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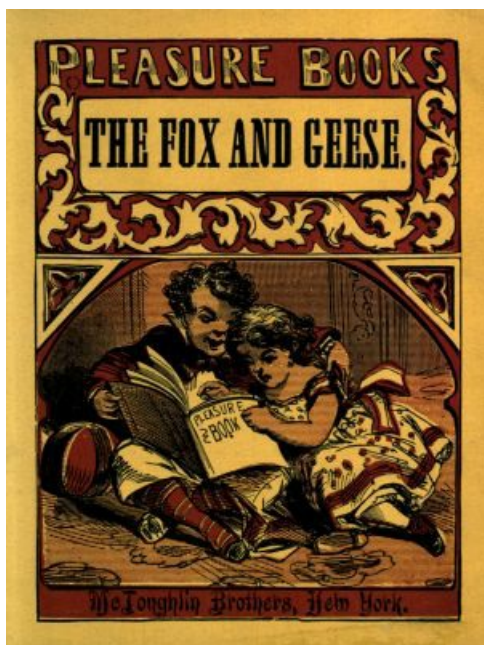
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THE
FOX AND THE GEESE.
— — — — —
AN ANCIENT NURSERY TALE.

There was once a Goose at the point of death,
So she called her three daughters near,
And desired them all, with her latest breath,
Her last dying words to hear:

"There's a Mr. Fox," said she, "that I know,
Who lives in a covert hard by,
To our race he has proved a deadly foe,
So beware of his treachery.

"Build houses, ere long, of stone or of bricks,
And get tiles for your roofs, I pray;
For I know, of old, Mr. Reynard's tricks,
And I fear he may come any day."

Thus saying, she died, and her daughters fair,—
Gobble, Goosey, and Ganderee,—
Agreed together, that they would beware
Of Mr. Fox, their enemy.

But Gobble, the youngest, I grieve to say,
Soon came to a very bad end,
Because she preferred her own silly way,
And would not to her mother attend.

For she made, with some boards, an open nest,
For a roof took the lid of a box;
Then quietly laid herself down to rest,
And thought she was safe from the Fox.

But Reynard, in taking an evening run,
Soon scented the Goose near the pond;
Thought he, "Now I'll have some supper and fun,
For of both I am really fond."

Then on to the box he sprang in a trice,
And roused Mrs. Gobble from bed;
She only had time to hiss once or twice
Ere he snapped off her lily-white head.



Her sisters at home felt anxious and low,
When poor Gobble did not appear,
And Goosey, determined her fate to know,
Went and sought all the field, far and near.

At last she descried poor Gobble's head,
And some feathers, not far apart,
So she told Ganderee she had found her dead,
And they both felt quite sad at heart.

Now Goosey was pretty, but liked her own way,
Like Gobble, and some other birds;
"'Tis no matter," said she, "if I only obey
A part of my mother's last words."

So her house she soon built of nice red brick,
But she only thatched it with straw;
And she thought that, however the fox might kick,
He could not get in e'en a paw.

So she went to sleep, and at dead of night,
She heard at the door a low scratch;
And presently Reynard, with all his might,
Attempted to jump on the thatch.



But he tumbled back, and against the wall
Grazed his nose in a fearful way,
Then, almost mad with the pain of his fall,
He barked, and ran slowly away.

So Goosey laughed, and felt quite o'erjoyed
To have thus escaped from all harm;
But had she known how the Fox was employed,
She would have felt dreadful alarm;

For Gobble had been his last dainty meat,—
So hungry he really did feel,—
And resolved in his mind to accomplish this feat,
And have the young Goose for a meal.

So he slyly lighted a bundle of straws,
And made no more noise than a mouse,
Then lifted himself up on his hind paws,
And quickly set fire to the house.

'Twas soon in a blaze, and Goosey awoke
With fright, almost ready to die,
And, nearly smothered with heat and with smoke
Up the chimney was forced to fly.



The Fox was rejoiced to witness her flight,
And, heedless of all her sad groans,
He chased her until he saw her alight,
Then eat her up, all but her bones.

Poor Ganderee's heart was ready to break
When the sad news reached her ear:
"Twas that villain, the Fox," said good Mr. Drake,
Who lived in a pond very near.

"Now listen to me, I pray you," he said,
"And roof your new house with some tiles,
Or you, like your sisters, will soon be dead,—
A prey to your enemy's wiles."

So she took the advice of her mother and friend,
And made her house very secure:
Then she said,—"Now, whatever may be my end,
The Fox cannot catch me, I'm sure."

He called at her door the very next day,
And loudly and long did he knock,
But she said to him,—"Leave my house, I pray,
For the door I will not unlock;"



"For you've killed my sisters I know full well,
And you wish that I too were dead;"
"Oh, dear," said the Fox, "I can't really tell
Who put such a thought in your head:

"For I've always liked geese more than other birds,
And you of your race I've loved best;"
But the Goose ne'er heeded his flattering words,
So hungry he went to his rest.

Next week she beheld him again appear,
"Let me in very quick," he cried,
"For the news I've to tell you'll be charmed to hear,
And 'tis rude to keep me outside."

But the Goose only opened one window-pane,
And popped out her pretty red bill,
Said she, "Your fair words are all in vain,
But talk to me here if you will."

"To-morrow," he cried, "there will be a fair,
All the birds and the beasts will go;
So allow me, I pray, to escort you there,
For you will be quite charmed, I know."

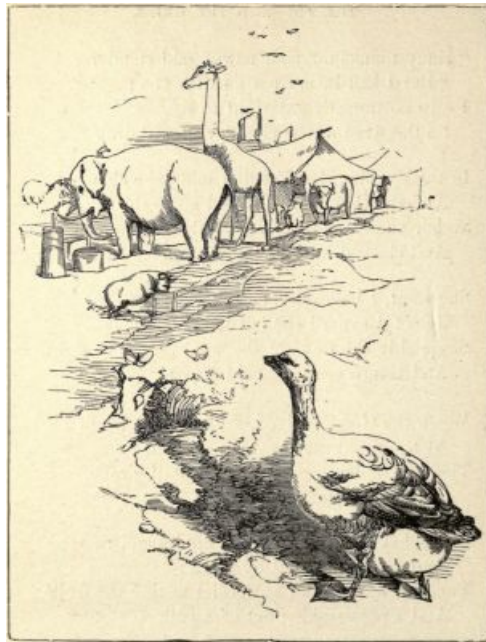
"Many thanks for your news," said Ganderee,
"But I had rather not go with you;
I care not for any gay sight to see,"—
So the window she closed, and withdrew.

In the morning, howe'er, her mind she changed,
And she thought she would go to the fair;
So her numerous feathers she nicely arranged,
And cleaned her red bill with much care.

She went, I believe, before it was light,
For of Reynard she felt much fear;
So quickly she thought she would see each sight,
And return ere he should appear.

When the Goose arrived, she began to laugh
At the wondrous creatures she saw;
There were dancing bears, and a tall giraffe,
And a beautiful red macaw.

A monkey was weighing out apples and roots;
An ostrich, too, sold by retail;
There were bees and butterflies tasting the fruits,
And a pig drinking out of a pail.



Ganderee went into an elephant's shop,
And quickly she bought a new churn;
For, as it grew late, she feared to stop,
As in safety she wished to return.

Ere, however, she got about half the way,
She saw approaching, her foe;
And now she hissed with fear and dismay,
For she knew not which way to go.

But at last of a capital plan she bethought,
Of a place where she safely might hide;
She got into the churn that she just had bought,
And then fastened the lid inside.

The churn was placed on the brow of a hill,
And with Ganderee's weight down it rolled,
Passing the Fox, who stood perfectly still,

Quite alarmed, though he was very bold.

For the Goose's wings flapped strangely about,
And the noise was fearful to hear;
And so bruised she felt she was glad to get out,
When she thought that the coast was clear.



So safely she reached her own home at noon,
And the Fox ne'er saw her that day;
But after the fair he came very soon,
And cried out in a terrible way,—

"Quick, quick, let me in! oh, for once be kind,
For the huntsman's horn I hear;
Oh, hide me in any snug place you can find,
For the hunters and hounds draw near."

So the Goose looked out in order to see
Whether Reynard was only in jest;
Then, knowing that he in her power would be,
She opened the door to her guest.

"I'll hide you," she said, "in my nice new churn."
"That will do very well," said he;
"And thank you for doing me this good turn,
Most friendly and kind Ganderee."

Then into the churn the Fox quickly got;
But, ere the Goose put on the top,
A kettle she brought of water quite hot,
And poured in every drop.

Then the Fox cried out, "Oh! I burn, I burn,

And I feel in a pitiful plight;"
 But the Goose held fast the lid of the churn.
 So Reynard he died that night.

MORAL.

Mankind have an enemy whom they well know,
 Who tempts them in every way;
 But they, too, at length shall o'ercome this foe,
 If wisdom's right law they obey.

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[The end of *The Fox and Geese* by Harrison Weir]