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There Was an Old Derry Down Derry, Who Loved to Make Little Folks Merry: A Closer Look at the Limericks of Edward Lear

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Edward Lear, whom most know as a writer and illustrator of nonsense rhymes and verses, as well as nonsense songs, stories, alphabets, recipes, and botany, predominantly for children, was also an accomplished illustrator, landscape painter, and poet. Born May 12, 1812, in Holloway, a suburb north of London, Edward, the twentieth of twenty-one children of Ann Clark (née Skerrit) and Jeremiah Lear, was prone to petit mal epileptic seizures, which he referred to as the "Terrible Demon" in his diary, and suffered from attacks of chronic asthma and bronchitis that were later to make it impossible for him to live in England in the winter.

When his father, a well-to-do stockbroker, went bankrupt in 1816, following several unwise business speculations, the family was dispersed, and Edward, who was but three at the time, was placed in the care of his eldest sister Ann where he remained even after the family debts had been paid and his father was released from King's Bench Prison. Being too frail to attend school, Edward was tutored by Ann, who also gave him lessons in drawing and painting. He studied natural history on his own, wrote poetry, and began to earn his own way by making sketches, preparing illustrations, and executing anatomical and disease drawings for doctors and surgeons. Still in his teens, he began a serious study of the parrots at the London Zoological
Gardens in Regent's Park that ultimately resulted in the publication, in 1832, of a series of folios, entitled *Illustrations of the Family Psittacidae*, the first complete volume of colored drawings of birds on so large a scale to be produced in England, equal to the well-known studies of Audubon and Barraband. He also undertook a similar study for *Tortoises, Terrapins, and Turtles* (1872).

It was, however, the previous volume on parrots that brought him to the attention of Lord Stanley, an amateur naturalist who was later to become the 13th Earl of Derby. After seeing his expert illustrations and observing him at work, Lord Stanley commissioned him to illustrate a volume based on the unique, private menagerie at Knowsley Hall, his family's estate in Lancashire. Lear spent the major portion of the next five years, 1832–1837, sketching and preparing the illustrations for the book. The resulting volume, titled *Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall*, was published privately in 1846.

While working at Knowsley, two things occurred which were to direct the course of Lear's life from that point onward. First his eyesight began to fail, and his attacks of asthma and bronchitis became more severe. This prompted him to abandon the exacting, extremely detailed work that was necessary to draw and paint natural history specimens from life. Instead he became a landscape painter, which permitted him to travel and avoid the harsh English winter weather that aggravated his health.

Secondly, Lear and others began to recognize his ability to
entertain children, as well as adults, with extemporaneous nonsense verses accompanied by quick sketches for illustrations.

Shortly after Lear arrived, the Earl noticed that the grandchildren and great-grandchildren would leave the dinner table as soon as they politely could and dash off below stairs. Inquiring, the Earl learned that they were gathering in the steward's dining room where the new zoological artist was entrancing them with ridiculous rhymes and improbable drawings about "a young lady of Portugal, whose ideas were excessively nautical," who drew people who looked like owls and vice versa, who meted out poetic injustice by bringing good people to bad ends, and who was always making fun of big noses, like that Old Man's "on whose nose,/Most birds of the air could repose;/But they all flew away, at the closing of day,/Which relieved that Old Man and his nose." ... 

Instead of declaring the steward's quarters off limits the Old Earl /Lord Stanley's father/ brought the star attraction upstairs to dine and socialize with the family. Edward Lear became not just a retainer at Knowsley but a guest and good friend. The friendship lasted through several successions to the title. "Fancy," Lear wrote some 50 years later, "having worked for 4 Earls of Derby." (Kastner, p. 110)

It is ironic that Edward Lear, who considered himself a "topographical landscape painter," was sought after, even in his own time, for his detailed watercolor sketches instead of the larger oil paintings that required more of his time and efforts. The further irony is that, although the value of his artwork, as might be expected, has increased considerably since his death, he is known almost exclusively at the present time for his limericks and several of his longer nonsense poems, including "The Owl and the Pussycat," written in 1868 for three-year-old Janet Symond, the daughter of one of Lear's friends, "The Courtship of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo," "The Pobble Who Has No Toes," "The Akond of Swat," and "Incidents in the Life of My Uncle Arly."
Edward Lear did not, as many have assumed, invent the rigid rhymed and metered poetic form that is known today as the limerick. While it has, over the years, come to be closely associated with him, the origin of the verse form, as well as the derivation of its appellation, is uncertain. To be sure, however, his fondness for and extensive use of this form of nonsense poetry undoubtedly contributed significantly to its development, its acceptance, and its popularity.

At least three popular books containing verses of the limerick form were published a quarter century before Lear's in the early 1820's. The first, *The Adventures of Fifteen Young Ladies*, and its sequel, *The History of Sixteen Wonderful Old Women, ... Their Principal Eccentricities and Amusements*, were published in London in 1821 by John Harris. (Byrom, p. 50) A year later, John Marshall published a toybook, *Anecdotes and Adventures of Fifteen Gentlemen*, attributed to R. S. Sharp, a grocer, poet, and author of several other books for children. *Fifteen Gentlemen* is considered by some to be a parody of the two volumes that preceded it, and its colored woodcut illustrations appear to be the work of Robert Cruikshank, a caricaturist and the elder brother of George Cruikshank, a well-known illustrator of children's books. Included in this volume were "a fat man of Bombay," "a poor man of Jamaica," "a tailor who sailed from Quebec," and "a sick man from Tobago," who turned out to be an inspiration for not one but two 19th century authors.

There was a sick man of Tobago
Liv'd long on rice-gruel and sago;
But at last, to his bliss,
The physician said this --
"To a roast leg of mutton you may go." (Opie, p. 406)

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. (Opie, p. 407)

While at the Villa Emily in San Remo in August 1871, Lear wrote
the following in the introduction to *More Nonsense Pictures, Rhymes, Botany &c.* (1872).

Long years ago, in days when much of my time was passed
in a country house, where children and mirth abounded, the
lines beginning, "There was an old man of Tobago," were
suggested to me by a valued friend, as a form of verse
lending itself to limitless variety for rhymes and pictures;
and thenceforth the greater part of the original drawings
and verses for the first Book of Nonsense were struck off
with a pen, no assistance ever having been given me in any
way but that of uproarious delight and welcome at the ap­
pearance of every new absurdity." (Lear, *The Complete Non­sense Book*, p. 21)

Coincidently, it is the same verse about the "sick man of Tobago" to
which Charles Dickens refers, through the character of Eugene, in the
second chapter of *Our Mutual Friend* (1864).

Neither Lear nor his immediate successors called the verses
limericks. In fact, the word is first cited in the *Oxford English
Dictionary* (O.E.D.) in 1898, "ten years after Lear's death, and it is
defined as "A form of 'nonsense verse.'" The final citation is taken
from Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky and Co.* (1899) as follows: "Make up a
catchy Limerick, and let the fags sing it." "By then," as John Byrom
points out in *Nonsense and Wonder: The Poems and Cartoons of Edward Lear*, "it [The limerick] had lost not only its respectability, but
also its final refrain, in favor of the novel and epigrammatic tail-line which it almost invariably has today." (Byrom, p. 50) Lear's limericks, as Joseph Kastner points out in his article on Lear in *Smithsonian*, "were often violent and uncharitable, but they were always chaste." (Kastner, p. 110)

As to the derivation of the word, the *O.E.D.* indicates that it is

Said to be from a custom at convivial parties, according to which each member sang an extemporized "nonsense-verse," which was followed by a chorus containing the words, "Will you come up to Limerick?"

Angus Davidson states that

It is possible that these extemporized nonsense-verses were in the limerick form and took their name from the words of the chorus, though the latter are not themselves in the limerick metre. (Davidson, p. 18)

There were two separate volumes in which the bulk of Lear's limericks appeared: *A Book of Nonsense* (1846) and *More Nonsense Pictures, Rhymes, Botany &c.* (1872). The first collection was compiled in 1845 from those verses that had amused the children at Knowsley, as well as several written in the interim for the children of friends in whose homes he had stayed and even the children of strangers whom he encountered during his travels. Emery Kelen believes that the first volume might, quite likely, have been encouraged by those former children for whom Lear was an "Adopty Duncle" and who, now parents themselves, wished to have copies of the rhymes that they remembered. (Kelen, p. 35) Thus,

On February 10, 1846, Thomas McLean, who had brought out
his Lear's Views in Rome in 1841, published A Book of Nonsense in two volumes at 3s. 6d. There were seventy limericks in all; Lear chose the nom de plume "Derry Down Derry" and placed on the title page a limerick explaining how the book had come about:

There was an old Derry down Derry
Who loved to see little folks merry;
So he made them a Book,
And with laughter they shook
At the fun of that Derry down Derry! (Byrom, p. 9)

From all reports the book was an immediate success, and it was reprinted and republished frequently, running into nearly thirty editions in his lifetime. Early editions were literally "read to pieces." Curiously it was not until Routledge, Warne and Routledge reissued the book in 1861 that Lear affixed his name to the work, perhaps fearing originally that his association with a book of nonsense for children might "damage" his reputation as a landscape painter. (Kelen, p. 35-36) The dedication not only identified Lear as the author of the verses, but it stated that the book itself was for the children of his original audience at Knowsley.

TO THE GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN, GRAND-NEPHEWS, AND GRAND-NIECES OF EDWARD, 13TH EARL OF DERBY,

THIS BOOK OF DRAWINGS AND VERSES
(The greater part of which were originally made and composed for their parents.)

Is Dedicated by the Author,

EDWARD LEAR

London, 1862.

In form, the limerick consists of two three-beat lines, followed by two two-beat lines, sometimes written as one, concluding with a single three-beat line that rhymes with the first two lines in an
a³b²a³b²a³ rhyme scheme. Originally the subject matter was humorous by presenting a nonsensical argument or statement.

Lear's limericks were printed in three lines with an almost German system of capitalization, that included most nouns and all proper names, in the early editions. The 1854 edition, however, featured the limericks in the five-line italic form with capitalization reserved for proper nouns only. The greater portion of the limericks, 184 out of the total 229, or 80%, introduce an old or young man, lady, girl, person — either male or female, the clues being derived from subsequent pronoun usage, the figure in the illustration, or a combination of the two — or, in but one case, a sailor from some specific geographical location or a named topographical feature or direction. In all but one case, limerick #227 being the exception, these persons existed at some time in the past. Almost following a formula, the first line reads:

There was/is an old/a young person (m or f) of/in ... ,

- man
- lady
- girl
- sailor

The second line, then, is a relative clause, referring to the subject of the first line and ending with a word that rhymes with and provides a pronunciation guide to the placename, topographical feature, or direction named in that line. There are, however, several foreign placenames ending in -a where, no doubt reflecting his own pronunciation, the rhyming word ends in -er, such as:

96. Corsica  saucy-cur
108. Janina  fanning her
110. Sparta  daughter
Also, with British and popular pronunciation prevailing, it is difficult for present-day readers to accomplish a complete rhyme with the following items:

30. Dorking walking
45. Hull Bull
91. Prague plague
92. Prague vague
97. Marseilles veils

The third and fourth lines rhyme or, if they are written as one, have internal rhyme. The final line is frequently a repeat or refrain of the first line, often in the form of a relative clause or an exclamation about the subject of the limerick, featuring an unusually descriptive if not outlandish adjective or verb. For example,

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

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

The last line almost invariably ends with the same word as the first
The refrain effect ... distinguishes Lear's limericks from those that have subsequently evolved, for later limerick writers generally aim at a clever twist for the last rhyme to serve as a kind of punch line. (Hark, p. 29)

A cursory look at the list of adjectives that Lear has used, particularly in his final line -- including a few he invented, such as borascible (2), abruptious (76), and ombliferous (107) -- are some indication of the range of vocabulary that is necessary to fully understand and appreciate Edward Lear's humor. Other adjectives that he coined, and for which he will be remembered, include meloobious, referring to a sound; runcible, modifying, at one time or another, the words eat, goose, hat, spoon, state of mind, and wall; and scorobious, applied to conduct and movements.

The subject matter of these limericks is far from serious. They describe the existence of

an individual who is in the literal sense remarkable, i.e. something about his or her appearance, behavior, or circumstances is worthy of remark. ... They engage in eccentric and often impossible behavior; their heads are too small, their noses and legs too long, their eating habits and ideas of fashion strange. They fall victim to terrible calamities. They come into conflict with neighbors, the infamous they of Lear's world, and with the animal kingdom, but they also on occasion develop satisfying symbiotic relationships with both. (Hark, p. 23)

The verse form may be confining and conventionalized, but the people and the situations in which they find themselves are far from those that would be considered conventional.

Just as an ailing old man from Tobago served as the inspiration for Lear's first limericks, a simple statement in a recent article on
children's play and games in the Victorian Era prompted the present study of Edward Lear and those limericks. Following a brief description of the illustrated alphabets -- similar to the one that Lear composed for Lord Tennyson's sons Hallam and Lionel, "A was an ape, / Who stole some white tape,/ ... ." -- that different families commissioned Lear to devise to aid their children's learning, the author of the article states, "Lear also created geographical limericks to teach place names and countries." (Nadel, p. 31) Three examples, the "Young Lady of Tyre," the "Old Man of Coblenz," and the "Old Man of Vesuvius," respectively, are presented as examples, but no further information or proof for this statement is provided.

Most studies of children who lived during the Victorian Era indicate that their play and games were meant to be instructive, as well as healthful, and that their literature was decidedly didactic. In writing his limericks, was Edward Lear's real motive to teach Victorian children, especially that collection of cousins, the grand-children and great-nieces and great-nephews of the Earl of Derby, who all lived together and were tutored at the estate, their geography? An article in an edition of The Cornhill Magazine from 1908 includes an account of how Lear came to write the limericks and appears to substantiate a didactic purpose.

It would almost seem that at this time he was trying, in his kindly way, to instruct the youthful mind in the rudiments of geography, for he draws his heroes and heroines from such unsuspected places on the earth's surface. It is true that the idea of composing such rhymes was suggested to him by a friend at Knowsley, who in an unguarded moment uttered the pregnant words, "There
was an old man of Tobago." That was enough for Lear, and he ransacked the index to the atlas of the world to find the names of places from which "an old man" or "an old lady" might (or might not) have come -- always, as I believe, with the idea of education in disguise. Thus he commandeered Smyrna, Ischia, Columbia, Madras, and Moldavia to serve his purpose ... ." (Malcolm, p. 26-27)

Was this really Lear's purpose or what a later author has assumed it might have been? His biographers have correctly identified the source of his inspiration as the "man from Tobago" from Fifteen Gentlemen. Lear, as has been noted, acknowledges this fact himself in his introduction to More Nonsense. Nowhere, however, including material that has been published to date from his private correspondence and diaries, has anyone been able to determine with certainty his reasons for writing the limericks or, more specifically, what prompted his preference for providing his heroes and heroines with a specific geographical locus in the majority of his verses. Although we are free to speculate, I doubt that his motives were anywhere near as serious as Sir Ian Zachery Malcolm purports them to be. The definitive answer may yet lie in one of Lear's diaries, which have been deposited in the Houghton Library at Harvard, along with a substantial collection of his watercolors.

It is unfortunate that it is impossible to determine the exact time or place of composition for any of the limericks since Edward Lear did not date any of his verses or their accompanying illustrations. Several facts are known, however, and some conclusions may be based on them. The 212 limericks that were published in Lear's lifetime appear in two separate volumes. These are, as mentioned before,
A Book of Nonsense, published originally in 1846, containing 112 limericks, and More Nonsense Pictures, Rhymes, Botany &c., published in 1872, containing 100 more limericks. In the tables that follow, these volumes have been designated "a" and "b," respectively. Additional limericks that have been discovered and subsequently published include ten in Teapots and Quails (1953), designated "c," and seven in Lear in the Original (1975), labeled "d."

Of the limericks in the present study, 175, or 76% of them, incorporate the name of a specific geographical place. Considering only the limericks from Lear's two original collections, the result is remarkably consistent; 160 of the 212 limericks (76%) exhibit place-names. By narrowing the field even further to include just the limericks from the 1846 volume, the majority of which had been composed for the children at Knowsley, 80 of the 112 limericks (71%) contain geographical locations. A greater percentage, however, refer to geography -- 80 of 100 (80%) -- in the 1872 volume that is a collection of limericks that Edward Lear wrote after leaving Knowsley in 1837.

The greatest number of limericks devoted to any one geographical region, a total of 86, commemorate places in the United Kingdom -- England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland -- and the Republic of Ireland, places that one would assume were fairly familiar to the Knowsley children. Interestingly enough, only 29 of these 86 appear in the 1846 volume. The remaining 57, including all eight of the limericks that refer to London and its environs, were published later
and were probably written for children whom Lear met in his travels rather than for his attentive audience at Knowsley.

Turning to the 51 limericks that designate places in Europe, they do name major countries and cities that the Earl's heirs would have been expected to know. The 31 that appeared in the 1846 volume, with a few possible exceptions, probably figured prominently in their geography lessons. The same is true for the majority of the cities and countries that are named in the limericks from *A Book of Nonsense* from Africa, Asia, North America, and South America, all of which might support some method in the madness of their composition.

It is equally possible, however, that, aside from some of the early limericks that may have been prompted by discussions that followed the children's geography lessons, Edward Lear, instead, wrote many of the limericks to more or less commemorate some of the places to which he travelled or in which he actually lived for some period of time. Leaving England in July of 1837 for his health, Lear travelled through and/or stayed in Bavaria, Luxemborg, Germany, the Alps, Milan, and Florence. Over the years, he made frequent excursions all over the Mediterranean, especially throughout Italy and Greece, and in his later life he had an extended stay in India and Ceylon. A brief outline of his itinerary is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Sicily</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Abruzzi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Adriatic</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Calabria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sicily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848-49</td>
<td>Ionian Islands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greece, which was perhaps his favorite
Albania
Turkey
Corfu
1854
Arabia
1860's
Egypt
the Holy Land
Palestine
Asia Minor
Syria
1868
Corsica
1873-74
India
Ceylon

In 1870 Lear settled permanently in San Remo where he lived, except for brief trips to England, summers in Switzerland and other parts of Italy, and his tour of India and Ceylon, until his death, January 29, 1888.

Geography lessons, commemorative poetry, or nonsense? What would the "laureate of nonsense," as he was dubbed by a critic in The Spectator in 1887, think of this serious inquiry? He would probably reply as he did when some suggested that his limericks and drawings contained political symbolism and that the characters were real people, "some of them in public life."

Lear absolutely denied these reports. "More care," he tells us, "than might be supposed has been given to make the subjects incapable of misinterpretation: Nonsense, pure and absolute, having been my aim throughout." (Davidson, p. 20-21)

That his various forms of nonsense were and still continue to be popular almost goes without saying. In February 1886, forty years after its first appearance and two years before Lear's death, John Ruskin paid Edward Lear an exceptional compliment when he wrote the following:
"Surely the most beneficent and innocent of all books yet published is the Book of Nonsense, with its corollary carols -- inimitable and refreshing, and perfect in rhythm. I really don't know any author to whom I am half so grateful, for my idle self, as Edward Lear. I shall put him first of my hundred authors." This praise from a man who was still regarded as the foremost critic in England was deeply satisfying to Lear who, much more perhaps than he was apt to admit, wanted to be recognized as a highly original nonsense-writer at a time when just appreciation of his painting was withheld, and a sense of failure haunted him. (Lehmann, p. 111)

In the "Introduction" to The Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear, Holbrook Jackson further describes the continued popularity of Lear's nonsense.

The early nonsense books are not readily accessible as most of them were very properly used up, or eaten up, by the children for whom they were written. The original editions of The Book of Nonsense (1846), as well as Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany and Alphabets (1871), More Nonsense (1872), and Laughable Lyrics (1877), are all scarce. It is easier to find a First Folio Shakespeare than a first edition of The Book of Nonsense; even the British Museum Library has to content itself with a copy of the third edition (1861). The popularity of that book has been continuous and progressive for a hundred years. (Jackson, p. xxviii)
"There was an Old Derry down Derry, who loved to make little folks merry":

A closer look at the Limericks of Edward Lear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placename</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rhyme Word</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Publication/Page</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. young person (f) of Ayr</td>
<td>Ayr, Scotland</td>
<td>square</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Old Person (m) of Bangor</td>
<td>Caernarvon, Wales</td>
<td>anger</td>
<td>*borscible</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. young person (f) of Bantry</td>
<td>Cork, Ireland</td>
<td>pantry</td>
<td>judicious</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Old person (m) of Basing</td>
<td>Hants, England</td>
<td>darts</td>
<td>luminous</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Old person (m) of Bow</td>
<td>Devon, England</td>
<td>amazing</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Old person (m) of Bow</td>
<td>London, England</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Old person (m) of Bradley</td>
<td>Derby, England</td>
<td>sadly</td>
<td>melodious</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Old person (m) of Bray</td>
<td>Wicklow, Ireland</td>
<td>day</td>
<td>valuable</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Old person (m) of Brigg</td>
<td>Lincoln, England</td>
<td>wig</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Old person (m) of Brill</td>
<td>Buckingham, England</td>
<td>frill</td>
<td>obsequious</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Old person (m) of Bude</td>
<td>Cornwall, England</td>
<td>crude</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Old Person (m) of Burton</td>
<td>Cheshire, England</td>
<td>uncertain</td>
<td>distressing</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Young Lady of Bute (I.)</td>
<td>Bute, Scotland</td>
<td>flute</td>
<td>amusing</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Old man of Carlisle</td>
<td>Cumberland, England</td>
<td>isle</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 1846 - The Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear (Jackson)
b. 1872 - The Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear (Jackson)
c. 1953 - Teapots and Quails (Davidson and Hofer)
d. 1975 - Lear in the Original (Liebert)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Old Person (m) of</th>
<th>Placename</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rhyme Word</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Publication/Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Old Person (m) of Cheadle</td>
<td>Cheshire, England</td>
<td>breadle</td>
<td>horrible</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Old person (m) of Cheadle</td>
<td>Stafford, England</td>
<td>dream</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Old Lady of Chester</td>
<td>Surrey, England</td>
<td>curtesy</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Old Person (m) of Chester</td>
<td>Cheshire, England <strong>New Zealand</strong></td>
<td>pester</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Young Lady of Clare</td>
<td>Down, Northern Ireland Mayo, Ireland (I.) Suffolk, England</td>
<td>bear</td>
<td>unfortunate</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Old Person (m) of Cromer</td>
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208. Old Man who said, "Bush!"
209. Old Man who said, "Well!"
210. old man who screamed out
211. Old Man who supposed
212. old man who when little
213. Old Man with a beard
214. Old Man with a beard
215. Old Man with a flute
216. Old Man with a gong
217. Old Man with a nose
218. Old Man with an owl
219. Old Man with a poker
220. Young Lady whose bonnet
221. Young Lady whose chin
222. old man whose dispair
223. Young Lady whose eyes
224. Old Lady whose folly
225. old Person (m) whose habits
226. young person (f) whose history
227. young lady whose nose
228. Young Lady whose nose
229. old man whose remorse

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* Adjective unique to Edward Lear
** Possible, but unlikely, referent
1 Possibly Dunblane, not Dumblane
2 Possibly Dunrose, not Dunrose
3 Edward Lear never visited North America
4 Edward Lear never visited South America
5 Unusual in that the limerick is in the present tense - "There is a young lady whose nose ... ."

**SUMMARY**

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