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MILLENNIUM EDITION

Meadowlands.

Thomas Pitfield.

Mrs. Frank Crossley.

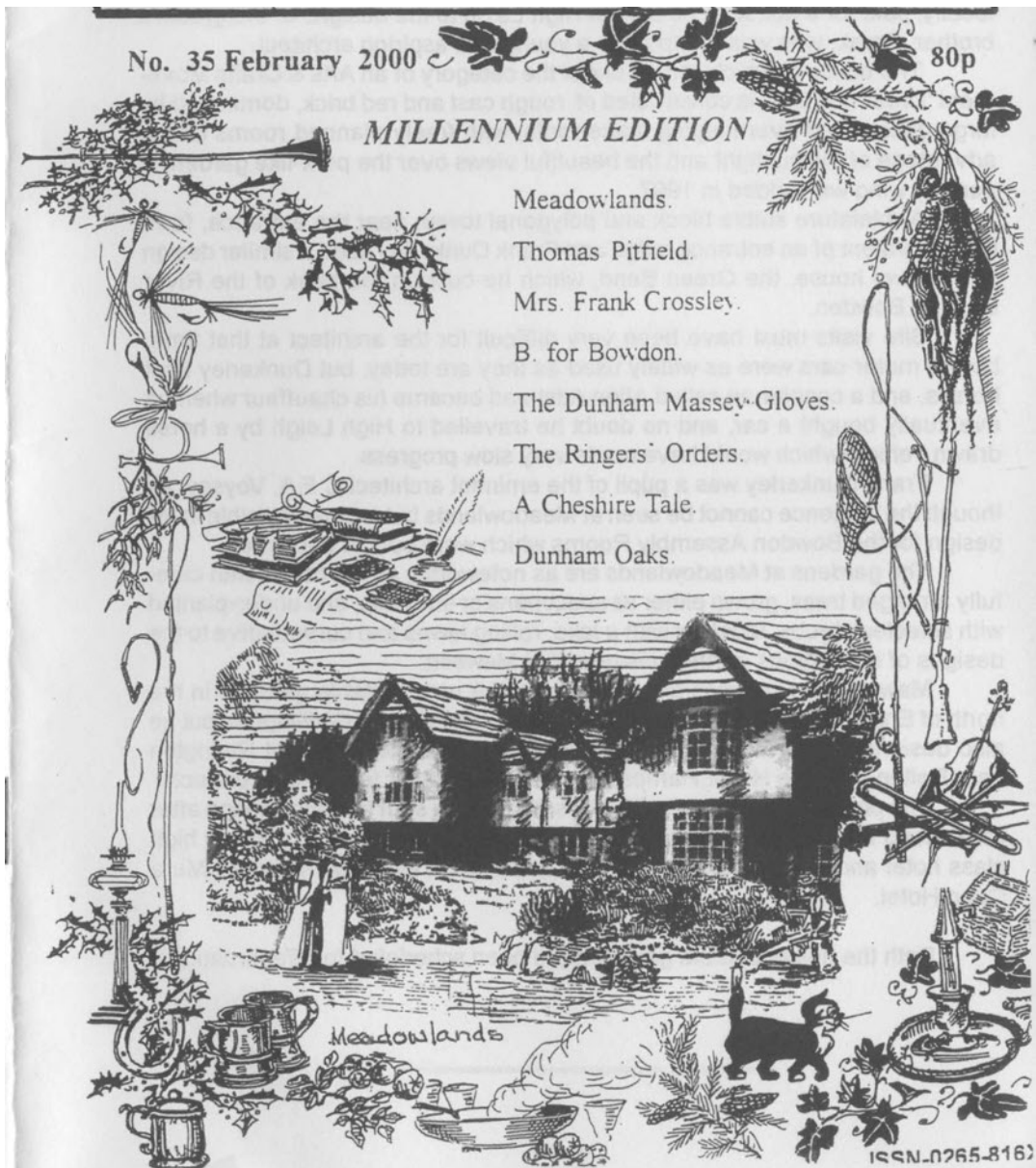
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Meadowlands **by Ronald Trenbath.**

When William and Amy Dunkerley married in 1903 his family, who lived locally, paid for a house to be built at High Legh to the designs of the groom's brother, Frank, who was at the time, a young and aspiring architect.

The building, which comes under the category of an Arts & Crafts Movement 'Dream House', is constructed of rough cast and red brick, dominated by large gables and overhanging stone roofs, with freely planned rooms taking advantage of the sunlight and the beautiful views over the park-like garden. A nursery wing was added in 1907.

A miniature stable block and polygonal tower, near the entrance, form the equivalent of an entrance lodge and Frank Dunkerley used a similar design for his own house, the Green Bend, which he built on the bank of the River Bollin in Bowdon.

Site visits must have been very difficult for the architect at that time, before motor cars were as widely used as they are today, but Dunkerley kept horses, and a coachman called Allen Adshead became his chauffeur when he eventually bought a car, and no doubt he travelled to High Legh by a horse drawn vehicle which would have made very slow progress.

Frank Dunkerley was a pupil of the eminent architect C.F.A. Voysey, although the influence cannot be seen at Meadowlands but is clearly visible in his design for the Bowdon Assembly Rooms which were built at this time.

The gardens at Meadowlands are as noteworthy as the house with care- fully arranged trees, grown either as specimens or en-mass, and under-planted with selected shrubs, together with a lake, rolling lawns and curved drive to the designs of the famous garden designer T.H. Mawson.

Mawson was responsible for many of the most notable gardens in the north of England, the best known being that at Tirley Garth at Willington, but he also designed gardens for Lord Leverhulme at Thornton Manor at Rivington near Bolton and The Hill at Hampstead, as well as other less known projects.

The property was taken by the Gas Board as a staff training college after the second world war but more recently it has been converted into a very high class hotel and very sympathetically restored, decorated and renamed Mere Court Hotel.

Both the house and the garden have been scheduled for preservation.

Thomas Pitfield 1903-1999

Thomas Pitfield, the distinguished composer and founder member of Bowdon History Society, died on 11th November 1999 at his home in Bowdon where he had lived for fifty-two years, joining the musical giants such as Hans Richter, Adolf Brodsky, John Ireland and others who had associations with the area as either residents or visitors.

Pitfield, lived throughout the twentieth century, except for three and a half years, during which time he saw more changes in every respect than anyone could have done in a previous century.

Born in Bolton, Lancashire, on 5th April 1903, the unwanted and largely unloved child of middle aged parents, his father was a jobbing builder and joiner and his mother a dressmaker, he was brought up in a hard north-country street, ultra-conservative, puritanical, Sabbatarian, narrow minded Anglican community which had no sympathy with cultural activities or pursuits which did not conform to local traditions.

When Pitfield was five he was sent to the local Church of England elementary school and at the age of eleven he was forced to collect rents from his parents tenants, many of whom, through extreme poverty, were unable to pay, but they received no sympathy from his mother and father thus causing young Tom great anguish.

At the age of fourteen Pitfield was 'pitchforked' into an apprenticeship as a draftsman in a factory making machinery for the cotton industry and it was then that he developed an interest in music and the visual arts.

It was at this point in his life, that he started to show the independence, determination and single minded tenacity that was to characterise the rest of his life, and by dint of hard work and careful saving he was able to pay for music lessons from a local organist, followed by a year studying at the Royal Manchester College of Music. Here his musical abilities broadened and he attended concerts and recitals and formed a string quartet playing a wide range of compositions including some of his own works.

During this time at the college Pitfield met Alice Maud Astbury, a more senior student, one year older, who had been born of British parents but educated in Russia. This meeting had a great influence on his work and they married in 1934.

In 1930 he was awarded a scholarship to Bolton School of Art but his stubborn resistance to advice and constructive criticism from tutors was detrimental to his career in Fine Art, unlike his contemporary Lowry who, as a result of such tuition, was able to rid himself of inhibitions and to develop his personal style to be accepted among the greatest artists of his day.

Concentrating on craftsmanship and graphic design, Pitfield qualified as an Arts and Crafts teacher, and accepted a post teaching handicrafts and music at Penketh School, near Warrington, a co-educational boarding school, whose irresponsible, eccentric headmaster made his life a misery until the school was closed down, causing Pitfield to have a nervous breakdown.

He had little interest in politics, describing himself as 'pink', but he formed a profound dislike for the idea of taking life, to become a strict vegetarian and pacifist, which led him into joining the Reverend Dick Shepherd's Peace Pledge Union, for which he composed 'A Patriot's Hymn of Peace'. He also developed a skill for writing limericks, which greatly impressed Richard Baker.

Because of his multiplicity of talents Hubert Foss, the music editor of the Oxford University Press, commissioned book illustrations, verse, cards and cover designs, including that for Britten's Simple Symphony which led to friendship with the composer and also with Peter Pears.

In 1947 Pitfield was appointed as a teacher of composition at the RCM which he held until his retirement in 1973, during which time he composed work to be performed at the Festival of Britain, as well as compositions, written at the request of Sir John Barbirolli, for the Halle Orchestra. He also wrote music for Leon Goossens, Evelyn Rothwell, Carl Dolmetsch, Osian Ellis and Archie Camden; and his pupils included John Ogden.

Wisely Pitfield concentrated on his much greater talent as a musician, rather than that of an artist, but he enjoyed sketching and in his very long retirement he produced numerous drawings and paintings of local scenes. His funeral at Bowdon Parish Church was attended by many of the greatest names in contemporary British music. Alice, his widow, continues to live in their home in Bowdon.

Mrs Frank Crossley by Chris Hill

Mrs. Frank Crossley - whose husband was regarded as a saint for his philanthropic work, shared in his work and did much herself to ameliorate the miseries of the poor. Miss Emily Kerr married Frank Crossley in 1871 and afterwards they lived at "Fairlie", on St. Catherine Road, Bowdon, (now an annexe of the Altrincham Grammar School for Girls). She started off this good work by helping those in need in the surrounding neighbourhood. Mrs. Crossley was a consistent visitor to those in any sort of trouble, and with her quiet support, inspired hope and encouragement in those who were in depressed spirits. She also visited the sick, taking with her cheering words of sympathy and affection that invariably rejoiced the hearts of her patients. When her husband set up business in Manchester, the initial years were a struggle, but when the business eventually prospered, their enhanced affluence enabled both Crossleys to increase their Christian service and philanthropy.

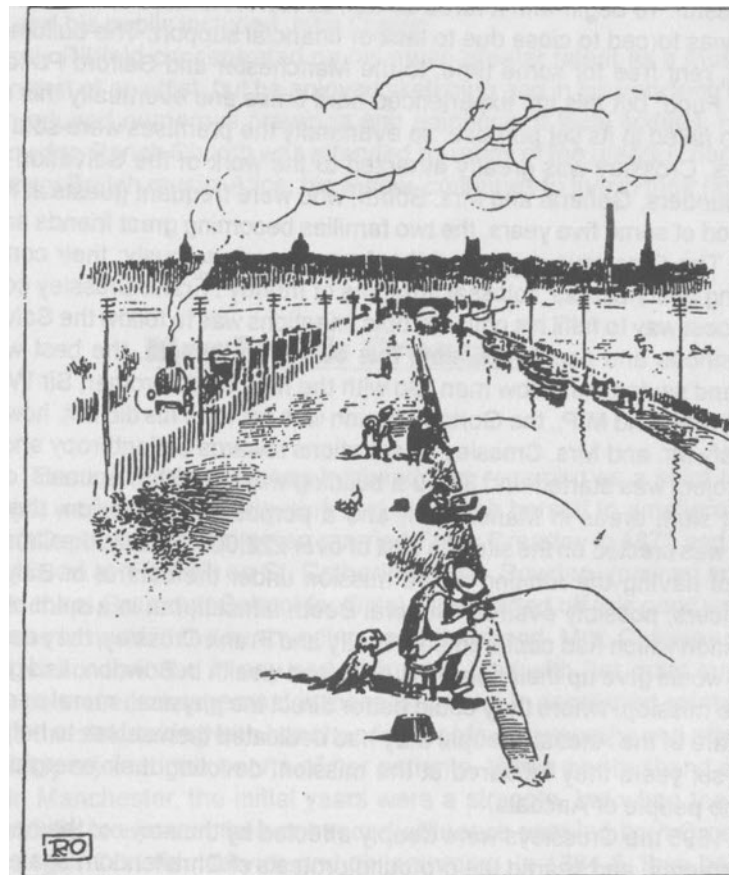
In 1884-5, they became deeply interested in the "Rescue Homes", first established as a branch of the Manchester and Salford "Boys' and Girls' Homes and Refuges", located in Cheetham Hill. The enterprise appealed strongly to the sympathy of Mrs. Crossley, and it finally resulted in the establishment of the Girls' Homes in Hale, for the rescue of waifs and strays - the lost and helpless children with which the city of Manchester abounded and for which the Cheetham Hill Homes could not adequately provide. The two buildings for the Girls' Homes were erected at Mr. Crossley's expense. No.1. Home was run as Mrs. Crossley's, until the death of her husband; while No.2. Home was placed in the hands of a Ladies Committee, who for many years carried it on with the aid of voluntary contributions - mainly from Bowdon people who were in accord with this worthy cause. Each home accommodated 30 children, who were clothed educated and trained, mostly for domestic service, until they reached the age of about sixteen. Just after the death of Mr. Crossley, No.1. Home was conducted by Mrs. Crossley with a small committee of like-minded people as herself. It existed well over 25 years and was considered a great success, partly due to the good staff Mrs. Crossley selected for the positions of matron and teacher. No.2. Home was not so successful. To begin with it fared as well as No. 1. Home, but after about 15 years, it was forced to close due to lack of financial support. The building was then lent, rent free for some time, to the Manchester and Salford Police Orphanage Fund, but this too experienced hard times and eventually this enterprise also failed in its set purpose; so eventually the premises were sold.

Mrs. Crossley was greatly attracted to the work of the Salvation Army and its founders, General and Mrs. Booth, who were frequent guests at Fairlie for a period of some five years, the two families becoming great friends and co-workers. The Crossleys supported the Army very generously; their contributions being described as 'colossal amounts of money'. Frank Crossley considered the best way to fulfil his philanthropic intentions was to follow the Salvation Army methods and open a mission, this being, he thought, the best way of serving and saving his fellow man. So with the help of his brother, Sir William Crossley, Bart, and M.P., the Gorton Mission was set up. This did not, however, fully satisfy Mr. and Mrs. Crossley's aspirations towards philanthropy and so a bigger project was started. In 1888-9 a building was bought in Ancoats, one of the worst slum areas in Manchester, and a purpose built mission, the 'Star Mission', was erected on the site at a cost of over £20,000. Initially, the Crossleys thought of having the running of the mission under the control of Salvation Army officers, possibly even by General Booth himself, but in a spirit of self-consecration which had captured both Emily and Frank Crossley, they decided that they would give up their home of luxury and wealth in Bowdon, and go and live at the mission, where they could better direct the physical, moral and spiritual welfare of the Ancoats people they had dedicated themselves to help. For the next six years they laboured at the mission, devoting their energies and zeal to the people of Ancoats.

In 1895 the Crossleys were deeply affected by the news of the happenings in Armenia, and shared the profound protests of Christendom against the atrocities occurring there. Frank Crossley was intensely concerned in leading public opinion against these horrors perpetrated by the Turks on the inhabitants of Armenia. As a consequence of all these activities, Frank's health suffered and he was recommended to take a convalescent voyage to India. On reaching Bombay, however, instead of resting and recuperating, he took it upon himself to visit most of the Missions Stations, offering encouragement and financial help. Thus his journey did little to improve his health, and as a consequence, he gradually wasted away, his energies having been spent. Eventually he died on March 25th. 1897. Mrs. Crossley continued to carry on with both her own projects and those previously supervised by her husband, so that she continued the 'saintly work' she and her husband had previously shared.

B. for Bowdon

The accompanying illustration is taken from a local ABC.



The drawing shows that stretch of canal between Brooklands and Timperley where there is a path on either side of the canal. It might be suggested that it could equally well be the stretch between Sale (or Sale Moor as it was known as previously) and Brooklands, but the position of the rectangular church tower identifies the view, as suggested above. From Sale, looking down the canal towards Altrincham, Bowdon Church tower appears to be on the skyline in line with the canal, but from Brooklands there must be a subtle alteration in the alignment of the canal because the church tower then appears offset from the direction of the canal. In the picture, the path on the right-hand side is the tow-path which would have been busy with horses towing barges and would have interfered with angler's lines, whereas the path on the left-hand side is a public footpath, enabling easy access for anglers, who would have been able to fish with the minimum of disruption to their lines. As well as horse-drawn barges, the drawing shows a steam powered tug, or towing barge. The train depicted would at that time, have belonged to the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway. Two lines of telegraph poles are shown, perhaps one set were the ordinary telephone line, whilst the other set, apparently on railway land, carried the necessary signalling for the operation of the railway.

The sky-line shows four churches, from left to right, St. John's, a chapel-of-ease for St. Margaret's. The Wesleyan Chapel of St. John's, known locally as The Dome Chapel and familiar to the people of Altrincham by dominating the direct view from along George Street, St. Mary's, the parish church of Bowdon, and lastly St. Margaret's, its spire providing a magnificent landmark from the north side of Altrincham. The chimney is that of the Linotype, which dates this drawing as being 1898, or thereafter. It was constructed of deep red brick which used to glow in the red-dish light of the setting sun. It has been demolished. Eventually another chimney serving Budenburg's was built and still stands with its faded wartime camouflage paint. On careful examination, the clock tower of the Linotype will also be discerned. There may be the indication of another landmark between the two left-hand churches, but it is not known what this would be.

The illustration was drawn by Roger Oldham, a school friend of the eminent Bowdon naturalist and ornithologist, T.A. Coward, with whom he travelled extensively in Cheshire, which resulted in the publication of 'Picturesque Cheshire', written by Coward and illustrated by Oldham. The book is now more often bought for the illustrations than for the text.

The drawing illustrated in this issue of Bowdon Sheaf is a poor example of Oldham's very distinctive and individualistic style but it shows his use of crosshatching to maximum effect.

The Dunham Massey Gloves
by Ronald Trenbath

Lady Mary Grey, sister of Lady Jane Grey the nine-day queen executed in 1554, presented Queen Elizabeth I with two pairs of decorated gloves as a present on New Years Day 1578. Gloves always featured as symbols of status in English Society as it indicated that those who wore, or carried them were not obliged to work with their hands and as a result gloves were a favourite present to give or receive at times of celebration among people of rank.

Presentation gloves were often elaborately and richly embroidered with figures and flowers on velvet with sequins, gold thread, dyed silk floss and decorative buttons. They were very rarely worn and more often than not they would be carried in one hand.

The Queen always enjoyed drawing gloves on and off her hands in order to focus attention to her long fingers, of which she was very proud, and she employed a Mistress of Sweet Coffers, whose job it was to maintain fragrant boxes in which to keep her gloves, so no doubt she was very delighted to receive Lady Mary's gift.

Lord John Grey, Mary's uncle, was a forbear of the Earls of Stamford and it was at their London house that these gloves were discovered, in excellent condition, in 1827, when they were taken to Dunham Massey for safe keeping. Here they were again forgotten until they were rediscovered in 1986, still in perfect condition.

The Ringers' Orders
by Chris Hill

The following notice, displayed in the Belfry of St. Mary's, Bowdon, was recorded by F. W. on 17th July 1852 and subsequently printed in the "Cheshire and Lancashire Historical Collector" Volume 1,1853.

You Ringers all observe these orders well
He pays his sixpence that o'erturns a Bell
And he that rings with either Spur or Hat
Must pay his six pence certainly for that
And he that rings and does dissturbbe ye Peal
Must pay his six pence or a Gun of ale
These laws elsewhere in every Church are us'd
That Bells and Ringers may not be abused.

James Millat, Ferdinando Laughton, George Wright, James Fletcher, Joseph Drinkwater, John Pickering, Aaron Eccles, Peter Pickering, John Dean, John Holbort.

**A Cheshire Tale "Through the Looking Glass
and What Alice Found There"
by Myra Kendrick**

Bowdon can not claim Lewis Carroll as its son and put up plaques to him and his books for children, in the way that it has done for the children's writers who actually lived locally for however short a time.

But Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, whose pen name was a play on his two baptismal names, was Cheshire born and spent his first eleven years at Daresbury where for sixteen years his father was vicar at the parish church. Childhood years make a deep impression on the mind, and *Alice in Wonderland*, the first of two *Alice* books, reflects something of the countryside and creatures of this once quiet Cheshire village. Who can forget the strange vanishing animal which grins down at Alice through the branches of a tree and fades until only the grin is left?

Daresbury's old sandstone Church, set amid fields and trees, receives a steady flow of visitors who come to see the memorial window to its most famous son, situated at the east end of the Daniell Chapel and dedicated in 1934. Below the window, on a fine oak table, is kept the Lewis Carroll Memorial Album in which may be read a list of his better known writings, including his second *Alice* book *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1872.

It is a curiosity that in fact the book was already in print and a copy in Dodgson's hands on December 6th 1871, so that the entry in the Memorial Album, as well as, oddly enough, the title page of the first edition, is not strictly accurate. The publishers, one supposes, must have been able to complete the publication processes a little ahead of the expected time. The Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th Edition) claims 1871 as the publication date and this is confirmed by the colophon of later editions of *Through The Looking Glass* itself. Dodgson's diary tells us that on 8th December 1871 he received from MacMillan "three Looking Glasses in Morocco and a hundred in cloth" and by 27th January 1872, "They have now sold 15000 *Looking Glasses* and have orders for 500 more". *Through The Looking Glass and what Alice Found There* was already well launched.

This book has an interesting history.

Alice lovers are so used to the illustrations by John Tenniel that they can hardly imagine the characters in the story in any other form than as Tenniel saw them. It comes as a surprise, then, to learn that when he was first approached, Tenniel, the illustrator of *Alice in Wonderland*, refused to illustrate *Through the Looking Glass*. He seems to have found Dodgson tiresomely exacting to work with. It was not until Dodgson had tried several other artists without success that Tenniel at last grudgingly relented and agreed to undertake the illustrations "at such spare times as he can find". Dodgson wrote in his diary that Tenniel thought it possible, though unlikely, that the book might be ready for issue by Christmas 1869. In fact, by June 1870 Dodgson had received only seven pictures from Tenniel.

Dodgson's own progress with the writing was not particularly fast. In August 1866 he had written to his publisher that he had an idea of writing a sequel to *Alice in Wonderland*. He did not, however, send them the first chapter until January 1869 and almost two years later a diary entry note stated that he had finished writing the book. By 27th April in the same year Tenniel had sent him twenty-seven pictures, but it was now clear that the book could not appear at Michaelmas, as Dodgson appears to have hoped.

Dodgson had some misgivings about the printing of the "*Looking Glass* writing" that appears in the book. He wrote to the publishers as early as 1868 to ask them if they would be able to print a page or two of his projected new *Alice* book "in reverse", but as time went on he seems to have felt this an unreasonable demand and reduced the amount to a mirror image of the title and first verse of the nonsense poem *Jabberwocky*

What gave Dodgson the idea of setting his second *Alice* book in a reverse world on the other side of a looking glass? It was due to the ready wit of a little girl named Alice Raikes, a cousin of Dodgson's whom she met on a visit to an uncle in London.

The grown-up cousin played a joke on the girl, giving her an orange to hold and asking her which hand it was in. On her replying correctly "The right" he turned her towards a mirror so that she could see her reflection, asking her again which hand it was in. She was puzzled by the apparent change of the orange to the left hand, but she worked out a solution for herself. "If I was on the other side of the glass, would the orange still be in my right hand?" Dodgson was delighted by this intelligent answer and claimed that it gave him the idea of the looking glass world in his story.

Yet this young cousin Alice was not the heroine of the book. It is well known that this was Alice Liddell, the middle sister of the three little girls whose company delighted Dodgson, by now a fellow and mathematical lecturer at Christ Church College, Oxford, of which her father was dean. Just as the girls' croquet games can be seen reflected in a chapter of *Alice in Wonderland*, so their introduction to the game of chess influenced the form of *Through The Looking Glass*. We follow Alice's progress as a pawn from square to square of chequered countryside, towards her crowning as queen at the end of the story, and witness her encounters with other pawns, knights, kings and queens, red and white.

In this way the material for the book was gathered until, fused with recollections of nursery rhymes such as *Humpty Dumpty* and *The Lion and The Unicorn* and embellished with nonsense verses, mirror writing and the quaint illustrations of John Tenniel, it emerged from the press at the end of 1871, bearing on its title page the date 1872.

Dunham Oaks
by **Marjorie Dorber**

I wish I was in Dunham
Where the giant Elm trees grow,
Just to see once more the red deer
And his gentle soft eyed doe.

I remember the blue backed swallows
As they swirled between the trees,
And the old water-mill
Where they nested beneath its eaves.

It seems the bracken stretched for miles
Just about waist high,
From somewhere beneath the tangled mass
You'd hear the game cock cry.

But, oh the walk beside the lake
Where the summer breezes blow,
Where the purple rhododendron and the
Water lilies grow.

I sat for hours, when I was young
Beneath the copper beech,
And fed the little squirrels
That played just out of reach.

I wish I was in Dunham
Where the many oak trees grow,
It seems like only yesterday
But it was many years ago.

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