LIMERICKS

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LIMERICKS

A limerick`s a joke in verse,
Or even moral (which is worse).
There`re many here
To fill you with cheer
By the end you`ll be feeling quite terse.

A limerick, to be sure,
Should have five lines, no more.
But if you`re slick
You can get away with six,
Whilst others require only four!

A limerick is meant to rhyme,
Generally all of the time.
But don`t be a fool,
It`s no hard or fast rule -
Not all of them must!

What is that?

● British people are very fond of *limericks* — **short humorous poems** full of absurdity and wit.

● The classic limerick has 5 lines, three long and two short ones. It usually begins by introducing a person and a place and often has a surprise in the last line.

Here is an example:

Person and a place

Long lines

1. There was a young lady of Niger
2. Who smiled when she rode on a tiger.
3. They returned from the ride
4. With the lady inside,
5. And the smile on the face of the tiger.

Short lines

History

- Limericks took its name from the country of Limerick in **Ireland**.

- The very first limericks were not even funny. But in the 19th century this verse form was popularized by **Edward Lear**, the father of English 'Nonsense', and for over 100 years it has entertained both children and grown-ups.
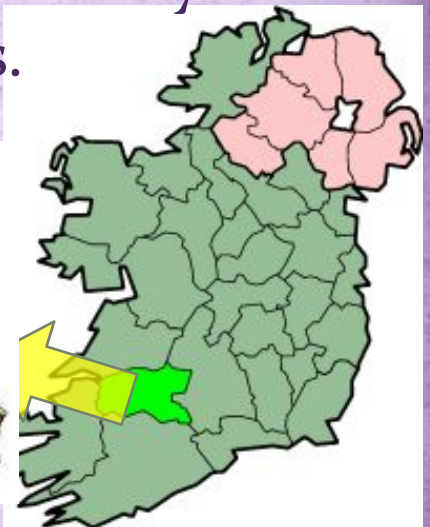
*County of Limerick in Ireland (particularly the Maigue Poets)*

Edward Lear

- Edward Lear was born in 1812 in London.

- He was the twelfth child of the family and had to earn his own living at the age of 15.

- When he was 19 he began to work as an artist at the zoo. The next year he published a book of coloured drawings of parrots.

- The Earl of Derby liked Lear's work and invited him to stay with his family and paint the collection of his birds. Lear worked him for four years, and it was during that period that he wrote his first limericks to amuse Earl's grandchildren.

- These nonsense verses were illustrated by charming pen drawings.
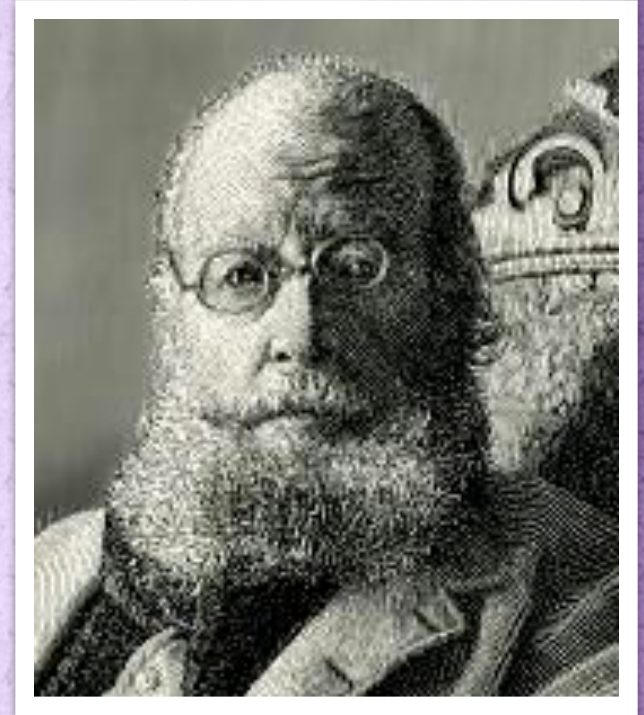

Edward Lear

Book of Nonsense.

- The limerick form was popularized by Edward Lear in his first Book of Nonsense (1845) and a later work (1872) on the same theme. In all Lear wrote 212 limericks, mostly nonsense verses.

- It was customary at the time for limericks to accompany an absurd illustration of the same subject, and for the final line of the limerick to be a kind of conclusion, usually a variant of the first line ending in the same word.
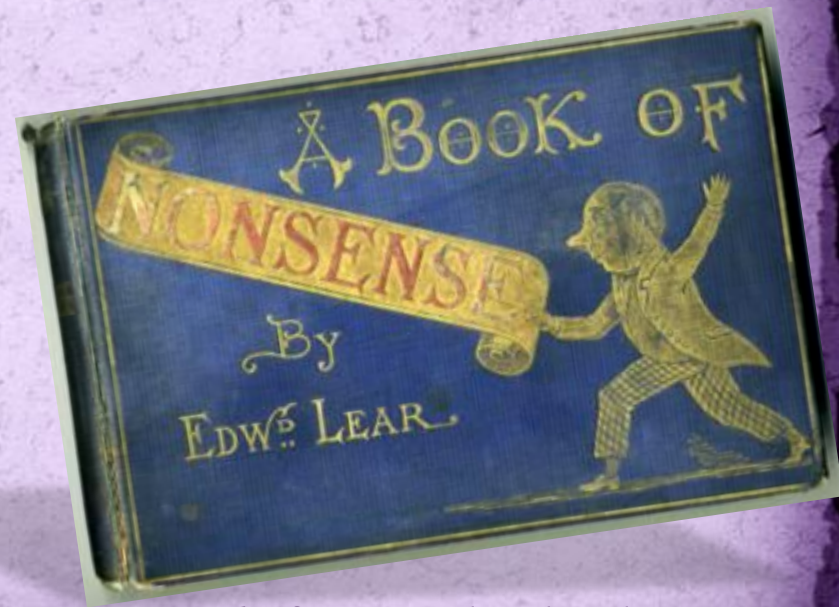
A Book of Nonsense by Edward Lear

In later years...

- In later years Lear published several additional volumes of nonsense verses and even songs, but he never thought much of them. He would have preferred the world to remember him as a landscape painter.

- Lear's books were a great success, and limerick writing became very popular.

- Some of the best limericks emerged from competitions run in the late nineteenth century by "Punch", the well-known British humorous magazine.
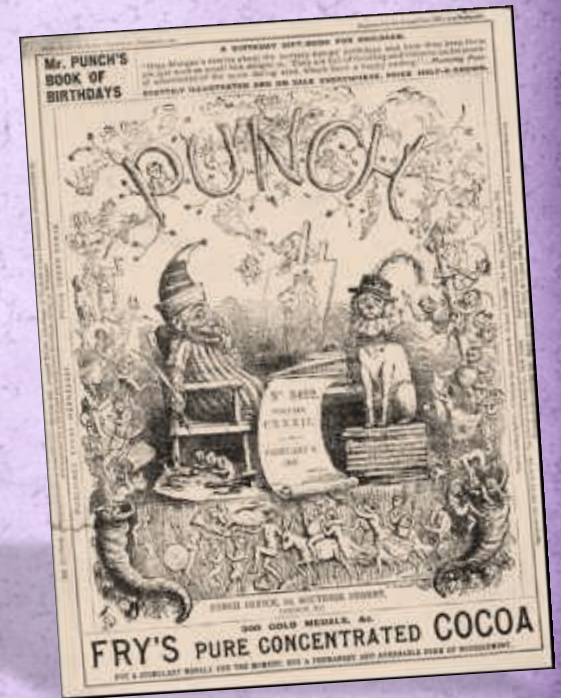
Punch magazine cover from 1867

COMPLETE NONSENSE

There was an Old Man on a hill,
seldom, if ever, stood still;
an up and down
s grandmother's gown,
ch adorned the Old Man on a hill.

There was an Old Man with a nose,
Who said, 'If you choose to suppose
That my nose is too long,
You are certainly wrong!'
That remarkable man with a nose.

COMPLETE NONSENSE

There was an Old Man of Peru,
Who watched his wife making a stew;
But once by mistake,
In a stove she did bake
That unfortunate Man of Peru.

There was an Old Man of Cape Horn,
Who wished he had never been born;
So he sat on a chair,
Till he died of despair,
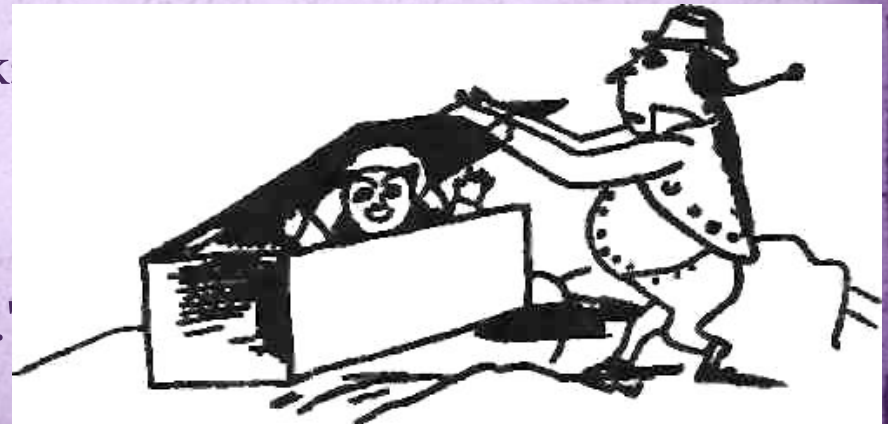That dolorous Man of Cape Horn.

COMPLETE NONSENSE

There was a Young Lady of Norway,
Who casually sat in a doorway;
When the door squeezed her flat,
She exclaimed, 'What of that?‘
This courageous Young Lady of Norway.

There was an Old Man on some rock,
Who shut his wife up in a box;
When she said, 'Let me out!‘
He exclaimed, 'Without doubt,
You will pass all your life in that box.'

COMPLETE NONSENSE

There was a young Lady whose chin
Resembled the point of a pin;
So she had it made sharp,
And purchased a harp,
And played several tunes with her chin.

There was a Young Lady of Portugal,
lose ideas were excessively nautical;
She climbed up a tree
To examine the sea,
Declared she would never leave Portu

COMPLETE NONSENSE

There was an Old Man of Moldavia,
Who had the most curious behaviour;
For while he was able
He slept on a table,
That funny Old Man of Moldavia.

There was an Old Man who supposed
That the street door was partially closed;
But some very large rats
Ate his coat and his hats, While that
Futile Old Gentleman dozed.

COMPLETE NONSENSE

There was an Old Man of Corfu,
Who never knew what he should do;
So he rushed up and down
Till the sun made him brown,
That bewildered Old Man of Corfu.

There was an Old Man of Nepal,
From his horse had a terrible fall;
But, though split quite in two,
With some very strong glue
They mended that Man of Nepal