to say, it reads like the production of an un-
sound mind; though I admit, that the proposition laid down
in the second stanza is hard to overturn. Great as the
odds are in the bet the poet offers to all the sporting world
of “ten thousand pounds to one penny,” I consider it per-
fectly safe for her, unless the “dry ground” were in Flori-
da where the earth sometimes suddenly gives way in what
are called “lime sinks,” and subterranean rivers or creeks
appear. But, it is to the first and third stanzas I wish to
confine my remarks:

Three children were sliding on ice during Summer. She
does not state where they were, except that they were on
ice; but the circumstances clearly show, they were in the
Frigid Zone; because ice, for sliding purposes, is not found
elsewhere “upon” (that is on top of) “a Summer’s day.”
Those children must have been Esquimaux. This I con-
clude, not only because ice is the principal “infant indus-
try” in their country all the year round, but because I
know of no other children that would go tobogganing,
without toboggans, in that way. Sliding on ice for several
consecutive hours, in children’s Summer costume, is cer-
tainly frigid enjoyment. Five seconds of such delight
would bounce any American child to his feet with hands
down and active. But, the nationality of the children and
the locality of their sliding are small questions. The seri-
ous difficulty is in these lines:

“As it fell out, they all fell in,
The rest, they ran away.”
Now, what was "it" that fell out? Was "it" the ice, or the Summer's day? By any rule of grammar, the pronoun "it" must refer to one or the other. If ice is the antecedent of "it," and the ice, as she says, was "upon the Summer's day," it is incorrect to say the ice fell out. She should have said "as it fell off." If she meant the "day" fell out, that is impossible, because a day is but a period of time and being without substance or weight, gravitation cannot act on it and, therefore, it cannot fall out or in, up or down. Besides, this "it" means something having substance and occupying space, because "it" had to be displaced—that is fall out—to make room for the children to fall in. The poet says so in express terms. "It," therefore, must refer to or mean the ice. But the mystery is, what did the ice fall out of or from? If the ice was in water, how could the ice fall out without the water going with it unless the water stuck to something? If the water fell out, how did the children get drowned? If the ice was not in water and fell out, what was there to drown the children? Again: as all three fell in, who were "the rest" that ran away?

The whole affair is very remarkable indeed. The entire stanza is either too deep for the ordinary intellect to fathom, or it is another signal proof of the author's incapacity to sing in pure mathematics. The first word she wrote—to wit: "three"—unbalanced her reason, or it inspired her instantly with a power of expression surpassing the comprehension of finite mind.

Nor is the third stanza less turgid, or less inspired. In
the first place, I remark, how can any parents be parents at all who "have got" no children? I fail to comprehend that, unless parents without children adopt or borrow the children of other parents. But that would not relieve the question of difficulty, because they—the parents—would then only be, as a young lawyer once expressed it in a petition for habeas corpus, "adopted parents." Information of that relation was broken by him to the Judge in these words: "Your petitioner showeth unto your Honor that he is the adopted father of said minor child."

In the third place, the poet says: "If you would have them" (the children) "safe abroad, Pray, keep them safe at home."

Now, with all respect for the learned author, I cannot comprehend how children can be kept abroad and at home at one and the same time. It is simply impossible unless their parents' home is abroad. But that raises a complex question of domicile which a court and jury would have to decide. In conclusion on this head I must maintain, that no poem can be classed for power and perspicuity among the best productions of genius, that requires a judge and jury to tell what it means!

Besides these mathematical flights, she chants of four and twenty black-birds all in a pie; of going to St. Ives and meeting seven wives with 49 sacks, 343 cats, 2,401 kittens, which really seems incredible, unless those wives were Egyptians or sausage makers; of three blind mice; of thirty days in September; of twelve pears hanging high; and of "ten little Ingins standing in a line," which num-
ber, by divers methods of subtraction, such as tumbling from a gate, "kicking the bucket," "going to bed," "breaking a neck," "getting drunk," and "fooling with a loaded gun," she reduces to one, and she then declares:

"He got married and then there was none."

How she does that sum, that is makes no Ingin at all out of that last Ingin—in other words, how she gets one to be naught, nothing, nobody, I do not understand, unless she herself married him and yet, that hypothesis stands solely on the known nonentity of Mr. Goose. But that hypothesis will not do because it involves the old lady in the crime of bigamy. I am sorry I mentioned it. I withdraw the remark.

It is due to the poet to explain, that "Ingin" is her way of spelling Indian—the name of a race of people (or supposed to be) that inhabited nearly all of what is now the United States of America before the landing at Plymouth Rock, and that this celebrated poem is a satire on the various and ingenious methods by which that race has long been and will be gradually decreased in number until "there is none."

The next mathematical is one of great economic value. The scene is laid in a barber's shop—not in Seville, however, as I believe.

The *dramatis personae* are the barber and a bald-headed pig. The author does not say so, but I am sure the pig is the traveller she met when she was on a journey to Bonner; not because it is an uncommon thing to meet pigs or hogs when one is travelling, for that is very common even dur-
ing a short ride on a street-car, but because the portraits of the two pigs which I have examined critically, are as like as Dromio to Dromio. They have the same large and pendant ears; the same dreamy, almond-eyes; the same broad, retreating forehead, and the same very large nose slightly turned up when intent on subterranean things. The barber had just laid his razor to the throat of his pa-tron, the pig—not in wrath but in tonsorial art—when the pig that evidently had been debating the cost of a wig with a view to purchasing one, inquired how many hairs there are in a wig. The barber, with that accurate knowledge of other people's affairs which swells so largely the dividends on his business, promptly gave the astounding answer, "four and twenty hairs!"

Before the disclosure of this professional secret and fraud, I supposed that a first class wig has at least a million hairs, and my indignation was almost beyond control when I learned how the bald-headed public has been swindled. I am opposed to strikes as a rule, but I really feel that all bald-headed citizens and all who intend or expect to be bald-headed, ought to boycott all artists who make twenty-four-haired wigs. I would like to know who wants a wig that is itself bald-headed!

But her "fifteen puzzle" poem is this:

"Every body in this land,
Has twenty nails upon each hand—
Five and twenty hands and feet,
All this is true without deceit."
It is not to be imagined that a poet of sufficient intelligence to count and sing “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, I caught a hare alive” and who had washed, a thousand times, the fingers of so great a number of children as would intimidate a census-taker, did not know there are but five nails on each hand; and we must, therefore, conclude that this is one of the many instances when Mother Goose sacrificed facts to meter. And just here I may say the “poet’s liberty” with her, has no limitation. She would split syntax as uuthesitatingly as she did a “leg of mutton.” For instance, in this:

“There was an old man of Tobago,  
Who lived on rice, gruel and sago;  
Till, much to his bliss,  
His physician said this—  
To a leg, sir! of mutton you may go!”

Again, in singing of that wickedest kitten in the world that openly, defiantly, told its mother, “I’ll never more be good, I’ll go and be a robber fierce,” she says, the kitten went forth to a dreary wood, met a cock,

“And blew its head, with a pistol off,  
Which gave it an awful shock.”

The whole affair is shocking. The shocking is divisible into three heads: 1st, the head of the kitten that was so utterly depraved; 2d, the head of the rooster that was awfully shocked; and third, the head of the reader. It is quite as shocking to the head of Lindley Murray, Smith, and other grammarians to see the word “off” cut off from
the cock's "head," by a "pistol," as it was to the cock to have his head "shot off."

There was a mysterious connection—a kind of solidarity—between numbers and the poet's stomach. In proof of this I refer to the poem just exegesised and also the following:

"Heigh ding-a-ding, what shall I sing?
How many holes in a skimmer?
Four and twenty; I'm half starving!
Mother! pray, give me some dinner."

I have wondered why this is, and whether mathematical poetry thus empties and aggravates the stomachs of male poets also. I seriously doubt it. It must have been the close application of the old lady in counting the four and twenty holes in the skimmer, that reduced her to the low condition she describes. She, evidently, was never "too full for utterance," as after-dinner speakers often are. She must have done all her writings on a full stomach—I don't mean literally on, but when her stomach was full. If so, she had to compose with prodigious rapidity. For, the poem above—"one, two buckle my shoe," shows, that, during the brief time required for her to count 20, her stomach got empty; and this poem proves that in counting only four more—that is 24—she became half starved. This explains why her children got only "broth without any bread." All the bread and "victuals and drink" went into poetry.

These two poems illuminate another, and prove what I have announced as my discovery, that Mrs. Goose's poems,
like many of Byron's, are autobiographic. The third poem is this:

"There was an old woman,
And what do you think?
She lived on nothing but
Victuals and drink.
And, though victuals and drink
Were the chief of her diet,
This little old woman
Could never be quiet."

Writing poetry must be the most exhausting exercise in the world. We can now understand why drink constitutes so large a part of a poet's diet, and why it takes so much of it to keep a poet quiet. But, I will pursue this argument no further, because I see that the vulgar enemies of poetry will seize upon excessive drink as an argument against poetry, and anti-prohibitionists will use it to prove the blessings of deep potations.

I feel relieved that I admitted at the start my author's ignorance of mathematics. It explains why she wrote so much on that subject. If she had been an Agnostic in religion, as she was a Know-Nothing in Mathematics, she would have written volumes upon volumes on religion and have packed that old shoe she lived in until her children would have been compelled, either to burrow for bunks under the sole, or to sleep outside on the "upper" and cover with umbrellas.
CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. GOOSE'S BIOGRAPHICAL POETRY.

Her muse exhibits great power and tenderness in biography. At times she expresses a volume by suggestion. For instance, when she sings:

“Little Tee Wee,
He went to sea
In an open boat;
And while afloat,
The little boat bended—
My story's ended.”

A writer of ordinary intellect, that is, without genius, would have harrowed our sensibilities by sickening details of Little Tee Wee's drowning, covering two columns in a big daily; but this wonderful genius tells the tale with more dramatic power in four words—"The little boat bended." Besides, she does not deprive the morbid-minded of the privilege of depicting all the horrors necessary to their fullest delight. Her desire was to make everybody happy.

Our poet's description of the personnel and death by drowning of a Mrs. Peg. falls properly under the head of biography, though some Goose commentators are of the opinion that the argument of the poem is essentially physiological. As a case of drowning viewed in the light of science, Mrs. Peg's stands without a parallel. It far surpasses Ophelia's and, also, old Mrs. Nero's. Indeed, a
more artistic and attractive case of drowning never occurred. But Mrs. Peg had such superior advantages in her physiology, as will be seen hereafter, that she could have given Ophelia, or Mrs. Nero, great odds and still have taken the prize in a case of competitive drowning if such is ever performed. I am of the opinion, however, that the Civil Service Rules and Requirements have not been enforced to that extent. I will give the entire poem:

“There was an old woman, her name it was Peg.  
Her head was of wood, and she wore a cork leg.  
The neighbors all pitched her into the water,  
Her leg was drowned first, and her head followed a’ter.”

This tragical poem has elicited as much exegetical disquisition as Junius has of research and discussion. Some commentators pronounce it an allegory; others say it is pure fiction; while a third class who are literalists, maintain that it is “an o’er true tale” with a fine moral hanging thereto.

The allegorists say, the words, “her head was of wood,” are figurative, just as ‘a wooden-headed’ person means a dunce. The literalists maintain that Mrs. Peg was a thriving gossip and her neighbors formed “a Trust” in gossip and drowned her to kill off competition.

But, the literalists have to explain how it was that her leg, which was cork, was drowned before her head was drowned. They answer, that Mrs. Peg was pitched in leg foremost and the cork leg stuck in the mud and held her. But, that theory assumes the presence not only of mud, but
mud stiff enough to hold a powerful gossip, which the allegorists say is simply impossible and absurd. The literalists further maintain, that it was her sound leg and not her cork leg that was drowned first. But, as the poet sings of a cork leg only, the allegorists again object to the assumption that Mrs. Peg had any other than a cork leg—a point well taken, in my judgment as a commentator and logician. Besides, if it was her natural leg, how could it drown before her head was drowned, unless this Mrs. Peg was so "fearfully and wonderfully made" as to have her lungs in her leg, and to breathe through her leg instead of her head? A reasonable explanation is, that her head was made of some kind of wood now unknown that was lighter than cork, which made her head flightly, and that "she was dragged from her melodious lay to muddy death" by the greater specific gravity of the cork leg. If I had ever discovered that my author indulged in allegory, or fiction, I might adopt the theory of the allegorists. But, knowing her matter-of-fact, common sense style, I must reject that theory as unsound.

But, why distort the writings of an author by straining for hidden meanings? I have no sympathy with the school of commentators who "like scurvy politicians, put on glasses and see the things that are not." When Theobald read, in the most natural sense, the account given by Dame Quickly, (then Mrs. Pistol), of Sir John Falstaff's death, to-wit: "a (he) babbled o' green fields," this same class of commentators sought to show their learning by reading that passage thus: "and a table of green fields;" also,
"on a table of green fells;" also, "on a table of green frieze" or "green baize."

If the system of banking devised and established by a Mr. Faro, (now so popular), whereby a depositor in his bank either draws out double the sum he deposits, or draws out with nothing, had been in operation during the time when Sir John Falstaff thrived by borrowing, and he could have borrowed enough to have a few dollars in excess of his necessary allowance of sack, he would, without doubt, have patronized Mr. Faro's Bank, and it would have been a very natural reading to say, "he babbled of green baize." But, as a half dozen hypotheses are necessary to that reading, and to the construction given by the allegorists to the poem on the wooden leg of Mrs. Peg, their construction must be rejected.

My view of the drowning of Mrs. Peg's cork leg and wooden head is strongly supported by another entire sonnet devoted by our author to a lady who had a wooden leg. I will quote it in full to show how I am sustained in this view by the identity of the material used in making the head of one and the leg of the other. That these two ladies were closely related is not only probable from the strong family resemblance between the head of one and the leg of the other, but is rendered almost certain by the fact that both were named Peg. The sonnet runs thus:

"Peg, Peg, with a wooden leg,
Her father was a miller,
He tossed a dumpling at her head,
And said, he could not kill her."
I beg indulgence of the reader for turning for a moment from the direct line of my argument to remark, I do not believe that that father, though he was a miller and always ready to dam something, really intended to murder his child, for the reason that he did not throw at her head an instrument or weapon which, in the language of the criminal code, is "likely to produce death"—that is, if it was cooked right. Besides, there was too much affiliation between the instrument thrown, (a dumpling), and the part of the body it was thrown at, to-wit: the head.

Again, the murderous intent would be largely determined by any jury by knowing, first, whether Peg's face was towards her father; second, whether her mouth was open; and, third, the size of her mouth. The last named fact may be surmised by the aid of another poem which I will recite after remarking, that these three poems demonstrate that, in order to do justice to an author, it is all important to construe his or her writings together. Not to do so may leave a vague impression on the mind of the reader that Mrs. Goose's poetical dissertations are disconnected or illogical. The poem which is the third in the series on this Peg biography, is this:

"There was an old woman named Nothing-at-all,  
Who rejoiced in a dwelling exceedingly small.  
A man stretched his mouth to its utmost extent,  
And down, at one gulp, house and old woman went."

Now, if Peg was the daughter of that man and inherited but a modicum of his capacity for deglutition, she was
no doubt well qualified, without personal discomfort, to take care of any ordinary sized dumpling thrown at her head, provided her mouth was open; and I presume it was because, if it was like her father's, there was hardly space enough around an ordinary sized farm for her to shut it.

Before dismissing the Peg families who had such remarkable physiologies, I will repeat here the regret I have often expressed, that the learned author did not inform posterity whether those ladies were born so. The one with the wooden head must have been, as I cannot see how it could have been put on after her birth. In fact a wooden head is always natural.
CHAPTER IX.

THE SPRAT FAMILY AND SPRATT.

The Sprat and Spratt families which our author sings of are not only worthy of mention, but one is worthy of all imitation as frugal housekeepers. There were two families named Sprat, but the orthography differed slightly. There were Jack Sprat and wife with one “t” in their name, and Jack Spratt, a young bachelor, with two “t’s.” I am sure they were kinsmen—as both were Jacks—but, no doubt, the elder Jack committed some horrible crime, or what was worse, refused to go security for his relative, or to lend him money to speculate, and the younger changed his name by adding a “t,” to avoid disgrace by the relationship. These two poems show that there was a great deal of hog in the Sprat family, because the poet bases the reputation of one branch of the Sprats on pork, and of the other branch on a pig.

The married Jack Sprat is the one who could eat no fat, and Mrs. Sprat, his wife, could eat no lean, which produced two very economical results: first, there was no waste of pork in the family, because, “between the two, they licked the platter clean;” and second, there was no expense for a pan, soap and dishrag to wash the platter. They, no doubt, became millionaires, if they raised their own hogs and fed them on mast. It is a pity the biographer did not think to explain, for the benefit of all husbands and wives having the same idiosyncrasies or appetites, whether Jack, with
“evenhanded justice,” always selected a hog that was evenly divided in fat and lean, or bought two hogs of equal weight, one all fat and the other all lean.

Jack Spratt with two “t’s” won his distinction by being the owner of a pig widely noted for a condition so equable that it inspired the minstrel to sing as follows:

“Jack Spratt’s pig,
He was not very little,
Nor yet very big,
He was not very lean,
He was not very fat—
He’ll do for a grunt,
Says little Jack Spratt.”

Of these two Jacks, I admire the married one more, not simply because I think more of married ones than I do of single ones, but because this bachelor Jack was a despicable ingrate. For, notwithstanding his whole fame rested on that pig, he spoke of it with great disrespect. “He’ll do for a grunt, says little Jack Spratt,” when in fact the pig, as “it was not very lean and not very fat,” was thoroughly equipped to preserve the peace between the other Jack Sprat and wife. And “to keep the peace” is what few men, or even grown hogs, can do. There are some men whose fame consists in being the sons of their fathers; and for that modicum of fame they should wake up of nights and return thanks; but, when any man whose reputation is due solely to his pig, slights the pig, or slanders it I consider him a bigger hog than the pig.
Jack Spratt's relation to his pig reminds me of a notice of a gentleman that appeared in a paper in Arizona. The notice reads thus: "Among the arrivals, yesterday, at the Palace Hotel was John Jones who is brother-in-law to James Smith who is the owner of the race-horse Bucephalus." Now, I know John Jones well and I never once heard him speak disrespectfully of that horse. He was a gentleman—I mean Jones, of course. Yet that horse was one degree removed from Jones, that is to say Jones' reputation stood on his brother-in-law's and his brother-in-law's stood on his horse's, whereas Jack Spratt's rested directly on the pig's. Of course, Jones, Smith and Bucephalus are not the true names. I omit them because all three of the gentlemen are still living.

Jones spoke so often and affectionately of Bucephalus' long line of distinguished fathers and mothers, of his fine head and form, that a friend of mine fell in love with Jones and invited him to his home. He explained to his family that he did so because Jones was a true devoted son, as he was all the time speaking in praise of his father. But imagine his feelings when Jones, at the dinner table, got on his favorite theme and remarked to his hostess with much animation and pride, "Yes, Madam! Bucephalus is admitted to be the finest and fastest horse on the American turf!" The lady almost fainted; and the husband was so disappointed and mortified when he thus learned that Bucephalus was not Jones' father, he went off and got drunk. Still, Jones was a gentleman so far as that horse was concerned, though I admit that his table manners suited a
stabler better. But I turn again to Jack Spratt, the bachelor:

Whether this Jack is the same that went with Jill "to fetch a pail of water," I was not able at first to determine with certainty. So many of my author's heroes were Jacks, it is difficult to distinguish one from another without a book of heraldry, or of registry. But there are three facts which identify Jack Spratt, Junior, with the Jill-Jack. One is, that the story of Jill-Jack is the next succeeding the biography of the pig-Jack. The second is, the trait of ingratitude in both. Jack Spratt, Junior, the bachelor, was ungrateful to his pig and this Jack was ungrateful to Jill. For, when "Jack fell down and broke his crown," such was Jill's devotion to him, she "came tumbling after" him. She did not simply follow, as Ruth followed Naomi—she "tumbled" for him! And what did Jack do? Why,

"Up Jack got and home did trot,
   As fast as he could caper."

Now, as one who admires woman with a chivalry but little less than worship, I denounce that Jack as a base ingratitude. It was bad enough for him to let Jill assist in fetching the water, but when a charming young woman is so dead-in love with a man as to go "tumbling" after him, and that, too, when he is not only down, but going "down hill," and he "trots" away from her, "as fast as he can caper," there is no language that can portray his base ingratitude. He
“Doubly dying should go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung” up
and trotted off.

The third fact is that the economical Jack—so economical he would not use two t’s in his name—was a married man. He had a wife at his own home who was a helpmeet. She helped him to eat the part of the hog he could not eat and to lick the platter clean. She was a good wife, and it is said good wives make good husbands. Being a married man, and having a good wife, it is highly improbable that he would leave her to go up a hill with a young, unmarried girl to fetch a pail of water, or anything else. That would be a very improper thing for a married man to do—highly improper—and, of course, a married man would not do such a thing! Besides, it would be a serious and unjustifiable reflection on the character of the young lady, Jill, to assume that she went up the hill with a married man, and when he fell down that she came “tumbling after” him.

That acrobatic performance by a young lady is a violation of social proprieties that no well regulated community would tolerate. And the unprecedented and singular fact that Jill tumbled after Jack, proves that he could not have been a married man. No married woman, I am sure, could get up that degree of enthusiasm for any married man. All these facts and social considerations amount to a demonstration of the identity of the pig-Jack with the Jill-Jack.

I trust that the gentle and charitable reader will pardon
a reasonable degree of self-gratulation on my success as a commentator in discovering the identity of Jill-Jack. This seems to be modest enough when we remember how many able scholars, including Macaulay, have failed to prove that Junius was Sir Philip Francis; and how many other writers of world-renown have left us in doubt whether “The Man of the Iron Mask” was Matthioli, Minister of the Duke of Mautua, or the twin brother of Louis XIV of France, or was a son of Ann of Austria, Queen of Louis XIII, by Cardinal Mazarin, or by the Duke of Buckingham, or was the leader of a formidable conspiracy against Louis XIV. It is creditable for a commentator, biographer, or historian to prove something beyond doubt or dispute. Even mathematicians have been disputing for years whether the year 1900 is the last of the nineteenth, or the first of the twentieth century.

But the most remarkable biography on record is the story in blank verse, of Solomon Grundy. His career is the saddest imaginable to those who desire longevity, and the happiest to those who, like candidates for office and Mr. Pickwick, long to be with the majority. To me his history would be pathetic, if it were not so brief that I finish reading it before I can shed a tear. It reads:

“Solomon Grundy
Born on Monday,
Christened on Tuesday,
Married on Wednesday,
Took ill on Thursday,
Worse on Friday,
Died on Saturday,
Buried on Sunday,
This is the end of Solomon Grundy.'

When I lay down this variegated volume of the immortal bard and muse on the career of that remarkable personage, I endeavor to decide whether life was to him a misfortune or a blessing. I try to weigh what pleasures he missed against the sorrows he escaped, to see where the advantage lies. He was hurried to the baptismal font and thence to the hymeneal altar with such precipitation that he had not more than about one day of youth, and that day was spent in courtship and active preparation for the impending nuptial. He never was lulled to sweet slumber by the melody of "Hush-a-bye-baby," or by the soothing tones of Mother Goose. If he ever had a whistle, he had no opportunity to blow it unless when he was held up, or held down, to be married. He never knew the delight of a game of pushpin, or marbles, of flying a kite, of rolling hoops, of robbing an apple orchard or watermelon patch, of breaking-in a goat or a pair of young steers, of tying a tin-cup to a dog's tail, or of a chicken-fight, or 'possum hunt. He never played on a jew's harp nor followed a hand-organ and monkey unless after marriage, and even then for but one day. He did not more than taste Love's young dream before he was stunned and sobered by matrimony. He never "heard the lisp of children and their earliest words." He had but one day to get acquainted with his wife, and had no time to get a divorce in order to marry again.
On the other hand, he escaped all of life’s troubles except the one inevitable. He was never cheated out of the society of his nurse by a lot of cheap toys while she flirted. He escaped measles, thrash, hives, chicken-pox, colic, mumps, whooping-cough and teething. That he was married without teeth needs no discussion. He escaped the curriculum of catnip tea, castor oil and paregoric. He never stumped his big-toe and had it cured by a sugar-rag poultice and a piece of pound cake. He never dropped his bread on the buttered side. He never had to wait for the second table and see a hungry guest take the last biscuit on the plate. He was never whipped at school, in sight of his sweetheart, whose name was Amy—for conjugating the Latin verb, “to love,” “amo, amare, ami? Amy!” He never had his faith in friends shaken by being scratched by his pet cat. He never had his fortune taken by a friend and invested for him in Canada. He never indorsed ninety-nine times for a friend and got a cursing for refusing the hundredth request. He never wore but one shirt a week to save money to feed his sweetheart on candy and ice-cream for two years, and then received an invitation to see her marry a rival.

And I have decided both ways a dozen times, my decision always depending on which I considered last, the misfortunes or the blessings. I am in this like some judges who are always convinced by the last argument; like some fair daughters who love most the last sweetheart; and like a friend of mine who always pronounced the last bottle of champagne the best.
And right here I wish to enter my protest, not as a commentator, but as a human being, as a man, as a citizen, a native-born, a father, a son, a brother, an uncle, a cousin, a Rebel, a Unionist, an Anglo-Saxon, a philanthropist, a psychologist, embryologist, an ethnologist and everything else that can be spoken or written in any language living or dead, or that can enter into the imagination of man to conceive or think of, against the evil and wrong of forcing or permitting an infant only two days old to marry! Just look at the consequences! He was taken sick the next day and was dead in two days!

It was an outrage! The more I think about it—why—what were his parents thinking about? Where were they if he had any? Ah! that may be the secret of his sad career after all—an orphan, perhaps, and no estate for relatives to inherit.

Now, one of two things is certain, either that Solomon Grundy was forced into that affair, or he went into it of his own free will. If he was not forced in, then there is but one way to explain why he, so young and inexperienced, took that obligation on himself so early in life, and I will now give my explanation:

I wish not to be misconstrued in what I have said about Solomon Grundy's early marriage. I do not blame him, even if he married voluntarily. I blame King Solomon. To make my meaning clear it is necessary to make a brief argument, and to do that I must invite my readers to take an excursion with me back about a hundred and fifty years ago when Tristram Shandy lived and wrote out his Life
and Opinions and thus acquainted mankind with his noble father and his lovable uncle Toby.

Tristram's father had two fixed and unchangeable opinions. One was, that noses mould the characters of their owners; and the other was that Christian names shape men's and women's destinies. I pass by the noses as they are not needed at present, because we are examining into Mr. Grundy's name, not his nose. I shall use the argument on names only. Mr. Shandy maintained firmly that no child could ever "turn out well," if christened with the name of one in history who was bad or wicked. Therefore, he asserted that parents cannot possibly be too cautious in the selection of names for their children. For instance, if a boy were named Judas, he would be a traitor, or if not a traitor, a coward, and all his life be running away from his name—like a boy dodging a hornet. If christened Capt. Kidd, he would certainly take to water like a duck and be a pirate. If named Cain, he would be a murderer. If named Adam, he would be the first rascal to bring some charge against his own wife. If named Joshua or Cyrus, or Alexander, or Hannibal, or Cæsar, he would go to war, if he had to make it on his own family.

If a girl should be named Eve, she would die of eating green apples, or go out the garden gate and never be able to get back. If called Semiramis, all her female neighbors would soon be snatched bald-headed. If Cleopatra, the whole male community would divide into Anthouys, Pompeys and Cæsars and go to fighting. If Ruth or Esther,
she would be gentle and sweet, loving and altogether lovely.

The application of the argument is plain. The parents of that Grundy child, guided by some evil spirit, christened him Solomon, and the baptism was hardly over—his little bald-head scarcely dry—when he started off to follow in King Solomon's wicked steps and got married, just as naturally as a chicken right out of the shell, before it can stand up, goes to pecking.

But we should not blame little Solomon. The sin is on old man Solomon for marrying so often. I can well understand why little Solomon was in such a hurry, when he began to calculate and saw what a job he had before him to marry 700 times. He saw, that even if he should marry a wife every day, he would be compelled to hire a parson for nearly two years to do the whole business on a job-lot contract. Then—think of what was to follow! Seven hundred receptions, seven hundred infairs—(and as the Grundy family, next to the Goose, is the most populous in the land, think of the stomachs to be fed!)—seven hundred bridal tours; or in place of them, there must be a postponement for two years and then—one Grand Consolidated Camping Caravan (no railroads then), of seven hundred Mistress Solomon Grundys on a bridal tour! Seven hundred to one! Mercy! what odds—at least, it would be in a bet or a battle.
MRS. GOOSE'S ASTRONOMICAL POETRY.

MRS. GOOSE sung also of astronomy, but as that science is largely connected with mathematics, it is not surprising that the soundness of her views have been questioned. I admit that they are original and startling, yet it will be seen, they are plausible. She says, there was once a family of cats—the mother and six children. The mother, as some orators treat their audiences, fed the kittens on wind. She had seen her master produce combustion by blowing the coals with bellows and, so, she put the nozzle in one ear of each kitten and blew it up as round as a ball. The kittens viewing their rotundity, imagined their stomachs were full of mice, or cheese, and went to bed contented and happy; just as many congregations receive through the ear a two-hours' harangue on non-essentials and go away believing they are filled with "the bread of life."

But the kittens became restless and troublesome and the old cat, one night, in her wrath, put on an extra head of wind and blew them up to the sky where they stuck and became and are still the constellation Pleiades or Seven Stars.

Whether this be the true theory or not, I say it is plausible, because it is the only theory I have ever heard that accounts for that peculiar, unearthly music which is seldom heard except in the hush and dead of night.
I do not claim to be a professor of the music of the heavenly spheres, but I will say this about it—if the voice of Mrs. Goose’s Pleiades is a fair specimen of it, candor constrains me to say, I prefer Wagner’s, or a Chinese orchestra. There is too much wail in it. It sounds like the chorus of a convention of nurseries. Besides, instead of coming down from the heavens or stars, it always seems to come up from the backyard, or a fence, or a shed. Still, I know it is very attractive to most people; for I have often seen my neighbors become so enthused by the first notes of this Nocturne that they threw up their window sashes and shouted vehemently, as if applauding or demanding an encore. But I never could understand why they wanted it repeated. I have even seen bootjacks, brickbats and bottles fly out of windows after it—just as rocks and trees used to follow Orpheus when he made music.

This view of the origin of the Pleiades differs widely from that of the ancient Greeks. Their belief was that there were seven daughters of Atlas and the Nymph, Pleione, named Alcione, Merone, Maia, Electra, Tayeta, Sterope and Celone; that on account of their exalted virtues and sisterly devotion, they were rewarded by being turned into stars; that one sister, Merone, fell from her high rank by marrying some mortal fellow who was bumming around up there, and as she has not been seen since, that she and that tramp eloped and settled down on the back of old Atlas, her father, for support. The fate of Merone has been a warning to all the virtuous royal blood, such as Catherine II of Russia, Henry VIII, the Princes of Wales—in short,
all royalty—not to marry out of their divine circle—and they stick to the rule undaunted by hereditary diseases and lunacy.

It is worthy of note that modern astronomers, such as Sir Isaac Newton, Herschel, LaPlace and hundreds more including the almanac makers, are silent on both the foregoing views as to the origin of the Pleiades. Still, that silence proves nothing. The wise Aristotle and Plato were silent on many subjects that our Mother Goose knew by heart. She saw cob-webs on the sky and went up to sweep them off.

It is not my duty as a commentator to attempt to show which opinion as to the Pleiades is right. What would be the use, even if I could? Opinions or creeds on politics, finance, religion, diseases and diagnostics change so rapidly these days that seekers for truth are kept on the run to keep up with the last notion. Yesterday this country stood square-toed on the Monroe Doctrine; to-day we are in a royal mix up with nearly every part of the earth and especially of the water. We pay high for Spain’s quit-claim title to a thousand islands and are trying to acquire the fee simple title by killing the tenants. Yesterday, we wanted silver as a money standard because it was scarce; to-day we want gold as the standard because it is scarce; to-morrow we would clamor for silver if it should again be scarce. And every day some presbytery, synod, assembly, conference, consistory, or congregation, is sitting on a recalcitrant brother to excommunicate him as a heretic because he has changed his opinion on ‘Immediate Inspi-
ration," or a personal Devil, or literal eternal punishment by fire and brimstone. All this is very discouraging to an earnest, zealous, commentator who desires to see something steadfast and sure besides his own criticisms and opinions.
CHAPTER XI.

MRS. GOOSE'S FIVE-PIG POEM.

I remarked when considering Mrs. Goose's prosody, that I would devote a chapter to an exegesis of the following popular pig poem:

"This little pig went to market,
This little pig stayed at home,
This little pig got roast beef.
This little pig got none,
This little pig cried 'w-e-e, w-e-e,' all the way home."

It will be observed below, that I speak of the characters here sung of as heroes or heroines. This is due solely to want of information, historical, biographical, or traditionary. And I must admit that my learning in zoölogy is not sufficiently minute to enable me, like a Buffon, or a Darwin, or a Huxley, to discern from the actions and characteristics so meagrely described by the poet, whether these personages be male or female. The nearest solution I can give is to state it as my opinion, that the first pig was a heroine because it did the marketing, and the second a heroine because it stayed at home. It is not the habit of males of any kind to stay at home. The third pig was a hero, and the fourth a heroine because it got none of the beef. However, this is but a surmise which is outside the prescribed boundary of an accurate commentary. Surmises partake of fiction which is a field a commentator should eschew.
The first of these heroes or heroines went to market—a very uncommon performance for a pig, if it was not dressed and went there to eat, but a very common trip if, like old Polonius at supper, it went there "to be eaten."

The second stayed at home. It is contended by some Gooseologists that the poet's main purpose in this biography, in three words, of the second hero, or heroine, is to portray his or her love of home, or domesticity. I do not concur in that opinion. It is against the universal experience of all mankind who have been at all familiar with pigs. A pig is a cosmopolite and nothing but a pen, sty, or fence, can make a pig domestic. A pig is in one respect very like Ridpath's "Great Races of Mankind"—it is a rover.

The great majority of men in the rural districts stay at home because there is no place for them to go at night. And some men in cities stay at home at night—brave men, too—not because they are afraid to go out in the early dark, but it is going back at midnight "when graveyards yawn," or, later still, when wives are too irate to yawn, that "gives" them "pause." I first thought of quoting "then comes the tug of war," but the former quotation is a higher classicism and, besides, it has not, like Zola's scenes, so much of the vulgar "realistic" as the latter quotation suggests. So that, it seems to me clear, that the poet did not intend to prove any voluntary domesticity in this hero, or in any other.

The third got roast beef. This is the most distinguished of all the five heroes or heroines, for it is the only pig in history of which such an achievement is recorded. Al-
though pigs are omnivorous like mankind, still their carnivorous appetite is generally satisfied with chickens.

The fourth heroine "got none," but why, "none," the learned poet has not explained. She makes the emphatic declaration and stops abruptly. The inference is that the third hero or heroine was the oldest and largest of all; in fact, was nearly if not quite a hog and refused to divide. Another inference is that the fourth hero or heroine did not know that the third had that delicacy in her house, as all pigs are, or try to be, communists.

The musical performance of the fifth of these heroes or heroines is the least remarkable of all. There is nothing new or romantic or pleasing in a pig's cry of "wee, wee, all the way home," or all the way from home, and especially all the time at home. A pig fastened under a fence or a gate, or hungry in a pen, will sing the same song. Thus we see that the poem fails not only in prosody but in climax. Four of the pigs do extraordinary things, while the fifth is commonplace to the degree of being ridiculous. Instead of rising like a rocket and bursting in its closing line into a thousand brilliant colors, this epic falls flat and goes out with a fizz.

Still, our reverence for the great author should have spared that poem from the desecration to which all nurses, many mothers and some fathers have subjected it. They will take baretoed babies on their laps and beginning with the big toe, (not their big toe but the baby's big toe, of course), will seize and shake each toe as an office-seeker shakes the hand of a doubtful voter, and then sing "this
little pig went to market;” second toe, “this little pig stayed at home;” third toe, “this little pig got roast beef;” fourth toe, “this little pig got none;” little toe, “this little pig cried wee, wee, all the way home;” thereby not only desecrating their grandmother’s most remarkable literary effort on swine, but teaching their dearly beloved cherubs that at least five parts of them are pigs.

But, desecration is the bent of the age. “Times change and we change with them.” Better say, we change and change the times with us. One illustration of thousands will suffice. Yonder church dedicated a century ago to God—consecrated by prayer—redolent of holy incense offered there from hearts dead and turned to dust generations ago, and around which cluster sacred memories of all that is good and pure and holy in this life, is on the market for the highest price. Why? Is it too small for the congregation? Is it unsafe? Has the city grown away from it? No! nothing of the kind. The congregation has grown rich. The location is not fashionable. The whole outfit—pulpit, chancel, pews, windows, doors, are commonplace. They were good enough for our fathers and mothers, our great-grandparents, but the present generation must have better. They have waxed fat and strong—strong in purse but weak in piety.

“Sell it, Mr. Broker!” “Shall I accept the offer of the Broadway Theatre Company that will give five hundred more than the church—the only competing bidder?” “Yes! Sell to the highest bidder!”

The church is gone. The congregation builds up town.
And now, where stood the altar of sacrifice, stands the broad stage for mimicry. Where stood the chancel, now hangs the curtain blazoned with heathen myths. Where stood the pews wide open to welcome strangers, are rows of numbered seats that open only to the sesame, "a dollar, each." Where the choir and deep-toned organ moving in symphony, flooded the hearts of devout worshippers with billow on billow of sacred harmony, are now heard the screeches, screams and cat-calls of dirty gallery-gods. Instead of hearing "I am the Resurrection and the Life," "Come unto Me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest," "The wages of sin is death," "Our Father which art in Heaven, lead us not into temptation," we hear the ribald song, see the boxing match, "The Black Crook," the can-can dance and kick, a hundred silly girls in stockinet and hip skirts dancing their way to iniquitous death, and the Temple of God has become the open market for soiled doves. Yes, desecration, first, then Mammon, then Belial, then Moloch—this is the order of the times. So the temples to Rome’s gods were followed by the Coliseum, and when the Coliseum fell, Rome fell, and when Rome fell the world groped through a thousand years of night.
CHAPTER XII.

MRS. GOOSE'S PHYSIOLOGICAL POETRY.

On physiology, that is, as to the component parts of the human body, Mrs. Goose entertained decided and advanced views, but I am forced to believe that a strong bias for her own sex and her prejudice against boys, generally (which I will prove by several of her poems), warped her judgment. She sings:

"What are little boys made of, made of?
What are little boys made of?
Scissors and snails and puppy-dogs' tails,
And that is what little boys are made of, made of.

And what are little girls made of, made of?
What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice and all that's nice,
And that's what little girls are made of, made of."

Now, I admit all the poet says of the elements of a girl, but I utterly deny, with scorn, her analysis of a boy's-body. It is, perhaps, unbecoming a commentator to display his personal indignation. It may be undignified. If so, I trust the reader will pardon my hasty speech. But, I was once a boy, and I will not sit silent and let Mrs. Goose or anybody else tell me to my face that boys are made up of puppy-dogs' tails and all that. It's a slander! Notwithstanding, it cannot be classed as scandalum magnatum, as it is written of boys I have read Dunglison's and others'
works on physiology, and this is the first time I have ever heard a suggestion that the body of a boy is made of anything different from other people. I admit, I have seen boys as slow as snails when going to school, but when school was out, they were just as frisky and quick as girls; which proves, there were no snails in them. And as to "scizzors," the old story of the woman who was drowned by her husband for saying scissors and who went down defiantly saying scissors with two fingers, shows in which sex the scissors are. And, as to her analysis by which she says she found puppy-dogs' tails in boys, it is too preposterous for serious discussion. I treat it as having been said in a moment of spleen, and I will give my reasons for believing it was. They are these: first, her dislike of boys, generally, and second, of one young man particularly. Now for the proof.

In the old quarto of her works published probably soon after leaving Noah's Ark, as the leaves are very much soiled, Mrs. Goose wrote that boys are made of "snaps" and snails and puppy-dogs' tails." But, after many years of observation of many boys, and her own experience with the young man referred to above; after seeing Tommy Green throw a cat in a well; after witnessing the wickedness of that scamp, Tom Piper, who

"Met old Dame Trott with a basket of eggs,
He used his pipes and she used her legs.
She danced about till the eggs were all broke,
She began to fret, but he laughed at the joke;"

after knowing another vagabond Piper who tried the same
experiment made by the old mother cat that ended in blowing her children to the sky, to wit: feeding his cow on wind, which ended in his robbing her of her last penny; after observing closely the face of the

“Little one-eyed gunner,
Who killed all the birds that died last Summer;”

after hearing the soliloquy of a heartless urchin who was trying to murder a sparrow:

“His body will make me a nice little stew,
And his giblets will make me a little pie, too;”

after hearing little Jack Horner who had a Christmas pie all to himself off in a corner, make a fool of himself by bawling out—“What a good boy am I,” simply because he “put in his thumb and took out a plum,” instead of stuffing his whole hand in as good boys always do; after seeing Rowley Powley, that despicable ingrate for whom I feel unutterable contempt, kiss the girls and make them cry and then run away; after hearing the following dialogue:

“John, come sell thy fiddle,
And buy thy wife a gown!
No! I’ll not sell my fiddle,
For ne’er a wife in town;”

I say, after seeing and hearing all that and more, the animus of this generally just poet was shown by a revision of the old quarto, and the substitution of scissors for “snaps,” thus making the lines read “scissors and snails and puppy-dogs’ tails.” And to make her indignation sizzling hot, she spelt scissors with two zs.
Some Gooseologists think she changed "snaps" to "seiz-zors" because a man named Schiedam came along selling a pious drink called "Schiedam Schnapps." But the difference in the spelling of the two words, "Schnapps" and "snaps" is too wide to support that theory. Mrs. Goose's "snaps" are the kind always found at the extreme anterior anatomy of the dog. They are unmistakable and cannot be adulterated like Schiedam's Schnapps. And the fact that she compounded boys of "snaps" and "puppy-dogs' tails." proves clearly how much puppy she thought there is in boys. She uses the figure of speech called synecdoche, whereby a part includes the whole.
CHAPTER XIII.

MRS. GOOSE’S FIRST AND LAST SPEE.

Her experience with a certain young man referred to in the tenth chapter above, which so embittered her against the male sex for very many years, she has recorded in the following bacchanalian song:

"We're all dry with drinking on't,
We're all dry with drinking on't;
The piper kissed the fiddler's wife,
And I can't sleep for thinking on't."

This personal wrong done to the old woman by the piper she never forgave. It embittered her against every member of the Piper family, and she chastised three of them in public print, to wit: Tom, who stole the pig; second, the one who piped and made Dame Trott use her legs till she broke all her eggs; and third, the lazy one who bade his starving cow "consider" and then robbed her. Why the old lady did not take revenge on the fourth Piper who kissed the fiddler's wife, every commentator has his own opinion. Perhaps, he was to her that "nearer and dearer one still." Perhaps she felt that the endearment which "thrills from the lips to the heart," bestowed on the fiddler's wife, by the sacredness of vows to be held inviolable, belonged to her. If not, why should a little osculatory familiarity between the piper and a fiddler's wife throw her into a state of total insomnia? In her anguish, she ex-
claimed, "I can't sleep for thinking on't!" Besides, there was palliation for the offense in the circumstances she narrates. She admits that the fiddler's wife, the piper and herself were all on a spree—if I must speak plainly. They had drunk themselves "dry." The word "dry" indicates they were holding a Prohibition meeting, but she says, twice, they had been drinking until they were all "dry," which looks like Anti-prohibition. What the peculiar drink was that produced such opposite effects—"wet" and "dry"—she omits to tell, greatly to the distress of millions of her children who would give millions to know.

Again, that kiss was given or taken at the winding up of a jolly good time, and was no more to be revenged than a kiss of Suter Johnnie's wife by Tam O'Shanter. It was, no doubt, "sweet and precious," but it was not "secret." There was, so to speak, "no cheating round the board." The comment by some Goose critics on this bacchanal lyric that the insomnia was due solely to the shock given to Mrs. Goose's sense of propriety, and not to her affections, is inadmissible. Other critics contend that any lady who goes to a frolic with pipers' and fiddlers' wives and drinks herself dry, will never catch insomnia simply because one of the musicians kisses another musician's wife. That view of the question seems to have much force, but I reserve my opinion until a test case shall be made by actual experiment.

But, whatever may have been the potent cause of such a physical disease, I wish to say in behalf of our dear old Mother that, that spree was her first and last. That dry
drinking sobered her. It taught her she was human. It made her more charitable towards others. It softened her misanthropy so much, that she composed soon after, a brief sonnet breathing in repentant tones her final conviction that men are not always at fault. It is one of her most rhythmical productions. It is this:

“Needles and pins, needles and pins!
When a man marries his trouble begins”

She was, no doubt, still “thinking out”—thinking of the outraged and miserable fiddler whose wife kissed the piper.

This short sonnet, I will remark, has given rise to three schools of commentators, all of them husbands. One school contends, that the trouble the poet speaks of is the wear and tear on a husband’s health and finances produced by the unremitting strain in filling the vacuum caused by needles broken and pins dropped.

The second school maintains that the “trouble” means the constant agony and blood-letting whenever husbands become absent minded and show their wives any gallant attention. Hence, this class of husbands, now always fold their hands on their own backs and lean cautiously forward to get or to give a kiss. This class is easily detected in social gatherings by their keeping at a safe distance from their wives; and, when one is startled by any cause whatever and anywhere he gives a loud, quick ejaculation—such as “Jerusalem!”—“My dear!” and sucks his finger. These two schools are literalists. They contend that “needles and pins” mean needles and pins.
The third school, the Idealists, say, the constructions given above are too narrow; that the poet was trying to convey some idea of a married man's tribulations by comparing them to those sharp, pointed, hidden, ever present weapons that are to be found on the wife's waist, her wristband, neck, bosom, apron, on the floor, in the pillowcase, now and then in the soup and in the baby's flesh. This school says, the poet refers to the husband's midnight promenades while involuntarily listening to a solo in a minor key from an organette in his arms full of big bellows that have no stops. That she refers to the wife's constant interference with important, sometimes pressing engagements at night, by the establishment of an embargo at the front door and back gate. That it means the persistent attentions of dry goods' and jewelers' clerks whose calls always increase as the pleasure of their company diminishes. I am happy in the faith that not one of these three schools is numerous. For myself, I do not belong to any one of them. I am with respect to this vexed question, as many religionists are as to evolution—I have refused to investigate it from fear of being converted.

It was after that great and subduing grief that assumed the phase of insomnia, that she sang so philosophically of life. She impresses on us the lesson, that when once caught in a scrape, as she was at that frolic, we should never be caught again. She teaches this by singing:

"Doctor Foster went to Gloster,
   In a shower of rain;
   He stepped in a puddle,
Up to his middle,
And never went there again;”

Of the inevitable, she sang divinely:

“For every evil under the sun,
There is a remedy, or there is none,
If there be one, try and find it;
If there be none, never mind it.”

It is noteworthy that Shakespeare plagiarised this thought and tried to cover it up in these words:

“Things without all remedy should be without regard.”

She even, at times, sang valuable lessons to children:

“Come when you are called,
Do what you’re bid,
Shut the door after you,
Never be chid.”

She appreciated the benefit of cheerfulness and merriment, as taught us in this ditty:

“Little Tommy Grace
Had a pain in his face,
So bad he could not learn a letter;
When in came Dicky Long,
Singing such a funny song,
That Tommy laughed and found his face much better.”

She teaches crowned heads, republics, statesmen and duellists, the folly of war and personal quarrels:

“Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee
Resolved to have a battle;”
For, Tweedle-dum said, Tweedle-dee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.
Just then flew by a monstrous crow
As big as a tar-barrel,
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel.”

She again condescends to children and warns them of the
dreadful consequence of disobedience. This grand, tragi-
cal epic is too voluminous for me to quote it. It is of a
young swell of the Frog family, who “would a-wooing go,
whether his mother would let him or no.”

One evening after tea he donned his opera-hat and
hopped forth to visit a Mrs. Mouse. At the end one of his
parabolic descents, as he touched the ground he met a
young buck of a Rat who, on invitation, joined him. They
found the lady at home and she soon brought out beer.
Mr. Frog being entirely at home in liquids, and familiar
with sheets in the wind and vessels of all sizes, took a
schooner. Soon all hands were uproarious—“o’er all the
ills of life victorious.” A cat and her kittens, without hav-
ing given the convivial party the compliment of an out-
side serenade, suddenly joined the roysterers. The cat
made up to the rat, the kitteus paid attention to Mrs. Mouse
and Mr. Frog “in a terrible fright,” took up his opera hat
and “wished them good night.” His flight was prosperous
until he arrived at a brook where, instead of meeting his
irate, or weeping, Mother, he hopped into “the bosom of a
lily white duck.” The poet points the moral and adorns
the tale with the epilogue,
“And there was the end of one, two, three,
The rat, the mouse and Mister Frog-gy.”

She also teaches us when we make a mistake and do another a wrong, to remedy it at once at any personal sacrifice. This, by the example of the man that “was wondrous wise” who very unwisely “jumped into a bramble-bush and scratched out both his eyes,” “and when he saw his eyes were out,” he made restitution by another jump “and scratched them in again.”

One lesson in economy she gives is sounder than any proposition ever laid down by Adam Smith, Say, Ricardo, or any other doctrinaire. I challenge any writer to produce its equal:

“To make your candles last forever,
You wives and maids, give ear ’o!
To put them out is the only way,
Says honest John Boldero.”

Is it not amazing that no one ever thought of that before Mrs. Goose discovered it? And it is so simple when once explained! Such is genius.

The wisest advice ever given to Benedicts, she conveys most adroitly in the biography of a bachelor:

“Little Jack Jingle,
He used to live single,
But when he got tired of this kind of life,
He left off being single and lived with his wife.”

To my mind, here is the finest moral expressed in four words that was ever delivered to man. She does not, as
you or I would do, sing of the wooing by Mr. Jack Jingle for the hand and the heart of the beautiful, the entrancing, the angelic Miss Tibitha Tingle, who, after an affectionate investigation made at her request by her tender father into Mr. Tingle’s honorable standing and character at the First National Bank, blushingly promised to make him happy. No, none of that. As the dog did in going to Dover,

“When he came to a stile,
Jump he went over.”

so the poet, by syncope, omits the wooing, the winning, the wedding, the honeymoon, and commends Mr. Jingle’s example by an encomium never surpassed in four words—Mr. Jingle “lived with his wife.”
CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. GOOSE ON THE VERGE OF EXAGGERATION.

Though no one has ever charged Mrs. Goose with indulging in hyperbole, exaggeration, or misrepresentation, still, in one instance she suspected she might be and, therefore, for the first and only time did she pledge her "word and honor" for the truth of her statement. They were pledged to make good her declaration of what she saw when on the journey to Bonner to which I have already referred.

"Upon my word and honor,
As I was going to Bonner,
I met a pig
Without a wig,
Upon my word and honor!"

This is very eccentric for one of her good sense. She had already sung some stories almost incredible, without giving any security for their truth; and here she hypothecates her "word and honor" to support a statement that no one would ever question, as no one ever saw a pig with a wig. How much this is like many people who think they must be always swearing, to have their statements believed!

If I had been a cotemporary and confidential relative of our Mother Goose, I would have advised her to let the truth of that pastoral-lyric on the wigless pig stand solely on her general credit without offering any collateral what-
ever; and to have held in reserve every available remnant of her "word and honor" to support her ram—poem. With all my devotion to this great poet, I confess, my faith was shaken for a time by the following mathematical-pastoral.

And just at this point I beg to remark, that no one can realize the painful embarrassment of a biographer, or commentator when he finds an act in the life of his subject that he cannot conscientiously defend. I am in a position, this moment, to appreciate the dilemma of Mr. Montagu when he undertook to justify the villainous conduct—the judicial crimes—of Lord Bacon. But, I shall not follow his example. I will not attempt to uphold what I cannot approve. In matters of right and wrong—truth and falsehood—I will not attempt to shield even my own kin. In such issues they have no more claim on me than strangers in blood. Yet, it is very hard to bear when, in extolling to the skies the genius of his subject, a commentator stumbles, unexpectedly, over a thing like the following. The minstrel is striking her harp in praise of a ram she measured one day on her way to market. She sings:

"This ram was fat behind, Sir; this ram was fat before. This ram was ten yards round, Sir; indeed it was no more."

I am thankful as her commentator that she thought it worth while to assure us, that ram was not more than ten yards rounds; for, even that statement leaves eight very troublesome yards to be gotten rid of somehow by me. But I plant myself at once, on the fact that this is a mathematical poem; and, as such, let us calmly consider it for a moment with an eye single to truth. I say this because some peo-
ple believe that everything their relatives say and do is right, and they refuse to listen to reason. And Mrs. Goose has a very large number of relatives.

Now, ten yards around are just thirty feet. Therefore, the diameter of that ram was at least ten feet. That is monstrous! Still, that story might go down—in California. But she goes on to say, that ram's "horns reached up to the sky." Well, we will give her the benefit of our doubts by supposing the ram was raised among the sequoia trees in California. But, when she comes to the end and asserts that, "that ram's tail grew on his back," and "was six yards and one ell long," and was used "to toll the market bell!"—well, I do not mean to be disrespectful, but I have just this to say about this whole ram poetry, that I am glad our old Mother's word and honor were staked on the pig being baldheaded and not on that ram's tail. I don't stop to quibble about the tail growing on that ram's back—that's a small matter. I am looking at the main proposition, that is, the length of it—I mean the tail.

Now, let us, without any prejudice or passion, carefully examine that tail. In order that the altitude of that ram and the length of his tail should be in proportion (and we must assume that the ram was well shaped), the altitude should be to the length of the tail as 2 is to 1. Therefore, that tail being six yards or 18 feet long (leaving off the "one ell" for easy computation, and giving the poet the benefit of that much discount on the tail)—that ram should have been at least 36 feet high. But, if the body was symmetrical, then, counting legs and body, it—the ram, I
mean—was not over 15 feet high; because, the body being
10 feet in diameter, the legs would be about five feet long;
for every one acquainted with rams knows that the legs are
about one-third of the total altitude.

Now comes the difficulty: if the total altitude of that
ram was only 15 feet and the tail was 18 feet long, then,
three feet of the tail of that ram had to be dragged on the
ground, or had to be supported above—that is, off the
ground, by a flexible lever (which was the other 15 feet of
the tail, of course) that was resting on a fulcrum 18 feet
distant from the tip of the tail. Now, I maintain that it
would require more horse-power to keep that ram’s tail
elevated, even in a parabolic curve, than there is horse-
power in a thousand rams’ tails combined! In fact, that
ram, in order to keep three feet of his tail from dragging
the ground, would have to carry with him a ten-horse-power
engine, or haul a wagon to hold up his tail.

I am very sorry, on her account, that this poet ever
consented to write such a story. It is the fly in the pot of
ointment. It is calculated to throw discredit, not on her
veracity of course but, on some others of her stories. For
instance, on the cow jumping over the moon; on the poem
of the 24 blackbirds rising up and singing after being
smothered to death under the pie-crust—and then baked,
and not one of the 24 that did not rise up and sing; also, on
the story of the tourist tumbling out of the moon and burn-
ing his mouth with cold peas-porridge; and, I may venture
to add, it discredits even her story of “Robin the Bobbin,”
who eat a cow and a calf, a hog and a half, a church and a
steeple, the priest and all the people, and even then that hog “complained that his stomach wasn’t full.”

People who value character for veracity should be very, very careful about telling stories. Some people, and good people too, are very incredulous—even when they can understand a story. What, then, are we to expect from those who cannot understand it? Many men of fair reputation for truth have suffered greatly—some irretrievably—in character by not being well fortified with witnesses, or strong corroborating circumstances, to support the truth of some of their narratives. Thousands of instances could be cited, but I can illustrate my meaning by giving only two.

An engineer on a railroad in Mexico, on his return to the United States, in order to prove that Mexico is the hottest place on the earth, told the following most remarkable, (I refrain from saying incredible), story: He said, he sent out a relay of negro laborers about noon, having admonished them most earnestly and solemnly not to drink any water while at work in the sun. They promised, but, negro like, he said, they followed their appetite. They had been at work but about fifteen minutes when he heard several distinct sounds like the blowing off of steam from a locomotive. Those sounds were almost instantly followed by loud reports. He called to the other hands to take their spades and wheelbarrows and go out and bury the fragments. When asked what he meant (which he regarded a very stupid question), he explained that the negroes had drank water, the sun converted it into steam
which began to escape through their mouths, but it formed so fast it exploded and blew the negroes to atoms.

That engineer did not take the precaution to have present any persons who had witnessed the terrible catastrophe, nor any scraps of the negroes, to corroborate his story; and the consequence was, there was not one who heard his statement that did not seriously question his veracity.

The second instance occurred in quite respectable society. An American Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James, on the occasion of a public dinner given in his honor, in a speech made by him, told his English audience of the pleasure of his trip across the Atlantic. He spoke of "the lane” his ship passed through and of the beautiful trees that lined each side of the lane and the luscious fruit with which they were laden. Unfortunately there was not a fellow passenger present to substantiate his statement, nor had he taken the precaution to pluck and have on hand some of the fruit, and the consequence was that not one Englishman present believed him. In fact, one was so much disgusted by the diplomat's reckless talk, he said to a plate neighbor, "Did you 'ear that? He must take us for a lot of hasses. 'Owever, he 'as the best quality for diplomacy—he knows 'ow to lie."

I wish it understood that I am not attacking our Mother Goose’s veracity. I mean no disrespect. I mean, she was mistaken about that ram’s tail—that is all. I have already shown that her imagination was always unduly excited by the exhilaration inherent in mixed mathematics, and I will now show that
her eye for distance and her judgment on speed and the
measurement of time were so defective that it is a pity she
ever sang of them at all. Every reader of these commen-
taries has seen bad jumping cows—so bad they had to be
hobbled or yoked—but it is simply nonsense to talk about
any one cow jumping over the moon, especially when the
moon is in apogee. I question very gravely whether any
dozen cows together could do it. The poet had no idea of
the distance to the moon, that is, of measurement; and she
knew just as little about speed. Here is the proof:

"There was a man and he had naught,
And robbers came to rob him;
He climbed up to the chimney top,
And then they thought they had him.

"But he got down on t'other side,
And then they could not find him;
He ran fourteen miles in fifteen days,
And never looked behind him."

Now, in all charity, let us look at this a moment. This
man, who had nothing, was so frightened by the robbers
that he ran away from it, effected his escape through the
chimney and emigrated for fifteen consecutive days without
food, drink, sleep, or even once looking behind him and
yet he did not run a mile a day. It is true, this poem
was not written to illustrate the speed of a scared man, but
it shows the author's idea of what is rapid running. The
poem is intended as a bitter satire on the male sex. It is
to prove what cowards men are, and the bard makes out a
strong case. Think of a man having nothing and running away and leaving it in such fright—and climbing up a sooty chimney, taking the risk of getting jammed and being smoked out like a rabbit in a hollow, risking his life by jumping to the ground, and tearing off for fifteen days at one heat! I incline to the opinion that this man was insane, while, at the same time, my admiration for his legs and lungs is unbounded.
CHAPTER XV.

MOTHER GOOSE’S CONTEMPT FOR MEN.

Her contempt for man’s courage is further shown by her satire on the twenty-four tailors who sallied out armed with scissors, shears and gooses to kill a snail. Though that poor little univalve was hid in its shell, she alleges, “the best man among them durst not touch her tail.” And when “she put out her horns, like a Keyloe cow,” every tailor straightened his coat-tail to a horizontal to save his life. Their fright was, no doubt, the result of her own teaching that boys are made of “scizzors and snails and puppy-dogs’ tails;” for, the tailors seeing the snail crawling out with horns, naturally expected to be pursued by dogs and “to catch scizzors.”

But, after all said by her, she does not make out a strong case of cowardice because, as “it takes nine tailors to make a man”—there were, in fact, but two men and two-thirds of a man to fight a host of scissors, snails and dogs. Besides, the two-thirds of a man was of no use in a battle, unless the missing one-third of him was his legs, and he, like Widdrington, in Hudibras, could “fight upon his stumps.” If the two-thirds of a man had lost his head, the two whole men might have made breastworks of him. But, as to that, every one of the twenty-four lost his head. That is the reason they took to their heels.

Again she expresses her opinion of man’s superior intellect by publishing one man’s confession:
"When I was a little boy I had but little wit,
It is some time ago and I have none yet;
Nor ever, ever shall until that I die,
For the longer I live, the more fool am I."

There the poet missed her aim. She makes that man wiser than Solomon. The wisest man is the one who realizes he is not wise. Solomon didn’t know that much or he never would have married seven hundred times. Ever since I was old enough to think outside of a catechism, I have believed and I now assert that Solomon was not half as wise a man as George Washington. This is heresy I know, because it disputes all the catechisms, but I am gratified to state that my opinion was concurred in by Mrs. Washington. It would not be fair to those two gentlemen to discuss their merits in connection with Mrs. Goose’s productions—I would not intentionally disparage them. But I am prepared to debate the question, “Who was the wisest man, Solomon or Washington?”—anywhere and at any time. All I will insist on is a Bench of female Judges—all married.

Yet, while the old lady despised men as a class, because that piper did not kiss her instead of the fiddler’s wife, still she had great respect for lawyers as is shown by the following compliment paid to one of that profession. She believed they make the kindest of husbands. To elucidate this proposition clearly requires a separate chapter.
CHAPTER XVI.

"Tommy Trot, a man of laws,
Sold his bed and lay upon straws:
Sold the straw and slept on grass,
To buy his wife a looking-glass."

As a member of that profession I regret that the poet selected as a specimen of a good husband a lawyer of no better business qualifications; for I cannot conceive of a family in more destitute circumstances than one whose only possession on earth is a looking-glass. I cannot comprehend why the husband did not exchange the straws for some kind of wearing apparel. However, Adam and Eve spent their happiest days when they were just as poorly clad as Mr. and Mrs. Trot.

What a rebuke were Mr. Thomas Trot’s sublime resignation and contentment to all who toil, rush and perspire by day, and roll and toss and dream nightmares by night, straining every nerve of body and brain, denying themselves comforts and pleasures, to pile up riches they can not enjoy and must soon drop for fools or ingrates to squander. What serenity must have prevailed throughout his mental and moral hemispheres. Thousands of millionaires would gladly give millions, if thereby they could purchase Mr. Trot’s exemption from care and his imperturbable philosophy that bore without a sigh the fate of Nebuchadnezzar. He ate grass for seven years, but Mr. Thomas Trot actually lived upon it.
Mr. Trot lost no sleep over ground-rent, water-rent, or taxes. Sheriffs and fies had no terror for him. He had no disputes or law-suits over plumbers' bills. He was not dodging tailors as did Charles Fox, Goldsmith Sheridan and Charles Lamb. No streets were closed by creditors against him as they were against Dick Swiveller. He cared not whether Prince George Wales, or Beau Brummel, or Beau Nash, or Beau Hickman, or Beau Tibbs, set the fashions. Why should he as long as Mrs. Trot was made happy by her looking glass? He was unpopular with furniture dealers, upholsterers and laundrymen—but he was not a candidate for any office, and could smile at their disgust. He was the only man on the earth who could defy trusts and monopolies. He was the only lawyer on the earth who was independent of clients. No one could offend him by the contemptuous remark—"Go to grass." because he was already there. He slumbered and dined as did Adam and Eve—al fresco. Attendant clouds supplied his bath; the god of day waited upon him to furnish him light and fuel; the stars stood sentinel over his emerald couch; he had no need of jewels as his locks were sprinkled with fresh diamonds by Aurora's fingers rosy-tipped, every morn before she drew aside the curtains of night; grasshoppers were his choir by day, and crickets and katydids furnished forth their somniferous orchestral lay by night when he drew the drapery of his couch around him and laid—well—it occurs to me. just here, that the word "drapery" in that quotation from the poet is, probably, not appropriate to Mr. Trot's circumstances: The
words "drew the grass" would come nearer fitting his case as presented by the poet—I mean Mother Goose, of course. But, as "grass" is only a half foot long, (I do not mean in height, but in metre), and as the drapery that was in the poet's mind was a foot and a half long, it is apparent that "grass" would not do as a substitute here, that is, unless it was as long as the drapery, so Mr. Trot could draw it "around him." But, as the Goose poet says nothing of the length or density of the grass, and as no commentator, historian, or biographer of any standing ever assumes anything to be a fact that is not established by proof, tradition or legend, I can not venture to substitute "grass" for the drapery, and I will not pursue that unfortunate quotation further. Still, I will remark, personally, not as a commentator, I have no doubt that "the pleasant dreams" with which the quotation would have wound up had I pursued it, were very common with this economist during warm weather.

Just why Thomas Trot, Esq., adopted that primitively simple mode of life, I am unable to explain with any degree of certainty, as he left no autobiography, nor Last Will and Testament. He very unostentatiously and sensibly died intestate, as he had nothing to bequeath—the looking-glass being the sole estate of his beloved wife. By "sole," I mean separate estate in her looking-glass that she had the right to dispose of by gift, assignment, or by her Last Will and Testament, or which, in default of a will by reason of sudden or unexpected death in a railroad accident or otherwise, would descend to her "heirs, executors and administrators forever in fee simple."
I can only surmise a negation which is that Mr. Trot did not dispose of his only personal estate to avoid taxation, or to defraud or delay his creditors. He sold his bed. The last property a civilized man parts with is his bed. The only exception I now remember was Dr. Oliver Goldsmith who, one cold night, gave away his bed covering to a poor family and then cut open his bed ticking and crawled in among the feathers. But Dr. Samuel Johnson did not consider Dr. Goldsmith a thoroughly civilized man, and Dr. Goldsmith and many others—in fact, all except Boswell—thought that a vast strain of the savage had not been evolved out of Dr. Johnson. I assume that Thomas Trot, Esq., who was not a doctor, was civilized in part at least. I think so because he was unselfishly devoted to his wife. Still Dr. Johnson, though a bear, was also a good husband. But his wife began the difficult study of men and women twenty years before he was born.

It is a fair presumption that the bed was the last earthly possession of Mr. Trot. I mean before he “lay upon straws,” for he evidently came into possession of that personal property after he had conveyed away the title to his bed. As a man’s bed, as a rule, is exempt from taxation, it is not to be presumed that Mr. Trot was endeavoring to shirk his obligation to society and to the government by disposing of his taxable estate. This theory of his good citizenship and willingness to bear his equitable share of the burdens of government is strongly supported by the fact that as soon as he dispossessed himself of the only remainder of his personal estate—the straws—and invested
the proceeds of that sale in a looking-glass, he acquired at once an easement in landed estate and became a freeholder, for he "lay upon grass." There he was exposed to public view where tax receivers could not fail to see him. If his purpose was to dodge taxes on land, Mr. Trot was not a disciple of Henry George, unless he was one of that vast multitude who are followers of men and believers in creeds without knowing why. Being a lawyer he knew what a "fixture" is, of course; that a "fixture" is anything intended to remain permanently on land, though it need not be attached to the land; and, therefore, he knew he had to move very often to keep from becoming real estate.

There is one reflection, possibly a stain, on the character of this now distinguished member of the noble legal profession that I am loth to mention. Epitaphs have a license to prevaricate, but commentators, historians and biographers are bound by the vows of their guilds to hew to the line—"nothing to extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." Therefore, I feel obligated to devote a paragraph in explanation of a possible blight on Mr. Trot's reputation.

When, as a bridegroom he led this most noble lady to the hymeneal altar (sometimes of late years known as the "Altar of Sacrifice"), he must have had at least a fairly approximate idea of the extent and value of his estate; and when he there repeated after the two, three, or four officiating Bishops, or Priests, or Archbishops, the beautiful euphemism—so sweet and interesting to all brides, "Thee" (Judy, Susanna, or Peggy, as her name was), "with all my worldly goods I do endow," if he knew that "all his worldly
goods" consisted of one bed, or worse still, of those straws (not a bedstead besides)—then the endowment was so ridiculously small as to amount to a fraud. It would have been at the very least what in law phrase is called "a pious fraud." How much better it would have been to ask the three, or four, or five officiating Bishops, or Priests, to skip that part of the marriage ritual; or to mumble over it so nobody could understand it; or to have told some male friend, just at that point to kick over a chair, or bench, or to cry "Fire!" or some female friend to scream "Rat!" But the honorable way was to make out a schedule of his "worldly goods" and to hand it out so the bride could read it and say whether it ("the worldly goods") came up to her expectations and was satisfactory.

Everybody knows that at these immense weddings, when the four, or five, or six officiating Bishops, or Priests, read that part of the marriage ritual, every girl begins at once to guess the size of the endowment, from a half of a dollar to a million dollars, according to her notion of what an endowment means. (Some girls think it belongs to colleges, and some think it a life insurance business) This guessing is solely from solicitude for a sister just entering on the experiment of trying to regulate the most unruly of all animals—a man, and the plan of reading aloud the schedule would be a great accommodation, saying nothing of the justice of it to the public and the bride. However, it is gratifying to be able to state that the world is rapidly rising to that most equitable plane where every one's right to know the size, quality and material of every bride's en-
dowment will be respected. Already the public demand has forced a concession by publication in the Big Dailies of every detail of the bride’s and bridesmaid’s trousseaus and dresses; the material, color and manufacturers thereof; of the number and exact value of the bride’s presents and names of donors; of the five hundred thousand or million-dollar check slipped under the bride’s breakfast plate as a brother’s donation to the fund she must have to begin the experiment at regulating a man. And the public have reasonable hope that the day is near when full justice shall be done them by a prompt and accurate account being rendered of the exact amount of each and every bride’s endowment whenever the same is large enough to merit attention. The public will require a statement whether the endowment is in gold or silver dollars.

Our ancestors were too mealy-mouthed—too prudish. The public suffered through their mock modesty. They were too penurious to pay for a little printing. But they passed away before the advent of Parson Jasper. This generation has learned that “the world do move,” and that “times change and we change with them.” The optimist says we are an improvement on our forefathers. The Pessimist denies it. Father Time is sole umpire and though his judgment is slow, it is infallible. The denser his ignorance, the more complacent is the egotist that thinks his time is the best of all time because he is a part of it.

In conclusion on Mr. Thomas Trot I must say, in justice to myself, that I am not unqualifiedly enthusiastic over his
biography or place of residence. I only commend him to all husbands as an exemplar in uxoriousness, and to all men and women as an economist and philosopher. In fact, as a philosopher he was superior to Diogenes, for Diogenes owned a tub as well as sunshine. Mr. Trot did not own even the grass.

As to Mrs. Thomas Trot, I have no language adequate to express my admiration for her amiability, self-denial, and complete victory over the show, pomp, frivolity and vanity of this wicked world. Her devotion was centered and exhausted on her looking glass and husband. Frills, flounces and furbelows possessed no charms for her. What a contrast was she to Flora McFlimsy who, with a wardrobe that a dozen Saratoga trunks could not contain, was constantly grumbling that she "had nothing to wear," and to Kaiser William who wears a suit of clothes but once. I doubt that the world has ever looked on the like of Mrs. Trot, since Ruth said "where thou dwellest will I dwell," or, even since Eve said of Adam as they were packing up to emigrate from the garden of Eden,

"So dear I love him, that with him all deaths  
I could endure; without him live no life."

This extract is from the biography of Adam and Eve by John Milton, which contains a very voluminous account of those stirring times and is, no doubt, as accurate as any history of that period. This soliloquy was spoken about noon and, yet, before supper time, the biographer says, Adam and Eve had the bitterest word-battle of their entire
married life. I indulge the hope that this statement crept in through a typographical error.

Speaking of Eve and Adam as emigrants suggests a reflection with which I will close these extended remarks on this couple of Trots.

In ancient days men and women had but one name—whether it was a surname or Christian name, I have not been able to ascertain, as no records of baptism were kept before the much later time of John, the Baptist. There was not then as now, an Adam Smith, Eve Higginbotham, Enoch Arden, no Paul Jones, Demosthenes A. W. Johnson, Alexander Hamilton, Praise-God-Barebones, David Copperfield, Uriah Heep, Jonathan Edwards, Zachariah Upatree, Ichabod Crane, Darius Jones, Hannibal Hamlin, Daniel or Noah Webster, Jacob Einstein, Joseph Andrews, Simon Suggs, Homer J. Thompson, Don Pedro Gonzales Sacro Ponce de Leon Santo Pizarro Matadore Vacquero Cristiano Anto-de-Fé Inquisitio Tokay Torquemada—an abbreviated Spanish name.

The inconvenience and confusion caused by the single-word names grew to be intolerable. Families got mixed up, and it is highly probable that parents had to resort to branding. Take the boys of Mr. Jacob for illustration. They were not named nor called Benjamin Jacob, Joseph Jacob, Judah Jacob and so on. They were kept from getting mixed with other boys only by calling them “the sons of Jacob.” When a stranger asked one of these boys what was his family name, he had to say he had no family name, which was tantamount to saying he was not of any family
in particular; that he was just branded "son of Jacob" and turned loose,

Besides the confusion thus produced, there was often great embarrassment. There were then very many people named John and, of course, the boys, then as now, nicknamed John "Jack." And when a stranger met one of these Johns on the highway and asked his name, and on receiving the answer "Jack" and nothing more, the stranger very naturally and innocently asked whose Jack he was, meaning, of course, what father claimed him, the question, to say the least of it, was embarrassing.

The confusion can be more clearly illustrated by the condition of the Solomon families. There were seven hundred (700) Solomon families with only one head. The average number of children in every family was much larger then than now. People, in that remote period, lived from one to nine hundred years, and some women bore children all along, even up to a hundred years of age. Therefore, it is a very reasonable computation to put the average number of children in each of Solomon's 700 families at not less than twenty-five. Think of seventeen thousand five hundred infants toddling around in the yard, or corral, and not one of them named Solomon! Besides all this, there was another obstacle that it was impossible for Solomon with all his wisdom to surmount. It was the impossibility to find given or Christian names for all those infants. For, from the name "Adam" down to "St. Paul," there are not sufficient proper names in the Old and New Testaments to go one-fifth around those 700 families. This statement can
easily be verified by consulting the appendix to Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, which gives every proper name in the whole Bible. So that, if Solomon in naming his children had exhausted every man’s and woman’s name then and afterwards known down to the time of St. Paul, including Moloch, Beelzebub, Baal, Apollyon, Satan, Devil, and had gone on and named some of his children Bosphorus, Babylon, Canaan, Jerusalem, Sin, Euphrates, Tigris, Ararat, Sodom, Gomorrah, Bashanhavrithjaair, Bethdiblahthaim, Abelbethmaachah, Brodachbaladan, after the towns, lakes, rivers, mountains and countries given in the Bible, there would have remained over fifteen thousand of Solomon’s children without names. The only possible recourse would have been to number them, or to name every one of the fifteen thousand “Solomon.”

That state of things became bewildering and some distinctive nomenclature had to be devised and adopted. It is a characteristic of the Shemitic race that whenever any great and apparently insurmountable obstacle has impeded its march, some genius has arisen to remove the obstruction, or to solve the problem. The only instances, so far as I remember in which failure has occurred are earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and Dakota divorces, which are so sudden and quick that no human foresight or precaution can prevent or escape them. So, in the case of these single names, some genius, now unknown, who ought to have had given to him the highest of all modern rewards—“The freedom of the city,” with the privilege of paying for all he could eat, drink, or carry away, devised the plan of giving
to every man a name descriptive of his occupation, residence, height, color of hair, size of feet, hands, or stomach, length of nose, ability to swear, and so on.

We owe it to that genius that we have families named Weaver, Smith, Brown, Black, Gray, Skinner, Fisher, Cook, Porter, Broadfoot, Swearinger, Crookshank, Lickpan, Longman, Billy Bowlegs, Not-Fraid-of-Horse, Bit-off-Buffalo-Tail, Married-a-Nigger, and like Indian names. And it was a habit of this "man of laws" that suggested his name. He had to change from grass to grass so often, for the reason given above that he was always "on the trot," and people dubbed him Mr. Trot.

Whatever may be said of the poet's enmity to men, she was loyal to her own sex—a virtue that every woman should, but many do not, possess. She never turned on a woman but once and that was on that notorious dipsomaniac, Margery Daw:

"See-saw, Margery Daw
Sold her bed and lay upon straw;
Was she not a dirty slut,
To sell her bed and live in the dirt?"

The analytical reader will notice at once the strong family and business resemblance between Mr. Trot and Miss Daw. Both had beds; both sold them and lay upon straw. The only difference was, that Mr. Trot's bed was in the plural number—that is, it contained straws. It must have been made of at least two straws. Both sold their entire estate to buy glasses. But there the divergence in character begins which proves that, however much
people may resemble, they invariably have distinct tastes or qualities of some kind. Mr. Trot sold his whole estate to buy a looking-glass just to please his wife. All honor to his heart I say! I reserve any comment on his head. Miss Daw also sold out to get a glass, but what a different looking glass it was. Hers was a bottle! One glass made one woman extremely happy; the other made of another woman—(I dislike even to quote the words about any being bearing the form and name of woman)—“a dirty slut!”

There is no painting of Mrs. Trot holding her mirror, but we have a mirror of Margery Daw in a painting supposed, from its dismal hues, to be by Salvator Rosa, that represents her in a very relaxed incline with her right hand grasping her glass—the bottle. Both appear to be exhausted. So, let us leave the two, (as neither is of any value now), and turn to the following picture of one of the noblest characters ever drawn by mortal pen.

The poem seems to indicate disloyalty to her sex. It has provoked much discussion on that point. It reads:

“There was an old woman lived under the hill,
   And, if she’s not gone, she lives there still.
Baked apples she sold, and cranberry pies
   And she’s the old woman who never told lies.”

Old bachelors who have courted every woman (maidens and widows) of their acquaintance and failed, and have arrived at the mature age of dyeing, insist that the poet asserts, there never was but that one woman “who never told lies.” Each bachelor bases his argument on the definite article “the” in the last line, and on the fact that as
each lady ate his ice cream and poured down his soda water in silence while he was pouring out his heart, they meant silence for consent. But, the general public (excluding bachelors) construe the declaration as confined to the selling of pies. They say, the poet meant that even if that old woman had been subjected to the temptation to get rich by vending pies at a Connecticut railroad station instead of "under the hill," and her pies had escaped destruction by the regular monthly railroad collisions, and had survived to attain the period of even middle age for a railroad pie—say, not more than the cycle of two railroad accidents—yet, that old woman would have told the truth about her pies, even if she had to go into bankruptcy with the railroad.

Her bias for her own sex is shown again by an important alteration in one of her sonnets. In the earliest edition, issued long before the piper neglected to kiss her—the sonnet read thus:

"Mary, Mary quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
Silver bells and cockle shells
And pretty maids all in a row."

In a recent edition she struck out the words, "pretty maids," and substituted "maidens," thereby declaring that all maidens are pretty, of course, and need no adjective to describe them. This was but justice, though it was tardy justice. However, the male sex of this country cannot make the point of tardy justice against her. For, justice in all our Courts has been so tardy for twenty years past,
that we now mourn it as the late Justice But the people are not left comfortless. Justice Lynch has succeeded. He is prompt. He dispatches business. He never tires. His decisions are never reversed. He permits no appeal, not even to Heaven!

But, strange to say, she sings of one woman whose stupidity and fright were more than an offset to the cowardice of the man who fled from the robbers. The story is told thus:

"Three blind mice
See how they run!
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife;
Did you ever hear such a thing in your life
As three blind mice?"

For one, I must say I never did, that is, after they got their eyes open. Nor did I ever hear of such a stupid woman as that farmer's wife. Why, in the name of common sense as well as anatomy, did she cut off the tails instead of the heads? She must have thought the jugular vein of a mouse is in its tail. But she learned better in a second, for the painting of that rural scene by Rosa Bonheur represents the three blind mice tailless, in full charge, and the farmer's wife with the booty (3 tails) in one hand, carving knife in the other, both feet off the floor, and making much faster time than "fourteen miles in fifteen days." The next biggest fools were the three blind mice for making such a hopeless chase after their tails instead of running for a surgeon.
CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. GOOSE'S PHILOLOGY.

MRS. GOOSE never turned her attention directly to philology. She made it as she wrote. She enriched our language with many new and musical words. There are rowley-powley, spinach, dickery, dockery, hickelty, pickelty, bumpety, lumpety, intery, mintery, cutery, neary, downy, roundy, tricey, niddle, naddle, humpty-dumpty, goosey, hick-a-more, hack-a-more, cock-a-doodle-doo, hush-a-by, fal-de-ral, al-de-ral-laddy; wisky, wasky, faddle, feedle, dingty, diddledy, sacradown, and many more.

Some of them are of great value, specially to those who take music lessons in the nursery. One word alone enabled me to find Boston. I was studying up, in the Unabridged edition of Mrs. Goose, the history of that eccentric family—four in number—of which the husband was named Dob, the wife Mob, the dog Cob and the cat Chitterabob, when, glancing meditatively at the opposite page, I saw the word "sacradown" in a sonnet that runs thus:

"See-saw, sacradown, sacradown,
Which is the way to Boston town?
One foot up, the other down,
That is the way to Boston town!"

Having that beautiful faith a child has in a mother (there being no mathematics in the case), I followed that simple direction—"one foot up, the other down"—and I found
Boston without getting lost once in any of its cross-roads or cow-paths. My trouble with them began after I arrived.

This poem contains the thrust made at Boston of which I said I would speak later on in these commentaries. The only comment I make is that, considering Mrs. Goose's violent Britishism at that time, the poem serves to prove how little can be said against Boston. That way of finding Boston is certainly much better than to find some other place with both feet up.
CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. GOOSE'S BIGOTRY ON PRAYERS.

I remarked when classifying the subjects on which our author wrote that she did not touch on religion. While that is true, we discover in her writings that she entertained a singular opinion on the subject of prayer. She believed that prayers must always be said up-stairs. The author has expressed that belief in three separate poems. They are these:

1st. “There was a rat for want of stairs,
    Went down a rope to say his prayers.”

2d. “When little Fred went to bed,
    He always said his prayers;
    He kissed mamma and then papa,
    And straightway went up-stairs.”

To an illogical mind it seems at first glance that Fred said his prayers before he went up-stairs, but, as the poet expressly avers that he said his prayers when he “went to bed,” and his bed was up-stairs, it amounts to a demonstration that he always prayed “up-stairs.” To those who attempt to construe the poet’s meaning otherwise, I consider it sufficient to reply in the language of an editor who overwhelmed a brother editor by saying: “You must remember that the logic of events must govern the function of proceedings!” Fred proceeded up-stairs and the event—the prayer—came after.
3d. "Goosey, goosey, gander, whither shall I wander? Up-stairs and down-stairs and in my lady's chamber.

There I met an old man who would not say his prayers, I took him by the left leg and threw him down-stairs."

Pretermittting any inquiry as to why that old man was "there," I proceed to remark that as he was up-stairs when found, our author at once considered that the first business in order was for him "to say his prayers." This is all I set out to prove, to-wit: that her religion was that praying is an up-stairs business. The old man evidently did not hold to that doctrine, as he refused to pray while up-stairs.

It was a peculiar belief of Mrs. Goose that prayers must he said "up-stairs." It was also singular, for there never was, there is not, and there never will be another person pagan, heathen, barbarian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, Christian, or Jew, of that religious faith. In that particular she stands alone. It is something in this world of billions of human beings to stand alone in some marked particular. It is not for me to say she was orthodox or heterodox.

The reader has observed, no doubt, the method adopted by Mrs. Goose in punishing the recalcitrant old man. She "took him by the left leg." As no person in normal condition has more than two legs, it may not have occurred to the reader that there was anything strange in seizing the left instead of the right leg. Many hypotheses can be easily conjectured to account for the selection she made. For instance, as the right hand and the right leg are commonly more used than the left (which explains the slightly larger muscular development of the right arm and leg), the
old man, during the religious controversy over the bigotted insistance that he should pray up-stairs, naturally threw himself into a defiant pose by resting his body on his right leg and thus projected his left leg a little forward. That attitude having placed the left leg nearer to his antagonist, she took advantage of its proximity and precipitated him down-stairs.

Neither this nor any other explanation based on the physical conditions or positions existing at the time of the dispute is satisfactory to my mind. The great learning of the author, her power for expression in epigram, and the fullness of her meaning embraced in one word, induced me to read up on legs in order to ascertain whether, as a general proposition, more reprehensibility, shortcoming, or criminality, can justly be imputed to the left leg than to the right.

The offense of this old man was Nonconformity; that is to say, he refused to pray in the place, at the time, and in the manner that Mrs. Goose demanded he should pray. He was a heretic according to her creed and she punished him for heresy. Taking this view of the case, I turned my attention to the history of the "Ten Persecutions" by the Roman emperors from Nero to Domitian, and then to the thousands of religious persecutions from the reign of Domitian to this date. In all persecutions for heresy there has been a prescribed form or method for executing sentence of death, or any punishment of less degree, but in my extended research I have not discovered that the executioner was directed, in any instance, to seize his victim by the
left leg, or to punish the heretic by inflicting death or other less sentence on the left leg.

To my mind, there is no good reason why such discrimination should be made to the detriment or disparagement of the left leg. Yet, such is the lamentable fact—that is, lamentable for the left leg. Let us calmly and dispassionately consider this question for a few minutes. It involves an act of injustice that is, so far as I know, almost if not quite universal. I do not use the word universal in the literal sense of the whole universe, of course, because our knowledge of other worlds than our own is unfortunately so limited at present that we cannot say with scientific accuracy or certainty that there are any legs outside of our planet. In making this declaration, I am not unaware of the recent contention by a few astronomers that they have seen unmistakable indications of inhabitants of the planet Mars. But admitting their alleged discovery to be true, still, not one of these star-gazers peeping through their immense, compound lorgnettes, as do the front-seat bald heads at the theatrical stars, has ever asserted that those inhabitants of Mars have legs. And, even if they had seen legs in Mars, or on Mars, it is impossible, at the present stage of astronomy, for us to determine positively whether those legs are divided and labeled, as ours are, into right legs and left legs. Hence, I must be understood as employing the word “universal” as restricted to the planet that we inhabit. My purpose is to defend the left leg and to see that it shall be righted so far as my humble ability can remedy the wrong done so unanimously to it.
Why the right leg was originally called or named "right" and the left named "left," we have no information. No philologist, nor etymologist, nor historian, nor biographer of legs, has ever thrown any light on this remarkable leg nomenclature. There is no record of its beginning. It extends back beyond history. We find it in use among the peoples who antedated the Jews. The Greek and Romans had their right legs and their left legs on the same sides where we have them. In fact, it is easily demonstrable that we derived our ideas of the relative positions assigned to our legs from the Greeks and the Romans. I must not be understood as saying that the Greeks and Romans used the words "right" and "left," for they had languages of their own. For "right" the Greeks said _dexia_ and the Romans said _dextra_; and for left the Greeks said _laios_ and the Romans said "_sinister._" But why they used the words as they did, or why the Romans, for instance, did not say _sinister_ for the right and _dextra_ for the left has never been explained. I can only say that whatever may have been the cause or reason, the result has been very unjust and injurious to the reputation of the left leg. I use the word leg here in its collective sense, embracing the entire family of left legs—that is, all human left legs, of course.

We can readily see, with slight reflection on this subject, that neither could have been called, in any language or by any people, the front leg or the hind leg as, anatomically, that designation would be not only impossible, but could convey no idea of precedence, that is as to which
leg, at any and all times, and especially on State occasions,
should go before the other, or occupy the post of honor, or
have the right of way. It requires very little knowledge
of society and social forms to see that that designation
would have led to such constant and interminable domes-
tic disputes and complications as to arrest all progress of the
human race. But even if that disastrous consequence had
not followed, still, those names, to-wit: front and hind leg,
could not have conveyed any definite idea of distinction, or
identity, because there is no moment of time when any
human being is in locomotion, that each leg is not alter-
nately both the front and the hind leg. Indeed, such is the
rapidity of alternate succession when a man is badly
scared, that it is impossible to tell which leg is fore or aft.

Again. It is equally clear that the left leg was not so
named in the ordinary sense and meaning of the word
“left”—the participle of the verb, leave, or to leave, because
it is well known that the right leg never leaves the left
leg at any time except in the single case of amputation.
In fact, although their entities are absolutely distinct and
unmistakable, yet, they are so constantly in company with
each other that they might, without the present injustice
to the left leg, have been named Damon and Pythias. All
who know the history of those inseparable friends, remem-
ber that Pythias, being condemned to death by that tyrant,
Dionysius, was permitted to go home and arrange his
business and bid his friends and family farewell, on con-
dition that Damon should surrender himself to die for Py-
thias should he fail to return, and that he returned but a
few minutes before the hour set for the execution.
Nor is it possible, in the light of the temperament (so to speak) and history and exploits of the right leg, that its name was conferred on it in the sense of always being right as distinguished from being wrong. I mean wrong, in the sense of the opposite to error, fault, blame, wicked, or oppressive. I do not mean wrong in the sense of being on the wrong or left side, as that would be absurd. So far is the right leg from always being in the right, I maintain that in its moral relation to or connection with the left leg, it is always in the wrong. I go further and maintain that the left leg is the least offensive, or most innocent, member of a man's entire anatomy. The head thinks evil; plans the most diabolical crimes; the hands and arms execute the head's wicked plans; the tongue lies, deceives, flatters, utters hypocrisy and slander; the eye speaks wickedness in many ways; the ears eavesdrop and revel in scandal; but the legs take no part, as a rule, in any of these wickednesses. They are used simply as a conveyance to and from the scene of crimes.

I say, as a rule, they simply go along to carry the other sinful members. But, there are occasions when the right leg is actively criminal. When men fight and kicking is indulged in, the right leg is sure to be the offender. When a man kicks a dog, the right leg always volunteers for the work, unless the dog has already taken adverse possession of it and is holding on by right of possession alone. Indeed, it is rare that even the left hand is the chief offender, and never so unless the man is left-handed. But no man has ever been left-legged, not even when left-handed. In
all offences committed by the right leg the left leg is present, of course, but not with malice. It is there only because it cannot conveniently be elsewhere at that time. In fact, the left leg is often a peacemaker and puts an end to strife by rendering great assistance to the right leg in getting out of a fight or a battle.

Again, another great injustice is this: It has become the concensus or common agreement of mankind to uphold everything on the right side and to condemn everything on the left side. I will give only a few illustrations. When a man is skillful, it matters not with which hand, he is called “ambi-dextrous.” Sinister is the left, but nobody has ever given the left hand any credit by using the word ambi-sinisterous. This invidious injustice has been carried so far that the innocent word “sinister” now means a vile motive or act. A bad motive is never called “dextra.” On the contrary, of all the dozen or more children descended from this mother, “dextra,” every one is respectable, while but two or three descended from “sinister” are considered honest.

The dictionary makers say “the left side is considered the unlucky side.” In the French, German and Australian parliaments “the Left” is the weak side. When a man is not prosperous, or fails in an election for office, everybody says “he got left.” If one fails in a business venture, the public says, “he came out over the left.” If a girl rejects a suitor she “gives it to him over the left.” In battles between large armies, the left wing is considered the weaker and, hence, the post of honor, as between the wings, is
on the right. On State occasions and at royal banquets, the seat of highest honor for a guest is on the right of the host.

That silly child, Juliet, (of whom I shall say more hereafter), expressed her opinion to Romeo that "there is nothing in a name." In view of what I have set forth above, I am satisfied that, if there should ever be a national convention of all the left legs to make a declaration of all their grievances, the platform they would construct and stand upon without a dissenting leg, would convince even that girl that she did not know what she was talking about!

With a few pertinent reflections growing out of the foregoing brief dissertation on legs, I will return to the main subject of these commentaries. The arrest of that old man's left leg illustrates the power of prejudice as well as the influence of public opinion. Mrs. Goose, without consciousness, was acting under the influence of both. Without reason mankind for hundreds of centuries had set their faces against "the left," and the old man's left leg was the victim of this hoary prejudice.

How this Old World without knowing it is moved and swayed and impelled by prejudices and acts under the influence of superstitions. The old, dead Moon—dead for thousands of centuries—dead so long that even her atmosphere has left the corpse, wrapped in her silver shroud, the only ghost among all the heavenly hosts, moving stealthily at night, at times in full view and then veiled from sight, changing her form and place of wandering every night, first but a lean phantom, then growing to full rotundity
and then gradually shrinking away, holds a wider and firmer dominion over the hopes, fears, judgments and actions of mankind than all the kings, emperors and other rulers together since the world began its course. This old ghost rules the earth. The tides obey it. We plant, we sow, we reap, we butcher, we till the soil, in obedience to the shape and look of this nightly ghost. We look for rain when it glides into view erect and lean. We despair of rain when it slides in on its back. We trace diseases to its baleful influence. We call our insane "lunatics," because its name is luna—so sure are we that this malign, heavenly old witch has conjured them. We trace to it our epileptic fits. When bacon shrinks in cooking, we know we did not do reverence to this corpse by observing whether it was waxing fat or losing flesh when we killed the hog. And, yet, "she looks so innocent all the while."
CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. GOOSE'S LOGIC.

Pure, dry logic—a syllogism for instance after the method of the scholastics—was not Mrs. Goose's forte; and, hence, she was not a distinguished debator or dialectician. Here is one of her efforts in logic:

"If a man who turnips cries,
Cries not when his father dies,
It is a proof that he would rather
Have a turnip than his father."

In laying down her premise she seemed not to know that a man who cries turnips, cries to make them go, but that a man who cries when his father dies, cries because his father went; and, therefore, he "would not rather have a turnip than his father," unless he is like a certain son who was executor of his father's will and was so annoyed by lawsuits, that, in telling a friend one day of his troubles, he burst out crying and said, "I have so much trouble with these lawsuits I sometimes almost wish Pa hadn't died."

Note.—After reviewing that son's case carefully, I see he is not the kind of man I supposed he was; for he did cry when his father died—that is, he did a few years after. I may do him injustice. My mistake was in not remembering that the emotions of some people are much slower than those of others and require much stronger causes to arouse them. It required several lawsuits to touch the
filial devotion of this young man, but they were touched and he did cry. I knew a Judge who took just six months to see the point of a story, but his laugh then was just as hearty as this young man's tears were after the lawsuits began.
CHAPTER XX.

MRS. GOOSE AT A RACE.

There is a part of a poem intended to be a description of a race which, I regret exceedingly, the author left unfinished. It stands in the category of *Edwin Drood* by Dickens and *Pausanias* by Bulwer, whereas it might have stood in competition with the chariot race in *Ben Hur*. It starts:

“There were two blind men went to see Two cripples run a race!”

And there it stops. There are two theories advanced in explanation of this literary torso. One is that it is the last of Mrs. Goose’s productions; that she set out to give the world a grand Epic, something on the order of Homer’s description of the Olympic races and suddenly died; and that, after her death, an aspiring Spanish literateur used to seeing bull-fights, undertook the labor of finishing the Epic and wound it and himself up in this couplet:

“The bull did fight the bumble-bee, And scratched him in the face.”

In my judgment as a critic, that is the flatest failure—the most absolute *non-sequitur*—to a grand epic that ever emanated from the brain of any poet whether he be in the Lake school of poets or out of it! It is absolutely bare of any logical connection whatever. It turns an amicable
pedestrian contest between two cripples into a disgusting, scratching fight between a bull and a bee!

The other theory is that the poet went with the two blind men to see the race and, as usual at every race that has occurred since Hippomenes won by throwing apples of gold in the course of his fair opponent, Atalanta, there was a tedious, tiresome, provoking delay in bringing the two cripples on the track; and the old lady having written the opening argument of her intended masterly poem and while waiting pen in hand to continue it, had her attention diverted by seeing a policeman clubbing a small boy. She thereupon recorded the incident, as she habitually did everything she saw—the bull representing the policeman and the bee the boy; and on reviewing her work, she decided to leave the poem as a satire on horse-racing; which always opens with a grand flourish till the gate money is in hand; proceeds with torturing delay, and ends mainly in a fizzle or a fight between a big policeman and a ragged urchin. As a commentator I incline to the latter theory only because the poem is devoid of satire by being history.
CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. GOOSE'S PATHOS.

I class the pastoral on Little Bo Peep among the author's most pathetic inspirations. Indeed, I regret she ever wrote it, because I resort to this poet for amusement as well as philosophy, and not to weep. The reader's acquaintance with the whole poem relieves me from quoting it. In fact, its sad words form one of our most plaintive and popular songs. It must be remembered that it was not the loss of her sheep that so distressed Little Bo Peep. She was not thinking of the sheep. It was her fear that when, like the prodigal son, they should repent and return, they would not "bring their tails behind them." This is what makes the story so very sad. She never made known why her dread of the tails being brought home in front or in any other way distressed her so. The first sigh she heaved and the first time she "wiped her eye" was when she was straying in sorrowful meditation through a lonely meadow and, casting her eyes heavenward, she beheld the dear little tails of her sheep "hanging side by side," like so many little criminals, "on a tree to dry." And the poet is particular to note, that the fact that her sheep "had left their tails behind 'em," was what "made her heart bleed."

She was a kind little mistress, for she—

"Tried what she could, as a shepherdess should,
To tack to each sheep its tail-o."
But she was doomed to disappointment. Not a tail would stick. Its physiological condition had changed. The contraction of the vascular integuments had proceeded so far under the lapse of time between the vivisection and the attempted rehabilitation, that the coincidence between the walls of the vascular organism of the amputated caudal attachment and the corresponding walls of the trunk attachment was so far from the line of coincidence as wholly to prevent the capillary venous movement necessary to revivification of the amputated portion. In other words, the dear little tails were dead.

Little Bo Peep had no experience in such surgery, or "tacking," as the poet expresses it. She would have been spared her grief, if she had known enough to call each sheep a federal office and then had nominated each tail to one. They would have stuck, even without the possibility of ever growing one barleycorn bigger in the office.

As a vivid picture of sorrow and pathos I cite the poem that tells of the bereavement of a widow whose name is not given for reasons apparent in the poem. The poet was too considerate and refined to lay bare to the unfeeling, uncharitable world the poor widow's wound of shame and family dishonor. What a pity it is that the Daily Press of this Country are not so considerate of "another's woe!" This elegiac runs thus:

"There was an old woman had three sons,
Jerry and James and John:
Jerry was hung, James was drowned,
John was lost and never was found;
And there was an end of the three sons,
Jerry and James and John."

But "there was not an end" of the stricken, heartbroken old mother. She had to sit alone by her hearth—alone bearing the burden of dishonor and grief that even she could not weigh. The domestic circle was first broken by the breaking of Jerry's neck. He may have been hanged wrongfully—who can tell? It may have been on circumstantial evidence of the kind on which, many years ago, a man was hanged in Norfolk, Virginia, on the charge of murdering a companion who was sleeping in the bed with him and who disappeared before daylight. The evidence was, "blood in the bed and a trail of blood to the beach near by." The facts were, the man's nose had bled; he went out to wash off the blood, was captured by the British, taken to England, and returned to Norfolk several years after his friend was hanged for murdering him.

But, be that as it may, James, no doubt, was driven to suicide by drowning, from a sense of the dishonor cast by Jerry's elevation by a rope; and John tried to escape the shame by running away. It was not supposed he went to Canada, as this was not a case of speculation with trust funds.

Pitiable as was the poor old mother's condition, may she not have brought it on herself? Let us consider this a moment. Macaulay, in his essay on Lord Bacon, tells of a learned Judge who insisted that there is a fatality in the letter B, as many believe there is in the gem, the opal. He
proved it by naming a large number of men with names beginning with B who were scoundrels and traitors.

Now, it will be observed that the name of each of the three ill-fated sons begins with the letter J—Jerry, James and John. J is, also, an opal in the alphabet. Run over a few names in history and you will see. Jacob was a robber and a polygamist. He first robbed his brother, Esau, and then robbed the father of his two wives of cattle by using streaked sticks. Joseph was beaten and thrown into a pit. Besides, he lost two coats—all he had so far as history tells us. Jeremiah was born crying and cried all his life. His reputation rests on his lamentations. Joab was a cowardly assassin. Jonah was taken in by a bunco whale. John the Baptist was beheaded to please a ballet girl. Jerusalem was often destroyed, sacked and burnt, until its name was changed to Aelia. Julius, the Caesar, was assassinated. Job was a fountain of boils. Josephus wrote a book, and judging by results, he may have been the enemy that Job prayed "would write a book." If so Job got his revenge—"sweet" enough for any woman. Judith was a murderess. Jepthah sacrificed his only daughter. Jericho's walls were blown down by rams' horns. Judas betrayed Christ. Joss, the Chinese God, is an impostor. Jupiter was no better. The Jacobins were bloody butchers and were butchered in turn. Jerome of Prague was burned alive. So was Joan of Arc. Josepha was cruelly divorced. Jezebel had Naboth murdered through perjury. Juggernaut has murdered millions. Jeffreys Judge, was the murderer of hundreds. The four
Jameses, Kings of Scotland, were assassinated, or died horrid deaths. Juries are always damned, and Jack is the synonym for dunce. But I need not cite any more. The case is already made out. The proof is overwhelming. B and J are opal letters. And I conclude this head by remarking:

"You parents all, that children have,
And you that have got none,"

my advice to you is, in naming your children begin with the first letter of the alphabet and name the first Aaron or Adam, for example. Then go to the end of the alphabet and name the second child And-so-forth; the third, (omitting B), Chance; the fourth, 'Zounds, and so on until you exhaust the alphabet, (omitting J), and then number the rest.
CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. GOOSE'S SATIRE.

One of her most instructive semi-pastoral lyrics is the colloquy between a Piper and his cow. The painful countenance of the cow as expressed in the painting of the interview, indicates that she had approached her master in a most humble manner to beseech him for food. This inference is supported by the poet herself who says "he had naught to give her." Then the drama opens.

"He pulled out his pipe and played her a tune,
And bade the cow consider."

What the reflections of that cow were as she listened to the old wind-broked bagpipe squeaking out some tune so old it sounded as if rendered in some dead language, we can never know. But she evidently obeyed her worthless master and "considered." She had a penny which the vagabond piper may have dropped from his cap when handing it around to a crowd of listening, gaping urchins. It was useless to her. She could not eat it, and what she had been considering may be inferred from the remainder of the poem:

"The cow considered very well,
And gave the Piper a penny,
And bade him play the other tune,
' Corn rigs are bonny.' "
Her thoughts paraphrased were: "You vagabond! I supply you with milk, cream, and butter, while you feed me with wind. Take the penny to buy me some feed! And, to let you know what I mean, if you will pipe, play the tune, 'corn rigs are bonny;' —(good) for a cow."

How like many worthless husbands that piper; and how like good wives who support them, that cow!

Of course I do not maintain that the cow actually spoke in audible words to the piper. Hers was only a "figure of speech." She posed before him. So far as we know, the last speech made by any animal, (excluding swearing parrots, of course), was addressed to Balaam, and the result was so unpleasant that men and beasts have never since been on speaking terms. The offense given was, that Balaam called the other one "an ass." Whether it was for opening his mouth, or for what he said. I am not certain. But, my opinion as a commentator is, it was on account of what he said, as that has been, ever since, the method by which that class make themselves known.
CHAPTER XXIII.

MRS. GOOSE'S CONUNDRUM POETRY.

Some of Mother Goose's conundrums are among the best ever propounded. She perpetrated seventeen, which number is slightly in excess of one author's share, if to be published.

"Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall" is not one of her best, because there are thousands of things besides an egg that, after falling from a great wall, "all the King's horses and all the King's men cannot put together again." For instance, a glass demijohn full of whiskey, or a ton of nitroglycerine.

But her second egg conundrum is exceptionally fine:

"In marble walls as white as milk,
Lined with a skin as soft as silk;
Within a fountain crystal clear,
A golden apple doth appear.
No doors there are to this stronghold—
Yet, thieves break in and steal the gold."

That of a "bed" is good:

"Formed long ago, yet made to-day;
Employed while others sleep;
What few would like to give away,
Nor any wish to keep."
The one on "Old Mother Twitchett" is perfect:

"Old Mother Twitchett had but one eye,
And a long tail which she let fly:
And every time she went over a gap,
She left a bit of her tail in a trap."

Here is one that was put out, seemingly, to exercise all future generations in the art of guessing:

"If all the world was apple-pie,
And all the sea was ink,
And all the trees were bread and cheese,
What should we have to drink?"

As a student of all of Mother Goose's works, I have given this problem all the thought I could spare from consideration of her more important writings. And, while a correct solution of it is not without difficulty, I will say that I see many and much greater difficulties, if her hypothesis should become a reality. However, I venture the opinion, "if all the world was an apple-pie," it would be wise economy in every one who ate pie three times a day to be a doctor and to own a drug store. If there were any way to kindle a fire, that is to create heat, I see how some men would have something to drink. They would evaporate the water in the ink, distill the apple in the pie, and make apple-jack.

Since pronouncing the bed-conundrum "good," I have read it critically and discovered an apparent contradiction in the two last lines. I say "apparent" from my constitutional respect for the learned author. I cannot clearly
see how anybody would not like to keep a bed and, at the same time, would not like to give it away. It may be, however, that the "few" she meant are furniture dealers who wish to sell, of course. Or, they may be Tommy Trots and Margery Daws, who wish to trade their beds for looking-glasses and bottles. I am not prepared to say this conundrum is bad. I only say that I will suspend judgment on it until further research can be made.

I see something wrong with the first line also. "Formed long ago, yet made to-day," does not sound right when applied to a bed. When a bed is "made" it is certainly "formed" in some shape. The poet must have meant a political platform, for we all know that political platforms were formed long ago and are made over "to-day." Besides, this interpretation renders the last two lines perfectly clear—to-wit:

"What few would like to give away,
Nor any wish to keep."

Whatever may be said of it as a bed-conundrum, I must say, that as a political platform, it is without a knot-hole or a crack.
CHAPTER XXIV.

MRS. GOOSE'S CALF POEM.

MRS. GOOSE was not as accurate in recording historical events in their chronological order, as poets ought to be. While it is true that poetry admits great license, still, I maintain that it does not allow the cart to be put before the horse, unless the horse is trained for pushing and not for pulling. Here is a poem in point:

"Johnny Armstrong killed a calf, 
Peter Henderson got the half; 
Willy Wilkinson got the head— 
Ring the bell—the calf is dead!"

This is not good poetic form. There is an unnecessary anachronism—to-wit: recording the death of the calf after narrating facts that could not have occurred before its death. When we are told that Peter Henderson has got one-half of a calf, and William Wilkinson has secured its head we do not need to be told afterwards "the calf is dead!" especially after being informed that one of the Armstrong family had anything to do with butchering it. Of course it’s dead!

The distribution of that calf is worthy of a passing remark. As only one half is accounted for by the poet, it is evident that Mr. Armstrong got the other half as toll for butchering the calf, while Mr. William Wilkinson, being well acquainted with the capacity of his own family, no
doubt chose the head for the brains. But, why the largest seedsman in the world, who was presumably a vegetarian, should take the other half of the calf, I have never understood, unless for the reason once given by a Georgia Judge for leaving the Bench and betting against a faro-bank, which was, "to break up the business."
CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. GOOSE'S HYPNOTISM.

Our author's mind was peculiar, if not singular, in one respect. She would sometimes begin a story and stop right at the beginning, or in the middle, and seem to forget or go to sleep and then rouse up and begin another story entirely different. Here is the poem in point:

"I'll tell you a story,
About John-a-Nory;
And now my story's begun———"

Just there she forgot all about John-a-Nory and fell asleep. When she woke up she sang:

"I'll tell you another,
About Jack and his brother;
And now my story's done."

She passed under the same state of hypnotism once when she began to "tell the story about Mary Morey." This is a very remarkable psychological phenomenon. It was evidently before her affliction of insomnia.

How interesting and instructive it would be, if we had some means to decide, whether Lord Bacon was hypnotized when he accepted bribes as Lord Chancellor or when he wrote the following in his play called Hamlet written by Shakespeare:
"May one be pardoned and retain the offense?  
In the corrupted currents of this world,  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;  
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law."

With that knowledge we could conjecture, charitably,  
his possible innocence.
CHAPTER XXVI.

MRS. GOOSE ON A POETICAL TEAR.

I stated near the beginning of these commentaries that I would not attempt to hide or slur over the faults of my author, and I shall keep my word. It is painful to do so, but no commentator can be true to his readers if not true to himself. It is, therefore, my duty to criticise a poem that has mystified and distressed me not a little. It is but little short of shocking. The truth is, it sounds like the joint production of a lunatic and an inebriate. I have searched to learn whether the poet was ever addicted to New England rum, and the only instance of ever being a little off was when she went to dance that with the piper and fiddler's wife and caught insomnia through her eyes.

The poem I will now quote is the most incoherent, disjointed, jumbled jingle that ever went to print. The old lady, I am pained to say, must have been in a state of—no, I cannot say it; but she was on a regular poetical tear—if I may be pardoned for using such language in a discussion so grave as this. But I cannot help it. There is no language that can express the intensity of my feelings—unless I were to swear. But I am not skilled in that art, and even if I were its practice here could do no good, as many readers, being unacquainted with the language, would fail to catch my idea. Therefore, I will not resort to such an extreme for assistance. I must leave that to the discretion and practice of each reader. Should any one feel com_
pelled to resort to it for relief, and his paucity of expletives and explosives should leave him still burdened in the cardiac region, in order to save him from low, vulgar profanity, I recommend to him the classic oath of Bishop Ernulphus. I am told that it has never failed to give relief—by exhaustion. No mule-driver with a stalled team ever approached it in vigorous detonation, universality, or orientality. It covers five pages, that is including interjections. It is in English and Latin. The swearer can take either or both. I do not pretend to be authority on swearing but, to the English scholar I recommend the English only because, when one is swearing vigorously, I imagine there is great satisfaction in understanding what he is saying. However, if the swearer is not particular about understanding what he says, and usually swears simply for relief, I advise him to use the Latin. As no one will understand him he will escape being considered wicked but, no doubt, he will be adjudged a lunatic and sent to an asylum. But that is a small matter so he gets relief. Now to the poem.

The poet, strange to say, starts off apparently in a very pious frame of mind, thus:

“A whale, I am to told, swallowed Jonah of old,
And kept him three days in his belly.
I should think such a squeeze would have made Jonah sneeze,
And mashed him all up to a jelly.”

That part of the poem is good enough. It is connected and rational. Nobody can justly criticise it except to note
two errors of judgment in the author. The first is that she mistakes the pathogenicity of a squeeze. She assumes as an undoubted fact that which has never occurred in human experience, that a squeeze naturally causes a sneeze. On the contrary, it is a fact that a timely squeeze—I mean of the nostrils, of course—will often prevent a sneeze. To appreciate fully the vast importance of the author's mistake, we have only to contemplate the disastrous consequences to matrimony alone, had Nature so ordered that every squeeze should inevitably be followed by a resounding, explosive sneeze. No young man could dare to touch the hand of his sweetheart, as he would be sure to squeeze it. If he should, the effect would be worse than a repeating rifle. But if the girl should forget and return the squeeze, the result would be like the firing of soldiers by platoon.

This is a very serious matter. Let us consider it gravely for a moment. There are two ways of estimating our blessings. One is to reflect thoughtfully on the blessings we possess, and the other is to think of the misfortunes, sorrows and afflictions we have escaped. We should take both views of this subject of squeezing and sneezing. We are greatly blessed that a squeeze does not cause a sneeze, but what would have been the measure of our calamities if the opposite were the inevitable consequence? I ask this, having in view, of course, the universal and inevitable propensity in lovers to squeeze. I will illustrate:

A young man makes an evening call on the girl he loves. The early hours drag heavily in company of the kind and
hospitable parents of his beloved. He, with dignified air and modest reserve, sits ten feet away from her, talking platitudes, about the weather, the crops, the market; sorrowing with the distressed father over the recent demise of his favorite steer, and then with the mother in her lamentation over roup and pip among her Leghorn hens. The parents tired from labor retire to rest. The young man joyfully bids them "Good night," but holds his ground. The ten feet soon contract to one foot, then six inches, then three inches. A brief time before the roosters crow for midnight, the straying hands of the lovers meet and a mutual squeeze is as certain as Fate. Instantly the very rafters quake—one sneezing treble and the other bass. The son and brother, imagining that burglars are in the parlor, rushes in, in scant apparel, with his gun. The old man (in his night robe) hurrying in the dark, tumbles down-stairs, plunging headforemost and sprawling into the parlor. The baby, awakened by the unearthly uproar, squalls like a catamount. The cook, thinking the burglar alarm has sounded, crazed by fright, thrusts her head out the basement door and cries "Fire! Murder!" The neighbors rush in pell-mell and the fire engines come roaring and blowing to the scene. And all this is caused by a little innocent squeezing done in the most natural way.

The same young, ardent lover, after that dreadful experience, invites his sweetheart to take a drive that he may press her hand in solitude, "far from the madding crowd." Dreamily they drive on until beyond the hearing, as they suppose, of human ears. He takes her hand—the inevit-
able squeeze follows and the cannonade begins. The fool horse—knowing not a thing about courting of course—imagines a pack of fire crackers burning and bursting at his tail and runs away. The girl in her fright instinctively grabs her lover’s arm and he circles her waist to hold her steady. Both lovers squeeze harder of course and the sneezes grow faster and louder. The horse now thinks a Gatling-gun is shooting at him and becomes wholly insane and blind from fright. He would now run into the ocean or a blazing brush-heap. The dogs from every farmhouse along the road give chase to this exploding wonder. Every old mule on the road, sound or crippled, thinking it a charge of cavalry on wheels firing off carbines, turns and dashes away kicking buggy or wagon to splinters, while their drivers jump for their lives and take to the woods.

But, I will not pursue this painful hypothesis to other and worse disasters, as the intellectual reader, if a young lover, sees them more clearly perhaps than I do. The truth is, if Mrs. Goose’s belief were a fact, then not one girl in a hundred could survive the squeezing, and laws with heavy penalties would have to be passed to forbid squeezing altogether, or to limit courting to about five minutes.

Children of royal families could not be inconvenienced by such laws, as they are not permitted to court. They are married right from the nursery without knowing or seeing each other and before they are old enough to squeeze, and the very rare love squeezing they indulge in
after marriage could be only healthful exercise for the lungs.

I can not close these reflections without remarking how careful all authors and writers should be in expressing opinions that are not maturely considered. Even this opinion on the probable effect of a squeeze may have wrecked the matrimonial prospects of thousands of deserving young men who feared the detonating result of a gentle, tender squeeze.

The second error of judgment was in thinking that Jonah with no air except the little supply of breath which he carried with him on such short notice, and with no chance to draw for more, would waste the little he had in sneezing. We must give a great man like Jonah credit for having some sense. A man is not necessarily a fool because he becomes cramped in his circumstances.

I have often thought, what an opportunity those cramped circumstances, like the prison to Bunyan and Baxter, afforded Jonah to gain immortality by composing "An Elegy In A Whale's Belly," after the pathetic style of Gray's "Elegy In A Church Yard." He certainly thought of a grave yard, and he must have thought he would need an Elegy very soon, for he had no idea, for three whole days, of his own strength as an emetic.

There must have been something very unpleasant about Jonah. The citizens of Ninevah wished him gone. Then, he was so disagreeable to the people on the ship they threw him into the water; and he disagreed with the whale till it threw him up on dry land to get rid of him. The whale
was so disgusted by him it would not let him stay in the water. The universal objection to Jonah's company may have been due to the smell or taste of that green gourd.

But I am forced to admit that my learned author is again in error about Jouah and the Whale. The only record of that most remarkable feat in swallowing, states that "a fish" performed it. Now, a whale is not a fish. Besides, if it be true as Professor True of Washington, D. C., announces, that the throat of the biggest whale is not more than three and a-half inches in diameter, we must concede, out of respect for Jonah's head as a prophet's, that it was impossible for his head to pass and repass through a three-and-a-half-inch hole. Why, a respectable-sized nose would choke a whale to death!

But, what concerns me as a commentator more than anything else, is that Professor True's discovery of the size of a whale's throat, if true, will ruin my author's poem. For, notwithstanding a whale is not a fish, I could have maintained plausibly that it was a whale that swallowed Jonah as my author says, and nobody could have disproved my assertion as all the witnesses—Jonah, the whale, and the passengers on that ship are probably dead or beyond the reach of a subpoena. I am not prepared just now to show that Professor True is wrong, but for the present I will only say that it is remarkable that there should be such a lack of economy and waste of material in building so large an animal around such a little hole?

But after starting off so piously with the whale and
Jonah, the poet then breaks loose in this strain. It is positively painful to lovers of high art:

"Father, may I go to war?
Yes, you may, my son;
Wear your woolen comforter,
But don't fire off your gun."

Now, what possible connection is there between Jonah in the whale's belly and war? I can not conceive of any situation less warlike than Jonah's. Besides, that son was evidently not Jonah's, for, had he been, he would not have stopped to get his father's permission to go to war with that whale. And had that father been Jonah, he would not have said "yes, but don't fire off your gun," unless he was afraid the boy would miss the whale and kill him.

But I must proceed with my discussion of this strange production. It is remarkable that an intellectual woman should write this:

"Hiram Gordon, where's your pa?
He's gone with uncle Peter,
To put a board across the fence,
So that we boys can teeter.

Can the human mind imagine a worse jumble than all that—Jonah in the whale's belly; a boy in a war in which guns must not be fired off; and her uncle Peter putting a board across a fence for "Hiram Gordon to teeter?" Besides, who is Hiram Gordon, anyhow? We are told nothing of him except that he had an uncle and a father which is a very scant biography. It is very unsatisfactory when
we are solicitous to know who and what a man is, to be told he had a father, or an uncle named Peter.

I cannot refrain from making a mild comment on another very objectionable though latent feature of this stanza. If the poet were any one but Mrs. Goose, I would dilate at considerable length on her conduct. I speak of the vulgarity of thrusting her obscure relatives and plebeian friends on our acquaintance, and especially in this boisterous and uncivilized manner. Her uncle Peter and that fellow, Hiram Gordon, are pulled or pushed into our presence and serene circle and dumped upon us without a word of introduction or even of warning. She does not afford us time or opportunity to exercise our privilege to tell a falsehood by sending a servant to the door to say "we are not in." Apart from the bad form in epic poetry in introducing a character, real or fictitious, without acquainting the reader with him or her by description or some brief genealogy or biography, the poet has violated every canon of polite society by prancing in her relative and friend in this rude, shocking manner. She speaks of Hiram Gordon as if he were the head of the Gordon family of Scotland whereas, in fact, he is nothing but a miserable little teeterer!

The next stanza indicates a lucid interval in all this distressing aberration:

"John fought for his beloved land,
And when the war was over,
He kept a little cookey stand,
And lived and died in clover."
Here we have the first line that suggests any coherence or connected thought in the poem. For, probably, John was the son who wished to "go to war." This theory is, beyond doubt, the correct one, because John returned from the war alive, and that would most likely be the result of the war in which the "firing off" of guns was prohibited, and the only weapons used were "woolen comforters" And yet I can conceive of some danger in woolen comforters unless the opposing armies, before proceeding to hostilities, would come to an amicable agreement not to fight except in freezing weather. But that is not probable so long as mankind continue to look forward. It may be, after they get to "looking backward."

Who this valiant hero, John, is or was, the poet gives no intimation. He was not John Hampden, for, though he "fought for his beloved land," he fell before "the war was over." If she had only said "John Smith," the historian of that war in that beloved land, (Great Britain no doubt), could have readily identified him. The name John is too common to constitute of itself any distinction except that we know thereby he was not Tom, Dick, nor Harry. The only guiding facts for tracing his identity are, first, that he fought; second, that he fought for his beloved land; third, that he kept a stand; fourth, that he kept a cookie stand; fifth, that his cookie stand was little; sixth, that he lived in clover; seventh, that he died; eighth, that he died in clover; ninth, that he was not killed in battle, unless the battle was in a clover field. I do not know any one, or any class of detectives, who could certainly find
and identify this John except a pension agent or attorney. And, as John died in clover, there can be no doubt that he was high up on the pension role and left a young widow who married him on his deathbed just to keep his pension running for a hundred years. The incaution of the poet in uncovering her hero so carelessly has, probably, put thousands of Johns on the pension role, all of whom departed leaving very young widows who loved them for the pensions they left. If so, the pensioners are British, of course, because our Pension Bureau and Congressmen are too watchful of the public’s interests to be fooled in that way.

In defense of the skimpiness of the biography of John it can be said, she assumed that every intelligent reader knew all about John. Besides, all scholars know that Mrs. Goose’s style, like that of all great writers, is never redundant. In fact, she wrote two pastorals, now world-renowned, in burlesque of authors and orators who are verbose and given to repetition. These pastorals are “The House that Jack Built” and “This Little Pig can’t get over the Stile to-night.”

She assumed that everybody knew John, because the three greatest events in his life had long been widely advertised, which are:

“While he lived, he lived in clover,
When he died, he died all over.”

Now, while it is true that this state of blessedness both in living and in leaving was not the portion of John by name, still, it is demonstrable that Mrs. Goose’s hero, John, was the same happy man. Thus, the hero of each stanza
“lived in clover,” which is very strong evidence of identity — so strong it has never been denied or doubted; and any matter, thing, or history that is not doubted these days, enjoys an exceptional honor not even accorded to the Bible. Poor Tom Moore, if alive, would hear attacked from every quarter his sweet, consoling refrain, “There’s nothing true but Heaven.” But I have digressed.

The second strong point in identity is that both heroes died. One “died in clover,” whereas the other just simply “died.” Still, as he “lived in clover” and there is no record of his moving away, it is a fair legal and logical presumption that he died there, that is, in clover.

The third point to prove identity is in the manner of the death of both. John “died in clover” and the other hero “died all over.” That is the only difference and it is only apparent, because we must assume as an undeniable postulate that when John “died in clover” he must have “died all over.” It is true that when we hear now and then of persons “dying by inches,” but such deaths are not exceptions to the rule, because, on the decease of the last inch, the person is undoubtedly dead all over.

All dialecticians and arguers know that the simplest proposition cannot be demonstrated without assuming certain facts or things to be true. For instance, in discussing the modern question, “Is marriage a failure?” how absurd it would be if each debater, pro and con, had first to prove the marriage and that it was lawful; that a dollar and a quarter had been paid for a marriage license; that the bride and groom were old enough to marry according to law;
that they were married, for instance, by a preacher; then prove that the preacher was duly licensed to preach and to marry—I mean other people, of course; that the bishop or congregation that licensed him had lawful authority to ordain him to preach; or if not regularly licensed, but only "Called to preach," then to prove that there was no mistake made in the "Call;" that the right name was heard and the right man heard and answered the "Call." If the name called were Smith or Jones, we see at once it would be impossible to say the right man answered the "Call" to preach, as a hundred might have heard the "Call." Hence there could never be even a beginning of an argument on "Is marriage a failure?" Besides, the debater would have to prove what a "failure" is. He might be one himself and offer himself in evidence, but that would only make matters worse. Therefore, we see the necessity of admitting that when John died he "died all over," which demonstrates that John and the other fellow were the same.

The poet, in the next stanza, relates her own experience, probably, in the same war:

"I've got a rocket in my pocket,
I cannot stop to play—
Away she goes! I've burnt my toes!
'Tis Independence day."

No, I was in error. for that occurred on the 4th of July. Still, that day is closely related to war. It may be called the father or the mother of the Revolution of '76. The gender is difficult to determine, especially as the poet was
of the opinion that a rocket is of the feminine gender. Her expression "Away she goes" refers to the rocket, of course. How the learned author ascertained the sex, I have no theory to advance. It was not found out by the rocket "going off," for that is the prerogative of the male sex especially on Independence day? It was, probably, by the rocket's sudden and unexpected explosion.

Then the poet swings loose from war and goes wild. It is a pity the following got into print:

"Phoebe rode a nauny goat,
Susy broke her leg,
Father took his wedding coat
And hung it on a peg."

Without pausing to comment on the evident impropriety of laying bare to public gaze the tomboyish conduct of Miss Phoebe, and especially the broken member, it may be, of Miss Susy, I proceed to remark that we here observe not only a painful want of logical thought but much obscurity. For instance, Phoebe was riding the goat, but "Susy broke her leg." Now, as the goat was of the feminine gender—being a Nanny—the question that perplexes me as a commentator is, was Susy's leg broken, or did she break Nanny's leg, or Phoebe's leg? It is clear that the limb broken was of the feminine gender, as it was "her leg." The verb "break" is active—at least, it was not in the passive mood in this instance.

The two succeeding lines throw no light on this perplexing problem. In fact, they too, are not perspicuous. Who
was the child of "Father" is not certain, but from the context it is a fair deduction that he was the poet's father. If he was, it is evident that the poet was indulging in reminiscences of her childhood, because she says he hung up his "wedding coat." Now, a wedding coat could hardly last and be the object of such caution and solicitude as to be hung up on a peg out of reach of a goat at a date when even the first child was old enough to write poetry about riding a goat and breaking somebody's leg, and also about her father's wedding coat—that is, unless her father married again late in life. But that is not at all probable, because he was certainly a very prudent and experienced man—I mean, of course, as to goats; as is shown by hanging his coat on a peg to prevent its consumption by that nanny.

I have often thought it was not judicious to acquaint the public with this flighty, harum-scarum, go-as-you-please intellectual production that, to speak it mildly, can not add to the fame of my author as a close reasoner. And I would have skipped it if, in a moment of unguarded candor, I had not promised on an early page, not to conceal my author's faults. But, as my promise is given, and as it does not require a high degree of courage to speak of the faults of others, I will go through with this distracted inspiration remarking, however, apologetically, that it must have been composed in a moment of great exhilaration—as is an after-dinner speech.

Now, after hearing of Jonah and the whale; war without firing off guns; that fellow, Hiram Gordon; Uncle
Peter, stuffed in just to rhyme with teeter; John somebody
and his cookie stand, and of John “dying all over;” Phoebe
riding a goat, and having a broken member of some female
laid before us, as some poet has said, “in such questionable
shape” that no naturalist can tell whether it is a girl’s or a
goat’s, and thus having our sympathy held in painful sus-
pense, we have to encounter the following:

“Josephus Smith, he bought a rake
And sold it for some corn,
He lived a week on Johnny-cake—
And, now, he’s dead and gone.”

The first thing that attracts a scholar’s notice is the re-
markable anachronism in the name of this distinguished
gentleman, Josephus Smith. Josephus, without the Smith
bowsprit or any other, flourished in and around Jerusalem
nearly a thousand years before the advent of Smith; and
it is a curiosity in philology how these two names got
hitched together over a chasm of near a thousand years in
width. The fact, however, remains and it strengthens the
contention of those Gooseologists who say that Mrs. Goose
landed from Noah’s Ark not far from Jerusalem and, hav-
ing found the name Josephus lying around there, she
picked it up as a curio, brought it west and in a spirit of
sport, tacked it to the first orphan Smith she met. I say
“orphan” because it goes without saying that no father
nor mother of the vast Smith family ever laid on a child
such an affliction to be endured for life. Josephus
Smith! “Great Phoebus! (or Phoebe)—what a name!”
However, the thing was done by somebody and it is too late to be holding indignation meetings about it now.

The next fact in this too brief biography of Mr. Josephus Smith is his crooked way in conducting mercantile transactions. Why did Josephus Smith buy a rake and sell it “for some corn” instead of buying the corn directly?

There is no intimation of insanity. It might be plausibly maintained that constant contemplation on the affliction of his name, like Hamlet’s brooding over his father’s taking off and his mother’s marriage to the murderer, had brought on, first, a sadness followed by several declines down finally to madness or softening of the brain, (now humanely disguised under the word paresis), but, as he was never accused of crime and thus was deprived of the sacred right of pleading insanity, it is not conclusive that Josephus Smith’s circumvention in a trade was due to a soft brain. It might have been due to strabismus.

The explanation in my opinion, is that Josephus Smith was a speculator, and having an intimate friend and neighbor who had plenty of corn and no rake and who needed a rake badly, got what is denominated in speculation parlance “a corner” on the rake in order to squeeze corn out of his needy friend. This theory, it is true, seems to make Josephus Smith a diabolical scoundrel; but much extenuation should be accorded one who after realizing he must wear “Josephus Smith” like a leaden collar through life, should become a misanthrope and resolve “to get even with the world.” Therefore, exercising charity, let us pass
on to another view of this sufferer whose only distinction in this world was in his Hebraic—Christian name.

The last view is this: The poet leaves us in doubt as to the cause of the dissolution of Mr. Josephus Smith. The solution of the doubt turns on the meaning of the word "now" in the last line of his biography. If "now" is an adverb of time, it may mean the time when the poet was singing, and that may have been fifty, a hundred or two hundred years after the Johnny-cake kept the soul and body of Josephus Smith united for an entire week, or after the week during which his soul and body heroically withstood dissolution under the assaults of Johnny-cake. But, if the word "now" must be construed as denoting an event, or a consequence, or a conclusion in the sense of "therefore," then the explanation is clear, which is that Johnny-cake was alone the proximate cause of the demise of Mr. Josephus Smith.

It has been surmised that Mister Smith became depressed by the thought of bearing "Josephus" to his grave—I mean Smith's grave—but I see, on reflection, that it makes no difference whether it be Smith's or Josephus' grave, as both would have to be buried in the same grave. As I was saying: he became depressed and sank into melancholia and committed suicide. But it is wholly improbable that any gentleman intent on hurrying out of the world would take a week to kill himself and that, too, with an implement so vulgar as Johnny-cake, when it was so easy and so respectable to hie him to the far-famed charybdic waves of the Savannah river, there to board a craft reeling under a delicious
cargo of crab or chicken salad and Chatham Artillery Punch; and quaffing freely that seductive and insidious brew in all the innocency and trust of Adam before his fall, as he rides the high-rolling billows of those yawning waters, he could quickly slip his cable and drift out on the Great Unknown, with the dignity of any native, old-time gentleman, or President, or Tar, while under the exhilarating hallucination that he was soberly dying of sea-sickness or mul-de-mer.

If, however, it was not suicide but death by eating Johnny-cake, then Josephus Smith made a very bad trade when he sold the rake; for, as Dr. Tanner lived forty days on nothing, Josephus could have subsisted longer than a week on his rake alone—if he was not too lazy. If he was too lazy, the Johnny-cake was very remiss in not performing its mission sooner. However, it had no doubt a very tough subject; for Josephus was an old-time author and had lived many centuries on anything he could pick up. Generous food, such as Johnny-cake, was too rich for an author, "and now he's dead and gone."

I infer that the poet herself considered Josephus a tough subject; for, the stanza devoted to him must have suggested by association the one following it in which she gives her opinion of a mule. It runs thus:

"If I had a mule, Sir! and he wouldn't start,  
Do you think I'd harness him to a cart?  
No! no! I'd give him oats and hay,  
And let him stay there all the day."

Now, assuming that the poet addresses that indignant question to me, I hasten to put myself right by declaring that I really had never considered the subject at all. I had never contemplated a poet and a mule in that close relation and entertaining such opposite opinions; that is, one maintaining that the proper time to start had arrived, and the other holding the direct opposite of the proposition and obstinately refusing to budge an inch from his position. And now, since she has denied so emphatically that she would harness up such a mule to a cart, I will certainly not dispute the proposition. On the contrary, I heartily concur in it. I go further and say, I never did see any economy in harnessing a mule to a cart that would not start—I mean the mule, of course. I highly approve her plan to "let him stay there all the day"—and night, too. But I would not extend any such hospitality as she says she would, to such an obstinate objector—whether he stand on two legs or on four.

But since the poet has declared what she would not do, I will say what I would do with such a mule. I would lengthen the shafts, nail a board across the ends of the shafts, and tie a bundle of hay just two inches further than that mule's nose could reach; then I would jump into the cart with my Bible and read *Job*. If he did not start within a day or two, I would convert him into *sausage meat*, *ship him to Paris and put him on the market*! He would go then!

But my opinion is that our poet's education on mules, as in mathematics, was neglected. I base my opinion on the
first line of that stanza. Her hypothesis is not true. I assert that there never was a mule that "wouldn't start." The mistake the poet made was in attempting to reason or argue with her mule. Like many unskilled logicians she commenced at the wrong end. It is evident that she addressed herself to the mule's head.

Now, a mule has two distinct movements or ways of starting; one is forward, the other is to the rear. Had the author approached her mule from the rear, she would have been surprised—in fact, startled—by its willingness to start. Every mule prefers to start that way. The reason is, as I suppose, it is more economical; for, when a mule starts forward, it has to employ all four legs, whereas in a backward movement only two legs and often but one is sufficient to do the work.

Any observing person who has associated much with mules can easily tell when a mule contemplates a start to the rear. There are three separate but almost simultaneous movements. First, a slight deflection of the head to starboard or port. That is done to obtain a free, open view to the rear, so he can take aim with the deflected eye—the other eye being occulted or covered by his head and neck. I say "he," but my explanation includes both sexes. One sex is just as agile as the other, and both have the same backward diathesis. Second, both ears suddenly unhinge at the base and drop parallel with and contiguous to the cervix or neck like the barrels of a double-barrel gun. The ears serve for taking aim. Third—the start! All these movements are quicker than Bogardus or Carver
or McAlpin can shoot a bird, and are as accurate and effective.

I trust I may be excused for making that short excursion in the field of natural history. I consider it in the line of my argument to support my judgment of a mule, in opposition to the poet's, as she was wholly in error about mules. I am compelled to say, in conclusion of this mule discussion, that Mother Goose did not know the construction and, I may say, the attributes of a mule. A mule is a double-ender. It can start either way with equal force and effect.

I thought I had finished my commentaries on her mathematical poetry, but here is another that fully illustrates her unfitness to soar in that imaginative field:

"Arithmetic I studied so,
It taught me how to trade;
I sold a yard of calico,
And now my fortune's made."

What childish simplicity do we witness here! Yet, how engaging it is—making a fortune out of the sale of one yard of calico! Let us see how her "Arithmetic" taught her to do that. A single yard of calico costs, at least, five cents. Now, suppose she sold it for a hundred per cent profit, or even two hundred, her profit was only ten cents. And that is what she considered a "fortune!" Why, it would use up her entire capital, principal and profit, to buy a shoe-string for her leather house!

Our Mother's simplicity recalls what I once saw on Broadway, New York. A father gave a cent to his three-
year-old boy. He thought he was rich and started off at once to buy out a Broadway store.

In this jumble and madness she retains a method. She does not forget her antipathy to men. Here is a proof:

"I bought a dozen new laid eggs
From good old farmer Dickens;
I hobbled home upon two legs,
And found them full of chickens."

Mrs. Goose had two hens, one black and named Hickety Pickety, the other, "a little hen, the prettiest ever seen," but without any name. so far as my researches have gone. The black hen she kept expressly to "lay good eggs for gentlemen." This hen was selected because she was guaranteed to lay none but fresh eggs. Her eggs were all engaged in advance to gentlemen. Hence, not being a gentleman, Mrs. Goose never used one of them. She bought eggs for her use of good old farmer Dickens.

The pretty little hen was not required to lay. She was too useful for her strength and constitution to be worn down by bringing eggs into the world. She washed the dishes, went to mill for flour, and returned always in less than an hour; baked bread, brewed ale, kept house, and after her day's duties were over, she sat by the fire and "told many a fine tale." (I will say right here, in parenthesis, when I look at all we are told that little hen did, I am tempted to throw the whole Goose poetry in the fire and declare I don't believe a word of it! It is all so different from my own experience, from what I read and see.)
However, that would do no good because there are probably ten million other copies out. Now, old farmer Dickens bore such a high character for new laid eggs that she bought a dozen of him and when she got home “she found them full of chickens.” That was very strange for “new laid eggs,” if Mr. Dickens was the good man people said he was. And, no doubt, he was a good man—when not on a trade. The world is full of such good men. One of two things is certain, either those eggs had left off being eggs and had started off to be chickens, or Mother Goose was flying home for about 21 days, and between her and her goose the eggs were hatched.

I have more than once complimented my author on the terseness of her style, that is, her avoidance of redundancy. I regret that I must here record an embarrassing exception to her fine rhetoric, in the third line of the stanza now under consideration. She sings, “I hobbled home upon two legs.” It was wholly unnecessary to use the numeral adjective, “two,” to describe or qualify her legs, because, unless a most extraordinary state of things existed in or about the poet’s physiology, she had the right and it was her duty to assume that the reader would not suppose against all observation, reading and personal knowledge, that she possessed more—lower extremities than anyone else. But, the employment of the word “two” does suggest the idea that she meant she had the ability, or the agility, to hobble home by the use of only two (to speak plainly) of her legs.
Redundancy is not only bad form in poetry or prose, but it sometimes raises perplexing surmises. All curiosity could have been forestalled, and any suggestion that gives pain to a tender-hearted physiologist, or a nervous excitable reader, could have been prevented by using the word “both” or “my” instead of the inquisitive numeral “two.” Verbal redundancy that goes to the extent of creating in the mind the image of a superfluous of legs is abominable rhetoric—(I say this respectfully)—because it “gives to airy nothing a local habitation,” or words to that effect. Besides, if such a superfluity did exist, it was a matter of such a delicate nature that it ought to have been kept exclusively in the family.

It seems as if there will be no end to this incoherent medley.

“Wash the dishes, wipe the dishes,
Ring the bell for tea;
Three good wishes, three good kisses
I will give to thee.”

Before considering the merits of this stanza, I wish to say that her proposition viewed as one for a trade seems to be fair enough. As in all she said and did, we discover in this a sense of fairness and justice. The three good wishes amount to nothing, of course, as anybody can give wishes, but to offer three good kisses just for washing and wiping the dishes and ringing the bell, it seems to me, was very liberal. However, on reflection, I see that the value of the kisses would depend on the person who was to give them. If my theory be correct that all Mother Goose’s
writings are autobiographic, then she made the proposition. In that case, after taking another look at her portrait, I don't believe I care to bother with the dishes. I would ring the bell as a matter of accommodation, but not under the terms of her proposition. But, now to the stanza as a work of art.

I cannot understand why the author introduced such domestic affairs into this poem. There is nothing essentially poetic in washing anything, or ringing a bell for supper. In fact, there is so little true poetry in that class of subjects that I maintain the proposition, (which I may as well announce here as a suggestion to all future poets), that no poem can be truly great and stand the test of time, that is founded solely on washing and wiping dishes and ringing a supper bell.

If she had confined her inspiration to ringing the bell, whether for tea, dinner, or breakfast, and had made a poem something like Edgar Poe's "Bells," it would have had a chance to live, because eating is a subject in which people feel a deep interest at least three times a day. I am amazed that she did not think of that. Perhaps she did and was willing to sacrifice the poem as well as the three good kisses to get the dishes washed. We must remember the size of her family. There must have been at least a crate or two of crockery to be washed and wiped. Besides, it was getting on to tea-time when she had to whip her children "all round," and she had to make a big sacrifice to get the washing and wiping done.
Here, I am pained to say, is another stanza in the same strain:

"My aunt she lost her petticoat,
    My uncle found a calf;
    My sister told an anecdote
    That made my father laugh."

Now, can not the simplest person see that a poem written to commemorate the loss of an aunt's petticoat, could not arouse much enthusiasm in the public's bosom? Who cares a cent whether her aunt ever had a petticoat, or whether she kept it, or lost it, or it was stolen, or burnt up? My deliberate judgment is that no poem can survive long with nothing to support it but a petticoat! Nor can it be made any stronger by introducing a calf into it—I mean the poem, of course. I admit that it was much more comforting and sustaining to the whole family for her uncle to find a calf than to lose one, but what do the lovers of poetry care about her uncle's calf? The public do not care a fig for a calf until it is turned into veal and its hide into leather. The author, it seems, did not recognize the fact that there is no congruity between poetry and a calf. All orators and all other poets recognize this incongruity and studiously avoid calves. In fact, in all my research I have never read a poem, eulogy, or panegyric, on a calf by any great orator or poet. The only calf that ever aroused enthusiasm was Aaron's golden calf. But it was not the poetry in the calf. It was the gold.

Therefore, whether viewing these two stanzas separately or the poem as a whole, I cannot pronounce them or it to
be of a high order of art. I must say I think they are failures. A petticoat, a calf and an anecdote, all within three lines, do not mix well. They lack poetic affinity.

Here is another specimen of this sad jumble, and with it I will drop the curtain on this painful performance of our sainted Mother. It is too bad, all round.

“There was a man in our town
Who couldn’t pay his rent;
And, so one lonely moonlight night
To another town he went.”

The only redeeming feature of that stanza is its truth. It is real history, or biography. The simplicity of our Mother in telling us of that man as something entirely new, is exquisitely charming. That man is as widely known as real estate. Every landlord knows him, and every landlord, strange to say, has no use for him. They set upon him and worry him everywhere he goes. The reason is, (as I am informed), that he is always moving and never settles. Landlords like men to settle and never move.
CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. GOOSE AND SHAKESPEARE COMPARED.

These commentaries would be incomplete were I not to give my estimate of Mrs. Goose's rank as a poet. This is the most difficult part of the undertaking. Hitherto I have not assumed the role of critic. I have been a commentator. There is a wide difference between a critic and a commentator. A commentator's duty is to show how much his author knows. A critic's duty, *imprimis, a priori, and a posteriori,* is to show, *a fortiori,* how much he knows.

To save labor and the time and patience of the reader, I will confine my comparison to one poet hitherto believed to be the greatest of all poets. I mean Lord Bacon Shakespeare, better known as William Shakespeare. I should explain that it has been but recently discovered by a vast deal of cyphering that his real Christian name was Lord Bacon.

Every one familiar with the works of L. B. Shakespeare and Mother Goose will, without critical comparison, recognize a wide difference in their respective writings.

**First:** The poems of Mrs. Goose are much shorter. Therefore, Mother Goose has a great advantage in wit. "Brevity is the soul of wit."

**Second:** Her poems are much more numerous. This demonstrates her superior capacity for writing, as is true of those novelists who write the greatest number of books.
She wrote about 375 poems, whereas L. B. Shakespeare wrote less than fifty.

**Third:** L. B. Shakespeare, in nearly all his compositions, could not conceal a constant effort to produce a dramatic effect, whereas Mrs. Goose wrote naturally and with great simplicity. Simplicity is a mark of greatness.

**Fourth:** Though L. B. Shakespeare introduces more characters, he has less variety. Every character is a man, or woman, or child, with two exceptions; one is a Mr. Bottom in *Mid-summer Night's Dream*, and the other is a dog that Launce lectures. But the dog makes no reply. He could not talk like Mrs. Goose's dogs. She introduces men, women, boys, girls, horses, mares, colts, one mule (a relative of Bottom), sheep, rams, dogs, cats, kittens, frogs, rats, mice, hens, roosters, ducks, drakes, wrens, robins, larks, enckools, crows, rooks, pigs, etc., most of which converse and take part in making the poetry. So that it is evident without argument, that Mrs. Goose has great superiority in the diversity of characters which L. B. Shakespeare calls *dramatis personae*.

**Fifth:** Mrs. Goose's poetry makes children as well as grown people laugh or smile. I never knew a child to laugh at L. B. Shakespeare's writings. On the contrary they sometimes make grown people weep, which is not a pleasing effect. It is, in truth, an "effect defective." Mrs. Goose's effects are always pleasing. "Argal"—(if it be not unfair to use L. B. Shakespeare's own word against him), Mrs. Goose is briefer; had greater capacity to write; wrote with more simplicity; could introduce more charac-
ters, and was more pleasing than Lord Bacon Shakespeare.

But there were two things in the surroundings of Mrs. Goose that gave her a great advantage over her distinguished rival, and it is but sheer justice to L. B. Shakespeare that I should make them known. One is that Mrs. Goose lived a hundred and more years later than he lived, or several thousand years before, I am not certain which. The evidence is conflicting. An anonymous author affirms that Mother Goose was cotemporary with the Noah who was Captain or Supercargo of the Ark. In fact, he says Mrs. Goose came over in the Ark. Another Noah asserts that she lived in the last or 18th century. Perhaps Mother Goose is "she"—who can tell? Several thousand years is a very broad discrepancy between the two dates claimed as the time when a mortal lived. But I will not attempt to settle that question of veracity. It is enough for any one to do in this wicked world to take care of his own veracity.

But, if Mrs. Goose lived with the first Noah, her great advantage was that she had the whole field of poetry in its virgin state all to herself. No one had touched it. If she lived with the other Noah, then she had the advantage of all the mistakes of all the poets from Job and David down to herself.

The other fact in favor of Mrs. Goose is one of my own discovery, I believe. It is this: Mrs. Goose had the good fortune to live at a time when certain families lived who had no ancestors and no descendants that I have been able to trace. Without using the names of those families it was
impossible for Mrs. Goose to have written some of her finest sonnets. Take this one as an example:

“Little Nancy Etticote
In a white petticoat,
With a red nose;
The longer she stands
The shorter she grows.”

How could Mother Goose have possibly poetized and immortalized that petticoat if Miss Nancy Etticote had not been born? What other word in the English language rhymes so well, or rhymes at all, with petticoat? If any reader is skeptical, let him try one. We have observed a few pages back, the complete failure of even this resourceful author when attempting to rhyme “anecdote” with petticoat.

She had the same advantage over the Shakespeare-Bacon Combination in the use of the name, Flinders.

“Little Polly Flinders sat among the cinders,
Warming her pretty little toes.”

Besides those she had Jumping Joan, Jack Horner, Handy Spandy, Tommy Tittlemouse, Margery Daw, Chitterabob, Miss Muffet and others who were involuntary but invaluable contributors to the power and beauty of the Goose poetry. It really seems that that fellow, Handy Spandy, was born for no other purpose than to rhyme with that other scrub, Jack-a-dandy; for, after doing that, he passed out and has never been heard of in any other business. What an easy life his was! He struck one note and his work was finished. He lived and died a melodious tone.
CHAPTER XXVIII.

But this comparison can be made clearer by a brief review of the methods of these two great poets in treating the same subject. And I select the subject of love because, although it is the oldest in human experience (as it began in the Garden of Eden), still, it is the least threadbare. While many people get love-sick, none get sick of love. I take L. B. Shakespeare's most famous love tragedy—Romeo and Juliet. Let us see what it amounts to.

Romeo, a young, blooded buck about Verona, already "mired down in love" with one Rosaline, "got on a spree" one night, put on a masque, and ran the blockade at a fandango given by the deadly enemy of his family—one Mr. Capulet—an act ill-mannered and ungentlemanly to the last degree. There he met for the first time, a girl named Juliet, daughter of his foe, and both fell dead in love at sight—as they imagined. He kissed her within two minutes and had to fly to prevent being kicked out or killed.

Romeo, that instant, pulled himself out of the mire, baselessly deserted Rosaline and took after Juliet. The next night he climbed over the wall built by old man Capulet around his apple orchard to make love to the girl. As he was sneaking through the orchard towards the house, without any arrangement between him and Juliet, she stepped out on a shed overlooking the orchard and back yard. Then commenced the most sickening twaddle about love; the
most bombastic cooing and wooing, crying and sighing, puling and fooling that were ever gotten off on such short notice and without laborious rehearsing. (They had known each other just two minutes at the dance).

She soliloquized and then he soliloquized. He Ohed three times and she Ahed once. Then he Ohed once and she Ohed twice in response. That made four Rolands for three Olivers, so to speak. They then rushed into a competitive contest in compliments. He vowed that Juliet was the Sun. He asked her to rise (though she was then standing upon the shed) and kill the envious Moon which, he said, was already sick and pale because Juliet was fairer than it was. Think of a girl killing the moon! Besides, astronomers say the moon has been dead millions of years! However, it is but just to remark that neither Juliet nor Romeo knew that fact, though both were at that time struck by the moon.

Not satisfied with that bombast, he asserted as a fact that he was acquainted with two of the fairest stars in the heavens that had been suddenly called away upon urgent business and had sent an entreaty to Juliet’s eyes to come up and take their stand and twinkle till they could get back home. And he declared that, if her eyes would accept the invitation and the two stars should go down and occupy Juliet’s eye-sockets, her cheek alone would be as much brighter than the two stars as the sun is brighter than a tallow candle; and that the birds would think it was broad open day and begin to sing. Think for a moment of the absurdity of a woman’s head being big enough
for two stars of the first magnitude to move in and out of the eye sockets, and of a man falling mad in love at sight with such a head! Why, he could have traveled a hundred years over her nose and never got across one of the pores of the skin! If he had slipped and fallen into one of her eye-sockets he would have plunged a hundred years before striking bottom! That boy was the prince of liars, or he was a plump idiot.

While Romeo was talking all that nonsense to himself, Juliet was also talking some nonsense to herself. She did not know he was in the back yard listening to her. But something prevented him from hearing distinctly what she was saying. Probably the brightness of her eyes had set the roosters to crowing for daybreak and the birds in the orchard to singing. So he slid from behind the hen house and got nearer—perhaps, behind Mr. Capulet’s dog kennel, or an apple tree. He then heard Juliet call, “O, Romeo—Romeo!” And he had so little sense, I verily believe that but for fear of the old man’s dogs he would have hollered out “Here,” like a Congressman at roll call.

The next thing he heard was a question which he was not able to answer. In fact, nobody could answer it. It was: “Wherefore art thou Romeo?” as if the poor boy could tell why he was Romeo and not Jacob Einstein, or Josephus Smith, or anybody else—a name over which he had no control, and about which he was not even consulted.

The next request would have insulted a gentleman. She asked him to deny that he was the son of his father, and to
change his name. But she added, if he would not, she would gladly change hers to Mrs. Romeo—the very thing Romeo was there for! Then, after ejaculating, "O, be some other name!" she, in the next breath, assured him there is nothing in a name and that he, like a rose, would be just as sweet if his name were Jehosaphat, or Cain, or Balaam. She insisted, notwithstanding, that he should change his name and instead of it to "take all herself."

While Juliet was thus auctioning herself off to Romeo he had not said a word; but that cheap offer enthused his cupidity beyond fear of dogs, or of Mr. Capulet's rusty old blunderbuss, and he stepped from behind the kennel, or apple tree, and accepted the bid. He bawled out, "I take thee at thy word!" He agreed at once to be rebaptized and to take the name of Love. In his hasty zeal he even forgot to give himself any Christian name. He was to be simply Love—Mr. Love, like Mr. Adam, or Mr. Noah, or Mr. Job.

Juliet not knowing that Romeo had been listening "behind a screen," as she politely called the hen coop, asked him who he was. He said his name was "hateful to him because it was an enemy to her." She said she knew his voice (though she had never heard him speak a hundred words) and, yet she asked if "he was not Romeo and a Montague."

He said he was neither if she had any objection to either!

Juliet then abruptly asked, how he got into the back yard, and told him "the orchard walls were high and hard
to climb,” (all of which he knew), and that he was in a very dangerous place.

Romeo replied that he got over the wall “with Love’s light wings.” Yet this was before he consented to be baptized as Mr. Love.

Juliet, girl like, was thinking of something to get scared at so she could scream and, hence, she replied, “they will murder you if they see you here in the yard.” She did not mean the dogs, of course, as she said “murder” instead of “chaw you up.” She meant her people would kill him.

Romeo instantly became very brave and told her he feared her eyes, (as he well might from his description of the size of them), more than twenty of their swords” and that if she would be so good as only to “look sweet,” he would be proof against her people. That request was an insult to Juliet because, for five minutes, she had been on a heavy strain to look her prettiest. That one remark proves the silliness of Shakespeare’s hero. He did not know the first principle of courting or politeness. I mean Romeo, of course.

Juliet next asked, by whose direction he found out the orchard and the way up to the back premises. Romeo said that Love prompted him to inquire how to get over the fence, and he then lent his eyes to Love as his pilot, and he had no trouble with the fence or the briars.

Just then Juliet for the first time thought she had not been modest in telling a stranger who had sneaked into the yard and was standing in the dark. that she was dying
to marry him. So she thought it about time to put on a show of diffidence which she did by assuring the stranger that she would blush if he could see her; but, as it was dark, it was of no use to blush as it would all be lost. After the assurance that she was gifted with the capacity to blush even at night, though she thought it wasteful to do so, she abruptly asked her acquaintance of five minutes if he loved her. Before he could answer, she said, she knew he would say “yes” and that she would believe him; but, if he should swear he loved her he would commit perjury.

Nevertheless, Romeo started off at once to perjure himself by swearing “by yonder blessed moon that tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops” notwithstanding, but five minutes before, he had spoken contumeliously of the moon as being “sick, pale and envious.” (I note here that I was right in stating Romeo was standing in old man Capulet’s orchard for he spoke of “these fruit-tree tops.”)

Juliet cut the oath and perjury short off at the “tree tops” by an objection well taken, because it was based on the inconstancy of the moon. She believed the oath if made by the moon would run out in a month, and she so told Romeo.

But he wished her to understand, he had not clambered over that wall at the risk of his life and breeches for nothing. He was there to swear to anything and by anything, he cared not what. The most charitable construction is that Romeo named the moon for himself to swear by, not
to take advantage of Juliet in the contract, but because he was on a trade and the moon looked like silver.

In fact the ignorant boy believed the moon was made of silver. I assert this because in his affidavit of perjury he had just sworn that the moon was then tipping old man Capulet’s tree tops with silver. I say he was on a trade, because he called Juliet “merchandise” to her face, and told her he would go to some far distant shore not named nor the number of miles stated, to procure such “merchandise” as she was. A lover who calls his sweetheart “merchandise” is a brute! And if she had been a sensitive, refined lady, she would have jumped off that shed and kicked him in the mouth!

After Juliet’s objection to the moon, Romeo most gallantly gave up the moon and left the whole universe to her from which to choose something for him to swear by.

Juliet said she preferred no swearing at all while the contract was going on, (a very moral and lady-like feeling), but, that if he thought swearing would put things in better shape—that is, would clinch the trade so he could not back out, or plead infancy, or the statute of frauds. she would suggest that he swear by himself, for the reason that he was “the God of her idolatry.” (She had known Romeo then about nine minutes.)

He began to swear again—but she stopped him by a most illogical remark, which was: “Although I joy in thee, I have no joy in this contract to-night—it is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden.”

Now, it is undeniable that she wanted him and he want-
ed her, at least they seemed to think so, as the talk of both was on that line; although, candidly speaking, I do not believe that either one knew what was the matter. She was the first to propose. She stood on the back porch Ohing and hollering for him before she knew he was around. She was the first to say she would swap herself for himself and give him all she had “to boot.” And yet, when he surprised her by hollering out from the henhouse, that he would take her on her own terms, she shocked him by saying she found joy in him but no joy in the bargain by which alone she had traded for him. I say that remark was wholly illogical and foolish, not to say ridiculous.

She then called him “Sweet” and said good-night.

He asked if she intended to leave him unsatisfied.

She inquired what satisfaction he demanded, as if contemplating a duel.

He said he desired to make an exchange of vows.

She assured him she gave hers before he requested it. How like a lady!

He wished to know whether she desired to take it back and, if so, why?

She said “only to give it to you again.” What nonsense!

What child’s play to keep on giving and taking back!

Just then Juliet’s old nurse discovered that the trundle-bed was empty and began to call the child. Juliet told Romeo to keep his stand as she would run in and quiet the old nurse and come back. I must remark just here that, judged by civilities of this age, Juliet was not a lady; for, during that entire dialogue, while that poor fellow was balancing
himself first on one leg and then the other, she did not once invite him to take a seat on a wash tub, or on the ground, or on the wood pile, or even to squat down and rest his legs by leaning against an apple tree. All Americans, especially horse-traders, know it would have given Romeo great comfort to squat down and whittle a splinter off the wood pile or hen roost while trading for that "merchandise."

It seems that Juliet quieted her nurse, for she ran back and told Romeo she had just "three words" more to say, which were that if he meant business, that is, marriage, she would meet him the next day when and where he might appoint.

The old nurse continued to bawl for Juliet, who answered one word to her and said a dozen to Romeo. But the nurse was not to be put off and Juliet had to go in again. Just as Romeo was leaving his stand Juliet ran out and called him. Considering that he was tired from standing and had not been asked to sit down, nor even to squat down, he answered her very sweetly. He said "My Dear."

She asked: "At what o'clock to-morrow shall I send?" "At nine," he replied. She vowed that "would be twenty years," and then remarked that she had forgotten why she had called him. He replied that did not matter as he would gladly continue "at the old stand" until she could recollect. She assured him his company was so delightful she would keep on forgetting to keep him standing there. That heartless remark would have settled the whole business with a gentleman of sensibility, but that fellow gallantly
responded that if she would continue to forget why she called him, he would forget that he had any home except that hen-roost. If stupidity and leg-power are characteristic of a young rooster, that boy was certainly a game-cock.

Juliet suddenly thought that it was almost day-break, and said that while she wished him to go, she would have him go no further than a bird could go with a silk thread tied to one leg, that is, if she should be permitted to hold the thread. She did not give the length of the thread. He protested that he wished he were her bird with a thread around his leg. She wished so too, but warned him if he were, she would “kill him with too much cherishing.” Before he could say “what a glorious and happy death that would be,” which he would have said, of course, something occurred—either the nurse called, or day broke, or the dogs got after him, and Juliet had to slip in and jump in her trundle-bed. And thus ended the most bombastic and hyperbolical courtship that ever was recorded or imagined.

I deem it unnecessary to submit an extended argument to a discriminating public so much accustomed to courting, to prove that the foregoing does not rise to the dignity of even a fourth-class courtship. Nor can I think it necessary to prove that no modest, refined, sensible girl, who desires however much to court a boy or a man, will go out and climb up on top of a shed; or go out on a balcony in the dark, and bawl for him loud enough to alarm the neighborhood. It may be said that I reason from false premises in assuming the night was dark, whereas the moon was shiu-
ing. But how can a matter of moonshine alter the case? Can moonshine make any act sensible or modest that is immodest or foolish in the dark? I admit that darkness or moonshine might make some difference between climbing up on that shed in a long dress or a short dress, but none in the bawling and Oh-ing and Ah-ing and telling an entire stranger that she wished she had a string tied around his leg. To make a sure thing of it, I do not see why such a tomboy did not say both legs. Besides, whoever heard before or since this idiotic courtship of any girl or woman who, after exhausting all the arts of love, all the endearments of speech, all the tender passion that eyes, tone and heart can express, proposed to the object of her despairing adoration, as a last resort, to let her tie a string around his leg? It is too absurd for even a lunatic to propose.

It may be objected that this view of Juliet is unjust, as she did not say "leg" to Romeo. It requires forbearance to even notice an objection so shallow. It is true that this heroine did not say "leg," or "your leg" but she so meant and Romeo so understood her. This is clear from three considerations. The first is that Juliet lived in the age of active falconry. This is proven not only by all histories of that age, but also by the falconric terms used by Juliet in that twaddling colloquy. She cried: "Oh for the falconer's voice to lure this tercel-gentle back again"—tercel being a male falcon. Hence, she knew that a falcon's jess was not put on its neck, or wings, but on its leg. Besides, she knew, of course, or rather any sensible girl should have known, that Romeo had not a single wing to be tied.
The second reason is, that it is not to be presumed even for argument's sake that Romeo crawled from the outer wall to the hen coop. Juliet must have known that he got there on his legs, and would go away on his legs; and as one purpose of her desire to tie him was to keep him there, the conclusion is inevitable that she desired to tie his means or apparatus of locomotion which was his legs, of course. Any other view of the case would make the child an idiot.

The third consideration, I frankly admit, is not so convincing as the former two, as it rests mainly on conjecture. Still, it is strong in the opinion of any man who has stood for as long a time as Romeo had, without any visible means of support except his legs. For, being in the shadow of the apple trees and chicken house, he was invisible to Juliet. Still, she must have known he was on his legs, as she had not arranged any accommodations for him to sit; and being solicitous to make him as happy as she could under such trying circumstances, her first thought, most naturally, was to pull his leg, thereby giving relief to it by genuflections and change of position. Of course, the second thought was of the means or instrument to be employed, and she at once thought of tying a string around his leg, with which to pull it for his comfort and, also, to hold him from running away. Juliet's humane proposition was gladly accepted, of course, as it would have been by any man or boy, provided he could have banished from his thoughts the terrifying size of Juliet's head as we must look at it by Romeo's statement of the
size of her eyes. We have heard him say they were large enough to fill the places or spheres of two stars of the first magnitude. Besides, the novelty of the experience of having his leg tied by his sweetheart, considered apart from its proof of her devotion, was a strong inducement for consenting to that delicate operation. Furthermore, this conclusion is not only rendered very strong by the custom above stated of tying the jess on but one leg of the falcon, but by the further reflection that as Romeo was evidently standing near the henhouse or woodpile, the consequences to him might have been broken bones, or cuts, or painful contusions, if Juliet had tied both legs and pulled both at the same jerk.

Before leaving this branch of my discussion, I will remark that it is worth our consideration as to what would have been the effect on the popularity of this much admired, much wept-over love-drama, had the author permitted his heroine to execute her affectionate longing to bind her lover closer to her by the leg. While I do not profess to be a critic of the drama, still, I venture the opinion that the author of this drama, if aiming at dramatic effect on his audience, committed an irreparable blunder in not permitting his heroine to descend from the shed and to tie his hero's leg. That act could not have been a disregard of "time, place and action" so scrupulously maintained by the Greek dramatists, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and others. There could have been no violation of the code of proprieties that prevailed during the Elizabethan reign, in the Court, on the stage, and in the taphouse. There could
have been nothing lost in dramatic effect or door receipts. Indeed, enchanting as is the backshed scene, it would be stale and flat to all beardless boys, school girls and even bald-headed sexegenarians, compared to this tying sequel to a love so "rash, so unadvised, so sudden" as to be born in a ball room at night and to die in a graveyard the second day thereafter. It is impossible to conceive of any other scene on the stage that could arouse as much wild enthusiasm in the spectators without regard to age or sex.

It may be said that, while criticising Juliet's method of making love, I have not suggested an improvement. It is not the duty of a commentator to prescribe how girls in charge of nurses and in short dresses ought to court. That duty belongs to mothers and nurses who understand the desirability or advantage in each particular case of starting children out in that business who are under the age of fourteen. With one more reflection on the heroine's part in this love-tragedy, I shall notice briefly the hero.

Juliet has been the cynosure—the art-model—in the passion of love for more than two centuries. Boys and girls, everywhere, will forego eating ice cream and drinking soda water for two or three consecutive hours, to dote on Juliet as a lover and to weep real salty tears over her insufferable woes and suicidal Good-Night to Earth. This morbid sentiment, this intoxication of the heart, this fascination of the soul, that for the time steeps the senses in forgetfulness and binds them unconscious slaves to a Sven-gali spell, that wafts them in dreams beyond earth's cares
and clouds into a beatific realm where Fancy's angels dwell, entices mothers, likewise, to desert their cherubs for a time that once more their spirits may float away listless on the roseate bosom of airy nothings and "lap them in Elysium." But in my opinion, which I apprehend is shared by very few boys and girls, this heroine is not a true ideal of human love, because, no girl child filled with genuine affection would go out to play with Romeo or any other boy, for ten minutes, without taking along her dolls. And I do not remember ever seeing Juliet playing with her dolls. It will not do to say her nurse would not let Juliet have her dolls, because it is a fact universally known that nurses will let children play with water, dirt, or aqua fortis, to get rid of them awhile.

The question whether the boy, Romeo, was a gentleman I do not consider debatable. No gentleman will jump a wall around the back yard of an enemy at night and go sneaking and dodging and sliding along from tree to tree, like a chicken thief, to make love to a girl who would kiss a stranger in a ball room. This assertion of general ethics might be questioned by some sophist who does not know what "gentleman" means, if he thought I am speaking of a ball like the Bradley–Martin, or the French ball in New York City. But I certainly am not. They came off only two years ago, whereas the bal masque of old man Capulet was five centuries ago—and centuries before the times of Catherine II. of Russia, Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry of France, of whom fifty or more crowded into the Bradley–Martin ball without knowing their own
biographies. Of course, for people so benighted, it is impossible for any writer to lay down any rule in ethics, for the reason that they know too little of history to concede that Madame de Pompadour, or Madame du Barry, could kiss or be kissed by anyone in a ball room with as little impropriety as elsewhere. But we must assume, there being no evidence to the contrary, that Mr. Capulet was a very proper person and that he conducted his ball like a gentleman. In support of this presumption, I will state that when Tybalt, Juliet’s cousin, was urging her father to kill Romeo on the ball room floor, the old gentleman positively refused on the ground that a ball room was not the best place wherein to commit murder. This gentlemanly regard for the proprieties pertaining to time and place for murder, will not be questioned by anyone even at this day except an untamed cowboy, or a Comanche, or an Apache Indian.

To make my position as to Romeo’s ungentlemanly conduct impregnable, I will state that, in the entire history of the human race, there have been recorded but two instances of such breaches and utter disregard of the proprieties of civilized society. One was by Romeo and the other by Satan, (called by profane people the Devil), who jumped over the wall around the garden of Eden and sneaked along among the fruit trees to give an apple to Eve. That it may be seen I do not misrepresent these two blackguards, I give a quotation from Milton who describes the action of Satan with the circumstantial detail that con-
vinces us he knew all the facts. He speaks with the confidence of an eye-witness.

"One gate there was, and that looked east
On the other side; which when the arch-felon saw,
Due entrance he disdained; and in contempt,
At one slight bound overleaped all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;
Or as a thief, best to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles."

Again: No sane man or boy would run the risk that Romeo took of being shot as a sneak-thief, or a henroost burglar, or of being dog-bit. Romeo was of Veronese blooded stock and could not dare, if sane, to imperil his family name by such conduct in the back yard of his hereditary foe. The Montagues and Capulets had been killing each other for ages in the struggle to get the lead in society, just as the war of destruction was carried on between the cranes and frogs.

If Romeo was afraid to present his card at the front door of Mr. Capulet's house and then to request permission of some one about the house to court Juliet in the parlor; or, if he could not get the old nurse to introduce him to Juliet during some stroll on foot, or ride in her push-carriage, he should have advertised among the "Personals" in a "Leading Daily" for a private interview, about as follows: "The young gentleman, masqued, who kissed ange-
lie young lady at Capulet’s fandango last night, is dying to form acquaintance. Will meet her, without nurse, tonight, nine o’clock sharp, in graveyard. Can be distinguished by white sheet wrapped around him.” If she had met him, he could have sworn she loved him. Besides, he would have run no risk in a graveyard of being shot, or dog-bit, or being arrested, and would have been saved all the climbing and creeping and leg-ache and swearing.

It is a noteworthy fact that these two children were of two of the first families in Verona. I do not mean the first settlers of the town, but first in social standing. They were a part of the aristocracy, if Verona had any; and the presumption is she had, because there is no record of any volunteer substitutes who came together and numbered themselves 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on to 400. or any other number, just as the French number their galley-slaves.

We have no record of Mr. Montague’s wealth, but we know that Mr. Capulet was wealthy, because he had many retainers who protected his personal honor by doing his fighting in the streets of Verona while he looked after his tombs and other business. (See Romeo and Juliet, Act I., Scene I.). He owned an apple orchard walled in, and large investments in tombs. “One of the tombs of the Capulets” is as well known to-day by all young orators as it was by the family or the undertaker. Mr. Capulet, if not an orator, had the highest appreciation of oratory, as, in disposing of his estate, he left this invaluable tomb a legacy to all orators to be used by them at will, during life, as joint tenants. Considered simply as a warehouse that tomb has
been increasing in value for over 520 years, as not a day passes without a "consignment" of something or somebody "to the tomb of the Capulets." Its storage capacity must be immense—much greater than that of Noah's ark, or of the proposed warehouse to store the entire cotton crop raised in the South.

If the art or science of courting is to be measured by the number of violent deaths by murder, duels and suicides as consequences of it, I admit, without a word, the vast superiority of the Shakespearean to the Goose dramatist. For, in no love affair of which I have any knowledge have so many homicides ever occurred as in the one between Romeo and Juliet except, perhaps, in a few that have taken place in Western mining camps where there were thirty to fifty Romeos and from sixty to a hundred revolvers and bowie-knives and only one Juliet. With such a disparity between one to be loved and so many lovers and pistols, it is not fair to Tybalt. Romeo and Juliet to make a comparison. The odds in weapons and male persons are too great. And what is the summing up of this love affair?

Mercutio, Romeo's friend, murdered on the street in open day; Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, slain in a brawl by Romeo, her husband, in a grave-yard; Paris, Juliet's intended husband, killed by Romeo; Romeo, a suicide; Juliet, a suicide—all within two days from the fatal kiss at the ball. Death—relentless, remorseless, insatiable! Death, pallid from ravenous hunger, should have been surfeited with such a feast!
I dismiss all this so-called love-making—this Oh-ing and Ah-ing—this jabbering about the sun, moon and stars; this surfeit of sighing; this puerile romancing in the borderland between the nursery and puberty; this stabbing and dying, with the remark that on calmly reviewing it from opening to finish, I am only restrained from saying something very discreditable to the author's common sense, by my natural respect and reverence for his extreme old age. He certainly could not have had a very wide experience in the arts commonly practiced in courting now-a-days.
CHAPTER XXIX.

Now, in contrast to that courtship, I will endeavor to disclose the charms of a love-affair immortalized in song by Mrs. Goose. I select her own courtship which, though recorded in the third person, is unquestionably autobiographic. A gentleman and, judging from the approved portrait of him, an octogenarian, suddenly and without any premonitory symptoms, discovering himself desperately in love, decided to hobble out and propose to somebody. He soon met a lady in the public road. The heroine had arrived at or near the age of the hero. They were not silly children. She was not romping in short dresses nor in charge of a nurse, although rapidly approaching the period of life when she would need one. Both had arrived at the age of discretion. They had known each other—not for five minutes only, as in the case of Romeo and Juliet, but, probably, for sixty or seventy years—a period long enough for them to be partially acquainted; for, no man and woman ever know each other thoroughly until married for twenty to fifty years, the time varying according to their temperaments, frankness and common sense.

This hero did not climb over a wall, nor sneak up on the heroine in her back yard. He did not even call on her at or in her leather mansion to break to her the glad tidings of his amatory purpose. There is no evidence written or traditional that these two lovers met by pre-arrangement. They met on the public road or the King's highway,
as any two wayfarers out in search of a responsive heart might meet. The gentleman seeing a lady approaching and being out to propose, without any useless ceremony, but with exemplary and unprecedented caution, at once dimly revealed the burden resting on his heart, by the question so full of tenderness and sympathy—"Shall we go a-shearing?"

The precise, and I may add, the occult reason for the appropriateness of a sheep-shearing, or any other shearing as the most delectable and propitious occasion for unveiling the tender passion to one's Dulcinea, I have not investigated with the minute research that is, perhaps, a commentator's duty. No treatise or discourse on this abstruse question having ever come into my possession, and not knowing anyone whose experimental knowledge might enlighten my mind, I have concluded that there is no record of another instance in the billions on billions of amatory strategies similar to the one now under consideration. I have been compelled, therefore, to accept the course adopted by this eager suitor as the result of much serious and rational forethought, and of a wide experience in matrimonial forays on the hearts of maidens, some of which had wound up in placing him on the defense in suits for breach of promise. This theory readily discloses the wisdom of the decision to invite his inamorata to a shearing. And this theory is strongly supported by the internal evidence furnished by all the attendant circumstances, such as the natural caution of an octogenarian; his prudence in proposing on the public highway far from any dwelling;
the presence of no one but the wooer and the wooed; the thorough diplomacy, the admirable adroitness used in opening negotiations; and his wonderful self-control while being consumed by the flame of love.

Another fact, in my opinion as a lawyer—not as a commentator—is perfectly clear. It is that this importunate lover was a bachelor. His coyness, his sheepishness, his doubt of the firmness of his footing, prove that he had no matrimonial experiences. They show that he knew the least of maidens and nothing whatever of widows. How differently would have been the action of a widower? He would never have thought of sheep-shearing. If he had, he would not have dared to propose to a widow to make a visit on an excursion to a sheep-shearing. He would have known too well that both widows and widowers know too much of that business to dress up and go junketing to see that operation. The more widower, the more direct and bluff are his amatory methods. When a widower about four times and ready for the fifth venture, he takes along an inventory of his property and children, reads it to his select-ed victim and asks her if she is willing to trade.

In the young bachelor's bosom Cupid's first arrow is poisoned with delirium, insomnia and the fidgets. If of poetic and dreaming mood, for him each star is lustreless beside his angel's eyes. The deepest hue of the reddest rose is sable to her lips. Her breath sweeter than the perfumed zephyr fresh from a bed of violets. Her voice more musical than Sappho's song, and every strand of her tresses
is spun of gold, no matter whether they be caroty, black, or flaxen.

The heroine in this charming model in the art of wooing was, beyond question, a widow. If, as I believe, she was Mrs. Goose, she was a widow, of course. Her Goose husband had been dead at least as long as Hamlet’s father before his mother married his uncle. No one would dare impute to Mrs. Goose even the thought of committing bigamy, although, so far as my researches disclose, Mr. Goose’s death is not recorded.

Many widows have been criticised, especially by maids, for marrying, but I venture to assert that, apart from her desire, it was not only the right but the duty of this widow to marry. I base this opinion solely on the size of her family. Any widow who has so many children she doesn’t “know what to do,” has the Divine Right to have help from any bachelor or widower she may select and, if need be, to coerce him into matrimony. This may be to bachelors and widowers a startling view in social statics; it may sound tyrannical, socialistic, anarchistic, revolutionary; but it is only an advance proclamation of one of the Rights of the New Woman, and bachelors and widowers can prepare for the inevitable. With this introduction, I shall proceed to demonstrate the superiority of my author over Shakespeare in the art of love.

In the drama I select, there are but two dramatis personae. The first and only act—the first and only scene—is in the middle of a public road. The heroic octogenarian, or octogenarian hero, meets the almost equally matured ob-
ject of his adoration, and the brilliant and successful affair of the heart began and ended thus:

"Old Woman! Old Woman! shall we go a-shearing?"
"Speak a little louder, I'm very thick o'hearing."
"Old Woman! Old Woman! shall I kiss you dearly?"
"Thank you, kind sir! I hear very clearly!"

Now whether this work of genius be considered in the light of tact, diplomacy, war, triumph, laconism, or therapeutics, I affirm it to be without parallel, or even comparison, in sacred or secular history. I had nearly said sacred or profane history, but there is not a suggestion of profanity in the entire drama. If considered as diplomacy, it over-reaches Machiavelli or Richelieu. If as tact, it surpasses all American politicians even when kissing unwashed babies to get votes. If as war, the cunning feint, the foxy decoy, surpasses Fabius or Hannibal, while the quick assault on the centre outdoes Napoleon. If as a triumph, it is unparalleled, because the hero, within twenty seconds, captured citadel, all opposing forces, baggage and arms, without the shedding of even a tear. If as laconism, no other courtship was ever made and successfully ended in nine words.

As more than nine words were spoken, I deem it necessary to explain my last assertion. The words, "Old Woman" shouted four times at the lady being wooed, are not to be counted in the courtship. first, because they are words of "Attention," that is, to fix the thoughts of the person addressed on what is to follow, similar to the military command, "Attention!" and second, because the words
"Old Woman" are wholly inadmissible by young and old as a distinctive and delicious term of endearment. They cannot be classified among the finest or the sweetest styles of address; nor are they recognized as classical amatory literature by those who understand, or think they understand, the art or science of love.

I cannot pause in my argument to discuss at length this minor point, but I will briefly illustrate my argument by giving a few of those endearing expressions, so that the reader can readily perceive the difference in grade or quality between them and the term "Old Woman." These terms, I premise, vary according to the age, education, environment, tastes, refinement, poetic temperament and often with the sex of the person in love. They range from my Gal to My Girl; My Fellow to My Boy or My Man; My Sweetheart, Dearest, My Dearest, My Love, Darling, Dear-est Darling, Darling Dearest, My Angel (sometimes spelt with a small a), Sweetest, Dearest One (to give assurance that he or she is the only object on earth that he or she thus adores), Beloved, My Adored, My Blessing, My Treasure, My Heart, My Joy, My Worshipped One, My Precious (this being derived from pretium, Latin for price, is employed for addressing the very wealthy). The poetic lover draws on things celestial, things not of the earth, and pours out his or her soul in "My Star," "My Sun," "Thou Star of My Heart," "Thou Sun of My Being" (sometimes spelt by mistake with an o). But My Precious or Darling Moon is never used by lovers. Nor is Jupiter, nor Mars, nor Saturn, nor Neptune, nor any other of the planets, so
far as my researches have disclosed. On the contrary some people swear by Jupiter. But I must resume the line of my argument.

If this wooing be considered from the standpoint of therapeutics or the art of healing, I do not think it presumptious in a layman to say that the combined medical faculty, from Aesculapius to this hour, cannot produce the record of another case of "thick" deafness, or of any other infirmity or disease, that was ever permanently cured within ten seconds of time. It must not be forgotten that Mrs. Goose's deafness was chronic. This we know because it had become "thick," or rather, because she so declared at a time and under circumstances when all women and men speak the truth, especially of their infirmities. I do not mean the time when being invited to "go a-shearing," but when words of circumlocution tenderly uttered before marriage often lead to a-shearing at last.

I should remark here that there are two schools of commentators on this play. One maintains the absolute verity of the thickness of the heroine's hearing, while the other, being skeptical on miracles and the marvelous, rejects the therapeutical theory altogether, and maintains that deafness was feigned as a part of the author's plot. Each school defends its position with cogent reasons. The therapeutists stand with unshaken confidence on the recent discovery by a new school of young but investigating and experimental physicians, that very frequent and vigorous kissing will cure the most obstinate case of dyspepsia. Their reasoning is that, if the simple contact of four lips (technically called
by them in their prescriptions and directions for taking this remedy, "ossis labiae"), followed by a suppressed detonation, can pathologically reach to the stomach a foot or more distant and cure its chronic malady, why cannot or should not the promise of a kiss which is applied directly to the auditory nerve, cure a case of deafness, be it thin or thick? I admit that if their premise or major proposition be sound, their conclusion must follow. And the fact that this new school of young physicians persist in applying this remedy in their practice, is strong evidence that they must be greatly encouraged by the number of their patients. Statistics show that dyspeptic patients are rapidly increasing, but the mortality tables show very few deaths from that complaint. The reason is, perhaps, that nearly all ailments now are charged to dyspepsia, although not one in five hundred kills.

The second school of commentators contend that the theory of real deafness, while greatly supporting the marvelous or miraculous, utterly destroys the art of the dramatist. It detracts from her acknowledged genius. It dwarfs a great love-drama into a case of Faith-cure or conjuring. It makes the hero nothing but the father or founder of this new school of the oscillatory remedy, and the heroine nothing but a decrepit old patient, deaf from old age, giving a certificate of skill to a quack without having ever tasted his medicine. That would be perpetrating a fraud on the public and, hence, I feel fully justified in denouncing that theory. I can never give my adhesion to any Faith that
even suggests the possibility of fraud or sham in Mrs. Goose.

With these few general reflections or deductions arising out of this, the most exquisite of all courtships, I shall now point out as succinctly as practicable wherein its perfection as a work of art in love-making consists.

I have so far directed attention to the external evidences of the genius of my author—such as the selection of *dramatis personæ* of great age; wide and ample experience in the roles they were to play; selection of the time and place of action—to wit: in the public road, in open day, and no witness present or within hearing; the hero, a bachelor of numerous youthful gayeties, pursued by "breaches of promise" until he was as sly as Joey Bagstock and as shy of women as the Satyr of Nymphs, yet anxious for a wife as a nurse; the heroine a widow of extensive experience, with innumerable children and as willing and eager to marry as Juliet. My task will be done when I shall have unfolded the brilliant movement of this drama.

The entire drama is in dialogue. This is in harmony with the most approved style of courting, that is to say, a subdued conversation between two people only, one of whom should be a male and the other a female. In this particular the Shakespearean method and the Goose method of courtship are, as lawyers say, "on all fours," or entirely analogous. But here the analogy stops. Shakespeare makes the female (a child under 14 years) do the courting; whereas my author properly makes the man propose. Shakespeare puts the child to raving and Oh-ing and Ah-
ing and bawling; whereas Mrs. Goose, to prevent such a ridiculous demonstration, opens the dialogue through a suitor too feeble from age to bawl, and too cautious from sad experience in suits for breach-of-promise to commit himself to anything approaching a declaration of love nearer than to make an inquiry about going a-shearing. He would not even say sheep-shearing. Had he ventured to say "a-sheep-shearing" and had not gone farther in his suit, and had again been pursued for breach of promise, I can very well see how he might have been required by a jury to pay heavy damages for his unfaithfulness.

A sheep-shearing is for but one purpose which is to obtain wool. Wool is used largely for domestic comfort. It is used exclusively in the manufacture of the best blankets. Blankets are used exclusively for keeping warm while sleeping. Therefore, what possible object could a suitor have in inviting a lady to witness the shearing of sheep except to use her superior judgment in the choice of the quantity and quality of wool necessary to make blankets for their comfort? If he wanted wool for himself alone, why tax the strength of such a feeble "Old Woman" to do his work? That would have been very ungallant, whereas the entire dialogue proves that he was the pink of chivalry although burdened with eighty years or more. If the wool was for himself alone, politeness constrained him to so declare in explanation for making such a burdensome request. Besides all this and more that could have been forcibly urged to a jury in her behalf, the unusual, the extraordinary, the startling request to a lady of nervous debility from
old age, to witness the cruelty attendant on throwing sheep and tender lambs to the ground, and to hear their piteous bleating, would have furnished convincing proof of an offer of matrimony. And the jury would have given heavy damages in consideration of the fact that, owing to her extreme age and innumerable children, this offer was her last chance to obtain pecuniary balm to heal her broken heart.

All readers of the biography of the distinguished, the benevolent but unfortunate Mr. Pickwick, remember the heavy verdict obtained in favor of Mrs. Bardell solely through the pathetic appeal made to the jury by Sarjeant Buzfuz. He demonstrated to the satisfaction of the jury, what tenderness, what devotion, what anticipation of domestic bliss, what an unfathomable depth of love there is in "cold chops and tomato sauce." But Mr. Pickwick was not discreet and wary as was this Goose lover and hero. Mr. Pickwick was in Mrs. Bardell’s dwelling. He sat near her. He laid his bosom wide open to the opportunity for Mrs. Bardell to fall fainting upon it the instant her emotions melted under the fervor of his "cold chops and tomato sauce." He afforded ample opportunity for eavesdropping and detection by sight. Besides, he had been imprudent almost to recklessness in laying his hand on the head of Mrs. Bardell’s young cub and saying to him, "How should you like to have another father?" All these facts and endearing sayings afforded most cogent proof to the mind of Sarjeant Buzfuz of a positive declaration of matrimony. But, I venture the opinion that, if that learned and imaginative Sarjeant had had no grounds on which to base
his eloquent appeal except the words “shall we go a-shearing” preceded by the insulting words “Old Woman! Old Woman!” he never could have won his world-wide fame as the stormer and capturer of the heights of the jury-box, and as a standing terror to all wealthy knaves who would play with the blossoming affections of unsuspecting maidens like Juliet, or the full-blown and waning emotions of widows like Mrs. Bardell.

The wonderful triumph of the great Buzfuz has been the admiration of all mankind and especially of all womankind to this day, but as a lawyer I regard it a stain on English jurisprudence that that verdict was not instantly set aside on the ground that it was contrary to the weight of the evidence. The jury ignored the very strong presumption of Mr. Pickwick’s innocence arising out of his international character for simplicity, and the still stronger presumption of innocence from being the president of a club composed exclusively of males who know nothing, of course, of the wiles and deceits by which the hearts of widows and maidens are blighted.

The invitation extended by the Goose hero was absolutely non-committal. The words used were and are now as devoid of love as an invitation to go a-berrying, or a-hunting, or a-skating, or a-tobogganing. What this aged suitor meant, or hoped the lady would understand, is another matter. The law is, that language must be construed by the courts in its usual meaning, unless technical words are used. If the speaker in this case had been a bull or a bear, and the scene had been in Wall street, then the words,
"shall we go a-shearing," should be construed as descriptive and technical, and, thus construed, they would be a proposition to form a syndicate to fleece some particular person, or persons, or weak corporation, or the general public as they come in fat and go out lean.

I come now to the response made by the seperannuated heroine to that most adroit advance. Her process of reasoning within the one or two seconds between the invitation and her reply, recalls the wonderful and inexplicable mental operations of the phenomenal mathematical geniuses who can calculate the distance by inches or barleycorns from the earth to the remotest star, almost as quickly as the question can be asked. No record of her lightning thought exists and we are left to conjecture. No veriscope of her movements of form, hands, walking-staff, bewitching expression of the speaking eyes, mute but eloquent lips, can be found for the reason, probably, that that invention (the veriscope) is reserved for prize fights alone, because such a large majority of men and women think more of pugilists than of domestic felicity. But, as the invitation and the reply are so far apart in any possible view, and as the sequel to which they led is so entirely illogical and unexpected, it is proper that I, as the commentator, should try to give some idea, however faint and incorrect, of Mrs. Goose's reflections. I do not—would not—presume to be able to give an X-ray revelation of her electrified brain at the second of time, first, because she was a genius of the highest order and, second, because no man is qualified to tell, or even to surmise, what a woman thinks. For,
"Men, with their heads, think on this and that;  
Women with her hearts, on God knows what."

I surmise that Mrs. Goose reflected somewhat on this line:

"Stops me on the public road, calls me 'Old Woman'—don't even say 'Good morning—how are some of your children?' Opens abruptly—'go a-shearing?' Me go a-shearing? He go a-shearing? Hidden meaning—deep—sly—shy—don't mean it—both too old. Means marriage—wants to court me—timid—suppose I faint—fall in his arms. Never do!—knock him down—neither strong enough to get up. I scrambling get up, he scrambling get up, what a ridiculous sight! People come 'long, think we're fighting—terrible! See first what he means—make him show his hand—call him—I'll pout my lips sweetly—twinkle my eyes—smile amiably—cant my head knowingly—lean gracefully on my staff and pretend I don't understand—feign deafness."

Whatever were her thoughts, it is certain that never was there a feint followed instantly by so complete a triumph. I assert that never before nor since has a suitor had the ability to make a declaration of his consuming passion in language so vague; nor has any other woman been so wise as to interpret its meaning and to convince that suitor that she understood his riddle, by saying she was deaf. Indeed there are very few women who, on such an approach, would not have fled and reported they had met a lunatic at large.
The exquisite style of the conclusion to this courtship as recorded in the third and fourth lines of this love-drama, is without a parallel. His anxious, doubting, palpitating heart being filled to overflowing with felicity, the octogenarian conqueror was unable to restrain the fiery flood rushing through his erstwhile sluggish capillaries. Bending forward with all his physical capacity on the staff which he had confidently trusted for locomotion during more than a third of a century, he pressed eagerly for the luscious seal of the coveted vow so diplomatically expressed by the transporting admission of "thickness o' hearing" and with ineffable tenderness, asked his captive whether he should kiss her "dearly" or otherwise. He did not say "otherwise." of course, as it would have been a waste of words. He did not say "Dearie," which indicates the person to be kissed, but he said "dearly," which describes the manner of kissing; as if he had said, "shall I kiss you sweetly, or mildly, or loudly, or lingeringly." It is clear, however, that this veteran bachelor-wooer, either from intuition, or long experience, or inspiration by Cupid, selected the word exactly descriptive of the agitating emotions and longing of the woman who had so readily consented to be his shearing helpmeet for the few hours remaining to them. Time was short and she desired all that fell to her lot to be of the best quality. This is shown by the high appreciation she exhibited of the quality of a kiss to be imprinted "dearly."

To the question whether the kiss should be given "dearly," it is impossible to conceive of a response so brief that
can express a deeper sense of gratitude, a courtesy more charming, or reason more convincing.

"Thank you, Kind Sir! I hear very clearly."

Of all the billions of women who have kissed and been kissed trillions of times (I do not mean one woman, but all together), was there ever another instance of thanks being so sweetly expressed for the mere offer of a kiss? It is true, however, that this offer was made to a lady of very advanced age, with whom rapturous love-kissing was very rare, or had become only a memory. Again, the offer was made with a degree of gallantry perhaps never extended by any lover before or since. For this chevalier deferred so completely to the fancy or taste of his lady-love as to leave it to her to select the kind of kiss she preferred, whether dear, sweet, long, short, loud, cross wise, noses straight up and down, lips puckered, or flat. I can see that this chivalrous deference to the lady’s taste, and magnanimous indifference on the part of her lover as to the style or quality or quantity of the kiss, constitutes a marked differentiation from all other kisses ever given away or accepted; and this alone may account for the thanks returned by the Mother and head of the great Goose family. Besides, no other woman ever had such a family, and it was in consonance with “the eternal fitness of things,” to return thanks to any one who had the means to provide for them, or the courage to face such a forlorn hope.

Again: How graciously and tenderly she complimented the aged hero for his generosity in assuming her with her incalculable load. "Thank you, Kind Sir"—Her grati-
Attitude and gentle submission; his generosity, liberality, and philanthropy, were all fervently acknowledged in two monosyllables! Then quickly follows the crowning success of this melo-drama in the closing words as the curtain falls. It is the triumph of art; the acme of figurative speech; the chef d'ouvre of circumlocution for “yes;” the perfection of metonymy; the blush of bashful youth surviving and over-flushing wrinkled age. In it we see the crown to all of woman's charms—the perfumed veil of modesty that strews with sensuous sweets the atmosphere wherein she moves; the humility that exalts and glorifies, as our spirit sees the royal richness of the violet’s purple robe floating on the viewless incense wafted from its humble bed. No bawling, no swearing by the moon, no proposition to the devoted decrepit to tie his leg to prevent the heartless desertion of her Romeo by flight. No, she lovingly, devotedly, gratefully, transported her adorer to Paradise by meekly uttering the tender words, “I hear very clearly.”

I have recounted briefly the horrors consequent on the love drama in which two silly children were most unfortunately chosen as hero and heroine, and I shall close this comparison of the respective merits of the two great dramatists by depicting with like brevity the blissful ending of the Goose affair. There is no record of the actual wedding, the usual shower of rice and old shoes, with wishes of long life and happiness, the innumerable and invaluable presents, the gorgeous details in the big dailies of dresses of bride, maids and guests, waistfully short above and wastefully long below, the bridal trip on a goose and gander or
in a private Pullman. No—none of that. They knew they had at most but a few hours left in their dial-glass and so,

“No more was said, but arm in arm
To church they hopped away,
Got married and prepared a feast
To grace their wedding day.”

The student of Gooseology will remember the above as the closing stanza in the story of the marriage of Mr. Frog and Miss Mouse. I except, of course, from the quotation that part which describes the groom and bride as “hopping away.” That would make the whole affair ridiculous. Besides, they had long ago lost the physical agility to hop as far as a church. But I think it best not to mar the quotation by striking out “hopped” and inserting they “hobbled,” or “shambled,” or “tottered” away arm in arm to be married. It would have been history, if I had thus struck out and inserted, but all historians and biographers will heartily indorse my course, because they know that history must always give way when it interferes with an author’s purpose or theory.
CONCLUSION.

CHARMING MOTHER GOOSE! How little do even English-speaking people realize her loveliness and worth. She is the unrivaled Prima Donna of the nursery in every cultured, happy home. When the first budding thought is seen blossoming into smiles, before the simplest word has meaning, she enters upon the stage "with rings on her fingers and bells on her toes" to delight her infantile audience with jingle and rhyme. When articulate sound becomes the symbol of thought, she sings with a rapture never in after years surpassed by Adelina Patti or Jenny Lind. No cantatrice has ever been encored so heartily or so often. Nothing but tired nature needing rest can weary the enchanted ear; no melody is so sweet as her soothing lullaby to the murmuring, babbling cherub sinking into cradled slumber.

I pity the child that Providence has not permitted to look up into a mother's face beaming with the Madonna's heavenly love, and hear her tenderest tones mellowed by the holiest passion on earth, as she chants some favorite melody of Mother Goose.

In the last chapter but one, I drew a burlesque comparison between Shakespeare and Mother Goose. Let us compare them somewhat seriously. Never were writings so diverse. Viewed as literary compositions these of Mother Goose take no rank. She is the clown among poets, with cap and bells and jingling words. Shakespeare stands
above all comparison. But as contributors to human happiness, as purveyors of unmixed pleasure, which wears the crown?

Intellectual pleasure is not happiness. No one was ever happy by reading or seeing Hamlet. The intellect alone enjoys Lear, or Othello. But the heart and head enjoy Mother Goose without a tear or a sigh. Is there as much pleasure for the matured judgment in the speeches of Portia and Mark Anthony, the soliloquies of Hamlet and Macbeth, the roaring wit and humor of Falstaff, as there is for the infant imagination in the tale and song of the wooing Frog, in "The House that Jack built," "Mother Hubbard and her dog," "Sing a song of sixpence," "Who killed Cock Robin," and a hundred other shorter ditties?

As we move on from the first decade of our lives we, almost without exception, underrate the joys and troubles of that period. Emotions are not the subject of memory. We can remember the fact of a painful or pleasing emotion, but the emotion itself, being necessarily sentient, cannot be recalled. Hence, we cease to appreciate the depth of children's emotions and so often commit the folly and wrong of trying to subdue a grief by parental command or bodily chastisement, instead of using the soothing influence of sympathy and applying the Golden Rule. The joys and sorrows of infancy are as intense as those of manhood. Every child has griefs as bitter to him or her as was Actium to Anthony and Cleopatra, Phillippi to Brutus, Waterloo to Napoleon, or Yorktown to Cornwallis and George the Third. As are their griefs, so are their joys. Can the mind of man
measure the sum of happiness, which the millions of infant hearts have derived from these simple rhymes? What child having read, or having heard them sung, has ever forgotten them? What face, whether "the shining, morning face of youth," or that of age and care, is not wreathed in smiles when one is brought to mind by song or recitation?

It is an ungracious act to destroy a sweet delusion. If it be true, as stated by Noah Webster, that a woman named Goose lived in Boston early in the 18th century, and that her impromptu rhymes sung to her grand-child were collected and published by her son-in-law, Thomas Fleet, it is also true that hundreds of stanzas now contained in the volume called "Mother Goose's Rhymes and Melodies," have been written by others and added to the nucleus formed by the original compilation. That volume is not the inspiration of one mind and the good will of one heart. It is made up of the flower-offerings of many hearts. It stands as one of the noblest monuments ever built by human genius. It reflects more honor on its builders than all the triumphal arches of Rome, the shafts of Trafalgar and the Place Vendome, and all the other memorials of war. And why? Because it is the work of love and was meant to swell the meagre sum of human happiness and especially to brighten the lives of little children. This monument commemorates love. Those commemorate glory, pride, hate, destruction, suffering, sorrow, death. This awakens only happy memories, inspires delight, makes childhood joyous, manhood merry and old age cheerful. Those awaken the awful boom of cannon, recall bitter recollect-
tions, and bring in review the panorama of blood and man-
gled kindred.

Mother Goose is philosophy without learning; poetry
without the art of poesy; music without method; benevo-
ience clothed in beauty; rhyme without reason; fun that
never offends; wit without a wound; a beam of sunshine
that stretches from the cradle to the grave.

Dear reader: While you were scanning the foregoing
serio-comic commentaries, I dare say, that recollections
bright and happy sprung into view along the dusky stretch—
it may be the waste—of many years. In imagination you
have sat again on the knees of loving ones now no more,
and felt something of the joy that thrilled you then. If you
ever knew the inestimable blessing of a mother’s tender
care, you have again heard the melody of a voice that sang
to you so sweetly:

“Rock-a-bye, baby, in the tree top;”
“Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker’s man;”
“Bye-a-baby-Bunting, dada’s gone a-hunting ;”
or told you the story of “The House that Jack Built.”
Memory, perhaps, has brought before some of you vivid
pictures of your own mature years, when you chanted these
simple rhymes to your darling ones, who are now olive
branches around your cheerful boards, or have fallen asleep
to await the last waking when you and they shall meet to
part no more.

It is for these memories, these joys, that I love Mother
Goose. She is the good Genie that takes us up and trans-
ports us back to the fairy land of innocence and childish
faith. She wipes away the tears wrung from us by life's sorrows; speaks words of cheerfulness; leads us into green fields, beside rippling brooks bordered with wild flowers, overhung with drooping willows; gathers around us the girls and boys of thoughtless playtime; rings out in our ears their merry laugh, sets us on our mother's lap and makes us hear the gentle voice that sang lullabies which were the sweetest of earth's music as it is still the dearest of life's treasures.

"Oh! Would I were a boy again"—but as I cannot be, I bless the hearts that smiled on the faces of babes and gave expression to their benevolence and merriment, in the nursery songs and tales known by us all as "Mother Goose's Rhymes and Melodies." They are a well spring of joy; a perpetual romp; a refuge from sorrow; unclouded sunshine; an uncloying feast; a mine of burlesque; a magazine of ridicule; an arsenal of keen weapons of defense and offense. They are the fountain that makes youth coeval with life. With them, the speaker on the hustings transfixes his adversary; the statesman cuts deep in the council chamber; the advocate turns an opponent into ridicule; the mother changes her infant's tears to smiles, and charms the sobbing murmurer far away to dreamland and forgetfulness.

Who would not give years of after-life to be a child again, and feel the enchantment that bound the budding thought when listening to these songs and tales? Illusions though they were, they were illusions full of unalloyed delight—Oh! how different from the thousand illusions and
delusions of which we have been victims in later years. I pity myself that those bright visions—those day dreams—are gone forever.

Reader! I pity you—from my heart I do—
When I see your darling Idols broken,
One by one, by Time's remorseless hand. Few
Have escaped the loss of every token
Of earthly glory, given when the dew
Of youth was on you. Tales, fitly spoken
In nursery lore, have faded into truth,
And memory mourns the fairy land of youth.

The bag of gold, full, at the rainbow's base;
The old man in the moon; Red Riding Hood;
The marriage of sweet Jenny Wren; the chase
Of Jack O'Lantern; the Babes lost in the wood;
The graceful Fairies with benignant face;
The thrilling tale of William Tell; the blood
On Bluebeard's Key; Aladdin's lamp and ring;
The Genii who countless treasures bring;
Old Santa Claus with reverential beard;
Who, on the eve of Jesus' natal day,
Punctual, at midnight, with his bag appeared;
To bless good children—as good parents say—
All, all, and more, have vanished at a word,
And left each legend but a thing of clay.

Who has not wished the truth had ne'er been known?
Who did not grieve when first the false was shown?

[THE END.]