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The
Story of Reynard the Fox
Illustrated





Wm. Crawford, Del.

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Or. Simp. L. 1840

John Wilson

The STORY of

REYNARD THE FOX

A NEW VERSION

by

DAVID VEDDER

Author of Orcadian Sketches Poems Legendry Lyrical and Descriptive
Pictorial Giltbook etc

ILLUSTRATED BY GUSTAV GARTON

of Munich and Düsseldorf.



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THE STORY OF
REYNARD THE FOX.

TO PROFESSOR WILSON
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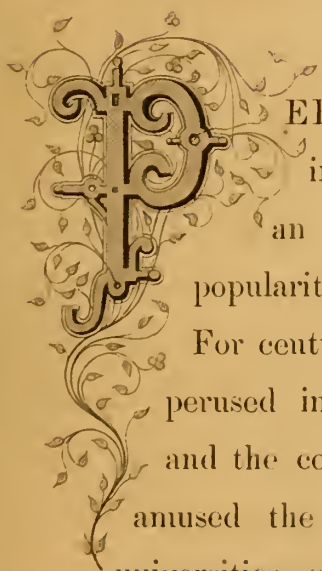


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Preface.



PERHAPS no secular work, since the invention of Printing, has obtained such an extensive circulation and unbounded popularity as the story of "REYNARD THE FOX." For centuries it has been a household possession. perused in the palace and the hall, the grange and the cottage; it has fascinated the young and amused the old. "It has been lectured on in universities, quoted in imperial council-halls; it has lain on the toilets of princes, and been thumbed to pieces on the benches of artisans."* Even the German Shakspeare, Goethe, has made it the subject of a great poem; and kindred genius, in the person of Kaulbach, has illustrated the work by the finest series of pictorial embellishments

* Carlyle.

with which a book was ever adorned. We are told by the eminent authority above quoted, "that the oldest printed edition of our actual Reynard is that of Lübeck in 1498, of which there is a copy, understood to be the only one, still extant in the Wolfenbüttel Library."

This ancient edition is in the Low German, and appears to have been produced by Hinrek van Alkmer, who, in his preface, calls himself "schoolmaster and tutor of that noble and virtuous prince and lord, the Duke of Lorrain;" and says farther, that by order of the same worthy sovereign, he "sought out and rendered the present book from the Waloon and French tongues into German, for the wholesome edification of whoso readeth therein." Another version of the authorship, bearing date some hundred years later, appeared, setting forth how that the real author was one Nicholas Baumann, professor at Rostock; how he had been secretary to the Duke of Juliers, but was driven from his service by wicked cabals; and so, in revenge, composed this satirical adumbration of the Juliers' court. In order to avoid consequences, he is said to have put on the title-page the fiction of its being rendered from the French and Waloon tongues, and the feigned name

of Hinrek van Alkmer, who, for the rest, was never schoolmaster or tutor at Lorrain or anywhere else, but a mere man of straw created for the nonce out of so many letters of the alphabet. Excessive debate and learned sharp-shooting ensued, with victorious shouts on both sides, but into the claims of either party we do not enter, though drawn sympathetically towards Hinrek.

In literary history, however, he is nowhere mentioned or hinted at, except on this one occasion; and whichever way the dispute is settled, the victor could at most claim to be the first German redactor of this fable.

The inventor must be sought for in a much remoter period. There are even two printed versions of the tale prior in date to this of Lübeck: a Dutch one at Delft in 1484, and one by Caxton in English in 1481, which seems to be the earliest of all.* These two differ essentially from Hinrek's; still more so does the French *Roman du Nouveau*

* Caxton's edition, a copy of which is in the British Museum, bears title—"Hystorye of Reynard the Foxe," and begins thus:—"It was aboute the tyme of Penteeoste or Whytsonyde that the wodes comynly be lusty and gladsome, and the trees clad with levys and blossoms, and the grounds with herbes and flowers sweete smellyng;" whereas in many other passages the fact that Caxton and Alkmer had the same original before them is manifest enough. Our venerable printer says

Rénard, composed by “Jacquemars Gielée at Lisle about the year 1290,” which yet exists in manuscript; however, they sufficiently verify that statement of the German redactor’s having “sought and rendered” his work from the Waloon and French, in which latter tongue, as we shall soon see, some shadow of it had been known and popular, centuries before that time. For besides Gielée’s work, we have a *Rénard Couronné* of still earlier, and a *Rénard Contrefait* of somewhat later date; and chroniclers inform us that, at the noted festival given by Philip the Fair in the beginning of the fourteenth century, among the dramatic entertainments was a whole life of Reynard, wherein it must not surprise us that he “ended by becoming pope, and still under the tiara continued to eat poultry.” From all which, so much at least would appear, that the fable of *Reynard the Fox*, which in the German version we behold completed, nowise derived its completeness from the individual there named Hinrek van Alkmer, or from any other individual

in conclusion—“I have not added ne mynsshed, but have followed as nyghe as I can my cotype whych was in Dutche, and by me, Willm Caxton, translated into this rude and symple Englyssh in the Abbey of Westminster, and fynnyshed the vi. daye of Juyn, the yere of our Lord 1481, the 21. yere of the regne of Kynge Edward the iiijth.”

or people, but rather, that being old and universally current, it was taken up by poets and satirists of all countries; from each received some accession or improvement, and properly has no single author. We must observe, however, that as yet it had attained no fixation or consistency. No version was decidedly preferred to every other. Caxton's and the Dutch appear, at best, but as the skeleton of what afterwards became a body. Of the old Waloon version, said to have been discovered lately, we are taught to entertain a similar opinion. In the existing French versions, which are all older, there is even less analogy. Loosely conjoined, therefore, and only in the state of dry bones, was it that Hinrek, or Nicholas, or some Saxon, whoever he might be, found the story; and blowing on it with the breath of genius, raised it up into a consistent fable.

The farther history of Reynard is easily traced. In this new guise, it spread abroad with unexampled rapidity—fixing itself as a firm possession in most countries, where, indeed, in this character, we still find it. It was printed and translated innumerable times. In the original dialect alone, the last editor has reckoned up more than twenty editions; in one of which, for example, we find such a

name as Heinrich Voss. It was first translated into High German in 1545, into Latin in 1567 by Hartmann Schopper, and a new version into short German verse appeared the century following. It was rendered into prose for the use of the people, and was sold on stalls; where still, with the needful changes in orthography, and printed on the greyest paper, it tempts the speculative eye. Thus has our old fable, rising like some river in the remote distance from obscure rivulets, gathered strength out of every valley, and out of every country, as it rolled on. It is European in two senses; for as all Europe contributed to it, so all Europe has enjoyed it. It has been translated into French, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, and English. Nor was that same stall honour, which has been reckoned the truest literary celebrity, refused it here. Perhaps many a reader of these pages may, like the writer of them, recollect the hours when, hidden from unfeeling gaze of pedagogue, he swallowed the most pleasant and delightful history of Reynard the Fox, like stolen waters, with a timorous joy.* The importance of fable in the earlier stages of society can never be overrated. The

* Abridged from the Foreign Quarterly Review.

intolerable haughtiness which invariably accompanies despotic power blinds the understanding and warps the judgment of its possessors, rendering them inaccessible to truth; their ears were therefore to be reached only through allegory and fable. The first on record is by Jotham, who, by the agency of an apologue, denounced the spurious usurper and murderer who put threescore and ten of his brethren to indiscriminate slaughter, seized the reins of government, and became a ruthless tyrant for the space of three years, when he perished by the hand of a woman at the tower of Thebez.* By the instrumentality of fable, the conscience of the poet-king of Israel was awakened, and his heart pierced to its inmost core by remorse, and ultimately by true repentance.† Lessons of reproof and morality were continually delivered in this mode by the sages of antiquity to the various classes of mankind, when instruction of a more direct nature would not, or could not have reached their hearts, or influenced their conduct.

But although our standard of morality is higher than that of the ancients, and our sources of instruction infinitely superior to theirs; yet, agreeable and ingenious fiction is

* Judges, chap. ix.

† 2 Sam. chap. xii. 1.

oftentimes found necessary to allure the juvenile mind into the path which leads to more important studies—to produce habits of reading and reflection, and thus, by imperceptible gradations, to imbue the youthful enquirer with a love of letters. If, therefore, we can procure the attention of the rising generation to matters of importance, through the medium of salutary amusement, conveyed in purity of language, and with earnestness of purpose, something has been gained. While preparing a new impression of this popular tale for the press, I have chiefly followed the London edition of 1706. It is an octavo of some 300 pages, entitled “The Crafty Courtier, or the Fable of Reynard the Fox; newly done into English verse from the ancient Latin Iambics of Hartmann Schopperus.”* But while this version preserves the narrative of Reynard with all fidelity, it abounds with satirical episodes and

* Carlyle has told us, with a degree of antiquarian research peculiar to himself, that while poor Schopper was engaged on his translation, at Freiburg in Baden, he was impressed as a soldier, and carried apparently in fetters to Vienna, having given his work to another to finish. At Vienna he stood not long in the ranks—having fallen violently sick, and being thrown out into the streets to recover there. He says—“He was without bed, and had to seek quarters on the muddy pavement in a barrel.” Here, too, in the night, some excessively straightened individual stole from

political pasquinades, now obsolete, together with improprieties of language and unsuitable allusions; all which I have deleted, and confined myself exclusively to the story of REYNARD, as it has descended to us through the lapse of centuries, with the important addition of awarding that great state criminal, that poetical justice which none of my predecessors have ventured to adjudge.

To have allowed this over-gorged public defaulter to loll on the woolsack in ease and honour, while he fleeced the lieges with impunity,—to bask in the sunshine of royal favour, while he perverted the stream of justice. and set the laws of the land at defiance,—to accumulate riches equal to the public resources of the kingdom by fraud. without impeachment, trial. and well-merited infamy.—would have abetted the avaricious propensities of public

him his cloak and sabre. However, men were not all hyænas. One Joseph Hufnagel, unknown to him, but to whom by his writings he was known, took him under roof, procured medical assistance, equipped him anew, so that, “in the harvest season, being half cured, he could return, or rather re-crawl to Frankfort on the Mayne.” There, too, “a Magister Johann Cnipius, Christian Egenolph’s son-in-law, kindly received him,” and encouraged him to finish his translation, as accordingly he did—dedicating it to the Emperor, with doleful complaints, fruitless or not is unknown.

peculators, strengthened the hands of ingenious tyranny, and our youthful aspirants after fame and fortune might have forgotten the awful denunciation, that “fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery,” and “the hope of unjust men perish.”

D. V.

PRESTON STREET, EDINBURGH,


May 1852.



The Story of Reynard the Fox.

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Chapter the First.

HE Spring appeared in all its glory, and the husbandman anticipated the coming season with joy; the trees were clothed in verdure, and the fields were enamelled with flowers; the birds saluted the morning sun with hymns of gladness, and poured forth vesper songs, as the glorious luminary descended behind the western mountains. The brilliant loveliness of nature, and the exhilarating influence of the atmosphere, mollified the stern heart of the royal Lion, King of beasts and birds, insomuch that he determined to hold a solemn festival at his imperial palace, and, under the guise of apparent condescension and friendly conviviality, investigate any charges of partiality against his judges, or oppression on the part of his other powerful subjects. Accordingly, he issued

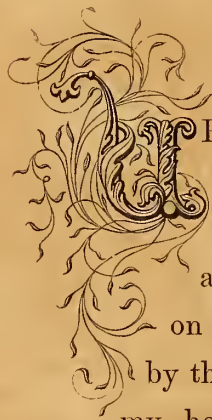
a proclamation, commanding all his lieges, both beasts and birds, to attend his court, on pain of his royal displeasure; announcing at the same time, that a sumptuous entertainment would be provided for them. When the important day arrived, birds and quadrupeds from every quarter might be seen thronging to court. The gates of the grand saloon were thrown open, and the great feudatories—such as Bruin the Bear, Isegrim the Wolf, Pard the Leopard, Grevincus the Badger, and Springer the Hound, took their places near the throne, while the herd of the commonalty kept at a respectful distance.

One of the most sagacious barons of the kingdom, however, had absented himself. This was no less a personage than Reynard the Fox. He had formerly held high office under his Majesty; but while he pretended to live only for the good of the commonweal and the honour of his master, self-interest was his ruling passion; moreover, he had such a strong liking for dainties, that he had been known to disguise himself, and purloin the King's poultry on their way to the royal demesne; and yet, next day, with unequalled address and consummate dexterity, he would throw the odium of the theft on some political rival whom it was his interest to keep down; thus making the prostrate body of an innocent competitor a stepping-stone to power, and strengthening the royal partiality by unworthy means. Conscious of guilt, the ex-minister pretended to be grievously sick, and could not do himself the honour to wait on his Majesty; while the fact was, that he was afraid to trust the royal amnesty, as he well knew he should be accused by

certain of his political or personal enemies when they became exhilarated by the influence of the delicious wine which was sure to circulate with regal hospitality. After an interchange of friendly greetings and salutary conversation, the august party descended to the banqueting hall, where they found the table furnished with regal magnificence. Each took his place with decorum, while his Majesty addressed his guests with dignified familiarity and amicable courtesy. The viands disappeared with great rapidity from the well-replenished board; the goblet circulated right royally; the company, who were at first awe-struck by the imperial glance, were now at their ease; political disquisitions became loud and fiery; and atrocious stories were told of and heavy accusations made against Reynard the Fox.



Chapter the Second.



—:~:~:~:—

AP rose Isegrim the Wolf; and having made his *congé* to the throne, bellowed forth his complaint against Reynard until the gilded cornices rung again. “I beseech you, dread Sovereign, take pity on me and my wife for the injuries we have suffered by that false craven Reynard. He intruded himself into my house, insulted my dear partner, did violence to my helpless children, whereby some of them lost their precious eye-sight, and then, like a coward, slunk to his hole, without giving me the satisfaction of a gentleman. Were I to record his crimes, it would be a black indictment, and would fill many volumes. By setting the laws at defiance, Sire, he slights you, while he injures the public with impunity.” Isegrim having caught the eye of the Monarch, again made his obeisance, and resumed his seat. Whereupon Springer started to his legs, and, having crouched before the throne, accused the unhappy culprit Reynard of robbing him of his perquisites of office, namely, the



THE IMPEACHMENT

The top panel shows
the way to the court of impeachment

KNP 14



skeletons of geese and other fowls, beef and mutton bones, together with rancid sausages and decayed bacon. He averred that such proceedings were intolerable, and ought to be punished by the laws of this and every well regulated kingdom; and this failing, such vagabonds should be proceeded against by fire and sword. Upon which, Malkin the Cat, with a fiery countenance and bristling whiskers, mewed forth a speech in the ears of Majesty which plainly showed that self-interest had blinded her judgment. So making a semicircle of her back, and stretching out her tail, she said—"My lord, I confess that Reynard the Fox is an atrocious villain, fraudulent, and a thief; but there are certain others who may be proved as bad as he. Springer the Hound has all the will to be a thief without the ability. The bacon which he alleges to have been stolen from him by Reynard, he meanly stole from me—although he knew very well I risked life and limb in taking it out of the mill by night when the miller lay asleep." Bruin the Bear, who thought himself the handsomest person in the assembly, and anxious to display his elocution before royalty, got upon his hind legs, and, leaning on a pole to which he had been accustomed in a caravan, he hoarsely complained of grievances and losses. He gazed in the Monarch's face, and, unabashed, told his Sovereign that he had more important information to lay before his majesty than any that had yet been tendered;—"They are worthy of the care of a prince and the anger of a king. Although your Majesty has thought the Fox a saint heretofore, I will prove him a fiend. His father was hanged, his mother was burned for

sorcery, he was inured to thieving from infancy, which malady can only be cured by a rope. Often has he wished you laid with your fathers, and made vows to evil spirits for your destruction, in the vain hope of cajoling the giddy crowd and ascending your royal throne. On the faith of treaties, a harmless Rabbit came to sojourn in your imperial city; Reynard, the villain, sneaked up to the simpleton, and smilingly asked him if he would learn a song. The knave made him believe that he would not only teach him music, but that he had interest enough to introduce him at court, and procure him the privilege of singing before royalty—when, if successful, his fortune was made. The fool believed him, and elevated his head and expanded his chest, as ordered by the singing master. While in this attitude, he seized his victim by the throat, just as he was warbling and quavering the first or second bars of an Italian air; and would have doubtless murdered the innocent but for me, who happily interfered at the critical moment. The gash on his throat may yet be seen; and the silly wretch is now here to prove my accusation. There are none secure from his treasons. He deceives the rich, robs the poor, murders the weak, and betrays the strong. Your Majesty's crown is in danger if he is suffered to prowl longer through your dominions; and with one voice we cry for justice." The crowd rent the sky with their plaudits, and all repeated, "Let the traitor perish!"

Grevincus the Badger, who was Reynard's nephew, being moved with high wrath and indignation on hearing his kinsman thus impeached, and on the brink of condemnation, manfully

stood up, and told the revellers in plain terms, that "if Reynard were here, they durst not abuse the ear of their Sovereign with falsehoods, nor give prominence to the faults of others to hide their own. Thou, Isegrim, now so loud and clamorous, hast found him friendly, and publiely bepraised his high mental qualities. The cunning which thou upbraidest has often saved thee from starvation. Well dost thou remember when the fishmonger's cart was driven through the village, how he stiffened his limbs, drooped his head, and glazed his eyes. The hind, thinking he had been dead, threw him into the cart, and, being smugly ensconced there, threw thee out as many fish as served thy famishing family for a fortnight. At the peril of life and limb, my sagacious kinsman procured a fine sucking Pig, and while it was becoming beautifully brown on the spit over a pool of rich gravy, thou ingrate, didst thou not meanly and feloniously tear it thence, and, like a craven as thou art, slink away to the forest with it? thus doing treason to thy hospitable entertainer, and giving a proof of thy worthlessness. As to the charge against my traduced relative, made by Bruin, the Rabbit was his scholar, and bound by oath to be his servant also. Had not the master a right to chastise his servant, the teacher to correct his pupil? Besides, the lad was both coxcomb and dullard at the same time. It would have been the simpleton's ruin if my friend had acted otherwise. Springer the Hound pretends that he has been robbed! What exclusive right he had to goods which he himself had stolen, I own passes my comprehension. Fair plunder in righteous wars is

approved of by our greatest generals; but envy follows merit, as surely as the shadow follows the substance. The humble, I should say the lowly, condition in which my relation lives, should move your pity rather than your hatred. Austere in his dress, severe in his morals, frugal in everything except charity, coarse his fare, and rigorous in his fasting and penances, he lives an inflexible recluse, and only thinks of his latter end. Besides, he is often insulted by the application of opprobrious epithets, and assaulted by the meanest of your Majesty's subjects; his reformation is termed hypocrisy, and the humility of his bearing cowardice. It was only the other day, when meditating in the fields, and arrayed in full canonical costume, he chanced unwittingly to pass a poultry yard; and although he was armed with your Majesty's decree, commanding peace and amity among the various tribes of your kingdom, the whole colony rushed out on the harmless recluse with bludgeons, brooms, pitchforks, and other deadly weapons, and but that he was 'cunning of fence,' they would have taken his life; and, to crown the indignity, a contemptible Peacock, tricked out in gaudy frippery, but a coward at heart withal, soared to a place of safety, and screamed forth such a torrent of vile language as was never heard in any of your Majesty's fishmarkets. If during the fray some of the family of Gallus suffered in either life or limb, I know not, but one thing I am certain of, that the *intentions* of my much abused relative were in strict accordance with your Majesty's decree." While Grevincus was labouring towards his climax, he was stopt short by seeing a sad procession



A scene from the story of the blind men and an elephant
The bear-like man is the elephant's head
The chickens are the blind men
The peacock is the elephant's tail
The ladder is the elephant's leg
The tree is the elephant's trunk
The building is the elephant's body
The ground is the elephant's feet




approach the court. Gallus the Cock, together with a long train of sons and neighbours, advanced lamenting, and crying for justice; and, to enhance the melancholy scene, the body of Gallena, his daughter, was laid on a bier, who had been lately murdered by Reynard.*

* See Frontispiece.



Chapter the Third.



GALLUS the Cock stood before the King's tribunal, impatient to avenge the blood of his beloved daughter. Her brothers bemoan their father's bereaved condition, and bewail the untimely fate of their sister. When the first paroxysm of grief subsided a little, Gallus addressed himself to the Monarch:—"Behold, Sire, a loyal subject wretched and old; robbed of his children who were dearer than life. I was the happy father of twelve stately sons, and twenty fair daughters. They had board and education in an abbot's yard, where their physical and moral health were well looked after. They were guarded by six friendly mastiffs day and night. This circumstance that culprit Reynard knew full well, and despaired of ever catching them by surprise. He accordingly resorted to stratagem, dressed himself like a monk, covered his villain's head with a cowl, and produced your royal mandate that feuds, and fear, and hostile acts should for ever cease and determine. I saw the imperial seal on the document, and bent my head in token of reverence and obedience. The

wily thief spoke demurely and penitentially of his former immoral courses; told me that penance should be his daily task hereafter; that he should endeavour to divest himself of all earthly cares, all worldly passions; that cooling herbs should be his food, and these only to be used in sparing quantities. He, moreover, produced a forged certificate to prove himself a member of the brotherhood; and when the vesper bell rung, he counted his beads, and went through certain devotional mummeries with the dexterity of an adept. I heard, saw, and believed. The tidings flew over the whole yard. The gates were opened; and the good mastiffs, who had watched my children with so much fidelity, were thrown off their guard. The hypocrite took advantage of the negligence which his falsehood had produced. He rushed in and devoured my daughters, and destroyed my sons. I have only been able to save the relics of Gallena, which I lay before your Majesty as a proof of the desolation which has overwhelmed my house."

Maugre the imperial diadem and mantle, the golden sceptre, and the jewelled throne, the Sovereign wept! and, frowning sternly on Grevineus the Badger, exclaimed, "Ha! is this the way the new monastic spends his time? He seems to defy Jove's thunder and his Sovereign's mandates. We can bear this insolence no longer. He dies! Inter the dead decently, and proceed instanter with the vile assassin!" The funeral rites being performed, the feudatories assembled, and debated the matter amicably, how the murderer might be brought to justice with the greatest speed and security. All seemed repugnant to

the task, and many were the excuses offered. At length Bruin the Bear, animated more by personal hatred than duty to his King, undertook the task; and with an oath—such as none but bears use—promised to bring him up to justice, dead or alive.



Chapter the Fourth.



THE Monarch held out the golden sceptre to Bruin the Bear, previous to his commencing his dangerous mission—"Go, Bruin, I command, but take care that thou art not baffled by the strategy of the rebel; give no heed to his smiles; trust not his flattery; it is unworthy of a great statesman to be circumvented." Impatient of advice, Bruin felt a little hurt, and growled forth a gaseonade. "Hear me, O Caesar! If Reynard proves too cunning for me, let the darksome womb of the earth engulf a wretch unworthy of the light." And bowing towards the throne, took leave. He traversed many wilds, passed rapid floods, descended into caves, and searched the forests all round, but saw nothing of the outlaw, and consequently had to put up with "traveller's lodgings" for the night. Reynard had built an impregnable fort, where guilt and infamy might find a retreat. He dug it deep, and compassed it with walls, hedges, and a deep trench. He also contrived a sally-port, known only to himself. This stronghold Bruin at length found out, and knowing it sheltered the rebel, he thundered at

the door, and in tones of authority accosted Reynard, who gave him a salute from the walls. "See," says Bruin, "the King's august command; here is his signature, and this is the impression of the royal signet; unbar your gates, and allow the representative of majesty to enter." Reynard answered the ambassador in the most polite manner,—“Read the King's commission, if you please. Ancient feuds, you know, have passed between us; but when we are both safe, we may be free.”

The Bear replied that his Majesty was highly exasperated against him. “If you dare refuse to obey his summons, he vows by his throne that he will put your person to the rack, and raze your house to the ground.”

When Reynard became assured that our egotistical envoy was alone, he thought all was as it should be, so went down and opened the narrowest wicket. “Your pardon, noble Bruin. I have kept you waiting by far too long, but I hope you will excuse my fright. My matin service is now over, and I hasten to pay my duty. I am astonished to see such an august guest within these poor walls as yourself. You renew your former favours in this visit. Great was your journey! Ah! 'tis very rare to see lords of your rank visit such humble individuals as myself. Homely fare and a hearty welcome is all your excellency must look for from me.”

The insolence of office is sometimes laconic. “Come Sir! my time is short; pack up your baggage and march, or I shall find a method to quicken your movements.” “If health permit, I shall follow your excellency to-morrow; they can never restrict a



ERWIN, THE ROYAL MESSENGER.


The king he writes a letter
 With his own hand and seal;
 It he hath sent it to Erwin, messenger,
 To come and speak with him speedily.



person of your high rank to a day. I am brought low by pain and sickness. Alas! I have scarcely strength to walk. My stomach is weak, and I am prescribed to eat gruels and salads, and to abstain from flesh altogether. I have as fine a chicken as ever was turned on a spit, but Dr. Owl prohibits me from touching it." The ambassador, after his long and devious journey, being somewhat sharp set, was already in fancy picking the bone. "You are well provided, Reynard," said his excellency, in a softened tone. "Time was, my lord, when I had enough and to spare, but I cannot forage now as formerly; I find myself at once sick and poor. I have, however, plenty of *honey*, but eating much of that brought on the colic. 'Tis rich and pleasant, but by far too luscious and sweet for me and my ailments." "Ha! you astonish me; is honey really so plentiful here? I prefer it to flesh, or fish, or venison, or lobsters, sturgeon, jellies, or soups. I shall never forget your favour, Sir, if you will oblige me with a pot, and the larger the better." Reynard was delighted to find that Bruin had swallowed the bait so greedily, and, bowing and smiling, he said, "Since your lordship is such a lover of honey, my neighbour the husbandman, I have to inform your lordship, has such a large stock of bees, that their hives will furnish you with as much honey as you can consume in a month. If your excellency will be pleased to walk, I will exert all my remaining strength to accompany you; 'tis only a short league." To the husbandman's orchard, accordingly, they trudged on in the most friendly manner; the envoy bent on delicacies, the rebel on revenge.

The orchard having been reached under cloud of night, the invaders surveyed the ground for a breach or opening whereby they might enter. At length they found a great oak tree with two wedges in it, and the cleft open. "I humbly beg your excellency," said the Fox, "be careful, for within this tree is much honey; eat moderately, for a surfeit is dangerous." "Leave that to my prudence," says Bruin. So he entered the cleft with eagerness, which his wily antagonist perceiving, pulled out the wedges, and caught Bruin in so sharp a trap, that the poor envoy howled with pain, while the Fox at a distance jibed and jeered the crest-fallen statesman. "How does your excellency like the honey? As you value your duty to the King, do not surfeit yourself, seeing ye are on an important mission." The noise alarmed the whole village, the inhabitants of which came and belaboured the Bear's sides with clubs, and hoes, and pitchforks, until, mad with rage, he tore his bleeding face and paws from the tree, and rushed blindly into a river that ran close by, knocking into the water many of the boors, and among the rest the husbandman's wife, for whose sake every one bestirred himself. Amidst the confusion the Bear limped away, and was no more seen in that quarter.

Chapter the Fifth.



MEANWHILE, the slippery politician Reynard having stolen a plump cockerel from the husbandman's roost, carried it to his stronghold, and having made a banquet thereon that might have served a cardinal, he sallied out by his secret postern to procure drink, and sauntering along the margin of the brook, he came upon the unfortunate Bear, growling in an under tone, and licking his lacerated paws. Adding insult to injury, he sneeringly observed, "Ha! by your looks you have fed upon delicious honey to repletion, but I fear you have paid too great a price for your luxuries. Your coat, too, has also changed colour. If I mistake not, it was formerly sable, now I perceive it is crimson. Perhaps you mean to leave the cares of statesmanship, and retire into the bosom of mother-church. Ah! my dear friend, when you receive a cardinal's hat, I hope your eminence will remember me, as my inclinations run in the same direction.—Why do you employ such a clumsy barber? He has scraped your chin too

close, and scarified your jaw! Your tusks—your very bones, appear; nay, as I live an honest life, he hath denuded you of half of one of your ears!” The discomfited Bear, writhing with mental and physical anguish, replied not a word, but limped away to the grand assembly, where, in dismal accents, he recounted the sad trick that Reynard had played him. The mighty autocrat of birds and beasts was never known to be in such a towering passion on any former occasion. He started from his throne—his mane bristled, his eyes flashed fire, and his tail swung from side to side like a pendulum; so, elevating his right paw, he exclaimed—

“Now, by this earth and yon empyreal sky!
The traitor shall with ignominy die;
The forms of law from which we never swerve,
Our judges must advise, and we observe.”

The senate, *nem. con.*, thanked him for his speech; and an impeachment was moved by the Bruin party. Grumble the Ass was the foremost spokesman; he was an advocate by profession, but was poor, proud, formal, obstinate, and dull. Nevertheless, he stood up before the august assembly—for ignorance is always impudent, and constantly self-possessed. He brayed a long invective against the panel, exhibiting his crimes in the blackest hues his ingenuity, such as it was, could suggest; and urging conviction, “for the honour of the Sovereign and the laws, the safety of the weak, and the terror of the wicked.” A bill was drawn, read, and unanimously approved of, and Reynard was condemned to capital punishment. It were wise, however, for people to catch their fish before they count them.






G. Cantor

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MALEPERTUS CASTLE

Home, sweet home!
There's no place like home!

Chapter the Sixth.




IT became necessary that a new commissioner be chosen, in order to bring the arch offender to justice, and the choice of the house unanimously fell on Malkin the Cat, who, conscious of the extreme hazard of the mission imposed on him, and fearing disgrace and discomfiture, urged a thousand reasons not to be employed on this piece of state service, seeing how stronger beasts than he had been hood-winked and circumvented. "It is your wisdom, Sir Malkin, I employ," said the great King, "and not your strength; many prevail with art, when violence returns with lost labour; we brook not reply." With a heavy heart Malkin made ready for his journey, and being well acquainted with the intricacies and sinuosities of the road, arrived at Reynard's fortalice about eventide. He found the object of his search sitting comfortably with Dame Emelin, his wife, their children sporting around them. After a slight but kindly greeting, the new envoy produced the King's summons, and assured the recusant that, if the tenor of the document was not instantly complied

with, "there is nothing more assured unto you than a cruel and sudden death." "Welcome, welcome to my poor habitation," said Reynard; "in you I behold the representative of my master, whom I revere. We have a gracious King, and a just senate. My life and lands are at his pleasure whom you serve; but you see it is late—so, walk in and spend the night in my humble domicile. I shall carefully peruse the royal letters, while my wife makes ready a cleanly, though, I fear, a coarse supper. But pardon me, my dear cousin, what food do you fancy best; we have delicious honey." "You will pardon me for making so free; but I prefer a delicate mouse to all the honey and nectar in the world." "Now, dear friend," says the Fox, "I can suit your appetite better than the royal purveyor can do even to our imperial master. My neighbour the parson has yards full of tithes, dairies full of cheese, vaults full of corn, so that the mice there are not only plentiful, but excel the finest venison in flavour." "Ah!" says Malkin, "the sooner you lead me there the better. You know the old adage, 'A parson's mouse is most delicious fare.'" Then away they went to the parson's barn, which was well walled about with a mud wall, where but the preceding night the Fox had broken in and stolen a fat hen, at which the worthy parson was so justly incensed, that he had set a snare before the hole to catch him at his next coming, which the false Fox knew of, and therefore said to the Cat, "Sir Malkin, creep in at this hole, and you shall not tarry a minute's space before you have more mice of the first quality than you are able to discuss; hark! how they squeak! When you are satiated, come to me again, for I will

wait for you at this hole. To-morrow we shall go together to court, but stay not too long, for I know my wife will hourly expect us." Malkin sprang quickly in at the hole, but in a moment was caught by the neck in the snare, by which he was half strangled—the more so, indeed, as he struggled for life, and mewed most piteously. "You sing most sweetly, dear cousin," says the betrayer, "and I make no doubt but you could dance equally well, were it not for that confounded trap, which spoils the gracefulness of your movements. As you are a cat of quality, you should have had your mice cooked according to the canons of Soyer, and not rushed on the harmless creatures, like a rapacious courtier as you are." The servants were all alarmed, and the cry was set up, "The Fox is taken!" and away they all ran to where poor Malkin was caught in the snare, and without finding out their mistake, they beat him unmercifully, and wounded one of his eyes. Mad with pain, the Cat suddenly gnawed the cord, sprung on one of the head servants, and scratched him so severely that he fainted; and when every one ran to afford his mite of assistance, Malkin leaped out of the hole, and limped as fast as his wounded legs would carry him to court, where the King was extremely angry at the treatment he had received, and in rage commanded his council to nominate yet another messenger to bring that audacious rebel Reynard to justice, when Grevincus the Badger, Reynard's sister's son, fearing it would likely go hard with his uncle, volunteered to carry his Majesty's message to his most subtile kinsman, to which the King graciously consented; so Grévincus set forth, and ere long arrived at the castle of his relatives.

Chapter the Seventh.



HAVING saluted the Fox, he said, "Take heed, uncle, that your refusal to come to court may not do you more harm than you are aware of; for the complaints against you are many and grievous. This is the third summons, and if you delay coming, you and yours will find no mercy, for in three days your castle will be demolished, all your kindred made slaves, and you yourself a public example, unless indeed you can make your innocence appear, which I doubt not, but by discretion and ingenuity you can; false pleading, you well know, is often as fortunate as true. How many capital suits has Grumble the Ass gained, who seldom speaks sense, and never speaks truth?" Whereupon Reynard put on a shew of candour, and said, "Why should I distrust the court, or fear my judges? My cause is just, my innocence is injured; but that I hope soon to clear up. If the Monarch and his ministers encourage slander and slanderers, the demand will always bring a supply; but who in such a state of things can be safe. I grant



TEMPTATION.

Sad memory brings the light
of other days around me.

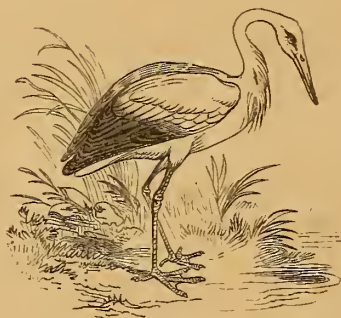
that I have failings, but who are without them? In trifles I may now and then transgress, but nothing serious can be proved against me. I'll go to Cæsar. My honour has been injured, and my name made a byword. I shall obliterate all this, or bravely fall." While wending his way to the royal presence his sincerity was put to a severe test, having been required to pass a well-known poultry yard, which had often contributed to his larder. He triumphed, however, and on consideration, thought it would not be altogether out of place to enumerate a few of his *crimes*, which he had heretofore denominated *failings*, by way of confession, to his nephew Grevineus, who had always led an hermit's life. The catalogue is by far too long for a place here, but it consists of thefts, robberies, and murders—lambs, hares, rabbits, geese, ducks, cocks, hens, pigs, all perished beneath the voracious fangs of this irreclaimable freebooter. In one word, he was a terror to the whole district where he lived; and although he had address enough to elude his pursuers, he was well known by every farmer, cottager, and gamekeeper in the country-side. He even had the hardihood to glory in his misdeeds, and set some of them to measure and music. Take the following as a specimen:—

“Eh,” quo’ the Tod, “it’s a braw light night,
The win’s i’ the wast, an’ the mune shines bright,
The win’s i’ the wast, an’ the mune shines bright,
An’ I’ll awa’ to the toun, O!”


“I was down amang yon shepherd’s scroggs,
I had like to been worried by his dogs,
But, by my sooth! I minded his hogs,
That night I cam’ to the toun, O!”

He's ta'en the grey goose by the green sleeve,
"Eh, ye auld witch! nae langer shall ye leeve;
Your flesh it is tender, your banes I maun preeve,
For that I cam' to the toun, O!"

Up gat the auld wife out o' her bed,
An' out o' the window she shot her auld head—
"Eh, gudeman! the grey goose is dead,
An' the Tod has been i' the toun, O!"



Chapter the Eighth.



HE news of Reynard's arrival spread like wildfire through the assembly. When he took his place near the throne, every member of that august house stood up in order to catch a glance of one so celebrated. Some feared him—some pitied him—others despised him—and many hated him. With the withering glance of injured innocence, he indignantly scowled on the junto, and, falling on his knees before the throne, he called loudly for justice. “Lowly, O Cæsar! like my altered fortunes, I sue at your feet for law and justice! My greatest crime has been my inflexible attachment to your person and government. Had I, like some pretended loyalists, sold your subjects' charters and their lives, to enrich myself—had I sent your favourite heroes to their certain fate—had I betrayed your fleets and armies by secret correspondence to your Majesty's enemies, I had not this day been encompassed with such impending dangers. Like certain others, I might have purchased large estates, erected lordly mansions, and fostered my family on the lap of wealth at the expense of my country; but my


patriotic principles were too strong, and my duty to your Majesty paramount to my very existence. Believing your Majesty to be wise and just, I troubled you with no petitions, knowing well that rounded periods and florid eloquence, where truth is lacking, would have been as smoke in your nostrils. Conscious that my services were sincere, both in word and action, and secure in rectitude, I considered myself above the reach of malice. They have traduced me, but how can they prove their allegations? they have impeached me, but how can they bring home guilt to me? They have charged me with disloyalty and malversation—let them prove it.” Here, folding his arms across his breast, he made a profound obeisance, and retired backward. “Peace, recreant,” exclaimed the King, I loathe to hear thy vile defence and thy wicked plea. Thy crimes are enormous, so shall be thy punishment. A more wretched cause than thine was never vindicated—a more atrocious villain never stood up in a court of justice, urging laws and citing precedents. Thy treason is already proved; behold Bruin’s wounds and Malkin’s lacerations! Were such felons as thee allowed to go at large, our very slaves would insult us!”

With more than Oriental humility in his demeanour, Reynard ventured to ask, “Why should Bruin’s folly be charged on me? Like a plunderer as he was and is, and while holding your Majesty’s seal of office, he went forth under cloud of night to rob an honest man’s bee-hives, and if he was caught in a cleft oak, was that any fault of mine? I humbly submit that he has disgraced himself for ever—brought obloquy on the commission

he bears—and that his evidence is inadmissible. The case of Malkin is equally atrocious. In place of following up the letter of his instructions, and making every thing give way, in order that your Majesty's behests might be obeyed with promptitude, the brainless coxcomb, giving way to his gluttonous propensities, neglected or despised the high commission with which he was charged; and, like a common burglar, feloniously broke into the parson's enelosnres, to the disgrace of himself and the dishonour of your Majesty; and if he was caught in a gin, and half strangled, lacerated, and buffeted, he really deserved it, but I humbly submit that I could neither foresee nor prevent what took place. If it is your Majesty's high pleasure to put me to the rack, devour me by fire, or suspend me from a gibbet, I shall gladly die a martyr to the state; but historians hereafter will arise, who, I hope, shall do justice to my memory; the example will not be lost, and I shall not have died in vain!"



Chapter the Ninth.

OT was the debate, and learned were the arguments which pervaded the assembly; much eloquence and more verbiage were displayed for and against the accused. Some attempted to vindicate Bruin; others stood up in favour of Malkin; a small knot of third-rate orators spoke in favour of Reynard; but it was evident from the beginning that the great majority would vote for the death of the culprit at the bar. The bill was read thrice, and ultimately it was touched with the golden sceptre, which was decisive of the fate of the criminal. "Our very enemies," says the Monarch, "will confess that lenity has been often fatal to the throne and the laws. Traitors abuse the royal clemency. A base impostor, intoxicated with the hopes of empire, which hopes have been fed by the factious, has had his crimes laid bare before us, and no doubt remains on our mind that he has been bribed thereunto by foreign powers." Whereupon the senate arose simultaneously, and yelled forth, "Long live the King, and down with the rebel." The attainted baron was stript of his cognisance, and fettered; and the Sheriffs with their officials brought out the doomed from the presence, to be

consigned into the hands of the finisher. Reynard ever had few friends, but now, when fortune had seemed to have forsaken him, these diminished to half a dozen of his blood relations; who wept and lamented, not so much, perhaps, for the impending fate of their kinsman as for the disgrace which his ignominious exit would bring on themselves. "What a pity," cried they, "that his untimely end should stain the ancient honours of our race! Why should we witness it?—let us turn to Cæsar and crave leave to return to our homes, that we may mourn in secret and in silence." "Peers, powers, and sages," replies the King, "I know you to be loyal and just, nevertheless, I cannot trifle with justice. Faction is in favour of Bruin, who has been anything but prudent, and no doubt deserves to be executed; of that hereafter. But your cousin *must* be hanged; there is no mercy in store for such a flagrant rebel, but that circumstance shall never make me part with you, nor lose the benefit of your counsel."

Accordingly Bruin and Malkin pinioned Reynard's hands behind his back; and Isegrim the Wolf, although imbrued with innocent blood, was as noisy and as eager to have Reynard brought to the gallows, as if he had been as pure and as honest as Keyward the Hare, or any other harmless beast. Shoving and pressing through the gaping crowd, he cried,—“Come on, bring the thief along; let some fetch the halter, and let others bring the ladder; I'll guard him safe, and see him fairly swung.. Haste! if the rascal escapes, we shall have to pay dearly for our negligence. Look sharp, the knave is as slippery as an eel; perhaps he may yet wriggle through our fingers. Lord Bruin, I entreat you,

have a care of him." "My life for his," says the Bear, "until you are entirely ready, leave the vagabond with me; fix you all the tackling securely, and see that the gibbet be well driven into the ground. Meanwhile the Queen, radiant in beauty, and glowing with gold and jewels, appeared on the ground to behold the death-scene of such a notable public offender as Reynard. Immediately all eyes were turned on her Majesty; when Isegrim the Wolf cried out with vehemence, "Are you mad to loose this rogue? I know his malice, as well as his cunning; if he get away from us, your necks will be in danger!" Reynard, as a kind of forlorn hope, appeals to the Wolf. "If, noble Isegrim, you despise justice, friendship, or gratitude, never forget that my blood circulates in your veins; this should move your pity—your care is needless. I am, alas! too weak; a silken thread or a spider's filament would secure me; for what, then, are you so barbarous? and why will you reward my good with evil?" "I'll dash my halbert in your teeth," replies Bruin. "Come, noose him quickly; we'll teach him, brother Isegrim, how to plot against the state." All Reynard's arts of persuasion having failed, he was at length pinioned, and carted to the foot of the gibbet. Stung by terror and remorse, he begged leave, as a final favour, to make a speech before the fatal noose was applied to his neck. This piece of formality was reluctantly granted; and, protruding his snout over the cart, he said,—“Good people, my destruction has been long threatened, and death has come at last; my crimes sit heavy on me, in pity let me ease my mind. If you will petition your gracious Sovereign, he may yet prolong my days.




DANGER

Now fitted the halter now traversed the air
He often took leave but was loath to depart.



I have much to confess, and, believe me, it is of great importance to the state, but this I can only relate to the King. It is for my Sovereign's interest, and that of the whole empire. Small venial trespasses I will own here, such as robbing orchards, slaying geese, chickens, turkeys, and all sort of fowl, young kids, pigs, lambs, and various small quadrupeds. But Sir Isegrim, who is so wondrous busy here to-day, shared the plunder, and should also share the shame. We roamed together, and, in a friendly manner, I invited him to my house. The winter stores which I had provided, he stole again and again; and my family would have starved but for the golden treasure which I discovered in a ruin. I never revealed this piece of good fortune, although the hoard was worth the ransom of ten kings. Some foreign enemy, I suppose, had sent this great mass of golden ore to purchase votes against the Government." As the sound of "gold" fell on the tympanum of royalty, he cried loudly from a scaffold—"Carman, hold! Inform us, Reynard, where this treasure is hidden. Speak out, man, and despise the fury of thy enemies!" "For what," says Reynard, "can such a heap of gold be hid but for mischief to your Majesty? My enemies, if I were dead, believe that their treasonable plot would prosper; and I would have divulged this important state secret sooner, but your Majesty was wroth, and would not grant me a hearing. I know, of a truth, that the money is still in the same place where I found it; and, if your highness will condescend, I will show your Majesty the secret passage." The King drank in the story greedily, and longed vehemently to touch the precious metal.

Chapter the Tenth.



HER Majesty the Queen sat and listened to the story of this new Eldorado with more than ordinary attention and solicitude; and, smiling graciously on the Fox, replied—"you must not think to impose on us with your ingenious falsehoods; but if you really speak the truth, I shall use my feeble interest with his Majesty to disengage you from the noose, and procure you a reprieve, perhaps a pardon."—"Alas! madam," says Reynard, "this is neither the time nor place to utter falsehoods. My friends and brethren, I fear, will be found not wholly guiltless, as I wish they were, but I durst not at this hour presume by lies to avert a righteous sentence. His Majesty would soon discover the deceit, and I should be more wretched than ever, to be repinioned and sent back. I defy the most implacable of my enemies to urge I ever would impose on wisdom and sagacity, such as all the world knows his gracious Majesty eminently possesses. If so, the world might well believe me to be as great a fool as Isegrim, and as stupid as Bruin." Since

the moment her Majesty heard of the golden tidings, her bowels yearned for the treasure; so, leaning fondly on the Monarch's shoulder, she patted his cheek and said—"It grieves my heart to the core, my lord, this cruel piece of business. Indeed, and indeed, you must not hang poor Reynard. You will be the cause of my death if you proceed any farther, especially when you know that my whole heart is bent upon saving him. His Majesty, with a combination of love and benevolence in his looks, gazed on the Queen and said—"We desire him to reveal all he knows, and as we like his story, so shall it be done unto him; the noose may be relaxed, and the condemned permitted to speak." Whereupon Reynard, with trembling lip and faltering accent, made the following disclosure:—"My liege, the treasure which I have alluded to, I willingly confess was stolen; and had it not been stolen in that manner in which it was, it might have cost your Majesty your life. Long may that inestimable life be extended." When the Queen heard of her lord's life being in hazard, she started up and said—"I command you, as you value your own life, unfold all those doubtful speeches, and keep nothing secret that concerns the life of my royal husband." "Know then," says the doomed one, "my dread Sovereign, that my father, by a strange accident, digging in the ground, found a great mass of treasure, jewels innumerable, and gold beyond calculation, of which being possessed, he grew so proud and haughty, that he held all the beasts of the forest in scorn and derision. At last he despatched Malkin the Cat to the forest of Arden, where Bruin the Bear sojourned for the time being, and

tendered him fealty and homage, and offered to place the imperial crown on his head—desiring him to come into Flanders, where he would find ways and means to accomplish his traitorous purpose. Bruin being excessively ambitious, and having long thirsted for sovereignty, thereupon came to the place of rendezvous, where my father received him with regal magnificence. They were joined by Isegrim the Wolf, Malkin the Cat, and my nephew Grevincus the Badger. These five held solemn council for the space of a whole night; and being intoxicated by my father's inexhaustible wealth, it was agreed that your Majesty should be forthwith murdered, and Bruin crowned king, with immediate possession of all the rights, privileges, and immunities which you or your royal predecessors ever enjoyed, together with a complete monopoly of all the honey found in the various bee-hives in the kingdom; and if any of your blood or kin gainsayed them, that assassins should be hired with a portion of my father's treasure, who should exterminate them—root and branch—from the forest.* To these horrid and treasonable measures each and all of them took the big oath, with all its formalities, to make it feel the more solemn and binding. Under the influence of rich old champagne—a wine which he had never been accustomed to—my nephew Grevincus blabbed the secret to his wife, who, in great secrecy told the matter to my wife, and she discovered it to me. It grieved me to the heart to think that they should depose my own rightful Sovereign, to whom I had sworn allegiance, and elevate a clumsy vulgarian like Bruin to

* See Centre Illustration of Frontispiece.





THE ROYAL PHYSICIAN

knew many an Amulet and Charm,
That would do neither good nor harm.

HUDIBRAS

the imperial purple ; and knowing that money is the sinews of treason as well as of war, I became desirous of finding out my father's treasure, and by constant watching, both by night and day, I at length, to my infinite joy, discovered his hoard, and with the assistance of my wife, removed it to a place more convenient for us, where we laid it safe from the search of all and sundry. When my unhappy father went to view his treasures, and found them all taken away, he rent the air with his howlings, and wandered from place to place, but could find no rest. He at last grew gloomy and morose, and, finding his misery beyond endurance, he hanged himself. It is meet that I take this opportunity to remind your Majesty of my father's services as court-physician ; and that, soon after your Majesty's ascension to the throne, having been struck down by a grievous malady, you were restored to health, strength, and the functions of royalty, by the medical skill and perseverance of him who is now no more. Thus have I defeated Bruin's treason—thus have I circumvented the deep-dyed traitor Isegrim—and hence all my misfortunes have accumulated on my devoted head. These foul conspirators being of your Majesty's privy council, and having your royal name constantly in their mouths, they traduce me, tread on me, and work my disgrace. But although I have lost my natural father for your sake, I would gladly lay down my own life also for you ; but I detest the idea of dying under the false accusations of my political enemies. 'Tis that, and that alone, which embitters the cup." Now their Majesties felt an ardent desire to possess the treasure ; and the Queen stepped forward, and

whispered—"Discover where this immense wealth is concealed ere it be too late; I shall intercede for you; his Majesty is not of an implacable nature; he is as generous as he is brave. Disclose the secret, and trust to the King's clemency." "Why, Madam," replied Reynard, "should I give this enormous treasure to one who has condemned me? Your Majesties put implicit faith in the asseverations of my enemies, who are thieves and murderers, while you disbelieve every word I say in defence." "Courage, Reynard! my lord shall not only forget the past, but sign your pardon also; nay, more, a portion of the riches shall be reserved for your especial use and benefit, while a small sum shall be scattered among the rabble, in order to gain you popularity; and, no doubt, I will retain somewhat for my own private use, as a remuneration for my intercession." "My most gracious princess," says the accused, "if the King will vow in your presence that I have his pardon, he shall be the most wealthy sovereign of the age in which he lives!" "Believe not the arch deceiver," said the King, "except when he confesses to robbery, murder, and falsehood." The Queen put on one of her most fascinating smiles, and said,—“No doubt Reynard's past life has not earned for him either our regard or confidence; but think only how he has accused his own father—to me that sounds very like sincerity of purpose; and therefore I implore your Majesty to extend your clemency to him this once.” “Well, on the faith of your sagacity,” said the King, “I'll pardon him; but it is the last time, so let him be cautious for the future.” Kneeling down, his eyes glistening with pretended gratitude, the Fox looked upwards

to their Majesties and exclaimed—"Imperishable honour and enduring renown be yours! your goodness I shall ever confess. Sooner shall envy cease to traduce merit, or modesty prevail over impudence—sooner shall sectaries forget their hatred, or misers their hoarded treasure, than I shall forget your Majesty's royal clemency—this is, indeed, the brightest jewel in your imperial crown. Now I will tell you where the treasure is hid, and shall tell nothing but the truth:—

"There is a forest in Flanders which has as yet escaped the ravages of war. Some give it one name, some another—the neighbours call it Hustelo. A rapid river runs through it, which, from its springs to where it debouches into the sea, glides past a hundred towns. Here the larks warble matins, and the nightingales sing their vesper songs. An enormous oak, which has stood the shock of tempests for many ages, is conspicuous above all the trees of the forest; at its root flows a fountain, and hard by is a dark deep cavern. That no one may reveal the secret, you must descend yourself and explore it in person. You will find an imperial crown, worn formerly by Emmeric. The rebels, who so successfully abused your Majesty's ear, had purchased it for the head of Bruin, when you should either be decapitated or abdicate. There are also hid precious pearls, and valuable jewels for his dowdy queen. And I humbly trust that when your Majesty is in undisputed possession of this great treasure, you will not forget your loyal slave, who has impoverished himself and brought his father's memory to infamy, that your Majesty might be great, glorious, and free." Whereunto the

King replied,—“Reynard! If thou art sincere, what need have we to go so far ourselves? 'Tis below our state to travel; and moreover, I have heard of Flerus and the Meuse, of Arden and Enghien, of Cologne, Antwerp, Brussels, Namur, and Mons, but never of Hustelo. In whose dominions does this forest grow? In what map will we find it? Is it in Eutopia or the country of Prester-John? Ah, Reynard, I know thou lovest a lie! and I fear this is one.” “It grieves me to the heart's core,” says Reynard, “that I should be thought capable of deceiving my own Sovereign. Hustelo is in Flanders, which I shall prove by the testimony of travellers who have been in the locality. With your Majesty's gracious permission I shall cite the Hare as an unimpeachable witness.” The heralds call on Keyward the Hare, who, at the summons, trembled in every limb; the fear of Reynard fell on him, and he confirmed the statement by affirmation.* “When hinds and hounds pursued me, I have often retreated to the forest of Hustelo, I think they call it; and there is a tradition that a profane prince, called Sylvio, hid money there; and the story goes that the place has been haunted ever since. This is vouched for by the wicked; as for me, I dare attest no more than that the forest is there.”

“Enough,” replied the Sovereign. “We shall depart on the important mission to-morrow, and you, Reynard, shall point out the spot; so make preparation.”


“I know of no higher honour, no greater distinction, than the privilege of accompanying you, my beloved Sovereign, on

* See Frontispiece.

this or any other enterprise. No higher fortune could have fallen on me; but, alas! Fortune has never been a friend to me. If I had been in a condition to have attended on your Majesty, then poets would have celebrated my name in immortal verse. I should have been recorded in history as the companion of a king, and unborn generations would have sounded my praise. But my company and companionship would scandalize your Majesty. I am under the ban of Rome, and lie under the sentence of the greater excommunication. I am ashamed of the fact, but I must confess it. It will, I trust, be another link in the chain of evidence, that my whole testimony is honest and candid. Isegrim took it into his silly head to become a friar: he sported the cowl, tied a cord around his waist, went through all the stages of discipline, fed on monastic fare, such as herbs and roots, begged from door to door even for that. I became vexed to see his bones protruding through his hide, and aided and assisted him to desert the church and take refuge in my poor domicile. The rage of the bishop knew no bounds. He declared me a reprobate, cursed me from the altar, and accursed me of heresy. What would your subjects say if they saw your Majesty holding intercourse with a spiritual outlaw. Besides, is it decent to have intimate communication with a newly pardoned felon? By waiting on your Majesty on the present occasion, I should rather disgrace you than be of service to you. My name would reflect on yours, and the Flemings would make a jest of yourself, your mission, and your train. No, no; I must cross the Alps, make my appearance before the sovereign pontiff.

propitiate him by gold and penitence, purchase large quantities of indulgences, kiss the toe of St. Peter's successor, and obtain absolution; and when I return with a newly scoured conscience, with your Majesty's pardon in one pocket and the Pope's in the other, my fame shall have been recovered and my mind at peace, and *then* shall I follow you to Flanders, or where you please." The King approved of his reasons, and ordered him to proceed on his pilgrimage forthwith; enjoining him to procure the counsel of some pious and discreet friend, and to observe fasting, and let his future life atone for the past. A throne was erected on the green, to which the King and his royal consort mounted. Silence was declared, on pain of forfeiture. Not the least murmur was heard through the crowd. The nobles lay dejected on the sward, while Reynard is preferred to a distinguished place. Though all envy the distinction, none dare condemn the favour that advanced him there. His Majesty told them that he preferred lenity to severity. "If the laws are cruel I am not so. We cherish the great and we maintain the poor. All have relief and succour in this court. Your just rights shall be supported, and we desire only to reign in your hearts. I have state reasons for striking the chains off Reynard. Whom I bound I can loose; and throughout my wide empire I declare him free, and whoever wrongs him injures me."

Chapter the Eleventh.

HE tidings of Reynard's pardon ran through the woods with great rapidity; having so suddenly grown great in his master's favour, indicated danger to the persons or offices of certain statesmen, who had recently hoped to feast their eyes, and glut their vengeance on their implacable foe. A general discontent crept over the multitude; many grew jealous at his rapid elevation in court favour, while Isegrim and Bruin were almost reduced to despair. Strapping his budget on his back, and grasping his pilgrim's staff, Reynard, at the proper time, commenced his journey, making pious genuflexions, and appearing as simple as a new made novice. Many were the farewells he uttered, rendered half inarticulate by sighs and sobbing. He was attended in his pilgrimage by Bellin the Ram as domestic chaplain, and the Rabbit, who had pitied him very much when fortune had apparently forsaken him; and having gathered a basket of delicious fruit, he brought it along with him, to be presented to the pilgrim at their first halting-place; for the Rabbit being rather a simple youth, and well

disposed, was highly gratified at the apparent piety of Reynard, and considered it his duty to encourage reformation, not only in his sagacious neighbour, but also in all carnivorous animals—for the poor Rabbit was a strict vegetarian, and often attempted to infuse a taste for vegetables among his associates. On the party journeyed, but in place of proceeding to the city of the seven hills, the leader made the best of his way to his fortalice of Malepartus. “Bellin, my reverend friend,” says the pilgrim, “remain outside and enjoy the sweet grass; I will take my young companion in with me to console my poor wife, for the tones of his voice are much softer than mine, and fitter for a lady’s ear.” So the poor Rabbit went in with Reynard, where he found Dame Ermelin sorrowing in a dark chamber, for she had despaired of ever beholding her husband again. Seeing him enter with staff, scrip, and scallop shell, she burst into a frenzy of joy, and said, “Reynard, my love, how has it gone with you.” “Ah!” he said, “I was condemned upon false evidence; but the King extended his pardon. I left him as a pilgrim, and Isegrim and Bruin have become bail for me. His Majesty bestowed the Rabbit on me as a peace-offering; we may do with him as best suits us, for the King told me at parting that it was he who betrayed me.” The fear of death descended on the Rabbit, and he sought to escape; but Reynard stood in the doorway, and seized him by the neck. Loud were his cries for help from Bellin: “I am undone! The pilgrim murders me.” But he did not cry long, for the Fox soon bit his throat asunder. “Come now, and let us dine on him,—’tis the first time the simpleton has been good for

anything." It was thus he received his too trusting friend and visitor. During the repast, Dame Ermelin was very inquisitive as to how he acquired his freedom; but Reynard told her the story was too long and intricate for recital on the present occasion. "This much I will say, however, that the friendship between me and his Majesty will be of short duration. When he discovers the truth, I have no more merey to expect." Meanwhile Bellin cried impatiently on the Rabbit to come forth, whereupon Reynard went out and said, "My dear sir, my young friend entreats that you will pardon him; he is enjoying the society of my wife, who is his near relation, and he begs that you will amuse yourself for a few minutes longer." Then said Bellin, "I heard what appeared to me to be cries of murder. Have you done any mischief to him?"—The Fox replied, "I was talking of the perils of my pilgrimage, at which my wife became so alarmed that she fainted. This frightened the innocent Rabbit, and he screamed for help!" "I know," said the Ram, "that he cried as in agony." "Not a hair of him has been hurt," swore the Fox. "Now I beg you will lull your suspicions asleep, and listen to me!* I have matters of grave importance which the King begged me to write down for him. I have just finished them, and I wish to entrust you with these letters. They contain prudent counsel, which is only meant to meet the royal eye." "Have a care then," says Bellin, "that you close them well, because I forgot my pocket-book, and were the seals to break it might get me into trouble." "Leave that to

* See Frontispiece.

me. There is a scrip made out of Bruin's hide, it is thick and strong, and will just hold the packet. You will be honourably rewarded, and who knows what you may yet obtain?" The Fox hastened back into the house, and stuffed the poor Rabbit's head into the scrip. "Hang the scrip round your neck, and be careful not to pry into the missives. I have tied it with a secret knot, known only to the King and myself, so that if you open it you will be assuredly found out. If you wish to secure the King's especial favour, you may tell him, when you come into the presence, with a joyful air, that you have brought a valuable packet, and that you helped to make it up. This, I think, will secure you the favour of our gracious master." The Ram was overjoyed, and hastened to court at the top of his speed. When the King saw him enter with the satchel, he exclaimed, "What does all this mean? Where is your friend the Rabbit? Speak man!" "Gracious King," replied Bellin, "Reynard bade me carry those letters; you will find them contain important matters. What they enclose has been put in by my advice; here they are; Reynard tied the knot. It was not for me to pry into your Majesty's affairs." When the head of the Rabbit was drawn forth, the King stood aghast, and several members of government fainted. Such an atrocity was unprecedented, and such an insult was not to be borne. The Monarch was convulsed with rage; he made his throne to tremble under him, and in the whirlwind of his passion he doomed the reverend chaplain to the rack and the gibbet; and, moreover, reflected severely on his own conduct in being swayed by the advice of the Queen. None durst attempt to

calm him but the Pard, who had a double right, being president of the council, and also the Sovereign's near kinsman. "If passion is vile in a slave, consider how it becomes a King; to rave and threaten is beneath your Majesty; you know the murderer, and you bear the sword of justice. Order Bruin and Isegrim to be liberated from prison, restore order, punish Bellin according to his deserts, for he openly and impudently confessed that he advised the death of the Rabbit. We will then march forth against Reynard, investigate his conduct, probe his crimes, and let the irresistible arm of the law do what is fitting and proper on so momentous an occasion. The goods and chattels of Bellin the Ram may be confiscated, and gifted over to the widowed Rabbit, while Bruin and Isegrim may be pensioned as a solatium to their wounded feelings, and harmony restored." "Cousin," says the King, "I like your counsel. Fetch the two barons; they shall sit in the highest place next ourselves; all shall do homage to them; and as an atonement to those gentlemen, I will give up Bellin to them and their heirs for ever." The Ram was executed; and all his relations, and all his posterity are hunted by the race of Isegrim to this day.

Chapter the Twelfth.



IGH wassail and rich banqueting were held at court for the space of eight days, in honour of the liberation of the two great barons Bruin and Isegrim, while Reynard kept within his stronghold. The King sat at table beside the

“And all went merry as a marriage bell,”

When the Hare came before them bleeding, and exclaiming—
 “Sire, have pity on me. In obedience to your Majesty’s proclamation, I hastened to court, and, taking the nearest way, I unhappily came near the gate of Reynard’s castle. There he sat in a pilgrim’s habit, reading what appeared to me to be some breviary or missal. He advanced towards me and saluted me politely; but, when opportunity served, he seized me by the ears with such violence, that I thought my head was off. Fortunately I made a sudden spring, and, being swift of foot, escaped the fangs of the felon, but left one of my ears behind me. See how I bleed! Look on these four holes in my neck. Sire, who



THE PRESENT

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF IN THE MONK'S HABIT"
LONDON: PUBLISHED BY G. B. S. & CO. 1850.




can travel to your court, if robbers are thus suffered to waylay your subjects?" Before he had finished his complaint, in hopped Merkenau the Crow, and related a piteous story, how Reynard shammed dead on the heath one morning. "His eyes were twisted in his head, and his tongue hung out of his open mouth. I screamed again and again in order to ascertain if he was really dead; my wife screamed also, but nothing seemed to move him; I tapped on his breast and his head, my wife approached near to his chin, to hear if he breathed; but no. We both were persuaded that he was quite dead. In her sorrow, my poor thoughtless wife put her bill into the rascal's mouth, and in one moment he snapped her head off. He made a dart at me also, but I flew up and sat on a tree. I saw the miscreant devour the dear creature; and when he was gone, I looked, and found a little blood and feathers only. Have compassion on your loyal subjects, Sire; for if the traitor escapes, the world will say that there are neither law nor justice within your realm." No sooner had the two complainants laid their grievances before the throne, than the Monarch took an oath in the presence of his two nobles, Bruin and Isegrim, that he would destroy Reynard's family, root and branch. "My wife persuaded me, but I am not the first who has followed a woman's counsel and repented of it afterwards. Decide now, my loyal barons, how this culprit may be brought to judgment." The two barons liked the tenor of the royal speech, but dared not deliver their opinion, because the royal temper was a good deal ruffled; but her Majesty, knowing her influence over her lord, said—"Make no rash promise, especially

when your Majesty is a little chafed. Reynard has not been heard. His accusers would perhaps be silent were he here to explain matters. I thought Reynard prudent and sensible, but he certainly gives his enemies occasion to scandalize his name. I may have been in error about him, but he undoubtedly is clever as a councillor, and his connections are influential. You will not make things better by too much precipitation; and moreover, you are master here—with a code of just laws before you, which should be administered with impartiality and due deliberation.” “With all respect and affection,” replied his Majesty, “I might command, but I entreat you, our Queen, to be silent. War is determined on. His house shall be utterly laid waste, and his name blotted out. So let our nobles and their retainers get ready, with harness on their backs, together with bows, spears, and other weapons. We will lay siege to his castle of Malepartus, and take a survey of the inside thereof.” Whereupon the assembly, with a great shout, agreed to his Majesty’s proposal. When Grevincus, his cousin, heard that evil was determined against Reynard, he hastened to his castle to communicate the fatal information, and put him on his guard. When he nearly reached it, he found the proscribed retreating homeward with two unfledged doves which had fallen to the ground, and which the gourmand had snapped up, for he was remarkably fond of fowl. Having seen Grevincus at a distance, he ran to meet him, and tendered a kindly welcome, paying him all manner of compliments. But the Badger, with unwonted haughtiness, desired him to desist from such fulsome and unmean-

ing stuff. "Sir, you are in peril! You have brought ruin on yourself and your house by your fraudulent actions; you have provoked the King beyond all endurance; he vows to extirpate you and yours. In six days you will behold his army under your walls, led by Field-Marshal Isegrim; while Bruin, who is again taken into favour, will collect such a mass of evidence against you as will quite overwhelm you." "If that be all," says the Fox, "I care not a rush. Though they have sworn to execute me over and over again, you see I have still escaped; aye, and still shall. They may debate, and do debate; but it all ends in smoke. Come in, cousin, and sup with me. These doves are young and tender—they require little mastication—their bones are sweet—they melt in the mouth—they are half blood, half milk. Light diet suits me, and my wife is of the same opinion. Come in, then. She will be delighted to see you, only do not tell her what you came here for. The merest trifle makes her nervous. To-morrow I shall go to court with you, and face those mighty chiefs whose rage I shall laugh at, knowing that I am always safe in their folly. I trust, nevertheless, that you will give me all the assistance in your power, like a good kinsman." "All that a friend or brother should hazard for you will I do; and if I have any little influence in high places, it is very much at your service." The Fox conducted the Badger into his house with great ceremony, and presented him to Dame Ermelin and her young family as a near relation.

Chapter the Thirteenth.



 HE lady of the mansion spread the board with good things; the two tender doves were not forgotten; each partook of the dainty with zest; and Grevincus was in ecstasies with the flavour of everything. When the cloth had been removed, and familiar chit-chat had taken place, Reynard said to his cousin the Badger,—“How do you like my family? Do you not admire my children? My eldest son, for instance, is he not like me every inch? My second son, too, a strapping little fellow. He has his mother’s leer, and he’ll be the wag of the family. The rogues are both ripe already. They’ll *filch* a pullet or *nim* a goose with the most practised of our sept; in truth they are fit for anything, and they will get on in the world, or they are no sons of mine. I would send them oftener out to hunt, but I must not neglect their education. They have to be taught prudence and foresight, and how to escape the snare, the huntsman, and the hound. When they have finished their education, they shall go out into the world and labour on their own accounts. Already they bite like a vice, and their leap

is as certain as the return of an unpaid creditor." Grevineus, like a sage, laid his paws upon their noddles, and tendered a long catalogue of good advices, much easier given than acted up to. The night waned apace, and the friends retired to their respective places of repose; but in place of sleeping, Reynard fell into a train of thinking, and slept none. Conscious guilt is a bad soporific, especially on the eve of appearing before one's accusers and judges; so he arose from his uneasy couch, and said to his wife—"I am invited to court by our consin Grevineus, which invitation I mean to comply with. Do not make yourself uneasy. Stop quietly at home. If anybody asks for me, you know what to say, and you know full well how to take care of the castle." Dame Ermelin used all her eloquence, and practised all her blandishments, to dissuade her lord from going to court. Every argument she could think of was used to induce him to stay at home; but all to no purpose. "Be calm, I entreat you; there is nothing to distress yourself about. I have business of importance; and in five or six days you will see me here again." So he set out for the court, together with Grevineus the Badger. The two friends scampered to court by paths only known to themselves, and, to a casual observer, they seemed to be in high glee. Guilt, nevertheless, was pressing on the mind of the Fox; and he could not help feeling misgivings as to his ultimate acquittal. "I have abused his Majesty's ear; I have slain his faithful servant; I have falsely entrapped Bellin, and had him unjustly executed; I wounded the Hare; I put the Crow to death; and what I believe will tell against me worst of all, is a trick I played on

Isegrim. One day, as we travelled over a flowery meadow, we saw a beautiful Colt sporting by the side of its dam, and, being somewhat anxious for a *tit-bit* for dinner, I offered to buy the Colt of its mother, and asked the price. The Mare replied that the price was written on her hoof, and that it was ready cash. I pretended that I was no great scholar; and Isegrim, wishing to display his abilities, put his spectacles on his nose, and pored over her hoof, as if he had been employed to cut her corns. Taking advantage of the precise moment, the lady salutes him with a tremendous kick, which sent him spinning breathless. His snout was battered, and his face was besmeared and clotted with gore—in one word, he cut a pitiable figure, while I sat on the park wall, and jeered him with all the ironical questions which occurred to me. He raved, and roared, and threatened; while I was thrilled by the very acme of enjoyment. There now, nephew, I have made confession; teach me how to obtain pardon.” “Ah!” says Grevincus, “you are laden with fresh sins. They follow at your heels, and you have no time to escape them, for I fear you are near your end. You can never think to be forgiven for the death of the Rabbit and the Crow; and the affront you have put on the noble baron Isegrim can neither be forgotten nor forgiven. How could you behave so rashly?” “Pooh,” said Reynard, “one has to make one’s way in the world. One can’t behave as if he were in a monastery. He who sells honey, licks his fingers now and then. The Rabbit’s fat little body tickled me, and I forgot both love and prudence. As for Bellin, his stupidity gave me a great deal of trouble;



The Wolf and the Lamb

Illustration by [Name]



but we will change the subject. Were I to speak my mind I could tell you who are robbers and manslaughterers of the first order; but I know full well my want of privilege, and therefore shall be silent." "I am astonished, uncle," said the Badger, "that you should confess the sins of other people, when you have so many of your own to think of." So they came near the court, and met Martin the Ape travelling out as a pilgrim. They stopped by the way, and Reynard had some confidential conversation with him. Reynard told how he was persecuted by his enemies, and, being under ban, was yet afraid to go to Rome, and leave his family in the vicinity of Bruin, one of his most deadly foes. The Ape enlightened his friend Reynard upon the practice of the Church of Rome; and having himself great interest with the Pope, promised to get the Fox his absolution,—for what says the complement made by his Holiness' laureate?

"Pardons, indulgences, I buy and sell,
They're good commodities, and answer well.
With money, you your agent must supply,
To bribe the Court, and what you want to buy
The Pope will favour, and defend you here,
Let heretics and unbelievers sneer."

Reynard thanked his friend Martin the Ape for his kindness, and proceeded to court without farther delay with his kinsman the Badger. Having again arrived at court, Reynard knelt before his Sovereign; and ascribing honour to his master in the most courtly style of language; nor did he forget to pay those compliments to the Queen which was most agreeable to her royal husband's ear,

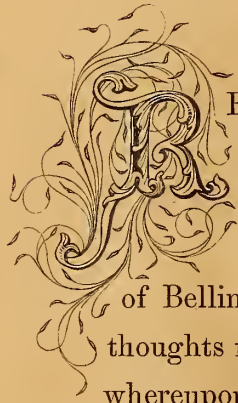
and secretly pleasing to herself. The courtiers pressed round, astonished at his audacity; but the King appeared fierce and implacable. "Renowned Monarch," said Reynard, "you are crowned—not with the imperial diadem only—but with Valour, Victory, and Justice. Rewards and punishments are alike yours. The world expects that you should reward virtue and punish vice. All pretend to truth and honesty, but were our crimes written on our foreheads, Bruin and Isegrim would not sit so near your royal person, nor loll upon the bench while I am trembling at the bar. I should then need no witnesses to prove my zeal and devotion to the person and government of my master. But I must check myself; I can have no reason to fear when you judge my cause." With an ingenious eloquence, he explained away the non-performance of his pilgrimage; rebutted with great tact and talent the accusation of the Hare; proved to the secret conviction of every one that the Crow had made a false accusation against him, and not only so, he proved that the Crow had committed the murder himself. Keyward the Hare and the Crow then left the court; all shunned a war of words with such an accomplished orator; and Reynard was apparently on the eve of triumph, when the King arose in royal ire, terrific in his gestures and terrible in untamed majesty—reminding the horror-struck spectators of the sublime quatrain of the poet:—

"He waved his sceptre north away,
The Arctic ring was rift asunder;
And through the sky the startling bray
Burst louder than the loudest thunder."—Hogg.

Here the favourite nurse, whose untiring attention to the wants and weaknesses of majesty had entitled her to the high privilege of being seated in the royal presence, became hysterical with sheer terror, and the page upon her lap was by no means insensible to the probable consequences of such a paroxysm; and having rolled himself into as small a space as possible, laid his head meekly on his paws, like an Oriental slave previous to decapitation; while the moles penetrated into their deepest fastnesses; and the crawling worms, with all the rapidity of which they were capable, transformed themselves into little red globules, so as to be mistaken for damaged berries.



Chapter the Fourteenth.



REYNARD alone retained his equanimity in the midst of the hurricane, trusting to his unrivalled powers of persuasion. The Monarch babbled incessantly of the Rabbit's murder, and the execution of Bellin; but extreme passion diverted the current of his thoughts from their right channel, and choked his utterance; whereupon Reynard interposed in the blandest of his tones, but somewhat tremulous for the sake of effect, asked—"What do I hear? Is the Rabbit dead, and is Bellin no more? Alas! I have lost a treasure with them, such as the most wealthy Jews have never been in possession of. They were the bearers to you of gold and gems, such as the world has seldom seen. Who could have believed that Bellin would have murdered the Rabbit, in order to rob his most gracious master the King? Alas! this world is full of danger and deceit." The King did not listen to Reynard, but retired to his private chamber in very bad humour, where the Chamberlain was closeted with the Ape's wife, who pleaded hard for Reynard, and reminded his





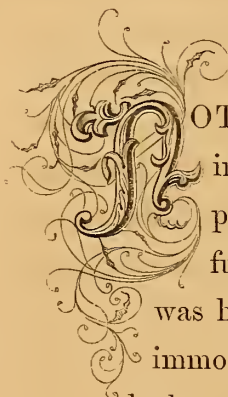
Majesty of his ability, and of his wise decision in a certain contest between a countryman and a serpent. The King, a little soothed, returned into the judgment hall, still, however, threatening the Fox with death; while Reynard eloquently regretted the lost gifts, which, if he were free, he would live only to recover. He proceeded to describe the treasures with a minuteness that had all the appearance of truth, and with an air of sincerity and candour:—"I sent your Majesty a ring, on which were inscribed mystic letters, which only Abryon, the Jew of Treves, could read. He who wore it could not suffer from cold or hunger; could not be defeated in a contest; could not be hated by a beholder; knew no darkness; and could not suffer by water or fire. There was a comb also, with a mirror, intended for the Queen, the wonders of which yet surpassed the wonders of the ring. Pictures were engraved on each." Reynard explained the fables appertaining to them. He reminded the King of the services performed by his father as court physician; and who unhappily committed suicide from the pangs of fell remorse, for having for a moment swerved from his loyalty to his Majesty through weakness and evil companionship. "The benefits which I received from your father are of such an ancient date that I forget them; but what good did I ever receive from you?" "I dare not bandy words with my royal master," said Reynard, "but I refer your Majesty to the testimony of your own heralds, who have publicly recorded many things honourable to my loyalty, and the reverse to my enemies. It would look like self-glorification were I to remind your Majesty of what I have

done for you, and which I cannot help believing you remember full well." Reynard again accused Isegrim of dastardly conduct, and, in an indignant style of eloquence, denounced him as a coward and a swindler, who was utterly incapable of practising honesty; and that he was a disgrace to the assembly in which he sat, and to the court to which he was attached. The Bear was also characterised as a devourer of the weak, an insulter of the people, and an abuser of the royal power; and lastly, with a loud voice and lofty bearing, he defied his accusers to mortal combat, — casting such a look on the Wolf as could neither be mistaken by the court or the challenged. The King was secretly overjoyed with Reynard's proposal, and instantly secured bail for the appearance of the combatants; and ordered the lists to be prepared for the judicial duel. During the night, Reynard's friends did all in their power to prepare him for the combat. Dame Ruckenán the Ape, who had considerable experience in such matters, exhorted him to go fasting to the field, and to use the utmost strategy when engaged with his antagonist. "'Tis not always strength that either obtains or secures victory, and therefore you should lose no advantage. Let Grevincus, your relative, shave your body all over, except the continuation of the spine; then have yourself anointed with a quantity of palm oil which I shall send you. Run round and round the lists until your enemy's heart palpitates, and his breathing grows difficult. You will see a small pool of water on the east side of the lists oozing from a brooklet, and thickened with dust. Immerse your brush there as you pass, and dash it in the eyes of your opponent. Do this

several times ere you come to close quarters with him; then, when he is endeavouring to clear his optics, seize him by the throat, and, if possible, throw him to the ground. The ladies are wholly on your side, and when you have the semblance of an advantage, we will wave our handkerchiefs and cheer. This will not only encourage you, but it will depress the spirits of your adversary." The sinking hopes of the champion now revived; and he attended minutely to the good counsel he had received, except in the matter of going to the field "fasting;" for an unfortunate goose, happening to cross his path that eventful morning, never returned to the pond of her nativity; and Reynard, having wiped his lips, wended his way to the lists, surrounded by his kinsmen and allies.



Chapter the Fifteenth.



NOT only was he shaved and anointed agreeably to instruction, but his joints were lubricated with a peculiar kind of ointment; he was, moreover, perfumed with balm and other essences. His Majesty was highly delighted to see him so spruce, and laughed immoderately when he inspected his smooth well-oiled body. "Go, Reynard; glory or justice, or both, call thee to the lists. It is meet that thou shouldst defend thy fair fame at the hazard of thy life; for to be infamous is not to live, but to drag out a miserable existence." Lowly bowed the champion to his master, and eloquent were the thanks which he tendered him; and, looking up with one of his blindest smiles, he bowed to the ground before her Majesty, and entered within the enclosed ground, declaring, that if he should prove dastardly enough to fly from his antagonist in her royal presence, that he deserved to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. While the whole assembly anxiously and painfully awaited the onset, the trumpet sounded, and the Wolf came roaring on the Fox, fierce as the angry Caspian when agitated by mountain blast; but Reynard, in place of grappling

with his mortal enemy, ran against the wind and scraped up dust into his pursuer's eyes. Occasionally he dipped his brush into the small pool of water, which had been secretly deepened a little, and dashed it with unerring aim full in the two glaring orbs of his foe. Again and again, like a skilful tactician, he practised this mode of desultory warfare, until Isegrim became almost blinded; and, to add to his disasters, one of his eyes was almost torn from the socket by a random blow from the fore-foot of Reynard as he whisked round him. Long and arduous was the conflict; and the Fox, believing he would soon be master of the field, began to shout after the manner of ancient heroes, to shame his adversary, and to exult in anticipated victory. But Isegrim, in a state of mind bordering on despair, and regardless of laceration and pain, put forth all his strength, and by one fortunate effort laid his foe prostrate, and caught one of his fore-feet between his teeth, which he held with all the tenacity of a double screw. "Yield thee, thou dastard!" muttered the Wolf through his throat. Reynard became completely paralysed with terror; his last shadow of hope had evaporated like mist before the noonday sun. Like a craven he begged for his worthless life. He shed a flood of tears; he implored pity; he confessed himself an unhappy wretch; promised to proclaim Isegrim the victor wherever he went; that he would be his slave for ever; and that he would fetch his family to kneel before him, in token of the most abject submission. Moreover, he promised to become the Wolf's purveyor. All ducks, geese, hens, or fishes, which he might hereafter catch, should be placed

at the victor's disposal; and his chivalrous bearing should ever thereafter be the theme of songs, more during than brass or adamant. "No!" says Sir Isegrim; "thou shalt cheat no more! I'll rid the world of a flatterer and a thief. The ravens and the crows shall behold thy bones whitening the common, or thrown into the river." Whereupon Reynard, thinking it was all over with him, renewed the attack, struggled desperately, and, by a lucky movement, clenched his fangs in the Wolf's throat. Isegrim shrieked with open mouth, and Reynard drew out his foot, and with his two paws he nearly deprived him of his skin. They rolled together in a pool of blood, into which, ever and anon, the Fox saturated his brush, and did tremendous havoc thereby on the enemy. Lacerated, crippled, and blind, Sir Isegrim's friends implored the Monarch to put an end to the combat. The heralds accordingly received the royal mandate; the conflict was ended, and Reynard proclaimed victorious; whereupon the whole assembly rent the air with shouts of acclamation. The entire monarchy was agitated, from its depth to its surface, by a turbulent concurrence with the royal decision; and golden opinions were uttered relative to the dignity and urbanity, as well as the justice, of the Sovereign. Grumble the Ass, although bred to the bar, had, like many of his relations, a strong propensity for verse-making; and accordingly he struck off an extemporaneous ode for the occasion, which was set to music with equal rapidity by no less a personage than Gallus the Cock, doctor of music, and sung by all and sundry who hoped for court favour.




BORNE OFF THE HILL.

Oh, how pale his wife looked
 When at the Castle set
 His own before the Scottish door
 He saw proud Jerry la



Chapter the Sixteenth.

—•••—

NCE more the Monarch of the Woods commanded silence, and selected the Leopard as his representative, who uttered his royal master's will in some such terms as follow:—"Victorious Reynard! I bring a laurel wreath from my august Sovereign, to be placed upon your brow as a symbol of conquest. He decrees a triumph in your honour." "I have compelled the foe to yield," said Reynard; "the disputed field is mine. I have added VICTOR to my family name; I have earned undying glory to myself by clearing my injured fame; therefore, in accordance with the wishes of my gracious and redoubted Sovereign, let what is past be forgotten; let none hereafter insultingly name him who was overcome; let Sir Isegrim be restored to the favour of his Sovereign. Generous victors do not conquer to insult the proud, but to tame them."

A thousand friends, whose names he had never heard of before, now thronged round him with fulsome congratulations. Even those who voted for his condemnation offered him a largess

of plate, and tendered their political support. But neither beast of the field nor fowl of the air was half so obsequious as Grumble the Ass, and poet; who, kneeling at Reynard's feet, supplicated the high honour of carrying him to court on his back, which humble request being complied with, the bard pricked up his ears to an unusual length, looked with contempt on the undistinguished mob around him, and laboured under the hallucination that he possessed more wisdom than Rajah the Elephant, and was a greater proficient in music than Cloudlet the Lark or Amoret the Nightingale. Preliminaries being adjusted, a regular procession was formed, and to court they marched, through lanes of troops in new uniforms, passing occasionally beneath triumphal arches, adorned by wreaths and chaplets; while the joyous inmates of the public seminaries strewed the path with flowers, and repeated quatrains from Grumble's ode. Nor were the fascinations of music forgotten. Rajah the Elephant, as bandmaster, struck up a Hindoo air, which had originally been composed in honour of Bramah, and had been a "march" in the Rajah's family for many hundred years; and he had judiciously selected Trickster the Monkey, a countryman of his own, and placed him on his shoulders, because he was conversant both with the instrument and the music. Poodle, a third cousin of Springer the Hound, thundered on the big drum, which happily drowned the discord elicited by Jackoo the Baboon from an old cracked banjee or violin with his *sinister* arm, while the tambourine passed from hand to hand as an instrument which required little previous practice. One ludicrous incident occurred however, which it may



THE TALENT

See the magnificent new edition
Sound the trumpet, beat the drum

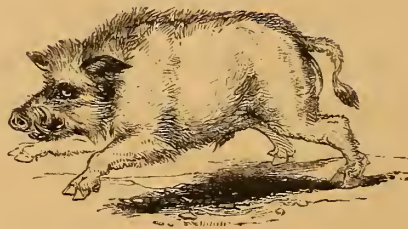


be as well to explain. Grunter the Hog had been appointed standard-bearer, but he became so bewildered with the magnificence of the solemn train, and the elevated part therein assigned him, that he stupidly attached the wrong end of his broad pennant to the staff. His enemies, however, scruple not to say, that he had been indulging in strong grains that morning. This piece of court scandal, however, may or may not be true; certain it is, that the mistake was committed. On rolled the excited throng toward the royal residence, accumulating in its progress like some mighty river in its transition to the ocean. The hills and valleys rung with Io Pæans, and the streets of the metropolis echoed to the exhilarating notes of the music, and the lusty cheers of the crowd. On approaching the royal presence, the observed of all observers bowed to his peers, but knelt to the Monarch, who graciously raised him from the ground, and after a brief speech, which monarchs sometimes find it necessary to make for the sake of being thought courteous, he concluded by quoting a piece of Grumble's doggerel, who was already smacking his lips in anticipation of the butt of sack—

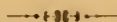
Your woes are righted, give the Wolf your hand,
I bade the war and now the peace command.

“Your Majesty's will,” said Reynard, “has ever been the rule of my life. To accomplish your desires I have struggled through good and bad report. Your royal ear has often been poisoned, but your princely discrimination has as frequently repelled its virulence. I know of no greater luxury than to live and die in your

Majesty's service. I appeal to my honourable antagonist if I did aught to heighten his despair during the conflict; and now that it is over, I deeply grieve to see his pretended friends basely desert their patron; but it will ever be thus. When wealth, or royal favour—which is better—set in on you, like the fertilizing waters of the Nile, friends will accumulate, and flattery rescund through your hall; let riches and influence depart, and your fawning wheedlers will follow."



Chapter the Seventeenth.



SEATED on his throne, in the midst of his senate, the Monarch of Beasts and Birds addressed them thus:—"My lords and gentlemen, we have listened to all your complaints—have taken them into our serious consideration.

We shall grant remedy to those who may have been injured, and dismiss those statements that appear frivolous. Meanwhile, it is our will and pleasure to redress the wrongs of our faithful liegeman Reynard, and reward his worth. His wisdom, experience, and zeal, deserve our favour, and we have determined to strengthen our government by his vast political knowledge, his high legal experience, and that personal influence which genius alone can exercise over the masses. We commission him to perform the onerous duties of Lord High Chancellor, to be the keeper of our royal conscience, and to utter those decisions in equity, from which there is no appeal. As our highest legal functionary, we will hear no murmuring at the conclusions he arrives at, and wherever he sits, you are to believe the King is there. He shall receive embassies in our name, with power

to treat and to conclude, and we command all our loving subjects to obey him, as they hope for our favour. He is no bigot, no lazy thoughtless drone—a burthen to himself and his colleagues in the cabinet; he is active and eloquent, ever on the alert; his judgment is not to be biassed, even by our own royal will; neither power nor party interest will tempt him from the path of rectitude; he'll fear no faction, and he'll accept no bribes. Such is the person which we have elevated to the highest post in our realm—'tis yours to obey." The members of senate were struck dumb with astonishment; they glared upon each other with amazement; but opposition to the royal will would have brought on confiscation, banishment, or even death, to any daring individual possessed of the temerity; so all were silent, which his Majesty construed into loyalty and acquiescence. Painfully anxious to return to his castle of Malepartus, where Dame Ermelin was suffering the sorrow of uncertainty in a darkened chamber, Reynard humbly solicited the royal permission to revisit his desponding spouse for a short space. The request was granted on condition that he should return to court with all convenient speed; for his presence and oracular wisdom had become almost necessary to the royal pair. Being so overwhelmed by regal grace, he scarcely wist what to say; but kneeling to the throne, and kissing the feet of the beauteous Queen, he said—"I bend with awe before your imperial Majesty, and also before you, the fairest Queen the sun ever shone upon. Long may you reign in the hearts of your subjects. Under your beneficent auspices may the age of iron depart, and the age of gold return. May you live, not only in plenty, but in peace; and may

you not only prove a blessing to your own subjects, but to the era in which you flourish." So, laden with royal presents, he departed for Malepartus, accompanied by a numerous train of friends, suitors, and time-servers, who, from motives of self-interest, fluttered round the new made Chancellor, as winged moths do round a lighted candle. Beguiling the way with "diverting talk," Reynard remarked—"You see our mighty foes, although impelled by envy and malice, could not prevail against me; we must forget past peril and past disgraces; the times are changing for the better. Our royal master is bountiful, generous, and good; he prefers blunt, unassuming honesty, to clever chicanery; and, what is more uncommon still, he prefers wisdom to gold." When the towers of his residence burst on his view, he halted for a little, and flattered his satellites, buoyed up their hopes as to their future fortunes through his patronage, retained a chosen few as his companions, to swell his triumph when he should appear in the presence of his wife and family, and bowed an obsequious farewell to the residue, although he despised them in his heart. Rumour, with her thousand tongues, had already proclaimed to the world the altered circumstances of him who was recently arraigned in the high court of justice, as a felon, for great crimes and treasonable practices. His trembling consort could hardly trust the testimony of her eyes, when he sprung to her embrace. Her articulation was restored after she had shed a flood of tears, and she welcomed him joyfully. His sons were transported with happiness, and his very servants exulted with pride to see their venerated master once more. After mutual felicitations, he gave a modest

narrative of the challenge, the duel, the victory, and the favourable change in the royal mind regarding him. "I am now honoured with the highest position which a subject may hold; my friends are in ecstasies at my elevation; my enemies depressed and despondent. But albeit I have them in my power, I shall not blight the verdure of my laurels by crushing them precipitantly, nor provide for my friends too hastily; my opinions, nevertheless, are beyond control, and my power absolute. Moreover, the King, my master, as the climax of his powers, tendered me the Great Seal with his own hand;

Bade me enjoy it with the place and honours,
During my life, and to confirm his goodness,
Tied it by letters patent;

So that I may truly say in the language of another great personage, 'I am the state.'"

After having recruited his health, feasted his retainers, and gleaned golden opinions from his neighbours and dependants, he repaired to the metropolis, entered his court, mounted the bench, and awarded such decisions as if he had been an embodiment of Truth, with Justice and Equity for his assessors. But the novelty of acting justly and honourably wore off—the glare of popularity ceased to dazzle him. A compound of avarice, fraud, and cunning, his judicial conduct had been a piece of acting; and his determinations gave him pain in proportion as these approximated to truth and righteousness. "Why should I injure my health, and waste my intellect, like a small pettifogger in the courts

below, for a poor limited remuneration? If my position is lofty, my expenses correspond therewith; and if I am the second in the monarchy, why should not my revenue be second only to that of the monarch himself? Besides, I am ambitious of becoming the founder of a family, and of transmitting, not only my name and honours, but also something of a more tangible nature to my descendants; and I must make hay while the sun shines." Such were the cogitations of the rapacious Chancellor as he twirled his paws or stroked his beard in his own court, while he pretended to give his most attentive consideration to the pleadings of the barristers in Chancery, and endeavoured to pass for an oracle of wisdom, and a prodigy of legal integrity. It is said, that "a crafty knave needs no broker:" it may be true in ordinary cases, but such was the depravity of this mushroom Chancellor's nature—such was his vehement desire for the accumulation of filthy lucre—such his insatiable craving for the mammon of unrighteousness, that, like the horse-leech, he sucked the blood alike of pursuer and defendant, rich and poor, as opportunities presented themselves. Nay, not content with this abominable procedure, his hired emissaries beset those who resorted to his court, together with their kith, kin, and allies. Throughout the various provinces of the kingdom, fraud and extortion were the order of the day. Decisions in Chancery were known to be marketable commodities, and the whole department voted a delusion and a snare. Sir Isegrim the Wolf drew up a memorial on the subject, largely and influentially subscribed, and presented it to the King, entreating his Majesty to remove the

arch-offender from his high office. Grumble the Ass—who had failed in obtaining the laurel—fired off paper pellets at the head of the wicked and fraudulent official, in shape of dull pasquinades and pointless epigrams, together with a satirical lyric, which obtained some popularity, not from its own merits, but from the beautiful air to which it was set by Dr. Gallus. Rajah the Elephant amused the lieges by playing the significant air, entitled “The Highway to Newgate,” and Poodle, the third cousin of Springer the Hound, beat the “Rogue’s March” every evening at sunset—the import of which was well known to all within hearing. Grunter the Hog, who had previously acted as standard-bearer, defaced the hated name from his pennon, and bartered it—staff and all—with Jackoo the Baboon, who conducted a brewery, for a bushel of his strongest grains. Even Malkin the Cat, who never either forgot or forgave her laceration, bequeathed her skin to the author of the best essay on “Tyranny under colour of Equity.” Society was fast verging towards anarchy, and various constitution-makers had begun to labour in their vocation, when happily the King took the alarm, and made minute and laborious investigation into the alleged malversations of his Chancellor. The result was, that he revoked his letters patent, deprived him of the Great Seal, and determined once more to have him impeached and tried before his peers as a great state criminal—

“He is attack’d,
 Call him to present trial. If he may
 Find mercy in the law, ’tis his; if none,
 Let him not seek’t of us.”—

Meanwhile the sleepless vigilance which had hitherto characterised the degraded ex-official had not diminished. His eyes were open to every movement, his ears to every whisper. His emissaries were to be found everywhere; but the more information which they collected the darker grew the page on which it was written, while his unrivalled sagacity assured him that he could hope for no clemency, except the axe and the block, as substitutes for the more vulgar halter and gibbet.

“ His high-blown pride at length broke under him.”

And, accordingly, he concerted secret measures with his cousin Grevincus the Badger, for depriving an ungrateful community of his eminent services, or, in other words, for absconding like a felon from the scorn and contempt of an insulted and injured people. Well did the arch-peculator know that eloquence would prove ineffectual and ingenuity powerless; that the prejudice of the multitude would be confirmed by irrefragable facts; and that acquittal was hopeless—condemnation certain. Wherenpon the wily politician was reduced to the bitter alternative of choosing between ignominy and exile, or certain death. After some hours of agony spent in deliberation, he preferred the former; and calling up all his sagacity, he started an hour before dawn.

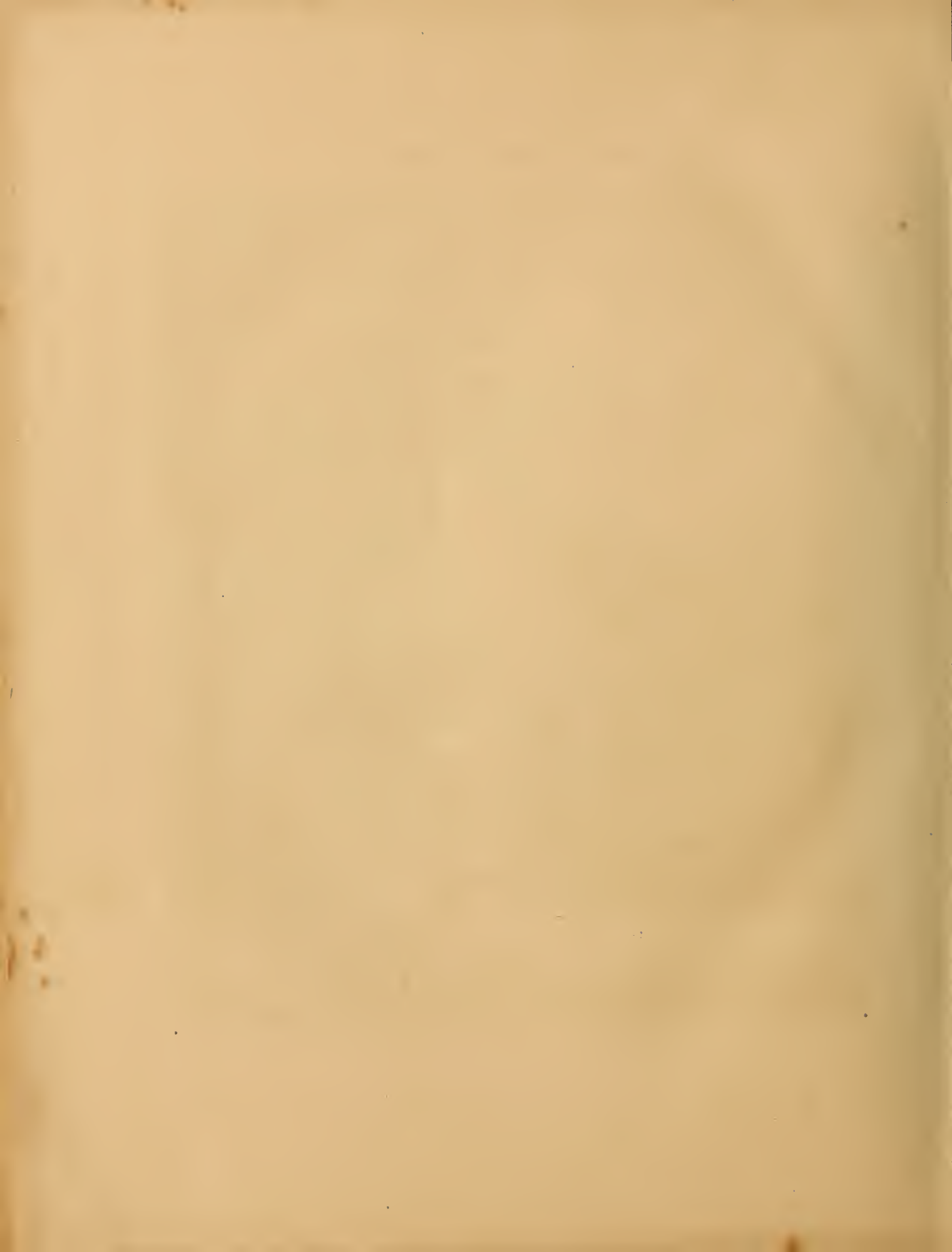
Chapter the Eighteenth.



HIS movement, however, was anticipated by the police authorities. Scouts had been stationed in the various localities through which it was likely the fugitive would pass, and sentinels placed on the heights. The alarm was at length given, and the whole posse, under the guidance of Springer the Hound, gave chase to the hated delinquent, who exerted himself with all the energy arising from the impulsive powers of despair, and love of life. With masterly dexterity he evaded the fury of Sir Isegrim the Wolf, and the fleetness and fangs of Springer the Hound, who hung upon his haunches for several hours; but torn, bleeding, and breathless, he was at last obliged to give up the chase, and call off his broken-down followers. Thus Reynard escaped decapitation; but history and tradition are silent as to the country of his adoption, his future career, or the termination of his existence. This much may be affirmed, that remorse with her cat-o'-nine tails would haunt his meditations by day and his



How the dog found the wolf



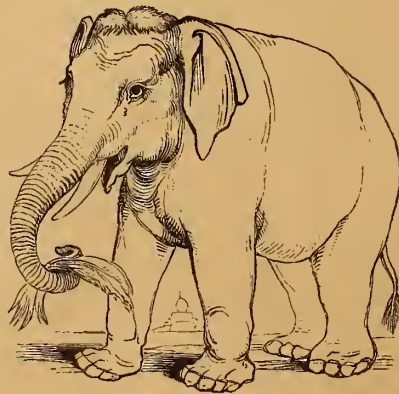
dreams by night, and he himself would exclaim in the language of the poet—

“My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale.”

Agreeably to the juridical canons of the monarchy, a writ, bearing the signature of the Sovereign, was issued from the Council Office, summoning “Reynard the Fox to appear at the bar of the Privy Council, to answer to the charge of having committed high crimes against the state.” The members of that august body met, and citation made, but no answer was returned either by principal or attorney. Upon which, sentence of outlawry was passed against the fugitive; his real and movable possessions escheated to the crown, and his family, with whose concurrence and assistance he had acted, attainted, declared incapable of serving the state from henceforth, and rendered infamous for ever.

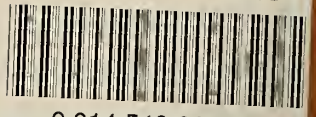
It is admitted on all hands, that the expatriated Ex-chancellor possessed all the requisites which form a great character. He was sagacious and penetrating, acute and observant, an orator of the first order, and one whose ingenuity was seldom or never at fault. His legal knowledge was above and beyond that of all his compeers; and his urbanity and courtesy, especially when they suited his own purposes, were fascinating. His business habits were exact and methodical, and his wisdom proverbial; but that wisdom was alloyed by low cunning, that sagacity and penetration by extreme selfishness, that legal knowledge by a morbid avarice which he sometimes could ill conceal, and that inflexible justice which he was elevated by his Sovereign to dispense to all the

lieges, was perverted by the lust of procuring wealth, and an insatiable covetousness which he neither could, nor sought to repress. Hence, with all his transcendant talents, and the favour of an indulgent Sovereign, he was precipitated from his place of pride and power, and became an outlaw, an exile, and a vagabond; proving the truth of the proposition promulgated by the illustrious fictionist, that "guilt, though it may attain temporal splendour, can never confer real happiness. The evil consequences of our crimes long survive their commission; and, like the ghosts of the murdered, forever haunt the steps of the malefactor. The paths of virtue, though seldom those of worldly greatness, are always those of PLEASANTNESS AND PEACE."





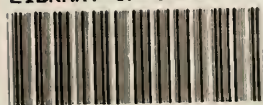
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