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False Stories Corrected - 1822

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False Stories
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False Stories

CORRECTED.



**“LEARN TO UNLEARN WHAT YOU HAVE
LEARNED AMISS.”**

NEW-YORK:

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NO. 261, PEARL-STREET;**

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PREFACE.

IT would be gratifying to the feelings of the publisher of this little work, to please and benefit all, without offending or injuring any; but observation and experience have convinced him that this is impracticable. Of this, the Fables of the Man and his Son, affords a familiar proof. In endeavouring to please all, they displeased all, and lost the beast on which they rode. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped, that judicious parents will approve this selection for their children, and that the children themselves will be amused and instructed by a perusal of True Stories Related, and False Stories Corrected.



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False Stories Corrected.



MANY wrong ideas are impressed on the infant mind ; grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength. Some of them, however ridiculous and troublesome, get such deep root and firm possession, as to bid defiance to reason ; and continue through life, the unprofitable companions of the injured individuals.

The erroneous opinions which little children often form from hearing of animals which have no existence, and seeing representations of them, are calculated to produce an injurious effect upon their inexperienced minds ; hence, is evident the propriety of withholding from them every thing but truth, or fiction presented in such form as cannot be mistaken, such as useful Fables. The fright-

ful stories which are sometimes told by nurses or the servants to children, in order to keep them quiet, have rendered many so timid that they hardly dare remain alone in the dark; and in some instances, the fearful disposition thus created is not overcome in the whole course of their lives.

Many false stories are told with an intention to deceive. This is lying, and is very wicked. Others are told merely for sport or pastime; this too is lying, and is very reprehensible. And many are the offspring of credulity in the relator, who, deceived by appearances, gives currency to narrations, the falsity of which, a due investigation would have detected. The imagination of a person excited by fear has sometimes represented the most absurd images, and at others, magnified objects to a size vastly greater than the reality; hence, the tales of Ghosts and Goblins, which exist only in the misgui-

ded imaginations of the ignorant and credulous.

An instance of the effect of fear and imagination is given in the following ingenious lines of Robert Bloomfield, founded upon fact.

THE FAKENHAM GHOST.

THE lawns were dry in Euston Park ;
 (Here truth inspires my tale,)
 The lonely footpath, still, and dark,
 Led over hill and dale.

Benighted was an ancient Dame,
 And fearful haste she made,
 To gain the vale of Fakenham,
 And hail its willow shade.

Her footsteps knew no idle stops,
 But followed faster still ;
 And echoed to the darksome copse,
 That whispered on the hill ;

Where clamorous rooks, yet scarcely hush'd,
 Bespoke a peopled shade ;
 And many a wing the foliage brush'd,
 And hovering circuits made.

The dappled herd of grazing deer,
 That sought the shades by day,
 Now started from her path with fear,
 And gave the stranger way.

Darker it grew ; and darker fears,
 Came o'er her troubled mind ;
 When now, a short quick step she hears,
 Come patting close behind.

She turn'd, it stopt ! nought could she see,
 Upon the gloomy plain !
 But as she strove the Sprite to flee,
 She heard the same again.

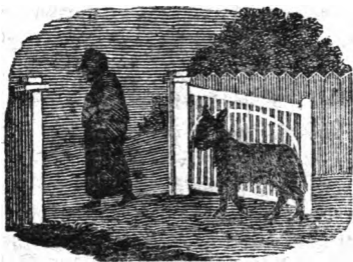
New terror seized her quaking frame,
 For, where the path was bare,
 The trotting Ghost kept on the same !
 She muttered many a prayer.

Yet once again, amidst her fright,
 She tried what sight could do ;

When through the cheating glooms of night,
A *Monster* stood in view !

Regardless of whate'er she felt,
It followed down the plain !
She own'd her sins, and down she knelt,
And said her prayers again.

Then on she sped : and hope grew strong,
The white park-gate in view ;
Which pushing hard, so long it swung,
That Ghost and all pass'd through.



Loud fell the gate against the post !
Her heart-strings like to crack ;
For much she fear'd the grisly Ghost,
Would leap upon her back.

Still on, pat, pät, the Goblin went,
 As it had done before:—
 Her strength and resolution spent.
 She fainted at the door.

Out came her husband, much surpris'd ;
 Out came her daughter dear.
 Good-natured souls ! all unadvis'd,
 Of what they had to fear.

The candle's gleam pierc'd through the night,
 Some short space o'er the green ;
 And there the little trotting Sprite,
 Distinctly might be seen.

An *Ass's Foal* had lost its Dam,
 • Within the spacious park ;
 And, simple as the playful lamb,
 Had followed in the dark.

No Goblin he, no imp of sin ;
 No crimes had ever known.
 They took the shaggy stranger in,
 And rear'd him as their own.

The Matron learned to love the soup,
That frightened her before.



A favourite the Ghost became ;
And 'twas his fate to thrive ,
And long he liv'd and spread his fame,
And kept the joke alive.

For many a laugh went through the vale,
And some conviction too :—
Each thought some other Goblin tale,
Perhaps was just as true.

AMONG the baneful effects of
neglected or improper education,
may be classed the ignorance of dis-

ferent parts of the earth, and that illiberality of sentiment towards the inhabitants of countries with which we are but partially acquainted. We suppose others enveloped in ignorance and error, and are too apt to consider them as infidels, savages, or barbarians.

The term *savage* signifies uncultivated, uncivilized, barbarous.

Infidel implies an unbeliever, a miscreant, a pagan, one who rejects christianity.

A christian is a disciple or follower of Christ, and is Christ's servant: and Christ says, "Ye are my servants if ye do whatsoever I command you." He commands his to live in love, and not even to resist evil, but to do good for evil, to pray for enemies; and has left the following golden Rule, which is a real criterion of a christian; "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

**From the preceding definitions,
can we believe every American**



**is a Christian? If we judge from
the manner of their lives and con-
duct, we must conclude they are
not.**

B

**Can we suppose every
man**



**is a Christian? They
prove many of them a
trees are known by their
by their conduct prove
are,**

Well, is it proper to call every Indian



a savage ? Judging, as before, by their fruits, it is evident from a variety of well authenticated facts and circumstances, they are not.

Have we reason to suppose every Turk



is an infidel? Though the practice of many is hostile to Christian principles, yet, no doubt, there are among them others whose deportment will not warrant the conclusion.

And shall every Negro



be termed an Infidel, Heathen, or Savage? Our own knowledge proves the contrary. We are sensible that there is a considerable number of pious Negroes in this country; and charity will conclude, and Mungo Park's testimony in his travels in Africa, will go to prove, that although they may be in a state of ignorance,

there are kind and humane people among them : and no doubt those who follow Christ, being led by the influence of his spirit, and carefully practice Christian principles, by doing as they would be done by.—

“ These having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts :” “ not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”

“ God, who hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.”

And John the Divine says, “ I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, saying, sal-

vation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ? and I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It is not profession and show, but possession and practice that make the Christian.

IT is not uncommon in this enlightened age, to hear of the strength of Hercules, whom fabulous history has recorded as a most renowned Grecian hero, and who, after death, was ranked among the gods,* and received divine honours. According to the accounts, there were many persons of the same name. Diodorus mentions three; Cicero six; and some others extend the number to no less than forty-three. Of all these, one generally called the Theban Hercules, is the most celebrated; and to him, as might naturally be expected, the actions of the

* There are that are called gods many, and lords many; but there is but one living and true God, and he neither slumbers nor sleeps. The wickedness and gross blindness attendant, have been the sources by which man has multiplied to himself objects of adoration not only from among his fellow-creatures, but also many of the inferior animals and beasts of the field, the sun, moon, things animate and inanimate; even of the works of his own hands he has made what are called gods: of gold. Of sil-

others have been attributed. He is reported to have been the son of Jupiter and Alcmena. He is represented as a very robust person, wrapt in a lion's skin, leaning on a huge and knotty club.



The following lines of the poet, which but hint at the various exploits of this renowned Hero, or Deity of Heathen Mythology, give a small specimen of the extravagant

and ridiculous falsehoods with which such history abounds; by which the ancients were imposed on; and to which moderns too fondly give countenance.

So mighty Hercules o'er many a clime,
 Waved his vast mace in virtue's cause sublime,
 Unmeasured strength with early art combin'd,
 Awed, served, protected, and amaz'd mankind.
 First, two dread snakes, at Juno's vengeful
 nod,
 Climb'd round the cradle of the sleeping god :
 Waked by the shrilling hiss and rustling sound,
 And shrieks of far attendants trembling round,
 Their gasping throats with clenching hands
 he holds,
 And death untwists their convoluted folds.
 Next, in red torrents from her sevenfold heads,
 Fell Hydra's blood on Lerna's lake he sheds;
 Grasps Achelous with resistless force,
 And drags the roaring river to its course;
 Binds with loud bellowing and with hideous
 yell,
 The monster bull, and threefold dog of hell.
 Then where Nemea's howling forests wave,
 He drives the lion to his dusky cave :

Seized by the throat, the growling fiend dis-
arms,

And tears his gaping jaws with sinewy arms ;
Lifts proud Antæus from his mother plains,
And with strong grasp, the struggling giant
strains.

Back falls his fainting head and clammy hair,
Writhe his weak limbs, and flits his life in air,
By steps reverted, o'er the blood dropt fen,
He tracks huge Caucasus to his murderous den ;
Where breathing flames through brazen lips,
he fled,

And shakes the rock-rooft cavern o'er his head.
Last, with wide arms the solid earth he tears,
Piles rock on rock, on mountain mountain
rears ;

Heaves up huge Abyla on Afric's sand,
Crowns with high Calpe Europe's salient
strand ;

Crests with opposing towers the splendid scene,
And pours from urns immense the sea between.
Loud o'er the whirling flood Charibdis roars,
Affrighted Scylla bellows round its shores ;
Vesuvio groans through all his echoing caves,
And Etna thunders o'er the insurgent waves.

That the light, vain and foolish

ors, and men who grasp the murderous steel, should abound with tales of heathen deities, or invocations to gods and goddesses, such as Venus, Cupid, Mars, Neptune, &c. is not so much to be admired at; but that sober people, endued with good understanding, especially, professors of a belief in the doctrines of christianity; that such should so often, in their conversations, writings, prints, &c. hoist in those ridiculous abominations of the dark ages, as though they believed in them, is astonishing and highly reprehensible.

It is not natural to make a god of a man, whom we have seen born and suffer like ourselves, all the miseries to which human nature is liable; and die, and become food for worms; yet this happened with almost all nations, after the revolution of many ages.

A man who had performed great actions, who had rendered important services to his country, was deified.

after his death; and there was scarcely a young warrior of distinguished valour, who was not reputed the son of a god.

When arts and sciences began to prevail, and a taste for elegant and beautiful composition had displayed itself among mankind, the poets, (particularly Homer) embellished these fictions, and increased their credit, by their lively descriptions and harmonious numbers. They assigned to each deity his particular attributes and functions; they recorded the actions of gods and heroes, and celebrated their praises; yet so far were many of these actions from meriting praise, that they would have disgraced men. Not only human weaknesses, but the most shocking vices, were attributed to these supposed divinities; and the immortal gods, whose province they believed it to reward virtue, and punish crimes, instead of being themselves held up as patterns of

purity and perfection, were represented as subject to human passions, and capable of committing the most criminal acts.

POETS, historians, and designing or credulous people relate many marvellous stories of Mermaids;



and some from such authority as to gain the belief of many people ; but little children, believe them not.

They are fictions, and no where to be found but in the imagination, or tales of travellers, and the wild fancy of the poet.* The annexed cut is the form in which she is represented, holding a mirror in one hand, and combing her long hair with the other.

*** One of them, speaking of the mermaid, says,**

**Amphibious nymph, from Nile's prolific bed,
Emerging Trapa lifts her pearly head ;
Fair glows her virgin cheek and modest breast,
A panoply of scales deforms the rest ;
Her quivering fins and panting gills she hides,
But spreads her silver arms upon the tides ;
Slow as she sails, her ivory neck she laves ;
And shakes her golden tresses o'er the waves.**



SUCH a thing or creature as a Fairy never was ; yet poets and others are pleased even to this day, to be writing and speaking of those airy and visionary beings, as though mankind could derive something useful from such tales. In ancient tradition and romances we are informed they are a sort of deity or imaginary genii, conversant on the earth, and distinguished by a variety of fantastical actions, either good or bad. They are represented as females, superior to human nature, sometimes visible, and sometimes

invisible ; and possessing power to pass through key holes, and to dart about with great velocity, &c. It is said, in the Highlands of Scotland, new born infants are watched till the christening is over, lest they should be stolen or changed by some of these fantastical personages. Probably from this circumstance, Gay formed his fable, the Mother, the Nurse and the Fairy.



ACCORDING to ancient tradition, Harpies were winged animals, with the face of a woman, bodies of vultures, with feet and claws hooked like the talons of a bird of prey. The ancients looked on the harpies as a sort of genii or dæmons.* This creature, which never had a being, is said to be symbol, and that the fable originated among the Egyptians, as follows :—During the months

* A kind of intermediate beings by the Mahometans believed to exist between man and angels.

of April, May, and June, especially the two latter, Egypt was greatly subject to stormy winds, which laid waste their olive grounds, and brought numerous swarms of grasshoppers and other troublesome insects from the shores of the Red Sea, which did infinite damage to the country. The Egyptians, therefore, gave figures which proclaimed these three months, a female face with the bodies and claws of birds, and called them Harop, a name which sufficiently denoted the true sense of the symbol. All this the Greeks realized, and embellished in their way.



GRIFFON, in the natural history of the ancients, the name of an imaginary bird of prey, of the eagle kind. They represented it with four legs, wings, and a beak: the upper part represented an eagle, and the lower a lion; they supposed it to watch over gold mines, hidden treasures, &c. This animal was consecrated to the sun. The Griffon is frequently seen on ancient medals: and it is still borne in coat-armour. The Griffon is an ornament in architecture, in common use among the Greeks, and was copied from them.



THE Salamander has a short cylindrical tail, four toes on the fore-feet, and a naked porous body.— This animal has been said, even in the *Philosophical Transactions*, to live in the fire ; but this is found to be fabulous. It is found in the southern countries of Europe. The following account of this species is extracted from the *Count de la Ceppe's Natural History of Serpents*. Whilst the hardest bodies cannot resist the violence of fire, the world have endeavoured to make us believe that a small lizard can not only withstand the flames, but even extinguish

them. As agreeable fables readily gain belief, every one has been eager to adopt that of a small animal so highly privileged, so superior to the most powerful agent in nature, and which could furnish so many objects of comparison to poetry, so many pretty emblems to love, and so many brilliant devices to valour. The ancients believed this poetry of the Salamander. Wishing that its origin might be as surprising as its power; and being desirous of realizing the ingenious fictions of the poets, they have pretended that it owes its existence to the purest of elements, which cannot consume it : and they have called it the daughter of fire, giving it, however, a body of ice. The moderns have followed the ridiculous tales of the ancients ; and as it is difficult to stop when one has passed the bounds of probability, some have gone so far as to think that the most violent fire could be extinguished by the land Salamander. Quacks sold this small lizard,

affirming, that when thrown into the greatest conflagration, it would check its progress. It was very necessary that philosophers and naturalists should take the trouble to prove by facts what reason alone might have demonstrated: and it was not till after the light of science was diffused abroad, that the world gave over believing in this wonderful property of the Salamander.

The Salamander being destitute of claws, having only four toes on each of the fore-feet, and no advantage of conformation making up its deficiencies, its manner of living must, as is indeed the case, be very different from that of other lizards. It walks very slowly; far from being able to climb trees with rapidity; it often appears to drag itself with great difficulty along the surface of the earth. It seldom goes far from the place of shelter which it has fixed on; it passes its life under the earth, often at the bottom of old walls during the summer.



PHOENIX, in ornithology, a bird famous in antiquity, but generally looked upon by the moderns as fabulous. The ancients speak of this bird as single, or the only one of its kind : they describe it as the size of an eagle ; its head finely crested with a beautiful plumage, its neck covered with feathers of a gold colour, and the rest of the body purple only the tail white, and the eyes sparkling like stars ; they hold that it lives 500 or 600 years in the wilderness ; that when thus advanced in age, it builds itself a pile of sweet

wood and aromatic gums, and fires it with the wafting of its wings, and thus burns itself; and that from its ashes arises a worm, which in time grows up to be a Phœnix.

This story is so extravagant, that little children have a very good right not to believe it; and to ask why the older persons, who know better, represent and keep alive the ideas of this fabulous bird of the ancients?



HISTORY informs, that there were a people in Thessalia, a country of ancient Greece, who were called Centaurs; and that they were the first who tamed horses, and made use of them in war, and thus became very formidable. Their neighbours, who first saw them on horseback, thought they were monsters, part man and part horse; and as this idea favoured the marvellous, it was eagerly adopted by the poets. Ridiculous as it may appear, some grave

writers have contended for the actual existence of these monsters, which are represented in paintings and prints, a compound of man and beast, like this cut.



That pious and beautiful writer, Dr. Young, in a work of his, entitled, "The Centaur not Fabulous," has a great deal of valuable matter, well worth reading. He very ingeniously takes up this fabulous story of the ancients, and proves, not that there ever was such a creature in shape,

ut that many, if not most men and women, may be considered as Centaurs ; that is, in disposition, action, and pursuits ; rendering themselves half human, half, or (as the Centaur is represented) more than half beast or brute.

IT is probable many of my little readers have heard of Jack Frost,



and his exploits of biting off toes and noses. Some person has fanci-

fully represented him with icicles hanging from his wings, and skates on his feet, pinching an old man's nose, to represent cold weather. The dress of the old man, as well as his attitude, and that of his dog, pretty ingeniously represent the effects of cold upon both ; while Jack Frost is feigned to say, as he holds the old man by the nose ;

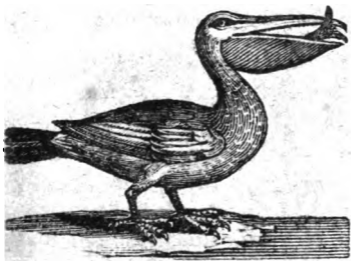
The zenith of thy sun is past ;
To ice or clay thou'lt come at last.

And the old man in his reply,

Take off thy fingers, hoary frost,
Lest sun beams dart forth to thy cost.

But this is all a matter of fancy ; such a creature as Jack Frost never existed. It is true, we often say of the cold, it pinches, it stings ; that is, it is sharp and piercing upon us, and in degree painful ; but we do not mean thereby that it has fingers to pinch, teeth to bite, or a sting like a bee, or wasp, or hornet.

1 Pelican as falsely described,



4 Pelican properly described.

WRITERS have related strange
 ings of this bird, which the cred-
 ous have believed ; numbers have

asserted, 'they fed their young with their own blood, and falsely described it in prints.

This bird, however, deserves our serious notice. It frequents both fresh and salt water; yet, its favourite residence is in uncultivated lands and wildernesses where it can remain undisturbed; in these places they bring up their young. Not as the pelican is to carry provision for a hungry brood, to remote places, she has a bag of a large size provided by Nature, for carrying in.

Here we may see the wisdom and goodness of the all-wise Creator, who has taught this bird to provide for its offspring, enabling her to carry the store of provisions she has caught far in the wilderness, the place of her residence, where, like a tender parent, she empties the products of her labours before them.

Now if some person quite unacquainted with this bird, has seen her

light, and hastily feed a ravenous brood from this bag, it would not be unnatural to suppose she fed them with her own blood. Edwards, who wrote a history of birds, says, "that we thought it incredible (in the description of this bird by some authors) to assert that a man's head could be put into their pouch; but he was an eye-witness to the fact, as practised by the keeper of a Pelican, brought to England in the year 1745, by Captain Pelly, from the Cape of Good Hope." The Pelican certainly is a good example to idle parents, who neglect to labour, and are not provident for their offspring.

FINIS.

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