

WHAT IS FANCY?

Sister

I am to write three lines, and you
Three others that will rhyme.
There—now I've done my task.

Brother

Three stupid lines as e'er I knew.
When you've the pen next time,
Some Question of me ask.

Sister

Then tell me, brother, and pray mind,
Brother, you tell me true:
What sort of thing is *fancy*?

Brother

By all that I can ever find,
'Tis something that is very new,
And what no dunces *can see*.

Sister

That is not half the way to tell
What *fancy* is about;
So pray now tell me more.

Brother

Sister, I think 'twere quite as well
That you should find it out;
So think the matter o'er.

Sister

It's what comes in our heads when we
Play at "Let's make believe,"
And when we play at "Guessing."

Brother

And I have heard it said to be
A talent often makes us grieve,
And sometimes proves a blessing.

ANGER

Anger in its time and place
May assume a kind of grace.
It must have some reason in it,
And not last beyond a minute.
If to further lengths it go,
It does into malice grow.
'Tis the difference that we see
'Twixt the Serpent and the Bee.
If the latter you provoke,
It inflicts a hasty stroke,
Puts you to some little pain,
But it *never stings again*.
Close in tufted bush or brake
Lurks the poison-swelled snake,
Nursing up his cherish'd wrath.
In the purlieus of his path,
In the cold, or in the warm,
Mean him good, or mean him harm,
Whensoever fate may bring you,
The vile snake will *always sting you*.

BLINDNESS

In a stage-coach, where late I chanc'd to be,
A little quiet girl my notice caught;
I saw she look'd at nothing by the way,
Her mind seem'd busy on some childish thought.
I with an old man's courtesy address'd
The child, and call'd her pretty dark-eyed maid
And bid her turn those pretty eyes and see
The wide extended prospect. "Sir," she said,
"I cannot see the prospect, I am blind."
Never did tongue of child utter a sound
So mournful, as her words fell on my ear.
Her mother then related how she found
Her child was sightless. On a fine bright day
She saw her lay her needlework aside,
And, as on such occasions mothers will,
For leaving off her work began to chide.
"I'll do it when 'tis day-light, if you please;
I cannot work, Mamma, now it is night."
The sun shone bright upon her when she spoke,
And yet her eyes receiv'd no ray of light.

THE MIMIC HARLEQUIN

“I’ll *make believe*, and fancy something strange:
I will suppose I have the power to change
And make all things unlike to what they were,
To jump through windows and fly through the air,
And quite confound all places and all times,
Like Harlequins we see in Pantomimes.
These thread-papers my wooden sword must be,
Nothing more like one I at present see.
And now all round this drawing-room I’ll range
And every thing I look at I will change.
Here’s Mopsa, our old cat, shall be a bird;
To a Poll Parrot she is now transferr’d.
Here’s Mamma’s work-bag, now I will engage
To whisk this little bag into a cage;
And now, my pretty Parrot, get you in it,
Another change I’ll shew you in a minute.”

“O fie, you naughty child, what have you done?
There never was so mischievous a son.
You’ve put the cat among my work, and torn
A fine lac’d cap that I but once have worn.”

WRITTEN IN THE FIRST LEAF OF A CHILD’S MEMORANDUM-BOOK

My neat and pretty book, when I thy small lines see,
They seem for any use to be unfit for me.
My writing, all misshaped, uneven as my mind,
Within this narrow space can hardly be confin’d.
Yet I will strive to make my hand less awkward look;
I would not willingly disgrace thee, my neat book!
The finest pens I’ll use, and wond’rous pains I’ll take,
And I these perfect lines my monitors will make.
And every day I will set down in order due,
How that day wasted is; and should there be a few
At the year’s end that shew more goodly to the sight,
If haply here I find some days not wasted quite,
If a small portion of them I have pass’d aright,
Then shall I think the year not wholly was misspent,
And that my Diary has been by some good Angel sent.