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Title: Fables for the Nursery: Original and Select

Author: Traill, Catharine Parr (1802-1899)

Illustrator: Anonymous

Date of first publication: 1825 [London: John Harris]

Place and date of edition used as base for this ebook: London: Grant and Griffith, 1840

Date first posted: 18 April 2009

Date last updated: 17 June 2014

Faded Page ebook#20090409

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FABLES
FOR THE NURSERY:
ORIGINAL AND SELECT.

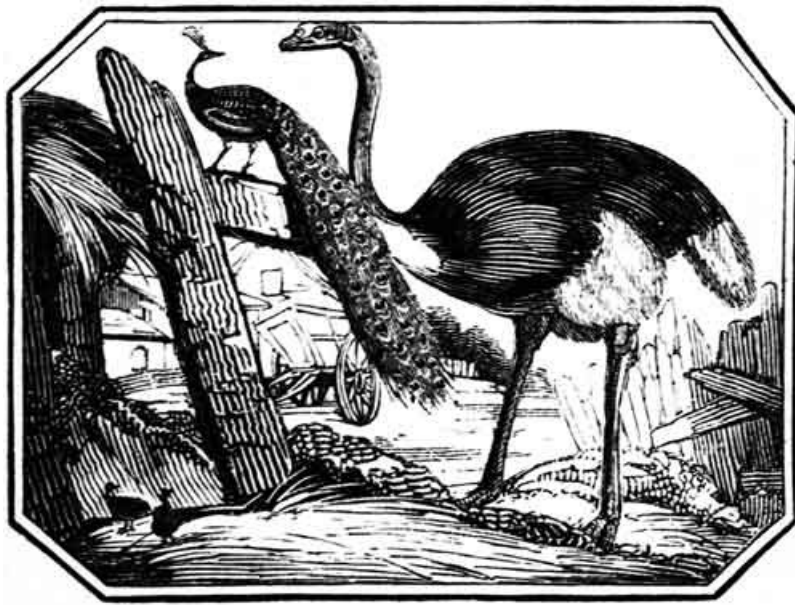
NEW EDITION.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NINETEEN ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:
GRANT AND GRIFFITH,
SUCCESSORS TO
J. HARRIS, CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

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FABLES FOR THE NURSERY.

THE LITTLE BOY AND THE LIZARD; OR, MUTUAL KINDNESS.



In a West India planter's garden lived a family of green lizards, under the roots of a spreading palm-tree. These beautiful and harmless little creatures led a pleasant life—basking in the rays of the sun, sporting with their shadows, chasing one another among the grass and flowers, or catching flies and insects; and but for the dread of birds of prey and serpents, they would have been quite happy.

The old lizards took great care of their young ones; and, while they slept or played, kept watch near them, lest the birds of prey should pounce upon them, or the snakes glide from their holes to destroy them: they joined them in all their playful sports; they taught them to rob the spiders' webs, to catch ants, and snare flies.^[1]

"Be careful," said the old lizard one day to his young ones, "how far you venture from the shade of this tree. Your mother and I must leave you, to take a journey of some hours; and, as danger often comes unawares, I advise you all to keep close together, and let one stand guard while the rest sleep or play."

The little lizards said that they would do as he bade them, and not stray away in his absence.

For some time the lizards were very careful; and first one kept watch on the boughs of the palm-tree, and then another; and, had they always been as prudent, they would have done very well: but one of the lizards, who was called Sprightly, was very fond of play; and when it was her turn to keep watch, she said, "I am tired of being in this dull tree by myself, while you are all so merrily playing below. I see neither bird nor beast near to annoy us, so I may as well come down." The other lizards, who loved Sprightly very much, said, "Yes, come down, if there is nothing near to hurt us." Then Goldstar (who was called so from a mark like a star on her head) said, "Let us go and search for flies in the spiders' webs; I saw the spiders weaving late last night, and I dare say we shall find plenty of flies trapped."

Then all the lizards went to the bushes where the spiders had laid their nets the night before to entangle the poor flies; and they darted their long tongues into the webs, and soon ate all the flies; and when the spiders came to look for their prey, they found their nets broken and their prisoners gone.

The lizards next went to catch ants, and when they were tired they lay down on the grass to sleep; but while these careless creatures slept, a great serpent, who had watched them for some time, glided from the thicket where he had lain hidden, sprang out upon them, and seized poor Sprightly, and devoured her, while the others fled away in terror.

Swiftfoot ran up the palm-tree, Longtail sought shelter in the nest, and Goldstar ran far away into the middle of the garden; nor did she rest till she found herself close to a summer-house, near the door of which she hid herself.

All night long did Goldstar grieve for the death of her pretty playmate Sprightly: "I shall never be able to return to my

home and friends," said she; "and the serpent will destroy my parents, and Swiftfoot my sister, and Longtail my brother, who used to make me so merry with their pretty gambols; but I shall never see them again."

The next day Goldstar sought for a spot where she might live in safety, and she soon found a nice hole in a green turf bank close to the summer-house.

Here she passed her time pleasantly enough; and would have been quite happy, only she was sometimes sad at being so far away from her friends and former gay companions.

One day, as she was sunning herself and playing with her own shadow on the window of the summer-house, she was somewhat alarmed by the approach of a little boy, with a basket of flowers in one hand and a light cane twig in the other: she had not time to retreat, but stood trembling with fear lest he should strike her with the cane he held; but Carlos (for that was the little boy's name) had often amused himself by watching the green lizards at play under the palm-trees in the garden, and he would not have killed or hurt one of those innocent little animals for the world, and Goldstar soon found she had little cause to fear.

Carlos threw down his flowers on the bench by the window, and began tying them in bunches and weaving a garland for his hair; his sweet and smiling air gave Goldstar courage, and she began to frolic in the sunbeams as before.

The brilliant colours of this little creature, her slender shape, her bright green coat, marked with chains of a golden hue, and her starry eyes, as she glided swiftly to and fro, attracted the notice of the little boy, who ceased to play with his flowers, and drew near to watch her motions.

The little boy and the lizard soon became such good friends, that, as soon as Goldstar heard Carlos's step in the garden, she ran to meet him; and Carlos came every day to visit his pretty green lizard, and see her at play on the bank, and watch her cunning tricks in robbing the spiders' webs and snaring flies.

One evening, as Carlos was walking in the garden, he chanced to see a large fierce bird hovering in the air near the summer-house, and preparing to dart on something below: "It is my pretty favourite that this wicked bird would make its prey," cried Carlos; and ran with all the speed he could, shouting as he went. The noise he made scared the bird from its pursuit; and Carlos gladly saw his pretty Goldstar retreat to her hole in safety, while the bird flew screaming far away.

From this time Goldstar sought by every playful caress to show her gratitude, and the joy she felt at the sight of her friend: she would permit him to take her in his hand; and, if she could have spoken, she would have thanked him for having saved her from the talons of the hawk.

One very hot day, Carlos came to the summer-house, which was a cool and pleasant place, shaded with trees and sweet-scented shrubs: tired with the heat, Carlos threw himself on a mat and fell asleep; but he had not lain long, when something ran across his face and hands: he felt vexed and peevish at being thus annoyed, and tried to chase away the intruder with his hand, but in vain; for as soon as he closed his eyes, Goldstar (for it was she who continued to disturb him) awoke him. Carlos roused himself in a pet, and tried to shake her off; but she sought refuge in his bosom: at that moment, when he became quite angry, and was about to throw her on the ground, his eyes were riveted by an object which filled him with terror.—It was a large snake, that, with head erect and eyes fixed upon him, was slowly gliding towards the spot where he lay; and he knew that it was one of those reptiles whose bite was certain death.

It was to warn him of his danger that his faithful little lizard had entered the summer-house window, and, by her gentle efforts, at last roused him to a sense of his danger, in spite of his anger and impatience.

As Carlos started from the ground, the snake, foiled of her purpose, made a sudden retreat.

Thus was the life of this little boy saved by the gratitude and sagacity of a little lizard.

A kind action is sure to meet with a reward sooner or later; and a "*good turn is never lost.*"

THE MONKEY AND THE LAPDOG.



Once upon a time a great monkey and a little lapdog lived with a lady, who was very kind to them both. One day she went out, and told them not to stir from the parlour till she came back.

Now the monkey was a great rude beast, and wanted to make the lapdog as bad as himself. As soon as their mistress had left the room, he said, "Moppet, what do you mean to do while our mistress is away?"—"Oh!" said Moppet, "I shall lie down on this soft cushion, and go to sleep."—"That will be very silly," said the monkey; "for you can have sleep enough in the night, when you can do nothing else. Come with me, and I will show you how to spend the time much better."—"How can that be?" said the lapdog; "my mistress told us not to stir from this place; and we can have no fun here, for if we begin to play, we may break the china jars, or throw down the fire-screens, or scratch the tables and chairs, or do some mischief, for which Prue, the maid, would beat us soundly!"—"To be sure!" said the monkey; "we cannot amuse ourselves in this stupid room."

"Well, dear Mr. Pug!" said Moppet, "I do not think there would be any harm in our having a game of romps in the hall, if we could get out of the room."

"Oh!" said the monkey, "I can open the door when I please, as well as any one in the house." So this naughty monkey opened the door, and they both ran out of the room. They had not played in the hall many minutes, before Pug ran against his mistress's flower-stand, threw down a fine rose-tree, broke the pot, spoiled all the roses, and spilled the mould on the carpet.

"Oh dear! what a pity," said Moppet; "Prue will be sure to beat us now. What shall you do, Pug?"

"I shall not stay to be beat," said the monkey; "and if we run away, my mistress and Prue may lay this mischief on Tib the cat." Now Moppet was as bad as Pug, for she hated Tib, and wished their fault might be laid on her: so she said, "Dear Mister Pug, I am glad you thought of that. Where shall we go?"

"In the garden first," replied he; "then we will go into the farm-yard, and have fine fun in driving about the hens and chickens, and teasing the pigs."

"Oh! I shall enjoy that of all things," said Moppet; so away they ran into the garden. Now Moppet, though she was so naughty, was a very pretty creature: she was not bigger than a cat, and had long curls of silken hair, as white as snow, that hung down to the ground, and quite hid her little feet. She had a tiny round face, with funny black eyes peeping from under her long silk curls, like two bright black beads; and her pretty ears swept the ground as she walked. Prue, the maid, washed and combed her every day; and she had just been fresh washed before her mistress went out. There had fallen a great deal of rain in the night, and it was very dirty and muddy abroad; which was the reason her mistress did not take her out with her as usual: but Moppet never thought of that, when she scampered all over the wet garden with

naughty rude Pug.

They ran on the flower beds, trampled down the flowers, and, in short, behaved as bad as a monkey and lapdog could do. At last Pug climbed up a cherry-tree, and began to steal the fruit. Moppet was vexed when she saw him eating the cherries. "You must not do that," she said. "Why not?" asked Pug.

"Because my mistress will be very angry, when she finds her early cherries gone!" said Moppet.

"Oh! never mind," said Pug; "she will not lay the theft on you, for she knows you cannot climb trees."

Moppet did not think it very pleasant to remain at the foot of the tree, while the monkey was eating the ripe cherries—for he never gave her so much as one—so she did not bark, to give him notice when the gardener was coming, who caught Pug as he came down the tree, and gave him a sound whipping with a hazel twig.

Pug set up a sad howl, and was very glad when he got out of the gardener's hands, who whipped both him and Moppet out of the garden.

Then they went into the yard, and drove the poor hens and chicks about, and were highly amused to see what a fright they were in. At last they began to tease a litter of sucking pigs, but the sow bit Moppet by the ear, till she cried out for mercy; while Pug, instead of helping her out of her distress, ran away.

Moppet's ear bled sadly; she was in a great deal of pain, and whined for a long time after the sow let her go.

Any one would have thought Moppet had suffered enough through Pug's bad advice, and that she would not have minded any thing more he said to her: but she was a very silly creature; and when Pug came to her, and told her he was sorry the sow had hurt her so much, and asked her to go into the meadow with him, Moppet left off crying, and did as he bade her.

Now the grass was so high, that they could not run about at their ease among it; but in the next field they saw two old geese and a flock of goslings.

"Oh!" said wicked Pug, "how I should like to tease those goslings!—It would be such fun to see them clap their wings, and run hissing about!"

"Yes," said Moppet, "I should like it of all things; but you know, dear Mister Pug, I cannot get across that broad muddy ditch."—"Oh!" said Pug, "I will carry you over on my back."

So they crossed the ditch; and Pug took a stick, and began to drive the goslings on one side, while Moppet ran barking on the other. They thought this fine sport, and only laughed at the terror the little creatures were in. But the gander, who was very fierce and strong, bit Pug by the heel, while the goose beat Moppet with her wings, till they both raised a most dismal outcry.

The geese did not let them go till they had punished them for the cruel manner in which they had treated their young ones; and Moppet and Pug were glad to scamper away faster than they came.

When they reached the side of the ditch, Pug jumped over, and left poor Moppet on the other side, to shift for herself as she could.

"Oh, dear!" said she, "what shall I do? Dear Pug, come back for me!"—"Why do not you swim across?" asked he.

"Because," answered Moppet, "I shall cover myself with mud: and Prue will beat me sadly if I come home in such a plight."

"Your servant, Miss Moppet!" said Pug; "I have no more mind to dirt my fur, than you have to wet that fine curled coat, of which you are so proud."

So this unkind monkey ran home, and left poor Moppet to get through the ditch as she could. Moppet now saw how unwise she had been in taking Pug's bad advice; and wished, when it was too late, that she had attended to the commands of her mistress.

It was getting late, and Moppet was very hungry, and thought it was better to swim across the ditch than to stay there all night. I wish you could have seen her when she came through the ditch! she had not a spot of white about her, and her

long ears were dripping with mud.

When she came home she was quite ashamed to be seen: even the cat would not speak to her; and all the servants held up their hands and cried, "Is this dirty little beast our pretty Moppet?"

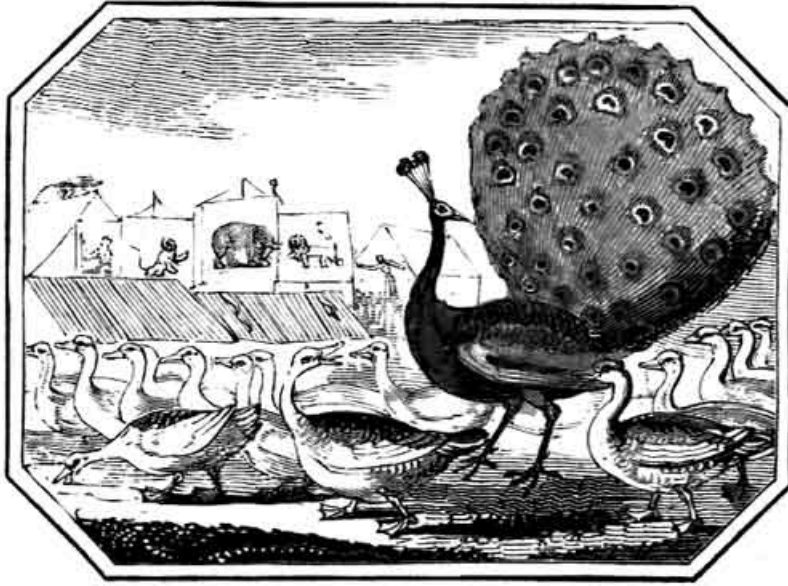
The footman, Joe, took her to the pump in the yard, and pumped on her till she was half dead, before he would let her go into the house; and then he could not get half the mud off her coat.

Then Prue put her in a tub, and washed her with a scrubbing-brush, and scolded her all the time: and when she tried to comb her long curls, they were so matted together, that she pulled them out by handfuls; which put Moppet to a great deal of pain. Oh, how she did cry!—but it was of no use. Prue told her she was rightly served for having been so very naughty; and when she brought her into the parlour, Moppet hung down her ears, and was afraid to look at her kind mistress, after having behaved so very ill.

Now, I suppose, you want to know what was done to Pug, when all his faults were found out. Joe, the footman, beat him with the horsewhip, and chained him to a post in the stable, where he was kept in disgrace, by himself, for a whole week.

So the monkey and lapdog, like a great many more, found out the folly of such bad conduct, and resolved never to behave ill for the time to come.

VANITY PUNISHED; OR, THE PEACOCK THAT WOULD GO TO THE FAIR.



There was once a proud peacock, who was so vain of his fine plumes and gay train, that he looked with disdain on all the geese, and turkeys, and ducks, and hens, that lived in the same yard. They did not approve of the pert airs the peacock gave himself; for he would strut before them and say, "Look at me, and admire my beauty! Observe my fine crest and gay plumage! Which of you can display a train like mine? You have only dull brown and gray feathers, and are very plain birds."

Now the geese, and turkeys, and cocks and hens, were all very angry when they heard the peacock make this rude speech; for they thought themselves quite as good as this vain bird,—for *he* did nothing but walk about and admire himself, and dress his feathers, while *they* were hatching their eggs, or taking care of young broods. To show their contempt for his foolish speeches, they made him no answer, but walked away, leaving him quite alone. This conduct vexed the peacock very much.

"How I hate this dull place," said he, "where there is no one to admire my fine plumage! These barn-door fowls are so envious, and think so much of themselves, that my beauty is quite lost and wasted."

What a pity the peacock was so vain and silly as to be so proud of his gay dress! But he was soon cured of his folly, as you shall hear.

One fine day, as the peacock was basking in the sun, he saw little Mabel, his master's daughter, come from the house, dressed very smartly, with a white frock, a long pink sash, and a new straw hat trimmed with knots of pink ribbon. "Dear me!" said the peacock to himself, "how fine Miss Mabel is dressed to-day!"

Just then her little brother ran up to her and said, "Mabel, where are you going dressed so gay?"—"I am going to the fair, brother," said she; "and you know I must look a little smarter than usual, for there will be so many gay people there to see me."

"Oh, ho!" said the peacock; "if a fair is the place where people go to be seen in their best clothes, I will be there also; for I am sure my feathers are finer than Miss Mabel's muslin frock and pink ribbons."

He then began to dress his plumes with great care, and went to the pond to look at his shadow in the water. He spent some time in viewing himself; then walked forth through the gate, and ran and flew till he reached the road that led to the town where the fair was kept.

Though the sun shone bright and warm, the road was very dirty; and he had some trouble to prevent his gay plumage from being wetted and spoiled by the mud and sloughs he was forced to pass through.

There were a great many folks going the same way to the fair, who stopped to admire the peacock.

"What a fine bird!" said one; "Look at his crest and neck!" said a second; "I should like to see how he looks with his train spread," said a third. In short, they all said something handsome of him.

The peacock was so pleased at hearing all these remarks on his beauty, that he spread out his tail like a fan, held up his head, and strutted along the road with an air of great state. "How much more sense these people have," said he, "than those foolish cocks and hens that think so much of themselves! How glad I am I thought of going to the fair!" But his joy soon fled; for, as he was proudly strutting along, three great ploughboys, who wanted to look smart at the fair, came behind him, and, before he was aware, tore out three of the gayest feathers in his train. The peacock was in a great rage, as you may well suppose; but the boys only ran away laughing; and he had the grief to see them enter the fair with his very best plumes stuck in their hats, while he looked quite shabby, with a great gap in his tail.

The peacock went fretting along till he reached the entrance of the town: he then smoothed his ruffled feathers and put his train in the best order he could.

He had not gone far before he fell in with a large flock of geese and some pigs, that a boy was driving into the fair to sell.

The peacock was in great distress when he found himself in the midst of such a throng. He tried to push his way through the flock; but the geese took no notice of him, kept close together, and would not let him pass.

The peacock was very angry at their rudeness, and said with a haughty air, "Make way for me, if you please, and pray do not crowd me in this manner: I shall have my fine train entirely spoiled by your dirty feet!"—"And who cares if it is, Mr. Pert?" said an old gray goose, with an air of great contempt: "my wings and tail are quite as good as yours."

The peacock was very angry that the goose should presume to think herself as handsome as he. "You rude bird!" said he, "learn how to behave to your betters for the time to come;" and gave the goose a severe peck on her back; which so enraged the whole flock of geese, that they flew towards him with one accord and beat and pecked him without mercy. The peacock fought and screamed; the geese hissed and flapped their wings; and, to add to the uproar, the pigs joined the fray, and squeaked and grunted at a great rate.

The peacock, finding he was likely to come but badly off; made the best of his way down the street, where he saw a great throng of people round a man who was showing off a box of puppets. The peacock ran with all the speed he could, to see what was going forward. He had never seen a puppet-show, and he wanted much to take a peep: but the people were all so busy looking at the show, that they paid no regard to him: one pushed him into the kennel, another trod on his toes, and his fine train was all splashed with dirt, and quite spoiled.

The peacock was so vexed at this uncivil treatment, that he began to scold and scream, making a great noise and outcry: but he would have been much wiser if he had held his peace; for some boys seeing him, cried out, "A peacock, a peacock! let us catch him and pull out all his fine feathers!" This put the poor peacock in a sad fright: away he ran and sought shelter under a cake-stall, and crept into the darkest corner. Here he thought to have been safe from harm: but, alas! his troubles were not yet at an end; for a great black dog, that had stolen a cake, ran under the stall where the peacock had hidden himself. "This great ugly beast has come here to insult me!" said the peacock, who was in a very ill humour; and he grumbled and scolded so loud, that the dog, out of all patience, said, "Hold your tongue, you cross creature, or I will teach you better manners!"

The peacock, not at all pleased with this reproof, said, "How dare you come here, sir, to affront me?" and very rudely flapped his wing in the dog's face.

"You ugly, shabby bird!" said the dog, "I have as much right to be here as you." The peacock was so angry at being called a shabby, ugly bird, that he gave the dog a peck on the nose; and the dog, in return, pulled a mouthful of feathers out of the peacock's neck; and would soon have killed him, but a farmer, who by chance passed that way, seized him, and, spite of his screams, tucked him under his arm, and never stopped till he reached his own house.

The farmer put the peacock into a dark hole where he kept coals and wood, and shut the door so close that he could by no means make his escape.

The peacock was very angry, and flounced about, and made a sad noise; but he soon found it was of no use trying to get

out, for he only broke the feathers of his train, and covered himself with coal-dust.

Hungry and sad, he began to reflect with sorrow on his hapless case. "Ah! foolish bird that I was," said he, "to be so vain of my fine plumage! How I wish I had stayed at home with the other fowls in the poultry-yard, instead of going to a place where I had no business! If ever I get out of this dirty coal-hole, I will be as modest and humble as I was before vain and proud." Now these were the wisest words the peacock had ever spoken.

Next morning the farmer's children came to look at the peacock, and threw a little dross corn for him to eat. Hunger had made him so tame, that he gladly ate all the food that the children gave him. That very afternoon, little Mabel and her brother came to play with the farmer's children: "Come and look," said one of them, "at a great bird my father caught last night in the fair!"

They all ran to take a peep; and the farmer's children opened the door of the coal-house, where the poor peacock stood looking very dirty and shabby. "Dear me!" said little Billy, "I think this must be our own peacock!"

"Our peacock, indeed!" said Mabel; "I am sure this dirty creature is not our handsome peacock! He had a fine train full of gay plumes; while this shabby bird has scarcely a feather in his tail, and his neck is half stripped, and his crest not fit to be seen. I am sure this cannot be our pretty peacock: if it is, I shall never care to look at him again."

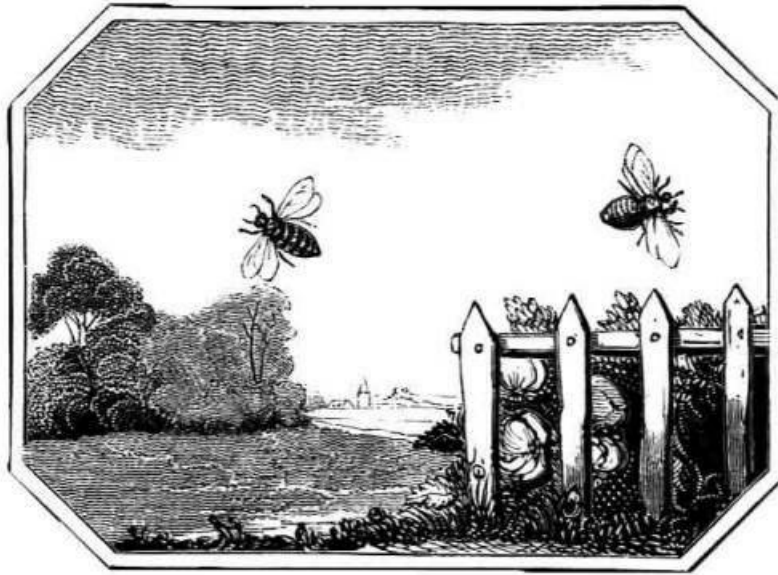
This was sad news for the poor peacock, who wanted much to get out of his dark prison; and he was much vexed when Mabel and Billy shut the door and went away.

When the little girl and boy came home, they ran to the yard to look for the peacock; but he was not there, and the cow-boy said he had seen him the day before walking in the road.

Next day the peacock was sent for home; and he was glad to return once more to the poultry-yard. The turkeys, and geese, and cocks and hens, that he used to treat with such disdain, all came round him, and said, "Is this the proud peacock, who thought himself so much better than we? he is shabby enough now!" The peacock was very much hurt at this speech; but as he knew how silly his conduct had been, he spoke to them very meekly, and said he would never be proud again.

The mishaps which had befallen the peacock when he went to the fair, taught him wisdom; and he never from that day boasted of his beauty, nor despised those birds that were not so gay as himself; but was so humble and kind to all the fowls, that they forgave him his former faults, and they lived very good friends all the rest of their lives.

VELVET AND BUSY; OR, IDLENESS AND INDUSTRY.



There were two bees, one called Velvet and the other Busy. Velvet had fine gauze wings, and a black body marked with stripes of bright yellow: but though she was so pretty, she was not good; she was lazy, and loved play, and flying about from flower to flower; she ate all the honey she gathered, and brought home none to increase the common store.

Busy, who was only a plain brown bee, was at work from morning till night; she brought home plenty of honey and wax, and was the most industrious bee in the whole nest. One fine spring day, Velvet and Busy left their nest in the wood, to seek for honey (for they were wild bees, and did not live in a hive, but in the hollow branch of a tree). The fields were full of daisies and cowslips, the wild roses and honeysuckles bloomed in the hedges, the sky was serene, and the birds sung from every bush.

Busy sought the fresh-opened blossoms of the cowslip, and was soon intent on the labours of the day; whilst Velvet—idle Velvet! flew from flower to flower, tasting the honey from each, and humming gaily as she went. She enjoyed herself some time in this manner; but, like most idle people, she grew weary, and said to Busy,—“I hate daisies and cowslips: leave this dull meadow, and fly with me into yonder garden; the sun shines warmer there, and the borders of the garden are gay with full-grown roses, and pinks, and lilacs.”

“There is richer and sweeter honey in these cowslip-bells,” said Busy, “than among the roses and pinks you admire so much; and, if we spend our time in flying about, we shall bring home but small store of honey, and shall perish with hunger when the cold weather returns.”

“There will be plenty for us,” said careless Velvet.

“No,” said Busy; “I will never eat the fruits of another's labour, when I am able to work for myself.”

“You may do as you please,” said Velvet; “for my part, I shall not waste all the fine weather in working. Look at the butterflies; they do nothing but enjoy themselves, fluttering among the flowers, and chasing one another—they are happy creatures, and I shall go and play with them;” and away flew this idle bee to the garden, where the butterflies were gaily sporting. But the butterflies showed no regard for Velvet, and would not play with her; and she soon grew tired of watching them, and looking at the brilliant colours in their gay wings as they fluttered past her: so she left them, and flew away over the garden.

At last she came to an apple-tree in full bloom, whose boughs overhung a pond of clear water. “Ah!” said Velvet, “how sweet these blossoms are! there is no tree like this in the meadow: how glad I am I left Busy, and flew hither!”

The water was so clear in the pond, that Velvet saw all the shadows of the blossoms that hung over it, and her own form

reflected among them: just at that instant, while Velvet was looking at her own image in the water, a sudden breeze shook the boughs of the tree so roughly, that it scattered the flowers on which she was resting; and not being on her guard, she fell into the water, and was borne by the motion of the wind into the middle of the pond.

What would silly Velvet now have given, had she but taken the advice of prudent Busy, and stayed in the fields. She strove to raise her wings, and fly from the surface of the water; but they were so clogged and heavy with wet, that she had no power to move them.

For some time Velvet floated on the water: the wind wafted her more than once to the very edge of the pond; but, alas! she could not get out, and before night came on poor Velvet was drowned.

Now I suppose you would like to know what became of Busy. She gathered much store of honey and wax that day; but she did not forget her companion, and wondered what had become of Velvet: she thought she would return at night to the nest in the wood; but night came, and, though all the other bees came back from their work, Velvet did not.

Busy was grieved, for she loved Velvet in spite of her idle ways; and she said, (for Busy was a good bee,) "I will go into the garden and look for Velvet, for I fear some harm has befallen her; but perhaps she was tired with wandering last night, and has fallen asleep in the flower of a foxglove or lily."

Then Busy sought Velvet among the flowers in the garden; and she asked all the wild bees she met, if they had seen Velvet. For a long time she could hear no tidings of her; till at last one said, "I was flying over the pond by yonder apple-tree, and I saw a drowned bee floating on the water."

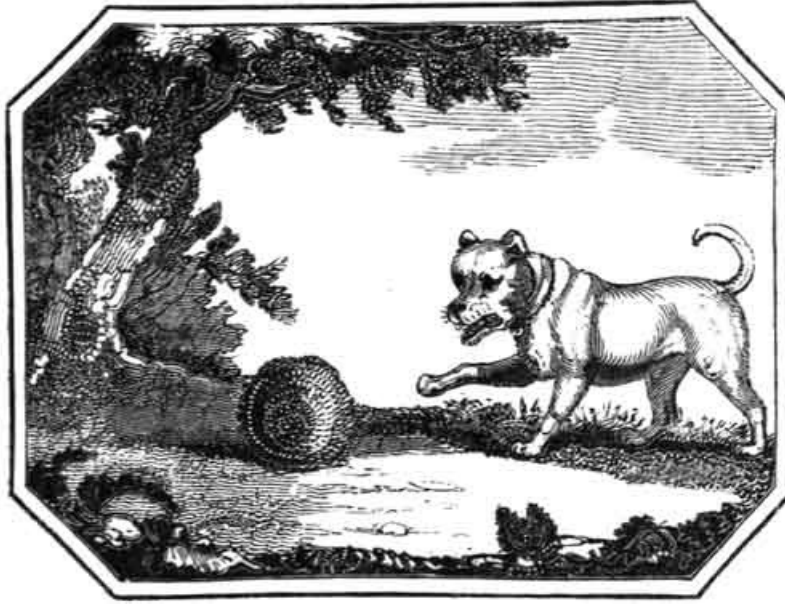
Then Busy went to the pond, and the first thing she saw was poor Velvet—quite dead.

"Ah, silly Velvet!" said Busy, "why did you leave me, to go and play with the butterflies in the garden? If you had not been so idle, you would not have met with so sad an end."

My little readers, I hope you will take example from the story you have just read, and,

"Like the little busy bee,
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower."

THE THREE HEDGEHOGS; OR, PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEDIENCE.



An old hedgehog, and three little ones, lived in a hole under the roots of an elm-tree.

One night, the old hedgehog said to her young ones, "My dears, I am going out to look for some food for your supper: I beg you will not leave your nest while I am absent; for there are traps and dogs in the wood and in the field." The little hedgehogs said they would be good, and not go out while she was gone.

The old hedgehog then bade them good-bye; and away she trotted over the fields; she was scarcely out of sight before Bustle, the eldest hedgehog, said to his two brothers, "Now our mother is gone, let us get through the hedge, and take a nice walk in the wood."

"We had better stay where we are," said Bristle and Bob (who always minded what their mother said to them), "and not go into the wood, lest we should meet the dog or be caught in a trap."

"Nonsense!" said Bustle; "I dare say we shall not meet any thing to hurt us; besides, I am hungry, and it will be a long time before we have our supper. The wood is a pleasant-looking place; and I will go and dig for pignuts, and get crab-apples and sloes. If you are wise, you will come with me." But Bristle and Bob thought it would be no great proof of wisdom to disobey their mother; so they said they would rather stay at home, and they told Bustle he had better do the same: but Bustle only laughed at his good brothers, and said, "I have a mind to see a little of the world; our mother will keep us in this dull hole all our lives; but I mean to go and seek my fortune, and I advise you to do the same."

Bristle and Bob both begged their naughty wilful brother to stay with them, and obey their mother's commands; but Bustle at last grew very cross, and held his ears that he might not hear what they said.

Now this was very rude conduct; and Bustle had soon cause to repent of his folly, as you shall hear, if you have patience.

As I said before, this wicked little hedgehog would not attend to the advice of his brothers: but, bidding them good night, he left the hole and scrambled through the hedge into the wood.

The sun was set, and the moon and stars were shining brightly through the trees; every thing was quite still, and the leaves only just rustled as the wind moved them.

"How pleasant it is in this nice wood!" thought Bustle, as he crept along among the long grass and the bushes. "How glad I am I did not attend to Bristle and Bob, who wanted me to stay at home!"

As he had taken no supper, and his walk had made him hungry, he began to look about in hopes of finding something to eat, but could find only a few worms and insects under the blades of grass: rather than fast, he ate some of these. But he

had heard his mother say there were pignuts by a little brook in the wood, so he made all the haste he could to look for them: and when he reached the bank of the little stream, he scratched with his feet, and turned up the ground with his nose; for this is the way that hedgehogs dig for their food.

He presently found some pignuts, and thought he should have a fine treat; when all on a sudden he heard a great noise among the bushes, and he called to mind the dog against which his mother and brothers had warned him.

"Oh, dear!" said he softly, "if this should be the dog, what shall I do? where shall I hide myself?"

He turned round; and began walking home as fast as he could: but hedgehogs are not very swift-footed; and before he had gone many steps, a great white dog ran up to him, and began barking and growling in a furious manner.

"What will become of me!" said Bustle; for the dog showed a set of large white teeth, which made the hedgehog fear that he was going to devour him; he trembled with terror; when a thought came into his head, that if he rolled himself up like a ball, as he was used to do when he went to sleep, the dog could not hurt him; because he was armed all over with sharp prickles like thorns, which would wound the dog if he bit or worried him. So Bustle rolled himself round, and folded his feet up close, and hid his face between his fore-paws.

The dog was very angry, and gave the hedgehog a pat with his paw to make him move. Bustle only grunted, and nestled still closer, and would not move a step. Then the dog tried to roll him over with his paw, but Bustle's sharp prickles soon made him retreat; he ran barking round the poor hedgehog, making a sad noise, till at last, finding he could not induce him to stir, he grew tired of plaguing and teasing him, and ran away through the wood.

It was a long time before Bustle dared to look up, or stir from the spot where the dog had left him: but at last hunger got the better of his terror, and he peeped out; and when he saw the dog was gone, he said, "I am glad that cross spiteful creature is gone! now I will look for some supper:" and he began to search afresh for something to eat.

He could find only a few slugs and snails: he dared not return to the spot where the pignuts grew, for fear of meeting with the dog; so he was forced to be content with what he could get.

The moon was down, the sky was clouded over, and the night was quite dark. Bustle had never been so far from home before: he was in a sad fright, for he had lost his way; and, instead of finding the right path, he got farther and farther into the wood. Every sound filled him with alarm; even the rustling of the leaves he fancied to be the steps of the dog coming back to worry him.

He now wished he had minded the good advice of Bristle and Bob, who were safe in the nest under the old tree, and no doubt had had a good supper and were fast asleep.

"If I should ever find my way back to the old tree," said Bustle, "I will stay at home, and never run away again."

This silly little hedgehog should have thought of this before he so rashly slighted the parting words of his mother: but it was no longer in his power to return; for as he was trotting along at full speed, he did not observe a great pit full of water, which was shaded by the bushes that grew round it: he fell in; and though he struggled, and tried all he could to get out, all his efforts were of no use, for hedgehogs cannot swim; and so poor Bustle was drowned.

Now, if this naughty little hedgehog had not been so wilful, he might have lived as long, and been as happy, as his two good brothers, Bristle and Bob.

THE DANGER OF KEEPING BAD COMPANY.



There were once two little dormice who lived in a fine gilt cage, which stood on a sideboard in a handsome parlour. These two dormice had a very kind young lady for their mistress; and they ought to have been very happy, for she gave them soft clean moss every day to sleep on, and was very good to them. Instead of acorns, roots, and corn, such as other mice eat, she gave them nuts, and apples, and cakes, and sometimes a lump of white sugar; and never forgot to feed them and have their cage cleaned every morning.

One of these dormice was called Cosset, the other Gentle. Gentle was always pleased and grateful, and was very happy and content in her cage, and never tried to make her escape: but Cosset was of a restless temper; and though he was very pretty, was so cross and rude, that he often vexed his mistress, and made poor Gentle cry.

At night, when his mistress was gone to bed, and the common gray mice came out of their holes to see what they could steal, he would try to force his way through the wires of his cage, and shake his door, that he might get out and scamper about the room, and play with them.

"How merry those grey mice are!" said Cosset; "I wish I was not shut up in this nasty cage, and could go just where I pleased, as they do."

An old gray mouse, who by chance heard him say this, ran up the leg of the sideboard, and, jumping on the cage, peeped down through the wires, and said, "Your servant, Mister Cosset and Mistress Gentle! would you like to make one among us to night?"

"Thank you, Mrs. Mouse," said Cosset; "but pray what is your name?"—"My name is Grig," said the grey mouse. "And where do you live?" asked Cosset. "Come with me and I will show you," said Grig. "I shall be very happy to take you and Mrs. Gentle home to sup with me."

"Thank you, Mrs. Grig," said Gentle; "but I do not wish to leave my cage, or to vex my kind mistress, who is so good to me."

"But I am sure I will, if I can but find the means to get out," said naughty Cosset.

"Oh, if that is all," said Grig, "I will bite the string in pieces that holds the peg of the door, and then you can push it open."

The string was soon bitten in two, and Cosset said, "Come, Gentle, make haste, or I shall go without you." But Gentle would not go, and begged Cosset to think better of it and stay with her; but he would not: and Gentle was so vexed, when she saw Cosset going away with a naughty rude grey mouse, that she held him by the tail, and said, "Pray, dear Cosset,

do not leave me, to go with those wicked grey mice, for they will teach you to steal, and make you as bad as themselves. And I am afraid the cat will catch you, or you will meet with some mishap, if you go away."

Cosset paid no heed to what good Gentle said, and tried to get away from her all the time she was giving him such good advice; and when he found she held him too fast, he turned round, and (you will hardly believe it when I tell you) he was so cross as to bite poor Gentle's nose, and pull her nice long whiskers.

Gentle was so vexed at his unkind conduct, that she began to cry, and let him go; and Cosset did not so much as say, "Gentle, I am sorry that I have hurt you," but ran down the leg of the sideboard with Grig, who led him to a dark hole under the door-mat. Grig bade Cosset follow her, and they both jumped down into the hole: it was a nasty dark place, full of dirt and rubbish, and smelt very ill.

There were seven or eight ugly grey mice in the hole, who stared very rudely at Cosset when he came in; and one of them said, "Pray, who is this strange mouse? and where does he come from?"

"Oh!" said another mouse, with an air of great disdain, "this is one of the fine dormice that belong to our mistress; and he lives in the gilt cage which stands on the sideboard: I know him by his great black eyes and long tail!"

"Oh, yes!" cried the other mice, "she thinks him a very fine fellow, and fondles him, and feeds him with all sorts of nice things; while, if *we* only nibble a bit of cheese, she sets a trap, or leaves the cat in the room all night, to catch us."

"Well, for my part," (said the mouse who spoke first,) "I think myself quite as good as a stupid dormouse, that does nothing else but eat and sleep!"

"And so do I! and I! and I!" cried all the mice at once.

Cosset, who had not been used to such ill manners, thought these remarks very rude, and began to wish he had not left his cage; besides this, the grey mice all got round him, and ruffled his fur, and pulled his long whiskers, and stared so rudely at him, that he scarcely knew which way to look: at last Grig said, "This is my friend Mr. Cosset, the dormouse; I have brought him home with me to sup with us."

Then the grey mice, instead of saying they were glad to see him, or asking him if he was quite well, only said "Ho!" and stared harder than before.

At last one of them asked Grig what they should have for supper.

"Why, the piece of cheese we stole from our mistress last night," said she.

Ought Cosset to have eaten any of the cheese which had been stolen from his kind mistress? Surely not! But Cosset never thought of that; when the rude mice, instead of saying, "Will you bring out the supper, Mistress Grig?" all cried out in a noisy loud voice, "Cheese,—cheese,—cheese!"

Grig set a lump of her mistress's best cheese before them; but they did not divide it as they would have done if they had known how to behave themselves; but they all jumped on the cheese, and began clawing, and gnawing, and fighting, and scratching, each snatching as large a piece as he could get.

Cosset, when he found they did not offer him any, got on the lump of cheese, and scratched, and squeaked, and fought, as rudely as any of the common mice.

After they had eaten the best of the cheese, they kicked the rind into the middle of the hole with the rest of the scraps and rubbish; and then the little mice came from the corners, where they had been watching the old ones all the time they were eating, and began to quarrel for it; and raised so much dust by kicking about the heap of rubbish and nutshells, that Cosset was almost blinded, and did nothing but sneeze. At length the old mice said, "Now let us go and see what we can steal!" and Grig popped her head out of the hole, and looked round the room to see if the coast was clear before they could venture out, and cried,

"The dog's asleep, the cat's away,
So, little mice, come out and play;
Come out of your holes without any fear,

For the candle is out and the coast is clear."

Then the mice jumped out of their hole one after another, and Cosset went with them; and they all raced about, and played such tricks, that it was well for them that puss was not in the parlour, for, if she had been, she would soon have put an end to their sports, and sent them all back to their hole faster than they came.

When the mice were tired of playing, one of them said, "What shall we do to amuse ourselves?—what can we steal?"

"Suppose," said Grig, "we gnaw the candle?" and all the mice cried, "So we will."

"Is tallow good to eat?" asked Cosset, who had never gnawed a candle in his life.

"Oh, very good indeed!" cried all the mice at once; and they all scampered up the table, and got round the candle, and began nibbling it: even Cosset stood upon his hind legs, and gnawed with the rest of these wicked little thieves.

At last, one unlucky mouse bit the wick of the candle in two; down it fell, and nearly broke Cosset's back, besides hurting two or three of the grey mice.

Cosset, who was much hurt, began to complain, and sent forth a doleful cry. Then they all began to lay the blame of this mischance on one another; and a quarrel took place, in the course of which poor Cosset was sadly nipped and scratched, till he grew quite angry at such uncivil treatment, and began to bite and scratch in his turn: but Cosset, not having been used to such battles, came but badly off; for no one took his part; so at last he was forced to ask pardon, and beseech the grey mice not to bite him and tease him any longer.

The grey mice said they wished to be friends once more; and when they were all quiet, Cosset asked what they thought their mistress would say when she saw the broken candle? "Nonsense!" said Grig; "she will only think it is our cousins the rats."

Then the mice all agreed they would get into the store-room, and steal some nice thing or other.

When they came to the store-room, they found that the hole under the door had been stopped: so they began to make a fresh one, and even Cosset set to work to help them to gnaw a passage to get into his kind mistress's store-room; and as they worked they all joined in singing this ugly song—

Here we work with tooth and claw,
And merrily we saw and gnaw:
A passage too we soon will make,
To steal our lady's nuts and cake.
Through the door or through the wall,
We will enter, one and all.
While puss is with her kittens sleeping,
There is no fear of her sly peeping;

And Pompey snores beneath the table;
So here we'll stay while we are able.
When Betty lightly trips down stairs
To sweep the room and brush the chairs,
Then to our holes we take our flight,
And come again to-morrow night.

As soon as these naughty mice had made a hole large enough to admit them, they all got through into the store-room, and whisked about over the dresser from shelf to shelf, and peeped into every pot and pan, plate and dish, seeking what they could steal.

At last one, who had found means to get into the closet, cried, "Here is the sugar-dish!" All the mice scrambled one over the other in their haste to steal the sugar, and they began eating the sugar like so many pigs.

But at last one of the grey mice saw Cosset in a corner, scratching a hole in a paper of cakes; and they all left the sugar,

and soon fell to work gnawing and pulling, and tearing the paper, to get the cakes.

Now it chanced that Cosset had chosen a cake full of almonds and currants, and orange and lemon peel; and it was a very nice cake—a great deal too good for naughty dirty mice to eat; and Cosset thought he should have a fine treat.

But a grey mouse, who had fixed his eye on it as well as Cosset, said "it was the very one he had chosen, and he would have it;" but Cosset ran away with the cake into a corner, and began nibbling it there.

Then the grey mice came to try and take it away from him; Cosset held it fast with teeth and claws; but first one mouse snatched a bit, and then another, till at last the cake was broken to pieces, and made so dirty it was quite unfit to be eaten.

Cosset was in a great rage at the rude conduct of the grey mice; but when he made a complaint to his friend Grig about their ill-usage, Grig told him "to hold his tongue," and bit his ear.

Cosset, in return for this affront, bit Grig's tail; Grig raised a sad outcry, which brought all the rest of the grey mice to assist her.

Some scratched Cosset, some pulled his fur and whiskers, some bit him; and they would most likely have killed him, but a sudden noise in the next room made them all scamper away: they thought it was the cat, white Patty, coming to devour them: so they ran off through the hole in the door, leaving poor Cosset lying in a china dish, half dead from the wounds they had given him.

The dish was cold, and Cosset tried to crawl out of it, to find a warmer place to lie in; but he was so stiff and sore, he could not stir.

And now he had leisure to reflect on his folly, in leaving his nice warm cage, and kind Gentle, who was so fond of him, to go stealing with such a rude bad creature as Grig; and when Cosset thought how wicked he had been, in helping these mice to steal his mistress's nice cakes and sugar, and spoiling her candle, and gnawing her store-room door, he could not but own he had been rightly served; for what could he expect but ill-treatment from such bad company as he had chosen to mix with that night?

It was late next morning before his mistress came into the store-room; and when she did come, and saw her sugar dirtied, and her nice cakes all crumbled and spoiled, she was quite vexed, and said, "Oh, dear! what can have been in my store-room, stealing my cakes and sugar in this manner?"

But she soon found out it was the mice who had done the mischief, when she saw the hole under the door, and the fur and whiskers lying about which had been pulled off in the fray.

"I will have the cat sent for," said she, "and set a trap to catch these wicked mice." Cosset, who was in a sad fright when he heard his mistress talk of shutting puss in the store-room, gave a dismal squeak; and his mistress, looking about, soon saw his black eyes peeping at her with a mournful air over the side of one of her china dishes.

"My naughty little pet!" said she, "how came you here in my store-room, so far from your cage? and who can have used you in so cruel a manner?" and Miss Carey gently took her poor dormouse in her hand, and coaxed down his ruffled fur.

Cosset thought how wrong he had been in joining the grey mice in robbing so kind a mistress, and he felt quite ashamed of his bad conduct.

If Cosset could have spoken, he would have said, "Dear mistress, I have been a very naughty mouse; but I am very sorry for all I have done, and I will be very good and tame for the time to come, if you will take me into favour, and love me as you used to do."

Cosset's good mistress put him once more into his cage, but took care to secure it so well that he might not make his escape a second time.

When Gentle saw poor Cosset in such a sad plight, she was quite grieved, and forgave him his unkind treatment of her the night before; nor did she once mention it to him, but licked him all over, and gave him the best of the food which her mistress had given her: and Cosset said he never would leave her again to go with such bad creatures as common grey mice; and Cosset and Gentle lived all the rest of their lives as happy as two dormice could live.

Now, should you like to know what became of wicked Grig and the grey mice who had treated Cosset so rudely?

When Betty, the maid, took up the carpet to sweep the room, she spied the hole under the door-mat where Grig lived.

"Oh ho!" said Betty, "I am glad I have found out at last where those wicked little thieves live, who get into the pantry and eat the bread and cheese, and steal my mistress's sugar and cakes."

So she sent for Fen, the rat-catcher, who brought a ferret with him. The ferret whisked into the hole, caught Grig and ate her up in a trice, and then killed all the rest of these naughty mice.

Now, if they had stayed in the fields, getting their living in an honest way, instead of making holes in the house where they had no right to come, they would not have been snapped up by the ferret.

I think they were all rightly served, as they were such wicked mice: and it was a good thing for Cosset that he did not return to the hole under the door-mat with the common mice; for if he had been found in such bad company, he would have met with the same fate, and been eaten by the ferret as they were.

THE LEARNED PIG; OR, THE FOLLY OF DISCONTENT.



"Dear me!" said the pigs to the chickens, "where are our young ladies going in such haste?"—"And the maids, too, dressed so smart?" said the geese, stretching their long necks across the gutter to look after them.

"I'll go ask the cat," said a duck that was dabbling in the mud close by; "for she hears all the secrets of the house:" and away she went as fast as she could walk; but ducks are not the best travellers in the world, and a great dog upset her as she crossed the yard.

Barker, for that was the name of the dog, had not the good manners to assist her to rise, or even to say, "Mrs. Waddle, I am sorry for your fall;" but leaped over the wall, and ran full speed towards the road.

The duck was very angry at his rudeness, and quacked with all her strength; but as the dog was out of hearing, and she was very curious to learn the cause of so much bustle, she shook her ruffled feathers and went on. She had not gone far, before she met the cat with her three kittens by her side.

The duck saw that the cat was in haste, and that she and the kits had all been newly washed, and their coats shone like satin.

"Pray, Mrs. Mouser," said the duck, speaking as softly as she could, "where may you and the Miss Mousers your kittens be going, so neat and trim, this fine day?"

The old cat had no mind to stop and gossip with the duck; but she thought it wisest not to affront her, as she might chance to peck her or the kits with her broad beak, if she was uncivil to her: so she put on a smiling look, and said, "Dear me, Mrs. Waddle, do not you know there is a fine sight to be seen on the green close by our house? There is a show with all sorts of strange beasts in it. A learned pig, dancing dogs, a monkey that smokes a pipe, and a singing parrot, and many fine things besides. My master and mistress, all our young ladies, the maids, and Barker our house-dog, are all gone to see them, and I and my kittens are going as fast as we can. I hope I shall have the pleasure of your company there; but I am in great haste, so I wish you good day for the present;" and away went the cat, and her three kittens after her.

"I do not see any reason why I should stay at home any more than the cat and Barker," said the duck: so she made all the haste she could back, to tell the news to the pigs, and geese, and chickens; and they all agreed to go with her and see the sight.

They had some trouble in making their way through the crowd that stood round the show. The pigs could scarcely get a peep, and as to the fowls, they were quite lost in the throng; till a cock, that was wiser than the rest, flew on to the top of the show, where he saw all that was going forward, and was followed by the chickens, and ducks, and geese. The pigs were very angry when they saw what a fine view the fowls had, while they could scarcely see at all.

"Gentlemen and ladies," said the master of the show, "you shall now see what is worth seeing! a sight such as you may never see again!" and he drew up a curtain as he spoke, and began playing a quick minuet on a fife. At the sound of the fife, two little French dogs, dressed in blue jackets, with scarlet and black caps on their heads, came on to the stage, and made bows all round to the company, and began to dance; and they danced on their hind legs, and looked very funny for near half an hour. Then they made bows again, and left off; and everyone caressed them, and gave them cakes to eat.

"How I wish I was one of these dancing dogs!" said Barker to himself; "they must lead a pleasant life: they are dressed fine, have a nice house to live in, have nothing to do but to dance a little, and everyone fondles and feeds them; while I live hardly, and no one takes notice of or caresses me:" and Barker began to be quite out of humour, and growled sadly.

The next thing that came on to the stage was a monkey, dressed like a sailor, with a red worsted nightcap on his head; and he had a pipe in his mouth, which he smoked while he danced a hornpipe. Then his master gave him a stick, which he toppled over, and played such antics, and made such droll grimaces, that all the people laughed to see his tricks.

When this was done, he took off his red cap and held it round to the company; and some gave him nuts, and some oranges and apples, and some put in halfpence.

The monkey carried the halfpence to his master, and cracked the nuts; the apples and oranges he peeled, and flung the peel among the crowd.

"It is a fine thing to have nothing to do but to topple over a stick, and have the best of fruit to eat," said the pigs to the cat, as they were eating the peel which Pug had thrown away. "I think so, indeed!" said Mrs. Mouser the cat: "for my part, I know that if I do not catch mice, and provide for myself, I might starve for what any one cared."

The showman next brought a fine green parrot in a gilt cage, and set it on the table, and said, "Pretty Poll, speak to the ladies and gentlemen." The parrot at these words held up her head, and said, "How do you do this fine morning? Will you give a groat to hear poor Poll sing?"

Then the people clapped their hands, and said, "Sing, pretty Polly! sing!" and the parrot sang, "God save the King:" and when she had done singing, she said, "Now pay for poor Poll's pretty song," and all the people gave the parrot money, and cakes, and sugar.

When the chickens, and ducks, and geese saw this, they were very envious, and said one to another, "It is a good thing to be able to squall and make a noise:" and the cock said, "I am sure, if these people knew what fine voices some of us have, they would not so much as listen to this green bird."

Then the cock flapped his wings, and began to crow as loud as he could; the hens cackled, the ducks quacked, and the geese hissed and gabbled so loud, that had you been there you would have been almost stunned by their clamour.

Instead of being praised for their noise, the people were all very angry, and threw stones and dirt at them, and said, "Hold your tongues, you noisy birds, or we will wring your necks." The fowls were not at all pleased by this treatment, you may be sure; and they prated a great deal, but no one cared for their airs.

"Now, my friends," said the showman, "here is the rarest sight of all to be seen:" as he spoke, he opened a side door, and called with a loud voice, "Toby, Toby, Toby! come forth, Toby, and show the company what you can do." At these words, a fine fat pig, as white as snow, trotted on to the stage, adorned with bunches of sky-blue ribbons.

"This is Toby, the learned pig, ladies and gentlemen; and a very clever fellow he is, quite unlike the dirty stupid pigs you see in farm-yards."

The pigs that were among the crowd squeaked and grunted with rage at hearing this; but the man went on: "Now, Toby, tell us what is the time of day." Then, to the wonder of all the bystanders, Toby made twelve scratches on the ground with his right foot, and ten with his left, to show that it was ten minutes past twelve o'clock.

"See, gentlemen and ladies," said the master of the show, "it is ten minutes past twelve by my watch." He then took from his pocket a pack of cards, and said to a man who stood nigh, "Choose a card from this pack, and give the rest to Toby, and he will point out the number of the card that you have taken." The man did so; and Toby, having first shuffled them with his foot, made seven scratches, to show that a seven was the card wanting.

"Now find out which is the greatest rogue present," said the showman; and, to the delight of all the company, Toby went up to his own master and squeaked.

"Toby, what do you deserve when you misbehave yourself and are stupid?" The pig brought a stick in his mouth, and laid it at his master's feet, with a pitiful whine.

"Now, Toby, shake hands with the ladies and gentlemen." The pig walked round the stage, and gave his foot to all near him. These tricks, and many more quite as strange, did Toby the learned pig perform before the company; who wondered that a pig should possess so much knowledge. They scratched his head, and gave him as many apples and pears as he liked to eat.

The other pigs were ready to die with spite at Toby's good fortune; and when the show was over, they all went grumbling home to the farm-yard.

The pigs and poultry, and dogs and cats, were in an ill-humour the rest of that day, and did nothing but complain of the hardness of their lot. "It is a shame," said Barker, "that I should have such scanty fare, and live in a dirty kennel, while these French dogs are so happy and well fed! They are not chained up at night to watch the house and yard, that the family may rest in safety, as I am. I wish I belonged to the showman, and I should have a pleasant time of it, for I should only have to dance and caper about a little."

"You are not half so badly off as I am," said the cat: "if you are chained up at night, you get plenty of bones and milk, and a bit of good meat now and then, to strengthen you: while I, who keep the house free from rats and mice, never get a morsel, unless I steal it, and then I am sure to be beaten by the maids, if they find me out. Besides, I am obliged to provide for three great lazy kittens, who suck, and tease me all day with their foolish tricks."

"As for us," said the pigs, "we are fed on nothing but sour swill and grains, and the refuse of the kitchen; and if we go into the fields or gardens, to help ourselves to what we like best, we are whipped home; or if we turn up the ground to look for earth-nuts and roots, they put rings in our noses. Is not ours an unhappy case?"

"True, brothers!" grunted a fatted hog, poking his nose through the rails of his sty; "but mine is far worse. You have the range of the yard, and can escape sometimes from your keeper into the fields and woods; while I am shut up in this close sty, which is scarcely large enough to turn myself about in: but this is not all; as soon as my master thinks I am fat enough, the butcher will come and cut my throat. I thought myself badly off when I ran about the yard with you; but I would now endure any want of food, could I but enjoy my life and liberty."

The chickens, and geese, and ducks, thought their fate quite as hard; the hens lamented the daily loss of their eggs. In short, all these creatures found some cause of complaint, and each thought their lot worse than their neighbours; but they all agreed in envying the happy life of Toby, the learned pig. "If we were but as well off as Toby, and the monkey, and parrot, and dancing dogs," said they, "we should be quite happy."

"Foolish creatures! you know not the miseries of the life you envy," said Toby, the learned pig, (who had escaped from the show, and now stood before them in all his fine gay trappings); "I have my share of sorrows as well as you, and perhaps even more. You enjoy your liberty, have neither labour nor fatigue, are seldom struck or ill-used, can lie down and sleep, and rise again when it pleases you; but I am under the control of a hard task-master, and can only act as he thinks proper. I was taken from the sow, my mother, before I was a month old, and sold to my present master, who forced me to learn many hard things; and when I was wilful, or stupid, he beat me with a whip, and kept me without food until I became tame, and learned my tasks."

"I am shut up in a close house, where there is little light, and less air, and, though ever so tired, am called out to show the tricks he has taught me; and if I refuse to obey his commands, am scolded and beaten without mercy. Every living creature has its troubles, as you may learn from having heard each other's complaints, and there are few worthy of envy. For my part," added he, "I have made my escape from my prison, and shall be quite happy and content if I can pass the rest of my life in freedom, and have as small cause to repine as you have." As he said this, he began to tear from his head and neck the gay ribbons which had been the envy of all the other pigs; but at that moment the showman, who had been searching every place for him, came up to the spot where Toby stood.

"Oh ho! my fine fellow!" said he, "I will teach you to run away again, and make yourself in this dirty trim." As he spoke, he laid a whip he had in his hand smartly across poor Toby's shoulders.

"You now see the folly of your discontent; have not you much greater reason to be happy than I?" said the learned pig, as with an humble air he returned to his former prison with his master.

The pigs and fowls, and dog and cat, now saw that Toby was worse off than themselves; and they resolved, for the time to come, not to envy the lot of others, nor yet be discontented and repine at their own.

THE APE AND THE ASS.

There was once an idle ape, named Ranger, who lived in a spreading tree in a green and pleasant meadow.

One day Ranger said to himself—"What a silly fellow I am to remain in this dull tree, where there is nothing to amuse me! I will go and see a little of the world."

Having first eaten a hearty breakfast of the fruit that grew on the tree, and drunk a little water from the stream which flowed near, he skipped lightly over the green turf, and went forth on his travels.

He had not gone far before he saw a man mounted on a fine horse, which pranced and cantered along in high style. "Ah!" sighed Ranger, "how much happier men are than we poor apes! I should like to have a horse to ride on, instead of being forced to walk on foot; and I have no doubt my figure would look very well on horseback. Before I go any further on my travels, I will have a steed to carry me." Saying this, he returned to the meadow, where some horses were quietly grazing, and besought one of them to permit him to mount on his back: but the horse looked very coolly on the ape, and said, with an air of great contempt, "Begone, you ugly beast! what horse of any spirit, think you, will suffer himself to be ruled by an ape? If you wish for a steed, I would advise you to ride on a stick, as that will best suit your size and figure."

The ape was very much hurt at this rude speech, and he chattered and made a sad noise; but the horse went on feeding, and paid no farther regard to him, and Ranger left him quite in a rage. He had not gone far, when he chanced to see a donkey feeding on the grass under a tree.

"Ah, ah!" said the ape, "I shall have a ride in spite of that rude horse, if I manage my matters well."

He soon climbed the tree; and perching himself on a convenient branch, he said in a voice loud enough for the ass to overhear him—"How much handsomer this ass is than *that* horse!—what a fine shape! what a soft coat! and then what nice long ears!—if this donkey's paces are but equal to her form, she must be a rare beast!"

The foolish ass was so charmed with the praises which the ape bestowed on her, that she pricked up her ears, and began capering about to convince the ape how well he had judged of her merits.

"Sweet Mistress Dustifoot," said the cunning ape with a coaxing air, "I was right when I said you were handsomer and swifter than a horse. Come a little nearer, for I should like to stroke your nice soft long ears."

The donkey, who did not suspect the trick, and thought all the ape's praises were sincere, came close under the tree; but before she was aware of his design Ranger sprang upon her.

The ass at first thought the ape had a mind for a little frolic, so she trotted about the field for some time in a very good humour; but at last she grew tired, and very civilly hinted that she wished to repose herself on the grass, and requested the ape to dismount, as she began to feel much fatigued.

"Thank you, Mistress Dustifoot," said Ranger; "if you are tired, I am not: and if you do not choose to go, I shall be obliged to make use of this long stick;" and he gave the poor ass several hearty blows as he spoke, with the stick he had broken from the tree.

The poor ass had now reason to lament her folly in having given ear to the flattery of the cunning ape, who urged her to her utmost speed, in spite of all she could say, with the stick he held in his hand; while the ape, rejoicing in the success of his scheme, began to applaud his own wisdom.

"It is a fine thing," said he, "to be wiser than one's neighbours. Now I am provided with a good steed, I will go forth on my travels, and if I increase in knowledge as I have begun, I shall become the wonder and envy both of man and beast; and when I return to the woods again, I will be a king."

Alas! the ape's vain hopes and grand projects were soon at an end; for the donkey, losing all patience at his ingratitude and vain boasting, approached the banks of a stream, and, putting her head between her fore-legs, began kicking in so furious a manner, that Ranger, not aware of her design, was thrown into the very middle of the stream.

The ass, glad of having rid herself of her burthen, capered away, leaving the ape struggling in the water. With much difficulty Ranger gained the shore, weary, bruised, and ashamed of his folly: he shook his wet coat; and, hanging his ears

with a doleful air, returned to his former dwelling, resolving for the future to stay at home and learn wisdom.

THE PROUD FROG.

A young frog lived with her father and mother in a brook where there were many frogs besides themselves. The young frog was very proud and vain, and would often hop about the meadow, and bid the other frogs admire her fine shape and graceful motions; but, as she was not a bit better-looking than her neighbours, no one cared even to look at her.

"Mother," said she, quite in a pet one day, "it is a shame that such a fine creature as I am should live in such a dull out-of-the-way place as this is; I am sure, if I was to go more into company, I should be taken a great deal of notice of, and I dare say make my fortune in one way or other."—"Indeed, my dear daughter," said her prudent mother, "you had better be content to live with me in this nice clear brook, where there are plenty of flies and water-beetles, and slugs and snails among the green grass and rushes: what can you desire more?"

"To go and seek my fortune," replied the young frog, with a very pert air. "The world is a great place, my child," said the old frog with a sigh; "and you are young and silly: I fear, if you are left to your own guidance, you will come to a bad end."

"I am sure I am both old enough and wise enough to take care of myself, and I shall do well, never fear," said the young frog; and she teased and plagued her mother till she let her go.

"Good b'ye, father and mother," said she, as she leaped out of the brook upon the bank and hopped away.

"That foolish young creature is so self-willed and proud, she will surely be punished for her folly sooner or later," said the old frog her father, as he watched the progress of his silly daughter while she leaped and jumped over the heads of the plantains and daisies in the meadow. The old frogs who lived in the same stream popped their heads out of the water to look after this wilful young frog, and shook their heads, and pitied the old ones for having such a sad vain daughter.

In the mean time the young frog went on her way: she crossed the meadow without any accident; but night coming on, and she being tired with her long journey, stopped to rest by a great stone which lay in her path; there was a nice round hole under the stone, and in she crept and soon fell fast asleep. She had not enjoyed her repose long, when she was roused by the entrance of an old toad and her four young ones, who very civilly told her the house was too small to admit another guest, for they had no more room than they wanted for themselves. The frog was very angry, and said she would not leave the lodging she had found; and she croaked so loud that the old toad and her young ones got behind her and pushed her out of the hole, saying as they did so, "Get out of our hole, get out, get out!"

Now this was very rude behaviour, you must own; but toads do not know much of good breeding, and they had no one to teach them better manners. I dare say, if the frog had not so rudely refused to leave the hole, and had asked the toad to let her pass the night in a corner, they would not have turned her out as they did.

This was the first misfortune the frog met with; she was ready to burst with anger; and passed the night in a very disagreeable humour, under a clod of earth.

Next morning, while she was feasting on some dainty young snails, she was alarmed by two boys, who had entered the field, crying out, "A frog! a frog!" and though she hopped and skipped as high as she could to get out of their way, one of these cruel boys put his toe against her, and kicked her across a ditch into another field, where she lay half-dead with fright, and much hurt by her fall.

Some frogs that were swimming in a pool close by came to her relief: they brought her the best food they could find, and nursed her so well, that in a few days' time she could swim and leap with the best of them: but instead of being grateful for the kindness shown to her in her distress by the good frogs, she began to give herself airs, and even wanted to rule over them and be queen of the meadow.

This conduct gave great offence to the whole race of frogs. "You be queen over us!" they said; "if you do not mend your manners, we will turn you out of the meadow, you foolish little creature."

"Little!" croaked the young frog, swelling herself to twice her usual size; "little indeed! I am bigger than any of you,—I am almost as large as that ox yonder."

"Pooh, nonsense!" cried all the pond of frogs in a breath; "as big as that ox! you have lost your senses: look at that great

animal again!"

But the young frog, puffed up by conceit and pride, only swelled her body the more; "See," said she, "how large I am now!"

"Just large enough to make a good meal for me," said a great white duck who was dabbling in the mud close by, as she opened her beak and swallowed this vain young frog at a mouthful.

Now, had she been wise, and not tried to look bigger than Nature had made her, she might have lived very happy in the pond with the frogs who had been so friendly, and treated her with so much kindness.

THE GRATEFUL CRANE.



A poor crane was once caught in a net, from which she could by no efforts escape. "Alas!" said she in a tone of deep distress, "what will become of me! if I cannot break a passage through this net, I shall either fall a prey to the fowler, or die of hunger. My death, too, will cause that of all my young ones, who must perish unless I return to feed and warm them."

A dog in the next field, hearing her complaints, jumped over the fence, and, bidding her be of good courage, tore the net in pieces with his teeth, and said, "Return, my friend, to your young ones, who are, no doubt, anxiously looking out for you."

The grateful crane thanked the dog a thousand times. "In saving my life," said she, "you have also saved my helpless family. I shall never forget your kindness as long as I live."

"The strong should always be ready to help the weak: we ought to do as we would be done by; and I may one day or other be glad of some friend to assist me," replied the dog.

They then parted: the dog returned to watch his master's sheep; and the happy crane to her nest of anxious young ones.

It chanced some time after this that the crane, on her return to her nest, stopped to drink a little water from a clear stream which flowed near the foot of a steep rock; but she had hardly tasted a drop when she was startled by a moaning sound near her, as if made by some animal in great pain.

Calling to mind the advice of the dog—to assist the distressed,—she left the water, and, looking round, she beheld, stretched on the ground at the foot of the rock, and almost at the point of death, the very dog that had formerly saved her life. She flew to him with all the haste she could; and asked, in what way she could serve him, and what was his ailment?

The dog with much difficulty told her that, in eating his dinner, a bone had got across his throat; and he should be choked, unless it was speedily removed.

"If that is all," said the crane, with a joyful air, "I can soon put an end to your distress, if you will but permit me to pull the bone out."

The dog gladly consented; and the crane, putting her long bill into the dog's throat, plucked up the bone that had given him so much uneasiness, and which, but for her timely help, must have caused his death.

Thus the dog was rewarded for having done a good action; and the crane was happy in having had it in her power to prove her gratitude, and make a return for the service which had been done to her when she was in distress and stood in

need of assistance.

THE KING OF THE FEN.



"I will be king of the fen," said Croaker the frog, leaping out of the brook upon the dry land.

"You king, indeed!" said Slyboots, a fine fat field-mouse, with a long tail and bright eyes, jumping out of his hole at the foot of a hazel bush which grew near. "I am larger than you, and I will be king, and the frogs shall be my subjects, and cut rushes, and bring me dry moss to line my nest." And Slyboots looked big, and strutted about and gave himself a great many airs.

"I will never consent to be governed by a mouse," replied the frog with a disdainful air: "finely king Slyboots would sound!"

"Quite as well as king Croaker!" retorted the mouse. Then the frog flew into a great passion, and hopped so high and croaked so loud that the mouse crept a little further from him; for frogs, like children, look very ugly when they are out of temper: and Slyboots did not much like the idea of being touched by his cold paws; and he said to himself, "In spite of this frog, looking so fierce and talking so loud, I should not wonder if he was a coward at heart." So he turned to the frog and said, "As we both wish to be king of the fen, I know of no way of ending the dispute but by single combat; and the one that wins the battle shall be king over the other."

Then the frog said, "I have no objection to what you propose, and we will each bring a friend to see fair play. To-morrow at twelve o'clock I shall be ready to take the field; and if you fail to meet me here, I shall be king of the fen, and the mice shall be my servants:"—for Croaker thought Slyboots was braver in word than deed, as cowards are often the foremost to talk of fighting.

Then the frog retired among the bulrushes, and the mouse ran home to his hole under the nut-tree.

These two rivals awoke next morning by break of day, to prepare for the combat, which was to take place at noon. The frog was very much afraid of Slyboots' sharp teeth and claws: so he fell to work and made himself a shield from the bark of an old willow tree; and then he plucked a long bulrush for a spear. "Now," said he, "I am well armed: I have a shield to defend myself, and a spear to attack the enemy with: if I had but a valiant friend to be my second in the fight, I should do very well."

"I will be your second," said a great pike, raising his head above the water: "and I will lie close to the bank, among these rushes; and if you lose or break your spear, come to me, and I will procure you another."

The frog was well pleased at this offer. "I shall beat Slyboots in a little time," said he, "with such weapons and so good a friend as the pike to stand by and help me."

Slyboots, in the mean time, was not idle; he sharpened his teeth and his claws, and chose a light twig from the hazel-

bush, and said, "I only want now a friend to be my second and see fair play." A great kite, who was hovering near, said, "Mr. Slyboots, you may command my services at any hour you please to name; I will attend you with great pleasure to the place of meeting."

Now Slyboots was somewhat afraid of the kite, for he thought he had rather a hungry look about the eyes and beak; but he dared not refuse his offer, lest he should give offence; so he thanked him for his kindness, and at the appointed hour they went to the spot where the frog was waiting for their arrival. The pike lay in the hole among the rushes; and the kite sat on the bough of a tree close by.

The frog and the mouse looked at each other for a few minutes, and brandished their weapons; the mouse walked about with a very warlike air, and the frog flourished his bulrush over his head. At last the kite and the pike gave signal for the fray to commence; and to fighting they both went, and the battle was long and fierce on both sides, and for some time it was doubtful which would be the conqueror. At last the frog seemed to gain ground; but at the very minute that he appeared to have the most advantage over the mouse, his spear broke in pieces. "Alas!" croaked he in a tone of dismay, "what shall I do? who will give me another weapon?"—"Here is one," cried his friend the pike from among the rushes.

The frog, the unsuspecting frog, gave a leap of joy, and sprang towards the pike, who, opening his mouth, quickly put an end to the battle by swallowing at one mouthful the hapless frog.

"I am king of the fen now!" cried Slyboots with a joyful squeak. "Long live your majesty!" exclaimed the crafty kite as he darted from the tree, and, pouncing upon the new sovereign, bore him away in his talons, and put a speedy end to his regal honours and his life at the same moment.

THE COVETOUS BOY AND THE GOOSE.



A great many years ago there lived a boy whose godmother was a wise and powerful fairy. One day she called him to her, and placed in his arms a fine white goose.

"This goose," said she, "will lay you every day a golden egg; and if you treat her well, she will make your fortune."

The boy thanked the fairy, and carried home the goose; and he built her a little house, and made her a nice warm nest, and lined it with the softest hay.

This wonderful goose laid a golden egg every day, as the fairy had foretold; and the boy said, "If I go on thus, I shall soon become a rich man." But riches are of little value without wisdom, and this boy was very far from being wise; for, one day, as he was feeding his goose, he said to himself, "I should like to have all my wealth at once, and then I would have a great house and fine clothes, and a horse to ride on." Then this cruel boy killed the poor goose that had laid him so many golden eggs: but he was rightly served for his covetousness and ingratitude; for, instead of the treasure he had expected, how great was his surprise and regret to find that, in taking away the life of this valuable goose, he had destroyed the whole source of his wealth. While he was still lamenting his folly, the fairy, his godmother, appeared before him with a countenance full of anger: "Covetous and ungrateful wretch!" said she, "I designed to have made your fortune; but you have proved yourself so unworthy of my favour that from this moment I renounce you." Saying these words she departed, leaving this foolish boy overcome with shame and confusion.

Thus, by his covetous disposition, he lost the favour of the fairy, and became a poor man all the rest of his life,—a hewer of wood and a drawer of water.

THE PEACOCK AND HIS FELLOW TRAVELLERS.



The peacock said one day to the game-cock, who lived in the same farm-yard, "I wonder, friend Chanticleer, how you can like to live in this disagreeable place; for my part, I mean to leave it as soon as I can."

"I have no more wish to be shut up here than you," replied the cock.

"Suppose, then," said the peacock, "we go and seek our fortune in the great world together."

"I have not the least objection to bear you company," said Chanticleer: "but yonder I see our mistress feeding the chickens; I must go and pick a bit first, for I never care to travel on an empty stomach."

The peacock said it would take him some time to prepare himself, so they agreed to put off the journey till the following day. Chanticleer promised to crow at break of day, to rouse the peacock, that they might set off quite early in the morning; but though he crowed both loud and long, the peacock slept so soundly that he did not hear his call, till Chanticleer, losing all patience, stepped close to him, and crowed in his ear,

Friend Peacock, awake, for bright is the day;
The sun has arisen, so let us away.

The peacock, quite ashamed of having slept so long, roused himself from his slumbers, and, opening his eyes, said:

"Truly, friend Chanty, I am so used to hearing you crow every night, that I quite forgot you were to rouse me so early."

Then the cock and the peacock bade adieu to the farm-yard, and set forth on their travels. They had not gone very far, when they overtook a crane that happened to be journeying the same way as themselves. The peacock and cock entered into discourse with the crane, who told them that he too was on his travels; and they presently agreed to join company, "for," said they, "we shall amuse one another, and make the way seem shorter." They were very comfortable, and went chatting very pleasantly of one thing or other, till, the sun going down, and they being tired with walking in the dusty roads, Chanticleer proposed going to a rick-yard which was near, to rest and refresh themselves.

To this plan they all agreed; and the crane, putting his long bill into a stack of corn, pulled out enough for a plentiful repast.

After they had supped, the peacock perched himself on the projecting beam of a pig-sty: the cock sat on a waggon-wheel close by, and the crane put his head under his wing and went fast asleep; and they slept soundly all night, and had very pleasant dreams.

Chanticleer, who was an early riser, called up his fellow travellers as soon as it was day; and when they had breakfasted, they again renewed their journey; but this day was not spent near so agreeably as the preceding one, owing to the airs and ill-humour of the peacock, who was a proud vain bird. It chanced that, in crossing the dirty yard, he soiled the gay feathers of his train, which accident made him very cross; and he commanded the cock and crane, in no very gentle manner, to hold up his train, and keep it out of the dirt.

The crane excused himself, saying he had enough to do in taking care of his own feathers; the cock, likewise, declined the honour of being train-bearer to the peacock: then the peacock was quite angry, and, thinking to vex his companions, said,—"I am glad I am a fine peacock, and not a shabby crane, nor yet a plain game-cock."

Hearing this, the cock bristled up his feathers, and, looking very angry, said, "A plain cock indeed! Let me tell you, I think myself quite as handsome as you, and I would rather be a *plain cock*, as you think fit to call me, than a useless peacock." And the crane said very mildly, "Friend Peacock, your feathers are very gay, and you are a very fine bird to look at; but I would not change my state for yours, for I am swifter afoot, and readier on the wing. Let us see, in time of danger, which will prove of the most service—your fine train and crest, or my long legs and dull plumes."

SECOND PART.

The peacock, the cock, and the crane, now came to a great forest of lofty trees, which they all three entered. They were still disputing on their separate merits, when they were terrified by a dreadful roaring near them, and a monstrous lion rushed out from among the bushes where he had lain concealed.

The crane, running swiftly a few paces, extended his wings, and, soaring through the air, flew full three miles out of sight.

The cock flew to the branch of an oak, whose boughs overhung the path; while the peacock, entangled by his heavy train among the brambles, could by no means escape from the paw of the lion; and he found with sorrow that the fine plumes he had boasted of so much, instead of being of use to him, were, at last, the cause of his being devoured by a savage beast of prey; while the plain cock and the shabby crane were enabled to make a safe retreat, and to return unhurt to their several homes.

THE YOUNG STAG.



A young stag once lived in a dell by the side of a fountain, under the covert of some forest-trees; he passed his days in ease and plenty, reposing on the green turf, cropping the flowers that grew on the borders of the fountain, or viewing his own shadow reflected on its surface: but Fleetfoot (for thus was the young stag called) at length became weary of the quiet life he led, and longed for a change of scene.

One fine spring morning he roused himself from the dewy grass, and, looking round him, said, "How bright the sun shines! the air is soft and balmy; I will leave these silent woods, and visit the plains and yonder verdant meadows." Saying this, he left his secure and pleasant retreat in the dell, and walked forth into the open fields. There he saw the shepherds folding their flocks on the hills, and the mowers cutting down the green grass in the meadows: he stopped to listen to the song of the milkmaid and the chime of the bells from the steeple of the distant village church. These sounds and sights were all new to the young stag, who had passed his life in the deep recesses of the forest; and, as he bounded with light and joyous steps over the level plains, he said, "I will return no more to the gloomy forest, but dwell here in these pleasant plains and fruitful fields."

But if his former abode was less pleasing, it was much more secure; and thoughtless Fleetfoot had soon reason to regret having been tempted to quit his quiet home in the shady dell; for, one day, as he was carelessly reposing by the bank of a river, the sound of a hunter's bugle rang upon his ear:—scarcely had he time to raise himself on his feet, when a pack of hounds, and a huntsman mounted on a fleet horse, came in view.

The frightened stag fled swiftly over hill and dale, followed by the noisy pack in full cry close behind him. Twice that day did the stag plunge into the stream and swim boldly over, thinking to baffle the pursuit; but in vain: the hounds, encouraged by the shouts of the huntsman, likewise crossed the river; and now they gained nearer and nearer on his fainting steps, and the hunter thought the prize secure; but Fleetfoot, collecting all his remaining strength, redoubled his former speed, and, leaving the disappointed hounds and hunter far behind, he reached the friendly shade of the forest, and, panting and breathless, gladly laid himself down once more by the side of the fountain. From that time he never left his native dell, but, contented with his lot, passed the remainder of his days in peace and happiness.

THE SHETLAND PONY.



"What stupid animals those tame horses are to bear such heavy burdens, and work so many hours!" said a wild Shetland pony, as he watched the labours of the horses of a Shetland farmer who were employed in carrying loads of turf. Brownny (for so was the wild pony called) lifted his rough head over the fence, and amused himself by observing what passed among his more industrious brethren. He examined with much attention the various parts of the harness that the horses wore—the bridle, the halter, and, above all, he was most pleased with their bright iron shoes. He could not refrain from asking a number of questions; to which the horses replied with much good temper. "What are those pretty bright things that you wear on your feet?" asked Brownny. "They are our shoes," said one of the horses. "And how came you by them?" demanded the pony. "They were put on by our master, to prevent our feet from being wounded by the rough stones and hard ground we are forced sometimes to travel over," replied the horse. "Then," said the simple pony, forgetting how much he had despised the labouring horses only a few minutes before, "I should like to wear such pretty shoes. Will you give me one of yours?"—"They are nailed on our feet, and we can by no means remove them," said the horse. "And pray, what is the use of that bright chain that you hold between your teeth, and that piece of leather which comes over your head and neck?" The horse told the pony, that the bright chain was a curb, and the leather a bridle, by which they were restrained from going any way but that which their master chose. "We are forced," said they, "to work many hours in the day, and in all weathers; and if we are unruly, or do not perform our duty according to our master's wishes, he never fails to chastise us with a long whip: but then, in return for our services, we are lodged in a warm sheltered stable or shed all the cold weather, and are fed with sweet hay, or corn, or grass; and when the frost is sharp, and the ground covered with snow, we have little to do, and live at our ease."

"For all this," replied Brownny, "I would rather enjoy my liberty, and be able to range over hill and plain, and have scanty fare, than be well fed, and subject to the will and caprice of a master, as you are. I am free, and will never submit to be curbed by anyone;" and, shaking his mane, he bounded over the heath, and joined the wild ponies his companions, exulting in his liberty.

The winter set in that year with uncommon severity: the snow fell for many weeks without ceasing; the mountain streams were fast bound up by the frost; the shrill north wind blew keenly over the desolate plains, which afforded not a single blade of grass, nor a bit of moss or heath, for the support of the wild ponies and cattle; who, forced by want, came into the enclosures, and round the dwellings of the Shetlanders, for shelter from the inclement season. Even the proud spirit of Brownny was tamed, and, urged by hunger, he entered the yard of a Shetland farmer to seek for food.

His fleet step, fine form, and fiery eye, did not pass unnoticed by the Shetlander, who resolved, if possible, to make himself master of so spirited an animal; but Brownny, as if aware of his design, bounded away whenever he drew near the spot where he stood. But the cold increased in severity, and Brownny felt the want of food every day more painfully.

One day the Shetlander, who had for some time marked his hungry and dejected looks, approached the spot where he

was with a basket of corn in his hand, which he placed on the ground before him, and withdrew to a little distance, that he might eat it undisturbed. For several successive days the Shetlander repeated his visit; and Brownny, grown more familiar, and grateful for the supply of food, at length suffered the farmer to approach him and pat his rough side and shaggy mane; and the sound of his steps on the frozen ground was heard and gladly welcomed by the Shetland pony, who ran neighing to meet his friend, eager to receive his daily supply of food from his hands.

But one day, while Brownny was eating his provender, the farmer, watching a favourable moment, threw over his head a noosed rope, and in spite of his anger and the resistance he made, led him away captive to the stable, where he remained for a long time sullen and unhappy, regretting the loss of that liberty which, in spite of cold and famine, he still held so dear.

Brawnny by degrees grew more gentle, and soon became sensible of the kind treatment he received from his new master, who trimmed his hoofs and mane, and combed and brushed his rough coat till it looked quite fine and shone like satin. He came daily to feed him, and brought his little children to admire the young stranger, who patted his sides with their little hands, and praised the beauty of his form and his bright eyes.

When the spring returned, and the warm sunbeams had melted the snow from the ground, Brownny was led from the stable, bridled and saddled, his feet shod with the bright shoes he had admired so much. Without making any resistance, he suffered himself to be mounted, and galloped lightly over the level turf; while his master, delighted by his gentleness, caressed him, and praised his fleetness and graceful motion.

From this time Brownny became a general favourite; he was the darling and pet of all the farmer's children, who never beat or kicked him, but plucked for him the sweetest grass, and brought him the clearest water from the spring to drink; and the grateful pony, no longer wild and unruly, would suffer them to mount his back and carry them safely round the fields and common. In short, Brownny was so happy, and treated with such kindness, that he never had reason to regret the day when he was deprived of his freedom and became subjected to the will of the good Shetlander, his master.

THE ROOK AND THE PITCHER.



Two old rooks built their nest on the top of a great tree, and hatched three young ones, whose names were Jet, and Jack, and Broadbill. Now Jet was very good; but Jack and Broadbill were very bad birds, and minded not a word that was said to them: they were always quarrelling with each other, and were very rude and saucy to their sister Jet.

One day the old rooks said to the young ones—"My dear children, we are going out on a visit to your uncle and aunt, who have built a nest in yonder wood. Take care you do not quarrel with each other; and, pray, do not attempt to fly in our absence."

Jet said she would not leave the nest; but Jack and Broadbill only cawed and flapped their wings; for they were sad wicked birds and did not mean to be good.

The old rooks were scarcely out of sight, when Jack began to quarrel with Broadbill about some nonsense or other; and they cawed and cawed, and flapped their wings in each other's eyes, and scratched with their sharp claws, till Jet was quite vexed at their bad behaviour, and begged them not to fight; but, instead of minding what their good sister said to them, they pecked her head, and pulled out some of her nice black feathers.

At last Broadbill, who was the strongest, pushed Jack over the edge of the nest; and Jack, who had never learned to fly, fell from the top of the tree to the bottom, and broke his neck in the fall.

Oh! what a fright Broadbill was in when he saw what he had done! he did not mean to kill Jack; but when people give way to anger, they never know where it will end, and so Jet told him.

Jet was grieved and cried sadly for the death of poor Jack; though, if he had been good like her, he would not have come to such a bad end.

Now Broadbill was very quiet for some time after this disaster had taken place; and Jet began to think he had seen the error of his conduct, and was going to behave quite well for the future.

Broadbill chanced to see some young crows a little bigger than himself on the next tree learning to fly; and they flew from bough to bough, and then back again to the nest, and seemed to enjoy themselves so well, that Broadbill thought he should like to fly like his neighbours; and he said, "Come, Jet, do not let us stay moping here; see how merry our cousins the crows are! I am sure we could fly as well as they, if we tried."

"Brother Broadbill," said Jet, "our father and mother told us not to quit the nest in their absence; and I do not think our wings are strong enough to bear us, and we have not as yet learned how to use them."

"I mean to try my wings to-day, for all that," said this wilful bird; "I long to show those crows what I can do."

"But the crows are older than we, and their wings are fuller of feathers," said Jet.

"But mine are broader and wider, and I am sure I can fly better," said Broadbill, as he hopped out of the nest upon a bough, and stood and flapped his wings before he took flight.

"Broadbill, you will surely break your neck," said Jet, and she begged him not to fly down: but Broadbill only laughed at her fears, and away he flew; but the wind blew strong, the tree was high, and Broadbill's wings were weak; he strove to keep them spread, but his feathers were not half-grown, and he had not learned to fly; so down he came upon the hard ground, and was killed on the spot.

Poor Jet was now left quite alone; and she hid her head under her wing, and cried and mourned for the death of her two brothers. The old rooks came home when it grew dark; and they were very much shocked when they heard what had happened, though they were not quite so sorry as they would have been, had Jack and Broadbill been good and dutiful birds, like their sister Jet.

Some time after this, Jet's mother fell sick, and grew so weak that she was unable to fly abroad and get food as usual.

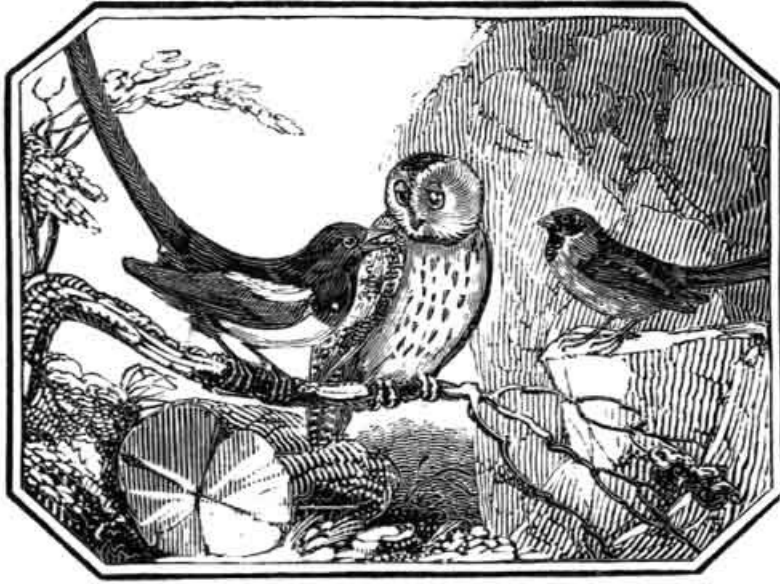
One day, when the old rook her husband was gone out to look for food, she called Jet to her, and said, "Jet, bring me a little water in your bill, for I am ready to die with thirst." Away flew Jet to seek for some drink for her sick mother; but the summer had been very hot, and all the ponds and ditches near were quite dried up. Jet flew far and wide to seek for some water, but found none.

Quite tired at last, she rested on some rails on the top of a steep bank; when, looking down, she beheld a pitcher which a shepherd had left by chance on the plain where he had been keeping his flocks.

Full of joy, Jet flew towards it. There was a little water, indeed, in the pitcher, but so near the bottom that she could not reach a single drop; then she tried to overturn the vessel, but she had not strength to move it. She looked round with a sorrowful air, thinking what she should do, when her eye by chance rested on a heap of stones that lay near. A sudden thought came into her head: she fetched the stones one by one in her bill, and cast them into the pitcher; thus by degrees she raised the water up to the brim, and was by this means able to carry home some water to her sick mother, who was so much revived by it that she soon grew well and strong.

When the rooks, and crows, and ravens heard what a good daughter Jet had been, and how clever she was, they built her a fine large nest, and made her queen over the whole rookery.

MADGE, THE OWL.



A pert young owl, who lived with her mother in the cleft of a rock, said one day, "Pray, mother, what is the reason that you stay in this dark hole all day, and only go out when the sun is down and all the birds and beasts are gone to rest?"

"Because, child," said the old owl, "our eyes are not strong enough to bear the light of the sun like those of other birds."

"I am sure my eyes are as large as the hawk's and kite's, and a great deal bigger than the jay's and jackdaw's, and they are on the wing all day long when the sun shines brightest. I mean to go out and enjoy myself, as they do."

"You are a foolish bird," replied the old owl gravely: "and will repent of your folly, if you expose yourself in the daylight."

"My mother only says this to make me stay at home and amuse her, because her sight has grown somewhat dim with age," said this undutiful daughter to herself, as she sat sulkily dressing her feathers in a corner of the nest.

That night she went abroad with her mother to hunt the fields and barns for mice and birds. They found but little prey; and Madge was very cross, for she saw no one all night but an old black raven who sat croaking on the top of a chimney.

"How much better I can sing than that hoarse old gentleman yonder!" said Madge to her mother: "if I were to go about like other birds, and be heard and seen a little, no one would listen to the robin or blackbird, my voice is so much finer than any of theirs."

"Indeed, Madge," said her mother, "our voices sound far better by night than by day; and if you were only to attempt to sing in the daytime, all the little birds, who now hold you in such reverence, would flock round you, and mock and torment you."

But Madge, who fancied she was a very fine singer, did not believe one word of what her wise mother said.

The sun rose bright and clear next morning; and the old owl hid her head in the long downy feathers of her breast, and shielded her eyes from the light which streamed into the hole through the chinks of the rock. Madge watched her mother till she thought she was fast asleep, and then she hopped to the entrance of the nest and peeped out. Her eyes were so dazzled by the glaring light of the sun that she could scarcely keep them open; but she saw the birds flying past, and heard them singing gaily among the green boughs, as they tended their nestlings or built their nests.

Then said Madge, "If I fly to the shade of those trees, I shall not be hurt by the light, and then I will teach those birds what good singing is." So away she flew; but she was ready to faint with the heat of the sun, and so blinded by his light, that she could scarcely see which way to direct her flight. At last she reached a bough, and sat down to rest on it; and when she was a little recovered, she began to try her voice: but owls only scream, and make a bad hand of singing.

It so chanced that a jackdaw and a magpie, who were chatting on the stump of an old willow close by, heard the noise she made.

"Jack," said the magpie, "yonder is an owl: hark! do you hear how she screams?"

"Ay, ay," said the Jackdaw: "we will teach her ladyship to venture out in the face of day, scaring honest folks with her hideous noise." Saying this, they both boldly flew close to Madge, and said, "Pray, Mrs. Owl, have some pity for your neighbours' ears, and cease that frightful clamour!"

Madge, who was so vain of her voice, drew herself up, and looking very fierce, said, "You are very bold birds, methinks, to venture so near me and make such rude remarks: do not you know I can punish you well for such conduct?"

"Indeed, Mrs. Madge," said the jackdaw, stepping close to her side, "we are somewhat afraid of you of an evening, but not at all in the daylight; and, let me tell you, you have no business out in the face of the sun."

Then they began to chatter and mock her: the owl hissed and screamed with rage; but the sun shone so bright, and Madge, never having been used to any light but the grey of the evening or moonlight, was half blinded, and so faint with the heat, that she was ready to die, and could not defend herself, nor yet punish the saucy jackdaw and magpie for their insolence.

The jackdaw and the magpie, when they found the owl had no power to hurt them, called together a flock of sparrows, and starlings, and tomtits, and chaffinches, and they all flew round Madge, and flapped their wings in her face, and pulled out her feathers, and drove her from place to place, till, tired and harassed by their uncivil treatment, and vexed to the heart, she was glad to seek shelter in the rock, and hide her head in the dark hole she had despised so much only the day before.

THE FAITHFUL DOG.



"Where are you going in such haste, friend?" said Trusty the shepherd's dog, to a great wolf that was jogging along the same road. "If I was sure you would not betray my secret," said the wolf, with a sly leer, "I would let you know."

"You need not fear me; I shall tell no one a word of the matter," said Trusty. "Well then," said the wolf, "you must know, as I was prowling round yonder cottage, I saw the peasant's wife put a fine baby into the cradle, and heard her say, 'Lie still, my darling, and go to sleep, while I run down to the village to buy bread for your father's supper.' As soon as the babe is asleep, I shall go and fetch it: it is fair and fat, and will make a nice supper for me and my cubs."

"Then," said Trusty, "I would advise you to wait a little longer, for I saw the baby's mother step into the next house to speak to a neighbour:—take care lest you are seen."

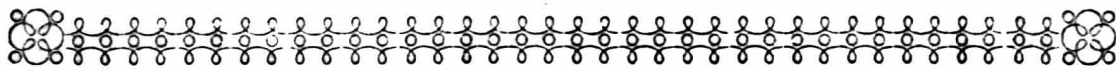
The wolf thanked the dog for his good advice, for he did not know that the baby belonged to Trusty's master; and he said he would take heed and keep close.

Then Trusty ran home with all the speed he could. The door was ajar, and the innocent baby was fast asleep in the cradle: so he lay down on the mat behind the door, and listened for the coming of the wolf. It was not long before he heard the tread of the wolf's feet on the gravel path, and in another minute the savage beast was in the room and stealing with cautious steps towards the cradle; but just as he was preparing to seize the poor baby, Trusty sprang upon him, and after a severe struggle, laid him dead on the floor.

The first object the mother saw on her return was the wolf bathed in blood at the foot of the cradle, while the infant, unhurt, lay soundly sleeping on its little pillow, and faithful Trusty watching its peaceful slumbers.

The grateful mother fondly caressed the preserver of her infant; and, calling together all her neighbours, made them bear witness to Trusty's courage and fidelity. From that time he became a favourite with the whole family; he had his share in all the meals, and a warm nook in the chimney corner, and passed a long and happy life.

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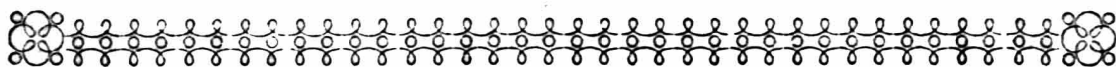
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[End of *Fables for the Nursery* by Catharine Parr Traill]