

FABLE #1

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A Wolf had been gorging on an animal he had killed, when suddenly a small bone in the meat stuck in his throat and he could not swallow it. He soon felt terrible pain in his throat, and ran up and down groaning and groaning and seeking for something to relieve the pain. He tried to induce every one he met to remove the bone. 'I would give anything,' said he, 'if you would take it out.' At last the Crane agreed to try, and told the Wolf to lie on his side and open his jaws as wide as he could. Then the Crane put its long neck down the Wolf's throat, and with its beak loosened the bone, till at last it got it out.

'Will you kindly give me the reward you promised?' said the Crane.

The Wolf grinned and showed his teeth and said: 'Be content. You have put your head inside a Wolf's mouth and taken it out again in safety; that ought to be reward enough for you.'

Gratitude and greed go not together.

FABLE #2

THE FOX AND THE CROW

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. ‘That’s for me, as I am a Fox,’ said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. ‘Good-day, Mistress Crow,’ he cried. ‘How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds.’ The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. ‘That will do,’ said he. ‘That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future .’Do not trust flatterers.’

FABLE #3

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

Once when a Lion was asleep a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him. 'Pardon, O King,' cried the little Mouse: 'forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?' The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his paw and let him go. Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a waggon to carry him on. Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts. 'Was I not right?' said the little Mouse.

Little friends may prove great friends.

Fable #4

THE DOG AND THE WOLF

A gaunt Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a House-dog who was passing by. 'Ah, Cousin,' said the Dog. 'I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?'

'I would have no objection,' said the Wolf, 'if I could only get a place.'

'I will easily arrange that for you,' said the Dog; 'come with me to my master and you shall share my work.'

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together. On the way there the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

'Oh, it is nothing,' said the Dog. 'That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it.'

'Is that all?' said the Wolf. 'Then good-bye to you, Master Dog.'

Better starve free than be a fat slave.

FABLE #5

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

One hot summer's day a Fox was strolling through an orchard till he came to a bunch of Grapes just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a lofty branch. 'Just the thing to quench my thirst,' quoth he. Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: 'I am sure they are sour.'

It is easy to despise what you cannot get.

FABLE #6

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

'Why not come and chat with me,' said the Grasshopper, 'instead of toiling and moiling in that way?'

'I am helping to lay up food for the winter,' said the Ant, 'and recommend you to do the same.'

'Why bother about winter?' said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present.' But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew:

It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.

FABLE #7

THE TREE AND THE REED

‘Well, little one,’ said a Tree to a Reed that was growing at its foot, ‘why do you not plant your feet deeply in the ground, and raise your head boldly in the air as I do?’

‘I am contented with my lot,’ said the Reed. ‘I may not be so grand, but I think I am safer.’

‘Safe!’ sneered the Tree. ‘Who shall pluck me up by the roots or bow my head to the ground?’ But it soon had to repent of its boasting, for a hurricane arose which tore it up from its roots, and cast it a useless log on the ground, while the little Reed, bending to the force of the wind, soon stood upright again when the storm had passed over.

Obscurity often brings safety.

FABLE #8

THE SHEPHERD'S BOY

There was once a young Shepherd Boy who tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out 'Wolf, Wolf,' and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out 'Wolf, Wolf,' still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help. So the Wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said:

'A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth.'

FABLE #9

THE MAN AND HIS TWO WIVES

In the old days, when men were allowed to have many wives, a middle-aged Man had one wife that was old and one that was young; each loved him very much, and desired to see him like herself. Now the Man's hair was turning grey, which the young Wife did not like, as it made him look too old for her husband. So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones. But the elder Wife saw her husband growing grey with great pleasure, for she did not like to be mistaken for his mother. So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could. The consequence was the Man soon found himself entirely bald.

Yield to all and you will soon have nothing to yield.

FABLE #10

THE WIND AND THE SUN

The Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger. Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and the Sun said: 'I see a way to decide our dispute. Whichever of us can cause that traveller to take off his cloak shall be regarded as the stronger. You begin.' So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and the Wind began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller. But the harder he blew the more closely did the traveller wrap his cloak round him, till at last the Wind had to give up in despair. Then the Sun came out and shone in all his glory upon the traveller, who soon found it too hot to walk with his cloak on.

Kindness effects more than severity.

FABLE #11

THE MISER AND HIS GOLD

Once upon a time there was a Miser who used to hide his gold at the foot of a tree in his garden; but every week he used to go and dig it up and gloat over his gains. A robber, who had noticed this, went and dug up the gold and decamped with it. When the Miser next came to gloat over his treasures, he found nothing but the empty hole. He tore his hair, and raised such an outcry that all the neighbours came around him, and he told them how he used to come and visit his gold. 'Did you ever take any of it out?' asked one of them.

'Nay,' said he, 'I only came to look at it.'

'Then come again and look at the hole,' said a neighbour; 'it will do you just as much good.'

Wealth unused might as well not exist.

FABLE #12

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. 'I have never yet been beaten,' said he, 'when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me.'

The Tortoise said quietly, 'I accept your challenge.'

'That is a good joke,' said the Hare; 'I could dance round you all the way.'

'Keep your boasting till you've beaten,' answered the Tortoise. 'Shall we race?'

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race. Then said the Tortoise:

'Plodding wins the race.'

FABLE #13

THE MILKMAID AND HER PAIL

Patty the Milkmaid was going to market carrying her milk in a Pail on her head. As she went along she began calculating what she would do with the money she would get for the milk. 'I'll buy some fowls from Farmer Brown,' said she, 'and they will lay eggs each morning, which I will sell to the parson's wife. With the money that I get from the sale of these eggs I'll buy myself a new dimity frock and a chip hat; and when I go to market, won't all the young men come up and speak to me! Polly Shaw will be that jealous; but I don't care. I shall just look at her and toss my head like this. As she spoke she tossed her head back, the Pail fell off it, and all the milk was spilt. So she had to go home and tell her mother what had occurred.

'Ah, my child,' said the mother,

'Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.'