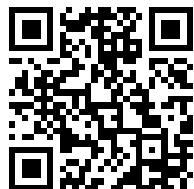

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*The pleasant history of Reynard
the fox, tr. by T. Roscoe*

Reynard



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THE PLEASANT HISTORY OF
REYNARD THE FOX.





“ I cast down my glove, which I dare thee to take up.”

Page 116.

THE
PLEASANT HISTORY OF
REYNARD THE FOX.

TRANSLATED BY THE LATE THOMAS ROSCOE.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NEARLY ONE HUNDRED DESIGNS BY

A. T. ELWES AND JOHN JELlicOE.



LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, LOW, AND SEARLE,
CROWN BUILDINGS, FLEET STREET.
1873.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE real origin of this very curious comic and satirical production is involved, like most fables of the kind, in considerable doubt and perplexity. The earliest printed German copy would appear to have been that of the year 1498, written in the dialect of Lower Saxony; though there was a Dutch romance, in prose, bearing the same title, "Historie van Reynaert de Vos," published at Delft, in 1485. The former one, of 1498, was afterwards translated into High German, and also into Latin. It has been referred to various individuals as the author; most commonly to Henry Von Alkmar; but that his was not the first story of the kind, would appear from his preface, in which he merely assumes the merit of its translation. Nicholas Baumann, who is stated to have written it as a satire upon the Chancellor of the duke of Juliers, is another author to whom it has, with less authority, however, been attributed, his edition bearing no earlier a date than 1522. In the translation it is stated to have been borrowed from the

Italian and French tongues, but its individual origin is not pointed out. It is so far left in doubt, whether the German author copied from the Dutch publication at Delft, where the sole remaining copy is still preserved, or whether both were translated or imitated from the French and Italian, or some more hidden materials, of which the MSS. have now perished.

At all events, the Lubec edition of 1498 is a work so superior in point of power and skill, as well as in its comic incidents and delineations, as to confer upon it the style and character of an original composition. Its allegorical scenes are well supported; exhibiting under a picture of the court of beasts, the various intrigues and interests of a human court, where everything is thrown into confusion, and the most dangerous plans are adopted, at the instigation of a wily favourite. By such means the Lion risks the loss of his dominions, while Reynard (who is supposed by some to represent the duke of Lorraine), and some other personages, doubtless imitated from real life, carry their obnoxious measures. There is an old English translation, published by Caxton, which was executed, it is said, from the Flemish version or original.

Goëthe's version is an imitation of the work of Alkmar, from the Lower Saxon, composed in hexameter verse, and in modern phraseology.

From the number of editions enumerated by the learned Flögel, in his "History of Comic Literature," the German Fox would appear to have been a singular favourite with most nations. Upwards of forty editions are mentioned, among which three were published in England, besides others which do not appear to have come within the scope of the German writer. The English prose version of 1694, from which the following

specimen of the work has been abridged, is one of them, consisting of a free translation and occasional abridgment of the edition of 1498, upon which most of the subsequent editions, indeed, both in Germany and elsewhere, seem to be founded.

The German edition of 1498 appeared at Lubec in small 4to. accompanied by woodcuts in a rude style of illustration, and with a preface of four pages from the pen of Henry Von Alkmar, the work itself consisting of two hundred and forty-one pages. It is composed in common heroic metre, the heroic metre of low Dutch; a copy is still preserved in the Ducal Library at Wolfenbüttel, with the following motto:

Ut vulpis adulatio,
Nun in der Werlde blyket,
Sic hominis est ratio
Gelyk dem vosse geschicket.

At the close is found the date, Anno Domini, 1498, Lubek.
 50 It was first made known by Professor Hackmann, in 1709, who printed an edition of it at Wolfenbüttel, 1711. In the Preface, Henry Von Alkmar announces himself as a schoolmaster, who had borrowed his translation from the French tongue, but without throwing any light upon the real author, or noticing any Dutch writers or commentators among his contemporaries. His name has by some been conjectured to be a mere fabrication, and among others by Henry Lackman, and by Büsching. Most probably, however, says Flögel, Alkmar was born in the city of that name in Holland; he represents himself as Hofmeister to the duke of Lothringen (Lorraine), who died in 1508, at whose request the Flemish work was first composed. The Dutch writer expressly disclaims all title to its production, though no

prior French and Italian materials, from which he professes to have taken it, have been discovered.

Gottsched, in his edition, is inclined to think Alkmar the real original author, and that he merely feigned its version from other tongues. Thus some dispute his word, and others his existence; learned opinions clash with still more learned opinions, and conjectures are heaped upon conjectures.

These unfortunately do not appear to have brought the learned speculators much nearer to the truth: the obscure fables of Reynard the Fox belong, in some form or other, to most nations; their peculiar origin losing itself in the mists of antiquity. Neither do they add anything to the value of the work under discussion, at all commensurate to the abundance and ingenuity of the researches it has elicited. What degree of certainty, indeed, can be expected, when the only true guide, that of comparison of dates, and the local intrinsic evidence of the work, has been doubtless mystified by the wily sir Reynard, who chose to leave us only vague hypothetical conjectures. Without presuming to enter into the mazes of antiquarian research, which fortunately for the readers of a work of entertainment, lies as far beyond the editor's ambition as his skill, he may be allowed to deduce, from the arguments set before him, the probability of sir Reynard having brought his learned pursuers to fault by his usual *ruse de guerre*; returning to his original seat, on finding himself hard pressed, so sily and softly as to render it impossible for the best trained scent to track him back to his native spot, whether in French Flanders, Holland, Italy, Germany, or in the East. He may probably have had his origin in the ancient *Kelila* and *Dimna* in these last regions; the nurse of oral animals, more especially of a long race of eloquent and politic

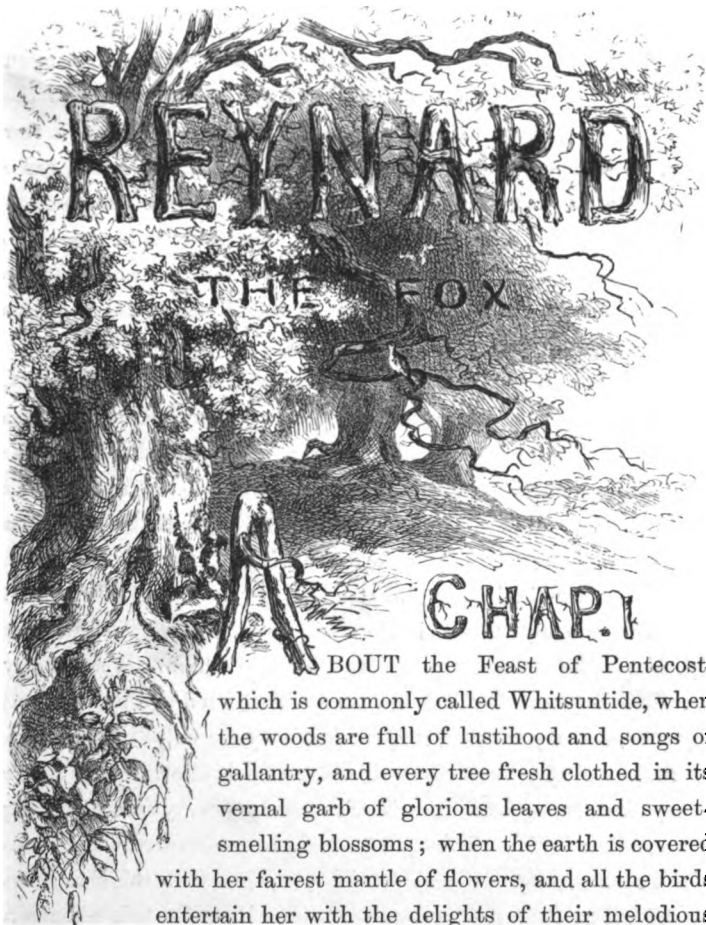
foxes, called Choes, celebrated for the wisdom of their maxims over all India. In justice to our own country, we must assign to it the priority of the printed editions of sir Reynard's histories and exploits, inasmuch as M. Flögel himself places Caxton's edition the earliest in his long series.

In addition to the early Dutch editions, and some among the French and English, without any author's names, the most esteemed are those of Hackmann, Gottsched, and Suhl, with the criticisms of other German scholars, all of whom have vied with each other in national zeal to illustrate the traditionary relics of their country.

Swedish and Danish translations are likewise enumerated by M. Flögel, some of which are founded upon the more modern German editions of the same work. Nor are Hebrew and Latin versions wanting to crown the reputation of its favourite hero, who appears to have been viewed, during successive generations, as a model of moral and political sagacity. To what prince or minister it was intended to apply, and whether as a compliment or a satire, must remain doubtful. The various suppositions on this head are rejected by the best German editors, who, however, have not attempted to substitute any others in their place.







ABOUT the Feast of Pentecost, which is commonly called Whitsuntide, when the woods are full of lustihood and songs of gallantry, and every tree fresh clothed in its vernal garb of glorious leaves and sweet-smelling blossoms ; when the earth is covered with her fairest mantle of flowers, and all the birds entertain her with the delights of their melodious songs ; even at this joyous period of the lusty spring, the lion, that royal king of beasts, the monarch of the ancient woods, thought to celebrate this holy festival, and to keep open court at his great palace of Sanden, with all triumphant ceremony and magnificence. To this end he made solemn proclamation over

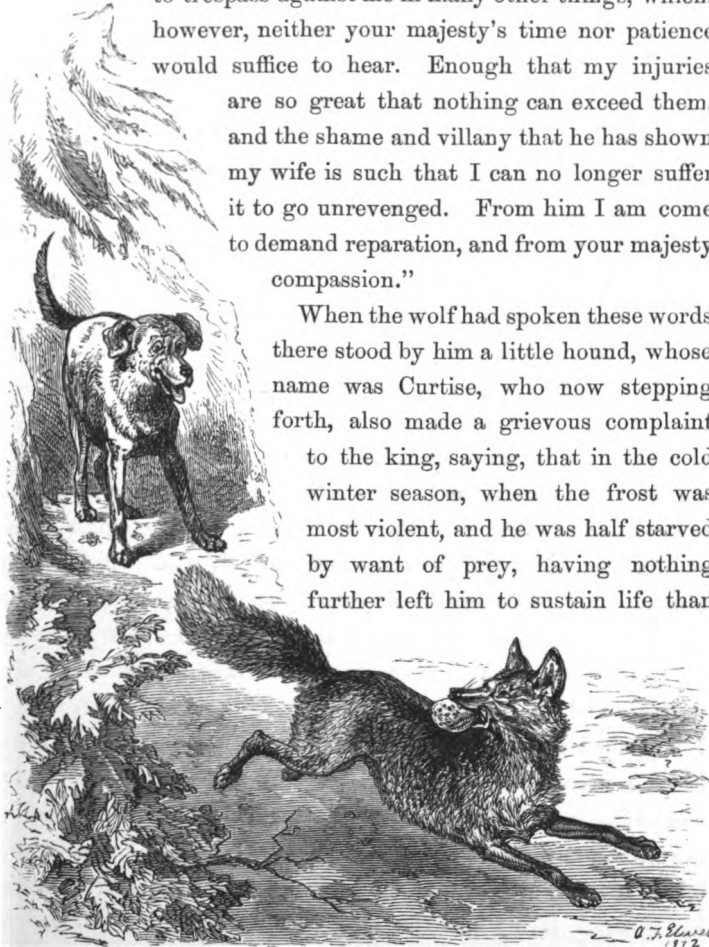


Now, when the royal monarch had assembled his whole court, there were few beasts who had not some complaint to make against the fox.

Page 2.

of your majesty and your laws. This, perhaps, my dread lord, some of the noblest beasts resident at your court did not know : yet this was not enough to satiate his malice, and he continued to trespass against me in many other things, which, however, neither your majesty's time nor patience would suffice to hear. Enough that my injuries are so great that nothing can exceed them, and the shame and villany that he has shown my wife is such that I can no longer suffer it to go unrevenged. From him I am come to demand reparation, and from your majesty compassion."

When the wolf had spoken these words there stood by him a little hound, whose name was Curtise, who now stepping forth, also made a grievous complaint to the king, saying, that in the cold winter season, when the frost was most violent, and he was half starved by want of prey, having nothing further left him to sustain life than



one poor piece of pudding, that vile Reynard ran upon him from ambush, and unjustly seized it.

Scarcely had these words escaped the hound's lips, before it sprang Tibert the cat, with a fierce and angry countenance, and falling down at his majesty's feet, exclaimed: "Oh, my lord the king, though I must confess that the fox is here grievously accused; yet were other beasts' actions searched, each would find enough to do to clear himself. Touching the complaint of Curtise the hound, it was an offence committed many years ago: and though I myself complain of no injury, yet was the pudding mine and not his; for I got it one night out of a mill, when the miller lay asleep. If Curtise could challenge any share thereof, it must be derived solely from me." When Panther heard Tibert's words, he stood forth and said, "Do you imagine, oh Tibert, that it would be just or good that Reynard should not be accused. Why, the whole world knows he is a murderer, a ravisher, and a thief; that he loves not any creature, no, not his majesty himself; and would suffer his highness to lose both honour and renown, if he thought he could thus obtain so much as the leg of a fat pullet. Let me tell you what I saw him do only yesterday to Kayward the hare, now standing in the king's presence. Under pretence of teaching poor Kayward his creed, and making a good chaplain of him, he persuaded him to come and sit between his legs, and sing aloud Credo, Credo. I happened to pass that way, and heard the song; and upon going nearer, I found that Mr. Reynard had left his first note, and began to play in his old key, for he had caught Kayward by the throat, and had I not at that moment come, he had certainly taken his life, as you may see by Kayward's fresh wound under his throat. If my lord the king should suffer such conduct to

go unpunished, the peace broken, the royal dignity profaned, and the just laws violated, your princely children, many years to come, shall bear the slander of this evil." "Doubtless, Panther," cried Isegrim, "you say well and true; it is only fit that they should receive the benefit of justice, who wish to live in peace."





WHEN spoke Grimbard, who was Reynard's sister's son, being much moved by anger: "Isegrim, you are malicious, and it is a common proverb, that 'malice never yet spake well;' and what can you advance against my kinsman Reynard? I wish you had only to encounter the risk, that whichever of you had most injured the other, was to be hanged, and die a felon's death; for I tell you, were he here in court, and as much in our monarch's favour as you are, it would be but small satisfaction for you to beg mercy. You have many times bitten and torn my kinsman with your venomous teeth, and much oftener than I can reckon;

though I will recall some instances to your shame. Can you have forgotten how you cheated him in regard to the plaice which he threw down from the cart, while you followed aloof for fear? Yet you devoured the good plaice alone, and left him nothing but the bones, which you could not eat yourself. You played the same trick with the fat flitch of bacon, which was so good, that you took care to devour the whole of it yourself. When my uncle entreated his share, you retorted with scorn: 'Fair young man, you shall surely have your share,' and yet you gave him nothing, although he won it at great hazard, inasmuch as the owner contrived to catch my kinsman in a sack, from which he with difficulty got away with life. Such injuries hath this Isegrim done to Reynard; and I beseech your lordships to judge if they are sufferable. Again he complains, that my kinsman hath wronged him in his wife; and true it is, that Reynard could boast her favour seven years before friend Isegrim did wed her. But if my uncle, out of courtesy, did pay her attentions, what is that to him? he took her for better and worse; nor ought he to complain of any foregoing transaction not belonging to him. Wisdom, indeed, would have concealed it, for what credit can he get by the slander of his own wife, especially when she is not aggrieved!

"Next comes Kayward the hare, with his complaint in his throat, which seems to me a mere trifle. If he will learn to read and sing, and read not his lesson aright, who will blame the schoolmaster for giving him a little wholesome correction: for if scholars are not sometimes beaten and chastised, depend upon it, they will never learn. Lastly, Curtise complains, that he had stolen a pudding with infinite pains out of the window, at a season when victuals are scarce. Would not silence better

have become such a transaction? for he stole it: 'Male quæstisti, et male perdidisti;' it was evil won, and evil lost; and who shall dare to blame Reynard for the seizure of stolen goods from a thief? It is reasonable, that he who understands law, and can



discern equity, being also of high birth as my kinsman is, should do justice to the law. Nay, had he hanged up the hound when he took him in the fact, he could have offended none but the king in doing justice without leave. Yet, out of respect to his majesty he did it not, though he reaps small thanks for his labour; thus subjected to the vilest calumnies, which greatly affect him. For my uncle is a true and loyal gentleman, nor can he endure falsehood; he does nothing without the counsel of the priest, and I assert, that since our lord the king proclaimed peace, he never dreamed of injuring any man. He lives like a recluse;

only eats one meal a day, and it is now a year since he tasted flesh, as I have been truly informed by some of his friends who saw him only yesterday. He has moreover left his castle Malepardus, and abandoned his princely establishment, confining all his wishes to a poor hermitage. He has forsworn hunting, and scattered abroad his wealth, living alone by alms and good men's charities; doing infinite penance for his sins, so that he is become pale and lean with praying and fasting, for he would fain be with God."

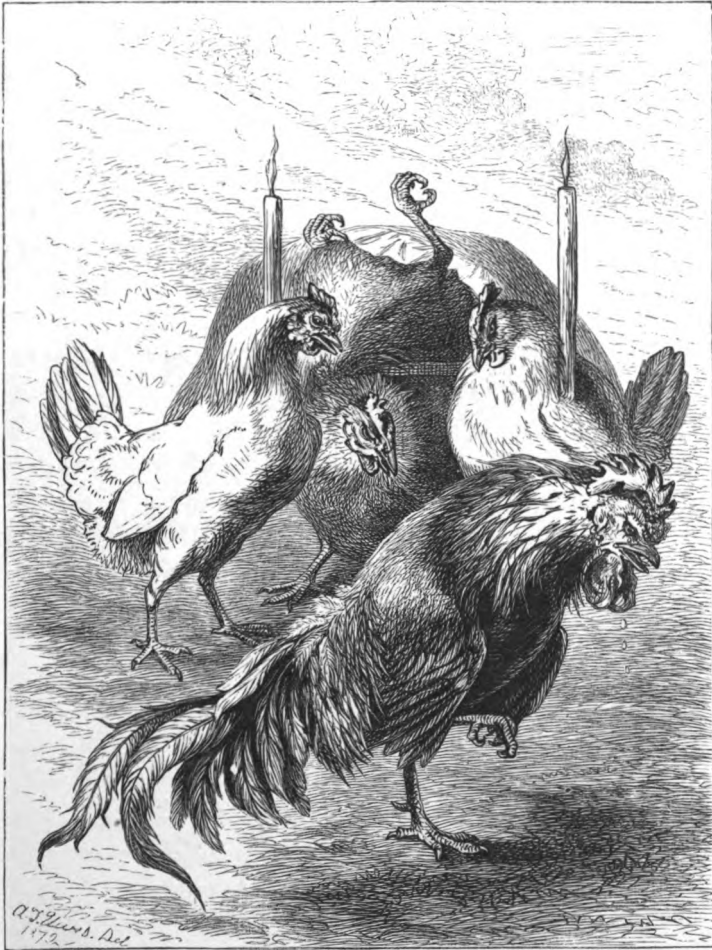
Thus while Grimbard stood preaching, they perceived coming down the hill towards them, stout Chanticleer the cock, who brought upon a bier a dead hen, whose head Reynard had bitten clean off, and it was brought before the king to take cognizance thereof.



Chapter III.



CHANTICLEER marching foremost, hung his wings and smote his feathers piteously, whilst on the other side the bier went two of his fairest hens, the fairest between Holland and Arden. Each of them bore a straight bright burning taper, for they were sisters to Coppel that lay dead upon the bier; and as they marched, they cried, “Alack, alack, and well-a-day, for the death of Coppel, our sister dear.” Two young pullets bore the bier, and cackled so heavily and wept so loud for the death of Coppel, their mother, that the very hills echoed to their clamour. On reaching the presence of the king, Chanticleer, kneeling down, spake as follows: “Most merciful dread lord the king! vouchsafe, I do beseech you, to hear and redress the injuries which the fox Reynard hath done me and my children, whom you here behold weeping, as well they may.



Chanticleer, marching foremost, hung his wings and smote his feathers piteously.

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mother, a victim to his arts. This is my just
I refer to your highness's mercy to have
and upon my many slaughtered children."

king: "Sir Grimbard, hear you this of your
He seems to have fasted and prayed with a
I live another year he shall dearly abide it.
hear, your complaint is heard, and shall be
I'll bestow handsome obsequies upon your
ing her in the earth with solemn dirge and
done, we will consult with our lords how to
bring the murderer to justice."

Placido Domine, with all the verses belonging
recite; the dirge being done, the body was
it was placed a fair marble stone, polished as
in which was inscribed the following epitaph
Koppel, Chanticleer's daughter, whom Reynard
hath here interred!—Mourn, reader, mourn;
violent and lamentable."

It sent for his lords and wisest counsellors, to
the foul murder committed by Reynard might
the end it was concluded that he should be sent
any excuse be made to appear before the king,
ages, and the message be delivered by Bruin
ing gave consent, and calling him before him,
"It is our pleasure that you deliver this message,
and a good eye to yourself; for Reynard is full
we well how to dissemble, flatter, and betray.
snarers to entangle you withal, and without
judgment will make a mock and scorn of the
wisdom."



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For it was in the beginning of April, when the weather was fair, I being then in the height of my pride and plumage, sprung from great stock and lineage, with eight valiant sons and seven fair daughters by my side, all of whom my wife had brought me at a single hatch, all of whom were strong and fat, strutting in a yard well fenced round about. Here they had several sheds, besides six stout mastiff dogs for their guard, which had torn the skins of many wild beasts; so that my children felt secure from any evil that might happen to those more exposed to the snares of the world; but Reynard, that false and dissembling traitor, envying their happy fortune, many times assailed the walls in such desperate manner, that the dogs were obliged to be loosed, and they hunted him away. Once, indeed, they overtook and bit him, making him pay the price of his theft, as his torn skin bore witness. Nevertheless he escaped, the more the pity, but we lived more quietly some time after; until at last, he came in the likeness of a hermit, and brought me a letter to read. It was sealed with your majesty's royal seal; and in it I found written, that you had proclaimed peace throughout all your realm, and that no manner of beasts or fowl were longer to injure one another. Reynard affirmed that, for his own part, he was become a monk, a cloistered recluse, and had vowed to perform daily penance for his sins. He next showed me and counted his beads; he had his books, and wore a hair shirt next to his skin, while in a very humble tone he said, "You see, sir Chanticleer, you have never need to be afraid of me henceforward; for I have vowed never more to eat flesh. I am now waxed old, and would only remember my soul: I have yet my noon and my evening prayers to say; I must therefore take my leave." He departed, singing his credo as he went, and I saw him lie down under a hawthorn.



WHEN spoke Grimbard, who was Reynard's sister's son, being much moved by anger: "Isegrim, you are malicious, and it is a common proverb, that 'malice never yet spake well;' and what can you advance against my kinsman Reynard? I wish you had only to encounter the risk, that whichever of you had most injured the other, was to be hanged, and die a felon's death; for I tell you, were he here in court, and as much in our monarch's favour as you are, it would be but small satisfaction for you to beg mercy. You have many times bitten and torn my kinsman with your venomous teeth, and much oftener than I can reckon;

though I will recall some instances to your shame. Can you have forgotten how you cheated him in regard to the plaice which he threw down from the cart, while you followed aloof for fear? Yet you devoured the good plaice alone, and left him nothing but the bones, which you could not eat yourself. You played the same trick with the fat flitch of bacon, which was so good, that you took care to devour the whole of it yourself. When my uncle entreated his share, you retorted with scorn: 'Fair young man, you shall surely have your share,' and yet you gave him nothing, although he won it at great hazard, inasmuch as the owner contrived to catch my kinsman in a sack, from which he with difficulty got away with life. Such injuries hath this Isegrim done to Reynard; and I beseech your lordships to judge if they are sufferable. Again he complains, that my kinsman hath wronged him in his wife; and true it is, that Reynard could boast her favour seven years before friend Isegrim did wed her. But if my uncle, out of courtesy, did pay her attentions, what is that to him? he took her for better and worse; nor ought he to complain of any foregoing transaction not belonging to him. Wisdom, indeed, would have concealed it, for what credit can he get by the slander of his own wife, especially when she is not aggrieved!

"Next comes Kayward the hare, with his complaint in his throat, which seems to me a mere trifle. If he will learn to read and sing, and read not his lesson aright, who will blame the schoolmaster for giving him a little wholesome correction: for if scholars are not sometimes beaten and chastised, depend upon it, they will never learn. Lastly, Curtise complains, that he had stolen a pudding with infinite pains out of the window, at a season when victuals are scarce. Would not silence better

have become such a transaction? for he stole it: 'Male quæstisti, et male perdidisti;' it was evil won, and evil lost; and who shall dare to blame Reynard for the seizure of stolen goods from a thief? It is reasonable, that he who understands law, and can



discern equity, being also of high birth as my kinsman is, should do justice to the law. Nay, had he hanged up the hound when he took him in the fact, he could have offended none but the king in doing justice without leave. Yet, out of respect to his majesty he did it not, though he reaps small thanks for his labour; thus subjected to the vilest calumnies, which greatly affect him. For my uncle is a true and loyal gentleman, nor can he endure falsehood; he does nothing without the counsel of the priest, and I assert, that since our lord the king proclaimed peace, he never dreamed of injuring any man. He lives like a recluse;

only eats one meal a day, and it is now a year since he tasted flesh, as I have been truly informed by some of his friends who saw him only yesterday. He has moreover left his castle Malepardus, and abandoned his princely establishment, confining all his wishes to a poor hermitage. He has forsworn hunting, and scattered abroad his wealth, living alone by alms and good men's charities; doing infinite penance for his sins, so that he is become pale and lean with praying and fasting, for he would fain be with God."

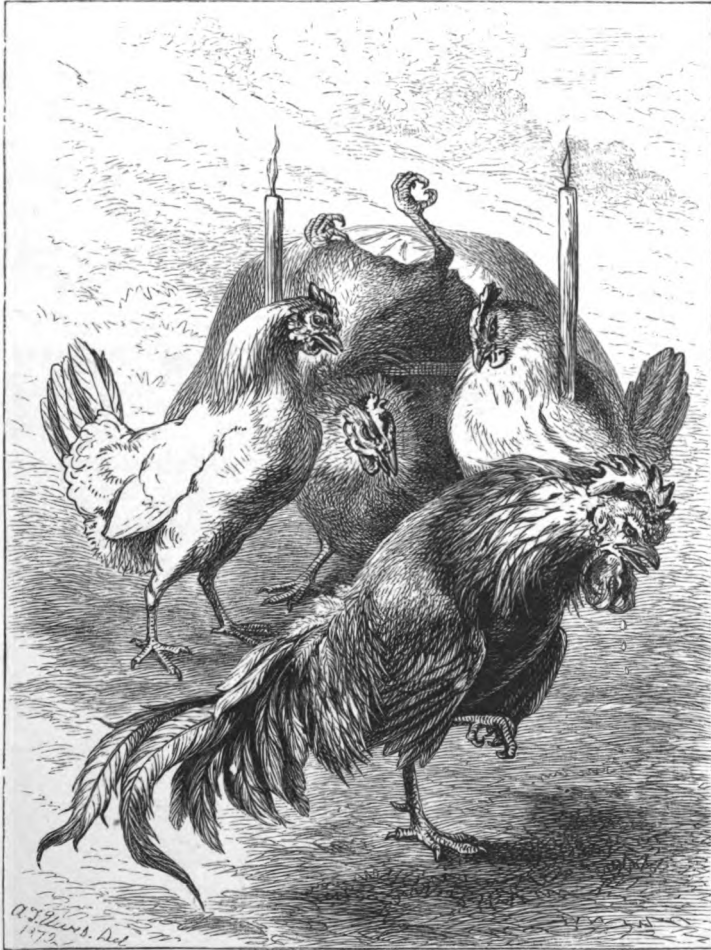
Thus while Grimbard stood preaching, they perceived coming down the hill towards them, stout Chanticleer the cock, who brought upon a bier a dead hen, whose head Reynard had bitten clean off, and it was brought before the king to take cognizance thereof.



Chapter III.



CHANTICLEER marching foremost, hung his wings and smote his feathers pitcously, whilst on the other side the bier went two of his fairest hens, the fairest between Holland and Arden. Each of them bore a straight bright burning taper, for they were sisters to Coppel that lay dead upon the bier; and as they marched, they cried, “Alack, alack, and well-a-day, for the death of Coppel, our sister dear.” Two young pullets bore the bier, and cackled so heavily and wept so loud for the death of Coppel, their mother, that the very hills echoed to their clamour. On reaching the presence of the king, Chanticleer, kneeling down, spake as follows: “Most merciful dread lord the king! vouchsafe, I do beseech you, to hear and redress the injuries which the fox Reynard hath done me and my children, whom you here behold weeping, as well they may.

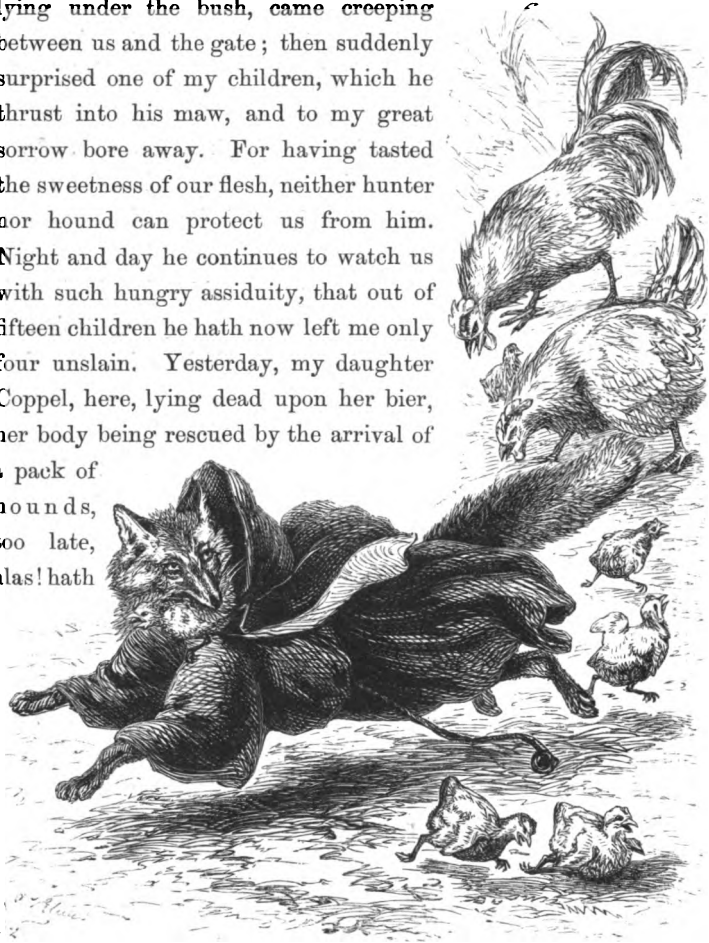


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These tidings made me exceedingly glad ; I took no further heed, but chuckling my family together, I went to ramble outside the wall, a step I shall for ever rue. For that same devout Reynard, lying under the bush, came creeping between us and the gate ; then suddenly surprised one of my children, which he thrust into his maw, and to my great sorrow bore away. For having tasted the sweetness of our flesh, neither hunter nor hound can protect us from him. Night and day he continues to watch us with such hungry assiduity, that out of fifteen children he hath now left me only four unslain. Yesterday, my daughter Coppel, here, lying dead upon her bier, her body being rescued by the arrival of a pack of hounds, too late, alas! hath



fallen, after her mother, a victim to his arts. This is my just complaint, which I refer to your highness's mercy to have compassion upon, and upon my many slaughtered children."

Then spake the king: "Sir Grimbard, hear you this of your uncle, the recluse? He seems to have fasted and prayed with a vengeance; but if I live another year he shall dearly abide it. For you, Chanticleer, your complaint is heard, and shall be repaired. We will bestow handsome obsequies upon your daughter dead, laying her in the earth with solemn dirge and worship due. This done, we will consult with our lords how to do you right, and bring the murderer to justice."

Then began the *Placedo Domine*, with all the verses belonging to it, too many to recite; the dirge being done, the body was interred, and over it was placed a fair marble stone, polished as bright as glass, upon which was inscribed the following epitaph in large letters: "Coppel, Chanticleer's daughter, whom Reynard the fox has slain, lieth here interred!—Mourn, reader, mourn; for her death was violent and lamentable."

The monarch next sent for his lords and wisest counsellors, to consult how best this foul murder committed by Reynard might be punished. In the end it was concluded that he should be sent for, and without any excuse be made to appear before the king, to answer these charges, and the message be delivered by Bruin the bear. The king gave consent, and calling him before him, said, "Sir Bruin, it is our pleasure that you deliver this message, yet in so doing, have a good eye to yourself; for Reynard is full of policy, and knows well how to dissemble, flatter, and betray. He has a world of snares to entangle you withal, and without great exercise of judgment will make a mock and scorn of the most consummate wisdom."

“My lord,” answered sir Bruin, “let me alone with Reynard; I am not such a truant to discretion as to become a mock for his knavery.” And thus full of jollity the bear took his departure to fetch Reynard: if his return be as jovial, there is no fear of his well speeding.



Chapter IV.

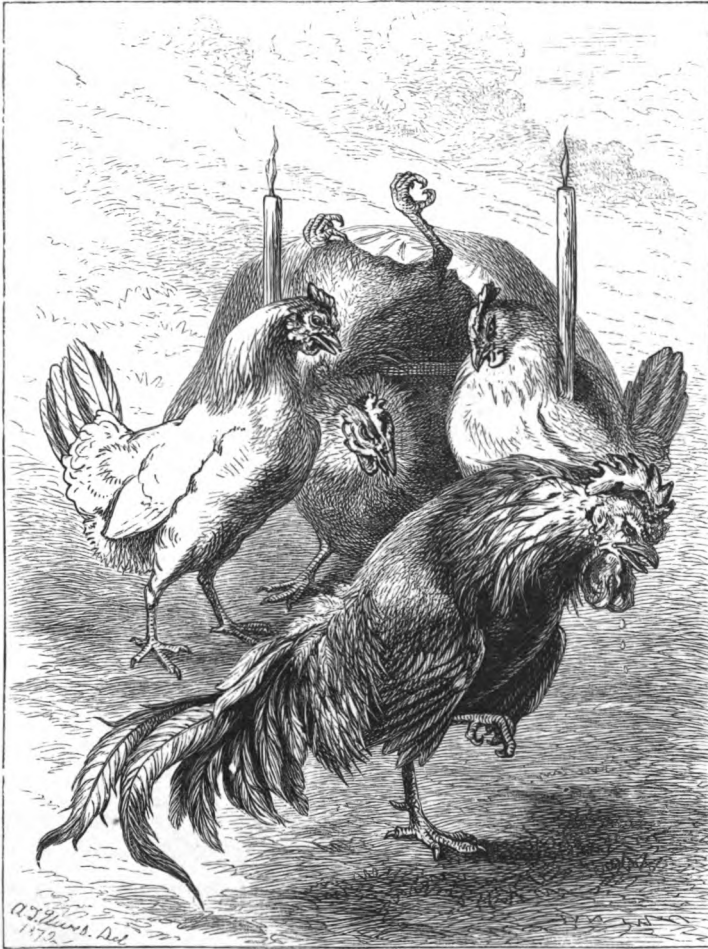


THE next morning away went sir Bruin the bear in quest of the fox, armed against all kinds of plots and deceit whatsoever: and as he went along through a dark forest in which Reynard had a by-path which he used when he was out hunting, or being hunted, he saw a high mountain, over which he must pass to reach Malepardus. For though Reynard had many houses, Malepardus is his chief and most ancient castle, and there he resorted both for defence and pleasure. When Bruin at length came to the place, he found the gates close shut; at which, after he had knocked, sitting upon his tail, he called aloud, "Sir Reynard, are you at home? I am Bruin, your kinsman, sent by the king to summon you to court, to answer the many foul accusations laid at your door. His majesty hath taken a great vow, that if you fail to appear to the summons, your life

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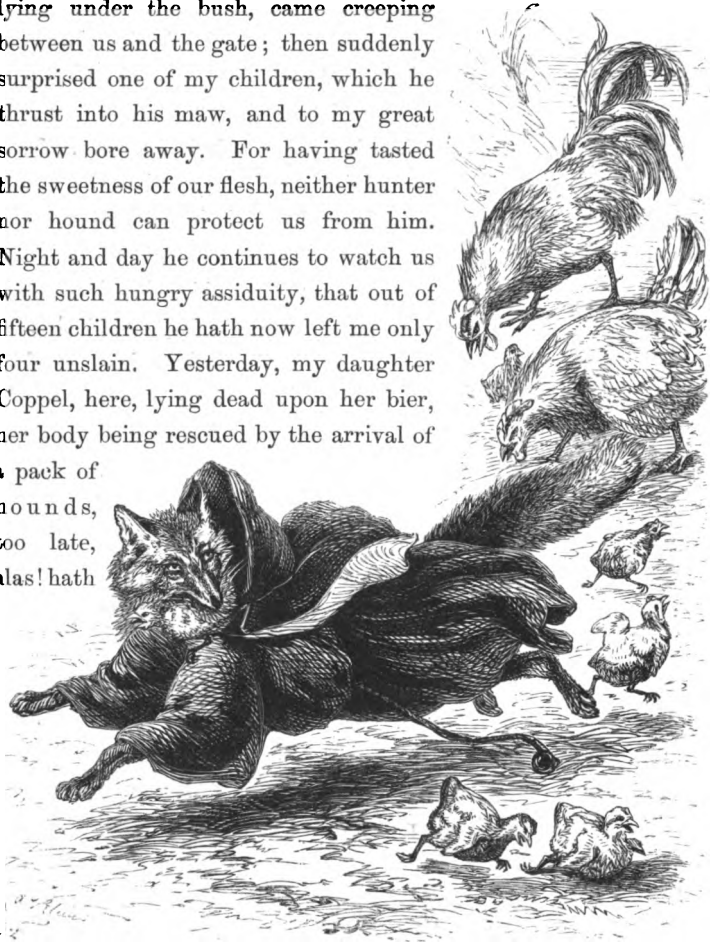


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shall answer for your contempt, and your whole goods and honours become confiscated to the crown. Therefore, fair kinsman, be advised by your friend, and come with me to court, in order to shun the fate that will otherwise overtake you:" so said the bear. Reynard, who was lying near the gate, as was his custom, basking in the sun, hearing these words, departed into one of his holes, Malepardus being full of many intricate and curious apartments, through which he could pass in case of danger or for objects of prey, where he determined to commune with himself awhile how best he might counterplot, and bring the bear into disgrace, while he added to his own credit. For he detested the bear; and at last coming forth, said, "Is it you, dear uncle Bruin? you are exceeding welcome, and excuse my delay in saying so; but the truth is, that when you began to speak I was saying my vespers, and devotion must not be neglected for any worldly concerns. Yet I believe he hath done you no good service, nor do I thank him who hath sent you hither, a long and weary journey, in which your sweat and toil far exceed the worth of the labour performed. It is certain that had you not come, I had to-morrow attended the court of mine own accord. As it is, however, my regret is much diminished, because your counsel just at this time may turn to my double benefit. Alas! uncle, could his majesty find no meaner a messenger than your noble self to employ in these trivial affairs? Truly it appears strange to me, especially since, next his royal self, you are of greatest renown, both in point of blood and riches. For my part, I would that we were both at court, as I fear our journey will be exceedingly troublesome. To say truth, since my entire abstinence from flesh, I have lived upon strange new meats, which



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have very much disagreed with me, and swelled my body as if it was about to burst." "Alas! dear cousin," said the bear, "what kind of meat can it be that makes you so ill?" "Uncle," he replied, "what will it avail you to know? The food was simple and mean, we poor gentry are no lords, you know, but are glad to eat from necessity what others taste for mere wantonness. Yet not to delay you, that which I eat was honeycombs, large, full, and very pleasant. But, impelled by hunger, I eat so very immoderately that I was afterwards infinitely distempered." "Aye!" quoth Bruin, "honeycombs, do you say? Hold you them in such slight respect, nephew? Why, sir, it is food for the greatest emperors in the world: help me, fair nephew, to some of these honeycombs, and command me while I live; for only a small share I will be your servant everlastingly." "You are jesting with me, surely, uncle;" replied the fox. "Jest with you," cried Bruin! "beshrew my heart, then; for I am in such serious good earnest, that for a single lick of the same, you shall count me among the most faithful of your kindred." "Nay, if you be," returned Reynard, "I will bring you where ten of you would not be able to eat the whole at a meal. This I do out of friendship, for I wish to have yours in return, which above all things I desire." "Not ten of us!" cried the bear, "not ten of us! it is impossible; for had I all the honey between Hybla and Portugal, I could eat the whole of it very shortly myself." "Then know, uncle, that near at hand there dwells a husbandman, named Lanfert, who is master of so much that you could not consume it in seven years, and this, for your love and friendship's sake, I will put into your possession." Bruin, now mad for the honey, swore, that for one good meal, he would stop the mouths of all Reynard's enemies.

D

Smiling at his easy credulity, the latter said: "If you would wish for seven ton^o, uncle, you shall have it;" and these words pleased the bear so much, and made it so pleasant, that he could not actually stand for laughing. "Well," thought the fox, "this is good fortune; though I will assuredly lead him where he shall laugh more in reason." He then said: "Uncle, we must lose no time, and I will spare no pains; such as I would not undertake for any of my kin." The bear gave him thanks, and away they went together, the fox promising as much honey as he could carry; but meaning as many stripes as he could undergo. At length they came to Lanfert's house, the sight of which made the bear caper for joy. This Lanfert was a stout brawny carpenter, who the other day had brought into his yard a large oak, which he had begun to cleave, and struck into it two wedges, so that the cleft lay a great way open, at which the fox rejoiced, as it was just what he wished. Then, with a smiling countenance, turning to the bear: "Behold now," he said, "dear uncle, and be careful of yourself; for within this tree is contained so much honey, that if you can get to it, you will find it immeasurable; yet be cautious, good uncle, and eat moderately. The combs are sweet and good, but a surfeit is always dangerous, and may prove troublesome on your journey, which I would not for the world, as no harm can happen to you but must redound to my dishonour." "Concern not yourself for me, faith, nephew Reynard: I am not such a fool but I can temper my appetite if I can only get at the honey." "True, I was perhaps too bold to say what I did, my best uncle; so I pray you enter in at the end, and you shall there find what you want." With all haste the bear entered the tree with his fore feet forward, and thrust his head into the hole quite over the ears. When the fox saw this, he instantly ran and pulled

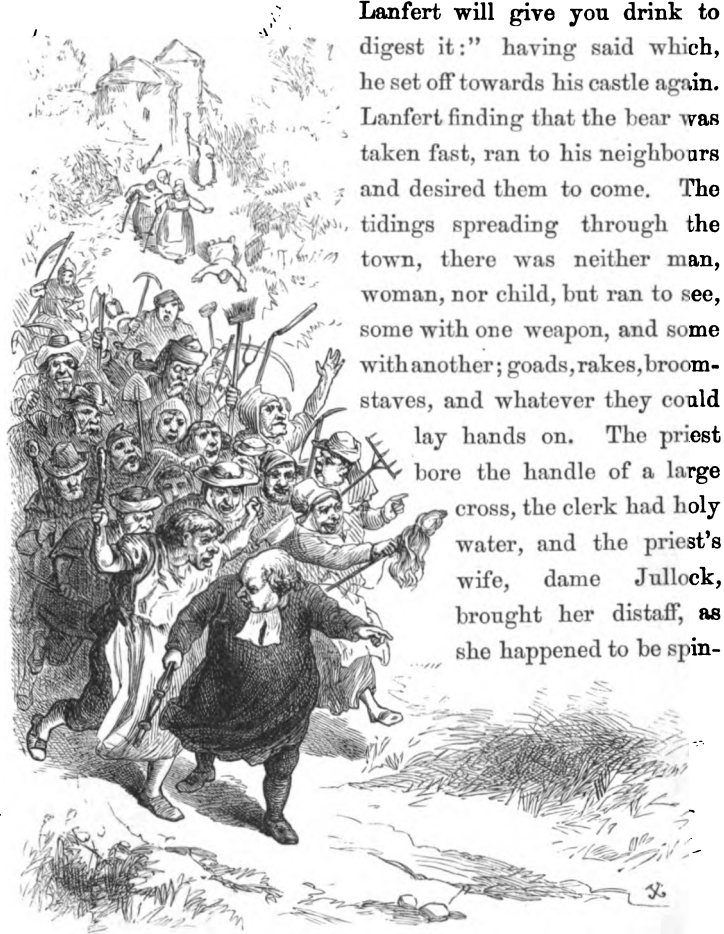
the wedges out of the tree, so that the bear remained locked fast. Neither flattery nor anger now availed the bear; for his nephew had got him in so fast a prison, that it was impossible to free himself by any manœuvre. What

profited him his great strength and valour now? They only served to irritate and annoy him; and deprived of all relief, he began to howl and bray, to scratch and tumble, and make such a noise, that

Lanfert came running hastily out of the house, to see what was the matter. He held a sharp hook in his hand, and while the bear lay tearing and roaring in the tree, the fox cried out in scorn; "He is coming,



uncle! I fear you will not like the honey; is it good? Do not eat too much; pleasant things are apt to surfeit, and you will delay your journey back to court. If your belly be too full,



Lanfert will give you drink to digest it:" having said which, he set off towards his castle again. Lanfert finding that the bear was taken fast, ran to his neighbours and desired them to come. The tidings spreading through the town, there was neither man, woman, nor child, but ran to see, some with one weapon, and some with another; goads, rakes, broom-staves, and whatever they could lay hands on. The priest bore the handle of a large cross, the clerk had holy water, and the priest's wife, dame Jullock, brought her distaff, as she happened to be spin-

ning. Nay, the old beldames came, that had never a tooth in their heads. Hearing the approach of this army, Bruin fell into great fear, there being none but himself to withstand them; and as they came thundering down upon him, he struggled so fiercely, that he contrived to get his head out of jeopardy, by leaving behind the best part of the skin, along with his ears, insomuch that never age beheld a more foul ugly beast. For the blood covered his face and hands, leaving his claws and skin behind him, so that he could hardly move or see. It was an ill market he came to, for in spite of this torment, Lanfert and his crew came upon him, and so belaboured him with staves and hooks and rakes, that it might well be a warning to every one taken in misery, showing how the weakest must evermore go to the wall. This Bruin cruelly experienced, every one venting their fury upon his hide, even Houghlin, with his crooked leg, and Ludolf with the long broad nose; the one armed with a leaden mallet, and the other with an iron scourge. None lashed so hard as sir Bertolf with the long fingers, and none annoyed him more than Lanfert and Ortam, one being armed with a sharp Welsh hook, and the second with a crooked staff heavily leaded at the end, with which he used to play at stab-ball. There was Burkin and Armes Ablequack, Bane the priest, with his cross-handle, and Jullock his wife. All these so belaboured the poor bear, that his life was in extreme jeopardy; he sat and sighed sadly during the massacre; but the thundering weight of Lanfert's fierce blows was the most cruel to bear. For Dame Podge, at Casport, was his mother, and his father was Marob, the staple-maker, a passing stout man when he was alone. From him Bruin received such a shower of stones, at the same time that Lanfert's brother wielded him a savage blow upon the pate, that he could

no longer see nor hear ; but made a desperate plunge into the adjoining river, through a cluster of old wives standing by, many of whom he threw into the water, which was broad and deep, among whom was the parson's wife. Seeing her floating there like a sea-mew, the holy man left off striking the bear, crying



out, "Help, oh help ; dame Jullock is in the water ! I absolve the man, woman, or child that saves her, from all their sins and transgressions, past and to come ; and I remit all penance." Hearing this, all left the pursuit of the bear to succour Dame Jullock, upon which Bruin cut the stream with fresh strength, and swam away. The priest only pursued him, crying in great rage, "Turn, villain, turn, that I may be revenged upon thee." But the bear having the advantage of the stream, heeded not his

calling, for he was proud of the triumph of having escaped from them. He bitterly cursed the honey tree, and more bitterly the fox, who had not only betrayed him, but made him lose his hood from his face, and his leather gloves from his fingers. In this condition he swam about three miles down the stream, when he grew so very weary that he was obliged to seek a landing. The blood trickled down his face: he sighed and drew his breath so short, that it seemed as if his last hour was come.

Meanwhile the fox, on his way home, had stolen a fat pullet, and running through a by-path to elude pursuit, he now came towards the river with infinite joy. For he never doubted but the bear was slain, and he therefore said; "My fortune is made, for my greatest enemy at the court is dead, and no one can suspect me." But as he spoke, looking towards the river side, he espied the bear lying down to ease his grievous wounds. At this sight Reynard's heart misgave him, and he railed bitterly against Lanfert the carpenter; cursing him for a silly fool, that did not know how to kill a bear in a trap. "What madman," he cried, "would have lost such good venison; so fat and wholesome, and which lay taken to his hand? A wise man would have been proud of the fortune which thou, like a fool, hast neglected." Thus fretting and chiding he came to the river, where he found the bear covered with wounds, which Reynard alone had caused. Yet he said in scorn as he passed, "Monsieur, Dieu vous garde!" "O thou foul red villain," said the bear to himself, "what impudence can equal thine?" But the fox continued his speech; "What, uncle, have you forgotten every thing at Lanfert, or have you paid for the honeycombs you stole? I would rather pay for them myself, than that you should incur any disgrace. If the

honey was good, you may have plenty more at the same price. Good uncle, tell me before I go, into what order do you mean to enter, that you wear this new-fashioned hood? Will you be a monk, an abbot, or a friar? He that shaved your crown, seems also to have cropt your ears; your forelock is lost, and your leather gloves are gone. Fie, sloven! go not bare-headed! They say you can sing *peccavi* rarely." These taunts made Bruin mad with rage; but because he could not take revenge, he was obliged to let him talk on. At last, to avoid him, he plunged again into the river and landed on the other side, where he began to meditate how best he might reach the court; for he had lost both his ears and his talons, and could scarcely walk. Yet of necessity he must move forward, which he could only do by setting his buttocks upon the ground, and tumbling his body over and over. In this manner he first rolled about half a mile, then rested, and rolled another half mile, until by dint of perseverance he tumbled his way to court. Witnessing his strange method of approach, a number of courtiers gazed upon him as a sort of prodigy, little deeming that it was the famous sir Bruin the bear.

The king himself was the first who recognized him, and he said: "It is sir Bruin my servant: what villains have wounded him thus? Where can he have been, that he could contrive it—to bring his death as it were back with him? let us hear what tidings he has got." "O, my dread sovereign lord the king," cried out the bear, "I have to complain grievously. Behold how I am massacred; a massacre I humbly beseech you to revenge on that false, malignant Reynard, who hath wrought me this foul disgrace and slaughter, merely because I have done your royal pleasure in conveying him a summons

to court." His majesty then said, 'How durst he do this thing? Now, by my crown, I swear, I will take such revenge as shall make the traitor tremble, and remember the foul deed.' So forthwith the king summoned his whole council, and consulted how and in what way to proceed most efficaciously against the wily fox. At length, after much discussion, it was unanimously concluded, that he should be again summoned to appear and answer his transgressions in person. The party now appointed to execute the summons was Tibert the cat, being equally recommended for his gravity and his wisdom; an appointment likewise well pleasing to the king.





CHAPTER 5

WHEN the king called for sir Tibert the cat, and said: "Sir Tibert, you shall go to Reynard and summon him the second time, and command him to appear and answer his offences; for though he be cruel to other beasts, to you he is courteous. Assure him if he fail at the first summons, that I will take so severe a course against him, and his posterity, that his example shall terrify all offenders." Then said Tibert the cat: "My dread lord, they were my foes which thus advised you, for there is nothing I can do that can force him to come or to tarry. I do beseech your majesty send some one of greater power; I am

small and feeble ; for if noble sir Bruin, who was so strong and mighty, could not compel him, what will my weakness avail ?” The king replied: “It is your wisdom, sir Tibert, that I employ, and not your strength ; many prevail with art, when violence



returns home with labour lost.” “Well,” said Tibert, “since it is your pleasure, it must be accomplished, and Heaven make my fortune better than my heart presages !”

Tibert then made things in readiness and went to Malepardus. In his journey he saw come flying towards him one of St. Martin’s birds, to whom the cat cried aloud, “Hail ! gentle

bird! I beseech thee turn thy wings and fly on my right hand." But the bird, alas, flew on the left side, at which sight the cat grew very heavy, for he was well skilled in augury, and knew the sign to be ominous. Nevertheless, as many do, he armed himself with better hopes, and went to Malepardus, where he found the fox standing before the castle gates, to whom Tibert said: "Health to my fair cousin Reynard; the king by me summons you to the court, in which if you fail or delay, there is nothing that can prevent your sudden and cruel death." The fox answered, "Welcome, dear cousin Tibert; I obey your command, and wish the king my lord infinite days of happiness. Only let me entreat you to rest with me to-night, and accept such cheer as my simple house affords. Tomorrow as early as you will, we will proceed towards the court, for I have no kinsman whom I trust so nearly as yourself. There came hither the other day that treacherous knight sir Bruin, who looked upon me with that tyrannous cruelty, that I would not for the wealth of an empire hazard my person with him; but with you, dear cousin, I will go, were a thousand diseases eating up my vitals." Tibert replied: "You speak like a noble gentleman, and it will now perhaps be best to move forward, for the moon shines as bright as day." "Nay, dear cousin," said the fox, "let us take day before us, so that we may know our friends when we meet; the night is full of dangers and suspicions." "Well," said the other, "if it be your pleasure, I am content; what shall we eat?" Reynard said, "Truly my store is small, the best I have is a honeycomb too pleasant and sweet, what think you of it yourself!" Tibert replied, "It is meat I little care for, and seldom eat: I had rather have a single mouse than all the

honey in Europe." "A mouse, dear cousin," said Reynard, "why, here dwells hard by a priest, who has a barn so full of mice, that I believe half the wains in the parish would not carry them away." "Then, dear Reynard," cried the cat, "do but you lead me thither, and make me your servant for ever." "But," said the fox, "do you love mice so much as that comes to?" "Beyond expression, I do," quoth the other, "a mouse is better than any venison, or the best cates on a prince's table. Conduct me therefore thither and command me afterwards in any of your affairs. Had you slain my father, my mother, and all my kin, I would freely forgive you now."



Chapter VI



SURELY," said Reynard, "you do but jest!" "No, by my life," replied the cat. "Well, then, if you be in earnest, I will so contrive this very night, that you shall have your fill." "Is it possible?" said the cat. "Only follow me," said Reynard, "I will bring you to the place presently." So away they went with all speed towards the priest's barn, well fenced about with a mud wall, where, but the night before, the fox had broken in, and stolen an exceeding fat pullet from the jolly priest. Now the priest was so angry, that he had set a trap before the hole to catch the thief at his next coming, which the fox well knew, and therefore he said to the cat: "Sir Tibert, here is the hole, creep in! It will not take you a minute before you find more mice than you are able to devour: hear you how they squeak? But come back when you are full and I will wait here for you, that we may then proceed together towards court.



Sir Tibert made a desperate effort, and jumping between the priest's legs, fastened there. .

Stay not long, for I know my wife is expecting us." "But think you I may safely enter in at this hole?" inquired the cat; "these priests are very wily and subtle, and often conceal their snares very close; making the rash fool sorely repent." "Why, cousin Tibert," said Reynard, "are you turning coward? What, man, fear you a shadow?" Quite ashamed, the cat sprang quickly in, and was caught fast by the neck in the gin. He tried to leap back, which only brought the snare closer, so that he was half strangled, and struggled and cried out piteously. Reynard stood before the hole and heard all, at which he greatly rejoiced, and cried in scorn, "Cousin Tibert, love you mice? I hope they are fat for your sake. Did the Priest or Martinet know of your feasting, I know them so well, they would bring you sauce to your meat very quickly. What, you sing at your meat: is that the court fashion now? If so, I only wish, that Isegrim the wolf bore you company, that all my friends might feast together.

Meanwhile the poor cat was fast, and mewed so sadly, that Martinet leaped out of his bed and cried to his people, "Up, up! for the thief is taken that caught our hens." At these words the priest unluckily rose, awaking his whole household, and crying, "The fox is taken! the fox is taken!" Not half dressed, he handed his wife the sacred taper, and running first, he smote Tibert a blow with a huge staff, while many others followed his example. The cat received many deadly blows; for the anger of Martinet was so great, that he struck out one of the cat's eyes, which he did to please the priest, intending to dash out the poor Tibert's brains at a blow. Beholding death so near, sir Tibert made a desperate effort, and jumping between the priest's legs, fastened there

in a style that caused him the most excruciating pain. When dame Jullock, his wife, saw this, she cried out, and swore in the bitterness of her heart, and withal cursed the gin, which she wished, along with its inventor, at the devil.

All this while Reynard stood before the hole, and seeing what passed, laughed so excessively that he was ready to burst; but the poor priest fell down in a swoon, and every one left the cat, in order to revive the priest. During this last scene, the fox set off back again to Malepardus, for he believed that it was now all over with sir Tibert. But he, seeing his foes so busy about the priest, began to gnaw his cord, until he bit it quite asunder. He then leaped out of the hole, and went roaring and tumbling like his predecessor, the bear, back to the court. Before he reached it, it was wide day, and the sun being risen, he entered the king's court in a most pitiful plight. For his body was beaten and bruised to a jelly, owing to the fox's craft; his bones were shivered and broken, one of his eyes lost, and his skin rent and mangled. This when the king beheld, he grew a thousand times more angry than before. He summoned his council, and debated upon the surest means of revenging such injuries upon the head of the fox. After long consultation Grimbarde the goat, Reynard's sister's son, said to the rest of the king's council, "Good my lords, though my uncle were twice as bad as he is represented, yet there is remedy enough against his mischiefs, and it is fit you do him the justice due to a man of his rank, by summoning him a third time, and then it will be time to pronounce him guilty of all that is laid to his charge." "But," said his majesty, "who will now be found so desperate as to hazard his hands, his ears, nay, his very life, with one so tyrannical and irre-

ligious?" "Truly," answered the goat, "if it please your majesty, I am that desperate person who will venture to carry the message to my most subtle kinsman, if your highness but command me."



Chapter VII



THEN said the king, "Go, Grimbard, for I command you; yet take good heed of Reynard, for he is subtle and malicious." Grimbard thanked his majesty; and so taking his humble leave, he went to Malepardus, where he found Reynard, and Ermelin, his wife, amusing themselves with their children. Having first saluted his aunt and uncle, he said, "Take heed, fair uncle, lest your absence from court cause more mischief than the offence deserves. Indeed, it is high time to appear, for delay brings only greater danger and punishment. The complaints against you are infinite, and this is your third summons. Your wisdom may therefore tell you, that no hope of mercy can longer remain for you and yours; within three days your castle will be beleaguered and demolished, your kindred made slaves, and you



Grimbard finds Reynard and Ermelin, his wife, amusing themselves with their children.

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yourself reserved for a public example. Do, my dear uncle, then, I beseech you, recall your better wisdom, and return with me forthwith to the court. I doubt not but your discretion will find words to excuse you; for you have surmounted many wonderful perils, and brought your foes to shame, whilst the innocence of your cause hath often borne you spotless from the tribunal." Reynard answered and said, "Nephew, you say true; I will be advised, and go with you; not to answer for offences, but because I know that the court stands in need of my counsel. Nor do I doubt the king's mercy if I can once gain his ear, though mine offences were double, and my sins as red as scarlet; for I know the court cannot stand without me, and that his majesty shall truly understand. Though I know I have many enemies, yet it troubles me not, for my innocence shall confound their inquiries, and they shall learn to their cost, that in high matters of state and policy Reynard cannot be dispensed with. They may harp upon injuries as long as they please, but the pith of the affair must rest upon my relation. Their envy made me leave the court; for though their shallow wits cannot disgrace me, their multitudes may at last oppress me. Still, nephew, I will go with you to the court, and beard my enemies to their face, for I will not hazard the welfare of my wife and children by opposing the king, he is too powerful; and though he do me great injury, I will ever bear it patiently." Having thus spoken, he turned to his wife, and said, "Dame Ermelin, take care of my children, especially Reynikin, my youngest boy, for he has much of my love, and I hope he will follow in my steps. Rossel too promises well, and I love them both truly. Therefore have an eye upon them, and if I should escape, doubt

not but my love shall requite you." At these words Ermelin wept, and could not say farewell, and her children howled to see their mother's sorrow; for their lord and provider was gone, and Malepardus left unvictualled.





“If you will shrive to me, do it in English, that I may understand you.”

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Chapter VIII



WHEN Reynard and Grimbard had proceeded some way on their journey, the former stopped and said, "Fair nephew, blame me not if I say my heart is very heavy, for my life is in great jeopardy. Would that to blot out my manifold sins and cast off so great a burden, I might here repent and be shriven by you. I know you are holy; and having received penance for my sin, my soul will be more quiet within me." Grimbard bid him proceed. "Then," said the fox, "*Confitebor tibi, pater.*" "Nay," interrupted the Brock, "if you will shrive to me, do it in English, that I may understand you." "Then," resumed Reynard, "I have grievously offended against all the beasts that live, and especially against mine uncle Bruin the bear, whom I lately almost massacred, and Tibert the cat, whom I no less cruelly ensnared in a gin. I have trespassed against Chanticleer and his children, and have devoured many of them. Nay, the king has not been safe from my malice; for I have slandered him, and not respected the name of the queen. I have betrayed Isegrim the wolf, while I called him uncle, though no part

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of his blood ran in my veins. I made him a monk of Esinane where I became also one of the order, only to do him open mischief. I made him bind his foot to the bell rope to teach him to ring; but the peal had like to have cost him his life, the parishioners beat and wounded him so very sorely. After this I taught him to catch fish; but he got soundly beaten for it, and beareth the stripes to this moment. I led him into a



rich priest's house to steal bacon, where he eat so much, that unable to get out where he came in, I raised all the town upon him; and while the priest ran from table, I seized upon a fat fowl, while the priest and his people were busy cudgelling the sides of Isegrim. At last the wolf fell down as if he had been dead, and they dragged his body over rocks and stones until they came to an old ditch, where they threw him in. There he lay groaning all night, and how he ever got thence I know not. Another time I led him to a place, where I told him there were seven cocks and hens perched together all in

excellent condition, and hard by stood a false door, upon which we climbed. I said that if he could contrive to creep in, he should have the fowls. Isegrim with much joy went laughing to the door, and pushing forward, he said, 'Reynard, you deceive me; for here is nothing.' 'Then,' replied I, 'uncle, they must be farther in; and if you will have them, you must venture for them.' At this the wolf going a little farther, I gave him a push forward, so that he fell down into the house with such an infernal noise and clatter, that all who were asleep in the house awoke, and cried out, 'What dreadful noise was that? what has fallen from the trap-door?' So they rose, one and all, lighted a candle, and espying him, took such measures that they wounded him almost to death. Thus I brought the wolf into many hazards of his life, more than I can well remember; but I will repeat them to you hereafter, as they occur to me. I have also most grievously offended against dame Ersewinde, his wife, of which I much repent me, as it was highly to her discredit." "Uncle," said Grimbarde, "you make your shrift imperfect; I hardly understand you." "Pardon me, sweet nephew; but you know I dislike casting aspersions on women; it is simply that she liked me, and preferred my company to that of Isegrim. Thus I have told you all my wickedness; and now order my penance as shall seem best." Now Grimbarde being both learned and wise, broke a switch from a tree, and said, "Nephew, you shall three times strike your body with this rod: then lay it down upon the ground, and spring three times over it without stumbling or bending your legs. This done, you shall take it up and kiss it gently, in sign of your meekness and obedience to your penance, when you will be absolved of your sins committed to this day; for I pronounce you a clear remission."

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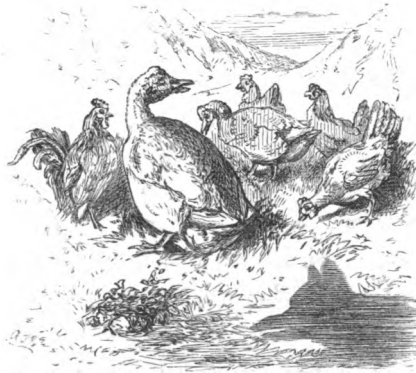
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At this the fox was exceedingly glad, and then Grimbard said, "See that henceforth, uncle, you do good works; read your psalter, go to church, fast, and keep vigils, all holydays; give alms, and abandon your sinful life. Avoid theft and treason; so that by doing these things, no doubt you shall obtain mercy from the king." All these the fox promised, and so they went journeying together towards the court.



Not far from the roadside there stood a dwelling of holy nuns, where many geese and capons were seen wandering without the walls. As they were conversing, the fox gradually drew Grimbard out of the right path, and finding the pullets picking near the barn, among which was a fine fat capon that had strayed a little way from the rest, he made a sudden spring and caught him by the feathers which flew about his ears; yet the capon escaped. At this sight Grimbard cried out, "Accursed wretch, what would you do? will

you for a silly pullet again fall into all your sins?" To which Reynard answered, "Pardon me, dear nephew; but I had forgotten myself: I do entreat your forgiveness, and my eye shall not wander." They then went over a little bridge, the fox still glancing his eye towards the pullets as if it were impossible for him to refrain; for the evil was bred in his bones, and it stuck fast to his flesh; his heart carried his eyes that way as long as he could see them. The goat, aware of this, again said, "For shame, dissembler, why wander your eyes after the fowl?" The fox replied, "Nay, nephew, you do me wrong, you mistake my looks; for I was merely saying a paternoster for the souls of all the pullets and geese which I have slain before my piety interfered." "Well," said Grimbard, "it may be so; but your glances are very suspicious." Now by this time they had regained the highway, and pushed on more speedily to the court, which the fox no sooner saw than his heart began to quake for fear. He knew too well the crimes he had to answer for; they were indeed infinite and heinous.



Chapter IX.



AS soon as the tidings spread, that Reynard the Fox and his kinsman Grimbard, were arrived at court, all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, prepared accusations against the fox. His heart quaked within him, but his countenance was, as usual, calm and confident, and he bore himself as proudly as before. His nephew attended him through the streets, and he walked as gallantly into the court as if he had been the king's son, and free from every imputation whatsoever. When he came opposite the chair of state in which the king sat, he stopped and said: "Heaven long give your majesty glory and renown, above all princes of the earth. I assure your majesty that no monarch had ever a more faithful servant than I have been; than I now am, and so, in spite of my enemies, will die. For, my dread liege lord, I know that many are plotting my destruction in this court, if they could prevail with your majesty; but you scorn the slanders of malice; and though in these days flatterers succeed in princes' courts, it is not so with you, nor will



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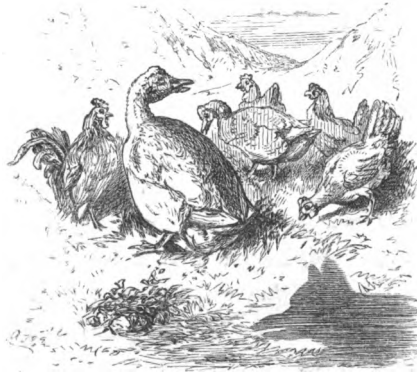
they reap anything but shame for their reward." But the king cut him short at these words, and cried, "Peace, treacherous Reynard! I know your dissimulation, and can expound your flattery, yet both shall now fail you at your need. Think you I will be taken with the music of smooth words? No, it has but too often deceived me. The peace which I have proclaimed and sworn to, that have you broken!" And as the king was proceeding, Chanticleer cried out: "Oh, how I have lost the benefit of that noble peace!" "Be still, Chanticleer," cried the king, "let me proceed. Thou devil among the innocent, with what face canst thou say thou lovest me, and seest all these wretched creatures ready to disprove thy words; yea, whose wounds yet spit bloody defiance at thee; and for which thy dearest life shall soon answer." "*In nomine Patris,*" cried the fox; "what, my dread lord, if Bruin's crown be bloody, what is that to me? If your majesty employed him in a message, which he neglected, to steal honey at the carpenter's house, where he got his wounds, am I to blame? If revenge he sought why did he not take it himself; he is strong and puissant; it was not to be considered as my weakness. As for Tibert the cat, whom I received with all friendship, if he would steal into the priest's barn against my advice, and there lose his eyes, nay his life, in what have I offended? Was I Tibert's keeper? or the guardian of the great bear? Oh, my dread lord! you may do your royal pleasure; notwithstanding my perfect innocence, you may adjudge me to die; for I am your poor vassal, and look only for your mercy. I know your strength and my own weakness; my death would yield you small satisfaction, yet whatever your good will and pleasure be, that to me shall prove most acceptable."

At this the fox was exceedingly glad, and then Grimbard said, "See that henceforth, uncle, you do good works; read your psalter, go to church, fast, and keep vigils, all holydays; give alms, and abandon your sinful life. Avoid theft and treason; so that by doing these things, no doubt you shall obtain mercy from the king." All these the fox promised, and so they went journeying together towards the court.



Not far from the roadside there stood a dwelling of holy nuns, where many geese and capons were seen wandering without the walls. As they were conversing, the fox gradually drew Grimbard out of the right path, and finding the pullets picking near the barn, among which was a fine fat capon that had strayed a little way from the rest, he made a sudden spring and caught him by the feathers which flew about his ears; yet the capon escaped. At this sight Grimbard cried out, "Accursed wretch, what would you do? will

you for a silly pullet again fall into all your sins?" To which Reynard answered, "Pardon me, dear nephew; but I had forgotten myself: I do entreat your forgiveness, and my eye shall not wander." They then went over a little bridge, the fox still glancing his eye towards the pullets as if it were impossible for him to refrain; for the evil was bred in his bones, and it stuck fast to his flesh; his heart carried his eyes that way as long as he could see them. The goat, aware of this, again said, "For shame, dissembler, why wander your eyes after the fowl?" The fox replied, "Nay, nephew, you do me wrong, you mistake my looks; for I was merely saying a paternoster for the souls of all the pullets and geese which I have slain before my piety interfered." "Well," said Grimbard, "it may be so; but your glances are very suspicious." Now by this time they had regained the highway, and pushed on more speedily to the court, which the fox no sooner saw than his heart began to quake for fear. He knew too well the crimes he had to answer for; they were indeed infinite and heinous.



Chapter IX.



AS soon as the tidings spread, that Reynard the Fox and his kinsman Grimbard, were arrived at court, all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, prepared accusations against the fox. His heart quaked within him, but his countenance was, as usual, calm and confident, and he bore himself as proudly as before. His nephew attended him through the streets, and he walked as gallantly into the court as if he had been the king's son, and free from every imputation whatsoever. When he came opposite the chair of state in which the king sat, he stopped and said: "Heaven long give your majesty glory and renown, above all princes of the earth. I assure your majesty that no monarch had ever a more faithful servant than I have been ; than I now am, and so, in spite of my enemies, will die. For, my dread liege lord, I know that many are plotting my destruction in this court, if they could prevail with your majesty ; but you scorn the slanders of malice ; and though in these days flatterers succeed in princes' courts, it is not so with you, nor will



“Peace, treacherous Reynard! I know your dissimulation, and can expound your flattery, yet both shall now fail you at your need.”

Page 43.

they reap anything but shame for their reward." But the king cut him short at these words, and cried, "Peace, treacherous Reynard! I know your dissimulation, and can expound your flattery, yet both shall now fail you at your need. Think you I will be taken with the music of smooth words? No, it has but too often deceived me. The peace which I have proclaimed and sworn to, that have you broken!" And as the king was proceeding, Chanticleer cried out: "Oh, how I have lost the benefit of that noble peace!" "Be still, Chanticleer," cried the king, "let me proceed. Thou devil among the innocent, with what face canst thou say thou lovest me, and seest all these wretched creatures ready to disprove thy words; yea, whose wounds yet spit bloody defiance at thee; and for which thy dearest life shall soon answer." "*In nomine Patris,*" cried the fox; "what, my dread lord, if Bruin's crown be bloody, what is that to me? If your majesty employed him in a message, which he neglected, to steal honey at the carpenter's house, where he got his wounds, am I to blame? If revenge he sought why did he not take it himself; he is strong and puissant; it was not to be considered as my weakness. As for Tibert the cat, whom I received with all friendship, if he would steal into the priest's barn against my advice, and there lose his eyes, nay his life, in what have I offended? Was I Tibert's keeper? or the guardian of the great bear? Oh, my dread lord! you may do your royal pleasure; notwithstanding my perfect innocence, you may adjudge me to die; for I am your poor vassal, and look only for your mercy. I know your strength and my own weakness; my death would yield you small satisfaction, yet whatever your good will and pleasure be, that to me shall prove most acceptable."

While he thus spoke, Bellin the ram stepped forth, along with his ewe-dam Oleway, and besought the king to hear their complaint; and next Bruin the bear with all his lineage, followed by Tibert the cat, Isegrim the wolf, Kayward the hare, Paulter the boar, and nearly all the other beasts of the court, who rose with one accord, crying for vengeance upon the fox, with such clamour that the king was induced to order the fox to be there secured and arrested.



Chapter X.



UPON this arrest a cabinet council was summoned, and every voice was in favour of Reynard's execution; though he answered every accusation *seriatim*, with a wonderful degree of art, to the admiration of all the court. Witnesses however were examined, the proofs established; the fox was condemned and judgment recorded. He was to be hanged up by the neck till he was dead; at which sentence the fox cast down his head, all his jollity was fled, and no flattery or smooth words any longer availed.

This being resolved, Grimbard his nephew, and several others nearest him in blood, unable to endure the sight of his death, took leave of the king and left the court. When the monarch saw so many gallant gentlemen depart, all sad and weeping, being near in blood and alliance to the prisoner, he said to himself, "It behoves me to take good counsel what I am about, for though Reynard has faults, he has many friends and more virtues." As the king was thus pondering, Tibert said to sir Bruin, "Why are you so slow in the execution of your sentence, and you sir Isegrim? See you not there are many

bushes and hedges ; it is near evening, and if the prisoner escape, his subtlety is so great, that all the art in the world will never again entangle him. If you mean to execute him, proceed quickly.—It will be night before the gallows can be made.” At these words Isegrim exclaimed, suddenly recollecting himself, “There is a pair of gallows hard by ;” at the same time he fetched a deep sigh ! “What, are you afraid, sir Isegrim ; or is this execution against your mind !” said Tibert, “remember the hanging of both your kinsmen was his work. Had you now a proper sense of justice, you would hang him for the same and not stand trifling thus.” Isegrim, half angry, answered, “Your anger puts out the eye of your better reason, though if we had a halter that would fit his neck, we would soon despatch him.” Reynard, who had long remained silent, said ; “Yes, I beseech you to shorten my pain ; sir Tibert has a cord strong enough, in which he himself was hanged at the priest’s house, when he got between the holy man’s legs and bit him so dreadfully. Besides, he can climb well ; let him mount and be my executioner ; for it would be a discredit both to sir Bruin and sir Isegrim, thus to treat their own nephew. I am sorry I live to see it ; but since you are resolved to be my hangmen, play your parts and delay not. Go before, uncle Bruin, and lead the way : follow me, Isegrim, my cousin, and beware I escape not.” “You say well,” said Bruin, “it is the best counsel I ever heard you give.”

So forth they went, and Isegrim and all his friends guarded Reynard, leading him by the neck and other parts of his body, at which usage the fox felt quite dismayed. Yet he said meekly, “Why put yourself to all this trouble, my best kinsman ? Believe me, I could well entreat your forgiveness, though you rejoice in my sufferings. Still I know, that did my aunt, your wife, see what was passing, she would not see me thus cruelly

tormented, were it only for old affection's sake. But do with me as you will ; I must endure the worst : as for Bruin and Tibert, I leave my revenge to justice, and to you the reward of traitors. I know my worst, fortune and death can come but once. I wish it were already past, for to me it is no terror. I saw my brave father die, and how quickly he vanished ! The worst of death is

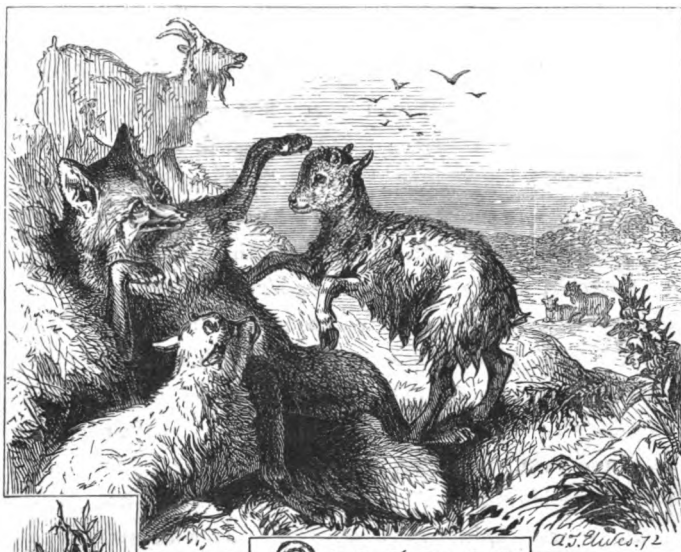


therefore familiar to me." "Then," said sir Isegrim, "let us make haste, for his curse shall not light upon me by delaying ;" so he on one side, and sir Bruin on the other, they led the fox to the gallows ; Tibert skipping before them with the halter.

On reaching the place of execution, the king, the queen, and all the nobility took their place, to behold the fox die. Reynard, though full of sorrow and dismay, was still busy thinking how he might escape, and again triumph over his proud enemies, by drawing the king over to his party. "Though the king," he

said to himself, "be offended with me, as he has reason enough, Heaven knows, yet I may perhaps live to become his bosom friend." While thus cogitating, the wolf said, "Now, sir Bruin, remember your injuries; revenge yourself well; for the day is come we have so long looked for. Go, Tibert, and mount the gallows-tree with the rope, and make a running noose, for you shall have your will of your enemy. Take heed, good sir Bruin, that he eludes us not, and I will now place the ladder; when every thing will be complete." This being done the fox spoke: "Now well may my heart be heavy, for death stands in all his naked horrors before my eyes, and I cannot escape. Oh, my dread lord the king, and you, my sovereign lady the queen, and all you, my lords and gentlemen here assembled to see me die, I beseech you grant me this one charitable boon. Let me unburthen my heart before you, and cleanse my soul of its manifold sins, so that hereafter no man may be unjustly accused or executed for my secret misdeeds. This done, death will come more easy to me, and the assistance of your prayers will lift my soul, I doubt not, to the skies."





CHAP. XI

ALL now took compassion on the fox, and beseeched the king to grant his request; which was done. And then the fox spake: "Help me, Heaven! for I see no man here whom I have not offended. Yet this was not from evil inclination; for in my youth I was accounted as virtuous as any breathing; I played with the lambs all day long, and took delight in their pretty bleating. But once in my play I bit one, and the taste of its blood was so sweet, that ever since I could not forbear. This evil humour drew me into the woods among the goats; where, hearing the bleating of the young kids, I slew one, and after two more, which made me so hardy, that I began to murder geese and pullets. Thus my crime growing by habit, the fancy so possessed me, that all was fish that was caught in my net. In the winter season I met with Isegrim, as he lay under a hollow tree, and he unfolded

unto me how he was my uncle, and laid the pedigree down so plain, that from that day forth we became companions. A friendship I have reason to curse ; for then, indeed, began the history of our thefts and slaughters. He stole the great prizes and I the small ; he murdered nobles and I the meanest subjects ; and in all these actions his share was ever the greatest. When he caught a calf, a ram, or a wether, his voracity would hardly afford me the bones to pick. When he mustered an ox or a cow, he first served himself, his wife, and all his family, nothing remaining, I say, for me but the bare bones. I state not this as having been in want, it being well known that I have more plate, jewels, and coin, than twenty carts would carry ; but only to show his vile ingratitude." When the king heard him speak of this infinite wealth, his heart grew inflamed with avarice ; and, interrupting the prisoner, he said : " Reynard, where is that treasure you speak of ? " The fox answered : " My lord, I will gladly inform you ; though it be true the wealth was stolen, and had it not been so stolen it would have cost your majesty his life, which Heaven long preserve." The queen here started, and said in great dismay, " What are these dangers you speak of, Reynard ? I do command ye to unfold these doubtful speeches, and to keep nothing concealed that affects the life of my dread lord ; go on."

The fox, with a sorrowful countenance, replied : " Oh, my dread sovereign lady, I would that I might now die, did not your commands and the health of my own soul so prevail with me, that I must discharge my conscience, and yet speak nothing but what I will make good at the hazard of damnation. True it is, that the king was to have been cruelly despatched by his own people : yea, I must confess, by some of

my nearest kindred, whom I would not accuse, did not the health of my soul, and my fealty to the king command me to do so." The king, much perplexed at this discovery, said, "Can it be true, Reynard, what you say?" The fox answered, "Alas, my dread lord, you see the case in which I stand; how small a sand is left in my poor glass to run. I will dissemble not; what dissembling can avail me, if my soul perish?" and saying this he trembled and looked so pitifully, that the queen took pity upon him. She humbly besought the king for the safety of his royal person to take compassion on the fox, and to command all his subjects to hold their peace, till he had revealed all he knew. This was done, and the fox proceeded as follows: "Since it is the pleasure of my dread lord the king, and that his royal life lies in the balance with my present breath, I will freely unfold this foul and capital treason, sparing no guilty person for any respect whatsoever, however high in greatness, blood, or authority. Know then, my dread lord, that my father, by accident turning up the earth, found king Ermetick's treasure; an infinite and incalculable mass of riches, with which he became so vain and haughty, that he looked down upon all the beasts of the forest with contempt, even upon his kinsmen and companions. At length he caused Tibert the cat to go into the forest of Arden to Bruin the bear, and to render him his homage and fealty; saying, that if it would please him to be king, he must come into Flanders, where my father received him nobly. Next he sent for his wife, Grimbard my nephew, and for Isegrim the wolf, with Tibert the cat. These five coming between Gaunt and the village called Elfe, they held solemn council for the space of one night, in which, instigated by the devil,

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 was concealed; and I watched him night and day, in the woods,
 in the hedges, and in the open fields. To whatever spot my
 father turned his eyes, there was I, sure of detecting him one
 or other in the fact.

ay, as I was lying flat down upon the ground, I spied
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and confident in my father's riches, it was concluded, that your majesty should be murdered. They took a solemn oath to this effect in the following way: sir Bruin, my father, Grimbard, and Tibert, laid their hands on Isegrim's crown, and swore to make Bruin their king; to place him in the chair of

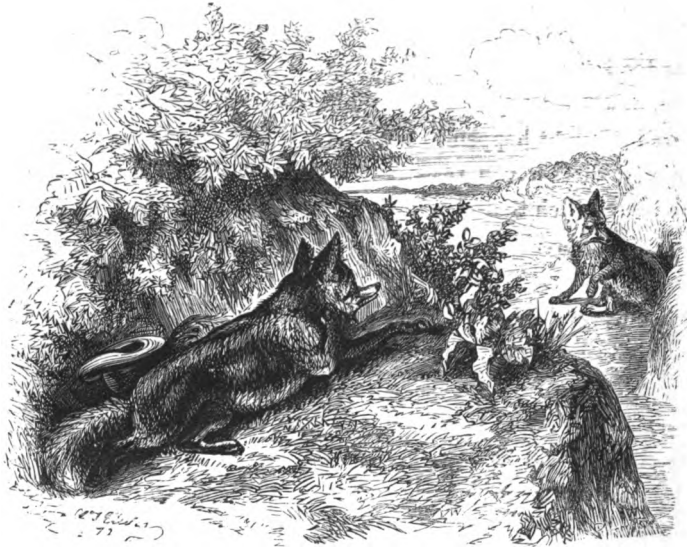


state at Acon, and set the imperial diadem on his head. That should any oppose the scheme, my father was to hire assassins that should utterly chase and root them out of the forests. After this it happened, that my nephew Grimbard being one day heated with wine, made a discovery of this damnable plot to Dame Slopard his wife, commanding her also to keep it secret. But she too, as women will, only kept it until she met with me, charging me to reveal it to no one! She moreover gave me such

proofs of its truth, as to cause the very hairs of my head to start upright, while my heart sunk cold and heavy within me, like a piece of lead. Indeed it led me to call to mind the story of the frogs, who complained to Jupiter that they had no king to govern them, and he presently sent them a stork, which eat and devoured them up; and by whose tyranny they became the most miserable of all creatures. Then they cried unto Jupiter for redress, but it was too late; for those that will not be content with their freedom, must consequently be subjected to thralldom. Even so I feared it might happen to us; and I grieved for the fate of your majesty, though you respect not my sorrows. The ambition of the bear is such that should the government come into his hands, the commonwealth would fall a sacrifice to his tyranny. Besides, I know your majesty is of that royal and lofty lineage, so mighty, gracious, and merciful withal, that it would have been a damnable exchange, to have seen a ravenous bear sit in the throne of the royal lion; for in sir Bruin and his whole generation there is more prodigal looseness and inconstancy than in any beast whatsoever. I therefore began to meditate how I might foil my father's false and treacherous designs, who sought to elevate a traitor and a slave to the height of your imperial throne. I was aware that as long as he held the treasure, your majesty was in danger, and I grew exceedingly troubled and perplexed. So I resolved, if possible, to find where the treasure was concealed; and I watched him night and day, in the woods, in the hedges, and in the open fields. To whatever spot my father turned his eyes, there was I, sure of detecting him one time or other in the fact.

“One day, as I was lying flat down upon the ground, I spied him coming out of a hole, with a very thievish look; he gazed

round about him to see if he was observed, and thinking the coast clear, he stopped up the hole with sand so even and smoothly that the most curious eye could discern no difference between it and the other earth. Then, where the print of his foot remained, he stroked it over with his tail, and smoothed it



with his mouth so that no person could perceive it. Indeed, that and many other subtleties I learned from him at that time. When he had thus finished, he went away towards the village about his private affairs, while I proceeded towards the hole, and in spite of all his cunning I quickly found the entrance. Then I entered the cavern, where I found an innumerable quantity of treasure; and taking Ermelin, my wife, along with me, we both laboured day and night in conveying it to another place, where

we deposited it safe from every human eye. During the time we were thus employed, my father was in deep consultation with the rest of the traitors to compass his majesty's death. It was concluded that Isegrim the wolf should traverse all the kingdom, and promise to all the beasts that would take wages, and acknowledge Bruin for their sovereign and defend his title, a full year's pay beforehand. In this journey my father accompanied him, bearing letters patent signed to that purport, little suspecting that he was deprived of all the wealth with which to promote his scheme. When this negotiation was concluded between Elge and Soam, and a vast body of soldiers raised for action against the next spring, they returned to Bruin and his party, to whom they declared the many perils they had escaped in the dukedom of Saxony, where they were pursued by hounds and huntsmen. They next showed Bruin the muster-rolls, which pleased him exceedingly; for here he found about twelve hundred of Isegrim's lineage, all sworn for action, besides the bear's kindred, the cats and the dassens, all which would be in readiness at an hour's notice. All this I discovered from good authority; and the plot becoming ripe for execution, my father went to the cave for his treasure. What was his infinite agony and trouble to find the place open and ransacked! He became desperate, and soon afterwards went to the next tree, and hanged himself.

“ Thus, by my skill, Bruin's treason was defeated, and for this I now suffer, while those two false traitors, Bruin and Isegrim, sit in the king's privy council, with great authority, procure my disgrace, and trample me under foot. I have lost my father in your majesty's cause, and what stronger proof can be tendered of my loyalty? I have lost my life in defending yours.”

bushes and hedges ; it is near evening, and if the prisoner escape, his subtlety is so great, that all the art in the world will never again entangle him. If you mean to execute him, proceed quickly.—It will be night before the gallows can be made.” At these words Isegrim exclaimed, suddenly recollecting himself, “There is a pair of gallows hard by;” at the same time he fetched a deep sigh ! “What, are you afraid, sir Isegrim ; or is this execution against your mind !” said Tibert, “remember the hanging of both your kinsmen was his work. Had you now a proper sense of justice, you would hang him for the same and not stand trifling thus.” Isegrim, half angry, answered, “Your anger puts out the eye of your better reason, though if we had a halter that would fit his neck, we would soon despatch him.” Reynard, who had long remained silent, said ; “Yes, I beseech you to shorten my pain ; sir Tibert has a cord strong enough, in which he himself was hanged at the priest’s house, when he got between the holy man’s legs and bit him so dreadfully. Besides, he can climb well ; let him mount and be my executioner ; for it would be a discredit both to sir Bruin and sir Isegrim, thus to treat their own nephew. I am sorry I live to see it ; but since you are resolved to be my hangmen, play your parts and delay not. Go before, uncle Bruin, and lead the way : follow me, Isegrim, my cousin, and beware I escape not.” “You say well,” said Bruin, “it is the best counsel I ever heard you give.”

So forth they went, and Isegrim and all his friends guarded Reynard, leading him by the neck and other parts of his body, which usage the fox felt quite unbecomingly. Yet he said meekly, “Why put yourself to all this trouble for my best kinsman ? Believe me, I could well do without your assistance, though you rejoice in it.” “Silence, you villain !” said his aunt, your wife, see what you have done to your nephew ; thus cruelly

tormented, were it only for old affection's sake. But I will
as you will; I must endure the worst: so far Brain and Tibert,
I leave my revenge to justice, and to you the reward of justice.
I know my worst, fortune and death can come but once. I wish
it were already past, for to me it is no terror. I saw my
father die, and how quickly he vanished! The worst of death is



therefore familiar to me." "Then," said sir Begon, "let us
make haste, for his curse shall not light upon me by sleeping;
so he on one side, and sir Brain on the other, they led the bear
to the gallows; Tibert skipping before them with the halber.

On reaching the place of execution, the king, the queen,
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though full of sorrow and dismay, they all busy thinking how
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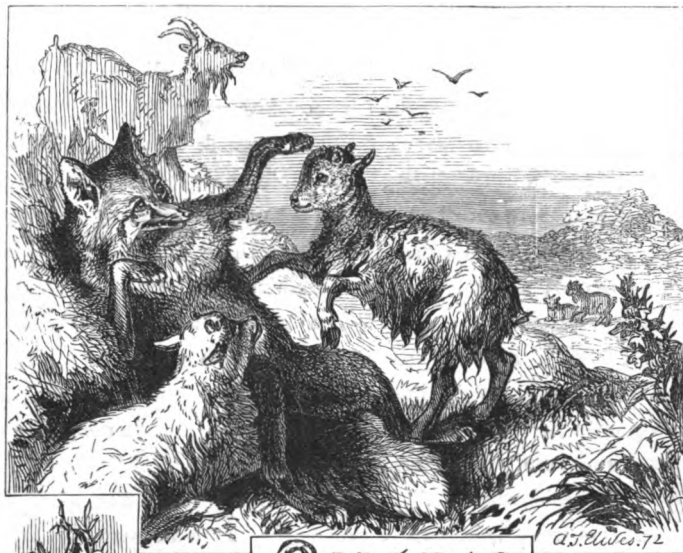


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CHAP. XI

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unto me how he was my uncle, and laid the pedigree down so plain, that from that day forth we became companions. A friendship I have reason to curse; for then, indeed, began the history of our thefts and slaughters. He stole the great prizes and I the small; he murdered nobles and I the meanest subjects; and in all these actions his share was ever the greatest. When he caught a calf, a ram, or a wether, his voracity would hardly afford me the bones to pick. When he mustered an ox or a cow, he first served himself, his wife, and all his family, nothing remaining, I say, for me but the bare bones. I state not this as having been in want, it being well known that I have more plate, jewels, and coin, than twenty carts would carry; but only to show his vile ingratitude." When the king heard him speak of this infinite wealth, his heart grew inflamed with avarice; and, interrupting the prisoner, he said: "Reynard, where is that treasure you speak of?" The fox answered: "My lord, I will gladly inform you; though it be true the wealth was stolen, and had it not been so stolen it would have cost your majesty his life, which Heaven long preserve." The queen here started, and said in great dismay, "What are these dangers you speak of, Reynard? I do command ye to unfold these doubtful speeches, and to keep nothing concealed that affects the life of my dread lord; go on."

The fox, with a sorrowful countenance, replied: "Oh, my dread sovereign lady, I would that I might now die, did not your commands and the health of my own soul so prevail with me, that I must discharge my conscience, and yet speak nothing but what I will make good at the hazard of damnation. True it is, that the king was to have been cruelly despatched by his own people: yea, I must confess, by some of

my nearest kindred, whom I would not accuse, did not the health of my soul, and my fealty to the king command me to do so." The king, much perplexed at this discovery, said, "Can it be true, Reynard, what you say?" The fox answered, "Alas, my dread lord, you see the case in which I stand; how small a sand is left in my poor glass to run. I will dissemble not; what dissembling can avail me, if my soul perish?" and saying this he trembled and looked so pitifully, that the queen took pity upon him. She humbly besought the king for the safety of his royal person to take compassion on the fox, and to command all his subjects to hold their peace, till he had revealed all he knew. This was done, and the fox proceeded as follows: "Since it is the pleasure of my dread lord the king, and that his royal life lies in the balance with my present breath, I will freely unfold this foul and capital treason, sparing no guilty person for any respect whatsoever, however high in greatness, blood, or authority. Know then, my dread lord, that my father, by accident turning up the earth, found king Ermetick's treasure; an infinite and incalculable mass of riches, with which he became so vain and haughty, that he looked down upon all the beasts of the forest with contempt, even upon his kinsmen and companions. At length he caused Tibert the cat to go into the forest of Arden to Bruin the bear, and to render him his homage and fealty; saying, that if it would please him to be king, he must come into Flanders, where my father received him nobly. Next he sent for his wife, Grimbard my nephew, and for Isegrim the wolf, with Tibert the cat. These five coming between Gaunt and the village called Elfe, they held solemn council for the space of one night, in which, instigated by the devil,

and confident in my father's riches, it was concluded, that your majesty should be murdered. They took a solemn oath to this effect in the following way: sir Bruin, my father, Grimbard, and Tibert, laid their hands on Isegrim's crown, and swore to make Bruin their king; to place him in the chair of



state at Acon, and set the imperial diadem on his head. That should any oppose the scheme, my father was to hire assassins that should utterly chase and root them out of the forests. After this it happened, that my nephew Grimbard being one day heated with wine, made a discovery of this damnable plot to Dame Slopard his wife, commanding her also to keep it secret. But she too, as women will, only kept it until she met with me, charging me to reveal it to no one! She moreover gave me such

proofs of its truth, as to cause the very hairs of my head to start upright, while my heart sunk cold and heavy within me, like a piece of lead. Indeed it led me to call to mind the story of the frogs, who complained to Jupiter that they had no king to govern them, and he presently sent them a stork, which eat and devoured them up; and by whose tyranny they became the most miserable of all creatures. Then they cried unto Jupiter for redress, but it was too late; for those that will not be content with their freedom, must consequently be subjected to thralldom. Even so I feared it might happen to us; and I grieved for the fate of your majesty, though you respect not my sorrows. The ambition of the bear is such that should the government come into his hands, the commonwealth would fall a sacrifice to his tyranny. Besides, I know your majesty is of that royal and lofty lineage, so mighty, gracious, and merciful withal, that it would have been a damnable exchange, to have seen a ravenous bear sit in the throne of the royal lion; for in sir Bruin and his whole generation there is more prodigal looseness and inconstancy than in any beast whatsoever. I therefore began to meditate how I might foil my father's false and treacherous designs, who sought to elevate a traitor and a slave to the height of your imperial throne. I was aware that as long as he held the treasure, your majesty was in danger, and I grew exceedingly troubled and perplexed. So I resolved, if possible, to find where the treasure was concealed; and I watched him night and day, in the woods, in the hedges, and in the open fields. To whatever spot my father turned his eyes, there was I, sure of detecting him one time or other in the fact.

“One day, as I was lying flat down upon the ground, I spied him coming out of a hole, with a very thievish look; he gazed

round about him to see if he was observed, and thinking the coast clear, he stopped up the hole with sand so even and smoothly that the most curious eye could discern no difference between it and the other earth. Then, where the print of his foot remained, he stroked it over with his tail, and smoothed it

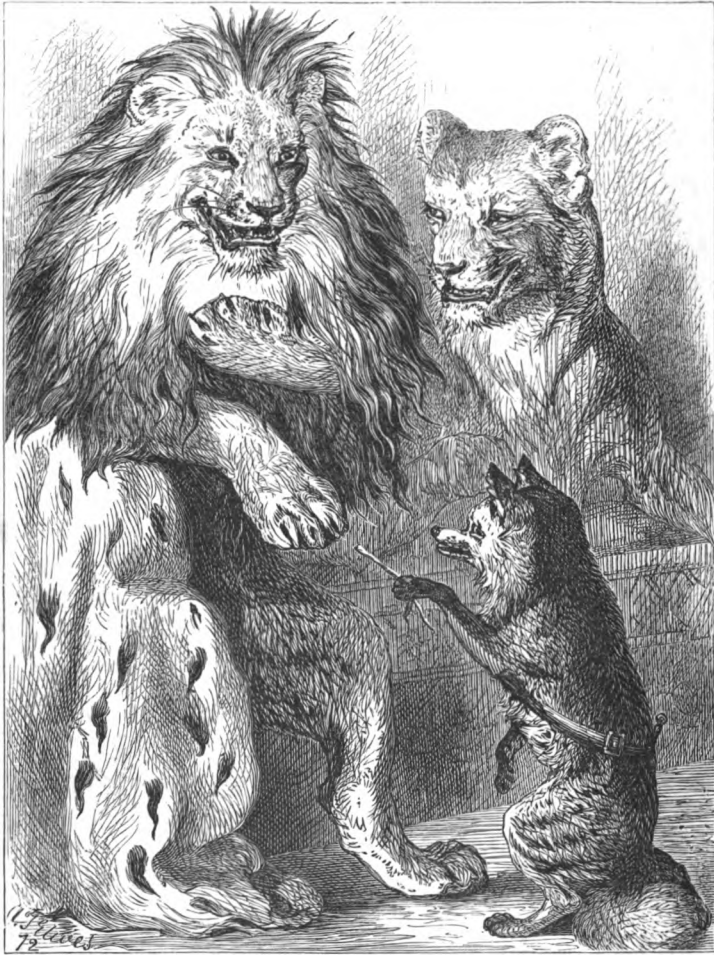


with his mouth so that no person could perceive it. Indeed, that and many other subtleties I learned from him at that time. When he had thus finished, he went away towards the village about his private affairs, while I proceeded towards the hole, and in spite of all his cunning I quickly found the entrance. Then I entered the cavern, where I found an innumerable quantity of treasure; and taking Ermelin, my wife, along with me, we both laboured day and night in conveying it to another place, where

we deposited it safe from every human eye. During the time we were thus employed, my father was in deep consultation with the rest of the traitors to compass his majesty's death. It was concluded that Isegrim the wolf should traverse all the kingdom, and promise to all the beasts that would take wages, and acknowledge Bruin for their sovereign and defend his title, a full year's pay beforehand. In this journey my father accompanied him, bearing letters patent signed to that purport, little suspecting that he was deprived of all the wealth with which to promote his scheme. When this negotiation was concluded between Elge and Soam, and a vast body of soldiers raised for action against the next spring, they returned to Bruin and his party, to whom they declared the many perils they had escaped in the dukedom of Saxony, where they were pursued by hounds and huntsmen. They next showed Bruin the muster-rolls, which pleased him exceedingly; for here he found about twelve hundred of Isegrim's lineage, all sworn for action, besides the bear's kindred, the cats and the dassens, all which would be in readiness at an hour's notice. All this I discovered from good authority; and the plot becoming ripe for execution, my father went to the cave for his treasure. What was his infinite agony and trouble to find the place open and ransacked! He became desperate, and soon afterwards went to the next tree, and hanged himself.

“ Thus, by my skill, Bruin's treason was defeated, and for this I now suffer, while those two false traitors, Bruin and Isegrim, sit in the king's privy council, with great authority, procure my disgrace, and trample me under foot. I have lost my father in your majesty's cause, and what stronger proof can be tendered of my loyalty? I have lost my life in defending yours.”

The king and queen, indulging a hope of possessing these inestimable treasures, ordered Reynard down from the gibbet, and entreated him farther to unfold its place of concealment. "What," replied the fox, "shall I make my worst enemies my heirs? Shall these traitors, who take away my life, and attempt your majesty's, become possessed of the fortune I enjoy?" "Then," said the queen, "fear not, Reynard, the king shall save your life, and you shall henceforth swear faith and true allegiance to his majesty." The fox answered, "Sovereign lady, if the king, out of his royal nature, will give credit to my truth, and forgive my offences, there was never king so rich as he will be." Then the king interrupting the queen, said, "Fair consort, will you believe the fox? Know that it is his chief excellence to lie, to steal, and to impose upon others." But the queen said, "Yet now, my dear lord, you may freely believe him; for, however full of deceit he may have been in his prosperity, you see he is now changed. Why, he accuses his own father, and Grimbard, his dearest nephew and kinsman! Were he dissembling, he might have laid his imputation upon other beasts, and not on those he loves best." "Well, madam," replied the king, "you shall, for this time, rule me; I will give free pardon to the fox, yet under this condition, that if he be ever found tripping again, though in the smallest offence, both he and his shall be utterly rooted out of my dominions." The fox looked sadly when the king spake thus; withal he rejoiced within himself, and he said, "Most dread lord, it were a huge shame in me, should I dare to speak any untruths in this august presence." Then the king taking a straw from the ground, pardoned the fox for all the transgressions which either he or his father before him had committed. No wonder the fox now began to smile, for life



The King received the straw, and smiling, gave the fox great thanks; at which the latter chuckled heartily to think of the grossness of the imposture.

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was most sweet to him ; and he fell down before the king and queen, humbly thanking them for all their mercies, and protesting that he would make them the richest princes in the world. At these words the fox took up a straw, and proffering it the king, said to him, "My dread lord, I beseech your majesty to receive this pledge of entire surrender unto your majesty of the great king Ermetick's treasure, with which I freely present you out of my free will and pleasure." The king received the straw, and smiling, gave the fox great thanks : at which the latter chuckled heartily to think of the grossness of the imposture. From that day forward no one's counsel so much prevailed with the king as that of the fox ; and confiding in this he said, "My gracious lord, you must understand that on the west side of Flanders there stands a wood called Husterloe, near which runs a river named Crekenpit : this is a wilderness so vast and impassable, that hardly throughout the year there crosses a man or woman over the place. In it I have hid this treasure, and thither I should wish your majesty and the queen to go ; for I know of none besides your highnesses whom I dare trust in so great a design. When your majesty reaches it, you will see two birchen trees growing by the pit, and there you shall find the treasure, consisting of coin, precious jewels, and the crown which king Ermetick wore. With this crown Bruin the bear was to have been crowned, if his treason had succeeded according to expectation ; there too you will find many costly stones, of which, when you are possessed, then remember the love of your poor servant, Reynard." The king answered, "Sir Reynard, you must yourself help to dig up this treasure, for else I see I shall never find it. I have heard of such places as Paris, London, Acon, and Cullen, but Crekenpit I never heard of ;

therefore I fear you dissemble." The fox blushed at these words; yet with a bold countenance he said, "Is your majesty still so doubtful of my faith? nay, then, I will approve my words by public testimony;" and with that he called forth Kayward the hare, commanding him to come before the king and queen, to answer truly to such questions as he should ask him. The hare answered, "I will answer truly in all things, though I die for the same." Then Reynard said, "Know you not where Crekenpit stands?" "Yes," replied Kayward, "I have known it these dozen years; it stands in a wood called Husterloe to be sure, amidst a vast and wild wilderness, where I have endured much torment both of hunger and cold. Besides, it was there where father Simony, the friar, made false coin for the benefit of himself and his brethren; yet that was before I and Ring the hound became companions." "Well," said the fox, "you have spoken sufficiently; go to your place again:" so away went the hare. Then said the fox, "My sovereign lord the king, what is your opinion? am I worthy of your confidence or no?" The king said, "Yes, Reynard, and pray excuse my suspicion; it was my ignorance which did thee wrong. Therefore make speedy preparation to accompany us to the pit where this treasure lies." The fox answered, "Alas! my lord, do you imagine that I would not fain go with you, if I could venture without your dishonour, which I cannot do. For you must understand, though it be to my disgrace, that when Isegrim the wolf, in the devil's name, would needs grow religious, and play the monk, the portion of meat which was for six monks was too little for him alone. He complained so piteously, that, being my kinsman, I compassionated his case, and advised him to run away, which he did. For this reason I at present stand accursed

and excommunicated under the pope's sentence, and am determined to-morrow at sunrise to journey towards Rome, and from Rome I intend to cross the seas for Holyland, and will never return again into my native country till I have done so much good, and so far expiated my sins, that I may attend on your majesty's person with honour and reputation." The king, hearing this pious design, said, "Since you stand accursed by the censures of the church, I must not have you about me; and therefore I will take Kayward the hare and some others with me to Crekenpit; only I command you, Reynard, as you value our favour, to clear yourself of his holiness's curse." "That is the reason, my lord, of my going to Rome; neither will I rest, night or day, till I have obtained absolution." "The course you take is good," said the king, "go on and prosper in your fair intent, and return home better than you went."



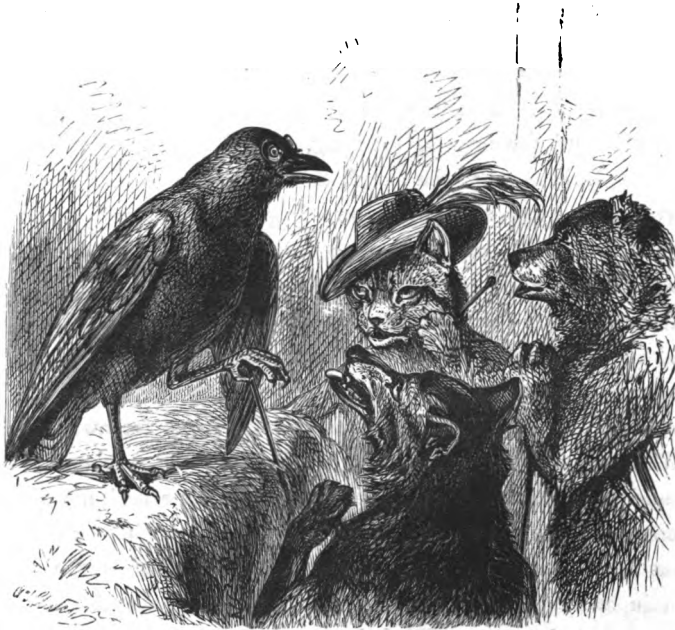
Chapter XII



AS soon as the conference was ended, the royal king mounted upon his high throne, raised in the form of a scaffold, made of fair square stone; and commanded thence a general silence among all his subjects. Every one was to take his place according to his birth or dignity in office; except the fox, who sat between the king and the queen. The king then spoke:

“Hear all you noblemen, knights, gentlemen, and others of inferior quality! Sir Reynard, one of the supreme officers of my household, whose misdeeds had brought him to his final account, standing between those two quarrelsome mistresses, law and justice, hath this day recovered our best grace and favour. He hath done that noble and worthy service to the state, that both myself and my queen

are bound to him for ever. Henceforth I do command all of you, upon pain and hazard of your dearest lives, that you henceforward fail not, from this day, to show all reverence and honour, not only to Reynard himself, but to his whole family,



wherever you may happen by night or day to meet with them. Nor let any one hereafter be so audacious as to trouble my ears with complaints against him, for he will no more be guilty of doing wrong. To-morrow very early he sets out on a pilgrimage to Rome, where he means to purchase a free pardon and indulgence from the pope, and afterwards to proceed to the holy land." Now when Tisellen the raven heard this speech, he

flew to sir Bruin, Isegrim, and Tibert, and said: "Wretched creatures, how are your fortunes changed; how can you endure to hear these tidings? Why, Reynard is now a courtier, a chancellor, nay, prime minister and favourite: his offences are forgiven; and you are all betrayed and sold unto bondage." Isegrim answered: "Nay, it is impossible, Tisellen, nor can such an abuse be suffered." "I tell you it can! Do not deceive yourselves, it is as true as that I now speak it." Then went the wolf and the bear to the king, but the cat refused, and was so sore afraid at what she heard, that to have purchased the fox's favour once more, she would have forgiven not only the injuries she had received, but have run a second hazard. But Isegrim, with much confidence and pride, appeared before the king and queen, and with the most bitter words inveighed against the fox; and in so passionate and impudent a manner withal, that the king was roused to anger, and ordered both the wolf and the bear to be arrested for high treason. This was forthwith done with every mark of violence and indignity; the prisoners were bound hand and foot, that they could not stir a limb nor a step from the place where they were couched. For the fox having thus entangled them, he so far prevailed with the queen as to obtain as much of the bear's skin as would make him a large scrip for his journey. This being put in force, he wanted nothing but a strong pair of shoes to defend his feet from the stones while he travelled. Again, therefore, he said to the queen: "Madam, I am your poor pilgrim; and if it would please your majesty but to take it into your consideration, you will perceive that sir Isegrim wears a pair of excellent long lasting ones, which would you vouchsafe to bestow upon me, I would pray for your majesty's soul during my travels upon my charitable

mission. Also mine aunt, dame Ersewind, hath other two shoes, which would your majesty bestow upon me, you would be doing her little injury, as she seldom ventures abroad." The queen replied, "Yes, Reynard, I believe you will want such shoes for your journey; it is full of labour and difficulty, both respecting the stony hills and the gravelly highways. Therefore,



be sure you shall have, though it touch their life never so nearly, a pair of shoes from each of them, the better to speed and accomplish your journey." So Isegrim was taken, and his shoes pulled off in the most cruel manner. After being thus tormented, dame Ersewind, his wife, was treated in the same manner as her husband; and had the cat been there, he would doubtless have experienced the same fate, in addition to the cruel mockery of the fox. The next morning early Reynard

caused his shoes to be well oiled, so as to make them fit well, and then he went before the king and queen, and said, "My dread lord and lady, your poor subject bows himself down before you, humbly beseeching your majesties to permit me to take my scrip and staff according to the custom of pilgrims." The king then sent for Bellin the ram, and commanded him to say solemn mass before the fox, and to deliver him his staff and mail; but Bellin refused, saying, "My lord, I dare not, for he is under the pope's curse." But the king said, "What of that? have not our doctors told us that if a man commit all the sins in the world, yet if he repent, be shriven, do penance, and walk as the priests shall instruct him, that all is clearly forgiven him? and hath not Reynard done all this?" Bellin answered, "Sire, I am loth to meddle with such points; yet if your majesty will protect me against the bishop of Preudelor and against the arch-deacon of Loofwind, I will execute your commandment." At this the king grew wrath, and said, "Sir, I scorn to be beholden to you." And when Bellin saw his majesty so offended, he shook with fear, and ran quickly to the altar, and sung mass, using many ceremonies over the fox, who had little respect for them beyond his wish to enjoy the honour. When Bellin the ram had finished, he hung his mail round Reynard's neck, made of the bear's skin, and presented him with the staff. Thus equipped, sir Reynard looked sadly towards the king, as if he had been loth to go; he feigned to weep, though all his sorrow was that the whole court were not in as bad a predicament as the wolf and the bear. He took leave, with requesting that each and every one would pray for his soul, as he would for theirs; for in fact he was so sensible of his own knavery that he was eager to be gone. The king said, "In truth, sir Reynard,

I am sorry we must part thus suddenly." But the fox replied, "There is no remedy, my lord; we ought not to be slow in fulfilling holy vows." Then the king commanded all the lords present, except the bear and the wolf, to attend Reynard some part of his journey. Though he cut a very gallant figure, he was inwardly smiling at his own villany, while he affected the utmost demureness. For his enemies were now become his attendants, and the king, whom he had most grossly deceived with wicked lies, now also accompanied him like his familiar friend.

After proceeding some way, the fox said, "I beseech your majesty, trouble yourself no farther; consult your ease and the safety of your royal person; for you have arrested two capital traitors, who, should they recover their liberty, the danger would be great." This said, he stood upon his hinder feet, and entreated the lordly beasts who were in his company once more to pray for him; after which he took leave of the king with an exceeding sad and heavy countenance. Then turning towards Kayward the hare, and Bellin the ram, with a smiling countenance, he said, "My best friends, must we part thus soon? Surely you will not leave me yet? With you I was never offended: your conversation is agreeable to me; for you are mild, loving, and courteous, religious withal, and full of wise counsel, just as I myself was when I led the life of a recluse. If you have a few green leaves and herbs, you are as well contented as with all the bread and fish in the world, for you are temperate and modest." Thus, with a profusion of the same flattering words, he enticed these two to accompany him.

Chapter XIII



THE three friends journeyed on together until they came to the gates of Reynard's own house. Then he said to the ram, "Pray, cousin, keep watch here without, while I and Kayward go in: I wish him to witness my pleasure at meeting my family." Bellin said he would; and the fox and the hare went into Malepardus, where they found lady

Ermelin sorrowing exceedingly for the absence of her husband. But when she saw him, her joy knew no bounds; and she expressed her astonishment on beholding his mail, his staff, and his shoes. "Dearest husband," she cried, "how have you fared?" Reynard then related his adventures at court, adding that he was going a pilgrimage, having left Bruin and Isegrim in pledge for

him till his return. As for Kayward, he added, turning towards him, the king had bestowed him upon him to do with as he pleased, as Kayward had been the first to complain of him, for which he vowed deadly revenge. Hearing these words, Kayward was quite appalled, and tried to fly ; but the fox had placed him-

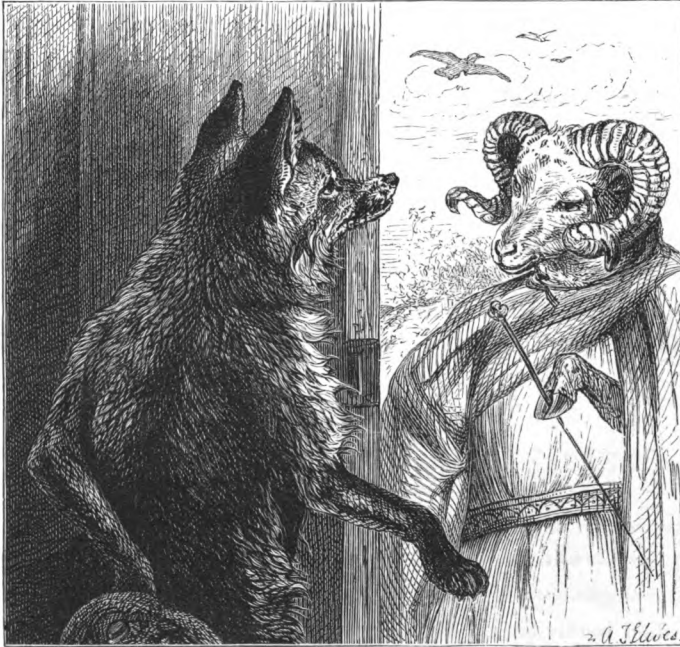


self between him and the door, and soon seized him by the neck. Kayward cried to Bellin for help, but the fox had cut his throat with his sharp teeth before he could be heard. This done, the traitor and his family began to feast upon him merrily, and drank his blood to the king's health. Ermelin then said, "I fear, Reynard, you mock me ; as you love me, tell me how you sped at the king's court." When he told her the pleasant story, how

he had imposed upon the king and queen with a false promise of treasures that did not exist. "But when the king finds out the truth, he will take every means of destroying us; therefore, dear wife," said he, "there is no remedy; we must steal from hence into some other forest, where we may live in safety, and find more delicate fare, clear springs, fresh rivers, cool shades, and wholesome air. Here there is no abiding: and now I have got my thumb out of the king's mouth, I will no more come within reach of his talons." "Yet here," said his wife, "we have all we desire, and you are lord over all you survey; and it is dangerous to exchange a certain good for better hopes. Should the king here besiege us ever so closely, we have a thousand passages and side holes, so that he can neither catch, nor deprive us of our liberty. Why then fly beyond seas? but you have sworn it, and that vexes me." "Nay, madam," cried Reynard, "grieve not at that: the more forsworn, the less forlorn, you know; therefore I will be forsworn, and remain, in spite of his majesty, where I am. Against his power I will array my policy. I will guard myself well, insomuch that, being compelled to open my stock, let him not blame me if he hurt himself with his own fury."

Meanwhile Bellin stood waiting at the gate, exceedingly wroth and impatient; and swearing both at the fox and the hare, he called loudly for sir Reynard to come. So at last he went and said softly: "Good Bellin, be not offended! Kayward is conversing with his aunt; and he bids me say, that if you will walk forward, he will overtake you; for he is light of foot, and speedier than you." "True! but I thought," said Bellin, "that I heard Kayward cry for help." "What! cry for help, forsooth! do you imagine he can meet with any injury in my house?" "No." "But I will tell you how you were deceived. Happening to

inform my wife of my intended pilgrimage, she swooned away, and Kayward, in great alarm, cried out ; ‘ Bellin, come help my aunt ; she dies ! she dies ! ’ ” “ Then I mistook the cry,” said Bellin. “ You did,” said Reynard ; “ and now let us talk of



business, good Bellin. You may recollect that the king and council intreated me to write before I set out for the pilgrimage, upon some matters important to the state.” “ In what shall I carry these papers most safely ? ” enquired Bellin. “ That is already provided for you,” replied Reynard ; “ for you shall have my scrip which you may hang round your neck ; and take care

of it, they are matters of great importance." Then Reynard returned into the house, and taking Kayward's head, he thrust it into the scrip, and enjoined the ram not to look into it, as he valued the king's favour, until he reached the court; adding, that he might rest assured that his presentation of the letters to the king would pave the way to his great preferment.

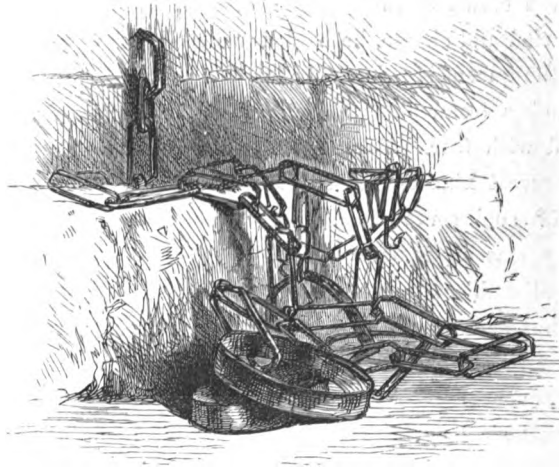


Bellin thanked the fox, and being informed that he had other affairs to impart to Kayward, set out on his journey alone. When he arrived at court, he found the king in his palace, seated amidst his nobility. The king wondered when he saw Bellin come in with the scrip made of Bruin's skin, and he said: "How now, Bellin! where is sir Reynard, that you have got his scrip

with you?" "My dread lord," said Bellin, "I have escorted the noble fox to his castle, when, after short repose, he desired me to bear certain letters to your majesty, of vast importance, which he enclosed in his own scrip." The king commanded the letters to be delivered to his secretary, Bocart, an excellent linguist, who understood all languages, that he might read them publicly. So he and sir Tibert the cat took the scrip from Bellin's neck, and opening the same, instead of letters, drew out the bloody head of Kayward, at which sight they cried out in huge dismay: "Woe, and alas! what letters call you these? Oh, dread lord, behold! here is nothing but the head of poor murdered Kayward." Seeing this, the monarch cried: "Unhappy king that I am, ever to have given credit to the traitor fox!" And overwhelmed with anger, grief, and shame, he held down his head a good space, as well as the queen likewise. At last shaking his royal locks, he made such a tremendous noise, that all the lords of the forest trembled with fear. Then spake sir Firapel the leopard, the king's nearest kinsman, and said: "Why is your majesty thus troubled? such sorrow might become the queen's funeral: I do beseech you assuage your anguish. Are not you king and master? are not all subject to your power?" The king replied, "Yes, cousin, but such mischief is beyond endurance. I am betrayed by a false villain, who has made me oppress my best friends and subjects, even those of my council and my blood: the stout sir Bruin, and sir Isegrim the wolf. Yet had I not heaped upon myself this foul dishonour, but for the queen's tenderness, which wrought upon me, and for which I shall evermore grieve." "What of all this?" replied the leopard; "you are seated above all injuries, and one smile can salve the greatest wound upon your honour. You have power to recompense and to punish, and

72. *KAYWARD'S HEAD SENT TO THE KING.*

you can destroy or restore reputation as you please. What if the bear lost his skin, the wolf and dame Ersewind their shoes, you may in recompense, since Bellin has confessed himself a party to this foul murder, bestow him and his substance upon the party aggrieved. As for Reynard, we can go and besiege his castle, and having arrested his person, hang him up by law of arms without further trial, and there is an end."



Chapter xiv



THE king consented to this motion, and despatched Firapel to the prison, where the bear and the wolf were in durance. “My lords,” he said, “I bring a free and general pardon from his majesty, as well as his good wishes, and recognition of your injuries. As some recompence he is pleased to bestow upon you out of his princely bounty, both Bellin the ram, and his whole generation with all they possess.

These you are to hold with full commission to slay, kill, and devour them wherever you meet them, in woods, fields, or mountains, until doomsday. The same power is granted you over Reynard and the whole of his lineage. Letters patent will shortly be forwarded to you, and Bellin now awaits your pleasure.” Peace being thus restored between the king and his nobles, Bellin was forthwith slain, (the wolf following up his

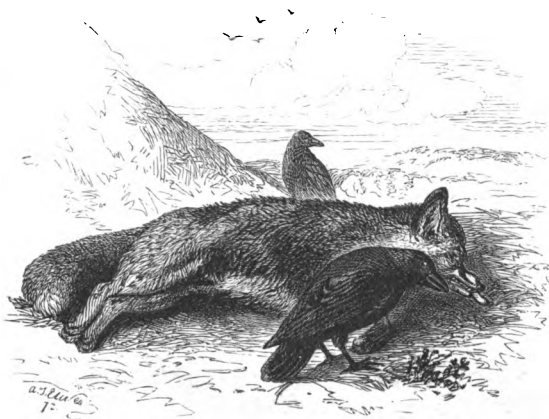
enmity to him and his race in perpetuity;) and afterwards, the king proclaimed a grand feast, which was held with all due solemnity during twelve days.

When these princely festivities, attended by the lords both of



earth and air, had reached the eighth day, about high noon came Laprel the coney, before the king and queen as they sat at feast, and with a lamentable voice he said: "Great king, have pity on my misery, and attend my complaint of the force and murder which Reynard the fox had nearly committed, as I passed by the castle of Malepardus. He stood outside his gates, attired like a pilgrim, and thinking I might pass quietly, he crossed my way,

saying his beads so devoutly, that I saluted him. He, returning no answer, stretched out his right foot, and gave me such a blow upon my neck, that I felt as if my head had been smitten from my body, but yet I retained my senses sufficiently, to start out of his claws, though very grievously hurt and wounded. One of my ears was left in his grasp; and I trust you will no longer permit this bloody murderer to afflict your poor subjects."



While the coney was yet speaking, in came flying Corbant the rook, who, coming before the king, said: "Great king, I beseech you vouchsafe to hear me. I went this morning with Sharpbeak my wife, to recreate on the heath, and there we found Reynard the fox laid on the ground like a dead carcase, his eyes staring, his tongue lolling out of his mouth like a dead hound. Wondering at his strange plight, we began to touch him, and he seemed quite dead. Then went my wife (poor careful soul) and laid her head to his mouth to see whether he drew any breath;

but the foul villain seeing the time, snatched her head into his mouth, and bit it clean off. At that I shrieked out ‘Woe is me!’ when the foul murderer made a sudden rush at me with the most deadly intent, so that I was glad to escape by mounting into the air, whence I saw him devour my wife in so terrible a style, that the very thought is death to me, as I repeat it.’



Chapter xv



WHEN he heard these complaints of the coney and the rook, the king's eyes darted fire amidst the beams of his majesty, so that his countenance was dreadful, and cruel to behold. At length he spoke: "By my crown, and the truth I evermore owe to the queen my wife, I will revenge these outrages committed against my dignity, until virtue shall again adore me, and the wicked shall die with the remembrance: his falsehood and flattery shall no more deceive me.

"Is this his journey to Rome, and to the Holy land? Are these the fruits of his scrip, and staff, and other ornaments becoming a devout pilgrim? Well, he shall find the reward of his treasons; though it was all owing to the queen's persuasion

nor am I the first that has been deceived by that soft gender, since many great spirits have fallen through their enticements." This said, he commanded all the nobles and worthies of his court to assist him with their counsel, how best to avenge the insults offered to the royal dignity, that every offender might know and feel the heavy price of his unjust actions.

Isegrim and Bruin, hearing the king's words, were greatly delighted, and hoped to satiate their full revenge upon Reynard; yet still they kept silence. The king observing them mute, as if all were afraid of giving their opinions, he began to hang his head. But the queen, after solemn reverence, said: "Sir, it is not the part of any excellent wisdom to believe or protest any thing, until the matter be made apparent: neither should the wise turn both their ears to any complaint, but reserve one to entertain the defence of any one accused. For many times the accuser exceeds the accused in injury; and therefore *audi alteram partem*; for it is only an act of justice. However I have erred, I had good ground for my persuasion, for whether good or bad, you have no right to proceed against Reynard, except according to the laws." When the queen had thus spoken, Firapel the leopard said: "The queen hath spoken well, and therefore let Reynard take the benefit of the laws, and first let him be summoned. If he appear not before the end of the festival, to submit to your mercy, then your majesty may proceed against him, as it shall appear best."

Isegrim the wolf replied: "Sir Firapel, for my own part, I think none of this assembly, so that it only be approved by my lord the king, can presume to oppose your counsel. Yet this I dare maintain, that however sir Reynard may feign to clear himself from these and a thousand other charges, yet I have that

lodged in my bosom which shall approve that he hath forfeited his life. But in his absence I will refrain from speech except in regard to the treasure which he has informed his majesty lies at Crekenpit in Husterloe; than which there never came falser words from the mouth of any creature, as the whole was a malicious lie to injure me and the bear; and obtain license to ravage and destroy all that approach near his castle. Nevertheless, let every thing be done in God's name, most pleasing to his majesty, and to you, sir Firapel; only I will say that if he had meant to have appeared he would have been here long before, upon the summons of the last king's messenger."

The king made answer: "I will have no other summons but that of my people's allegiance. Let all who respect mine honour equip themselves for the war, and at the end of six days appear before me with their bows, guns, bombs, pikes and halberds, some on horseback, some on foot, for I will besiege Malepardus instantly; and destroy Reynard and all his generation for ever. This if any dislike, let him turn his back that I may know him for my enemy." And they all cried with one voice, "We are ready to attend your majesty."

Grimbard the Brock, hearing this determination, grew exceedingly sorry, and stealing out of the assembly, he ran with all possible speed to Malepardus, neither sparing bush nor brier, pale or rail; and as he went, he said to himself: "Alas, my dear uncle Reynard, into what dangers art thou fallen! only one step between thee and perdition. Well may I grieve for thee, since thou art the top and honour of our house, art wise and politic, and a friend to thy friends when they stand in need of counsel; for thy sweet language can enchant all creatures, though it will no more avail thee."

With such lamentations, Grimbard reached Malepardus, and found his uncle Reynard standing at the castle gate, eating two young pigeons which he had caught as they were first trying to fly. Beholding his nephew, he said: "Welcome, my beloved Grimbard, the most esteemed of all my kindred, surely you must



have run very hard, for you sweat exceedingly. What tidings, man? how run the squares at court?" "How?" replied Grimbard, "exceeding bad for you; you have forfeited your life, your honour, and estate. The king is up in arms, with horse and foot innumerable; and Isegrim and Bruin are in greater favour with his majesty than I am with you. It is high time you look to your safety; their envy rages against you; you are posted up as a

thief and a murderer; besides Laprel the coney and Corbant the rook have made heinous complaints against you; there is no escape from death." "Tush!" said the fox, "my dear nephew, if this be the worst, let it not alarm you; come, let us be cheery and pleasant together. What if the king and all the court swear my death? you shall live to see me exalted above them all. Let them prate and jangle together in council till they are tired; what boots it? Without the aid of my wit and policy, neither the court nor the kingdom can long hold together. Fear nothing, nephew, but come along with me; I have a pair of fat pigeons, which are meat of pure and light digestion. There can be nothing better, when young and tender; for they may almost be swallowed whole, their bones are little other than blood; come along, I say, and my wife will receive you kindly. When we have feasted, I will go with you to court, for if I can only get to speak before his majesty, I will gall some of my enemies yet. I have only to beg that you will stand by me as one kinsman ought by another." "Doubt it not," replied Grimbard, "both my life and property shall be at your service." "I thank you, nephew, and you shall not find me ungrateful." "Sir," said the Brock, "trust boldly to this, when you appear to answer before the lords, not a hand shall dare to arrest you; for true it is, that you enjoy the favour of the queen." "Then I care not a hair for their worst malice," said the fox; "come, let us go to supper!" and they entered the castle, where they found Dame Ermelin and the family. "Nephew!" said the fox, "what think you of my children, Reynardine and Rossel: I hope they will do credit to our family. They promise well, I assure you; for one lately caught a chicken, and the other actually killed a pullet: they are both good duckers, and can deceive the lapwing and the mallard. I can

now trust them at a distance from me, and I shall soon finish my instructions how to escape gins, and to foil all their enemies so as to leave both hounds and huntsmen at fault. In fact, they are of the right stamp, nephew, and resemble me both in countenance and quality; they play grinning, intangle soothing, and kill smiling. This is the true nature of our blood, and in this they are perfect, which is a great pride and consolation to me."



Chapter XVI

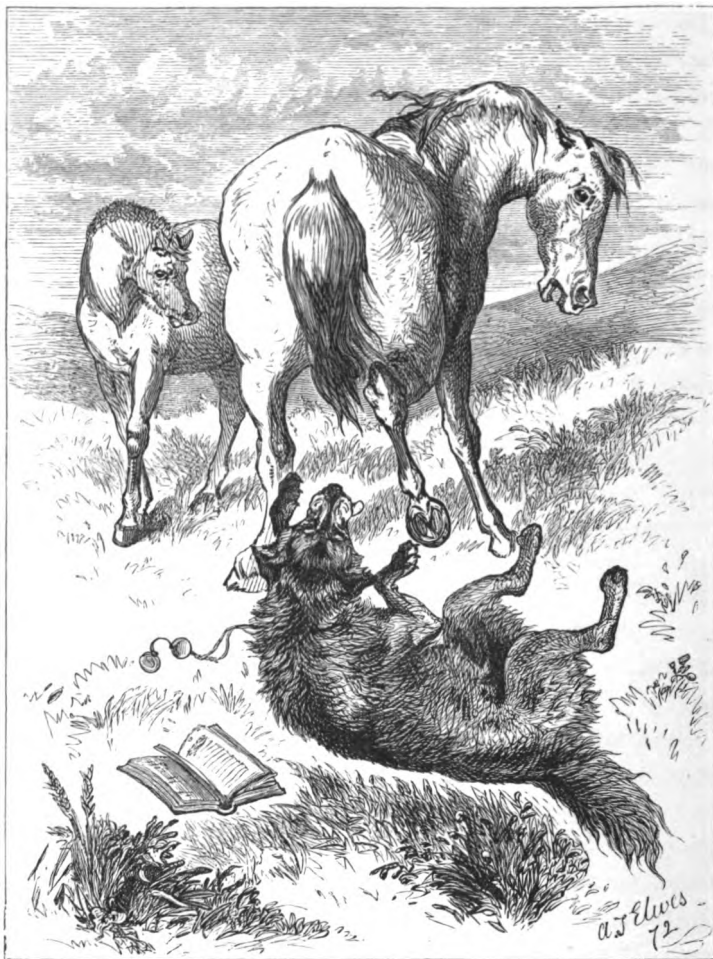


UNCLE," said the goat, "you may be proud you have such toward children, and I rejoice because they are of my blood." After supper was concluded, the fox, willing to have time to reflect upon his new schemes, said, "I know your journey must have made you weary, nephew; you had better retire to rest." And they all slept soundly except the wily cogitating fox.

At the first dawn of day he arose, and proceeded with Grimbard towards the court; after having taken an affectionate leave of his wife and family. As they journeyed over the heath, Reynard said, "Nephew, the accidents of this world are various and unavoidable, we are always subject, spite of the best concerted schemes, to the strokes of fortune. Since I was last shriven, I have committed many sins; therefore I beseech you, let me make my confession before you, in order that I may pass with less trouble through my worst dangers.

Then I confess, it is too true that I gave the bear a grievous wound in causing him to lose part of his hide. I stripped the wolf and his wife of their shoes. I appeased the king only with lies; for I feigned a conspiracy against his majesty's life by sir Isegrim and sir Bruin, when no such idea existed; while the great treasure I reported at Husterloe, was as fabulous as the rest. I slew Kayward, and betrayed Bellin to death; I wounded and killed dame Sharpbeak, the rook's wife.

“ Finally, I forgot to mention at my last shrift a great piece of deceit which I committed, but I will reveal it now. Once, as I went talking with sir Isegrim the wolf, between Houthlust and Elverding, we beheld a goodly grey mare, grazing with a black foal by her side, which was quite fat and playful. Sir Isegrim being almost dead for hunger, intreated me to inquire whether the mare would sell her foal; to which the mare replied, that she would willingly for money. When I asked her the price, she said it was written on her hinder foot, and if I pleased, I might come and read it. But I saw into her design, and said: ‘Of a truth I cannot read, neither do I desire to buy your foal; I am only a messenger.’ ‘Then let the purchaser come,’ said the mare, ‘and I will give him satisfaction.’ So I went to the wolf and told him what the mare said, assuring him he might have a bargain, provided he could read; for the price was written on the mare's foot. ‘Cousin,’ quoth the wolf, ‘I can read both Latin and Greek, English, French, and Dutch. I have studied at Oxford, and argued with many doctors. I have heard many stately plays recited, and sat in the place of judgment. I have taken degrees in both the laws, and can decipher any kind of writing.’ Thus saying, the boasting blockhead proceeded to the spot, and entreated the mare to let him read the price. She held



And as the wolf was inspecting, smote him so exactly upon the forehead, that she threw him head over heels.

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up her hind foot very politely, newly shod with strong iron, and as the wolf was inspecting, smote him so exactly upon the forehead, that she threw him head over heels, and he lay in a dead swoon, as long as a man might have ridden a mile and better. This done, away trotted the mare with her colt, and left the poor wolf all bloody and wounded. When he came to himself, he howled like a dog: then went I to him, and said; ‘sir Isegrim, dear uncle, how do you? have you eaten too much of the colt? Pray give me a small share, for I went on your message honestly. Surely you have outslept your dinner, good uncle! was it prose or rhyme you found written on the mare’s foot? I think it must have been a song, for I heard you sing: nay, you show your scholarship in all the arts.’

“Alas,” cried the wolf, ‘I am extremely ill hurt. Forbear to disdain me, Reynard, for the damned mare has an iron hoof upon her long leg, and I mistook the nails for letters; verily, I think my skull is cloven; she has hit me such a cursed kick just as I was reading.’ ‘Ay, ay, uncle,’ cried I, ‘the most learned clerks are not the wisest men, you know. Poor men sometimes outstrip them in judgment, and the reason is, you great scholars study so much, that you grow dull with over much labour.’

“And now, fair nephew, I have unloaded my conscience, and delivered myself of as many of my sins as I can call to remembrance. I beseech you, therefore, let me receive absolution and penance, and then, come what may, I am thrice armed against all dangers and mischances at court.” Grimbard replied: “Your trespasses, Reynard, are great and heinous: yet what is done is done; the dead must remain dead, so I freely absolve you, upon assurance of repentance; only the contempt you showed the king, in sending him Kayward’s head, will I fear lie heavy on

your soul." "Why!" said the fox, "he that will live in the world, seeing one thing, hearing another, and learning a third, is sure to meet with affliction. No man can touch honey, but will have to lick his fingers after. I often feel touches of repentance, but reason and our will are ever at variance; so that I often stop as if at my wit's end, and cry out against my sins, feeling that I detest them. Yet soon the world and its vanities catch me again; and when I find so many rubs and stumbling blocks in my way, together with the example of rich and crafty prelates, I am taken fast, as it were in a trap. The world first enchants me, and then fills me with covetousness; so that what with my natural disposition, with the flesh and the devil, I have enough to do. If I gain ground one day, I lose my good resolution the next; thus I assure you, nephew, I am sometimes a saint; and at others I am only for hell and wickedness. For I hear priests singing, piping, laughing, playing, and making all kinds of mirth; and I find their words and actions totally at variance. From them I learn my lying, and from lords at courts my flattery: for of a truth, lords, ladies, priests and clerks, among all creatures, use most dissimulation. It is an offence to tell great men the truth; and he that cannot dissemble, cannot live. I have often heard men speak truth; yet they always adorn it with falsehoods of their own. For lies will push themselves, in a way, as it were, into our discourse, whether we will or no; indeed they come quite natural to us. Falsehood hath a pretty dress, which keeps always in the fashion, a fashion to flatter, to sooth, to threaten, to pray and to curse; in fact, to do any thing that may keep the weak in subjection; and those who do otherwise, are thought simple. He that has learnt to lie and impose upon us without stammering, may do wonders; he may wear scarlet, grey, or

purple, as he pleases: he shall gain both by the laws spiritual and temporal, and come off victorious in every scheme. There are many who imagine they can do it neatly, but their cunning fails them; so that when they think they have secured the fat morsels, they slip to the next trenchers. Others are blunt and foolish, and for want of method mar all their discourses; but he who can give his lie a fit and apt conclusion, can pronounce it without rattling, and make it like truth, fair and amiable, that is the man worthy of our admiration. But there is no art in speaking the truth; it never makes the devil laugh: to lie well and with a grace, to raise up wrong above right, to make mountains out of mice, and build castles in the air; to make them juggle and look through their fingers; this, nephew, is an art valuable beyond expression. Yet evermore at the close, is sure to come misery and affliction; though he who speaks always truth, shall find most rubs in his way. There are so many, that it is well, nephew, that every trespass hath its mercy, just as there is no wisdom but what at times grows dull."

"Uncle," said the goat, "of a truth, you are so wise, that you cannot fail in any purpose; I am delighted with your precepts, though they surpass my understanding. There is no longer need that you be shriven; for yourself may play both the priest and the confessor; such is your experience of the world, that it is impossible for any man to stand up against you."

With these and similar conversations, they held on their journey towards the court. Yet the fox's heart, in spite of all his fair show, was sad and heavy, while the smiles of hope and confidence were in his face. He passed without any apparent agitation through the press of the court, even till he came into the king's presence, while his nephew whispered him at his side,

“Bear yourself bravely, dear uncle, for fortune is ever enamoured of the brave.” “You say true,” cried the fox, as he went on, casting disdainful looks on those whom he did not like, as much as to say: “Here I am; what dare the proudest of you object against me?” He beheld many of his kindred whom he loved not, and many, too, who loved him. As soon as he was come in full view of the king, he fell down on his knees, and spoke as follows.



Chapter xvii



MAY that divine power from which nothing can be hidden save the lord my king, and my sovereign lady the queen, and give them grace to know who has right, and who has wrong; for there are many false shews in the world, and the countenance betrays not the heart. Yet I wish it were openly revealed, and that every creature's trespass stood written on his forehead, although it cost me the uttermost of my substance; or that your majesty knew me as well as I do myself, and how I devote myself early and late to your majesty's service. To this I owe the malice of my enemies, who envy me your majesty's grace and favour. I have indeed, cause to cry shame upon those who have so deadly belied me; yet I know that my sovereign lord and lady will not be imposed upon by their malicious falsehoods. Your majesties will consider all things according to the right of your laws: it is

only justice I look for, and desire that the guilty may feel the full weight of his punishment. Believe me, dear lord, it shall be seen before I leave your court, who I am: one, who though he cannot flatter, will shew his face with unshrinking eye, and an unblemished forehead."

All that stood in the royal presence were amazed, and looked at each other, when the fox spoke so boldly. But the king with a stately countenance, replied: "Sir Reynard, I know you are expert in fallacies; but words will no longer avail you. I believe this day will be the last of your glory and your disgrace; therefore I will not chide you much, because I intend you shall live so short a time. The love you bear me has been shewn to the coney and the rook; your reward shall be a short life on earth. There is an ancient saying: 'A pot may go long to the water, but will come home broken in the end:' and your crimes though so long successful, shall now pay the penalty with death."

At these words, Reynard was stricken with fear, and wished himself far away; yet he found he must put the best face upon it, whatever fortune might betide. He therefore said: "My sovereign lord; it is but justice that you hear me, in answer to my accusers, for were my faults more heinous than any can make them, equity calls for a hearing from the accused. I have done the state some service with my counsels, and may do so still. I have never deserted your majesty in emergencies, when others shrunk from your side. If my enemies then utter slanders, have I not a right to complain. It was once otherwise, and time may bring round the old course, for the actions of good servants ought not to be forgotten. I see here many of my kindred and friends, who now make no account of me, but can venture to deprive you of the best servant you possess. Had I been guilty,

should I have dared to have made my appearance thus voluntarily, in the very throng and press of my enemies. That would have been madness, indeed, more especially when I was at full liberty; but Heaven be thanked I know my enemies, and dare encounter them, innocent as I am. Had I not laboured under the censure of the church, I would have sooner appeared; but



when my uncle brought me the tidings, I was wandering sorrowfully on the heath, where I met my uncle Martin, the ape, who far exceeded any other priest, in his pastoral duties, having been chaplain to the bishop of Cambrick, these nine years. Seeing me in such great agony of heart, he said: 'Why so heavy in spirit, dear cousin! and why is your countenance so sad? Think grief is easy to carry when the burden is divided among many friends.'

“ I answered : ‘ You say true, dear uncle, such is indeed my fortune : not that I am guilty, yet sorrow is heaped upon me without cause. Those whom I ranked among my best friends, accuse me, as you will hear. Lately at the feast of Whitsuntide, when I was keeping fast ; a time we must prepare our hearts, ‘ *Et vos estote parati*,’ you know ; in came Laprel the coney, and refreshed himself along with the children. My youngest son Rossel came to take away what he left, for the nature of children is ever eating and craving, when the coney smote him on the mouth till his teeth bled. The little fool fell down in a swoon, on seeing which, Reynardine my eldest son ran at the coney, caught him by the ears, and would questionless have slain him, had I not come to his rescue. I then gave my son correction for his fault ; but Laprel hastened to the king, and accused me of having sought to destroy him. Thus am I unjustly accused and brought into danger ; I who have most occasion to accuse others. Not long after came Corbant the rook, flying to my house with a sad noise, and on demanding what ailed him, he said : ‘ Alas, my wife is dead ! There was a dead hare full of moths and vermin, lying on the heath, of which she has eaten so much that the worms have gnawed her throat asunder.’ And having said this, away he flew, and reported forsooth, that I had slain his wife ; though she flies in the air, and I walk on foot. Thus, dear uncle, you see how I am slandered, but it is perhaps, for my old sins, and therefore I bear it with more patience.’ Then my nephew the ape said : ‘ You shall go to court, and disprove their falsehoods.’ ‘ Alas ! uncle,’ I replied, ‘ the archdeacon has laid me under the pope’s curse, because I advised the wolf to forsake his holy orders, when he complained that he was unable to endure that strict life and so much fasting. Of this advice I now repent me, since he has repaid my love

with nothing but malice, and stirring his majesty against me with all the worst slanders he can invent. In fact, dear uncle, I am brought to my wit's end, for as I must hasten to Rome for absolution, what injuries may happen to my wife and children in my absence, through the malice of such bloody-minded wretches as the wolf? Were I but quit of the pope's curse, I could go to court, and pleading my own cause might turn their malice against themselves."

"'Then pray, cousin,' replied the ape, 'cast off your sorrow, for I am experienced in these matters, and know the way to Rome well. For I am called the bishop's clerk, and I will hasten thither and enter a plea against the archdeacon, trusting, in spite of him, to bring you a well-sealed absolution from the pope. Why, man, I have many great friends; as my uncle Simon and others, Pen-stout, Wait-catch, and the rest, all of whom will stand by me. Nor will I go unfurnished with money, for the law has no feet to walk on without money. A true friend is known in need, and you shall find me one without difficulty, so cast aside your grief, I say, and proceed to court, as I will now do, on your behalf to Rome. Meanwhile I absolve you of all your sins and offences; and on reaching court you shall meet there Dame Rukenard, my wife, her two sisters and our three children, besides others of the family. Salute them from me, and explain what has passed. My wife is prudent, I know her to be faithful, and like me, she will never leave her friends in danger. Yet should your affairs require it fail not to dispatch me tidings; and there is not an enemy, from the king and queen to the lowest of their subjects;—not an enemy of yours, but shall instantly be placed under the pope's curse. Such an interdiction shall be issued against the whole kingdom, that no holy or royal duty shall be performed till you be restored to right and justice.

“ ‘This, he continued, ‘rest assured, I can easily perform, for his holiness is very old, and little esteemed, while Cardinal Pare-gold bears all the sway in the country, being young and rich in many friends. Besides he has a mistress of whom he is so greatly enamoured, that he denies her nothing which she demands. This lady is my niece, and will do whatever I request her; so you may go boldly to the king, and charge him to do you justice, cousin, which I know he will, as he understands that the laws are made for the use of all men.’

“ When I heard him speak thus, please your majesty, I smiled, and with great joy came hither to relate the truth. Therefore if your majesty or any lord within this court, can charge me with any trespass whatsoever, and prove the same by testimony, as the law requires, or will otherwise oppose himself to me person to person; grant me but a day and equal lists, when I will maintain my innocence in combat, provided he be my equal in birth and degree. This is a law that has never been put aside, and I trust that in me, for me, or by me, it shall not now be broken.”

The whole of the assembly stood dumb and amazed at hearing these words, not expecting so much boldness. As for the coney and the rook they stood so scared that they durst not speak, but stole away privately out of court. When they had gone a little way they said, “ This devilish murderer has such art in his falsehood, that no truth has any chance of contending with it. It is far better for us to save ourselves while there is yet time.”

Sir Isegrim the wolf, and Bruin the bear, were very sad when they saw these two desert the court: while the king said, “ If there be any who would impeach the fox, let him step forth, and he shall be heard. Yesterday we were laden with complaints; where are they to-day? behold here is the fox ready to answer for himself.” “ My sovereign lord,” said the fox, “ absence makes

impudent accusers bold when the accused's presence daunts them, as your majesty sees. O, what it is to trust to the malice of these cowards! and how soon they may confound good men. As for me it matters not, only had they asked me forgiveness, I had quickly cast all their offences behind me, for I will never more



complain of my enemies; my revenge I will safely confide to Heaven, and justice to your majesties." Then said the king, "Reynard, you speak well, if the inward heart resembles the outward show; but I fear your grief is not so great as you express it." "It far surpasses it, sire," replied the fox sorrowfully. "No!" quoth the king, "for I must charge you with one false treason: When I had pardoned all your sins and offences, and you promised to go a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; when I had furnished you with scrip and staff and all things requisite to

the holy order, you shewed your utter contempt of them by sending back with Bellin the ram the head of Kayward, a thing so wholly reflecting upon my honour, that no treason could be fouler. This you cannot affect to deny, for Bellin my chaplain at his death made known the whole transaction, and the same penalty which he then paid shall now fall to your share."

On hearing this sentence Reynard grew sore afraid and scarcely knew what to say. He looked with a woeful countenance upon all his kindred who stood round him; his colour went and came; but none lent either hand or foot to help him. The king then said, "Oh, thou false dissembling traitor, why art thou thus struck dumb?" The fox being full of anguish, heaved a deep sigh, as if his heart was breaking; so that all the beasts present except the wolf and bear truly pitied him. Dame Rukenard in particular shed tears, and being a great favourite of the queen she took up the fox's defence, in so eloquent and pathetic a strain as to melt the hearts of all present, not excepting the king. The queen then followed her favourite friend the ape's wife, until observing the relenting mood of his sovereign, the fox, who had flattered himself with this result, proceeded to clench the nail and strike the iron while it was hot.



Chapter XVIII.



THEN Reynard again held up his head, and said: "Alas, my sovereign lord, what is that you said? Is good Kayward the hare then dead? where then is Bellin the ram? These are strange tidings I hear. What did Bellin bring to your majesty at his return? for my part I delivered him three rich inestimable jewels, which I would not have detained from your majesty for all the wealth of India. One of them was directed for my lord the king, the other two for my sovereign lady the queen." "Yet I received nothing," said the king, "but the head of poor murdered Kayward, for which I executed my chaplain the ram instantly, as he confessed the crime to have been done by his advice and counsel." "Can this be true?" cried the fox; "then woe is me, that ever I was born: the finest jewels that ever were possessed by any earthly prince are lost and gone. I had rather have died before your majesty should be thus

defrauded ; and I know that it will be the death of my wife, she will never more put trust in me." "Dear nephew," cried the ape's wife ; "let them go ! why sorrow thus after transitory wealth ; if you will give us a description of them it will be just as good, and from that we may perhaps be able to find them. If not, we can order the magician Alkarin to consult his books, and search all the corners of the earth. Besides, whosoever detains them shall be cursed in all parishes until he shall restore them to the king's majesty."

"But whom," said the fox, "shall we trust in this corrupt age, when even sanctity itself walks masked and in disguise?" Then heaving another deep sigh to gild his dissimulation, he proceeded. "Now listen all of you belonging to my stock and lineage, for I will describe what these jewels were, of which both the king and myself have been defrauded. The first of them, intended for his majesty, was a ring of fine and pure gold, and within it, next the finger, were engraven letters enamelled with azure, and labels, containing three Hebrew names. For my own part I could neither read nor spell them ; but Abron of Trete, the excellent linguist, who knows the nature of all manner of herbs, animals, and minerals, assured me that they were those three names which Seth brought out of Paradise when he presented his father Adam with the oil of mercy. Whoever shall wear these three names about him shall never be hurt by thunder or lightning, neither shall any kind of witchcraft have power to charm him, he shall not be tempted to any sin (would each of my enemies had one to wear), neither will heat or cold ever annoy him. Upon it was enchased a most precious stone of three divers colours. The first like red crystal, glittering with fire, and that with such brightness, that if one had occasion to



“ We can order the Magician Alkarin to consult his books.”

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journey by night, the light thereof was as great as that at noon-day. Their colour was a clear burnished white, the virtue of which would cure any blemish or soreness in the eyes; also by stroking the grieved part, all manner of swellings, headaches, or any sickness whatever, whether of venom, weakness of stomach,



cholic, stone, strangury, fistula or cancer, either outwardly applied as before shown, or inwardly by steeping the stone in water and swallowing it. Again as far as one bore it fasting, into whatever company the wearer went it would make him infinitely beloved; and if he should be exposed naked in a vast wide field, against an hundred armed enemies, yet should he stand firm and come off with honour and victory. Yet he must be nobly bred, and of no churlish disposition; as the ring confers

“ ‘This, he continued, ‘rest assured, I can easily perform, for his holiness is very old, and little esteemed, while Cardinal Pare-gold bears all the sway in the country, being young and rich in many friends. Besides he has a mistress of whom he is so greatly enamoured, that he denies her nothing which she demands. This lady is my niece, and will do whatever I request her ; so you may go boldly to the king, and charge him to do you justice, cousin, which I know he will, as he understands that the laws are made for the use of all men.’

“ When I heard him speak thus, please your majesty, I smiled, and with great joy came hither to relate the truth. Therefore if your majesty or any lord within this court, can charge me with any trespass whatsoever, and prove the same by testimony, as the law requires, or will otherwise oppose himself to me person to person ; grant me but a day and equal lists, when I will maintain my innocence in combat, provided he be my equal in birth and degree. This is a law that has never been put aside, and I trust that in me, for me, or by me, it shall not now be broken.”

The whole of the assembly stood dumb and amazed at hearing these words, not expecting so much boldness. As for the coney and the rook they stood so scared that they durst not speak, but stole away privately out of court. When they had gone a little way they said, “ This devilish murderer has such art in his falsehood, that no truth has any chance of contending with it. It is far better for us to save ourselves while there is yet time.”

Sir Isegrim the wolf, and Bruin the bear, were very sad when they saw these two desert the court : while the king said, “ If there be any who would impeach the fox, let him step forth, and he shall be heard. Yesterday we were laden with complaints ; where are they to-day ? behold here is the fox ready to answer for himself.” “ My sovereign lord,” said the fox, “ absence makes

impudent accusers bold when the accused's presence daunts them, as your majesty sees. O, what it is to trust to the malice of these cowards! and how soon they may confound good men. As for me it matters not, only had they asked me forgiveness, I had quickly cast all their offences behind me, for I will never more



complain of my enemies; my revenge I will safely confide to Heaven, and justice to your majesties." Then said the king, "Reynard, you speak well, if the inward heart resembles the outward show; but I fear your grief is not so great as you express it." "It far surpasses it, sire," replied the fox sorrowfully. "No!" quoth the king, "for I must charge you with one false treason: When I had pardoned all your sins and offences, and you promised to go a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; when I had furnished you with scrip and staff and all things requisite to

the holy order, you shewed your utter contempt of them by sending back with Bellin the ram the head of Kayward, a thing so wholly reflecting upon my honour, that no treason could be fouler. This you cannot affect to deny, for Bellin my chaplain at his death made known the whole transaction, and the same penalty which he then paid shall now fall to your share."

On hearing this sentence Reynard grew sore afraid and scarcely knew what to say. He looked with a woeful countenance upon all his kindred who stood round him; his colour went and came; but none lent either hand or foot to help him. The king then said, "Oh, thou false dissembling traitor, why art thou thus struck dumb?" The fox being full of anguish, heaved a deep sigh, as if his heart was breaking; so that all the beasts present except the wolf and bear truly pitied him. Dame Rukenard in particular shed tears, and being a great favourite of the queen she took up the fox's defence, in so eloquent and pathetic a strain as to melt the hearts of all present, not excepting the king. The queen then followed her favourite friend the ape's wife, until observing the relenting mood of his sovereign, the fox, who had flattered himself with this result, proceeded to clench the nail and strike the iron while it was hot.



Chapter XVIII.



THEN Reynard again held up his head, and said: "Alas, my sovereign lord, what is that you said? Is good Kayward the hare then dead? where then is Bellin the ram? These are strange tidings I hear. What did Bellin bring to your majesty at his return? for my part I delivered him three rich inestimable jewels, which I would not have detained from your majesty for all the wealth of India. One of them was directed for my lord the king, the other two for my sovereign lady the queen." "Yet I received nothing," said the king, "but the head of poor murdered Kayward, for which I executed my chaplain the ram instantly, as he confessed the crime to have been done by his advice and counsel." "Can this be true?" cried the fox; "then woe is me, that ever I was born: the finest jewels that ever were possessed by any earthly prince are lost and gone. I had rather have died before your majesty should be thus

defrauded ; and I know that it will be the death of my wife, she will never more put trust in me." "Dear nephew," cried the ape's wife ; "let them go ! why sorrow thus after transitory wealth ; if you will give us a description of them it will be just as good, and from that we may perhaps be able to find them. If not, we can order the magician Alkarin to consult his books, and search all the corners of the earth. Besides, whosoever detains them shall be cursed in all parishes until he shall restore them to the king's majesty."

"But whom," said the fox, "shall we trust in this corrupt age, when even sanctity itself walks masked and in disguise?" Then heaving another deep sigh to gild his dissimulation, he proceeded. "Now listen all of you belonging to my stock and lineage, for I will describe what these jewels were, of which both the king and myself have been defrauded. The first of them, intended for his majesty, was a ring of fine and pure gold, and within it, next the finger, were engraven letters enamelled with azure, and labels, containing three Hebrew names. For my own part I could neither read nor spell them ; but Abron of Trete, the excellent linguist, who knows the nature of all manner of herbs, animals, and minerals, assured me that they were those three names which Seth brought out of Paradise when he presented his father Adam with the oil of mercy. Whoever shall wear these three names about him shall never be hurt by thunder or lightning, neither shall any kind of witchcraft have power to charm him, he shall not be tempted to any sin (would each of my enemies had one to wear), neither will heat or cold ever annoy him. Upon it was enchased a most precious stone of three divers colours. The first like red crystal, glittering with fire, and that with such brightness, that if one had occasion to



“ We can order the Magician Alkarin to consult his books.”

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journey by night, the light thereof was as great as that at noon-day. Their colour was a clear burnished white, the virtue of which would cure any blemish or soreness in the eyes; also by stroking the grieved part, all manner of swellings, headaches, or any sickness whatever, whether of venom, weakness of stomach,



cholic, stone, strangury, fistula or cancer, either outwardly applied as before shown, or inwardly by steeping the stone in water and swallowing it. Again as far as one bore it fasting, into whatever company the wearer went it would make him infinitely beloved; and if he should be exposed naked in a vast wide field, against an hundred armed enemies, yet should he stand firm and come off with honour and victory. Yet he must be nobly bred, and of no churlish disposition; as the ring confers

no virtue upon any who is not a true gentleman. Now, all these virtues considered, I thought myself quite unworthy to keep it; therefore I sent it to you, my lord the king, knowing you to be the most excellent of all living beings, and one on whom all his subjects' lives depend, most fit to be guarded then by so rich a jewel.

“This ring I found in my father's treasure; and also a comb, and a glass mirror, which my wife begged to have. They were both jewels of great worth, and these were intended for the queen, because of the grace and mercy she extended towards me. The comb was made of the bone of a noble beast called Panthera, which lives between the greater India and earthly Paradise. He is so beautiful, that he partakes of all the loveliest hues under heaven; and the smell of him is so sweet and wholesome, that the very savour cures all infirmities. He is the physician of all animals that follow him; he has one fair bone broad and thin, in which when slain, are contained the whole virtues of the animal. It can never be broken nor consumed by any of the elements; yet it is so light that a feather will poise it, and it will receive a fine polish. The comb then resembles fine silver; the teeth are small and straight, and between the great teeth and the small, there is engraven many an image very cunningly wrought and enamelled about with fine gold. The field is chequered with sables and silver, and therein is contained the story how Venus, Juno and Pallas contended for the golden ball upon mount Ida, and how Paris was to present it to the fairest of them.

“Paris, at that time, was a shepherd, and fed his flocks along with Onone on that hill; and first Juno promised that if he would bestow it upon her, she would make him the richest

man in the world. Pallas said, that if she might have it he should become the wisest among all mortals, and the most fortunate against his enemies. But Venus said, 'What boots wealth, wisdom, or valour? art thou not Priam's son and Hector's brother, who sway all Asia?—art thou not one of the heirs of mighty Troy? Give me the ball, and I will give thee the sweetest creature the world can boast, the fairest lady of all breathing; she whose like no sun shall ever more behold. Thus thou shalt be richer than with riches, and tower above all in pride. Thine will be wealth none can praise too much; since such beauty is that heavenly elixir which turns all things into delight.'

"Then presently Paris gave her the ball, confirming her the fairest among the goddesses; and another place was figured, showing how he won Helen, and brought her to Troy, with the solemnity of the marriage, the honour of the triumphs, and all else appertaining to that grand story.

"Now for the mirror, it was not inferior to either of the preceding; for the glass was of such rare virtue that men might see and know whatever was done within a mile; whether the actions of animals or any thing he should desire to know. Whoever gazed therein was cured of every malady; and indeed so manifold were its virtues that wonder not if I shed tears over its loss. The value of the wood far exceeded that of gold, greatly resembling the wood Hebenus, of which king Crampart made a horse, for love of the most beautiful daughter of king Morcadiges. This horse was so artfully constructed, that whoever rode on it might speed above an hundred miles in less than an hour; which Clamades the king's son proved to his cost. Not believing in it, and being strong and lusty, he leaped upon

the horse, when Crampart turning a pin that was fixed in the breast of the engine, it went through the palace windows like a shot, and carried him ten miles at least the first minute. At this miracle, Clamades was much affrighted, and imagined, as the story goes, that he should never return again: but what was at



length his infinite joy, when he had learned to guide and manage the wonderful beast!

“ Strange histories in gold and silver were deciphered on the wood with sables, yellow, azure and cynope, all which colours were very curiously interlaid with each other, and the words under each history were so finely engraven and enamelled, that any man might read the whole story. In truth the world never

produced a thing of greater worth, lustre, or pleasure. In the upper part stood a horse in his natural glory, fat, fair, and fiery, which vied with a stately hart that run before him. Finding he could not overtake the hart, at which he was filled with disdain, he went to a herdsman near at hand, and told him that if he would help him to take a hart, he should have the profit of it; horns, skin, and flesh. Then the herdsman asked him what means he should use to get him. The horse said, 'Mount upon my back, and I will bear you after him, till we have tired him down.' The herdsman accepted the offer, and bestriding the horse, pursued the deer. But he fled so fast, and gained so much ground, that the horse grew weary and bade the herdsman alight, for he would rest him awhile. 'No,' the herdsman said; 'I have a bridle on thy head and spurs on my heels; so thou art now my servant, neither will I part with thee, but govern thee as seems best to my pleasure.' Thus the horse brought himself into thralldom, and was taken in his own net; for no creature has a greater adversary than its own envy, and many while aiming at the downfall of others, fall upon their own ruin.

"In another part was represented the story of my father and Tibert the cat, how they travelled together, and had sworn by their troth, that neither for love nor hate would they desert each other. It happened as they were journeying along, they encountered hunters coming over the fields with a pack of hounds at their heels, from which they both fled apace. Then said the fox, seeing their lives in danger, 'Tibert, whither shall we turn, for the hunters have espied us? for my part, I have a thousand wiles in readiness, and as long as we keep together, we shall have no need to fear them.' But the cat began to sigh, and was sore afraid; 'Alas,' he said, 'I have only one, and that must

help me at my need ;' and with that, he clambered up a tree, leaving my noble father in the lurch ; who then fled with a whole kennel at his heels, and hunters crying, 'Kill the fox, kill the fox.'

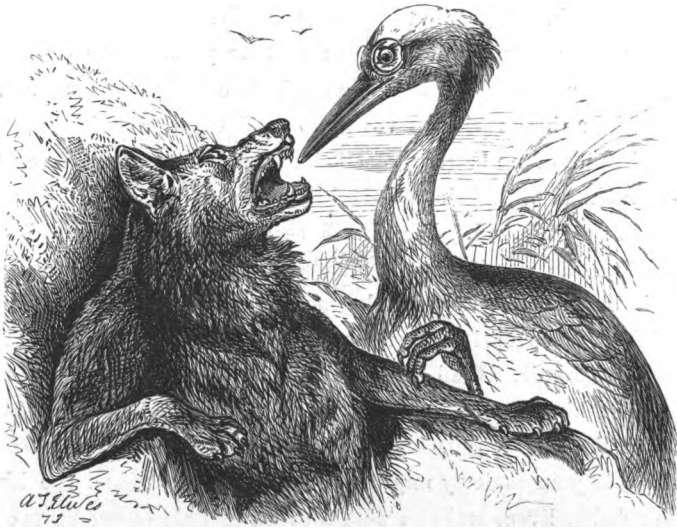
"Tibert also mocked my father, saying: 'Now, cousin, it is



high time to try your hundred wiles ; for if your wit fail you, I fear your whole body will perish.' My father was much hurt at these reproaches from a friend in whom he trusted, only he had not time to listen to them. For the dogs were so close upon him, that had he not luckily met with a hole at hand, it must have gone hard with him. You may thus see the false faith of the cat, like whom there are many living at this time, and

though this might well excuse me from loving the cat, my soul's health and charity bind me to the contrary, and I wish him no harm, though I confess his misfortunes would not grieve me.

“ On the same mirror was written the history of the wolf ;



how he found a dead horse upon the heath, whose flesh being eaten away, he was fain to gnaw the bones. Swallowing them too hastily, one stuck across his throat, and almost choked him. In this extremity, running and crying everywhere for a surgeon to ease his torments, in the end he met with the crane, and besought him with his long neck and bill to help him, and he would give him great rewards. Believing him, the crane put in his long neck quite down his throat, and brought up the long

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bone. At this pull, the wolf started and howled out: 'How you hurt! but I forgive you, if you will not do it again.' Then the crane said, 'Sir Isegrim, be joyous and frolick, you are whole. I only look for the promised reward.' 'How!' cried the wolf; 'what impudence is this? I suffer, and have cause to complain, yet you want to be rewarded. Do you forget that your head was in my mouth, and yet that I spared your life. Yes, though you put me to great pain, I allowed you to take your head out again. You are ungrateful; it is I who ought to call for some reward.'

"These three rarities I vowed to send to your majesties, and could think of no better messengers than Kayward the hare and Bellin the ram. Little did I then imagine that good Kayward was so near his end. Yet I will search the whole world, but I will find the murderer; for murder cannot be hid. It may be, he is in this presence who knows what is become of Kayward, although he conceal it, for many devils walk like saints. Yet the greatest wonder of all is, and which troubles me most, that my lord the king should say that my father, and not I myself, ever did good. But weighty affairs may well produce forgetfulness in kings, or your majesty might call to mind how when the king your father lived, and you were a prince not above two years old, my father came from the school at Montpelier, where he had studied the art of physic five years, and became so expert in all its principles, and so famous in those days, that he wore clothes of silk and a golden girdle. Now when he arrived at court, he found the king in great extremity, which grieved him, for he loved the old king your father; and the king rejoiced at his presence, and would not suffer him to quit his side. He said, 'Reynard, I am exceeding sick, and I feel my sickness increasing.' My father answered, 'My lord, I must see your tongue; as soon



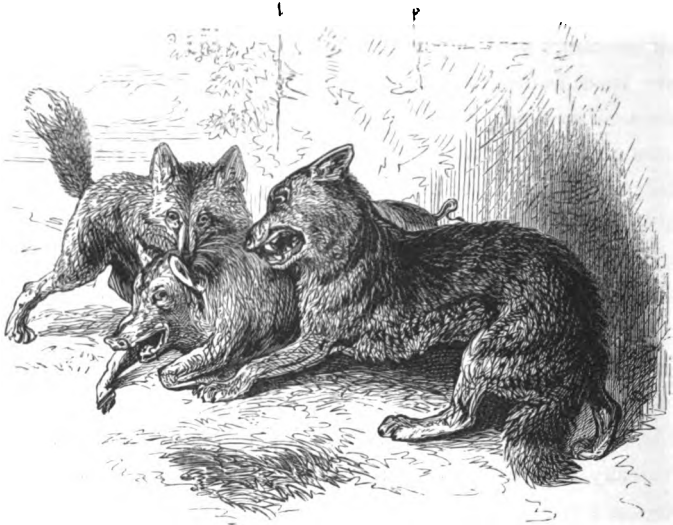
“ My father came from the school at Montpelier, and became so expert and famous
that he wore clothes of silk and a golden girdle.”

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as I behold its colour, I will give you my opinion of the state you are in.' The king did as he was advised, for he trusted not any equal to him. Then said my father, 'My best lord, if you will be eased of your disorder, you must needs take the blood of a wolf of seven years old, or else your disease is incurable.'

"The wolf at that time happened to stand by your father, but said nothing: whereupon the king observed: 'Sir Isegrim, you hear there is nothing which can cure me besides your blood.' The wolf replied: 'Not so, my lord, for I am not yet full five years old.' 'It is no matter,' answered my father; 'let him be bled, and when I see the blood I will tell you if it be medicinal.' The wolf was then carried howling to the kitchen, and his blood extracted, which the king took, and was soon cured of his disorder. Then the king thanked my father, and commanded all his subjects upon pain of death, from that hour to give him the title of sir Reynard, presenting him with the castle of Malepardus and the neighbouring warrens, besides a number of orders and titles to boot. Yet he still abode with the king, and was consulted in all things; he was presented with a garland of roses to wear like a crown upon his head. But the remembrance of his services is all past and gone, and his enemies are advanced—virtue is trampled; and innocence lies in sorrow. For when baseness and avarice are made masters, they neither know themselves, nor consider the lowliness whence they sprung. They have no hearts for pity, nor ears for the poor man's cause. Gold is the goal they run to, and gifts the god which they worship. What great man's gate does not look towards covetousness;—where is not rank flattery entertained;—and what prince takes hate at his own praises?

“ This was, my lord, an accident which befel in your youth and you may easily forget it ; yet, without boasting, I think I may say, I, as well as my father, have consulted your honour and service. Far be it from me to repeat these things, I would not upbraid your majesty who is always worthy of more than I can



render—my uttermost is but the rent of a loyal subject, which I am ever bound by the laws of God and nature to pay. But I must say that so it was, when the wolf and I together had gotten a swine under us, and on account of his extreme loud crying were compelled to bite him to death ; at that time your royal self came out of a grove, and saluted us saying : that you and the queen your consort were both exceeding hungry, and entreated of us to give you part. Isegrim murmured something, but I spake out

aloud: 'With all my heart, my lord, and were it better than it is, it were too mean for your deserts.' But Isegrim taking half of the swine went grumbling away.

"This, and many such actions as this, I have done for your majesty's sake—too painful to repeat. They are all expunged from memory; but time and my loyalty will one day, I trust, recall them. I have seen the day when no affair of moment was transacted at court without my concurrence; and though the same policy and judgment are not now so highly prized, circumstances may bring them into action with the same reputation as heretofore; as long as I aim only at justice. For if any one can assert or prove the contrary, here I stand to endure the worst the law can inflict. But if malice only slander me, without witness, I crave the combat according to law and usage of the court." "Then," said the king, "Reynard, you say well: and nothing know I of Kayward's death save the bringing of his head hither by Bellin the ram; and so I acquit you of that savage deed." "My dear lord," said the fox, "I humbly thank you, yet I cannot so easily pass over his death. I remember how heavy my heart felt at his departure, which I take to be a certain presage of the loss which subsequently happened."

These words, and the sad looks of the fox amazed all the beholders, insomuch that they could hardly refuse to believe what he had said, and in fact every one lamented his loss and pitied his sorrow.

The king and queen were the most affected of any, and then entreated him that he would make diligent search for the discovery of those precious jewels, his praises having excited the royal curiosity and avarice beyond measure. And because he affirmed that he had intended those rare articles for them, though

they never so much as saw them, yet they gave him as great thanks as if they had been in their safe possession, (so gratified was their vanity,) and they desired that he would use all means to recover them.



Chapter XIX.



SIR REYNARD understood their meaning exceeding well, and, though he little meant to perform what they entreated, he thanked the king and queen, vowing not to rest, either night or day, until he had found what had become of those precious jewels. He besought his majesty that if they should be concealed in places where entrance was forbidden by force, his majesty would assist him, as their discovery so nearly concerned him. The king replied, "That as soon as it should be known where they were, no help or assistance should be wanting." Having thus obtained all the success he aimed at by his false tales and flattery, he thought he might go whither he pleased, and that none would dare to oppose him. But sir Isegrim had stood by the whole of this time infinitely displeased, and no longer able to restrain his anger, he cried: "Oh, my dread lord, is it possible your majesty should be so weak and credulous, as to credit the falsehoods of

this arch impostor. They are only shadows and chimeras which he holds out to mislead you; but be not deceived by him, he is a wretch covered with blood and treason, and he mocks and scoffs your majesty to your face. But I am glad we are here together in your royal presence, and I intend to ring such a peal of justice over his head that all the lies he can invent shall not bear him away with safety.



“Not long since, this smiling but bitter-hearted traitor persuaded my wife that he would teach her how to catch fish—as many as she pleased. It was one cold winter’s morning; and having first made a hole in the ice, he told her that if she would let her tail hang in the water a good while, numbers of fish would come and seize hold of it, when she might easily pull them upon land. This the simple fool did; and stood there so long that her tail was frozen hard to the ice, so that all the force she had was not able to pull it out. Well might she shriek, cry, and feed upon the brine of her own tears, but all to no

purpose, had I not providentially been passing near. So I went unto her with much sorrow and heaviness, having a world of labour ere I could break the ice about her, and in despite of all my cunning, yet she was compelled to leave a piece of her tail behind her; and, indeed, we both escaped hardly with our lives. For by reason of her great anguish, she barked so loud, that the people of the next village rose up, and so fiercely assaulted us, that I never was in so desperate a taking. Thus, my gracious lord, you have heard how this traitor hath used us, and against the same we crave the right of your law and justice."

At this serious charge sir Reynard answered and said: "If this were true, I confess it would touch me near in honour and reputation; but God forbid that such a slander should be proved against me. I confess I did teach her to catch fish, but her greediness so transported her when she heard me name it, that she ran among the pieces of ice without any direction, and stopping too long she was frozen, though she had eaten as much as would have satisfied twenty reasonable beings; but it is a general saying 'that have all will miss all;' and so the lady got fastened in the ice. I was employed in charitably lending her my assistance; when up came the furious Isegrim, and most basely slandered me. At the same time he cursed bitterly, instead of thanking me for my goodness; and more to avoid his blasphemy than his threats I went my way. Truth is my badge, and hath ever been the device of all my ancestors, and if any scruple my assertion, I require but eight days' liberty, that I may confer with my learned counsel, when I will with oath and testimony make good my words. As for sir Isegrim, what have I to do with him? it is already known that he is an abandoned notorious villain, false both to heaven and your majesty, and now his own words witness

that he is a base slanderer. Let the matter be referred to his wife—if she accuse me, let me be held guilty; provided she be not overawed by the tyranny of her husband.”

“Villain,” cried sir Isegrim, “recollect when you fell to the bottom of the well, and lay in peril, my wife hearing thee moan ran to assist thee. Then thou didst persuade her to lower herself down by the bucket into the well, leaping at the same time into that hanging by the other pulley at the bottom, when thou being lighter than she didst reach the top and she fell heavily to the bottom. When she complained you only said, ‘Nay, it is but the fashion of the world, as one comes up another must get down;’ and so saying, you leaped out of the bucket and ran away.” To this the fox replied, “I had rather you should have been there than myself, for you are stronger and better able to endure hunger. At that hour of necessity both of us could not escape; and I taught your wife wisdom and experience, that she should neither trust friend nor foe, when our own peril is in question; for nature teaches us to love our own welfare, and he who does not is crowned with nothing but the title of folly.”



Chapter XX



SIR ISEGRIM, waxing very wroth, answered the fox: "Villain as thou art, thy mocks and scorns I despise, but thy injuries I will not bear. You say you have helped me in my need, when I was almost dead with hunger, but thou liest in thy throat. You never gave me better than a bare bone, after you had gnawed it well yourself. This you say, to injure my reputation, and again, you accuse me of treason against the king, for the sake of thy false treasures at Husterloe, besides having injured and slandered my wife, which will continue to stain our name until we are avenged. Therefore, look no longer for escape; here, before my lord the king, and you, my noble friends and kinsmen, I affirm and will approve to the last drop of my blood, that thou Reynard the Fox, art a false traitor and murderer, as I will make good upon thy body within



PER XX

ISEGRIM, waxing very wroth, answered the fox: "Villain as thou art, thy mocks and scorns I despise, but thy injuries I will not bear. You say you have helped me in my need, when I was almost dead with hunger, but thou liest in thy throat. You never gave me better than a bare bone, after you had gnawed it well yourself. This you say, to



reputation, and again, you accuse me of treason for taking, for the sake of thy false treasures at Husterloe, having injured and slandered my wife, which will continue to stain our name until we are avenged. Therefore, look for me here, before my lord the king, and I will appear before him, and will approve of what he says. The Fox, and the other dogs, are in the doghouse.

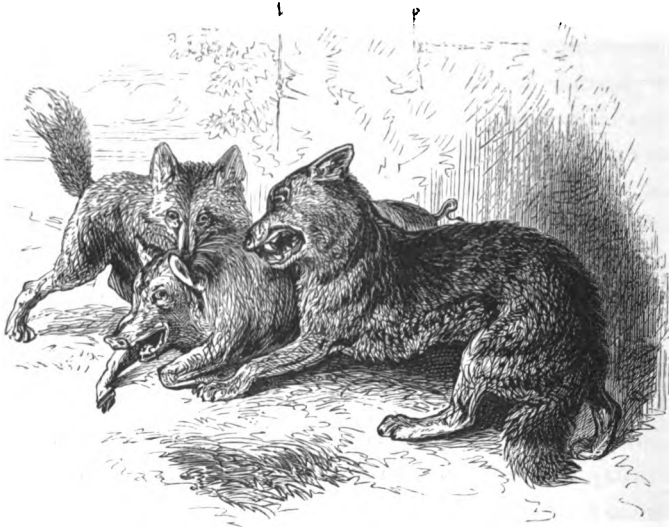
the lists of the field, until our strife shall have a fatal end, body to body, and life to life. Witness for me here, I cast down my glove, which I dare thee to take up, that I may have right for my injuries, or die like a recreant and coward."

Reynard was somewhat perplexed when it came to this; he knew himself much too weak for the wolf, and feared to come off with the worst. But suddenly recollecting the advantage he had in the wolf's fore-claws being pulled off, and which were not yet healed, he mustered courage to reply: "Whoever says that I am a false traitor and murderer, lies in his throat, especially Isegrim above all others. Poor fool, thou art ending the affair as I would have it; in proof of which I take up thy gage and throw down mine, to prove thou art a liar and traitor, as of old."

This said, the king received their pledges, and admitted the battle, commanding each to put in his surety that the combat should be tried on the morrow. Then stepped forth the bear and the cat, and became sureties for the wolf; and for the fox appeared Grimbard the brock, and Betelas. When all ceremonies were finished, the ape's wife taking Reynard aside, said, "Nephew! I beseech you, look to yourself in this battle, be bold and wise. Your uncle taught me once a prayer of singular virtue for any combatant; which he learnt from that excellent scholar and clerk, the abbot of Budelo. If you utter that prayer with great devotion, fasting, you shall never be utterly vanquished, however hard pressed in the field. Therefore, good nephew, be not afraid; for to-morrow I will read it to you fasting; and the wolf shall never prevail." Reynard, grateful as he said, for her favours, swore that his quarrel was good and honest, and that he had no doubt of his success. The whole of

that night he tarried with his kinsmen, who sought to amuse him with pleasant discourse. Dame Rukenard was still suggesting something for advantage in the approaching battle; and she persuaded him to have the whole of his hair shaved off, from head to tail, and afterwards anointed his body over, with olive oil. This made him so smooth and slippery, that the wolf could scarcely hope to keep his hold; besides, he was round and plump, which was also much to his advantage. She next advised him that night to drink exceeding much, that he might be more able to blind his enemy in the morning, but by no means to waste his ammunition till he came to close quarters in the field. "Then when you see the moment, take your bush tail, and strike it well in the villain's eyes, until you have quite perplexed and blinded him. But in the intervals keep your bush between your legs, as close as you can, lest he catch you by it, and level you with the ground. Take sharp heed at first to shun his blows: elude them, nephew, and make him toil and sweat after you in vain. Lead him where there is plenty of dust, and having first besprinkled him, kick up the dust in his eyes with your heels. Then take your advantage when he can no longer see, and smite and bite him most mischievously, still continuing to mystify both his sight and understanding, by brushing him in the face from time to time. Thus put him to the torture till you have quite wearied him out; and fear not, for though he be strong and stout, his heart is little and weak. This, nephew, is my advice; art prevails as much as courage; therefore look to it, and think how much wealth, honour, and reputation you may reap, both for yourself and family, by accomplishing this great feat. Now for the charm which I learnt from your uncle Martin, and which will help to make you invincible, it is as

“ This was, my lord, an accident which befel in your youth and you may easily forget it; yet, without boasting, I think I may say, I, as well as my father, have consulted your honour and service. Far be it from me to repeat these things, I would not upbraid your majesty who is always worthy of more than I can



render—my uttermost is but the rent of a loyal subject, which I am ever bound by the laws of God and nature to pay. But I must say that so it was, when the wolf and I together had gotten a swine under us, and on account of his extreme loud crying were compelled to bite him to death; at that time your royal self came out of a grove, and saluted us saying: that you and the queen your consort were both exceeding hungry, and entreated of us to give you part. Isegrim murmured something, but I spake out

aloud: 'With all my heart, my lord, and were it better than it is, it were too mean for your deserts.' But Isegrim taking half of the swine went grumbling away.

"This, and many such actions as this, I have done for your majesty's sake—too painful to repeat. They are all expunged from memory; but time and my loyalty will one day, I trust, recall them. I have seen the day when no affair of moment was transacted at court without my concurrence; and though the same policy and judgment are not now so highly prized, circumstances may bring them into action with the same reputation as heretofore; as long as I aim only at justice. For if any one can assert or prove the contrary, here I stand to endure the worst the law can inflict. But if malice only slander me, without witness, I crave the combat according to law and usage of the court." "Then," said the king, "Reynard, you say well: and nothing know I of Kayward's death save the bringing of his head hither by Bellin the ram; and so I acquit you of that savage deed." "My dear lord," said the fox, "I humbly thank you, yet I cannot so easily pass over his death. I remember how heavy my heart felt at his departure, which I take to be a certain presage of the loss which subsequently happened."

These words, and the sad looks of the fox amazed all the beholders, insomuch that they could hardly refuse to believe what he had said, and in fact every one lamented his loss and pitied his sorrow.

The king and queen were the most affected of any, and then entreated him that he would make diligent search for the discovery of those precious jewels, his praises having excited the royal curiosity and avarice beyond measure. And because he affirmed that he had intended those rare articles for them, though

they never so much as saw them, yet they gave him as great thanks as if they had been in their safe possession, (so gratified was their vanity,) and they desired that he would use all means to recover them.



Chapter XIX.



SIR REYNARD understood their meaning exceeding well, and, though he little meant to perform what they entreated, he thanked the king and queen, vowing not to rest, either night or day, until he had found what had become of those precious jewels. He besought his majesty that if they should be concealed in places where entrance was forbidden by force, his majesty would assist him, as their discovery so nearly concerned him. The king replied, "That as soon as it should be known where they were, no help or assistance should be wanting." Having thus obtained all the success he aimed at by his false tales and flattery, he thought he might go whither he pleased, and that none would dare to oppose him. But sir Isegrim had stood by the whole of this time infinitely displeased, and no longer able to restrain his anger, he cried: "Oh, my dread lord, is it possible your majesty should be so weak and credulous, as to credit the falsehoods of

this arch impostor. They are only shadows and chimeras which he holds out to mislead you ; but be not deceived by him, he is a wretch covered with blood and treason, and he mocks and scoffs your majesty to your face. But I am glad we are here together in your royal presence, and I intend to ring such a peal of justice over his head that all the lies he can invent shall not bear him away with safety.



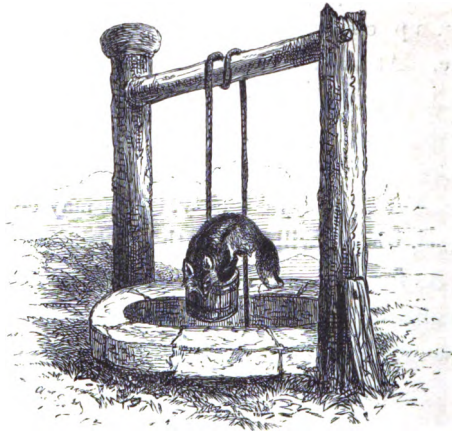
“ Not long since, this smiling but bitter-hearted traitor persuaded my wife that he would teach her how to catch fish—as many as she pleased. It was one cold winter’s morning ; and having first made a hole in the ice, he told her that if she would let her tail hang in the water a good while, numbers of fish would come and seize hold of it, when she might easily pull them upon land. This the simple fool did ; and stood there so long that her tail was frozen hard to the ice, so that all the force she had was not able to pull it out. Well might she shriek, cry, and feed upon the brine of her own tears, but all to no

purpose, had I not providentially been passing near. So I went unto her with much sorrow and heaviness, having a world of labour ere I could break the ice about her, and in despite of all my cunning, yet she was compelled to leave a piece of her tail behind her; and, indeed, we both escaped hardly with our lives. For by reason of her great anguish, she barked so loud, that the people of the next village rose up, and so fiercely assaulted us, that I never was in so desperate a taking. Thus, my gracious lord, you have heard how this traitor hath used us, and against the same we crave the right of your law and justice."

At this serious charge sir Reynard answered and said: "If this were true, I confess it would touch me near in honour and reputation; but God forbid that such a slander should be proved against me. I confess I did teach her to catch fish, but her greediness so transported her when she heard me name it, that she ran among the pieces of ice without any direction, and stopping too long she was frozen, though she had eaten as much as would have satisfied twenty reasonable beings; but it is a general saying 'that have all will miss all;' and so the lady got fastened in the ice. I was employed in charitably lending her my assistance; when up came the furious Isegrim, and most basely slandered me. At the same time he cursed bitterly, instead of thanking me for my goodness; and more to avoid his blasphemy than his threats I went my way. Truth is my badge, and hath ever been the device of all my ancestors, and if any scruple my assertion, I require but eight days' liberty, that I may confer with my learned counsel, when I will with oath and testimony make good my words. As for sir Isegrim, what have I to do with him? it is already known that he is an abandoned notorious villain, false both to heaven and your majesty, and now his own words witness

that he is a base slanderer. Let the matter be referred to his wife—if she accuse me, let me be held guilty; provided she be not overawed by the tyranny of her husband.”

“Villain,” cried sir Isegrim, “recollect when you fell to the bottom of the well, and lay in peril, my wife hearing thee moan ran to assist thee. Then thou didst persuade her to lower herself down by the bucket into the well, leaping at the same time into that hanging by the other pulley at the bottom, when thou being lighter than she didst reach the top and she fell heavily to the bottom. When she complained you only said, ‘Nay, it is but the fashion of the world, as one comes up another must get down;’ and so saying, you leaped out of the bucket and ran away.” To this the fox replied, “I had rather you should have been there than myself, for you are stronger and better able to endure hunger. At that hour of necessity both of us could not escape; and I taught your wife wisdom and experience, that she should neither trust friend nor foe, when our own peril is in question; for nature teaches us to love our own welfare, and he who does not is crowned with nothing but the title of folly.”



Chapter XX.



SIR ISEGRIM, waxing very wroth, answered the fox: "Villain as thou art, thy mocks and scorns I despise, but thy injuries I will not bear. You say you have helped me in my need, when I was almost dead with hunger, but thou liest in thy throat. You never gave me better than a bare bone, after you had gnawed it well yourself. This you say, to

injure my reputation, and again, you accuse me of treason against the king, for the sake of thy false treasures at Husterloe, besides having injured and slandered my wife, which will continue to stain our name until we are avenged. Therefore, look no longer for escape; here, before my lord the king, and you, my noble friends and kinsmen, I affirm and will approve to the last drop of my blood, that thou Reynard the Fox, art a false traitor and murderer, as I will make good upon thy body within

the lists of the field, until our strife shall have a fatal end, body to body, and life to life. Witness for me here, I cast down my glove, which I dare thee to take up, that I may have right for my injuries, or die like a recreant and coward."

Reynard was somewhat perplexed when it came to this; he knew himself much too weak for the wolf, and feared to come off with the worst. But suddenly recollecting the advantage he had in the wolf's fore-claws being pulled off, and which were not yet healed, he mustered courage to reply: "Whoever says that I am a false traitor and murderer, lies in his throat, especially Isegrim above all others. Poor fool, thou art ending the affair as I would have it; in proof of which I take up thy gage and throw down mine, to prove thou art a liar and traitor, as of old."

This said, the king received their pledges, and admitted the battle, commanding each to put in his surety that the combat should be tried on the morrow. Then stepped forth the bear and the cat, and became sureties for the wolf; and for the fox appeared Grimbard the brock, and Betelas. When all ceremonies were finished, the ape's wife taking Reynard aside, said, "Nephew! I beseech you, look to yourself in this battle, be bold and wise. Your uncle taught me once a prayer of singular virtue for any combatant; which he learnt from that excellent scholar and clerk, the abbot of Budelo. If you utter that prayer with great devotion, fasting, you shall never be utterly vanquished, however hard pressed in the field. Therefore, good nephew, be not afraid; for to-morrow I will read it to you fasting; and the wolf shall never prevail." Reynard, grateful as he said, for her favours, swore that his quarrel was good and honest, and that he had no doubt of his success. The whole of

that night he tarried with his kinsmen, who sought to amuse him with pleasant discourse. Dame Rukenard was still suggesting something for advantage in the approaching battle; and she persuaded him to have the whole of his hair shaved off, from head to tail, and afterwards anointed his body over, with olive oil. This made him so smooth and slippery, that the wolf could scarcely hope to keep his hold; besides, he was round and plump, which was also much to his advantage. She next advised him that night to drink exceeding much, that he might be more able to blind his enemy in the morning, but by no means to waste his ammunition till he came to close quarters in the field. "Then when you see the moment, take your bush tail, and strike it well in the villain's eyes, until you have quite perplexed and blinded him. But in the intervals keep your bush between your legs, as close as you can, lest he catch you by it, and level you with the ground. Take sharp heed at first to shun his blows: elude them, nephew, and make him toil and sweat after you in vain. Lead him where there is plenty of dust, and having first besprinkled him, kick up the dust in his eyes with your heels. Then take your advantage when he can no longer see, and smite and bite him most mischievously, still continuing to mystify both his sight and understanding, by brushing him in the face from time to time. Thus put him to the torture till you have quite wearied him out; and fear not, for though he be strong and stout, his heart is little and weak. This, nephew, is my advice; art prevails as much as courage; therefore look to it, and think how much wealth, honour, and reputation you may reap, both for yourself and family, by accomplishing this great feat. Now for the charm which I learnt from your uncle Martin, and which will help to make you invincible, it is as

follows:" Then laying her hand upon his head: she cried, " Blaerd, Ihay, Alphenio, Rasbue, Gorsons, Arsbuntro. There, nephew, now you are free from all powers of mischief and danger whatsoever. Go then to rest, for it is near day, and some sleep will make your body the better disposed for action, on the great and eventful morrow."



The fox gave her infinite thanks, saying, she had bound him to her a servant for ever, and that he felt entire confidence in the excellent rules she had laid down. He then laid himself down to rest, under a green tree on the grass, till it was sun-rise, when the otter came to awake him, saying he had brought him a fat young duck to eat. "I have toiled all this blessed night," he said, "to get this present for you, dear cousin, which I took from

a feeder. Here, take and eat it, for it will give you vigour and courage." The fox thanked him kindly, and said it was lucky hansel, assuring his friend, that if he survived that day, he would requite it. Reynard then eat the duck without bread or sauce, except his hunger, and to it he drank four great draughts of water. He then hastened to the appointed place of action, where the lists stood, with all his kindred attending on him.

When the king beheld Reynard thus shorn and oiled, he said to him: "Well, sir Reynard, I see you are very careful of your own safety: you have little respect for booty, so you escape danger." The fox answered not a word, but bowed himself humbly to the ground before their majesties, the king and the queen, and proceeded into the field. At the same time the wolf was also ready, and stood boasting with many proud and vain-glorious speeches. The marshals and rulers of the lists were the Libbard and the Loss. These last brought forth a book on which the wolf swore, and maintained his assertion, that the fox was a traitor and a murderer, which he would prove on his body, or be accounted a recreant.

When these ceremonies were over, the marshals of the field held them to their devoir. And then every one abandoned the lists save dame Rukenard, who stood by the fox, reminding him of the rules of battle she had given him. She bade him recollect how, when he was scarcely seven years old, he had wisdom enough to find his way to his father's castle on the darkest night without any lanthorn, or even the light of the moon. That his experience was much greater, and his reputation for wisdom more frequent with his companions than any other; and that he ought therefore to make double exertions to win the day, which would be an eternal monument to him, and his family for ever-

more. To this the fox answered, "My best aunt, be assured I will do my best, and not forget a tittle of your counsel. I doubt not but my friends shall reap honour, and my foes shame by my actions." To this the ape said amen, and so departed.



Chapter XXI.



WHEN none but the combatants were left in the lists, and the signal was given, the wolf advanced towards sir Reynard with infinite rage and fury, thinking to catch his enemy in his fore feet, but the fox leaped nimbly aside. The wolf then pursued him, and there began a tedious chase, on which the friends on both sides gazed with earnestness.

Taking huge leaps and strides, sir Isegrim soon overtook him, and lifting up his feet to strike, Reynard avoided the blow, and smote his adversary on the face with his tail. It told so well, that sir Isegrim was almost stricken blind; in fact, it was a complete damper, and smarted excessively. He was compelled to rest while he cleared his eyes, an advantage which Reynard did not lose; for he scratched up the dust with his feet, and threw it boldly in the eyes of his enemy, close under his nose, as

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he was thus employed; a feat which called forth loud applause. This dust tormented sir Isegrim worse than the brush, and he ventured to follow him no longer. His eyes smarted so sorely, that he sought to wash the dust away, at which Reynard ran in upon him, and gave him three severe wounds upon his head with his teeth, saying, "Have I bit you, sir Isegrim? I will soon bite you better. You have killed many a lamb, and many an innocent beast, and would give me the credit of it, but you shall find the price of your knavery. I am now sent to punish thy sins, and I will give thee thy absolution bravely. It is good thou use patience. I will make a hell of thy purgatory, for thy life will be at my mercy. Yet if thou wilt kneel down and crave forgiveness, confessing thyself vanquished, though thou art the vilest creature living, I will spare thy life, for such is my pity, that I am loth to kill thee." These words made sir Isegrim mad and desperate, so that he could find no vent to his fury; for his wounds bled, his eyes smarted, and his whole frame was oppressed.

In the height of his fury he raised up his foot, and hit the fox so severe a blow, that he felled him to the ground. But sir Reynard being nimble, quickly rose, and fiercely encountering the wolf, a dreadful and doubtful combat began. Ten times the wolf leaped upon sir Reynard, in the hope of catching or killing him, but his skin was so slippery and oily that he could not hold him. Nay, so extremely active was he in the fight, that when the wolf thought he had him in the surest, he would shift himself between his legs, and under his belly, each time dealing the wolf a bite, or a brush on the face with his tail, that poor sir Isegrim was almost reduced to despair.

Various wounds and bitings passed on either side, the one achieved by cunning, the other by violence, the one expressing

fury, the other temperance. At length sir Isegrim enraged that the combat had continued so long, for had his feet been sound it would have been much shorter, he said to himself, "I will make an end of this fight, it is too long; and I know my very weight is enough to crush him to pieces. I am now losing my reputation in fighting with him at all." This said, he struck Reynard another severe blow upon his head, and again felled him to the ground. Ere he could recover himself and arise, he caught the fox in his feet, and thrusting him under him, he lay upon him with his whole weight, thinking to stifle him.

Now Reynard began to be seriously alarmed, while sir Isegrim's friends shouted for joy; but the fox though he ceased to joke, defended himself manfully with his claws stretched as he was upon the ground. When the wolf thus pressing and biting him, sought to put an end to his existence, the fox bit him again in the belly, and repelled his attempts at worrying him with his fore claws, so that he actually tore the skin between the wolf's eyebrows. His ears bled and one of his eyes was hanging out of his head; he howled out in great extremity, and as he was wiping his face Reynard took an opportunity of regaining his legs. But the wolf striking furiously after him again caught him in his arms, and held him fast. Never was Reynard in such straits before, and fierce was now the struggle between them. Passion made the wolf forget his smart; and gripping the fox under him, he got his hand into his mouth and nearly bit it off. Then spoke sir Isegrim to Reynard: "Yield thyself vanquished, or else I will certainly slay thee; neither thy dust, thy brush, thy mocks, or any more subtle inventions shall now save thee: thou art utterly desperate." When the fox heard this, he thought there was little choice left, as either would be his ruin. But there being no time to lose, he said: "Dear

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uncle, since fortune will so have it, I yield to your commands : I will travel for you to the Holy Land or any other sort of pilgrimage ; yea, or perform any service most beneficial to your soul and the souls of your forefathers : I will obey you, as I would obey the king or our holy father the pope. I will hold my lands and tenements from you as well as the rest of my kindred. You shall be a lord of many lords, and none shall dare to move against you. Whatever I catch, whether pullets, geese, partridges, or plover, flesh or fish, you, your wife and children, shall ever have the first choice. Again, we are so near in blood that nature forbids there should be any long enmity between us ; and I would not have fought against you had I been sure of victory. You first appealed, and then of necessity I must do my utmost, yet even in this battle I have been courteous to you and not acted as I should to a stranger ; for well I know it is the duty of a nephew to spare his uncle, which you might easily perceive from my running from you. I might have often hurt you when I refused, nor are you any worse except for the blemish in your eye, for which I am sorry, and wish it had not happened. I therefore humbly beseech you that you will permit poor Reynard to live ; I know you might kill me, but what will that avail you, when you can never live in safety for fear of the revenge of my kindred ? Temperance in wrath is an excellent thing, while rashness is still the mother of repentance. You, uncle, I know to be valiant, wise, and discreet, you rather seek honour, peace, and good fame than blood and revenge." To this sir Isegrim replied, "Thou infinite dissembler ; thou wouldst fain be free from the badge of my servitude. It is well I understand thee, and know that if thou wert safe on thy feet, thou wouldst soon forswear this submission. But all the wealth in the world shall not purchase thy ransom. For thee and thy friends I esteem

them not, nor believe a word of what thou hast uttered. I am no bird for thy lime bush, chaff cannot deceive me. Thou wouldst triumph bravely were I to credit thee; but know that I have wit to look both on this side and beyond thee. Thy innumerable deceits have armed me against thee; and look upon me and my wounds, and then say if thou hast spared me. Thou didst not even give me time to breathe, nor will I now give thee time to repent in; for thou hast dishonoured me in every mode thy villany could devise."

Now whilst sir Isegrim was thus prating, Reynard was thinking how he might best get free, so thrusting his other hand which was at liberty down under his belly, he caught sir Isegrim fast between the legs, and wrung him so extremely, that he made him shriek and howl out with anguish. Then the fox drew his other hand out of his mouth, for sir Isegrim was in such wondrous torment that he was only a few degrees from swooning, and completed the torture he was inflicting. Nature could endure no more, sir Isegrim fell over in a deadly fit, and Reynard dragged him by the legs about the lists. He then struck, wounded and bit him in divers places, so that the whole field might behold the punishment he inflicted. Sir Isegrim's friends meanwhile were transfixed with sorrow and despair, so they went weeping and lamenting to the king, praying him to appease the combat and take it into his own hands. Their suit was granted, and the marshals Libbard and Loss entered the lists, and told the fox that the king would speak with him, that the fight should cease, and that he would take it into his royal hands to determine; adding that his majesty did not wish to lose either of them, though the whole field had given the fox the victory.

"I humbly thank his majesty," said the fox, "and I will obey his commands, my ambition extending no farther than to be pro-

more. To this the fox answered, "My best aunt, be assured I will do my best, and not forget a tittle of your counsel. I doubt not but my friends shall reap honour, and my foes shame by my actions." To this the ape said amen, and so departed.





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Chapter XXI.



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Taking huge leaps and strides, sir Isegrim soon overtook him, and lifting up his feet to strike, Reynard avoided the blow, and smote his adversary on the face with his tail. It told so well, that sir Isegrim was almost stricken blind; in fact, it was a complete damper, and smarted excessively. He was compelled to rest while he cleared his eyes, an advantage which Reynard did not lose; for he scratched up the dust with his feet, and threw it boldly in the eyes of his enemy, close under his nose, as

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In the height of his fury he raised up his foot, and hit the fox so severe a blow, that he felled him to the ground. But sir Reynard being nimble, quickly rose, and fiercely encountering the wolf, a dreadful and doubtful combat began. Ten times the wolf leaped upon sir Reynard, in the hope of catching or killing him, but his skin was so slippery and oily that he could not hold him. Nay, so extremely active was he in the fight, that when the wolf thought he had him in the surest, he would shift himself between his legs, and under his belly, each time dealing the wolf a bite, or a brush on the face with his tail, that poor sir Isegrim was almost reduced to despair.

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fury, the other remembrance of the combat had been so great, that he would have been glad to have had an end of this fight, if he could have done so. He was so weary, that it is enough to crush him, and he was so tired, that he could not stand. He gave another severe blow upon the ground. Ere he could do so, he had the fox in his feet, and thrust him with his whole weight.

Now Reynard began to cry, and his friends shouted for him. He was so weary, that he could not stand. He was upon the ground. When he saw that he was upon the ground, he sought to put an end to his life, and again in the belly, and repeated the same with his fore claws, so that he cut the wolf's eyebrows. His ears were torn out of his head; he howled, and was wiping his face Reynard's legs. But the wolf struck him in his arms, and held him in such straits before, and fierce was their passion. Passion made the wolf get the fox under him, he got his bit off. Then spoke sir Isopron, "I will certainly be vanquished, or else I will certainly be vanquished, thy mocks, or any more such intentions shall save thee: thou art utterly desperate." When he said this, he thought there was little choice left, as to his ruin. But there being no time to lose, he saw

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fury, the other temperance. At length sir Isegrim enraged that the combat had continued so long, for had his feet been sound it would have been much shorter, he said to himself, "I will make an end of this fight, it is too long; and I know my very weight is enough to crush him to pieces. I am now losing my reputation in fighting with him at all." This said, he struck Reynard another severe blow upon his head, and again felled him to the ground. Ere he could recover himself and arise, he caught the fox in his feet, and thrusting him under him, he lay upon him with his whole weight, thinking to stifle him.

Now Reynard began to be seriously alarmed, while sir Isegrim's friends shouted for joy; but the fox though he ceased to joke, defended himself manfully with his claws stretched as he was upon the ground. When the wolf thus pressing and biting him, sought to put an end to his existence, the fox bit him again in the belly, and repelled his attempts at worrying him with his fore claws, so that he actually tore the skin between the wolf's eyebrows. His ears bled and one of his eyes was hanging out of his head; he howled out in great extremity, and as he was wiping his face Reynard took an opportunity of regaining his legs. But the wolf striking furiously after him again caught him in his arms, and held him fast. Never was Reynard in such straits before, and fierce was now the struggle between them. Passion made the wolf forget his smart; and griping the fox under him, he got his hand into his mouth and nearly bit it off. Then spoke sir Isegrim to Reynard: "Yield thyself vanquished, or else I will certainly slay thee; neither thy dust, thy brush, thy mocks, or any more subtle inventions shall now save thee: thou art utterly desperate." When the fox heard this, he thought there was little choice left, as either would be his ruin. But there being no time to lose, he said: "Dear

uncle, since fortune will so have it, I yield to your commands : I will travel for you to the Holy Land or any other sort of pilgrimage ; yea, or perform any service most beneficial to your soul and the souls of your forefathers : I will obey you, as I would obey the king or our holy father the pope. I will hold my lands and tenements from you as well as the rest of my kindred. You shall be a lord of many lords, and none shall dare to move against you. Whatever I catch, whether pullets, geese, partridges, or plover, flesh or fish, you, your wife and children, shall ever have the first choice. Again, we are so near in blood that nature forbids there should be any long enmity between us ; and I would not have fought against you had I been sure of victory. You first appealed, and then of necessity I must do my utmost, yet even in this battle I have been courteous to you and not acted as I should to a stranger ; for well I know it is the duty of a nephew to spare his uncle, which you might easily perceive from my running from you. I might have often hurt you when I refused, nor are you any worse except for the blemish in your eye, for which I am sorry, and wish it had not happened. I therefore humbly beseech you that you will permit poor Reynard to live ; I know you might kill me, but what will that avail you, when you can never live in safety for fear of the revenge of my kindred ? Temperance in wrath is an excellent thing, while rashness is still the mother of repentance. You, uncle, I know to be valiant, wise, and discreet, you rather seek honour, peace, and good fame than blood and revenge." To this sir Isegrim replied, "Thou infinite dissembler ; thou wouldst fain be free from the badge of my servitude. It is well I understand thee, and know that if thou wert safe on thy feet, thou wouldst soon forswear this submission. But all the wealth in the world shall not purchase thy ransom. For thee and thy friends I esteem

them not, nor believe a word of what thou hast uttered. I am no bird for thy lime bush, chaff cannot deceive me. Thou wouldst triumph bravely were I to credit thee; but know that I have wit to look both on this side and beyond thee. Thy innumerable deceits have armed me against thee; and look upon me and my wounds, and then say if thou hast spared me. Thou didst not even give me time to breathe, nor will I now give thee time to repent in; for thou hast dishonoured me in every mode thy villany could devise."

Now whilst sir Isegrim was thus prating, Reynard was thinking how he might best get free, so thrusting his other hand which was at liberty down under his belly, he caught sir Isegrim fast between the legs, and wrung him so extremely, that he made him shriek and howl out with anguish. Then the fox drew his other hand out of his mouth, for sir Isegrim was in such wondrous torment that he was only a few degrees from swooning, and completed the torture he was inflicting. Nature could endure no more, sir Isegrim fell over in a deadly fit, and Reynard dragged him by the legs about the lists. He then struck, wounded and bit him in divers places, so that the whole field might behold the punishment he inflicted. Sir Isegrim's friends meanwhile were transfixed with sorrow and despair, so they went weeping and lamenting to the king, praying him to appease the combat and take it into his own hands. Their suit was granted, and the marshals Libbard and Loss entered the lists, and told the fox that the king would speak with him, that the fight should cease, and that he would take it into his royal hands to determine; adding that his majesty did not wish to lose either of them, though the whole field had given the fox the victory.

"I humbly thank his majesty," said the fox, "and I will obey his commands, my ambition extending no farther than to be pro-

claimed victor. I beseech you then, let my friends come and attend me: I will do according as they advise." They answered it was reasonable, and then came forth lady Slopard, and sir Grimbard her lord, lady Rukenard with her two sisters. Next Bitelas and Fullrump her two sons, and Malicia her daughter. Hundreds more who would not have ventured, had the fox lost



the battle, to condole with him, now advanced to greet him, seeking to become his attendants, for to him who has earned honour fresh honours and graces will flock in, while losers meet only with contempt. Alas, poor Isegrim! there now followed in the train of Reynard, the Beaver, the Otter, and both their wives, Pauntecrote and Ordigale, along with the Ostrole, the Martin, and the Fitchews, the Ferret, the Squirrel, and numbers more than we can name, all because he was the victor. Many who

had most bitterly complained of him, swore they were nearest of kin, and proffered their services to him with all humility. For such is the fashion of the world; he who is rich and in favour will never want abundance of friends; every one will pretend to like him, and imitate his folly and retail his falsehoods.

Accordingly there was a solemn feast proclaimed on the part of Reynard's friends, at which all kinds of honours were to be heaped upon him; trumpets sounded, cornets winded their horns, and the music was followed by thanksgivings for his glorious victory. Sir Reynard received all his friends with courtesy, and returned thanks, with evident gratification and delight. He concluded by requesting their opinion whether or not he should yield his victory into the King's hands, instead of taking sir Isegrim's life? to which his faithful relation lady Slopard made answer: "Yes, by all means, cousin; it is a point of honour, and I do not see how you can refuse." The rest agreed, and the marshals then led the way into the king's presence, escorting Reynard on each side, with trumpets, fifes, and timbrels playing as the procession went along.

When sir Reynard came before the king, he fell on his knees; but his majesty bade him rise, and said: "Sir Reynard, you may well rejoice, for you have this day won signal honour. On this account I discharge you and set you free; to go whither your own pleasure leads; all former quarrels I take upon myself, and will have them well discussed by the wisest heads in the kingdom, as soon as Isegrim's wounds, if ever, shall be cured. At that time I will take care to acquaint you, and then proceed to judgment in these matters."

"Most excellent and dreaded lord, the king!" replied the fox, "I am well satisfied with every thing that shall please you; yet when I first came to your majesty's court, there were many mali-

cious persons whom I never injured, who sought my life. They believed they should overpower me by uniting with my worst enemies, for they imagined that the wolf was more in favour with your majesty than I myself. This was the ground of their indignation, wherein they only shewed their simplicity, which was unable to avert the catastrophe that followed.



“Such men, my lord, are like a great kennel of hounds, which I once saw standing upon a dunghill near a great lord’s house, where they were waiting for what they could catch; expecting their feeders were not far off. Shortly they saw a hound run out of the lord’s kitchen with a good fat rib of beef in his mouth. But the cook was in pursuit, and got so close as to throw a pail of hot scalding water upon his hind quarters, though like a stout dog, he still kept hold of his prey. His companions beholding

him, said: 'O, how much art thou indebted to the good cook who has doubtless given thee that fine bone so well lined with flesh.' But the dog replied, 'You speak, friends, according to what you see;—not according as I feel. You see me with this good bone in my mouth, but you do not feel the smarting upon my buttocks. Please only to look upon me behind, and you will find the price I have paid for it.' His friends then perceived how badly he was scalded; both hair and hide were flayed clean away; and they looked aghast and sorrowful at the torment he suffered in his loins. Finding, too, he was such an unlucky dog, they renounced all farther acquaintance with him, and ran away. So likewise, my lord, do these false and unworthy beasts, when they are made lords, and gaining their desire, think they become mighty and renowned. Then they begin to grind the faces of the poor and needy, eating them up like hungry and savage hounds; for these are the dogs with bones in their mouths, though they deserve to get their buttocks well scalded. Yet no man must dare to meddle with them, or offend them; but rather praise all their actions, while many assist them in their unlawful actions in order that they may be allowed to lick their fingers for some share of their extortions. Oh, my dear lord; how can such men walk safely while thus blindfold;—how can they expect anything but a shameful fall, when taking such uncertain steps? Neither can we pity them when their works come to light;—perpetual curses and reproaches must follow them to their graves after their ruin is accomplished. Many of these have lost their jackets—namely, their friends, like the thievish hound, and have none left to cover their misdeeds; while their former companions desert them as the whole skinned hounds did the scalded dog.

“My gracious lord, I beseech you remember this moral ex-

ample; and it will no way impair the greatness of your virtues, for doubtless many of these ravenous extorting creatures are under your subjection, both in towns, cities, and great lords' houses. These are they who outface the poor; barter their freedom and privileges, and accuse them of actions of which they never dreamed:—all to make up the sum of their own private projects. But Heaven has still judgment in reserve for them, when they reach their ignominious end; for they are guilty of errors of which none can justly accuse me, or any of my kindred;—we can always acquit ourselves nobly of the same. I fear no creature's accusations;—not I; for the fox will still be the fox, though a host of foes try to outswear me. For you, my dread lord, you I adore above all mortal beings; nor shall any art or devices divert me from you;—I will abide by you to the last gasp. Malice, I am aware, has belied me, and told your majesty the contrary, yet I have always disproved its accusations and so will do to the last moment of my existence.”



Chapter XXII.



HIS majesty then made answer as follows: "Sir Reynard, you are one, I think, who owes me homage and fealty, if ever subject did; and long I trust I shall live to enjoy it. Here, for your past services I elect you one of my privy council. Take heed you do not show any backsliding, or any unworthy hankering after old tricks; for I am about to

place you in full power and authority as you formerly were. I hope you will administer justice equitably and truly. For as long as you apply your policy to right views and actions, so long the court will cherish you, for you are a star whose lustre exceeds all others, especially in prying into mischief and preventing it. Remember, therefore, the moral you yourself related to me, and attach yourself to truth and equity.

"Henceforward I will be governed by your wisdom, and not any subject breathing throughout my kingdom shall offer you the least insult or injury, but I will highly resent it. This you

shall proclaim through all the nation, of which you shall become chief minister;—the office of lord high chancellor I here freely confer upon you, and I know that you may reap great honour as well as profit thereby.”



All Reynard's friends and kindred humbly thanked the king, when he informed them that it was much short of what he intended to do for them, at the same time advising them all to admonish Reynard to be careful of his faith and loyalty. Lady Rukenard then observed: "Believe me, my lord, we will not fail in that point; for should he fail there, of which there is no danger, we should all renounce him." The fox too thanked the

king with fair and courteous words, saying, "Nay, my gracious lord and master! I am not worthy!—far from worthy of these high honours, yet I will ever study with my best service to deserve them, nor shall my best advice ever be wanting." And



this said, he took his humble leave of the king, and then departed with the rest of his friends and kindred.

Meanwhile Bruin the bear, Tibert the cat, and sir Isegrim's wife, with her children, had been busily employed in conveying their vanquished relation from the field. They laid him upon soft litter and hay; covered him very warm, and dressed his wounds, to the number of twenty-three, assisted by some of the most skilful surgeons. He was exceeding sick, and his weak-

ness was such that all sense of feeling was lost. So they rubbed and chafed him on the temples and under the eyes, till he recovered from his swoon, and howled so loud, that all stood equally shocked and amazed to hear him. His physicians instantly gave him cordials, with a sleeping draught to allay the sense of his torments; at the same time they consoled his wife, assuring her there was no kind of danger from his wounds, though they might long prove troublesome. So the court broke up and every beast returned to his own home.

But chief, among the departures, sir Reynard the Fox took his leave of the king and queen, both their majesties requesting that he would not long be absent from them. To this he answered, that he should make a point of being ready at their service, as was his bounden duty; and not only he himself, but the whole of his friends and kindred. Then craving leave of his majesty, with all due solemnity, and smooth speech, he departed from the court.





Sir Reynard and his friends approached the castle of Malepardus, where each in noble and courteous guise took leave of the other.

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Chapter xxiii.



ALONG with Reynard all his friends and kindred, to the amount of forty, took their leave of the king, and accompanied him; being proud that he had so well sped, and stood so fair in the king's favour. For now he had power enough to advance whom he best pleased, and pull down any who envied his fortune.

After a pleasant tour, sir Reynard and his friends approached the castle of Malepardus, where each in noble and courteous guise, took leave of the other, while sir Reynard himself showed especial politeness to each and all. He thanked them for the singular love and honour he had received from them, and protested that they might always count upon him as their faithful and humble servant; bound to serve them in all things, as far as his life and property might be serviceable.

With these words, he shook hands, and hastened to rejoin lady Ermelin, who welcomed him home with great tenderness. To her and his children he related at large all the wonders he

had gone through at court, not omitting the minutest circumstance. They all felt proud of his high fortune, and that they were so nearly related to him. Henceforward the fox spent his days with his wife and children as much as possible, with infinite joy and content. Now, whoever shall aver more or less of the fox than you have here heard, I would not have you place much reliance on his report; only this which you have already heard or read, you may believe as much as you please. Nevertheless, if any refuse, he shall not be accounted heretical and contumacious, since only he who said it, can give full credit to it, though it is certain that many in this world believe the things they have not seen.



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