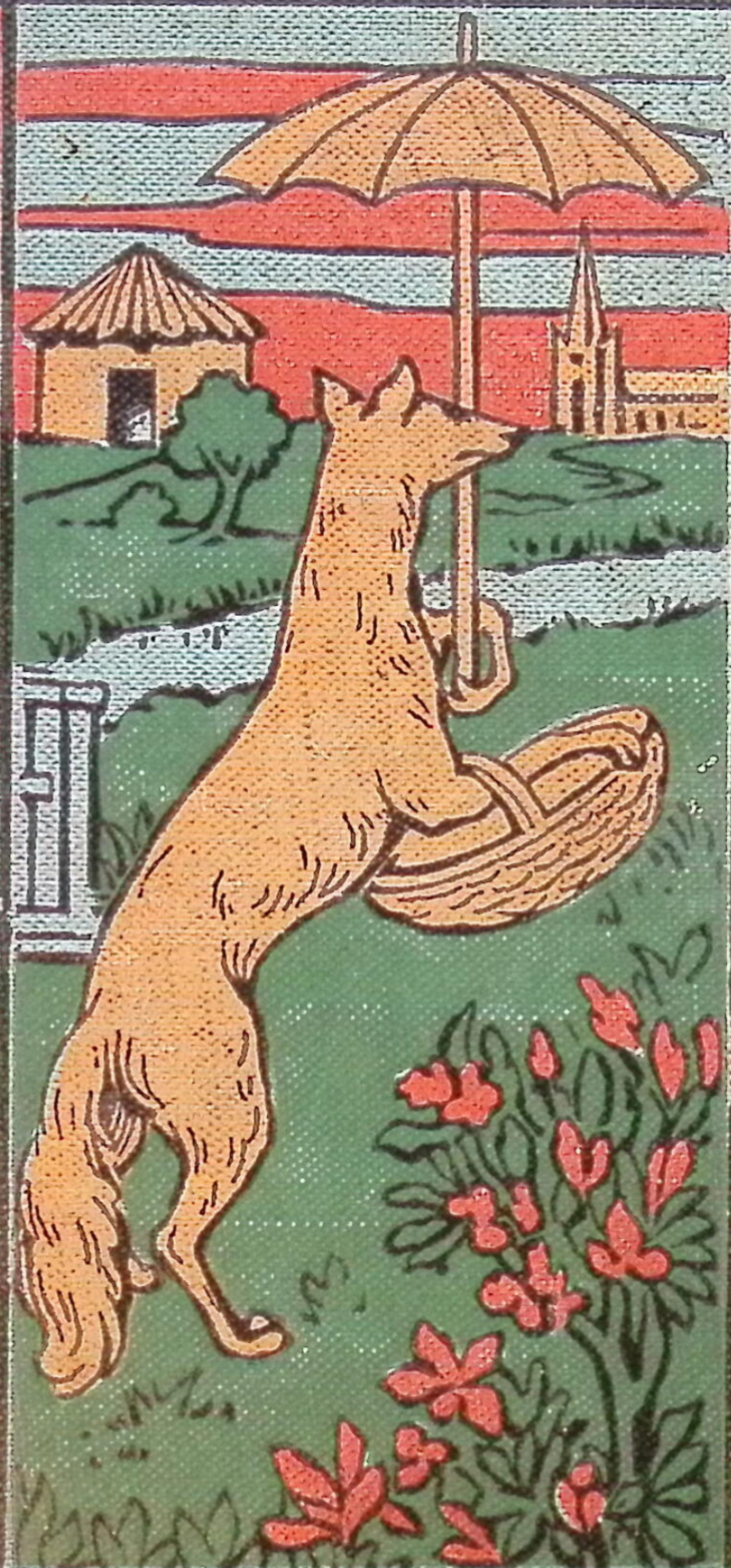


REYNARD  
THE FOX



IN WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE

Nan Bisner

Merry Kwas to James  
from Grandpa  
Ymas, Dec 25, 1911.

NAN BISNER

Nam Dix . N. Womers

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One day as the Fox lay flat on the ground he saw the Grew-  
bard, creep out of a hole and look to see if all was clear.—  
Page 31, *Reynard the Fox.*

THE RARE ROMANCE  
OF  
REYNARD THE FOX

THE CRAFTY COURTIER.

IN WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE.

By SAMUEL PHILLIPS DAY.

*ILLUSTRATED.*



A. L. BURT COMPANY,  
PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK.



THE RARE ROMANCE  
OF  
REYNARD THE FOX.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE LI-ON HELD A GREAT FEAST AT HIS COURT, AND HOW IS-GRIM THE WOLF AND HIS WIFE, CUR-TISE THE HOUND, AND CHAN-TI-CLEER THE COCK, TOLD THEIR TALES OF REY-NARD THE FOX, AND WHAT THE KING SAID.

AT the time of a high feast, held in the spring of the year, when hill and dell were gay and bright, and when birds sang sweet songs as they sprang from bough to bough, the Li-on, proud King of Beasts, made up his mind to hold great court at his seat of Sand-den. He had his will made known through all his realm, and none were to stay at home if they did not wish to risk the King's ire.

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Hence all beasts, both great and small, came in crowds to the King's leet. But Rey-nard the Fox gave no heed to the call. He had done such hurt and harm to not a few beasts that he felt not quite safe should he join the rest and face the King.

Now, when all the beasts met in grave court in view of the King, the Fox had but few friends. Each foe made a charge, so that this sly rogue grew more black in their thoughts. Of these, Is-grim the Wolf was the chief. He had a train of blood friends, who felt joy in his sight, and proud of his speech to the King, which was in this wise:—"My dread lord, most low in mien, I beg of you, great as you are and good, that you will deign to feel for the wrongs which that wretch the Fox hath done to me and our whole race. Know, if it please you, sire, that he slung to my house; and while my young ones were laid in their soft couch, so ill did he treat them, that they lost their sight. When the day came to hear the case, and the Fox was put to the proof, so sure was he of his guilt, that he ran and hid in his hole, in scorn of your Crown and laws. But this is not all. He hath done much more to grieve and gall me; more than time would let me tell, or you, sire, could hear. I am loth to curb my just ire; I wish him to change his course; and I hope that you will feel for me."

When Is-grim the Wolf had thus said what he felt, a small Hound, Cur-tise, told his tale to the King. He said that in a cold time of the year, when no food was to be had in the shape of prey, and with naught but a piece of cake to keep life in him, the Fox took it from him by stealth.

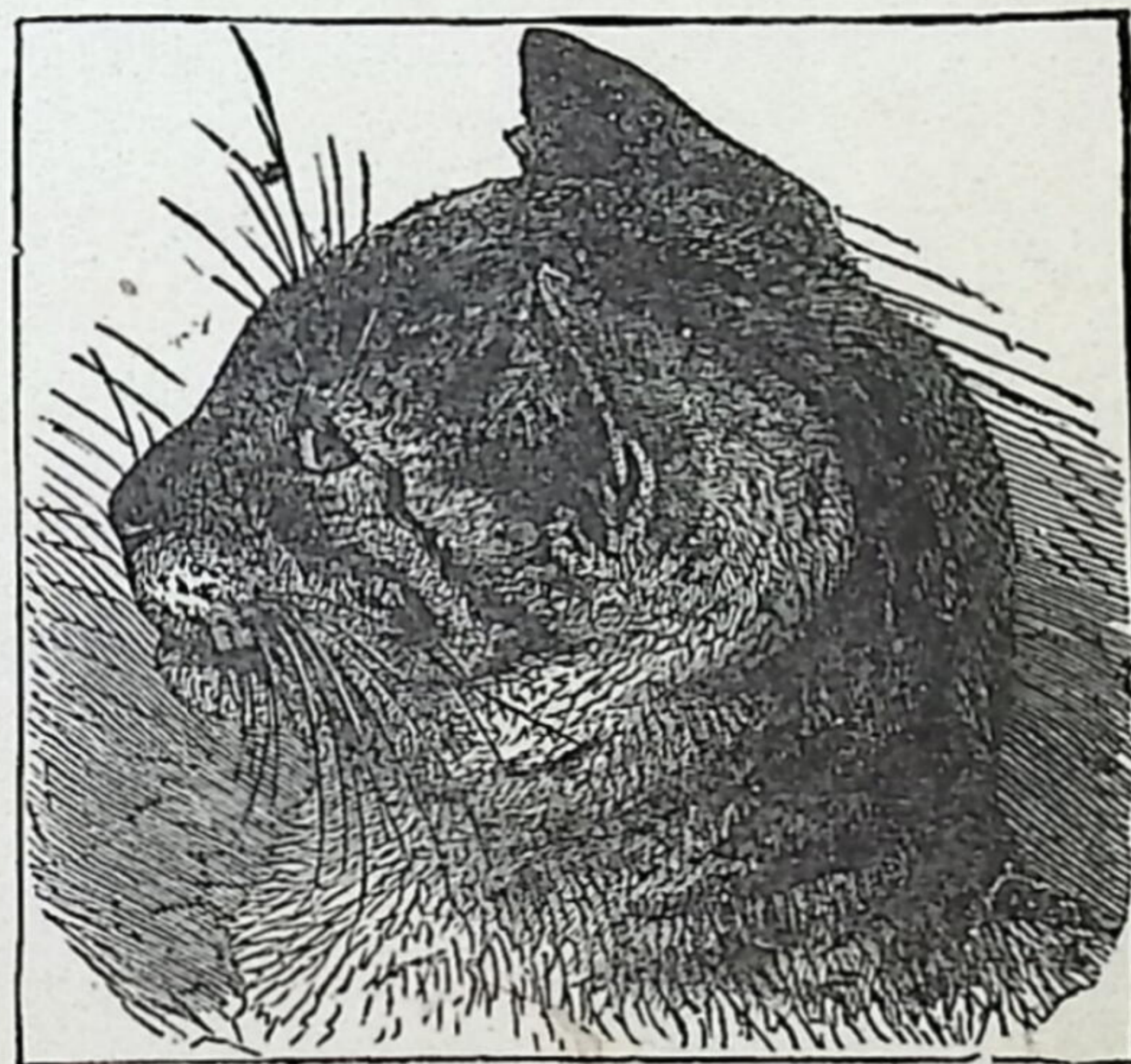
Ere these words were out of the Hound's mouth, in sprang Ti-bert the Cat. He fell down in view of the King,

and said: "My lord, I must own that the Fox is here made to seem worse than he is. As to what the Hound said, the theft was done some years since, and, though I do not mind it now, yet was the cake mine, and not his; for I got it one night from a mill, while the watch was in bed."



When the Lynx heard these words of the Cat, he said: "Do you think, Ti-bert, that the Fox should not have his crimes brought home to his door? Why,

the whole world knows he is a thief and sheds blood, and that he is void of love for aught that has life. I shall just tell you what I saw him do but a few hours since to Kay-ward the Hare, who now stands in the King's sight. He told the Hare he would teach him to sing a song; so he made him sit down, twist his legs, and shout out the words, 'I trust you! I trust you!' When I came more close to them I found the Fox had left his first note, and caught the Hare, with a firm grip, by the throat, and had I not been near, his death was sure. Oh, good King, if you fail to mete out pain for this crime, and let the Fox go free, each proud prince of your house shall have to bear the brunt of his vile deeds, which will bring a blur on your fair shield."



"Ay, Sir Lynx," said the Wolf, "you say true; it is but right that those who wish to live in peace should be dealt with in a right way."

Then spoke Grim-bard the Brock (who was near of kin to the Fox), warm with rage: "Wolf, you are vile. What can you lay to the charge of my friend? I tell you that were the Fox here in Court, and as much in the King's good will as you are, it would be your turn to sue for grace. You have oft torn him with your rank teeth—more oft than I can count; yet I can call to mind some of your acts.

"You well know how you did cheat him with the plaice which he flung down from the cart, when you shrank back through fear. With greed you ate the fine fish, and gave him but the bones. The like you did with the fat fitch: you ate it up; and when one of my clan did crave a share, he got it not, though he won the fitch with risk to his life, for he was caught in a trap, and to get free was put to his wits' end. These, and as grave wrongs, hath the Wolf done to the Fox, and I pray the Court to judge if such are to be borne.

"Then, the last charge was made by Cur-tise the Hound, who said that he, with great toil, had found some cake late in the year, when food was hard to get. I think he had best have held his tongue, as he has shown he stole it, for goods ill got do not thrive. Who can blame the Fox for such an act? He but took from a thief. Pshaw! How do these tales hurt him? My near and dear friend comes of good blood, and is a true Fox. Nor can I hear lies. Rey-nard likes to hurt none, for he eats but once a day, and lives like a monk. He has gone from his fort, and now dwells in a mean crib, far out of the way. He hath



THE ENGLISH GREYHOUND.

sworn not to hunt. He lives but by alms, and the gifts of good men."

Ere the Brock (one of the Fox's clan) had quite done his speech, they saw stout Chan-ti-cleer the Cock strut down the hill with a dead hen on a bier, who had lost her head by a freak of the Fox.

The Cock went first. As if in deep grief, he smote his feet with his wings. On each side of the bier were two hens, sad of mien. Each held a tall, bright wax light. Two young hens bore the bier, who gave such vent to their grief, that the hills gave forth the wild wail. When they came in the King's sight, the Cock knelt down, and spoke thus:

"Great King, deign to hear our words, and right the wrongs which the Fox hath done to me and to my chicks, who now stand here in tears. In the first spring month, I was in the height of my pride and glee, and the joy of a sire who could boast of a large stock, strong and fat. We did strut to and fro in a yard made safe by tall walls, where six stout dogs did guard us, so that we had no cause for fear. But that fiend the Fox did oft clear the walls, and sneak his way to the yard, when the dogs were let loose on him to drive him off. At length he came in the guise of a monk, and brought a note with the King's seal on it. By this I learned that you, sire, had peace made known, so that no more wrong should be done by beast or bird. 'Sir Chan-ti-cleer,' he said, 'do not fear me, for I have made a vow not to eat flesh more. I am now old, and think but of my end.' At this I was most glad, and did cluck my chicks to me, told them the good news, and went out of the yard with them. But the false Fox, who had hid by a bush, got in front of me and the gate, and



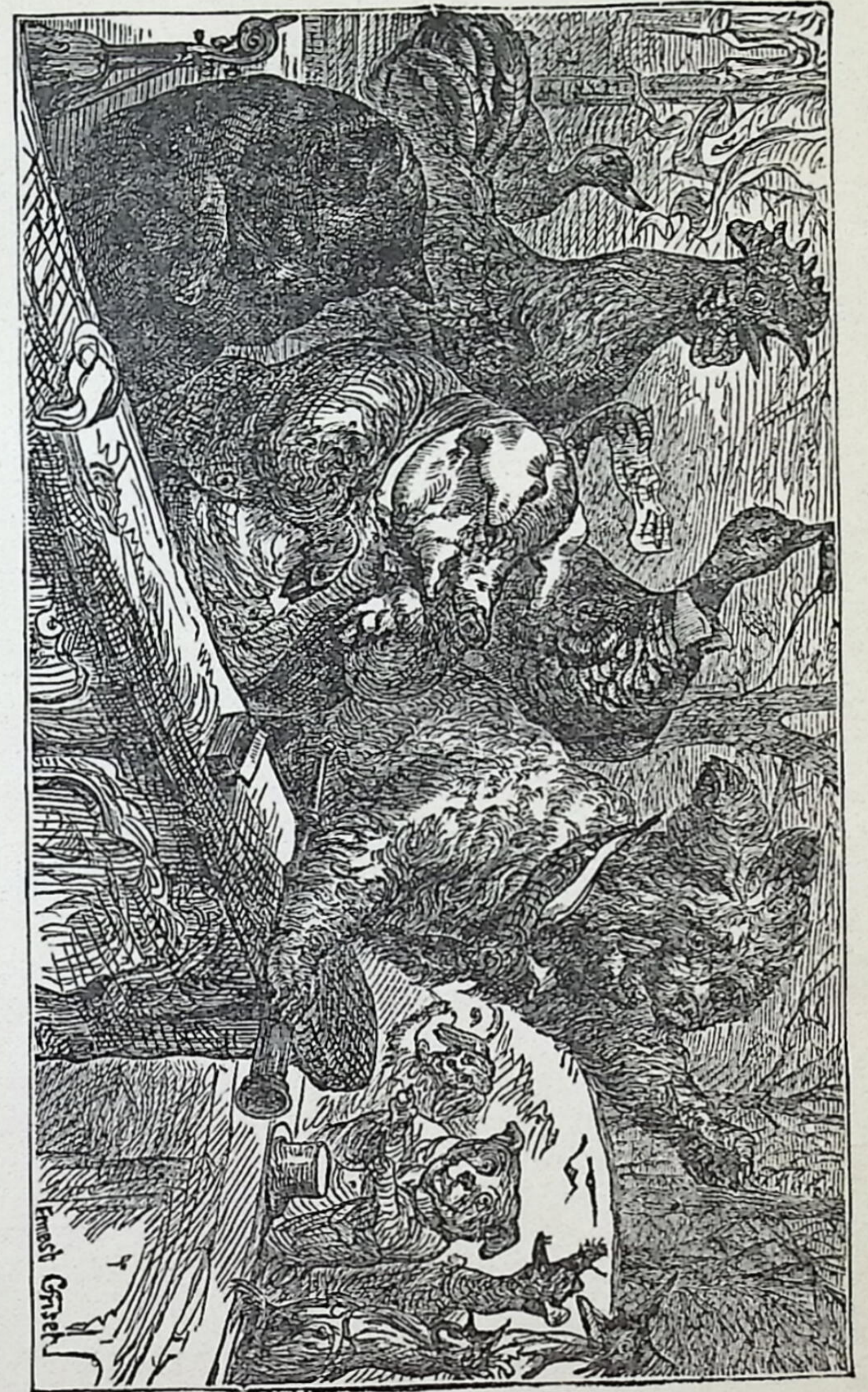
At length the Fox came in the guise of a monk, and brought a note with the King's seal on it.—Page 10. *Reynard the Fox.*



soon did pounce on one of my young ones, and ran off with it. Night and day he lies in wait to seize us. A few hours since she who lies here dead was torn from his claws by a pack of hounds. This, my lord, is my sad tale; and I crave of you, the source of might and right, to feel for me, and mete out just pain for the death of my fair chicks."

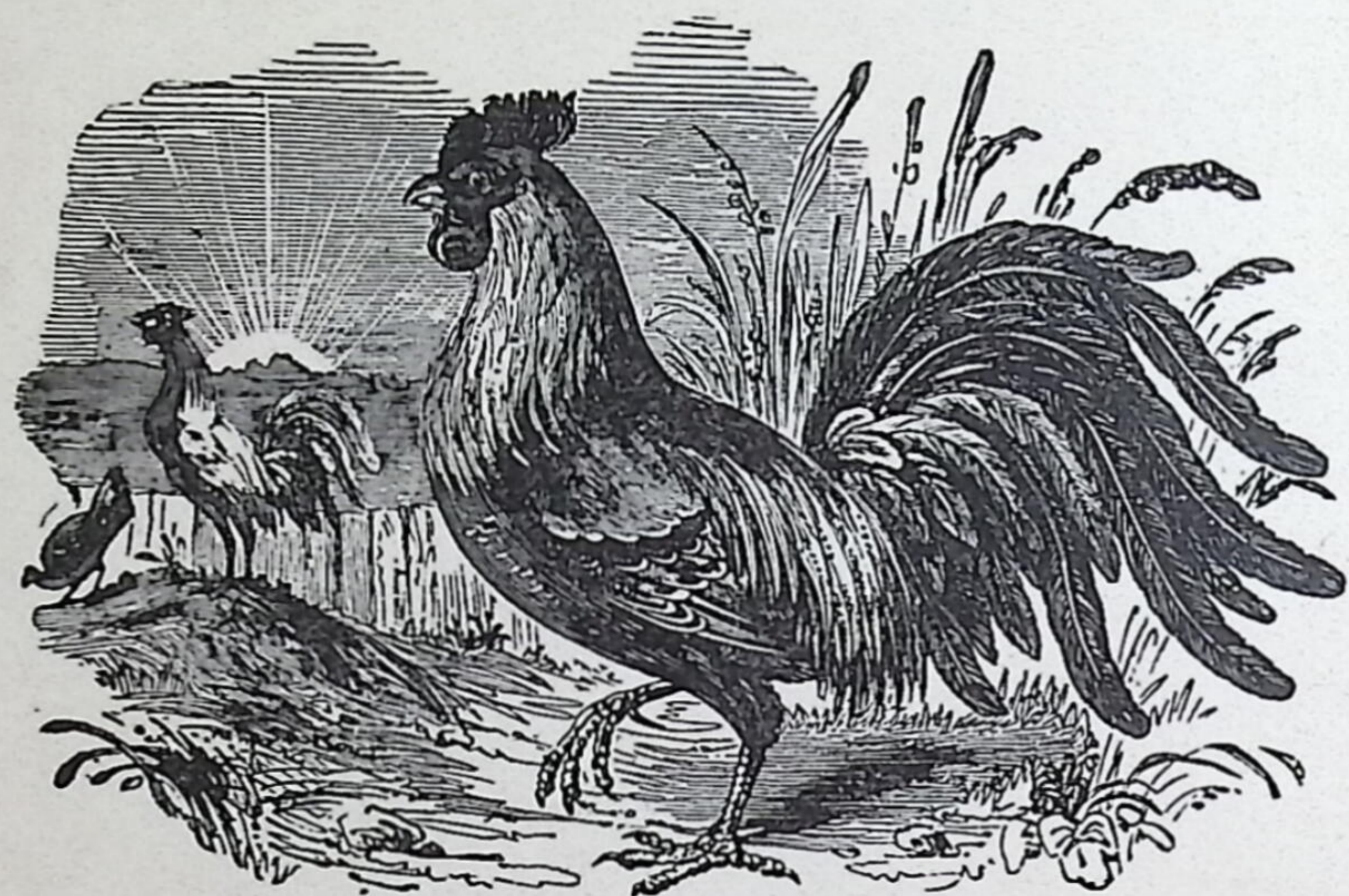
Then spoke the King: "Sir Grim-bard, hear you this of one of your kin who apes the monk? Now, heed what I say: if I live, he shall rue it. As for you, Chan-ti-clear, your tale is heard, and what is just shall be done."

Then they sang a dirge, laid the corpse in the grave,



and put on the top a stone slab, on which were cut these words: "Here lies Chan-ti-cleer's child, Cop-ple, whom Rey-nard the Fox hath slain. Mourn, ye who read this; for her death was most swift and sad."

So the King sent for his lords of State, to judge of the mode in which the vile Fox should be dealt with. They all took the same view of the case; and it was made known that the Fox should come forth to the Court, and that



Bru-in the Bear should serve him with the King's writ.

When the King had the Bear brought to him, "Sir Bru-in," said he, "it is our will that you take these words from us; yet have great heed. The Fox is full of craft, and if you use not your wits, he will mock you, though you be the most wise in the world."

"My liege," said the Bear, "let me but get sight of the Fox. I am not quite such a one as to be made his dupe, knave as he is."

Thus, full of joy, the Bear set out, and if he comes back in such high glee, we shall hear how he will brag.

## CHAPTER II.

### HOW BRU-IN THE BEAR SPED WITH REY-NARD THE FOX.

THE next day, as soon as the sun shone forth, Bru-in the Bear set out in quest of Rey-nard the Fox. As he went through a thick wood, he saw a high hill, which he must needs climb to get to the house. Now Rey-nard had not a few seats, but none were so fine as this.

When Bru-in got to this fort, he found the gates shut. Then did he knock hard and shout with a will: "Sir Rey-nard, are you at home? I am Bru-in, one of your own kin, whom the King hath sent to call you to the Court to say aught that can be said to the foul tales told of you. The King hath made a vow that, should you fail to heed his will, you will lose your goods and good name to boot. I pray, my fair friend, that you will this once be led by me, and go with me to the Court."

Rey-nard, as he heard these words, went and hid in one of his holes, for, be it known, the place is full of dark rooms through which he could pass, in case of need. There he thought how he might hit on a plot that would shame the bear, while it would add to his own fame. At length he came forth and said: "Dear Bru-in, one of my own kin, I do so much like to see you. He that hath sent you this long and lone way hath done you no good. Your toil and risk are far more than the gain. Had you not come, I should of my own free will have soon been at the Court.

But, my dear friend, could not the King have found one less high in rank for this slight work? I wish for your sake we were both now at the Court, for I fear I shall prove a sore grief to you; since I have not had flesh, the new meats I felt loth to take have put me quite out of sorts."

"My dear friend," said the bear, "what meat is this, pray, which makes you so ill?"

"In truth," quoth the Fox, "it was mean food, at the best; we poor folk are not lords, as you well know; we eat not from choice. It was bees' comb, large and full, and so good, that sheer want made me gulp it with greed."

"Ah!" said Bru-in, "bees' comb! And do you speak in so light a way of this? Why, it is meat fit for the best king in the world. Fair Rey-nard, help me but to a share, and your slave will I be from this time forth."

"Sure, my dear friend," quoth the Fox, "you do but jest."

"Jest!" said the Bear, "ill fare my heart, then, for I pledge my troth, that for one lick of it you shall make me more in love with you than all your clan."

"Nay," said the Fox, "if what you say be true, I will bring you where so much is to be had, that ten of you shall have more than your fill."

"Not ten of us," said the Bear, "that is not the case; for had I all such rare food to be found from Greece to Spain, I could in a short time eat it up."

"Well, then, my dear friend," said the Fox, "there dwells hard by a man whose name is Lan-fert. He owns so much comb that you could not get through it in eight years; and the whole of this shall be yours."

Bru-in, mad for the prize, made a vow that he would be Rey-nard's firm friend, and would stop the mouths of all his foes. A smile sat on the face of the Fox as he said, "If you want eight tons, my friend, you shall have it."

The bear gave him meet thanks, and so off they went.



At last they got to Lan-fert's house, the mere sight of which made the Bear's heart jump for joy.

Now Lan-fert had brought to his yard a large oak, which he cleft in twain, and then drove in a wedge so as to leave a wide gap. At this the Fox was glad, and, with a smile on his face, said to the Bear: "See now, dear friend, this

stanch tree; there is much sweet food hid in it. Try if you can reach to where it lies. But take care how you get to it, and do not eat too much; for, though the comb be rich and good, yet too large a meal may hurt you, which I would not for the world."

"Take no thought for me, my friend Rey-nard," quoth the Bear; "do not think I am such a fool as to let my wants tempt me to glut my maw. I can set bounds to my greed."

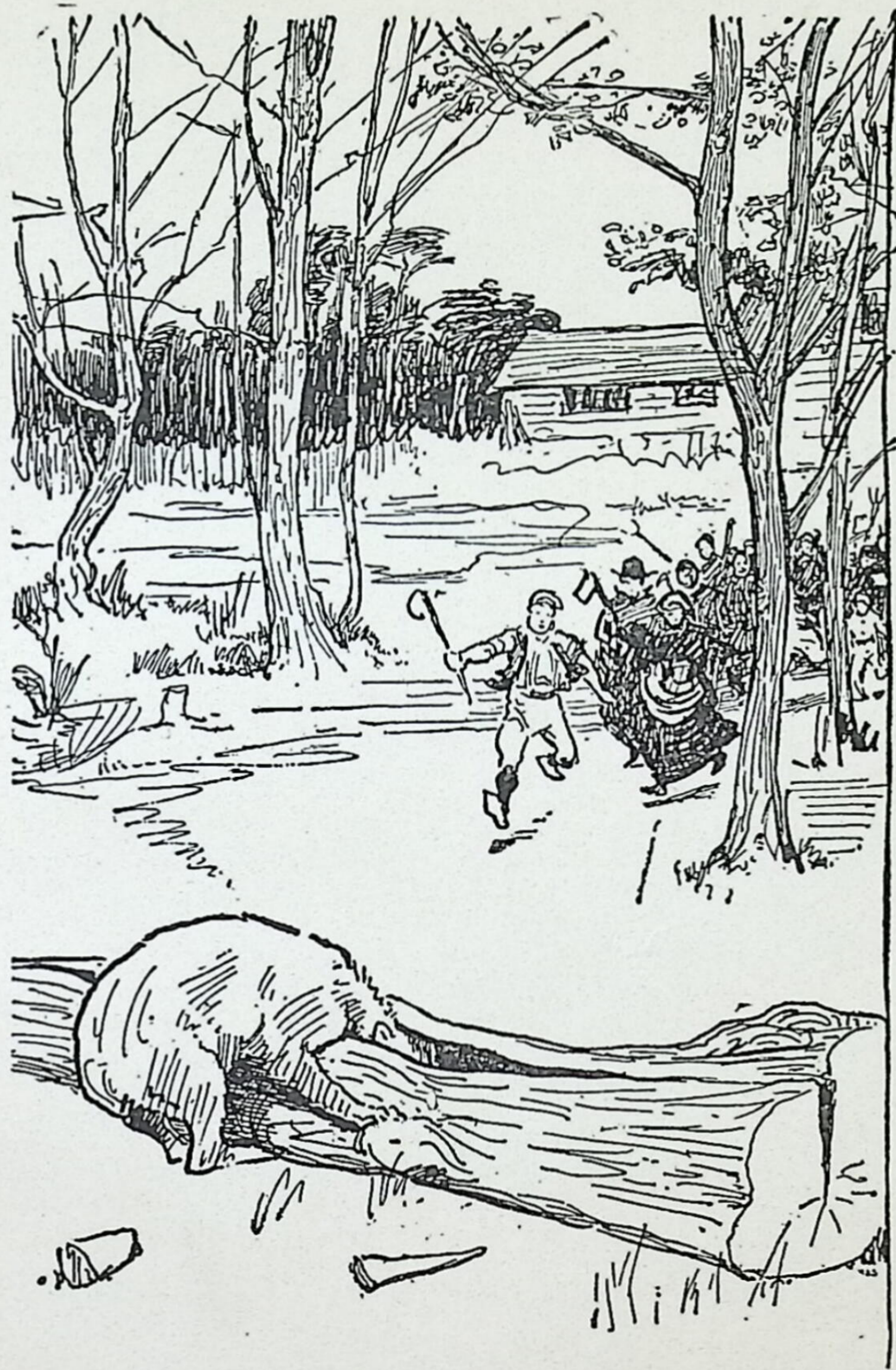
"It is true, my good friend; I was too bold. I pray you get in, and you shall at once find what you seek."

The Bear with all haste thrust his head in the cleft right up to his neck. When the Fox saw the scrape Bru-in was in, he drew each wedge out of the tree, so that the Bear could not stir an inch. Poor Bru-in then tore with his claws, and made such a fierce noise, that Lan-fert came out of his house. The Fox, who was not far off, saw the man, and said in jest to the Bear, "Is the comb good, my friend? I pray you do not eat too much. It may cause you to be late for the Court, should you err in this way."

As soon as Lan-fert found the Bear fast in the tree, he ran to his friends, who came with him to his yard. When the fact got known, all the folk of the town came in haste to the spot. So large a host put Bru-in in sore fright; so that he did pull and drag with might and main, till he got his head clear out, glad to get free with the loss of his ears and skin. In sooth, a beast so torn and foul could not be found.

While in this strait, Lan-fert and his friends laid on him with hard thumps. One and all fell on the poor beast.

The poor bear could but sit and groan as he felt their blows, of which Lan-fert's were the worst, till, as he woke



When the Fox saw the scrape Bruin was in, he drew each wedge out of the tree, so that the Bear could not stir an inch.—  
Page 16. *Reynard the Fox.*

from his swoon, he gave a quick jump, which brought him in the midst of a deep stream close by. The Bear swam off as fast as he could, full of joy that he had got free with his life; yet did he curse, with warmth of heart and strength of words, the comb which did tempt, and the Fox who did lure him with his glib tongue.

He swam some three miles down the stream, and grew so faint, that he went on the bank to rest.

In the mean time, the Fox, in his route home, stole a fat hen, and slunk through a duct not known, and so he came down to the stream. He felt quite gay, as he thought that the Bear was slain; which made him muse thus: "My fate is as I could wish; for the worst foe I had in Court is dead, and all men will think that my hands are free from blood." But as he spoke these words he spied Bru-in the Bear at rest on the bank. This sight struck his heart with grief, so he did rail at Lan-fert till he came to where the Bear lay, then he said in a mock tone of voice:

"I hope I see you well?"

"Oh, thou foul red wretch!" quoth the Bear, "what a face of brass is thine!"

But the Fox went on with his speech, and said—

"Dear friend—a sept of my own—I trust you will call to mind all the things that took place at Lan-fert's, and that you paid for the comb; if you did not, it will look bad, and blast your fame. The comb was sweet, in troth, and I know of a great deal more at the same price. But, dear friend, what a strange sort of coif you wear on your head. Why, when you did shave your crown you gave your ears a crop, too! and you have no gloves! Fie, my friend! you should not go out with bare hands; it does not suit one of your rank."

These taunts made Bru-in mad with rage.

As soon as he could move, the Bear once more sought the stream and swam to the far side, where he thought how best he could get to the Court. He could not walk, but he must needs go; so at last he lay down on his side and did roll on the road. By this means he found his way to the Court. As he came in view, the lords were struck with the strange sight, and when the King knew him he grew wild with rage.

"It is," quoth he, "Sir Bru-in, whom I sent forth from this Court. What vile foes have put you in this plight?"

"Oh, my dread liege," said Bruin, "see how I am at death's door; I pray you, blame the Fox for this; for shame and grief have come to me through him."

"Then," quoth the King, "by my Crown, I swear I will sate my ire, and make that base imp quake."

At once the King sent for his best lords of State to learn in what way they should act. It was then thought that once more Rey-nard should be sent for to put in a plea, and that this time Ti-bert the Cat should make known the Court's will. At this the King was right glad at heart.

### CHAPTER III.

#### HOW THE KING SENT TI-BERT THE CAT FOR REY-NARD THE FOX.

THEN the King sent for Sir Ti-bert the Cat, to whom he thus spoke: "Sir Ti-bert, you shall go to Rey-nard, and urge him once more to haste and let the Court hear what



"Health to thee, my dear friend Rey-nard," said Ti-bert the Cat; "the King, by me, calls you hence to Court; and it you fail, a quick death must be yours."—Page 19. *Reynard the Fox.*

he has got to say. Let him know that if he fail in this I will treat him and his kin in such a way that, for all time to come, they who would scorn my will, and do such deeds as are laid to his charge, will fear to take the risk."

Then said Ti-bert the Cat: "I pray you, my liege lord, send some one of more weight. If Sir Bru-in could not bring him, how can I hope to do so?"

To which the King said: "It is for that you are wise, and not for your strength, Sir Ti-bert, that I thus make use of you. Art and skill may hit a mark, while rude strength would strive in vain to reach it."

"Well," said the Cat, "since it is your will, sire, it must de done."

So Ti-bert made haste and set out for the house of the Fox. While on his way he saw a crow in full flight near to him, to whom he spoke: "Hail, grave bird; turn thy wings and fly on my right hand." But the bird took the wrong course, and flew on the left side. Though he well knew that the sign meant no good, still did he hope for the best, and went on to the house, where he found the Fox in front of the gates which led to the fort.

"Health to thee, my dear friend Rey-nard," said Ti-bert; "the King, by me, calls you hence to Court; and if you fail, a quick death must, of a truth, be yours."

Then said the Fox: "Right glad am I to see you here, dear Ti-bert, who art one of my own kin; may the King have long life, and days of bliss void of pain! Let me beg of you to rest with me this night, and in the morn we will both set out for the Court."

Quoth Ti-bert, "You speak like a brave knight, as thou art; but I think it best to set out now, for the moon shines as bright as day."

"Nay, dear guest," said the Fox, "let us take day for our route; the night is full of risk."

"Well," said the Cat, "if such be your will, let it be so: what shall we eat?"

Rey-nard said, "Of a truth my store is small; the best I have is some bees' comb; what think you of it?"

Quoth Ti-bert, "It is meat not much to my mind, which I eat but at rare times. One mouse would be more to me than all the comb the globe could yield."

"A mouse!" said Rey-nard: "Why, my dear friend, there dwells a man hard by who hath a barn near his grange so full of mice that I think half the wains in the town would not hold them."

"Oh, good Rey-nard," quoth the Cat, "do but lead me there, and make me your slave from this time forth. A mouse is more to me than game, or the best dish laid for kings. Do lead the way, and tell me how I can serve you"

Then said Rey-nard, "Sure you do but jest?"

"No, by my life," said the Cat.

"Well, then," quoth the Fox, "if what you say be true, I will give you as much as you can eat."

"Come with me, then, and I will lead you at once to the spot."

Thus off they went to the barn, where but a night since the Fox had made off with a fat hen. This theft put the man who kept the barn in a rage, so that he had set a snare in front of the hole to catch the Fox when next he came. This the Fox well knew, and hence he said to the Cat, "Sir Ti-bert, creep in at this hole, and it shall not be long ere you clutch more mice than you can eat. I will wait for you at this hole, and at break of day both of us will go to the Court."

Then said the Cat, "Will it be safe for me to go in at this hole?"

"Why, my dear friend," said the Fox, "I have not seen you show fear till now. You start at your own thoughts."

At this taunt the Cat felt shame, when he sprang in at the hole, but was at once caught by the neck. He tried in vain to get free, and he could not well gain breath, which made him whine and shriek for help. Rey-nard stood in front of the hole, and thus did mock his poor dupe: "My own dear Ti-bert, do you love mice? I hope, for your sake, they will be well fed. I think you sing at your meat. Is that what they do at Court? If it be so, I would Is-grim the Wolf were close to you, that all my friends may feast at the same time."

All this while the poor Cat did mew in so shrill and loud a tone, as to wake the man of the house, who made all those in the grange jump out of bed by his cries of "The Fox is caught! the Fox is caught!" All his kin were soon at the spot, so that the Cat got smart blows. Sir Ti-bert thought his death was nigh, so at a bound he sprang on the man, and struck his teeth and claws deep in his foe, which made him roar for aid.

All this time Rey-nard stood not far from the hole, and saw and heard all that went on. But the poor man fell down in a swoon, so that each one left the Cat to give him aid.

The Fox now slunk off, and went home, as he thought the Cat was past all hope. But Ti-bert, when he saw his fierce foes had left him, sprang out of the hole, when he went on to the King's Court.

Ere he got to the Court the sun had sunk, and the hour was late. He came in so sad a plight, his bones were



out of place, one of his eyes were gone, and his skin was torn.

When the King saw Ti-bert in such a state, he got in a great rage, and once more spoke with the lords of his Court.

While the Court sat, Grim-bard the Brock, Rey-nard's near of kin, spoke thus: "My good lords, though my friend were twice as bad as these complaints make him, there is a cure for such ills: it is fit you do what is just to a beast of rank; he must have a call three times, and then, if he spurn it, let his peers rule that what has been laid to his charge is true."

Then the King did ask of the Brock, "Whom he thought would be so bold as to risk his life with one so vile as the Fox?"

"My liege," said Grim-bard, "if it please you, I am that bold and brave man who dare let my sly friend the Fox know the King's will, if you will but tell me that such is your wish!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

HOW GRIM-BARD THE BROCK WAS SENT TO CALL THE FOX TO COURT; HOW THE FOX CAME TO THE COURT, AND HOW HE WAS TO DIE.

THEN said the King, "Go, Grim-bard, for such is my will; yet take heed of Rey-nard, for he is sharp and sly."

When the Brock gave the King due thanks, he took his leave, and went straight to the house of the Fox. He first did greet his aunt and her spouse, and then said: "Take heed, fair friend, that you cause not the crimes laid to your charge to do you more wrong by the way you act;

it is high time that you go to Court, as your own good sense must tell you that if you act in the like way once more, there is left to you and yours not a ray of hope, for your fort will be blown down, your kin made slaves, and you will meet with a dread death. I pray you, then, my dear, good friend, to act in a wise way, and go with me to the Court." Rey-nard felt the force of these words, and said: "My best friend, you speak the truth. I will go with you.



If I but speak with the King I feel sure he

will not hurt me, though my crimes were ten times more than they are. That I have a host of foes there is no doubt; yet it grieves me not, for I shall prove that I am free from taint, and so balk their plot to crush me. In high points of State craft, Rey-nard is more than a match for those who wish him ill. Now, I dread not the worst their weak minds can hatch, though a host of foes may do one harm. Still, my friend, I will go with you to the Court, and not risk that my wife and young ones should come to grief. The King is great, and though he do me wrong, yet will I bear it like a saint."

Then said Rey-nard to his wife: "Take care of our young ones, most of all of my dear boy, Rey-ni-kin, for he hath much of my love, and will, I trust, walk in my steps. Take you great care of them; and if I come back safe and sound, and a free man, doubt not but that I shall bear in mind what you have done."

When Rey-nard and Grim-bard had gone a good way from the fort, Rey-nard came to a dead halt, and thus spoke to his guide: "Dear friend, blame me not if my heart be full of care, for I feel as if my life were not safe. I have done much wrong to all beasts; more still to Bru-in, who comes of the same stock. I have done grave harm to Chan-ti-clear and his large brood, on some of whom I did feast well; nay, the King and Queen, through my glib tongue, have been hurt, for I have told lies of them. But this is not all. Is-grim, the Wolf, I got caught in a snare. I have made him tie his foot to the rope of a bell to teach him to ring, as it were; but the peal had well nigh cost him his life, so ill did the mob treat him. Next I ran to where a squire was at lunch, who had a plump fowl on his plate. This I took hold of and made off with as fast as

my legs would let me, while the squire ran to seize the thief, and cried out in a gruff voice the while, 'Kill the fox! kill the fox!' All the folk came in his wake, when I led them to the spot where Is-grim was. There I let the fowl drop, and then sprang to a hole and got out of harm's way. When the squire saw Is-grim he cried out, 'Strike, friends, strike! here is the wolf, see that he does not get free.' Then the crowd came with clubs and staves, and gave the Wolf sound blows, so that he fell down as if he were dead, when they took him by the heels and flung him in a ditch; but how he got thence I trow not. Thus, through me, the Wolf has had great risks of his life, more than I can now call to mind. I will say more by and by. And now as I have told you most of my bad deeds, say what I can do to purge my own soul."

Now Grim-bard was wise, and knew much lore. He tore a branch from a tree, and said: "My dear Rey-nard, you shall three times strike your body with this rod, then lay it on the ground and jump three times clear of it, but you must not bend your legs or fall; then shall you take it up and kiss it in a mild way, to show how meek you are; which done, all your faults shall be thought of no more, and you shall be clear of them."

The Fox said he would do this, and so they went off to the Court.

But as they sped on their course they came to a spot where stood a house for nuns, a short way from the road. Close by the wall a lot of geese and fowl fed; and the Fox led Grim-bard out of the right path to that place. When Rey-nard found that a fat young hen had left the rest of the flock, he sprang and caught her by the wings, but the fowl got free. Grim-bard saw this, and said,

"You wretch of a beast, how weak of will you are! For such a poor prize you would spoil all you have done." To which the Fox said, "I pray you heed not this act of mine, for I scarce knew what I did. I will take care now, and not let my eyes rove in quest of prey."

Then they went past a small bridge, but the Fox still set his eyes on the fowl; nor could he well help it, for what was bred in his bones still came out in his flesh.

Now by this time they had got on the main road, and soon came in sight of the Court.

When it was known that Rey-nard the Fox, who was in Grim-bard's keep, was near the Court, all those to whom he had done wrong made haste to charge him with his foul deeds. Rey-nard's heart beat high, but he strove to keep a calm face. When he came in front of the chair of State, in which the King sat, he thus spoke: "My liege, may your fame spread to the ends of the earth, and no king have such might as thou dost wield. I have been, and still am, true to you, and so will die. But, my lord, I know there are some at this Court who seek my life. In these days the courts of kings have tools who fawn, as well as fools who cause mirth; yet, with you it is not so, nor shall they reap aught but shame for their pains."

But the King cut short his speech, and said, "Peace, wretch! Rey-nard, I know you well; but your craft and your soft words shall both fail you now. Thou black fiend, with what face canst thou say that you love me, when I see proofs of thy lies in all those poor beasts, whose wounds yet gape at thee?"

"My dread lord," said the Fox, "if Bru-in's crown be grim with gore, am I the cause? If he would not do your



When Rey-nard the Fox came to the Court where the King sat, his heart beat high, but he strove to keep a calm face.  
—Page 26. *Reynard the Fox.*

will, but wait to filch comb from a grange, where he got his wounds, how am I to blame? If so, why did he not smite me at the time, and not wait for the law to do it? He is strong, while I am weak. As for Ti-bert the Cat, whom I met as a friend, if he seek out barns to catch mice, and there lose his eyes, is this a fault of mine? Oh! my dread liege, you will do what you list, plead as I might, yet will I bear that death to which you may doom me."

As he thus spoke, all cried out with one voice, that the Fox hath done them great hurt and harm, which so smote the King's heart, that the Fox was brought



to the bar to hear what he had to say why the law should not be put in force. Yet, though the Fox made a speech full of art and tact, which made the law lords stare, the proofs were so strong, and his foes so great, that he might as well have held his peace. The Court said that he should hang by the neck till he was dead.

When he heard his doom he hung down his head; while Grim-bard the Brock, and those of his near kin, who could not bear to see him die, took leave of the King, and went off with sad hearts and wet eyes.

As soon as the King saw that a host of brave hearts had left the Court so full of grief, he said in his own mind, "It needs that I take great heed how I act; it is best to be wise than too brave."

While the King thought thus, the Cat said to the Bear—

"Sir Bru-in, and you, Sir Is-grim, why are you so slow? Night is near, and the law is not yet put in force. The rogue may steal a march on us. If you mean to hang him, do so at once, for it will be dark night ere the tree is set up."

Is-grim said, "The means are nigh at hand." And with that he gave a deep sigh.

The Cat took note of this and said: "Do you then fear the work, Sir Is-grim, or is the task not quite to your mind? Now, if you have one grain of sense left, you would hang him, and not stand and waste your time."

Quoth Is-grim, in a gruff tone, "If we had but a rope that would fit his neck we would soon get rid of him."

Rey-nard, who for some time spoke not a word, now let loose his lips.

"I pray you," said he, "let my pain be short. Sir

Ti-bert hath a strong cord, which did well nigh choke him at the monk's house. Let him hang me, for it is not right in Is-grim or Bru-in to act thus with one so near of kin to them. Bru-in, go on and lead the way; Is-grim, you can make up the rear."

So Is-grim and Bru-in, one on each side, led the Fox to the rack, while Ti-bert, to whom he had done much wrong, ran in front with the rope. When they came to the set place, the King and Queen, and all the high lords took their seats to see the Fox die.

When all things were got right the Fox said: "My dread lord the King, and you, my liege Queen, and you, my lords, who come to see me die, I pray now grant me this boon, that I might make bare my heart, and clear my breast, so that in years hence no man can blame me for my faults; which done, my death will be one of ease and peace."

## CHAPTER V.

### HOW REY-NARD THE FOX SPOKE TO THE KING OF HIS GREAT HOARD.

ALL the beasts now felt grief that the Fox was in so dire a scrape, so they did pray the King to grant him his wish. This was done, and then the Fox spoke:

"I see no one here to whom I have not done wrong of some sort; yet I was not born with this bad trait. In my youth I was thought mild and coy. I staid with the lambs all day long, and was glad to course on green meads with

them. But whilst in my play I bit one, and the taste of the blood was so sweet that I still crave it. This greed drew me to woods where I found goats, when I slew a kid, which made me so bold that I went from bad to worse, and took the lives of geese, hens, and what I could clutch. Once, late in the year, I met with Is-grim, as he lay hid in the trunk of an old tree, when he told me we were bound by ties of blood, and did trace my race in so plain a way that we were firm friends from that time forth, which I may well rue to this day, for then we set out to steal and take life. He stole the great things; I, the small. When he got a sheep or a calf, his greed was so great that he would scarce give me the bones to pick. This I say, not that I was in want, for it is well known I have more plate, gems, and coin, than half a score carts would hold, but just to show how he dealt with me, and what a bad heart is his."

When the King heard him speak of his hoard, his pulse beat quick, and he said, "Rey-nard, where is that vast wealth of yours?"

To which the Fox said, "My lord, I am proud to tell you. True it is I stole the hoard; but, were it not for this, it had cost you your life, which I pray, for the sake of your Realm, may long be safe."

The King grew grave and said, "Can what you state be true?"

Quoth the Fox, "Ah, my dread lord, you see how I stand, and that there is not much sand left to run in my poor glass; think you, can I lie?" And then a sad shade came on his face, so the Queen felt for his state, and by her wish the King made all the beasts hold their peace till the Fox told all he knew. Then spoke he in this wise;—

"May it please my liege, I will let you hear the whole plot. Know, then, my lord, that my sire, while at work on his farm, found King Er-men-rich's hoard—a large mass of wealth. When he got this, he grew so proud that he held in scorn all the beasts of the woods who, up to that time, were his close friends. At length he sent Ti-bert the Cat to the woods of Ar-denne to see Bru-in the Bear, who was told how my sire did love him well, and would make him king. Bru-in said he would wear the crown if he got it, and with this view came to Flanders, where he did feast like a prince; then he sent Grim-bard, who is of my own stock, for Is-grim the Wolf, and for Ti-bert the Cat, and these five went to a place near Ghent, where they spoke of their scheme for the space of a whole night. A plan was laid to slay the King, place Bru-in in the chair of state at Aix-la-Chapelle, and to set the crown on his head.

"Now for a strange tale. Once my friend Grim-bard drank too much wine, when he told this foul plot to dame Slo-pard his wife; but on her life she was not to let it pass her lips. But she told it, as a firm friend, to my wife; who, as soon as she met with me, let the cat out of the bag, but made me vow I should keep it hid. My heart now was like lead, cold and dull in my breast. I felt grief for the King, though it was of slight use.

"Then strove I to bring to naught my sire's plot to rob you of your Crown. As his wealth might be the means of this base act, I sought where to find it. Night and day did I watch, and kept a close eye on my sire's steps. Once, while I lay flat on the ground, I saw him creep out of a hole and look to see if all was clear. He then put sand in the place, and did rub the print of his feet with his

tail to make the ground smooth. Then he went off. But I soon found where his hoard lay. I took Er-me-line, my wife, to help me; and we did not cease to toil till it was put far from his reach. In the mean time Is-grim the Wolf, went with my sire through the Realm, and said he should give to all who would hail him as king a full year's pay. Bru-in was shown the roll of names; a host of which the clan of the Bear, the Fox, the Cat, and the Brock made up the chief part. But when my sire went to his cave and saw that his hoard was gone, all hope fled, he put a rope round his neck and tied it to a graff of the next tree he came to, where he hung till he was dead.

"Thus by my art did I spoil the plot to strip you, my liege, of your Crown, and rob the State of its King. For this I am to yield up my life. O, my lord, what can one do more for his King than lose his own blood?"

Then spoke the Queen: "Fear not, Rey-nard, the King shall spare thy life; and, more than this, you shall be made one of the first lords of his Court."

Quoth the Fox, "Dear Queen, if the King but have faith in me, no king was, or will be, so rich as I will make him."

Then the King did chide the Queen, and said, "Dame, you want me to trust the Fox. Know you not, that his chief traits are to lie and cheat and steal?"

The Queen said to this: "My dear lord, you may trust him this time, for he is not what he has been; grief has made a change in him. Had he not told the truth he might with ease have laid this crime on those he did not love!"

"Well, dame," said the King, "you shall for this once rule me, and the Fox shall be set free; yet let me tell



Then the King on his high throne, said, "Hear, all peers, knights, and squires—Rey-nard the Fox is now made one of the prime lords of my Court."—Page 35.

*Reynard the Fox.*

you, should but a slight charge be made by one beast whom he may wrong or harm, I will drive his whole race, root and branch, out of my Realm."

When the King spoke thus, gloom sat on the Fox's face, while he was glad at heart.

Then the King in due form did clear the Fox of all his crimes. So he fell down at the feet of the King and Queen, gave them his best thanks for the grace shown to him, and said that no king or queen in the world would be so rich as they. From that time forth the Fox had more weight in Court than all the beasts.

The Fox now said to the King: "My good lord, you must know that at the west end of Flan-ders there is a wood known by the name of Hus-ter-loe, near to which runs the brook Cre-ken-pit. Here have I hid this wealth, to which spot I would that you, sire, and your Queen would go, for there is none else whom I could trust. When my lord gets there, you shall see two birch trees close to a pit. You shall go in, and there you shall find the hoard. There shall you find rare stones, and when you clasp them in your hands, think of the love that Reynard bears you."

Quoth the King, "Sir Rey-nard, you must of a truth dig up this hoard, for sure I am I shall not find it. I have heard of Par-is, Lon-don, Aix-la-Cha-pelle, and Co-logne, but Cre-ken-pit I do not know; hence I fear you mean to trick me."

At these words a blush sat on the Fox's face, and he said, "Does my lord doubt of my faith?" With that he bade Kay-ward the Hare come forth. When he was told, by the love he bore the King and Queen, to speak the truth, the Hare said—



"I will speak the truth in all things, though I were sure to die for the same."

Quoth the Fox, "Know you not where is Cre-ken-pit?"

"Yes," said the Hare, "I have known it these twelve years. It is in the wood Hus-ter-loe."

"Well," said the Fox, "I have done with you now; you may go hence." Then said the Fox, "My liege lord, what say you now; can you doubt me more?"

The King said, "No, Rey-nard; and I pray you let this pass. Let us at once seek the pit where the hoard lies hid."

The Fox said, "Ah, my lord, think you would I not set out with joy, could I but act as I please? Just hear what I have to say, though it may cause you to think the worse of me. When Is-grim the Wolf would fain turn monk, the meat that was meant for six of his guild was less than he could eat. He told me this, and I felt for him, so I saw it were best he should run off, which he did. Now I stand with the Pope's ban on my head, and at break of dawn must wend my way to Rome; and will not come back till I have done so much good that I may be a fit knight to wait on my liege lord."

When the King heard this he said, "In such case I dare not have you at Court; and hence I will take Kay-ward the Hare with me to Cre-ken-pit. I but ask you, Rey-nard, not to stay too long."

"My lord," said the Fox, "I will not rest night nor day till I am in my own land."

"I like the course you take," said the King. "Go your way, and may all good be with you."



Then was Is-grim caught hold of, and the skin torn from his front feet to make shoes for the Fox.—Page 36.

*Reynard the Fox.*

## CHAPTER VI.

HOW REY-NARD THE FOX, BY THE KING'S GRACE, GOT PRAISE FROM ALL BEASTS, AND HOW HE TOOK OFF THE WOLF'S SHOES.

THEN the King sat on his high throne, and said that each beast that heard him should speak not a word, but take the place fit for his birth or rank. The Fox was the sole lord put next to the King and Queen. Then said the King: "Hear, all peers, knights, squires, and you of still less name, this Rey-nard is now made one of the prime lords of my Court. He hath this day done such good to the State, that both the Queen and I felt bound to show him the best proof of our grace. Hence, we did grant him his life, let him go free, clear him of his crimes, and give him back his goods which he hath lost. That he is staid now, and means well, I know for a fact. At the hour of Prime he goes on to Rome, where he will buy what will cleanse him from his sins! then he will set out for the Ho-ly Land, and is the chief friend of the King."

Then went the Wolf and Bear to the King. Is-grim, with great pomp and pride, came near to the Throne, and with sharp words spoke so ill of the Fox, that both the Bear and he were bound fast, so that they could not stir an inch.

When the Fox had by guile thus caught his foes in a snare, he got leave of the Queen to have so much of the Bear's skin as would make him a large scrip, for use on his way to Rome. Still he was in dire need of a strong pair of shoes; so he said to the Queen, "Dread dame, I am

your poor friend, and may it please your Grace to know that Sir Is-grim wears a pair of shoes that will last long, which, if you deign to give me, I will pray for you all the way."

The Queen said, "No doubt, Rey-nard, you will want such shoes, for your road is strewn with stones and hard grit; hence, you shall have a pair to guard your soft feet."

Then was Is-grim caught hold of, and the skin torn from his front feet in so cruel a way as to lay bare his nerves.

Is-grim and Bru-in lay mute, for they felt the keen smart of their wounds too much to let them speak.

Ere Rey-nard set out, he put oil on his shoes, and made them fit as well and as close to his feet as they did on those of Is-grim. He then went to the King and Queen, and said, "My grand lord, and my bland Queen, your poor friend bows low in your sight; I pray thee give me my mail and staff, and with such forms as are due to one like me."

Then the King sent for Bel-lin the Ram, and told him to hang round Rey-nard's neck the mail made of the Bear's skin, and to place the staff in his right paw. Then he took leave of the lords, and left the Court. So the King said to him, "It grieves me, Rey-nard, that we must part so soon."

Quoth the Fox, "There is no cure for it, my liege, that I know of; nor ought I to be slow in an act so full of praise, and which will ease my soul."

Then the King gave strict word to all his Court, save the Bear and Wolf, to go with Rey-nard a part of the way. The Fox put on grave airs, whilst his heart was full of glee. He felt proud to find his foes his slaves, and the King, whom he made a fool of by his tricks, walk with him, as if he, too, were a prince of the blood.



Then the King gave strict word to all of his Court, save the Bear and the Wolf, to go with Rey-nard a part of the way, the King walk-ing with the Fox.—Page 36. *Reynard the Fox.*

They had not gone far when the Fox said, "I beg, my lord, that you will not move one step more, but think of the risk you run on this lone road. You have left two base beasts in chains at your Court, and should they get free, you know not what may take place. It may cost you your Crown."

Then he took quick leave of the King, in a sad way; when he at once spoke to Kay-ward the Hare, and Bel-lin the Ram, in this strain: "My best friends, shall we part so soon? Do not leave me, I pray you. I like your bland words and staid ways, for you are mild, kind, and wise, just as I was when I first put on a monk's cowl."

The poor beasts, struck with his fair speech, and too dull to grasp its drift, were led to go on with him.

## CHAPTER VII.

HOW KAY-WARD THE HARE WAS SLAIN BY REY-NARD THE FOX, AND HOW THE RAM BROUGHT THE NEWS TO THE KING.

THUS these three went on, and all was well for a time. But when Rey-nard got to the gates of his own house, he said to Bel-lin the Ram, "My dear sir, I pray you stay here for a short time, as I have some slight work to do at home which I should like Kay-ward to see."

"All right," said the Ram; so the Fox and the Hare went through the gates of Rey-nard's house. Er-me-line sat on the ground, much cast down for the loss of her lord; but when she saw him safe once more, her joy was too great for tongue to tell. Then he told her all that took

place at Court; how he was bound and then set free; how he was now on his way to Rome; and how the King gave Kay-ward to him to treat as he list.

When Kay-ward heard these words he would have fled had not the Fox caught him fast. On this the Hare sought help from Bel-lin; but the Fox gave his neck a squeeze, and he was dead in a trice.

But Er-me-line said, "I fear, Rey-nard, you trick me; tell me if all you say be true."

Then he told her in what bland speech he spoke to the King and Queen; how he did trick them by the lure of wealth that he had not, but which he said should be theirs; so that when his guile should be found out the King would try all means to take his life. "And hence, wife," said he, "it is well that we should quit this place in quick time, and get to some far off copse, where we may rest more at ease."

"Yet," said Er-me-line, "I have no wish to go to a strange home. I like to stay where I am, for I have got all I want. More than this, we are safe here; and should the King storm the walls of the house with all his troops, we shall not be cut off from aid."

"Well, dame," quoth the Fox, "grieve no more; first thoughts are not the best. We shall stay where we are. If the King hunt me, I will use my craft to fight his strength, and in this I think I shall be a match for him."

All this while stood Bel-lin the Ram at the gate, wroth that they should keep him there so long; so he gave a shout, which, when Rey-nard heard, he came forth, and said, "Good Bel-lin, think not I slight you, for I meant not to be rude. Kay-ward is with his fond aunt in close speech, and he told me to say that, if you would walk on,



he would soon come up to you, for he is more fleet of foot than you are."

"Ay," said Bel-lin, "but have I not heard Kay-ward cry for help?"

"What! How can you think he could meet with hurt in my house? I will tell you how it was he made that noise. When my wife heard of my plans, she fell down in a swoon. Kay-ward saw this, so he gave a scream, and said, 'O Bel-lin, come and aid my aunt; she will die! she will die!'"

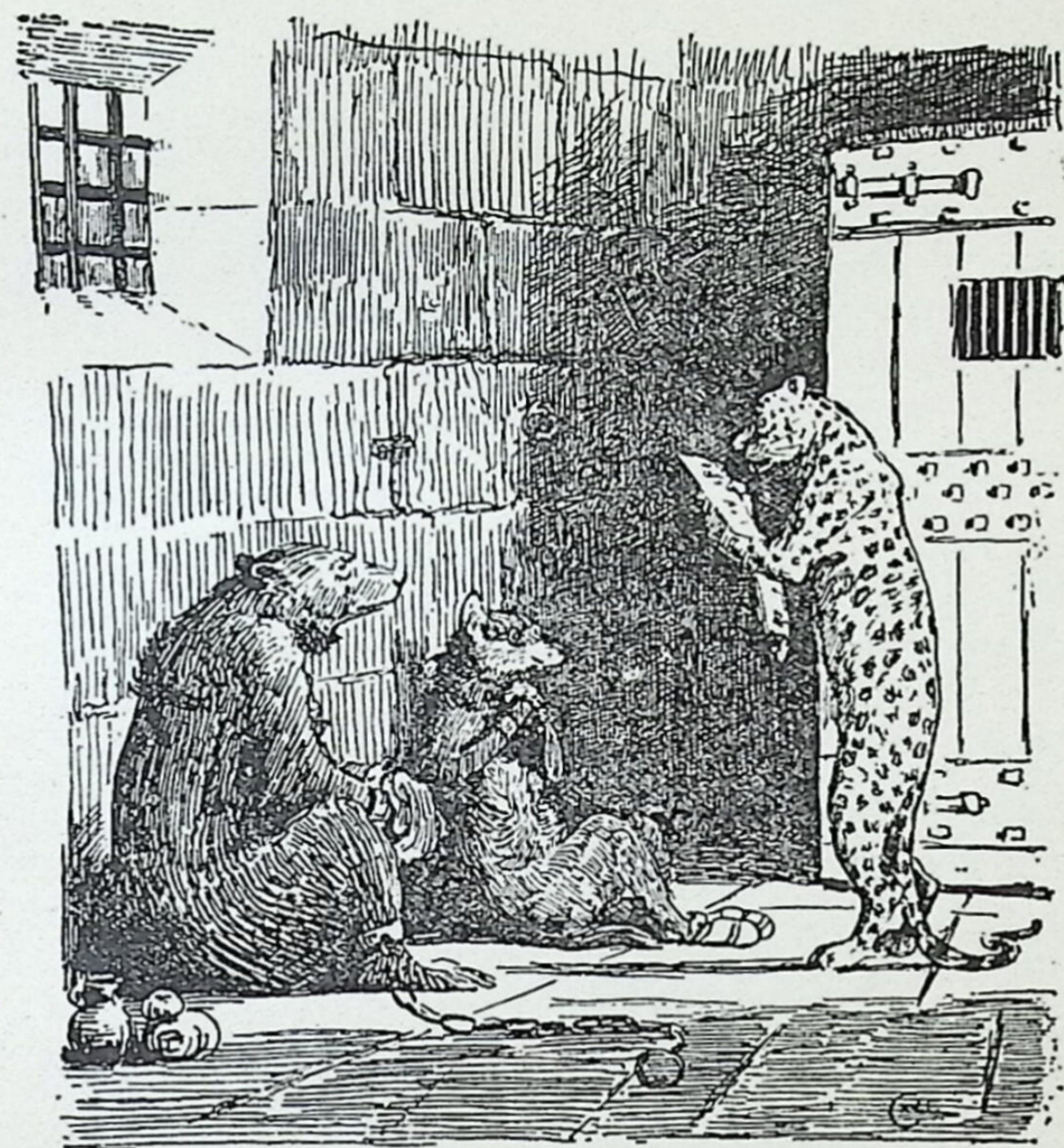
Then quoth the Ram, in a grave tone of voice, "I thought it was Kay-ward who was in need of help."

"It was your too much caré of him," said the Fox, "made you think so; but bear in mind, Bel-lin, that the King told me, ere I left the Realm, I should write two notes to him. I beg you will bear them to our liege lord. You shall have my mail, and can with ease slip it round your neck. Full well I know that what I send will cause the King to thank you, for the news has to do with grave things of State."

So the Fox took the bag, put in it the head of Kay-ward, and brought it to the Ram, with the charge that if he did wish the King to be his friend, he would not dare look to see what it held till the King had got it in his hands; and that he might still more gain the King's good will, he told him to say it was he who wrote the scroll.

The Ram was most glad to get such shrewd hints from Rey-nard, so he said, "What you have done for me shall one day be made up to you. It will raise me in the King's mind when he thinks I can write so well."

This said, Bel-lin took leave of the Fox and went on to the Court, where he got just at noon.



So the Leo-pard went to the fort where the Bear and Wolf were, and said: "My lords, I am told by the King to set you free. He sends his love, and grieves for your wrongs."—Page 42.

*Reynard the Fox.*

The King did stare when he saw the Ram walk in with the mail made of the Bear's skin, and said, "Whence dost thou come, Bel-lin, and where is the Fox that thou hast his sack with you?"

Quoth Bel-lin, "My lord, I went with the Fox to his house, stayed at the gate, and in a short time he came to me and said I should take a scroll of great pith to the King. He gave it to me shut up in this bag, which scroll I did write, and I doubt not that the style will please my liege lord."

The King said, "Pass the mail to Boc-art," whose post it was to read all things that had to do with the Realm. So he and Ti-bert the Cat took the mail off Bel-lin's neck, and when they did loose the ties they found the head of Kay-ward the Hare.

Cut to the heart, they said in a loud voice, "Woe, woe, what a scroll is this! My dread lord, there is naught here but the head of poor Kay-ward, who must have met his death by foul means."

When the King saw the head, he said with wry looks, "Ah, woe is me, that I should have put faith in this vile Fox! I have been made a fool of by a vile wretch, who did cause me to wrong my best friends. Yet it was not my will; my Queen felt for the Fox in his dire grief, and did work on me till she made me act in a way that I shall mourn whilst I live."

"Nay," said the Leo-pard, "say not so, sire. You can make up for this wrong by gifts, which will be found the best salve for all sores. You can give them the flesh and store of Bel-lin the Ram, who did aid in this foul crime. As for Rey-nard, we will storm his fort, and hang him by the law of arms; we shall not try him this time, nor shall he have shrift of priest."

## CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE BEAR AND WOLF GOT HOLD OF BEL-LIN THE RAM AND HIS RACE, AND HOW FRESH PLAINTS WERE MADE OF THE FOX.

THE King said he thought the Leo-pard's plan a good one ; so Fy-ra-pel went at once to the fort where the Bear and the Wolf were pent, and thus spoke to them : " My lords, I am told by the King to set you free. More than this, he sends his love, and doth grieve for your wrongs ; to make up in a slight way for which he grants you Bel-lin the Ram, his bucks and ewes, and his whole race, with all their goods, that when you may find them you may kill and eat them."

Thus did the Leo-pard cause these lords and the King to be on good terms once more. Then Bel-lin the Ram was slain by the Bear and the Wolf, while the King gave a feast, which was held for twelve days, to show his joy at the pact that was made.

On the eighth day of the feast came Lap-rel the Rab-bit to the King and Queen, and while they sat at meat, said in sad tones, but so loud that all who were there heard him : " My lord, list to what I have to tell you, which is of great force. But a day since I came by the Fox's house at Ma-le-par-dus. He stood in front of the gates and had on a monk's hood. When he saw me he came to meet me, and told his beads at the same time. I bade him ' good day,' but he spoke not a word ; while he flung out his right foot and gave me a blow in the eyes with all his





strength, which made me reel. I had just that share of life left to get free from him. Still, I have lost one ear, and have four great cuts in my head from his sharp nails. Now, my lord, I pray you to look on my wounds, and to make this vile beast smart for his crimes. No beast is safe while he is let ramp and prowl at large."

Just at this time came in Cor-bant the Rook, who thus spoke: "Great King, I bear with me a sad tale. This morn I went with my wife, Sharp-beak, to play on the heath, and there lay Rey-nard the Fox, as though he were dead. For some time we stood to watch the strange sight, and then my poor wife—dear soul as she is!—put her ear near to his mouth to try if he drew breath; but at once the foul Fox, who kept sharp watch and bode his time, when he saw her so nigh him, gave a fierce snap, caught her by the head, and bit it off. On this the wretch made a dart at me, with such hot ire in his eyes, that I was glad to fly to a tree, where I stayed while I saw him eat my dear wife, so that he left not flesh or bone, but the plumes. Now I pray you will be just, and stay the Fox's course, for if not, you and your lords will scarce be safe while the law is set at naught."

When the King heard from the Rab-bit and the Rook what dire deeds the Fox had done, his eyes shot fire, while he said, "By my Crown, I will not stay my hand till I have glut my ire. His lies and glib tongue shall take me in no more. I here vow I will so wreak my ire on the Fox for the slight he has cast on my Crown and name, that while the good shall look on with joy, the bad shall wail with fear."

But the Queen, with a deep bow, thus said: "Sire, a wise man will put faith in naught till he knows all the ins and outs of it; nor should he lend both ears to strange tales,

but keep one free, so as to be just to each side. Rey-nard may or may not have done the deeds laid to his charge; you may bind him or you may slay him; but still the King durst not act save in due form of law."

To these words of the Queen, Sir Fy-ra-pel the Leo-pard rose and said: "My lord, the Queen hath laid down the best course, and I see not how you can well act save in so wise a way. Let the Fox get the last call to Court; and if he come not ere the close of this feast, then shall you treat him as seems best to thee."

Then quoth the King, "By my troth I will call him no more. Now I crave that all who owe me love, and wish to see my Throne firm, come here in my sight at the end of six days, with bows, guns, pikes, and spears, on foot or on colts, for I mean at once to lay siege to Ma-le-par-dus and to cut off Rey-nard and his race, large and small, from the face of the earth."

## CHAPTER IX.

### HOW GRIM-BARD THE BROCK MET AND SPOKE WITH REY-NARD THE FOX.

WHEN Grim-bard the Brock heard these words he ran with all speed through bush and brake, till he got to Ma-le-par-dus.

He saw his friend Rey-nard, who stood at the gates, and said to him, "I am so glad to see you, my best friend that I love so well, more than all my kin. Tell me how runs the news at Court."

"Oh," said Grim-bard, "most ill with you, I grieve to

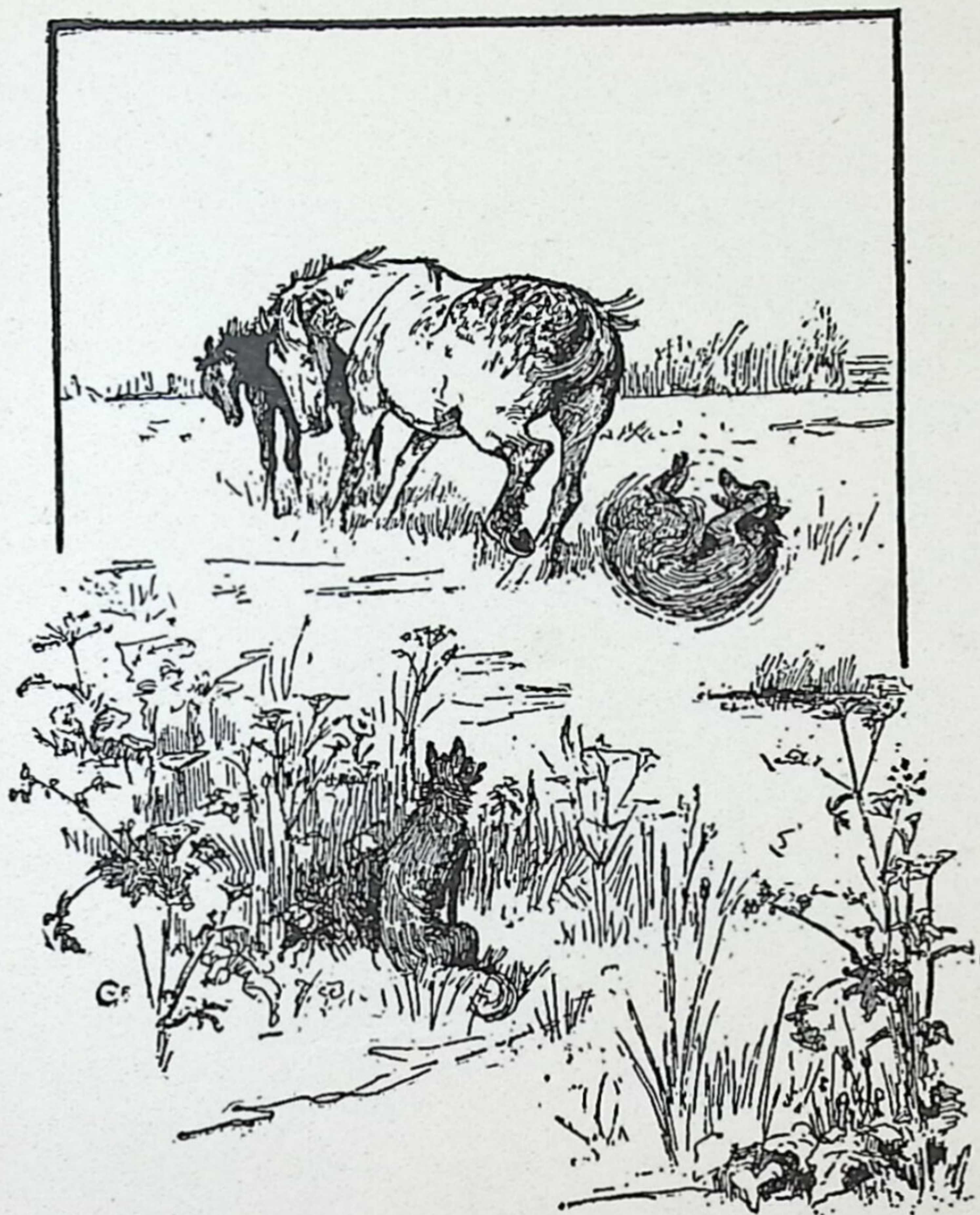
say. The King is up in arms, and means to storm this place. Is-grim and Bru-in now lead the King, and he loves them much; so it is high time that you use your wits, for they have told all you did to them, and I see no means by which you can flee from a death of pain and shame."

"Tush," said the Fox, "let no care for me put you in such a fright; but let us cheer up. My dear friend, come let us go in and feast. I have a brace of fat snipe for you. As soon as we have had our slight meal, I will go with you to the Court; and if I can but get to speak with the King I shall gall some of them and touch them to the quick."

This said, they went to Ma-le-par-dus, and found Er-meline with her young ones at her feet. Soon the brace of snipe were set forth, when each took his part. Then said the Fox, "My most dear friend, I know you are worn out from your long walk, hence you shall go to your rest."

So they lay down and had a sound sleep, save the Fox, who thought of the way he should act when he met the King. As soon as the sun shone on the brow of the hills, Rey-nard got up and went to Grim-bard, and set out with him to the Court.

As they went through the heath, Rey-nard said to the Brock, "My dear friend, I will tell you some of the crimes which I have done, that you may know for what I am to be brought to task." Then quoth he, "You must know, my fond friend, that I got the Bear's skin torn off to make a pouch, and I said that the Bear and the Wolf did plot to take the King's life, and to change the form of the State, when there were no grounds for these things; and I said that there was a huge hoard of wealth in Hus-ter-loe.



When the Wolf got nigh the mare, she gave him such a kick, that he did roll to and fro in pain and then fell in a swoon.  
—Page 47.  
*Reynard the Fox.*

Through me the Wolf got a smerk in his head—it was this way: while I spoke with him on a plain, we saw a bay mare at grass with a fat foal by her side. The Wolf was all but dead from want of food, and he told me to go to the mare and ask if she would sell her foal. I spoke to the mare, and then told the Wolf that if it was his wish to know what the foal would cost, he must read some Greek words that were on the mare's hind foot; which, as he was a beast of lore, he could do quite well. Now the mare had just been shod with stout shoes, full of big nails with sharp heads to them, and when he got nigh the mare, she up with her heels, and gave him such a kick, that he did roll to and fro in pain, and then fell in a swoon.



Then went I up to him and said, 'Sir Is-grim, have you ate too much of the colt? It is not kind of you to grudge me my share. Tell me, pray, what was on the mare's foot, was it prose or was it rhyme?'

“‘Ah, Rey-nard,’ quoth the Wolf to me, ‘I pray you, mock me not, for my grief is too great. The vile mare had on her long leg a shoe with sharp nails in it; I took the nails for Greek signs, and when I cast my eye on them, she hit me so full on the head that I think my skull is rent in twain.’”

“‘Dear friend,’ said I, ‘is this truth that you tell me? I took you for one of the best read beasts in the Realm.’ With these mocks and taunts I brought the Wolf nigh to death’s door. Now, my fair and dear friend, I have made my heart more light, and come what may at the Court, it will be seen if my foes can do me hurt.”

Then said Grim-bard, “You have in truth been vile, your crimes are of a deep dye; and I can but hope you may feel grief of heart, and, if you have the chance, lead quite a new life.”

With such talk did they make brisk the hours till they got to the Court, when the Brock got by his side and said in a low voice, “Fear not, but be of good cheer; good luck goes with the brave.”

Then quoth the Fox, “Friend, you speak the truth, and your hint is good.” As soon as he came where the King sat, he fell down on his knees and spoke thus:—

## CHAPTER X.

HOW REY-NARD THE FOX DID PLEAD HIS CAUSE IN THE KING’S SIGHT, AND OF WHAT THE KING SAID TO HIM.

“HAIL to my lord the King, and to my good Queen, and may they be led to see whose cause is right and whose is wrong; for in this world lies oft wear the gloss of truth, and the face proves not a sure guide to the heart. Still I know that you, my lord, and your Queen, can soon sift the chaff from the wheat; that your minds are clear to see, and your hearts just to judge, what is right in my case.



As soon as the Fox came where the King sat, he fell down on his knees and said: “Hail to my lord the King, and to my good Queen.”—Page 48.  
*Reynard the Fox.*

'Trust me, my lord, it shall be known, ere I leave your Court, that I do bear a name on which none can fix a blot.'

But the King, with a proud air, said: "Rey-nard, I see you in no new dress; I know what a gift you have for guile; but soft words will not now get you out of your scrape. I fear this day will be the last of your pride, and that your fall is sure. Your crimes have gone on so long that they bring you to grief in the end."

"My lord," quoth Rey-nard, "it is just that you hear what I have to say, for let my faults be worse than they are set forth, or than pique can paint them, still the law gives me the right of speech. In this Court I now view a host of my own kin who care not one whit for me. Think you, sire, could I but own to this guilt, that I would have come here of my own free



will, and face such a throng? Not I, my lord. When Grim-bard, one of my own kin, brought me the news, had I not been on my way to Rome, I would have got here ere the last charge was made. Then I met on the route my friend Mar-tin the Ape, who, when he saw me in such grief, quoth he, 'Dear Rey-nard, why are you thus cast down? grief is light, and may be borne when friends

share it.' Then said I, 'You speak the truth, dear Ape; woe, in sooth, weighs me down. False tales are told of me at Court by the Rab-bit, whom I took for one of my stanch friends. A day since he came to my house, weak and worn, so I at once gave him a loaf of fine bread and some rich cheese. My young son, Ros-sel, came in just ere he had quite done his meal, and said he would take off what crumbs were left, when the Rab-bit smote my boy on the mouth, and he fell down in a swoon. Rey-nard-ine, my heir, saw the brute give the blow, when he sprang forth, caught him by the head, and would have slain him had I not been there. Then I gave my son stripes for his fault, to teach him he should love those who did him hurt, and that two wrongs could not make a right. But Laprel the Rab-bit posts to my lord the King, and says that I sought to kill him. So good deeds have been my bane. Thus, dear Ape, you see how crimes are laid to my charge from which I am as free as you are.' Then said the Ape to me, 'My dear friend, you shall go to the Court and show that it is not in you to do such black deeds.' 'Ah,' quoth I, 'it must not be yet, at least, for I am on my way to Rome, to buy a brief from the Pope, so that I may get quit of all the sins I have done to this day.' Then said the Ape, 'Friend, cast off your care, for I know the road to Rome well, and how to do these sort of things; so I will go there and bring you back the brief you want, with the seal of the Keys on it. So, cast your grief to the winds, and get to the Court as soon as you can.'

"At this, my dread lord, I was full of joy; so I made up my mind to come here and speak out my whole mind. Let now but one in this Court come forth and charge me with the least crime, and prove it in due form of law, or



Then I met on the route my friend the Ape, who, when he saw me in such grief, quoth he, "Dear Rey-nard, why are you thus cast down?"—Page 49.  
*Reynard the Fox.*

else meet me hand to hand in fair fight, and let us have war to the knife. When I shall hold my own, and prove by the death of my foe how free I am from fault!"

The bold air Reynard put on, and the warm words he spoke, made all the beasts stare at him half in fear.

But the King said, "Let him stand forth who wants to charge the Fox, and he shall be heard. A day since we could not get to the end of his crimes; this day, where are they? Here is the Fox, who will speak in turn?"

Then said the Fox, "Foes are bold when those they wish to harm are far off; when near, it daunts them. You may see this, sire,

both by the Rabbit and the Rook, But I mind it not; for



I could not hate those who do me ill, and wish not to pay them back in the same coin. I leave you, my lord, to mete out what is just."

Quoth the King, "Rey-nard, you speak well; yet I much fear you sham grief. I must charge you with one thing, which is, that when I set you free, and you gave me your faith you would go to Rome, and then cross seas to Palestine, you got mail and staff, and all things else to aid you in your good work, and then out of sheer scorn you sent me back the head of Kay-ward the Hare. You dare not say nay to this, for Bel-lin at his death made known the fact. The gain he got shall be yours; trust me, you shall course the meads no more."

When the King had told him what his doom would be, he shook with fear, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. Then quoth the King, "Thou false, vile slave, how comes it that thou art for once dumb? Art thou hoarse, or hast thou caught a cold?" But the Fox gave a deep sigh, as if his heart would burst; so that all the beasts felt grief for him save the Bear and the Wolf, who were glad to find their old foe brought low at last.

## CHAPTER XI.

HOW DAME RUKÉ-NAW DID PLEAD FOR THE FOX WITH THE KING, AND OF WHAT SHE TOLD HIM.

DAME RUKÉ-NAW, the Ape, Rey-nard's aunt, who stood well with the Queen, wept when she saw the Fox sunk so low; and it was well for Rey-nard that she was in Court at the time, as she was wise and had much tact.

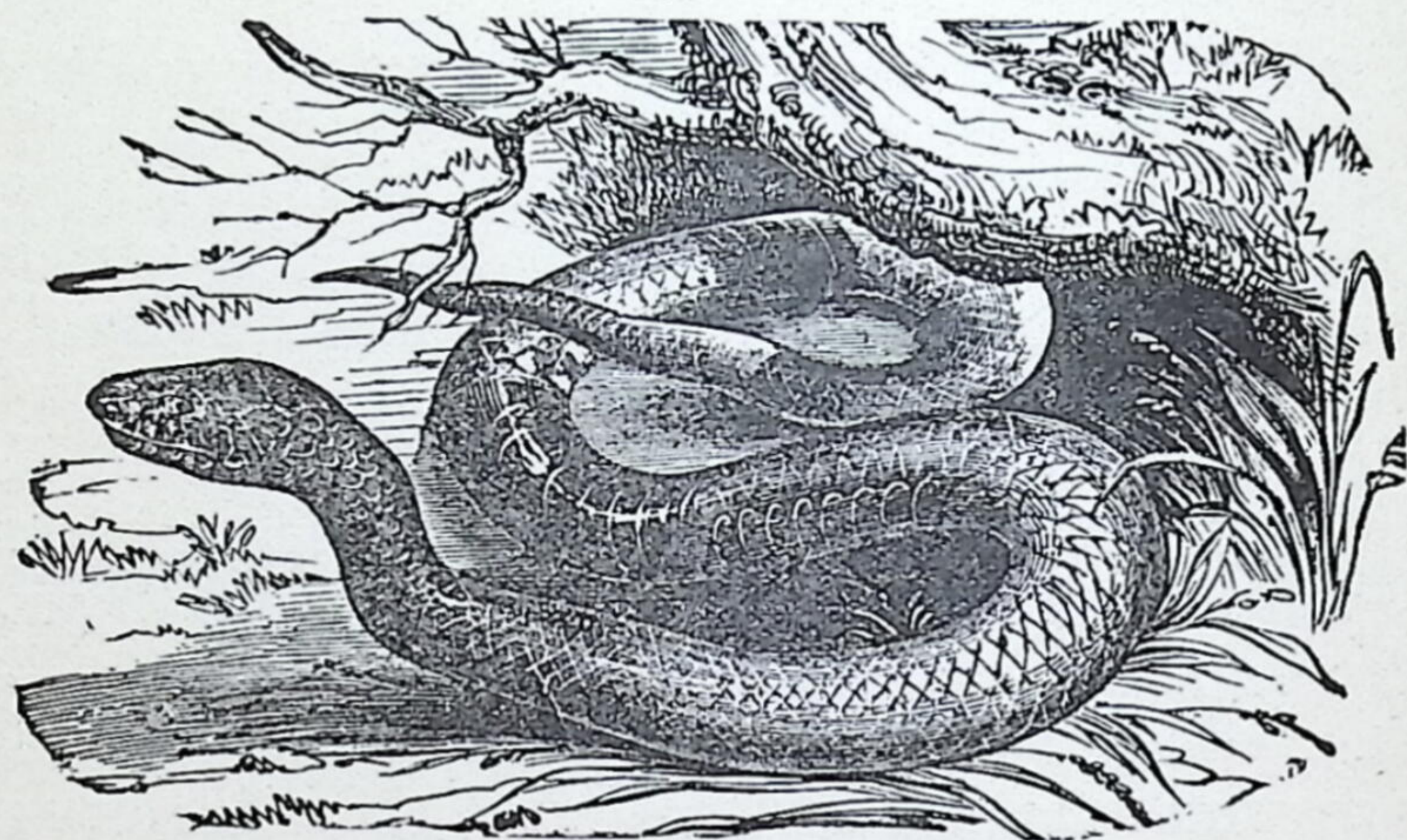
With the high grace and fine airs of one brought up at Court, she made a low bow to the Throne, and then said: "My lord the King, when you sit here to judge of what is just, you should curb your ire, and not let your hot blood spur you to do that which would give you grief had you been calm. A sage of Greece once said that kings are bound to act in a just way with those they rule, and that the law must be dealt out in the same straight form to high and low. I wish each one to know his own mind and heart; for none is so sure he stands but he may fall; none so good that he needs must stop in the right course. Would that some who hear me took these thoughts to heart; for the sky would not then be so dark for Rey-nard as it seems. It is well known how high his own and his sire's sire stood in this Court; for more sway did they wield than Bru-in or Is-grim, or their whole stock."

To this speech the King said: "Dame, had the Fox done the same wrong to you he hath to some beasts, such is not the style in which you would speak to us. You have heard the high crimes laid to his charge—that he thieves, sheds the blood of those who hurt him not, and scorns my rank and rule. I tell you, there is not one good trait in him, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. Not a friend or one of his own kin comes to his aid. I should like to hear who once got good by him, or what friend he flung his smiles on he hath not made to weep?"

Then spoke the Ape: "My lord, I love him, and have done so this long while, and I well bear in mind one great and good deed he did in your sight, for which you gave him thanks, though I dare say you think not of it at this far time. Let me bring it to your mind. Two years since there came to this Court a man and a snake to have a



point of law heard, and to get a rule. It was in this wise: The snake broke through a hedge, when he was caught by the neck with a snare, so that there was no way to get free with his life. A man came by at the time, when the snake told him to help him in his ill luck. The man was kind at heart, and said, 'If thou wilt swear not to do me hurt with thy tooth or sting I will let thee free.' The snake of course said he would; so the man let him loose. Then they went for a long way on the same road.

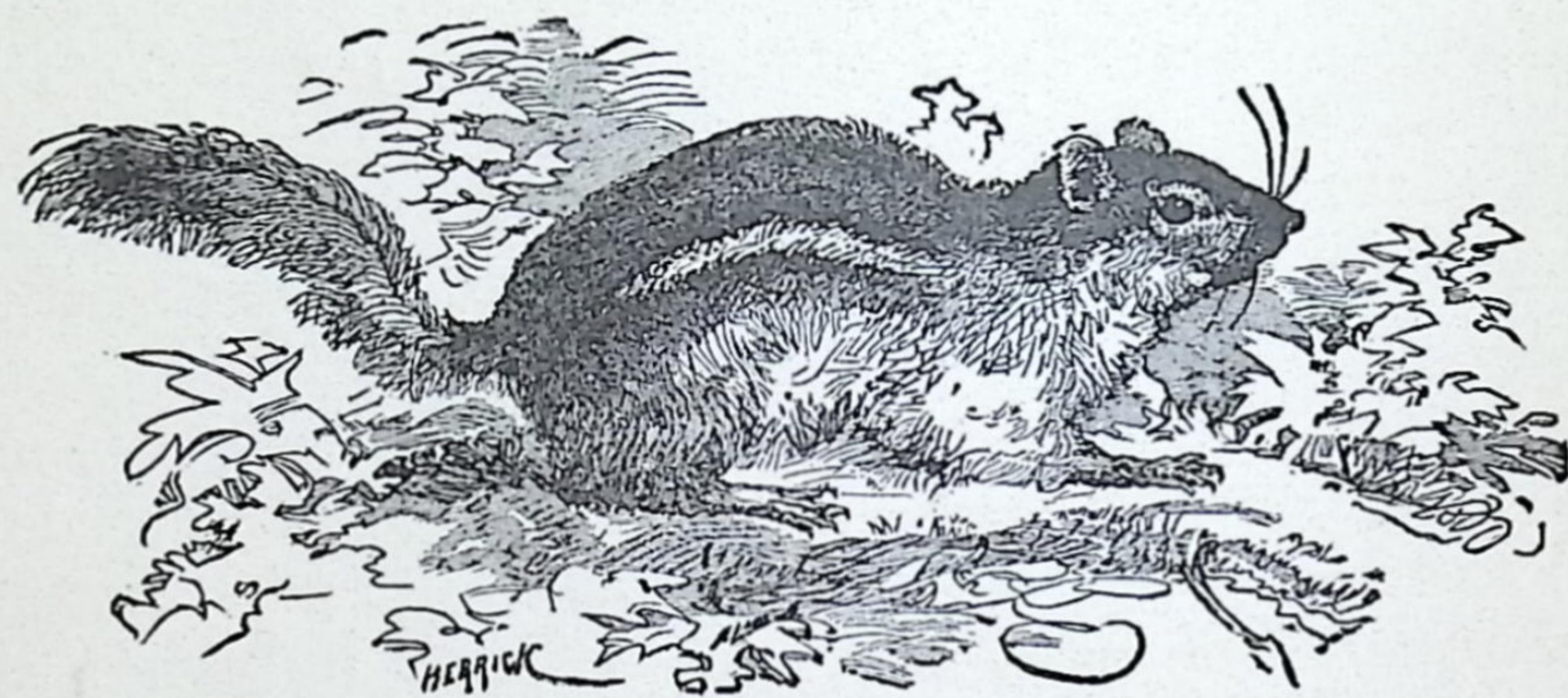


"In time the snake felt the pangs of want, and sprang on the man and sought to kill him; but he gave a jump out of his reach, and said, 'What dost thou mean? hast thou heed of thine oath?' Quoth the snake, 'No; but I may kill thee for all that, and not get in the mesh of the law, since want will break through stone walls, and aught else.' Then said the man, 'If it be so, yet let me live till we meet with some one who will solve the doubt; for I place no faith in what you tell me.'

"The snake said he would do so; so they went on till they met Tis-el-len the Ra-ven, who said that the snake should eat the man; but gave the snake to know that he must get a share. But, quoth the man, 'How shall he that is a thief and lives by spoil, judge the cause? It must be done by such as know both law and right; the Ra-ven is not just, nor is he free from self love. Let us go to the Court and have the point made clear; there can be no doubt left then. Let your King try me, and I shall fain bide by what he says.' So they brought their case, my liege, for you to judge of. It was set forth in full form by your law lords, and both sides were heard. Points were put which got the whole Court in a fog. In fact, such doubts were brought to bear on the case that not one in your Court could judge of it.

"At last, when no help could be found, you put the case in Rey-nard's hands. He told you, my lord, that he could not judge of the case as it was put, and said he should have more proof, and that if he might see in what way the snake had been caught, and what risk he had run, then he could state his view as to what ought to be done. Then went the man and the snake to the place where the trap was set; so Rey-nard had the snake made fast in the snare. When this was done, then you, my lord, said, 'Rey-nard, how will you judge now?' Thus he spoke, 'They are, my lord, just in the same state they were in when they first met; they have not won or lost. Hence I judge in this case, may it but please my lord the King: If the man will now let the snake loose on the strength of the same vow made to him at first, he may do so; but if he thinks that want will force the snake to break faith with him, then is he free to go where he choose, and leave

the snake bound as he had found him ere this cause came up to be heard.' You, my lord, at that time gave the Fox high praise for the shrewd plan his quick brain had brought forth, when your Court was in such a dire strait to fix a point of law. You say, my lord, that his friends and kin have left him. Had one said this save the King, you would then have seen how false was the view you took; but your Grace may speak as you list, nor will I make so bold as to let a word pass my lips that would clash with it. Think, my lord, of our high birth, and how much from time to time Rey-nard's friends have thought



of him, and would lay down their lives, if need be, to save his. For mine own part, I am of his race; and though we are not near of kin, yet for him I would spend my best blood. I have a brood of three, whom for his sake I would see face risk, though I feel for them the love of her who brought them forth." With that she spoke to them and said, "Come, my dear ones, and stand by one of your own race, the good and brave Rey-nard, and with you come all the rest of our old stock; and let us pray to the King to do for him what is meet and just."

Then forth came a crowd of beasts, the Squir-rel, and the Fer-ret, for these love fowl as well as Rey-nard doth; then came the Ot-ter, and more than a score of beasts, who stood by the Fox. Then spoke Ruke-naw: "My lord, the King, now you may see that he who is of my kin hath friends who dare to be proud of him, and who are true and stanch to your Throne and bound to our King by strong ties; hence let us, with one voice, beg of you, sire, to deal in a just way with Rey-nard, and if he does not prove that what his foes charge him with is false, let the law pass; we will not mourn for his fate."

The Leo-pard next spoke: "Sire," said he, "you must judge in this case not from whim, but from what has been sworn in Court; for rule by mere will is cruel."

Then said the King, "It is true; but the scorn shown to me in Kay-ward's death, and some things else, did so rouse my blood that I could not look to law or take a calm view of what was said. Hence, now let the Fox speak out what he has to say. If he can show that false tales have been told of him, I shall at once set him free; the more so, for your sakes, who are his dear friends, and are bound to my Throne, and love and prize him who sits on it."

## CHAPTER XII.

HOW REY-NARD THE FOX MET THE CHARGE OF KAY-WARD'S DEATH; AND HOW HE TOLD OF LOST GEMS.

THEN spoke Rey-nard the Fox: "Ah, my liege lord, what have you said? Is good Kay-ward the Hare dead? Oh! where is Bel-lin the Ram? I gave him three gems rich and rare, that I would not for a mine of gold should

be kept from you. The best of these I sent to my lord the King; the two that were left to my good Queen."

Quoth the King, "I got naught, save the head of poor Kay-ward, all grim with gore, for which I had the Ram put to death, who said that the deed was done by his wish."

"Is it so, in truth?" said the Fox; "then woe is me that I was born; for there are gone such gems the like of



which are not in the world! Would I had lost my life with such a prize."

Then said Dame Rukewaw, "Dear Reynard, why should you grieve thus for this world's wealth? Tell us what sort of gems they

were; it may be we shall find them. We will search all the nooks of the earth till we can get them for the King."

"Oh, aunt," said the Fox, "do not give heed to such a vague thought. He who hath them will not part with them to gain a realm; they are so rare that no gold can buy the like; yet your words do soothe me in a slight way. But whom shall we trust in this lorn age, when what is

pure walks with a mask and looks as though it were vile." Then he gave a deep sigh, to cloak his guile, and said—

"Hear all you who are of my stock and kin, for I now will make known what these rich gems were, of which some one did rob both me and the King.

"The first—which I meant for the King—was a gyve of pure gold. On it were cut, in deft form, some strange signs, dight with blue and black hues—a charm of three words. For my own part, I could not make them out, but Rab-bi Ab-rou, of Trent, who knows all tongues, and the cure that lies hid in herbs, beasts, and ores, told me they were three names of vast pith, and that none but those who knew the Black Art could read them; and that if one wore them, he could not be hurt by clash of winds or flash of fire from the clouds; nor could heat burn, or cold freeze, or weird charms act on him.

"On the top of the ring was a rich stone of three tints; the first red as fire, and with such a glare that it shed light by night as bright as the sun at noon. The next was white and clear, and its smooth hard gloss was put on by the hand of art; its use was to cure all kinds of blains, sprains, aches, and ills brought on by glut of food, or drugs that would take life. The last was green as grass, with red and blue spots on it, which will guard him who wears it from his foes in peace or war, in city or camp. Then I thought it was not meet in me to wear a ring of such worth; so I sent it to you, my liege, as the sole one who could lay claim to it.

"This ring I found in my sire's desk, with a comb and a glass to look in, which my wife sought to gain hold of. They were rare gems, and were sent to my good Queen as

a gift for her grace to me. It were vain to laud the comb: it was made of the bone of a stout beast known as Pan-the-ra, who lives in the far East. His hue is so bright that the bow in the clouds pales in its sight; and he hath so sweet a smell that one sniff of it cures all the ills that flesh is heir to. This Pan-the-ra hath one broad and thin bone, and when he dies all the charm he had lies in it; while it is so light that a mere plume can weigh it down, yet not air, earth, fire, or wet can harm it. He who smells it once will care for no scent but this: if weak he grows strong; and if dull or sad he will get blithe, and his heart will know no grief from that time forth.

“This comb is sheen like fine white ore, while its teeth are straight and smooth. Its ground tint is blue and black, and on it the life of Ve-nus and Ju-no and Pal-las are wrought in bright pearl and faint blue, and how they strove for the fruit of gold on Mount I-da, and how Par-is was made to judge which of the three was the most fair. At that time Par-is was with his flocks on the hills, and when the prize of gold was put in his hands to give to one of the three Queens of Love, Ju-no said that, ‘He should have a great store of wealth did he but give it to her.’ Pal-las said, ‘That if she got it, she would make him the most wise man of his age, and cause him to tread down his foes.’ But Ve-nus spoke to him and said, ‘What need hast thou to be wise, or brave, or to have wealth? Art thou not the son of Pri-am, and is not thy sire the sire of Hec-tor, who are lords of all A-sia? Art thou not an heir of great Troy? Come, give me the bright fruit, and thou shalt have the best gifts the world knows. I will let thee have the most fair wife that breathes; then wilt thou be more rich and wise and brave than

all men; for fair looks yield a charm that makes sour sweet, and turns all things to joy.’ When Par-is heard this, quoth he, ‘And who is this fair sylph you speak of?’ So Ve-nus said, ‘It is none but Hel-en of Greece, the gem of the world, the soul of grace, and the joy of all eyes.’ Then Par-is gave her the fruit of gold, and made her the most fair of the three—then, the wrought work did show how Par-is won Hel-en and brought her to Troy; the grand feast held when they were made man and wife; and much that took place in course of time.

“The globe of glass, too, was of vast worth; for what was done a mile off by man or beast could be seen in it, and it would tell all that he who had it sought to know. So great were the charms of this rare glass, that I can but shed salt tears to think of its loss. Its frame was of wood, light and smooth, but so strong that it will last till the wreck of time; nor can damp or dust, worms or age, harm it. It is of much more worth than fine gold; it is like the wood with which King Cram-part made a strange kind of horse for the love of a fair maid, the child of King Mar-ca-di-ges. The horse was wrought with rare art, so that when one rode it, he could make it course more than five score miles an hour. This was shown to his cost by the King’s son, Cla-ma-des, who was young and stout, and put faith in strange things. He sprang on the steed’s back, and put his hand to a screw stuck in its neck and made it loose, when off flew this bosk horse out of the hall door and went ten miles in a trice! Cla-ma-des got a fright, and thought he could not get back. But of his long ride, his fear, and of his joy when he learnt how to curb it, I will say no more, lest I may tire you. I have

said as much as I need to prove the high charm there is in the wood.

“Of this wood the frame of the glass was made, and it was wrought with gold and rare ores and gems. In one part was cut a proud steed in full chase, with a deer a far way off. But the deer was too fleet for the horse, which set him wild and made him snort. So he went to



a man who grew herbs, and said, ‘That if he would help him to catch the deer, all the gain should be his.’ Quoth the man, ‘By what means can I aid you?’ The horse said, ‘Just mount on my back, and I will take thee till we get up to him.’ The man then got on the steed; but the deer fled so fast that at length the horse got worn out, and went but at a trot; so

he bade the man to come off. But the man said, ‘I have reins in my hand and spurs on my heels; I know how good a slave thou art, and I will not part with thee, but will guide thee as I please.’ Thus the horse came to grief, and was caught in his own snare; for no one has a worse foe than his own ill will; and such as seek to do harm oft find *that* harm come home to roost.

“Then there was wrought the tale of the Dog and the

Ass who were kept by the same squire. He was fond of his Dog, and would play with him, and let him fawn and leap on him, and lick his face. Now when the Ass saw this, he grew full of spite, and said, ‘What does he who owns me see in this foul hound, that he lets him leap on him and kiss him? He gives him no help, while I draw large loads and work more in one week than all his breed could in a year. Yet I have not a tithe of his good luck. He fares well and leads a life of ease, while I am fed on furze. I will not bear this scurf on my name; and must try to win the smiles of him who keeps me as much at least as the Dog.’ By and by the Ass broke from his boose, and came to the room of the grange in which the squire sat, when he gave a spring, put his fore feet on the man’s knees, and sought to lick his lips. This rough mark of love threw the squire off his chair, tore the skin from his ears, hurt him to the quick, and made him shriek out, ‘Help, help! the Ass will kill me.’ Then came in men of the farm with sticks and stones, and beat him till he was half dead. So the Ass went back to his stall, and thought not once more of a change of life. Thus do they come to grief who like not to see some they know get on well. An Ass is born to eat gorse; and where oafs of their kind rule there is no good in the realm, for they are the dupes of their own pride. ’Tis true they sit on high seats at times, and are the butts for wise men to laugh at.

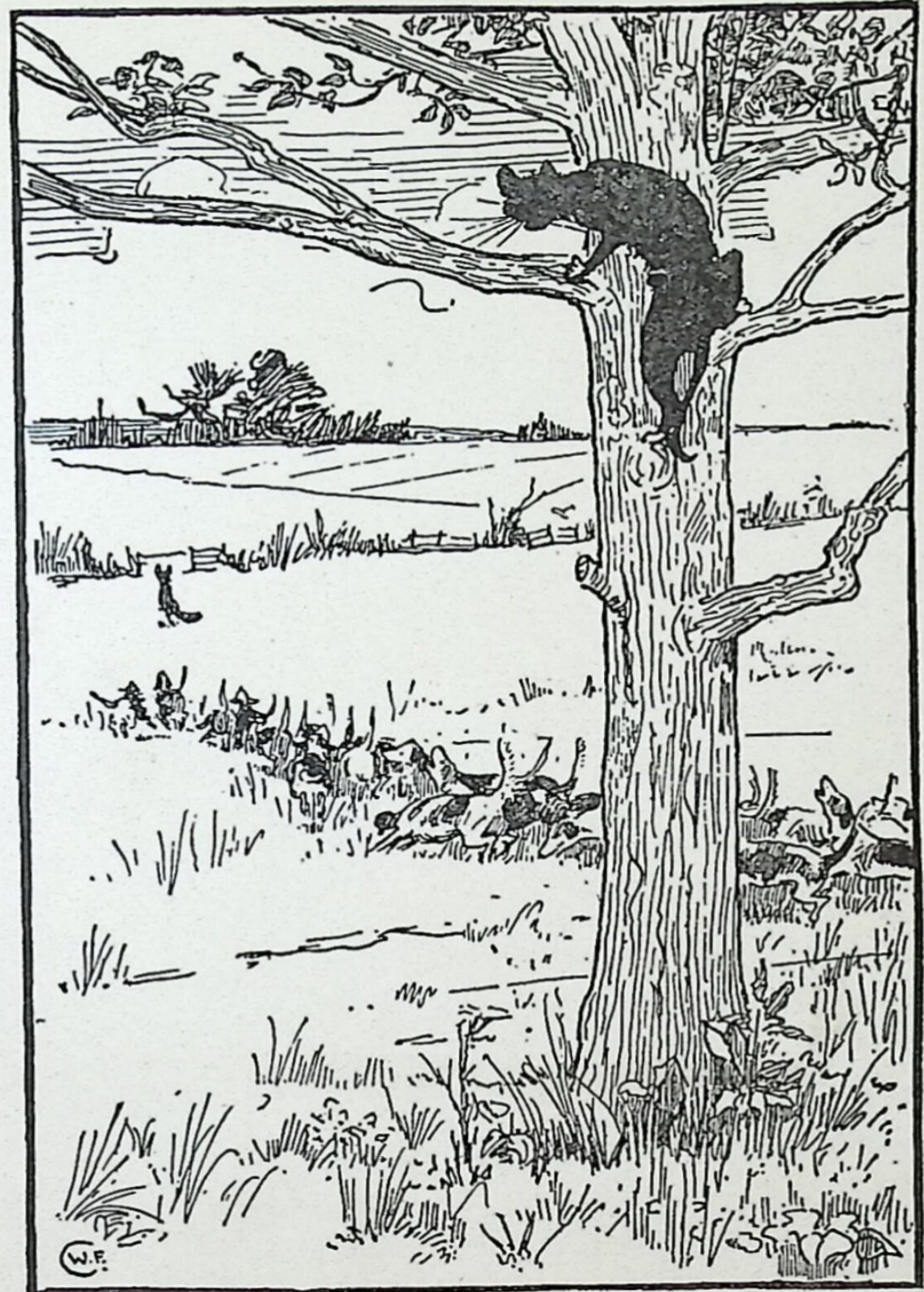
“The tale of Ti-bert the Cat and my sire Reynard was in like way wrought on it. It told how that they made a long tour, and said that not for love or hate would they part. But once they saw a pack of hounds and a lot of men on their track, so they fled for their lives. Then quoth my sire, ‘Where shall we flee, Ti-bert, for we

have been seen?' 'I know,' said my sire, 'more ways than one how to put them on a false scent; so long as you stay with me all will go well.' But Ti-bert, full of fear, got up to the top of a high tree, and hid in the leaves, where no dog could see or reach him, and left my sire with all the pack close on his trail. Then did Ti-bert jeer at my sire, and



said, 'Now, dear Reynard, show forth all your wiles; for if your wit fail you, I fear you are lost.' My sire heard this from one in whom he put most trust; and his wiles would have been in vain, had he not seen and crept to a hole, and thus got clear of the hounds. I do not love Ti-bert, but yet I wish him no hurt, though I should not grieve if he gets paid out one day.

"One tale more in bold and clear form was wrought on this strange glass. It was of a Wolf, and of how he once found on a heath a dead horse whose flesh was foul, and he was fain to scrunch and eat the bones, and with such greed, that one stuck fast in his throat. Then he sought for one who had skill to cure him, and said he would give a heap of gold to him that should ease his pain. At last he met with the Crane, whom he thought could help him with his long neck; so he



When they heard the hounds, Ti-bert the Cat got up in a high tree and hid in the leaves, but Reynard the Fox had to run for his life.—Page 64.  
*Reynard the Fox.*

said he would give him the large store. The Crane, to get this rich fee, thrust his neck in the Wolf's throat and drew out the bone. The Wolf gave a start and said, in a howl, 'You hurt me; but I mind it not this time, yet take heed that you do not so once more.' Quoth the Crane, 'Go, and be glad, Sir Is-grim, for the bone is out; I want but the fee you said you would give me.' Quoth the Wolf, 'What does this hunks crave? I feel pain, and yet you ask a fee, when it is you who ought to thank me for your life. I had your head in my mouth and let you draw it forth; so it is I who have the right to the fee.'

"All this, and more than I can think of, was wrought on the glass; for no man had so great art as he who made it. And as such gems were too rich for me to hold, I sent them to my liege King and Queen, as marks of the high trust their reeve had in them. You would have wept for my brood had you seen their grief when the glass was gone, for they oft gave a sly peep in it to view their faces and see how their coats sat on them.

"But I thought not how nigh good Kay-ward was to his death; and I knew of none but Bel-lin the Ram who was fit to bring such gifts. I will search the world, but I will find the base wretch who took Kay-ward's life; for he who sheds blood will be found out—its voice cries to the skies! He on whose fate the red guilt rests may now be in the King's sight; for crime can hide its fell form so as to seem void of stain."

## CHAPTER XIII.

OF WHAT MORE REY-NARD THE FOX SAID TO THE KING ;  
AND HOW THE CHARGE OF KAY-WARD'S DEATH  
BROKE DOWN.

THEN Rey-nard said, "My lord, my worst grief is that you should say no good was done by my sire or me. The cares of state may well cause kings to have blunt minds for some things, or else my liege might know how in the days of your sire's reign, and you were a prince of two years old, my sire came from a high school where he won great fame for the skill he had in drugs, that he wore robes of silk and a belt of gold lace. When he came to Court, the King was so ill that it was thought his death was sure. My sire felt sad at this news, for he had great love for his liege lord, who was glad to see him, and would let no one else come nigh his sick bed. Your sire said, 'Rey-nard, I am in much pain, and in a low state.' My sire felt his pulse, made him thrust out his tongue, put on grave airs, and thought of his case for some time; then quoth he, 'My dear lord, I know what will cure you at once; so, if you want to mend, you must eat the heart of a wolf six years old, else, I fear, you will not live, and my skill can do no more.' The Wolf at that time stood some way off, but spoke not a word. Then quoth the King, 'Sir Is-grim, you hear there is but one cure left for me, which is your heart.' The Wolf said, 'Not so, I pray, my liege; for I am not yet five years old.' 'It must needs be,' quoth my sire; 'let him be slit; and when I view his heart I will

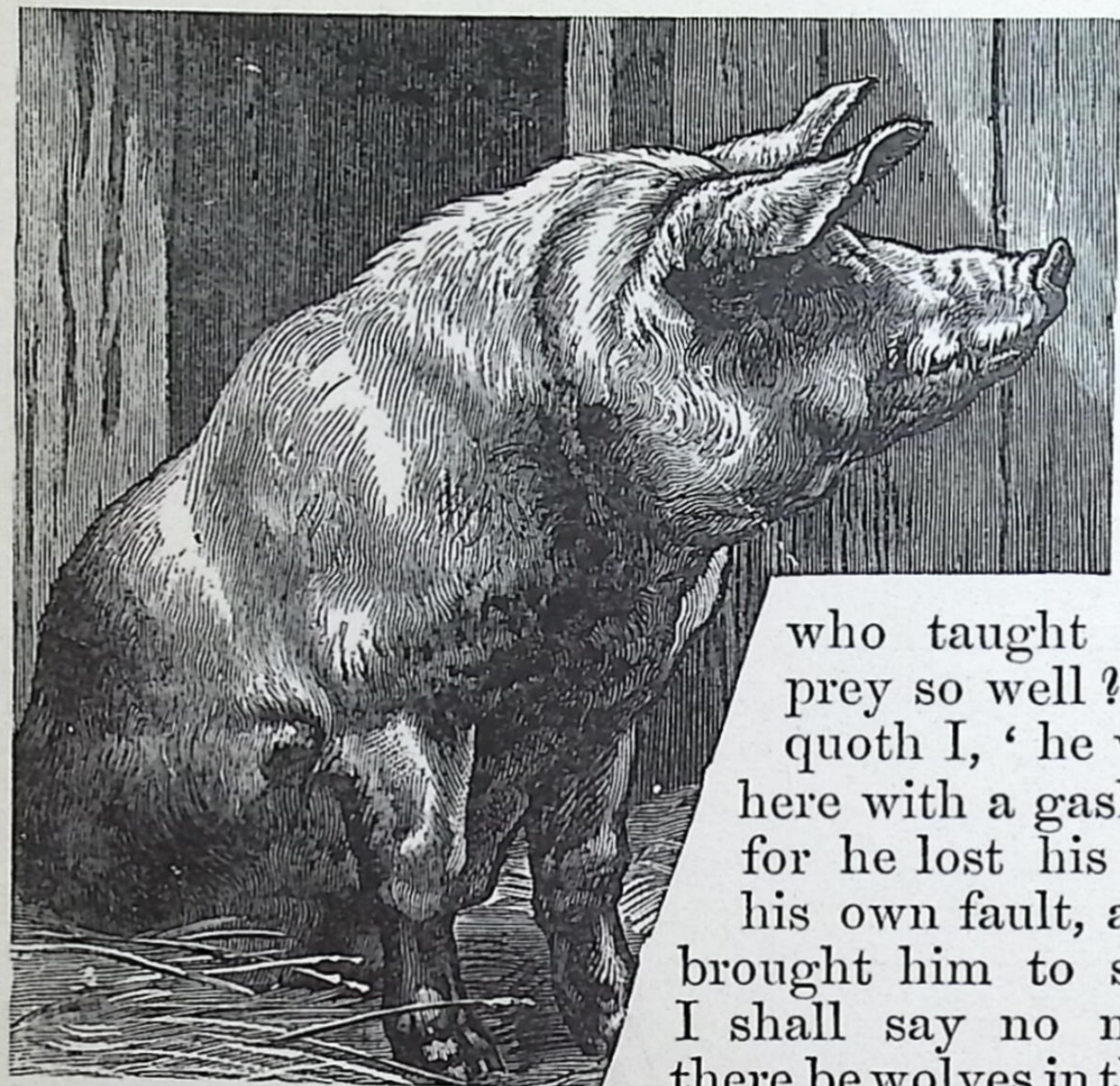
tell you if it will do.' Then the Wolf was brought to the garth, and his heart was cut out, which the King ate, and he soon grew well. Then my sire got the thanks of the King, who made a law that on pain of death all the beasts of his Realm should call him Sir Rey-nard. Then he had a post in the Court; and the King had such love for him as to have him wear a wreath round his head, as a mark of his high grade.

"What I have now told you, my liege, fell out in your youth, and it may well slip your mind. But I boast not when I say that I, too, have shown my love for the Throne, though that may not be borne in your thoughts, from the length of time since it took place. I tell you this, not to grieve you, but to show my vaunt is not in vain.

"Once in our sport Sir Is-grim and I caught a pig, which gave such fierce grunts that we had to kill it. At this time you came out of a grove, spoke to us as if we had been friends, and said that you and the Queen felt the want of food; so you bade us give you part of our chase. Is-grim did not like the thought, and gave a scowl; but quoth I, in warmth, 'With all my heart, my lord; and had I a more fit meal, it would be too mean for you.' Then Is-grim gave a growl, as is his wont, and in a glum way caught hold of one half the pig, so that he left but a fourth part each for you and the Queen; while poor I had to make the best of the draff. You still had not food for your wants, and as Is-grim would give up none, you dealt him a blow with your foot, which tore the skin from his ears, and sent him off in throes of pain. Then you told him to get you more meat, and then come back at once; so he crept off in search of game, though he would fain stay where he was. Then



quoth I, 'If it be my lord's will, I will go and cause him to make more haste.' So off we went and soon caught a calf, which, when you saw it, made you laugh. Then you said that I was swift, and had a rare gift for sport, to find my game so soon, and then you bade me halve it. I did so, and gave a cut each to you and the Queen, while



our kin, who were with you, got the tripe; the head I gave to the Wolf, while I kept but the feet. Then said my lord, 'Ah, Rey-nard,

who taught you to carve prey so well?' 'My lord,' quoth I, 'he who doth soss here with a gash in his head, for he lost his skin through his own fault, and his greed brought him to shame.' But I shall say no more of this: there be wolves in these days that

would eat up their best friends and kin, nay, the King's self, for they love and fear no one. But woe to that land where such imps as these have sway.

"This, my lord, and deeds of a like kind, have I done to serve my King, though they find no place in your mind at this long date; still I hope that time and my zeal for

the Throne will bring them back with force. I have seen the day when my words had full weight with the Court, and I may live to see it once more. I have lost caste; yet it may be I shall rise to my late height, when faith in me may be as firm as of yore; so long as it swerves not from what is just, which is my sole aim. Now, my lord, I sue at your feet for what is meet. Let him who brings a charge to my hurt, vouch it in due form of law, and on strong proof, and I stand here to hail my doom. Should this not be the case, and crimes are laid on my head through sheer spite, of which I am free; then I claim the palm!"

Quoth the King, "Rey-nard, you say well. I reckon not of Kay-ward's death more than that his head was brought to me by Bel-lin the Ram. Hence I feel bound to free you from the blame as well as from the pain, which the law doth make the wage of such a crime as was laid, void of proof, at your door."

"My dread lord," said the Fox, "I thank you from the depths of my heart; but Kay-ward's death makes me mourn so much that I must not let it pass in a light way. I know my soul was sad when he set out, and I had dark thoughts which were the sure signs of the dread loss that was to be mine."

At these words and sad looks of the Fox, all those in Court could not check their sighs; for they put faith in his words and drank them in with greed. The King and Queen, in like way, felt one touch of that law which makes the whole world kin. But the lost gems were much to their minds; so they said Rey-nard should do all he could to find such; and as they had heard that this rare prize was for them, though they had it not, yet did Rey-nard meet with the same thanks as if they had.

## CHAPTER XIV.

HOW IS-GRIM THE WOLF ONCE MORE MADE PLAINT OF  
THE FOX; AND OF REY-NARD'S PLEA.

THE Fox heard with joy those words of the King; and though he knew he could not put his vow in force, yet swore he would search the world through, till he had found the gems.

The King at once said he should grant the Fox all due aid, so soon as he could learn where the gems were. Reynard gave meet thanks to his liege: he thought by his false tales and bland speech he had so bound the King to him with a leash of love, that none durst speak a word, much less bring a charge, to his hurt. But Is-grim stood gruff and mute. At length his thoughts grew too strong for him; so he had to give them vent.

"Oh, my lord," said he, "how can you thus put faith in the words of one who takes pride in his guile? Let not his glib tongue and low art lead you to think he means what he says. He has shed blood more times than I can count; is false to the Throne, and scoffs in your face. I am glad he is now here that I may show up his guilt in so strong a light that all the lies he can hatch will serve him not a jot. First, let me tell you, my lord, in how vile a way he dealt with Dame Hers-win a short time since. One day, at the bleak time of the year, when both were by a lake, he told my wife he would teach her a new and sure way to catch fish with her tail. Well, my poor wife did not see the joke; so she went through the deep mire till she came to where he told her: then she held down her



When the Wolf got to the lake, she stood so long that her tail grew firm in the ice; then the pain and the cold made her howl.  
—Page 71. *Reynard the Fox.*

tail, and thought the fish would come and bite. But the cold was so keen, and she stood still so long, that her tail grew firm in the ice, and with all her strength she could not pull it out. Then pain and cold made her howl; but the rude rogue gave her taunts and not help. When I heard my wife's groans, I came at once to give my mite of aid; when I saw Reynard run off, swift as a roe. I had hard work of it to break the ice and set her free; but with all my toil and pains she had to leave a piece of her tail in the lake. We both ran the worst of risks; for my poor wife's groans made such a fuss in the vill close by that the folks came with stones and bills, and flails and forks, and the dames with the staffs with which they spin, and they beat us and said, 'Kill, kill!' and 'Slay, slay!' that it was the worst plight we were in. One stout and swift boor hurt us much with the staff of a pike, and were it not the night stood our friend we would scarce have got off with our lives. Thence we came to a field, full of broom and furze, where we hid from our foes. Thus, my good lord, have you lent a kind ear to what this vile wretch hath done to us; and we now claim what the law deems just. Though he wears a sleek face, he lives in fear of the axe and the rope; one of which will be his fate at last."

Then up spoke Reynard, "My liege, if what the Wolf says were true, I grant it would touch my good name. I now tell him he durst not prove his words, and fling back his foul charge right full in his face. I know I taught his wife to catch fish, and how to get to the lake. But her greed, when she heard me name the fish, made her rush in such hot haste that she would not pay the least heed to what I said. When she got to the lake she stood so long there that her tail grew firm in the ice, though she caught

as much fish as a score of wolves would eat, whose maws were of the main size. But it is a trite phrase, 'Crave all, lose all'; and, in sooth, greed works but ill to him who has it, and brings no good home. So soon as I saw her fast bound, I did all I could to free her; but it was of no use; I could not move her.

"Just at that time Is-grim came, and when he found the plight his wife was in he fell in a huge rage; he spoke in a harsh and foul way to her; while the worst names he could think of were too good for me; nay, he said I should bear the brunt; so that more to get rid of his noise than from fear of him, I left the spot. Then he got to the edge of the lake, and by dint of pulls and hauls, till he was nigh out of breath, he set her free from the ice, when numb and half dead with cold they ran up and down the fields to gain warmth. What I say is the truth; for I would not lie to the King for all this world's wealth. Truth, my lord, is my badge, and has for all time been the pride of my race. Should you have the least doubt of what I say, I ask but eight days to speak with such friends whose skill in the law is well known; at the end of which time I shall prove my words in due form, and by the lips of those you can trust, who are good beasts, and free from guile. Then both you, my lord, and the Court, will find how just is my cause; and that I would as lief lose my life as lie to the King. What have I to do with the Wolf? He is more vile than the worst beast that prowls the woods, and is false to the Throne as well. As to the trick which he says I had the spite to play on his wife, I now ask her if this be not a base lie? that is, if she stand not in such awe of her spouse that she dare not speak the truth, let the cause be what it might."

At this Dame Hers-win came forth and said, "Oh, Reynard, why dost thou oil thy tongue so, that no one is safe from thy wiles? Not once, but scores of times have you led me wrong and brought me to grief. Think how ill thou didst use me at the well, where two pails hung by one rope which ran through a groove, so that when one went down the next came up. Thou didst stand in one pail and then fall down souse as far as thou couldst go; there thou wast in great fear till I heard thy moans and sped in haste to help thee. 'How didst thou get in this plight?' quoth I. 'I am in search of fish,' saidst thou, 'and have had such a glut that I dread I shall burst.' 'How shall I come to thee?' said I. Then saidst thou, 'Aunt, leap right in the pail which hangs by you; and thou wilt be down soon.' This I did; and as I was of more bulk than you I was borne down in a trice; while you got safe to the top. The *ruse* was shrewd, and when I grew cross at this low trick of yours, quoth you, to taunt me, 'Aunt, this is but the way of the world; one falls that some one else may rise.' Then didst thou leap out of the pail and hie off, while I was left in the well all day in cold and with no food to eat, and ere I could get out I was so much hurt from blows that I had well nigh lost my life."

"Aunt," said the Fox, "though the blows gave you pain, it were best you had them and not me; for you are strong and can bear them, which I could not. Then think, Aunt, what a nice bit of lore thou hast learnt, which is, not to put trust in friend or foe when what he says tends to free him from a scrape; for we all love self best."

Then spoke Dame Hers-win to the King: "I pray you, my lord, to mark well how this knave can blow all winds with the same breath, and paint all hues with the same

brush. It would fail me to tell of half his vile pranks. Once he led my spouse to a great ape, which, by the way, cost him one of his ears. If the Fox dare for once to speak the truth, the best proof he can give, or I can wish for, is his own tale."

At once Rey-nard caught at these words, and said, "Most glad will I be to do this. I shall tell the truth and not flinch; and hence I pray the King to lend his ear to what I now state.

"Once the Wolf came to me while in the woods, and said in a whine that he had no meat to eat and was in great want, though I thought at the time he was sleek and full; for one must not trust a word he says. I felt ruth at last, and gave him to know that I stood in need of a meal as much as he did. So off we set, side by side, in search of prey. When half the day had gone, and we found our chase in vain, he said he could not move a step more. In the nick of time our eye fell on a gap close by a thorn tree, and we heard a queer kind of low dull sound come from it, the cause of which we could not make out. I told the Wolf to creep in and try if he could find aught that would serve us in our need, for I knew there must be some kind of game in the place. But, quoth he, 'Friend, I durst not do so for the King's crown, till I first know what is in the hole; I would not take the risk; but, what if you try, who have arts and parts to get you quick out of a strait; I will stay hard by this tree till you come back; and I pray you take time by the front lock, and let me know what the spoil is when you clutch it.'

"Thus, my lord, did he cause me, a poor weak beast, to put my head first in a poke, and chance my life, while he, who is stout and firm of limb, lay in peace. I got in the

den, as he bade me, and found the way dark, dank, and long; but at last I saw a strong glare of light come in at the mouth of the cave, and by it my eye caught a huge she Ape, with eyes like fire, her mouth set round with long sharp teeth, and with nails on her paws as fine as pins. By her side lay a brood as grim and fierce as their dam. They gave a gape with their mouths when they saw me, at which I took fright; but I thought that now I was in, I would brave it as well as I could. Hence I set my eyes full on her, till she grew as big as Is-grim, and the least of her young ones as large as I am. There they lay in mire and dirt; but I made up my mind, as I thought it the best course, to speak them fair; and hence I said, 'Long life to you, dear aunt, and may you have more bliss than you can wish. I do so much like your fine brood; they look so sleek and slim; you may well be proud of such a stock, for they would not shame a prince had one been their sire. When I got to these parts I would not lose a day, but came at once to see you; and now my cup of joy is full.' Quoth she, 'My friend Rey-nard, I greet you well; you have found me in a sad state, more like a blowz than is my wont, but I thank you for all that; we are now and then caught by our friends when things are not quite as straight as they ought to be. You are known all through the King's realm for your wit and the store of lore that lies in one small head, and hence your call is a great boon. I beg you to take charge of my young ones and teach them some of the grand arts, that they may know how to live and thrive in the world. From the time they were born I have had you in my mind; and I know they can find none to guide them so well; for you have the best traits, and walk with those who are wise and good.'

“These words gave me ease, which came of my kind speech; for she felt proud of the term aunt, though she is none of my kith or kin; for my true aunt is Dame Rukewaw, who stands a short way off, and can boast of a fine brood. Then said I to the foul thing, ‘Aunt, my life and my goods are both at your beck; and to serve you night or day shall be my chief pride.’ Had I lost all my wealth I would have felt rich were I but clear of the cave; for it was so rank and close I thought I should choke. Then I felt for Is-grim, who all this while had no food; so I took my leave, on the ground that my wife would grieve at my long stay. Quoth she, ‘Dear friend, you must not quit this place till you have had a slight meal. I do not take it as kind of you thus to make such swift haste, for your time is your own, I go bail.’ Then she rose up and led me to a large room close at hand where there was a row of prime red deer and roes, and such piles of rare birds that my eyes shed tears at the sight. I set to work and made a rich feast, and when I had done she gave me a whole side and half a haunch of a fat doe to bring home to my wife, which I felt shame to take; but she saw at a glance how loath I was to have her gifts, and hence did press them on me. Then I took my leave; and when she gave me her hand to kiss, said I would see them all soon, and felt right glad that I had sped so well.

“When I came out of the cave I saw Is-grim plump on the ground, while his groans rent the air. He told me he was so faint that if he could not get some meat he would be sure to give up the ghost. Then I gave him the prime haunch I brought with me; so that he owes his life to me. For this act he gave me thanks at the time, much as he seeks to do me hurt now. When he could eat no more,

quoth he, ‘Rey-nard, my good friend, what else did you find in the hole? for I need to eat more than when you gave me the haunch; that wee bit but whets my greed and gives me a gust for good things.’ ‘Is-grim,’ said I, ‘you creep in at the cave’s mouth, and there you will find my aunt, with her whole brood; if you please her ear with fine words and speak her fair, you need dread no ill, and all will go as you would wish.’

“I think, my lord, to one who had a grain of sense in his head such hints would tell him how to act; but dull dolts will walk in their own ways, do what one might, and it is but waste of words to teach them. Is-grim said he would do as I bade him, and so in he went to the moist den, where he found the huge Ape, quite snug, with her young ones at her feet, which made him blench at first sight. He gave a shrill squeak, and said, ‘What foul sty is this I have come to? and what grim whelps! Drown them! pray drown them! their gruff looks put me in a fume and make mine hair stand on end. And then, they glare so! I trust I shall not once more set eyes on such waifs and strays; they serve but to scare the crows!’ ‘Sir Is-grim,’ said the Ape, ‘’tis true I can say not a word in praise of their good looks; but it is not their fault that I know of; nor do I see what it has to do with you. They are my brood, and I am their dam. One of your kin has but just gone from hence, who is of high rank, and wise, which you are not. He told me they are fair and have good looks; so I care not a straw what you think, and you may trudge as soon as you please.’ Is-grim blurts out, ‘Dame, you carp at what I say. Now, I want some of the meat you have in store; it is more fit for me to have it than these brats of yours.’ She told him she

had no meat for him; but he said he would soon find as much as he could eat; and with that he caught hold of some, when up got my aunt (as she claims to be) and her brood, who tore him with their sharp nails, that the blood ran down his ears and chaps. I heard him yelp and yell as if he had got bad pains, and naught was left for him but to scape from the den as fast as he could, mulct of his meat. When I saw him he was black and blue and full of gore from the blows and bites he got. Here and there he had a slash in his skin, and one ear he left in the hole as a pledge that he would act with more tact the next time he gave the Ape a call.

“When I saw him in this sad state it made me yearn; so I said—but not to twit him—he had not made that good use of his tongue he might have done. He told me he spoke as he felt and as he found them, for the dame was a foul beast and the young ones a set of grim runts. I told him he should have been mild of speech, spoke of their fair looks, and laid claim to them as his best of kin; but he said he would have seen them hung first. Then quoth I, ‘You must shut your chaps and not whine more, for you are to blame. Fair words cost not a groat; and keep fresh and good all the year. To be bland one need not lie; and those of high grade will go as far as to say that, and, in sooth, more so, if the truth be told.’

“Thus, my lord, have I been frank with you, and told you how Is-grim came by his red night cap. No word of his can mar what I say; for it is the whole truth, in which there is not a patch of guile; for I would be the last one in the world to fly in the face of, or to foist false tales on, my liege King.”

## CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE WOLF SPOKE TO THE FOX, AND FLUNG HIS GLOVE AT HIM; AND HOW REY-NARD TOOK UP THE GAGE.

THEN said Is-grim to the Fox, “Vile knave that thou art, I heed not thy gibes and scowls, but I will tell of the hurt thou hast done me. You say I was in great need and that you came to my help. You lie, like a dog! You gave me naught but a bare bone, from which thou didst champ off the meat. You charge me with high crimes, such as that I laid a plot to change the form of the State and to take the King’s life, just to gain a hoard hid in Hus-ter-loe. This, too, is a bold and base lie. I have borne with you thus long, but find I must sneap you at last. Hence, my lord the King, and you my brave knights, my friends and kin, I here state and vouch to the last gasp of my life that thou, Rey-nard the Fox, art a vile knave, and that thou hast the red stain of blood on thy head; and this I will make good on thy foul skin, in face of the King, by fair fight, till one of us shall fall. In proof of this I here cast thee my glove, which I dare thee to take up; that my wrongs may be set right, or else die like a loon.”

Rey-nard, when he heard these words of wrath, felt ill at ease. He knew he was weak whilst the Wolf was strong, so he thought he might fare the worst. Still he did not quite want to shirk the fight; for he knew that were he to wince, it would stick as scurf to his name and

blur his shield. But then he brought to mind that he had one chance left, as the Wolf's claws had been off and his foot was still sore; so he said in a loud voice: "He who says I am a knave, and that I plot to kill the King, and that I shed blood, I say lies in his throat, and Is-grim most of all. Fool that thou art! thou dost thirst for thy own bale; which I shall not balk thee of. All thy lax words I will prove to be false, and that they mar the weal of the Realm. In mark of this I take up thy gage, and here throw thee mine."

When this was done, the King took the pledge of each, and gave them the right to try a feat of strength; but he said they must find sound bail that the fight should take place on the next day. Then the Bear and the Cat came forth as bail for the Wolf, and Grim-bard the Brock and Bit-e-las the young Ape in like way for the Fox. As soon as all the forms had been gone through, Dame Ruke-naw took Rey-nard to the porch of the Court, and said, "Your dear aunt hopes you will take care and not get hit or hurt in this fight. One, near of kin to us, once told me of a charm good for those who meet a foe and cross swords with him; he learned it, he said, from an old priest who had much skill in such kind of art. He who will say the words of this charm while he fasts from food, shall come off best should he face a foe that day. Hence, my dear Rey-nard, fear not; for ere you take to the field, I will read it to you, and the Wolf shall lose the palm." The Fox gave her his best thanks, and said he had no doubt that through her means he would come off well, and not get a scratch, as on his part the fight was fair and just, for he held no pique, and but sought to clear his fair name of foul blots. Then he stayed all night long with his horde,

who made time wane by good cheer and blithe talk as to what Fate had in store for the Fox.

Dame Ruke-naw thought well how she might work for Rey-nard's good in the fight that was to come off; so she got him close shorn from his head to his tail, and then put oil on his skin. This made him so smooth and hard to hold, that the Wolf must fail should he try to catch him; the more so, as he was round, fat and plump. Then she told him not to wax warm at the first set to, nor to get too close, that his foe may toil and run at him when he meant to deal a blow, and that in such case he was to get where there was most dust, which he should strive to whisk up with his feet and thick tail, so as to make it fly in the Wolf's eyes. At the same time he was to keep his tail as close as he could, so that his foe might not seize it and pull him to the ground. She said when the Wolf's eyes were half blind from dust, he should not let that time slip, but bite him where he might do him most hurt; then wend and thwack him in the eyes with his tail to tease him and get him in a maze, that by this means he might lose a chance. "And thus," quoth she, "you will so tire and wear him out, that he will fail to get at you; the more so as the wounds on his feet are still raw from the loss of his shoes, which you took off from him; for though he is a big size, yet his heart is small and frail as that of a chick. This, Rey-nard, is what I tell you to do; and take an old dame's word for it, that, in such a case, guile is more than force. I pray you, then, be of good cheer, and hope for the best; so that not you but all your kin may have joy and gain fame and a proud name by the palm you will win this day. And this is the charm which Monk Mar-tin taught me, by which no foe, let him be as fierce as he may,



can strike you. These are the words of the weird spell." Then she laid her hands on his head and said :

"Blaerde Shcay Alphenio,  
"Kashue Corsons Alsbufrio.

"Now, dear Rey-nard, you may be sure that you are quite safe from all hurt or harm; so go to rest for a short time, for it is just day, and a nice nap will give you strength and help you to win the fight."

The Fox gave his aunt his best thanks, and told her he put full faith in the might of the charm, and that he would love and serve her more and more from that time forth. Then he lay down to sleep on the grass, near to a tree, till the sun rose, when the Ot-ter came to rouse him, and gave him a fat young duck with which to break his fast. "Dear friend," said he, "I have kept strict watch all the live long night to get this snack for you. I stole it from the man who shot it, and I find it fresh and good; here, take and eat it, for it will give you nerve to meet your foe."

The Fox was glad of this treat; said it was a stroke of good luck to get it; and that, should he live out that day, he would do some kind deed for the Ot-ter, who was a friend in need. He then ate the duck, to which keen greed and the crisp air gave the sole sauce; and took four large draughts at a brook to wash it down. Then in high glee he and all his kin and clan went to the field where the fight was to take place.

When the King saw Rey-nard so shorn and full of grease he said to him, "Well, Rey-nard, I see you mean to get safe out of this fray; you look as if you meant more to shun harm than to gain a prize."

The Fox was dumb for the nonce, and, with staid airs, bent to the earth in sight of the King and Queen, as though he would lick the dust. He then went forth to the sward where the match was to be fought, and where he was met by the Wolf, whose tongue must needs wag with vain taunts at his foe, and proud boasts of how he would serve him out.

The Leo-pard and the Lynx were the chiefs of arms, and led the lists. First, the Wolf was bade to make his call, when he said the Fox was false to his King and to the Realm, and that on his pate lay the stain of blood, which he would prove on his vile hide, or else be known as a mean churl.

When the set forms had been gone through, the chiefs of arms held them to



the call; when they came to the bout. Then all the tribe of beasts went off from the lists, save Dame Ruke-naw, who stood by the Fox and bade him dwell on the words she spoke, and the hints she gave him. She told him to call to mind how, when he was but a few years old, he was thought most wise and shrewd by all the beasts; and now that time had taught him more craft than he then knew, while his strength was not less, she bade him fight so as to win the day, which would add to the pride of his bright fame and that of his race while time should last.

To this quoth the Fox, "Thanks, my dear good aunt, and, trust me, I will do my best in this bout, and not let slip from my mind one jot of what you have told me. I doubt not that my deeds will bring fame to my friends, and cast shame on my foes. Now, then, to let loose the dogs of war and put one more star on my breast."

"Thus may it be," said the Ape, who then left the lists.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HOW THE FOX AND THE WOLF FOUGHT, AND HOW REYNARD WON THE BAY.

WHEN all, save the twain who were to fight, had left the lists, the Wolf ran in a huge rage to where the Fox stood. He lost no time, but gave a bound and struck at him with his fore feet. The force with which he dealt the blow would have thrown his foe to the ground, did the Fox not foil it by a quick bob of his head, and a swift spring on one side. Then the Wolf went round and round



The Wolf ran in a rage to where the Fox stood, and struck at him with his fore feet, but the Fox sprang to one side, and threw up the dust in his foe's eyes.—Page 85. *Reynard the Fox.*

the lists, to try and seize hold of the Fox; and as the Wolf's strides were more long than those of Reynard's, he, as a rule, came up to him, and strove hard to strike him with his fore foot. Then the Fox brought his skill to bear, and threw up the dust in his foe's eyes, so that he could not see clear; and when he put his paw to soothe them and ease the smart, the Fox smote him in the face with his thick tail, which made the Wolf wild. Then he durst cease to give the Fox chase, for the dust and fine sand made his eyes ache to such a pitch that he had to stop and rub and wash the grit out. Reynard was not blind to all this; so he made up to him, and hit him with all his force, and then gave him three great wounds on the head with his teeth. When he saw what he had done, quoth he in jest: "What ails thee, Sir Is-grim; hath some one beat thee? Stay, I will bring thee some aid. You who take the life of poor weak lambs, and then lay the blame on me; I can now pay you off for your old crimes. I shall serve thee in a way that will be good for thy soul; and ere you quit this field you shall sue for grace. Yet, I feel ruth, and my heart yearns for you; so if you kneel down and ask me to grant a truce, and say the palm is mine, I will spare thy life, bad as thou art and base."

These scoffs set the Wolf all but out of his wits, and made him wish he had the chance and the strength to tear the Fox to shreds. He took up his foot, sore as it was, and with sure aim dealt him such a spank that he fell flat on the ground as though the life had left him. But up sprang Reynard in a trice, for he was slim and light, who gave a jump on the Wolf, and held him down for a time. Then came the tug of war. All the Wolf could do was to

hoot and howl. Ten times he sprang on the Fox, so as to let him feel the clench of his sharp teeth for the last time, and ten times his foe, by help of the thick coat of oil he wore, got off. So light and swift of foot was the Fox, that when the Wolf thought he had him in his firm grasp, he would get a fierce bite, so that he would have to let go his hold. This led him to think the day was lost, and that it were as well to give up all hope.

Thus the fight held up. On one side sheer force, which was met by craft; on the next wild rage, which was met by coy ease. Now the Wolf felt the loss of his claws and how his sore feet kept him back. So he made up his mind to take a leaf out of the Fox's book, and bide well his time till he could give one blow which he meant should close the fight. When he thought the right time came, he sprang on the Fox, threw him on the ground, and ere he could get on his feet, fell on him, and sought by his great weight to press his breath out; for quoth he, "It is to me a great shame that I spare him so long. I shall get taunts for that I am yet on the worst side. I am sore hurt, and I bleed fast; while he casts dust and sand in my eyes, that soon I shall not see."

Now the Wolf's friends did shout for joy, while those of the Fox could but look on in grief. When Reynard found that, do what he might, he could not get free, he was in dire dread, and smote the Wolf in the head with his front claws, and tore the skin from his ears and brows, so that one of his eyes hung out, which gave him so much pain that he wept and made a loud noise, for the blood ran down his cheeks as though it had been a stream. Still Is-grim held the Fox with a strong gripe, and said at the pitch of his voice: "Now, Fox, I have thee; yield, or

I will kill thee: thy lies and tricks shall not serve thee aught, but thou must die or be my slave."

Then the Fox said, "Dear Sir Is-grim, I am your true friend from this time forth. I shall get shrift for you and yours, and shall serve you as I would our good sire the Pope. I will go to Rome, or Pa-les-tine, or where you wish me, and let you have all the grace I shall reap by my toil and good works. I tell you no such gift as this has been made to a king. You shall be the lord of all my lands and tithes, and what I take of geese, fowl, flesh, or fish, or aught else, you and your wife and young ones shall have the first choice. I will aid your strength with my guile, so that when we are bound as one, all the force in this world will fail to crush us. I will stay with you so as to ward off all hurt or scathe. In sooth, let me say that I would not have fought could I well have got off; but you were the first to call for the fray. So far, I have dealt well with you, and have not yet put forth my main strength, as I might have done had you not been my friend. It is a fair truth, and it ought so to be, that a foe should spare his friend, and the strong the weak. So have I now done, and that mark you well. When I ran in front of you I might have hurt you far more than I did, but my heart would not let me. By chance I tore out your eye; for which sad act I feel and grieve more than I can tell. How I wish it did not take place, and that it was I who had lost an eye and not you! But in this you have a gift which most folk have not, for while they see but one eye in you, you will see two eyes in them. Hence, I pray you, spare my life: it is well to be slow in wrath; to be rash is but to sow the seeds of grief. I know you are shrewd, wise, and brave, and that you seek the meed of fame far more

than you thirst for my blood; my death will serve you not; while by my life you will gain the rare boon of a firm friend."

Then spoke Is-grim: "False thief! how dost thou cheat thy own self! Full well I know that if thou wert once more on thy free feet, thou wouldst not set by me the shell of an egg. If thou saidst thou wouldst give me all the gold in the world, I durst not let thee go. Nor think I more of thy wealth than I do of thee. All thou hast said is but lies, meant to cheat me. I have known thee this long while, and am no bird to be caught by chaff, as I can tell good corn. Oh, how thou wouldst strut and crow, and say my wit was weak, did I but trust thee! Thou mayst well talk this stuff to one that knew thee not, but I can see through thy grave guise and tall talk, and take heed of thee. Thou false, foul knave! thou saidst thou hadst not done thy best in this fight. Just look on me! Didst not thou gouge one of my eyes, and give me a score wounds in my head, and wouldst not so much as let me rest to gain breath? I would be a flat fool, and you would write me down a crass ass, if I should now spare thee for the hurt and shame thou hast brought on me. Most of all do I feel for the lies thou hast told of my wife, Hers-win, whom I love. The low trick you had the guilt to play on her is fresh in my mind, and fills my heart with hate."

The Wolf had best have held his peace, for while he thus spoke his wounds bled, and he grew faint. The Fox, who saw how his case stood, felt that the time had come for him to strike a blow on which his own life hung; so he gave a bound, sprang at the Wolf, caught him by the throat, and put his teeth in so far and fast, that the Wolf fell in a swoon. Then the Fox let go his firm gripe, and

gave his foe a few sharp bites, as a sign that he had beat him. He next took him by the hind legs, and drew him forth through the field, that all might see what he had done. Now Is-grim's friends felt great grief, and went in tears to the King, to pray him to stop the fight, and take it in his hands. This the King did; who told the Leo-pard and the Lynx, who kept the lists, to say to the Fox and Wolf that the King speaks and says the feat of strength must cease, for that it would be a slur on both sides if one was slain; and that all the beasts who had seen the fray give the palm to the Fox.

Rey-nard said, "I thank them much, and shall do the King's will in all things."

Then came Grim-bard the Brock, and Dame Slo-pard his wife; Dame Ruke-naw and her two sons, Bit-e-las and Fair-limb; and more than these, Pan-crote the Beaver, and Or-di-gale the Ot-ter, and the Mar-tin, the Fer-ret, the Squir-rel, the Pole-cat, the Wea-sel, and the Shrew, and five score more who would not have come had not the Fox won the field. Some came who once made complaints of him, but who would now feel proud could they do him the least good, and said they were his best friends. Such is the way of the world. The rich hath great store of friends, who would be glad to serve them; the poor hath none but foes, and all their gain is but loss. These friends of the Fox did hail him as the prince and best of beasts with wild shouts, fifes, and horns. They then went with him to the King, the chiefs of arms in the van; while those who bore the horns and the lutes made up the wake.

## CHAPTER XVII.

HOW THE FOX GOT THE KING'S GRACE ; AND HOW HE HAD A HIGH POST IN THE STATE THRUST ON HIM.

AS soon as the Fox came in the King's sight he fell on his knees ; but the King took him by the hand and said, "Lord Rey-nard, you have this day won a proud prize, and now we raise you to the rank of a peer of our Realm, so that you will be known as the Earl of Hedge-wood. Hence we burst your bonds, and set you free to go where you have a mind. When Is-grim the Wolf gets well from his wounds, I will call all the wise beasts of my State to the Court, when both of you shall be sent for, so that the bay you have won may be put on your brow, with the star and sash to which your new rank lays claim."

"My dread liege," quoth the Fox, "I am but too well paid with the way it doth please you to judge of my deeds in the field. But, my lord, when first I came to Court, I found a host of beasts there to whom I had done no hurt, who sought my life, and with this view made a league with my sworn foes. They thought the Wolf was more in your good grace than I, and this was all the ground they had for their poor spite. They put me in mind of a pack of hounds whom I once saw near to a large manse where monks dwelt in ease. They stood there to wait for one of their flock who had slunk to the room where the food was kept, and who came out in quick time with a fat piece of beef in his jaws. But the cook was soon at his tail, who flung at him a pan of hot broth,

ON THE WATCH.



which made him yell at a fierce rate. Then those base brutes, who saw but the meat, said, 'Oh, how rich thou art, and how much art thou bound to love the kind cook who gave thee such a prize!' But when he came near to them, and they saw the skin all off his back, and how he did writhe in pain, then they sought to flout and not heed him, and at last drove him from their pack. Such, my liege, are those who now boast that they are my new friends. I may cheat and rob the Church and the poor, and they will both praise and aid me, so that they may lick their thumbs and get a share of the spoil. Now, my lord, none may say aught to wound me: I am the dog with the shin of beef in my mouth. But, tush! if I get a scald, then have I got a plague spot, and am in sooth not fit to speak with a soul; so that, were I wise, I should be thought a fool; and though a saint, the worst wretch in the world—all would pass me by in scorn."

Then quoth the King, "Lord Rey-nard, you, more than all beasts, ought to be a staunch friend to our Throne, and we doubt not but you will give us your best aid, so as to help us to guide the ship of State in a straight course, and keep her clear from shoals and rocks; for these are sad times, when beasts who were wont to keep the peace and bow to our will fall out and fight, and no more dwell as they were wont to do. The wit and good parts you have shown will, we think, help us to see that the law is well kept. Hence it seems good to us to make you one of our chief lords, and we hope you will wear your new rank in such a way that no foe, should you have one, can fix a slur on you. We, by our grace, raise you to a high grade, and to a post of vast trust, and we look to you to mete out what is just to all who seek your help. Think of the tale

you have told in our ears, and love truth and seek pure aims. Let but your keen wit and fine lore lead you to do good acts, and you will form such a strong link in the chain of State that we dare not snap you off. While you work for us and with us, and try to make all things right, not a beast in our Realm shall harm you but we will at once make him rue his deed."

These bland words of the King made the Fox's friends feel proud of him. Proud were they, too, to own the sway of such a wise and just liege, for whom they would lay down their lives. Then the King said he would, for their sakes, raise Lord Reynard to a rank still more high did he but act in a fair way; and the King gave a slight hint that it may be as well for them to warn him should they see his zeal on the wane.

"Fear not, my lord," said Dame Ruke-naw, "we will all watch him well; and if he fail in what he hath said to you, we will give him up."

The Fox gave his best thanks to the King, and said, "My dread liege, I owe you a debt I may not hope to pay, and I know of naught in me for which you should thus heap rich gifts on my head. I own I have sought them not, nor do I think I ought to have such high marks of your grace thrust on me; still I will try and wear them in a meek way. From this time forth I but live for my King and the Realm he rules so well."

In the mean time Bru-in the Bear, and Ti-bert the Cat, and Dame Hers-win, and his chief friends drew Is-grim from the field, laid him down on soft hay, and wrapt him up well. They then sent for men of skill, who came and bound up his wounds, which were just one score and five. As he still lay in a swoon, they had to chafe his brow with



Bru-in the Bear, and Ti-bert the Cat, and Dame Hers-win, now drew Is-grim from the field, and sent for men of skill to bind up his wounds.—Page 94.  
*Reynard the Fox.*



strong scents, and rub his eyes and cheek bones till he woke from his dull state, when he gave such a loud yelp as made all who stood by start at the sound. Then he got a drink to rouse him, and in a short time a drug to soothe his nerves; while Dame Hers-win heard the good news that she need not have the least fear for the life of her spouse.

When the Court broke up, Rey-nard took his leave with the rest; when the King and Queen said in kind tones, it was their will that he should not stay long from his post. The Fox told them it would be his chief thought and pride to do the King's wish, and he would pledge that all his friends and his whole clan should act in the like way. Then he set out for his seat at Mal-e-par-dus, right glad to get off so well, and to be so high in the King's grace. He then told his friends he could now lift up and pull down; and that while those who stood firm to him in the hour of need should have high posts and rich gain, he would make his foes eat the sour leek, strip them of all they had, and see them live to mourn their acts.

The route was long, but at length the Fox and his friends got safe to Mal-e-par-dus, where they took leave of Rey-nard, who gave them his best thanks for their kind aid. He said he would bear both them and the great good they did him in mind, and would help them with his life and goods, could such be of use. He then shook hands with and took kind leave of his friends, who went to their own homes.

Then the Fox sped with all haste to Dame Er-me-line, who was glad to see her dear spouse once more safe and back in the old fort where his sires had so long dwelt, and the walls of which were moist with age. She met him

with marks of deep love, and her sweet smiles made him feel as blithe as on the day he wed her. He then told her and her brood all the strange things he had met with at the Court since he left home, and did not miss a jot. The tale of his good luck made all their hearts beat high and feel light at the core, and he spent the rest of his days with them in bliss and peace.

**THE END.**

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