

MISCELLANEOUS PUERILE RHYMES.

THE present section is composed of the rhymes prevalent amongst young boys, and most of which are appropriate to the little affairs of that section of the community.

In vituperation of the schoolmaster—

A, B, buff,
Tak' the master a cuff;
Hit him ane, hit him twa,
Ding him to the stane-wa'.

In contempt for effeminate or missyish boys—

Half a laddie, half a lassie,
Half a yellow yoldrin.

In vituperation of liars—

Liar, liar, lick-spit,
In behind the candle-stick!
What's good for liars?
Brimstone and fires.

A contemptuous answer to unwelcome advice—

Speak when ye're spoken to,
Drink when ye're drucken to;

Gang to the kirk when the bell rings,
And ye'll aye be sure o' a seat !

Said on finding anything, to prevent others from claiming
a part—

Nae bunchers, nor halvers,
But a' my ain.

As a challenge to a guess—

Chaw, chaw, babec ba',
Guess what's in my pouch, and I'll gi'e ye't a'.

The following explains itself, as accompanying a piece of
harmless practical wagery :—

My mother gied me butter and bread, my father gied me claes,
To sit about the fireside, and knap folk's taes.

Said with shut eyes and an open palm, in solicitation of
a part of any good thing which another boy may have—

King, King Capper,*
Fill my happer,
And I'll gi'e you cheese and bread
When I come owre the water.

Or—

Fill a pot, fill a pan,
Fill a blind man's hand ;
He that has, and winna gi'e,
An ill death may he die,
And be buried in the sea.

When, however, a boy is saluted by a companion with a
longing 'gie's'—that is, 'give us,' or 'give me'—he is apt
to answer insolently—

The *geese* is a' on the green,
And the gan'er [gander] on the gerse.

If on this, or any other occasion, the phrase 'I'll gar
[compel] ye' is used, the reply probably is—

Gaur gerse is ill to grow,
And chuckie stanes is ill to chow.

Said in reproach of a companion who takes back, or asks
back a thing formerly given—

Gi'e a thing, take a thing,
Auld man's gowd ring ;

* *Capper* is a Scotch term for a piece of bread and butter with cheese
upon it.

Lie but, lie ben,
Lie amang the dead men.

Said when anxious to get more of some delicacy, such as comfits, which a companion may chance to have—

Ane's nane,
Twa's some,
Three's a pickle,
Four's a curn,*
Five's a horse-lade,
Six 'll gar his back bow,
Seven 'll vex his breath,
Aught 'll bear him to the grund,
And nine 'll be his death.

Said to boys caught helping themselves at the cupboard—

Black dog, white dog, what shall I ca' thee?
Keek i' the kail-pat, and glowre i' the awmrie!

Said on catching a cat in the same circumstances—

Jean, Jean, Jean,
The cat's at the ream,
Suppin' wi' her fore-feet,
And glowrin' wi' her een!

The following is said by children on the flowing of the tide:—

Nip, nip taes,
The tide's coming in,
If ye dinna rin faster,
The sea will tak' ye in.

An address to the hiccup—

Hiccup, hiccup, gang away,
Come again another day;
Hiccup, hiccup, when I bake,
I'll gi'e you a butter cake!

* *Curn*—one of several words in Scotland to express a small quantity. Pickle is another. It happened, strangely enough, that one of the managers of the Opera-house in London was the son of a respectable but plain man who resided in Aberdeen. This old person regarded his son's exaltation in no pleasant light; and on some one asking him one day what the young man was now about, he gave for answer, 'He keeps a *curn* o' queynies, and a when widdy-fu's, and gars them fussle, and loup, and mak' murgeons, to please the grit folk!' That is, in English, 'He keeps a number of indifferent women, and a few blackguard men, and makes them play on instruments, and dance, and make grimaces, to please the great people.'

Said to people yawning—

Them that gant,
Something want—
Sleep, meat, or makin' o'.

An obstestation on confirming a bargain—

I dapse ye, I dapse ye,
I double double dapse ye;
If ye're found to tell a lie,
Your right hand aff ye!

To secure a fair start in a race—

'Are you saddled?' 'Yes.'
'Are you bridled?' 'Yes.'
'Are you ready for the ca'?' 'Yes.'
'Aff and awa!'

A rhyme on numbers, said very fast—

Seventeen, sixteen, fifteen,
Fourteen, thirteen, twelve,
Eleven, ten, nine,
Eight, seven, six,
Five, four, three,
The tenor o' the tune plays merrilie.

A jocular vituperation of boys named David—

Davie Doytes, the Laird o' Loytes,
Fell owre the mortar stane,
A' the lave got butter and bread,
But Davie Doytes got nane.

In *Cockelby's Sow*, a strange rude Scottish poem of the end of the fourteenth, or beginning of the fifteenth century, 'Davie Doytes' is alluded to as a minstrel—

'Besyde, thair capitane, I trow,
Callit wes Colyne Cuckow ;
And *Davie Doyte* of the dale
Was thair mad menstrale:
He blew on a pype he
Maid of the borit bourtre.'

It is very curious thus to trace a piece of childish nonsense through a long succession of centuries.

A similarly curious instance of far-descended puerilism is to be found in another rhyme—

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John,
Haud the horse till I loup on ;
Haud it fast, and haud it sure,
Till I get owre the misty muir.

Boys in Scotland say this in the course of their rollicking sports. The invocation is probably borrowed from an old religious custom. Ady, in his *Candle in the Dark*, 4to. 1655, tells of an old woman he knew in Essex, who had lived in Queen Mary's time, and thence learned many Popish charms, one of which was this: every night when she lay down to sleep, she charmed her bed, saying—

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John,
The bed be blest that I lie on !

And this she would repeat three times, reposing great confidence therein, because (she said) she had been taught it, when she was a young maid, by the churchmen of those times.

I am informed that this custom still exists in Somersetshire, where the children, in blessing their beds, use the following rhyme:—

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on ;
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels at my head,
One to watch, and one to pray,
And two to bear my soul away.

Cried at the top of the voice to inattentive herd-boys, when they allow their charge to stray from their pastures—

Buckalee, buckalo, buckabonnie bellie-horn !
Sae bonny and sae brawly as the cowie cows the corn !

Otherwise thus (in Fife)—

Buckalee, buckalo, buckabonnie, buckabo,
A fine bait amang the corn—what for no ?
A lippie or a peck, a firlot or a bow [boll] ;
Sorrie break the herd's neck owre a foggie knowe.

Ritson gives the corresponding English rhyme—

' Little boy, little boy, blow your horn,
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn !
What ! this is the way you mind your sheep,
Under the haycock fast asleep !'

A whimsical childish grace—

Madam Poussie's coming hame,
Riding on a gray stane.
What's to the supper?
Pease brose and butter.
Wha'll say the grace?
I'll say the grace—
Leviticus, Levaticus,
Taste, taste, taste.

A whimsical summons to breakfast, said to have been made by a female servant at a school, in consequence of hearing Latin words amongst the scholars—

Laddibus and lassibus,
Come in to your paratchibus,
With milkibus and butteribus,
And ram's horn spoonibus ! .

Cried in vituperation of boys who play the truant from school—

Truan, truan, trottibus,
Leaves the school at Martinmas,
Comes again at Whitsunday,
When a' the lave get the play.

Another—

Truantie, truantie, tread the bush,
Where shall I get you?
In ahint the nettle bush,
Playing at shuggy-shew ! *

I'll tell ye a tale of Tammie Fail—
Ae Monanday at morn,
He tethered his tyke ayont the dike,
And bade him weir the corn ;
The dike shot, and the tyke lap,
And the sheep ran a' i' the corn.

In the principal country towns in Scotland, it is customary for the boys to parade the streets at night in bands, bawling, at the full extent of their voices, various rhymes of little meaning, such as—

The mune shines bright,
And the stars gi'e a light,
We'll see to kiss a bonny lass
At ten o'clock at night !

* Shuggy-shew is *see-saw*.

Mune, mune,
 Mak' me a pair o' shoon,
 And I'll dance till ye be done.

Lazy deuks, that sit i' the coal-neuks,
 And winna come out to play ;
 Leave your supper, and leave your sleep,
 Come out and play at hide-and-seek.

The following is cried by these juvenile bands when, at a particular season, they observe the conflagration of the heath, which takes place annually on many mountains in Scotland :—

Rabbit wi' the red neck, red neck, red neck,
 Rabbit wi' the red neck, follow ye the drum :
 Fire on the mountains, the mountains, the mountains ;
 Fire on the mountains ; run, boys, run.

A street cry of the Edinburgh boys—

Will ye buy syboes ?
 Will ye buy leeks ?
 Will ye buy my bonny lassie
 Wi' the red cheeks !

I winna buy your syboes,
 I winna buy your leeks,
 But I will buy your bonny lassie
 Wi' the red cheeks !

Another—

Hey, cockie dawdie, hey, cockie dow,
 Are ye ony better since you got your row [roll] ?

This was very frequently heard during the time of the last war. *Cocky* is a term for a recruit (Fr. *coquet*), and perhaps the cry was first addressed to the young men composing the volunteer regiments which took their rise in Edinburgh at the conclusion of the last century. The couplet was subjected to frequent variations, as, for instance, when the present Emperor Nicholas of Russia visited the city in 1818—

Hey, cockie dawdie, hey, cockie dow,
 Did ye see the Grand-Duke running down the Bow ?

This nonsense caught the fancy of the late Nathaniel Gow, who actually composed 'The Grand-Duke's Welcome to

Edinburgh' on the basis of the air to which the boys sung the verse.

The following are cries of the Edinburgh boys in anticipation of one of the most endeared festivals of their year, the various ceremonies of which are so well described by Burns:—

Haly on a cabbage-stock, haly on a bean,
Haly on a cabbage-stock, the morn 's Halloween!

Halloween, ae nicht at een,
I heard an unco squeaking;
Dolefu Dumps has gotten a wife,
They ca' her Jenny Aiken.

Hey-how for Halloween,
When a' the witches to be seen;
Some black, and some green,
Hey-how for Halloween!

The following passage, in a burlesque poem of the sixteenth century, *Montgomery's Flyting against Polwart*, jingles strangely in harmony with these distichs of the youth of our ancient city:—

'In the hinder end of harvest, on All-halloween,
When our good neighbours does ride, if I read right,
Some buckled on a bunwand, and some on a bean,
Aye trottand in troups from the twilight.'

The Gunpowder Plot
Will never be forgot,
While Edinburgh Castle stands upon a rock.

—A cry of the Edinburgh boys, probably bearing some reference to the firing of the castle guns customary on the 5th of November.

The following seem to be puerile burlesques of a custom once prevalent in all Scottish towns. Upon the death of any person, the bedral, or the town-crier, was sent with his bell, or wooden platter beat by a stick or spoon, through the chief streets, to announce the event, which (at Peebles) he did sixty years ago in the following words:—'All brethren and sisters, I let ye to wut, that a brother (or sister) has depairtit at the pleasure of the Almighty God—

called [John Thamson]: A' friends and brethren are invited to the burial on Tyesday niest, at twa o'clock.'

Lingle, lingle, lang tang,

Our cat's dead!

What did she dee wi'?

Wi' a sair head!

A' you that kent her,

When she was alive,

Come to her burial

Atween four and five!

An Annandale version gives the other sex, and assigns a much more dignified and deadly disease than headache—

Oyez! oyez!

I let ye to wut,

That our cat Gilbert's

Dead o' the gut! &c.

That is, the gout. In a district of Galloway the funeral invitation itself has been jocularly versified—

Highton and Howton,

Croglenton and Powton,

* * * [other places forgot]

Come a' down to the yirding o' the lang blacksmith,

P' the drap o' the day, when the harrows lowsers.

The following verse is familiar to the boys in every province of Scotland:—

When I was a little boy, striking at the studdy,

I had a pair o' blue breeks, and oh but they were duddie!

As I strook they shook, like a lammie's tailie;

But now I'm grown a gentleman, my wife she wears a railie!*

It is said that it bears reference to the first Callander of Craigforth, near Stirling, who was originally a poor blacksmith, but rose in his profession, and ultimately acquired a large fortune in an extraordinary way. James VI., when residing in Stirling Castle, having run in his debt, he followed him to London to crave payment; and the charge being in Scots money, it was paid in sterling by mistake;

* That is, a *night-rail*.—'You tie your apron about your neck, that you may say you have been kissed in a night-rail.'—*Ward's London Spy*. Mistress Sarah Stout, the Quakeress, wore a night-rail when drowned.—*See State Trials*.

that is to say, it was paid twelve times over. The verse is said to have been inscribed on the back of a picture of the fortunate man at Craigforth House.

A rhyme upon the royal coat-armorial—

The lion and the unicorn,
 Fighting for the crown ;
 Up starts the little dog,
 And knocked them baith down !
 Some gat white bread,
 And some gat brown ;
 But the lion beat the unicorn
 Round about the town.

The little dog must be the *lion sejant* placed on the top of the crown in the crest.

The following are exercises in rapid pronunciation. The object is to say the whole of one of these sentences without drawing breath—no easy matter, as any one will find who tries—and as often as possible, without faltering or blundering :—

The rattan lap up the rannle-tree,
 With a raw red liver in its mouth ;
 Loup, rattan, loup !

A shoemaker cam' to our town,
 Wi' fine cut pumps, and pumps cut fine.

I wad gi'e my ten owsen that my wife was as fair as yon swan
 That is fleeing owre you mill-dam.

It is necessary in the above case to add *co* to each syllable.

Climb Criffel, clever cripple.

I sewed a pair o' sheets, and I slate them ;
 A pair o' weel-sewed sheets slate I.

Lang may Auld Reekie's lums reek rarely !

As all the world knows, Auld Reekie is a popular name for Edinburgh. At a high masonic festival held in the city some years ago, the Earl of Dalhousie very appropriately gave the above as a toast ; but he felt so much difficulty in articulating the words, that much merriment was excited. The following is designed peculiarly as an exercise for persons having the Northumbrian burr :—

The burghers of Berwick get warm rolls and butter every morning for their breakfast.

See, after all, a better exercise of this kind in Pope's Homer's Iliad—

‘ And round the rugged rocks the ragged ruffian ran.’

A jocular imitation of toasting—to be pronounced very rapidly—

Here's to you and yours,
 No forgetting us and ours ;
 And when you and yours
 Come to see us and ours,
 Us and ours
 Will be as kind to you and yours,
 As ever you and yours
 Were to us and ours,
 When us and ours
 Came to see you and yours.

A jocular imitation of ordinary salutations—

‘ Cousin, cousin, how do you do ?’
 ‘ Pretty well, I thank you ; how does Cousin Sue do ?’
 ‘ She is very well, and sends her service to you,
 And so do Dick and Tom, and all who ever knew you.’

A school rhyme, descriptive of a house and garden—

First in the garden is a row
 Of elder bushes fit to blow,
 A bed o' balm, and a bed o' mint,
 A broken pot, and flowers in't.
 A currant bush and a codlin tree,
 A little rue and rosemarie ;
 A row or twa o' beans and peas,
 A guinea-hen and a hive o' bees ;
 A mufty tufty bantam cock,
 A garden gate without a lock ;
 A dial cut upon a stone,
 A wooden bench to sit upon.
 The house is neat, and pretty squat,
 It's safer in the storm for that.
 A looking window through the latch,
 A broken door and a wooden catch ;
 And for the knocker there is a foot
 Of poor dead Pompey tied to't,
 So that they may remember him,
 Whenever they go out and in.

JOKE UPON OLD WOMEN.

(In a loud voice.)

‘Auld wife, auld wife,
 Will ye go a-shearing?’
 ‘Speak a little louder, sir,
 I’m unco dull o’ hearing.’

(In a lower tone.)

‘Auld wife, auld wife,
 Wad ye tak a kiss?’
 ‘Yes, indeed, I will, sir,
 It wadna be amiss.’

Those which follow are of no particular application. They are often heard among children :

I’ve a cherry, I’ve a chess,
 I’ve a bonny blue glass ;
 I’ve a dog among the corn,
 Bah, Willie Buckhorn.
 Threescore o’ Highland kye,
 One booly backit,
 One blind of an eye,
 A’ the rest hawkit.
 Laddie wi’ the shelly-coat,
 Help me owre the ferry-boat ;
 The ferry-boat’s owre dear,
 Ten pounds every year.
 The fiddler’s in the Canongate,
 The piper’s in the Abbey ;
 Huzza! cocks and hens,
 Flee awa’ to your cavey !*

When I was ane, I was in my skin ;
 When I was twa, I ran awa’ ;
 When I was three, I could climb a tree ;
 When I was four, they dang me o’er ;
 When I was five, I didna thrive ;
 When I was sax, I got my cracks ;
 When I was seven, I could count eleven ;
 When I was aught, I was laid straught ;
 When I was nine, I could write a copy line ;
 When I was ten, I could mend a pen ;
 When I was eleven, I was sent to the weaving ;
 When I was twall, they ca’d me brosy Wull.

* The above appears in Halliwell’s ‘Nursery Rhymes of England,’ from which all but the first four lines are copied.

As I gaed up by yonder hill,
 I met my father wi' good-will ;
 He had jewels, he had rings,
 He had mony braw things,
 He had a cat wi' nine tails,
 He had a hammer wanting nails.
 Up Jack, down Tam,
 Blaw the bellows auld man.
 The auld man took a dance,
 First to London, then to France.
 &c. &c. &c.

MONS MEG.

Powder me well, and keep me clean,
 I'll carry a ball to Peebles green.

The rude piece of old ordnance, so long preserved in Edinburgh Castle, and known by the title of *Mons Meg*, is a subject of much popular marvelling. In this rhyme the boys pay the cannon a compliment beyond all probability, as the distance from Edinburgh to Peebles as the crow flies is fully seventeen miles. It is, however, exceeded in the verse of Robert Fergusson—

' Right seenil am I gien to bannin,
 Yet, by my saul, she was a cannon,
 Wad shot a man had he been stannin'
 In shire o' Fife,
 Sax lang Scots miles ayont Clackmannan,
 And ta'en his life.'

The history of this cannon being obscure, tradition has stepped forward with a story regarding it. At Carlingwark, now Castle Douglas, there once lived a smith named Mouncey, who had six stout sons of his own profession, and a noisy wife. In his forge was prepared this huge engine, for the purpose of battering the neighbouring castle of Thrave, then in the possession of the Douglas family. The neighbours gave it the name of *Mouncey's Meg*, in jocular allusion to the roaring habits of the fabricator's wife. To support this tale, the people allege that the stone bullets belonging to Meg can be identified with a kind of rock found on Lourin Hill near Carlingwark.