



THE BOOK

OF

FABLES.

ILLUSTRATED BY ENGRAVINGS.



WORCESTER:

PUBLISHED BY J. GROUT, JR.





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THE BOOK

OF

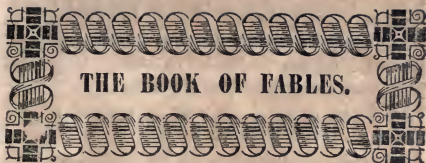
FABLES.

WITH MANY ENGRAVINGS.



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THE BOOK OF FABLES.

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

The fox being an animal remarkable for his cunning, and for the address with which he procures his food and avoids danger, we find him a very prominent character in the fables of Esop and others. It must be confessed, however, that many things are put to his account and laid to his charge, with which he could not have had anything to do; and I rather think that if he could be made to understand this fable, he would clear himself at once of all suspicions regarding depredations in a vineyard: a hen-house I fancy, is much more to his taste, and here his artifices and success are wonderful. However, we must let Esop tell his story in his own way, merely accomodating him with a few rhymes, which we hope will convey his meaning.

A fox into a vineyard stray'd,
Perhaps for theft, perchance for shade,
And soon rich clusters caught his eye
Of purple grapes, suspended high :
But ah ! he tired himself in vain,
The tempting treasures to obtain.
In vain he climb'd, in vain he sprung,
Too loftily the bunches hung :
And so—although it gave him grief,
The intended robber was no thief.
Quoth he, at length, in canting tone,
“ Why should I take what's not my own ?
Why should I eat, though in my power,
Wild, worthless grapes, unripe and sour ! ”
Thus disappointed folks invent
A fib, to hide their discontent :
They'd better let old Esop teach,
Nor aim at things beyond their reach.

THE FOX AND THE TORTOISE.

A Fable to show the advantages of Honesty.

A fox that had been robbing some hen-roosts, and had therefore excited the indignation of the people, was one day pursued by a party of hunters, and sorely pressed by hounds. At last he came to a secluded spot, and having for the time eluded his enemies, he sat down to take breath. Near

by there chanced to be a tortoise, and as birds and beasts always talk in fables, it was a matter of course that the two animals on the present occasion should fall into conversation.

“You seem,” said the tortoise, “to be very much out of breath: pray let me ask you what is the matter?”

“Matter enough!” replied the fox. “I occasionally slip into the farmers’ hen-roosts and take away a few of their fowls, or now and then I carry off a fat goose or a stray lamb; and behold I am hunted by all people with their hounds, as if I were the greatest rascal on the face of the earth! Whew! how hot I am. These villanous hounds put me in a terrible tremor. One of them came so close as to snap at my throat with his long ugly teeth, and I really thought my last hour was come. What a terrible life it is I lead: I cannot stir abroad but some hound is on my track, or some bullet whistles near my heart. Even in my den of rocks I have no peace, for I am ever dreaming of the sounds of muskets or the baying of hounds.”

As the fox said this, the cry of the hunters and their hounds came near, and to save his life, he was again obliged to take to flight. The humble tortoise, observing all this, remarked very wisely, as follows:

How much better it is to be honest and content with what we call our own, than to be forever running after forbidden pleasures, thus drawing down upon ourselves the enmity of mankind, and all the disquietude of a guilty conscience."



THE SHEPHERD'S BOY.

A wanton boy, that kept his Master's Flock,
The neighbor's care and kindness us'd to mock ;
Often he cried, The wolf ! The wolf ! is come !
And brought the friendly villagers from home.
When still they came, well arm'd the folds to
guard,
They found no wolf, but the abusive 'herd.
Thus oft deluded, they observed no more
His cry, but let him, unregarded roar :

At last, the wolf attack'd the folds indeed ;
The boy cried out ; the people gave no heed :
They were so oft, by false alarms, deceiv'd,
They thought he was not fit to be believ'd.

THE FOX AND THE GOAT.

A fox who down a well had tumbled,
There lay and thus at leisure grumbled :
“ How could I be so strangely wrong
To let myself get overhung !
Now all at me this jest will cast—
He overreach'd himself at last !
But I will not repine and fret,
But see what fortune brings me yet.”
Just as these thoughts he had rehearsed,
A goat drew near to quench his thirst :
“ Oh, Reynard, is that you below !”
“ Yes,” said the fox, “ will you come too ?
You'd be delighted were you here,
The water is so cool and clear !”
The goat, though bearded, was not wise ;
He jumped, and found, to his surprise,
The well was deep and cold and all,
And he got bruises by his fall.
The fox now jump'd upon his back,
Resolved no more his wits to lack,
And springing with his utmost strength,
Regain'd the upper world at length.
The Goat now maundered in his turn,

Which gave sly Reynard small concern :
Said he, " Now make not this ado ;
You're in the well—'tis well for you !
If friends inquire in future days,
I'll say you're at a watering-place !"

Advise not with suspicious friends—
In evil all such talking ends :
Be sure some mischief is implied
When thieves and rogues begin to guide.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

'Twas June ; the ass could not be chilly—
Oh no, but he was vain and silly,
Disliking asinine estate,
He wish'd that folks would think him great.
So having found a lion's skin,
He needs must thrust his body in.
Intent to astonish all beholders,
At length he got it on his shoulders ;
There was a sight, " Could one be found
To pull it smooth and tie it round,
He for a lion sure might pass !"
So thought this vain and stupid ass.
At last he deem'd it well adjusted,
And thought the secret might be trusted,
And so it was, as Esop said,
The flocks and herds in terror fled,

He seem'd his object to attain,
A lion, monarch of the plain !
And when his master he espied,
To frighten him as well he tried ;
But he the impostor did not doubt
Who saw his long ears sticking out.
“ Come hither, honest friend,” said he ;
“ You need not think of scaring me ;
I'll clothe you soon, you foolish hack,
With two broad panniers on your back !”



THE DOG AND THE WATER DOG.

A poor hungry dog had travelled far in quest of a bit of meat for his supper, and at length obtained—whether honestly or not Esop does not say—half of a very fine shoulder of mutton, uncooked—he much

preferred it so. Well, this dog, considering he might enjoy it with more safety at home, determined to trudge thither with his booty. So he trotted along with the meat in his mouth, keeping rather on the unfrequented and shady side of hedges for private reasons of his own, relishing much the expectation of his treat, and also the odour of the meat which projected just under his nose. He knew the way well—to say the truth, he had often footed that same path entirely on his own account. At length he had to cross a remarkably clear rivulet by means of a plank, which was not intended perhaps any more than the mutton for his express use and accommodation. As the bridge was long and narrow, he proceeded slowly, and casting an eye beneath, perceived what he doubted not was another dog, (a water dog it certainly was,) with the other half of the shoulder of mutton in his mouth. And now he must needs make a sudden spring and snatch at this new temptation; in doing which he slipped off the bridge, found no dog in the water but himself, and lost his own meat at the same time, which speedily disappeared in the passing stream!

So those who plan dishonest gains,
Oft have their labor for their pains,

And go like him of whom you've read,
Greedy, yet supperless to bed !

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE.

A greedy wolf who ate in haste,
Whilst others envied his repast,
Contrived the flesh with speed to swallow,
But found a bone that would not follow.
Now do not at the matter joke,
For this poor wolf began to choke—
With starting eyes he grasp'd for breath,
And thought 'twould quickly end in death.
At length a crane, to whom belongs
A bill that's like a pair of tongs,
Observed the wolf's distress and grief,
Yet hasted not to his relief.

“ Oh ! Mr. Spindleshanks, I pray
Have mercy, do, and come this way !
One moment now your pinchers lend,
And draw this bone to serve a friend !
Now pray be brisk,” the wolf implored ;
“ You'll have the bone for your reward.”
The crane the terms began to ponder,
And tho't them hard, and that's no wonder.
“ Promise,” said he, “ a lamb to pick.”
“ Done,” said the wolf now pray be quick !”
The crane, ere venturing to comply,
First view'd the gulf with careful eye,
At length the blade-bone did espy ;

Then pulling by an end of gristle,
Withdrew the intruder from his whistle.
“Thanks” said the wolf; “a friend in need,
Is without doubt, a friend indeed :
Why wait you, Mr. Spindleshanks ?
I tell you that you have my thanks.”
The crane now thought it was no ill
Once more to try—bring in his bill,
Charging for work and labor done,
Extracting the aforesaid bone.
“What” said the wolf, “is this the way
My great forbearance you repay ?
I had yourself between my paws,
Your very head within my jaws !
Ere for reward you idly gape,
Pray thank me for your strange escape !

THE WOLF AND LAMB.

One sultry day, a wolf and a lamb happened to come at the same time to quench their thirst at a brook. The wolf stood on the higher ground, and the lamb at some distance down the current. However, the wolf having a mind to pick a quarrel with him asked him what he meant by disturbing the water, and making it muddy and unfit to drink. The poor frightened lamb humbly said, that he could not conceive

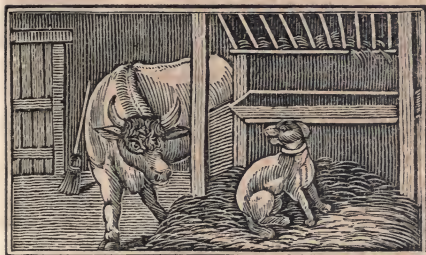


how that could be, since the water ran the other way! "Be that as it will," said the wolf, "you are a mischievous wretch, and railed at me behind my back above a year ago!" "Upon my word," said the lamb, "that was before I was born." The wolf, finding it to no purpose to invent these idle tales, fell into a great passion, and vowed that the lamb was keeping him without his dinner by remaining where he was, and that the whole race with their shepherds were determined on the same thing. The poor lamb had no defence, but was obliged to submit to the designing and voracious tyrant, who made his intended meal of him without further delay or ceremony.

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE BEAR.

Two travellers through a forest stray'd
Who were of various foes afraid ;
But each beforehand had agreed
To aid his friend in time of need.
They had not long been plodding there,
When from a thicket rush'd a bear :
But see how soon a promise fails
When danger comes and fear prevails !
The man who just his word had pass'd
Now scrambled up a tree in haste,
Regardless of his lonely mate,
Who lay in unprotected state
Flat on his face, and motionless—
The part of prudence in that case.
So Bruin now drew near, 'tis said,
Smell'd to his ear, and thought him dead,
And whilst the man his fears digested,
Went on, and left him unmolested.
The danger o'er, the unfaithful friend
Could quickly from the tree descend ;
In anxious questions was expert,
As whether he were scared or hurt :
But most especially inquired
If the bear spoke, and what transpired.
“ Why yes, kind sir,” replied the other,
“ He ask'd if you were friend or brother.
Said he, ‘Whate’re he is, ’tis vain
To think of trusting him again.

You'd better in yourself confide
Than have pretenders at your side.' ”



THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

A dog was lying upon a manger full of hay. An Ox, being hungry, came near, and offered to eat of the hay; but the envious ill-natured Cur, getting up and snarling at him, would not suffer him to touch it. Upon which, the Ox, in the bitterness of his heart, said, 'A curse light on thee for a malicious wretch, who wilt neither eat hay thyself, nor suffer others to do it.'

HURCULES AND THE CLOWN.

A rustic on one wintry day
Was driving up a miry way,
With loaded cart and aged horse,
He could not well proceed of course.
In fact, he had the adverse luck
To find a slough in which he stuck :
In vain he flogg'd ; in vain the beast
Struggled to get his load released.
The man despair'd and roar'd at length
To Hercules, the god of strength.
Oh ! have compassion, if you please,
And lift me out, good Hercules !
So Hercules—as Esop tells—
(I could not have believed it else)
Inquired, from a descending cloud,
“ For what it was he bawl'd so loud.”
The clown now pointed to his beast,
And then repeated his request.
“ What think you,” Hercules replied,
“ That I have no affairs beside
Assisting lazy drones like you,
Who leave their work for me to do ?
Come ! clap your shoulder to the wheel,
Before the whip I make you feel ;
I'll not indulge your sloth at all,
But cure it thus next time you call !”

Many who for assistance cry
Could help themselves if they would try :
Let such their idleness repent,
And take the hint that Esop meant.

THE LARK AND HER YOUNG ONES.

A lark who had young ones in a field of corn which was almost ripe, was under some fear, lest the reapers should come before her brood was fledged. She told them therefore to let her know any thing they heard about the matter in her absence. When she was gone they heard the farmer say to his son, "This wheat is nearly ready; go and ask our neighbors to lend us a hand to reap it." The young ones in terror told this to their parent. "Be easy," said the old bird; "if the man depends on his neighbors for help, he will wait some time." She went out again leaving the same instructions; and on again returning, inquired what had happened in the way of talk. "Why" said the little ones, "the owner came, expecting his helps; but as nobody came, he sent his son to their own relations to assist them, as laborers were too scarce to be obtained." "Don't be frightened, yet," said the cunning old lark; "but pay particular attention to what you hear

next." And so it was, that the farmer coming again and finding no aid arrived, said to his son, "Hark you, George, get a couple of good sickles ready, and we will begin the corn ourselves to-morrow." When the young larks told their mother this, "Then," said she, "we must be gone, indeed; for, when people help themselves, their business is sure to be done."

THE DOVES AND HAWK.

The *Doves* wag'd war with their old Foe the *Kite*,
And chose a *Hawk* to head them in the fight :
He undertook it, but abus'd his power,
And strove, not to protect them, but devour.
The helpless birds to greater harms betray'd,
Dearly repent the fatal choice they made ;
And rather would the *Kite's* insults sustain,
Than their new Tyrants sanguinary reign.



THE GROOM AND THE HORSE.

A Fable, to show the disadvantages of Deception.

A GROOM, whose business it was to take care of a certain horse, let the animal go loose into the field. After a while, he wanted to catch him, but the brute chose to run about at liberty, rather than be shut up in the stable; so he pranced round the field and kept out of the groom's way. The groom now went to the granary, and got the measure with which he was wont to bring the horse his oats. When the horse saw the measure, he thought to be sure that the groom had some oats for him; and so he went up to him, and was instantly caught and taken to the stable.

Another day, the horse was in the field, and refused to be caught. So the groom again got the measure, and held it out, inviting the horse, as before, to come up to him. But the animal shook his head, saying, "Nay, master groom; you told me a lie the other day, and I am not so silly as to be cheated a second time by you."

"But," said the groom, "I did not tell you a lie; I only held out the measure, and you fancied that it was full of oats. I did not tell you there were oats in it."

“Your excuse is worse than the cheat itself,” said the horse. “You held out the measure, and thereby did as much as to say, ‘I have got some oats for you.’”

Actions speak as well as words. Every deceiver, whether by words or deeds, is a liar; and nobody, that has been once deceived by him, will fail to shun and despise him ever after.

THE LION AND OTHER BEASTS.

The Tyrant of the forest issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal den. Among the rest, the Bear made his appearance; but pretending to be offended with the steams which issued from the monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his nose in his majesty's presence. This insolence was so highly resented, that the Lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet. The Monkey observing what had passed, trembled for his carcass; and attempted to conciliate favor by the most abject flattery. He began with protesting, that for his part, he thought the apartments were perfumed with Arabian spices; and exclaiming against the rudeness of the Bear, admired the beauty of his majesty's paws, so hap-



pily formed, he said, to correct the insolence of clowns. This fulsom adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offensive than the rudeness of the Bear: and the courtly Monkey was in like manner extended by the side of Sir Bruin. And now his majesty cast his eye upon the Fox. Well, Reynard, said he, and what scent do you discover here? Great prince, replied the cautious Fox, my nose was never esteemed my most distinguishing sense; and at present I would by no means venture to give my opinion, as I have unfortunately got, a terrible cold.

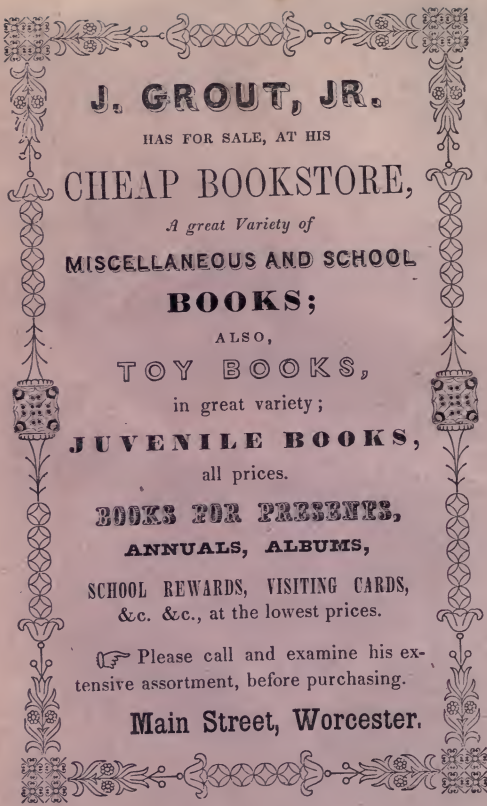
THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A formal solemn Owl had many years made his habitation in a grove amongst the ruins of an old monastery, and had pored so often on some mouldy manuscripts, the stupid relics of a monkish library, that he grew infected with the pride and pedantry of the place; and mistaking gravity for wisdom, would sit whole days with his eyes half shut, fancying himself profoundly learned. It happened, as he sat one evening, half buried in meditation, and half asleep, that a Nightingale, unluckily perching near him, began her melodious lays. He started from his reve-

rie, and with a horrid screech interrupting her song—Be gone, cried he, thou impertinent minstrel, nor distract with noisy dissonance my sublime contemplations; and know, vain songster, that harmony consists in truth alone, which is gained by laborious study; and not in languishing notes, fit only to soothe the ear of a love-sick maid. Conceited pedant, returned the Nightingale, whose wisdom lies only in the feathers that muffle up thy unmeaning face: music is a natural and rational entertainment, and though not adapted to the ears of an Owl, has ever been relished and admired by all who are possessed of true taste and elegance.







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