

Nursery Rhymes in the Vernacular

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[Note: One must keep in mind that the end of one line in a verse tends to rhyme with the end of the next line in German. This is difficult to maintain in translating from one language to another. Comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator. Thanks to Elvire Necker for supplying the meaning of some of the vernacular words]

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[Translation Begins]

Nursery Rhymes in the Vernacular Compiled by A.W.

May is definitely the nicest time in the whole year. That is when the sky is blue, the breezes are mild, the sun is shining bright, the birds are singing and flowers blooming. Like a beautiful day in May, so my childhood and youth is also in front of me. Many a beautiful memory remains about this time. And of all the many beautiful ones, the most special ones at the top are nursery rhymes and little poems that our mother taught us; I want to present them now to the readers and in the pronunciation in which I heard them.

First of all, the verses which were told to us while we were still very small and were able to ride on the knee of father or mother:

(1)
*So reiten die Kleinen,
Wenn sie kleinwunzig sind.
Wenn sie groß werden,
Reiten sie auf Pferden.
Wenn sie großwachen,
Dann reiten sie nach Sachsen.*

(2)
*Hoppa, hoppa, Reita,
Fällt er ra, na schreit er;
Steht er wieder uff,
Hockt sich oba nuff.*

(1)
This is how the little ones ride,
When they are still little,
Once they get bigger,
They ride on horses.
Once they are grown up,
Then they ride to Saxony.

(2)
Bouncing, bouncing, riding,
When he falls off, he cries out;
Gets back up again,
Sits himself back on top again.

(3)

*So reiten die Herren
Mit blanken Gewehren
Hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp, hopp
So schuckert der Bauer,
So schuckert der Bauer,
Fort, fort, im Galopp.
(Bei "schuckert" wird recht herzlich
mit dem Fuß geschuettelt)*

(4)

*Hoppa, hoppa, Rößle,
En Stua gert steht a Schlößle,
Drei Fraua guckat raus,
Die eine spent Seide,
Die andre klengt Weide,
Die dritt machts Feuer aus.
D'Katz kehrt d Stub aus,
D'Maus tragt d'r Dreck naus.
Henkt a Kendle an der Wand,
Hot a Goeckele en der Hand;
Möchts gerne essa,
Hot koe Messer.
Fallt a Messer oba ra,
Schlagt dem Kendle 's Armle a.
Zom Barbira isch neamart d' rhoim,
Als zwei Gockala mit rote Schüala.
Ond die Katz isch ontram Dach,
Hot sich schier gar bucklich gelacht.*

(3)

This is how the lords ride
With shiny weapons
bounce, bounce, bounce, bounce, bounce
This is how the farmer bumps around,
This is how the farmer bumps around,
Away, away, in a gallop.
(with the word "bumps around" the foot
is enthusiastically shaken)

(4)

Bouncing, bouncing, little horse,
In Stuttgart there stands a little castle,
Three women are looking out,
One is spinning silk,
The other weaves willow,
The third one is putting out a fire.
The cat is sweeping out the parlor,
The mouse is carrying out the dirt.
A child is hanging on the wall,
Has a rooster in the hand;
Would really love to eat it,
Does not have a knife.
A knife falls down from above,
Hits the child on the arm.
Off to barber but no one is at home,
Except two roosters with little red shoes.
And the cat under the roof,
Laughed itself almost into a humped back position

Great was the joy among us children whenever something tasty (kuchen, cookies or rice porridge) was made, because we then sang in unison so that the whole neighborhood could hear it.

(a) bei Kuchen:

*Backa, backa Kucha,
Der Becker hat gerufa:
Wer will gute Kucha bacha,
Der muß haba sieba Sacha:
Eier und Salz,
Butter und Schmalz,
Milch und Mehl
Safran macht die Kucha gel.*

(a) with Kuchen [coffee cake]:

Bake, bake, kuchen,
The baker called out:
One who wants to bake good kuchen,
Has to have seven things:
Eggs and salt,
Butter and lard,
Milk and flour
Saffron coloring makes the kuchen yellow.

(b) bei Kuchlein:

*Moi Muater bacht Kuchla
Sie bacht se so bra(un),
Sie sperrat me ens Kemmarle,
Daß i nex darvo ha(n)
Sia gebt mar en Brocka,
Zom' Bibarle locka,
Bi, bi, bi, bi,
Den Brocka freß i.*

(b) with Pastry:

My mother bakes pastry
She bakes them so brown,
She confines me in the room,
So that I do not get any of it
She gives me a little piece,
To entice little chickens,
Bi, bi, bi, bi,
I gulped down the little piece.

(c) bei Reisbrei:

*Eia, popaia, dia Breila send guat,
Wo mar gut Zucker ond Butter dra tuat,
Zucker ond Butter ond Mandeleskern
Esset die kloine Kender so gern.*

(c) with Raisen Porridge:

Eia, popaia, raisen puddings are good,
Where one puts on lots of sugar and butter,
Sugar and butter and almonds
The little children really like to eat it.

If we happened to see a stork flying, we screamed as loud as our lungs could deliver:

*Storch, Storch Schniebelschnabel,
Mit de lange Haiagabel,
Mit de kurze Rechestiel,
Alte Kender fresset viel.
Junge müassat faschta
Brot liegt em Kaschta
Woe liegt'm Keller Muschka-Muschkateller.*

Stork, stork, Schneibelschnabel (beak)
With the long hay pitch-fork,
With the shot rake-handle,
Older children devour a lot.
Young ones have to fast
Bread is lying in the cupboard
In the cellar lies Muska-Muskateller wine

oder

*Storch, Storch Schniebelschnabel,
Mit de lange Haiagable,
Hasch doem Vater 's Geld vergraba.
Flieg, flieg übers Bäckers Haus,
Brenge en Sack voll Semmel raus,
Mir oiner, dir oiner
Und de alte Weiber koiner.*

or

Stork, stork, Schneibelschnabel (beak),
With the long hay pitch-fork,
You buried father's money.
Fly, fly over the baker's house,
Bring from it a sack full of breakfast rolls,
One for me, one for you
And none for the old women.

At the time of rain and the first snow, the chorus takes off again:

(a)

*Rega, Rega, Tropfa,
Buaba muß mar klopfen.
D' Mädla muß mar schona
Wie Ziterona*

(a)

Rain, rain, drops,
Young boys have to be beat.
The young girls must be treated with consideration
Like lemons

A.B.C.

*Die katze lief im schnee,
Als sie dann nach Hause kam,
Hatt' sie weiße Höschen an.*

A.B.C.

The cat walked in the snow,
Then, when it came to the house,
It had on little white pants.

Should one of the children fall and bump himself, the hurt area was blown on and then was said:

*(blasen) Heila, heila, Sega,
(blasen) Drei Tag Rega,
(blasen) Drei Tag Schnee,
Morga tut nex meh weh.*

(blowing) Heal, heal, blessing,
(blowing) Three days rain,
(blowing) Three days snow,
Tomorrow morning it will not hurt anymore.

(and this helped more than some medicine.)

If a person was very happy and satisfied with his lot on earth, all the children, hand in hand, went around and around in the room and kept repeating:

*Wenns emmer, wenns emmer,
Wenns emmer so wear,
Guat Essa, guat Trenka,
Koi Arbeit net wear.*

If it would always, if it would always,
If it would always be like this,
Good food, good drink,
But no work.

At intervals, one would sit down on the floor and say:

*Da hock i, da hock i,
Wer flickt mar moe Schua
Ond gibt mar a Breckele
Leder darzua.*

Here I sit, here I sit,
Who is going to patch my shoes
And give me a little piece
Of leather for it.

oder
*Rengel, Rengel, Rosa,
Gele Aprikosa,
Veilchen ond Vergißneinnicht,
Alle Kender setzet sich.*

or
Rengel, Rengel, rose,
Yellow apricots,
Many and do not forget anyone,
All children are seated.

And once again the chorus started without understanding what was being said.

(1)
*Endle, quendle, Zuckerzendle
Erle, berle, buchstabiera
Schreibia, kleng, klang, glerch.*

(1)
Endle, quendle, sugar-zendle
Erle, berle, spell
Writing, kleng, klang, glerch.

(2)
*Kann net Russisch kann net Deutsch,
Kommt der Vater mit der Peitsch,
Kommt die Mutter henta droe,
Schlagt mer alle Kippa noe.*

(2)
Don't know Russian, don't know German,
Comes the father with the whip,
Comes the mother right behind,
Hits all my ribs.

(3)
*Moe Waib isch krank,
Moe Waib isch krank,
Sia hat en krommer Zea,
Sie hopft mer en der Küche rom,
Schmeißt mer alle Häfa om.*

(3)
My wife is sick,
My wife is sick,
She has a crooked toe,
She often hops around the kitchen,
Knocking over all the pots.

(4)
*Trips, traps, drill,
Dr Bauer hat a Füll;
Das Füll, das will net laufa,
Der Bauer will's verkaufa;
Nu laufst em Bauer weg,
No hat d'r Bauer en Dreck.*

(4)
Trips, traps, drill,
The farmer has a colt;
The colt, it does not want to walk,
The farmer wants to sell it;
It then walks away from the farmer,
Now the farmer ends up with dirt.

A special kind of entertainment was to say some sentences three times in quick succession which begin with the same letters:

(1)
Müller mahl mir mein Mehl, meine Mutter muß mir Mitschala, Matschala macha.
Miller grind for me my flour, my mother must make with shells, Matschala.

However, this saying has already been revised to adapt to and express today's conditions:

Müller, mal mir moe Mais-Mehl, moe Muater muß mir morga Mamalik mit Milch macha.
Miller, grind me my cornmeal, tomorrow my mother must make me some mamaliga with milk.

(2)
Wenn Wasser Woe wär, wo würden Weiber weiße Wendla wascha.
If water were wine, where would women wash white diapers.

(3)
Fischers Fritz fischt frische Fische.
Fisherman Fritz fishes fresh fish.

(4)
*Henter Hennas Hasa-Haus, hängt hondert Hasa haus, hondert Hasa hängt haus, henterm
Hennas Hasa-Haus.*
Behind Henna's rabbit house, a hundred rabbits hang out, a hundred rabbits hang out, behind
Henna's rabbit house.

(5)
Bayrische Bierbrauer bereiten beständig bitteres, braunes bayrisches Bier.
Bavarian beer brewers continually prepare bitter, brown Bavarian beer.

Vierfeinde behaupten bisweilen, Bier berausche, bereite breite Bäuche, begründe bodenlose Besinnungslosigkeit.

Four enemies sometimes maintain beer intoxicates, creates broad bellies, establishes bottomless senselessness.

The following 4 counting rhymes also belong to this type of folk poetry, which must slowly make way for book knowledge:

(1)
*Eins, zwei, drei,
Nika, naka, nei,
Nika, naka, Nuß,
Du bisch duß*

(1)
One, two, three,
Nika, naka, nei,
Nike, naka, nut,
You are out.

(2)
*Ich ond du
Ond's Müllers Kuh
Ond's Bäckers Stiar,
Send onsre viar*

(2)
Me and you
And the Müller's cow
And the baker's bull,
That makes up us four

(3)
*Auf dem Klavier
Steht ein Glas Bier,
Wer das trinkt,
Der stinkt.*

(3)
On the piano
Sits a glass of beer,
Whoever drinks it,
He stinks.

(4)
*Ein, zwei, drei, vier, füng, sechs, sieben,
Eine Frau die kocht die Rüben,
Eine Frau die kocht den Speck,
Eins, zwei, drei, da war sie weg.*

(4)
One, two, three four, five, six, seven,
A woman is cooking the turnips,
A woman is cooking the bacon,
One, two, three, and then she was gone.

Who among us has not heard that little naughty kids themselves will call out rhymes of ridicule on adults, obviously only first after they know that one could no longer catch them.

(1)
*Emil, Bemil, Pfeffermühle,
Deine Kender fressat viele;
Aelle Tag a Laible Brot,
Nemm dar Hammer ond schlag se tot.*

(1)
Emil, Bemil, pepper mill,
Your children devour a lot;
Every day a loaf of bread,
Take the hammer and beat them to death.

(2)
*Eduard, Kartoffelsack,
Nemm mi mit nach Antschekrak.
Antschekrak isch zugeschlossa
Ond d'r Schlüssel abbrocha.*

(2)
Edward, potato sack,
Take me along to Antschekrak (Tarutino).
Antschekrak is locked up
And the key is broken.

(3)

*Schäfer bend doe Pudel a,
Daß er mich net beißa ka.
Beißt er mich, so straf' ich dich
Om a Rubel dreieißig.
En Rubel dreißig isch koe Geld,
Ond wenn der Pudel noch so bellt.*

(4)

*Eine kleine Dickmadame
Fuhr auf einer Eisenbahne,
Eisenbahne krachte,
Dickmadame lachte.*

(5)

*Mariele, Koch doe Breile,
Sitz ufs Stühale,
Melk doe Kühale,
Geh ens Gras, wersch naß.*

(3)

Shepherd tie up your poodle,
So that he is unable to bite me.
If he bites me, I will fine you
By the amount of a ruble thirty.
A ruble thirty is not money,
And if the poodle continues to bark.

(4)

A little fat lady
Traveled on a train,
Train makes a cracking noise,
Fat lady laughed.

(5)

Little Marie, cook some raisen porridge,
Sit on a little stool,
Milk your little cow,
Walk in the grass, you will get wet.

[Translation Ends]