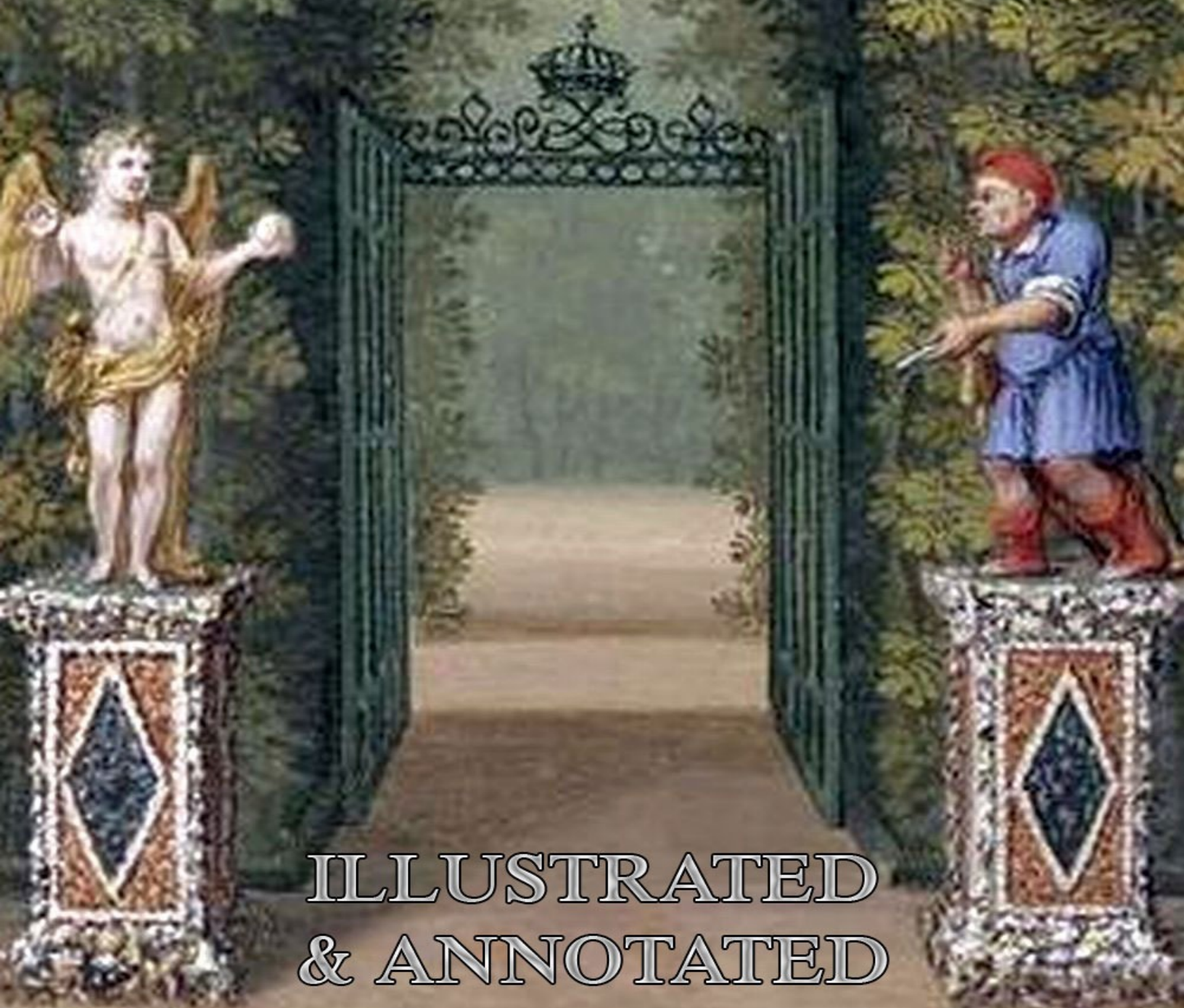


AESOP'S FABLES



ILLUSTRATED
& ANNOTATED

Æsop's Fables

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Aesop - A Primer

AESOP (Gr. "Αἴσωπος"), famous for his *Fables*, is supposed to have lived from about 620 to 560 B.C. The place of his birth is uncertain—Thrace, Phrygia, Aethiopia, Samos, Athens and Sardis all claiming the honour. We possess little trustworthy information concerning his life, except that he was the slave of Iadmon of Samos and met with a violent death at the hands of the inhabitants of Delphi. A pestilence that ensued being attributed to this crime, the Delphians declared their willingness to make compensation, which, in default of a nearer connexion, was claimed and received by Iadmon, the grandson of his old master. Herodotus, who is our authority for this (ii. 134), does not state the cause of his death; various reasons are assigned by later writers—his insulting sarcasms, the

embezzlement of money entrusted to him by Croesus for distribution at Delphi, the theft of a silver cup.

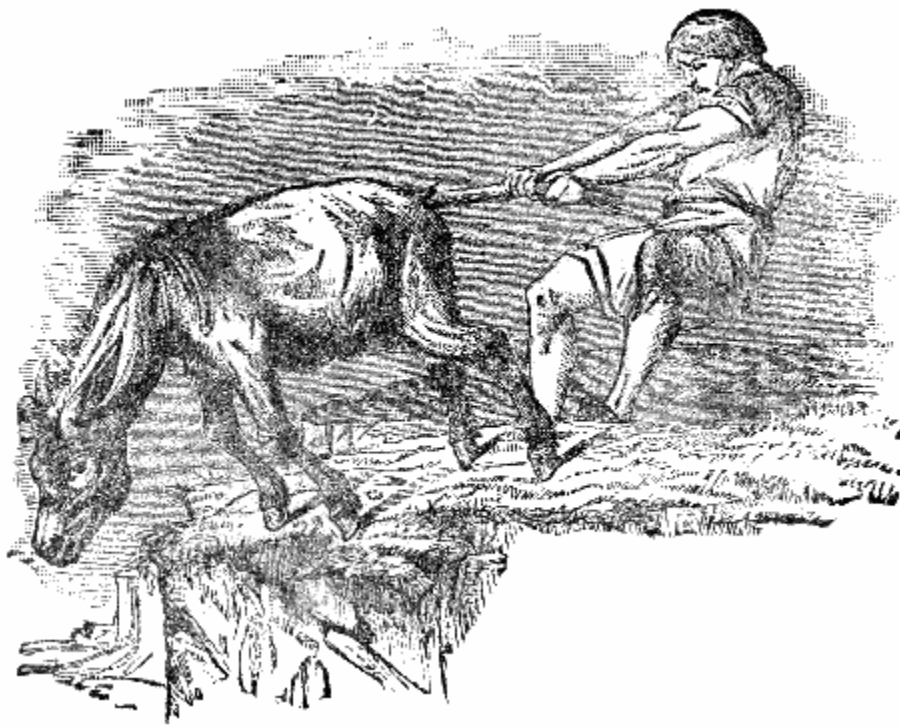
Aesop must have received his freedom from Iadmon, or he could not have conducted the public defence of a certain Samian demagogue (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ii. 20). According to the story, he subsequently lived at the court of Croesus, where he met Solon, and dined in the company of the Seven Sages of Greece with Periander at Corinth. During the reign of Peisistratus he is said to have visited Athens, on which occasion he related the fable of *The Frogs asking for a King*, to dissuade the citizens from attempting to exchange Peisistratus for another ruler. The popular stories current regarding him are derived from a life, or rather romance, prefixed to a book of fables, purporting to be his, collected by Maximus Planudes, a monk of the 14th century. In this he is described as a monster of ugliness and deformity, as he is also represented in a well-known marble figure in the Villa Albani at Rome. That this life, however, was in existence a century before Planudes, appears from a 13th-century MS. of it found at Florence. In Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Sages*, at which Aesop is a guest, there are many jests on his original servile condition, but nothing derogatory is said about his personal appearance. We are further told that the Athenians erected in his honour a noble statue by the famous sculptor Lysippus, which furnishes a strong argument against the fiction of his deformity. Lastly, the obscurity in which the history of Aesop is involved has induced some scholars to deny his existence altogether.

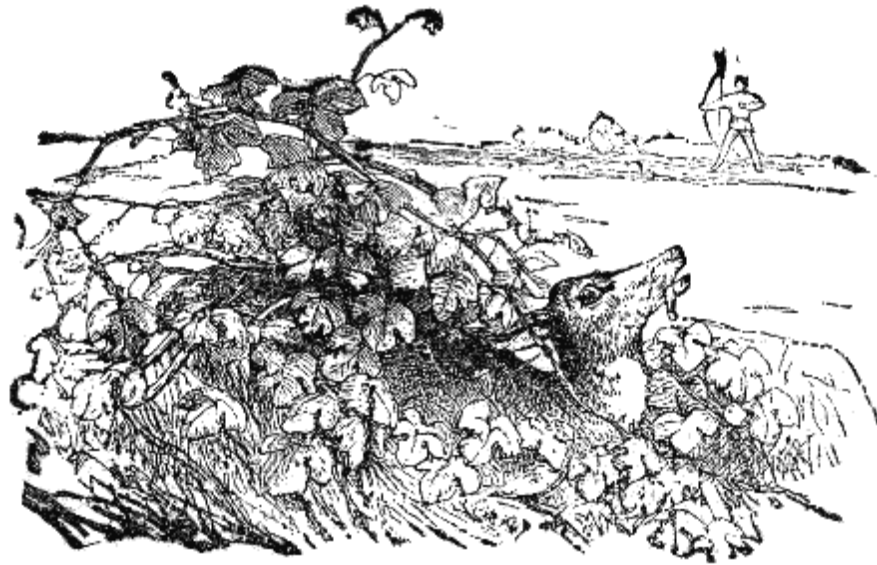
It is probable that Aesop did not commit his fables to writing; Aristophanes (*Wasps*, 1259) represents Philocleon as having learnt the "absurdities" of Aesop from conversation at banquets) and Socrates whiles away his time in prison by turning some of Aesop's fables "which he

knew" into verse (Plato, *Phaedo*, 61 b). Demetrius of Phalerum (345-283 B.C.) made a collection in ten books, probably in prose (Λόγων Αἰσωπειῶν συναγωγή) for the use of orators, which has been lost. Next appeared an edition in elegiac verse, often cited by Suidas, but the author's name is unknown. Babrius, according to Crusius, a Roman and tutor to the son of Alexander Severus, turned the fables into choliambics in the earlier part of the 3rd century A.D. The most celebrated of the Latin adapters is Phaedrus, a freedman of Augustus. Avianus (of uncertain date, perhaps the 4th century) translated 42 of the fables into Latin elegiacs. The collections which we possess under the name of *Aesop's Fables* are late renderings of Babrius's Version or Προγυμνάσματα, rhetorical exercises of varying age and merit. Syntipas translated Babrius into Syriac, and Andreopulos put the Syriac back again into Greek. Ignatius Diaconus, in the 9th century, made a version of 55 fables in choliambic tetrameters. Stories from Oriental sources were added, and from these collections Maximus Planudes made and edited the collection which has come down to us under the name of Aesop, and from which the popular fables of modern Europe have been derived.

For further information see Bentley, *Dissertation on the Fables of Aesop*; Du Meril, *Poésies inédites du moyen age* (1854); J. Jacobs, *The Fables of Aesop* (1889): i. The history of the Aesopic fable; ii. The Fables of Aesop, as first printed by William Caxton, 1484, from his French translation; Hervieux, *Les Fabulistes Latins* (1893-1899). Before any Greek text appeared, a Latin translation of 100 *Fabulae Aesopicae* by an Italian scholar named Ranuzio (Renutius) was published at Rome, 1476. About 1480 the collection of Planudes was brought out at Milan by Buono Accorso (Accursius), together with Ranuzio's translation. This edition, which contained 144 fables, was frequently reprinted and additions made from time to time from

various MSS.—the Heidelberg (Palatine), Florentine, Vatican and Augsburg—by Stephanus (1547), Nevelet (1610), Hudson (1718), Hauptmann (1741), Furia (1810), Coray (1810), Schneider (1812) and others. A critical edition of all the previously known fables, prepared by Carl von Halm from the collections of Furia, Coray and Schneider, was published in the Teubner series of Greek and Latin texts. *A Fabularum Aesopicarum sylloge* (233 in number) from a Paris MS., with critical notes by Sternbach, appeared in a Cracow University publication, *Rozprawy akademii umiejetnosci* (1894).





The Wolf Turned Shepherd.

A wolf, finding that the sheep were so afraid of him that he could not get near them, disguised himself in the dress of a shepherd, and thus attired approached the flock. As he

came near, he found the shepherd fast asleep. As the sheep did not run away, he resolved to imitate the voice of the shepherd. In trying to do so, he only howled, and awoke the shepherd. As he could not run away, he was soon killed.

Those who attempt to act in disguise are apt to overdo it.

The Stag at the Pool.



A stag saw his shadow reflected in the water, and greatly admired the size of his horns, but felt angry with himself for having such weak feet. While he was thus contemplating himself, a Lion appeared at the pool. The Stag betook himself to flight, and kept himself with ease at a safe distance from the Lion, until he entered a wood and became entangled with his horns. The Lion quickly came up with him and caught him. When too late he thus

reproached himself: "Woe is me! How have I deceived myself! These feet which would have saved me I despised, and I gloried in these antlers which have proved my destruction."

What is most truly valuable is often underrated.



The Fox and the Mask.

A fox entered the house of an actor, and, rummaging through all his properties, came upon a Mask, an admirable imitation of a human head. He placed his paws on it, and said: "What a beautiful head! yet it is of no value, as it entirely wants brains."



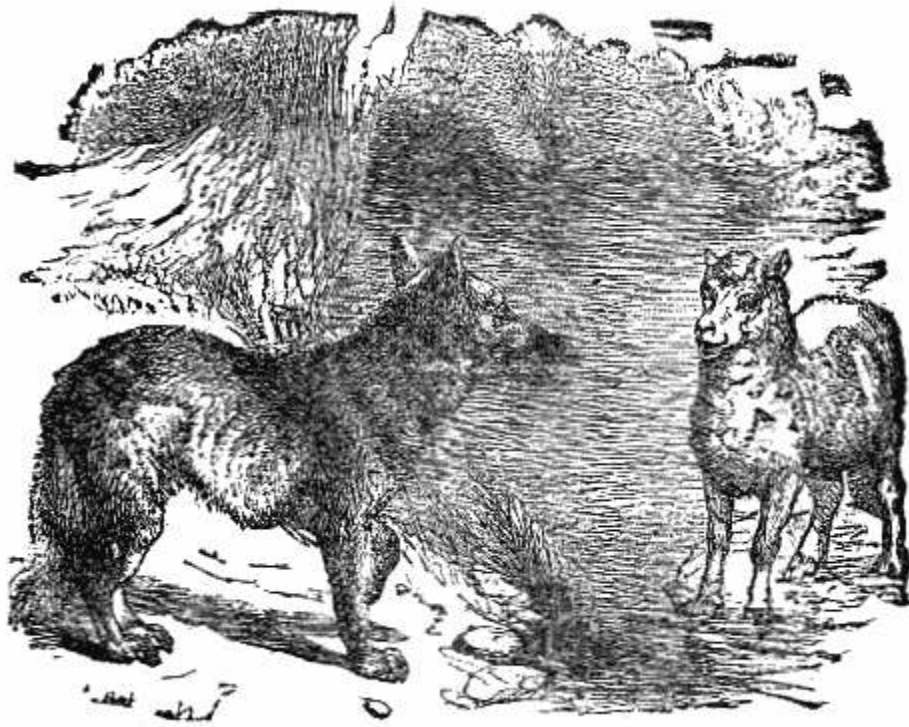
A fair face is of little use without sense.

The Bear and the Fox.

A bear boasted very much of his philanthropy, saying "that of all animals he was the most tender in his regard for man, for he had such respect for him, that he would not even touch his dead body." A Fox hearing these words said with a smile to the Bear: "Oh, that you would eat the dead and not the living!"

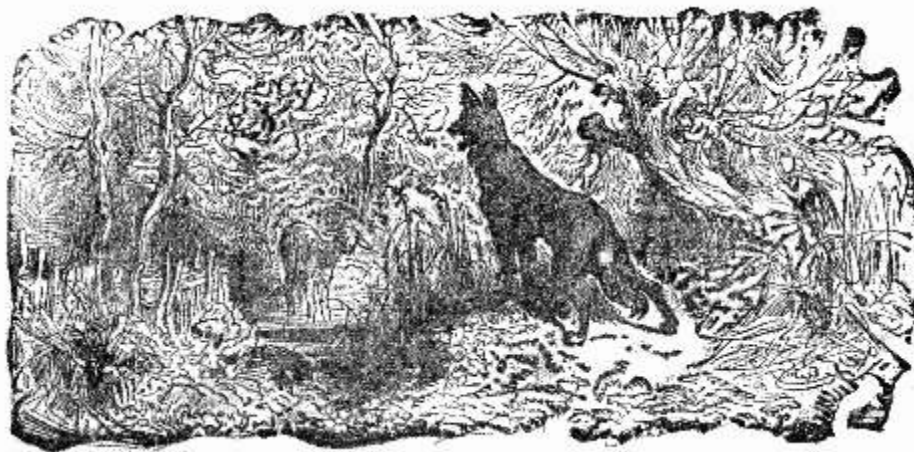
We should not wait till a person is dead, to give him our respect.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

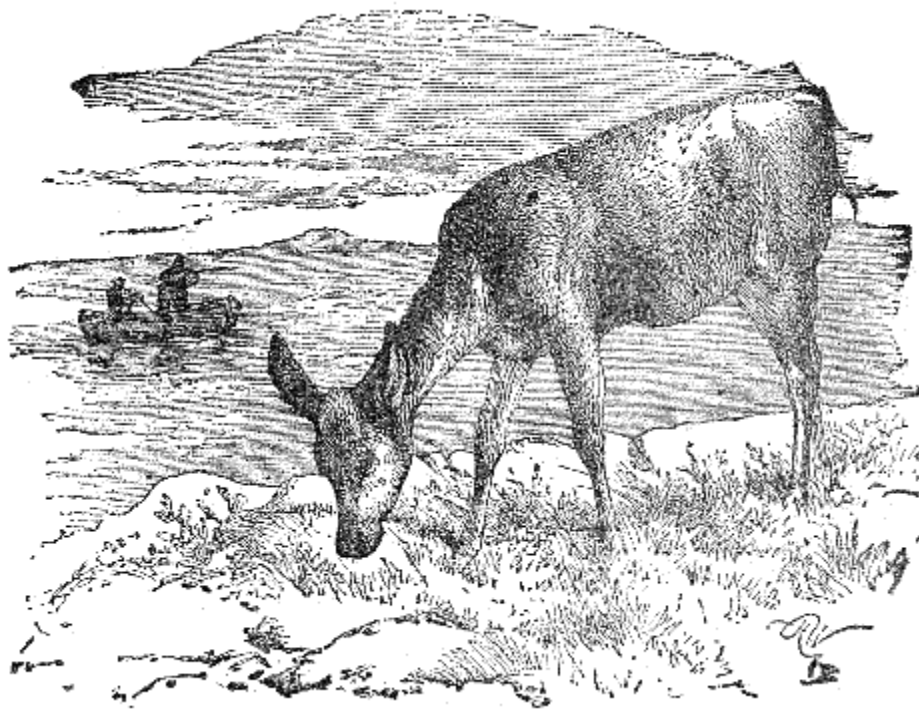


A Wolf, meeting with a Lamb astray from the fold, resolved not to lay violent hands on him, but to find some plea, which should justify to the Lamb himself his right to eat him. He then addressed him: "Sirrah, last year you grossly insulted me." "Indeed," bleated the Lamb in a mournful tone of voice, "I was not then born." Then said the Wolf: "You feed in my pasture." "No, good sir," replied the Lamb, "I have not yet tasted grass." Again said the Wolf: "You drink of my well." "No," exclaimed the Lamb, "I never yet drank water, for as yet my mother's milk is both food and drink to me." On which the Wolf seized him, and ate him up, saying: "Well! I won't remain supperless, even though you refute every one of my imputations."

The tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny, and it is useless for the innocent to try by reasoning to get justice, when the oppressor intends to be unjust.



The One-Eyed Doe.



A Doe, blind of an eye, was accustomed to graze as near to the edge of the sea as she possibly could, to secure greater safety. She turned her eye towards the land, that she might

perceive the approach of a hunter or hound, and her injured eye towards the sea, from which she entertained no anticipation of danger. Some boatmen, sailing by, saw her, and, taking a successful aim, mortally wounded her. Said she: "O wretched creature that I am! to take such precaution against the land, and, after all, to find this seashore, to which I had come for safety, so much more perilous."

Danger sometimes comes from a source that is least suspected.

The Dog, Cock and Fox.





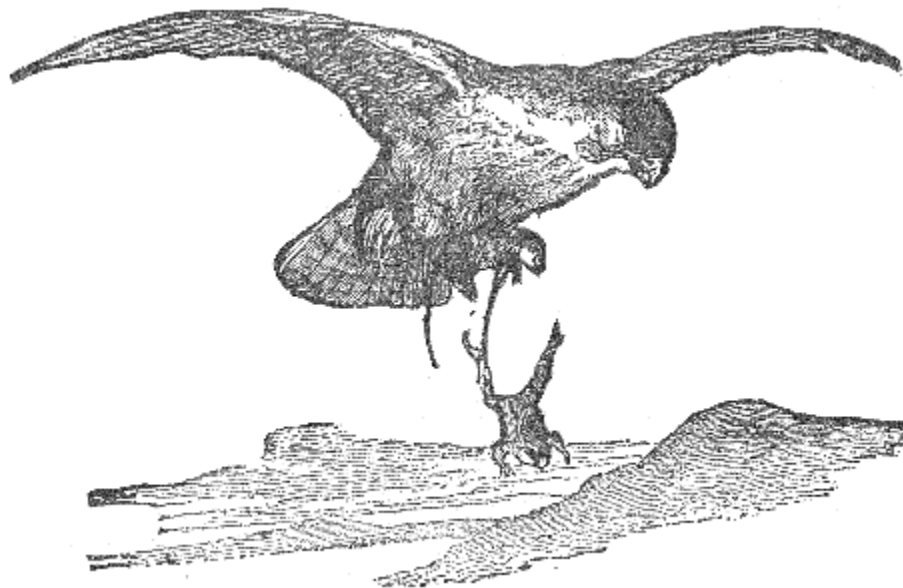
A Dog and a Cock, traveling together, took shelter at night in a thick wood. The Cock perched himself on a high branch, while the Dog found a bed at the foot of the tree. When morning dawned, the Cock, as usual, crowed very loudly. A Fox, hearing the sound, and wishing to make a breakfast on him, came and stood under the branches, saying how earnestly he desired to make the acquaintance of the owner of so sweet a voice.

"If you will admit me," said he, "I should very much like to spend the day with you."

The Cock said: "Sir, do me the favor to go round and wake up my porter, that he may open the door, and let you in." On the Fox approaching the tree, the Dog sprang out and caught him and quickly tore him in pieces.

Those who try to entrap others are often caught by their own schemes.

The Mouse, the Frog, and the Hawk.



A Mouse, by an unlucky chance, formed an intimate acquaintance with a Frog. The Frog one day, intent on mischief, bound the foot of the Mouse tightly to his own. Thus joined together, the Frog led his friend toward the pool in which he lived, until he reached the very brink, when suddenly jumping in, he dragged the Mouse in with him. The Frog enjoyed the water amazingly, and swam croaking about as if he had done a meritorious action. The unhappy Mouse was soon suffocated with the water, and