

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Jarndyce and Jarndyce

A few days ago a popular radio announcer presented an author of his program who had just recently published a new edition of "Mother Goose," a copy of which was presented to a group of children present at the broadcast. The author told in humorous vein how he had decided to write a book that would not be controversial, but lo! The very heavens almost descended upon him – some liked the book, some debated its value, others regretted that the old Mother Goose should be so mutilated, while others were high in the praise of the manner in which the writer had changed the – some thought – gruesome lines in the stories.

One of my correspondents writes "I'm sorry I got switched onto the trail of Mother Goose as it has me in its clutches and hangs on and on like the noted case of "Jarndyce and Jarndyce" in Dickens' "Bleak House."

About ten years ago there appeared an article in a San Francisco newspaper entitled "Boston" by Gladwin Hall which I think might be interesting to those in Monterey who are interested in preservation. Mr. Hall wrote: "Outside the fence of the old Granary burying ground, where the original Mother Goose is interred, the old man still sells catnip and herbs, with a discourse on the origins and benefits of each.

"This cemetery, squeezed into mid-city grass plot back of the Park street church, is probably the most select in the world. You have to do a lot more than die to get into it. Burials are very rare. People were astonished a few years ago, when a new grave was dug, to discover its prospective occupant was the old lady had been a familiar figure for years in the ticket booth of the old Howard Burlesque theater. It turned out that she was a forgotten remnant of an old Boston family.

"Benjamin Franklin's birth site, the home of the recently defunct Boston Transcript is shuttered, and old gaffers in the musty clubs around Beacon Hill have a new pastime in comparing notes over what paper they have switched to. 'The evening so-and-so is all right,' one growled, 'but it's so hard to find out who's dead.'"

Mrs. Mary Trimmer Baldwin has sent me a few notes on the origin of the name "Granary." The Granary was once the largest building in Boston. It was maintained by the

town during most of the nineteenth century, holding 12,000 bushels of grain in reserve, to be sold at cost to the poor in time of famine. It stood on the place of the Park Street Church, a plain, old-fashioned meeting house with a really fine spire, built by an English architect in 1809. The intense orthodoxy here preached won for the locality the name of "Brimstone Corner" and the great choir enjoyed wide renown.

John Fenno, a noted wit, was the keeper of the Granary before the Revolution. It stood next to the burying ground by the same name. The building was not used as a granary after the American way, but was occupied by various minor town officials. In 1795 the town voted to sell the building but it was not until 1809 that it was removed to Commercial Point, Dorchester, and altered into a hotel.

In Samuel Adams Drake's "Old Landmarks of Boston" (eighth edition published in 1893) he wrote "The frigate's (Old Ironsides) sails were made in the Old Granary at the corner of Park and Tremont streets where now stands the Park Church. No other building in Boston was large enough. In the Park Street Church the national hymn "America" was first sung on July 4, 1832. It was written by Samuel Francis Smith."