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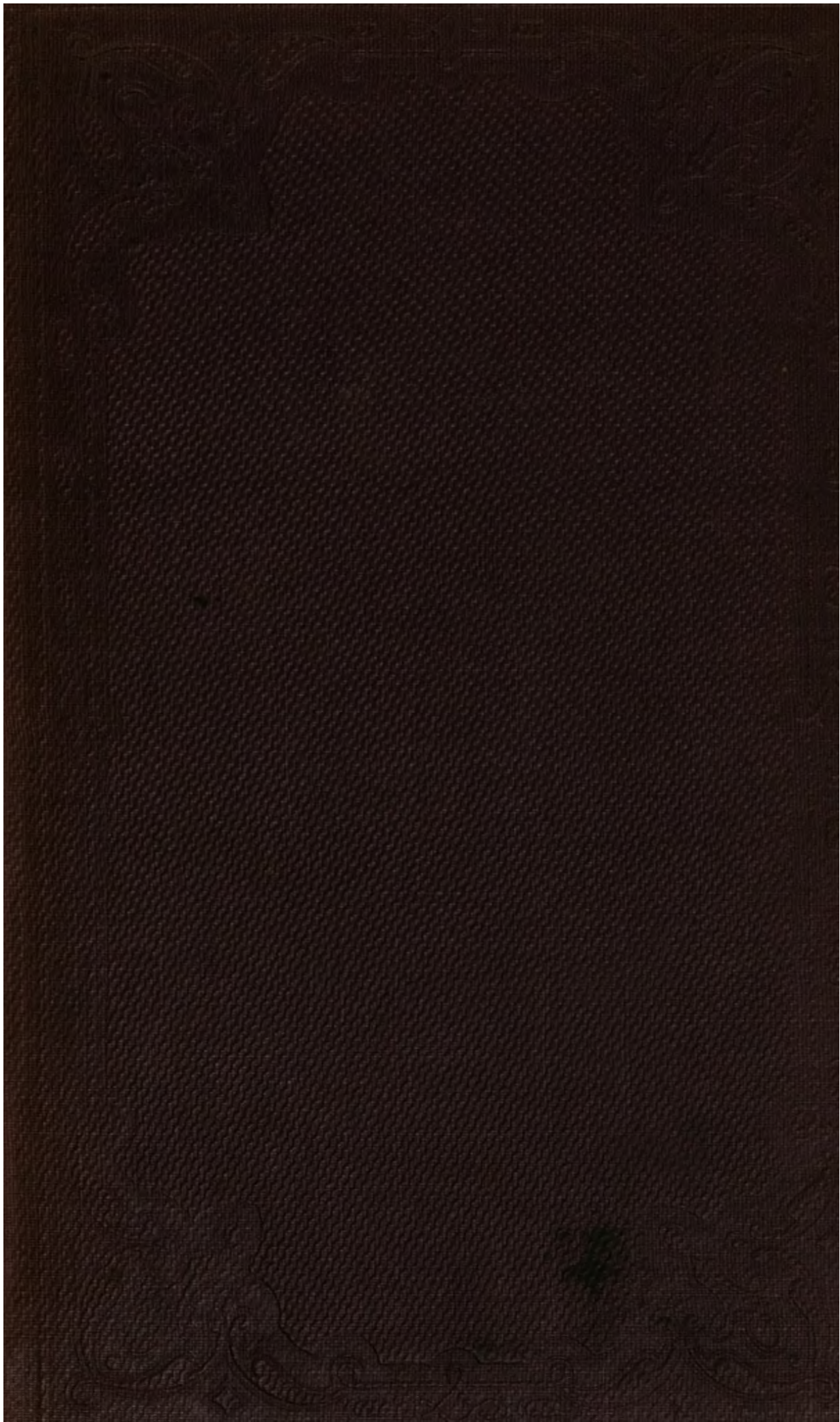
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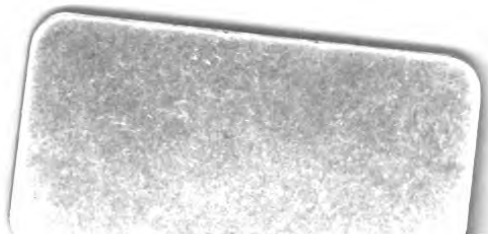
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John Riddell -

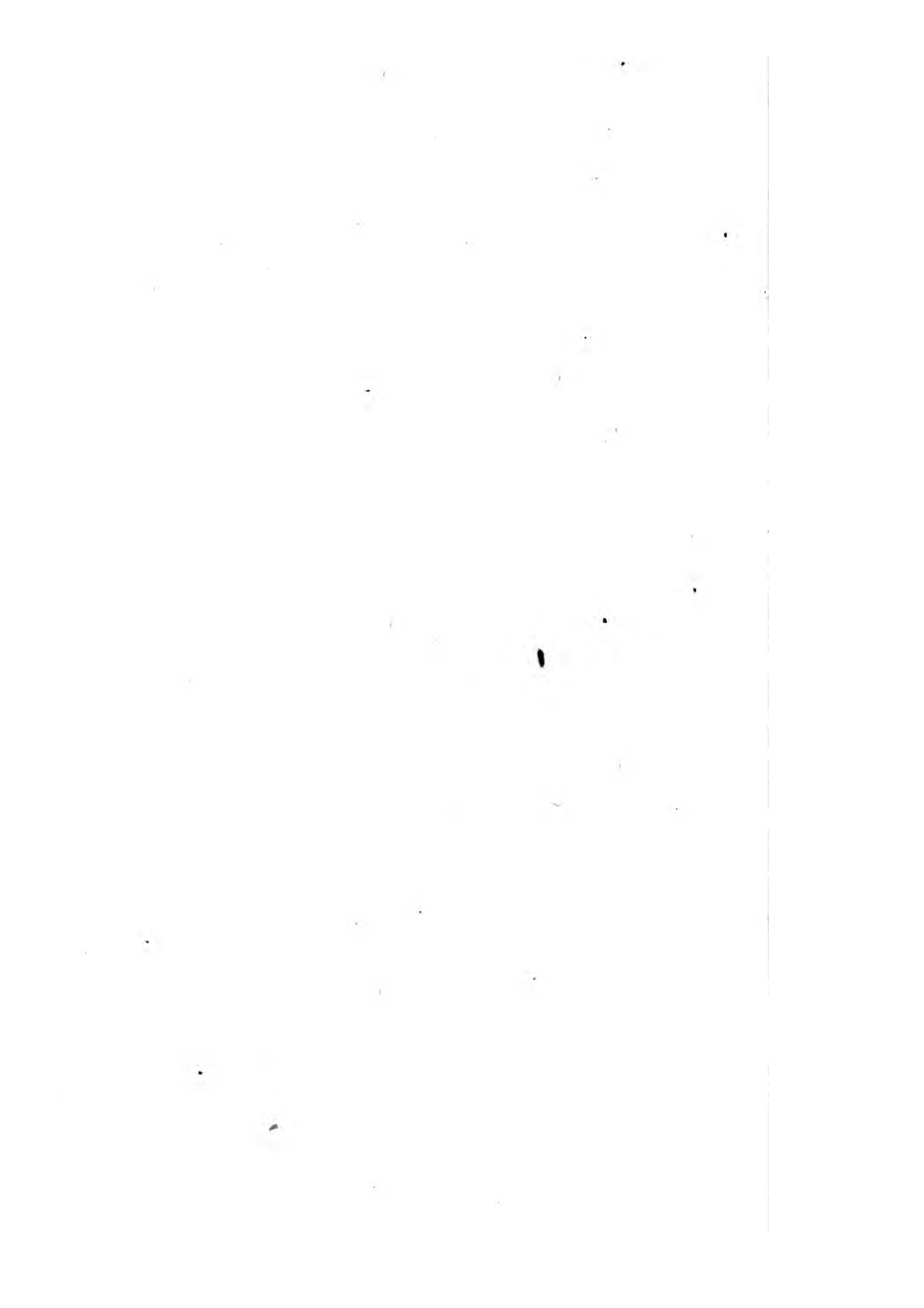


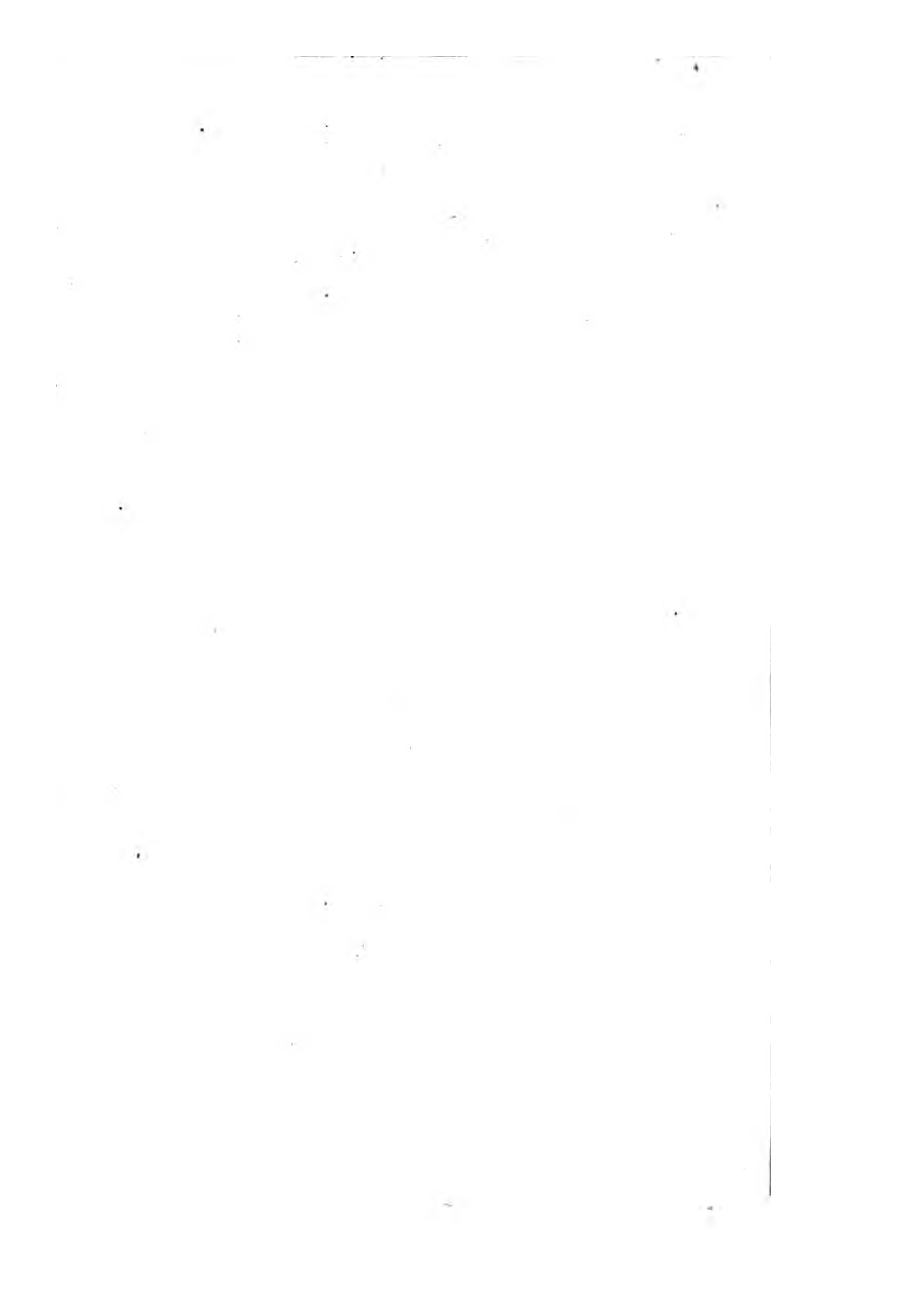
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GAY'S MONUMENT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

*John Riddell . 1873.*

FABLES,

BY

JOHN GAY.

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WITH UPWARDS OF  
ONE HUNDRED EMBELLISHMENTS.



ALNWICK:

PRINTED BY W. DAVISON, BONDGATE STREET.

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1842.





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## THE LIFE OF JOHN GAY.

JOHN GAY, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manor of Goldworthy, in Devonshire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnstaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the school of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, published a volume of Latin and English verses. Under such a master he was likely to form a taste for poetry. Being born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a silk mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of softness and dexterity he received and accommodated the ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was soon weary of either the restraint or servility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

The Duchess of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess, in 1712 took Gay into her service as secretary; by quitting a shop for such service he might gain leisure, but he certainly advanced little in the boast of independence. Of his leisure he made so good use, that he published next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inscribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then rising fast into reputation. Pope was pleased with the honour; and, when he became acquainted with Gay, found such attractions in his manners and conversation, that he seems to have received him into his inmost confidence; and a friendship was formed between them which lasted to their separation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole association of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than a partner, and treated him with more fondness than respect.

Next year he published *The Shepherd's Week*, six English pastorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, such as it appears among the rustics in parts of England remote from London. Steele, in some papers of the *Guardian*, had praised Ambrose Philips as the pastoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope, who had also published pastorals, not pleased to be overlooked, drew up a comparison of his own compositions

with those of Philips, in which he covertly gave himself the preference, while he seemed to disown it. Not content with this, he is supposed to have incited Gay to write *The Shepherd's Week*, to shew, that if it be necessary to copy nature with minuteness, rural life must be exhibited such as grossness and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was reasonable; but the Pastorals are introduced by a *Proem*, written with such imitation as they could attain of obsolete language, and, by consequence, in a style that was never spoken nor written in any age or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to shew them groveling and degraded. These Pastorals became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations.

In 1713 he brought a comedy, called *The Wife of Bath*, upon the stage, but it received no applause. He printed it, however; and seventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the public taste, he offered it again to the town; but, though he was flushed with the success of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to see it again rejected.

In the last year of Queen Anne's life, Gay was made secretary to the Earl of Clarendon, ambassador to the court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party: but the Queen's death put an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift considered as the crime that obstructed all kindness from the house of Hanover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the Princess of Wales he wrote a poem, and obtained so much favour that the Prince and Princess went to see his *What d'ye call It*, a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comic and the action grave; so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwell, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleasure by novelty, and was so much favoured by the audience, that envy appeared against it in the form of criticism; and Griffin, a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called

the *Key to the What d'ye call It*; "which," says Gay, "calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave."

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally imply something more generally welcome, a soft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to please them: but he that believes his powers strong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to please himself.

He had been simple enough to imagine that those who laughed at the *What d'ye call It* would raise the fortune of its author; and, finding nothing done, sunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. The Earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire: the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix; and in the following year Lord Harcourt invited him to his seat, where, during his visit, the two rural lovers were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his Poems by subscription, with such success, that he raised a thousand pounds; and called his friends to a consultation, what use might be best made of it. Lewis, the steward of Lord Oxford, advised him to intrust it to the funds, and live upon the interest; Arbuthnot bade him intrust it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was seconded by Swift, to purchase an annuity.

Gay, in that disastrous year, had a present from young Craggs of some South-Sea stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase a hundred a year for life; "which," says Fenton, "will make you sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day." This counsel was rejected; the profit and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shewn particular tenderness, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, he wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before the Princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the Princess and her ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence,



too great for any other attention, stumbled at a stool, and, falling forwards, threw down a weighty Japan screen. The Princess started, the ladies screamed, and poor Gay, after all the disturbance, was still to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives* I know not; but he now thought himself in favour, and undertook (1726) to write a volume of Fables for the improvement of the young Duke of Cumberland. For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had doubtless magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

Next year the Prince and Princess became King and Queen, and Gay was to be great and happy: but upon the settlement of the household he found himself appointed Gentleman Usher to the Princess Louisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, and sent a message to the Queen, that he was too old for the place. There seem to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour, and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the King and Queen, to engage her interest for his promotion; but solicitations, verses, and flatteries, were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All the pain which he suffered from the neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be supposed to have been driven away by the unexampled success of the *Beggar's Opera*. This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian Drama, was first offered to Cibber and his brethren, at Drury-Lane, and rejected; it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of "making Gay rich, and Rich gay."

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, according to the different opinion of its readers. Swift commended it for the excellence of its morality, as a piece that "placed all kinds of vice in the strongest and most odious light;" but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished. It has been even said, that after the exhibition of the *Beggar's Opera* the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both these decisions are surely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is therefore not likely to do

good; nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and house-breakers seldom frequent the playhouse, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved upon the stage.

This objection, however, or some other rather political than moral, obtained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit. The publication was so much favoured, that though the first part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the second.

He received yet another recompense for this supposed hardship, in the affectionate attention of the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. The Duke, considering his want of economy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is supposed that the discountenance of the Court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could overpower. He soon fell into his old distemper, an habitual colic, and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent fit at last seized him, and hurried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a monument, with an affectionate inscription by Pope, is erected to him.

OF Manners gentle, of Affections mild;  
 In Wit, a Man; Simplicity, a Child:  
 With native Humour temp'ring virtuous Rage,  
 Form'd to delight at once and lash the Age:  
 Above Temptation, in a low Estate,  
 And uncorrupted, ev'n among the Great:  
 A safe Companion, and an easy Friend,  
 Unblam'd thro' Life, lamented in thy End.  
 These are Thy Honours! not that here thy Bust  
 Is mix'd with Heroes, or with Kings thy Dust;  
 But that the Worthy and the Good shall say,  
 Striking their pensive Bosoms—*Here lies GAY.*

After his death was published a second volume of Fables more political than the former. His Opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were given to two widow sisters, who inherited what he left, as his lawful heirs; for he died without a will, though he had gathered three thousand pounds. There have appeared likewise under his name a comedy called the *Distrest Wife*, and the *Rehearsal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope is this, that he was "a natural man, without design, who spoke what he thought, and just as he thought it;" and that "he was of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great;" which caution however, says Pope, was of no avail.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work; for, having published one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables, the authors do not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with *Tales*, and Gay both with *Tales* and *Allegories*. A *Fable* or *Apologue*, such as is now under consideration, seems to be, in its genuine state, a narrative in which beings irrational, and sometimes inanimate, "arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ," are, for the purpose of moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interests and passions. To this description the compositions of Gay do not always conform. For a Fable he gives now and then a Tale or an Allegory; and from some, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with liveliness; the versification is smooth, and the diction, though now and then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

Of his little Poems the public judgment seems to be right; they are neither much esteemed, nor totally despised. Those that please least are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occasion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?

# FABLES.

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## PART I.

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### INTRODUCTION.

#### THE SHEPHERD AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

REMOTE from cities liv'd a Swain,  
Unvex'd with all the cares of gain ;  
His head was silver'd o'er with age,  
And long experience made him sage ;  
In summer's heat, and winter's cold,  
He fed his flock and penn'd the fold ;

His hours in cheerful labour flew,  
Nor envy nor ambition knew ;  
His wisdom and his honest fame  
Through all the country rais'd his name.

A deep Philosopher (whose rules  
Of moral life were drawn from schools)  
The Shepherd's homely cottage sought,  
And thus explor'd his reach of thought :

“ Whence is thy learning ? hath thy toil  
O'er books consum'd the midnight oil ?  
Hast thou old Greece and Rome survey'd,  
And the vast sense of Plato weigh'd ?  
Hath Socrates thy soul refin'd,  
And hast thou fathom'd Tully's mind ?  
Or, like the wise Ulysses, thrown,  
By various fates, on realms unknown ?  
Hast thou through many cities stray'd,  
Their customs, laws, and manners weigh'd ?”

The Shepherd modestly replied,—  
“ I ne'er the paths of learning tried ;  
Nor have I roam'd in foreign parts  
To read mankind, their laws and arts ;  
For man is practis'd in disguise,  
He cheats the most discerning eyes :  
Who by that search shall wiser grow,  
When we ourselves can never know ?  
The little knowledge I have gain'd,  
Was all from simple nature drain'd ;  
Hence my life's maxims took their rise,  
Hence grew my settled hate to vice.



“ The daily labours of the bee  
Awake my soul to industry :  
Who can observe the careful ant,  
And not provide for future want ?  
My dog (the trustiest of his kind)  
With gratitude inflames my mind :  
I mark his true, his faithful way,  
And in my service copy Tray.  
In constancy and nuptial love,  
I learn my duty from the dove.  
The hen, who from the chilly air,  
With pious wing, protects her care,  
And every fowl that flies at large  
Instructs me in a parent’s charge.

“ From nature too I take my rule,  
To shun contempt and ridicule.  
I never, with important air,  
In conversation overbear.  
Can grave and formal pass for wise,  
When men the solemn owl despise ?  
My tongue within my lips I rein,  
For who talks much must talk in vain :  
We from the wordy torrent fly :  
Who listens to the chatt’ring pie ?  
Nor would I with felonious slight  
By stealth invade my neighbour’s right ;  
Rapacious animals we hate :  
Kites, hawks, and wolves deserve their fate.  
Do not we just abhorrence find  
Against the toad and serpent kind ?

But envy, calumny, and spite  
Bear stronger venom in their bite.  
Thus every object of creation  
Can furnish hints to contemplation ;  
And from the most minute and mean,  
A virtuous mind can morals glean."

"Thy fame is just, (the Sage replies),  
Thy virtue proves thee truly wise ;  
Pride often guides the author's pen ;  
Books as affected are as men :  
But he who studies nature's laws,  
From certain truth his maxims draws ;  
And those, without our schools, suffice  
To make men moral, good, and wise."



TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
WILLIAM, DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.



## FABLE I.

## THE LION, TIGER, AND TRAVELLER.

ACCEPT, young Prince, the moral lay,  
And in these tales mankind survey ;  
With early virtues plant your breast,  
The specious arts of vice detest.

Princes, like beauties, from their youth  
Are strangers to the voice of truth :  
Learn to contemn all praise betimes ;  
For flattery's the nurse of crimes ;  
Friendship by sweet reproof is shown,  
(A virtue never near a throne) ;  
In courts such freedom must offend,  
There none presumes to be a friend.

To those of your exalted station  
Each courtier is a dedication ;  
Must I too flatter like the rest,  
And turn my morals to a jest ?  
The muse disdains to steal from those  
Who thrive in courts by fulsome prose.

But shall I hide your real praise,  
Or tell you what a nation says ?  
They in your infant bosom trace  
The virtues of your royal race,  
In the fair dawning of your mind  
Discern you gen'rous, mild, and kind ;  
They see you grieve to hear distress,  
And pant already to redress.  
Go on, the height of good attain,  
Nor let a nation hope in vain.  
For hence we justly may presage  
The virtues of a riper age.

True courage shall your bosom fire,  
And future actions own your sire.  
Cowards are cruel ; but the brave  
Love mercy, and delight to save.

A Tiger, roaming for his prey,  
Sprung on a Traveller in the way.  
The prostrate game a lion spies,  
And on the greedy tyrant flies :  
With mingled roar resounds the wood,  
Their teeth, their claws, distil with blood,  
Till, vanquish'd by the lion's strength,  
The spotted foe extends his length.

The man besought the shaggy lord,  
And on his knees for life implor'd.  
His life the generous hero gave.  
Together walking to his cave,  
The Lion thus bespoke his guest :

“What hardy beast shall dare contest  
My matchless strength? you saw the fight,  
And must attest my pow'r and right.  
Forc'd to forego their native home,  
My starving slaves at distance roam.  
Within these woods I reign alone,  
The boundless forest is my own ;  
Bears, wolves, and all the savage brood,  
Have dy'd the regal den with blood ;  
These carcasses on either hand,  
Those bones that whiten all the land,  
My former deeds and triumphs tell,  
Beneath these jaws what numbers fell.”

“True, (says the man), the strength I saw  
Might well the brutal nation awe ;  
But shall a monarch, brave like you,  
Place glory in so false a view ?  
Robbers invade their neighbours' right.  
Be lov'd ; let justice bound your might.  
Mean are ambitious heroes' boasts  
Of wasted lands and slaughter'd hosts ;  
Pirates their power by murders gain ;  
Wise kings by love and mercy reign ;  
To me your clemency hath shown  
The virtue worthy of a throne :



Heaven gives you power above the rest,  
Like Heaven to succour the distrest."

"The case is plain, (the monarch said),  
False glory hath my youth misled,  
For beasts of prey, a servile train,  
Have been the flatt'ers of my reign.  
You reason well: yet tell me, friend,  
Did ever you in courts attend?  
For all my fawning rogues agree  
That human heroes rule like me."





## FABLE II.

## THE SPANIEL AND THE CAMELEON.

A SPANIEL, bred with all the care  
That waits upon a fav'rite heir,  
Ne'er felt correction's rigid hand ;  
Indulg'd to disobey command,  
In pamper'd ease his hours were spent ;  
He never knew what learning meant ;  
Such forward airs, so pert, so smart,  
Were sure to win his lady's heart,  
Each little mischief gain'd him praise ;  
How pretty were his fawning ways !

The wind was south, the morning fair,  
He ventures forth to take the air ;  
He ranges all the meadow round,  
And rolls upon the softest ground ;

When near him a Cameleon seen,  
Was scarce distinguish'd from the green.

“Dear emblem of the flatt'ring host!  
What, live with clowns! a genius lost!  
To cities and the court repair,  
A fortune cannot fail thee there;  
Preferment shall thy talents crown;  
Believe me, friend, I know the town.”

“Sir, (says the sycophant), like you,  
Of old, politer life I knew;  
Like you, a courtier born and bred,  
Kings lean'd their ear to what I said;  
My whisper always met success;  
The ladies prais'd me for address;  
I knew to hit each courtier's passion,  
And flatter'd every vice in fashion.  
But Jove, who hates the liar's ways,  
At once cut short my prosperous days,  
And, sentenc'd to retain my nature,  
Transform'd me to this crawling creature;  
Doom'd to a life obscure and mean,  
I wander in the sylvan scene.  
For Jove the heart alone regards;  
He punishes what man rewards.—  
How different is thy case and mine!  
With men at least you sup and dine,  
While I, condemn'd to thinnest fare,  
Like those I flatter'd, feed on air.”



## FABLE III.

THE MOTHER, THE NURSE, AND THE FAIRY.

“GIVE me a son!”—The blessing sent,  
 Were ever parents more content?  
 How partial are their doting eyes!  
 No child is half so fair and wise.

Wak'd to the morning's pleasing care,  
 The mother rose and sought her heir:  
 She saw the nurse, like one possess'd,  
 With wringing hands and sobbing breast.

“Sure some disaster has befell:  
 Speak, Nurse; I hope the boy is well.”

“Dear Madam, think not me to blame;  
 Invisible the Fairy came;  
 Your precious babe is hence convey'd,  
 And in the place a changeling laid.

Where are the father's mouth and nose,  
The mother's eyes, as black as sloes?  
See here, a shocking awkward creature,  
That speaks a fool in every feature."

"The woman's blind, (the mother cries),  
I see wit sparkle in his eyes."

"Lord! Madam, what a squinting leer!  
No doubt the fairy hath been here."

Just as she spoke, a pigmy sprite  
Pops through the key-hole, swift as light;  
Perch'd on the cradle's top she stands,  
And thus her folly reprimands:

"Whence sprung the vain conceited lie,  
That we the world with fools supply?  
What! give our sprightly race away  
For the dull helpless sons of clay!—  
Besides, by partial fondness shown,  
Like you we dote upon our own.  
Where yet was ever found a mother,  
Who'd give her booby for another?  
And should we change with human breed,  
Well might we pass for fools indeed."





## FABLE IV.

## THE EAGLE AND ASSEMBLY OF ANIMALS.

As Jupiter's all-seeing eye  
 Survey'd the worlds beneath the sky,  
 From this small speck of earth were sent  
 Murmurs and sounds of discontent ;  
 For every thing alive complain'd,  
 That he the hardest life sustain'd.

Jove calls his Eagle. At the word  
 Before him stands the royal bird.  
 The bird, obedient, from Heaven's height,  
 Downward directs his rapid flight ;  
 Then cited every living thing  
 To hear the mandates of his king.

“ Ungrateful creatures ! whence arise  
 These murmurs which offend the skies ?



Why this disorder? say the cause;  
For just are Jove's eternal laws.  
Let each his discontent reveal;  
To yon sour Dog I first appeal."

"Hard is my lot (the Hound replies),  
On what fleet nerves the Greyhound flies;  
While I, with weary step and slow,  
O'er plains, and vales, and mountains go.  
The morning sees my chase begun,  
Nor ends it till the setting sun."

"When (says the Greyhound), I pursue,  
My game is lost, or caught in view;  
Beyond my sight the prey's secure;  
The Hound is slow, but always sure;  
And had I his sagacious scent,  
Jove ne'er had heard my discontent."

The Lion craved the Fox's art,  
The Fox the Lion's force and heart:  
The Cock implored the Pigeon's flight,  
Whose wings were rapid, strong, and light;  
The Pigeon strength of wing despised,  
And the Cock's matchless valour prized:  
The Fishes wish'd to graze the plain,  
The Beasts to skim beneath the main:  
Thus, envious of another's state,  
Each blamed the partial hand of Fate.

The bird of Heaven then cried aloud,  
"Jove bids disperse the murmuring crowd;  
The god rejects your idle prayers,  
Would ye, rebellious mutineers!

Entirely change your name and nature,  
And be the very envied creature ?  
What, silent all, and none consent ?  
Be happy, then, and learn content :  
Nor imitate the restless mind,  
And proud ambition, of mankind ”





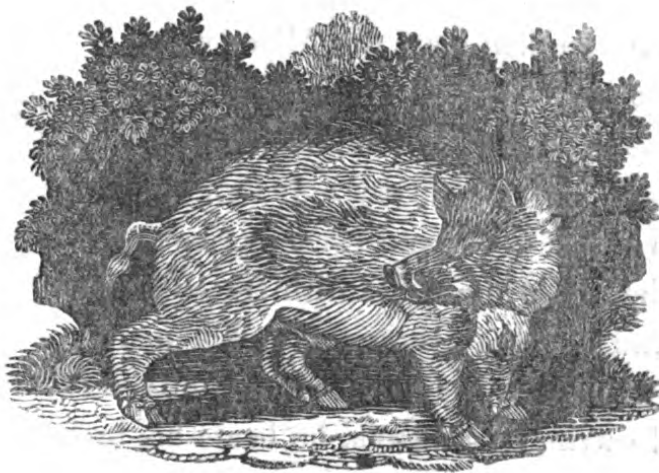
## FABLE V.

## THE WILD BOAR AND THE RAM.

AGAINST an elm a sheep was tied,  
 The butcher's knife in blood was dyed ;  
 The patient flock, in silent fright,  
 From far beheld the horrid sight :  
 A savage Boar, who near them stood,  
 Thus mock'd to scorn the fleecy brood.

" All cowards should be served like you.  
 See, see, your murderer is in view :  
 With purple hands, and reeking knife,  
 He strips the skin yet warm with life.  
 Your quarter'd sires, your bleeding dams,  
 The dying bleat of harmless lambs,  
 Call for revenge. O stupid race !  
 The heart that wants revenge is base."

“I grant (an ancient Ram replies),  
We bear no terror in our eyes ;  
Yet think us not of soul so tame,  
Which no repeated wrongs inflame ;  
Insensible of every ill,  
Because we want thy tusks to kill.  
Know, those who violence pursue,  
Give to themselves the vengeance due ;  
For in these massacres they find  
The two chief plagues that waste mankind.  
Our skin supplies the wrangling bar,  
It wakes their slumbering sons to war ;  
And well revenge may rest contented,  
Since drums and parchment were invented.”





## FABLE VI.

## THE MISER AND PLUTUS.

THE wind was high, the window shakes,  
With sudden start the Miser wakes ;  
Along the silent room he stalks,  
Looks back, and trembles as he walks.  
Each lock and every bolt he tries,  
In every creek and corner pries ;  
Then opes the chest with treasure stored,  
And stands in rapture o'er his hoard :  
But now with sudden qualms possess'd,  
He wrings his hands, he beats his breast :  
By conscience stung, he wildly stares,  
And thus his guilty soul declares :  
    “ Had the deep earth her stores confined,  
This heart had known sweet peace of mind.

But virtue's sold. Good gods! what price  
Can recompense the pangs of vice!  
O bane of good! seducing cheat!  
Can man, weak man, thy power defeat?  
Gold banish'd honour from the mind,  
And only left the name behind;  
Gold sow'd the world with every ill;  
Gold taught the murderer's sword to kill:  
'Twas gold instructed coward hearts  
In treachery's more pernicious arts.  
Who can recount the mischiefs o'er?  
Virtue resides on earth no more!"—  
He spoke, and sigh'd.—In angry mood,  
Plutus, his god, before him stood.  
The Miser, trembling, lock'd his chest;  
The Vision frown'd, and thus address'd:  
    "Whence is this vile ungrateful rant,  
Each sordid rascal's daily cant?  
Did I, base wretch, corrupt mankind?—  
The fault's in thy rapacious mind.  
Because my blessings are abused,  
Must I be censured, cursed, accused?  
E'en virtue's self by knaves is made  
A cloak to carry on the trade;  
And power (when lodged in their possession)  
Grows tyranny and rank oppression.  
Thus, when the villain crams his chest,  
Gold is the canker of the breast;  
'Tis avarice, insolence, and pride,  
And every shocking vice beside:



But when to virtuous hands 'tis given,  
It blesses, like the dews of Heaven ;  
Like Heaven, it hears the orphan's cries,  
And wipes the tears from widows' eyes.  
Their crimes on gold shall Misers lay,  
Who pawn'd their sordid souls for pay ?  
Let bravoës, then, when blood is spilt,  
Upbraid the passive sword with guilt."





## FABLE VII.

## THE LION, THE FOX, AND THE GEESE.

A LION, tired with state affairs,  
 Quite sick of pomp, and worn with cares,  
 Resolved (remote from noise and strife)  
 In peace to pass his latter life.

It was proclaim'd ; the day was set :—  
 Behold the general council met.  
 The Fox was viceroy named. The crowd  
 To the new regent humbly bow'd.  
 Wolves, bears, and mighty tigers bend,  
 And strive who most shall condescend.  
 He straight assumes a solemn grace,  
 Collects his wisdom in his face :  
 The crowd admire his wit, his sense ;  
 Each word hath weight and consequence.

The flatterer all his art displays :  
He who hath power is sure of praise.  
A Fox stept forth before the rest,  
And thus the servile throng address :  
    “ How vast his talents, born to rule,  
And train'd in Virtue's honest school !  
What clemency his temper sways !  
How uncorrupt are all his ways !  
Beneath his conduct and command,  
Rapine shall cease to waste the land.  
His brain hath stratagem and art ;  
Prudence and mercy rule his heart.  
What blessings must attend the nation  
Under this good administration !”

He said. A Goose, who distant stood,  
Harangued apart the cackling brood :  
    “ Whene'er I hear a knave commend,  
He bids me shun his worthy friend.  
What praise, what mighty commendation !  
But 'twas a Fox who spoke th' oration.  
Foxes this government may prize  
As gentle, plentiful, and wise ;  
If they enjoy the sweets, 'tis plain  
We Geese must feel a tyrant-reign.  
What havock now shall thin our race,  
When every petty clerk in place,  
To prove his taste and seem polite,  
Will feed on Geese both noon and night !”



## FABLE VIII.

## THE LADY AND THE WASP.

WHAT whispers must the beauty bear ;  
 What hourly nonsense haunts her ear !  
 Where'er her eyes dispense their charms,  
 Impertinence around her swarms.  
 Did not the tender nonsense strike,  
 Contempt and scorn might look dislike ;  
 Forbidding airs might thin the place,  
 The slightest flap a fly can chase :  
 But who can drive the numerous breed ?—  
 Chase one, another will succeed.  
 Who knows a fool must know his brother ;  
 One fop will recommend another :  
 And with this plague she's rightly curst,  
 Because she listen'd to the first.

As Doris, at her toilet's duty,  
Sat meditating on her beauty,  
She now was pensive, now was gay,  
And loll'd the sultry hours away.

As thus in indolence she lies,  
A giddy Wasp around her flies.  
He now advances, now retires,  
Now to her neck and cheek aspires.  
Her fan in vain defends her charms ;  
Swift he returns, again alarms ;  
For by repulse he bolder grew,  
Perch'd on her lip, and sipt the dew.

She frowns ; she frets. " Good gods ! (she cries)  
Protect me from these teasing flies :  
Of all the plagues that Heaven hath sent,  
A Wasp is most impertinent."

The hovering insect thus complain'd ;  
" Am I then slighted, scorn'd, disdain'd ?  
Can such offence your anger wake ?  
'Twas beauty caused the bold mistake.  
Those cherry lips that breathe perfume,  
That cheek so ripe with youthful bloom,  
Made me with strong desire pursue  
The fairest peach that ever grew."

" Strike him not, Jenny, (Doris cries),  
Nor murder Wasps like vulgar flies ;  
For though he's free (to do him right),  
The creature's civil and polite."

In ecstasies away he posts ;  
Where'er he came, the favour boasts ;

Braggs how her sweetest tea he sips,  
And shows the sugar on his lips.

The hint alarm'd the forward crew ;  
Sure of success, away they flew :  
They share the dainties of the day,  
Round her with airy music play :  
And now they flutter, now they rest,  
Now soar again, and skim her breast.  
Nor were they banish'd till she found  
That Wasps have stings, and felt the wound.







## FABLE IX.

## THE BULL AND THE MASTIFF.

SEEK you to train your favourite boy?  
 Each caution, every care employ;  
 And ere you venture to confide,  
 Let his preceptor's heart be tried:  
 Weigh well his manners, life, and scope;  
 On these depends thy future hope.

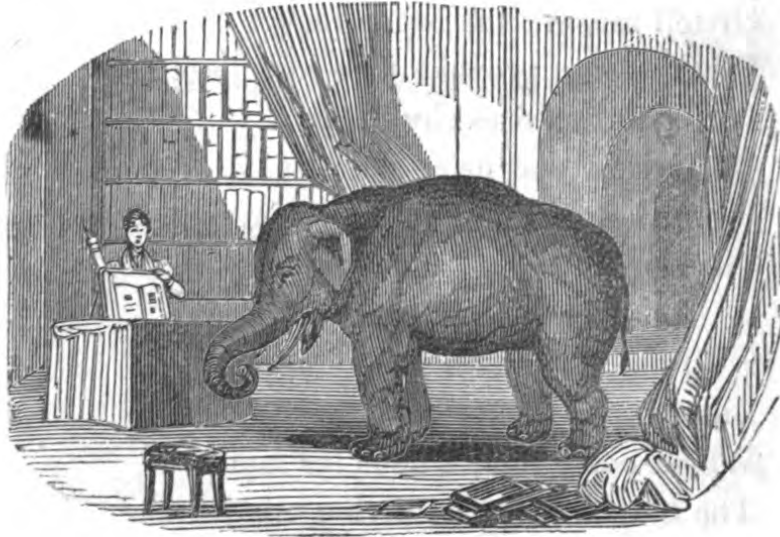
As on a time, in peaceful reign,  
 A Bull enjoy'd the flowery plain,  
 A Mastiff pass'd inflam'd with ire,  
 His eyeballs shot indignant fire;  
 He foam'd, he rag'd with thirst of blood.

Spurning the ground the monarch stood,  
 And roar'd aloud: "Suspend the fight;  
 In a whole skin go sleep to-night;

Or tell me, ere the battle rage,  
What wrongs provoke thee to engage?  
Is it ambition fires thy breast,  
Or avarice, that ne'er can rest?  
From these alone unjustly springs  
The world-destroying wrath of kings."

The surly Mastiff thus returns :  
"Within my bosom glory burns.  
Like heroes of eternal name,  
Whom poets sing, I fight for fame.  
The butcher's spirit-stirring mind  
To daily war my youth inclined ;  
He train'd me to heroic deed,  
Taught me to conquer or to bleed."

"Cursed Dog, (the Bull replied), no more  
I wonder at thy thirst of gore ;  
For thou (beneath a butcher train'd,  
Whose hands with cruelty are stain'd,  
His daily murders in thy view)  
Must, like thy tutor, blood pursue,  
Take, then, thy fate!" With goring wound  
At once he lifts him from the ground :  
Aloft the sprawling hero flies,  
Mangled he falls, he howls, and dies.



## FABLE X.

## THE ELEPHANT AND THE BOOKSELLER.

THE man who with undaunted toils  
 Sails unknown seas to unknown soils,  
 With various wonders feasts his sight :  
 What stranger wonders does he write ?  
 We read, and in description view  
 Creatures which Adam never knew ;  
 For when we risk no contradiction,  
 It prompts the tongue to deal in fiction.  
 Those things that startle me or you,  
 I grant are strange ; yet may be true.  
 Who doubts that Elephants are found  
 For science and for sense renown'd ?  
 Borri records their strength of parts,  
 Extent of thought, and skill in arts ;  
 How they perform the law's decrees,  
 And save the state the hangman's fees ;

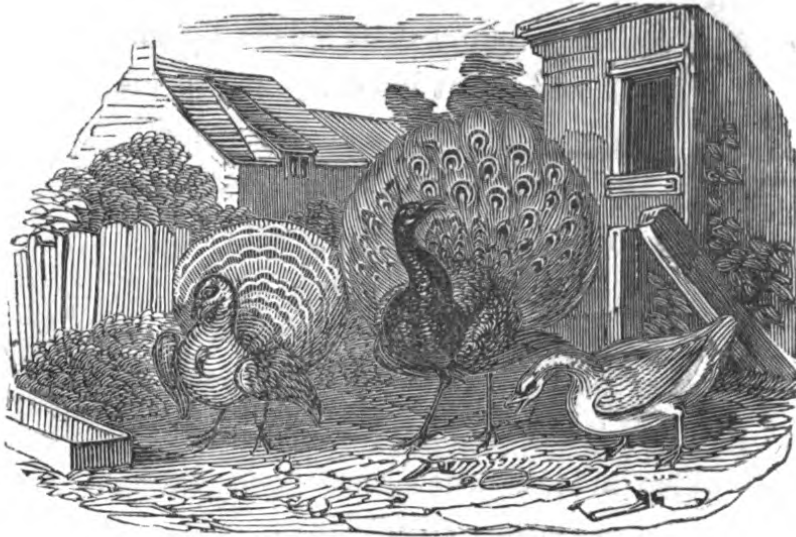
And how by travel understand  
The language of another land.  
Let those who question this report,  
To Pliny's ancient page resort.  
How learn'd was that sagacious breed ;  
Who now (like them) the Greek can read ?  
As one of these, in days of yore,  
Rummaged a shop of learning o'er ;  
Not, like our modern dealers, minding  
Only the margin's breadth and binding ;  
A book his curious eye detains,  
Where, with exactest care and pains,  
Were every beast and bird portray'd,  
That e'er the search of man survey'd ;  
Their natures and their powers were writ  
With all the pride of human wit :  
The page he with attention spread,  
And thus remark'd on what he read.  
" Man with strong reason is endow'd,  
A beast scarce instinct is allow'd :  
But let this author's worth be tried,  
'Tis plain that neither was his guide.  
Can he discern the different natures,  
And weigh the power of other creatures,  
Who by the partial work hath shown  
He knows so little of his own ?  
How falsely is the spaniel drawn !  
Did man from him first learn to fawn !  
A dog proficient in the trade !  
He, the chief flatterer Nature made !

Go, Man ! the ways of courts discern,  
You'll find a spaniel still might learn.  
How can the Fox's theft and plunder  
Provoke his censure or his wonder ?  
From courtiers' tricks and lawyers' arts,  
The Fox might well improve his parts.  
The lion, wolf, and tiger's brood,  
He curses, for their thirst of blood :  
But is not man to man a prey ?  
Beasts kill for hunger, men for pay."

The Bookseller, who heard him speak,  
And saw him turn a page of Greek,  
Thought, ' what a genius have I found !'  
Then thus address'd with bow profound :

" Learn'd Sir, if you'd employ your pen  
Against the senseless sons of men,  
Or write the history of Siam,  
No man is better pay than I am ;  
Or, since you're learn'd in Greek, let's see  
Something against the Trinity."

When wrinkling with a sneer his trunk,  
" Friend, (quoth the Elephant) you're drunk :  
E'en keep your money, and be wise :  
Leave man on man to criticise :  
For that you ne'er can want a pen  
Among the senseless sons of men.  
They unprovoked will court the fray ;  
Envy's a sharper spur than pay :  
No author ever spared a brother ;  
Wits are game-cocks to one another."



## FABLE XI.

## THE PEACOCK, TURKEY, AND GOOSE.

IN beauty faults conspicuous grow ;  
 The smallest speck is seen on snow.  
 As near a barn, by hunger led,  
 A Peacock with the poultry fed,  
 All view'd him with an envious eye,  
 And mock'd his gaudy pageantry.  
 He, conscious of superior merit,  
 Contemns their base reviling spirit ;  
 His state and dignity assumes,  
 And to the sun displays his plumes,  
 Which, like the Heaven's o'er-arching skies,  
 Are spangled with a thousand eyes.  
 The circling rays, and varied light,  
 At once confound their dazzled sight ;

On every tongue detraction burns,  
And malice prompts their spleen by turns.

“Mark with what insolence and pride  
The creature takes his haughty stride,  
(The Turkey cries). Can spleen contain?  
Sure never bird was half so vain!  
But were intrinsic merit seen,  
We Turkeys have the whiter skin.”

From tongue to tongue they caught abuse,  
And next was heard the hissing Goose:  
“What hideous legs! what filthy claws!  
I scorn to censure little flaws:  
Then what a horrid squalling throat!  
E'en owls are frightened at the note.”

“True: those are faults, (the Peacock cries),  
My scream, my shanks, you may despise;  
But such blind critics rail in vain:  
What! overlook my radiant train!  
Know, did my legs (your scorn and sport)  
The Turkey or the Goose support,  
And did ye scream with harsher sound,  
Those faults in you had ne'er been found!  
To all apparent beauties blind,  
Each blemish strikes an envious mind.”

Thus in assemblies have I seen  
A nymph, of brightest charms and mien,  
Wake envy in each ugly face,  
And buzzing scandal fills the place.





## FABLE XII.

## CUPID, HYMEN, AND PLUTUS.

As Cupid in Cythera's grove  
 Employ'd the lesser powers of Love ;  
 Some shape the bow, or fit the string,  
 Some give the taper shaft its wing,  
 Or turn the polish'd quiver's mould,  
 Or head the darts with temper'd gold.

Amidst their toil and various care,  
 Thus Hymen, with assuming air,  
 Address'd the god : " Thou purblind Chit,  
 Of awkward and ill-judging wit,  
 If matches are not better made,  
 At once I must forswear my trade.  
 You send me such ill-coupled folks,  
 That 'tis a shame to sell them yokes.

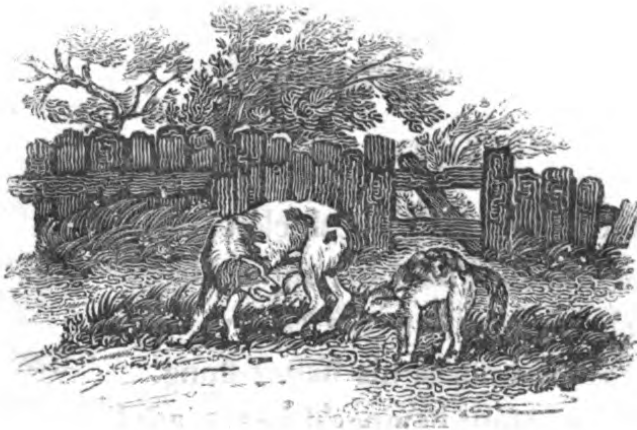
They squabble for a pin, a feather,  
 And wonder how they came together.  
 The husband's sullen, dogged, shy,  
 The wife grows flippant in reply ;  
 He loves command and due restriction,  
 And she as well likes contradiction :  
 She never slavishly submits,  
 She'll have her will, or have her fits.  
 He this way tugs, she t' other draws ;  
 The man grows jealous, and with cause,  
 Nothing can save him but divorce,  
 And here the wife complies of course.

“ When (says the Boy) had I to do  
 With either your affairs or you ?  
 I never idly spend my darts ;  
 You trade in mercenary hearts.  
 For settlements the lawyer's fee'd ;  
 Is my hand witness to the deed ?  
 If they like cat and dog agree,  
 Go rail at Plutus, not at me.”

Plutus appear'd, and said, “ 'Tis true,  
 In marriage gold is all their view ;  
 They seek not beauty, wit, or sense,  
 And love is seldom the pretence.  
 All offer incense at my shrine,  
 And I alone the bargain sign.  
 How can Belinda blame her fate ?  
 She only ask'd a great estate.  
 Doris was rich enough, 'tis true ;  
 Her lord must give her title too :

And every man, or rich or poor,  
A fortune asks, and asks no more."

Avarice, whatever shape it bears,  
Must still be coupled with its cares.





## FABLE XIII.

## THE TAME STAG.

As a young Stag the thicket past,  
 The branches held his antlers fast ;  
 A clown, who saw the captive hung,  
 Across the horns his halter flung.

Now safely hamper'd in the cord,  
 He bore the present to his lord,  
 His lord was pleased, as was the clown,  
 When he was tipp'd with half-a-crown.  
 The Stag was brought before his wife ;  
 The tender lady begg'd his life :  
 " How sleek's the skin ! how speck'd like ermine !  
 Sure never creature was so charming !"

At first within the yard confin'd,  
 He flies and hides from all mankind ;

Now bolder grown, with fix'd amaze,  
And distant awe, presumes to gaze :  
Munches the linen on the lines,  
And on a hood or apron dines :  
He steals my little master's bread,  
Follows the servants to be fed :  
Nearer and nearer now he stands,  
To feel the praise of patting hands ;  
Examines every fist for meat,  
And, though repulsed, disdains retreat :  
Attacks again with levell'd horns,  
And man, that was his terror, scorns.

Such is the country maiden's fright,  
When first a Red-coat is in sight ;  
Behind the door she hides her face,  
Next time at distance eyes the lace :  
She now can all his terrors stand,  
Nor from his squeeze withdraws her hand.  
She plays familiar in his arms,  
And every soldier hath his charms :  
From tent to tent she spreads her flame ;  
For custom conquers fear and shame.





## FABLE XIV.

## THE MONKEY WHO HAD SEEN THE WORLD.

A MONKEY, to reform the times,  
 Resolved to visit foreign climes ;  
 For men in distant regions roam  
 To bring politer manners home.  
 So forth he fares, all toil defies :  
 Misfortune serves to make us wise.

At length the treacherous snare was laid ;  
 Poor Pug was caught ; to town convey'd ;  
 There sold. (How envied was his doom,  
 Made captive in a lady's room !)  
 Proud, as a lover of his chains,  
 He day by day her favour gains.  
 Whene'er the duty of the day  
 The toilet calls ; with mimic play

He twirls her knots, he cracks her fan,  
Like any other gentleman.  
In visits, too, his parts and wit,  
When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.  
Proud with applause, he thought his mind  
In every courtly art refin'd ;  
Like Orpheus, burnt with public zeal,  
To civilize the Monkey-weal ;  
So watch'd occasion, broke his chain,  
And sought his native woods again.

The hairy sylvans round him press,  
Astonish'd at his strut and dress :  
Some praise his sleeve, and others gloat  
Upon his rich embroider'd coat.  
His dapper periwig commending,  
With the black tail behind depending :  
His powder'd back, above, below,  
Like hoary frost, or fleecy snow ;  
But all, with envy and desire,  
His fluttering shoulder-knot admire.

“ Hear and improve, (he pertly cries),  
I come to make a nation wise.  
Weigh your own worth ; support your place,  
The next in rank to human race.  
In cities long I pass'd my days,  
Conversed with men, and learn'd their ways.  
Their dress their courtly manners see ;  
Reform your state, and copy me.  
Seek ye to thrive ? In flattery deal ;  
Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.



Seem only to regard your friends,  
But use them for your private ends.  
Stint not to truth the flow of wit ;  
Be prompt to lie, whene'er 'tis fit.  
Bend all your force to spatter merit ;  
Scandal is conversation's spirit.  
Boldly to every thing pretend,  
And men your talents shall commend.  
I know the great. Observe me right ;  
So shall you grow, like man, polite."

He spoke, and bow'd. With muttering jaws  
The wondering circle grinn'd applause.

Now, warm'd with malice, envy, spite,  
Their most obliging friends they bite ;  
And, fond to copy human ways,  
Practise new mischiefs all their days.

Thus the dull lad, too tall for school,  
With travel finishes the fool ;  
Studious of every coxcomb's airs,  
He drinks, games, dresses, whores, and swears ;  
O'erlooks with scorn all virtuous arts,  
For vice is fitted to his parts.





## FABLE XV.

## THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE PHEASANTS.

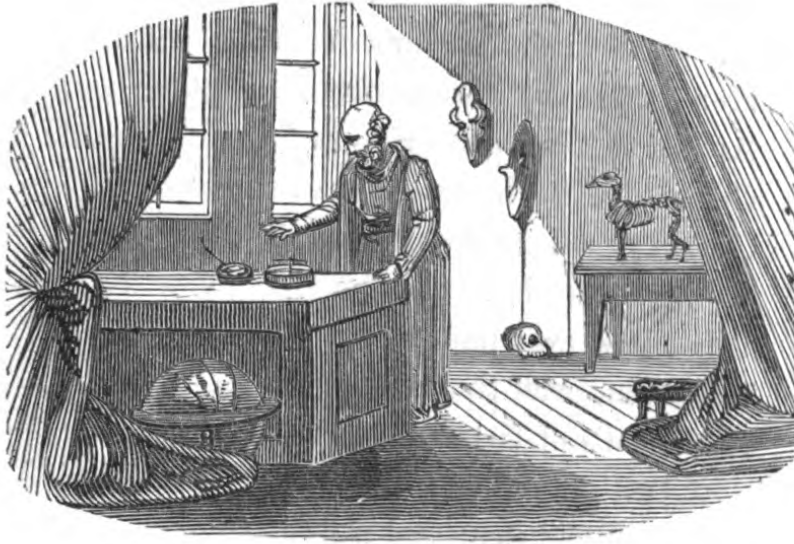
THE Sage, awak'd at early day,  
 Through the deep forest took his way ;  
 Drawn by the music of the groves,  
 Along the winding gloom he roves :  
 From tree to tree the warbling throats  
 Prolong the sweet alternate notes :  
 But where he pass'd he terror threw,  
 The song broke short, the warblers flew ;  
 The thrushes chatter'd with affright,  
 And nightingales abhorr'd his sight ;  
 All animals before him ran,  
 To shun the hateful sight of man.

“ Whence is this dread of every creature ?  
 Fly they our figure or our nature ? ”

As thus he walk'd in musing thought,  
 His ear imperfect accents caught ;

With cautious step he nearer drew,  
By the thick shade conceal'd from view.  
High on the branch a Pheasant stood,  
Around her all her listening brood ;  
Proud of the blessings of her nest,  
She thus a mother's care express'd :

“ No dangers here shall circumvent :  
Within the woods enjoy content.  
Sooner the hawk or vulture trust  
Than man, of animals the worst :  
In him ingratitude you find,  
A vice peculiar to the kind.  
The sheep, whose annual fleece is dy'd  
To guard his health, and serve his pride ;  
Forced from his fold and native plain,  
Is in the cruel shambles slain.  
The swarms who, with industrious skill,  
His hives with wax and honey fill,  
In vain whole summer days employ'd ;  
Their stores are sold, the race destroy'd.  
What tribute from the goose is paid !  
Does not her wing all science aid ?  
Does it not lovers' hearts explain,  
And drudge to raise the merchant's gain ?  
What now rewards this general use ?  
He takes the quills, and eats the goose.  
Man then avoid, detest his ways,  
So safety shall prolong your days.  
When services are thus acquitted,  
But sure we Pheasants must be spitted.”



## FABLE XVI.

## THE PIN AND THE NEEDLE.

A PIN, who long had served a beauty,  
 Proficient in the toilet's duty,  
 Had form'd her sleeve, confined her hair,  
 Or given her knot a smarter air,  
 Now nearest to her heart was placed,  
 Now in her mantua's tail disgraced ;  
 But could she partial fortune blame,  
 Who saw her lovers served the same ?

At length, from all her honours cast,  
 Through various turns of life she past ;  
 Now glitter'd on a tailor's arm,  
 Now kept a beggar's infant warm ;  
 Now, ranged within a miser's coat,  
 Contributes to his yearly groat ;

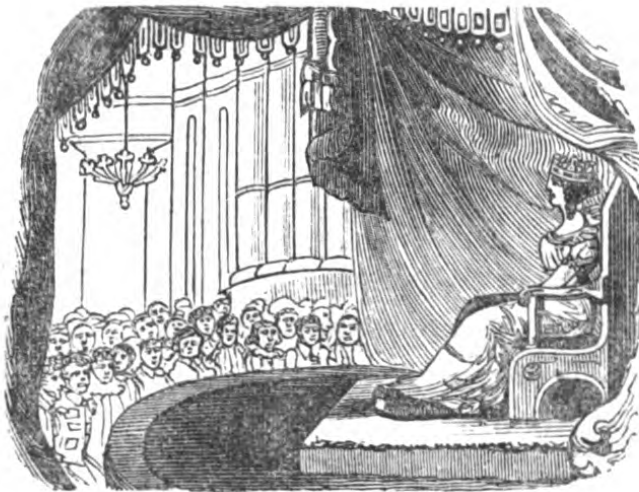
Now, raised again from low approach,  
 She visits in the doctor's coach :  
 Here, there, by various fortune tost,  
 At last in Gresham-hall was lost.  
 Charm'd with the wonders of the show,  
 On every side, above, below,  
 She now of this or that inquires ;  
 What least was understood admires.  
 'Tis plain, each thing so struck her mind,  
 Her head's of virtuoso kind.

“ And pray what's this, and this, dear Sir ?”  
 “ A Needle,” says the' interpreter.  
 She knew the name ; and thus the fool  
 Address'd her as a tailor's tool.

“ A Needle with that filthy stone,  
 Quite idle, all with rust o'ergrown !  
 You better might employ your parts,  
 And aid the sempstress in her arts ;  
 But tell me how the friendship grew  
 Between that paltry flint and you ?”

“ Friend, (says the Needle), cease to blame ;  
 I follow real worth and fame.  
 Know'st thou the loadstone's power and art,  
 That virtue virtues can impart ?  
 Of all his talents I partake,  
 Who then can such a friend forsake ?  
 'Tis I direct the pilot's hand  
 To shun the rocks and treacherous sand :  
 By me the distant world is known,  
 And either India is our own.

Had I with milliners been bred,  
What had I been? the guide of thread;  
And drudged, as vulgar Needles do,  
Of no more consequence than you."





## FABLE XVII.

## THE SHEPHERD'S DOG AND THE WOLF.

A WOLF, with hunger fierce and bold,  
Ravaged the plains, and thinn'd the fold ;  
Deep in the wood secure he lay,  
The thefts of night regaled the day.  
In vain the shepherd's wakeful care  
Had spread the toils, and watch'd the snare ;  
In vain the Dog pursued his pace,  
The fleeter robber mock'd the chase.

As Lightfoot ranged the forest round,  
By chance his foe's retreat he found.

"Let us awhile the war suspend,  
And reason as from friend to friend."

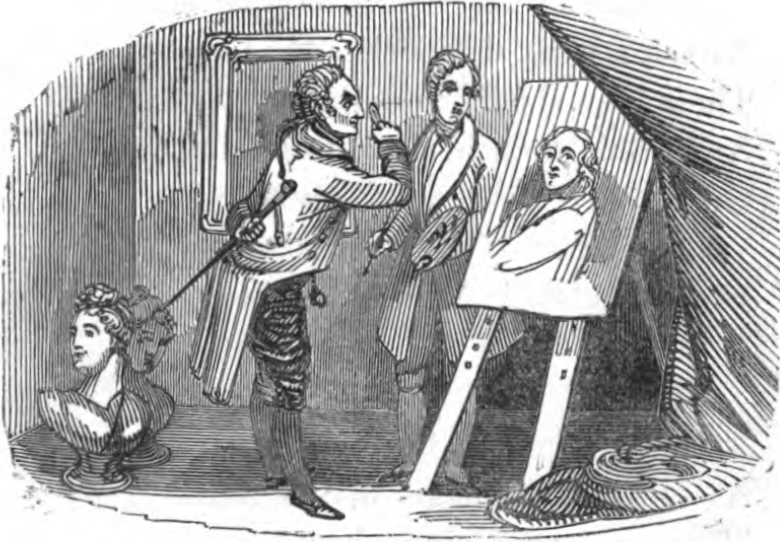
"A truce !" replies the Wolf. 'Tis done.  
The Dog the parley thus begun.



“ How can that strong intrepid mind  
Attack a weak defenceless kind ?  
Those jaws should prey on nobler food,  
And drink the boar’s and lion’s blood.  
Great souls with generous pity melt,  
Which coward tyrants never felt.  
How harmless is our fleecy care !  
Be brave, and let thy mercy spare.”

“ Friend, (says the Wolf), the matter weigh ;  
Nature design’d us beasts of prey ;  
As such, when hunger finds a treat,  
’Tis necessary Wolves should eat.  
If, mindful of the bleating weal,  
Thy bosom burn with real zeal,  
Hence, and thy tyrant lord beseech ;  
To him repeat the moving speech :  
A Wolf eats sheep but now and then,  
Ten thousands are devour’d by men.  
An open foe may prove a curse,  
But a pretended friend is worse.”





## FABLE XVIII.

THE PAINTER WHO PLEASD NOBODY AND  
EVERY BODY.

LEST men suspect your tale untrue,  
Keep probability in view,  
The traveller, leaping o'er those bounds,  
The credit of his book confounds.  
Who with his tongue hath armies routed,  
Makes ev'n his real courage doubted.  
But flattery never seems absurd ;  
The flatter'd always take your word :  
Impossibilities seem just :  
They take the strongest praise on trust.  
Hyperboles, though ne'er so great,  
Will still come short of self-conceit.  
So very like a Painter drew,  
That every eye the picture knew ;

He hit complexion, feature, air,  
So just, the life itself was there.  
No flattery, with his colours laid,  
To bloom restored the faded maid ;  
He gave each muscle all its strength ;  
The mouth, the chin, the nose's length ;  
His honest pencil touch'd with truth,  
And mark'd the date of age and youth.

He lost his friends, his practice fail'd ;  
Truth should not always be reveal'd :  
In dusty piles his pictures lay,  
For no one sent the second pay.

Two bustos, fraught with every grace,  
A Venus' and Apollo's face,  
He placed in view ; resolved to please,  
Whoever sat, he drew from these,  
From these corrected every feature,  
And spirited each awkward creature.

All things were set ; the hour was come,  
His pallet ready o'er his thumb ;  
My Lord appear'd ; and, seated right,  
In proper attitude and light,  
The Painter look'd, he sketch'd the piece,  
Then dipt his pencil, talk'd of Greece,  
Of Titian's tints, of Guido's air ;  
"Those eyes, my Lord, the spirit there  
Might well a Raphael's hand require,  
To give them all the native fire ;  
The features, fraught with sense and wit,  
You'll grant are very hard to hit ;

But yet with patience you shall view  
As much as paint and art can do."

Observe the work. My Lord replied,  
"Till now I thought my mouth was wide ;  
Besides, my nose is somewhat long ;  
Dear Sir, for me, 'tis far too young."

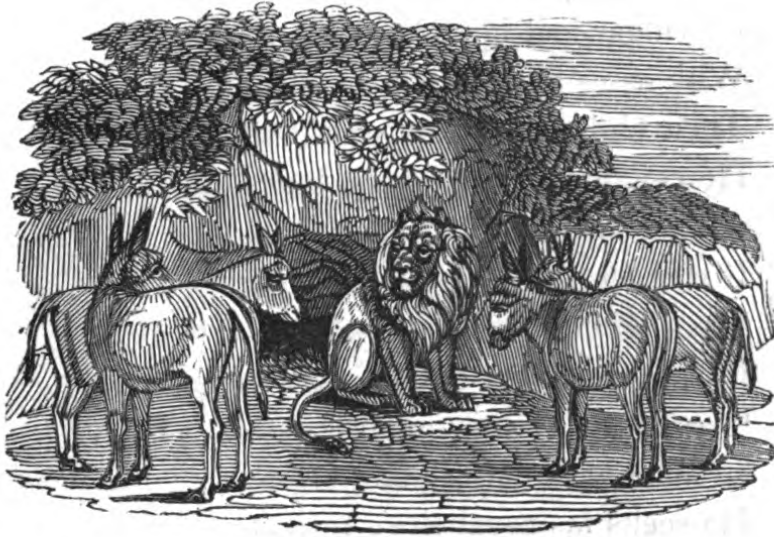
"Oh! pardon me, (the artist cried),  
In this we painters must decide.  
The piece e'en common eyes must strike,  
I warrant it extremely like."

My Lord examined it anew ;  
No looking-glass seem'd half so true.

A Lady came, with borrow'd grace  
He from his Venus form'd her face.  
Her lover praised the Painter's art ;  
So like the picture in his heart !  
To every age some charm he lent ;  
E'en beauties were almost content.

Through all the town his art they praised ;  
His custom grew, his price was raised.  
Had he the real likeness shown,  
Would any man the picture own ?  
But, when thus happily he wrought,  
Each found the likeness in his thought.





## FABLE XIX.

## THE LION AND THE CUB.

How fond are men of rule and place,  
 Who court it from the mean and base !  
 These cannot bear an equal nigh,  
 But from superior merit fly.  
 They love the cellar's vulgar joke,  
 And lose their hours in ale and smoke.  
 There o'er some petty club preside ;  
 So poor, so paltry is their pride !  
 Nay, e'en with fools whole nights will sit,  
 In hopes to be supreme in wit.  
 If these can read, to these I write,  
 To set their worth in truest light.  
     A Lion-cub, of sordid mind,  
 Avoided all the lion kind ;

Fond of applause, he sought the feasts  
Of vulgar and ignoble beasts ;  
With asses all his time he spent,  
Their club's perpetual president.  
He caught their manners, looks, and airs ;  
An ass in every thing but ears !  
If e'er his Highness meant a joke,  
They grinn'd applause before he spoke ;  
But at each word what shouts of praise !  
“ Good gods ! how natural he brays !”

Elate with flattery and conceit,  
He seeks his royal sire's retreat ;  
Forward, and fond to show his parts,  
His Highness brays ; the Lion starts.

“ Puppy ? that cursed vociferation  
Betrays thy life and conversation :  
Coxcombs, an ever-noisy race,  
Are trumpets of their own disgrace.”

“ Why so severe ? (the Cub replies),  
Our senate always held me wise.”

“ How weak is pride ! (returns the sire),  
All fools are vain when fools admire !  
But know, what stupid asses prize,  
Lions and noble beasts despise.”





## FABLE XX.

## THE OLD HEN AND THE COCK.

RESTRAIN your child ; you'll soon believe  
The text which says we sprung from Eve.

As an old Hen led forth her train,  
And seem'd to peck to show the grain,  
She raked the chaff, she scratch'd the ground,  
And glean'd the spacious yard around :  
A giddy chick, to try her wings,  
On the well's narrow margin springs,  
And prone she drops. The mother's breast  
All day with sorrow was possest.

A Cock she met ; her son she knew ;  
And in her heart affection grew.

“ My Son, (says she), I grant your years  
Have reach'd beyond a mother's cares.



I see you vigorous, strong, and bold ;  
I hear with joy your triumphs told.  
'Tis not from cocks thy fate I dread ;  
But let thy ever wary tread  
Avoid yon well ; that fatal place  
Is sure perdition to our race.  
Print this my counsel on thy breast ;  
To the just gods I leave the rest."

He thank'd her care ; yet day by day  
His bosom burn'd to disobey,  
And every time the well he saw,  
Scorn'd in his heart the foolish law :  
Near and more near each day he drew,  
And long'd to try the dangerous view.

" Why was this idle charge ? (he cries),  
Let courage female fears despise.  
Or did she doubt my heart was brave,  
And therefore this injunction gave ?  
Or does her harvest store the place,  
A treasure for her younger race ?  
And would she thus my search prevent ?  
I stand resolved, and dare th' event."

Thus said, he mounts the margin's round,  
And pries into the depth profound.  
He stretch'd his neck ; and from below  
With stretching neck advanced a foe :  
With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,  
The foe with ruffled plumes appears :  
Threat answer'd threat ; his fury grew ;  
Headlong to meet the war he flew ;

But when the watery death he found,  
He thus lamented as he drown'd :  
    “I ne'er had been in this condition,  
But for my mother's prohibition.”





## FABLE XXI.

## THE RAT-CATCHER AND CATS.

THE rats by night such mischief did,  
 Betty was every morning chid:  
 They undermined whole sides of bacon,  
 Her cheese was sapp'd, her tarts were taken;  
 Her pasties, fenced with thickest paste,  
 Were all demolish'd and laid waste:  
 She cursed the Cat, for want of duty,  
 Who left her foes a constant booty,  
     An Engineer, of noted skill,  
 Engaged to stop the growing ill.

From room to room he now surveys  
 Their haunts, their works, their secret ways;  
 Finds where they 'scape an ambuscade,  
 And whence the nightly sally's made.

An envious Cat, from place to place,  
 Unseen, attends his silent pace :  
 She saw that, if his trade went on,  
 The purring race must be undone ;  
 So secretly removes his baits,  
 And every stratagem defeats.

Again he sets the poison'd toils,  
 And Puss again the labour foils.

“ What foe, to frustrate my designs,  
 My schemes thus nightly countermines ?  
 (Incensed, he cries), this very hour  
 The wretch shall bleed beneath my power.”

So said, a ponderous trap he brought,  
 And in the fact poor Puss was caught.

“ Smuggler, (says he), thou shalt be made  
 A victim to our loss of trade.”

The captive Cat, with piteous mews,  
 For pardon, life, and freedom sues :  
 “ A sister of the science spare ;  
 One interest is our common care.”

“ What insolence ! (the man replied),  
 Shall Cats with us the game divide ?  
 Were all your interloping band  
 Extinguish'd or expell'd the land,  
 We Rat-catchers might raise our fees,  
 Sole guardians of a nation's cheese !”

A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,  
 Thus spoke, and saved her sister's life :

“ In every age and clime we see  
 Two of a trade can ne'er agree.

Each hates his neighbour for encroaching ;  
'Squire stigmatizes 'squire for poaching ;  
Beauties with beauties are in arms,  
And scandal pelts each other's charms ;  
Kings, too, their neighbour kings dethrone,  
In hope to make the world their own :  
But let us limit our desires,  
Not war like beauties, kings, and 'squires ;  
For though we both one prey pursue,  
There's game enough for us and you."





## FABLE XXII.

## THE GOAT WITHOUT A BEARD.

'TIS certain that the modish passions  
 Descend among the crowd, like fashions.  
 Excuse me, then, if pride, conceit,  
 (The manners of the fair and great),  
 I give to monkeys, asses, dogs,  
 Fleas, owls, goats, butterflies, and hogs.  
 I say that these are proud: what then?  
 I never said they equal men.

A Goat (as vain as Goat can be)  
 Affected singularity:  
 Whene'er a thymy bank he found,  
 He roll'd upon the fragrant ground;  
 And then with fond attention stood,  
 Fix'd o'er his image in the flood.

“I hate my frowzy beard, (he cries),  
 My youth is lost in this disguise.  
 Did not the females know my vigour,  
 Well might they loathe this reverend figure.”

Resolved to smooth his shaggy face,  
 He sought the barber of the place.  
 A flippant monkey, spruce and smart,  
 Hard by, profess'd the dapper art ;  
 His pole with pewter basons hung,  
 Black rotten teeth in order strung,  
 Ranged cups that in the window stood,  
 Lined with red rags, to look like blood,  
 Did well his threefold trade explain,  
 Who shaved, drew teeth, and breathed a vein.

The Goat he welcomes with an air,  
 And seats him in his wooden chair :  
 Mouth, nose, and cheek the lather hides ;  
 Light, smooth, and swift the razor glides.

“I hope your custom, Sir, (says Pug),  
 Sure never face was half so smug !”

The Goat, impatient for applause,  
 Swift to the neighbouring hill withdraws ;  
 The shaggy people grinn'd and stared :

“Hey-day ; what's here ? without a beard !  
 Say, brother, whence the dire disgrace ?  
 What envious hand hath robb'd your face ?”  
 When thus the fop, with smiles of scorn :  
 “Are beards by civil nations worn ?  
 E'en Muscovites have mow'd their chins.  
 Shall we, like formal Capuchins,



Stubborn in pride, retain the mode,  
And bear about the hairy load?  
Whene'er we through the village stray,  
Are we not mock'd along the way,  
Insulted with loud shouts of scorn,  
By boys our beards disgraced and torn?"

"Were you no more with goats to dwell,  
Brother, I grant you reason well;  
(Replies a bearded chief). Beside,  
If boys can mortify thy pride,  
How wilt thou stand the ridicule  
Of our whole flock? Affected fool!  
Coxcombs, distinguish'd from the rest,  
To all but coxcombs are a jest."





## FABLE XXIII.

## THE OLD WOMAN AND HER CATS.

WHO friendship with a knave hath made,  
 Is judged a partner in the trade.  
 The matron who conducts abroad  
 A willing nymph, is thought a bawd ;  
 And if a modest girl is seen  
 With one who cures a lover's spleen,  
 We guess her not extremely nice,  
 And only wish to know her price.  
 'Tis thus that on the choice of friends  
 Our good or evil name depends.

A wrinkled hag, of wicked fame,  
 Beside a little smoky flame  
 Sat hovering, pinch'd with age and frost ;  
 Her shrivell'd hands, with veins emboss'd,

Upon her knees her weight sustains,  
While palsy shook her crazy brains :  
She mumbles forth her backward prayers,  
An untamed scold of fourscore years :  
About her swarm'd a numerous brood  
Of Cats, who, lank with hunger, mew'd.

Teased with their cries, her choler grew,  
And thus she sputter'd, " Hence, ye crew !  
Fool that I was to entertain  
Such imps, such fiends, a hellish train !  
Had ye been never housed and nursed,  
I for a witch had ne'er been cursed.  
To you I owe, that crowds of boys  
Worry me with eternal noise ;  
Straws laid across my pace retard,  
The horse-shoe's nail'd (each threshold's guard),  
The stunted broom the wenches hide,  
For fear that I should up and ride ;  
They stick with pins my bleeding seat,  
And bid me show my secret teat."

" To hear you prate would vex a saint ;  
Who hath most reason of complaint ?  
(Replies a Cat). Let's come to proof.  
Had we ne'er starved beneath your roof,  
We had, like others of our race,  
In credit lived as beasts of chase.  
'Tis infamy to serve a hag ;  
Cats are thought imps, her broom a nag !  
And boys against our lives combine,  
Because, 'tis said, your Cats have nine."



## FABLE XXIV.

## THE BUTTERFLY AND THE SNAIL.

ALL upstarts, insolent in place,  
Remind us of their vulgar race.

As in the sunshine of the morn  
A Butterfly (but newly born)  
Sat proudly perking on a rose,  
With pert conceit his bosom glows ;  
His wings (all glorious to behold)  
Bedropt with azure, jet, and gold,  
Wide he displays ; the spangled dew  
Reflects his eyes and various hue.

His now-forgotten friend, a Snail,  
Beneath his house, with slimy trail  
Crawls o'er the grass, whom when he spies,  
In wrath he to the gardener cries :

“What means yon peasant’s daily toil,  
From choking weeds to rid the soil?  
Why wake you to the morning’s care?  
Why with new arts correct the year?  
Why grows the peach with crimson hue?  
And why the plum’s inviting blue?  
Were they to feast his taste design’d,  
That vermin of voracious kind?  
Crush then the slow, the pilfering race,  
So purge thy garden from disgrace.”

“What arrogance! (the Snail replied),  
How insolent is upstart pride!  
Hadst thou not thus, with insult vain,  
Provoked my patience to complain,  
I had conceal’d thy meaner birth,  
Nor traced thee to the scum of earth:  
For scarce nine suns have waked the hours,  
To swell the fruit and paint the flowers,  
Since I thy humbler life survey’d,  
In base, in sordid guise array’d;  
A hideous insect, vile, unclean,  
You dragg’d a slow and noisome train;  
And from your spider bowels drew  
Foul film, and spun the dirty clue.  
I own my humble life, good friend;  
Snail was I born, and Snail shall end.  
And, what’s a Butterfly at best,  
He’s but a caterpillar drest;  
And all thy race (a numerous seed)  
Shall prove of caterpillar breed.”



## FABLE XXV.

## THE SCOLD AND THE PARROT.

THE husband thus reproved his wife :  
 “ Who deals in slander, lives in strife.  
 Art thou the herald of disgrace,  
 Denouncing war to all thy race ?  
 Can nothing quell thy thunder’s rage,  
 Which spares nor friend, nor sex, nor age ?  
 That vixen tongue of yours, my dear,  
 Alarms our neighbours far and near.  
 Good gods ! ’tis like a rolling river,  
 That murmuring flows, and flows for ever !  
 Ne’er tired, perpetual discord sowing !  
 Like fame, it gathers strength by going.”

“ Heyday ! (the flippant tongue replies),  
 How solemn is the fool ! how wise !

Is nature's choicest gift debarr'd?—

Nay, frown not; for I will be heard.

Women of late are finely ridden,

A Parrot's privilege forbidden!

You praise his talk, his squalling song,

But wives are always in the wrong."

Now reputations flew in pieces,

Of mothers, daughters, aunts, and nieces:

She ran the Parrot's language o'er,

Bawd, hussy, drunkard, slattern, whore;

On all her sex she vents her fury,

Tries and condemns without a jury.

At once the torrent of her words

Alarm'd cat, monkey, dogs, and birds;

All join their forces to confound her,

Puss spits, the monkey chatters round her;

The yelping cur her heels assaults;

The magpie blabs out all her faults;

Poll, in the uproar, from his cage,

With this rebuke outscram'd her rage:

"A Parrot is for talking prized,

But prattling women are despised.

She who attacks another's honour,

Draws every living thing upon her:

Think, Madam, when you stretch your lungs,

That all your neighbours too have tongues:

One slander must ten thousand get;

The world with interest pays the debt."





## FABLE XXVI.

## THE CUR AND THE MASTIFF.

A SNEAKING Cur, the master's spy,  
 Rewarded for his daily lie,  
 With secret jealousies and fears  
 Set all together by the ears.  
 Poor puss to-day was in disgrace,  
 Another cat supplied her place ;  
 The hound was beat, the Mastiff chid,  
 The monkey was the room forbid ;  
 Each to his dearest friend grew shy,  
 And none could tell the reason why.

A plan to rob the house was laid :  
 The thief with love seduced the maid,  
 Cajoled the Cur, and stroked his head,  
 And bought his secrecy with bread :

He next the Mastiff's honour tried,  
Whose honest jaws the bribe defied :  
He stretch'd his hand to proffer more ;  
The surly Dog his fingers tore.

Swift ran the Cur ; with indignation  
The master took his information.  
“ Hang him, the villain's cursed,” he cries ;  
And round his neck the halter ties.

The Dog his humble suit preferr'd,  
And begg'd in justice to be heard.  
The master sat. On either hand  
The cited dogs confronting stand ;  
The Cur the bloody tale relates,  
And, like a lawyer, aggravates.

“ Judge not unheard, (the Mastiff cried),  
But weigh the cause of either side.  
Think not that treachery can be just ;  
Take not informers' words on trust ;  
They ope their hand to every pay,  
And you and me by turns betray.”

He spoke ; and all the truth appear'd :  
The Cur was hang'd, the Mastiff clear'd.





## FABLE XXVII.

## THE SICK MAN AND THE ANGEL.

“Is there no hope?” the sick man said,  
 The silent doctor shook his head;  
 And took his leave with signs of sorrow,  
 Despairing of his fee to-morrow.

When thus the Man, with gasping breath:  
 “I feel the chilling wound of death!  
 Since I must bid the world adieu,  
 Let me my former life review.  
 I grant my bargains well were made;  
 But all men overreach in trade;  
 ’Tis self-defence in each profession;  
 Sure self-defence is no transgression.  
 The little portion in my hands,  
 By good security on lands,

Is well increased. If, unawares,  
My justice to myself and heirs  
Hath let my debtor rot in jail,  
For want of good sufficient bail ;  
If I by writ, or bond, or deed,  
Reduced a family to need,  
My will hath made the world amends ;  
My hope on charity depends.  
When I am number'd with the dead,  
And all my pious gifts are read,  
By Heaven and earth 'twill then be known  
My charities were amply shown.

An Angel came : " Ah ! friend, (he cried),  
No more in flattering hope confide.  
Can thy good deeds in former times  
Outweigh the balance of thy crimes ?  
What widow or what orphan prays  
To crown thy life with length of days ?  
A pious action's in thy power,  
Embrace with joy the happy hour.  
Now while you draw the vital air,  
Prove your intention is sincere :  
This instant give a hundred pound ;  
Your neighbours want, and you abound."

" But why such haste ? (the sick Man whines),  
Who knows as yet what Heaven designs ?  
Perhaps I may recover still :  
That sum and more are in my will."

" Fool, (says the Vision), now 'tis plain  
Your life, your soul, your Heaven was gain.

From every side, with all your might,  
You scraped, and scraped beyond your right ;  
And after death would fain atone,  
By giving what is not your own."

"While there is life, there's hope, (he cried),  
Then why such haste?"—so groan'd and died.





## FABLE XXVIII.

THE PERSIAN, THE SUN, AND THE CLOUD.

Is there a bard whom genius fires,  
 Whose every thought the god inspires ?  
 When Envy reads the nervous lines,  
 She frets, she rails, she raves, she pines ;  
 Her hissing snakes with venom swell ;  
 She calls her venal train from hell :  
 The servile fiends her nod obey,  
 And all Curl's authors are in pay.  
 Fame calls up Calumny and Spite :  
 Thus shadow owes its birth to light.

As prostrate to the god of Day,  
 With heart devout, a Persian lay,  
 His invocation thus begun :  
 " Parent of light ! all-seeing Sun !

Prolific beam, whose rays dispense  
The various gifts of Providence ;  
Accept our praise, our daily prayer,  
Smile on our fields, and bless the year."

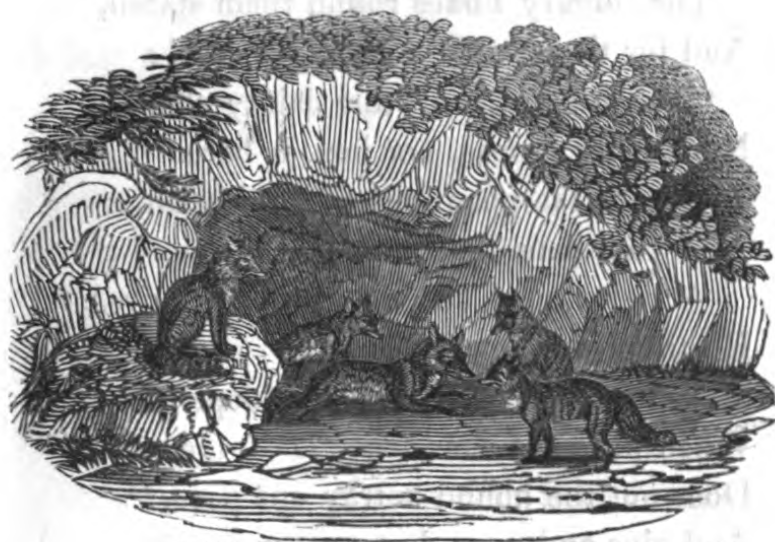
A Cloud, who mock'd his grateful tongue,  
The day with sudden darkness hung ;  
With pride and envy swell'd, aloud  
A voice thus thunder'd from the Cloud :

"Weak is this gaudy god of thine,  
Whom I at will forbid to shine.  
Shall I nor vows nor incense know?—  
Where praise is due the praise bestow."

With fervent zeal the Persian moved,  
Thus the proud calumny reproved ;  
"It was that god who claims my prayer,  
Who gave thee birth, and raised thee there ;  
When o'er his beams the veil is thrown,  
Thy substance is but plainer shown :  
A passing gale, a puff of wind,  
Dispels thy thickest troops combin'd."

The gale arose ; the vapour tost  
(The sport of winds) in air was lost ;  
The glorious orb the day refines :  
Thus envy breaks, thus merit shines.





## FABLE XXIX.

THE FOX AT THE POINT OF DEATH.

A Fox, in life's extreme decay,  
 Weak, sick, and faint, expiring lay ;  
 All appetite had left his maw,  
 And age disarm'd his mumbling jaw.  
 His numerous race around him stand,  
 To learn their dying sire's command :  
 He raised his head with whining moan,  
 And thus was heard the feeble tone :  
 " Ah, sons ! from evil ways depart ;  
 My crimes lie heavy on my heart.  
 See, see the murder'd geese appear !  
 Why are those bleeding turkeys there ?  
 Why all around this cackling train,  
 Who haunt my ears for chickens slain ?"

The hungry Foxes round them stared,  
And for the promised feast prepared :

“ Where, Sir, is all this dainty cheer ?  
Nor turkey, goose, nor hen, is here.  
These are the phantoms of your brain,  
And your sons lick their lips in vain.”

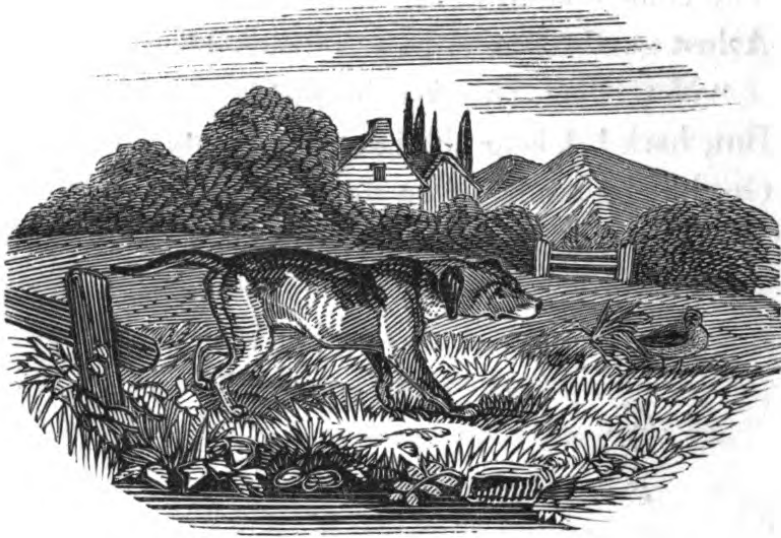
“ O gluttons ! (says the drooping sire),  
Restrain inordinate desire :  
Your liquorish taste you shall deplore,  
When peace of conscience is no more.  
Does not the hound betray our pace,  
And gins and guns destroy our race ?  
Thieves dread the searching eye of power,  
And never feel the quiet hour.  
Old age (which few of us shall know)  
Now puts a period to my woe.  
Would you true happiness attain,  
Let honesty your passions rein :  
So live in credit and esteem,  
And the good name you lost redeem.”

“ The counsel's good, (a Fox replies),  
Could we perform what you advise.  
Think what our ancestors have done ;  
A line of thieves from son to son :  
To us descends the long disgrace,  
And infamy hath mark'd our race.  
Though we, like harmless sheep, should feed,  
Honest in thought, in word, and deed ;  
Whatever hen-roost is decreased,  
We shall be thought to share the feast.

The change shall never be believed ;  
A lost good name is ne'er retrieved."

"Nay, then, (replies the feeble Fox) ;  
But, hark ! I hear the hen that clucks :  
Go, but be moderate in your food :  
A chicken, too, might do me good."





## FABLE XXX.

## THE SETTING DOG AND THE PARTRIDGE.

THE ranging Dog the stubble tries,  
 And searches every breeze that flies ;  
 The scent grows warm ; with cautious fear  
 He creeps, and points the covey near ;  
 The men, in silence, far behind,  
 Conscious of game, the net unbind.

A Partridge, with experience wise,  
 The fraudulent preparation spies ;  
 She mocks their toils, alarms her brood,  
 The covey springs, and seeks the wood ;  
 But, ere her certain wing she tries,  
 Thus to the creeping Spaniel cries :  
 “ Thou fawning slave to man’s deceit,  
 Thou pimp of luxury, sneaking cheat,

Of thy whole species thou disgrace,  
Dogs should disown thee of their race !  
For if I judge their native parts,  
They're born with honest open hearts ;  
And, ere they served man's wicked ends,  
Were generous foes, or real friends."

When thus the Dog, with scornful smile :  
"Secure of wing, thou darest revile.  
Clowns are to polish'd manners blind ;  
How ignorant is the rustic mind !  
My worth sagacious courtiers see,  
And to preferment rise like me.  
The thriving pimp, who beauty sets,  
Hath oft enhanced a nation's debts ;  
Friend sets his friend, without regard,  
And ministers his skill reward :  
Thus train'd by man, I learnt his ways,  
And growing favour feasts my days."

"I might have guess'd (the Partridge said)  
The place where you were train'd and fed ;  
Servants are apt, and in a trice  
Ape to a hair their master's vice.  
You came from court, you say : Adieu !"  
She said, and to the covey flew.





## FABLE XXXI.

## THE UNIVERSAL APPARITION.

A RAKE, by every passion ruled,  
 With every vice his youth had cool'd ;  
 Disease his tainted blood assails ;  
 His spirits droop, his vigour fails :  
 With secret ills at home he pines,  
 And, like infirm old age, declines.

As twinged with pain he pensive sits,  
 And raves, and prays, and swears, by fits ;  
 A ghastly phantom, lean and wan,  
 Before him rose, and thus began :

“ My name, perhaps, hath reach'd your ear ;  
 Attend, and be advised by Care.  
 Nor love, nor honour, wealth, nor power,  
 Can give the heart a cheerful hour,

When health is lost. Be timely wise :  
With health all taste of pleasure flies."

Thus said, the Phantom disappears,  
The wary counsel waked his fears :  
He now from all excess abstains,  
With physic purifies his veins :  
And, to procure a sober life,  
Resolves to venture on a wife.

But now again the Sprite ascends,  
Where'er he walks his ear attends ;  
Insinuates that beauty's frail,  
That perseverance must prevail ;  
With jealousies his brain inflames,  
And whispers all her lovers' names.  
In other hours she represents  
His household charge, his annual rents,  
Increasing debts, perplexing duns,  
And nothing for his younger sons.

Straight all his thought to gain he turns,  
And with the thirst of lucre burns.  
But when possess'd of fortune's store,  
The Spectre haunts him more and more ;  
Sets want and misery in view,  
Bold thieves and all the murdering crew ;  
Alarms him with eternal frights,  
Infests his dream, or wakes his nights.  
How shall he chase this hideous guest ?  
Power may perhaps protect his rest.  
To power he rose. Again the Sprite  
Besets him morning, noon, and night ;



Talks of Ambition's tottering seat,  
How Envy persecutes the great ;  
Of rival hate, of treacherous friends,  
And what disgrace his fall attends.

The court he quits, to fly from Care,  
And seeks the peace of rural air :  
His groves, his fields, amused his hours ;  
He pruned his trees, he raised his flowers.  
But Care again his steps pursues,  
Warns him of blasts, of blighting dews,  
Of plundering insects, snails, and rains,  
And droughts that starved the labour'd plains.  
Abroad, at home, the Spectre's there ;  
In vain we seek to fly from Care.

At length he thus the Ghost address :  
" Since thou must be my constant guest,  
Be kind, and follow me no more ;  
For Care, by right, should go before."





## FABLE XXXII.

## THE TWO OWLS AND THE SPARROW.

Two formal Owls together sat,  
 Conferring thus in solemn chat :

“How is the modern taste decay'd !  
 Where's the respect to wisdom paid ?  
 Our worth the Grecian sages knew ;  
 They gave our sires the honour due ;  
 They weigh'd the dignity of fowls,  
 And pry'd into the depth of Owls.

Athens, the seat of learned fame,  
 With general voice revered our name ;  
 On merit title was conferr'd,  
 And all adored th' Athenian bird.”

“Brother, you reason well (replies  
 The solemn mate, with half-shut eyes) ;

Right: Athens was the seat of learning ;  
And, truly, wisdom is discerning.  
Besides, on Pallas' helm we sit,  
The type and ornament of wit :  
But now, alas ! we're quite neglected,  
And a pert Sparrow's more respected."

A Sparrow, who was lodged beside,  
O'erhears them sooth each other's pride,  
And thus he nimbly vents his heat :

"Who meets a fool, must find conceit.  
I grant you were at Athens graced,  
And on Minerva's helm were placed ;  
But every bird that wings the sky,  
Except an Owl, can tell you why.  
From hence they taught their schools to know,  
How false we judge by outward show ;  
That we should never looks esteem,  
Since fools as wise as you might seem.  
Would ye contempt and scorn avoid,  
Let your vain-glory be destroy'd :  
Humble your arrogance of thought,  
Pursue the ways by Nature taught ;  
So shall you find delicious fare,  
And grateful farmers praise your care ;  
So shall sleek mice your chase reward,  
And no keen cat find more regard."



## FABLE XXXIII.

## THE COURTIER AND PROTEUS.

WHENE’ER a Courtier’s out of place,  
 The country shelters his disgrace ;  
 Where, doom’d to exercise and health,  
 His house and gardens own his wealth.  
 He builds new schemes, in hope to gain  
 The plunder of another reign ;  
 Like Philip’s son, would fain be doing,  
 And sighs for other realms to ruin.

As one of these (without his wand)  
 Pensive along the winding strand  
 Employ’d the solitary hour,  
 In projects to regain his power,  
 The waves in spreading circles ran,  
 Proteus arose, and thus began :

“Came you from court? for in your mien  
A self-important air is seen.”

He frankly own'd his friends had trick'd him,  
And how he fell his party's victim.

“Know (says the god) by matchless skill  
I change to every shape at will ;  
But yet, I'm told, at court you see  
Those who presume to rival me.”

Thus said: a snake, with hideous trail,  
Proteus extends his scaly mail.

“Know (says the Man) tho' proud in place,  
All Courtiers are of reptile race.  
Like you, they take that dreadful form,  
Bask in the sun, and fly the storm ;  
With malice hiss, with envy gloat,  
And for convenience change their coat ;  
With new-got lustre rear their head,  
Though on a dunghill born and bred.”

Sudden the god a lion stands ;  
He shakes his mane, he spurns the sands ;  
Now a fierce lynx, with fiery glare,  
A wolf, an ass, a fox, a bear.

“Had I ne'er lived at court (he cries)  
Such transformations might surprise ;  
But there, in quest of daily game,  
Each able Courtier acts the same.  
Wolves, lions, lynxes, while in place,  
Their friends and fellows are their chase.  
They play the bear's and fox's part,  
Now rob by force, now steal with art.

They sometimes in the senate bray,  
Or, changed again to beasts of prey,  
Down from the lion to the ape,  
Practise the frauds of every shape.”  
So said: upon the god he flies,  
In cords the struggling captive ties.

“ Now, Proteus! now (to truth compell'd)  
Speak, and confess thy art excell'd.  
Use strength, surprise, or what you will,  
The Courtier finds evasions still;  
Not to be bound by any ties,  
And never forced to leave his lies.”





## FABLE XXXIV.

## THE MASTIFF.

THOSE who in quarrels interpose,  
Must often wipe a bloody nose.

A Mastiff, of true English blood,  
Loved fighting better than his food.  
When dogs were snarling for a bone,  
He long'd to make the war his own,  
And often found (when two contend),  
To interpose obtain'd his end ;  
He gloried in his limping pace ;  
The scars of honour seam'd his face ;  
In every limb a gash appears,  
And frequent fights retrench'd his ears.

As on a time he heard from far  
Two dogs engaged in noisy war,



Away he scours, and lays about him,  
Resolved no fray should be without him.

Forth from his yard a tanner flies,  
And to the bold intruder cries :

“ A cudgel shall correct your manners :  
Whence sprung this cursed hate to tanners ?  
While on my dog you vent your spite,  
Sirrah ! 'tis me you dare not bite.”

To see the battle thus perplex'd,  
With equal rage a butcher vex'd,  
Hoarse-screaming from the circled crowd,  
To the cursed Mastiff cries aloud :

“ Both Hockley-hole and Mary-bone  
The combats of my dog have known :  
He ne'er, like bullies, coward-hearted,  
Attacks in public,—to be parted.  
Think not, rash fool, to share his fame ;  
Be his the honour or the shame.”

Thus said, they swore, and raved like thunder,  
Then dragg'd their fasten'd dogs asunder ;  
While clubs and kicks from every side  
Rebounded from the Mastiff's hide.

All reeking now with sweat and blood,  
Awhile the parted warriors stood ;  
Then pour'd upon the meddling foe,  
Who, worried, howl'd and sprawl'd below.  
He rose ; and, limping from the fray,  
By both sides mangled, sneak'd away.



## FABLE XXXV.

## THE BARLEY-MOW AND THE DUNGHILL.

How many saucy airs we meet  
 From Temple Bar to Aldgate Street !  
 Proud rogues, who shared the South-sea prey,  
 And sprung like mushrooms in a day !  
 They think it mean to condescend  
 To know a brother or a friend ;  
 They blush to hear their mother's name,  
 And by their pride expose their shame.

As cross his yard, at early day,  
 A careful farmer took his way,  
 He stopp'd, and leaning on his fork,  
 Observed the flail's incessant work.  
 In thought he measured all his store,  
 His geese, his hogs, he number'd o'er ;

In fancy weigh'd the fleeces shorn,  
And multiplied the next year's corn.

A Barley-mow, which stood beside,  
Thus to its musing master cried :  
“ Say, good Sir, is it fit or right  
To treat me with neglect and slight ?  
Me, who contribute to your cheer,  
And raise your mirth with ale and beer ?  
Why thus insulted, thus disgraced,  
And that vile Dunghill near me placed ?  
Are those poor sweepings of a groom,  
That filthy sight, that nauseous fume,  
Meet objects here ? command it hence ;  
A thing so mean must give offence.”

The humble Dunghill thus replied :  
“ Thy master hears and mocks thy pride :—  
Insult not thus the meek and low ;  
In me thy benefactor know ;  
My warm assistance gave thee birth,  
Or thou hadst perish'd low in earth ;  
But upstarts, to support their station,  
Cancel at once all obligation.”





## FABLE XXXVI.

## PYTHAGORAS AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

PYTHAGORAS rose at early dawn,  
 By soaring meditation drawn ;  
 To breathe the fragrance of the day,  
 Through flowery fields he took his way.  
 In musing contemplation warm,  
 His steps misled him to a farm,  
 Where on a ladder's topmost round  
 A peasant stood ; the hammer's sound  
 Shook the weak barn. " Say, Friend, what care  
 Calls for thy honest labour there ?"

The Clown, with surly voice replies,  
 " Vengeance aloud for justice cries.  
 This kite, by daily rapine fed,  
 My hens annoy, my turkeys dread,

At length his forfeit life hath paid ;  
 See on the wall his wings display'd.  
 Here nail'd, a terror to his kind,  
 My fowls shall future safety find ;  
 My yard the thriving poultry feed,  
 And my barns' refuse fat the breed."

"Friend, (says the Sage), the doom is wise ;  
 For public good the murderer dies :  
 But if these tyrants of the air  
 Demand a sentence so severe.  
 Think how the glutton, man, devours ;  
 What bloody feasts regale his hours !  
 O impudence of power and might,  
 Thus to condemn a hawk or kite,  
 When thou, perhaps, carnivorous sinner,  
 Hadst pullets yesterday for dinner !"

"Hold, (cried the Clown, with passion heated),  
 Shall kites and men alike be treated ?  
 When Heaven the world with creatures stored,  
 Man was ordain'd their sovereign lord."

"Thus tyrants boast, (the Sage replied),  
 Whose murders spring from power and pride.  
 Own then this manlike kite is slain  
 Thy greater luxury to sustain ;  
 For ' Petty rogues submit to Fate,  
 That great ones may enjoy their state.' " \*

\* See Garth's Dispensary.



## FABLE XXXVII.

## THE FARMER'S WIFE AND THE RAVEN.

“WHY are those tears? why droops your head?  
Is then your other husband dead?  
Or does a worse disgrace betide:  
Hath no one since his death applied?”

“Alas! you know the cause too well;  
The salt is spilt, to me it fell:  
Then to contribute to my loss,  
My knife and fork were laid across:  
On Friday, too! the day I dread!  
Would I were safe at home in bed!  
Last night (I vow to Heaven 'tis true)  
Bounce from the fire a coffin flew.  
Next post some fatal news shall tell;  
God send my Cornish friends be well!”

“Unhappy Widow, cease thy tears,  
Nor feel affliction in thy fears;

Let not thy stomach be suspended ;  
Eat now, and weep when dinner's ended ;  
And when the butler clears the table,  
For thy dessert I'll read my Fable."

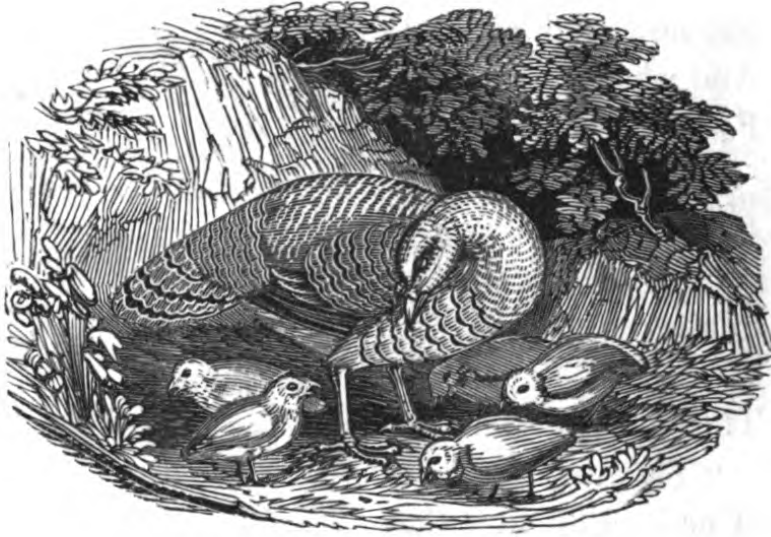
Betwixt her swagging panniers' load  
A Farmer's Wife to market rode,  
And, jogging on, with thoughtful care,  
Summ'd up the profits of her ware ;  
When, starting from her silver dream,  
Thus far and wide was heard her scream :

" That raven on yon left-hand oak  
(Curse on his ill-betiding croak)  
Bodes me no good." No more she said,  
When poor blind Ball, with stumbling tread,  
Fell prone ; o'erturn'd the panniers lay,  
And her mash'd eggs bestrew'd the way.

She, sprawling in the yellow road,  
Rail'd, swore, and curs'd : " Thou croaking toad,  
A murrain take thy whoreson throat !  
I knew misfortune in the note."

" Dame, (quoth the Raven), spare your oaths,  
Unclench your fist, and wipe your clothes.  
But why on me those curses thrown ?  
Goody, the fault was all your own ;  
For had you laid this brittle ware  
On Dun, the old sure-footed mare,  
Though all the Ravens of the hundred,  
With croaking had your tongue out-thunder'd,  
Sure-footed Dun had kept her legs,  
And you, good woman, saved your eggs."





## FABLE XXXVIII.

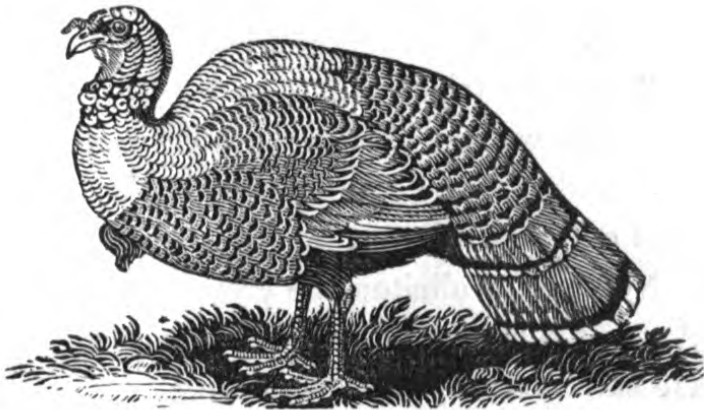
## THE TURKEY AND THE ANT.

IN other men we faults can spy,  
And blame the mote that dims their eye ;  
Each little speck and blemish find,  
To our own stronger errors blind.

A Turkey, tired of common food,  
Forsook the barn, and sought the wood ;  
Behind her ran an infant train,  
Collecting here and there a grain.  
“ Draw near, my Birds ! (the mother cries),  
This hill delicious fare supplies ;  
Behold the busy negro race,  
See millions blacken all the place !  
Fear not ; like me with freedom eat ;  
An Ant is most delightful meat.

How bless'd, how envied, were our life,  
Could we but 'scape the poulterer's knife !  
But man, cursed man, on Turkeys preys,  
And Christmas shortens all our days.  
Sometimes with oysters we combine,  
Sometimes assist the savoury chine ;  
From the low peasant to the lord,  
The Turkey smokes on every board.  
Sure men for gluttony are cursed,  
Of the seven deadly sins the worst."

An Ant, who climb'd beyond his reach,  
Thus answer'd from the neighbouring beech :  
" Ere you remark another's sin,  
Bid thy own conscience look within ;  
Control thy more voracious bill,  
Nor, for a breakfast, nations kill."





## FABLE XXXIX.

## THE FATHER AND JUPITER.

THE Man to Jove his suit preferr'd ;  
 He begg'd a wife ; his prayer was heard.  
 Jove wonder'd at his bold addressing ;  
 For how precarious is the blessing !

A wife he takes : and now for heirs  
 Again he worries Heaven with prayers.  
 Jove nods assent : two hopeful boys  
 And a fine girl reward his joys.

Now more solicitous he grew,  
 And set their future lives in view ;  
 He saw that all respect and duty  
 Were paid to wealth, to power, and beauty.

“ Once more (he cries) accept my prayer ;  
 Make my loved progeny thy care :

Let my first hope, my favourite boy,  
All Fortune's richest gifts enjoy :  
My next with strong ambition fire ;  
May favour teach him to aspire,  
Till he the step of power ascend,  
And courtiers to their idol bend.  
With every grace, with every charm,  
My daughter's perfect features arm.  
If Heaven approve, a Father's bless'd." —  
Jove smiles, and grants his full request.

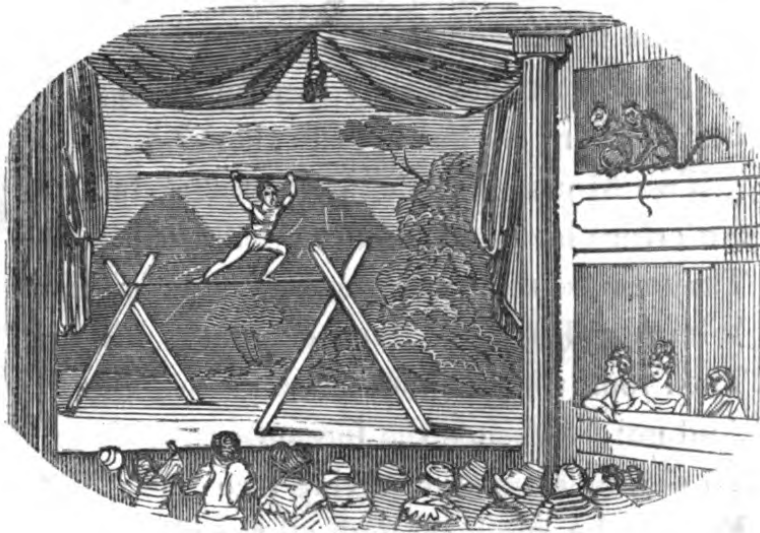
The first, a miser at the heart,  
Studious of every griping art,  
Heaps hoards on hoards with anxious pain,  
And all his life devotes to gain :  
He feels no joy, his cares increase,  
He neither wakes nor sleeps in peace ;  
In fancied want (a wretch complete)  
He starves, and yet he dares not eat.  
The next to sudden honours grew ;  
The thriving art of courts he knew ;  
He reach'd the height of power and place,  
Then fell, the victim of disgrace.

Beauty with early bloom supplies  
His daughter's cheek, and points her eyes.  
The vain coquette each suit disdains,  
And glories in her lovers' pains.  
With age she fades, each lover flies ;  
Contemn'd, forlorn, she pines and dies.

When Jove the Father's grief survey'd,  
And heard him Heaven and fate upbraid,

Thus spoke the God : “ By outward show  
Men judge of happiness and woe :  
Shall ignorance of good and ill  
Dare to direct th’ eternal will ?  
Seek virtue ; and, of that possest,  
To Providence resign the rest.”





## FABLE XL.

## THE TWO MONKEYS.

THE learned, full of inward pride,  
 The fops of outward show deride ;  
 The fop, with learning at defiance,  
 Scoffs at the pedant and the science :  
 The Don, a formal solemn strutter,  
 Despises Monsieur's airs and flutter ;  
 While Monsieur mocks the formal fool,  
 Who looks, and speaks, and walks by rule.  
 Britain, a medley of the twain,  
 As pert as France, as grave as Spain,  
 In fancy wiser than the rest,  
 Laughs at them both, of both the jest.  
 Is not the Poet's chiming close  
 Censured by all the sons of Prose ?

While bards of quick imagination  
Despise the sleepy prose narration.  
Men laugh at apes ; they men contemn ;  
For what are we but apes to them ?

Two Monkeys went to Southwark fair,  
No critics had a sourer air :  
They forced their way through draggled folks,  
Who gaped to catch Jack Pudding's jokes ;  
Then took their tickets for the show,  
And got by chance the foremost row.  
To see their grave observing face  
Provoked a laugh through all the place.

“ Brother, (says Pug, and turn'd his head),  
The rabble's monstrously ill-bred.”

Now through the booth loud hisses ran,  
Nor ended till the show began.  
The tumbler whirls the flip-flap round,  
With somersets he shakes the ground ;  
The cord beneath the dancer springs ;  
Aloft in air the vaulter swings ;  
Distorted now, now prone depends,  
Now through his twisted arms ascends :  
The crowd, in wonder and delight,  
With clapping hands applaud the sight.

With smiles, quoth Pug, “ If pranks like these  
The giant apes of reason please,  
How would they wonder at our arts ?  
They must adore us for our parts.  
High on the twig I've seen you cling,  
Play, twist, and turn in airy ring :



How can those clumsy things, like me,  
Fly with a bound from tree to tree ?  
But yet, by this applause, we find  
These emulators of our kind  
Discern our worth, our parts regard,  
Who our mean mimics thus reward."

"Brother, (the grinning mate replies),  
In this I grant that man is wise :  
While good example they pursue,  
We must allow some praise is due ;  
But when they strain beyond their guide,  
I laugh to scorn the mimic pride ;  
For how fantastic is the sight,  
To meet men always bolt upright,  
Because we sometimes walk on two !  
I hate the imitating crew."





## FABLE XLI.

## THE OWL AND THE FARMER.

AN Owl of grave deport and mien,  
 Who (like the Turk) was seldom seen,  
 Within a barn had chose his station,  
 As fit for prey and contemplation :  
 Upon a beam aloft he sits,  
 And nods, and seems to think, by fits.  
 So have I seen a man of news,  
 Or Post-boy or Gazette peruse,  
 Smoke, nod, and talk with voice profound,  
 And fix the fate of Europe round.  
 Sheaves piled on sheaves hid all the floor :  
 At dawn of morn to view his store  
 The farmer came. The hooting guest  
 His self-importance thus express'd :

“ Reason in man is mere pretence :  
How weak, how shallow, is his sense !  
To treat with scorn the Bird of Night,  
Declares his folly or his spite.  
Then, too, how partial is his praise !  
The lark's, the linnet's chirping lays  
To his ill-judging ears are fine,  
And nightingales are all divine :  
But the more knowing feather'd race  
See wisdom stamp'd upon my face.  
Whene'er to visit light I deign,  
What flocks of fowl compose my train !  
Like slaves, they crowd my flight behind,  
And own me of superior kind.”

The Farmer laugh'd, and thus replied :  
“ Thou dull important lump of pride !  
Dar'st thou with that harsh grating tongue  
Depreciate birds of warbling song ?  
Indulge thy spleen : know, men and fowl  
Regard thee, as thou art, an Owl.  
Besides, proud Blockhead ! be not vain  
Of what thou call'st thy slaves and train :  
Few follow Wisdom or her rules ;  
Fools in derision follow fools.”





## FABLE XLII.

## THE JUGGLERS.

A JUGGLER long through all the Town  
 Had raised his fortune and renown ;  
 You'd think (so far his art transcends)  
 The devil at his fingers' ends.

Vice heard his fame, she read his bill ;  
 Convinced of his inferior skill,  
 She sought his booth, and from the crowd  
 Defied the man of art aloud.

“ Is this then he so famed for sleight ?  
 Can this slow bungler cheat your sight ?  
 Dares he with me dispute the prize ?  
 I leave it to impartial eyes.”

Provoked, the Juggler cried, “ 'Tis done ;  
 In science I submit to none.”

Thus said, the cups and balls he play'd :  
By turns this here, that there, convey'd.  
The cards, obedient to his words,  
Are by a fillip turn'd to birds.  
His little boxes change the grain :  
Trick after trick deludes the train.  
He shakes his bag, he shows all fair :  
His fingers spread, and nothing there :  
Then bids it rain with showers of gold ;  
And now his ivory eggs are told !  
But when from thence the hen he draws,  
Amazed spectators hum applause.

Vice now stepp'd forth, and took the place,  
With all the forms of his grimace.

“ This magic looking-glass (she cries),  
(There, hand it round) will charm your eyes.”  
Each eager eye the sight desired,  
And every man himself admired.

Next, to a senator addressing,  
“ See this bank note ; observe the blessing.  
Breathe on the bill. Hey, pass ! 'Tis gone.”  
Upon his lips a padlock shown.  
A second puff the magic broke ;  
The padlock vanish'd, and he spoke.

Twelve bottles ranged upon the board,  
All full, with heady liquor stored,  
By clean conveyance disappear,  
And now two bloody swords are there.

A purse she to a thief exposed :  
At once his ready fingers closed.

He opes his fist, the treasure's fled ;  
He sees a halter in its stead.

She bids Ambition hold a wand ;  
He grasps a hatchet in his hand.

A box of charity she shows.  
" Blow here ;" and a churchwarden blows.  
'Tis vanish'd with conveyance neat,  
And on the table smokes a treat.

She shakes the dice, the board she knocks,  
And from all pockets fills her box.

She next a meagre rake address'd :  
" This picture see ; her shape, her breast !  
What youth and what inviting eyes !  
Hold her, and have her." With surprise,  
His hand exposed a box of pills,  
And a loud laugh proclaim'd his ills.

A counter in a miser's hand  
Grew twenty guineas at command :  
She bids his heir the sum retain,  
And 'tis a counter now again.

A guinea with her touch you see  
Take every shape but Charity ;  
And not one thing you saw or drew,  
But changed from what was first in view.

The Juggler now, in grief of heart,  
With this submission own'd her art :  
" Can I such matchless sleight withstand !  
How practice hath improved your hand !  
But now and then I cheat the throng ;  
You every day, and all day long."



## FABLE XLIII.

## THE COUNCIL OF HORSES.

UPON a time a neighing Steed,  
 Who grazed among a numerous breed,  
 With mutiny had fired the train,  
 And spread dissension through the plain.  
 On matters that concern'd the state  
 The Council met in grand debate.  
 A Colt, whose eyeballs flamed with ire,  
 Elate with strength and youthful fire,  
 In haste stepp'd forth before the rest,  
 And thus the listening throng address'd :  
 " Good gods ! how abject is our race,  
 Condemn'd to slavery and disgrace !  
 Shall we our servitude retain,  
 Because our sires have borne the chain ?



Consider, friends ! your strength and might ;  
'Tis conquest to assert your right.  
How cumbrous is the gilded coach !  
The pride of man is our reproach.  
Were we design'd for daily toil,  
To drag the ploughshare through the soil,  
To sweat in harness through the road,  
To groan beneath the carrier's load ?  
How feeble are the two-legg'd kind !  
What force is in our nerves combined !  
Shall then our nobler jaws submit  
To foam and champ the galling bit ?  
Shall haughty man my back bestride ?  
Shall the sharp spur provoke my side ?  
Forbid it, Heavens ! Reject the rein ;  
Your shame, your infamy disdain.  
Let him the lion first control,  
And still the tiger's famish'd growl.  
Let us, like them, our freedom claim,  
And make him tremble at our name."

A general nod approved the cause,  
And all the circle neigh'd applause.

When, lo ! with grave and solemn pace,  
A Steed advanced before the race,  
With age and long experience wise ;  
Around he cast his thoughtful eyes,  
And, to the murmurs of the train,  
Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain :

“ When I had health and strength, like you,  
The toils of servitude I knew ;

Now grateful man rewards my pains,  
And gives me all these wide domains.  
At will I crop the year's increase ;  
My latter life is rest and peace.  
I grant to man we lend our pains,  
And aid him to correct the plains ;  
But doth not he divide the care,  
Through all the labours of the year ?  
How many thousand structures rise,  
To fence us from inclement skies ;  
For us he bears the sultry day,  
And stores up all our winter's hay ;  
He sows, he reaps the harvest's gain ;  
We share the toil, and share the grain.  
Since every creature was decreed  
To aid each other's mutual need,  
Appease your discontented mind,  
And act the part by Heaven assign'd."  
The tumult ceased. The Colt submitted ;  
And, like his ancestors, was bitted.





## FABLE XLIV.

## THE HOUND AND THE HUNTSMAN.

IMPERTINENCE at first is borne  
 With heedless slight, or smiles of scorn :  
 Teased into wrath, what patience bears  
 The noisy fool who perseveres ?

The morning wakes, the Huntsman sounds,  
 At once rush forth the joyful Hounds ;  
 They seek the wood with eager pace,  
 Through bush, through brier, explore the chase :  
 Now scatter'd wide they try the plain,  
 And snuff the dewy turf in vain.

What care, what industry, what pains !  
 What universal silence reigns !

Ringwood, a dog of little fame,  
 Young, pert, and ignorant of game,

At once displays his babbling throat ;  
The pack, regardless of the note,  
Pursue the scent ; with louder strain  
He still persists to vex the train.

The Huntsman to the clamour flies,  
The smacking lash he smartly plies.  
His ribs all welk'd, with howling tone  
The puppy thus express'd his moan :

“ I know the music of my tongue  
Long since the pack with envy stung.  
What will not spite ? these bitter smarts  
I owe to my superior parts.”

“ When puppies prate, (the Huntsman cried),  
They show both ignorance and pride :  
Fools may our scorn, not envy, raise :  
For envy is a kind of praise.  
Had not thy forward noisy tongue  
Proclaim'd thee always in the wrong,  
Thou might'st have mingled with the rest,  
And ne'er thy foolish nose confest ;  
But fools, to talking ever prone,  
Are sure to make their follies known.”





## FABLE XLV.

## THE POET AND THE ROSE.

I HATE the man who builds his name  
On ruins of another's fame :  
Thus prudes, by characters o'erthrown,  
Imagine that they raise their own ;  
Thus scribblers, covetous of praise,  
Think slander can transplant the bays.  
Beauties and bards have equal pride,  
With both all rivals are decried :  
Who praises Lesbia's eyes and feature,  
Must call her sister 'awkward creature ;'  
For the kind flattery's sure to charm,  
When we some other nymph disarm.  
As in the cool of early day  
A Poet sought the sweets of May,

The garden's fragrant breath ascends,  
And every stalk with odour bends :  
A Rose he pluck'd, he gazed, admired,  
Thus singing, as the Muse inspired :—

“Go, Rose, my Chloe's bosom grace ;  
How happy should I prove,  
Might I supply that envied place  
With never-fading love !  
There, Phoenix-like, beneath her eye,  
Involved in fragrance, burn and die.

“Know, hapless flower ! that thou shalt find  
More fragrant Roses there :  
I see thy withering head reclined  
With envy and despair !  
One common fate we both must prove ;  
You die with envy, I with love.”

“Spare your comparisons, (replied  
An angry Rose, who grew beside).  
Of all mankind you should not flout us ;  
What can a Poet do without us ?  
In every love-song Roses bloom ;  
We lend you colour and perfume :  
Does it to Chloe's charms conduce,  
To found her praise on our abuse ?  
Must we, to flatter her, be made  
To wither, envy, pine, and fade ?”



## FABLE XLVI.

THE CUR, HORSE, AND SHEPHERD'S DOG.

THE lad of all-sufficient merit,  
 With modesty ne'er damps his spirit ;  
 Presuming on his own deserts,  
 On all alike his tongue exerts :  
 His noisy jokes at random throws,  
 And pertly spatters friends and foes.  
 In wit and war the bully race  
 Contribute to their own disgrace :  
 Too late the forward youth shall find  
 That jokes are sometimes paid in kind ;  
 Or if they canker in the breast,  
 He makes a foe who makes a jest.

A village Cur, of snappish race,  
 The pertest puppy of the place,



I imagined that his treble throat  
Was blest with Music's sweetest note ;  
In the mid road he basking lay,  
The yelping nuisance of the way ;  
For not a creature pass'd along,  
But had a sample of his song.  
Soon as the trotting steed he hears,  
He starts, he cocks his dapper ears ;  
Away he scours, assaults his hoof ;  
Now near him snarls, now barks aloof ;  
With shrill impertinence attends,  
Nor leaves him till the village ends.

It chanced, upon his evil day,  
A Pad came pacing down the way ;  
The Cur, with never-ceasing tongue,  
Upon the passing traveller sprung.  
The Horse, from scorn, provoked to ire,  
Flung backward : rolling in the mire,  
The Puppy howl'd, and bleeding lay ;  
The Pad in peace pursued his way.

A Shepherd's Dog, who saw the deed,  
Detesting the vexatious breed,  
Bespoke him thus : " When coxcombs prate,  
They kindle wrath, contempt, or hate ;  
Thy teasing tongue had judgment tied,  
Thou hadst not like a Puppy died."



## FABLE XLVII.

## THE COURT OF DEATH.

DEATH, on a solemn night of state,  
 In all his pomp of terror sate :  
 Th' attendants of his gloomy reign,  
 Diseases dire, a ghastly train !  
 Crowd the vast court. With hollow tone,  
 A voice thus thunder'd from the throne :  
 " This night our minister we name ;  
 Let every servant speak his claim :  
 Merit shall bear this ebon wand."  
 All, at the word, stretch'd forth their hand.  
 Fever, with burning heat possess'd,  
 Advanced, and for the wand address'd :  
 " I to the weekly bills appeal,  
 Let those express my fervent zeal ;

On every slight occasion near,  
With violence I persevere."

Next Gout appears with limping pace,  
Pleads how he shifts from place to place ;  
From head to foot how swift he flies,  
And every joint and sinew plies ;  
Still working when he seems suppress'd,  
A most tenacious stubborn guest.

A haggard Spectre from the crew  
Crawls forth, and thus asserts his due :  
" 'Tis I who taint the sweetest joy,  
And in the shape of Love destroy :  
My shanks, sunk eyes, and noseless face,  
Prove my pretension to the place."

Stone urged his ever-growing force ;  
And, next, Consumption's meagre corse,  
With feeble voice, that scarce was heard,  
Broke with short coughs, his suit preferr'd :  
" Let none object my lingering way,  
I gain, like Fabius, by delay ;  
Fatigue and weaken every foe  
By long attack, secure, though slow."

Plague represents his rapid power,  
Who thinn'd a nation in an hour.

All spoke their claim, and hoped the wand.—  
Now expectation hush'd the band,  
When thus the monarch from the throne :

" Merit was ever modest known.  
What ! no Physician speak his right !  
None here ! but fees their toils requite.

Let then Intemperance take the wand,  
Who fills with gold their zealous hand.  
You, Fever, Gout, and all the rest,  
(Whom wary men, as foes, detest),  
Forego your claim ; no more pretend ;  
Intemperance is esteem'd a friend ;  
He shares their mirth, their social joys,  
And, as a courted guest, destroys :  
The charge on him must justly fall,  
Who finds employment for you all."





## FABLE XLVIII.

## THE GARDENER AND THE HOG.

A GARDENER, of peculiar taste,  
 On a young Hog his favour placed,  
 Who fed not with the common herd ;  
 His tray was to the hall preferr'd :  
 He wallow'd underneath the board,  
 Or in his master's chamber snored,  
 Who fondly stroked him every day,  
 And taught him all the puppy's play.  
 Where'er he went, the grunting friend  
 Ne'er fail'd his pleasure to attend.

As on a time the loving pair  
 Walk'd forth to tend the garden's care,  
 The master thus address'd the Swine :

“ My house, my garden, all is thine,

On turnips feast whene'er you please,  
And riot in my beans and pease ;  
If the potatoe's taste delights,  
Or the red carrot's sweet invites,  
Indulge thy morn and evening hours,  
But let due care regard my flowers :  
My tulips are my garden's pride :  
What vast expense those beds supplied !"

The Hog by chance one morning roam'd  
Where with new ale the vessels foam'd ;  
He munches now the steaming grains,  
Now with full swill the liquor drains.  
Intoxicating fumes arise ;  
He reels, he rolls his winking eyes ;  
Then staggering through the garden scours,  
And treads down painted ranks of flowers :  
With delving snout he turns the soil,  
And cools his palate with the spoil.

The Master came, the ruin spied ;  
" Villain ! suspend thy rage, (he cried),  
Hast thou, thou most ungrateful sot,  
My charge, my only charge, forgot ?  
What, all my flowers !" no more he said,  
But gazed, and sigh'd, and hung his head.

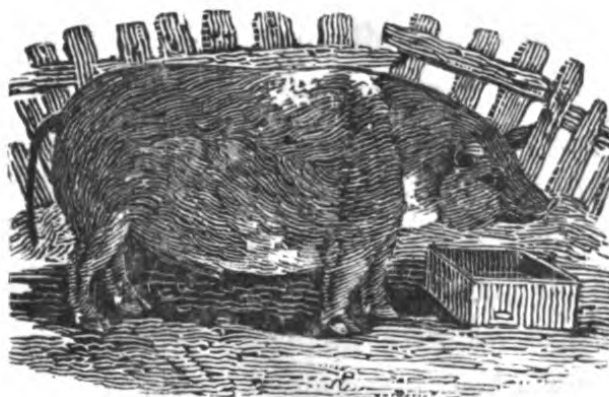
The Hog with stuttering speech returns :  
" Explain, Sir, why your anger burns.  
See there, untouch'd, your tulips strown ;  
For I devour'd the roots alone."

At this the Gardener's passion grows ;  
From oaths and threats he fell to blows :

The stubborn brute the blow sustains,  
Assaults his leg, and tears the veins.

Ah, foolish Swain! too late you find  
That styes were for such friends design'd!

Homeward he limps with painful pace,  
Reflecting thus on past disgrace:  
"Who cherishes a brutal mate  
Shall mourn the folly soon or late."







## FABLE XLIX.

## THE MAN AND THE FLEA.

WHETHER on earth, in air, or main,  
Sure every thing alive is vain !

Does not the hawk all fowls survey,  
As destined only for his prey ?  
And do not tyrants, prouder things,  
Think men were born for slaves to kings ?

When the crab views the pearly strands,  
Or Tagus bright with golden sands ;  
Or crawls beside the coral grove,  
And hears the ocean roll above ;  
“ Nature is too profuse, (says he),  
Who gave all these to pleasure me !”

When bordering pinks and roses bloom,  
And every garden breathes perfume ;  
When peaches glow with sunny dyes,  
Like Laura’s cheek when blushes rise ;

When the huge figs the branches bend,  
When clusters from the vine depend,  
The snail looks round on flower and tree,  
And cries, "All these were made for me!"

"What dignity's in human nature?"

Says Man, the most conceited creature,  
As from a cliff he cast his eye,  
And view'd the sea and arched sky.  
The sun was sunk beneath the main;  
The moon and all the starry train  
Hung the vast vault of Heaven: the Man  
His contemplation thus began:

"When I behold this glorious show,  
And the wide watery world below,  
The scaly people of the main,  
The beasts that range the wood or plain,  
The wing'd inhabitants of air,  
The day, the night, the various year,  
And know all these by Heaven design'd  
As gifts to pleasure human kind,  
I cannot raise my worth too high;  
Of what vast consequence am I!"

"Not of th' importance you suppose,  
(Replies a Flea upon his nose):  
Be humble, learn thyself to scan;  
Know, pride was never made for man.  
'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.  
What, Heaven and earth for thee design'd!  
For thee, made only for our need,  
That more important Fleas might feed."



## FABLE L.

## THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS.

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,  
 Unless to one you stint the flame.  
 The child, whom many fathers share,  
 Hath seldom known a father's care.  
 'Tis thus in friendships ; who depend  
 On many, rarely find a friend.

A Hare who, in a civil way,  
 Complied with every thing, like GAY,  
 Was known by all the bestial train  
 Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain ;  
 Her care was never to offend,  
 And every creature was her friend.

As forth she went, at early dawn,  
 To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,

Behind she hears the hunter's cries,  
And from the deep-mouth'd thunder flies :  
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath ;  
She hears the near advance of death ;  
She doubles to mislead the hound,  
And measures back her mazy round,  
Till, fainting in the public way,  
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.

What transport in her bosom grew,  
When first the Horse appear'd in view !

“ Let me (says she) your back ascend,  
And owe my safety to a friend.

You know my feet betray my flight :  
To friendship every burden's light.”

The Horse replied : “ Poor honest Puss,  
It grieves my heart to see thee thus :  
Be comforted, relief is near,  
For all your friends are in the rear.”

She next the stately Bull implored ;  
And thus replied the mighty lord :

“ Since every beast alive can tell  
That I sincerely wish you well ;  
I may, without offence, pretend  
To take the freedom of a friend.

Love calls me hence ; a favourite cow  
Expects me near yon barley-mow ;  
And when a lady's in the case,  
You know all other things give place.  
To leave you thus might seem unkind,  
But see, the Goat is just behind.”

The Goat remark'd her pulse was high,  
Her languid head, her heavy eye :  
“ My back (says he) may do you harm ;  
The Sheep's at hand, and wool is warm.”

The Sheep was feeble, and complain'd  
His sides a load of wool sustain'd ;  
Said he was slow ; confess'd his fears ;  
For hounds eat Sheep as well as Hares.

She now the trotting Calf address'd,  
To save from death a friend distress'd.

“ Shall I (says he) of tender age,  
In this important care engage ?  
Older and abler pass'd you by ;  
How strong are those ! how weak am I !  
Should I presume to bear you hence,  
Those friends of mine may take offence.  
Excuse me, then : you know my heart ;  
But dearest friends, alas ! must part.  
How shall we all lament ! Adieu ;  
For see the hounds are just in view.”



# FABLES.

## PART II.

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### ADVERTISEMENT.

These Fables were finished by Mr. GAY, and intended for the press a short time before his death; when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron the Duke of Queensberry. His Grace has accordingly permitted them to the press; and they are here printed from the originals, in the author's own hand-writing. We hope they will please equally with his former Fables, though mostly on subjects of a graver and more political turn. They will certainly show him to have been (what he esteemed the best character) a man of a truly honest heart, and a sincere lover of his country.

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### FABLE I.

#### THE DOG AND THE FOX.

TO A LAWYER.

I KNOW you Lawyers can, with ease,  
Twist words and meanings as you please;

That language, by your skill made pliant,  
 Will bend to favour every client ;  
 That 'tis the fee directs the sense,  
 To make out either side's pretence.  
 When you peruse the clearest case,  
 You see it with a double face :  
 For scepticism is your profession ;  
 You hold there's doubt in all expression.

Hence is the bar with fees supplied,  
 Hence eloquence takes either side.  
 Your hand would have but paltry gleanings,  
 Could every man express his meaning.  
 Who dares presume to pen a deed,  
 Unless you previously are fee'd ?  
 'Tis drawn ; and, to augment the cost,  
 In dull prolixity engrost.  
 And now we're well secured by law,  
 Till the next brother finds a flaw.

Read o'er a will. Was't ever known  
 But you could make the will your own ?  
 For when you read, 'tis with intent  
 To find out meanings never meant.  
 Since things are thus, *se defendendo*,  
 I bar fallacious *inuendo*.

Sagacious Porta's skill could trace  
 Some beast or bird in every face.  
 The head, the eye, the nose's shape,  
 Proved this an owl, and that an ape ;  
 When, in the sketches thus design'd,  
 Resemblance brings some friend to mind,



You show the piece, and give the hint,  
 And find each feature in the print ;  
 So monstrous like the portrait's found,  
 All know it, and the laugh goes round.  
 Like him I draw from general nature ;  
 Is't I or you, then, fix the satire ?—

So, Sir, I beg you spare your pains  
 In making comments on my strains.  
 All private slander I detest,  
 I judge not of my neighbour's breast :  
 Party and prejudice I hate,  
 And write no libels on the state.

Shall not my Fable censure vice,  
 Because a knave is over nice ?  
 And, lest the guilty hear and dread,  
 Shall not the decalogue be read ?  
 If I lash vice in general fiction,  
 Is't I apply, or self-conviction ?  
 Brutes are my theme : am I to blame,  
 If men in morals are the same ?  
 I no man call or ape or ass ;  
 'Tis his own conscience holds the glass.  
 Thus void of all offence I write :  
 Who claims the fable knows his right.

A Shepherd's Dog, unskill'd in sports,  
 Pick'd up acquaintance of all sorts ;  
 Among the rest a Fox he knew ;  
 By frequent chat their friendship grew.

Says Reynard, "'Tis a cruel case,  
 That man should stigmatize our race,

No doubt, among us rogues you find,  
As among dogs and human kind ;  
And yet (unknown to me and you)  
There may be honest men and true.  
Thus slander tries whate'er it can  
To put us on the foot with man.  
Let my own actions recommend ;  
No prejudice can blind a friend :  
You know me free from all disguise ;  
My honour as my life I prize."

By talk like this, from all mistrust  
The Dog was cured, and thought him just.

As on a time the Fox held forth  
On conscience, honesty, and worth,  
Sudden he stopp'd ; he cock'd his ear ;  
Low dropp'd his brushy tail with fear.

" Bless us ! the hunters are abroad :  
What's all that clatter on the road ?"

" Hold, (says the Dog), we're safe from harm,  
'Twas nothing but a false alarm :  
At yonder town 'tis market-day ;  
Some farmer's wife is on the way ;  
'Tis so ; I know her piebald mare,  
Dame Dobbins with her poultry ware."

Reynard grew huff. Says he, " This sneer  
From you I little thought to hear ;  
Your meaning in your looks I see :  
Pray what's Dame Dobbins, friend, to me ?  
Did I e'er make her poultry thinner ?  
Prove that I owe the dame a dinner."

“ Friend, (quoth the Cur), I meant no harm ;  
Then why so captious ? why so warm ?  
My words, in common acceptation,  
Could never give this provocation.  
No lamb, for aught I ever knew,  
May be more innocent than you.”

At this gall'd Reynard winced, and swore  
Such language ne'er was given before.

“ What's lamb to me ? this saucy hint  
Shows me, base knave, which way you squint.  
If t'other night your master lost  
Three lambs, am I to pay the cost ?  
Your vile reflections would imply  
That I'm the thief. You Dog, you lie.”

“ Thou knave, thou fool, (the Dog replied),  
The name is just, take either side ;  
Thy guilt these applications speak :  
Sirrah, 'tis conscience makes you squeak.”

So saying, on the Fox he flies :  
The self-convicted felon dies.





## FABLE II.

THE VULTURE, THE SPARROW, AND OTHER  
BIRDS.

TO A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY.

ERE I begin, I must premise  
 Our ministers are good and wise ;  
 So, though malicious tongues apply,  
 Pray what care they, or what care I ?  
     If I am free with courts, be't known,  
 I ne'er presume to mean our own.  
 If general morals seem to joke  
 On ministers, and such-like folk,  
 A captious fool may take offence ;  
 What then ? He knows his own pretence.  
 I meddle with no state affairs ;  
 But spare my jest to save my ears.  
 Our present schemes are too profound,  
 For Machiavel himself to sound ;

To censure 'em I've no pretension ;  
I own they're past my comprehension.

You say your brother wants a place,  
( 'Tis many a younger brother's case ),  
And that he very soon intends  
To ply the court, and teaze his friends.  
If there his merits chance to find  
A patriot of an open mind,  
Whose constant actions prove him just  
To both a king's and people's trust ;  
May he, with gratitude, attend,  
And owe his rise to such a friend.

You praise his parts, for business fit,  
His learning, probity, and wit ;  
But those alone will never do,  
Unless his patron have 'em too.

I've heard of times ( pray God defend us !  
We're not so good but he can mend us )  
When wicked ministers have trod  
On kings and people, law and God ;  
With arrogance they girt the throne,  
And knew no interest but their own.  
Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,  
Gets nothing but its own reward.  
A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,  
With proper parts to recommend 'em.  
Then if his patron burn with lust,  
The first in favour's pimp the first.  
His doors are never closed to spies,  
Who cheer his heart with double lies ;

They flatter him, his foes defame,  
 So lull the pangs of guilt and shame.  
 If schemes of lucre haunt his brain,  
 Projectors swell his greedy train :  
 Vile brokers ply his private ear  
 With jobs of plunder for the year ;  
 All consciences must bend and ply ;  
 You must vote on, and not know why :  
 Through thick and thin you must go on ;  
 One scruple, and your place is gone.

Since plagues like these have cursed a land,  
 And favourites cannot always stand,  
 Good courtiers should for change be ready,  
 And not have principles too steady ;  
 For should a knave engross the power,  
 (God shield the realm from that sad hour),  
 He must have rogues or slavish fools ;  
 For what's a knave without his tools ?

Wherever those a people drain,  
 And strut with infamy and gain,  
 I envy not their guilt and state,  
 And scorn to share the public hate.  
 Let their own servile creatures rise,  
 By screening fraud, and venting lies :  
 Give me, kind Heaven, a private station,\*  
 A mind serene for contemplation :

\* ——— When impious men bear sway,  
 The post of honour is a private station.

*Addison.*

Title and profit I resign ;  
 The post of honour shall be mine.  
 My Fable read, their merits view,  
 Then herd who will with such a crew.

In days of yore (my cautious rhymes  
 Always except the present times)  
 A greedy Vulture, skill'd in game,  
 Inured to guilt, unawed by shame,  
 Approach'd the throne in evil hour,  
 And step by step intrudes to power :  
 When at the royal Eagle's ear,  
 He longs to ease the monarch's care.  
 The monarch grants. With pride elate,  
 Behold him minister of state !  
 Around him throng the feather'd rout ;  
 Friends must be served, and some must out ;  
 Each thinks his own the best pretension ;  
 This asks a place, and that a pension.

The Nightingale was set aside :  
 A forward Daw his room supplied.

“ This bird (says he) for business fit,  
 Hath both sagacity and wit :  
 With all his turns, and shifts, and tricks,  
 He's docile, and at nothing sticks ;  
 Then with his neighbours one so free  
 At all times will connive at me.”

The Hawk had due distinction shown,  
 For parts and talents like his own.

Thousands of hireling Cocks attend him,  
 As blustering bullies to defend him.

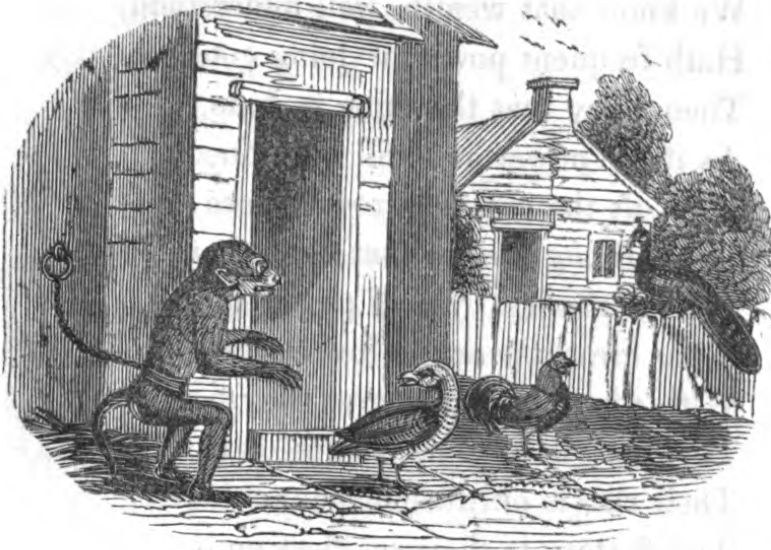


At once the Ravens were discarded,  
And Magpies with their posts rewarded.

Those fowls of omen I detest,  
That pry into another's nest.  
State-lies must lose all good intent,  
For they foresee and croak th' event.  
My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote,  
Speak what they're taught, and so to vote.

“When rogues like these (a Sparrow cries)  
To honours and employments rise,  
I court no favour, ask no place,  
From such, preferment is disgrace.  
Within my thatch'd retreat I find  
(What these ne'er feel) true peace of mind.”





## FABLE III.

## THE BABOON AND THE POULTRY.

TO A LEEVE-HUNTER.

WE frequently misplace esteem,  
 By judging men by what they seem.  
 To birth, wealth, power, we should allow  
 Precedence, and our lowest bow :  
 In that is due distinction shown ;  
 Esteem is Virtue's right alone.

With partial eye we're apt to see  
 The man of noble pedigree :  
 We're prepossess'd my Lord inherits,  
 In some degree, his grandsire's merits ;  
 For those we find upon record,  
 But find him nothing but ' my Lord.'

When we, with superficial view,  
 Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too.

We know that wealth, well understood,  
Hath frequent power of doing good,  
Then fancy that the thing is done,  
As if the power and will were one.  
Thus oft the cheated crowd adore  
The thriving knaves that keep them poor.

The cringing train of power survey ;  
What creatures are so low as they !  
With what obsequiousness they bend !  
To what vile actions condescend !  
Their rise is on their meanness built,  
And flattery is their smallest guilt.  
What homage, reverence, adoration,  
In every age, in every nation,  
Have sycophants to power address'd !  
No matter who the power possess'd.  
Let ministers be what they will,  
You find their levees always fill :  
E'en those who have perplex'd a state,  
Whose actions claim contempt and hate,  
Had wretches to applaud their schemes,  
Though more absurd than madmen's dreams.  
When barbarous Moloch was invoked,  
The blood of infants only smoked !  
But here (unless all History lies)  
Whole realms have been a sacrifice.

Look through all courts : 'tis power we find  
The general idol of mankind ;  
There worship'd under every shape :  
Alike the lion, fox, and ape,

Are follow'd by time-serving slaves,  
Rich prostitutes, and needy knaves.

Who then shall glory in his post ?  
How frail his pride, how vain his boast !  
The followers of his prosperous hour  
Are as unstable as his power.  
Power, by the breath of Flattery nursed,  
The more it swells is nearer burst.  
The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,  
And in a dirty tear descends.

Once on a time an ancient maid,  
By wishes and by time decay'd,  
To cure the pangs of restless thought,  
In birds and beasts amusement sought :  
Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employ'd ;  
With these alone she talk'd and toy'd.

A huge Baboon her fancy took,  
(Almost a man in size and look),  
He finger'd every thing he found,  
And mimic'd all the servants round ;  
Then, too, his parts and ready wit  
Show'd him for every business fit.  
With all these talents 'twas but just  
That Pug should hold a place of trust ;  
So to her favourite was assign'd  
The charge of all her feather'd kind.  
'Twas his to tend them eve and morn,  
And portion out their daily corn.

Behold him now, with haughty stride,  
Assume a ministerial pride.

The morning rose. In hope of picking,  
Swans, turkeys, peacocks, ducks, and chicken,  
Fowls of all rank surround his hut,  
To worship his important strut.

The minister appears. The crowd,  
Now here, now there, obsequious bow'd.  
This praised his parts, and that his face,  
T'other his dignity in place.

From bill to bill the flattery ran,  
He hears and bears it like a man ;  
For when we flatter Self-conceit,  
We but his sentiments repeat.

If we're too scrupulously just,  
What profit's in a place of trust ?  
The common practice of the great  
Is to secure a snug retreat :  
So Pug began to turn his brain  
(Like other folks in place) on gain.

An apple-woman's stall was near,  
Well stock'd with fruits through all the year ;  
Here every day he cramm'd his guts,  
Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts ;  
For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)  
His payments should in corn be made.

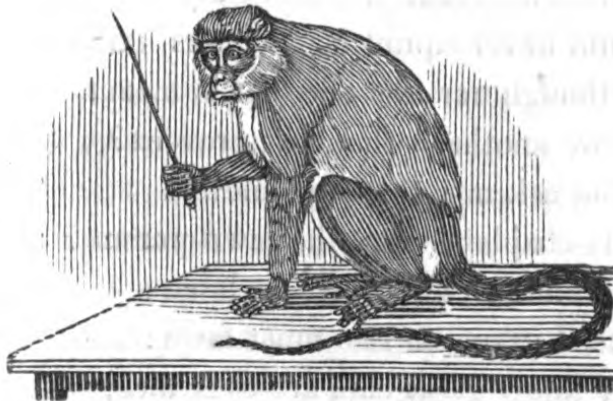
The stock of grain was quickly spent,  
And no account which way it went :  
Then, too, the Poultry's starved condition  
Caused speculations of suspicion.  
The facts were proved beyond dispute ;  
Pug must refund his hoards of fruit ;

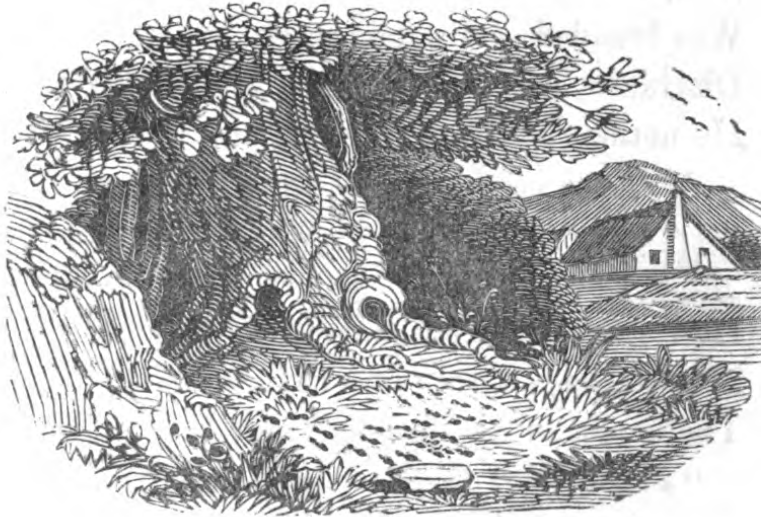
And, though then minister in chief,  
Was branded as a public thief.  
Disgraced, despised, confined to chains,  
He nothing but his pride retains.

A Goose pass'd by ; he knew the face,  
Seen every levee while in place.

“ What, no respect ! no reverence shown !  
How saucy are these creatures grown !  
Not two days since (says he) you bow'd,  
The lowest of my fawning crowd.”

“ Proud fool ! (replies the Goose), 'tis true  
Thy corn a fluttering levee drew ;  
For that I join'd the hungry train,  
And sold thee flattery for thy grain :  
But then, as now, conceited Ape,  
We saw thee in thy proper shape.”





## FABLE IV.

## THE ANT IN OFFICE.

TO A FRIEND.

You tell me that you apprehend  
 My verse may touchy folks offend.  
 In prudence, too, you think my 'rhymes  
 Should never squint at courtiers' crimes ;  
 For though nor this nor that is meant,  
 Can we another's thoughts prevent ?

You ask me, if I ever knew  
 Court-chaplains thus the lawn pursue ?  
 I meddle not with gown or lawn ;  
 Poets, I grant, to rise must fawn :  
 They know great ears are over nice,  
 And never shock their patron's vice.  
 But I this hackney path despise ;  
 'Tis my ambition not to rise :



If I must prostitute the Muse,  
The base conditions I refuse.  
I neither flatter nor defame,  
Yet own I would bring guilt to shame.  
If I Corruption's hand expose,  
I make corrupted men my foes ;  
What then ? I hate the paltry tribe :  
Be virtue mine ; be theirs the bribe.  
I no man's property invade ;  
Corruption's yet no lawful trade.  
Nor would it mighty ills produce,  
Could I shame bribery out of use.  
I know 'twould cramp most politicians,  
Were they tied down to these conditions ;  
'Twould stint their power, their riches bound,  
And make their parts seem less profound.  
Were they denied their proper tools,  
How could they lead their knaves and fools ?  
Were this the case, let's take a view  
What dreadful mischiefs would ensue.  
Though it might aggrandize the state ;  
Could private luxury dine on plate ?  
Kings might indeed their friends reward,  
But ministers find less regard.  
Informers, sycophants, and spies  
Would not augment the year's supplies.  
Perhaps, too, take away this prop,  
An annual job or two might drop.  
Besides, if pensions were denied,  
Could Avarice support its pride ?

It might even ministers confound,  
And yet the state be safe and sound.

I care not though 'tis understood ;  
I only mean my country's good :  
And (let who will my freedom blame)  
I wish all courtiers did the same.  
Nay, though some folks the less might get,  
I wish the nation out of debt.  
I put no private man's ambition  
With public good in competition :  
Rather than have our laws defaced,  
I'd vote a minister disgraced.

I strike at vice, be't where it will ;  
And what if great folks take it ill ?  
I hope corruption, bribery, pension,  
One may with detestation mention ;  
Think you the law (let who will take it)  
Can *scandalum magnatum* make it ?  
I vent no slander, owe no grudge,  
Nor of another's conscience judge :  
At him, or him, I take no aim,  
Yet dare against all vice declaim.  
Shall I not censure breach of trust,  
Because knaves know themselves unjust ?  
That steward whose account is clear  
Demands his honour may appear :  
His actions never shun the light ;  
He is, and would be proved, upright.

But then you think my Fable bears  
Allusion, too, to state affairs.

I grant it does : and who's so great,  
That has the privilege to cheat?  
If then in any future reign  
(For ministers may thirst for gain)  
Corrupted hands defraud the nation,  
I bar no reader's application.

An Ant there was, whose forward prate  
Controll'd all matters in debate ;  
Whether he knew the thing or no,  
His tongue eternally would go ;  
For he had impudence at will,  
And boasted universal skill,  
Ambition was his point in view :  
Thus by degrees to power he grew.  
Behold him now his drift attain :  
He's made chief treasurer of the grain.

But as their ancient laws are just,  
And punish breach of public trust,  
'Tis order'd (lest wrong application  
Should starve that wise industrious nation)  
That all accounts be stated clear,  
Their stock, and what defray'd the year ;  
That auditors shall these inspect,  
And public rapine thus be check'd.  
For this the solemn day was set ;  
The auditors in council met.  
The granary keeper must explain,  
And balance his account of grain.  
He brought (since he could not refuse 'em)  
Some scraps of paper to amuse 'em.

An honest Pismire, warm with zeal,  
 In justice to the public weal,  
 Thus spoke :—“ The nation’s hoard is low ;  
 From whence does this profusion flow ?  
 I know our annual fund’s amount ;  
 Why such expense ? and where’s the account ?”

With wonted arrogance and pride,  
 The Ant in office thus replied :  
 “ Consider, Sirs, were secrets told,  
 How could the best-schemed projects hold ?  
 Should we state mysteries disclose,  
 ’Twould lay us open to our foes.  
 My duty and my well-known zeal  
 Bid me our present schemes conceal :  
 But, on my honour, all th’ expense  
 (Though vast) was for the swarm’s defence.”

They pass’d th’ account as fair and just ;  
 And voted him implicit trust.

Next year again the granary drain’d,  
 He thus his innocence maintain’d :

“ Think how our present matters stand,  
 What dangers threat from every hand ;  
 What hosts of turkeys stroll for food,  
 No farmer’s wife but hath her brood.  
 Consider, when invasion’s near,  
 Intelligence must cost us dear ;  
 And, in this ticklish situation,  
 A secret told betrays the nation :  
 But, on my honour, all th’ expense  
 (Though vast) was for the swarm’s defence.”

Again, without examination,  
They thank'd his sage administration.

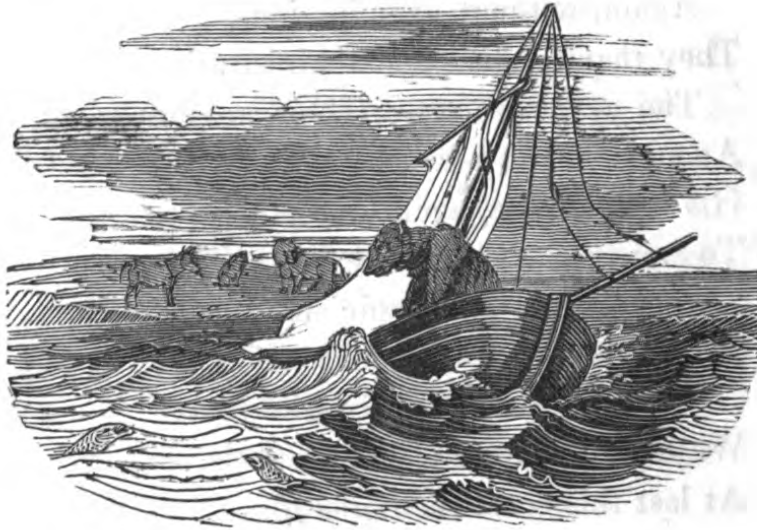
The year revolves. Their treasure spent,  
Again in secret service went :  
His honour, too, again was pledged,  
To satisfy the charge alleged.

When thus, with panic shame possess'd,  
An auditor his friends address'd :

“What are we? ministerial tools?  
We little knaves are greater fools.  
At last this secret is explored,  
'Tis our corruption thins the board.  
For every grain we touch'd, at least,  
A thousand his own heaps increased.  
Then for his kin and favourite spies,  
A hundred hardly could suffice.  
Thus for a paltry sneaking bribe,  
We cheat ourselves and all the tribe ;  
For all the magazine contains  
Grows from our annual toil and pains.”

They vote th' account shall be inspected ;  
The cunning plunderer is detected ;  
The fraud is sentenced ; and his hoard,  
As due, to public use restored.





## FABLE V.

## THE BEAR IN A BOAT.

TO A COXCOMB.

THAT man must daily wiser grow,  
Whose search is bent himself to know ;  
Impartially he weighs his scope,  
And on firm reason founds his hope ;  
He tries his strength before the race,  
And never seeks his own disgrace ;  
He knows the compass, sail, and oar,  
Or never launches from the shore ;  
Before he builds, computes the cost,  
And in no proud pursuit is lost :  
He learns the bounds of human sense,  
And safely walks within the fence.  
Thus, conscious of his own defect,  
Are pride and self-importance check'd.

If then, self-knowledge to pursue,  
Direct our life in every view,  
Of all the fools that pride can boast,  
A Coxcomb claims distinction most.

Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind ;  
They're not to sex or age confined,  
Or rich, or poor, or great, or small,  
'Tis vanity besots them all.  
By ignorance is pride increased :  
Those most assume who know the least ;  
Their own false balance gives 'em weight,  
But every other finds 'em light.

Not that all Coxcombs' follies strike,  
And draw our ridicule alike ;  
To different merits each pretends ;  
This in love-vanity transcends ;  
That, smitten with his face and shape,  
By dress distinguishes the ape ;  
Th' other with learning crams his shelf,  
Knows books, and all things but himself.

All these are fools of low condition,  
Compared with Coxcombs of ambition :  
For those, puff'd up with flattery, dare  
Assume a nation's various care.  
They ne'er the grossest praise mistrust,  
Their sycophants seem hardly just ;  
For these, in part alone, attest  
The flattery their own thoughts suggest.  
In this wide sphere a Coxcomb's shown  
In other realms besides his own :



The self-deem'd Machiavel at large  
 By turns controls in every charge.  
 Does Commerce suffer in her rights?  
 'Tis he directs the naval fights.  
 What sailor dares dispute his skill?  
 He'll be a admiral when he will.

Now meddling in the soldiers' trade,  
 Troops must be hired, and levies made :  
 He gives ambassadors their cue,  
 His cobbled treaties to renew :  
 And annual taxes must suffice  
 The current blunders to disguise.  
 When his crude schemes in air are lost,  
 And millions scarce defray the cost,  
 His arrogance (nought undismay'd)  
 Trusting in self-sufficient aid,  
 On other rocks mi-guides the realm,  
 And thinks a pilot at the helm.  
 He ne'er suspects his want of skill,  
 But blunders on from ill to ill ;  
 And, when he fails of all intent,  
 Blames only unforeseen event.  
 Lest you mistake the application,  
 The Fable calls me to relation.

A Bear of shag and manners rough,  
 At climbing trees expert enough ;  
 For dextrously, and safe from harm,  
 Year after year he robb'd the swarm :  
 Thus thriving on industrious toil,  
 He gloried in his pilfer'd spoil.

This trick so swell'd him with conceit,  
He thought no enterprise too great.  
Alike in sciences and arts,  
He boasted universal parts :  
Pragmatic, busy, bustling, bold,  
His arrogance was uncontroll'd ;  
And thus he made his party good,  
And grew—dictator of the wood.

The beasts, with admiration, stare,  
And think him a prodigious Bear.  
Were any common booty got,  
'Twas his each portion to allot :  
For why ? he found there might be picking,  
Ev'n in the carving of a chicken.  
Intruding thus, he by degrees  
Claim'd, too, the butcher's larger fees,  
And now his overweening pride  
In every province will preside.  
No task too difficult was found :  
His blundering nose misleads the hound,  
In stratagem and subtle arts,  
He overrules the fox's parts.

It chanced as, on a certain day,  
Along the bank he took his way,  
A boat, with rudder, sail, and oar,  
At anchor floated near the shore.  
He stopt, and, turning to his train,  
Thus pertly vents his vaunting strain :  
“ What blundering puppies are mankind,  
In every science always blind !

I mock the pedantry of schools :  
 What are their compasses and rules ?  
 From me that helm shall conduct learn,  
 And man his ignorance discern."

So saying, with audacious pride,  
 He gains the Boat, and climbs the side.  
 The beasts, astonish'd, line the strand :  
 The anchor's weigh'd ; he drives from land :  
 The slack sail shifts from side to side ;  
 The Boat untrimm'd admits the tide.  
 Borne down, adrift, at random tost,  
 His oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.  
 The Bear, presuming in his skill,  
 Is here and there officious still ;  
 Till, striking on the dangerous sands,  
 Aground the shatter'd vessel stands,  
 To see the bungler thus distress,  
 The very fishes sneer and jest :  
 Ev'n gudgeons join in ridicule,  
 To mortify the meddling fool.  
 The clamorous watermen appear ;  
 Threats, curses, oaths insult his ear :  
 Seiz'd, thrash'd, and chain'd he's dragg'd to  
 land ;  
 Derision shouts along the strand.





## FABLE VI.

## THE SQUIRE AND HIS CUR.

TO A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

**THE** man of pure and simple heart  
 Through life disdains a double part ;  
 He never needs the screen of lies,  
 His inward bosom to disguise :  
 In vain malicious tongues assail ;  
 Let Envy snarl, let Slander rail,  
 From Virtue's shield (secure from wound)  
 Their blunted venom'd shafts rebound.  
 So shines his light before mankind,  
 His actions prove his honest mind.  
 If in his country's cause he rise,  
 Debating senates to advise,  
 Unbribed, unawed, he dares impart  
 The honest dictates of his heart :

No ministerial frown he fears,  
But in his virtue perseveres.

But would you play the politician,  
Whose heart's averse to intuition,  
Your lips at all times, nay, your reason  
Must be controll'd by place and season.  
What statesman could his power support,  
Were lying tongues forbid the court?  
Did princely ears to truth attend,  
What minister could gain his end?  
How could he raise his tools to place,  
And how his honest foes disgrace?

That politician tops his part,  
Who readily can lie with art:  
The man's proficient in his trade;  
His power is strong, his fortune's made:  
By that the interest of the throne  
Is made subservient to his own;  
By that have kings of old, deluded,  
All their own friends, for his, excluded:  
By that, his selfish schemes pursuing,  
He thrives upon the public ruin.

Antiochus,\* with hardy pace,  
Provoked the dangers of the chase;  
And, lost from all his menial train,  
Traversed the wood and pathless plain.  
A cottage lodged the royal guest;  
The Parthian clown brought forth his best.

\* Plutarch.

The King, unknown, his feast enjoy'd,  
And various chat the hours employ'd.  
From wine what sudden friendship springs!  
Frankly they talk'd of courts and kings.

“ We country folks (the Clown replies)  
Could ope our gracious monarch's eyes.  
The King (as all our neighbours say)  
Might he (God bless him!) have his way,  
Is sound at heart, and means our good,  
And he would do it if he could.  
If truth in courts were not forbid,  
Nor kings nor subjects would be rid.  
Were he in power, we need not doubt him;  
But that's transferr'd to those about him;  
On them he throws the regal cares;  
And what mind they? Their own affairs.  
If such rapacious hands he trust,  
The best of men may seem unjust.  
From kings to cobblers 'tis the same;  
Bad servants wound their master's fame.  
In this our neighbours all agree:  
Would the King knew as much as we!”—  
Here he stopp'd short. Repose they sought;  
The Peasant slept, the Monarch thought.

The courtiers learn'd, at early dawn,  
Where their lost sovereign was withdrawn.  
The guards' approach our host alarms;  
With gaudy coats the cottage swarms.  
The crown and purple robes they bring,  
And prostrate fall before the King.

The Clown was call'd ; the royal guest  
By due reward his thanks express'd.  
The King then, turning to the crowd,  
Who fawningly before him bow'd,  
Thus spoke : " Since, bent on private gain,  
Your counsels first misled my reign,  
Taught and inform'd by you alone,  
No truth the royal ear hath known,  
Till here conversing : hence, ye Crew,  
For now I know myself and you."

Whene'er the royal ear's engross'd,  
State-lies but little genius cost :  
The favourite then securely robs,  
And gleans a nation by his jobs.  
Franker and bolder grown in ill,  
He daily poisons dares instil ;  
And, as his present views suggest,  
Inflames or soothes the royal breast :  
Thus wicked ministers oppress,  
When oft the monarch means redress.

Would kings their private subjects hear,  
A minister must talk with fear ;  
If honesty opposed his views,  
He dared not innocence accuse ;  
'Twould keep him in such narrow bound,  
He could not right and wrong confound.  
Happy were kings could they disclose  
Their real friends and real foes !  
Were both themselves and subjects known,  
A monarch's will might be his own.



Had he the use of ears and eyes,  
Knives would no more be counted wise.  
But then a minister might lose  
(Hard case!) his own ambitious views.  
When such as these have vex'd a state,  
Pursued by universal hate,  
Their false support at once hath fail'd,  
And persevering truth prevail'd:  
Exposed, their train of fraud is seen;  
Truth will at last remove the screen.

A Country 'Squire, by whim directed,  
The true staunch dogs of chase neglected:  
Beneath his board no hound was fed;  
His hand ne'er stroked the spaniel's head,  
A snappish Cur, alone caress'd,  
By lies had banish'd all the rest.  
Yap had his ear; and defamation  
Gave him full scope of conversation.  
His sycophants must be preferr'd;  
Room must be made for all his herd:  
Wherefore, to bring his schemes about,  
Old faithful servants all must out.

The Cur on every creature flew,  
(As other great men's puppies do),  
Unless due court to him were shown,  
And both their face and business known:  
No honest tongue an audience found;  
He worried all the tenants round;  
For why? he lived in constant fear,  
Lest truth by chance should interfere.

If any stranger dared intrude,  
The noisy Cur his heels pursued.  
Now fierce with rage, now struck with dread,  
At once he snarled, bit, and fled.  
Aloof he bays, with bristling hair,  
And thus in secret growls his fear :  
“ Who knows but Truth, in this disguise,  
May frustrate my best-guarded lies ?  
Should she (thus mask'd) admittance find,  
That very hour my ruin's sign'd.”

Now in his howl's continued sound,  
Their words were lost, the voice was drown'd.  
Ever in awe of honest tongues,  
Thus every day he strain'd his lungs.

It happen'd, in ill-omen'd hour,  
That Yap, unmindful of his power,  
Forsook his post, to love inclined ;  
A favourite bitch was in the wind.  
By her seduced, in amorous play,  
They frisk'd the joyous hours away :  
Thus by untimely love pursuing,  
Like Antony he sought his ruin.

For now, the 'Squire, unvex'd with noise,  
An honest neighbour's chat enjoys :  
“ Be free, (says he), your mind impart ;  
I love a friendly open heart.  
Methinks my tenants shun my gate ;  
Why such a stranger grown of late ?  
Pray tell me what offence they find :  
'Tis plain they're not so well inclined.”

“ Turn off your Cur, (the Farmer cries),  
Who feeds your ear with daily lies.  
His snarling insolence offends :  
'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.  
Were but that saucy puppy check'd,  
You'd find again the same respect.  
Hear only him, he'll swear it too,  
That all our hatred is to you :  
But learn from us your true estate ;  
'Tis that cursed Cur alone we hate.”

The 'Squire heard Truth. Now Yap rush'd in ;  
The wide hall echoes with his din :  
Yet Truth prevail'd ; and, with disgrace,  
The dog was cudgell'd out of place.





## FABLE VII.

## THE COUNTRYMAN AND JUPITER.

TO MYSELF.

HAVE you a friend (look round and spy)  
 So fond, so prepossess'd, as I?  
 Your faults, so obvious to mankind,  
 My partial eyes could never find.  
 When, by the breath of Fortune blown,  
 Your airy castles were o'erthrown;  
 Have I been ever prone to blame,  
 Or mortified your hours with shame?  
 Was I e'er known to damp your spirit,  
 Or twit you with the want of merit?  
 'Tis not so strange that Fortune's frown  
 Still perseveres to keep you down.  
 Look round and see what others do,  
 Would you be rich and honest too?

Have you (like those she raised to place)  
 Been opportunely mean and base ?  
 Have you (as times required) resign'd  
 Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind ?  
 If these are scruples, give her o'er ;  
 Write, practise morals, and be poor.

The gifts of Fortuné truly rate ;  
 Then tell me what would mend your state.  
 If happiness on wealth were built,  
 Rich rogues might comfort find in guilt.  
 As grows the miser's hoarded store,  
 His fears, his wants, increase the more.

Think, GAY, (what ne'er may be the case),  
 Should Fortune take you into grace,  
 Would that your happiness augment ?  
 What can she give beyond content ?

Suppose yourself a wealthy heir,  
 With a vast annual income clear !  
 In all the affluence you possess,  
 You might not feel one care the less.  
 Might you not then (like others) find  
 With change of fortune, change of mind ?  
 Perhaps, profuse beyond all rule,  
 You might start out a glaring fool ;  
 Your luxury might break all bounds :  
 Plate, table, horses, stewards, hounds,  
 Might swell your debts : then, lust of play  
 No regal income can defray.  
 Sunk is all credit, writs assail,  
 And doom your future life to jail.

Or were you dignified with power,  
Would that avert one pensive hour?  
You might give avarice its swing,  
Defraud a nation, blind a king :  
Then from the hirelings in your cause,  
Though daily fed with false applause,  
Could it a real joy impart ?—  
Great guilt knew never joy at heart.

Is happiness your point in view ?  
(I mean th' intrinsic and the true)  
She nor in camps or courts resides,  
Nor in the humble cottage hides ;  
Yet found alike in every sphere ;  
Who finds content will find her there.

O'erspent with toil, beneath the shade,  
A Peasant rested on his spade :

“ Good gods ! (he cries), 'tis hard to bear  
This load of life from year to year !  
Soon as the morning streaks the skies,  
Industrious Labour bids me rise ;  
With sweat I earn my homely fare,  
And every day renews my care.”

Jove heard the discontented strain,  
And thus rebuked the murmuring swain :

“ Speak out your wants, then, honest friend :  
Unjust complaints the gods offend.  
If you repine at partial Fate,  
Instruct me what could mend your state.  
Mankind in every station see.  
What wish you ? tell me what you'd be.”

So said, upborne upon a cloud,  
The Clown survey'd the anxious crowd.

“Yon face of Care, (says Jove), behold,  
His bulky bags are fill'd with gold :  
See with what joy he counts it o'er !  
That sum to-day hath swell'd his store.”

“Were I that man, (the Peasant cried),  
What blessing could I ask beside ?”

“Hold, (says the god), first learn to know  
True happiness from outward show.  
This optic glass of intuition——  
Here, take it, view his true condition.”

He look'd, and saw the miser's breast  
A troubled ocean, ne'er at rest ;  
Want ever stares him in the face,  
And fear anticipates disgrace :  
With conscious guilt he saw him start ;  
Extortion gnaws his throbbing heart ;  
And never, or in thought or dream,  
His breast admits one happy gleam.

“May Jove (he cries) reject my prayer,  
And guard my life from guilt and care.  
My soul abhors that wretch's fate :  
O keep me in my humble state !  
But see, amidst a gaudy crowd,  
Yon minister so gay and proud ;  
On him what happiness attends,  
Who thus rewards his grateful friends !”

“First, take the glass, (the god replies),  
Man views the world with partial eyes.”



“Good gods! (exclaims the startled wight),  
 Defend me from this hideous sight!  
 Corruption with corrosive smart  
 Lies cankering on his guilty heart:  
 I see him with polluted hand  
 Spread the contagion o’er the land.  
 Now Avarice with insatiate jaws,  
 Now Rapine with her harpy claws,  
 His bosom tears: his conscious breast  
 Groans with a load of crimes oppress’d.  
 See him, mad and drunk with power,  
 Stand tottering on Ambition’s tower.  
 Sometimes, in speeches vain and proud,  
 His boasts insult the nether crowd;  
 Now, seized with giddiness and fear,  
 He trembles lest his fall is near.

“Was ever wretch like this! (he cries),  
 Such misery in such disguise!  
 The change, O Jove! I disavow;  
 Still be my lot the spade and plough.”

He next, confirm’d by speculation,  
 Rejects the lawyer’s occupation;  
 For he the statesman seem’d in part,  
 And bore similitude of heart.  
 Nor did the soldier’s trade inflame  
 His hopes with thirst of spoil and fame:  
 The miseries of war he mourn’d;  
 Whole nations into deserts turn’d.

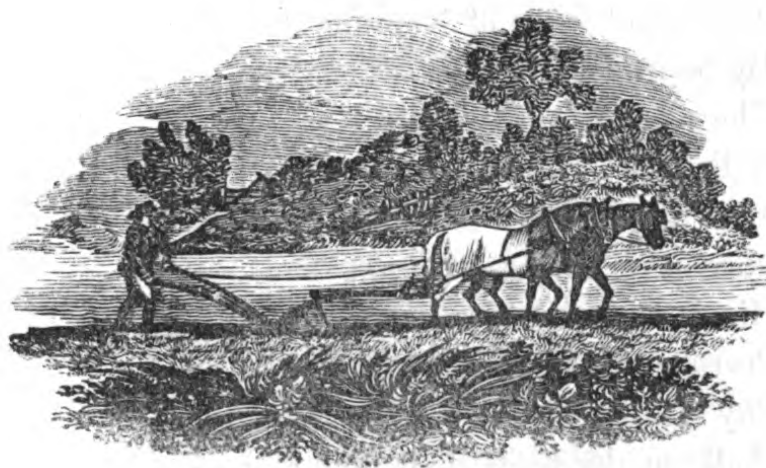
By these have laws and rights been braved;  
 By these was free-born man enslaved:

When battles and invasion cease,  
Why swarm they in the lands of peace ?  
“ Such change (says he) may I decline ;  
The scythe and civil arms be mine !”

Thus, weighing life in each condition,  
The Clown withdrew his rash petition.

When thus the god : “ How mortals err !  
If you true happiness prefer,  
’Tis to no rank of life confined,  
But dwells in every honest mind.  
Be justice then your sole pursuit :  
Plant virtue, and content’s the fruit.”

So Jove, to gratify the Clown,  
Where first he found him set him down.





## FABLE VIII.

THE MAN, THE CAT, THE DOG, AND THE FLY.

TO MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

HAIL, happy land ! whose fertile grounds  
 The liquid fence of Neptune bounds ;  
 By bounteous Nature set apart,  
 The seat of Industry and Art.  
 O Britain ! chosen port of trade,  
 May luxury ne'er thy sons invade ;  
 May never minister (intent  
 His private treasures to augment)  
 Corrupt thy state. If jealous foes  
 Thy rights of commerce dare oppose,  
 Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe ?  
 Who is't prescribes the ocean law ?  
 Whenever neighbouring states contend,  
 'Tis thine to be the general friend.

What is't who rules in other lands ?  
 On trade alone the glory stands :  
 That benefit is unconfined,  
 Diffusing good among mankind :  
 That first gave lustre to thy reigns,  
 And scatter'd plenty o'er thy plains :  
 'Tis that alone thy wealth supplies,  
 And draws all Europe's envious eyes.  
 Be commerce, then, thy sole design ;  
 Keep that, and all the world is thine.

When naval traffic ploughs the main,  
 Who shares not in the merchant's gain ?  
 'Tis that supports the regal state,  
 And makes the farmer's heart elate :  
 The numerous flocks that clothe the land  
 Can scarce supply the loom's demand ;  
 Prolific culture glads the fields,  
 And the bare heath a harvest yields.

Nature expects mankind should share  
 The duties of the public care.  
 Who's born for sloth ? \* To some we find  
 The ploughshare's annual toil assign'd :  
 Some at the sounding anvil glow :  
 Some the swift-sliding shuttle throw ;  
 Some, studious of the wind and tide,  
 From pole to pole our commerce guide :  
 Some (taught by industry) impart  
 With hands and feet the works of art ;

\* Barrow.

While some, of genius more refined,  
With head and tongue assist mankind ;  
Each aiming at one common end,  
Proves to the whole a needful friend.  
Thus, born each other's useful aid,  
By turns are obligations paid.

The monarch, when his table's spread,  
Is to the clown obliged for bread ;  
And when in all his glory dress'd,  
Owes to the loom his royal vest.  
Do not the mason's toil and care  
Protect him from th' inclement air ?  
Does not the cutler's art supply  
The ornament that guards his thigh ?  
All these, in duty to the throne,  
Their common obligations own.  
'Tis he (his own and people's cause)  
Protects their properties and laws :  
Thus they their honest toil employ,  
And with content the fruits enjoy.  
In every rank, or great or small,  
'Tis industry supports us all.

The animals, by want oppress'd,  
To man their services address'd :  
While each pursued their selfish good,  
They hunger'd for precarious food :  
Their hours with anxious cares were vex'd ;  
One day they fed, and starved the next.  
They saw that plenty, sure and rife,  
Was found alone in social life ;

That mutual industry profess'd,  
The various wants of man redress'd.

The Cat, half-famish'd, lean, and weak,  
Demands the privilege to speak.

“ Well, Puss, (says Man), and what can you  
To benefit the public do ? ”

The Cat replies : “ These teeth, these claws,  
With vigilance shall serve the cause.  
The mouse, destroy'd by my pursuit,  
No longer shall your feasts pollute ;  
Nor rats, from nightly ambuscade,  
With wasteful teeth your stores invade.”

“ I grant (says Man) to general use  
Your parts and talents may conduce ;  
For rats and mice purloin our grain,  
And thrashers whirl the flail in vain :  
Thus shall the Cat, a foe to spoil,  
Protect the farmer's honest toil.”

Then, turning to the Dog, he cried,  
“ Well, Sir, be next your merits tried.”

“ Sir, (says the Dog), by self-applause  
We seem to own a friendless cause.  
Ask those who know me, if distrust  
E'er found me treacherous or unjust ?  
Did I e'er faith or friendship break ?  
Ask all those creatures, let them speak.  
My vigilance and trusty zeal  
Perhaps might serve the public weal.  
Might not your flocks in safety feed,  
Were I to guard the fleecy breed ?

Did I the nightly watches keep,  
 Could thieves invade you while you sleep?"

The Man replies: "'Tis just and right;  
 Rewards such service should requite.

So rare, in property, we find  
 Trust uncorrupt among mankind,  
 That taken in a public view,  
 The first distinction is your due.  
 Such merits all reward transcend:  
 Be then my comrade and my friend."

Addressing now the Fly: "From you  
 What public service can accrue?"

"From me! (the fluttering insect said),  
 I thought you knew me better bred.

Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit  
 That I to industry submit?

Let mean mechanics, to be fed,  
 By business earn ignoble bread:  
 Lost in excess of daily joys,  
 No thought, no care my life annoys.

At noon (the lady's matin hour)  
 I sip the tea's delicious flower;  
 On cates luxuriously I dine,  
 And drink the fragrance of the vine;  
 Studious of elegance and ease,  
 Myself alone I seek to please."

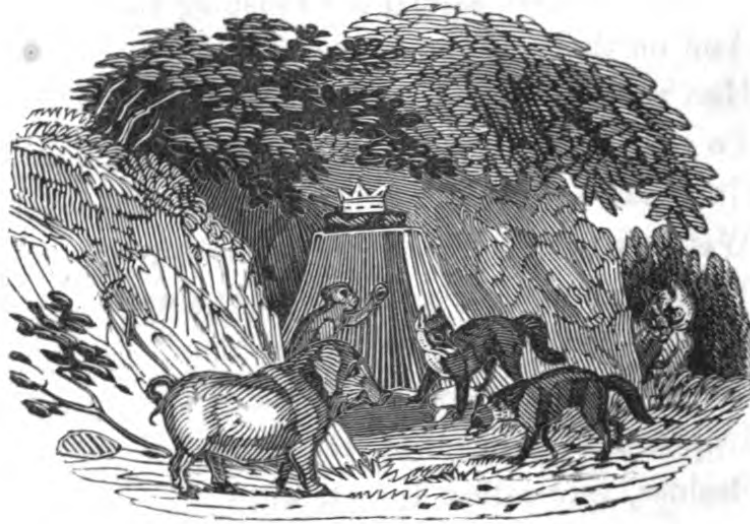
The Man his pert conceit derides,  
 And thus the useless coxcomb chides:

"Hence, from that peach, that downy seat;  
 No idle fool deserves to eat.



Could you have sapp'd the blushing rind,  
And on that pulp ambrosial dined,  
Had not some hand, with skill and toil,  
To raise the tree prepared the soil?  
Consider, sot, what would ensue,  
Were all such worthless things as you.  
You'd soon be forced (by hunger stung)  
To make your dirty meals on dung,  
On which such despicable need,  
Unpitied, is reduced to feed.  
Besides, vain selfish Insect, learn,  
(If you can right and wrong discern),  
That he who, with industrious zeal,  
Contributes to the public weal,  
By adding to the common good,  
His own hath rightly understood."  
So saying, with a sudden blow,  
He laid the noxious vagrant low.  
Crush'd in his luxury and pride,  
The spunger on the public died.





## FABLE IX.

THE JACKAL, LEOPARD, AND OTHER BEASTS.

TO A MODERN POLITICIAN.

I GRANT corruption sways mankind ;  
 That interest, too, perverts the mind ;  
 That bribes have blinded common sense,  
 Foil'd reason, truth, and eloquence :  
 I grant you, too, our present crimes  
 Can equal those of former times.  
 Against plain facts shall I engage,  
 To vindicate our righteous age ?  
 I know that in a modern fist  
 Bribes in full energy subsist.  
 Since then these arguments prevail,  
 And itching palms are still so frail,  
 Hence Politicians, you suggest,  
 Should drive the nail that goes the best ;

That it shows parts and penetration,  
To ply men with the right temptation.

To this I humbly must dissent,  
Premising, no reflection's meant.

Does justice, or the client's sense  
Teach lawyers either side's defence?  
The fee gives eloquence its spirit;  
That only is the client's merit.

Does art, wit, wisdom, or address,  
Obtain the prostitute's caress?  
The guinea (as in other trades)  
From every hand alike persuades.

'Man (Scripture says) is prone to evil ;'  
But does that vindicate the devil?  
Besides, the more mankind are prone,  
The less the devil's parts are shown.  
Corruption's not of modern date ;  
It hath been tried in every state.

Great knaves of old their power have fenced,  
By places, pensions, bribes, dispensed,  
By these they gloried in success,  
And impudently dared oppress ;  
By these despotically they sway'd,  
And slaves extoll'd the hand that paid ;  
Nor parts nor genius were employ'd,  
By these alone were realms destroy'd.

Now see these wretches in disgrace,  
Stripp'd of their treasures, power, and place ;  
View 'em abandon'd and forlorn,  
Exposed to just reproach and scorn.

What now is all your pride, your boast ?  
 Where are your slaves, your flattering host ?  
 What tongues now feed you with applause ?  
 Where are the champions of your cause ?  
 Now ev'n that very fawning train,  
 Which shared the gleanings of your gain,  
 Press foremost who shall first accuse  
 Your selfish jobs, your paltry views,  
 Your narrow schemes, your breach of trust,  
 And want of talents to be just.

What fools were these amidst their power !  
 How thoughtless of their adverse hour !  
 What friends were made ? A hireling herd,  
 For temporary votes preferr'd.  
 Was it these sycophants to get,  
 Your bounty swell'd a nation's debt ?  
 You're bit : for these, like Swiss, attend ;  
 No longer pay, no longer friend.

The Lion is (beyond dispute)  
 Allow'd the most majestic brute ;  
 His valour and his generous mind  
 Prove him superior of his kind :  
 Yet to Jackals (as 'tis averr'd)  
 Some lions have their power transferr'd ;  
 As if the parts of pimps and spies  
 To govern forests could suffice.

Once, studious of his private good,  
 A proud Jackal oppress'd the wood ;  
 To cram his own insatiate jaws,  
 Invaded property and laws.

The forest groans with discontent,  
 Fresh wrongs the general hate foment.  
 The spreading murmurs reach'd his ear ;  
 His secret hours were vex'd with fear.  
 Night after night he weighs the case,  
 And feels the terrors of disgrace.

“ By friends (says he) I'll guard my seat,  
 By those malicious tongues defeat ;  
 I'll strengthen power by new allies,  
 And all my clamorous foes despise.”

To make the generous beasts his friends,  
 He cringes, fawns, and condescends ;  
 But those repulsed his abject court,  
 And scorn'd oppression to support.  
 Friends must be had. He can't subsist.  
 Bribes shall new proselytes enlist ;  
 But these nought weigh'd in honest paws ;  
 For bribes confess a wicked cause :  
 Yet think not every paw withstands  
 What hath prevail'd in human hands.

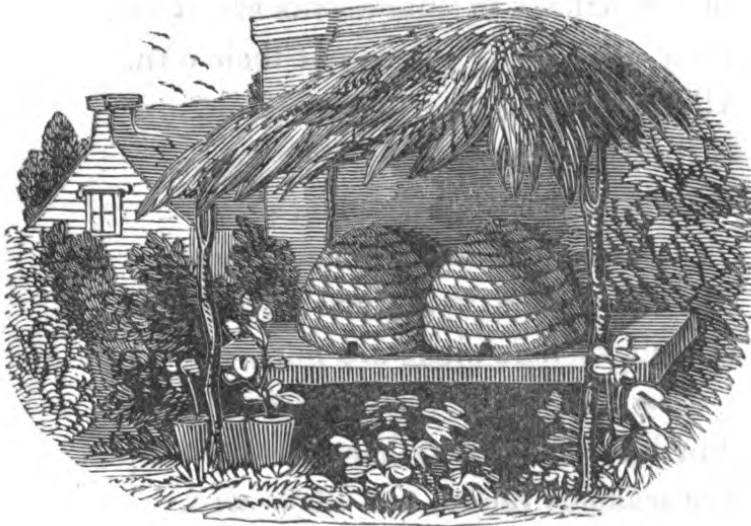
A tempting turnip's silver skin  
 Drew a base hog through thick and thin :  
 Bought with a Stag's delicious haunch,  
 The mercenary Wolf was stanch :  
 The convert Fox grew warm and hearty,  
 A pullet gain'd him to the party :  
 The golden pippin in his fist,  
 A chattering Monkey join'd the list.

But soon, exposed to public hate,  
 The favourite's fall redress'd the state.

The Leopard, vindicating right,  
Had brought his secret frauds to light.  
As rats, before the mansion falls,  
Desert late hospitable walls,  
In shoals the servile creatures run,  
To bow before the rising sun.

The Hog with warmth express'd his zeal,  
And was for hanging those that steal ;  
But hoped, though low, the public hoard  
Might half a turnip still afford.  
Since saving measures were profess'd,  
A lamb's head was the Wolf's request.  
The Fox submitted,—if to touch  
A gosling would be deem'd too much ?  
The Monkey thought his grin and chatter  
Might ask a nut, or some such matter.

“Ye Hirelings, hence ! (the Leopard cries)  
Your venal conscience I despise :  
He who the public good intends,  
By bribes needs never purchase friends.  
Who acts this just, this open part,  
Is propp'd by every honest heart.  
Corruption now too late has show'd,  
That bribes are always ill bestow'd :  
By you your bubbled master's taught,  
Time-serving tools, not friends, are bought.”



## FABLE X.

## THE DEGENERATE BEES.

TO THE REV. DR. SWIFT, DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S.

THOUGH courts the practice disallow,  
 A friend at all times I'll avow.  
 In politics I know 'tis wrong ;  
 A friendship may be kept too long ;  
 And what they call the prudent part  
 Is to wear interest next the heart :  
 As the times take a different face,  
 Old friendships should to new give place.

I know, too, you have many foes ;  
 That owning you is sharing those ;  
 That every knave in every station,  
 Of high and low denomination,  
 For what you speak, and what you write,  
 Dread you at once, and bear you spite.



Such freedoms in your works are shown,  
 They can't enjoy what's not their own.  
 All dunces, too, in church and state,  
 In frothy nonsense show their hate ;  
 With all the petty scribbling crew,  
 (And those pert sots are not a few),  
 'Gainst you and Pope their envy spurt ;  
 The booksellers alone are hurt.

Good gods ! by what a powerful race  
 (For blockheads may have power and place)  
 Are scandals raised, and libels writ,  
 To prove your honesty and wit !  
 Think with yourself : those worthy men,  
 You know, have suffer'd by your pen.  
 From them you've nothing but your due.  
 From hence, 'tis plain, your friends are few.  
 Except myself, I know of none,  
 Besides the wise and good alone.  
 To set the case in fairer light,  
 My Fable shall the rest recite ;  
 Which (though unlike our present state)  
 I for the moral's sake relate.

A Bee of cunning, not of parts,  
 Luxurious, negligent of arts,  
 Rapacious, arrogant, and vain,  
 Greedy of power, but more of gain,  
 Corruption sow'd throughout the hive :  
 By petty rogues the great ones thrive.  
 As power and wealth his views supplied ;  
 'Twas seen in overbearing pride.

With him loud impudence had merit ;  
The Bee of conscience wanted spirit ;  
And those who follow'd honour's rules  
Were laugh'd to scorn for squeamish fools.  
Wealth claim'd distinction, favour, grace,  
And poverty alone was base.  
He treated industry with slight,  
Unless he found his profit by't.  
Rights, laws, and liberties gave way,  
To bring his selfish schemes in play.  
The swarm forgot the common toil,  
To share the gleanings of his spoil.

“ While vulgar souls, of narrow parts,  
Waste life in low mechanic arts ;  
Let us (says he) to genius born,  
The drudgery of our fathers scorn.  
The Wasp and Drone, you must agree,  
Live with more elegance than we.  
Like gentlemen they sport and play ;  
No business interrupts the day :  
Their hours to luxury they give,  
And nobly on their neighbours live.”

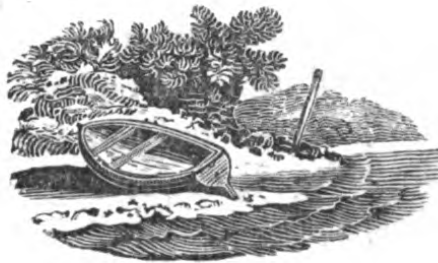
A stubborn Bee, among the swarm,  
With honest indignation warm,  
Thus from his cell with zeal replied :

“ I slight thy frowns, and hate thy pride.  
The laws our native rights protect ;  
Offending thee, I those respect.  
Shall luxury corrupt the hive,  
And none against the torrent strive ?

Exert the honour of your race ;  
He builds his rise on your disgrace.  
'Tis industry our state maintains,  
'Twas honest toil and honest gains  
That raised our sires to power and fame.  
Be virtuous ; save yourselves from shame.  
Know, that in selfish ends pursuing,  
You scramble for the public ruin."

He spoke ; and from his cell dismiss'd,  
Was insolently scoff'd and hiss'd :  
With him a friend or two resign'd,  
Disdaining the degenerate kind.

" These Drones, (says he), these insects vile,  
(I treat them in their proper style),  
May for a time oppress the state :  
They own our virtue by their hate ;  
By that our merits they reveal,  
And recommend our public zeal ;  
Disgraced by this corrupted crew,  
We're honour'd by the virtuous few."





## FABLE XI.

## THE PACK-HORSE AND THE CARRIER.

TO A YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

BEGIN, my Lord, in early youth,  
 To suffer, nay, encourage truth ;  
 And blame me not for disrespect,  
 If I the flatterer's style reject ;  
 With that, by menial tongues supplied,  
 You're daily cocker'd up in pride.

The tree's distinguish'd by the fruit :  
 Be virtue then your first pursuit ;  
 Set your great ancestors in view,  
 Like them deserve the title too ;  
 Like them ignoble actions scorn ;  
 Let virtue prove you greatly born.

Though with less plate their sideboard shone,  
 Their conscience always was their own ;

They ne'er at levees meanly fawn'd,  
Nor was their honour yearly pawn'd ;  
Their hands, by no corruption stain'd,  
The ministerial bribe disdain'd ;  
They served the crown with loyal zeal,  
Yet, jealous of the public weal,  
They stood the bulwark of our laws,  
And wore at heart their country's cause ;  
By neither place nor pension bought,  
They spoke and voted as they thought :  
Thus did your sires adorn their seat ;  
And such alone are truly great.

If you the paths of learning slight,  
You're but a dunce in stronger light.  
In foremost rank the coward placed,  
Is more conspicuously disgraced.  
If you, to serve a paltry end,  
To knavish jobs can condescend ;  
We pay you the contempt that's due ;  
In that you have precedence too.

Whence had you this illustrious name ?  
From virtue and unblemish'd fame.  
By birth the name alone descends ;  
Your honour on yourself depends :  
Think not your coronet can hide  
Assuming ignorance and pride.  
Learning by study must be won ;  
'Twas ne'er entail'd from son to son.  
Superior worth your rank requires ;  
For that mankind reveres your sires :

If you degenerate from your race,  
Their merits heighten your disgrace.

A Carrier, every night and morn,  
Would see his horses eat their corn :  
This sunk the hostler's vails, 'tis true ;  
But then his horses had their due.  
Were we so cautious in all cases,  
Small gains would rise from greater places.

The manger now had all its measure ;  
He heard the grinding teeth with pleasure ;  
When all at once confusion rung ;  
They snorted, jostled, bit, and flung.  
A Pack-horse turn'd his head aside,  
Foaming, his eyeballs swell'd with pride.

“ Good gods ! (says he), how hard's my lot !  
Is then my high descent forgot ?  
Reduced to drudgery and disgrace,  
(A life unworthy of my race),  
Must I, too, bear the vile attacks  
Of ragged scrubs and vulgar hacks ?  
See scurvy Roan, that brute ill-bred,  
Dares from the manger thrust my head !  
Shall I, who boast a noble line,  
On offals of these creatures dine ?  
Kick'd by old Ball ! so mean a foe !  
My honour suffers by the blow.  
Newmarket speaks my grandsire's fame,  
All jockeys still revere his name :  
There yearly are his triumphs told,  
There all his massy plates enroll'd.

Whene'er led forth upon the plain,  
You saw him with a livery train :  
Returning too, with laurels crown'd,  
You heard the drums and trumpets sound.  
Let it then, Sir, be understood,  
Respect's my due, for I have blood."

“ Vain-glorious fool ! (the Carrier cried),  
Respect was never paid to pride.  
Know 'twas thy giddy wilful heart  
Reduced thee to this slavish part.  
Did not thy headstrong youth disdain  
To learn the conduct of the rein ?  
Thus coxcombs, blind to real merit,  
In vicious frolics fancy spirit.  
What is't to me by whom begot ?  
Thou restive, pert, conceited sot.  
Your sires I reverence ; 'tis their due :  
But, worthless fool, what's that to you ?  
Ask all the Carriers on the road,  
They'll say thy keeping's ill bestow'd :  
Then vaunt no more thy noble race,  
That neither mends thy strength nor pace.  
What profits me thy boast of blood ?  
An ass hath more intrinsic good.  
By outward show let's not be cheated ;  
An ass should like an ass be treated."





## FABLE XII.

## PAN AND FORTUNE.

TO A YOUNG HEIR.

SOON as your Father's death was known,  
 (As if th' estate had been their own),  
 The gamesters outwardly express'd  
 The decent joy within your breast:  
 So lavish in your praise they grew,  
 As spoke their certain hopes in you.

One counts your income of the year;  
 How much in ready money clear.

“No house (says he) is more complete;  
 The garden's elegant and great.  
 How fine the park around it lies!  
 The timber's of a noble size!  
 Then, count his jewels and his plate!  
 Besides, 'tis no entail'd estate.

If cash run low, his lands in fee  
Are, or for sale or mortgage, free."

Thus they, before you threw the main,  
Seem to anticipate their gain:

Would you, when thieves are known abroad,  
Bring forth your treasures in the road?  
Would not the fool abet the stealth,  
Who rashly thus exposed his wealth?  
Yet this you do, whene'er you play  
Among the gentlemen of prey.

Could fools to keep their own contrive,  
On what, on whom, could gamesters thrive?  
Is it in charity you game,  
To save your worthy gang from shame?  
Unless you furnish'd daily bread,  
Which way could idleness be fed?  
Could these professors of deceit  
Within the law no longer cheat;  
They must run bolder risks for prey,  
And strip the traveller on the way.  
Thus in your annual rents they share,  
And 'scape the noose from year to year.

Consider, ere you make the bet,  
That sum might cross your tailor's debt.  
When you the pilfering rattle shake,  
Is not your honour, too, at stake?  
Must you not by mean lies evade  
To-morrow's duns from every trade?  
By promises so often paid,  
Is yet your tailor's bill defray'd?

Must you not pitifully fawn,  
To have your butcher's writ withdrawn ?  
This must be done. In debts of play  
Your honour suffers no delay ;  
And not this year's and next year's rent  
The sons of Rapine can content.

Look round : the wrecks of play behold ;  
Estates dismember'd, mortgaged, sold !  
Their owners, now to jails confined,  
Show equal poverty of mind.  
Some, who the spoil of knaves were made,  
Too late attempt to learn their trade.  
Some, for the folly of one hour,  
Become the dirty tools of power,  
And, with the mercenary list,  
Upon court-charity subsist.

You'll find at last this maxim true,—  
Fools are the game which knaves pursue.

The forest (a whole century's shade),  
Must be one wasteful ruin made :  
No mercy's shown to age or kind ;  
The general massacre is sign'd.  
The park, too, shares the dreadful fate ;  
For duns grow louder at the gate.  
Stern clowns, obedient to the 'squire,  
(What will not barbarous hands for hire ?)  
With brawny arms repeat the stroke ;  
Fallen are the elm and reverend oak.  
Through the long wood loud axes sound,  
And Echo groans with every wound.

To see the desolation spread,  
Pan drops a tear, and hangs his head :  
His bosom now with fury burns ;  
Beneath his hoof the dice he spurns.  
Cards, too, in peevish passion torn,  
The sport of whirling winds are borne.

“ To snails inveterate hate I bear,  
Who spoil the verdure of the year ;  
The caterpillar I detest,  
The blooming Spring’s voracious pest ;  
The locust, too, whose ravenous band  
Spreads sudden famine o’er the land.  
But what are these ? The dice’s throw  
At once hath laid a forest low.  
The cards are dealt, the bet is made,  
And the wide park hath lost its shade.  
Thus is my kingdom’s pride defaced,  
And all its ancient glories waste.  
All this (he cries) is Fortune’s doing :  
'Tis thus she meditates my ruin.  
By Fortune, that false, fickle jade !  
More havoc in one hour is made,  
Than all the hungry insect race,  
Combined, can in an age deface.”

Fortune, by chance, who near him past,  
O’erheard the vile aspersion cast.

“ Why, Pan, (says she), what’s all this rant ?  
'Tis every country-bubble’s cant.  
Am I the patroness of vice ?  
Is’t I who cog or palm the dice ?

Did I the shuffling art reveal,  
To mark the cards, or range the deal ?  
In all th' employments men pursue,  
I mind the least what gamesters do.  
There may (if computation's just)  
One now and then my conduct trust.  
I blame the fool, for what can I,  
When ninety-nine my power defy ?  
These trust alone their fingers' ends,  
And not one stake on me depends.  
Whene'er the gaming-board is set,  
Two classes of mankind are met ;  
But if we count the greedy race,  
The knaves fill up the greater space.  
'Tis a gross error held in schools,  
That Fortune always favours fools.  
In play it never bears dispute ;  
That doctrine these fell'd oaks confute.  
Then why to me such rancour show ?  
'Tis Folly, Pan, that is thy foe,  
By me his late estate he won,  
But he by Folly was undone."





## FABLE XIII.

PLUTUS, CUPID, AND TIME.

OF all the burdens man must bear,  
 Time seems most galling and severe :  
 Beneath this grievous load oppress'd,  
 We daily meet some friend distress'd.

“ What can one do ? I rose at nine ;  
 'Tis full six hours before we dine :  
 Six hours ! no earthly thing to do !  
 Would I had dozed in bed till two.”

A pamphlet is before him spread,  
 And almost half a page is read ;  
 Tired with the study of the day,  
 The fluttering sheets are toss'd away :  
 He opes his snuff-box, hums an air,  
 Then yawns, and stretches in his chair.

“ Not twenty, by the minute-hand !  
 Good gods ! (says he), my watch must stand !  
 How muddling 'tis on books to pore !  
 I thought I'd read an hour or more.  
 The morning, of all hours, I hate :  
 One can't contrive to rise too late.”

To make the minutes faster run,  
 Then, too, his tiresome self to shun,  
 To the next coffee-house he speeds,  
 Takes up the news, some scraps he reads.  
 Sauntering, from chair to chair he trails ;  
 Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails.  
 He spies a partner of his woe ;  
 By chat afflictions lighter grow ;  
 Each other's grievances they share,  
 And thus their dreadful hours compare.

Says Tom, “ Since all men must confess,  
 That Time lies heavy, more or less,  
 Why should it be so hard to get,  
 Till two, a party at piquet ?  
 Play might relieve the lagging morn :  
 By cards long wintry nights are borne.  
 Does not quadrille amuse the fair,  
 Night after night, throughout the year ?  
 Vapours and spleen forgot, at play  
 They cheat uncounted hours away.”

“ My case (says Will) then must be hard,  
 By want of skill from play debarr'd.  
 Courtiers kill Time by various ways ;  
 Dependence wears out half their days.



How happy these, whose Time ne'er stands !  
Attendance takes it off their hands.  
Were it not for this cursed shower,  
The Park had whiled away an hour.  
At court, without or place or view,  
I daily lose an hour or two.  
It fully answers my design,  
When I have pick'd up friends to dine ;  
The tavern makes our burden light ;  
Wine puts our time and care to flight.  
At six (hard case !) they call to pay.  
Where can one go ? I hate the play.  
From six till ten ! unless in sleep,  
One cannot spend the hours so cheap.  
The comedy's no sooner done,  
But some assembly is begun ;  
Loitering from room to room I stray,  
Converse, but nothing hear or say :  
Quite tired, from fair to fair I roam.  
So soon ! I dread the thoughts of home.  
From thence, to quicken slow-paced Night,  
Again my tavern friends invite :  
Here, too, our early mornings pass,  
Till drowsy sleep retard the glass."

Thus they their wretched life bemoan,  
And make each other's case their own.

Consider, friends, no hour rolls on,  
But something of your grief is gone.  
Were you to schemes of business bred,  
Did you the paths of learning tread,

Your hours, your days would fly too fast ;  
You'd then regret the minute past.  
Time's fugitive, and light as wind ;  
'Tis indolence that clogs your mind :  
That load from off your spirits shake,  
You'll own and grieve for your mistake.  
A while your thoughtless spleen suspend,  
Then read, and (if you can) attend.

As Plutus, to divert his care,  
Walk'd forth one morn to take the air,  
Cupid o'ertook his strutting pace.  
Each stared upon the stranger's face,  
Till recollection set them right,  
For each knew th' other but by sight.  
After some complimentary talk,  
Time met them, bow'd, and join'd their walk :  
Their chat on various subjects ran,  
But most, what each had done for man.  
Plutus assumes a haughty air,  
Just like our purse-proud fellows here :  
" Let kings, (says he), let cobblers tell,  
Whose gifts among mankind excel.  
Consider courts ; what draws their train ?  
Think you 'tis loyalty or gain ?  
That statesman hath the strongest hold,  
Whose tool of politics is gold ;  
By that, in former reigns, 'tis said,  
The knave in power hath senates led :  
By that alone he sway'd debates,  
Enrich'd himself, and beggar'd states.

Forego your boast. You must conclude,  
That's most esteem'd that's most pursued.  
Think, too, in what a woful plight  
That wretch must live whose pocket's light.  
Are not his hours by want depress'd ?  
Penurious care corrodes his breast :  
Without respect, or love, or friends,  
His solitary day descends."

" You might (says Cupid) doubt my parts,  
My knowledge, too, in human hearts,  
Should I the power of gold dispute,  
Which great examples might confute.  
I know, when nothing else prevails,  
Persuasive money seldom fails ;  
That beauty, too, (like other wares),  
Its price, as well as conscience, bears.  
Then marriage (as of late profess'd)  
Is but a money-job at best.  
Consent, compliance, may be sold ;  
But Love's beyond the price of gold.  
Smugglers there are, who, by retail,  
Expose what they call Love to sale ;  
Such bargains are an arrant cheat :  
You purchase flattery and deceit.  
Those who true love have ever tried  
(The common cares of life supplied)  
No wants endure, no wishes make,  
But every real joy partake.  
All comfort on themselves depends ;  
They want nor power, nor wealth, nor friends.

Love, then, hath every bliss in store ;  
'Tis friendship, and 'tis something more.  
Each other every wish they give :  
Not to know love, is not to live."

"Or love, or money, (Time replied),  
Were men the question to decide,  
Would bear the prize : on both intent,  
My boon's neglected or mispent.  
'Tis I who measure vital space,  
And deal out years to human race.  
Though little prized, and seldom sought,  
Without me love and gold are nought.  
How does the miser time employ ?  
Did I e'er see him life enjoy ?  
By me forsook, the hoards he won  
Are scatter'd by his lavish son.  
By me all useful arts are gain'd ;  
Wealth, learning, wisdom is attain'd.  
Who then would think (since such my power)  
That e'er I knew an idle hour ?  
So subtle and so swift I fly,  
Love's not more fugitive than I.  
Who hath not heard coquettes complain,  
Of days, months, years, mispent in vain ?  
For time misused they pine and waste,  
And love's sweet pleasures never taste.  
Those who direct their time aright,  
If love or wealth their hopes excite,  
In each pursuit fit hours employ'd,  
And both by time have been enjoy'd.

How heedless then are mortals grown !  
How little is their interest known !  
In every view they ought to mind me,  
For when once lost they never find me."

He spoke. The gods no more contest,  
And his superior gift confess'd,  
That Time (when truly understood)  
Is the most precious earthly good.





## FABLE XIV.

THE OWL, THE SWAN, THE COCK, THE SPIDER,  
THE ASS, AND THE FARMER.

TO A MOTHER.

CONVERSING with your sprightly boys,  
Your eyes have spoke the Mother's joys.  
With what delight I've heard you quote  
Their sayings, in imperfect note!

I grant, in body and in mind  
Nature appears profusely kind.  
Trust not to that. Act you your part;  
Imprint just morals on their heart;  
Impartially their talents scan:  
Just education forms the man.

Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)  
Each lot of life's already thrown;  
That this shall plead, the next shall fight,  
The last assert the church's right.

I censure not the fond intent ;  
 But how precarious is th' event !  
 By talents misapplied and cross'd,  
 Consider, all your sons are lost.

One day (the tale's by Martial penn'd)  
 A Father thus address'd his friend :  
 " To train my boy, and call forth sense,  
 You know I've stuck at no expense ;  
 I've tried him in the several arts ;  
 (The lad, no doubt, hath latent parts) ;  
 Yet trying all, he nothing knows,  
 But, crab-like, rather backward goes.  
 Teach me what yet remains undone ;  
 'Tis your advice shall fix my son."

" Sir, (says the friend) I've weigh'd the matter ;  
 Excuse me, for I scorn to flatter :  
 Make him (nor think his genius check'd)  
 A herald, or an architect."

Perhaps (as commonly 'tis known)  
 He heard th' advice, and took his own.

The boy wants wit ; he's sent to school,  
 Where learning but improves the fool :  
 The college next must give him parts,  
 And cram him with the liberal arts.  
 Whether he blunders at the bar,  
 Or owes his infamy to war ;  
 Or if by licence or degree  
 The sexton share the doctor's fee ;  
 Or from the pulpit by the hour  
 He weekly floods of nonsense pour ;



We find (th' intent of Nature foil'd)  
A tailor or a butcher spoil'd.

Thus ministers have royal boons  
Conferr'd on blockheads and buffoons :  
In spite of nature, merit, wit,  
Their friends for every post were fit.

But now let every Muse confess  
That merit finds its due success.  
Th' examples of our days regard ;  
Where's virtue seen without reward ?  
Distinguish'd, and in place, you find  
Desert and worth of every kind.  
Survey the reverend bench, and see  
Religion, learning, piety :  
The patron, ere he recommends,  
Sees his own image in his friends.  
Is honesty disgraced and poor ?  
What is't to us what was before ?

We all of times corrupt have heard,  
When paltry minions were preferr'd ;  
When all great offices, by dozens,  
Were fill'd by brothers, sons, and cousins.  
What matter ignorance and pride ?  
The man was happily allied.  
Provided that his clerk was good,  
What though he nothing understood ?  
In church and state the sorry race  
Grew more conspicuous fools in place.  
Such heads, as then a treaty made,  
Had bungled in the cobbler's trade.

Consider, patrons, that such elves  
Expose your folly with themselves.  
'Tis your's, as 'tis the parent's care,  
To fix each genius in its sphere.  
Your partial hand can wealth dispense,  
But never give a blockhead sense.

An Owl of magisterial air,  
Of solemn voice, of brow austere,  
Assumed the pride of human race,  
And bore his wisdom in his face ;  
Not to depreciate learned eyes,  
I've seen a pedant look as wise.

Within a barn, from noise retired,  
He scorn'd the world, himself admired ;  
And, like an ancient sage, conceal'd  
The follies public life reveal'd.

Philosophers of old, he read,  
Their country's youth to science bred,  
Their manners form'd for every station,  
And destin'd each his occupation.  
When Xenophon, by numbers braved,  
Retreated, and a people saved,  
That laurel was not all his own ;  
The plant by Socrates was sown.  
To Aristotle's greater name  
The Macedonian owed his fame.

Th' Athenian bird, with pride replete,  
Their talents equall'd in conceit ;  
And, copying the Socratic rule,  
Set up for master of a school.

Dogmatic jargon learn'd by heart,  
 Trite sentences, hard terms of art,  
 To vulgar ears seem'd so profound,  
 They fancied learning in the sound.

The school had fame; the crowded place  
 With pupils swarm'd of every race.  
 With these the Swan's maternal care  
 Had sent her scarce-fledged cygnet heir:  
 The Hen (though fond and loath to part)  
 Here lodged the darling of her heart:  
 The Spider, of mechanic kind,  
 Aspired to science more refined;  
 The Ass learnt metaphors and tropes,  
 But most on music fix'd his hopes.

The pupils now, advanced in age,  
 Were call'd to tread life's busy stage;  
 And to the Master 'twas submitted,  
 That each might to his part be fitted:  
 'The Swan (says he) in arms shall shine;  
 The soldier's glorious toil be thine.'

'The Cock shall mighty wealth attain:  
 Go, seek it on the stormy main.'

'The court shall be the Spider's sphere:  
 Power, fortune, shall reward him there.'

'In music's art the Ass's fame  
 Shall emulate Corelli's name.'

Each took the part that he advised,  
 And all were equally despised.  
 A Farmer, at his folly moved,  
 The dull preceptor thus reproved:

“Blockhead, (says he), by what you’ve done,  
One would have thought them each your son ;  
For parents, to their offspring blind,  
Consult nor parts nor turn of mind,  
But ev’n in infancy decree  
What this, what th’ other son shall be.  
Had you with judgment weigh’d the case,  
Their genius thus had fix’d their place ;  
The Swan had learnt the sailor’s art ;  
The Cock had play’d the soldier’s part ;  
The Spider in the weaver’s trade  
With credit had a fortune made ;  
But for the fool, in every class  
The blockhead had appear’d an Ass.”





## FABLE XV.

THE COOK-MAID, TURNSPIT, AND OX.

TO A POOR MAN.

CONSIDER man in every sphere,  
 Then tell me, is your lot severe?  
 'Tis murmur, discontent, distrust,  
 That makes you wretched. God is just!

I grant that hunger must be fed,  
 That toil, too, earns thy daily bread.  
 What then? Thy wants are seen and known,  
 But every mortal feels his own.  
 We're born a restless needy crew:  
 Show me the happier man than you.

Adam, though bless'd above his kind,  
 For want of social woman pined.  
 Eve's wants the subtle serpent saw,  
 Her fickle taste transgress'd the law:

Thus fell our sire : and their disgrace  
The curse entail'd on human race.

When Philip's son, by glory led,  
Had o'er the globe his empire spread ;  
When altars to his name were dress'd,  
That he was man, his tears confess'd.

The hopes of avarice are check'd :  
The proud man always wants respect.  
What various wants on power attend !  
Ambition never gains its end.  
Who hath not heard the rich complain  
Of surfeits and corporeal pain ?  
He, barr'd from every use of wealth,  
Enviest the ploughman's strength and health.  
Another, in a beauteous wife  
Finds all the miseries of life :  
Domestic jars and jealous fear  
Embitter all his days with care.  
This wants an heir ; the line is lost :  
Why was that vain entail engross'd ?  
Canst thou discern another's mind ?  
What is't you envy ? Envy's blind.  
Tell Envy, when she would annoy,  
That thousands want what you enjoy.

“ The dinner must be dish'd at one.  
Where's this vexatious Turnspit gone ?  
Unless the skulking Cur is caught,  
The sirloin's spoil'd, and I'm in fault.”  
Thus said, (for sure you'll think it fit  
That I the Cook-maid's oaths omit),

With all the fury of a cook,  
Her cooler kitchen Nan forsook :  
The broomstick o'er her head she waves ;  
She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves ;  
The sneaking Cur before her flies ;  
She whistles, calls ; fair speech she tries.  
These nought avail. Her choler burns ;  
The fist and cudgel threat by turns :  
With hasty stride she presses near ;  
He slinks aloof, and howls with fear.

“ Was ever Cur so cursed ! (he cried),  
What star did at my birth preside !  
Am I for life by compact bound  
To tread the wheel's eternal round ?  
Inglorious task ! of all our race  
No slave is half so mean and base.  
Had Fate a kinder lot assign'd,  
And form'd me of the lap-dog kind,  
I then, in higher life employ'd,  
Had indolence and ease enjoy'd ;  
And, like a gentleman, caress'd,  
Had been the lady's favourite guest :  
Or were I sprung from spaniel line,  
Was his sagacious nostril mine,  
By me, their never-erring guide,  
From wood and plain their feasts supplied,  
Knights, 'squires, attendant on my pace,  
Had shared the pleasures of the chase.  
Endued with native strength and fire,  
Why call'd I not the lion sire ?  
A lion ! such mean views I scorn :  
Why was I not of woman born ?



Who dares with reason's power contend ?  
On man we brutal slaves depend :  
To him all creatures tribute pay,  
And luxury employs his day."

An Ox by chance o'erheard his moan,  
And thus rebuked the lazy drone :

"Dare you at partial Fate repine ?  
How kind's your lot compared with mine !  
Decreed to toil, the barbarous knife  
Hath sever'd me from social life ;  
Urged by the stimulating goad,  
I drag the cumbrous waggon's load :  
'Tis mine to tame the stubborn plain,  
Break the stiff soil, and house the grain ;  
Yet I without a murmur bear  
The various labours of the year.  
But then consider, that one day  
(Perhaps the hour's not far away)  
You, by the duties of your post,  
Shall turn the spit when I'm the roast ;  
And for reward shall share the feast,  
I mean, shall pick my bones at least."

"Till now (th' astonish'd Cur replies)  
I look'd on all with envious eyes.  
How false we judge by what appears !  
All creatures feel their several cares.  
If thus yon mighty beast complains,  
Perhaps man knows superior pains.  
Let envy then no more torment :  
Think on the Ox, and learn content."

Thus said, close following at her heel,  
With cheerful heart he mounts the wheel.



## FABLE XVI.

THE RAVENS, SEXTON, AND EARTH-WORM.

TO LAURA.

LAURA, methinks you're over nice.  
 True: flattery is a shocking vice ;  
 Yet sure, whene'er the praise is just,  
 One may commend without disgust.  
 Am I a privilege denied,  
 Indulged by every tongue beside ?  
 How singular are all your ways !  
 A woman, and averse to praise !  
 If 'tis offence such truths to tell,  
 Why do your merits thus excel ?  
     Since then I dare not speak my mind,  
 A truth conspicuous to mankind ;  
 Though in full lustre every grace  
 Distinguish your celestial face ;

Though beauties of inferior ray  
(Like stars before the orb of day)  
Turn pale and fade : I check my lays,  
Admiring what I dare not praise.

If you the tribute due disdain,  
The Muse's mortifying strain  
Shall, like a woman, in mere spite,  
Set beauty in a moral light.

Though such revenge might shock the ear  
Of many a celebrated fair ;  
I mean that superficial race  
Whose thoughts ne'er reach beyond their face ;  
What's that to you ? I but displease  
Such ever-girlish ears as these.  
Virtue can brook the thoughts of age,  
That lasts the same through every stage.  
Though you by time must suffer more  
Than ever woman lost before,  
To age is such indifference shown,  
As if your face were not your own.

Were you by Antoninus taught ?  
Or is it native strength of thought  
That thus, without concern or fright,  
You view yourself by Reason's light ?

Those eyes, of so divine a ray,  
What are they ? mouldering, mortal clay.  
Those features, cast in heavenly mould,  
Shall, like my coarser earth, grow old ;  
Like common grass, the fairest flower  
Must feel the hoary season's power.

How weak, how vain, is human pride !  
 Dares man upon himself confide !  
 The wretch who glories in his gain  
 Amasses heaps on heaps in vain.  
 Why lose we life in anxious cares,  
 To lay in hoards for future years ?  
 Can those (when tortured by disease)  
 Cheer our sick heart, or purchase ease ?  
 Can those prolong one gasp of breath,  
 Or calm the troubled hour of death ?

What's beauty ? Call ye that your own ?—  
 A flower that fades as soon as blown.  
 What's man in all his boast of sway ?—  
 Perhaps the tyrant of a day.

Alike the laws of life take place  
 Through every branch of human race :  
 The monarch of long regal line  
 Was raised from dust as frail as mine.  
 Can he pour health into his veins ?  
 Or cool the fever's restless pains ?  
 Can he (worn down in Nature's course)  
 New-brace his feeble nerves with force ?  
 Can he (how vain is mortal power !)  
 Stretch life beyond the destined hour ?

Consider, man ; weigh well thy frame ;  
 The king, the beggar is the same.  
 Dust form'd us all. Each breathes his day,  
 Then sinks into his native clay.

Beneath a venerable yew,  
 That in the lonely church-yard grew,

Two Ravens sat. In solemn croak  
Thus one his hungry friend bespoke :  
    “ Methinks I scent some rich repast ;  
The savour strengthens with the blast ;  
Snuff then, the promised feast inhale ;  
I taste the carcass in the gale.  
Near yonder trees, the farmer’s steed,  
From toil and every drudgery freed,  
Hath groan’d his last : a dainty treat !  
To birds of taste delicious meat.”

A Sexton, busy at his trade,  
To hear their chat suspends his spade.  
Death struck him with no farther thought,  
Than merely as the fees he brought.  
“ Was ever two such blundering fowls ;  
In brains and manners less than owls !  
Blockheads, (says he), learn more respect :  
Know ye on whom ye thus reflect ?  
In this same grave (who does me right,  
Must own the work is strong and tight)  
The ’Squire, that yon fair hall possess’d,  
To-night shall lay his bones at rest.  
Whence could the gross mistake proceed ?  
The ’Squire was somewhat fat indeed.  
What then ? the meanest bird of prey  
Such want of sense could ne’er betray ;  
For sure some difference must be found  
(Suppose the smelling organ sound)  
In carcasses, (say what we can),  
Or where’s the dignity of man ?”

With due respect to human race,  
The Ravens undertook the case.  
In such similitude of scent,  
Man ne'er could think reflection meant.  
As epicures extol a treat,  
And seem their savoury words to eat,  
They praised dead horse, luxurious food !  
The venison of the prescient brood !

The Sexton's indignation moved,  
The mean comparison reprov'd ;  
Their undiscerning palate blamed,  
Which two-legg'd carrion thus defamed.

Reproachful speech from either side  
The want of argument supplied :  
They rail, revile ; as often ends  
The contest of disputing friends.

“ Hold, (says the fowl), since human pride  
With confutation ne'er complied,  
Let's state the case, and then refer  
The knotty point, for taste may err.”

As thus he spoke, from out the mould  
An Earth-worm, huge of size, unroll'd  
His monstrous length : they straight agree  
To choose him as their referee :  
So to th' experience of his jaws  
Each states the merits of the cause.

He paused, and with a solemn tone,  
Thus made his sage opinion known :

“ On carcasses of every kind  
This maw hath elegantly dined ;

Provoked by luxury or need,  
On beast, or fowl, or man, I feed :  
Such small distinction's in the savour,  
By turns I choose the fancied flavour :  
Yet I must own (that human beast)  
A glutton is the rankest feast.  
Man, cease this boast ; for human pride  
Hath various tracts to range beside.  
The prince who kept the world in awe ;  
The judge whose dictate fix'd the law ;  
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,  
Are levell'd ; death confounds them all.  
Then think not that we reptiles share  
Such cates, such elegance of fare ;  
The only true and real good  
Of man was never vermin's food :  
'Tis seated in th' immortal mind ;  
Virtue distinguishes mankind,  
And that (as yet ne'er harbour'd here)  
Mounts with the soul, we know not where.  
So, good man Sexton, since the case  
Appears with such a dubious face,  
To neither I the cause determine,  
For different tastes please different vermin."







## FABLE XVII.

## AY AND NO.

IN Fable all things hold discourse ;  
Then Words, no doubt, must talk of course.

Once on a time, near Cannon-row,  
Two hostile Adverbs, Ay and No,  
Were hastening to the field of fight,  
And front to front stood opposite ;  
Before each general join'd the van,  
Ay, the more courteous knight, began :

“ Stop, peevish Particle ! beware !  
I'm told you are not such a bear,  
But sometimes yield, when offer'd fair.  
Suffer yon folks awhile to tattle ;  
'Tis we who must decide the battle.  
Whene'er we war on yonder stage,  
With various fate and equal rage,

The nation trembles at each blow  
That No gives Ay, and Ay gives No ;  
Yet, in expensive long contention,  
We gain nor office, grant, or pension.  
Why then should kinsfolk quarrel thus ?  
(For two of you make one of us.)  
To some wise statesman let us go,  
Where each his proper use may know :  
He may admit two such commanders,  
And make those wait who served in Flanders.  
Let's quarter on a great man's tongue,  
A treasury lord, not Master Young.  
Obsequious at his high command,  
Ay shall march forth to tax the land ;  
Impeachments No can best resist,  
And Ay support the Civil List :  
Ay, quick as Cæsar, wins the day,  
And No, like Fabius, by delay.  
Sometimes in mutual sly disguise,  
Let Ay's seem No's, and No's seem Ay's ;  
Ay's be in courts denials meant,  
And No's in Bishops give consent."

Thus Ay proposed—and, for reply,  
No, for the first time, answer'd " Ay !"  
They parted with a thousand kisses,  
And fight e'er since for pay, like Swisses.

FINIS.





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