

CHEAP TRACTS,

Calculated to promote the Interests of Religion, Virtue, and Humanity.

No. XVII.

THE
Little
Fabulist:
OR
Select Fables.

(From DODSLEY's Collection.)

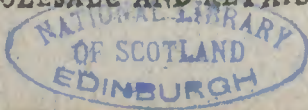
Recommended to the Perusal of the
Youth of both Sexes.

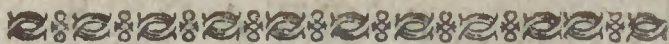
'Tis the very essence of a Fable to convey some *Moral*
or *Useful* Truth beneath the Shadow of an *Allegory*.

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WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.





SELECT FABLES.

Thus, every object of Creation,
Can furnish hints for contemplation;
And from the most minute and mean,
A virtuous mind can morals glean.

The Miller, his Son, and the Asfs.

'Tis better to pursue the dictates of one's own reason,
than attempt to please all mankind.

A Miller and his Son, were driving their Asfs to the market in order to sell him: and that he might get thither fresh and in good condition, they drove him on gently before them. They had not proceeded far, when they met a company of travellers. Sure, say they, you are mighty careful of your Asfs: methinks one of you might as well get up, and ride, as suffer him to walk on at his ease, while you trudge after on foot. In compliance with this advice, the Old Man set his Son upon the beast. And now, they had scarce advanced a quarter of a mile further, before they met another company. You idle young rogue, said one of the party, why don't you get down and let your poor Father ride? Upon this the Old Man made his Son dismount, and

got up himself. While they were marching in this manner, a third company began to insult the Father. You hard-hearted unnatural wretch, say they, how can you suffer that poor lad to wade through the dirt, while you like an alderman, ride at your ease? The good-natured Miller stood corrected, and immediately took his Son up behind him. And now the next man they met exclaimed with more vehemence and indignation than all the rest—Was there ever such a couple of lazy boobies! to overload in so unconscionable a manner, a poor dumb creature, who is far less able to carry them than they are to carry him! The complying Old Man would have been half inclined to make the trial, had not experience by this time sufficiently convinced him, that there cannot be a more fruitless attempt, than to endeavour to please all mankind.

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### The two Horses.

*The objects of our pride are often the cause of our misfortunes.*

**T**WO Horses were travelling the road together; one loaded with a sack of flour, the other with a sum of money. The latter, proud of his splendid burden, tossed up his head with an air of conscious superiority, and every now and then cast a look of contempt upon his humble companion.

In passing through a wood, they were met by a gang of highwaxmen, who immediately seized upon the Horse that was carrying the treasure : but the spirited Steed not being altogether disposed to stand so quietly as was necessary for their purpose, they beat him most unmercifully, and after plundering him of his boasted load, left him to lament at his leisure the cruel bruises he had received. Friend, said his despised companion to him, who had now reason to triumph in his turn, distinguished posts are often dangerous to those who possess them : if you had served a Miller, as I do, you might have travelled the road unmolested.



### The Cameleon.

*The different lights in which things appear to different judgements, recommend candour to the opinions of others, even at the time that we retain our own.*

**T**WO travellers happened on their journey to be engaged in a warm dispute about the colour of the Camelion. One of them affirmed, it was blue ; that he had seen it with his own eyes, upon the naked branch of a tree, feeding on the air, in a very clear day. The other strongly asserted it was green, and that he had viewed it very closely and minutely on the broad leaf of a

fig-tree. Both of them were positive and the dispute, was rising to a quarrel : but a third person luckily coming by, they agreed to refer the question to his decision. Gentlemen said the arbitrator, with a smile of great self-satisfaction you could not have been more lucky in your reference, as I happened to have caught one of them last night : but indeed you are both mistaken, for the creature is totally black. Black! impossible! Nay, quoth the umpire, with great assurance, the matter may soon be decided, for I immediately inclosed my Cameleon in a little paper box, and here it is, So saying, he drew it out of his pocket, opened his box, and behold it was as white as snow. The positive disputants looked equally surpris'd, and equally confounded, while the sagacious reptile, assuming the air of a philosopher, thus admonish'd them : Ye children of men, learn diffidence and moderation in your opinions. 'Tis true, you happen, in the present instance, to be all in the right, and have only considered the subject under different circumstances : but pray, for the future, allow others to have eye-sight as well as yourselves ; and be candid enough not to condemn any man for judging of things as they appear to his own view.

## The Wolf and the Lamb.

*The young and artless should make caution supply the place of years and experience.*

**A** FLOCK of Sheep were feeding in a meadow, while the Dogs were asleep, and their Shepherd at a distance playing on his pipe beneath the shade of a spreading elm. A young unexperienced Lamb observing a half-starved Wolf peeping through the pales of the inclosure, entered into conversation with him. Pray what are you seeking for here? said the Lamb. I am looking replied the Wolf, for some tender grass; for nothing you know is more pleasant than to feed in a fresh pasture, and to slake one's thirst at a crystal stream: both which I perceive you enjoy within these pales in their utmost perfection. Happy creature! continued he, how much I envy your lot! who are in full possession of the utmost I desire: for philosophy has long taught me to be satisfied with a little. It seems then, returned the Lamb, those who say you feed on flesh, accuse you falsely, since a little grass will easily content you. If this be true, let us for the future live like brethren, and feed together. So saying, the simple Lamb imprudently crept thro' the fence, and became at once a prey to our pretended philosopher, and a sacrifice to his own inexperience and credulity.

## The Fox and the Bramble.

*We should bear with patience a small evil, when it is connected with a greater good,*

**A** FOX, closely pursued by a pack of Dogs, took shelter under the covert of a Bramble. He rejoiced in this asylum and, for a while, was very happy : but soon found, that if he attempted to stir, he was wounded by thorns and prickles on every side. However making a virtue of necessity he forbore to complain; and comforted himself with reflecting, that no bliss is perfect ; that good and evil are mixed, and flow from the same fountain. These Briars indeed, said he, will tear my skin a little, yet they keep off the Dogs. For the sake of the good then, let me bear the evil with patience : each bitter has its sweet ; and these Brambles, though they wound my flesh, preserve my life from danger.



## The Falcon and the Hen.

*Different kinds of experience account for different kinds of conduct.*

**D**IFFERENT circumstances make the same action right or wrong, a virtue or a vice.

Of all the creatures I ever knew, said a Falcon to a Hen, you are certainly the most ungrateful. What instance of ingratitude, replied the Hen, can you justly charge upon me ? The greatest, returned the Falcon ; in-

gratitude to your highest benefactors, Men. Do they not feed you every day, and shelter you every night? Nevertheless, when they endeavour to court you to them, you ungratefully forget all their kindness, and fly from them as from an enemy. Now I, who am wild by nature, and no way obliged to them; yet upon the least of their caresses I suffer myself to be taken, and go, or come, at their command. All this is very true, replied the Hen, but there may be a sufficient reason both for my fear, and your familiarity. I believe you never saw a single Falcon roasting at the fire; whereas I have seen a hundred Hens trussed for that purpose.



### The Travellers and the Money-bag.

*We cannot reasonably expect those to bear a part in our illfortune, whom we never permitted to share in our prosperity.*

**A**S two Men were travelling on the road, one of them espied a Bag of Money lying on the ground, and picking it up, I am in luck this morning, said he, I have found a Bag of Money. Yes, returned the other; though, methinks you should not say *I*, but *We* have found it: for when two friends are travelling together, they ought equally to share in any accidental good fortune that may happen to attend them. No



rejoined the former, it was I that found it? and I must insist upon keeping it. He had no sooner spoken the words, then they were alarmed with a hue and cry after a thief who had that morning taken a purse upon the road. Lord, says the finder, this is extremely unfortunate; we shall certainly be seized. Good Sir, replied the other, be pleased not to say *We*, but *I*: as you would not allow me a share in the prize, you have no right to make me a partner in the punishment.

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The discontented Ass.

We greatly diminish the happiness of life, by undervaluing all that is short of perfection.

IN the depth of winter a poor Ass prayed heartily for the spring, that he might exchange a cold lodging, and a heartless truss of straw, for a little warm weather, and a mouthful of fresh grass. In a short time, according to his wish, the warm weather & the fresh grass came on; but brought with them so much toil and business, that he was soon as weary of the spring as before of the winter; and he now became impatient for the approach of summer. Summer arrives: but the heat, the harvest work, and other drudgeried and inconveniencies of the season, set him as far from happiness as before; which he now flattered himself would be found in the plenty of autumn.

But here too he is disappointed; for what with the carrying of apples, roots, fuel for the winter, and other provisions, he was in autumn more fatigued than ever. Having thus trod round the circles of the year, in a course of restless labour, uneasiness and disappointment, and found no season, nor station of life, without its business and its trouble, he was forced at last to acquiesce in the comfortless season of winter, where his complaint began: convinced that in this world every situation has its inconvenience.

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### The Two Springs.

*There is more to be expected from sedate and silent, than from noisy, turbulent, and ostentatious beginnings.*

**T**WO Springs, which issued from the same mountain, began their course together: one of them took her way in a silent and gentle stream, while the other rushed along with a founding and rapid current. Sister, said the latter, at the rate you move, you will probably be dried up before you advance much farther: whereas, for myself, I will venture a wager, that within two or three hundred furlongs I shall become navigable, and after distributing commerce & wealth wherever I flow, I shall majestically proceed to pay my tribute to the ocean: so farewell, dear sister, and patiently submit to

your fate. Her sister made no reply; but calmly descending to the meadows below, increased her stream by numberless little rills, which she collected in her progress, till at length she was enabled to rise into a considerable river: whilst the proud Stream, who had the vanity to depend solely upon her own sufficiency, continued a shallow brook, and was glad at least to be helped forward, by throwing herself into the arms of her despised sister.

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The Farmer and his Dog.

The greater room there appears for resentment, the more careful should we be not to accuse an innocent person.

A FARMER who had just stepped into the field to mend a gap in one of his fences, found at his return the cradle, where he had left his only Child asleep, turned upside down, the clothes all torn and bloody, and his Dog lying near it besmeared also with blood. Immediately conceiving that the creature had destroyed his Child, he instantly dashed out his brains with the hatchet in his hand: when turning up the cradle, he found his child unhurt, and an enormous Serpent lying dead on the floor, killed by that faithful Dog, whose courage and fidelity in preserving the life of his Son deserved another kind of reward. These affecting circumstances afforded him a striking

lesson, how dangerous it is too hastily to give way to the blind impulse of a sudden passion.

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### The Owl and the Eagle.

*Narrow minds think the system of the universe should have been contrived to suit themselves alone.*

**A**N Owl sat blinking in the trunk of an hollow tree, and arraigned the brightness of the Sun. What is the use of its beams, said she, but to dazzle one's eyes so that one cannot see a Mouse? For my part, I am at a loss to conceive for what purpose so glaring an object was created. We had certainly been much better without it. O fool! replied an Eagle, perched on a branch of the same tree, to rail at excellence which thou canst not taste; ignorant that the fault is not in the Sun but in thyself. All, 'tis true, have not faculties to understand, nor powers to enjoy the benefit of it: but must the business and the pleasures of the world be obstructed, that an Owl may catch Mice?

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The Blind Man and the Lame.

The wants and weaknesses of individuals form the connection of society.

TIS from our wants and infirmities that almost all the connections of society take their rise.

A Blind Man, being stopped in a bad piece of road, meets with a Lame Man, and intreats him to guide him through the difficulty he was got into. How can I do that, replied the Lame Man, since I am scarce able to drag myself along? but as you appear to be very strong, if you will carry me, we will seek our fortune together. It will then be my interest to warn you of any thing that may obstruct your way; your feet shall be my feet, and my eyes yours. With all my heart, returned the Blind Man; let us render to each other our mutual services. So taking his lame companion on his back, they by means of their union, travelled on with safety and pleasure.



The Ant and the Caterpillar.

Boys of no very promising appearance often become the greatest men.

AS a Caterpillar was advancing very slowly along one of the alleys of a beautiful garden, he was met by a pert lively Ant, who tossing up her head with a scornful air, cried, Prithee get out of the way, thou poor creeping animal, and do not presume to obstruct the paths of thy superiors, by wriggling along the road, and besmearing the walks appropriated to their footsteps. Poor creature! thou lookest like a thing half made, which Nature not liking, threw

by unfinished. I could almost pity thee, methinks; but it is beneath one of my quality to talk to such mean creatures as thou art: and so, poor crawling wretch, adieu.

The humble Caterpillar, struck dumb with this disdainful language, retired, went to work, wound himself up in a silken cell, and at the appointed time came out a beautiful Butterfly. Just as he was sallying forth, he observed the scornful Ant passing by, Proud insect, said he, stop a moment, and learn from the circumstances in which you now see me, never to despise any one for that condition in which Providence has thought fit to place him; as there is none so mean, but may one day, either in this state or in a better, be exalted above those who looked down upon him with unmerited contempt.



The Passenger and the Pilot.

We are no where out of the reach of Providence, either to punish or to protect us

IT had blown a violent storm at sea, and the whole crew of a large vessel were in imminent danger of shipwreck. After the rolling of the waves were somewhat abated, a certain Passenger, who had never been at sea before, observing the Pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned even in their greatest danger, had the curiosity to ask him what death his father died. What death?

said the pilot, why he perished at sea, as my grandfather did before him. And are you not afraid of trusting yourself to an element that has proved thus fatal to your family? Afraid! by no means; why, we must all die: is not your father dead? Yes, but he died in his bed. And why then are you not afraid of trusting yourself to your bed? Because I am there perfectly secure. It may be so, replied the Pilot; but if the hand of Providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reason for me to be afraid of going to sea, than for you to be afraid of going to bed.



The two Foxes.

We should ever guard against those vices, that are chiefly incident to our times of life: excess and riot, whilst we are young; and egregious parsimony, as we grow in years.

TWO Foxes formed a stratagem to enter a hen-roost: which having successfully executed, and killed the cock, the hens, and chickens, they began to feed upon them with singular satisfaction. One of the Foxes, who was young and inconsiderate, was for devouring them all upon the spot: the other, who was old and covetous, proposed to reserve some of them for another time. "For experience child," said he, has made me wise, and I have seen many unexpect-

"ted events since I came into the world.
 "Let us provide, therefore, against what
 "may happen, and not consume all our
 "stores at one meal." "All this is wonder-
 "ous wise," replied the young Fox; "but for
 "my part, I am resolved not to stir till I have
 "eaten as much as will serve me a whole
 "week; for who would be mad enough to
 "return hither? when is it certain the ow-
 "ner of these fowls will watch for us, and
 "if he should catch us, would certainly put
 "us to death." After this short discourse,
 each pursued his own scheme; the young
 Fox eat till he burst himself, and had scarce-
 ly strength to reach his hole before he died.
 The old one, who thought it much better
 to deny his appetite for the present, and lay
 up provision for the future, returned the
 next day, and was killed by the Farmer.
 Thus every age has its peculiar vice; the
 young suffer by their insatiable thirst after
 pleasure; and the old, by their incorrigible
 and inordinate avarice.

The Tortoise and the two Ducks.

*Curiosity often excites those people to hazardous undertak-
 ings, whom vanity and indiscretion render totally unfit
 for them.*

VANITY and idle curiosity are qualities
 which generally prove destructive to
 those who suffer themselves to be governed
 by them.

A Tortoise, weary of passing her days in the same obscure corner, conceived a wonderful inclination to visit foreign countries. Two Ducks, whom the simple Tortoise acquainted with her intention, undertook to oblige her, upon the occasion. Accordingly they told her, that if she would fasten her mouth to the middle of a pole, they would take the two ends, and transport her whithersoever she chose to be conveyed. The Tortoise approved of the expedient; and every thing being prepared, the Ducks began their flight with her. They had not travelled far in the air, when they were met by a Crow, who enquiring what they were bearing along, they replied, the Queen of the Tortoises. The Tortoise, vain of the new and unmerited appellation, was going to confirm the title, when opening her mouth for that purpose, she let go her hold, and was dashed to pieces by her fall.



The Atheist and the Acorn.

He who disputes the existence of a Deity, will find himself confuted by every part of nature.

IT was the fool who said in his heart, *There is no God*: into the breast of a wise man such a thought could never have entered.

One of those refined reasoners, commonly called Minute Philosophers, was sitting at his ease beneath the shade of a large oak,

while at his side the weak branches of a pumpkin trailed upon the ground. This threw our great logician into his old track of reasoning against Providence. Is it consistent with common sense, said he, that infinite wisdom should create a large and stately tree, with branches of prodigious strength, only to bear so small and insignificant a fruit as an Acorn? Or that so weak a stem, as that of a pumpkin, should be loaded with so disproportioned a weight? A child may see the absurdity of it. In the midst of this curious speculation, down dropt an Acorn, from one of the highest branches of the oak, full upon his head. How small a trifle may overturn the systems of mighty philosophers! Struck with the accident, he could not help crying out, How providential it is that this was not a pumpkin!

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### The Cat and the old Rat.

*Repeated instances of artifice create a suspicion, that is our guard against it.*

**A** CERTAIN Cat had made such unmerciful havock among the vermin of her neighbourhood, that not a single Rat or Mouse dared venture to appear abroad. Puss was soon convinced, that if affairs remained in their present situation, she must be totally unsupplied with provision. After mature deliberation, therefore, she resolved to have

course to stratagem. For this purpose, she suspended herself from a hook with her head downwards, pretending to be dead. The Rats and Mice observing her, as they peeped from their holes, in this dangling attitude concluded she was hanged for some misdemeanour; and with great joy immediately sallied forth in quest of their prey. Puss, as soon as a sufficient number were collected together, quitting her hold, dropped into the midst of them; and very few had the fortune to make good their retreat. This artifice having succeeded so well, she was encouraged to try the event of a second. Accordingly she whitened her coat all over, by rolling herself in a heap of flour, and in this disguise lay concealed in the bottom of a meal-tub. This stratagem was executed in general with the same effect as the former. But an old experienced Rat, altogether as cunning as his adversary, was not so easily ensnared. I dont much like, said he, that white heap yonder; something whispers me, there is mischief concealed under it. 'Tis true, it may be meal; but it may likewise be something that I shall not relish quite so well. There can be no harm, at least, in keeping at a proper distance: for caution, I am sure, is the parent of security.

## The Lynx and the Mole.

*We should use the talents that are allotted, and are most suitable to our species; instead of disparaging those faculties, that are as properly adapted to another.*

**U**NDER the covert of a thick wood, at the foot of a tree, as a Lynx lay whetting his teeth, and waiting for his prey, he espied a Mole, half buried under a hillock of her own raising. Alas, poor creature, said the Lynx, how much I pity thee! Surely Jupiter has been very unkind, to debar thee from the light of the day which rejoices the whole creation. Thou art certainly not above half alive; and it would be doing thee a service to put an end to so unanimated a being. I thank you for your kindness, replied the Mole, but I think I have full as much vivacity as my state and circumstances require. For the rest I am perfectly well contented with the faculties which Jupiter has allotted me, who I am sure wants not our direction in distributing his gifts with propriety. I have not, 'tis true your piercing eyes; but I have ears which answers all my purposes full as well. Hark! for example, I am warned, by a noise which I hear behind you, to fly from danger. So saying, he slunk into the earth; while a javelin from the arm of a hunter pierced the quick-sight Lynx to the heart.

## The sick Lion, the Fox, and the Wolf.

*Men, who meditate mischief, suggest the same to others ; and generally pay dear for their forward gratifications.*

**A**LION, having surfeited himself with feasting too luxuriously on the carcase of a Wild Boar, was seized with a violent and dangerous disorder. The beasts of the forest flocked in great numbers to pay their respects upon the occasion, and scarce one was absent, except the Fox. The Wolf, an ill-natured and malicious beast, seized this opportunity to accuse the Fox of pride, ingratitude, and disaffection to his majesty. In the midst of his invective, the fox entered ; who having heard part of the Wolf's accusation, and observing the Lion's countenance to be kindled into wrath, thus adroitly excused himself, and retorted upon his accuser. See many here, who, with mere lip-service, have pretended to shew you their loyalty ; but for my part, from the moment I heard of your majesty's illness, neglecting useleſs compliments, I employed myself day and night to enquire among the most learned physicians, an infallible remedy for your disease, and have at length happily been informed of one. It is a plaister made of part of a Wolf's skin, taken warm from his back, and laid to your majesty's stomach. This remedy was no sooner proposed, than it was determined that the experiment should be

tried: and whilst rhe operation was performing, the Fox, with a sarcastic smile, whispered this useful maxim in the Wolf's ear—you would be safe from harm yourself, lea for the future not to meditate mischief again others.

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The Lion, the Bear, the Monkey, & the Fo

*It is often more prudent to suppress our sentiments, th
either to flatter or to rail.*

THE Tyrant of the forest issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal de 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 carcase; and attempted to conciliate favour 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 happily formed he said, to correct the insolence of clowns. This sulsome adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offen-

five 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 eyes 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.

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### The Fox and the Cat.

*Persons may write fine systems of morality, who never practised a single virtue.*

**N**OTHING is more common than for men to condemn the very same actions in others, which they practise themselves whenever occasion offers.

A Fox and a Cat having made a party to travel together, beguiled the tediousness of their journey by a variety of philolophical conversations. Of all the moral virtues, exclaimed Reynard, mercy is sure the noblest ! What say you, my sage friend, is it not so ? Undoubtedly, replied the Cat, with a most demure countenance ; nothing is more becoming, in a creature of any sensibility, than a compassionate disposition. While they were thus moralizing, and mu-

tually complimenting each other on the wisdom of their respective reflections, a Wolf darted out from a wood upon a flock of Sheep, which were feeding in an adjacent meadow; and without being in the least affected by the moving lamentations of a poor Lamb, devoured it before their eyes. Horrible cruelty! exclaimed the Cat; why does he not feed on vermin, instead of making his barbarous meals on such innocent creatures? Reynard agreed with his friend in the observation; to which he added several very pathetic remarks on the odiousness of a sanguinary temper. Their indignation was rising in its warmth and zeal, when they arrived at a little cottage by the way side; where the tender-hearted Reynard immediately cast his eye upon a fine Cock that was strutting about the yard. And now adieu moralizing: he leaped over the pales, and without any sort of scruple, demolished his prize in an instant. In the meanwhile, a plump Mouse, which ran out of the stable, totally put to flight our Cat's philosophy, who fell to the repast without the least commiseration.

F I N I S.