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THE
F A B L E S

OF *alyl*

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Æ S O P,

WITH HIS

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E T F F.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

MORALS AND REMARKS,

ACCOMMODATED TO THE YOUNGEST CAPACITIES,

By ROBERT BURTON OF LONDON.

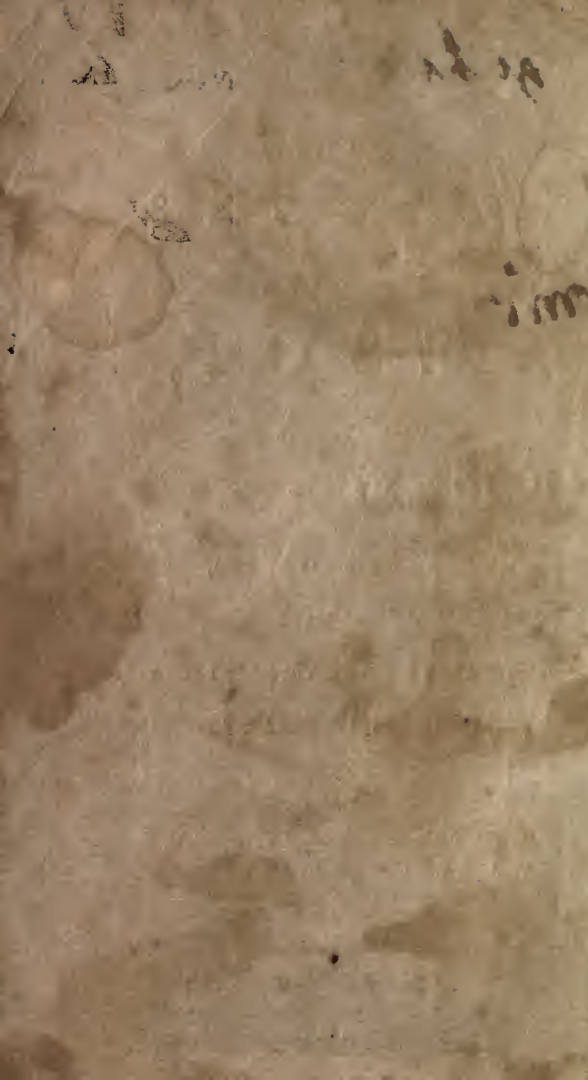


“ The little knowledge I have gain'd,
Was all from simple nature drain'd.”



ALEXANDRIA PRINTED.

1802.



THE
L I F E of Æ S O P.

WHAT Æsop was by birth, authors don't agree; but that he was in a mean condition, and his person deformed to the highest degree, is what many affirm: he was flat-faced, hunch-back'd, blubber-lip'd, jolt-headed; his body crooked all over, big-bellied, baker-legged, and of a swarthy complexion. But the excellency and beauty of his mind made a sufficient atonement for the outward appearance of his person: for, the first account we have of him in history, is, That being sent to Ephesus, in company with other slaves to be sold, his master had a great many burdens to carry, and Æsop begged of his companions not to overload him: they found him a weakling, and bid him please himself. The parcel that he pitched upon was a pannier of bread, twice as heavy as any of the rest: they called him a thousand fools for his pains, and so took up their baggage, and away they went. About noon, they had their dinner out of Æsop's basket, which made his burden one half lighter in the afternoon than it had been in the morning, and after the next

meal he had nothing to carry but an empty basket, which made his fellow-slaves know that he had more wit than themselves. Upon the master's arrival at Ephesus, he soon sold off all his slaves but Æsop and the other two, whom he carried to Samos as the likeliest place for a chapman. He shewed them in the open market, and there they were viewed by one Xanthus an eminent philosopher in the city, who was mightily pleased with the two youths, and asked them what they could do. The one said, he could do every thing, which set Æsop a laughing, which the philosopher perceiving, asked what he could do? Nothing at all, says he. How comes that, says the philosopher? My companion, says he, undertakes every thing so there is nothing left for me to do. Which gave the philosopher to understand he was no fool: so he asked the merchant his lowest price for that ill-favoured fellow? Why, say he, if you'll give me my price for the other two you may have him in the bargain. The philosopher immediately pays the money, and takes Æsop along with him. While he was in this philosopher's service several things happened betwixt them, too long to be mentioned here; only I cannot omit to speak of Æsop's ingenious invention, to

bring his mistress back again. After Xanthus's stock of patience was quite spent in bearing with her, he was resolved to use severity, since nothing could be done by kindness: but this made her worse and away she went. Had as she was he would have been glad to have her back again; but nothing would do. Æsop seeing his master quite out of humour, Come master, says he, I'll bring my mistress back to you with as much good will as ever she went from you. Æsop immediately goes to market, and speaks for what was best in the season, and tells every body that his master was going to be married again, and this was to be the wedding feast. The news flew like lightning, and coming to his mistress's ears, away she posted back to her husband. No, Xanthus, says she, don't think that you shall have another wife while I live; and so kept the house close afterwards. After this there happened a strange thing at Samos; for an eagle had snatched up the town seal, and dropt it into the bosom of a slave. They consulted all the wise men about it, and especially Xanthus, who was at a loss what to think of it. Æsop hearing of it, went before the town council, and told them the meaning of it was, that some great king had designed to take away their liberties;

this satisfied them so well, that they proclaimed Æsop a freeman. Shortly after, as he had foretold, there came ambassadors from Cræsus king of Lydia, demanding tribute, and threatening them with war in case of a refusal. Most part of them was for paying the tribute; but Æsop's advice put them off on't. The king came afterwards to understand how Æsop, by the power of a few words, diverted them; he sent them word that he would put a stop to the war, if they would deliver up Æsop to him. They would not, but he would needs go himself. When he came before the king, he looked upon him with disdain; but when he heard him speak, he was so moved with the modesty and wisdom of the man, that he not only pardoned him, but also, for his sake, forgave the Samians the tribute he demanded. After this returning to Samos, he was joyfully received by the citizens, who erected a statue to him. Æsop, after this, travelled to Babylon and Egypt, where he was kindly entertained, and gained great reputation by his wisdom. After this he went to Greece, and he had the curiosity to visit Delphos, for the oracle's sake; when he came there, he found matters to be quite otherwise than he expected; and having given his opi-

nion of them, the magistrates took great offence at his freedom; and fearing lest he should give the same character of them elsewhere, and to lose the reputation they had in the world for piety and wisdom, entered into a conspiracy to take away his life; so they caused a golden cup to be secretly conveyed into his baggage, when he was going to depart. He was no sooner out of the town, but pursued, taken up and charged with sacrilege, and so hurried him away to prison. He was next day brought into court, and condemned to die. His sentence was to be thrown headlong from a high rock.

Beach & Co

THE

P R E F A C E.

THE usual way of teaching by tales, and fables is so pleasant and instructive, and is so many times over and over recommended by the greatest and wisest men of all ages, as that which makes the deepest impression on the mind, and comes most lively to the understanding, not only of men, but even of children, that it would be lost labour to insist on its commendation. All the precepts and counsels of the antients, for ordering our lives and manners, have been handed down to us under such veils and figures; and every one knows the frequent and edifying use of them in scripture. Christ himself has recommended this way of teaching by parables, both in his doctrine and practice, well-knowing that the images would much more affect men's minds, than the strongest and most persuading way of reasoning. Besides, we have a convincing proof of this in ancient history. For when the common people of Rome were in a direct mutiny against their magistrates, that they would neither pay taxes nor bear arms, the

sedition run so high, that all the arguments the senators made use of could not reclaim them until Menenius Agrippa did it by this fable.

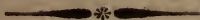
The hands and feet were in a desperate mutiny once against the belly. They knew no reason, they said, that the one should lie idle and pampering itself with the fruit of the others labour; and if the belly would not share in the work, they would be no longer at the charge of maintaining it. Upon this mutiny they kept the belly too long without nourishment, and all the other parts suffered for it; in so much that the hands and feet came at last to find their mistake, and would have been willing to have done their office, but it was then too late; for the belly was so pined with overfasting, that it was quite out of condition to receive the benefit of relief; which gave them to understand, that the body and members are to live and die together.

Now, says he, if you withdraw your service, you'll find your mistake when it is too late. So by this means he brought them to their wits again.

F A B L E S

OF

Æ S O P,



F A B L E I.

The EAGLE *and* FOX.

THE eagle and fox resolving to stand by, and comfort and relieve each other in the course of their lives, whatever should befall them; they agreed to be neighbours, whereby the bond of friendship they had lately entered into, might be the more lasting and firm, so as never to be violated or broken. The eagle thereupon made choice of a tall tree for its abode; the Fox, his fickle friend and ally, of a thicket of brambles hard by, to enjoy the friendship and society of his good neighbour and confederate. The fox being abroad, searching after prey to maintain herself and young; in the meanwhile the eagle being hungry, flew down from her nest to the thicket, where finding the cubs unguarded by their dam, laying

her talons upon them, she straightway carried them away to her nest, where not long after, she and her young ones feasted upon them. The fox returning, quickly discovered the guilty offender; the grief arising from her not being able to revenge the injury, more afflicting her than the loss and untimely death of her cubs. For being unfurnished with wings, she knew not how to come at her avowed enemy and robber. In this case, not being able to be even with her treacherous friend, she fell to cursing and banning her, the only return she then could make. Some time after a goat being sacrificing in the open field, down flies the eagle, and snatches away a piece with the live coals that hung to it, and thus carried the burnt-sacrifice to her hungry eagles. A high wind chanced at that instant to blow the coals, set fire to the nest, and down fell the young ones singed with the flames; which the fox, espying, and hastening to the place, instantly buried them in her guts, to the no little grief of the dam that beheld the act.

The MORAL.

The foregoing tale may stand us instead upon occasion, viz. when injured persons

are unable to deal with them that wronged them, divine justice will be even with them, and right the sufferers.

The REMARK.

Friendship is a large subject, and a very copious theme, had one a mind to enlarge and dwell thereon. Many, and many are they, whose strict and inviolable amity has kept their memorials alive to this day, and preserved their fame and renown from being buried in the silent grave of oblivion with them. Antient histories abound with examples of this kind. And the truth of it is, when all is said that can be said about it, it will prove scanty, and fall very far short of the due esteem of the thing they, between which it is found, enjoy. 'Tis therefore one of the greatest blessings heaven can bestow upon mortals. Wherefore, in speaking of it I shall be brief: He that broke his word, and disregarded the obligation he lay under, was, from the beginning of the creation, looked upon as a heinous criminal, and grievous offender. The instance here before us of the insincerity of the eagle, is so odious and abominable, that scarce one circumstance is wanting to aggravate and enhance it. 'Tis painted to the life by Æsop's admirable pen, and the foul misdeed is, in all respects, quite contrary to cordial friendship and fair dealing. He, in whose heart unfeigned love and kindness lodges, will expose himself to any danger, if thereby he hopes to find and save his friend from the jeopardy and mischief that threatens him; which is agreeable to the doctrine of the apostle Paul, who tells us, "That for a righteous person one would even dare to die."

FABLE II.

The FOX and GOAT.

A FOX and a goat being thirsty, go down to a well to allay it; which done, the goat being at a loss how to get out, the fox to comfort her, said, Be of good cheer, and nothing dismayed; for I have thought upon a way and means how thou shalt get up again, and escape the danger thou so much darest. For if thou standest upright, leaning thy forefeet against the wall, and bending thy horns that way too, by means of this new devised ladder, I getting first out, will afterwards hiall thee out hence. The goat readily consented to do what she was advised to. The fox by this machine skipping out, danced about the mouth of the well, sporting and merry. But the goat blamed her for not performing her promise, and not being as good as her word. To whom the fox replied, Had your head been as long as your beard, thou wouldst not have ventured into the well before thou hadst thought of a way to climb out of it again.

The MORAL.

The use and profit arising from the tale shews thus, that it is the part of a wise man seriously and naturally to consider and weigh the means of attaining the enterprize, as well as the end and issue of it, before he goes about it.

The REMARK.

Rash and unadvised attempts usually miscarry. What is blindly undertaken, the end seldom answers the hopes conceived of it, unless chance, which seldom falls out to second and favour the design. The experience of all ages has set its seal to this truth, and will, as long as time lasts, ratify and establish it.

FABLE III.

The SWAN and GOOSE.

A MAN stored with riches, and the goods of this world, bred up a goose and swan in his yard, but not for the same end. The swan he fed to please his ear, the other his palate, whenever he should think fit to feed upon her. When the time came that the goose was destined to die, and be upon the spit, in the evening the owner

intended to kill his goose; but delaying it too long, he could not discern which was which, and mistook the one for the other. Death approaching the swan by misfortune, she falls to singing a melodious song, as a preparatory to her latter end, and by her harmony undeceived her master, whereby she escaped the imminent danger, and the terrible fear she was in quickly vanished.

The MORAL.

The life of a creature is that which is dearest to it, and which is usually valued above all it enjoys besides; and therefore a man cannot be too tender and backward in taking it away, when it is in his power to do it.

The REMARK.

Melody is often very useful, because it prolongs life when death is ready to put an end to it. 'Tis high time to look about when death is ready to seize us: All thoughts are at work to devise a way how we may escape. Any shift, though ever so pitiful, if like to succeed, will serve the turn. By this we may see the subtlest contrivances miscarry; when others, a great deal more shallow, effect the business, and lead to safety and content.

FABLE IV.

A CUCKOO *and* a HAWK.

BY the beak and claw of a Cuckoo, one would take her for a kind of hawk; only the one lives upon worms, and the other upon flesh; infomuch that a hawk twitted a cuckoo on a time with her coarse way of feeding. If you would look like a hawk, why do you not live like a hawk? The cuckoo took this a little ill. But flying by a dove-house some time after, she espied the skin of this very hawk upon a pole planted upon the top of the pigeon-house. Well, says the cuckoo within herself to the hawk, And had not you as good have been eating worms as pigeons?

The MORAL.

Pride is an abomination in the sight of God, and judgment is just upon us when the subject of our vanity becomes the occasion of our ruin.

The REMARK.

A safe mediocrity is much better than an envied and dangerous precedency. They that in their prosperity

despise others, shall be sure in adversity to be despised themselves. It is much the same case with men of prey, that it is with birds of prey; they look on it as a disparagement to sort themselves with any other than the enemies of the public peace; but those that live upon rapine are set a mark upon as the common enemy, and all heads and hands are busy about their destruction.

FABLE V.

A FLEA and a MAN.

THERE was a fellow, that upon a flea biting called to Hercules for help. The flea made her escape, and the man is angry upon the matter. Well, Hercules, says he, you that would not take my part against a sorry flea, will never be my second in a time of need, against a more powerful enemy.

The MORAL.

We slight God in matters and concerns of great moment, and petition him for toys; and are in a pet, at least, if we cannot obtain our desire.

The REMARK.

'Tis an argument of a naughty disposition of mind,

to turn offices and duties of piety into matters and words only of course, and to squander away our wishes and prayers upon what amounts to little more than downright fooleries, when life and death, heaven and hell, and the like weighty matters take not up our thoughts, nor busy our minds, we being wholly unconcerned about them. By this impertinent and foolish way of proceeding towards the Almighty, men slide by little and little into some sort of doubt, if not a direct disbelief and contempt of his power. And then, with the country fellow here, if we cannot obtain every vain thing we ask for, we are in a pet at the refusal, and in revenge give over praying for good and all, and so part with heaven for a flea-smart.

FABLE VI.

A FOX and GRAPES.

UPON a time, when a fox would have ventured as far for a bunch of grapes as for a shoulder of mutton—there was a fox of those days, and of that place, that stood gaping under a vine, and licking his lips at a most delicious cluster of grapes that he espied hanging there. He fetched a hundred and a hundred leaps at it, till at last he was as weary as a dog, and found he availed nothing by it: Hang 'em, (says he) they are as sour as crabs. And so away he went, turning off the disappointment with a jest.

The MORAL.

When man cannot, in due manner, attain

what he longs for, and aims at, it is a token he is endowed with prudence and sound discretion, in giving over striving for it.

The REMARK.

'Tis a point of good discretion to make a virtue of necessity, and to content ourselves with what we can compass in an honest way, though we eagerly covet to have somewhat else. For it is a notable piece of craft and worldly wisdom, to seem to despise what we are unable to obtain, and to put off a miscarriage with a jest. Beside it is much more commendable to have people think a man could gain such and such a point, if he would, than that he would, but cannot. This fable affords us a noble piece of doctrine and instruction that may prove very useful to us, if we need it, in governing our lives, managing our affairs, and directing our conversation during our pilgrimage in this world. A prudent person, whom we should always strive to imitate, cannot, at least will not, change his countenance at the frowns and smiles of giddy and inconstant fortune: He goes cheerfully on his way, whatever rubs and holes he meets with in it: Disappointments, that most of all ruffle us, and exercise our patience and constancy, afflict him very little: He knows the world, and expects nothing else from it.

FABLE VII.

A WOLF and KID.

A KID being in a place where no harm could reach her, espied a wolf as he passed by, at whom she presently fell a rail-

ing and scoffing—to which the wolf replied, 'tis well you are out of my reach, otherwise I'd make you give better words.

The MORAL.

Hence we learn this notable truth, that place and opportunity embolden many to do what otherwise they would sooner eat their nails than do.

The REMARK.

There is nothing more bold and saucy than a coward when he dreads no danger. This way of reviling and clamour is such an arrant mask of a dastardly wretch, that he does as good as call himself so that uses it.

FABLE VIII.

A COCK and PRECIOUS STONE.

A COCK seeking for food upon a dung-hill, lighted up a precious stone, so called and esteemed by the foolish world. After he had viewed and considered it a while, thus thought with himself: A barley-corn would have served my turn better, and nourished me, which the sight of this glittering stone cannot do.

The MORAL.

Honest industry and pains never go unrewarded. Virtue itself is its own reward, if

it meet with no other from an ungrateful age.

The REMARK.

The use and benefit this fable affords us is this, viz.— That necessary things should direct and command our choice, before things that are not so, which tend to nothing else but disappointment and vanity, and to please and gratify an idle misled passion.

FABLE IX.

The WOLF, KID, and GOAT.

A GOAT having occasion to go abroad, ordered her kid to let nobody in that come to the door that had not a beard, till her return. Soon after, a wolf, that was hard by when the charge was given, approached the door, and demanded admittance, using a counterfeit voice for that purpose. The kid, apprehensive of the danger that was ready to overtake her, bid the wolf shew his beard, and his request should be granted.

The MORAL.

Hypocrisy, as cunning and deceiving as it is, cannot conceal all ways of discovering it. A little attention and trial will discover the cheat, and remove the disguise.

The REMARK.

- This fable should serve as a caution to all societies not to admit any persons as members with whose temper and character they are not sufficiently acquainted; for

designing men will sacrifice the interest of the society to their own private views: And all is not gold that glisters: One may have a very specious appearance, and yet be an arrant knave at bottom. But wise regulations will do much to prevent this imposition; and we shall find it easier to deny access to persons who are suspected this way, than, when once they are admitted, to exclude them.

FABLE X.

A SPIDER and SWALLOW.

A SPIDER seeing a swallow catch flies, a foolish fancy or whimsy set her to work how to contrive a net that would catch swallows, as intruders upon her right, and mere interlopers. But the net proved too weak to hold the prey—and so the bird flew away with it; by which the spider was undeceived, and so fell to her old trade again.

The MORAL.

He that follows a calling he has no genius or fitness for, will soon grow weary of it, and lay it down.

The REMARK.

It is both safe and prudent for every one to make trial of his ability, and of the force of the adversary he is to contend with, before he enters the list with him: If the enemy be stronger, the other will certainly loose the day and his reputation at once. The spider's attempt was very foolish, and the wrong she conceived to be done her ill grounded. The aim and drift of the fable is to help

us to understand and explain injuries aright. It is hurtful and injurious to look upon a thing as injury, which is not so. It was a ridiculous project to think of catching a swallow in a cob-web; and as much was the spider mistaken in vainly imagining to ingross the air to its own use. Those men, in short, deserve to be accounted great fools that are fretful and angry, first for nothing, secondly to no manner of purpose. How many are more foolish than the spider, who seeing their fruitless endeavours and attempts, return to their old trade again? Whereas, many men are so obstinate, that they will never own that they have committed any mistakes, or been guilty of any errors; and so, like Pharoah, harden their own hearts, and use violence to their own consciences, rather than it should be said that they were guilty of the least mistake; and so run on, till, at last, they are drowned in the sea of obstinacy and stubbornness.

FABLE XI.

A FOX and a COCK.

A FOX spied a cock at roost upon a tree with his hens; the unusual sight whereof made him ask the cock, why he chose a tree for his roost, being no fit place for that purpose. But, continues Reynard, you do not hear the news perhaps, which is certainly true: There is a general peace and concord agreed on between all living creatures, so that hence-forward not one will dare annoy, much less prey upon his fellow-creature.

This is good news indeed, says the cock ; at the same stretching out his neck, as if he had a mind to see something afar off. At which the fox asked the cock what he gazed at? Nothing, says the other, but a couple of great dogs yonder, that are coming this way open mouthed, as fast as they can run. If it be so, says the fox, it is time for me to depart. — No, no, replied the cock, the general peace will secure you. Ah, says the fox, so it will; but if the sound of the proclamation has not yet reached their ears, they may sacrifice me to their hunger and hatred they bear me: and so betook himself to his heels.

The MORAL.

Amongst over-reaching, and such as trick others out of their right, due respect ought to be had to honour and justice.

The REMARK.

This is to tell us, that in some cases one nail must be driven out by another; and the deceiving of the deceiver doubles the pleasure. 'Tis a hard matter to make an agreement between a forger and his forgery; they are in a manner irreconcilable; so that it requires great care and skill in a shammer, to see that he contradict not himself. Wherefore flatterers and liars need have good memories. A general truce would have put the fox out of danger as well as the cock; but if the fox would not stand the dogs, the cock had no reason to trust the fox. All people that are treacherous in

their kind, are narrowly to be suspected, when things are told that concern their own interest; and when they can make nothing else out, they chuse to put it off with a jest.

FABLE XII.

JUPITER and the BEE.

A BEE presented Jupiter with a pot of honey, which was so acceptable to him, that he bid her ask what she would from him, and she should have her will. The bee replied, that the wound made by her stinging whenever it happened might prove mortal. Jupiter bid her be content without her wish, and be rather inclined to save life than to destroy it; telling her farther, that if she stung any, and left her stinging behind her, it would become fatal to her.

The MORAL.

He that longs to see mischief fall on another, and prays to the Almighty it may so happen, often hastens his own ruin and overthrow.

The REMARK.

Mercilessness and revenge are quite contrary to God's gentleness and forbearance, and the contriver of mischief commonly feels it first himself. He that lays a trap for another, generally entangles himself in his own

gin. Many in the world, how mischievous would they be, had they power equal to their ill-nature, which so much abounds in this land! So it fares with the bee here; she had mischief in her heart already, and wanted only some mischievous power answerable to her malicious wish.

FABLE XIII.

Of the MAN and the SERPENT.

A SERPENT haunted a country-cottage, and bit a child that struck it, which soon after occasioned his death—The child's parent being much grieved at it, with a billet he had in his hand, deprived the snake of his tail: this done, though the utmost he intended was not done, to conceal what he proposed to do further, which was to retaliate and pay him in his own coin, he resolved to endeavour to be friends with him. But the snake refused it, telling him, it was morally impossible a firm and safe league could be made betwixt them, till he had forgot the untimely death of his child, and the other the loss of his tail.

The MORAL.

Persons that have injured each other cannot presently forget hostilities and outrages done to one another, and forgive them;

injuries usually leaving a smart behind them, that continue long after.

The REMARK.

Friendship is of that nature, that if not entire and complete, is dangerous, and proves rather a snare than a safeguard. 'Tis rarely seen that two, who were once enemies, ever after return to a perfect amity and concord. And no wonder it is that so it falls out, real friendship being in all ages so rare and uncommon.

FABLE XIV.

A FOX and HEDGE HOG.

A FOX meeting a porcupine or hedgehog, wondered to see him so armed cap-a-pee, every part having on its armour of defence; afterwards fell into talk with him, and among other things persuaded him to lay aside that hostile garb, as not being apprehensive of any danger that threatened it. After the porcupine had listened a while to his deceitful arguments, he made this reply to the ensnaring beguiler: Methinks I smell a fox. — Keep at a distance; your eloquent flourishes have made no impression upon me. Be packing therefore, lest you feel the keenness of my anger, and the smart of prickles.

The MORAL.

He that strips himself of the fence that nature has bestowed upon him for his safe-

guard, is miserably foolish and if he smart for it, deserves no compassion.

The REMARK.

Every thing that has not a mind to perish, is provided with means to avoid it. Hares are stored with ways to escape the dogs that pursue them. Partridges know how to save themselves from the claws of their merciless enemies the hawks. The smaller fry have their several tricks and devices to keep out of harm's way; self-preservation being implanted in every thing that has a being.

FABLE XV. *WOLF*

The WOLF and CARVED HEAD.

A WOLF entering a carver's shop, found a man's head; after a little gazing and thinking thereon, imagined it had no sense, and then said, O pretty head, finely wrought, but void utterly of brains.

The MORAL.

Outward comeliness is so much the more graceful, if the inward be answerable and agreeable to it; and a handsome outward shape is so far from decking a fool, that it renders him the more hateful and contemptible.

The REMARK.

Outward beauty, no doubt, very much sets off and graces a person; but the mind is all in all, that vastly

exceeds every thing else he possesses and enjoys : All besides this is of no esteem ; and without it he is very much beneath a brute, who, when he dies, leaves nothing behind him to preserve and perpetuate his memory. What a happy world should we live in, if mankind would but bestow the half, nay, the twentieth part of their precious time to adorn and trim their insides (which is the great thing necessary) which they lavishly waste in painting and setting off the outside ? Let them remember the woes pronounced by our Saviour, against those that cleansed the outside of the cup and platter, but neglected the inside ; and then, no doubt, they won't take so much pains on their mortal bodies, which are often like the painted sepulchre.

*F*ABLE XVI.

The OX and DOG in the MANGER.

A CHURLISH cur got into a manger, and there snarled to keep the oxen from their provender and food, brought thither for them by their careful owner ; the meat fitted not the dog, who, to starve others, cared not what became of himself.

The MORAL.

Other people's misery is the proper food of envy and ill nature, which had rather want itself, than see others enjoy what is convenient and necessary for them.

The REMARK.

There are but too many in the world of this dog's

temper, that will rather punish themselves than not be troublesome and vexatious to others. If some men might have their wish, the very sun in the firmament should withdraw his light, and they would submit to live in perpetual darkness themselves, upon condition that the rest of the world might do so too for company. Whatsoever their neighbour gets, they lose; and the very bread the one eats, makes the other lean and meagre; which is the natural meaning and intent of the tale.

FABLE XVII.

A DOG and SHADOW.

A DOG crossing a river with a morsel of meat in his mouth, saw, as he thought, another dog under the water, with such a piece of meat in his mouth, as he had in his. He never considered, that what he saw was reflection only, and that the water did the office of a looking-glass; wherefore greedily chopping at it, he lost both substance and shadow, to his great regret and disappointment.

The MORAL.

Excessive greediness mostly in the end misses what it aims at; disorderly appetites seldom obtain what they would have; passions mislead men, and often bring them into great straits and inconveniencies, through heedlessness and negligence.

The REMARK.

This fable shews people the great danger and mischief they may fall into by suffering themselves to be directed by conceit only, and fancy that is its own guide. How wretched is the man who does not know when he is well, but passes away the peace and enjoyment of his life for the humouring a whimsical appetite? He is never well till he is at the top, and when he can go no higher, he must either hang in the air, or fall. What can be vainer now, than to lavish out our lives and fortunes in the search and purchase of trifles, and at the same time to ly carking for the needless goods of this world, and in a restless disquiet of thought for what is to come, which is, at the same time, as uncertain as uncertainty itself?

FABLE XVIII.

The VIPER and FILE.

A VIPER meeting with a file, fell to gnawing it. What ails the fool? says the file.—Dost thou go about to fret me, who am wont to gnaw the hardest of metals?

The MORAL.

Splenetic fools neither regard their own interest, nor that of any body else.—Fall about it they will, whatever betide them, whatsoever mischief or calamity they thereby run into.

The REMARK.

Unadvised rashness hurries men unawares into mani-

fold mischiefs. The attempt here of the viper was exceeding foolish, and no less ridiculous; for the softer and weaker gnawer, to bite and gnaw the harder and stronger, looks odd and very wild.

FABLE XIX.

A WOLF and LAMB.

A WOLF quenching his thirst at a fountain-head, perceived at a good distance below him, a lamb standing at the brink of the said rivulet; upon which the wolf hastens to her. Wretch, as thou art, says he, how didst thou dare to mud the stream? To which the lamb replied, that she thought that her drinking at such a distance below him could not have given any disturbance. Nay, says the other, you will remember what your mother's fauciness cost her a while ago; if you have not a care, you'll fare as she did. If you'll believe me, says the lamb, in a trembling posture, I was not then in being. Well, well, impudence, says the wolf, you talk at this rate out of hatred to our kind and family; but now I have you in a convenient place, I will be even with you; and so immediately sacrificed her to his hunger and revenge.

The MORAL.

'Tis an easy matter to find an occasion to misuse one that is below us. Innocence is no armour against tyrannical power; no pleas avail against a power and a desire of injuring, if they meet together.

The REMARK.

Pride and cruelty never want a pretence to do mischief; the plea of not guilty signifies nothing where arbitrary power is. When innocence is to be born down by might, arguments are foolish things; nay, the very merit, virtues, and good offices of the person accused, are improved to his condemnation; nay, such is the boldness of spiteful cruelty, that people shall be charged with things utterly impossible, and wholly foreign to the matter in question; the lamb itself shall be made malicious. Thus the Jews treated the Lamb of God, and such treatment must all men expect, who endeavour to follow the Lamb; for so great is the corruption of men, that interest and self-love are foisted in, and pass at present for true religion and piety; and under this false mask of godliness, persecution is christened with zeal, and fury for religion and Christianity.

FABLE XX.

An EAGLE and TORTOISE.

A TORTOISE being weary of living in a hole and carrying his house about,

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made a request to the eagle to learn him to fly. The eagle seemed unwilling to grant it, telling him it was against nature's course and appointment, and common sense too. But such was the freakishness of the tortoise, that the more the one was against it, the more the other was for it. The eagle perceiving the tiresome importunity of the tortoise, heaved him up in the air, steeple high, and then let him fall; the first thing that he met with at his return was a rock, which dashed him to pieces.

The MORAL.

Whatever is unnatural, and goes topsyturvy, cannot but be dangerous, and of ill consequence.

The REMARK.

This hints to us, how unsafe a vanity it is for a creature that was destined for one condition of life to affect another, no way agreeable to it. The tortoise's place was upon the sands, not among the stars; and if he had kept his wonted habitation, he would then have been out of danger of a fall, for then he could never have caught one. Many a fool is well advised, that has not either the grace or the wit to follow and profit by it, and thus his stubborn wilfulness often proves his ruin.

FABLE XXI.

The WIDOW and her HEN.

A CERTAIN widow had a hen that every day laid one egg. Upon this she vain-

ly thought within herself, that if she gave her hen more to eat, she would lay two eggs a day. She tried the experiment upon it, till the hen was waxed fat, and by that means gave over laying.

The MORAL.

This fable is a-kin to that of the dog and shadow foregoing. Striving after a great deal, which is both unlikely and uncertain, we worst ourselves, not at all mending our condition.

The REMARK.

To be discontented with present comforts and enjoyments, is no hopeful way of attaining either more or greater. What a happiness would it be to mankind, did they but know when they were well! Nature has bestowed upon every one his share, were a discreet use made of her bounty. But now a-days many people seek out ways and means to disquiet themselves; and what they will be, they will be, whatsoever hinders them, or stands in their way: Hence no wonder if disappointment attend them and disquiet their hopes, thus deceived and brought to nought. If mortals would endeavour to act and move every one within his own sphere, we should not see so many sad and fatal examples, as we often do, of the ruin and overthrow of many, whose ambitious designs lifted them up, and made them soar for a while as it were with the wings of the eagle, only that their fall might be the greater.

FABLE XXII.

A SPIDER and the GOUT.

A SPIDER walking abroad to recreate himself, lighted upon the gout, and

walked with him till even tide, and afterwards took up his lodging in a fine palace, and fell to spinning cob-webs, which were as fast swept away; but the gout had his quarters in a very nasty place, having nothing fit to entertain him. Meeting again the next morning, each gave his fellow an account how it fared with him the night past. The spider began his relation first, which was a complaint of the niceness of his landlord; afterwards the gout requited him with such another story of ill-usage: Whereupon the next night they took quite the contrary course. The spider got into a hovel, and the gout into a hall, where the lord of the manor had his abode. The gout met with every thing he desired, and the spider was as well pleased on the other hand. Upon this the gout resolved henceforward to get into some rich man's house, and the spider into some needy person's.

The MORAL.

An industrious poverty in a cell, with quiet thoughts and sound sleep, is infinitely to be preferred before a lazy life of pomp and pleasure.

The REMARK.

One may be very uneasy with a plentiful fortune, and

as happy in a mean condition; for it is the mind that makes us either one or the other: A plain honest and temperate condition contents itself with a little. Where gluttony and idleness rule and bear sway, something is still wanting. How many foolish longings and wild desires, possess and unquiet the fancy in such a state! We see a sailor sleep quietly in a hammock, without any cares in his head, or indignation in his stomach; where persons of quality lie lurking upon a bed of state, with the qualms and twinges that accompany riot and excess.

FABLE XXIII.

The OLD MAN and DEATH.

AN old man carrying a burden of wood from the place where it grew, to his dwelling; by that time he had carried it half way, grew tired with it, and so laid it down, wishing death would approach and convey him from this life to a better. Death was presently at his elbow, and demanded why he implored his help? The old man's reply was, he had at present no other need of him than to take him afresh, by helping him up with his burden.

The MORAL.

Life, be it as miserable and wretched as it will be, is still preferable to death, though it have none of its frightful companions about it.

The REMARK.

One of the chiefest lessons Christianity teaches its professors, is cheerfully and courageously to bear and undergo all the crosses and temptations they may meet with, during their pilgrimage in this lower and toilsome world. Death is always the conclusion and period of life; but we must not call and hasten it as often as we please: He that gave us our being has ordered us to preserve and keep it, till he thinks death better for us than our longer abode here; to whose blessed will, as in all things else, so in this great point, we must submit and readily obey.

FABLE XXIV.

~~The OLD WOMAN and PHYSICIAN.~~

AN old widow having a distemper fallen into her eyes, sent for a physician, telling him, if he could cure her, he should receive a reward from her, otherwise nothing.—The physician, under the fore-cited condition, undertook the cure. He visited his patient every day, anointing her eyes with an ointment he had prepared for the purpose. After the anointing was over, away went the physician, carrying something with him that belonged to his patient, being tempted thereunto, because just at the anointing she was wholly bereft of sight by its means. The woman perceiving her substance by this

means to decrease daily, and that, if her sight was restored, she might have nothing to look upon, the physician demanding the agreed-on reward.—Nay rather, replied the old woman, I see nothing at this time: When I first fell amiss, I could see goods of my own; but now at this time thou sayest I can see, they are got out of sight.

The MORAL

Intimates to us—That it often falls out, that wicked and unconscionable men fall under the rebukes of their own misdoings, and vile practices, unwarily and unwillingly.

The REMARK.

The deeds of unrighteous men at last find them out, and betray them to shame and misery. Whilst the physician was busy to bring the patient to her sight again, ~~he was~~ no less active in bringing his own thievery to light; for which he rather deserved a gibbet, than a reward from his pillaged patient. This is nothing else but for a man to cut his shins with his own hatchet, and to bring down mischief upon his own empty and senseless noddle.

FABLE XXV.

The WOMAN and DRUNKEN HUSBAND.

TWAS a woman's misfortune to be joined in matrimony to a drunken husband. Being desirous to free him from

that abominable vice, she took this course to effect it: seeing him once very drowsy, by reason of the fit of drunkenness he was then in, she took him upon her back, and carried him into a vault in the church yard, where she left him, and went her way. When she thought he was come to himself, she returned thither, and he asked who it was that knocked? His wife made answer, it is I, who have brought a meal for a dead person! To which the drunkard replied—gentle, fir, a bottle or two of strong liquor would have been more acceptable than any kick-shaw of any kind whatsoever; I am sad at hearing that I must make a meal without liquor.—But she, striking her breast, said, miserable woman that I am, this device avails me nothing; for thou, husband, art not amended by it, rather thou art worse than before: The disposition, I fear, being also grown a habit.

The MORAL.

The tale gives us warning of the danger a continuance in a wicked course of life may bring us into, for oftentimes, when he that is in it would give over, and forsake it, he cannot.

The REMARK.

'Tis well known, custom is a second nature. A bad habit steals upon us unawares, before we perceive it; and once got, is not easy shook off and parted with. Nothing can prevail with us to divorce ourselves from a beloved lust we have some time been wedded to: So strong and powerful are its charms, that death itself, as terrible as it is, cannot fright us from hugging and caressing it. This poisonous viper we will cherish in our bosom, though we are sure thst ere long his poison will give us a mortal wound, and punish us as we deserve. An old, stubborn, rooted habit, what a difficult task, good God! what a toil it is, wholly to vanquish and get an entire victory over it! The cutting of Hydra's head asks the utmost strength and effort of Hercules; but to tame an inordinate desire that has for some time ruled us, is past the power of most mortals.

FABLE XXVI.

HUSBANDMAN and his SONS.

A HUSBANDMAN knowing he had not long to live, called his sons together, and earnestly exhorted them to follow his calling, commending a husbandman's life to them—further telling them, that if they diligently and painfully cultivated his vineyard, they should find a treasure of very great value he had in it. This welcome

news cheered their hearts, and filled them with extraordinary hopes of finding a great deal of treasure; and without more ado fell to digging the vineyard, not leaving a foot of it unturned.— However, after all the hoped for treasure, they met not with any— But nevertheless, the vineyard being thus well dressed, and ordered, made them an ample satisfaction for the pains and labour they had bestowed on it.

The MORAL.

The tale sets before us, that by industry men thrive and grow rich.

The REMARK.

Honest labour never fails, never misses its due reward and recompence. What else is virtue itself, the fairest and noblest ornament of mankind, but pains married to ingenuity? And happy, thrice happy is he in whom they meet and are joined. How sweet does his time pass away! whatever befalls him, this quiets his mind, and thereby he enjoys a complete rest, and is out of the reach of all care and trouble. This world, that to most is a sort of hell, proves to him, by means of it, a real and sensible paradise.

FABLE XXVII.

The WEASEL and FILE.

A WEASEL running into a brasier's shop, got to licking a file that lay

there; so that a great deal of blood ran down his tongue as he licked. But the heedless weasel thought his blood to be the brazier's filings only, until he had quite filed away his tongue, and then he found his mistake.

The MORAL

Is levelled at such that, in quarrels and brawls, get harm and mischief before they are aware.

The REMARK

Shews, that tho' nature has endowed every creature with a principle of self preservation, yet their unruly appetites hurry them blindly on to their own destruction.

FABLE XXVIII.

The FLIES in the HONEY-POT.

THE flies having got into a buttery where honey-pots stood, fell a eating of the honey. When they had got a good belly-full, they were going off, but found their feet fast — they struggling to get loose, so entangled themselves, that being almost stifled, they cried our, What wretches are we to pay so dear for such a short banquet?

The MORAL.

The fable shews gluttony has destroyed many.

The REMARK.

Intemperance has always proved fatal and destructive. Daily experience confirms the truth. A glutton seldom lives out half his days; therefore fly from this vice as from the most poisonous serpent. How many have been destroyed by a debauch! It is but just that they who trample upon the laws of nature, and make themselves worse than the brute beasts, should come to an untimely end. How many instances does history give us, of such as have been fairly, but were at last miserably destroyed by this vice! A famous example we have in the person of Alexander the Great, who soon subdued nations, while he continued moderate and sober, till, at last, this great conqueror was himself conquered by drunkenness, and so put an end at once both to his life and conquest. What a dismal spectacle is a drunkard, or glutton, cast upon his sick-bed, under the heavy load of loathsome distempers! and how wisely does the wisest of men observe, "Who hath wee? who hath sorrow? who hath redness of eyes? but he that tarrieth at the wine."

FABLE XXIX.

The MISTRESS and her MAID.

A MISTRESS taking a liking to a girl, was resolved to hire her, to whom the maid agreed, and so became the servant.

The mistress did her part, being rather too kind. The maid, after a while, grew weary of her service, and by that means the mistress was no less tired with her. After several sharp rebukes, she resolv'd to be even with her mistress, and us'd this device.—She strew'd the stairs with pease, thinking thereby to give her mistress a fall; but forgetting what she had done the next morning, catch'd a sad fall herself.

The MORAL.

Harm watch, harm catch; knaves and villians often contrive their own ruin.

The REMARK.

Ingratitude seldom goes unpunished—too much gentleness is often more hurtful and fatal than too much severity. Ease and plenty makes servants often negligent of their duty. If they are reprov'd by master or mistress, they maliciously study their ruin. Wicked contrivances often fall heavy on the contrivers; and men are usually caught in the snare they have laid for others.

FABLE XXX.

The GRASHOPPER and PISMIRE.

IN the winter-season the pismires grew cold, by reason of the moistness of their food; however, an hungry grasshopper ask-

The REMARK.

clamours of them; they answered, Why do you not in summer lay up for the winter? The grasshopper replied, I am not at leisure for siaging to the country-swains all the season. Nay, then, said the frowning pismires, since in summer thou pipest, thou must even dance in winter.

The MORAL

Teaches us to be careful and diligent in all our affairs, on all occasions, lest reproach, grief, and shame overtake us.

The REMARK.

We were sent into the world to toil, and thereby to earn our daily bread. It is no wonder to see him fall in danger, who will not foresee it, and feel misery who will not prevent it. To provide against a wet day is both commendable and necessary. Who can tell what may happen? What we little think of may befall us. We cannot sufficiently fence against the calamities which abound every where in this world. The more careful we are to prevent tribulation, the less grievous and irksome will it prove. Solomon sends the sluggard to the ant to learn industry; and it is a shame to find men endued with reasonable souls come so far short of beasts: For certainly, if men were in many things as provident as brute beasts, we should see fewer go to the gallows.

FABLE XXXI.

THE LYING MOLE.

MOST people think that a mole is blind.—He, on a time, said to his dame, I see a sycamore tree. He said to her another time, there must be some frankincense hereabouts, for I smell it. He said to her a third time, I hear the noise of a brasen ball. His mother taking him up, answered thus: Son, I now plainly perceive, thou art as void of hearing and smelling as of sight.

The MORAL

Plainly shews that many boasters promise great and wonderful things, who, when put to the trial, can hardly perform small ones.

The REMARK.

Great boast and little roast; as it is with the dogs, so it is with crackers, and vain braggers. The loudest boasters are generally the least performers. Saying and doing are different things; talking is not performing. If words alone could do, a ladder had been found out before this time, which would have reached the moon; so that from thence a nearer prospect had been taken of the stars. Noise can only affect the ear, prattle will never butter parents.

FABLE XXII.

The MISTRESS and her MAIDENS.

A LABORIOUS and thrifty widow usually called her maidens to their work at the crowing of the cock.—The toil at last growing irksome and grievous to them, made them think of this device for their ease. They imputed their early rising every morning to the noise the cock made; and therefore, to make sure work, at once put an end to his noise and his life. But the remedy proved worse than the disease; for the old widow, deprived of her watchman, called them up, for the most part, sooner than before.

The MORAL

Tells us in very plain terms, that many, and too many, devise and contrive their own harm and mischief.

The REMARK.

Many know not when they are well, and are therefore often altering their condition and way of living. They soon turn weary of what is present, and always restless; such are their own disturbers, who often seek their ease and quiet by such indirect practices, that they often have cause to repent of them. Men should think before

they change, lest they change for the worse. The foolish wenches in the fable must kill the cock for wakening them too soon, and so by thinking they should have much more sleep, it happened they had almost no sleep at all.

FABLE XXXIII.

MERCURY and the CARVER.

MERCURY, desirous to know what repute he had in the world, went into a Carver's shop in the shape of a man. Looking about him, he espied Jupiter's image, and cheapened it: The Carver asked a groat. Afterward he cheapened Juno's, for which he asked more. At last, seeing his own image, not doubting but the Carver would value it at a great rate, as being messenger to the gods, and patron of tradesmen, asked the price of it: Why truly, says the Carver, give me but my price for the other two, and you shall have that into the bargain.

The MORAL.

This Fable reproves such, who, setting too high a value upon themselves, appear by so much the more despicable to others.

The REMARK.

A fond conceit where it prevails, is of bad consequences, and commonly meets with contempt and scorn. A country girl dressed up for a fair or a wedding, fancies herself presently to be some dutchess. What a fair creature does a Peacock think himself while he gazes on his fine painted tail, not considering his ugly paw, and frightful cry? They who think themselves no fools, are apt to fancy that others have the same opinion of them that they have of themselves.

FABLE XXXIV.

The FOWEER and SNAKE.

A FOWLER having provided twigs, and birdlime, went on to try his art; having espied a thrush sitting on a high tree hard by, he presently made all things ready to catch her as his prey; but had the misfortune to tread upon a Snake sleeping at the root of a tree, which presently swelled with anger, bit him mortally: So the unhappy Fowler finished his life with this sad complaint: Poor wretch that I am! whilst I seek and thirst after another's life, alas! I fall a prey to a poisonous Viper.

The MORAL

This Fable teaches us, that many, whilst they go about to ensnare their neighbours, meet with the same fate from others, who are no less busy to entrap them.

The REMARK.

Contrivers of mischief often meet with mischief:— They who think to catch others are often prevented in their malicious designs, and lose their lives by accidents, which they cannot foresee. Though daily experience shews this to be true; yet so great is the devil's power over wicked men, that they will still plot and seek the ruin even of the harmless and innocent.— Would mankind but think seriously on the laws of nature, which teach us to do to others what we would have done to ourselves, we should not find so many instances of cruelty and malice among Christians, which even the very Heathens are incapable of.

FABLE XXXV.

The WITCH.

A WITCH professing a great skill in pacifying the angry-gods, when provoked against a wicked people, grew so successful, that she became a great gainer thereby; but being indicted for witchcraft, was found

guilty, condemned, and afterwards carried to the place of execution. Whereupon one seeing her pass by, gave her this sharp taunt. How couldst thou shew others the way to appease God's wrath, and not now help and relieve thyself, when under the same dreadful judgment and calamity.

The MORAL

Shews us the folly and madness of too many, who, after great promises and brags, can really perform nothing.

The REMARK.

To teach others to get out of the briers, whilst we are ourselves so far entangled, that we cannot get out, is both sad and ridiculous. Hence we may learn and remember this useful lesson, viz. How unsafe and dangerous it is to believe, and much more to rely upon the vain promises and idle vapours of mere pretenders, and bare faced cheats.

FABLE XXXVI.

The MULE.

A MULE over-fed, turned wanton and skittish, fell a kicking and braying ;—

moreover bragged that his father was as swift as any Barbary courser, and that he was every way, and in all respects, like him. Soon after, being obliged to run a little way, soon grew weary, remembered that an ass begat him.

The MORAL

This Fable teaches this plain lesson, that though men may rise considerably in the world; however they should not forget what they are, and from whence they came;— And seeing earthly things are uncertain, the higher they stand, the sooner their fall may be.

go The REMARK. *home*

An ancient poet left behind him that wholesome advice, Avoid a high station: For he that stands there should take heed that he fall not. What a world of examples are to be seen every day of this kind! No journals, no annals are without plenty of such dismal instances; To day a Prince, to-morrow a beggar, and much more miserable and wretched. St. Paul gives us a wholesome advice, "Let him that thinketh he stands, take heed lest he fall." How many think themselves secure in their riches; high posts, and acquired honours? but they should remember their days of adversity;—

for what Solomon says of all earthly enjoyments, is confirmed by daily experience, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

FABLE XXXVII.

A SON and his MOTHER.

A BOY stealing a book at school, brought it home to his Mother; She countenancing her child in that naughty course, encouraged him in process of time, to steal things of greater value. At last being caught in the fact, he was found guilty, and condemned. As he was going to the place of execution, his Mother followed him, sadly bewailing his case. Upon which the Malefactor desired that his Mother might speak to him. She came according to his request; and whilst she listened to hear what he would say, he bit off one of her ears. And being chid by the company, for what he did, he excused himself by telling them, that his Mother, and no body else, was the cause of his destruction; for had she chastised me (said he) for my foul offence, I had no longer followed the trade of stealing, but might have lived honestly, and by that means have escaped this shameful death.

The MORAL

Plainly declares to us, that wickedness, of what kind soever, if not speedily curbed, will quickly bring people to an untimely end.

The REMARK

That parent that has perused Solomon's admirable proverbs, will there perceive how much wicked children stand in need of correction: Which must be applied as soon as it is needful. No distemper of body and mind can effectually be removed, without a proper and suitable remedy. A vice let alone becomes stronger, and takes daily a deeper root, until, at length, it turns natural and becomes remediless. What a remarkable example doth the scripture give of this in Eli, and his sons? How fatal was his fondness, and too good humour, not only to his children, but to all Israel?— So that parents ought to consider, that in the bad education they give to their children, they not only do them harm, but their country.

FABLE XXXVIII.

The BRAGGER.

A GREAT traveller returning home to his native country, bragged of fundry notable exploits which he had performed in

foreign parts—Particularly he told how he had jumped such a jump in the island of Rhodes, that none living could do the like; and that a great many of the Rhodians (if they were present) could bear witness that what he said was true. One of the standers-by answering, said, sir, if what you say is true, there is no need of vouchers, only fancy this place is Rhodes, and let us see such a jump here.

The MORAL.

This fable shews us, that if the proof of a thing be not ready and at hand, whatever else can be produced in its behalf is of no force, and altogether impertinent.

The REMARK.

Boasting is but very seldom excusable. Yet what abundance of foolish fops doth this age produce, who, by their boasting and bragging, teaze every company they sit in. Wise men are, for their own part, sparing of their own actions; for they who dwell most on that subject, are commonly looked on to be guilty of partiality and sometimes of untruth.

FABLE XXXIX.

The DOGS.

A CERTAIN person kept two dogs, the one for the house, the other for game. When the game-dog caught any thing,

the house-dog had a share, at which the game-dog grudged, and upbraiding the other, told him, he lived by his labour, but you are at no pains to get your livelihood. The house-dog, vexed with this sharp taunt, excused himself, saying, you should blame my master, not me, whom he never taught to do any thing.

The MORAL

Informs us, that such as understand little, are not so much to be found fault with as their parents, who took no care of their education.

The REMARK.

Better unborn than untaught. Good education is the most valuable thing a parent can bestow upon his child. The great advantage that attends an early and good education, is what every one is so sensible of, that there is no need to speak any more about it. How many born of mean parents have raised themselves and friends by their virtuous education, to great honour and much wealth? A little cost and charge this way has often made a vast return:

FABLE XL.

The CAMEL.

AT the camel's first appearance in the world, most creatures were afraid to come near it, by reason of its unnatural bulk, and odd shape. But in process of time, they perceiving his gentleness, ventured to come near him. Soon after, finding that he was a harmless creature, they bridled him, and caused the very children to lead him up and down, and made him their game.

The MORAL

Custom and use makes things easy which at first view appeared hard, and that contemptible which at first was dreadful.

The REMARK

Use and custom are (I may say) a second nature.— They make things easy and delightful, which at first view seemed strange, hard, and even frightful. Good nature is often abused: Men, as well as children, are apt to make their game, not only of inferiors, but also of superiors. Good nature has made subjects turn too familiar even with their sovereigns.

FABLE XLI.

A HUNTED BEAVER.

THE Beaver (as people say) can stay longer in the water than any four-footed beast. His stones are reckoned to be good in physic; When he finds himself pursued by the Hunter, he bites them off, and leaves them, & by this means saves his life.

The MORAL

This Fable shews, that all men ought to part with their most valuable things to save their lives, when in danger.

The REMARK.

Nature hath endued all creatures with self-preservation. Nor should men take care of themselves only.—but also of their country. For when government is in danger, every good subject, without grudging and murmuring, ought to part with goods and estates to prevent its ruin.

FABLE XLII.

The DAW HUNG by the FOOT.

A COUNTRY-fellow caught a daw, and tied a string to his leg, and so gave him

to a child to play withal; but the daw turned soon weary of his play-fellow, and gave him the slip as soon as he found his opportunity, and went off to the woods with the string, which shackled him so that he starved — But as he was dying, he sore repented his folly, in going back to starve in the woods, rather than to lead an easy life among men.

The MORAL.

Mens' humour and fancy are often the cause of their uneasiness; but where content is, there is happiness.

The REMARK.

How many are impatient let their condition be ever so easy, and will still be changing, though commonly they change for the worse, as the Daw did, who brought himself to a starving condition, seeking after liberty, whereas he might have lived easily and plentifully under a small confinement? How many are to be seen daily, who, after a loose and idle life, which bring them to misery, and often to ruin and disgrace, see their folly when it is too late? Liberty, 'tis true, is a very desirable thing, but some people mistake it much, who suppose that they want liberty if they are confined to an honest trade or employment, whereby they may do their duty in that state; whereas, to be wholly given to a lazy and sluggish temper, which they falsely call Liberty, is the worst of slaveries.

FABLE XLIII.

The CROW and PIGEON.

A PIGEON that was brought up in a dove-house, meeting with a crow, told him in a vain and bragging way, how fruitful she was, and what a number of young ones she had. Never value yourself too much upon that (says the crow) for the more children, the more sorrow.

The MORAL

Many children, when they prove good, are a great blessing; but if bad they are as great a curse.

The REMARK.

Parents are often puffed up, and too vain, if they have a number of children; but they are seldom taken up with the care of their education. Wherefore it comes to pass, that they often prove crosses rather than comforts. How many instances of this have we heard of in all ages, and see but too many in this we live in?

FABLE XLIV.

The FOX and CRAB.

AN hungry fox espied a crab lying on the sand by the sea-side, ran, and snatched

it up. The crab finding that he was to be eaten, said thus, no better could come of it, I had nothing to do here, for my business was at sea, not upon the land.

The MORAL.

Nobody pities a man for any misfortune that befalls him, for meddling with things out of his way.

The REMARK.

Some men are so very curious in prying into the affairs and concerns of others, that they often get a great deal of ill will. Others there are, who can never be at rest, but love to be shifting and changing, and when well, cannot hold themselves well. A third sort there are, who by meddling with things above their reach, often bring themselves and friends to utter ruin, for which they may thank themselves.

FABLE XLV.

The REED and OLIVE.

THERE was a dispute between the reed and the olive, which was the lustiest, strongest, and firmest. The olive upbraided the reed as frail, and yielding to every

wind. The reed was for some time without returning an answer, but not long—For a violent wind arising, the reed was shaken and tossed by its fury, which the olive endeavouring to resist, was broken.

The MORAL.

This fable shews, that those who on occasion give way to such as are stronger, obtain their ends sooner than those who obstinately resist.

The REMARK.

It is folly, we commonly say, to strive against the tide. We often see the proud and lofty brought down and humbled; whereas they that are mean and lowly in their own conceit, frequently come either to honour or renown, or at least they escape these checks and turns of adversity, that the high and mighty ones are subject to. Thunder oftener breaks on high mountains than on low vallies; and tall oaks and ceders are split to pieces, when the low shrubs go free. How often do we see those that use all arts and contrivances, to come to the highest of honours and preferments, (from whence, as from a high tower, they look down with contempt and neglect on those they thought their inferiors), struck down on a sudden from the height of their grandeur and become as mean and contemptible in the sight of those they despised, as the poorest country fellow, who con-

tent with his homely condition, never aims at any other advantage than to secure himself and family from poverty and hunger?

FABLE XLVI.

A wicked Wretch undertakes to beguile APOLLO.

A WICKED Wretch went to Delphos, with a design to trick Apollo, thus;— He held a living Sparrow in his hand under his cloak, and approaching the altar put this question to the God, O Apollo! may it please thee, tell me, whether this which I hold in my hand be living or dead? Intending to shew the Sparrow alive, if Apollo should say it was dead; or to squeeze it to death in his hand, under his cloak, should Apollo say it was alive. But Apollo knowing the cunning of the man, answered, You need not ask my advice on that head; for it being in your power, you may shew it dead or alive, as you think fit.

The MORAL.

This Fable shews, that 'tis vain for us to think that we can hide any thing from God, who sees and knows all things.

The REMARK.

Men always deceive themselves when they think to deceive God, They must have very weak thoughts of God who think to juggle with him as with their fellow creatures, who are liable to ignorance and mistakes, and therefore can be easily imposed upon.

FABLE XLVII.

The UNSKILFUL HARPER.

A CERTAIN Harper playing, as he usually did upon his harp in a large hall, which made a mighty sound and echo fancied himself to be no mean artist. Puffed up with this vain conceit, he must needs be one of the music in the play house; where having appeared, he began to play; but so harsh and unpleasant was his music, that he was hissed out of the house.

The MORAL

This Fable shews, that many, who think themselves to be no small persons, are, upon trial, found to be very weak and ignorant.

The REMARK.

The world abounds with more pretenders to learning, than truly learned. How many do we see daily, who having for some time ranged about the streets with a Mountebank, and learned a little of his quacking, set up for able Physicians, and give out (with a great stock of impudence) that they can cure all diseases, when they really know nothing of the matter? I have known a fellow, who having served his apprenticeship to a Gipsy, immediately set up for a great Fortune teller and Astrologer, when he knew no more of it than Serjeant Kite in the play. And so it is in all other sciences and trades. There can be no greater sign of folly, than for any one to be wise in his own conceit; and they that are thus fond of their silly performance, seldom come better off than this unskilful Harper, who thought that he could as sufficiently please the learned, by his music, as he pleased himself.

FABLE XLVIII.

THIEVES breaking into a HOUSE.

AS a gang of Thieves were busy breaking into a house, a Mastiff that lay within, fell a barking. One of the Thieves spoke to him fair, and offered him a piece of bread to stop his mouth; to whom the dog answered, I smell your wicked design. Do you take me to be such a fool as to be bribed,

and betray my master? You offer me a piece of bread, but I scorn your offer, for should I take it, you would rife the house, and get off while I am eating.

The MORAL

This Fable shews that neither fair promises, nor presents, should tempt any one to betray his trust.

The REMARK.

There are a great many servants not half so true to their masters as this Dog was to his; for a loaf of bread was as great a temptation to him, as a bag of money to a man. Yet very few are proof against such an offer. So that this dog is a great reproach to all false trustees; for the greater the trust is, the greater the treachery.

FABLE XLIX.

The DOG and the WOLF.

A DOG and a Wolf met accidentally together upon the highway. The wolf told the Dog, that he was glad to see him, and wanted to know how it came to pass that he looked so fat and jolly? What! says the

dog, I keep my master's house from thieves, and I have very good meat, drink and lodging for my pains. I wish, says the wolf. I were as well provided for. Truly, says the Dog, if you will go along with me, I'll speak to my master in your favour, and I doubt not but you will fare as well, if you will be as good a servant as I am. The Wolf was very well pleased, promising fairly; and away they trot together, and were very pleasant company on the way. At length, as they came nigh the house, the Wolf spied a bare place about the Dog's neck, where the hair was worn off, brother, says he, How comes this I pray thee? Oh! that's nothing, says the Dog, but the fretting of my collar a little.— Nay, says the Wolf, if there be a collar in the case, I know better things than to sell my liberty for a crust.

The MORAL.

This Fable shews, how valuable a thing liberty is, and that all other things without it can give no comfort.

The REMARK

All creatures have a desire after liberty, which they will not exchange for any thing else. The Wolf you

see here in this fable was well enough pleased with the good plight the Dog was in; he thought it a good thing to have meat, drink, and lodging, at his command; but had no fancy at all for his collar: And truly he that sells freedom for the cramming of his gut, makes at best but a bad bargain; for though such a one looketh well in the eyes of the silly and ignorant people, who have no further view than fine cloaths, plenty of provisions, and money; yet he will appear but mean and servile to such as consider him with a more considering eye, as the Wolf did the Dog's neck.

FABLE L.

A MAN bit by a DOG.

ONE that was bitten by a Dog, was advised (as the best remedy in the world) to dip a piece of bread in the blood of the wound, and give the Dog to eat. Pray hold there, says the man; I have no mind to draw all the Dogs in the town upon me;—for that will certainly be the end on't, when they shall find themselves rewarded instead of punished.

The MORAL

Good nature is a great misfortune, when it is not managed with prudence.

The REMARK.

Wicked and ill-natured men can never be obliged by kindnesses, which oftentimes make them more insolent; and it is a great temptation to go on in their course, when they fare the better for evil doing. Christian charity, 'tis true, bids us return good for evil; but it does not oblige us to reward where we should punish. This way of proceeding is dangerous in public, as well as in private affairs; for bad men, when they find themselves treated with too much tenderness, are thereby encouraged to be worse and worse. Quarrelsome men, as well as quarrelsome curs, are worse for fair usage.— We have many examples of this nature at home and abroad. How many kingdoms, as well as private families, have not only been in great danger, but brought to utter ruin, by bold, insolent, and designing villains, when their superiors were but too good natured, and thought to reclaim them by gentle and kindly means, which is the wrong way of managing such obstinate and perverse tempers.

FABLE LI.

A SOW and a DOG.

A SOW and Dog fell a scolding, and the Sow, in a great wrath, swore by Venus, that she would tear him to pieces if he did not hold his peace: Ah! says the Dog, you do well to swear by Venus indeed, who

cannot abide any creature about her that eats Swine's flesh. You fool, says the Sow, do not you know this is a great token of her love to me, not to endure any thing that hurts me? But as for Dog's flesh, it is good for nothing, either dead or alive.

The MORAL.

This Fable shews us, how prudent it is, when a quarrel or dispute ariseth, to break it off with a jest.

The REMARK.

'Tis a common thing for men to boast and value themselves upon their interest and familiarity with great men, whom, it may be, they never spoke to.—Others, upon slender acquaintance, intrude so much into the company of their betters, that they become both uneasy and impertinent. Even when they think themselves favourites, cannot but expose them to the scorn of such as know how matters stand with them; as the Sow here in the Fable appeals to Venus, as her patroness, before the Dog, when she might easily have foreseen, that the Dog could not miss of reproaching her as a liar. However, when people have overshot themselves, the best way is to turn off the scandal with a jest.

FABLE LII.

A STAG and LION.

A STAG that was closely pursued by the huntsmen, fled for safety into a den where a Lion chanced to be, and before he was aware, the Lion immediately got hold of him; and as he was expiring under his paws, Miserable creature that I am, says he, endeavouring to escape the hands of men, I have unluckily run into the paws of the fiercest of beasts.

The MORAL.

This Fable shews, that many, while they think to get rid of small danger, run themselves headlong into greater mischief.

The REMARK.

Men in this world are threatened with danger on all hands, some of which they cannot easily avoid.— But when men are brought to this pass, that they know not which way to turn, they should follow the advice of the proverb, Of two evils, the lesser is to be chosen. How unaccountable is the conduct of some, who, endeavouring to avoid pressing difficulties, fly for refuge to thieves and murderers; and so, by

engaging in their wicked ways, bring themselves unto a shameful end. The proverb holds good here, viz.— That men should always look before they leap; for they that act without consideration, must needs repent them of their rash engagements, whereby they often ruin not only themselves, but also their whole family, as well in their estates, as their reputation.

FABLE LIII.

The PIDGEON and WATERPOT.

A PIDGEON, that was extremely thirsty, found a Pitcher with a little water in it, but it lay so low, that he could not come at it: He tried first to break the Pot, but it was too strong for him; he tried then to overturn it, but it was too heavy for him, at last he bethought himself of a device that did his business, which was this: He went and brought little pebbles, and dropt them in the water, and so raised it till he had it within his reach.

The MORAL

What we cannot compass by force, we may by art and invention.

The REMARK.

Necessity is very oft the mother of invention ; and we find that some when they are put to their wit's end, have presently fallen upon a shift, which otherwise would never entered into their heads. We commonly say, that wiles help weak folks ; as we see in this fable, that the Pidgeon came nearer to his purpose by his cunning device, than by his force and strength, which before he had spent in vain.

FABLE LIV.

THIEVES and a COCK.

A BAND of thieves broke into a house once, and found nothing to carry away but one poor Cock : The Cock said as much for himself as a Cock could say ; — but he chiefly spoke of the services which he did by calling people up to their work, when it was time to rise. Sirrah, says one of the thieves, you had better spoke nothing of that, for your waking the family spoils all our trade, and your bawling very oft makes us run the hazard of hanging.

The MORAL

This Fable shews, that many a man, by his foolish talk, is the occasion of his own ruin.

The REMARK.

The government of the tongue is a notable thing; and it is a great sign of a prudent and sober man, not to let any thing drop from his mouth which may be made use of against himself; for it has often happened, that one foolish word has spoiled a good cause.— Had the silly cock been so wise as to keep his own counsel, the thieves would hardly have thought it worth their while to carry him off. Seldom comes any good of too much prating. Though good men are conscious to themselves, that they discharge their duty with honesty and care towards their neighbours; yet they ought well to know in what company they are, before they presume to let their virtues be known; because virtue is always despised by the wicked, and they that delight in darkness, and love not that their actions should come to light, hate those whose deeds are contrary to their own.

FABLE LV.

The SHEPHERD and FOX.

AS a Shepherd was one day playing on his pipe, up comes the Fox, charmed with his music, and told him what great de-

fire he had to become one of his family, that he might have the pleasure always of hearing his sweet pipe. Verily friend Reynard, says the shepherd, you shall be very welcome into my family, providing that you leave your teeth and nails behind you.

The MORAL.

There is no trusting of fair words from a known and professed enemy, without the best security that can be had.

The REMARK.

One can never be too wary, who to trust. It is the interest of all men to know well those whom they enter into friendship with; for there are some men, let them speak ever so fair, that are knaves at the bottom; and there are some sharpers in the world, that men must stand upon their guard for fear of being tricked.

FABLE LVI.

The COCKLES ROASTED.

AS a country boy was roasting Cockles, he heard them hiss with the great heat of the fire: What silly wretches are ye, says he,

thus to sing, while your house is burning about your ears?

The MORAL.

This Fable shews, that every thing done out of season, looks ridiculous.

The REMARK.

Many a good advice has been lost for not timing it right; and many have been thought tedious and impertinent, who had they taken a fit opportunity, would have been looked upon as wise and prudent counsellors. Solomon says very wisely, that there is a time to laugh, and a time to mourn; so that people should suit their behaviour with the present occasion.

FABLE LVII.

The SICK KITE.

WHEN the Kite lay sick and like to die, he sends to his mother and desires her to pray to the gods for his recovery. Alas, my child, says the mother, how can you expect that they should send you any relief, seeing you have robb'd their altars so often?

The MORAL

We ought to have a great reverence for God, and every thing that belongs to his worship, if we expect that he should hear us when we call upon him.

The REMARK,

This Fable shews us, that nothing but a good and truly Christian life can make death easy to us. Can we expect that God should hear us on our death bed, — when in all our life we are at no pains to please him, or hearken to his precepts? This shews us also the folly and great madness of such as trust to a death bed repentance; when they have lived a wicked life, and can serve the devil no longer. Can it be supposed, that such a short time will be enough for the great work of reconciling ourselves to God? The best way to secure God's favour in the time of adversity, is to be mindful of him in our prosperity. The preacher's advice, who desires us to remember our creator in the days of our youth, is now of little weight with those that from their infancy think of nothing but roguery and rapine; who to satisfy their boundless lust, spare nothing either sacred or profane. Little do such people think, that they must one day answer for all their violences that at present they glory in.

FABLE LVIII.

The SHEPHERD and his FLOCK.

AS a certain Countryman was feeding his sheep in a fine day, by the sea side; and seeing the sea so calm and smooth, he thought to set up for a merchant, and venture something. Away he goes in all haste, sells some of his sheep, buys a bargain of figs, and to sea he goes. It happened that there arose such a tempest, that the seamen were fain to cast their loading over board, to save their own lives. So our new merchant came home very soon, and betook himself to his old trade again. It happened, as he was feeding his sheep upon the same coast, that there was such a fine day, and calm sea, as had tempted him before. Yes, said he to the sea, you think to flatter me once more, but I am not such a fool as to be so gulled out of the rest of my sheep.

The MORAL.

Experience teaches fools, as we say in the proverb, to be wise; and if that do it not, nothing will.

The REMARK.

How happy may many persons be in all estates, if they can but suit their mind to their condition! A

Shepherd may be as easy in a cottage as a Prince in a palace. But every man living has his weak side ;— and we seldom see people so easy, but that they are discontented about something, and fancy they may be better in another station, even following some trade or business that they don't perhaps understand ; and so when they meet with disappointments, it shews them how well they were at first, if they would have kept so.— The reason of this restless temper is, because people do not look upon the station they are in, as that wherein God is well pleased to place them ; which makes them hanker and greedily pursue after something else, without considering whether they can serve God in that condition, better than in that state where providence has been pleased to call them.

FABLE LIX.

The WOLF and CRANE.

THERE was a Wolf that had got a bone in his throat, and being like to be choaked, he intreated all the beasts to help him ; but when none came to his assistance, he promised a considerable reward to the Crane, if she would put her long bill down his throat, and draw out the bone.— He prevails with the Crane, and when she had done him that good office, claimed his promise. Why now impudence, says the

Wolf, when you put your head into my mouth, and then brought it out again fair and found, I think that's a reward enough ; Could not I have bit off your head ? So I think you owe me your life, and that's a very good recompence.

The MORAL.

'Tis lost kindness that's done to an ungrateful person.

The REMARK.

Tho' it be commonly said, that one good turn requires another ; it is different when people have to do with men who are no better than beasts ; they are no way grateful or thankful to their preservers. Nay how many are worse than the Wolf, who had the Crane's head at his mercy, yet did not chop it off ? which was a kindness so far, that he would not take away the life of that creature who preserved his own. But we have many instances of those who have been their ruin who raised them from the dunghill. Nay, too many do we see, who let their parents starve, who spend all their substance to put them in a way of living. But to be sure, vengeance will overtake such wretches, whose cruelty goes beyond that of the most cruel beasts.

FABLE LX.

The HUSBANDMAN and SERPENT.

A COUNTRYMAN happened, in a hard winter, to espy a serpent under a hedge, that was half frozen to death: The good natured man took it up, and kept it in his bosom till warmth brought it to life again; and so soon as it was in a condition to do any thing, it bit the very man that saved the life on't. Ah! thou ungrateful wretch, says he, can thy ill-nature be satisfied with nothing less than the ruin of thy preserver?

The MORAL.

'Tis natural for some men, like the Serpent, to do more mischief, the more kindness one does them.

The REMARK.

'Tis an excellent saying of the prophet, "Can any man take fire "in his bosom, and not be burned?"— So he that takes an ungrateful man into his bosom, must expect to be betrayed. But it is no new thing with good natured men to meet with ungrateful returns: Therefore friendship and kindness ought to be well weighed and considered before they are bestowed.

For 'tis very true, as the proverb says, save a thief from the gallows, and he will cut your throat. This Fable also strikes at such as indulge their base vices; those are so many Snakes, who will certainly destroy both soul and body at last; if they be kept in the service of sin, they will meet with no better reward than the Countryman did from the Serpent.

FABLE LXI.

A LION grown OLD.

A LION, who in his younger days had got a great many enemies by his fierceness and cruelty, came at last to be reduced, in his old age, to a great deal of misery and contempt; so that most of the beasts out of revenge, came and fell upon him. Amongst the rest the Ass comes and kicks him with her foot; then the Lion groaning, said, I am a miserable creature indeed! And, I confess I deserve no kind usage from some to whom I have been no friend; but that others should serve me so, to whom I have been very kind, I think it is very hard: But there is nothing goes so near my heart as to be kicked by the heel of an Ass.

The MORAL.

No body ought to be haughty in his prosperity; for if fortune does but frown upon him, he soon becomes contemptible.

The REMARK.

It is the interest of all persons to secure for themselves something against the time of need. Our Saviour commends the conduct of the unjust steward, who made friends to himself, who should receive him into their houses, as soon as he was turned off; and we are desired, in the conclusion of that parable, to make ourselves friends with the mōmmon of unrighteousness, that we may be received into everlasting habitations. How miserable is the condition of such, who, to gratify some base vice, such as pride, malice, or for the base lucre of money, lose soul and body, and reputation! Such leave this world unlamented, and unpitied, and enter on the next with a conscience stung with a guilty remembrance of their wickedness, and full of horror at the prospect of divine vengeance. Solomon gives a fair warning to such, in the book of Ecclesiastes, where he says, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;—but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee unto judgment."

FABLE LXII.

The SPANIEL and ASS.

A GENTLEMAN had got a pretty Spaniel that was still leaping upon him, licking his hands, cheeks, and face, and playing a thousand tricks, wherewith the master was pleased. There was an Ass about the house who seeing this, began to think of her own sad fortune, how she must trudge about with her burden, and never be at rest, yet always beat; whilst this idle puppy was his master's favourite, fed with the best, and careffed by every body. The Ass, finding him so well treated, must needs go the same way to work to curry favour with her master: So the first time she saw him, she ran towards him, leaped upon him, & daubing him with her nasty hoofs, almost beat him down to the ground; whereupon he called to his servants, and so the poor Ass was soundly cudgelled for her fondness.

The MORAL.

People in all stations ought to know their due distance; because too much familiarity breeds contempt.

The REMARK

Men ought to observe order and decency in all things; for that may become one man, which is no ways proper for another; and some, by their too much officiousness, do themselves no kindness. They are looked upon as fondlings, who seek after something to themselves, and so by this means they lose both their credit and design. This Fable also strikes at such as are discontented with the station wherein God is pleased to place them: They look upon others with an envious eye, whom they suppose to be in better circumstances: So while they attempt to raise themselves by indirect means, they go out of that road which Providence has allotted them; and it is no wonder if they meet with a scourge to humble them.

FABLE LXIII.

The LION and MOUSE.

A LION that had been faint and weary travelling in a hot day, lay down under a shade, and fell asleep, but was soon awakened by a parcel of mice who run over his back, one of which he caught. This poor prisoner pleads, that he was not worthy of his wrath: 'Tis true, says the Lion, it is not worth my while to meddle with you, and so let him go. Some time afterwards it

happened, that this same Lion was caught in a net, and fell a roaring; the Mouse presently knows the voice, runs out, and fell to work upon the couplings of the net, gnaws the thread to pieces, and in gratitude delivered her preserver.

The MORAL

There is no body so inconsiderable, but some time or other there may be occasion for him.

The REMARK.

In this Fable we see the generosity of the Lion, and the gratitude of the Mouse; and notwithstanding the power and greatness of the one, who expected no return, (and who would have thought that the life of the Lion should lie at the mercy of the Mouse?) yet the meanness of the other did not hinder, but that he stood in great need of her assistance; which should teach us not to despise the meanest of creatures, because they may be of use to us; and so we ought never willfully to disoblige any body; for if we did by others, as we would have others to do by us, this is the best way to do ourselves and others a kindness.

FABLE LXIV.

The FROGS desiring a KING.

WHEN the Frogs, had grown wanton with too much liberty, they petitioned Jupiter for a King; Jupiter who knew the vanity of their hearts, refused them;—but they were so importunate, that at last he threw down a log for their king, which, at the first dash, made a mighty stir in the lake, and frightened them so, that all sculked in the mud; this fear kept them in awe for some time, till one of the Frogs bolder than the rest, put up his head, and looked about him to see how matters went with their new king; and finding that he stirred not, drew near by little and little, till at last he perceived what it was; upon this he calls his fellow subjects, and discovers the whole matter to them, so that nothing would serve them but they must ride a-top of him; insomuch, that the fear they were in before is now turned into insolence and contempt. Jupiter is intreated a second time, for this king was too tame, and they desire one that had some courage; so Jupiter sent them a

serpent, which moving stoutly up and down the fen, left them neither liberty nor property, but devoured all the Frogs that came in his way : The Frogs send once more to Jupiter, complaining of the king's cruelty, and desiring they may have another ; but Jupiter answers them, that they who petition against a gracious king, must now endure one who has no mercy.

The MORAL.

They that will not be contented when they are well, must be patient when things are amiss with them.

The REMARK.

It usually befalls the common people as it did with the Frogs, who if they have a king a little more mild, they find fault with him that he is slothful and idle, and wish that they may once have a man of valour.— On the contrary, if at any time they have a king that hath mettle in him, they condemn this king's cruelty, and commend the clemency of the former. 'Tis the temper of a great many to be weary of things present; and yet the oftener they change, and the further they go, they fare still the worse. Wisely doth Solomon enjoin us, to fear God and honour the King, and not to meddle with such as are given to change.

FABLE LXV.

The KITE, HAWK and PIGEONS.

THE Pigeons once made war with a Kite, and that they might be able to beat him, made choice of the Hawk for their King. But as soon as he got the government, he acted more like a tyrant than a King, making a greater havock among them than the Kite had done. The Pigeons at last repented of their choice, saying, we had done better to have bore with the Kite's severity, than thus to suffer the tyranny of the Hawk.

The MORAL

'Tis good to follow St. Paul's advice, who learns us in every condition therewith to be contented.

The REMARK.

'Tis seldom that people of a fickle temper escape inconveniences, which they are constantly exposed to by the designs of crafty and treacherous men, who under pretence of friendship, prove much more hurtful than an avowed enemy. David complains, how he that was

a familiar friend had lifted up his heel against him, and this was a sorer wound to him, than if an enemy had done it; for says he, I could have borne with it the better. The pleasures and vanities of this life are such treacherous friends, who promise great things at a distance; and though they seem to be sweet in the mouth, yet they prove bitter in the belly.

FABLE LXVI.

The WOLF and SOW.

A WOLF came to a Sow just ready to lie down, and promised to take care of her litter: The Sow told him, she did not want his help, and the greater distance he kept, he would oblige the more; for the Wolf's office, says she, consists not in being nigh, but in being far away.

The MORAL.

Many offer their service, not out of love to the person they would seem to serve, but out of self-love.

The REMARK.

Many dangerous snares are laid for people under the name of kindness, and good office; but all men are not

to be believed or trusted, for some enemies appear in the shape of friends; but men should stand upon their guard, as the Sow here did, who had more wit than to be enticed by the Wolf. Many love their neighbours, not for the love of God, but for the love of themselves; and this love lasts no longer than they can expect some benefit by them. There is nothing more hurtful to mankind than this poisonous principle of self-love;— it destroys all government: For while men do all for private ends, what must become of the public? and it overturns all religion, which strictly enjoins, “Whosoever ye would that men should do unto you, even do so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets.” So that nothing more effectually ruins men, both in this life and that which is to come, than self-love, which, at last, proves rather to be self-hatred. It is the spring of sin and wickedness; and we may very well apply unto it, what the apostle says of the love of money,— “that it is the “root of all evil.”

FABLE LXII.

The MOUNTAIN in LABOUR.

THERE was once a report that a Mountain was in travail; all the people expected some dreadful monster to be brought forth, at last there comes only a Mouse;— so that the people were like to die with laughing.

The MORAL.

There's often much to do about nothing.

The REMARK.

This Fable strikes at great braggers, who make a mighty noise and boasting about their performances; and yet when they are brought upon trial, behold they can do nothing at all; and it is no wonder if such vapouring fellows become the scoff and game of all that know them: And though they may sometimes impose upon the mob, yet they make themselves ridiculous to all men of sense. And yet how extravagant and vain are the attempts of some men? What castles do they build in the air? and what fine things do they promise to themselves? though all end like the Fable, a Mountain brings forth a Mouse. Such vain and empty fellows may justly be compared to a cracker, which mounts into the air with a mighty noise and force, to the great wonder of the beholders, but of a sudden it bursts, and vanishes into smoke, and turns the contempt of all present. 'Tis commonly observed, that such as are great braggers, are for the most part, slow performers, and it is a great sign of folly and weakness, to keep people, in expectation of great matters, when we are conscious to ourselves that we are no ways in a capacity to put them in practice.

FABLE LXVIII.

The HARES and FROGS.

THE Hares were strangely frightened at a whirlwind that had happened in a wood, which made a terrible noise among the trees: But after their fear was over, some of them began to be mightily dissatisfied with their miserable condition. Why, says one of them, here we live at the mercy of Men, Dogs, Eagles, and I know not how many beasts that prey upon us at pleasure; we are perpetually in danger; so that it is better to die once for all, than live at this rate in a continual fear, which is worse than death itself. All were well pleased with the fancy, and a resolution was taken one and all to drown themselves; so away they went to the next lake. A great many Frogs, who were lying upon the banks, hearing the hurry of the Hares, leaped for fear into the lake: Nay then, my master, says one of the Hares, pray let us have a little patience, our condition is not, I find, altogether so bad as we fancied; for there are those you see that are as much afraid of us, as we are of others.

The MORAL

The intent of this Fable is to shew, that if people did well consider their own case, there is not such cause of repining as they imagine.

The REMARK.

It is the unhappiness of the greatest part of mankind, that they always look to persons above themselves, which makes them so uneasy, while they see some others in a more flourishing condition than themselves: Whereas, did they but consider how it is with many of their neighbours, they would find it their duty to be thankful that it is no worse with them. I wish I had this, and I wish I had that, is the common saying of people; but did we compare ourselves with others, and see how many are in a miserable and wretched condition; some tormented with the most torturing pains and diseases, and others blind and lame, starving for want of bread; they would be very thankful to God for what they are, and what they have, seeing others envy their happiness as much as they do that of others.

FABLE LXIX.

The DAW and borrowed FEATHERS.

A DAW that would fain appear finer than her companions, decked herself with Peacock's Feathers, and all the other gay Feathers that she could find; so she would not stay any longer with birds of her kind, but must needs go among the Peacocks, and other fine birds: But as soon as they discovered the cheat, they fell a pulling of her: And when every bird had taken his own Feathers away, the silly Daw was stript to the skin, and nothing left to cover her nakedness.

The MORAL.

When pride and beggary meet, people are sure to make themselves ridiculous.

The REMARK.

Pride and ambition has been the ruin of many.— Lucifer was turned out of heaven for his arrogance:— And we have all the sad experience, how fatal this was to our first parents, who were not satisfied with the state wherein God had placed them, but they must at-

tempt such things which were their ruin : And when their eyes were opened, and they found themselves as naked as the Daw stript of her feathers, then they came to understand and repent their folly. And how many of their posterity follow their example? They still believe Satan's amusements, until they are summoned by death. Then it is that their eyes are opened, and find that he that was a liar from the beginning, and will be so to the end, has cheated them.

This Fable shews us, moreover, the great mistake of such as place their happiness upon any thing that may be taken away. What are all the riches and honours of this world but borrowed feathers. When death comes, we must be stripped of them, and left naked, according to the saying of Job, " Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return." This Fable strikes at such as make a mighty show, and have a gay outside at the expence of others; until people begin to discover how matters are with them, and every one takes away his own : and so they are left, as naked as the Daw.

FABLE LXX.

The FROG and OX.

A HUGE Ox was grazing in a meadow, and a Frog seeing him, was desirous to match him in bulk, and so fell a stretching herself. She called out to her little ones to take notice whether she was not as big as

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the Ox. Why, mother, says they, you are nothing to the Ox. She then strained again, but it would not do: But she went still on and on, till at last she burst.

The MORAL.

Pride and envy will at last bring a man to destruction.

The REMARK.

This Fable is a severe lash upon those who fancy themselves to be greater than really they are, and so set up to live above what they can afford: They strive to imitate persons of the highest station and quality, who have twenty times their estates, till at last they bring themselves to poverty. What a great unhappiness is it to such whose affections and thoughts run after nothing but high places? Into how many inconveniences do they bring themselves, till at last they burst? How contrary is the humour (which prevails too much in our days) to that poverty and humbleness of spirit which our Saviour lays down as the foundation of the Christian religion? For he begins the sermon on the mount with these words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And truly without such a disposition as this, there can be no real happiness;—for whatever condition the humble person is in, he is content, and prefers sobriety and retiredness to the luxury of courts and palaces. *M*

FABLE LXXI.

A STAG DRINKING.

AS a Stag was drinking in a clear fountain, he saw his image in the water; — so fell to admire his fine large and branching horns, but quite despised his legs, thinking they were but small pitiful shanks — Just as he was upon this thought, he discovered a pack of dogs coming full cry towards him: Away he scours across the fields, and gets into a wood; but pressing through a thicket, the bushes held him by the horns till the hounds came up to him, and pulled him down; and as he was dying he said, what an unhappy fool was I, to take my friends for my enemies, and enemies for my friends? I trusted to my head that has betrayed me, and I found fault with the legs that would have otherwise carried me off.

The MORAL

Such as do not know themselves right, cannot chuse but pass a wrong judgment upon matters that nearly concern them.

The REMARK

Many are ready to admire that which they ought to forsake and abhor ; while, on the other hand, they despise and trample upon that which is mostly to be valued and admired. The pomps and vanities of this wicked world is, what all Christians ought, and are bound by their baptism to deny ; and yet nothing appears so fine and desirable, in the eyes of the most part of mankind as these. Is there any thing so beautiful and lovely as virtue ? and yet how much is it neglected and despised ! The reason why men are guilty of such woful mistakes, as to take the worse for the better, and the better for the worse, is because they do not know themselves, nor the end for which they came into the world, which makes them glory in that which is rather their shame, and which if not prevented, will prove to be their destruction. But when death comes, they will find the difference, and say, as the Stag in the Fable, What fools they were to take their friends for their enemies, and enemies for their friends ?

FABLE LXXII.

The HUSBANDMAN and the WOOD.

A COUNTRY-fellow that had got the iron work of an ax, went to the next forest to beg only so much wood as would make an handle to it. The matter seemed so small, that it was easily granted : But

when the trees came to find that the whole wood was to be cut down by the help of this handle; there's no remedy, says they but patience, when people are undone by their folly.

The MORAL.

Nothing goes nearer a man in his misfortune, than to be undone by his own fault.

The REMARK.

How many are there who are enemies against themselves; and what a trouble is it for a man to fall by that weapon which he has put in the hand of his foe? Daily experience discovers how many are the cause of their own destruction. And though sometimes a man may lose his life or estate without being the cause of it, yet it is impossible that a man can lose his soul without being altogether the cause and occasion of it: Which will make all such inexcusable in the day of judgment. This Fable strikes also at such who are the ruin of their benefactors: The wooden handle cut down the wood wherein it grew. How many employ that life and strength which God gives them to fight against himself? So that in all ages people may be justly charged with what God upbraids the Jews: "I have nourished and brought up people, but they have rebelled against me."

FABLE LXXIII.

A HORSE and LION.

A LION longed for a piece of good Horse-flesh, but not knowing how to come by it, by reason of his age and want of strength, he made use of this contrivance: He comes to a Horse, and gave out himself to be a Farrier, thinking to amuse the horse with a long story of his art and experience. The Horse finding his knavery, designed to be as cunning as he; therefore pretending to have lately pricked his foot, he intreats the Physician that he would be pleased to look upon it, to pull out the thorn and give him ease. O, says the Lion, do but hold up your leg a little, and I will cure you immediately. But as he was looking to it, the Horse gave him a terrible blow upon the forehead with his heel, which laid him flat, and so got off. When the Lion had recovered a little, well, says he, I am rightly served for my folly, and I see the Horse has repaid knavery with knavery.

The MORAL

It often happens, that people are paid home in their own coin, and the deceiver himself is deceived.

The REMARK.

Though it be commendable in all men to supply their want of strength by industry and invention, yet they ought to keep their skill within the bounds of justice and honesty; and when they go beyond it, they may expect some time or other to be served as the Lion was by the Horse; for what measure we give to others, we shall be served in the same measure again, sooner or later. It would be good for many that they were so sharp sighted as the Horse here was, and could distinguish between a good Physician and a dissembling quack, and so reward them accordingly; then we should not see so many wheedled out of their money, as well as their lives.

FABLE LXXIV.

The BOAR and HORSE.

THERE fell a dispute once betwixt a Boar and a Horse, and when they had fought a pretty while, the Boar got the better of him, and beat the other out of the field. The Horse grieved at this affront, advised with a man what course he should

take to be revenged on the Boar. The man told him, that if he allowed himself to be bridled and saddled, and take one on his back with a lance in his hand, he should be sufficiently revenged on him. The Horse agreed to it; but though he got his enemy killed yet he lost his liberty by it, and made himself a slave all the days of his life.

The MORAL.

He is a madman, who, to avoid a present and less evil, runs blindfold into a greater.

The REMARK.

This Fable discovers to us the folly of such as make themselves slaves to their revenge; for no man should be so angry with another as to hurt himself. How many do in haste, what they repent at leisure; and for the gratifying of a froward humour, make themselves slaves all their days, as the Horse in the Fable? who had better passed by the affront; but his stomach was too great, and did, as many others do, ruin himself, that he might but ruin his enemy. We may easily observe, by this, that there is nothing better for a man's body, as well as the soul, than the Christian doctrine of the forgiving enemies; though the world look upon such as pass by affronts to be nothing else but cowards; and that man that runs himself upon the sword of another, whom he

would kill, is looked upon to be a brave gallant man, though he be such another fool as the Horse in the Fable, who paid dear for his revenge.

FABLE LXXV.

Two YOUNG-MEN and a COOK.

TWO young fellows slipt into a Cook's shop, and while the Cook was busy at his work, one of them stole a piece of flesh, and conveyed it to the other; the Cook missed it immediately, and challenged him with the theft. He that took it, swore he had none of it, and he that had it, swore as considerably that he did not take it. Well my masters, says the Cook, these tricks may be put upon men, but there is an eye above that sees through them.

The MORAL

When we do any thing amiss, and think ourselves secure by hiding it from men, God who is the searcher of hearts, sees it.

The REMARK.

There is no playing fast and loose with God; for double-dealing is what he abhors. And suppose this way may succeed for some time among men, who cannot discover the secret designs that lurk in a man's heart; yet at last such persons never fail of betraying themselves; and then how odious do they appear when their knavery is found out! No trust or credit is given them, though they back their promises with repeated oaths; so that the common proverb holds true, Honesty is the best policy.

FABLE LXXVI.

A FOX and a sick LION.

A LION falling sick, all the beasts came to visit him, except the Fox; whereupon the Lion sent to tell him, that he longed to see him, and that his presence would be very acceptable to him. He moreover desired the messenger to assure the Fox, that for several reasons, he had no occasion to be afraid of him; because the Lion was one that loved the Fox very well, and therefore desired to speak with him, besides that, he lay so sick that he could not stir to do the Fox any harm, though he had never so great a mind to it. The Fox returned a

very obliging answer, desiring the messenger to acquaint the Lion, that he was very desirous of his recovery, and that he would pray to the Gods for it; but at the same time desired to be excused for not coming to see him, as other beasts had done: For, truly says Reynard, the traces of their feet frighten me, all of them going towards his Majesty's palace, but none coming back again.

The MORAL

Words are not to be trusted, though never so fair; we must examine mens actions, as well as their words and promises, and judge of the one by the other, if we would escape their mischievous inventions.

The REMARK.

The proverb holds true, Larks are not to be caught with chaff: The Lion, by his pretended sickness and weakness, thought that the Fox, in point of civility, ought to pay him a visit; but sending such a kind invitation, so full of compliments, was still a greater obligation on the Fox to pay his respects to him; but Reynard was too sharp sighted not to see through his design; though truly it is a hard matter sometimes to distinguish between a friendly invitation and an hypocritical snare, so that a man is often at a loss, not know-

ing but he may disoblige a friend, whilst he thinks only to save himself from the hands of an enemy. However, while the world is full of tricks, 'tis always the best and wisest method to take particular care where any signs of suspicion appear.

F A B L E LXXVII.

A STAG and a VINE.

A STAG that was hard pushed by the huntsmen, ran into a vineyard, and took shelter under the root of a Vine. When the huntsmen were gone, and he thought the danger was over, he fell presently to browsing upon the leaves. The rustling of the boughs made some of the huntsmen apprehend that he might be there: So upon a strict search, he was discovered, and shot; and as he was dying, he said, how justly am I punished for offering to destroy my protector?

The MORAL.

'Tis but just that such who wrong their benefactor, should be punished with divine vengeance.

The REMARK.

There is nothing more abominable in the sight of God and man than ingratitude; and such as repay good with evil, in seeking the ruin of their protectors, seldom escape the judgements of God. This Fable exposes the baseness of this vice, as many other Fables in Æsop, do: but all that God commands, or men preach, or beasts practise, against this sin, will not put a stop to the wicked and ungrateful doings of malicious spirits; and a man that can be ungrateful, is capable of any manner of wickedness.

FABLE LXXVIII.

The GEESE and CRANES.

AS some Geese and Cranes were feeding in a countryman's field of corn, he heard the noise, and came presently out upon them, The Cranes seeing the countryman, they fled for it; but the Geese tarrying behind, because of the heaviness of their bodies, were caught.

The MORAL.

This Fable signifies, that, in taking of a town, the poor easily escape, while the rich,

tarrying behind to save their riches, commonly lose both lives and estates.

The REMARK.

It is strange how riches alter the tempers of men;—how timorous it makes some who have been brave, and how secure it makes others, who trusting to their money, and thinking to escape by its means, make them only the greater prey to their enemies. This Fable is a severe rebuke to such as take no care to provide for time of danger, but go on in their old courses, until they be suddenly destroyed; and though they have many examples to warn them, yet their vices and corrupt affections so hang about them, and clog them, that they never will cast them off, until they are brought to destruction. Had the Geese been so wise as to get off with the Cranes, they might have saved themselves;—but the sweetness of the corn whereupon they were feeding, and the weight of their dull bodies, quite stopt them, until they were caught.

FABLE LXXIX.

A TRUMPETER taken PRISONER.

WHEN an army had been routed, a Trumpeter was taken prisoner:—And as the soldiers were going to kill him, Gentlemen, says he, why should you kill a man that has killed no body? You shall die

the rather for that, says one of the company; when, like a rascal as you are, you don't fight yourself, yet set other people together by the ears.

The MORAL

He that provokes others to mischief, is as much, if not more guilty, than the doers themselves.

The REMARK.

This fable reproves such as take delight in setting people together by the ears, which is quite opposite to the Christian duty of being peaceable and meek.—“Blessed are the peace-makers, (says “our Saviour), for they shall be called the children of God.” For God is a God of Peace and Love, Malice, hatred, and envy, which makes such difference among people, proceed from Satan the Prince of darkness; but meekness, goodness, and brotherly kindness, is what Christ, the Prince of Peace, strictly commands. We may easily judge by peoples practice, whose children they are; for whosoever takes pleasure in divisions, strife, and discord, must be of their father the devil, whose works they do, let their pretences be never so fair.

FABLE LXXX.

The HUSBANDMAN and STORK.

A POOR innocent Stork had the ill hap to be taken in a net that was laid for Geese and Cranes. The Stork's plea for herself was simplicity, good-nature, and the love of mankind; together with the service she did in picking up venomous creatures. This is all true, says the Husbandman; — but they that keep ill company (if they be caught with ill company) must expect to suffer with ill company.

The MORAL.

A man is esteemed according to the company he keeps, for it is a common saying, which will be applied in this case, that birds of a feather flock together.

The REMARK.

There are many inconveniences that attend the keeping of bad company. A lewd and wicked example will be ready to have influence upon the person that frequents vicious company; and if he should escape from the plague, which is very rare, yet his credit and reputation

suffers; so that when the good and bad are taken together, they must suffer together; for it is a common proverb, Shew me the company, and I'll shew you the man. 'Tis the bad fortune of many a good man to fall into base company, and to be undone by it, and yet be no ways guilty of the iniquity of his companions: But was a man never so innocent, it is a shame and dishonour to be taken with rogues; for very few escape from being poisoned with their vices. And it holds very true what the apostle says, "That evil communication corrupts good manners."

FABLE LXXXI.

The WASPS and PARTRIDGES.

A FLIGHT of Wasps, and a covey of Partridges, that were hard put to it for want of water, went to a farmer, and begged a sup of him to quench their thirst. The Partridges offered to dig his vineyard for it; and the Wasps promised to secure him from thieves. Pray hold your peace, says the farmer, I have Oxen and Dogs to do me these offices already, and am resolved to provide for them in the first place.

The MORAL

Charity begins at home: And it is very true which the apostle says, "He that does not provide "for his own family, is worse than an infidel."

The REMARK.

People ought to know well how to bestow their charity. For a man to rob his family of what is necessary, under pretence of charity, is like the sacrifice of the wicked, which is an abomination to the Lord: But people ought not, under the cloak of providing for themselves and families, when they have affluence and plenty, refuse to distribute to the necessities of the poor; for this is what will not excuse them; neither is it possible that such can love God or his neighbour; for, as the apostle says, "He that seeth his brother want, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion against him, how can the love of God be in him?" A man's prudence will always direct him how to behave himself in such cases; only let a man be sincere in what he does, for God loveth a cheerful giver.

FABLE LXXXII.

A DAW and PIGEONS.

A DAW took particular notice of Pigeons in a dove-house, that they were well fed

and provided for; so he went and painted himself of a dove colour, and fed among the Pigeons. So long as he kept silent, this passed very well; but it happened that forgetting himself he fell a chattering; upon which discovery he was turned out of the dove house, and when he came to his old companions, they would not receive him. So, by this means, he lost both parties.

The MORAL.

He that halts between two opinions, loses himself with both parties; for when he is discovered, he is found true to neither.

The REMARK

Some, by grasping at too much, lose all; and by aiming at what they have not, and cannot well obtain, lose what they had before. And men do but make themselves ridiculous, in imitating that which they cannot do. For though the Daw painted herself like a Pigeon, yet it did not make her one: And though a man put himself into another man's shape, yet he is commonly discovered. The hypocrite is never so far from being a good Christian, as when he looks like it; and double-dealers are always discovered by some accident or other; and then both parties beat them away. So that every man ought to be true and honest to what he undertakes.

FABLE LXXXIII.

The FOX and SNAKE.

A FOX and a Snake chancing to meet, the Snake began to entertain the Fox with a long story concerning her beauty, and the pleasant and charming colours of her spotted skin. The Fox, weary with the discourse, interrupted her, and said, that the beauty of the mind was of much greater value and excellency than that of a painted outside.

The MORAL

A good understanding is a blessing far exceeding all outward beauty.

The REMARK.

Many men are ready to prefer the outward blessings, such as beauty, nature, and riches, to wisdom, temperance, and piety, and other inward blessings, for more valuable; for they only represent man, and distinguish him from the beasts. We have few outward advantages beyond the other creatures, but we are inferior to them in many, such as in strength, swiftness, hearing, seeing, and all the other senses: So that were it not for inward advantages, man would be rather a prey to, than a lord over the creatures. How unaccountable is the

most part of mankind, that run so much upon their sensual appetites, and neglect the nobler part of man, the soul! so that they are worse than the beasts that perish.

FABLE LXXXIV.

The CHOUGH and SWALLOW.

THE Chough and Swallow fell into a warm dispute about their beauty; and as the Swallow insisted mightily on hers, and claimed the advantage. Nay, says the Chough, you forget that your beauty decays with the spring, whereas mine lasts all the year round.

The MORAL.

Of two things equally good, that is the best which lasts longest.

The REMARK.

The greatest blessings we can enjoy in this world are health and long life, which are still more valuable the longer we enjoy them; but yet the strongest man must expect to fall sick, sooner or later, and the longest life has an end. So that these, together with riches, honours, and pleasures, are like the Swallow's beauty

which lasts but for a time. But piety and goodness are what affords a man not only satisfaction in this life, but also joys that shall endure for ever in that life which is to come. Therefore they are fools who value themselves upon the short-lived pleasures of this life, as the Swallow did upon her spring beauty and neglect to secure to themselves those lasting pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore.

FABLE LXXXV.

A FATHER and his SONS.

AN honest man, who had the misfortune to be the Father of a contentious brood of Children, endeavoured all he could to make them to be more friendly towards one another; and one day, having called them before him, he brought a bundle of sticks, and desired his children to take it, and try, one after another, with all their force, if they could break it: They tried but could not. Well, says he, unbind it now, and take every one a stick of it a part, and see what ye can do that way: They did as he desired, and with great ease they snapt every one of the sticks to pieces. The Father then told them, Children, your condition is exactly

that of the bundle of sticks; for if you keep together, you are safe; but if you divide you are undone.

The MORAL

Small things increase by peace and unity, whereas great things decay and dwindle away to nothing by discord.

The REMARK.

Division is what has been the ruin of great and powerful kingdoms, as well as of private families. Was it not division that exposed Christians to the fury of the Turks, Infidels, Barbarians? and every one knows how fatal division is to private families, where all things go to ruin, when one strives against another. And it is a strange thing that men cannot do this with all their knowledge and reason, what the brute beasts do; for we find, that even the fiercest of them, such as Tygers, Wolves, and Bears, agree among themselves. Nay, the very Devils, who though they be like so many firebrands, setting mankind together by the ears, yet they seem to agree among themselves. For our Saviour says, "If Satan be divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?" There is not one precept so often enjoined by our Saviour, as unity and brotherly love; for he makes it the distinguishing mark of his servants;—"By this shall all men know (says he) that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

FABLE LXXXVI.

The FOX that lost his TAIL.

A FOX having his tail cut off to get out of a trap, when for shame he thought it death to live, devised to persuade other foxes to cut off theirs, under pretence of common benefit, but really to lessen his own disgrace. The Foxes therefore having convened, he told them, that their tails were not only a disgrace to them, but an useless burden. One of them who heard him, smartly answered. O brother! where is your justice, to advise us all to do a thing which will be to no body's advantage but your own?

The MORAL.

This Fable belongs to them, who under a shew of charity and kindness to others, aim at their own profit and advantage.

The REMARK.

The most part of mankind are so wicked, that they never love to be miserable without company. When they make any false step, or find themselves guilty of

any oversight or mistake, they never think how to come off handsomely, or how to correct their error. No, this is the least of their thoughts: Then their only study is how to deceive others: And to succeed the better in their design, they never fail to use fair words, to tender seemingly wholesome and charitable counsel without being asked, and never give over till they have persuaded others to run into the same snare wherein they themselves were caught. In this they imitate the devil, who finding himself miserable by his own doings, was never at rest, until he persuaded our first parents to ruin themselves. What smooth language did he use, how specious the arguments to entice two innocent creatures to be partakers of his guilt? If the sad truth were well imprinted in our memory, it would prove to us as a beacon to seamen, and shew us how to escape these dangers and hidden rocks of flattery and pretended charity, whereupon so many suffer shipwreck.

FABLE LXXXVII.

The FOX and HUNTSMEN.

A FOX that had been hard run, begged of a country-man, whom he saw hard at work in a wood, to help him to some hiding place: The man directed him to his cottage, and thither he went. He was no sooner got in, but the Huntsmen were presently at his heels, and asked the cottager, if he did see a Fox that way? No, truly, said he, I

saw none, but pointed, at the same time with his finger, to the place where he lay.— The Huntsmen, it seems, did not understand his meaning; but the Fox spied him, however, through a peeping hole he had found to see what news. So the Foxhunters went away; and then out steals the Fox without one word speaking. Why, how now, says the man, have you not the manners to take leave of your host before you go? Yes, yes, says the Fox, if you had been as honest of your fingers as you were of your tongue, I should not have gone without bidding you farewell.

The MORAL

Man may discover things by signs as well as words, and his conscience is as answerable for his fingers as his tongue.

The REMARK.

There is no trusting those that say one thing and do another, especially if they follow fair words with foul deeds. It is a base and treacherous thing for one man to betray one, who commits himself to his mercy, especially when he lies under all the ties of honour, trust, and faith, to preserve him. There be many instances

of the Woodman's double dealings in these bad times; for interest is the only rule whereby men now walk, without regard to God or their neighbour; and where it intervenes, it discharges all our obligations. And let people pretend to what religion they will, gold and money is now the God they adore; which makes the father betray the son, the mother the daughter, and the servant the master: So that what our Saviour foretold may be applied to these times, That a man's enemies should be those of his own house; as that also of St. Paul's,—
 “In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, unthankful, truce breakers, without natural affection, traitors, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”

FABLE LXXXVIII.

The FOX and BRAMBLE.

A FOX that was closely pursued took to a hedge; the bushes gave way, and in catching hold of a Bramble to break his fall, the prickles ran into his feet: Upon this he laid himself down and fell a licking of his paws, with bitter complaints against the Bramble. Good words, Reynard, says the Bramble; one would have thought you would have known better things, than to expect a kindness from a common enemy,

and to lay hold on that for relief, which catches at every thing else for mischief.

The MORAL.

There are some malicious natures, that place all their delight in doing ill turns;— and that man is hard put to it, who is first brought into a distress, and then to come to such people for relief.

The REMARK.

'Tis a great folly to fly for protection to people who naturally delight in mischief. The Fox blames the Bramble here, but he may thank himself; for how could he expect any good or kindness where there is none? It is a fatal thing for men, when God is offended with them, to go to the devil for relief. This is what destroyed Saul, and proves daily the destruction of many. Men commonly, when pursued by an evil conscience, and pressed hard by the guilt of their sins, run to a tavern, and drown their senses in a debauch, or else go a whoring or gaming, with a design to stifle these thoughts; though all these shifts afford no better comfort than the Bramble did the Fox, rather adding to, than diminishing these stings.

FABLE LXXXIX.

A MAN and a WOODEN GOD.

A MAN that had a great veneration for an image he had in his house, found that the more he prayed to it, the more he went down the hill still. This put him into such a rage, to pray so long and so earnestly, and yet to so little purpose, that at last he dashed the head of it to pieces against the wall, and out comes a considerable quantity of gold. Why, this it is, says he, to adore a perverse and senseless deity, that will do more for blows than for worship.

The MORAL

If we ever expect good from a bad person, it is only when he is forced to do it.

The REMARK.

This wooden Image is like many in the world, who notwithstanding all the application that people make to them, and their dependance on them, yet never do any good, either for prayers or entreaties, until they are forced to it by necessity. This Image resembles also those base and stupidly covetous wretches, with whom neither prayers, tears, or the distressed condition of their

suffering brethren, nay nor the necessities of their own nearest relations, can prevail to part with their money till they die; so must needs part with it when they can no longer keep it; and which often times falls into the hands of those who longed most for their death, and shewed them least respect when alive.

FABLE XC.

MERCURY and a TRAVELLER.

ONE that was entering upon a long journey, made his prayers to Mercury, with a promise that he should go half with him in whatever he found. It was his good fortune to find a bag of dates and almonds; he went to work upon them immediately; and when he had eaten the kernals, and all that was good of them himself, he laid the stones and shells upon the altar, and desired Mercury to take notice that he had performed his vows; for here, says he, are the out-sides of the one, and the insides of the other.

The MORAL.

'Tis a vain thing to suppose that we can put a trick upon God, and think, that after

solemn vows and promises, we may come off with such slender performances.

The REMARK.

Men may talk as if they believed in God, but they live as if there were none; for their very prayers and vows are mockeries; and what they say, they never intend to make good. If men did narrowly search their own hearts, they would find, that more or less, they are jugglers in secret betwixt heaven and their own souls; many a thousand wicked and false things can they charge themselves with, which they hide as the greatest secret in the world from their neighbours; but did they rightly consider, that the almighty God sees them, from whom nothing can be hid, and who will judge the secrets of all mens hearts in the day of judgment; I say, did they but seriously consider this, they would do nothing in secret, but what they might expose to the eye of the whole world.

FABLE XCI.

A SICK MAN making large PROMISES.

A POOR sick man, given over by the Physicians, betook himself to prayers & vowed to sacrifice a thousand bullocks to either Apollo or Æsculapius, which of the two would deliver him from his diseases. — Ah! my dear, says his wife, who was stand-

ing by, have a care what you promise; for where would you have these oxen should you recover? Wife, says the sick man, thou talkest like a fool; have the Gods nothing else to do, dost thou think, than to leave their heavenly business, and come to this lower world to sue me in an action of debt? They heard his prayer, however, and restored him for that time to make trial of his honesty and good faith. He was no sooner up, but for want of living oxen, he offered upon an altar so many pieces of paste made up in the shape of oxen. For this mockery divine vengeance pursued him; & he had an apparition came to him in a dream that bid him go and search in such a place near the coast, and he should find a considerable treasure. Away he went, and as he was looking for money, he fell into the hands of pirates. He begged hard for his liberty, & offered a thousand talents in gold for his ransom; but the pirates would not trust him, and so carried him away, and sold him afterwards as a slave for as many groats.

The MORAL.

Many, in their adversity, promise to God more than they intend to make good in their prosperity.

The REMARK

'Tis the practice of the world, for people in distress, to serve God and mankind alike. For when they lie under any heavy affliction, and find they have need of another's help, how do they vow and promise, and yet are conscious to themselves, that they neither intend or are able to make any one article good? What a rash & knavish promise was it in this poor fellow, who could not but know that he was in no case able to perform his vow? So his design could be nothing else but to put a trick upon God, if he could: The foolish attempts of men, who while they think to cheat God, only cheat themselves. What the apostle says is very applicable in this case, "Be not deceived, for God will not be mocked; for "as you sow here, so shall ye reap hereafter." And so we see vengeance overtook this wretch at last.

FABLE XCII.

An APE and a FOX.

UPON the death of the Lion, the beasts met incouncil to choose a King: Several put in for it; but one wanted brains,

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another strength, and a third stature, or something else: At last the Buffoon Ape, with his grimaces, carried it from the whole, by I do not know how many voices. The Fox being one of the pretenders, was not well pleased to see the choice go against him, and presently whispered the new King in the ear, that he could do him a piece of secret service: Sir, says he, I have discovered some hidden treasure yonder; but seeing it is a right belongs to your Majesty, I have nothing to do with it. So he carried the Ape to take possession; and what should this treasure be, but a bait in a ditch? The Ape lays his hand upon it, and the trap springs, and catches him by the finger. Ah! thou perfidious wretch, cries the Ape! Ah! thou silly Prince, rather, replies the Fox; thou a governor of others, with a vengeance, that hath not wit enough to look to your own fingers!

The MORAL

'Tis a great unhappiness to people, to have such a governor as can neither take care of

them, nor of himself, by distinguishing between bad and good counsellors.

The REMARK.

'Tis the greatest blessing of a kingdom to have a wise and prudent Prince; neither can there be a greater sign of the divine favour towards it: "Happy are the people (says the Queen of Sheba to Solomon) that hear thy wisdom; because the Lord loved Israel, therefore made he thee King to do judgment and justice." And indeed, no kingdom was so flourishing as that of Israel, under the reign of the wisest of Kings. But how miserable and distracted was it, when such a weak Prince as his son Rehoboam reigned, who forsook the counsel of the old men who stood before his father Solomon, and followed the counsel of the young men. And such will be the fate of all nations that have weak Kings, and cunning and designing counsellors.

FABLE XCIII.

A LION in LOVE.

A LION was in love with a country-lass, and desired her father's consent to have her in marriage. The answer he gave was churlish enough: He would never agree to it, he said, upon any terms, to marry his daughter to a beast. The Lion gave him a very sour look, which brought

the fellow, upon second thought, to strike up a bargain with him, upon these conditions, that his teeth should be drawn, and his nails pared; these were things, he said, that the foolish girl was terribly afraid of. The Lion sends immediately for a surgeon to do the work; and as soon as the operation was over, he goes and challenges her father upon his promise. The countryman seeing the Lion disarmed, plucked up a good heart, & with a swinging cudgel so ordered the matter, that he broke off the match.

The MORAL

What will not love make a body do!— It consults neither life, fortune, nor reputation; but sacrifices all that can be dear to men of sense and honour, to an extravagant passion.

The REMARK.

What strange alteration does this passion make on the minds of men? There is nothing so fierce or savage, but love will soften it: Nothing so sharp sighted in other matters, but it makes it stupid and blind. What a vast number of examples do all ages furnish us with of this kind? The strongest men both of sacred and pro-

fane history, were slaves to it: All the wisdom of Solomon could not resist it, who, to his sad experience, said "That love was strong as death; that many waters could not quench love, neither could the floods drown it." And how often does he caution men to take care of this, and advises them to think seriously upon the laws of God, as the only antidote against it; for the commandment, says he, "Is a lamp, and the law is a light, to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of a strange woman; for by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread."— We have sad objects every day in our view, who are convincing proofs of the dismal consequences of this blind and bewitching passion.

FABLE XCIV.

Two COCKS Fighting.

TWO Cocks fought a duel for the mastery of a dunghill. He that was worsted, slunk away into a corner, and hid himself; The other took his flight up to the top of a house, and there, with crowing and clapping his wings, makes a proclamation of his victory. An Eagle made a stop at him in the middle of his gallantry, and carrying the conqueror away with him, his rival took possession of the dunghill they contended for, and had all his mistresses to himself again.

The MORAL.

This Fable shews, that he who is too proud in prosperity, often falls headlong into adversity.

The REMARK.

Solomon observes very truly, that pride goeth before destruction. And how many instances have we of such whose pride and ambition were the fore-runners of their fall? What a short time was there betwixt Haman being the greatest favorite at court, and his being hanged on the gallows he had prepared for another? And it is no wonder that proud men should meet with such falls, when they have such a strong and mighty enemy to grapple with: For the apostle assures us, "That God resisteth the proud." It fares often with the greatest monarchs, as with these Cocks; he that is victorious to day, may be made a slave to-morrow. With what proud and blasphemous words did the king of Syria insult over the Israelites? but we see to what a low pass he was brought by the destroying hand of God. Belshazzar in the midst of his glory and pomp, had the mortification to see, by a hand-writing on the wall, himself and his kingdom condemned into the hands of the Persians.

FABLE XCV.

A League betwixt the WOLVES and SHEEP,

A WAR once broke out between the Wolves and Sheep, wherein the Sheep

had for the most part the better being assisted by the Dogs, with whom they had made an alliance. The Wolves taking this into consideration, sent embassadors to the Sheep with proposals of peace. The Sheep having heard the proposals, by which they were to have the Wolves whelps delivered up to them for their security, as the Wolves were to have the Dogs for theirs delivered up to them; a peace was immediately patched up. Some time after as the sheep were feeding, as they thought, very securely, because of the late agreement, the Wolves whelps fell a howling; whereupon the Wolves came presently rushing in, complaining loud that the sheep had broke the peace, and were using their hostages with cruelty. The sheep denied the charge, but to little or no purpose; for the Wolves fell upon them, and easily destroyed them, knowing that they had no more Dogs to stand by them.

The MORAL

'Tis the greatest folly and madness imaginable, to think true and sincere friendship can be settled where nature herself has placed

an unalterable aversion and disagreement. — A bloody and expenfive war does not half so much harm to a nation, as a foolish and ill-grounded peace.

The REMARK.

Though we are advised in scripture to be harmless as doves, yet we are not less warned to be prudent as serpents. No nation ought tamely to listen to the wheedling proposals of an enemy, who prefers an agreement of a suspension and cessation of arms, only to gain time or advantage, either to save himself when he finds he is too hard put to it by his opposers; or to work their ruin, by enticing them to part with their surest allies and defenders, who by their assistance have obliged him to change his method, and lay aside his open force, and have recourse to a seeming agreement, which never lasts longer than he can break it with convenience. Not only nations, but private persons also, ought always to be upon their guard, not to expose themselves to the cunning and cruelty of self-designing neighbours, who use fair means when they find the foul will not do, to ruin those they find in the way to hinder their mischievous and unwarrantable designs. And as we are obliged to be upon our guard against our temporal enemies, we are much more against our spiritual ones, who are worse than the Wolves here mentioned in the Fable; for when they cannot, by open force get any advantage over us, they presently have recourse to smoother terms, and even put on Sheep's clothing, that they may the more conveniently devour the flock.

F A B L E S

IN

PROSE AND VERSE.

F A B L E XCVI.

The MONKEY the CAT, and the CHESNUTS.

A MONKEY observing his Master to lay some Chesnuts in the fire to roast, he was very desirous to taste of them, but was likewise much afraid of burning his fingers, so that though he often attempted to take them out, yet he was as often discouraged by the heat of the fire; whereupon he was a long time contriving with himself, how to attain his end; at length he perceived a young Kitling lie sleeping by the fire, whereupon he presently resolves that Pufs shall be his instrument to gain his pur-

pose: and catching her up in his arms notwithstanding her squalling, and all the resistance she could make, yet Pug being stronger, takes her forefoot in his hand, and thrusting it into the fire, gets out the Chestnuts, which he with much greediness devours. The poor cat had her foot miserably burnt, and asks him weeping, why he would use her so cruelly without any provocation given him: the Monkey knew he had wronged her, and could say little in his own vindication, yet willing to make a lame defence rather than none, impudently replies; I must confess the jest was somewhat severe, but yet it is not so much as you justly deserve to suffer, considering the wicked, slothful, and sleepy life that you lead.

The MORAL.

Some men care not what abuses they put upon others, nor what troubles and danger they bring them into, so they can but compass their own ends and purposes; and how many are made use of to bring about the designs and contrivances of ill men, who when their turn is served, are so far from

gratifying them, that they scoff and laugh at their easiness and folly.

F A B L E XCVI.

The MONKEY, the CAT, & the CHESNUTS.

A MONKEY saw his Matter roast.

Some Chestnuts by the fire,

And Pug being very liquorish

To taste them did desire;

But was afraid to burn himself,

Neither could he contrive

Which way he without trouble might

To his design arrive.

But seeing Puss lye by the fire,

He was resolv'd that she

The pain and danger should endure,

His instrument to be.

And catching her into his arms,

He with her foot doth get

The roasted Chestnuts, which he

Most greedily did eat.

The Cat's foot is severely burnt,

Who weeping with the pain,

Against the Monkey's crushy

Doth wofully complain;

Quoth she, why hast thou us'd me thus,
 What mischief have I wrought
 To thee or thine, that thou hast now
 This misery on me brought.

Pug knew that he had wronged her,
 And little had to plead
 In vindication of himself
 For this injurious deed :

You like a villain he replies,
 You need not cry and roar,
 Since for your slothful wicked life,
 You ought to suffer more.

For you and all your kindred to
 Most idly spend your time ;
 Yea, but to wet your feet forsooth,
 You think a grievous crime.

For these and other faults, whereof
 I an account could give,
 If you but your just merits had
 You don't deserve to live.

The MORAL.

Ill men do very seldom mind
 What hazards others run,
 On their behalf, so that they can
 But have their business done.

F A B L E XCVII.

The Young MOUSE, the COCK, and the CAT.

A YOUNG Mouse and an only son, had been so carefully bred up by his mother, that she would never permit him to go beyond the mouth of her hole. But growing up, the young creature had a desire to look abroad into the world, which his mother was very fearful he should do; alas child, said she, there is so much treachery abroad, that if you once go out of my sight, I never expect to see you again, Fear mother, quoth he, fear nothing, I will only go and look through the crevice of the door, and come back instantly; his importunity prevailed, and so he goes into the next room, and peeps into the yard, where he saw a Cat walk very demurely by the door, who laid herself down in the warm sun; the young Mouse much wondred at her gravity, and was extremely taken with her shape and sober carriage; soon after a Cock comes by very briskly, who clapping his wings set up a loud crow, whereat our young traveller was so affrighted, that all pale and trem-

bling, he runs back to his mother, who glad of his return, hugged him tenderly, demanding the cause of his great surprize and fright; ah mother quoth he, I saw a dreadful creature with a red piece of flesh on his head like a crown, and the like under his chin, and horns on his heels, who with things like arms, beating his sides, made such a horrible noise, as almost scared me out of my wits, just when I was admiring a very fine creature, of so modest a look, and so cleanly and neat, lying in the sun, that I hardly could forbear running to kiss and hug her; the old Mouse perceiving his mistake, my dear, says she, that proud strutting thing will never hurt thee, but be sure to avoid that other modest one who will certainly be the death of thee with the first opportunity.

The MORAL

We must not always judge of men by their looks and carriage, neither are some roaring sparks so much to be dreaded as some demure and sober knaves.

FABLE XC VII.

The Young MOUSE, the COCK, and the CAT.

A YOUNG Mouse and an only son.
With tenderness and care,
Was by his mother bred, who of
His life stood in much fear.

And kept him close within her hole
Till grown, who then doth creep
Into the adjoining room where through
A crevice he doth peep.

And in the yard he there espies,
A Cat demure and grave.
With whom he wishes that he could
But some acquaintance have.

Soon after he observes a Cock,
That by the door doth go,
Who with his wings did clap his sides,
And cheerfully did crow.

At which the Mouse was almost scar'd,
Out of his wits, and run
Post-haste unto his mother, who
With joy receives her son.

Edw. A. Beach

Demanding what the reason was
 Of his so great affright ;
 Oh mother, I have seen, quoth he,
 A very dreadful sight.

A Monster with a crown on's head,
 And horn'd heels march'd by,
 Who with his arms clapping his sides,
 Sent forth a hideous cry.

Whereat I was surpriz'd, being then
 Admiring 'ot a creature,
 Sober and modest in her look,
 And of a handsome feature.

With whom I was resolv'd to make
 A league of amity,
 The mother finding by his talk,
 Her son's simplicity.

She tells him from that strutting thing
 He need no danger fear,
 But for his life, he never should
 That serious one come near.

The MORAL

By modest looks we scarce can judge,
 What really men are,
 For the demure are oft more false,
 Than huffing sparks by far.

FABLE XCVIII.

The WOLF and the MARE.

THE Fox and Wolf travelling together they met with a Mare which had a Foal by her side, that was very fat and smooth, the Wolf was almost famish'd with hunger, and desired his cousin Reynard to go and ask the Mare what she would take for her colt; truly says the Mare, I am in great want of money, and would willingly sell him; and what do you value him at, quoth the Fox? Why, brother, says she, the price is written in my hinder foot, and if you please you may read it; excuse me, Brother, cries the Fox, for I cannot read, neither do I desire to buy your foal for myself, but am only sent as a messenger from the Wolf, who has a great mind to him; well, said the Mare, let him come himself, and no doubt but we shall bargain: The Fox went to the Wolf, and carried this answer, asking him if he could read writing; read, quoth he, do you doubt it? Let me tell the cousin, I can read both Latin, French, Dutch and English; I have studied at the university, and disputed with several doctors; I have seen many famous plays, and heard diverse

trials in courts of judicature; I have taken my degrees in the law, and there is no writing but I can readily understand; well come on then quoth the Fox, and read the value of the colt in the Mare's hinder foot: Away he goes and desires to read the price, she lifts up her foot, which had a strong iron shoe newly put on with many sharp headed nails; and while the Wolf was earnest to read the writing, she struck him so full in the forehead, that he fell over and over, and lay a long while for dead, all bloody and sorely wounded; while the Mare went trotting away with her colt, and laughing at his folly and stupidity. At length recovering, Cousin Reynard, quoth he, what a roguish trick has this jade served me? for thinking the nails had been letters, while I was reading them. she hit me so strongly on the face, that I fear my skull is broken. Alas Cousin, quoth the Fox, I find the proverb true in you, That the greatest scholars are not alwas the wisest men.

The MORAL

Those that pretend to the most learning, and are much conceited of their own knowledge, do many times fall into great misfor-

tunes, and are made a scorn of by those that bring them into mischief.

F A B L E XCVIII.

The WOLF and the MARE.

THE Fox and Wolf together walk'd
 Along the Forest, where
 They saw a fat brisk wanton colt,
 Which suck'd a lusty mare.

The Wolf was almost starv'd, and so
 He Reynard does intreat
 To ask the price of him, that he
 Might something have to eat.

The Fox goes to the Mare, and asks
 If she her Foal will sell,
 And if she willing be to trade,
 The lowest price to tell.

The Mare cries, I will sell him if
 I can a chapman find,
 And for the price 'tis plainly writ,
 Upon my foot behind.

He knowing the Mare's subtilty,
 Pretends he could not read,
 And so desirous to be excus'd,
 Declaring that indeed.

It was not for himself that he
 Did come the Colt to buy,

But at his uncle Wolf's request
Who was but just hard by.

Then let him come himself, quoth she,
That he his price may see,
And if he my proposals like,
We quickly shall agree.

The Fox this answer carried,
Which much the beast amaz'd,
That they should think him such an Oaf,
He wonderfully gaz'd.

Read, quoth the Wolf, cuz, doubt not that
I all my time have spent
In learning, and in all known tongues
I am most excellent.

He then goes to the Mare, who had
Been newly shod, to read
The nails which he thought words; but whilst
He holdeth close his head,

The treacherous Mare upon the skull,
Gave him so smart a blow,
As the poor Wolf had almost kill'd,
And backward did him throw.

The Fox then cries, Uncle, I find
The ancient proverb true
Great scholars are not always wise,
As now 'tis seen by you.

The MORAL.

Those that pretend to understand
 More than they truly know,
 Are oft abus'd and mock'd by them
 That seek their overthrow.

FABLE XCIX.

The WOLF, the FOX, and the APES.

A WOLF in the midst of winter was ready to die for want, but happened to meet a Fox, whom he observed to be fat, and in good case, he asked him how he came to live so well in that hard season;— the Fox shewed him where the Ape and her young lay in the den, saying had it not been for that charitable creature, I should have wanted as much as you but there I have oft been invited and found kind entertainment, witness the fragments of my supper last night, and therewith gave the Wolf some remains of his meat, which he eat with greediness, desiring the Fox to tell him how he might get in favour with the Ape. That is not difficult, quoth he only by framing yourself to flattery and lying; if that be all quoth the Wolf, I can soon practice it, and thereupon runs with all speed to the den,

but was no sooner in e're he cry'd out, Ah foh! what a nasty stink is here; and then seeing the old Ape hugging her deformed young ones; surely, quoth he, in all my life I never saw such ugly creatures as these;—whereat the Apes being intraged, they all fell upon him together, one biting him by the nose, another by the neck, and the rest in other places, so that he was forced to run out with all speed to save his life; and finding the Fox, related his misfortune to him: You are well enough served, quoth he, since you forget my council, and spoke truth when you should have told lies; Do you think I had lost my smelling and eye-sight? and yet I told the Ape that her house was perfumed with sweet wood, and that I was mightily pleased to see such a beautiful lady have such a fine off-spring of young ones to keep up the family; upon which the best in the house was set before me, but during supper I was very careful, not to speak a word of truth, and hereby I was treated so gallantly, or else I might have starved as you are like to do e'er you have any relief from her.

The MORAL.

Most men are too much pleased with flattery, and nothing is more disobliging than

to tell them their faults, or impartially to censure their actions.

F A B L E X C I X.

The WOLF, the FOX, and the APES.

A WOLF in winter almost starv'd,
Who nothing had to eat,
Neither could possibly contrive
Provision how to get.

Happen'd to meet a Fox who look'd
Fat, and plump, and well,
That the Wolf cries, I prithee cuz
But be so kind, to tell

How thou dost thus maintain thyself,
And art in such good plight ;
Ah, quoth the Fox, the Ape's my friend,
Who oft doth me invite.

Into his den, who nobly lives,
And where I need not fear,
To meet with Turkies, Geese, and Hens,
And other dainty cheer.

But says the Wolf, can you tell how
I may her favour get,
And thereby be partaker of
This plenteous store of meat ?

Yes, uncle, says the Fox, if you
Can lye and flatter well,

But have a care what e'er you do,
The truth you never tell.

That's quickly learnt, quoth he, and then
Into the den he goes,
And cries, Foh, what a nasty stink
Is this, offends my nose.

Then seeing how the young Apes were
Embraced by the old,
They are the ugliest things, quoth he,
That e'er I did behold.

The cubs enrag'd upon him fell,
And wounded him all o'er,
So that to save his life, with speed,
He run out of the door.

And meeting with the Fox, he does
His sad misfortune tell,
Who cry'd, you for your folly do
Deserve it very well.

What do you think I could not see,
And smell as well as you?
Yet I the old one Lady call'd,
And prais'd the young ones, too.

The MORAL

Most men love flattery, and scarce
Can ever truly love,
Those that plainly of their faults,
Or vices them reprove.

FABLE C.

The APE turned CARPENTER.

AN unlucky Ape sitting opposite to a Carpenter's yard, took much notice how he wrought and was mightily desirous to imitate him discoursing thus with himself; certainly I could easily be master of this trade without seven years slavery to learn it, as no doubt this dull fellow hath had; for I am of opinion that it is only for want of practice, or else we Apes could soon outshine men in all arts and sciences; and I remember a notable king in India having taken several of my elder brethren, called baboons, prisoners, he was resolved to put them to plough and sow, and to make foldiers of them, alledging that they would not speak, because they were idle and unwilling to work; well, I have a great inclination to try my skill, but I hope, I shall have better fortune than a nephew of mine, who living in a house over against a Cobler, and often observing how he cut his leather to pieces to soal his shoes, when the Cobler was absent, he leaps into his stall, and strives to imitate him, who returning and finding his

leather all mangled and spoiled, resolved to be revenged; and one day when he saw my cousin Pug look earnestly at him, he took up his sharp cutting knife, and drew it over his throat divers times, and then going away, my silly kinsman skipped instantly into his shop, and taking his knife, thinking to do the same, he cut his own throat therewith and died, but I'll take more care; and so getting into the Carpenter's yard he began to handle his tools, and to split wood therewith, but on a sudden his foot was catch'd in a cleft-piece of board, and held so fast, that he could not stir, but crying out, the Carpenter came, and perceiving his folly, with many scoffs and blows dismiss him.— This comes of it quoth the Ape to be over-conceited of one's own wit, but now I find it is not so easy to be a workman as I at first imagined.

The MORAL

Some persons have so great an opinion of their own ingenuity, as to imagine they can soon attain to the most curious inventions; but upon trial, there appears more difficulty and danger than they could possibly foresee.

F A B L E C I.

The DRONE and the SPIDER.

IN IMITATION OF MR. GAY.

AS, banish'd from th' industrious hive,
 A Drone, despairing now to live,
 Travers'd with mournful hum the air,
 He fell into a Spider's snare.
 In hopes to break the slender chain,
 His wings he shook, but shock in vain:
 The more he strove, entangled more,
 He gave the fruitless labour o'er.

Ah, most unhappy Drone, he cry'd;
 The means of life were first deny'd;
 The cruel honey-making weal
 Drove me all helpless from the cell:
 And now, of liberty bereft,
 I'm to a Spider's mercy left!
 But all must die, or soon or late;
 With patience I submit to fate.

The Spider lurk'd unheeded by,
 And heard the sad soliloquy;
 Then rushing on his Captive, said
 Shall object towards patience plead?
 Had that firm virtue steel'd your breast,
 With freedom you had yet been blest;
 Where industry preferment meets,
 Had shar'd the toil, and shar'd the sweets.

Observe this web—What happy art,
 The fabrick shews in every part!
 View well the texture and design;
 What silk was ever half so fine!
 With what exactness too decrease
 The circles regularly less!
 Thro' each the parting rays extend,
 And all the curious frame suspend.

This common centre is my throne:
 The mechanism all my own:
 Myself from out these bowels drew
 The subtle film, and spun the clue.
 How different is your case and mine!
 Despis'd, exploded, you repine;
 While I, disdain'g to depend,
 Find in myself a real friend.

He spoke, the Drone, his lawful prize,
 Unfit to live, unpity'd dies.

FABLE CII.

PLUTUS, CUPID, AND THE FARMER, BY
 THE LATE ENSIGN, JOHN WILCOCKS,
 OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

THE moon was bright, the skies serene,
 And not a cloud was to be seen,
 Hush'd were the winds, and not a breeze
 Was heard to whisper thro' the trees;

A deep and solemn silence reign'd,
 The bird of night alone complain'd,
 The waves in melancholy roar,
 Roll'd heaving to the silent shore :
 When in a solitary wood,
 Near which a lonely cottage stood,
 The peaceful dwelling of a swain,
 Whose soul was undisturb'd by gain,
 The god of riches, and of love,
 Descending from the courts of Jove,
 Together met, beneath an oak,
 When thus, the god of riches spoke.

Whence is it boy, that with thy dart,
 Thou canst enflame each mortal heart,
 Kindle in Jove a soft desire,
 And set the god of war on fire !
 All own the mighty pow'r of love,
 On earth below, in heav'n above,
 Whilst mortals only worship me,
 Immortals humbly bow to thee,
 E'en birds and beasts, and fish despise,
 And men alone my treasure prize :
 Nor would I Cupid thus complain,
 If I o'er man could wholly reign :
 But oft the human soul I find,
 To wisdom more than gold inclin'd ;
 Not very oft I must confess,
 But yet my influence seems the less.

Alas ! with me, it is the same,
 The wife I seldom can enflame :

Cupid replies,—And oft my dart,
 Is useless thrown against their heart :
 In yon lone cottage lives a swain,
 Whom long I've sought to wound in vain ;
 He baffles my most wily arts,
 Is proof against my keenest darts ;
 Unmov'd would view e'en Sylvia's charms,
 Nor wish to clasp her in his arms.
 This swain when evening shades pervade,
 And murky twilight fills the glade,
 When finish'd in his rural toil,
 O'er books consumes the midnight oil.
 In books alone he hopes to find,
 Instructions for the human mind ;
 He does my utmost pow'r defy,
 Do you the force of riches try.

Agreed says Plutus, I'am content,
 And straitway to the cottage went :
 Whilst Cupid to the town departs
 On beaux and belles to try his darts.

The shepherd in his homely cott,
 Just o'er the fire had hung his pot,
 And seated in his elbow chair,
 Unknown to envy or to care,
 But with sweet peace and quiet blest,
 Was fond'ling of his fav'rite guest,
 His faithful dog who us'd to keep,
 Or find when lost, a straggling sheep :
 And purring in the corner sat,
 Gravely demure his aged cat.

Whilst thus employ'd—as oft before,
 The God arrives and taps the door;
 Loud bark'd the dog, the shepherd cries,
 Whose there? A friend, the god replies.

Friendship profess, an't worth a pin,
 He says, but let his godship in.

When, thus our god the swain address'd,
 I come this night to be thy guest:
 You're welcome friend, come pray sit down,
 Is there aught strange? What news in town?
 Be not surpris'd, but shepherd know,
 That I'm the god, who wealth bestow,
 Then be advis'd, my council take,
 Hasten to the town, your fortune make!
 Get rich my friend, you'll find in treasure,
 Consists the truest worldly pleasure;
 I'll crown your wishes with success,
 And all your undertakings bless.

But will you give me peace of mind?
 Or shall I sweet contentment find?

Contentment! pooh! 'tis poultry stuff,
 Get riches, man, and that's enough!
 No—riches breed a thousand fears,
 A thousand woes, a thousand cares,
 Whilst in this lonely safe retreat,
 I live secure, my joy's compleat,
 I ask no more from heav'n than this,
 My books afford me real bliss,

In them I read and know mankind,
 They both instruct and please the mind,
 I've all I ask; thus spoke the swain
 And 'twould be impious to complain,
 Wisdom shall ever be my guide,
 O'er all my actions shall preside,
 What ever wisdom says is right,
 In that alone I'll take delight.

The angry god astonish'd heard,
 Frown'd on the swain and disappear'd.

F A B L E CIII.

THE FOP, THE COCK, AND THE DIAMOND.

BY MR. H. GREVILLE.

CEASE, erring man, nor nature blame,
 'Tis not from her thy mis'ry came;
 Her wants are few, and those we find
 Sustain the bliss of human kind,
 They're all supply'd with ease, and hence
 First flows the meaner joys of sense:
 Their aim yet nobler, next they prove
 The source of bounty and of love:
 And last, from love and bounty flow
 The noblest joys that minds can know:
 But vice, in men of wanton heart,
 Soon forg'd the various wants of art,
 And these indeed are treach'rous things;
 From these invet'rate evil springs.

These (more than man can e'er supply,
 Exempt from toil and misery)
 Supply'd the joy is transient, vain,
 And not supply'd sincere the pain.
 Hence Care his iron reign began,
 The creature and the curse of man :
 This truth that ev'ry head may reach,
 A tale in easy strains shall teach.
 'Tis this :

A mortal not content
 With what for mankind nature meant,
 Tho' fortune to his just desire
 Had freely giv'n "meat, clothes and fire,"
 Still restless, wanted something new,
 And frantic schemes of pleasure drew ;
 To use for ever adding show,
 In short, he dwindled to a beau.
 Straight on his coat he clap'd gold lace,
 And next with washes spoil'd his face ;
 But most of all he priz'd his ring,
 The dearest, prettiest, sparkling thing !—
 'Twas this that gave him half his air,
 'Twas this he play'd against the fair ;
 Conscious of worth, when this was on,
 He mov'd as grand as Spanish Don—
 But who can tell the cares that stole
 With all these sopp'ries on his soul ?
 To dress at first the other name
 For hiding decently our shame,
 He made to signify an art
 Which act a quite contrary part ;

Which turn'd him on himself a foe,
 And set his follies out to show;
 This cost him so much time and pain;
 'Twas happiness and virtue's bane.
 Besides it griev'd his soul to find
 Some brutes to all his merit blind,
 To slight him when he'd spent a day
 To dress and paint him for the play;
 'Twas pungent grief succeeding care,
 And more than Cato's self cou'd bear;
 Still worse you'll think it, when I tell ye,
 That for his back he pinch'd his belly.
 But ah! the worst is still behind;
 And fortune prov'd yet more unkind:
 He lost the ring we nam'd before
 And what could fate to curse him more!
 It's borrow'd rays withdrawn that fed
 Those weeds his joys by folly bred,
 As real woe his heart deprest,
 As ever heav'd a patriot's breast
 He wept, he rav'd, and o'er and o'er
 His vitals stab'd, and stamp'd and swore
 The dear delighting toy away,
 No more he sparkled at the play,
 Blush'd to be seen the gem without,
 Where once he threw its rays about.
 Nor could his purse afford to buy
 What might as well its place supply.
 At length through disappointed pride
 The wretch grew stupid, moap'd and dy'd
 Mean while the guiltless Diamond lay
 Safe from the beams of rival day,

Beneath a dunghill's peaceful load
That fac'd a farmer's blest abode,
And long had there been free from prate,
Noise, nonsense, essence, pox, and state:
'Till once a cock by hunger taught,
Rak'd out the gem unpriz'd unsought;
For he ne'er turn'd his thoughts to find
The polish'd woes of human kind.
What faithful nature crav'd to gain
Was all he sought, nor sought in vain.
No fancy'd want, no distant prize
Had taught th' eternal sigh to rise:
Fit bounds his wishes all controul,
And fix the quiet of his soul.
In vain the gay temptation prov'd,
His virtue firm remain'd unmov'd;
And tho' he thought a gem might deck
As well his tail as lady's neck,
He spurn'd the splended bait aside
With just disdain and comely pride,
And smiling half he thus exprest
The thought sarcastic of his breast;
Whence and what art thou, tawdry thing?
From thee what happiness can spring?
Let senseless man with antick pride
Bid Pageant rise, and use subside,
We birds with nobler sapience blest,
Their peace-destroying arts detest;
Two things alone can give me pain,
Dame Partlet's coynels, want of grain.
Their wants so monstrous grow, their joy
A thousand little turns destroy;

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A thousand things must all unite,
 E'er they can taste one hour's delight;
 Fools! all to Reason's scale reduce,
 And weigh the value to the use.
 Then one full grain of gen'rous wheat
 (Ye pow'rs how wholesome, plump and sweet!)—
 Will dearer prove by far than all
 The shining nothings round the ball.

Who read this fable with discerning mind
 Perhaps this plain advice imply'd will find:
 Take freely all that nature's wants require,
 But check the first excess of frail desire.
 For food the fks, and raiment, we agree;
 But never ask'd brocade or fricasee—
 Howe'er, what custom calls genteel and neat,
 That (if the purse affords it) wear and eat,
 Yet all above thy friend's inferior lot,
 Sull learn to prize as tho' you priz'd it not,
 All above thine with care devoutly shun,
 Or be ambitious, restless, and—undone.

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