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BOOKS FOR THE BAIRNS.—V

EDITED BY W. T. STEAD.

THE ADVENTURES
OF
REYNARD THE FOX.

WITH 200 ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

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LONDON :

"REVIEW OF REVIEWS" OFFICE.

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VOL. I.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

No. 5.

PREFACE.

THE story of "Reynard the fox" is quite different from any of the stories which have gone before it. For this story was written by some very clever man hundreds of years ago, in Germany, in order to attack a cleyer rogue of a man who had cheated and lied and made his way by ruining his neighbours. We need not trouble ourselves about this "political satire," as it is called, when we are reading the story. It is an interesting story as it is written, and it has amused and interested millions of men and women and children who lived long ago and are now dead. But, whereas in all the other stories you have read the wicked people are punished in the end, in this case the wicked one comes off triumphantly. Reynard the fox was a sad rogue. He was a liar, a thief, and a hypocrite, and everything that was bad; but in this story he does not come to a bad end; quite the contrary—he succeeds by his villainy and his cheating far better than others by their truth-speaking and their honesty, and instead of being hanged, he is victorious over every one.

This is very sad, but unfortunately, in this respect, very much more true to real life. As you will find when you come to look about you in the world, the good people are not always triumphant, nor are the bad ones always punished—at least, not in this world, for, as you have already heard in the first two "Books for the Bairns," the wise man who wrote the fables, and the good Jesus who told the parables and worked the miracles, were both killed by the men whom they wished to help. And so it often is in this world. Why it is we cannot understand, but that it is we do not need to look far to see. Then it must be remembered that the other animals who complained of Reynard the fox, and whom he overcame by cheating and lying, were, after all, no better than Reynard himself, only they were not so clever. The Wolf, the Bear, and the Wild Cat were all doing just as cruel and evil things as Reynard, only he was much cleverer than they; and so among rogues, as among honest men, cleverness did it.

When I read the story of "Reynard the fox" to my children, my little girl, who is six, cried bitterly over the cruel fate of poor Isegrim the wolf, who certainly was treated very badly indeed, but she did not understand that if the whole story had been fully told it would be seen that Isegrim had killed far more innocent sheep, and done much more harm, than the clever Reynard whom he was trying to destroy, and who in the end turned the tables on him so cleverly. When you read the story you will see that if the animals had been obedient and good, and had not given way to their selfishness, it would never have been in Reynard's power to lead them such a dance. He played upon their weaknesses, their selfishness, their vanity, and so made profit out of the shortcomings of all the others. There are many Reynards in this world who make their living by their wits, and you will come across some of them sooner or later. When you do, remember the fate of Bruin the bear and of Hintze the wild cat, and do not let them lead you into temptation by appealing to your selfishness. There is another thing also you will do well to bear in mind, viz., to beware of flatterers and liars. If King Lion had not been so weak and foolish he would never have allowed Reynard to escape. Take care when you have to deal with people who are sneaks and sharpers and flatterers, who try to get round you by appealing to your weaknesses. If you remember the story of "Reynard the fox," you will be on your guard against being made to do injustice, even as did the Lion.

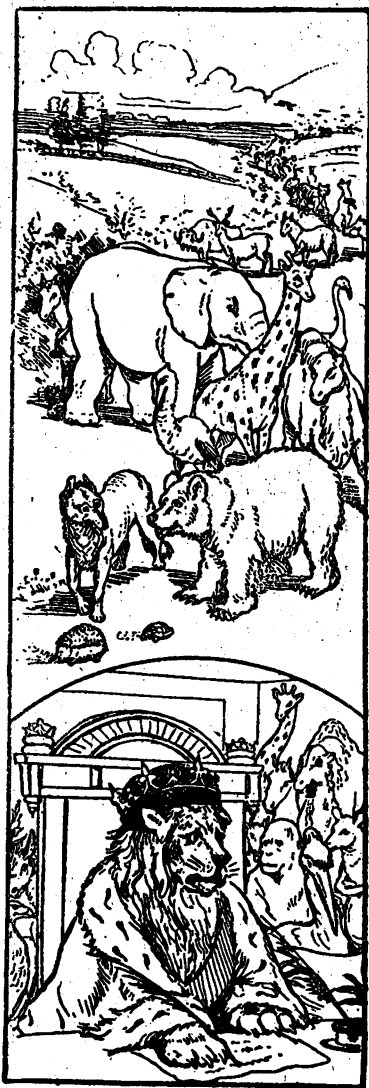
REYNARD THE FOX.

I.

It was Whitsuntide; and the Lion, the King of the beasts, summoned a great meeting of all his subjects.

All the beasts and birds came trooping into court from every side: Bruin the bear, and Isegrim the wolf, and Hintze the wild cat, and Lampe the hare, and Grimbart the badger, and crowds of others. But one was absent; and it was Reynard the fox.

King Lion sat in his council to administer justice, and all the birds and beasts that had any complaints to make were carefully listened to, and justice was done them. But this Whitsuntide there were more complaints than





usual; and they were all of the wickedness of Reynard the fox.

The first that came forward was Isegrim the wolf. "Indeed, your Majesty," he began, "there is no putting up with Reynard any longer. Only the other day he came to my house when I was out, and was very rude to my wife, and flapped dust with his tail into my children's eyes, and three of them have gone quite blind, poor little things. And he is such a thorough-paced liar that you can't believe a word he says."

"Yes," said the panther, "and did you hear how he treated poor old Lampe the hare? Reynard pretended he had turned good, and offered to teach Lampe how to say his prayers. I was just passing, and there they sat by the roadside, looking as pious as anything. Then Reynard

jumped up all of a sudden, and seized the poor frightened thing by the scruff of his neck, and worried him."

"Yes," said a dog, "and he went and stole the sausage that I was going to have for dinner; I hid it away behind a bush, and Reynard found it, and ate it."

"Oh! *you* needn't talk," said Hintze the cat. "Please your Majesty, it was *my* sausage, and he stole it from me first. I went into the miller's house one night while they were all asleep, and saw the sausages doing nothing on a shelf. Your Majesty, I only took *one*, and it was such a little one."

"That's all very fine," said Grimbart the badger, who was Reynard's nephew, "and you only talk because you know Reynard isn't here to listen to you telling tales. No one, your Majesty, ought to be con-





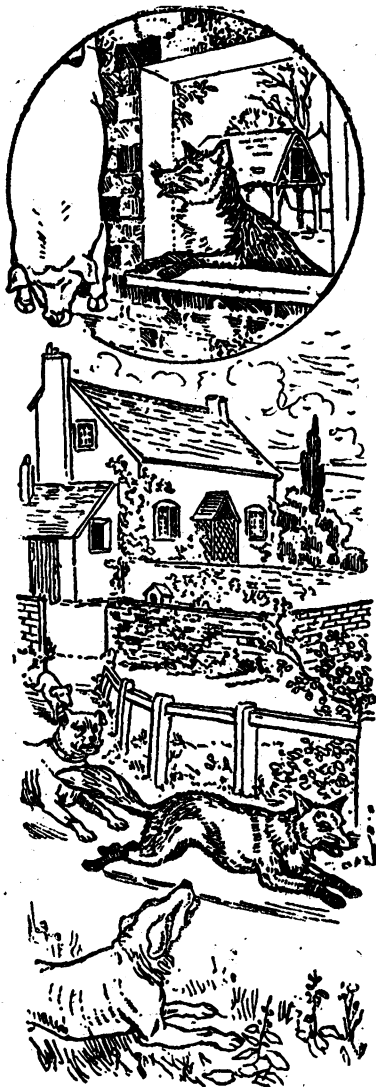
demned unheard. Now I happen to know something about Reynard, and how mean Isegrim the wolf has been towards him. Now, would you believe it, Reynard and Isegrim once went into partnership, and Isegrim was shabby and selfish enough to let Reynard do all the work and face all the danger, while *he* got all the profit."

"I expect it's six of one, and half-a-dozen of the other," said the King. "What have you to say in Reynard's favour?"

"Well, your Majesty, one day Isegrim and Reynard went out together, and they got very hungry. Presently a man came along with a cart full of fish; Isegrim wanted the fish very much, but he hadn't the pluck to go and take it. So Reynard went on a little way when the man wasn't looking, lay down in

a deep rut, and shut his eyes and held his breath, and made himself very stiff. So, when the man and the cart came up, the man said, 'Hallo! here's a dead fox!' and he picked him up, and threw him into the cart on the top of the fish, because he thought he would sell Reynard's skin when he got to the town. But Isegrim ran behind, and every now and then Reynard kicked some fishes into the road. After a while, he thought he had kicked off enough, and, when the man wasn't looking, Reynard jumped down and ran back to Isegrim. He thought Isegrim looked exceedingly fat, and that made him hungrier than ever. 'Where's my share?' said Reynard. 'Here,' said Isegrim, and he pointed to a nice little heap of fish-bones. 'I hope you'll enjoy them. They're very nice,' and then Isegrim bolted."





"H'm!" said the King.
 "Anything else?"

"Yes," said Grimbart;
 "another time Isegrim and
 Reynard went to a peasant's
 house, because they knew the
 man had killed a fat pig
 that morning. They thought
 they should like that pig.
 Reynard got in through the
 window, and threw the pig,
 which was hanging on a
 wooden peg, out of the win-
 dow to Isegrim, peg and all.
 Reynard got out of another
 window, and jumped into the
 yard, straight on to the dog-
 kennels. All the dogs rushed
 out, and Reynard had to flee
 for his life. When he had
 left them far behind, and the
 dogs had gone home, Reynard
 crept stealthily back. There
 was no pig, and Isegrim
 looked ready to burst.
 'Haven't you saved a bit
 for me?' he asked, very
 indignantly. 'Oh, yes!' said

Isegrim; and he held out the wooden peg."

"What have you to say?" said the King, looking at the wolf.

"But that isn't all," broke in Grimbart, before the wolf could reply. "Whatever sins Reynard may have committed in the past, he has repented now. In fact, he has turned hermit; he has left his castle at Malepartus, and has built himself a hermit's cell. He only eats once a day, flogs himself, for penance, wears a hair-shirt, and has got quite lean and pale, with remorse."

Just then there was a commotion outside the court, and then the door opened, and in walked Henning the cock, and all his relations, in a long procession, all weeping. In the middle of the procession came a stretcher, and on it lay a young hen, very much torn and mangled, and with no

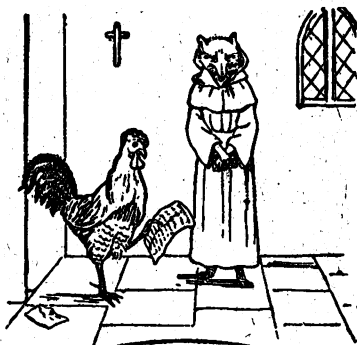


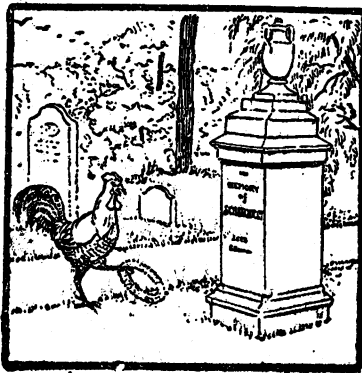


head. Two young cocks walked on either side, carrying torches, and wailing, and beating their breasts.

“Alas! alas! your Majesty,” wept Henning the cock, “just see what Reynard has done to my poor daughter Scratch-foot! My wife and I brought up a large and flourishing family this season, ten fine manly young cocks and fourteen lovely little hens. We lived so happily, in perfect safety, in the farmyard of a monastery, with high walls all round, and six big dogs to guard us. Reynard tried several times to get in, but the dogs caught him and crumpled his skin for him. Then one day we heard that Reynard had turned hermit, and had vowed never to eat meat any more. The next day he came to the gate and rang the bell, and said he wished to see me, as he had

a letter to deliver from the King. So he was shown into the guest-room, and I went to see him. He was dressed just like a hermit, in hair-shirt, scapular, cowl and all, and looked exceedingly proper and remorseful. The letter was your proclamation, O King, saying that all your subjects were to go freely about, and that any one who molested them would be punished. I felt quite overjoyed, and began to show my delight to Reynard. But Reynard said he could not stay, for he had to go home and read prayers; and he took out his prayer-book then and there, and began to read it as he walked out. So I called my children and told them that Reynard had turned a holy hermit, and that we might all go where we pleased in perfect safety. So we all went out beyond the gates. But alas! alas! Reynard was





lying in ambush just round the corner, and he sprang out and killed fifteen of my children and ate them up, feathers and all. And he bit off poor Scratchfoot's head. The dogs were only in time to rescue her body."

Then the King rose, very wrathful, both with Reynard and with his nephew Grimbart. He ordered a magnificent funeral for Scratchfoot, and a marble tombstone to be placed over her. Then he sent strict orders to Reynard to appear in court without delay. And for the messenger the King chose Bruin the bear, because he was big and strong, and warned him very seriously that Reynard would be up to tricks if he could, and that he must not let himself be taken in.

II.

So Bruin the bear trotted off at a double-quick pace for the Castle of Malepartus. Reynard was well off, and had several houses; but he always went to Malepartus whenever he saw there were going to be bad times for him. The castle was very strong, and heavily fortified, and there was a regular labyrinth of caves underground, in which Reynard and his family could hide, or into which he could artfully entice his enemies and shut them up.

When Bruin reached the castle he found the gate shut, and all silent. He knocked several times, and then called out loudly. Reynard lay low and said nothing, because he wanted to find out whether Bruin was all by himself. Hearing no one else, he went





and opened the door, with his prayer-book in his paw, as if he had just been reading it.

"Ah, Bruin," he said craftily, "I have been very unwell, or else I should have gone to the King's court this Whitsuntide. However, I shall be better to-morrow. What do you want?"

"The King commands your presence there at once," said Bruin, panting, for he had run all the way.

"It is rather late," said Reynard. "It would be much better to go in the morning. Besides, my dear friend, how hot you look! Your face is quite wet with perspiration. I could not be so inhospitable as to let you start off again to-night. Allow me to offer you some refreshment. Though I am afraid I have very little to offer you—I never eat meat; in fact, I fear there is nothing but

some honey in the house. It is that which has made me so unwell. Still, I must not complain. There are many others worse off."

"Honey!" said Bruin, licking his lips and forgetting all the King's warnings. "Honey! Oo-o-o-o-o! There's nothing I like better. Lead on, good Reynard."

"Ah! now I think of it," said Reynard, "one of my neighbours has much better honey than I have. Besides, he has such a lot, you could eat your fill. This way, please."

Reynard and Bruin therefore trotted off across the fields to the house of a peasant, a woodcutter and carpenter by trade. Now Reynard knew that this man, whose name was Rustefill, usually lay down on his bed for a nap at this time in the afternoon, and so the yard was deserted. At





the end of the yard lay the trunk of a large oak-tree, which Rustefill was going to saw up into planks. He had already driven in two large wedges in order to split the trunk lengthways, and there was a broad crack six inches wide and several deep.

"This is where Rustefill keeps his honey," said Reynard, pointing to the crack; "it is right at the bottom. Put your nose in and see."

The foolish Bruin was so anxious to get to the honey that he put his nose and paws in as far as they would go.

"Don't move," shouted Reynard, "or you'll miss it!" Then he jumped up on to the tree, and began tugging away with teeth and claws at the wedges with all his might, until he got them right out. Then Bruin began to roar hideously, for the crack closed up again, and there were his

nose and paws caught as in a vice.

"How do you like the honey?" asked Reynard politely. "I hope it's nice. I wouldn't be greedy, if I were you." Then he went quietly home to Malepartus.

Bruin's roars made Rustefill the woodcutter dream such bad dreams that he woke up. "What in the world is the matter?" he said, as he looked out of the window. In a moment he was tearing off down the road to rouse all the neighbours. "A bear! a bear! he is caught in my yard!"

All the neighbours came flying out with the first things that came to hand. Rustefill caught up a hatchet, the blacksmith brought his hammer and tongs, the sexton his pitchfork, the labourers their spades and mattocks, the market-women their baskets, the priest



his stick, the priest's house-keeper her distaff; and they all crowded into the yard and began to belabour the unhappy Bruin with all their might and main.

At last Bruin wrenched his nose and paws out of the trunk, leaving the fur behind. As soon as they saw he had got loose, the crowd fled, one on the top of another; and, as they fled, the priest's house-keeper accidentally tumbled into the river.

"Oh! hi!" shouted the priest, "she'll be drowned, poor thing! Two casks of beer to the man that pulls her out!"

All the men at once made for the river. In five minutes the housekeeper was safe and on dry land, and was being hurried home to get some dry clothes. In the excitement, they had forgotten Bruin altogether; so he quietly



slipped into the river and floated down the stream.

Four days later, a weak, sore, miserable bear, with no fur on his paws or nose, crawled, first one leg and then the other, into the King's palace. He dropped down on some hay that was heaped up in the corner, and with many tears and groans of pain told his tale; and begged them all to take his part, and to see that the scandalous Reynard was soundly punished, which King Lion, in great wrath and with much roaring, promised to do.





III.

It was the custom in the Lion's court not to condemn any one unheard until he had been summoned to appear three times, and had refused to come. Reynard had as yet been summoned only once, and, seeing in what a bad plight poor Bruin had returned, no one was particularly anxious to be the second messenger. At last King Lion chose Hintze the cat, and so Hintze determined to put a good face on it and go.

"Now, mind," said the King, before Hintze started, "Reynard is as cunning as sin, and he will get round you the moment you are off your guard."

"Oh, all right," said Hintze, with his tail very upright. "Bruin is very strong and

big, of course; but then, bigness and strength aren't everything, and Bruin is a regular old duffer at times, as everybody knows. Some people have got a head on their shoulders, I *should* hope," and Hintze puffed himself out, and marched off with his nose very much in the air.

It was getting dark when he arrived at Malepartus, and found Reynard sitting out in the garden, contemplating the scenery. Reynard got up and bowed very politely when he saw Hintze coming.

"Welcome, my dear friend," he said. "What good fortune brings you here?"

"The King summons you, for the second time, to appear before his court, and answer the charges against you!" said Hintze severely.

"Charges against *mé*?" said Reynard, pretending to be very much surprised.





“Really, there must be a little mistake. Oh! I see; some of those unprincipled creatures have been inventing tales about me, just to throw the King off the scent. Of course I’ll come. We will start early to-morrow morning. May I have the pleasure of offering you a bed in my house?”

“I don’t feel very sleepy yet,” said Hintze, who felt quite pleased that Reynard had given him so little trouble, and who began to think that there might be something in what he said about the other animals, after all.

“Perhaps you would like some supper first?” said Reynard. “May I offer you some honey?”

“No, thank you,” said Hintze, who felt his suspicions revive. “Poor Bruin had quite enough of your honey, I had rather be excused.”

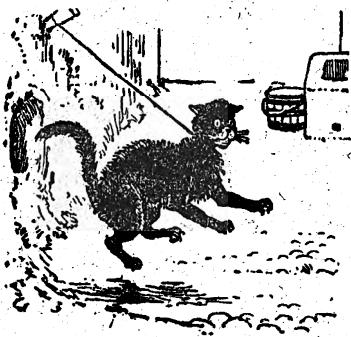


“Bruin?” said Reynard, in most innocent tones. “Ah, I see he has been inventing some unkind tale just to screen himself. He *would* go into that yard to look for honey. I tried to restrain him, and implored him not to disgrace himself by such greediness. But he wouldn’t listen to me. However, as you are not very tired, let us take a quiet stroll down the road.”



Presently they passed a farmyard, which was enclosed by a high earthen wall. “He is not a bad fellow; that farmer,” said Reynard, carelessly, “only rather close-fisted. I had to go there on business the other day”—Reynard did not add that his “business” was to carry off the farmer’s fattest chick—“and I was obliged to make a door for myself in the wall before they would let me in. The place is quite over-run with mice——”





"MICE!" said Hintze, quivering all over, from the root of his whiskers to the tip of his tail, and forgetting every one of the King's warnings; "oh, where?"

"If you really care about such things," said Reynard, "I can show you the hole I went in by. See, here it is."

Now, Reynard did not say what he knew very well, that the farmer's little boy, Martin, had been so angry with Reynard for stealing the cock that he had placed a string trap over the hole on the inside, with a running noose, ready to catch the thief next time he came. So Hintze crept cautiously through, and before he knew where he was he had put his head through the noose, and felt exactly as if he were being hanged. He began to mew piteously.

"I hope you are enjoying yourself," shouted Reynard,

through the hole. "How are the mice? How sweetly you sing! I admire it very much. Good night. Pleasant dreams." And Reynard went home to bed.

Now Martin's bedroom was just above the yard, and Hintze made such a dismal noise trying to escape from the string, and getting more and more choked every moment, that he woke Martin up. He jumped up, and looked out of the window, and could just see something dark moving about inside the wall. Martin rushed off to rouse his father and mother, who slept in the next room. "Mother! Father! Wake up! The fox is in my trap!"

Martin's father jumped out of bed, and wrapped himself in his market-cloak, and Martin's mother took two candles, and they all went out into the farmyard. The farmer took up a pitchfork, and Martin a big





stick, and they rushed at the hole and began to cudgel the creature they saw moving. Martin's stick knocked out one of poor Hintze's eyes, and, quite mad with pain, the cat broke through the string, and sprang at the farmer, and scratched and bit him so badly that he fainted.

By this time the farm servants were roused, and they came and picked up their master and carried him to bed. He looked so bad that no one thought of paying any more attention to Hintze, who now jumped over the wall, and made his escape.

The next evening, the door of the Lion's court opened, and a miserable draggled-tailed cat crawled sadly in, one eye gone, his fur torn and muddy, his face scarred and battered, and covered with gore. He gasped out, "Reynard!" and fell on the floor fainting.

Then all his friends came round, and licked his fur clean, and washed his face, and fetched him some milk and cat's meat; and when he felt a little better, he told them all that had happened.





IV.

KING LION'S wrath knew no bounds. "The inhuman scoundrel!" he roared, till the house shook. "Hanging's too good for him! Here, Grimbart, perhaps *you* can get this rascally uncle of yours here to justice. Go at once, and if you don't bring him back with you, I'll make you into mince-meat, as sure as my name's King Lion!"

So Grimbart the badger started off for Malepartus. He found Reynard sitting with his wife and children like any good father of a family. "If you don't go at once, Uncle Reynard," said Grimbart, the King will come with all his army and besiege you here in your castle."

"Really, nephew," said Reynard, "I am surprised at



your rude behaviour. Didn't you learn manners at your school? But there, I forgive you. I suppose you don't know any better. It grieves me much that the King should listen to any such unkind tales about me. Let us start at once, that I may prove to all how unfounded these charges are."

Now, on the way Reynard began to reflect that he might very possibly be condemned to death for his numerous misdeeds, unless he could wriggle out once more. So, when Grimbart asked him why he had behaved so cruelly to poor Bruin and Hintze, Reynard pretended that his feelings were very much hurt.

"Really, nephew," he said, in an injured tone, "I am surprised at you. I did my very best to save them from themselves. It is bad enough to see your old friends yielding



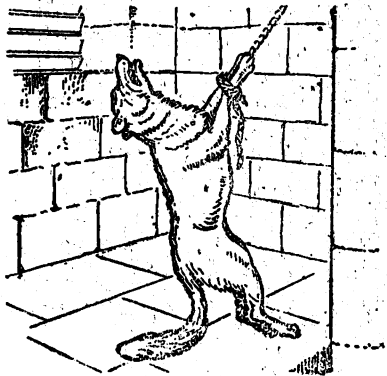


so shamefully to the temptation of greediness; but when it comes to being reviled for having tried to keep them from it, it is really past bearing." And Reynard managed to squeeze out a tear, which rolled down his cheeks.

Grimbart was so shocked to see his uncle crying that he began to feel he had been an unkind brute to hurt his feelings so much. So he said nothing. Presently Reynard went on, "Not that I haven't committed follies in my time, when I was younger and more inexperienced. Indeed, there is one sin of my youth that weighs very heavily on my conscience. It may be that the King will condemn me to death for what I have never done, and I couldn't bear to die without confessing my sins first. Be my father-confessor, my dear nephew, and let me make a clean breast of it.



When I was young, I was brought up in a monastery. One day Isegrim the wolf came and asked to see me. He really only wanted to become a monk because he thought he could have plenty to eat, but he pretended that it was because he had reformed and wanted to be good. So I spoke to the abbot, and Isegrim was taken in. He said he was ready to work hard, and that he should like to be sexton, and toll the bell for the chapel services. So I took him to the belfry and tied his forepaws together, and bound them to the bell rope, ho! ho! —At least, I mean, my dear nephew, he *asked* me to do so, for fear he should get tired and yield to the temptation of going to sleep. So he pulled and pulled at the bell until the neighbours got so sick and tired of the sound that they all came to the belfry in a





crowd, armed with broomsticks, and gave Isegrim a sound flogging. I did not expect that after that he would have strength of mind enough to persevere in becoming a monk. However, he did, and so the next thing to do was to tonsure him, to shave off the bit of hair at the top of his head, according to the fashion among monks. So I made him sit down, and tied a barber's apron round his neck, and went away to fetch the barber with his soap-lather and razor. And here, my dear father-confessor, I must confess that I yielded to temptation myself; for I did not fetch the barber, and I'm afraid I fetched a red-hot poker and singed the hair off the top of Isegrim's head with it. Then Isegrim howled so hideously that the other monks said they couldn't stand it, and that he must be put on bread and water for a week as

a punishment. And Isegrim said he didn't enter a monastery to be fed on nothing but bread and water, and that he should go. 'Yes,' I said, 'it's the best thing you can do. It requires real strength of mind and character to be a monk like me, a great deal more strength than you'll ever grow if you live to a hundred.' So I helped him to escape. But that is against the rules, and so the next time one of the monks went on a pilgrimage to Rome he told the Pope all about it, and the Pope excommunicated me, and I have been excommunicated ever since. You don't know how much it weighs upon my heart. If the King would let me, I would go on a pilgrimage myself, and ask the Pope to take the excommunication off. Now, my dear nephew, I have confessed all my sins; what shall





I do for a penance, to show how sorry I am?"

Grimbart was touched to the heart when he saw how his uncle humbled himself. He broke off a little twig out of the hedge, and hit Reynard with it three times very softly. Then he put it down in the road, and made Reynard jump over it three times. "And now," he said, "you must kiss the rod, to show how sorry you are."

So Reynard pretended to kiss the rod; and, when Grimbart wasn't looking, he winked the other eye.

"And now," continued Grimbart, "you must spend the rest of your life in good works. You must go to church every Sunday, and fast, and be very charitable, and leave off stealing, and deceit, and lying." And Reynard deceitfully promised that he would.

So they walked on. And



presently they came to a convent, where lived several good women. In and out of the open gate strutted a number of cocks and hens. Reynard gazed longingly at them, and gazed, and gazed, till he could bear it no longer. He gave a great spring, and pounced upon a fine plump hen.



Grimbart was unspeakably shocked. Just after all those confessions and promises of amendment, too! He rushed at Reynard, seized him by the tail, and dragged him away till he got him across the bridge over a stream. "Oh, uncle, how *could* you? How *could* you?"



"How could I what?" said Reynard, very indignantly, as he kept his eyes still fixed on the convent gate. "It really is too bad. I am more than grieved—I am truly disgusted to find that my own nephew could give way to such nasty,





uncharitable thoughts about his poor, cruelly misrepresented uncle! Just as we came to that convent, I was thinking sadly what had become of the souls of all the chickens and geese I ate in former years, when I was leading a wicked life, and I wanted to consult that hen as to what I could do to atone for my sin; only she wouldn't wait to hear, and I was afraid my chance would be gone unless I ran after her. I think you ought to be very much ashamed of yourself, my dear nephew. But there, we will say no more about it. I am of a very forgiving nature, and I hope you'll take pattern by me."

Poor Grimbart was so utterly bewildered by all this hypocrisy that he hadn't a word to say. They walked on in silence. When they came within sight of the Lion's palace, Reynard held up his head, and put on a very jaunty air; but inwardly he quaked.



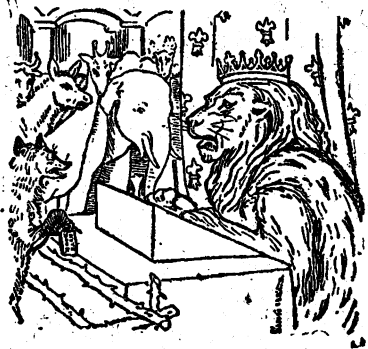
V.

WHEN the birds and beasts heard that Reynard was really coming at last, they came trooping into the court till it was crammed almost to suffocation.

Reynard walked up, looking not in the least ashamed of himself, and stared so coolly at the others that they got quite uncomfortable, and felt as if *they* were going to be tried, and not Reynard.

The King tried to be very severe. He enumerated all the charges brought against Reynard, and asked him what he had to say.

Reynard was not a bit put out. He took out his notebook, and put down the charges with a pencil, as coolly and easily as a practised lawyer, smiling gently to himself every





now and then. Then he cleared his throat, brandished his bushy tail, and began his answer, counting off the charges on his paws, as he dealt with them. He excused himself very plausibly, put the most charitable interpretation on everything, and looked blandly round with the air of a most righteous martyr.

"This is a very clever defence, Reynard," said the King severely, "but it is just a little too late. Call the witnesses."

So the witnesses were called, and the evidence of Reynard's iniquity which one after another brought forward was so overwhelming that Reynard's face fell. The King summed up, and then put on the black cap, and condemned him to the gallows.

So Reynard was bound with ropes, and taken away. But, as he went, he looked about

him with such an air of conscious innocence, and was so little ashamed of himself, that Grimbart and others of his friends began to feel quite sorry for him, and plucked up courage. And, seeing that they could not save Reynard from being hanged, they got up in a body, and told the King that they thought the verdict unjust, and that they declined to be a party to it, and should go home altogether.

Now the King didn't like this, for there was a great deal of business still to get through at this Whitsuntide, and he did not see how he was to do it, if so many of his subjects went away. So he began to relent. But Bruin, and Isegrim, and Hintze caught hold of Reynard, and hurried him off to the gallows, for fear the King should change his mind.

"Fetch a strong rope," said





Isegrim, and when they brought it, he mounted up on the gallows, and fastened it about Reynard's neck. An enormous crowd stood waiting to see the execution, King and Queen, rich and poor, birds and beasts alike.

Just as the signal was going to be given, Reynard plucked up courage. He felt very desperate, but thought that it might not be too late, even now. He asked permission to say a few words.

"Tell a few lies, you mean," growled the King. "No! the sooner you're hanged, the better."

Reynard was at his wits' end. He began to weep—real tears this time. When they saw the tears rolling down his cheeks, the more tender-hearted animals began to weep too. It made them feel quite uncomfortable themselves, and they didn't like that; so they

begged the King to have a little pity on him.

"Yes," wept Reynard, whose spirits were rising, "I ask but permission to say a few words, just to confess my sins."

At this, the King felt that he had, perhaps, been too hard-hearted, so he granted permission, but with rather a bad grace.

Reynard's heart gave a bound of hope. With many sham tears and the utmost craftiness, he began a long tale, and hinted all sorts of unkind things about the other animals, and made out that he himself was a most injured fox, and that he had done a great many good and right things which he had been too modest to talk about. "So *this*," he sighed, "is my reward! *This* is the only reward a noble and chivalrous spirit meets with! Ah! it's a wicked, wicked





world! If every one had their deserts, O King, should I be standing here on the gallows, with this crowd before me, thirsting for my blood? No! But for me, O King, would *you* be standing there yourself? Yet here am I—I, with a halter round my neck—I, who nipped in the bud that terrible conspiracy against your Majesty three years ago, and preserved the treasure which was to come to your Majesty, had I lived, only two months hence! I, who——”

“What!” shouted the King, in bewilderment, “Conspiracy? Treasure? I never heard a word about it! Speak plainly. What are you talking about?”

“It’s all right now,” chuckled the cunning Reynard to himself, as he saw that his stroke had told. So he began to invent a long tale about a conspiracy against the

lion, in which he said all the other chief animals were mixed up, and how he had found it out, and stopped it at once, by threatening to reveal everything to the King; and how another set of conspirators had discovered a vast heap of treasure in a cave on the King's land, and how Reynard had made them promise not to go near it for several days; and how he had carried it all away by night, he and his wife, and put it in a safe place, and how he had spent all his spare time ever since in sorting and counting it, so that in another two months it would be all ready to hand over to the King as a pleasant surprise. And there was not a word of truth in the story from beginning to end. But the King believed it all, because he wanted the treasure, and the other animals stood speechless with indignation at





Reynard's shameless audacity.

"I see what a grave mistake I have made," said the King. "You are free! Take off the rope! And now," he said severely to the crowd, "Reynard is restored to my favour! *He* seems to be the only one of my subjects I can really trust. I shall listen to no more charges against him, and, if any of you come with complaints, I shall treat them with the contempt which I now know they deserve."

So Reynard stepped jauntily down off the gallows, and went home to supper with the King and Queen.

"I think, your Majesty," said the crafty one, "you had better send and fetch the treasure without delay. I will tell you exactly where it is. You must go for fifteen miles along the high road, and then turn off on the right, and just outside a village called Krekel-

born you will see a cave. The treasure is behind a heap of stones at the back. You can't miss it. The villagers won't go into the cave, because they think it is haunted. If I were you, I should go at once. It will take seven waggons to bring the treasure home."

The King had never heard of a village named Krekelborn, but he was quite willing to admit that perhaps he didn't know everything, and he said he would start with the waggons that night.

"But it would be much better," he added, to Reynard, "if you were to come with me, and show me the way."

"Your Majesty must excuse me," said Reynard firmly; "I have only just escaped a horrible death, and I cannot now rest until I have been on a pilgrimage to Rome, and begged the Pope to take my excommunication off. I shall





start at once. None must detain me, when I am bound on such a good and holy errand."

For Reynard knew that, as soon as the King found out the fraud which had been practised on him about the treasure, his own life would not be worth a rush, and he wanted to get out of the way as quick as he could. So he said he would start as soon as he could get ready, and that he should like to bid good-bye to Bruin and Isegrim before he went.

Now Reynard thought he had better have a knapsack for his journey, and two pairs of good strong shoes with nails. So he went to the house where Isegrim lived, and where Bruin was staying. They were all asleep, for they were very tired, so Reynard hopped softly in and out out a good-sized piece of Bruin's fur to make his knapsack with, and

skinned Isegrim's front paws and Mrs. Isegrim's hind paws, and put the furry skin and claws on his own four feet. Then he felt ready to start, and hopped out again into the road just as they woke up, roaring with pain, and rushed to the window.

"Good-bye," shouted Reynard; "don't you admire my knapsack and travelling shoes! I think they'll do beautifully myself." And away he went to the palace to ask King Lion to let him have his chaplain's blessing before he set out for Rome. The King's chaplain and secretary was Bellyn the ram. Bellyn did not at all like having to give Reynard his blessing, but he had to do it, because the King ordered it.

Then Reynard began to shed more sham tears, to make the King believe in his repentance; but he was really feel-



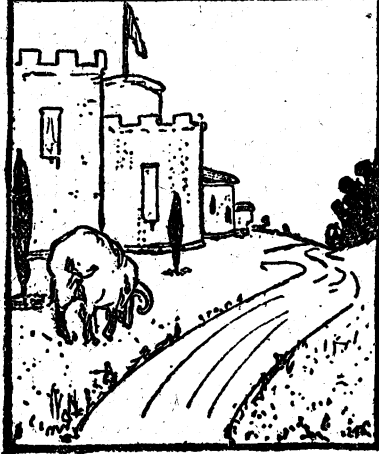


ing quite sorry and disgusted with himself for not having served all the rest as he had served Bruin and Isegrim.

So they saw him off, and several of the animals went part of the way with him, and Reynard looked so pious that they began to be quite sorry to be obliged to part with such a good and holy fox. Reynard begged Bellyn the ram and Lampe the hare to accompany him home to Malepartus for the night, as he had an important letter to send back to the King.

"I don't think I'll stay," said Bellyn, when they reached Malepartus; "I'll just wait outside and have a mouthful of grass while you get the letter. Please be quick, for I want to get back."

Reynard took Lampe in with him, and presently returned alone, carrying his knapsack.



"Here's the letter," he said; "I have put it into my knapsack, and sealed it, because it is *very* important. I hope I may trust you to carry it back without tampering with the seal," he added, rather severely; "you must deliver the knapsack to the King just as it is, and let him break the seal himself."

Bellyn promised. "Tell Lampe to be quick," he said.

"Oh! Lampe isn't going back to-night. He is having a game with my wife. She is very fond of Lampe," replied Reynard; "you'll see him at the court to-morrow."

Reynard went in and shut the door, and Bellyn set off on his journey.





VI.

By the time Bellyn entered the King's court on the following morning, the King had discovered how Reynard had hoaxed him about the treasure, and was feeling very sore and very much ashamed of himself for having been so easily taken in, and having let Reynard escape his hanging. He broke the seal of the knapsack, put in his paw, and lifted out, not a letter, but the head of the poor hare, Lampe!

"The villain! the scoundrel!" roared all the beasts together, "he has murdered him and cut off his head! Justice! justice!"

The King at once summoned his council, sent for Bruin and Isegrim, apologized to them for having treated them so unkindly, and handed Bellyn

over into their custody till the matter was cleared up. Reynard and his family were declared outlaws; Malepartus was to be besieged at once.

Grimbart the badger managed to slip away unseen, and sped away to Malepartus to give the alarm. The crafty Reynard saw that his only hope lay in disarming the King of his wrath by going to court at once to explain things away.

On the way, Reynard again made Grimbart his father-confessor. He confessed how he had stolen the knapsack and shoes from Bruin and Isegrim, and how he had eaten a crow's wife a day or two before, and had badly mauled a rabbit. "As for Lampe," he said, "that was entirely his own fault. He looked so fat, and jumped about so, right under my eyes, that a sudden impulse overtook me, for which I am





extremely sorry. There, we'll say no more about it. None of us is faultless. No one knows better than I do how many sins the King himself has committed in his time. Let bygones be bygones."

Grimbart felt a little surprised that Reynard should be so ready to confess the sins of other people, but he said nothing, and Reynard, went on:

"Not that *I* pretend to be better than anybody else. Now, there is one thing that I feel sorry for. When Isegrim and I were in partnership, we met a mare one day with a delicious fat foal. 'Go and ask her,' said Isegrim, 'how much she wants for that foal.' So I went and asked her, and she said, 'The price is written on my hind hoof.' And I came back and told Isegrim to go and look. So Isegrim went and asked her to lift up her hind hoof, that he

might read it. But all he ever read was the print of her shoe and six brand-new nails on his face. Ho! ho! ho!"

Reynard found the King very angry at first, but he explained everything away so skilfully that the King was silenced, and the others were all so puzzled that when the King invited them to come forward and complain, they none of them dared. "Yes," said Reynard, "that is always the way. They don't mind what shameless lies they tell about me behind my back, but as soon as I come and offer to be questioned, they haven't a word to say. As for Lampe, I saw him and Bellyn start back together. Bellyn murdered him on the road, and now tries to get out of it in this mean way by throwing the blame on me. Just see how guilty he looks," he added, pointing to the un-





happy Bellyn, who was standing between Bruin and Isegrim, shaking with speechless indignation at such an atrocious slander.

So once more the King declared that Reynard left the court without a stain on his character.

Isegrim could bear it no longer. He took off his glove and flung it in Reynard's face. Reynard picked it up, and so accepted his challenge to fight.

"Now," said the King, "we shall see who is the guilty one."

VII.

THE night before the fight, Reynard went to see an old ape that lived in the palace, and to consult with her what to do; for she was as cunning as himself, and a great friend of his.

"I expected you would come," said the ape, "and I have got everything ready. First, you must have all your fur shaved off, so that there will be nothing for the wolf to catch hold of."

The ape then fetched in a barber, and Reynard was shaved from head to tail.

"Now," said the ape, "we will oil and grease you well, so that, if he does try and claw you, his paws will slip. Your tail looks very hard and shiny, now your brush has been shaved off; it shall be well oiled just before you





begin. You must drag it in the dust till the dust sticks to it all over, and then flap it hard in Isegrim's eyes, so that he won't be able to see where he is going." Reynard grinned and nodded intelligently.

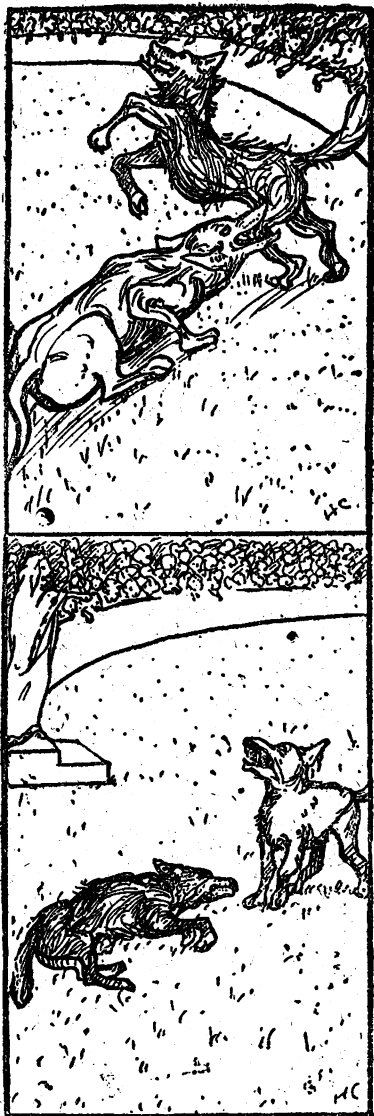
When the two opponents entered the ring, a perfect shout of laughter greeted Reynard's appearance. "Laugh away," said Reynard to himself; "he laughs last who wins."

Isegrim rushed at Reynard with open mouth; but Reynard slipped nimbly aside, got his tail well covered with dust, and, just as Isegrim came at him again, flapped it extremely hard right across Isegrim's face. Isegrim threw up his paws and began to rub his eyes, and the more he rubbed the worse they got, until he could scarcely see at all. Then Reynard bit and clawed his sides, until they were both rolling

over and over in the dust. "Now's my chance," thought Reynard, and he got his claws into Isegrim's wounds, and pulled with all his might. But as he knew that the other beasts would think that kind of fighting very unfair, he kicked up such a dust that none of them could see exactly what was going on. Thus Reynard dragged poor Isegrim round and round the ring, until he fainted, and Reynard thought he was dead.

Then the King sent down a messenger to tell Reynard to stop.

"It is quite clear that you are the victor," said the King, "and that Isegrim has been punished, for all he said against you, in a very fit and proper manner. Now you must be magnanimous, and forgive him, and not hurt him any more."





So Reynard got up and marched out of the ring, holding his paw before his face to hide his laughter, while they all thought how modest he was; for there is nothing in the world that changes its mind so quickly as a crowd, or that follows its feelings so much without stopping to think whether its feelings are right or wrong. Now that Reynard was victorious, all the other beasts at once began to fancy that Reynard must have been right all along; so they all began to cheer him till they were hoarse, and to jeer at poor Isegrim, who had got the worst of it. Then the whole crowd escorted Reynard to the palace, and there was not one of them that would not joyfully have gone down and licked his boots.

But Isegrim lay in the ring half dead, and, when the crowd

had gone, his wife and children came, and his servants, and his friends, Bruin and Hintze, all weeping and wailing piteously, and gently picked him up, and laid him on an ambulance on some soft hay, and carried him home. All his limbs were lame, and he had twenty-six wounds. They sent for the doctor, a wise old mastiff, and gave the patient a warm bath, and rubbed ointment into his wounds, and bandaged him from head to foot, and put him to bed. And then he came to himself, and wept with pain and shame.

"It's not only his wounds," said Mrs. Isegrim to the doctor, "bad as they are. It is all the dreadful hurt he will feel long after his wounds are healed. To think that even the King, and those who have known him for years and years, should have disbelieved him,





and all gone over to that false hypocrite's side—the despicable cur! Isegrim will never be the same wolf again.

But the foolish King Lion hushed up all Reynard's past misdeeds, and made him Lord Chancellor, and a member of his Privy Council. Everybody praised and honoured Reynard, and he thought a great deal of himself as long as he lived.

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is the BEST
COCOA

CHEAPEST
HIGHEST QUALITY
GENUINE FLAVOUR

REDUCED PRICES.—"The alteration in price of the 6d. packet to 5d. and of the $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. tin to 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and is all the more pleasing when we can be assured that there will be no alteration whatever in the quality of the cocoa, and that the standard of purity for which Messrs. Cadbury's are famous will still be maintained."—*The Gentlewoman.*

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