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Peake

STUDIES

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On the following pages

Four colour illustrations to 'Children's Hour: four nursery rhymes' from
Lilliput, May 1950 (vol.26, No.5, issue 155, pp.37–40).

They have previously been reprinted, rather small, in
Mervyn Peake: the man and his art (page 132).

The original drawings were sold at Sotheby's on 24–25 January 1983.

These are reproduced from the magazine, so the colours may be
a bit off compared with the originals.

The verses are also as printed in *Lilliput*, so they too
may not be exactly as you remember them.

Mervyn Peake had already illustrated 'How many miles to Babylon?'
ten years before, in *Ride a Cock-Horse*.

On that occasion, the boy was sitting up in bed, raising his candle to see
a dark figure from Babylon, rising behind the bedhead.

Here he seems fascinated and at the same time slightly appalled
by what he is seeing.

‘How many miles to Babylon?’
‘Three score miles and ten.’
‘Can I get there by candle-light?’
‘Yes, and back again.
If your heels are nimble and light,
You may get there by candle-light.’

‘Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been?’

‘I’ve been to London to visit the queen.’

‘Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, what did you there?’

‘I caught a little mouse under the chair.’

Three wise men of Gotham
Went to sea in a bowl.
If the bowl had been stronger,
My song had been longer.

Hark! Hark! The dogs do bark, / The beggars are coming to town.
Some in rags and some in tags, / And some in silken gown.
Some gave them white bread, / And some gave them brown,
And some gave them a good horse-whip,
And sent them out of town.