

# 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. A word of thanks to Elvire Necker for helping out with the meaning of some of the vernacular words.]

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[Translation Begins]

## Nursery Rhymes in the Vernacular Compiled by A.W.

There are quite a number of small, simple nursery rhymes which were in the mouths of all children, that have already been published in the 1937 Calendar [*Deutscher Volkskalender für Bessarabien*], as they were used by us in Bessarabia during my adolescence. So this year, I want to again convey some of these to the honored reading community. Unfortunately, it is true that not too many are considered any more today. My children already know far fewer of these little verses than I do.

So we begin again with the rhymes for the little **knee-riders** (*Knireiter*):

(1)  
Hoppa, hoppa, Reiter,  
Wenn er fällt, so schreit er.  
Fällt er in den Graben,  
Fressen ihn die Raben.  
Fällt er in den Sumpf,  
Macht der Reiter plumps.  
(dabei laesst man das Kind  
vom Knie gleiten).

(2)  
Hoppa, hoppa, reiten,  
Säbel an der Seiten,  
Geld in der Tasche,

(1)  
Bouncing, bouncing, rider,  
When he falls, he cries out.  
Should he fall into a ditch,  
He will be eaten by ravens.  
Should he fall into a swamp,  
The rider goes thud.  
(at this point one lets the child  
slip off the knee).

(2)  
Bouncing, bouncing, riding,  
Sword at the side,  
Money in the pocket,

Wein in der Flasche.  
Hoch, hoch auf der Mauer,  
Sieh' die Aepfel süß u. sauer!

(3)

Hoppa, hoppa, reiten!  
So reiten die Herren,  
So reiten kleine Kinder,  
Die noch nicht geritten sind.  
Wenn sie größer werden,  
Reiten sie auf Pferden;  
Wenn sie größer wachsen,  
Reiten sie nach Sachsen.  
Reiten sie vor's Kaisers Haus,  
Ziehen die Pistolen raus,  
Schießen alle: Puff.

(4)

Hoppa, hoppa Rößle,  
Droba stoht a Schlößle,  
Guckat drei Madama raus.  
Die eine spent Seide,  
Eine spent Weide,  
Eine spent an rota Rock  
Für den Albert seine Popp.  
(für "Albert" kann auch ein  
anderer Name gesetzt werden).  
Hockt a kindle an dr Wand,  
Hot a Apfele en dr Hand;  
Möcht's gern essa,  
Fend koi Messer.  
Fallt a Messer von oba ra,  
Schlagt em Kendle 's Armle a.  
's Kendle fahrt zom Dokter,  
Dr Dokter isch net drhoim  
D' Katz fegt d' Stub aus,  
D' Maus tragt dr Dreck naus.  
D' Katz sprengt über dr Bronna.  
Hot a Kendle gfonna.  
Wia solls heißa?  
Beckle, Beckle, Kaiser,  
Dr. Hahner uff em Dach (oder  
"Hockt a Vögele unterm Dach")  
Hot sich halba kropfich g'lacht.

Wine in the bottle.  
High, high up on the wall,  
See the apples, sweet and sauer!

(3)

Bouncing, bouncing, riding!  
This is how the lords ride,  
This is how little children ride,  
Although they have not yet ridden.  
Once they get bigger,  
They will ride on horses;  
When they grow up some more,  
They will ride to Saxony.  
If they ride in front of the Kaiser's house,  
Taking out the revolvers,  
Everyone shoots: Bang.

(4)

Bouncing, bouncing, little pony,  
Up there stands a little castle,  
Three ladies are looking out.  
One is spinning silk,  
One is spinning willows,  
One is spinning a red coat  
For Albert's doll.  
(instead of "Albert" one can  
mention a different name).  
A child is sitting on the wall,  
Has an apple in the hand;  
Would gladly eat it,  
Cannot find a knife.  
A knife falls down from above,  
Strikes the arm of the child.  
The child is driven to the doctor,  
The doctor is not at home  
The cat is sweeping the parlor,  
The mouse is carrying out the dirt.  
The cat jumps over the well.  
It discovered a child.  
How shall it be named?  
*Beckle, Beckle*, Kaiser,  
The rooster is on the roof (or  
"a little bird is sitting under the roof")  
Laughed itself into a humped over position

Few children games are there that start off in a manner whereby a little child does not have to enounceiate or count out. For that, the children need their different, sometimes quite senseless **counting rhymes** (*Abzählreime*):

(1)  
Ena, dena, di dä, kalaree,  
Zicka, zacka, Bohna stecka,  
Kirls, Karls, Knopf.

(1)  
Ena, dena, di dä, kalaree,  
Zicka, zacka, bean stick,  
Kirls, Karls, Button.

(2)  
Der Ga'sker hot en da Kibel bissa  
Wieviel Löcher hot er bissa?  
Eins, zwei, drei, nicka, nacka, nei,  
Nicka, nacka, Nuß  
Bischt en alter Ruß.

(2)  
The gander bit into the tub  
How many holes did he bite?  
One, two, three, nicka, nacka, nei,  
Nicka, nacka, Nut  
You are an old Russian.

(3)  
Ena, dena, dussa,  
's Kätzla will net mussa,  
's Hondle will net Hasa jaga,  
Wart i wärs dem Vatt'r saga!

(3)  
Ena, dena, dussa,  
The little cat does not want to chase mice,  
The little dog does not want to hunt rabbits,  
Just you wait, I am going to tell father!

(4)  
Moe Vatter hot en Garta kauft.  
En dem Garta war en Lauf,  
En dem Lauf war en Baum,  
Uff dem Baum war en Nescht,  
En dem Nescht war en Ei,  
En dem Ei war en Dotter,  
En dem Dotter war 'ne Maus.  
Sankt Johannes, du bischt draus.

(4)  
My father bought a garden.  
In the garden there was a path,  
In the path there was a tree,  
On the tree there was a nest,  
In the nest there was a egg,  
In the egg there was a yolk,  
In the yolk there was a mouse.  
Saint John, you are out.

(5)  
Eins, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs, sieben,  
Eine Frau, die kocht die Rüben,  
Eine Frau, die kocht den Speck,  
Eins, zwei, drei, da war sie weg.

(5)  
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,  
A woman, she is cooking the turnips,  
A woman, she is cooking the fat [bacon],  
One, two, three, and then she was gone.

(this above part stayed in my memory ever since my teenage years, now, however, my little schoolgirls from Katzbach introduced me to an addition:)

Eins, zwei, drei, da kam sie wieder,  
Eins, zwei, drei, da schnitt sie Brot,  
Eins, zwei, drei, da war sie tot.

One, two, three, here she comes again,  
One, two, three, she is slicing bread,  
One, two, three, then she was dead.

But also on occasion of the **children's tears**, one comes up with rhymes in order to always maintain the composure of the little face. And immediately—already with the first words—the child's little crying face once again beams:

(1)  
 “Heila, Heila, Katzadreck!  
 Morga früh ischt alles weg!”

(1)  
 “Healing, healing, cat dirt!  
 Tomorrow morning everything is gone!”

(2)  
 Buale, warum heilsch!  
 Lacha will I nett!  
 Hot dr Wolf a Schäfle gstohla?  
 Geia han i ‘s ‘m net!  
 Ischt er mit’m übers Bergle gspronga?  
 Ontarom freile net!  
 Du Buale, sei net so grob, i ben a Ratsherr!  
 Na, rot amol, was i en moem Säckle han?  
 Ja, i denk, Käs und Brot!  
 Dreckla, moene Henschich!

(2)  
 Little fellow, why are you crying!  
 I do not want to laugh!  
 Did the wolf steal a lamb?  
 I did not give it to him!  
 Did he run off with it over the hill?  
 For sure not under it!  
 Little fellow, do not be so rude, I am a councillor!  
 Now, take a guess, what do I have in my little sack?  
 Well, I think, cheese and bread!  
 Oh poo, it is my gloves!

During bad weather, since jumping and romping around in the yard, threshing place and garden was out of the question, it called for staying quiet in the room. But the time, the long time! So— one wiled away the time. Deep thoughts were woven, one focused on the future. One wanted to know what one would become. The buttons on the shirt and blouse were chosen **to predict the future**. With the assistance of our sayings:

(1)  
 Edelmann, Bettelmann, Bauer, Soldat, und

(1)  
 Nobleman, Beggerman, Farmer, Soldier, and

(2)  
 Gribst, grabst, gnomma,  
 gfonda, gstohla, gkauft.

(2)  
 Snatch, grab, taken,  
 found, stolen, purchased.

It could be established that the one who had four buttons on his shirt would become a soldier, and that he had found his battle-dress.

Even more fun for us children was the **finger count off** (*Fingerabzählen*):

(1)  
 Descht der Dauma.  
 Der—schüttelt d Pflauma.  
 Der—lest se uff.  
 Der—trage se hoem.  
 Ond der—sagt alles dr Muater  
 ond em Vatter d’rhoem.

(1)  
 This is the thumb.  
 This one—shakes the plums.  
 This one—picks them up.  
 This one—carries them home.  
 And this one—tells everything to mother  
 and father at home.

(2)  
Der ischt en 'n Bromma gfalla.  
Der—ziagt en raus.  
Der—tragt en hoem.  
Der—deckt en zua.  
Ond der kloine Schelm—deckt  
en wieder uff.

(2)  
This one fell into a well.  
This one—pulls him out.  
This one—carries him home.  
This one—covers him up.  
And this little rascal—uncovers  
him again.

The little finger was called “the little Bombernickel” (*dr Kloie Bombernichel*) in some areas, so that the final line [of the above] could be as follows:

(1)  
Ond dr kloine Bombernickel  
klatscht alles dr'hoem.

(1)  
And the little rascal  
tells everything at home.

(2)  
Ond dr kloine Bombernickel  
deckt en wieder uff.

(2)  
And the little rascal  
uncovers him again.

Even **for the days of the week**, the little folks of Sarata have their rhymes:

**Montag**—ischt der Fangea'.  
**Dienstag**—do gehts herzhaf dra'.  
**Mittworch**—ischt der Wocha-Markt.  
**Donnerstag**—schaff' I au net arg!  
**Freitag**—laß i Freitag soe.  
Der **Samstag**—leit den **Sonntag** oe.

**Monday**—is the beginning.  
**Tuesday**—serous business starts here.  
**Wednesday**—is the weekly market.  
**Thursday**—I do not work all that hard!  
**Friday**—I let Friday be.  
**Samstag**—leads **Sunday** in.

Also our "Little Benchers" (*Sitzbänkla*), if they comprehend conversation, can come up with a lot of nursery rhymes, which only have meaning and understanding as they are repeated by the children who want to show their **good memory** in this way in front of their peers and especially in the presence of the adults:

(1)  
Moe Mitz isch weg, moe Mitz isch weg,  
Waiß der Kucker, wo sie steckt.  
Muß I halt nach Breslau laufa,  
Ond mir oene neue kaufta.

(1)  
My cap is missing, my cap is missing,  
the cuckoo knows where it is hiding.  
Guess I will have to walk to Breslau,  
And buy myself a new one.

(2)  
Ben amol nach Arzis gfhra,  
Han a Stickla Kreida gfonda,  
D' Kreide han I em Schneider gea,  
Dr Schneider hot m'r Schuha gea,  
D' Schua han i dr Braut gea.  
D' Braut hot mr's Streißle gea,

(2)  
I once drove to Arzis,  
I found a piece of chalk,  
I gave the chalk to the tailor,  
The tailor gave me shoes,  
I gave the shoes to the bride,  
The bride gave me a little bouquet,

's Streißle han i der Braut gea,  
D' Braut hat m'r Woe gea,  
Der Woe han i tronka,  
's Gläsle isch verschwonda.

(3)

Ben amol nach Paris gfahra,  
Han moi rot's Röckle verlorä,  
's Preisle han i gfonda,  
's Preisle han i em Wittle gea,  
's Wittle hot mir Schala gea,  
D' Schala han i der Kuha gea,  
D' Kuha hot m'r Milch gea,  
D' Milch han i der Magd gea,  
D' Magd hot m'r Beigel gea,  
D' Beigel han i em Wirt gea,  
D'r Wirt hot m'r Woe gea,  
D'r Woe han i tronka,  
s Gläsle isch versonka.

(4)

“Jockele, Jockele, Bira schittla!”  
“Bira wellt net falla!”  
Schickt der Herr soe Hondle naus,  
Soll des Jockele beißä,  
Jockele will net Bira schittla,  
Bira wellt net falla.  
Schickt der Herr soe Steckä naus,  
Soll des Hondle schlagä.  
Steckle will net Hondle schlagä,  
Hondle will net Jockele beißä,  
Jockele will net Bira schittla,  
Bira wellt net falla.  
Schickt der Herr des Feuer naus,  
Soll des Steckle brenna.  
Feuer will net Steckle brenna,  
Steckle will net Hondle schlagä,  
Hondle will net Jockele beißä,  
Jockele will net Bira schittla,  
Bira wellt net falla.  
Schickt der Herr des Wasser naus,  
Soll das Feuer löscha.  
Wasser will net Feuer löscha,  
Feuer will net Steckle brenna,  
Steckle will net Hondle schlagä,  
Hondle will net Jockele beißä,

I gave the little bouquet to the bridegroom,  
The bridegroom gave me wine,  
I drank the wine,  
The little glass got lost.

(3)

I once drove to Paris  
I lost my little red coat,  
I found a little prize,  
I gave the little prize to a *Wittle*,  
The *Wittle* gave me shells,  
I gave the shells to the cow,  
The cow gave me milk,  
I gave the milk to the maid,  
The maid gave me bagels,  
I gave the bagels to the inn-keeper,  
The inn-keeper gave me wine,  
I drank the wine,  
The little glass sank away.

(4)

“Little Jack, little Jack, shake the pears!”  
“Pears do not want to fall!”  
The master sends out his little dog,  
It is supposed to bite little Jack.  
Little Jack does not want to shake the pears,  
Pears do not want to fall.  
The master sends out his stick,  
It is supposed to beat the little dog.  
Little stick does not want to beat the little dog,  
Little dog does not want to bite little Jack,  
Little Jack does not want to shake the pears,  
Pears do not want to fall.  
The master sends out the fire,  
It is suppose to burn the little stick.  
Fire does not want to burn the little stick,  
Little stick does not want to beat the little dog,  
Little dog does not want to bite little Jack,  
Little Jack does not want to shake the pears,  
Pears do not want to fall.  
The master sends out the water,  
It is supposed to extinguish the fire.  
Water does not want to extinguish the fire,  
Fire does not want to burn the little stick,  
Little stick does not want to beat the little dog,  
Little dog does not want to bite little Jack,

Jockele will net Bira schüttle,  
 Bira welt net falla.  
 Schickt der Herr soe Ochsle naus,  
 Soll des Wasser laba. (trinken)  
 Ochsle will net Wasser laba,  
 Wasser will net Feuer löscha,  
 Feurer will net Steckle brenna,  
 Steckle will net Hondle schлага,  
 Hondle will net Jockele beißa,  
 Jockele will net Bira schittla,  
 Bira welt net falla.  
 Schickt der Herr dr Metzger naus,  
 Soll des Ochsle schlachta.  
 Metzger will net's Ochsle schlachta,  
 Ochsle will net Wasser laba,  
 Wasser will net Feuer löscha,  
 Feuer will net Brigele brenna,  
 Brigele will net Hondle schлага,  
 Hondle will net Jockele beißa,  
 Jockele will net Bira schittla,  
 Bira welt net falla.

Little Jack does not want to shake the pears,  
 Pears do not want to fall.  
 The master sends out his little ox,  
 It is supposed to drink the water. (to drink)  
 Little ox does not want to drink the water,  
 Water does not want to extinguish the fire,  
 Fire does not want to burn the little stick,  
 Little stick does not want to beat the little dog,  
 Little dog does not want to bite little Jack,  
 Little Jack does not want to shake the pears,  
 Pears do not want to fall.  
 The master sends out the butcher,  
 He is supposed to butcher the little ox.  
 Butcher does not want to butcher the little ox,  
 Little ox does not want to drink the water,  
 Water does not want to extinguish the fire,  
 Fire does not want to burn the little stick,  
 Little stick does not want to beat the little dog,  
 Little dog does not want to bite little Jack,  
 Little Jack does not want to shake the pears,  
 Pears do not want to fall.

Once the children come to school, so also slowly begins for them the awareness of the serious side of life. The playing is detached from the work. However, in the first years of schooling, there is still the disposition of the children to be fully conversant with nursery rhymes, yes there are even more new ones added, like **little verses that have to do with school:**

(1)  
 Sechs mal sechs ist sechsunddreißig —  
 Unsre Mädle sind so fleißig —  
 Unsre Buben sind so faul —  
 Wie ein alter Ackergaul. —

(1)  
 Six times six is thirty six —  
 Our young girls are so hard-working —  
 Our young boys are so lazy —  
 Like an old farm horse. —

(2)  
 Ene, tene, Tintenfaß,  
 Geh in 'd Schul und lerne was;  
 Kommscht dann hoem und kannscht's no nicht  
 Nehm i d'r Stock und zwirble dich.

(2)  
 Ene, tene, ink-well,  
 Go to school and learn something;  
 Come home then and still know nothing  
 I will take the stick and twirl you.

(3)  
 Ene, tene, Tintenfaß,  
 Geh in 'd Schule ond lerne was;  
 Wenn d' no was gelernet hascht  
 Komm nach Haus und sag mir das.

(3)  
 Ene, tene, ink-well,  
 Go to school and learn something;  
 If you have learned something  
 Come home and tell it to me.

[Translation Ends]