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too. Our party had travelled tourist, sleeping and eating in the region of the forward hold. The crew's quarters were astern, and the fore-castle uninhabited. There were other passengers who travelled first. They berthed amidships, where there was more chromium plating, and acquired a taste for black caviare for breakfast, whereas we acquired a taste for the red variety. The other difference between the classes was that the firsts were more or less confined to their midships area, whereas we proletarian thirds had the run of the whole ship! "All one class, like in Russia" is not such a simple statement as it might appear.

At my table, as we returned through the Baltic, there was an oldish Frenchman and two pleasing young ladies, who unfortunately could speak French also. The Frenchman, with the best intentions in the world, talked endlessly about love, and what fine times young people could have, and so made progress among us British quite impossible. He was almost as tiring as the cafeteria technician of the voyage out. Also on board were two or three Americans, and our French table-mate struck up a great friendship with one of these. "Tovarish Amerikanski!" he would begin, and then not get much further, for the only words they knew in common in all the languages of Babel, were about 10 of Russian and a dozen of German, and some of those overlapped! This tongue-tied friendship would have been more touching if the man had not been such an inconvenience.

"Occult Art"

Second day out, I discovered that a college acquaintance was under the doctor's care in the sick-bay. Talking to the doctor by means of the Navigation Student's interpreting, I told him that if he cured his present patient, we would give him a Frenchman in exchange for him to look after. The doctor liked having a patient, because he had little to do except cure sore throats when the ship lay in the Pool of London, and help decide questions of victualling on the crew's Nutrition Committee, of which he was an ex officio member. A day later, as we were approaching Kiel again, the exchange actually took place. My Cambridge friend was up, and the Frenchman was in the sick-bay! His own explanation was that he thought he'd seen a pretty nurse, but the navigation student had other ideas. When he heard the news, he smiled at me darkly, and murmured "You are very powerful."

As we rounded the Hook of Holland to enter the Maas, my young Soviet friend took me up to the bridge to see our course on the charts, and down to his cabin to see his English-made navigating instruments. In the cabin there was further evidence of Russian preparedness in 1935, a personal gas mask hanging over each bunk.

In the Maas, he went over the side to join a ship going to Vladivostock. He gave no address, and I would probably not have kept in touch with him if he had. Knowing there are millions like him, though, I do hear from him in a vague sort of way, battling across from Stalingrad to the Baltic and the Danube. But back in those days of 1935, it seemed too much to hope for that in the coming war our countries would be allied.

NOT SO INNOCENT

There Is A Sting In Some of Those Old Nursery-Tales

(Written for "The Listener" by J.C.R.)

AT THIS time of the year, hundreds, and probably thousands, of parents will be reading or reciting to their children from books of nursery-rhymes which were deposited in the Christmas pillow-case. Over the centuries these nursery rhymes and tales have been repeated so often that they have become almost meaningless—mere innocent jingles of words. It might come as a surprise to some parents (and their children) to learn that these jingles are not quite as innocent or meaningless as they sound. They are, however, harmless enough. Time takes the sting even out of political satire and topical lampooning—which, in many cases, is what these nursery-rhymes originally were.

Similarly, the years have drawn the talons of Swift's *savage Gulliver's Travels*, and made the book into a children's reader. It is well known, too, how the apparently innocuous inn-titles such as "Pig and Whistle" (Pyx and Missal) contain the ashes of old religious controversies, and how such words as "hocus-pocus" enshrine one of many Protestant gibes at the Catholic liturgy, in this case, at the words of Consecration in the Mass "Hoc est enim corpus meum."

So also many of our most familiar nursery-rhymes, behind their apparent inconsequence, conceal stories of royal tragedies, popular satire on leading figures, thus expressed to by-pass censorship, and barbed thrusts at the personal

weakness and blunders of English leaders. What could be seemingly more innocent than

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

But what a different story is told when it is realised that Mary is no idyllic creation, but Mary Tudor, "contrary" because of her endeavours to restore the Old Religion of her "garden" England, "the silver bells" are the Sanctus bells of the Mass, the "cockle-shells," the male religious orders, and the "pretty maids" the nuns, all of which she tried to bring back into English life.

Ingenious Devices

Most of our nursery-rhymes date from Tudor times and just after, and a large number are concerned with the religious quarrels of those days. The devices to which the adherents of the various sides resorted to publish their criticisms is seen from the following verse, published in 1655. If read straight through it appears to be an expression of Protestant faith, but if read in two columns, down each side, up to and from where commas have been inserted, a very different viewpoint is found.

I hold as faith, what England's Church allows
What Rome's Church saith, my conscience disavows,
Where the King is head, that Church can have no shame,
The flock's misled, that holds the Pope supreme.
Where the altar's drest, there's service scarce divine.
The people's blest, with table, bread and wine.
He's but an ass, who the Communion flies.
Who shuns the Mass, is Catholic and wise.

Hardly less thinly-veiled in their significance, nursery-rhymes were created to mock Henry VIII. and his plundering of the monasteries.

To the same troubled times can be traced the rhyme of Little Jack Horner. It is known that Jack Horner was the steward of the Abbot of Glastonbury. When Henry took over the monastery, Horner was given the title-deeds of the monastery properties to carry to the King. These were hidden in a pie for safety, but it is said that, by accident or design, the crust was broken and Horner took out the "plum" of the title deeds to the manor of Mells, which his family possesses to the present day.

Jibes at Cardinal Wolsey

There are many rhymes celebrating the downfall of Cardinal Wolsey, notably "Old Mother Hubbard." When Wolsey lost the favour of Henry VIII., the Pope tried repeatedly to have him reinstated, but in vain. Thus Old Mother Hubbard, the Pope, examines the cupboard of the King's favour for the dog Wolsey, but the cupboard remains bare. "Little Boy Blue" again refers to the



"... the ashes of religious controversy"

Cardinal. The references to the sheep and the cow are digs at his humble origin as the son of a butcher and glazier.

The Pope again appears to be mentioned in Little Bo-Peep, although one group of students deny this. It is claimed that Bo-Peep herself is the Pope (the similarity of names seems to bear this out) the shepherd of souls, and that the whole rhyme is a reference to the English Reformation, the lost sheep being the sects which broke away from Rome. Another group, however, sees Bo-Peep as the unhappy Mary, Queen of Scots. Certainly Mary is "Little Miss Muffet," with John Knox as the "great big spider."

So far as Bo-Peep is concerned, it is said by this group to refer to the time when Darnley was murdered and Mary was sheltering Bothwell. At that time her sheep or followers deserted her. After the acquittal of Bothwell, she rallied her forces at Carberry Hill, but they had "left their tails behind them" and the Border Lords crushed them. This view, although widely supported, seems far-fetched, and most prefer the concept concerning the Pope.

Humpty-Dumpty Crookback

There can be little doubt, however, that Humpty-Dumpty is Richard III., the "Crookback" of Shakespeare's play and the murderer of the Royal brothers in the tower. The "Humpty-Dumpty" name comes from his twisted back, and it is true that all the King's horses and all the King's men could not put together his dead body, slain on Bosworth Field. Although there are many foreign versions of this rhyme, which seems originally to refer merely to the difficulty of standing an egg on its end, any doubt as to the reference to Richard III. is removed when it is noted that some versions of "Humpty-Dumpty" run

"There is no doctor in all England
Who can make Humpty Dumpty right any more."

The Stuarts were the occasion for quite a crop of nursery-rhyme lampoons. "Hark, hark, the dogs do bark!" is undoubtedly directed against Charles II. or James II., with their court favourites and followers. "Simple Simon" is the Englishman asked with Scots caution by the pie-man, James I., what money is in the English Treasury. There was none when James came to the throne, and the monopolies and titles he was forced to sell to fill his coffers are the "wares" he proffered. "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe" was the English Parliament, her swarming progeny the English people, and the broth without bread, the Scots King, who was so heartily disliked by the people, but who had been placed over them by Parliament.



Broken Spell

[Recognition of the fact that smoking among women is general is the provision for a "smoko" in the new award of the Auckland Rubber Workers' Union made by the Arbitration Court. Under this award all female workers are to be allowed a "smoko" of 10 minutes in the morning and afternoon.—News Item.]

UNDER Auckland's new award
Lady workers may afford
Twenty minutes every day
Just to puff their spell away;
Happily, although it's ripe,
We can still enjoy our pipe!

EQUAL rights and equal pay
Coming nearer every day;
Shades of Sylvia Pankhurst, dear,
Manifesting year by year,
Solemn thought, though somewhat harsh—
Sole distinction—our moustache.

VERY shortly we may see—
All, perhaps, may not agree—
A place which he-men may aspire
To reach, without being set afire
By ladies' matches, deftly thrown;
A place which men may call their own.
Grudge not the darlings their success,
Let's suck a peppermint in peace.

—E.R.B.

