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*Hommage du traducteur
à M. Arnould.*

FABLES

BY

THE BARON DE STASSART

OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY
OF BELGIUM, OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, ETC.

Castigat ridendo mores.
SANTÉ.

TRANSLATED

FROM THE SEVENTH EDITION OF THE ORIGINAL

BY

JOHN HENRY KEANE.



LONDON :

STRANGE, PATERNOSTER ROW.
BRUSSELS, LEIPZIG AND GHENT :
G. MUQUARDT, PLACE ROYALE, 11.

—
1850

Ar 2523

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1850

quelques mots sur cette édition.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

The French editions of these Fables have long been exhausted, and I am gratified to find that a new one is now asked for.

I imagined that I had composed, ten years ago, my last apologues; but a sort of instinct still urges me on, and I now add an eighth book, for which, as for its predecessors, I solicit the kindness of the public.

Paris, July the 6th, 1847.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

Circumstances of a political nature and imperative duties prevented me from preparing, so soon as I could have wished, a new edition of my Fables; I have now revised them for the fifth and, I am almost inclined to add, the last time—but not because I look upon this little moral gallery as having nothing to fear, for the future, from well-founded criticism. Much negligence, no doubt, is still discernible, but it may be partly attributed to the nature of the production, and partly—so to say—to an inherent peculiarity of disposition. On the latter point, I may well recall the maxim of the master :—

« Ne forçons point notre talent,
Nous ne ferions rien avec grâce. »

The public, moreover, has been pleased to give a cordial reception to my offsprings, even in their

dishabille. Why should I, then, exhibit a greater degree of severity? When these Fables appeared, for the first time, in Paris in 1818, they were greeted in a manner which the author was far from anticipating. The journals of all shades of political opinions gave favourable notices, and five rapidly exhausted editions were proofs of their success. They have been referred to, in a flattering manner, in several literary works, and many have been republished in the majority of recent collections.

This sixth edition contains seven new Fables — in all probability the last (1).

Brussels, March the 1st, 1837.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

After learning Fables by heart, during the happiest years of my existence, I became desirous of composing some in my turn. Of all branches of literature, the one in question possesses the most charms. Hence the number of fabulists is, as it were, immense. The French alone have nearly two hundred, and the Germans more than fifty. The Dutch, the English, the Italians, the Spaniards, the Poles and even the Russians have their share in the domain of *Æsop*. One may, however, without manifesting any injustice towards foreigners, and without being blind to the incontestable merit of Gellert, Lichtwer, Lessing, Cats, Gay, Moore, Dodsley, Pignotti, Bertola, Yriarte, Krasicki, and Kriloff, safely affirm that the palm would belong to us, even if we could only quote the

name of La Fontaine. The singer of *Estelle* and more than one living author would also suffice to secure the superiority for us. Perhaps such names as Lamotte, Aubert, Lemonnier, Nivernais, and some others may be even advantageously opposed to those of several of our rivals as above quoted; — but is it becoming in a feeble gladiator, scarcely entered on his career, to set himself up as the champion of his masters? Let me hasten, then, towards the ordinary object of an introduction, and say a few words about the present work.

This year I have enjoyed, in the country, an amount of leisure which important occupations did not allow me to possess before. Like many others, I yielded to seduction, composed Fables and, at the termination of winter, found to my surprise one hundred and twenty-nine ready made, including the prologue and the epilogue. Foreign fabulists furnished me with some fifty—the remainder being exclusively my own.

I now present the public with the produce of a late reaper, trusting that the offering may not be deemed altogether an unworthy one.

A dissertation on Fables may well be dispensed with in the present day—our predecessors, Lamotte, d'Ardenne and Florian, having exhausted the subject. If prefaces be still looked for, they must be, at least, short ones. The monosyllabic *I*—necessarily the soul of them—always appears with a bad grace, much as one may endeavour to render it tolerable; and in that painful position, the writer incurs too readily the risk of communicating to others the *ennui* which he himself experiences (2).

Corioule, March the 25th, 1818.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR.

The following sketch of the eventful life, distinguished political career and literary productions of the Baron de Stassart is extracted from the *Nouveau dictionnaire de la conversation*, a modern encyclopedia, in twenty-five volumes, published in Brussels : —

“ STASSART (GOSWIN-JOSEPH-AUGUSTINE, Baron De) was born at Malines, on the second of September, 1780, of a distinguished family which had rendered honourable services to the country, both in the army and on the bench. Having completed his classical studies at the college of Namur, he proceeded to Paris in 1802. His successes at the university of jurisprudence, where he obtained the prizes for eloquence, for disquisitions on the penal code and for pleading, attracted the attention and good will of the government. On the 5th of August, 1804, an imperial decree attached him to the Council of State and to the office of the minister of the interior, in the capacity of auditor. At that period, sixteen posts of that kind were created, but only the half were, at first, filled up. Appointed at Vienna, after the campaign of Austerlitz, to a place in connexion with the general administration of the army and of the

conquered countries, he left in December 1805 for Innsbruck, as intendant of the Tyrol and of Vorarlberg. Whilst there, he prevented, by the adoption of wise measures, an insurrection that was on the point of breaking out in those mountainous parts, which Prince Eugene shortly afterwards traversed, on his way to Munich to espouse the Princess Augusta of Bavaria.

Charged, in July 1806, with a mission in the departments of the 25th and 26th military divisions, he made, in his reports to the various ministers, several suggestions of an administrative nature, the majority of which were adopted, amongst others the establishing of a sub-prefect, in the chief place of the department, and the official stamping on letters of the date of their arrival, a measure of high importance in a commercial point of view. In the month of October of the same year, the minister of finance (Gaudin) entrusted him with a mission relative to the registration of the landed and house property of Liege.

In December, 1806, he was for the second time placed under the orders of Count Daru (intendant-general of the army and of the conquered countries) at Warsaw, where he devoted special attention to Polish history and literature. In February 1807, he rendered, in his capacity of intendant of Elbing and of Old Prussia, immense services to the French army, and thereby attracted the attention of Napoleon, who, after the capture of Königsberg, appointed him to the important post of intendant of Eastern Prussia (which extended as far as Tilsit) and decorated him with the star of the Legion of Honour.

Whilst thus engaged, he had the opportunity of displaying, in a striking manner, his disinterestedness and sense of delicacy. By his influence, it was ordered that the sum of eight millions of francs, imposed on the town of Königsberg, should be paid, as equity demanded, by the entire province. In recognition of this service, a deputation waited on him and begged his acceptance of ten thousand ducats; but he stopped them with the following memorable words, — repeated by the journals of the time, — “Gentlemen, would you make me blush at an act of justice?”

After the peace, the Baron de Stassart traversed the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw, in order to draw up a report of the claims of the Poles on Prussia, and to superintend the exchange of the archives between the two governments. In the month of October of the same year (1807), the French government, finding that the King of Prussia did not fulfil the pecuniary obligations imposed on him by the treaty of Tilsit, resumed the administration of the Prussian provinces, still occupied by the Grand Army. The Baron de Stassart was then called upon to exercise the functions of intendant of West Prussia, at Marienwerder and afterwards at Marienburg; at a later period, (in May, 1808) he replaced M. Bignon, at Berlin, as intendant of the Middle Marches, and by measures both energetic and moderate contrived to put an end to the factitious famine which desolated that capital. The conferences of the two emperors at Erfurt led to the definitive evacuation of the Prussian States, and the Baron de Stassart, after having, in his quality of imperial commissioner, made final arrangements with

the Prussian commissioner, for the departure of the French, took possession of the sub-prefecture of Orange, to which he had been, the preceding year, appointed. In this new post, as well as in the prefecture of Vaucluse, to which he was soon afterwards nominated, he left numerous and honourable mementoes of his administration, such as a monument erected under his superintendence and at his expense to the memory of Dutillet, a distinguished Bishop of Orange; a premium founded at the college of Vaucluse (the labours of which he revived) for the panegyric of Petrarch; the first formation of the public library of Orange by the gift of three thousand volumes; the road conducting to the waters of Vaqueyras, and the delightful walk around the triumphal arch of Orange, to which *promenade*, "public acclamation" (as M. Gasparin states in his *Histoire d'Orange et de ses antiquités*. Orange 1816) "gave the name of that worthy functionary" *. The Baron was always a firm upholder of vaccination, and on that account, he received a gold medal from the central committee of Paris. "As Prefect of the department of the *Bouches-de-la-Meuse*, in 1811, he bestowed" (writes M. de Beaunoir in *Les étrangers vengés*. Paris 1814) "particular attention on the arts

* When the Baron de Stassart was sub-prefect of Orange, he induced the municipal authorities to make over to the Protestants the old church of the Dominicans; and by promoting a friendly intercourse between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants saved Orange and the entire district from those excesses which broke out, on the score of religious differences, in the department of the Gard and other portions of France.

and the schools, as proved by the speeches which he delivered at the classical meetings, as well as by the programme of the exhibition of the Hague." In that district, where a new organization was required for assimilating it to the old departments of the empire, and where there were no zealous partisans of the new institutions, he became the object of public esteem, and even surmounted all obstacles, until, by the adverse turn of affairs for the imperial Eagle, the difficulties greatly increased. He quelled, nevertheless, the insurrections which burst out in the island of Oud-Beyerland in February 1813, and at the Hague and Leyden in the April of the same year. Those revolts gave him the opportunity of displaying greatness of character, and, more than once, a magnanimous disposition.

It is related that he forbade the arrest of a sailor who endeavoured to stab him with a knife, and contented himself with the disarming of the would-be assassin. The results of the battle of Leipsic rendered a longer occupation of Holland almost impossible. Prince Lebrun, the governor-general, evacuated Amsterdam on the night of the 15th of November, 1813, and, on the 17th, the Baron de Stassart retired to Gort, which he left for Paris, by order of the minister of the interior, when the place was invested.

If a few persons, never disposed to take the force of circumstances into account, reproach him with excessive severity, during his administration in Holland, all agree in lauding his business-like habits, his impartial justice, with regard to all classes, and his scrupulous probity. The following portrait of the Baron was traced, at the time, by M. Van der

Palm, in a work having in view the creating of popular excitement, a work imbued, therefore, with evident hostility : — “De Stassart, occupying at the Hague a post similar to that of the Count de Celles at Amsterdam, executed the orders of his master with the same fidelity, but with less ostentation and rigour. Sanguine and enterprising, active and indefatigable, but always inclined, either by vanity or ambition, to estimate eulogy and the attainment of dignities as the sovereign good; a statesman full of merit and knowledge, but urged by his passions beyond all bounds, he endeavoured to attain his ends—it is true —by persuasion, but became irritable in the extreme when people would not allow themselves to be convinced.”

In March 1814, the Baron de Stassart, faithful to his oath as a member of the Legion of Honour, acted, during the siege of Paris, as one of the superior aides-de-camp of King Joseph, and conducted a number of retired artillerymen to the batteries which were not sufficiently manned. After the fall of Napoleon and the abdication at Fontainebleau, the Emperor of Austria, who recalled to mind the care with which the Baron, during his sojourn in the Tyrol, had preserved intact the noble museum of Ambras (near Innsbruck), made him one of his chamberlains. He then proceeded to Vienna, Gratz and Prague, and in the last-named place met with the members of his family whom the various revolutions had dispersed. The fate of Belgium appearing quite decided, he quitted Vienna towards the end of February 1815, to return to his native country, when he received, at Munich, the astounding intelligence of the departure

of Napoleon from Elba and of his disembarkation in France.

The Baron immediately resolved to go to that country. He arrived on the 26th of March, in Paris, where on the 16th of the following month, he was commissioned by Napoleon to proceed to Vienna with a letter for the Emperor of Austria, with despatches for the Duke of Vicenza and with full powers to negotiate the maintenance of the treaty of Paris. He could not advance further than Lintz, but he found means to forward to the Austrian government the documents of which he was the bearer. Some curious details respecting this mission are given by the Baron de Menneval, in his *Souvenirs historiques*. (Paris, 1844. Second edition. Vol. II, p. 382 and following pages.) *.

* The following is an extract from the work just quoted :

“ Count de Flahault, aide-de-camp of the emperor Napoleon, and the Baron de Stassart, who was auditor and prefect under the empire, and who was at that time chamberlain of the emperor of Austria, having arrived at Lintz, after encountering many obstacles, were not able to proceed any further. The Baron de Stassart then went to Munich to await the reply to the letter which he had written to the emperor of Austria (when transmitting to him the despatches of which he was the bearer) and in which he renewed the offer made by Napoleon to maintain the treaty of Paris. This was in the beginning of May. A few days after the Baron's arrival in Munich, Prince Eugene, who had reached that capital about a month previously, informed him that he had received from Prince Metternich (through the Prince de Wrede who had just come from Vienna) a letter requesting him

On his return to France, the Baron de Stassart was nominated *Maitre des requêtes*, in service extraordinary, with orders to hold himself in readiness to resume, at a favourable moment, the negotiations referred to *.

On his arrival in his own home, after the second restoration in France (in July 1815), he was comprised in the organization of the equestrian corps of the province of Namur. He was elected in 1818 a member of the Provincial States and in 1821 a member of the Second Chamber of the States General, to which he was returned at several successive elections. He took part in all the important discussions of that Chamber, and his speeches excited much attention, being reproduced by all the Belgian

to state that if Napoleon would consent to abdicate immediately, in favour of his son, not only would Austria acknowledge the imperial dynasty, but would even, if necessary, make common cause with France. It was also demanded, on the part of Austria, that Napoleon should place himself in the hands of his father-in-law, and, until a sovereignty could be assigned to him, take up his residence in one of the towns of the hereditary states of Austria. Napoleon, to whom the Baron de Stassart hastened to communicate this message (thus transmitted from hand to hand) gave due attention to some of the points of the propositions, but his want of confidence in the Austrian cabinet and in the dispositions of the allies finally prevented him from accepting them. "

* Prince Lebrun, formerly governor-general of the departments of Holland, wished to retain the Baron in France, and offered to solicit in his favor the prefecture of Châteauroux, then vacant, and situated within the prince's jurisdiction.

journals and several French ones. His name in fact became a very popular one. Charged, in conjunction with MM. Zoude, Brabant, and de Bruges, and Count de Quarré, with the presentation of an address to the King of the Netherlands at the Hague, on the part of the chief inhabitants of Namur, he did not hesitate to fulfil that dangerous mission which nearly cost him his life at Rotterdam, where he had the generosity to designate himself to an infuriated mob, in order to avert all danger from one of his colleagues who was mistaken for him. This fact was mentioned in the report addressed by the deputation, on the 7th of September, 1830, to the inhabitants of Namur, and inserted, the next day, in the *Courrier de la Sambre*. The circumstance alluded to did not deter him from assisting at the opening (in the above month) of the extraordinary session of the States General in Holland. But the ambiguous terms employed in the speech from the Throne soon determined him to retrace his steps to Belgium. Having narrowly escaped being arrested at his estate of Corioule, he was obliged to seek an asylum at Givet, whence he wrote to the secretary of state at the Hague, informing that minister that he considered himself released from his oaths of allegiance *.

* The following is an extract from the report in question :

“ A circumstance occurred which we cannot pass over in silence. It is the more imperative on us to make it known, inasmuch as it prevented the Baron de Stassart from fulfilling the mission with which you charged him conjointly with us.

Before the departure of your deputation, the Belgian

Arriving at Brussels, on the 30th of September, he accepted, the next day, from the provisional govern-

journals mentioned the names of the persons who composed it and they were not ignorant of the exasperation which the events of Brussels had produced in the northern provinces. On the other side, the persons of the deputies appeared to them inviolable and sacred; nevertheless, their safety was gravely compromised at Rotterdam. Those journals had preceded our arrival in that city; numerous assemblages were formed on the port; and an immense crowd, uttering dreadful vociferations, loudly demanded that the Baron de Stassart should be pointed out to them.

The risk was imminent when the courageous deputy, braving the danger which threatened his days, and in order to save his colleagues from falling victims to a popular revolt, directed against him, declared to the crowd which surrounded him that it was he whom they demanded with such blind fury.

He would have perished on the spot, had not prompt measures been taken by the police of Rotterdam and by a great number of well-intentioned persons, towards whom it would be an act of injustice if we did not render them a public testimony of our gratitude.

Thus saved from a death which appeared certain, the Baron de Stassart was not deterred from continuing as far as the Hague the journey which he had undertaken with us. He persisted in his determination to accomplish his mission; but public exasperation was displayed in that latter place quite as violently as at Rotterdam. The effervescence was the more to be feared inasmuch as before our arrival several acts of violence had been committed. So that through motives of personal safety on our own side as well as on his, and in order to remove all pretexts for deplorable disorders, we urged him at last to return to Belgium.

ment, the post of President of the Committee of the Interior (which he renounced shortly afterwards),

He consented though with much regret. Before his departure, he wrote the following letter to the secretary-minister of state :

Monsieur le Baron,

I came to Holland with the confidence inspired by my previous conduct, my upright intentions, and my devotedness to my country to fulfil the honourable mission with which I was charged to his majesty; but alarming reports which have reached me from all sides respecting the disposition of the public, and a disorderly scene which occurred on my arrival in Rotterdam make me fear that I may be made the pretext here for lamentable disorders and which would be, no doubt, followed by new troubles in Belgium. I leave, then, in the public interest, to my colleagues alone (and by their own advice) the task of presenting the Namur petition respectfully to the King.

I have the honour, etc.

(Signed) the Baron de STASSART.

Such, gentlemen, is the exact report which we submit to you. We desire one thing, viz that you may be convinced thereby that we have employed all the zeal, of which we were capable, to justify your confidence.

Namur, Sept. 7. 1830.

(Signed) The Count de QUARRÉ, de BRUGES, de
BRANCHON, Ch. ZOUDE, J.-B. BRABANT. "

On his return to Belgium from this dangerous journey, the Baron de Stassart was met by the Baroness who, overjoyed at his safe arrival, threw herself into his arms. The next day the Baron and his lady proceeded towards his estate of Corioule. On their arrival at Namur, they were met by nearly all the inhabitants who formed

and also, on the same day, the governorship of the province of Namur, where his presence was (to use the expression) providential, inasmuch as he maintained order in a remarkable manner, prevented reaction, gave in his own person the example of the oblivion of all private animosity and succeeded in forming, in one week, six battalions of civic guards at the renewal of hostilities in 1834.

A member of the National Congress, the Baron de Stassart shared with MM. de Surlet and de Gerlache an equal number of votes for the post of president of that assembly. M. de Surlet, however, was elected at the second vote, and the Baron de Stassart became one of the vice-presidents. In that congress, he constantly defended the principles of order as well as monarchical institutions, and showed himself favourable to the intimate union of Belgium with France, his plan in favour of the Duke of Leuchtenberg being only, in his eyes, the means for the attainment of that object, as may be seen in his letter to the Duke de Bassano, reproduced by M. Huyttens, in his *Discussions du Congrès national de Belgique, 1830-34*. (Brussels 1844. Second vol. p. 400.) The destinies of Belgium, however, turned out to be quite different from those which were anticipated. Its independence was proclaimed, and the next point was the drawing up of its organic institutions. The Baron de Stassart presided over the commission appointed to prepare the drafts of the provincial and communal laws.

ranks on each side from the hotel de Hollande to the gate of the town, and who received them with the greatest enthusiasm.

His report respecting the province of Namur, printed in 1834, and the four others which he drew up as Governor of Brabant are full of excellent views, expressed with remarkable precision. Namur lost him in September 1834, and on the 30th of the same month he took possession of the governorship of the province of Brabant. Whilst filling the latter post, his opinions respecting the internal march of affairs, particularly with regard to the elections, were soon found to be in ill accordance with those of the minister of the interior (the Count de Theux). The Baron, finding that the administration of the province of Brabant had been long neglected, directed all his attention to its amelioration, and the good effects of his labours are still felt.

He presided over the jury of the exhibition of the productions of national industry in 1835, and subsequently became Grand-Master of the Freemasons of Belgium. This title, (which was soon the source of much unpleasantness for him) he accepted, as it appears, merely through deference for the King and through a spirit of patriotism, in order to prevent the masonic institution from becoming,—what it had the appearance of becoming, — the medium of correspondence with the Hague. Although the Belgian masonic order, holding itself aloof from politics and devoted to the arts, did not manifest any hostility whatever to the clergy, an episcopal encyclical letter was launched against it towards the end of 1837. It cannot be denied that such a step was a grievous political fault, and the results soon became apparent.

Freemasonry, which until then had been a very luke-warm and a very limited institution, received a

surprising developement; much excitement was produced, and, without the wisdom and extreme moderation of the Grand Master, matters would have been carried to an extreme.

The next year (1838) the Baron de Stassart, who during seven consecutive sessions had been chosen President of the Belgian Senate, was not re-elected. The persecution of which he was the object did not cease there. Having been, in 1839, elected by large majorities a member of the Senate, in not less than three places (Namur, Nivelles and Brussels), he drew on himself the ill-will of the ministry who revoked him from his functions of governor of Brabant, admitting his claim to a pension. It is worthy of remark that a few days previously to that revocation, he had been nominated officer of the Order of Leopold for his good and loyal services. Whatever may be said with respect to the rash act of the ministers, it is certain that regret for the loss of an active, enlightened, equitable and upright administrator was loudly expressed. A protest against his dismissal was drawn up by the principal electors of Brussels, and a large gold medal was struck in his honour, the expense being defrayed by public subscription, as was the case also in 1830, when he was deprived, by the Dutch government, of his pension of a retired prefect (*).

Nevertheless, the position of the Baron de Stassart

* More than three thousand persons went in procession to the prefecture, whence they proposed to go to the king's palace at Laeken, but the Baron de Stassart energetically opposed so unsuitable a demonstration.

in the Masonic order was an altered one. Instead of being, as heretofore, its protector, he became, to a certain extent, its *protégé*. Amidst the general effervescence, he could only preserve his influence by manifesting a greater degree of excitement and exasperation than any body else. Such demonstrations would have been in ill keeping with his previous career, as well as with the principles of moderation which had directed the whole course of his life, and which he had so well developed in his inauguration speech in the Grand Lodge. Accordingly, when he failed in his endeavours to secure, in June 1841, the return (at the Brussels elections for the Chamber of Representatives) of the previous members, he unhesitatingly resigned the Grand-Mastership, continuing, however, his former line of conduct, and by his speeches as well as by his votes in the senate, avowing himself a partisan of progress and, at the same time, of the maintenance of social order.

A mission in the capacity of envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at Turin placed him, in 1840, in communication with the principal *savants* of Italy (at that time assembled at a scientific congress) and procured for him flattering testimonials of esteem from the Sardinian government. The King presented him with his portrait set in brilliants, as well as a medal in commemoration of the congress, which the Baron attended.

In the discussion which led to the downfall of the Lebeau and Rogier cabinet, in April 1841, he displayed his usual consistency of conduct, and, whilst condemning the attitude assumed by those two statesmen with reference to the senate, he blamed that body

for desiring to effect a ministerial change without sufficient grounds for such a step. He still continues to serve his country in the Senate, in the communal council and in several commissions, amongst others, the jury of examiners of young men destined for the diplomatic career. He presides, moreover, over the commission appointed to liquidate the claims for compensation for losses incurred during the wars of 1830 and 1831. The King, by a decree of the 13th of February 1843, conferred on him the permanent title of minister plenipotentiary *.

One of those men who profess to entertain a profound contempt for decorations, after having solicited them the more earnestly on account of a consciousness of having little deserved them, insinuated once that the Baron de Stassart,—Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, Grand - Cross of the order of St-Stanislaus, Knight of the order of the Polar Star in brilliants, of the Tyrol order and of the Bavarian order of Merit—appeared to attach too much importance to those vain gewgaws; the latter rejoined with vivacity : “ If I set some value on those distinctions, it is because I did not pick them up in ante-chambers.”

A member of a great number of learned societies,

* The Baron de Stassart ceased in 1847 to be a member of the Senate. Notwithstanding the determination which he formally expressed in that assembly not to become a member, the two political parties of the day resolved to maintain him on the list of the candidates at Brussels, but he declined the honour, on the ground that as he had sold some of his estates, he no longer paid the special taxes required by law for members.

a correspondent of the Institute of France and of the committee of history attached to the office of the minister of public instruction in Paris, and the annual director of the royal Academy of sciences and *belles-lettres*, in Brussels, the Baron de Stassart entered on his literary career in 1800, by the publication of a collection of prose idyls which, although French literature was at that time much neglected in Belgium, had the honour of being reprinted in several French works, such as the *Almanach des prosateurs* of MM. Noël and Lamarre, and the *Bibliothèque pastorale* of Chaussarde. His translation of Eckartshausen's "*God is the purest love*," has become a classical one. His *Maximes morales*, published, for the first time, in 1814 in Paris, under the title of *Pensées de Circé*; his *Fables*, which have been translated into several foreign languages, and which have already reached the sixth edition; his discourses on Belgian history and his biographical and critical notices of a great number of celebrated men in Belgium, which have given a powerful impulsion to the investigation into the past glories of the nation, have procured an honourable place for him amongst the literary men of our epoch *. It is said that he is preparing his Memoirs, which cannot fail to excite great and general attention, and it is to be hoped that the work will not be a posthumous one, but that the author may have the satisfaction of enjoying their success."

B.

* The Baron was also one of the contributors to the *Biographie universelle* (published by Michaud. Brussels), the *Revue encyclopédique*, the *Revue belge*, the *Trésor national*, the *Bibliographie Belge*, etc., etc.

(Having taken up his residence in the Quartier-Léopold, which is outside the gates of Brussels, he was obliged to resign his functions as a member of the municipal council of that city. Since the decease, on the 8th of July 1849, of a beloved wife, one in every way worthy of his affection, (and who, up to the time of her death was one of the ladies-in-waiting of the Queen of the Belgian) he has ceased to be a member of the jury of examiners of young men studying for the diplomatic career. The labours of the commission appointed to investigate the claims for compensation for losses incurred during the Belgian revolution (a commission which he presided over) were brought to a termination towards the end of 1846, the period prescribed by the law. It is remarkable that the decisions of the commission were never disputed.

PROLOGUE.

The Lark, the Blackbird and the Ringdove.

The spfightly lark's most gladsome lay

One morn within a tranquil grove was heard :

"See I aright"? exclaimed with feigned dismay

The envious blackbird; "a lark essay

To gain the singing prize, presuming bird !

Such hateful plans must hissed down be." Straightway

Hissed he most lustily.

Our songster gay

Soon failed in breath. — Accompaniment like this

Would baffle Amphion : "Pray, what's amiss?"

Well interposed a ringdove, sitting nigh,

The song enjoying; "all birds—as meet,—

Sink into silence when the nightingale,

True phenix of our groves, begins his tale,

But, surely, in his absence one may try
To please a moment, tho' with notes less sweet."

The lark's full privilege may I
Now claim ? And hope, too, may I dare
For ringdove-like indulgence for my song?
Self-love says "yes"—self-love is often wrong,
Too oft deceives.—The blackbird's hiss beware (3)!

FABLES.

BOOK THE FIRST.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The two Goldfinches.

TO M. BLONDEAU ;
PROFESSOR OF ROMAN LAW AT THE ÉCOLE DE PARIS.

Who in affections ne'er deceived has been ?
That sad experience I've also learned ;
But Rousseau erred when, in a fit of spleen,
Friendship—the wise man's joy—he spurned
As mere delusion. Tho' oft mistaken, I have earned
True friends and dear ; so still my fate I bless.
O joy untroubled when around me press
My old associates. To thee, for whom I've yearned
In happy friendship, since our dawning youth,
Blondeau, a fable I address ; —
Thy heart and mine not less
Will find therein a meaning full of truth.

In neighb'ring nests and almost on one day,
Two birds were hatched. United e'er,
Their infant moments, all devoid of care,
In groves and meadows calmly passed away.

Our two goldfinches were, in fact,
Models of constancy, and famed
For many a well-attested act
Worthy of two friends in Grecian story named.

Free from alarm, no tears save those of joy
Or tenderness they ever shed;

Ev'ry blessing was around them spread,
E'en to their hearts' content. Oh say
Who could such happiness as this destroy.

Alas, 'twas despot man, he whose sway
Is one of terror. Admiringly intent

On the sweet love-song which at love's soft hour,
Philomel poured forth, our comrades lent—
As stole, one day, the heartless snarer near—
To his sly movements neither eye nor ear.
And soon both lay within his boasted power,
E'en when they thought they had least cause for fear.
Then came the question whether in one cage

Both prisoners should be pent; —
To their great joy, by accident
'Twas so decided. "Better," says the sage,
"For two in common sorrows to be blent
Than one, in bliss, alone to dwell." —
An adage I have ever loved right well.

One of our mates, the smaller of the two,
A certain loop-hole in his prison spied;
Oft he examined it and tried
Egress to gain — labour, alas, ill-spent.

With beak, howe'er, right steadily he plied;
And, luckily, at last passed through.
In vain the other sought the same to do.
What then? His fate he will abide!
So urged his friend all speedily to flee : —
“ My brother quit! Oh no,” the other cried,
“ Better to die; severed from thee,
How great my anguish! Who would e'er be free
Whilst languishes his friend in slavery?”

Forth stepped the master. Safely, this time,—
Relentless still—caged he them both again;
In vain a lesson gen'rous, sublime,
E'en birds give men (4).

FABLE II.

The Dog and the Horse.

A luckless charger, wounded in the fray,
Languished longtime upon his littered straw.
Balsam or plaster no one on him saw;
The cuppers held aloof; yet, strange to say,
Nature restored him. On the very day
 His health improved, one of those dogs —
 Bone-grubbers true—who seek a meal
Where lay-stalls reek, into his presence jogs :
“ Well, how do you now, my dearest cousin, feel?
 Quite convalescent eh, at length?
 Each day acquiring fresh strength?
Well, at one time, I thought it would go wrong.”
“ Relatives we? — Pray, my good sir, how long?
But cousins let us be, if so you will.
 Thank heaven, I am not very ill,
 In fact — and here pray take no huff —
 I am far better, I could swear,
Than suits you quite — how now, O cousin rare!”
 This was enough; —
Off scud the cur his maw elsewhere to fill. —
His case is that of many a greedy heir (5).

FABLE III.

The Swallow and the Sparrow.

The swallow I esteem—if not for mind
At least for virtue. In affection true,
Sensitive, coquettish ne'er, and kind,
She lives to love—having nought else to do.
My belles! 'twere well, in some respects, if you
To take her for a model were inclined.—
But to our fable.

One fine spring morn,
Progne, who lived most neighbourly, was told
A sparrow from the nest where he was born
Wished to remove unto a country seat,
' Neath whose proud roof a home he hoped to meet.
As in she came, th'adventurer bold

Was nearly starting! "My young friend, hold!
I owe thee good advice, and at my age"

One prudent gets. The shade why quit
Of this loved oak which o'er the hermitage
For ages towers—the spot so long deemed fit
For home of thee and thine?"

"I must confess

Your speech most sage is—ev'ry bit —"
Rejoined the fugitive, "I lay much stress
On this most flatt'ring visit. Ne'ertheless,

For honours I was born, and so
Honours I seek. Let's part good friends ;
No change shall fortune make in me, and know
I'm always at your service. — Off I go ! ”
So said, so done ! His flight he bends
Unto the splendid turrets, without fear.—
Caught in a snare, his brief existence ends.

Ambitious man, see you no lesson here?
Needs one a kingdom to be truly blest?
The golden mean is still the better lot;—
Why seek a palace, when the straw-thatched cot
Gives blissful rest?

FABLE IV.

1808—1818.

The Monkey and the Watch.

Damis a rhymester was. No need to say :
 Horace's followers are a careless race.
 Full of his triumphs, Damis left, one day,
 His watch on Virgil. Prithee, what took place?
 Bertrand the Don, his comrade and his pet,
 Soon spied the treasure. Master Marmoset
 Hopped from his wonted nook and laid
 His paw upon it; such was e'er his way,
 Learned, I suppose, from one who made
 More free than welcome with his neighbour's store.
 With watch-chain round his neck, he wore
 A pompous look like some great Dons at court,
 With foreign orders all bedizened out.
 Well ogled he the watch, in short
 Like a true connoisseur turned it round about,
 Its beauties to examine : " 'Pon my word,
 'Tis not amiss", he cried, "although
 'Tis somewhat fast. Now I have always heard
 Perfection one should seek, and lo
 An opportunity !"
 Quite undeterred
 By thought of inexperience, he wound

The hands round quickly ; all went right,
But this sufficed not for our hopeful wight —
The movements most irregular he found.
Puffing with rage, he put forth all his strength,
And worked so well that the poor watch, at length,
Stopped quite!

Whom with my monkey shall I now compare?
Our bolus friends? ho! ho! Pray take good care.
Joking with doctors is no joke at all ;—
They'll well repay us when they make a call.
But are not politicians often quacks ?
And such fair game are for a few hard thwacks.
Brimful of projects, ever malcontent,
By dint of change, disorder they foment ;
Against such folk let's turn, in time, our backs (6).

FABLE V.

The useless Remorse.

The Syracusians longtime groaned
Beneath their tyrant's iron sway;
Till stung by fierce remorse, he owned
Soft pity's melting mood, one day.
Loud in his praise the people rose : —
“ O silly victims!” cried a seer,
“ Think ye your ills are at a close? —
The crocodile e'en sheds a tear.”

A treach'rous heart at times may feel
Virtue's emotions o'er it steal;
But vice still watchful lies to turn
Her gentle hints to promptings stern (7).

FABLE VI.

The Fox.

How charming is the critic's course!
Both court and city own his force,
Parnassus knows him well, and still
Mock him the petted worldling will, —
'Gainst rich men sarcasms seldom tell.

A certain fox, devoid of dread,
Prepared for this ordeal well.

In rhetoric profoundly read,
And oft 'mongst living speakers quoted,
First as a preacher he was noted.
Struck from the lists, his punishment
'Gainst the profession turned his mind;
The surplice checked too much his bent,

For in divines we hope to find
Practice with preaching hand in hand, —
And this he would not understand.
For other honours qualified,
At politics his hand he tried.
The royal lion then invited

Our modern Chrysostom to court,
And with him soon became delighted;

The fox was perfect in comport —
Flatt'ring with much tact, and ne'er
One word about the nation's care.

Snug in the Foreign Office seated,
So well things brought he to a stand,
That all the neighb'ring roosts escheated
Unto our four-legged Talleyrand.
Throughout the deeply harassed nation,
Remained but one poor consolation : —
Sarcasms and quips and jests t'indite
Against the greedy favourite.
(Thus we, or, if you like, the French
The public hate 'gainst placemen clench.)
But all these pains might well be spared —
The deuce a bit his Lordship cared,
Nay, quite amused, kept up the game,
(At feeble foes 'tis sweet to smile.)
Chickens and turkeys still he'd claim —
For so King Lion willed the while (8).

FABLE VII.

The Owlet and the Sun.

Bedazzled with the sun the owlet, who
Has shocking eye-sight, from her turret e'er
Against all light declaims—her cousins fair
Each taunt applauding. Were her speech true,
That blessed luminary which shows
A God's beneficence no light bestows,
But makes birds blind.

The sun of course

Laughs at her jeers, and still
Shines forth triumphant, with his wonted force.

And so tis ever! Vulgar minds see ill
Thro' splendid merit. So 'twill ever be!
A numerous tribe—mere fools—would fain
Genius hunt down wherever found. In vain
They battle 'gainst its brilliant destiny;
Need Arnault of the envious complain?
Can dwarfs the giant's energies restrain (9)?

FABLE VIII.

The warlike Horse.

1808.

« These tears why shed, and why this sad adieu?
Are we all born to slave e'er at the soil? »
Thus to his parents, people bred to toil,
Cried a young horse with battle-fields in view.
« A name I'll seek at dread Bellona's call.

Death no respect for persons shows,
But ev'rywhere, alas, his scythe lets fall
On old and young alike, on great and small.
Here, when worn out by drudgery and blows,
A vulgar end awaits you both, but I —
E'en Bayard-like—with reputation graced,
Shall be in Mem'ry's fane by Vict'ry placed—
My deeds admiring, ev'ry passer by
Will say : If certain folk, who now
Eke out in fields a dull and wretched life,
Like him would perish in immortal strife,
How great their fame! » And this, I trow,
Is hero's language, and as such is good ;
But is't enough for noble ends to try — ,
Nobly to live and even nobly die?
The great point is to be well understood,
To prove one's means, then die in proper time ;
Here is our steed to wit ; no bounds he set
To youthful ardour, generous, sublime ;
A cannon ball soon struck him down, and yet
No word in the gazette (10)!

FABLE IX.

The Pike and the other Fishes.

Two sisters lurk in ev'ry place,
Hypocrisy and Malice called ;
Not man alone, the finny race
Of Neptune is by them appalled.
Nay more — a Frenchman swears he spied
Within the moon this pleasant couple.
'Gainst man and beast in hate allied, —
Vindictive, heartless, base and supple —
They fill this world with care and strife ;
And even ye, poor guiltless fishes,
Oft lead thro' them a wretched life.
The pike, as known, loves dainty dishes —
And fish-ponds oft by him are cleared ;
A certain pike, howe'er, fared ill,
For all the carps, when he appeared,
Snug in their lurking holes kept still.
What was our wily pike to do?
Kind he became and meek to view ;
Quite neighbourly he seemed to all,
'Gainst tyrant men declaimed, and said
He had a plan to make them fall. —
The fish tribe should by him be led ;
In fact, he was prepared to tell
His secret to his brethren. Well

His wheedling speech o'ercame them quite ;
 Respectfully, with smiling faces,
 Forth came they from their hiding places.
O gross imprudence, for the wight
Opening wide his pond'rous jaw —
 Apostle-like — as if to teach,
Soon filled with fish his hungry maw.

 Distrust, O people, I beseech,
The factious tribunes when they say
 They come to set you free, for know
Their slaves you'll soon become, if they
 Succeed in laying princes low (44).

FABLE X.

The young Girl, her Mother and the Will o' the Wisp.

1819.

When summer heat, at close of day,
 To tranquil Vesper's coolness yields ;
How sweet thro' tuneful groves to stray,
 O'er fragrant meads and blooming fields.
So Ursula, a sprightly maid
 Just turned fifteen, exclaimed as she
Was wand'ring in the twilight shade,
 In her dear mother's company.
Forth from a latent marsh upshot
 One of those fleeting flames which mark
Where lies a pestilential spot,
 And which, when nights were drear and dark,
Our good old grandams looked upon
 As imps of the most Wicked One.
" O Mamma ! " cried the pretty creature,
 Whilst joy and hope lit up each feature,
" Oh see, how brilliant is yon light,
 It surely leads to scenes of bliss. " —
Swift as an arrow was her flight,
 Till stopped—for ever—in th'abyss.
Alas poor mother — killed with grief !

Maidens, avoid the world's false glare ;
Seductive 'tis, but unreal, brief—
Leading to vice's poisoned lair.

FABLE XI.

The Philosopher and the Alchemist.

Having—I'm glad to say—not much to do,
 As in the good old times, I'll now relate
 A fable—no, a history true,
 So Lichtwer says, and seldom German pate
 Untruth conceives.

 In a quiet country seat,
 Despising honours and the world's vain stir,
 (To vulgar minds so costly and so sweet)
 A certain—shall I say—philosopher
 In genial studies passed his time away,
 Blessing his destiny. One day,
 Minerva's friend a visiter received :—
 “ A sage behold in me, ” the stranger cried,
 “ I'll tell thee frankly—and I may be b'lieved—
 What brought me here. Thy fame is wide,
 Thy worth, thy talents are well-prized, and still
 Thy happiness — pray take my words not ill —
 Is incomplete, for gold, all-potent gold
 Is wanting. Good sir, in me behold
 Famed Trismegistus, he on whom
 The Gods bestow their confidence and care.
 Thou mayst, indeed, right well with wonder stare!
 Mine eye all Nature sees, in light or gloom.
 To gold th'impurest matter I can turn. —

All things can Trismegistus do ! ”

“Then learn,

O mighty alchymist, ” rejoined the sage,

“ I need thy secret not, and I engage

Its great discoverer to make it known

To men who yearn for golden store alone.

I care not for it, since with liberal hand

Nature supplies still ev’ry want I own.—

Gold to dispense with is, in fact, the stone

Philosophers demand (12). ”

FABLE XII.

The Crow, the Gosling and the Duck.

Good Master Crow, completely tired
With finding out the Warbler's faults,
Became quite fluent and inspired
In praise of cuckoos, and admired
The owls that screech in lofts and vaults.
" See now," exclaimed a gosling zealous,
" Our neighbour crow is never jealous.
Good soul, no envy does he know,
Though spiteful people say not so. "
" Your crow's a rogue and you're a fool, "
Rejoined a duck, " for 'tis his rule
The dull and ignorant to flatter,
(Whose rivalry he need not fear)
But with the foulest speech bespatter
The birds we love all and revere.
Thus is he heard full oft to rail
'Gainst e'en the charming nightingale. "

Such crows near Helicon abound ;
Voltaire and Racine they abuse,
But noisily the triumphs sound
Of Pradon's and of Voisenon's muse (13).

FABLE XIII.**The Mole.**

Within a vegetable garden once,
A mole made frightful havoc, far and near :
“ Oh, all my labour is in vain, I fear; ”
Exclaimed the master, as he shook his scone,
“ My table’s ill supplied, and nought I send
E’en to the market town! A spade quick here!
Of all this baneful tribe to make an end.”
Straight hied he to his post. Soon moved the earth,
And lo, the mole was in a moment seized.
“ Oh, why this rage? To death I’m almost squeezed,”
Exclaimed the captive. “ Even from my birth,
I’ve had no eyes. I know not what I do.
Oh, all in vain does Phœbus shed each ray —
His glowing splendour I can never view.
This time, O man, indulgent be, I pray.”
“ Eyes or no eyes, you constantly pursue,
A course most mischievous, ” the other said,
“ If, as you say, you’ve no eyes in your head,
Why not, all quietly, keep within your hole?
Motives are nothing in this case, good mole;
Results I look to only. ”

With a blow,
He sent the blind one to the shades below.

Amidst the councils oft of many a king,
Moles of another breed much mischief bring, —
As scourges to the nations even sent.
Their death I wish not—but their banishment (14).

FABLE XIV.

The old Courtier and his Son.

1808.

Good sense the Orientals own ;
A noble, pleasing, moral tone
Their writings e'er display, altho'
But little pathos they can show.
That wisdom in their lessons lies,
 This tale, which once a dervis wrote,
No doubt will prove. — If such ye prize,
 Often, my friends, the moral quote.
“ All blest am I”, a Pacha's son,
 Enraptured, to his father cried,
“ The Sultan's sister I have won,
 To-morrow e'en she'll be my bride ;
His Highness, too, has deigned to send
 An invitation to the chase ;
To my fair prospects there's no end —
 Ne'er Mussulman has found such grace! ”
“ Oft youth is by appearance led ;
My white hairs trust”, the other said,
“ At seventy, the world one knows ;
Thy hopes may vanish altogether,
For sov'reigns, women and the weather
Change like the wind which comes and goes.

My son, I tremble for thy fate;
At least thy transports moderate.”
The Pacha had foreseen quite well :
Next day, the rain in torrents fell ;
No hunt of course ! His Highness grew
Quite sulky at the change and, vexed ,
Postponed the match — reproving, too,
The lover’s zeal as over-due.
The latter all aghast, perplexed,
Ill-humour could not quite repress ;
All thought then that they could discover
(The princess hinted e’en not less)
Some grave faults in the harassed lover.
Soon banished from her heart he fled,
To hide, in shame and grief, his head.

Who builds his hopes on Fortune’s waves
A fickle, stormy ocean braves (15).

FABLE XV.

The Owl amongst the Birds.

Descended from that moping bird
Which sad Heraclitus long kept,
One still more moping took—I've heard—
A strange fit once and hopped or crept,
Even at full noon-day, to where
A host of birds held friendly meeting.
Ye may be sure this visit rare
Gave rise to much sarcastic greeting,
But chiefly from the linnet tribe—
One quite at home at joke or gibe.
As is the case oft with a sage,
Whose learning folk set down as folly,
Good Master Owl soon swelled with rage.
Fiercer the laughter grew—a volley
Of hisses drowning all he said,
Till self-possession was quite fled.
“ Oh, oh,” he cries at last, “ I've got
Amongst a pack of fools, but he
Most surely is a greater sot,
Who tries to please such company.
Back to my hole, for solitude
Is e'er the sage's best retreat.”
Now, far from me with jesting rude
This adage, full of truth, to meet.

But let me hint that our poor owl
Should not, from his dark hermitage,
Upon the birds he courted scowl,
Nor rail for ever 'gainst the age.

If misanthropic Timons quit
The world for woods—what benefit?
All men for social joys were born—
Joys which thro' pride alone they scorn (16).

FABLE XVI.

The Pigeon and the Ringdove.

A pigeon's mate lay dead and cold ;
Alas, his grief cannot be told.
"Oh, why these woful plaints? In vain
Thou seek'st the lost one to regain.
Like thee, too, am I all alone, "
A ringdove cried in soothing tone,
"No more will my sweet mate return ;
But I was wrong all birds to spurn.
Friendship alone can mitigate
The cruel strokes of heartless fate ;
Let friendship then our hearts entwine,
And one roof screen thy form and mine. "
And living thus, they found relief
And solace, 'midst their care and grief.

Never repel the kindness, care,
With which a friend would check despair.

FABLE XVII.

The Swallow and the Magpie.

The swallow's nest by storms was rent;
With wild laments she filled the air,
Cursing aloud each element,
Nay, death invoking in despair.
Now who would b'lieve it? Softened quite
At her sad fate, the magpie, who
Both near and far is famed for spite,
Straight to our lonely mourner flew:
"Dear friend," quoth she, "pray cease thy wails;
Thy home is gone but mine remains;
Come dwell with me, and endless tales
And endless chat shall ease thy pains."
No time to think the swallow took;
"Neighbour, I thank you," she replied,
"I fear (my frankness pray o'erlook)
We could not long together bide."
Her quick refusal may appear
To many folk but folly sheer,
But each right mind her spirit prizes;

Dishonoured the receiver stands
Of gifts and favours, at the hands
Of beings whom he e'er despises (17).

FABLE XVIII.

The Cock, the Turkey and the Hens.

1820.

Proud of his scarlet comb and glossy dress,
Great Sultan Cock knows well he is admired
By all his harem. In full state attired,
With gait majestic, yet replete with grace,
Struts he forth now with tow'ring head, elate,
Amidst a countless suite that round him press.
“And so you think to reign, sir, in this place?”
Exclaimed a Turkey-Cock with simple pate,
And envious heart : “Mere silliness
Is such pretension. There's a certain state,
A certain dignity, quite requisite
For royalty, and nothing less
In height and size than Turkey-Cock is fit
For that distinction.” Lo, he puffs and strains,
His tale enlarges, all his crow displays. —
But what a cackling rose instead of praise !
“Ho, Master Turkey, you've indeed no brains,”
Gabbled the hens all amidst scoffs and jeers ;
“The cock's true majesty well-pleased we view,
For Nature gave it him, but you —
Ha ! ha !
A fool who, with much pains,
Sets himself off a greater fool appears.”

FABLE XIX.**The Death of the Lion.**

A lion once an empire founded,
Unequalled his benignant sway ;
Both liberty and peace abounded ;
Life was secure by night and day.
No risk whatever beast or bird, —
Tho' e'en the feeblest — e'er incurred.
All deemed the golden age restored,
And oft his subjects Heav'n implored
Long to protract the lion's reign.
On all sides spread his fame and glory,
But certain lords could not restrain
Their hatred tow'rds him, for they 'd fain
Indulge again in pleasures gory.
Strange times, indeed ! Each tiger, bear,
Panther and wolf the laws forbid
To ruffle e'en a single hair
Of any poor stray lamb or kid.
Such tyranny they 'd not endure !
And so they sought a plot secure.
A jealous senate once (for so
Vertot informs us) struck a blow,
Secret and silent, 'gainst Rome's founder ;
The fox who's ever a propounder
Of schemes most villanous, I trow,

Suggested one most cunning; well,
The lion disappeared, but how —

None, save a few, could ever tell.
His apotheosis they voted,
So that their deed might not be noted.

'Gainst kings who seek the public weal,
Malignant minds direct their ire;
It was the wicked courtiers' steel

Which made good Henri e'en expire.
The dagger hiding, oft with skill

Such polished murderers will trace
The virtues of their victim still.

To princes of the Trajan race
Those horrid tactics I disclose,
To warn them 'gainst th'assassin's blows (18).

FABLE XX.

The Porcupine.

1625.

Happy the man who, far from courtly din,
Is Nature's true observer and her friend;
When ringdoves' tender murmurings begin,
And nightingales' soft melodies ascend,
Enraptured he! All things around him win
And interest him. E'en th' insect in the sod
To *his* eyes seems a pleasing work of God.
Nature's fond student, for her alone he lives,
And truthful portraits of all objects gives,
Whether the eagle or the moth he note. —
'Twas thus that Buffon lived and wrote.

That great expounder of creation's laws
To catch a porcupine one day essayed;
Labour in vain! The restive thing displayed
Its threat'ning quills; th' assailants pause,
Puzzled outright to know what best to do.
E'en Buffon looked confounded, till, at last,
His good old gardener, one Lucas, who
Knew a wise trick or two, as fast
As legs could carry him the garden sought,
And cabbages and apples from it brought.

Fine feast for Porcupine, whose rage soon cooled—

**Alack! he was not only filled but fooled;
Under his stomach Lucas thrust his hand,
And straightway brought our hero to a stand.**

The stomach is, indeed, the weakest part. —

Nay, Deputies of the Centre, do not smile!

**My aim is elsewhere : To prove there is an art
Of meeting obstacles, when there's will the while
(19).**

FABLE XXI.

The Squirrel and the Hound.

A graceful squirrel, lively and quite tame—
A model for each painter — had become
The pet of all the household; some
Brought him sweet biscuits, others nuts; none came,
Without some dainties, near his pretty cage,
In which he turned and turned with joyous air;
“ Now tell me, ” once he cried, “ if anywhere
There’s one so active. I should die for shame,
If all my thoughts, like Medor’s, were t’assuage
Hunger and thirst.” This Medor was a hound
Quiet and sedate and of a certain age,
Once famed for fleetness and a scent most rare,
But now with well-earned ease and comfort crowned.—
Old age, ye know, is not the time to toil.
And so from morn till night, in thought profound,
Free from ambition, free, too, from all coil,
Thanks to his master’s kindness, he reposed.
Tho’ he was deaf, nay at the time half dosed,
He heard the squirrel’s words, so turning round : —
“ You’ re a fine fellow, truly”, thus he spoke,
“ You jump and frisk about, and come and go,
Thinking yourself, like other clever folk,
Most wondrously engaged; but know
’Tis all lost time. Better ’twould be for you

Not toil at all, like me, and let thought flow,
Than toil unceasingly — yet nothing do.”

Wisest of dogs! May thy brief speech
The ears of haughty scribblers reach; —
Those triflers grave who deem that on
Their shoulders rests all Helicon (20).

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

BOOK THE SECOND.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The Nightingale and the Greenfinch.

TO M. VIOLET D'EPAGNY.

Favours unsought on thee bestowed have been
By all the Muses and Apollo fair ,
By Love, and beauty's e'er entrancing queen.
For thee, too, as for her all flowers rare
Spring on Parnassus. On thy model formed,
A charming nightingale the grove adorned;
With love and friendship ev'ry breast he warmed,
No bird his equal was. And yet he scorned
To talk about his songs, unless
At gen'ral request. No Adonis he,
But thro' his features shone true nobleness
Which made him pleasing in each company.
In fact, 'twas said the pretty lady-lark
And other lady birds—but hush! No word
Upon that point. A vain and silly spark
Is all disclosure in that way, but mark
How cautious he whom merit has preferred.
Even like Bayard, our most trusty bird

Was mute on these successes. Near his dwelling,
A greenfinch filled the air with constant boasts—
All kinds of tales 'bout ev'ry body telling.
To countless ladies' names he gave out toasts,
Claimed wit and valour, and in fact procured
Credit at first for all he said or sung.
(How many persons led are by the tongue!)
But, little time this baseless fame endured.
His claim deriding, all the winged breed,
An Arcopagus severe, decreed
The nightingale alone their votes deserved;
Nay, deemed they had from their strict duty swerved,
By hearing, for a while, the other's themes.

What grace to beauty is, the world e'er deems
Is modesty to genius; thus allied,
Both triumph over envy and o'er pride,
And, 'tween them both, success well-earned divide (21).

FABLE II.

The Goose, her Goslings and the Swan.

1820.

A certain doting, simple goose
With silver plumage, golden bill,
Indulged in praises, loud, profuse,
Of all her goslings' grace and skill,
Their dignity, their fund of sense,
And e'en their high intelligence. —
In fact they were perfection quite :
 " Well, I must own", observed a swan,
 " That their long necks and forms so white
Are made to please all — I delight
As much in them as any one; —
But can they sing, friend?"
 " Sing you say?
None in the land so well as they!
Be judge yourself." —
 Oh, what a clatter!
 B sharp, B flat at random led;
The goslings never ceased to patter
Till all their neighbours fairly fled.

In country towns, nay e'en in cities,
Mamma too oft each daughter praises,
The while her skill at music, ditties,
Malicious observations raises.

FABLE III.

The Ox and the Ass.

1808.

Beside a humble donkey grazed an ox
From whom, by clever pates e'en, might be learned
Some useful hints;—he knew well what was good,
So took the clover and the thistle spurned.

Quite dainty he, and orthodox
In gastronomic taste! He scarcely stood
In need of Berchoux or la Reynière.
But as for neighbour Neddy, 'twas indeed,
As ye may guess, a different affair;
Whate'er he found, he ate with gusto rare :
“ Oh this is perfect callousness! You need
A few brief rules and hints about the mode”
(So spoke our connaisseur) “that beasts should feed;
Take then a leaf from out my oft-tried code.”
“ Greatly obliged”! Replied the stubborn ass,
(And loudly brayed he, with contented look.)
“ All things agree with me, where'er I pass—
Thistles and clover, legumes, weeds and grass.”

How many readers find in ev'ry book
A kindred taste; nay, some e'en can digest
The Sorbonne's trash and useless lore !
Ségur, they say, a gleaner is—no more.
To please such folk would be poor fame, at best.
All is alike to them, — but hold !
Lest in this strain I may be deemed too bold (22).

FABLE IV.

The Kite's Generosity.

Grown old, a kite became at last
A saintly person, mild and meek ;
But, not at all disposed to fast,
Still kept himself both plump and sleek.
Against the world he railed, but deemed
All birds his brothers, chiefly those
Who unprotected were and seemed
A prey to grief. To ease their woes
Long wept he with them, till at length
He brought relief in his own fashion, —
Striking them down with all his strength,
Thro' love fraternal and compassion !
As on his travels once he went
He pounced upon — by accident —
A capon, pride of all the county,
For prelates and for princes fit;
And thanking Heav'n for all its bounty,
Quite relished every dainty bit,
Leaving the bones and other ends
To grateful and astonished friends.

'Tis thus full oft — thrice gen'rous soul ! —
A man grows kind with wealth he stole ;
And wins thereby fair Virtue's palm —
In hand a book, in mouth a psalm.
Knowing himself too well, he'd fain
Others deceive—and not in vain.

FABLE V.

The Almond-tree and the Pear-tree.

'Midst scenes where lovely Durance flows,
An almond-tree with pride arose;
For, thinking gentle spring was nigh,
With thousand flowers 'twas arrayed—
Casting the while a scornful eye
Upon a pear-tree which, hard by,
A few scant shoots alone displayed.

Came wind and rain and frost and cold
Which nipped the almond-tree's fruit flowers,
But, in due time, a hundred fold
The pear-tree bloomed 'midst vernal showers.
Pomona's favourite it grew,
And choicest fruits soon brought to view;
Now cited 'tis, beloved, admired —
The pride of all the country round.

Young poets, ye who feel inspired
To strike the lyre, with laurel crowned,
Let not its sounds be heard, until
Both time and thought mature your skill;
Oft poets flattered in their youth
Live but to hear unpleasant truth (23).

FABLE VI.

The Steed.

A steed, from famed Bucephalus descended
And cousin to horse Bayard, had full long
With ardent zeal Bellona's course attended,
Till fate decreed — the conflict ended —
That he should be (still mettlesome and strong)
Placed with an aged miller, whom his mien
And spirit almost frightened into fits. —
Not for the world he'd mount him, e'en with bits
And reins the tightest, thickest ever seen.
In vain our steed, to tempt him to a ride,
Shook his fine mane; — the other shook his head,
And chose a quiet and sluggish mule instead, —
A very Rosinante in his gait.
But on our hero's shoulders, stark and wide,
All kinds of things for market towns were piled —
To which he early hied, returning late.
This a dragoon, upon half-pay, espied,
Who oft the Fates for his own lot reviled : —
“ And so this horse must, e'en like me, abide
Without reward!”

Well, one day passed the King
And saw by chance the still-neglected steed : —
“ Why, he's a noble animal, indeed!”
(Exclaimed his Majesty) “ the very thing

For royalty". The price was soon paid down.
Off paced our friend — the fav'rite of the Crown :
" Now, I have often thought the Gods would find,
Or soon or late, for merit and for worth "
('Twas thus he neighed) " a patron wise and kind."

Or soon or late! Well, well, I'm quite inclined
To say so likewise; but since Time had birth
All swiftly flees he. ' Death, alas, drops in
Quite unexpected, too, amidst our course. —
So thought our half-pay officer, perforce,
And, thinking so, indulged in many a grin (24).

FABLE VII.

The Mules and their Owners.

Six mules, well-fastened by one tether,
One morn were jogging to the fair ;
Too far behind them came together
Their owners twain — a careless pair ;
And who moreo'er, — be this between us —
Were followers of old Silenus.
One mule slips down, the others follow
And o'er a dread abyss they fall ;
In vain the owners shriek and hollo,
'Gainst Heaven rail, on Heaven call.

I well can understand their sadness, —
By sheer imprudence both undone ;
But folly 'tis, nay downright madness,
To risk one's all beneath the sun (25) .

FABLE VIII.

The Ass and his Master.

How mules were lost I've just related.
Their uncle-ass, a beast hard-pated,
(Rid by a miller), followed slowly;
To mere routine devoted wholly,
He wished his nephews to attain —
Thinking the journey's end to gain;
So preparations made to leap,
Down the abyss so rugged, steep,
Unconscious that its hidden path
Was one of death. His cautious master,
Without a sign of fear or wrath,
Quietly prevented the disaster,
Held tight the reins and kept poor Neddy
Upon his course, all straight and steady.
But Ned, in his own way, kept grumbling —
Something 'bout injured rights e'er mumbling.

Both man and ass, in my opinion,
Have much in common; oft we find
Example o'er each vulgar mind
To exercise a vast dominion.
For his protection man needs laws, —
To save him from thunseen abyss;
But seldom deems he they're the cause
Of his salvation and his bliss.

FABLE IX.

The Professor and the Ape.

In Saxony, or 'midst those verdant hills
Where runs Thuringia's most lovely Wald,
A learned doctor snugly was installed
In some quiet university, where he,
Disgusted with the world, all lonely dwelt.
But solitude full oft with horror fills
The brooding mind; — this our professor felt,
So bought an ape to keep him company.
Why at his choice amazed, my friends, now gape?

The choice a good one is — an ape
Is seldom obstinate, and never vexes
By marked contrariness in word or act,
Nor with long arguments the mind perplexes.
An easy temper has he and much tact.
And soon Don Bertrand pleased his thoughtful master
Applauding ev'ry word he said. In fact
Quick progress made he — even faster
Than any other pupil — in his learning.
Sharp and attentive, sedulous, discerning,
He kept, from morn till night and night till morn,
His eye upon the doctor's changeful face,
Till all his master's looks of pride and scorn
And self-esteem — for thus oft people trace
A doctor's emblems — he could imitate.

So well our ape succeeded in his task,
That strangers—oft enough—were heard to ask
Which the professor was. One ev'ning late,
(His lessons o'er) the doctor was employed
In turning o'er his manuscripts and books —
An occupation which he much enjoyed.
Next morn the sage of Guinea, with glad looks,
The same work undertook and worked right well;
The book-shelves soon were emptied, and pell-mell
Their rich contents were scattered all about. —
Arrived the doctor, stumbling 'midst the rout!
Speechless with fury, maddened quite with rage,
He seized a book and tore off page on page.
The ape, too, set to work; and oh the zeal
With which each laboured in this novel match!
Livy and Cicero, Herodotus,
Profane and sacred, were all treated thus.
The very room, as 'twere, appeared to reel. —
Soon book on book, nay, nay, soon batch on batch
Lay shattered with the tearing and the blows,
Quartos, octavos, duodecimos —
Never was folly pushed to such extreme.

Anger's first movements let us ever fear,
For Mind oft ceases then to be supreme.
A second maxim is intended here : —
Of flatterers beware, whose imitation
Of all our senseless actions but creates
Sorrow and woe, without alleviation,
And 'gainst our faults shuts reformation's gates (26).

FABLE X.

The Eagle and the Hawk.

Thro' the vast plains of air, with steady flight
His swift and tow'ring course Jove's bird maintained—
An eaglet by his side, of tender sight :
“ Methinks your object would be better gained,
If you this trying voyage would defer,”
Thus spoke a hawk, “until he's stronger grown.
Prudence should ever be our rule.”

“ Dear sir,

Most generous thy counsels are, I own.
But pray excuse me, if I think it right
To listen to experience alone.
Were he first taught upon the earth to run,
How could he soar, with majesty and might,
To those far regions where the lightnings rise,
Or face unflinchingly the noon-day sun?”

The eagle's speech suggestive is and wise—
A lesson to all teachers to essay
To save from prejudices tender youth;
So that, in proper time, fair reason may
O'er thought and action exercise her sway.
The glorious rays e'en of the sun of truth
To tender minds may safely be displayed,
If but a prudent guide give friendly aid (27).

FABLE XI.

The Wolf, the Shepherd and the Dog.

Amidst a splendid flock of sheep,
Disease, in spite of Lullin, spread;
A wolf began to grieve and weep :
“How now, a wolf, too, take in head” —
The shepherd, all surprized, thus cried,
“To show such kindness and such feeling!”—
“He kind, indeed”, the dog replied,
“He grieves 'cause there's an end of stealing.
Off pack he must, no longer able
To live at our expense.”

One day,
Deprived by fortune, e'er unstable,
Of wealth, I found that, in dismay,
Valberg was plunged in grief profound;
In gratitude did he abound?
Grieved he for his own loss or mine? —
This Valberg knew not where to dine (28).

FABLE XII.

The Ape and the Fox.

Flushed with the glory recently acquired
By his quaint tricks and gambols at the fair,
Bertrand, a famous ape, became inspired
With the vast merit and the talent rare
Which drew crowds round him e'en in th' open air.
Another braggart, not of the monkey race, —
One Mercier—in our day, essayed to fix
Public attention by his polemics
About his own good sense, his wit and grace,
His fine-edged satire e'en — but cease !
He's now beyond the borders of the Styx,
So let his manes rest in peace.

“ Why I alone,” exclaimed our ape, “ am worth
All other animals upon the earth !
I imitate them all and well can I
Exhibit all that droll is or awry.”
“ No doubt of that,” rejoined with furtive glance
Good Master Renard, who stood near by chance,
“ Better than Martinet you oft retrace
All that grotesque is in each passing face —
Adding, of course, to it nor grace nor beauty,
For such your secret is, perchance your duty.
’Tis strange, that other animals disdain

To take each other's traits, — as you would show them —
Or imitate your mien and air; 'tis plain
They deem such imitation quite below them."

Rivals of Bertrand, oft from book-ranged shelves
Compilers rob who're never robbed themselves (29)

FABLE XIII.

The two Speculators.

A modern Solon once declared that tea
Around the drawing-room casts joy and pleasure;

Now with that doctrine I for one agree,
But I am told that this much vaunted treasure
In China, (strange to say) where long a passion
Was felt for its perfume, gets year on year
More out of favour, that is, out of fashion. —
E'en Mandarins must in the fashion be :

“ Well for my part, I've shipped a cargo here,”
A merchant cried, quite conversant with trade,
“ Europe will ever stand in need, 'tis clear,
Of this delightful beverage. No fear
Of loss, nay more, a fortune may be made.
Whatever comes from far is prized the most.”
And saying this he left the Chinese coast.

Half-way he hailed an outward-going ship,
And met a merchant friend therein : “ Where bound?”

“ To Pekin with a cargo all of sage.”

“ Capital indeed ! I'm sure your trip
Will profit bring. That plant will be the rage
With all the Chinese, tho' with scorn profound
We treat it, till for weakened nerves or phthisic
We take it as — for so we deem it — physic.

And why all this? No one in his own land
A prophet is e'er deemed (says Sancho Panza) —
A proverb quoted oft in prose or stanza.
A pleasant trip. " " Farewell!" Each sought a
[diff'rent strand (30).

FABLE XIV.

The Philosopher and the Owl.

1808.

By moonlight once, when not a stir
Save Nature's broke upon the ear,
Forth wandered a philosopher,
Till some old turrets found he near.
Whilst o'er the lonely ruin glancing,
An owl at supper he espied,
And saw, when tow'rd's its hole advancing,
A tender mouse the feast supplied :
" Oh fie, to love such dainty cheer
Which ill becomes," exclaimed the seer,
" Thy philosophic turn and fame;
Minerva's bird love tit-bits — shame !"
" Why not" ! rejoined with peevish tone
Our solemn bird, " no need to perish
With hunger, thro' desire alone
Fair wisdom's lore to seek and cherish.
True I eat mice — for such their lot.
Lucullus-like to live I've not —
Nor any owl — the least aversion;
In that respect pretended sages
Differ from owls throughout all ages."
I quite agree with each assertion;
Heav'n's gifts t'enjoy with grateful heart
Is the philosopher's true part (31).

FABLE XV.

The Fresco-paintings.

“How fine!” exclaimed a Paris cit
Who some high-stationed frescoes saw,
“To view their beauties all, ’tis fit
I nearer get. There’s not a flaw
In all the master work, I’m sure,
And so a ladder I’ll procure.”
Arrived on high, he rubbed his eyes,
And stared and stared in mute surprize —
Nought but a botch, bedaubed, besmeared,
The new-formed frescoes then appeared.

So courtiers, at a distance seen,
E’er please with their most polished mien;
A nearer view shows how intense
Their baseness, pride and insolence (32).

FABLE XVI.

The Birds, or the Music Prize.

In public once the birds united,
To vote the first prize were invited. —
The prize for what? For music truly.
Who gained that prize—of course most duly?
A score of times I'll give to guess!
In their republic e'en — not less
Than at our courts — there loved to dwell
A host of cringing courtiers — Well,
The scene was Greece; ye know that there
Pallas with pomp was worshipped e'er;
So the electors soon preferred
Her chosen owl to ev'ry bird,
Loud praising his most wondrous song.
The nightingale few votes received; —

The Institute ne'er does such wrong—
Of course it does not! — Am I b'lieved (35)?

FABLE XVII.

Jocrisse's Coat.

1824.

My old friend Jocrisse let me introduce ;
He's an original, but then his heart—
Tho' beating 'neath a coat the worse for use—
Is rightly placed. Injustice and abuse
Determined him, one morn, to make a start. —
Off jogged he then, steeled 'gainst misfortune's dart.
His coat was out at elbows. Thus one day
Was Henri-Quatre's doublet — so they say.
No cash, no credit—even for some patches!
Well Jocrisse sets a-thinking and soon finds
The sleeve-cloth with the elbow-cloth quite matches ;
So with the former he the latter mends,
And shortens thus the sleeves at both their ends.
What jokes now rise, what jeers, too, of all kinds !
But Jocrisse, who's no fool, his coat-skirts clips,
And tacks them to his sleeves, not caring for his hips.
His coat a waistcoat is! Agreed,
But then his gait is easier.

At need,
Stretched or curtailed at royalty's caprice,
Many a charter—thanks e'er to the shears
Of skilful statesmen — now and then appears
Quite like the garment of our friend Jocrisse (34).

FABLE XVIII.

The Mule and the Ass.

More haughty than the bastârd of a King,
A certain mule addressed a certain ass : —
“ What! dare compare thyself with me? Poor thing,
Thy pride, in truth, has reached a pretty pass.
Know that, in the hundredth degree,
From famed Bucephalus, I trace my breed.
My father was a gentleman, and he
Resided in the capital.—Indeed
His portrait—one of Vernet’s — still
Fills its possessor’s heart with pride and glee;
B’lieve me, thy vanity will lead to ill.
Must thou, forsooth, a jackass vile as mud,
Be placed upon a par with me, whose blood
Springs from a stallion of the choicest stud?
Thou call me brother; prithee, why?
Is’t because mere chance has so arranged
That from a donkey-mother I
Should come.—’Tis time such thoughts be changed.
Respect propriety, good sir, and pray
Of this relationship let’s hear no more;
I’m very sensitive, and set high store
On what the fashionable world will say.
Sir, rank must be respected and be heard. —
Asses! fine relatives, upon my word!

All ill-assorted marriages I spurn.
 But urge me not too far, and learn
 To know thyself, thou silly pate!
 There is a certain distance 'tween thy state
 And"—

— To bring this boasting to a close,
 The ass began to laugh in his own way ;
 You understand — that is — began to bray. —
 'Tis thus all asses laugh. Then up he rose
 And in a bant'ring tone bespoke
 Our gentleman, who relished ill each joke :

“ In spite of your nobility, good friend,
 She-asses, as you know, and mares
 Send you to Coventry. Such airs
 As your's amuse far more than they offend.
 Why ev'ry thorough-bred, poor fool,
 Snubs up his nose at mongrel mule.
 You a true gent, forsooth ! ha ! ha !
 You trace your blood from heroes—bah !
 Your birth is but a stigma on their fame.
 Why plume yourself on what the world e'er deems
 Your proof of baseness and their shame ? ”

The donkey's not the simpleton he seems.
 Right good his logic ! Are there not, alas !
 Many as impudent as mules, at times ?
 Let such folk take a lesson from the rhymes
 So well recited by the honest ass (35).

FABLE XIX.

The Cat that grows old.

1820.

In a princess's dwelling born and bred,
A happy life a pretty cat once led ;
Soon it became the drawing-room's chief pet,
Its suppleness, its playful tricks and skill
And e'en its love of mischief and of ill
Many a dainty tit-bit made it get ;
Whilst compliment on compliment arose
Upon its ermine, eyes and rosy nose.
Whene'er it purred, it made a noise akin
To that of grandams at the spinning wheel.
Applauded 'twas, e'en when it scratched the skin.
But great the mirth, whene'er it caught within
Its oft stretched claws the spaniel or the ape,
Making them both with pain and terror squeal.
No menial dared resent a scratch.
But time soon spoiled its fine and graceful shape ;
Morose it grew, in fact a cross old patch. —
Her Highness in an angry fit, one day,
Straight to the knacker's sent poor Tom away.

'Twas thus to drawing-rooms, where only met
A frivolous and self-conceited set,
Longwhile was Cleon, for his spiteful tongue
And scandal-founded gossiping, invited. —
Failing in grace and wit, no longer young,
For malice he, in turn, became a butt ;
Till in the end, most quietly he was cut
E'en by the coxcombs he so oft delighted.

FABLE XX.**The Parrot.**

From morn till night a parrot cried :
“ O pretty Poll”! with joy and pride;
And ev’ry one who passed him by
Re-echoed that most flatt’ring cry,
Till as an adage it was treated, —
So oft and loudly ’twas repeated.

How many politicians, sages
Follow those tactics in all ages! —
“ If you ’ve no friend to sound your praise,
Why, praise yourself,” cries Lemièrè ;
A plan adopted in our days,
And one, which Salgues, declares most fair
(36).

FABLE XXI.

**The Stag, the Pig, the Ox, the Ass, the Goat and
the Horse.**

One morn, as I have heard, it came to pass,
The horse, pig, stag, ox, goat and ass
 Resolved to go upon their travels;
The horse they chose soon for their guide and chief.

 All goes on well at first, none cavils
Against the leader's measures, for, in brief,
There is no cause, — good sleeping and good feeding
Await the caravan whenever needing.

Lo, gloomy clouds along the heavens creep,
A burst of storms forebodingly preceding.
Fatigue, distaste, distrust—ill-humour breeding—
Create injustice ; plaints both loud and deep
Against the horse soon rise. Thus did the Jews
At ev'ry adverse incident accuse

 Their chief of want of skill :

 “ Too fast,

 By far too fast, ” roared out the ox,
“ He speeds for me ; I'm quite worn out at last.”
“ What a slow leader ! ” oft exclaimed the stag.
This mode of life, of course, the pig quite shocks. —
Never sufficient time for each repast !
The goat would fain explore each height and crag,
Instead of hieing straightway on his road.
Unless all good things in abundance flowed,

For want of foresight was the horse e'er blamed;
But chief the ass against the guide declaimed.
With due presumption and impertinence,
He criticized the letter and the sense
Of all the regulations and the rules. —
For gen'ral blame commend me e'er to fools.
Our horse good-natured was, but then
 He did as one should do again
(If well advised he be) in such a case; —
He left the silly and ungrateful race.
Soon 'neath the lion's and the leopard's claws,
They perished — victims of their insolence.

With kingly rule we cannot now dispense ;
But each would fain establish only laws
Which suit his int'rest. Or right or wrong,
Monarchs are censured — do e'en what they may.
Not without murmurs now will men obey.
Shorn of the splendid majesty which long
The throne environed, kings unhappy grow.
Better our humble joys than all the show
And dangerous honours of the royal throng (37).

END OF BOOK THE SECOND.

BOOK THE THIRD.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The Oak, the Elm and the Bramble.

TO THE ABBÉ SOTTEAU,

PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AT THE COLLEGE OF NAMUR.

To thee who trained my youthful years,
This fable brief inscribed appears,
In gratitude for all thy care —
In homage to thy merit rare.

O'er an elm-tree, tender, young,
The forest King his branches flung,
O'erjoyed to find its shoots extending —
Propping it still and still befriending.
Whene'er the sultry heat of day
Fell on the oak's majestic head —
He tempered each oppressive ray,
Thro' love for his young friend, and shed
A fruitful dew upon it, when
The rain and moisture came again.
A strong hale tree the elm soon grew : —
“ Indeed, my dear, I pity you,”
Exclaimed a bramble, “ for I see

How much this proud oak domineers.
Oh what a yoke — what slavery !
For dwarfish plants this well may be,
But you" —

Enraged the elm this hears : —
" O hateful language," thus it cried,
" This oak-tree all my love possesses ;
Whatever I may claim with pride
I've gained at his protecting side —
Such patron humbles not but blesses.
You'd have me prove ungrateful ! Learn,
Indignantly th' advice I spurn."

Be benefactors loved, esteemed,
Second creators be they deemed.
Can we, for all they 've done, give less
Than gratitude and tenderness (38) ?

FABLE II.

The Ant.

An ant who thought herself a sage,
Thus cried out once with dreadful rage :
“ O Jupiter, I'm trodden down
At ev'ry step by beast or clown.
Oh, for a pair of little wings
Like those on which yon bird now springs,
Or like the crane's e'en — he who pants
To make his breakfast on poor ants. ”
Jove kindly this petition heard : —
Behold our ant become a bird !
Swift was her flight, her progress small —
A swallow gulped her — wings and all.

For goods which fortune now denies
Why importune so much the skies?
Acceded they may prove to be
The source of woe and misery.

FABLE III.

The over-fat Hen.

The poultry-yard's most potent queen, one Su,
Chief care upon a certain hen bestowed,
Which each day laid an egg and showed
Her gratitude : "Well, I must something do,"
Cried Susan once "to make my hen still fatter,
So that instead of one egg I'll have two;
And this, I'm sure, is not so hard a matter.
Moreover, 'tis good time, for lent draws near,
The market town is nigh and eggs are dear."
Like Perrette with his pot of milk, her head
Devised most charming projects, great and small;
So well, so often she her fav'rite fed,
It barren grew and laid no eggs at all.

Superabundance industry destroys,
And wishing for too much oft breaks up present joys
(39).

FABLE IV.

The Farmer and the Curs.

Good Master Bumpkin had a wife just taken,
And eke a farm : “ Well, if I’m not mistaken,
Prudence demands,” he cries, “that whilst we’re sleep-
Some trusty dogs a constant watch be keeping, [ing,
To scare each robber off, post-haste.

This very morn — for there’s no time to waste —
I’ll get two curs, all vigorous and strong. ”
So said, so done. Well, all day long
Barked they most loudly at the slightest noise ;
This vigilance the master quite enjoys.
But night spreads o’er the farm, and who can tell
The horrid din from bark and snarl and yell ?
The very bed-posts with the noise were jolted.
Morpheus soon packed his poppies up and bolted.
No sleep all night ! Next day, the work ill sped.
Oft Bumpkin shook — and well he might — his head.
The ideas came at last ; away he sent
The loud-tongued guardians, and two others sought,
Who noiselessly, but on their duty bent,
Gave satisfaction whilst they safety brought.

Let those whose duty ’tis to be pursuers
And constant thwarters of all evil-doers,
Have their eyes open, keen of sight, but ne’er
A boist’rous tongue and consequential air.
An over-troublesome police creates
Distrusts in subjects and in potentates (40).

FABLE V.

The Grasshopper and the Ant.

Young, the grasshopper (as we have been told)
Oft borrowed from the ant, and at that time
No one declaimed so much, in prose and rhyme,
'Gainst usury. But age will change our tastes,
Our habits, inclinations and our views. —
He who at twenty years his substance wastes,
At forty gathers up and hugs his gold.
He, too, in turn will borrowers refuse.
So our grasshopper, formerly so gay,
So wholly careless of the coming day,
Is now quite altered — scarcely knows himself.
His sole thought is vast magazines to store,
And thro' his loans at int'rest build up more.
His character, in fact, seems built upon
The very traits of famous Harpagon —
Great Molière's man of avarice and pelf.
Well, my lord butterfly, a sprightly beau,
Like many a noble scion in fair France,
(And elsewhere too) long led a pretty dance,
Thanks to his creditors or — better so —
At their expense. Pressed hard at last,
To our grasshopper speedily he hied,
(On usurers alone our spark relied

Regardless of the lessons of the past)
Bowed most politely, praised with perfect grace
The gentleman's rare kindness—known and prized
(So said the visiter) in ev'ry place.
No brilliant marquis of a brilliant race
Could better try a lender's heart to soften;
Our usurer, howe'er, had heard too often
Such specious compliments, tho' well disguised.
Ample security he asked — too high
(To tell the truth) for spendthrift butterfly,
Who in a moment flew into a pet.
But, by that movement, nothing did he get.
Bowing him coolly out, the stinter
Told him to call again — tow'rds winter.

Why the grasshopper blame—less changeful still than
When borrowers they are, the latter [men?
Gainst usurers declaim, but when
They lend in turn — 'tis quite another matter (41).

FABLE VI.

The Turkey-cock.

By constant boasting and display,
A Turkey-cock had wrought his way
To honour, reputation, fame,
And crowds to him from all parts came.
A deer who saw his walk so steady,
Exclaims : " He's not to running bred, he
Has wings, howe'er, and I could swear
He's just the one to cleave the air. "
Next came the eagle and, amazed,
Upon the turkey's hips he gazed.
" Great Jove, " he cried, " this bird has given
A racer's houghs, so praised be heaven !
These gifts are quite enough to bless —
One cannot ev'ry thing possess. "
The Turkey is a good apostle !
As thro' the world we jog and jostle,
How many find we imitating
His mode of winning fame unearned ! —
Intriguers often desecrating
Posts which the talented and learned
Alone deserve. A man of science
Thinks Damis has much wit ; a poet
Upon his learning sets reliance —
In neither case can Damis show it.

FABLE VII.

The Mole and her Daughter.

A mole still silly, tho' not young,
Oft in a fair rich meadow strayed,
Wherein (so ran the owner's tongue)
She had as oft much havoc made.
Loud swearing that, for all her tricks,
He'd quickly send her to the Styx,
He one day saw her coming, but
The moment he essayed to seize her,
He stumbled'gainst a stone or rut,
And this time missed his constant teaser.
Off went she — where, I cannot say,
Her hole she could not find, however.
Her daughter chanced to pass that way —
A miss more pert and brisk than clever :
“ O mamma follow me”, she cries,
“ I'll lead you home ”!
“ But you 've no eyes,
No more than I”, mamma replies,
“ Say, how can we in safety go,
When neither can the right way know?”
In these our days, how oft we find men
Their service proffer kings — tho' blind men!
In mercy, let no ignoramus
Touch our affairs, if he'd not shame us (42).

FABLE VIII.

Jupiter and the Starlings.

La Fontaine says we cannot praise too much
The Gods, our lady-love and king;
This precept has become a law, as such
I hold it in respect, but hesitate
Into full practice e'en that law to bring.
For I am warned by Chateaubriand's fate : —
He in most glowing and most pious strains,
With all the ornaments of style, too, graced,
Praised God and all the saints, and, for his pains,
Was in the index placed!
With prudent hand at least, the censer touch,
So that its fumes quite apropos may rise.
With proper skill and tact to eulogize
Is not the easy task it may appear—
A truth, this fable will, I hope, make clear.
Unceasingly the starlings vaunted
The wisdom of great Jove but — poor weak fools! —
Taking their faults for virtue's golden rules,
Their own defects, too, all the time they chaunted,
Attributing them to Jove, who fired
With anger 'gainst the congregated dolts
Blew them to atoms with his thunderbolts.
E'en courtiers' praise oft lacks the skill desired;
O gentlemen, if gracefully ye'd flatter,
Better prepare the incense which you scatter (43).

FABLE IX.

The Horse and his Master.

A Norman horse the battles had attended
Which noble Washington for freedom fought;
Grown old at last — so far by fate befriended —
He came to Normandy again. Soon sought
By all the district round for his great lore
And vast experience, his fame ascended
Higher than any other steed's. 'Twas so decreed,
That by a reckless youth he should be bought —
Who on his horse's learning set no store,
“My dear sir,” cried unceasingly the horse,
One false move e'en may make of you a corse;
Pray, hearken to my counsels, for I'm old.
The roads are bad, and like good sailors e'en
Good riders should their steeds well steer between
Impending risks—nor tim'rous nor too bold.
Thus to Achilles Xanthe once foretold
Approaching death; — the hero took no heed,
Nor better do our modern seers succeed.
Outright the tyro laughed; our horse oft sighed,
Nay wept to find his master so besotted;
One day, as wildly he his charger trotted,
Head foremost' gainst an oak-tree, tough and knotted,
He pitched — and died.
Learn, youthful rakes, with brains soon turned,
That many a one who sages spurned
Now sleeps in death, from parents riven,
Thro' heedlessness of counsel given (44).

FABLE X.

The Mole and the Gardener.

A certain mole most dainty, wily,
Oft lettuces and salad sought,
And then all cautiously and slily
The booty to her hillock brought :
“ The gardener must have fine sight,”
(Exclaimed the smuggler, with delight,
As thro’ the cavity she wound)
“ To find my dwelling underground.”
But Colin was a knowing blade,
He saw, next morn, the hill she made ;
And laid his snares so wisely, well,
Into a trap the mole soon fell.

A rogue, tho’ full of caution, sense,
E’er falls thro’ his own negligence.

FABLE XI.

The Education of the Canary.

1820.

Slender of form and delicate of hue,
 A young canary bird all eyes enchanted;
 From point to point all gracefully he flew —
 Sprinkling full oft his silken coat, —
 Nor ever, as 'twould seem, for freedom panted.
 Favoured by nature, hearts and ears he won;
 Joyous his warbling, beautiful each note :
 “ Well, of his kind ” — another’s words I quote. —
 “ He is the greatest wonder ’neath the sun.”
 But destiny our charming bird had given
 To an old lady, crotchety and cracked,
 Who tried to form his voice — the gift of Heaven, —
 On a bird-organ, shrill, discordant, hacked.
 Well, *Ah! vous dirai-je?* he was forced to learn,
 And sang it prettily, to tell the truth;
 But this sufficed not! — He must chaunt, in turn,
 All the court airs that pleased her in her youth : —
Berger, qu’as-tu fait de mon cœur?
 Then : *L’amour est un enfant trompeur;*
 Then : *Bannissons les alarmes;*
 Next : *Un enfant plein de charmes.*

9.

In short, a dozen of this kind he learned,
And then a pious canticle of praise.
At length his brains, poor bird, became quite turned, —
The songs he sang all in all kinds of ways.

A certain person studies Latin, Greek,
Hebrew, Arabic and e'en Chinese!
His brain for all this jumble is too weak —
A jargon makes he, losing by degrees,
The faculty his own tongue well to speak.
A word to parents! — Tutors void of skill
Each talent, in its very blossom, kill.

FABLE XII.

The Elephant, the Monkey and the Conductor.

Perched on an elephant, a monkey rare
Proceeds in triumph to a neighb'ring fair :
"Why Mordechai ne'er was honoured so!"
Exclaims each passer by, as on they go.
Attained at last their place of destination,
The guide began a powerful oration,
Extolling to the skies the vast proboscis
Of his most sage, most learned, most rare colossus.
Loud shouts arose and bravos fierce and long. —
Was it the elephant which pleased the throng?
'Twas not indeed! The ape alone
Drew forth the plaudits and the admiration : —
"Well, after all, I'm but a simple donkey!"
Exclaimed the guide, with unfeigned animation,
"Had I the public taste beforehand known,
I'd have brought here another grinning monkey.
Instead of this vast mass of flesh. Th' expense
Would have been less, the profit more.
The vulgar populace, devoid of sense,
On trifles and grimaces set high store."
'Tis seldom otherwise! The crowd's delighted
With some low joker when the sage is slighted (45).

FABLE XIII.

The Peacock in the moulting Season.

The peacock's pride in ev'ry place is noted,
 A thousand traits from Æsop may be quoted ;
 A thousand others I shall give, but hold —

One will suffice just now. One morn,
 The pompous bird, half of his plumage shorn,
 Beheld his feathers scattered all about.
 His deep vexation cannot well be told,
 He could not help but grieve and sigh and pout
 But did not wish his sorrow to be seen.
 So he assumed a quiet contented mien —
 Resolved to make the best of the affair.
 And soon a host of children, on their knees,
 Were scrambling for each prize : —

“ Most rich and rare,
 Are all those plumes,” he cried with boastful air,

“ No colours in the world like these.
 Each one is worthy of a monarch's crown ;
 Gold, emerald and sapphire therein shine,
 Yet I resign now to your hands and care,

Those treasures — sought by all the town :
 Pray, my young friends, those trophies do not spare.”
 “ All this,” an urchin cries “ is very fine...
 You'd have us, Master Peacock, I suppose,
 Think you quite generous, but know
 No gratitude is justly due to those,
 Who what they cannot keep all grudgingly bestow (46).”

FABLE XIV.

The Bees.

Many there are who loudly blame
Whatever in their country passes,
Thereby destroying, e'en in name,
All public confidence, and shame
And sorrow bringing on the masses.
To sounder views than these restore them,
Ye powers that are watching o'er them.

The only way the bees could see
To save themselves from anarchy
Was in monarchic rule, directed
By prudent laws. To public posts,
Fit persons only they elected,
That is to say, the baneful hosts
Of drones and hornets were excluded,
Altho' their claims were oft intruded.
In vain the latter stormed, bewailed, —
Nor Gods nor bees would listen to them!
'Gainst ev'ry measure then they railed,
And all the ministers assailed
Solely on purpose to undo them.
Well, this base plan at last succeeded,
A hive received them, kith and kin:—
Oh, what a change! No work was heeded —

Nought seen, nought heard but riot, din!
Fine times, indeed, for hornet, drone!
Soon ruined they the very throne. —
Thus has many a potent state
Been rendered poor and desolate.
Th' adjacent hives which longed to get,
 With little labour and no money,
 Their neighbour's store of wax and honey,
In swarms soon on the treasure set.
Of course they gained it!

Woe the nation
A prey to discord, fermentation!

FABLE XV.

The Hare, the Rabbit and the Gun.

Fatigued at last, tow'rds the decline of day
A sportsman sought his home. When near his cot,
He laid down on the grass and slept away.

Whilst foraging in silence near the spot,
A rabbit and a hare the gun soon spied;
The former drew near slowly, and prepared
To touch the fatal weapon. Terrified,
"My cousin, pray desist," the other cried,
E'en lions, tigers, bears and wolves are scared
With this most fatal instrument, and say
Should we more impudent than great lords be?
I'm trembling already — let's away."
"For this vast haste, no cause whate'er I see;
Thy terror, friend, I do not understand,"
Rejoined the rabbit, "know, a sportsman sleeping,
With gun at side, is not like one who's keeping
A rigid watch upon us — gun in hand.
At present, we can do whate'er we please!"
"Why, so we can, indeed," exclaimed the hare,
"Let's to his garden hurry, where, at ease,
As well as in his orchard, we shall find
The rarest and the very best of fare."

Can statutes even of the strictest kind
And regulations prudent, good and wise,
Avail us aught, if e'er to sloth inclined
In apathy supine the monarch lies?

FABLE XVI.

The Nightingale and the Lark.

My friends, 'tis seldom, in the month of May,
I'm not a witness of Aurora's dawn.

Through Flora's groves, or up the dewy lawn,
All free from care, with real delight I stray.
Yestern, the nightingale's soft notes I caught—

Loving his song far better than repose.
His warbling soon the birds around him brought;—
And when 'twas ended, suddenly there rose
A host of compliments. All sought

To do most homage to him, and to say
The prettiest things in their own way.
Thus was Delille e'er greeted, when he read
His tuneful lines to th' academic throng.

"My cousin dear!" the lark 'mongst others said,
"No flatt'rer I; but sweeter far thy song
Than all the finest concerts I e'er heard.

How comes it that but one month in the year,
Or two at most, thy melodies we hear?"
"Because," replied Apollo's favoured bird,
"I only sing when Nature's self inspires."

Poets! this gentle hint hold dear,
And never strain your lyres (47).

FABLE XVII.

The Ram appointed Judge.

The animals, one time, agreed to live

In a republic; you ask me now :

Was that their golden age ? And how
Shall I reply ? A simple “ no ” to give
Would too laconic be.—A treasure

Is liberty, but Montesquieu preferred
Monarchic power which no one should measure
By despotism;—but leave those points alone,
On which wise legislators oft are heard,
And turn attention solely to our own.

A bull-dog had his brother killed—a deed
Rare amongst animals ; the bull-dog breed
For punishment all called. The cause

Before the councillors of state was brought.

Whom as chief judge then did they nominate ?

No doubt, an animal of worth and weight,

Whose attitude, all firm, sedate,
Would give fresh power to th’ existing laws.
The bear had many voices; others sought

To raise the lion to the bench, until

An honest ram, sage and devoid of ill,
To the high dignity, at length, was called.
In his tribunal solemnly installed,

The upright judge pronounced, the while he sighed,

The law's dread sentence on the fratricide.

The council's choice I heartily applaud.

Let laws severe crime punish and prevent,

For the protection of the innocent.

But a mild judge, too, I must ever laud.

The less vindictive is a judge, the more

Will vulgar minds, when the dread scene is o'er,

By useful terror still be overawed (48).

FABLE XVIII.

The Wolf as King.

1837.

E'en from that prince who all the arts befriends,
And whose just sway Bavaria commends,
A fable let us take, for he at times
Has entered Æsop's vast domain.

One day,
A wolf — he tells us, in most pleasing rhymes —
Would fain be king, merely that at dinner
He might upon a sheep — that's all — in safety prey.
Raised to the throne, the discontented sinner
Soon calls out for a change. Obeyed as master,
He could not all his courses well digest,
Unless he had — well-served up with the rest —
A sheep, a shepherd's-dog and — pastor!

Nor men nor wolves — for such my observation —
When fortune smiles show proper moderation (49).

FABLE XIX.

The Violet.

1819.

A priestess of loved Flora, or in humbler strains —
If so ye will—a pretty flower-girl,
Young Spring's forerunner, had from hills and plains
All kinds of treasures gathered. Primrose, daisy,
[pearl,

Tulip and heart's ease and ranunculus
Were sweetly blended by her hand, and thus
Many a charming garland she possessed.

All gazed upon her flowers who passed nigh,
But coldly e'er. "Alas," she cried, "must I
My labour lose, for no one comes to buy?
Is there aught wanting here?"

She looked, and thought, and guessed;
And found at last no violets she had!

Soon she returns, all smiling and all glad.
From her young violets sweet odours flow;
All tribute pay her as they onward go.

The violet, fair maids, I'd have you know,
Is that sweet modesty which fresh charms imparts
Even to yours, and wins all minds and hearts.

FABLE XX.**The Toad.****1822.**

From 'midst his slime and filth, an animal most vile,
With eye perfidious and heart accursed —
A foul black toad—which seemed just to have burst
From realms infernal, flung his venimed bile
With unchecked insolence on all around.
What was his fate? No one, of course, was found
On such an object vengeance e'er to take; —
The thing to touch would one all dirty make.
With full impunity still lived he on —
The scorn and hate of ev'ry worthy one (50).

FABLE XXI.

The Butterfly, the Goldfinch and the other Birds.

One fine May morn, the citizens of air
Assembled on a hill beside a grove,
Chatting about each kind of merit rare :—
“Wit, strength, and courage all of us must love,
But bitter fruits, indeed, they often bear;
Beauty is still all other gifts above,”
’Twas thus they cried, “to beauty then the prize!”
Judges are chosen soon, and soon arise
Greenfinch and bullfinch and all kinds of finches.
From such a match, the goldfinch never flinches,
And chiefly on him the suffrages fall, —
In my opinion he should have them all.
Gold, purple, silver in his plumage glow, —
A rich variety, but well combined;
A bird more fairly decked I do not know.
But to another’s merit we are blind,
And great the effort justice e’er to show.
To make a choice ’mongst people of one kind
Is not an easy task, for oft cabal
Rules o’er assemblages electoral.
How could our feathered senate then decide?
Long the debate and no decision nigh!
But lo, appears a charming butterfly,
His four gold wings expanded to the sun;

Loud in his praises all the conclave cried —

The pretty creature all their homage won.

But short his triumph, for a heavy show'r
Destroyed, alas, this phenix of the hour.

How common 'tis to see true merit scorned,

For some weak coxcomb outwardly adorned (51).

FABLE XXII.

The Insatiable Speculator.

“ A gain of twenty-five per cent ! ”
A young man cries, “ I’m not content
With such a profit ! One should double
His capital each year, and I
With twenty-thousand pounds shall try
To do it, too, whate’er the trouble.
A millionaire before two years,
Unless I die, I’ll surely be. ”
On Pactolus his course he steers ; —
Did he contented grow ? — Not he !
His mad brain bolder schemes devises,
All prudent warnings he despises.
Fortune a constant friend he deems,
So makes at last one vast endeavour —
(An error which too common seems)
To seal his happiness for ever.
His all upon a ship he places ;
But Neptune who its progress traces,
’Midst raging storms drew down the prize —
In misery the owner dies.

Ambition’s voice we should not hear ;
A lurking danger oft is near.
The ocean which the vessel bears
Can seize its treasure unawares (52).

END OF BOOK THE THIRD.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The Warbler and the female Sparrow.

TO MY SISTER, M^{me} DE CHAUDELOT.

1820.

In that sweet month, in which the dewy showers
Fall in their silv'ry pearls on velvet flowers,
Happy are they who flee the city's noise,
Its vain distractions and deceitful joys.
In rural scenes, Elysium I find,
And Philomel enchants both heart and mind.
Glowing with rapture, I to rapture yield,
And sing of Pales and the pastured field,
Or chaunt, in eclogues, all the rural loves,
Or from the birds that haunt the meads and groves
I take a moral, so that my coy muse —
Even in fable — may some truth infuse : —

A timid warbler in a grove
Upon her downy nest was sitting,
On which, sole objects of her love,
Her eggs she hatched with caution fitting :

"Why thus so lonely live, my dear?"
 Exclaimed a female sparrow, mocking,
 "Think well on what you do — 'tis clear,
 This mode of life is really shocking!
 Folk now-a-days are not such fools
 To be their childrens' slaves and tools,
 Nor does maternal love require
 That one with *ennui* expire."
 "I never feel it," cries the mother,
 "Whene'er my children dear are nigh."
 "All very fine!" rejoins the other,
 "I'm off again — and so good by!"
 Her charming home she sought, at last,
 Beneath a mansion's roof, — alas,
 Her young ones had been seized, and cast
 Bleeding and dead upon the grass!
 Our warbler who had kept her nest
 Was in her progeny all blest,
 For solitude is ever dear
 To those who'd well their offspring rear.

THE MESSAGE.

With real delight these lines I've traced ;
 With gifts most prized my bird I've graced ,
 Because my model thou hast been ,
 My sister dear ; she too possesses
 Thy gentleness and pleasing mien ,
 And placid temper which e'er blesses.
 Devoted to her children, she
 But lives for their felicity ;
 Like thee, a mother wise and kind ,
 May she, like thee, all honour find (53).

FABLE II.

The Eagle and the Kite.

A cruel kite had long the terror been
 Of all the turtle-doves : “ Immortal fame, ”
 ’Tis thus he cries one day, “ I ne’er can claim,
 By battling ’gainst birds so weak, so mean. —
 I’ll seek a higher and a nobler game. ”
 Off flies he now to where the eagle sleeps,
 High in those realms where thunders roll and growl.
 Amazed at first, the king of birds but keeps
 On the defensive, but th’emboldened kite
 Plucks soon a feather from the royal wing,
 And then descends in triumph and delight,
 To show the trophy to each dove and fowl : —

“ For such an outrage vengeance I shall bring, ”
 Exclaims the eagle, all enraged, “ for he
 Who insults brooks is ne’er from insults free. ”

Lo, from his lofty eyrie now he sweeps,
 And soon the kite is trembling in his claws;
 Death is his fate — but no ! There is a pause ; —
 The eagle spares his life. ’Tis thus we see
 True valour joined to generosity.
 O’erwhelmed with shame, and stripped of half his fea-
 [thers,

’Midst lonely mountains seeks he a retreat ;
 His sole reflection this : — Revenge is sweet !

And great his joy when o'er the hills and heathers
 Again he rises, at return of spring,
 With renovated plumage glistening.
 His rival now shall perish — so he cries,
 If not by strength, at least by art and cunning;
 As on he speeds, an ancient bridge he spies,
 Which the wild torrent, swiftly 'neath it running,—
 Aided by time, — had rendered insecure,
 In one part forming e'en an aperture.
 All gently glides he thro' the hole and then,
 His wings expanding, soared aloft again,
 Defying still the eagle in his lair.
 Lo, he appears! The other wings his flight —
 Closely pursued—e'en tow'rd's the old bridge, where
 The hole he enters, followed even there
 By his antagonist. Alas, no might,
 No effort can the royal bird release;
 Quivering in each muscle, all in vain
 He wildly struggles; soon fatigue and pain
 Stiffen his sinews and destroy his force.

Th'ungrateful kite makes an ill use, of course,
 (When his liege master's struggles nearly cease)
 Of this mean victory; the royal bird expires,
 Complaining of his fate.

Thro' gen'rous desires,
 And magnanimity oft heroes bleed.
 No mercy for the wicked! Humbled pride
 Is ever restless, nay at need
 'Twill vengeance seek thro' regicide (54).

FABLE III.

The Lion and the Fox.

Good Master Renard in the lion's court
Is minister of police, a post
Not the most pleasing in the world—a host
Of enemies creating. Master Fox
Is not, howe'er, a novice, and report
Gives out that he, in all official matters,
Never the tiger or the panther shocks,
But right and left deals sundry blows and knocks
On sheep and goats; and oft it comes to pass
He kicks and cuffs the all-enduring ass,
Altho' that animal at times he flatters,
Nay friendship proffers him.

One morn, at levee,
Making on public feeling observations,
Varied with dark prognostications,
“ May't please your Majesty, ” he cries, “ I learn—
And this I say with heart both sad and heavy, —
That donkey trumpeter, who has a turn —
And likes t' indulge in it — for idle gabble,
Ventures, in terms fit only for the rabble,
To speak of royalty. He knows not, sire ,
The reasons I so much your worth admire, —

The greatness and the courage you display ; —
May't please your Majesty, he dares to say
We should change masters ! Tortures most intense
I'll put him to ! ”

“ Your Excellence, ”

Rejoined the lion, “ need no trouble take
Upon that point. For goodness' sake,
Do not essay such simpletons to baulk—
Think you I care for any donkey's talk (55) ? ”

FABLE IV.

The imprudent Shepherd.

1815.

“ Say, how can I my flocks retain?
In spite of dogs, wolves seize and rend them! ”
Alexis cried with grief and pain,
“ Some other guardians must defend them.
These dogs, so much belauded, lack
The zeal and skill each wolf possesses;
Altho’, upon the poor wolf’s back
All kinds of sin each shepherd presses.
The dogs may honest be, but then
Mere dolts are honest dogs and men.
In short, I am resolved to try
What wolves can do—so, dogs, good-by! ”
Wolves amongst sheep! I need not state
What was the latter’s speedy fate.
E’en like Alexis, kings desire
All kinds of talents, zeal and tact,
In ministers whom they require;
But like Alexis, too, they act,
If honesty, e’en more than these,
They do not seek for, and caress;
’Tis that alone which guarantees
A nation’s fame and happiness.

FABLE V.

The Sheep, the Horse and the Bull.

Adieu, in winter, hills and meads!
Each one upon allowance feeds,
And great th' economy all bring—
How prized will be the coming spring!

An honest sheep, but one who'd not
Of vested rights abate a jot,
Who gladly took whatever came,
And knew well how to keep the same,
Went out to see her sisters—she
Dwelling alone in privacy.
Returned, she finds, in deep dismay,
Some thief had taken all her hay;
But who it was she could not tell,
Altho' she pondered long and well.
Next day she kept close watch — her eyes
E'er fixed upon her new supplies.
In came a horse, and he all coolly
Seized on her hay, as if quite duly;
“Justice is on my side”, she said,
“No fear have I upon that head;
Straight to the magistrate I'll go,
And on this thief bring shame and woe”.

His worship was a stately bull,
Of talent and of learning full, —
At least 'twas said so in the stable;
The sheep, as well as she was able,
Set forth her griefs, and judgment sought
 With damages and costs : “ Good dame”,
Exclaimed the bull, “ I should have thought
 You knew ere this, at least by fame,
That great folk do whate'er they like.
Now, if it were a goat, I'd strike
A blow severe against th'offender ,
But tow'rds a horse I must be tender.
Whatever be, good friend, the court,
 A horse comes always off as winner ;
Madam, more careful be — in short
 More safely guard your scanty dinner. ”

If thus, at times, our judges act,
They do so with more skill and tact ;—
Never one word about the fact !

FABLE VI.

The Man, the Eel and the Serpent.

As Bumpkin once was idly stooping
Beside a pond, an eel he saw
Amidst the slime an entrance scooping,
And soon he caught it—'spite of law.
In vain the pris'ner turned and twisted,
For Bumpkin was a clown hard-fisted :
“ Why seize on me ? ” exclaimed the eel,
“ See yonder serpent where he lies ;
He is my cousin, and I feel,
He is by far a greater prize. ”
“ Aye, aye, ” quoth Bumpkin “ well I see
This cousin fine— but much I fear him ;
I'm not a fool 'tween thee and me —
I'd get a sting by drawing near him. ”
Show malice and you'll be respected,
(So wags the world at least) altho'
You be a reptile mean and low —
A truth which makes one sad, dejected.
Another adage let's recall :
The wicked to avoid and flee
Is ever true sagacity. —
A moral I like best of all.

FABLE VII.

The Bear and the Pug-dog.

No doubt, my friends, you've seen oft at the fair
The learned dogs. A pug beyond compare

Most learned was—all hearts entrancing.

Strange tales about him children would relate.

Yet hard his lot—e'er hopping or e'er dancing.

The stick was ever o'er his back or pate.

His food was scanty and his constant drink

Pure water—the beverage I think

Of heroes and of actors: “When, alas,

Will all my labours, all my sorrows end?”

Cried Roscius to his comrade and his friend—

A bear sedate, who quietly let things pass.

Now, when the master near friend Puggy came,

The latter soon put on a different face,

Nay, licked the hand of him he'd fain defame.

This pleased not Bruin, for he deemed it base:

“For goodness' sake, let's hear no more of this,”

Cried Bruin once, “why rail against thy master?

Who slave-like acts, slave's treatment ne'er shall miss.

Be dignified, friend, even in disaster (56).”

FABLE VIII.

The plucked Cock.

Trust Master Renard for a constant sneaking
Near hens and turkeys; generally speaking,
No farmer can be too much on his guard
'Gainst Master Renard's tricks.

A youthful cock,
Just placed as sentry in the poultry-yard,
Saw him advancing tow'rds the roost; the shock
Of course was great, but cock-a-doodle
Neither a coward was nor noodle.
So he resolved, like d'Assas, death to brave, —
His country dear — the poultry-yard — to save.
Or cock or hen, for fox 'tis all alike,
And soon he seized our sentinel, but lo,
Came springing from the house a sturdy tyke! —
Off scud the fox and cock began to crow.
Straight hied he to the roost and there related
The whole adventure; — what a burst of mirth!
His half-shorn wings and comb dilapidated
Raised shouts of laughter :

“ On the earth,
There's not, I'm sure, ” exclaimed a pert young hen.
“ So strange a form. ” “ There is, they say, a dearth, ”
Rejoined another, “ of young cocks, but then
All chance for him is lost. Upon my word,

Not for the world I'd marry such a bird. "

" Away with him! " cried out a capon, " he,
Is quite unfit for our society. "

All fell upon him, beak or spur, before
He could one word e'en utter. Nevermore,
Saw they the cock again; his days were spent
In deep obscurity and retirement.

Honour, unless 'tis in a carriage seated
And has a brilliant suite, is poorly treated;
The times are gone when greatness appertained
To what a man did — not to what he gained (57).

FABLE IX.

The ambitious Wren.

IMITATED FROM THE RUSSIAN POET, KRILOFF.

1824.

In ev'ry land, the art of writing fables
Is cultivated now ; a Russian e'en
To stray in Æsop's grounds my muse enables ;
I'll an adventure after Kriloff tell, —
A strange one truly 'tis, but he has seen
Whatever he relates, so 'twill be well
To let his tale unaltered quite remain.
Succeeding to the eagle's throne, the wren
Wished t'immortalize his novel reign,
So he resolved to set the sea on fire,
For the astonishment of birds and men :
“ I have the means to do what I desire ; ”
('Twas thus he cried) “ a secret I possess,
And soon the vast experiment I'll try.
Two dogs upon a time - for so they say —
Resolved to drink the mighty ocean dry ;
A feat which even if performed, is less
Than that I undertake. My friends all, pray
Erect, where'er ye can, a tow 'ring pyre.”

The speech concluded, plaudits loud arose
From tom-tits, guinea-hens and crows,
And such like birds who did what they were told.
“Right joyfully, indeed, shall I behold,”
Exclaimed a turkey, with excessive glee,
“ This mighty ocean fuming all away.”
What fine estates therein ! I’ll lay
A wager, there is more than one for me,
To which my eldest son will be succeder.”
“ Pray, Sir Author ! ” calls out many a reader,
“ Leave idle talk alone and tell us how
The wren performed his feat.” I bow.
To this suggestion ; but with deep regret
I have to state— ’tis not performed as yet !
Nay more, I have to add— tho’ ’tis quite shocking —
The birds are still the wren and courtiers mocking (58).

FABLE X.

The Horse.

A luckless steed, to Lichtwer known,
Oft mourned his fate in bitter tone,
Fatigue and blows the whole year round!—

Nor more nor less he e'er expected.

All scant his oats and straw he found —

No wonder that he grew dejected :

“ Whate'er betide me, off I'll go ! ”

He cried one day, and broke his halter ;
Off went he—where? I do not know—
To the Black Forest p'raps, whence flow

Tales that oft make a stout heart falter.

“ My rights I have recovered quite ! ”

He oft exclaimed, in wild delight,

“ The victory indeed is great,

How happy I in my new state !

Nature's wise laws I now obey ”.

Alas, the woods hide wolves and boars.—
And oft had he to fight his way,

Till weak with loss of blood, and sores,

He fell at last, but fell like one

Who'd sooner die than live a slave.

Your safety, princes, build upon
Strict equity; — if that be gone,

No hope remains your thrones to save.
Urged to despair, a maddened nation
Will crush your crowns and break your sway,
Even if their brief liberation—
Welcome tho' brief—by death they pay.

FABLE XI.

The surly Bachelor.

From Anglomania who'll set us free?
In all parts it exists, and say, must we
E'er hear in parliament, in all kinds of speeches,
Of John Bull's genius—how he acts and teaches?
A thousand little Solons of our day,
Disdaining Montesquieu, their homage pay
To English Radicals—at all times citing
The English as our guides. Home goods e'er slighting.
Fashion procures from London boots and hats,
Horses and dogs, gowns, pickles and cravats;
Nay more, a friend of mine and neighbour, who
Is skilled in cattle-breeding and in tillage,
Went o'er to England, to a Yorkshire village,
And bought—guess what, my friends? And you
May twenty guesses have!—Well, well, 'twas one
Of those fat animals, the patrimony
In olden times of good Saint Anthony,
In short an English pig, a perfect Don
Amongst the ladies—so my neighbour thought.
Placed in his farm-yard, when to Belgium brought,
The stranger as a stranger was admired;—
All compliments for him, all smiles, all graces!
Each lady-sow with love he soon inspired,
But not a pin cared he for her embraces.—

Nor wife nor family he e'er desired!
The cause of this strange fit I cannot guess,
'Twas not a passing one, howe'er,—our boar
Both lived and died in single blessedness.
Dog's meat his flanks became—expensive food!—
Our pig when dead, for nothing else was good.—
You may be sure my neighbour never more
Purchased a British pig t'increase his store—
But in our Ardennes got the best he could (59).

FABLE XII.**The Hare and the Hound.**

Captured alive, well fed, well housed,
A certain hare lived quite contented;
No fears whatever were aroused.

His tit-bits were each day augmented.
The lady of the mansion e'er
Protected him with greatest care,
And all her children did the same.
Well, one fine morn by chance there came
Beside the hare's strong house a hound

Which oft o'er meadows, hills and bogs,
Had hunted him — the country round :

“ Approach, ” he cries “ thou worst of dogs,
Let's see if thou wilt dare attack me,
Thou knowest well I'd kick and thwack thee,
My valour dread—poor paltry thing? ”
Quoth Towzer : “ Friend, I made you sing
Another tune, when from the brushwood
With tale between your legs you rush would. ”
Now doubly safe, you taunt and boast.

Proud slaves there are—a countless host—
Who, thanks to some great friend, protector,
Will strut and swagger, brag and hector.

FABLE XIII.

The Nightingale and the Swallow.

Nothing but fables ! I admit

'Tis even so, but still I write them ; —

I cannot help it—but 'tis fit

That Æsop's humour, wisdom, wit

I oft invoke, ere I indite them.

No caged bird sings—some people say,—

And yet a captive nightingale

Full often raised a charming lay, —

A melody half joy, half wail, —

The royal chaunter coy and lonely,

Chosing for song-time midnight only.

“ Why sing just now ? Exclaimed a swallow ,

Whose nest was in a neighb' ring hollow

Beneath the window, and who oft

Was roused from slumber, sweet and soft ;

“ Oh pray,” she added, deeply yawning,

“ Defer this chaunt till day is dawning.

I promise you I'll loudly cheer it. ”

“ What sing in day-time ! — Much I fear it,

Rejoined the other, ” I was caught

One morning early, and since then

I wait till night has safety brought —

For still I dread, friend, heartless men. ”

12.

**“ Precaution vain ! Distrust too late !”
The swallow said, “ all fixed your fate !
Had you this prudence e’er possessed,
You’d now be snug in your own nest.”**

**One prudent gets — each danger o’er —
Who never prudent was before.**

FABLE XIV.

The Lion and the Bear.

A lion's whelp, placed by his dying sire
Beneath a wise and faithful bear's tuition,
Was from his infancy all passion, fire;
And soon he yearned to have the full fruition
Of regal sway — to rule e'en as he willed.
Of age at last, he ceased not to aspire.
Soon love of power, grandeur and th' advice
Of courtiers, neither sage nor over-nice,
His youthful head with false conceptions filled.
But still the bear — e'en Burrhus-like, — instilled,
Or sought to do, into the monarch's mind,
Ideas noble, gen'rous and refined —
Of each Narcissus combating the reign.
'Twas longtime hoped the lion would amend.
But he, one day, determined to ordain
An act of gross injustice; long he tried
To gain the signature of his old friend.
With a brief "No," the other quick replied —
And soon their intercourse was at an end.
The bear was banished, and his post bestowed
Upon the tiger. Countless ills and woes
Were now the nation's lot, and each day showed
Increase of cruelty; rebellions rose,

Anger gave place to vengeance, till the shout :
“ Death to our tyrants,” with their death died out.

Princes, if you all happily and well
Would reign and rule, attend to those who tell
Of man's just rights ; nor mar each gen'rous plan,
Because base courtiers vilify the man (60).

FABLE XV.

The Crow and the Rook.

“Who nothing sees can nothing say!
I’ll make a tour,” cries Master Crow,
“Nought can I learn, in any way,
In this my native country, nay,
I much forget — so off I go.”
“Pray, tell me,” cried a solemn rook,
“What you can gain by widely wand’ring;
The stork has visited each nook
Of this vast world by hook or crook, —
Her money and her time all squand’ring
And yet, for all that I e’er heard,
She cannot speak one pleasing word. —
The talent e’en of keeping still
She lost —and not for good but ill.”

A travelled fool returns, I’m sure,
A fool whate’er he saw or spent;
Too many folk need make a tour,
If wit were gathered as they went.

FABLE XVI.

The caged Nightingale.

As Cicely had long desired,
 A nightingale she now possessed.
To have a cage she next aspired,
One that should be by all admired —
 One fit, too, for her charming guest.
Her page, at last, by some good chance,
Bought e'en the prettiest in France —
A perfect model in its way,
 ('Twas said that Perrault had designed it)
Cecilia became quite gay,
And kissed her bird in love and play,
 As in its mansion she confined it.
“ My pretty pet, how blest art thou !
Nought but repose awaits thee now. ”
('Twas thus she cried) “ and what a cage !
 The Louvre's beauties all excelling !
The parrot will expire with rage,
 When he beholds thy splendid dwelling !
Good night, sweet nightingale, good night !
 To-morrow, I shall say good morn ! ”
Her couch she left when scarce day-light ;
 Alas, her heart with grief was torn .

That moment her sweet bird dropped dead :

“Ah me! Too late I learn,” she said,

“That gilded cages nought avail

To cheer a captive nightingale (61). ”

FABLE XVII

The Dog-dealer.

Man's stomach will set forth its daily claim;
It must be heard—so 'tis in nature written.
One sells his dog or cat, his whelp or kitten,
Another one his genius and his fame,
To ease its cravings and compose its strife;
Nay more, if pressed too hard, a shameless Briton,
At public auction e'en, will sell his wife.

You'll find at Paris, on the boulevarts,
Spaniel and hound and terrier and poodle—
In fact all kinds of dogs, and from all parts.
The price is fixed—the much respected dealers
Never deceiving one, tho' e'en a noodle—
Never proposing sums by way of feelers.
One of these gents had 'mongst his tribe of mothers
One who was more prolific than the others—
Twelve puppies in the year,— and all alive;
Each bringing, on an average, one pound five.
Had she amongst the ancient Romans figured,
She had been free|from imposts and from taxes.
To feed her well, howe'er, was not the praxis
Of our dog-dealing friend. In fact, the niggard

Lessened, each day, her breakfast and her dinner.

Diana—such her name — grew weaker, thinner,
Grieved, sighed and pined away and—who'd not do so?
Went down, one morning, to the shades of Pluto.

Exchequer-Chancellors, pray take the hint!

Abundance in a nation never stint

By taxes numerous, unjust and heavy;

Nor think your sole task is each tax to levy.

Live and let live; in all your measures be

The wise promoters of brisk industry (62).

FABLE XVIII.

The Hen and the Turkey-cock.

A pretty hen, with plumage where
Ebon and ivory were blended,
Came once 'mongst poultry fat and fair;
All coy she was and unattended:
With timid look around her glancing,
Like a young debutante advancing
Upon the stage with no friend near,
Her ev'ry step betrayed her fear.
With impudence all stopped and stared,
Whilst pert remarks were seldom spared :
“ Upon my word, I must pronounce her
A little beauty,” cries a cock —
A perfect swaggerer and bouncer —
“ She'll soon improve, if good her stock.”
“ Oh, what a very awkward creature!”
Exclaimed one hen. “ In ev'ry feature,”
Rejoined another, “ I discern
A something very bold and pert!”
“ If all the truth you like to learn, —”
Thus cried a turkey, “ but I spurn
E'en truth itself—when truth may hurt.
I hate malicious talk, but know
Most intimate — some time ago —

Was I with her, for we resided
 Together in one poultry-yard; —
 On the poor thing I'll not be hard. ”
He said no more. The rest provided
A host of comments on the danger
They ran from the suspected stranger.
Each word, each step, each glance, each sigh
Were tortured, watched and turned awry.
Death brought relief, and then 'twas seen
How injured she thro' life had been.

Distrust all those who speak 'gainst others,
 'Midst hems and haws and hints obscure;
Such caution ill their malice smothers,
 Their aim thereby is but more sure.
'Twould be, indeed, a great deal better
To tell the secret, to the letter. —
Methinks, I see a mute, — slow-killing —
Some Sultan's vile behests fulfilling.

2

FABLE XIX.

The Torrent and the Shrub.

Many a brook becomes a torrent ,
Boisterous and wild and horrent ;
There's one I know, which in its course
E'en victor-like exerts its force,
Destruction spreading far and wide, —
O'erwhelming all that stems its tide.

A shrub amidst the swollen waves
The tempest and the torrent braves.
O bold defiance; vain endeavour! —
The shrub is swept away for ever,
The while the fiercely rushing billows
Uninjured leave the bending willows.

Firmness of mind, if not allied
To prudence, is a faulty guide.

FABLE XX.

The Ostrich.

1808.

Who would suspect the ostrich was an antic ?
Yet Lessing tells us that this bird gigantic
Issued a placard once, declaring
He meant to fly aloft. This piece of news
Set all the feathered tribe a - staring.
But all soon came, since there was nought to lose :
“ Room ! Room ! ” exclaimed the ostrich , “ I’m pre-
[paring!
High in the skies I’ll soar with flight all steady —
Indeed, I all but touch the clouds already ! ”
The eagle laughed outright ; his two large eyes
The turkey opened with profound surprise.
In vain the ostrich fluttered, stretched and strained,
Still on the ground the silly bird remained.
What his reward ? — A burst of jeers and hisses !

Many a rhymester, who in pompous lines
Would fain high soar, his object misses ;
Still on the earth — a laughing-stock — reclines,
Till, ’ spite of tropes Pindaric, he descends
Cold Lethe’s stream — and there the matter ends (63).

15.

FABLE XXI.

The Bull and the young Horse.

1822.

A fine young horse, the hope of ev'ry stud,
Disported in the meadows. By his side —
As much as possible — e'er went his guide,
His tutor rather, a sagacious bull,
Sober and prudent, and of wise saws full.
His pupil's fiery eye bespoke the blood
That mantled in his veins — a gait e'er prancing,
Nostrils e'er fuming and a flowing mane
Proving his ardour, and his form enhancing.
The bull of course was not so fond of dancing; —
He liked a quiet walk and sober train.

Tyro proposed a race and for a bet :
“ Well, I shall take it, ” cries Magister, “ merely
To show my pupil that I love him dearly.
Who touches first yon beech the prize shall get.
A hundred paces 'tis.” — And off Bull set.

No hurry did the other show to start;
But all at once, swift as a feathered dart,
Bounded he o'er the space and reached the tree —
That is to say, he passed beyond it quite,

Nor stopped to touch the beech — not he !
Soon Bull came up and rested where 'twas right :

“ Ardour, ” he cried, “ you should, dear friend, res-
The goal to pass is not the goal to gain.” [train, —

FABLE XXII.

The Council of State and the Lion.

King Lion wished t'indite a code of laws,
With greater order o'er his realm to rule, —
So Peter, Fritz, and others of that school
Once willed the same — and not without good cause.

Statutes too numerous and diffuse
Create injustice often and abuse,
And kings would fain decide without a pause.
Much work there was to do, and so our king
Resolved to form a council and to bring
The wisest folk around him. Whom to choose
Was the great matter ; — Bruin had good views,
But courtly etiquette he ne'er could show.

Horse was too quick by far, and Bull too slow ;
Monkey was trickish, fond of silly stuff,
Ass was an Ass — and that was quite enough.
And now Duke Elephant ! Well, 'twas agreed
That he most learned was, tho'not o'er witty,
But showed his parts too much at court, in city.—
Learning offends at times. — The leopard breed

Were too imperious in their comport :
Wolf was unpopular in town and court.
Tiger was treacherous e'er ; Kid too mild,
Sir Ram too gen'rous and Lord Goat too wild.
The Fox's cunning was e'en feared ; in fine

All were rejected, for the monarch wise
His council board with setting-dogs supplies.

Many a crowned prince follows in that line.
Good luck attend them ! I shall elsewhere look !
Such things at court a caviller ne'er would brook,
But I am silent. Fond of tillage,
I'll seek my plough again and cherished village (64).

END OF BOOK THE FOURTH.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The Ivy and the Wall.

TO M. RABILLON.

In Hymen's laws supremely blessed,
No passions ling'ring in thy breast,
The path of honour e'er pursuing —
Which clearly shines in all thou'rt doing, —
Thou cultivatest in sweet peace
 Each joy of mind — thy heart revealing
 Meanwhile each noble, kindly feeling.
Rabillon, may thy joys increase —
Of all thy bliss thou'rt well deserving.
Thy children, from the path ne'er swerving
Which thou hast set them, will assuage
The pains and trials of old age —
As one son proves in Latin fable,
Which I translate as well as able. .

A modest, timid ivy, peering
 Just 'bove the ground and near a wall,
Addressed it thus in tone endearing : —
 “ On thee and thee alone I call.
Let my weak frame on thine repose.

Oh, grant me thy protection kind ;
True gratitude till life's full close
And tenderness the ivy shows —
And such in me thou'lt ever find. ”
All walls have ears, and so had this, —
Nay, good ones too, — all kindly hearing ;
The plant grew up in perfect bliss —
Wanting for nought and nothing fearing.

Years after years soon roll away ;
The wall shows signs of deep decay,
But, tenderly all round it pressing,
The ivy props its rev'rend form,
And screens it, thro' its fond caressing,
'Gainst frost and heat, 'gainst rain and storm —
Prolonging thus, with joy and praise,
Its ancient benefactor's days (65).

FABLE II.

The Cat.

A teasing race, indeed, the mice are —
Neither o'ergood nor over-nice are —
And yet it would be hard to say
Which teases more — the cat or they.
In fact 'tis but a toss between !

Sweet Jane, the pastor's kitchen queen,
Went out, one morn, all flushed and gay,
To have a pleasant holiday.

Just like a bailiff who ransacks
The house that hides the man he's seeking ;
Puss jogs about, her chaps oft smacks,
Then nabs her booty without speaking. —
From drawing-room to kitchen hieing,
Each dainty bit she takes where lying,
Regales herself with all she pleases, —
The freshest cream, the finest cheeses ;
Nor spares, — thro' gluttony intense —
The capon of his reverence.
A thousand mice would not, 'tis clear,
Such havoc make in half a year.

I'd sooner let a cheating neighbour
Pare off my land than go to law, --
Too well I know the cost, the labour !
Oh, save me from the lawyer's claw (66) !

FABLE III.

The Nightingale and the Peacock.

Too proud the peacock is to have much wit,
But then how fine his plumage is! 'Tis fit,
His nobleness and beauty we admire,
And they're enough — nor more does he desire.
The nightingale a most sweet voice possesses, —
A gift I think that's worth the other two.

By chance, there was one day an interview
Between them both, and each addresses
Fine compliments, in turn, unto the other.
Each too, in turn, becomes a friend, a brother.
In this, the secret of their friendship lies : —
One charms the ears, the other charms the eyes.

A difference of merit will cement
A friendship which the same kind would prevent (67).

FABLE IV.

Chinese Vengeance.

I love to dwell amongst the quaint Chinese,
And oft their famous moralist I read. —
The great Confucius can always please,
And from his store oft fabulists succeed
In drawing many a subject and reflection. —
The great point is to make a good selection.

The emperor Tscham, the glory of his nation,
To eloquence each virtue joined, and thus
Practice with preaching blended. Oft with us
It is quite otherwise ; a fine oration —
Warmly pronounced — on some great point is heard,
And lo, the speaker with premeditation
Acts as if ne'er he spoke a single word.
But back to Peking let us quickly hie!
The gen'rous monarch was informed, one morning,
That in a certain province, which was named,
A mandarin, all courtly breeding scorning,
In a strange way his Majesty defamed.
In such a case, courtiers are ever by
Who seldom spoil such tales, as ye may guess. —
Courtiers all o'er the world much mischief make
By air mysterious and nod and shake. —
Nay, some declared that they could do no less

Than tell his Majesty the whole affair,
Tho'it should bring unpleasantness and care. —
A viper's tongue should not unpunished go !
As for our mandarin, tho' scornful ever,
Learned he was, no doubt, and passing clever —
This he supposed his sovereign should know,
Nay, blamed his Majesty for not confiding,
To such a subject, e'en the nation's guiding.
Many in Europe thus will often reason.
Summoned to Peking, he began to dread
It was to answer to a charge of treason :
“ What must I do with thee ? ” the monarch said.
“ Forgive an injury ? That's not enough !
An unjust foe's excesses I'll reprove
By kind proceedings and paternal love.
With hatred still, with speech all rude and rough,
Let him repel advances if he will,
And thus fill up the measure of his ill —
Unless with deep regret the whole he view.
Anger suppressed — is not esteem my due ?
Now let thy heart speak out ! Canst thou prolong,
Without a crime, thine error and thy wrong ? ”
Beside the throne the other sank, depressed,
Then rose again — both honoured and caressed.
No Chinaman herein a fiction traces —
Is it a fable thought in other places (68) ?

FABLE V.

The Jackdaw, the Crow and the Eagle.

1821.

A jackdaw, from an eagle fleeing,
Knew not where he could shelter get ;
A crow his sad dilemma seeing,
Exclaimed : " Make haste, — there's time as yet —
In yonder oak-tree there's a hollow,
Quick, fly within it — and all's right !"
" This sage advice, most kind, I'll follow,
But, surely, you've defective sight,"
Rejoined the daw. " The truth I'll teach thee —
'Tis not an oak, friend, but a beech-tree. "
" Is this the time, " screeched out the crow,
" To stay disputing ? Hide I pray thee ;
Some other time thy learning show. "
The daw draws near the tree, but lo
He stops quite short : " Good dame, I'll lay thee
Whate'er thou wilt, it is a beech. —
An oak ! Ha ! ha ! — Now tell me why — "
But hark a loud and piercing screech !
The eagle flew again on high,
But with the jackdaw — thereby stopping
The question that he thought of popping .

The daw has many imitators !
O statesmen all, O rash debaters,
Your petty wrangles oft expose,
When danger's near, the land to focs.

FABLE VI.

The Buck and the Hind.

A buck made love once to a hind —
One of the true coquettish kind,
Who here and there, and far and near,
Flirted with ev'ry stag and deer,
Thro' vanity and love of pleasing.
The buck liked not this constant teasing :
“ O Jupiter, “ he cries, ” I'm fired
With rage against this hind admired ;
Revenge the pangs she makes me feel. ”
Jove's heart is not a heart of steel :
A hunter soon approached, and shot
The flirting hind upon the spot.

Oft grief to violence succeeds,
We weep o'er hasty words and deeds.
Oh ever since that fatal morn,
The buck was wretched and forlorn (69).

FABLE VII.

The Eagle and the Butterfly.

1808.

The bird of Vict'ry,—by Roman legions raised
 Full oft in triumph—sate upon his throne
 High placed amidst the skies. To him alone
 The feathered tribe paid homage. From all sides,
 All sang his glory and his power praised.

The butterfly, howe'er, each song derides :—

“ Good heavens! What a racket, what a rout! ”

'Twas thus he cried, “ pray what's it all about ?
 And so he'd be our lord — this proud vain eagle !

O birds most vile ye are — 'tis I who say it. —

Do homage at his throne !—I'll never pay it. —
 Such homage is degrading and illegal.

Nay more, his very sceptre I shall claim.

My wings are stronger, swifter far than his,

And thro' the skies more nobly I can whiz.—

Oh, ye shall see! ”

The eagle has his spies,
 Who tell him soon how Butterfly defies

His sway and power and upbraids his name.

Loud is the eagle's laugh—ye stare:—'tis true!

For who would be a King, if never free

To break court etiquette with gaiety?

He e'en resolved to try a flight or two—
Thro' mere caprice or with some end in view —
 With Master Butterfly—so sought the earth.
They start !—Behold the eagle cleaves the clouds!
 But Butterfly, when six feet from the ground,
 By a slight zephyr hurled was round and round,
And falls, all giddy, 'midst the jeering crowds.

Self-love takes care that there shall be no dearth
Of vain pretenders who, presuming ever,
Without due strength or means, all things endeavour.
Will man e'er cease beyond his sphere to go?—
That pride which fascinates him still says:—"No(70)!"

FABLE VIII.

The Travellers and the Plane-tree.

Two honest Normans, famed for cider brewing
And cider selling, wholesale and retail,
One sultry morn in August were pursuing
Their homeward course—no cool, refresh'ning gale
Or e'en a breath of wind their strength renewing.
A plane-tree in a field its shade extended;
Their way soon tow'rds it our two Normans wended,
Seeking the shelter 'neath its sombre leaves.
One views the tree well, but no fruit perceives :
“ Oh, oh, ” he cries, “ I wish I were your master !
Off you should pack from here, good friend, e'en faster
Than any weed. No fruits, it seems, you give ; —
In forests wild alone, such trees should live. ”
“ O base ingratitude ! ” the plane-tree cried,
“ You taunt me thus whilst resting at my side !
For ever quit my hospitable shade. ”

Ingratitude is shamelessly displayed ;
And traders often merit will deride ,
Unless that merit has a fortune made (71).

FABLE IX.

The Birds and the Fishes.

“ O happy fishes, when ye glide,”
Thus cried the birds, “ deep in your waters,
From hooks and bow-nets ye can hide,
Nor fear ye e’er men’s sons and daughters.
But we, when wand’ring thro’ the air,
Or on the ground, dread gun and snare.
The eagle and all birds of prey
Still eat us up, in uncooked dishes.
O Jupiter, we’d bless thy sway,
If thou, upon creation day,
Had made the birds—not birds but—fishes. ”

Now hear the finny tribe : “ Heigho!
Comfort or ease we never know ;
Life is a burden — would that we
Were like the birds, for they can rise
High in the Heavens, when their eyes
Or ears detect an enemy.
However deep we dive, we find
Too oft the snares of base mankind ;
And were it only for the whales
Who batter us with their huge tails,
Or sharks that gulp us clear and clean —
We all wish that we birds had been.

To envy one another's lot
Is still the custom. Courtiers yearn
For peace within a humble cot —
And cottagers for splendour burn.

FABLE X.

The Throne of Snow.

Pleasing the sight of children playing,
For mem'ry then to boyhood straying
Recalls that cherished time, altho'
It has its torments, as all know.
The merest incident and trifle
Can children please, but ne'er can stifle
The voice of nature — for in play
Passion will still assert its sway.
Some youths, returning from the school,
 Espied a heap of snow before them;
The eldest boy—one fond of rule —
 Ascends the throne, and reigns thus o'er them.
The while, like courtiers, all his suite
His new-born power own and greet.
The throne was cold as ice, but then
 It was a throne — a monarch pressed it;
Power is sweet in boys and men —
 All love it who have once possessed it.
And insolent our prince soon grew, —
 Tarquin the Proud, in fact, resembling;
Each fault he punished, more than due. —
 His subjects stood around him trembling.
A Nero e'en he seemed to grow —
Already one in embryo.

But see, with more than wonted glow
The sun bursts forth, and in an hour
All melted was the throne of snow —
The fragile seat of fragile pow'r.
Hadst thou thy seat retained, O sire,
Thou hadst been squatting in the mire.

All ye 'neath fortune's smiles now sitting,
Reflect that fortune is e'er flitting.
Ye're on a heap of snow — beware
The noon-day sun's dissolving glare (72).

FABLE XI.

The Child, her Mother and the Rose.

TO MY NIECES, MESDEMOISELLES DE LE B^{***}.

No rose without a thorn, all say,
Yet all still seek that charming flower ;
“ O joy ! ” Young Lizzy cried, one day,
“ I see one in my own sweet bower.
Thine shall it be, mamma ! ” “ My dear,”
Exclaimed the mother, “ pray take care ; ”
But hark a cry of pain and fear !
Too late th’ advice — no thorns will spare.
A pair of scissars had young Lizzy —
By chance — for she was seldom busy ;
The tree of all its thorns she stripped,
And then the pretty rose-bud clipped.

’Gainst idleness e’en nature cries,
Nor joy unworked for e’er supplies.

FABLE XII.

The Caterpillar, the Spider and the Silkworm.

Jealous, I fear, and envious we're all.

Not easy 'tis such feelings to subdue, —

But then the animals are jealous too.

A proof I'll give you, if for one you call.

The worm, in Provence prized so much, had spun

A tissue which — so rich it was — had won

Orosman-Lafon's love and made him buy it,

E'en as a turban on the stage to try it :

“ I wish to see the work — that is, t' admire it,”

Arachne cried. “ And I likewise desire it,”

Rejoined the caterpillar. — Off both went :

“ Is this the work? Is this, forsooth, the stuff

(Such their remarks) on which such praise is spent ?

Let's to our homes. — I'm sure we've seen enough.

Much finer specimens we both can show.”

Such comments are not seldom heard, for so

Speak poetasters—so pretensions raise.

Rivals, of talent void, are just the men

To be fault-finders — right or wrong — but then

Blame in such mouths is tantamount to praise (73).

FABLE XIII.

The Sheep, the Wolf, the Dogs and the Shepherd.

1824.

Tho' timid, still the woolly clan
At times grow headstrong and seditious ;
A ram, their tribune, once began
A crusade 'gainst both dog and man —
Each of a race (he said) most vicious :
“ These dogs torment us night and morn ;
Our hips and houghs are by them torn,
For mere amusement. Then they hurry
To Master Man, fresh grace to curry.
And what a master! He, at need,
Would slaughter all the woolly breed. —
Whilst we're alive, like slaves he treats us,
And when we're killed—the glutton eats us!
Then rise, O sheep, 'gainst foes unjust
And nobly fall—if fall ye must! ”
Soon rank rebellion lifts its head,
And soon its flames on all sides spread.
Lo Wolf appears! Oh what a bustle !
What a scamp'ring! What a tussle!
All sought the shepherd : “ O good master,
Save us, O save from fell disaster.
Oh, let the dogs, whose needful sway
We gladly own, drive Wolf away.”

E'en sheep heads come to just conclusions,
Once they've dispelled all vain delusions : —
“ If we'd escape from wolves, ” they said,
“ We must by men and dogs be led. ”

FABLE XIV.

The Starling representing the Race of Birds.

1821.

In a republic once, the birds devoted
Much time to law and politics, and sent
Well-chosen deputies to parliament.
Amongst the members was the starling noted. —
With plumage black and grey, and beak all yellow,
He's not, 'tis true, a very pretty fellow.
But then in eloquence he e'er rejoices,
And thereby gains the citizens' sweet voices.

Boldness and prudence he could well unite —
The eagle and his courtiers all condemning,
Their impudence and tyranny e'en stemming. —

His talent put all violence to flight :
“ Long live the starling! ” was the gen'ral cry,
All spoke of him, all loved him far and nigh. —
But praise too oft perverts e'en sterling merit;

The love of pleasing starlings e'en inherit. —
And so he flattered e'er, in fine orations,
Whatever whims and plans and inclinations
Had popularity upon their side.

With putting tyrants down not satisfied,
Fell anarchy he preached, nor, till too late,
Saw that he had, alas, destroyed the state.

If our ambition merely is to shine
And praise procure, e'en talent, merit, worth
To follies often, nay to crimes, give birth. —
But useless all these reasonings of mine ;
All two-legged senators — 'tis understood —
Are wise and modest, prudent, calm and good (74).

FABLE XV.

The Fisherman and the Thunny.

“ What, not a single sturgeon in my net
 Nor e'en a pilchard? ” cried in no slight pet
 A Marseilles fisherman, “ I'll homeward sail.
 But how will my good housewife scold and rail?
 Well, well, I must return, tho' great my sorrow,
 More lucky I shall be—no doubt — to-morrow. ”

But scarcely had poor Simon time to tack,
 Before a thunny sprung into his smack,
 A shark escaping : “ Bravo! ” cried the fisher,
 Fortune a jade is — true— but I'm the man
 To make her do whatever I may wish her!
 Declaim 'gainst me who dare — compete who can!
 I'm not a sorcerer, but none can ply
 The trade of fisherman so well as I. ”

Oft credit take we and oft honour claim
 For good which — not from skill, but — chance
[arose;
 Gen'ral's retreat — yet win a victor's fame;
 But hush! — Bellona's secrets why disclose?

FABLE XVI.

The Wolves the Dog and the Flock.

1815.

The wolves, one day, united with intent
To fall upon a sheepfold unawares ;
Of their base schemes old Growler got a scent,
So took wise steps th' irruption to prevent.—
The baffled wolves resought their gory lairs.
Growler at times was somewhat rough, severe,
But good at heart, prudent and void of fear—
One fit to reign and wolves to foil and brave,
But lo, their tactics change they, and devise
Plans Machiavellic and most cunning tricks,—
Trying, in fact, their hands at politics.
A proclamation, philanthropic, grave,
They post up on the fold.—With deep surprise,
Ye ask how that is possible, and crave
Permission e'en to doubt that this be truth !
But what of that ? Historians, in sooth,
Events e'en more incredible have told—
Events which we as truth undoubted hold.
But to our wolves return. Their proclamation
No slight effect produced ; they swore
No enmity whate'er to sheep they bore —
Only 'gainst Growler rose their indignation :

“ Growler once killed,” they said, “for evermore
True friendship will t’ween wolves and sheep prevail;
Whilst peace and confidence will never fail.
To many shameful acts will weakness lead.
The thoughtless sheep soon fell into the snare :
“ When all run risk, ’twere folly one to spare
Whose sacrifice brings safety to us all, ”
’Twas thus they cried. “ Whatever may befall,
The country must be saved, in time of need. ”
Growler betrayed was, and his cruel foe,
Maddened with rage, soon laid poor Growler low. —
This act of treach’ry and ingratitude
His heart had broken and his force subdued. —
But hark, what groans of anguish and despair ! —
The wolves are in the fold — and no friend there !
A horrid massacre the sheep awaits.

When common danger menaces states,
Make common cause, O people, with your kings,
Union alone rescue and safety brings (75).

FABLE XVII.

The Ass and the Magpie.

Asses will ne'er improve! How Neddy once,
Thro' o'er politeness, got a broken sconce,
Lafontaine tells us. Ne'ertheless,

He once more took in head to give full vent
To all his fancies, and all ears to bless

With dulcet song and rare accompaniment.
A thousand jeers and blows, of course, he won :
" Men are the greatest fools beneath the sun, "

'Twas thus he brayed "My songs are all in vain."
But lo, a magpie hops in view : " Good friend,

How sweet thy voice," she cries, " how pure thy
Oh, why so soon thy lay entrancing end? [strain!
Sweeter than those which from yon grove ascend?

Our voices suit — a duet let us try;
With envy all competitors will die ".

Ye poetasters who, 'gainst nature's laws,
Murder so many verses, ye've no cause
To be depressed; from Boileau e'en take cheer :
Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire (76).

FABLE XVIII.

The Child and the May-Chafer.

A spoiled child, George, one day retained
A young May-chafer by a string;
(Such cruel sports should be restrained)
Alas, the poor and harmless thing,
Born free, for freedom panted still,
Denounced each wrong and claimed each right;
And this the urchin took quite ill :
“ An insect, too, my power slight ! ”
’Twas thus he cried, “ a chafer mutter
Each time I check him in his flutter !
His life I could at will destroy,
Yet such my kindness I forbear.
Death he deserves, but as a toy
He’s useful still, so still I’ll spare ”.

A tyrant thinks that, ’neath the sun,
There’s none so good and kind as he,
Because he leaves some ill undone.
Upon this text I have begun
A book — but let me prudent be.

FABLE XIX.

The Eagle and the Crow.

" Oh, what a scent cadaverous !
Vile bird, I pray, approach not thus, "
 Exclaimed the eagle to the crow ;
" Your mode of life is hateful quite. "
" O sire, " said crow, in deep affright,
 " Pray let me all my errors know.
May 't please your majesty, declare
 If worse it is to set a-picking
At dead cold lambs, than rudely tear,
 And eat them — all alive and kicking ".

To conquerors I might allude,
But others have, in terms most rude,
Attacked them oft enough, and yet
Upon destruction still they're set.
Contractors come within my aim :
Cannibals of course they hate,
Yet oft they fleece, devoid of shame,
The living members of the state.

FABLE XX.

King Chaffinch.

I've read that in some foreign part, my friends, —
In Germany or Italy perchance, —
A chaffinch, most ambitious, gained his ends,
And king became. Proud of the regal crown,
And anxious all its splendour to enhance,
He soon proclaimed, in country and in town,
That foreign languages, — that is, all those
Foreign to chaffinches — should not be heard —
Ord'ring, in fact, that they should be put down.
The nightingale and ev'ry singing bird
Of course grew silent. Soon a host arose
Of paid interpreters. All tried to catch
(No easy task) the king's shrill, treble note —
But no one got at place, who had it not by rote.
True merit was e'er spurned ; in such a match,
Dulness the best chance has. But 'gainst the king
Complaints soon rise and discontentment spreads.
Adieu his power ! All the birds that sing,
To where the swan holds sway their flight now
[wing. —]
The chaffinches alone the monarch heads.

What matter is't to him who wears the ermine
If subjects speak French, Latin, Greek or German,
So that they loyal be. Thus Lewis thought
And Charles-Quint also. — Some few kings, I fear,
(Unlike those monarchs) with imprudence fraught,
Still greatly need the warning given here (77).

FABLE XXI.

The Bear at Beaucaire Fair.

Now, who would b'lieve it? Once a bear,
For wit and grace beyond compare,
Had gained a wide-extended fame —
For ev'ry one knew Martin's name.
One time, with step all firm, sedate,
Like a pro-consul he would walk;
And then, just as he took in pate,
Ee'n like a Paris coxcomb stalk !
His features he could change as often
As visitors might please to ask. —
Our nature to correct and soften
Is a good tutor's easy task. —
Now Bruin from his tend'rest years
Had been well bred, and it appears
That Vestris e'en had taught him dancing —
His other merits all enhancing.
Six months, in fact, before he came out,
His qualities had brought his name out,
With honour too; — and prithee, where?
Why, nowhere else than in Beaucaire —
In whose most ancient, famous fair,
Many a roguish Greek-clad Frenchman
The cash, from tight-held purses, wrench can,
By oriental silks unfolding —

To the surprise of all beholding,
Who 'gainst them would turn up their noses,
If they but knew the figured roses
And flaunting patterns had not come
From places out of Christendom,
But could be got, on any day,
In Lyons for one half th' outlay.
Lo, Bruin makes his first appearance!
In other booths there's soon a clearance,
All hasten to him — prince and clown —
And own how just is his renown.
Ne'er Talma, on provincial stage,
Lebrun, in his Pindaric rage,
Or Doctor Gall, at his *début*,
Such hosts of warm admirers drew.
His dose of praise was far too drastic.

Soon all his tricks were fully known,
The public passed to jeers sarcastic,
But Bruin still, with look bombastic,

Repeated all the tricks he'd shown.
At last he set the crowds a-yawning
Who soon, 'midst hisses, left the awning.
The rostrum why so oft ascend,

Ye orators? Be not deluded!
Beware of scoffers! Foe and friend
E'en talent spurn will, in the end,
If talent be too oft intruded (78).

END OF BOOK THE FIFTH.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The generous Cock.

TO THE MARQUIS DE NISAS.

Upon thine honoured brow, we view
Bellona's and Apollo's bays ;
Then, what can vile detractors do ?
Thy path of honour still pursue,
Regardless of the taunts they raise. —
The worth which calls forth envy's hate
Will envy conquer, soon or late. —
Descended from a noble stock,
And crowned with vict'ry oft, a cock
Acquired that easy tone, that grace
And air of greatness which so well
Become a victor's fame and place.
The senate-house, too, oft could tell
How fluent he and eloquent. —
None equalled him in parliament.
A host of rivals he prostrated,
Who soon his ruin meditated ;
At length, they in their schemes succeeded,
His services were all unheeded,

Till, shorn of honours, he became
The last in rank and last in name.
With dignity, the change he bore,
Nor condescended to complain;
Redress he scorned to ask—the more
That he despised the vulgar train.
But still his country loved he dearly,
Tho' it had treated him severely.
Tow'rds midnight once, a fox most cunning,
By well-laid schemes the watch-dog shunning,
Upon the silent hen-house falls,
Oh, what a panic then arose!
Like that which spread, when raging Gauls
Were rushing over Rome's old walls.
Camillus-like, all wrongs and woes
Forgiving, nay forgetting, lo
The cock assailed the daring foe,
And with his spurs his eyes he tore,
So Master Fox could see no more.
His skin became a muff—the farmer
Giving it to some lady-charmer.

From that day forth, the cock was deemed
The liberator of his kind, —
Admired and courted, loved, esteemed;
All honour was to him assigned :
“ His valour, prudence and his tact
Are worth an army,” all exclaimed;
His foes could not deny that fact,
And grew confounded and ashamed (79).

FABLE II.

The Financier, the Primer and the Starling.

Fat Mondor, early—that's to say at noon,—
Was driven into one of those still streets
Where oft the scholar with the pedant meets —
The former seeking for good books, the latter
Thinking an old one, merely, quite a boon,
Whether 'twas written by a wit or loon.
The " Latin Land " was startled with the clatter
Of Mondor's splendid carriage, till it stopped
At a bookseller's, into which he popped.
A book superb he opened soon, and found
It was a primer—for the Dauphin bound.
" Without your pompous binding," thus he cried,
" You'd be of little value! " " That's quite true."
A mocking starling from his cage replied, .
" Good Master Turcaret — I greatly fear " —
He added, whilst the other looked quite blue,
" You'd not be worth much, if you had no gear. "
Swollen with pride, how many great folk lack
All sterling worth—pluming themselves upon
Their wealth and their possessions. Many a one
With handsome frames will sorry pictures back.
On mere appearance praises ne'er bestow,
For merit only let our incense glow (80).

FABLE III.

The mad Lion and the Rabbit.

Hippocrates or Pinel tells us — and with truth —
That oft ambition will to madness lead;
Once upon a time — I know when — in sooth
’Tis not of consequence, it was decreed
King Lion should stark mad become. Some said
(Lord Fox amongst the rest) ’twas but a fit. —
He spoke by etiquette, but shook his head,
Quite gravely e’en, when others mentioned it :
“ Oh, in what corner can I safely hide,
T’escape his glance so fierce ? ” the rabbit cried,
“ What will become of us ? O cruel fate !
’Twas bad enough — so all of us will state —
Before his Majesty became quite cracked. ”

Say, can the rabbit’s reas’ning be attacked ? —
All hope is lost, and all is sadness,
Whenever power is combined with madness (81).

FABLE IV.

The Ass and the Gander.

The ass and gander once contended
About the blood which had descended
From ages to them, each one naming
His famous sires, and each one claiming
Precedence o'er the other. So
Talk many persons whom I know, —
Displaying as much wit and knowledge;
For heraldry has got its college.
Friend Neddy swore Canaan's land
Was that in which his race first sprung,
And claimed amongst his sires so grand
Balaam's ass, of famous tongue,
Whose learned speech, I b'lieve, prevailed
E'en when the prophet's had quite failed.
Came Gander next! He scratched his poll,
“The geese, the geese,” he then exclaimed,
“That saved the Roman capitol
Were my great ancestors — e'er-famed.”
Forth came the master from a nook :
“Too long,” he cried, “ye both have boasted!”
The ass he drubbed, and to the cook
Straight sent the gander to be roasted.

How many persons do we find
Quite of the ass and gander kind ;
Trusting to ancient parchments, they
Their merit found on them alone.
To have famed ancestors I own
Is fortunate, but then I pray
That all, who boast of them, endeavour
To vie with them in merit ever (82).

FABLE V.

The Beetle and the Eagle.

Jove's bird—his earthly visit ended—
High in the realms of air ascended.
A beetle all ambitious—e'en
The insect tribe ambition know—
Was on his back! All scared his mien,
As swiftly thro' the clouds they go.
The Gods he wished to see—tis true—
But then too rapid was the flight;
He soon repented, home-sick grew,
And wishing to return, ere night,
Sprung from the eagle's back!—The winds
Blew him to pieces as he fell.

Many a fool, alas, one finds
In stations which—the truth to tell—
Are far too high for feeble heads.
The height attained, the height he dreads.
Unable well to hold it, he
Would fain re-seek obscurity.—
Alas, that e'er the beetle quitted
The humble post he well befitted (83).

FABLE VI.

The great Bell of Notre-Dame.

E'en near that part of Paris where—as wits
Or wags declare—reside true Paris cits,
A portly burgess with his children dwelt,
“ Oh, what a deaf'ning sound! ” the eldest cried,
“ Tis the great bell of Notre-Dame! ”
Rejoined the father with delight and pride,
As on the ground in thankfulness he knelt.
“ It tells us that our glorious oriflamme
Has gained fresh viet'ries. Three cheers for Mars!
He brings us fame and honour—let's rejoice. ”
Again it sounded, but this time its voice
Was all for peace : “ The nation's scars
Will now be healed, ” our citizen exclaimed,
“ Wealthy thro' commerce we'll become and famed.
We've had enough of combats—Goodness knows.
Frenchmen—all own—love quietness and repose.”

The war began again! The great bell sounded;—
With martial zeal our trader's heart rebounded.
And thus, for many years, he gave applause
To each event, nor cared he in what cause.—
When into Paris marched the English host,
He drank their health, and drank it as a toast.

O Notre-Dame! thy great and changeful bell

Has many imitators. If, at times,
Some men at each event with anger swell,
A host there are to whom all things sound well.
Alas, some prove as much in venal rhymes.
Seldom can Kings escape from flatt'ring odes.—
Chazet pursues them on all sides, all roads!
Nay, if he thought he could some favours cull,
He'd send his verses to the great Mogul (84)!

FABLE VII.**The Ass beaten to death by his Master.**

For twenty years, an ass had led
 A life of labour and privations ;
On thistles he, contented, fed—
He did not wish to tax (he said)
 The family's e'er scanty rations.
On working-days he brought a store,
 To market towns, of garden tillage,
And cheerfully on Sundays bore
 His mistress to the neighb'ring village.
But old he grew at last. One morn,
 His heartless owner (less a man
Than monster—I must state in scorn)
 Observed the faithful ass began
To falter 'neath his wonted load,
So struck him down upon the road.

Ye heroes — (if I thus may pass
To heroes from a poor old ass)
O ye who consecrate your lives
 To your loved country's service, learn
That he alone who ever thrives
 Retains th'esteem which heroes earn.
The least reverse will clamour bring,
For ne'er will envy cease to sting.

FABLE VIII.

The Swan, the Nightingale, and the Gosling.

A swan, whilst resting on the waters,
Was chaunting to fair Mem'ry's daughters :

“ O strains entrancing ! I confess
So sweet a song I never heard,”

Exclaimed a nightingale — a bird
Whose tones, likewise, all hearers bless.
A certain gosling, with rude tongue,
Cackled the while the swan thus sung :

“ O horrid noise ! ” cries Philomel,
“ Why thus with envy 'gainst him swell ? ”
“ His triumph I shall ne'er forgive,”
Exclaimed the gosling, “ whilst I live.
My foe he is, since fame he'd gain.”

Apollo's sons should e'er restrain
The feelings that from envy rise. —
True talent should true talent prize.
Envy becomes a gosling well —
Ill placed 'tis in a Philomel (85).

FABLE IX.

The Rat and the Bull.

Fatigued with combats and with pleasure,
Beside a stream a young bull slept,
And, whilst he dozed away at leisure,
A rat beside him slily crept. —
When rats can hurt they're in their glory,
So death they merit, tho't be gory. —
Around the bull all softly creeping,
Rat found that he was soundly sleeping;
“ O idle brute, he'd happy be,
When all around is misery!
I'll gently wake him. ” Saying this,
The bull's foot bit he, and away
Quick scampered from the sight of day,
To hide in some dark foul abyss. —
After his vile successes, thus
Sneaks off each paltry Zoilus. —
'Midst madd'ning pain, the bull awakes,
With bellowing the forest shakes;
Tosses and bounds and rends the ground, —
Scatt'ring a cloud of dust around.
Lo, wildly o'er the plain he rushes;
But still, but still—the life-blood gushes!
All weak his limbs, all dim his eyes,
Tott'ring he falls, and falling—dies.

Vile animals there are who hate
All who more blest than they appear,
But let not talent desecrate
Its nobleness, by giving ear
To what a brood of vipers say —
Unheeded, let them hiss away.
The foe who hides thro' very shame
Not e'en a passing thought can claim (86).

FABLE X.

The Eagle and the Nightingale.

The eagle is no singing-bird — at least
I never heard his song — but, then, all say
That he's a connoisseur, well-practised, nay
Quite a Mecænas in the music way.
Oft courtly circles will he leave, to feast
Upon a sweet love-song in grove or bower.
A pretty air and ballad have the power
T'arrest his swiftest flight. Now, 'mongst all birds,
There's none can vie with gentle nightingale,
Spring's chaunter — but onward with my tale.
One morn, the eagle with most gracious words,
Invited all the singing tribe to pay
A visit to him at his palace, where
The thunders gather and the lightnings play.
“ Alas, to such a height I ne'er could stray, ”
Exclaimed the nightingale, “ and e'en if there
I could not chaunt in worthy strains your praise —
The land of storms would drive me to despair.
Ne'er could I face the sun's terrific glare.
Ambitious birds would court its dazzling rays,
But I am feeble both of voice and sight, —
In shady woods alone I take delight.”

O sons of song, if ye would song retain,
Avoid the court, and in your groves remain.

FABLE XI.

The Stag and the Fawn.

“ Dear Father,” cried a pretty fawn,
Disporting on a tranquil lawn,
“ A shame ’tis for a stag like thee,
 With head so well armed and protected,
At all times from mere hounds to flee.”

“ My son,” the other said, dejected,
“ I’ve often urged as much, and sought
 To muster up true martial zeal,
But when the hounds’ full cry I’ve caught,
My resolutions are as nought ; —
 Away I go ! ”

 E’en clad in steel,
A poltroon is a poltroon still,
Tho’, when he’s safe, he bluster will.

FABLE XII.

The Fox and the Dog.

A famous cock, unequalled e'en
By any that in England fight,
By Master Renard seized had been,
Whilst dozed he, in the dead of night.
But Growler found th'assassin's den,
Expelled him thence, and on him felt;
Fox never more wronged dogs or men —
What Growler does, he does right well.

Success in crime full oft precedes
The chastisement of evil deeds;
Renard had got his booty—soon
It proved a sad, a fatal boon.
Remorse may cease to sting, but still
There is a Nemesis for ill.

FABLE XIII.

The Horse and the Ass.

Whatever happens 'mongst us men,
The animals soon know—how? when?
Ah, that I cannot tell—unless
That parrots as their agents act;
Be that as't may, it is a fact
They learn our deeds with eagerness—
Making many a comment, note,
On what their Homer 'bout them wrote:
“How truly he our features traces,
How well describes the donkey's graces,”
Exclaimed the horse, “his notes and voice,
His bursts of music, strange yet choice,
And flourishes of rhetoric—
In short, our darling's ev'ry trick!”

Neddy grew savage at this speech,
And railed 'gainst all within his reach, —
Æsop, Lafontaine, Phedrus chiding,
Like Fréron did Voltaire: “I ask,”
He cried at last, “if this deriding
Is worth a thought—O idle task!
True consolation I can find
By thinking that Delille has praised me,
And thus to glory's temple raised me.”

Thus fools—and often men of mind—
Just criticism will o'erlook,
Judicious comments but ill brook,
Have faith in praise alone, and deem
'Tis but their due whate'er their theme (87).

FABLE XIV.

The Sow and the Lioness.

That animal which Hebrews—one and all —
 Denounce as foul, but which the wealth insures
 And forms the boast, too, of Westphalia's boors,
 The sow, the pig's fair spouse, (for one must call
 Things by their proper names), had given birth
 To twelve young pigs, a good round number,
 Which did not let her pride maternal slumber.

Like Niobe, she boasted to all earth
 Of her superiority : " Poor Queen ! "
 She thus bespoke the lioness, " you've got
 One son alone — I pity your hard lot. " —

(And Sow put on a sympathizing mien.)

" Upon such terms, a crown I'd not possess. "

" 'Tis true ", replied the stately lioness,

" I've one son only, but I'd have you know, —
 That son a lion is."

Dorat, fond of show,
 Produced all kinds of works, and lost all fame ;
 Barthélemi, the model of each sage,
 Wrote his Anacharsis and gained a name —
 An honoured one for ev'ry clime and age.

Mere quantity can ne'er true honour raise —
 'Tis quality alone that merits praise (88).

FABLE XV.

(IMITATED FROM KRASICKI.)

The Horses, the Conductor and the Passer-by.

1821.

To be a plagiarist is not, I'm sure,
A rare occurrence at Castalia's spring;
Invention grows fatigued, if long on wing,
And seeks for books already made. Secure
Against detection, authors often seize
The best ideas that in England rise,
Or those which most the race Teutonic please.
The Polish Æsop I have learned to prize,—
He who in Fritz's time was quite in vogue. —
I'll borrow from him a brief apologue.

Four prancing steeds, all strong and young,
Like those which Homer paints divinely,
Along the road, one morning, sprung, —
A skilful coachman guiding finely.
With voice and gest, he urged them still,
Exclaiming thus to both the leaders: —
“ On! on! — if still ye'd be preceders.
Rival the wind, or else ye will
By your two comrades be o'ertaken,
And thus your fame for ever shaken.”

“ And ye, ” he cried, in turn addressing
The other two, “ on, on with speed!
Why let them in advance be pressing?”

“ Oh, this is trickery, indeed!”
Exclaimed an honest passer-by,
With philosophic ear and eye,
“ How can you thus these beasts deceive?
You have no conscience, friend, I b’lieve.”
Jehu pulled up : “ You see, good sir,
My words replace both whip and spur.
All swiftly flies the coach — the while
A race of heroes thus I train.
What! know you not that, with such guile,
Kings now-a-days both rule and reign!”

This doctrine will restriction bear ;
No need to base deceit to fly ;
Yet whip and spur we oft may spare,
If emulation we but try.

FABLE XVI.

The Fly and its Cousin.

A pretty fly, all thoughtless, gay.
And dainty even as a doctor,
A glass of Tokay spied, one day,—
Quite fit for canon or for proctor.
Wishing to sip it merely, he
Fell in and soon, alas, was drowned ;
“ The fruits now of imprudence see ! ”
Exclaimed a cousin, grave, profound —
One that we might with Cato measure,
“ Get tipsy—fie ! Oh, where the pleasure?
I bless my fate that such low joys
I never court—but only glory. ”
He’s off,— and soon a lamp destroys
His fragile life.—So ends my story.

Thus one who boasts of wisdom, force,—
Who other’s follies can discern,
Will merely take another course
To be himself shipwrecked in turn (89).

FABLE XVII.

The Lion, the Spaniel and the Wolf.

1824.

In hunting, monarchs e'er delight —
It whets the royal appetite.
King Lion had the woods just scoured,
And now a noble stag devoured. —
I pardon beg : He offered it
To Comus as a present fit. —
Lion devout was. — Soon there crept
 A spaniel near him, lively, gay,
And gracefully around him leapt,
 Amidst all kinds of pretty play.
He fain would of the stag partake,
 But how become a lion's guest ?
No easy task — and great the stake!
Th' attempt, howe'er, he dared to make,
 And soon success the effort blessed.
Regardless of the lion's jaws,
He picked a bit from out his claws!
The prince was quite amused, the other
Grew quite at home — a friend, a brother!

A wolf, presuming, this espied ;
 “ A lucky journey I have made,

Be heaven thanked ! ” ’twas thus he cried,
“ But can I trust mine eyes? No pride
 No anger by the king displayed!
Must he now insults brook, and fear
A poor weak dog? — I’m lord, then, here!
Perish he must. His crown I’ll seize,
And reign supreme as fate decrees.”
This said, he made a spring, but lo
The monarch felled him at a blow.

Some folk there are who weakness call
 The generosity that spares : —
I like to see the wicked fall
 Into their own malicious snares (90).

FABLE XVIII.

The Leopard, the Bear and the Nightingale.

A youthful leopard held tyrannic sway
O'er all the land where he as sultan dwelt;
Conquered at last, his foes before him knelt,
The while his subjects trembled night and day.
Nor happier, in sooth, was he than they. —
Suspicious, all-retiring and all fierce,
No tyrant quietly breathes, for well he knows
Too many arms would fain his bosom pierce,
And bring his hated being to a close.—
The leopard was ambitious, fond of rule,
But still for happiness he often yearned,
And so to Bruin he one morning turned,
(Bruin the Bear, with head all wise and cool)
And asked for his advice : “ I was myself,
Some time ago, a melancholic elf, ”
(Bruin observed) “ but, one fine morning,
Mars and his labours all intensely scorning,
I got a dancing-master, music heard, —
In short, the fine arts patronized, and now
I scarcely know myself — so glad my brow,
So light my heart. O sire, in one brief word,
If you would happy be, in spite of fate,

Tastes good and innocent e'er cultivate;
All baneful passions subjugate and quell,
And hear the strains full oft of Philomel. ”
His Highness took th'advice, and soon became
The model of all rulers.

There's no ground
To be astonished at this change. — The same
Was seen in ancient Rome. In grief profound
And in despair, Augustus plunged the land,
Whilst mad ambition's voice he heard alone.
But Orpheus raised at last his magic tone —
All just the prince soon grew, all gentle, bland;
The friend of Virgil and of Horace, he
Became a model for posterity (94).

FABLE XIX.

The Crow.

The birds (so Dupont-Nemours says) devote
Much time to literature and arts;
The crows, howe'er, must show at times strange
[parts,

But no : — e'en like our journalists they note
The quantum that is due of praise — a right
Which they will suffer no one to assail.
Whene'er the sweet and gen'rous nightingale
Praises the Warbler's song, Crow, full of spite,
Sets up as critic, ready-made — rejecting
The most harmonious sounds, and faults detecting
Where others none can find. To have good ears
One should have ears like him — then all is right! —
The harshest sound melodious appears.

Zoilus lays his dictum down, and lo,
A host of fools applaud it with delight —
And thus subservience not judgment show (92).

FABLE XX.

The Wren and the other Birds.

A wren to sov'reign sway aspired;
So perched upon a noble oak,
Which all the feathered tribe admired : —
“ From this high throne, ” ’twas thus he spoke,
“ I’ll rule you all and rule you well,
No fault shall e’er unpunished go. ”
The monarch made a step and, lo,
Upon the ground he quickly fell.
And oh, the jeers and tauntings rude
That rose from ’midst the multitude.

Ye *parvenus*, devoid of sense,
Why manifest such insolence?
Ye ’re perched full high, but perches fall,
And down ye come may — perch and all.

FABLE XXI.

The Ass's Wishes.

At spring's return, all nature glows,
The trees resume their verdant dress,
And one melodious chorus flows
From birds which that sweet advent bless.
One of Montmartre's lords, howe'er,
In short, a donkey full of care
And full of grief, sweet May denounced :
" I'm always in this month well trounced ; "
Poor Neddy cried, " from garden bowers,
My master plucks the sweetest flowers,
To sell them to those gallants who
To lady-loves, as presents, take them ;
O'erloaded am I e'er, nor few
The blows I get, if I pursue
My way at ease, or roughly shake them.
The spring I hate ; and when it passes,
'Twill be a blessing for us asses. "

Lo, Saturn brings the summer heat —
Does that friend Neddy's wishes meet ?
A vegetable cart he draws, —
No time to rest or e'en to pause.

And on he jogs with many a sigh,
Exclaiming oft : " Well, autumn's nigh ! "

And autumn comes — for, swift Time's flight !
New griefs arise, new loads distress ;
Two hampers, filled with grapes, now press
Upon his form and bend it quite.
The frost and snow he oft invokes, —
Thinking repose will come at length ;
But winter brings the worst of yokes,
And rudest labours try his strength.
Ere morning dawns, he's roused from sleep,
With ice to rich mens' cooks to creep,
And when home come, manure must bring
To raise the flowers for — next spring.
At last his philosophic pate
Found death alone could change his fate.

E'en like the ass will men oft reason ;
New governments they still demand ;
But when change comes, thro' chance or treason,
They think it is still out of season —
For suffering still o'erwhelms the land.
O ye, who mourn your heavy doom,
Know there's a life beyond the tomb (93).

FABLE XXII.

The Parrot and the Chaffinch.

“ Vain as a parrot! ” Sancho Panza cried,
And he is right, for Poll is full of pride,
E'er glories in his plumage, and invites
All passers-by to praise him for his speech.
Escaped from his gilt prison, he alights
Amidst a wood and on a tow'ring beech.
Soon he begins to clatter and to screech : —
“ The feathered tribe, ” he says, “ were made to
[hear me,
Rule over them I shall — so let them fear me!”
Whene'er the nightingale or soaring lark
Began to sing, he never failed to say : —
“ What a fine talent truly! Poor things, they
Not one word e'en can speak, but mark
How fluent I! Now if they'd only learn,
They'd both be good for something in their turn.
I'll their professor be; ye know I'm pat in
Many a written language, e'en in Latin!
A learned doctor brought me up, and ever
I treasured up his sayings and his saws,
And that precisely is, my friends, the cause
I'm now all wise, all eloquent, all clever! ”
“ So, that's the cause eh? ” Thus the chaffinch said,
“ Your wit is, then, but borrowed from another!

Each jealous feeling we may all well smother.
Repeat fine phrases, when you take in head;
Our singing-birds sing only, but their song
Does not, at least, to other folk belong."

A savant who can never comprehend
His Homer, tho' each line he can repeat,
Thinks that he is superior in th' end
To Fontane and to Voltaire e'en. I meet
An antiquary who, from ancient schools,
Derives — but hold! Why irritate fresh fools (94)?

END OF BOOK THE SIXTH.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The Boat and the Rowers.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA CAZE.

As on the banks of Seine I wandered,
Upon the human race I pondered,
Retracing life's eventful course,
 E'en from the cradle to the tomb;
And grieved to find that brutal force,
Self-love and pride were still the source
 Of all the ills which life consume.
And, whilst thus straying sad and lonely,
 My heart recalled with grateful joy,
How friendship, and how friendship only,
 Life's pains can soothe, if not destroy.
And then I seemed again to be
In Berlin, dear La Caze, with thee—
That pleasing city where we two,
 On Pegasus together mounted,
To ev'ry Muse paid homage due—
 While all our wishes we recounted.

And all at once a boat I spied,
 With two young rowers in it seated;
All swiftly did it downward glide,
Yet steadily on either side,
 Until, with vain discussions heated,
The rowers quarrelled.

 To and fro,
 The boat keeps heaving in the river;
Contrariwise in wrath they row. —
 Their craft to atoms soon they'll shiver !
Their homes they' ll never see — their rage
 Urging them on to Pluto's stream.

As this life is a pilgrimage,
 Oh, what a treasure should we deem
A friend that we can love and cherish,
 And one by whom we're loved in turn.
 All vain dissensions let us spurn,
And row together, or we perish (95).

FABLE II.

The Tom-tit.

“ A truce to the insipid praises,
Which ev’ry one at random raises,
 Whene’er the Warbler comes in sight;
In what consists his art of pleasing?
And yet his triumph is unceasing!” —

 Thus cried a tom-tit in his spite.
“ Less handsome he — so all must own —
Than I, for ’tis his song alone
Which captivates each ear and heart;
Since wonders then from singing start,
Why I’ll sing also!” —

 Oh, what tones!

Cleavers combined with marrow-bones
Ne’er woke such music. Altogether,
The birds of ev’ry kind and feather
Against the luckless chaunter rose,
And brought his ditties to a close.

For one who, in the road that leads
To Mem’ry’s brilliant fane, succeeds,
A thousand fail, and ’stead of fame
Gain nothing but rebuke and shame.

FABLE III.

The Rat, the Weasel, the Fox and the Wolf.

A rat, who revelled long 'mongst cheeses,
Scuds off with one without demur;
A weasel comes, and straightway seizes
The plunder and the plunderer.
A fox from 'midst a field of teasel
Sees Rat and cheese devoured by Weasel;
" Oh, what feast she'll now provide me!
If I but spare her—woe betide me!
Moreover, 'twould be wrong, I'm sure,
To let Rat's death unpunished go."—
And Fox, e'en like an epicure,
Soon sets to work on Weasel. Lo,
A wolf appears, with hunger raging,
And soon that hunger he's assuaging
On Master Fox : " I have been sent "
Thus Wolf cried, " for his punishment. "
How many heroes are there found
Who, sword in hand and laurel-crowned,
This fox and wolf too much resemble!
For mankind's good, they at their pleasure
Ravage the earth and seize its treasure—
The while mankind before them tremble,

FABLE IV.

Rats-bane.

“ A plague upon the micy brood!
I cannot tell the hate I bear them;
Into my study they intrude, —
In vain all efforts to ensnare them.
They seem to pick the very locks!
I dread to see the place each morn —
What’s this? — The very sight e’en shocks —
My Seneca all nibbled, torn!
And Charron too! I’m in despair!
The other day, ’twas Cicero,
To-morrow it will be Voltaire —
For what is good the wretches know.
Now, if the over-dainty nibblers
Would feast upon mere grubs and quibblers —
On Cotin, Valant, or Laserre,
Lesuirre or e’en Sabatier, —
Whom Ferney’s great possessor e’er
Well ridiculed in his own way —
I might enjoy the joke. Well, well, —
Great evils need great remedies,
And one I’ll try which — truth to tell —
Is just the one for thieves like these. ”
So spoke a famed philosopher,
But no; that term I must efface.—

A savant 'twas, so you'll infer

He was of a most ireful race.

A cat he bought, but, not content,
For rats-bane he one ev'ning sent,
Thinking thereby that, in a trice,
He'd settle all his friends— the mice.

But Mousy pushed the bait aside,
Whilst Pussy eat it and soon died.

Three useful truths this fable shows :
That different results should be

Foreseen with due sagacity; —

That much regretful mischief flows
From poison often, e'en tho' used
In one's defence and not abused :
The cat is quite enough ; in fine ,

That we should not for faults or vices
A hundred remedies combine,
When one good one alone suffices (96).

FABLE V.

The generous Dog.

1825.

No animal more brave, more kind,
More trusty than the dog we find.
Would I had children—he should be
Their model e'er. Poor Cæsar, he
Met treatment most unjust and rude,
(Oft shepherds show ingratitude)
Altho' the flock he e'er protected;
And—like a Mentor e'en—directed.
Well, banishment to blows succeeded,
And to a neighb'ring copse he fled;
But soon his services were needed; —
The wolves, by gnawing hunger led,
Attacked the sheep-cot in a mass,
And bore a dozen off or more :
“ Poor Cæsar I have lost, alas! ”

Thus cried the shepherd; — lo, before
His grieving master, Cæsar stood :
“ Thou wert, at one time, kind and good, ”
Cried Cæsar, “ on those points I'll dwell.
And thus all angry feelings quell;
My master, thou'rt in sorrow now—
To thee and thine my life I vow. ”

19.

And Cæsar, like a hero speaking,
E'en like a hero acted—lo,
The wolves' throats 'neath his gripe are reeking, —
The sheep are rescued from the foe!
Oh, never did the noble Cid
More generosity display;—
But how when thus of danger rid,
Did Colin Cæsar's deeds repay? —
Colin, that monarch who betrays
Suspicious ever, fear and pain;
(Such monarchs no one now-a-days
Discovers—he to Heaven praise —
So says a friend of mine from—Spain.)
Why Colin trembled, grew quite pale,
A musket seized and Cæsar shot,
Who fell without a sigh, a wail.—
—O brutal deed, O hapless lot!
The shepherd thought he could descry,
In Cæsar's danger-scorning eye,
Symptoms of madness.

Craven pride
Is ne'er disarmed, ne'er satisfied (97).

FABLE VI.

King Leopard and King Elephant.

E'en words become, at times, quite à-la-mode;
A "constitution" is a striking sample.
Respect for it, howe'er, sincere and ample,
I entertain, and think that ev'ry nation
Acts rightly when it gives itself a code.

Kings we must have, but then there is no need
To have a tyrant for our castigation —
Or one that on our liberties will trample.

But despots skilful quacks are, and succeed
In driving four-horse coaches thro' the laws.

Back to the deluge! Not without good cause,
Ye stare, my friends, — but pray excuse the flight.
Peace to secure and guarantee each right,

The animals, when Noah turned them out,
Drew up a charter in which kingly sway
Was greatly limited, and even they
Deemed they all knew well what they were about.
The four-legged Areopagus then chose

One famed for his exploits — a leopard, who
Had skill and courage and some vices, too,
E'en of first magnitude. Soon rose

A host of courtiers round him and — quite true
To their profession — flattered all his tastes;
The laws he soon eludes, then braves them,

Tramples his subjects down, enslaves them,
And with extravagance their substance wastes. .
Unmourned, he died at last, and in his place
A wise and steady elephant was crowned,
Who made all happy — tho' by no oath bound.

A contract, which self-will can oft efface,
Is not so binding as a monarch's worth
And virtuous character. Moreover, these
Are, after all, the best of guarantees
Of public good — 'twas so e'en from time's birth.
Such is Voltaire's opinion, and I b'lieve
E'en Robertson's; all this is very good,
But let this proverb be well understood :
“ Have two strings to your bow, ” and you'll not
[grieve.
A charter does no harm, so get it, pray, —
It may be useful in a needful day (98).

FABLE VII.

The envious Man.

Must gardeners, like courtiers e'en, display
Fell envy's spite? Ariste had, all his life,
His laurel-trees well tended — far away
From vain distractions and from mundane strife.
His home he loved, and owned soft wisdom's sway.
He had, howe'er, a most malicious neighbour,
Whose garden, full of thistles and of weeds,
Displayed his want of taste and hate of labour.
One night, on mischief bent still — he succeeds
In ent'ring Ariste's garden, axe in hand,
And hews — O impious deed — Apollo's trees!
No branch his hateful fury can withstand —
Soon on the ground the flowers all he sees,
Then off he sneaks — rejoicing at his feat.
Firm were the trunks, howe'er, and young and hale,
And soon they put forth, 'midst the vernal dew,
A thousand graceful stems, on which soon grew
A thousand flowers, beautiful and sweet.

'Tis thus when surly critics loudly rail,
In tones unjust, fresh worth they but bestow
Upon the work which they would fain lay low.
O sons of song, e'en sarcasm overlook —
Rude taunts are oft the making of a book (pg).

FABLE VIII.

The toothless Lion.

How, when the lion was in love, he grew
A most imprudent monarch, we have learned.
Of claws and teeth deprived, he fled from view,
Pursued by dogs, nor ever'gainst them turned.
He gained his states again, with much ado,
But found them all in anarchy — each law
Set at defiance.—If he wished his rights
To be respected, he should not have left,
But staid to keep his subjects all in awe. —
Still, his return no slight ferment excites,
Tho' his adventure was not fully known,
Nor that he was of teeth and claws bereft.
He saw, however, that a haughty tone
Would be ill-placed, so wrote a proclamation
Stating that he had graciously decreed
A plenary indulgence for the nation —
Forgiving ev'ry treasonable deed,
Nay more, forgetting it. This, for a while,
Worked well, but certain subjects oft would smile,
When they perceived that in each ordinance
This gen'rous pardon was his constant boast.
At last the secret was divulged (a glance
At Lion's throat was quite enough — and chance
So ruled it, that it seen was by a host).

Oh then, to rev'rence and to gratitude,
Contempt succeeded and reflections rude.
All knew at length—for beasts have much good sense—
That clemency in him was impotence.
Despised and ridiculed, our toothless king
Was banished from his throne.

'Tis good, no doubt,
Offences to forgive; another thing
It is, howe'er, one's goodness to assert,
And magnanimity to claim, without
The power having to molest or hurt.
More quickly do such pompous airs reveal
The innate weakness they'd fain conceal (100).

FABLE IX.

The Roe and the Fox.

The roe shall be my hero — he
On each side meets with eulogy.
All soberly inclined, he lives,
E'en like Pythagoras, on what
The vegetable kingdom gives.
In fact, 'mongst animals there's not
A character so good as his.
When services he renders, 'tis
Disinterestedly — in fine
I love him, and would wish him mine.

One day, with light and mocking air,
A wily fox the roe addressed : —
“ Oh why, young friend, from joys forbear
Which give new charms to life, new zest?
Why check your passions — source of bliss?
Act e'er like me, e'er loving, toying;
B'lieve me, there is no world but this —
And this is one that's worth enjoying.
A life beyond the tomb! Ha! Ha! —
Such thoughts are good for grandmamma!
Think you that one's privations here
Earn rapture in another sphere?”
“ I hope so ”, modestly replied

The youthful roe, "but — come what will —
'Tis wise to stem the reckless tide
Of passion — source of ev'ry ill,
This life's brief course to signalizē
By deeds that all may love and prize,
And happily in peace expire,
Unmoved by joys I ne'er desire."
Not Socrates could better reason. —

Fox is dumb-founded — off he goes! -
His rhetoric is out of season.

If the great secret no one knows, -
Let us respect it, come what may;
Do good that we remorse may flee;
Ye wits, who rail 'gainst all things say
If that be not sagacity (101)?

FABLE X.

The Tortoise and the Butterfly.

“ Oh, what a mass of— is it bone ?
Or is it skin—or both together ? ”
Cried Butterfly, in railing tone ,
As once he saw, in gloomy weather,
A tortoise slowly drawing near ; —
“ With such a pack upon your shoulders,
You envied are by all beholders.
O happy is your lot, my dear.
For my part, when I wish to fly,
My wings I open—and I’m off ! ”
“ No need whate’er to jeer and scoff , ”
Such was the tortoise’s reply,
“ Whene’er a pilgrimage I make,
My house, of course, I always take,
And, so, anxiety I’ve never ;
Good weather does not last for ever.
When winds blow loud and rains fall hard,
’Tis well to be upon one’s guard. ”
Just then, ’midst lightning, hail and thunder,
A mass of dark cloud burst asunder ;
And Butterfly that moment fell —
No more to rise ; but in her shell
Our tortoise drew.—All burdens light seem,
Which useful are, and which we right deem.

How many at hap-hazard live —
No thought whate'er to prudence give,
No foresight, no precaution, care —
A load of sorrow they prepare (102).

FABLE XI.

The Crow hatching.

Cries Crow : " The eagle, thirty days
E'er sits upon the eggs she lays ;
I'll do the same. " But great his wonder
('Twas said he looked, too, black as thunder)
When from the eggs no eaglets came,
But crows—in nature as in name.

And nature still unchanged remains.
Ne'er ugliness, tho' decked, with pains,
Will beauty grow—such nature's rule.
A fool, whate'er his school or college—
Impervious to wit and knowledge—
Will come out still as great a fool.

FABLE XII.

The Looking-glass and the Pocket-mirror.

1820.

One day, when strolling thro' the town,
A shop I entered, patronized
By all the court for its renown
In looking-glasses; — e' en the Crown
Oft at its rich frames was surprised.
And thus a costly looking-glass,
For Pysche's toilet fit, bespoke
A modest mirror : " All who pass,
At thy appearance crack a joke,
And laugh to see thee placed near me ! —
This shop is quite unfit for thee.
Thou mayst, at times, please Poll or Nancy. —
Thou'lt ne'er of great folk take the fancy ".
Iris arrives, coquettish, pretty,
But not more beautiful than witty : —
" A splendid boudoir glass thou art,
Perfection quite in ev'ry part !
I'll do thee justice — still I'll buy
This modest pocket-mirror nigh.
Thou show'st whole-lengths, — agreed ! — And such
A noble office is, but know
I prize this humble one as much —
I'll carry it where'er I go.

Small is its scale, but with delight
I'll see my features, day and night."

If allegories were in vogue,
I might admit that this was one,
Since thus by chance I've hit upon
Both comedy and apologue (103).

FABLE XIII.

The Crow, the Nightingale and the other Birds.

When verdant trees, and meads with flowers decked,
 Announce to birds the sure return of spring,
 Their joyousness bursts forth at once, unchecked,
 And distant echoes catch the strains they sing.
 Supreme their happiness! All seem
 To have one heart then, and one theme.—

When I say all, my friends, I err ;

In a hundred ways or so

Kept lamenting still a crow :

“ Well? what’s the matter now, good sir?”

Demanded all the songsters of the wood ;

“ The matter is’t?” replied, in gloomy mood,
 The prophet bird, with ill-foreboding eye,

“ Why, know you not that, ere six months go by,
 Nature resumes her livery of woe?

No flowers then, no verdure will appear.

When Boreas begins his chills to blow,

Adieu the rural charms ye hold so dear!

Under the nipping frost and heaps of snow

How find the food we all require here?

Such frightful ills t’avoid, no way I know,

And therefore I’m depressed.”

“ Oh, pooh!

(Exclaimed a nightingale.) “ ’Twill never do

To always think on days like those.
Sad prudence that, which ever would impose
 On present joys the dread of future ill—
 Making the coming time no better still!
Pray, croaker, cease! For, know that trouble,
Beforehand, makes affliction double (104)."

FABLE XIV.

The Sporting-dog.

Dunois (a name which many heroes bear)
My fav'rite dog is, one of merit rare,
Who, e'en like Cæsar, prudence aptly blends
With boldness. Dunois hates repose,
And if, whilst in my study he attends,
He sees a Horace in my hand, he knows
'Tis for the day, so off, alone, he goes
Upon his rounds, startling all the game.
But still by honour and by duty bound,
Disinterestedness in him is found
As much as in great Turenne, he whose fame
In that respect e'en hallows his bright name.
In short, my faithful Dunois never fails
To bring me partridges and snipe and quails.
That he my lieutenant is he ne'er forgets.
This morn, ere breakfast even, off he sets,
And captures soon a young and tender teal;
Urged on by hunger, he would fain conceal
The booty, and devour it at ease.
Let us not rudely blame such thoughts as these. —
How oft first impulses will make us blush —
So let us not to rash conclusions rush.
Well, Dunois overcame his inclination
Tho' no one viewed him — so at least he thought :

He saw himself howe'er — soon home he brought
The booty without further hesitation.

“ Respect thyself. Be this thy first of laws,
Whene'er thine honour with temptation meets, ”
So said Pythagoras. Here let us pause,
And ask if we, who read that golden rule,
Should not like Dunois act, who ne'er repeats
That axiom—and who never went to school (105).

FABLE XV.

The Lion and the Fox at the Council of State.

1832.

The democratic spirit, now-a-days,
Reigns in each place, and each would fain lay low
The ancient rule monarchic, and upraise
Another government. May heaven grant
That, from that spirit, good at least may flow.

Even King Lion's restless subjects pant
To have a constitution. That strange word,
One fine spring morning, on all sides is heard.
Quick he convenes a council — one of state —
And ev'ry animal, as int'rest leads,
Gives his opinion, with an air sedate, —
Of course sincerely — but not one succeeds
In pointing out a practicable plan.
Sir Fox, at last, amidst deep silence speaks : —
“ O sire,” he cries, “ a lesson take from man;
Much tact he shows by yielding, with good grace,
To stern necessity. The people's freaks
Indulge a while. So varied is the range
Of all their wishes that, in any case,
They'll come back to us, e'en thro' love of change.
May't please your Majesty, no wrath display;

Issue no proclamation full of threats, —
True love paternal love in turn begets. —
Ask all these gentlemen to share your sway, —
I'm almost sure that no one will say " nay. "
Let them a congress form; Lord Bear
Will play the tribune and protract,
By long and drowsy speeches, each affair.
Curs will be there, and they by word and act
Will soon produce th'effect we all devine —
That is, all things embroil. Asses, of course,
Will bray and bray, moreo'er, with all their force.
Fatigued with such a concert, such a din,
The public all — short-winded and weak-brained —
Will ask for change soon and, in fine,
Will wish they had 'neath your solesway remained.—
Soon 'neath your sceptre will they refuge seek,
And bow to it — all dutiful and meek. "
Sir Fox sits down — his arguments all win. —
And all just happened, as he had foretold.

A thousand charms does liberty unfold.
But all excess will soon those charms destroy : —
Whoe'er abuses them will cease t'enjoy.

FABLE XVI.

The Dromedary and the Ape.

“ Dear comrade, dearest friend, oh let me climb
Upon your back and rest a little time, ”
Thus to a dromedary cried an ape,
“ I’m light, and I’ll not spoil your handsome shape.
When to the fair we come, I’ll be quite brisk,
If you will let me ride. ” The other —
A kindly heart — e’en acted as a brother.
Well, master Bertrand, not without some risk,
Contrived at last to clamber to his seat.
What then? He soon began, as ye may think,
To exercise each trick and show each feat —
To pluck, tear, scratch, tickle and frisk about,
Until the other’s patience was worn out.
Quite short, he stopped upon a rugged brink,
And pitched poor monkey headlong down th’abyss.

Ungrateful hearts, a fate e’en like to this
May be your lot. Who benefits forgets
A limit, nay an end, to kindness sets.

FABLE XVII.

The River-fish and the Sea-fish.

A modest barbel, forced along
A swollen torrent, rapid, strong,
Was hurried to the mighty sea :
“ Right welcome, friend ! ” the sturgeon cried,
“ Poor homes to leave is proper pride,
Nay, e’en good sense. — Come dwell with me,
And turn to good account this chance,
And thus your comforts all enhance. ”
“ But then, ” says Barbel, “ one great fault
These waters have—they’re plaguy salt !
I’m sure I shall be always dry,
And so, my friend, I’ll say : Good by.”
Soon Barbel reached a tranquil nook,
And went home by another brook.

Where bitterness abounds, we’ll find
Nor joy of heart nor peace of mind.
Into that strange and jarring ocean
Which giddy fashion calls the world—
A sea of passion and commotion —
The really sage are never hurled.

FABLE XVIII.

The Owl.

“ The bird which e’en Minerva loves,
As much as Venus does her doves,
The bird whose talents, wit and sense
And whose unrivalled eloquence
Have come directly from the skies,
Of course is envied—such the fate

Of all the great folk who e’er rise.

Fools ne’er forgive will my bright eyes
Which e’en thro’ darkness penetrate. ”

And who now is this sage concoctor
Of boastful phrases ? Is’t a doctor
Of Salamanca, prone to scowl ?

Why, not exactly, but I’ll say

’Tis something in that very way—

In fact, a most pedantic owl,
Whom scores of birds, in merry mood,
Pursued had to his solitude.

The boasting of the pompous elf
And mighty airs he gave himself
Raised shouts of laughter—each one mocking
Those eyes which, all day long, were blind ;
(Minerva’s taste they said was shocking)
And jeers arose of ev’ry kind.

So journalists of sense should treat
The tiresome pedants we oft meet.
To penetrate the night of ages
They have, they think, the eyes of sages,
But present customs, manners, laws,
Are problems which they cannot solve;
Yet still they'd doctors be, nor pause
To learn new systems e'er, because
Around their own they but revolve (106).

FABLE XIX.

Fortune and the Sage.

That blind and giddy goddess, who
Has long and ill this world directed,
One morning paid a visit to
A sage whom she had e'er neglected.
“ Dear friend,” cried Fortune, “ take my carriage
And off to court, where talents shine;
The prince's love, a brilliant marriage,
Wealth, honour, power,—all are thine.”
“ I'm much obliged for these thy favours,”
The sage replied, “ but all this savours
Of mere caprice; in any case
I have no wish to leave this place.
Who Fortune seeks must Plutus follow—
And all his joys are vain and hollow.
The thoughtful sage must e'er prefer
Virtue and peace to him and her.”

Philosophers of course abound—
But seldom like this one are found.

FABLE XX.

The Bœuf-Gras.

The Carnival has got its merit,
Tho', 'bout it censors make a fuss ;
For my part, I somewhat inherit
The spirit of Democritus,
And laugh most heartily at all
The jollity of Carnival.
And such a spirit I contend
Is not the worst one upon earth ;
Why should we not our brows unbend? —
No happiness without some mirth.
Shrove-Tuesday, then, is my delight ;
And, like a true Parisian quite,
From early morn, I push along
The Boulevarts amidst the throng,
O'erjoyed to meet each waggish clown,
With large red nose and pointed chin,
And loud my laughter is, when down
He falls 'neath some gay Harlequin,
Whose fragile wand soon breaks to pieces.
Each veiled Sultana's freaks, caprices,
I greatly too, admire, but lo
In motley groups, all changeful, pliant,
Come humpy-bumpy, dwarf and giant,

Fish-dame and duchess; now a row
Of Pantaloons! But hark, what revels! —

A host of Seraphim and devils!

And see upon their heels now press

A throng of noisy negresses,

And now a group of girls and boys —

The former, dressed *à la Cauchoise*.

“ He comes! He comes! ” “ Pray what, good sir? ”

The answer drowned is in the shout!

Oh, what a clamour, what a stir! —

“ Pray, madame, what’s it all about? ”

“ *Mon cher monsieur, c’est le bœuf-gras.* ”

“ Oh, now I see it’ — poor thing, ah

He marches on, with joyous air,

Bedecked with crowns of brightest flow’rs;

That ass which relics bore was ne’er

So proud as he — but brief his hours.

This day, he would do nought but grieve

If he but knew what woes attend him;

Attained the goal, all take their leave

Of bœuf-gras whom some folk receive,

That with the sacrificing knife soon end him ; —

Bull crying out with dying breath :

“ So all this triumph led to death. ”

A senseless mortal, full of pride

Oft stumbles on a fate like this ;

For paths with flowers well supplied

Conduct oft to th’unseen abyss (107).

FABLE XXI.

The Dog and the Wolves.

Who in a land of wolves must live
Must, on all sides, attention give.
Much loss may be expected, since
 One cannot keep all under lock;
And vain it is to whine or wince,
 For all must meet the loss and shock.
A zealous active dog had long
 The sheep protected, and had oft
Many a wolf, both fierce and strong,
 Laid low, as with step sly and soft,
He sought the sheepfold.

 Who, howe'er,
So burdensome a life could bear? —
On the *qui vive* both day and night! —
All combating and no respite.
A war on the defensive, ever,
Seldom` gives rise to high endeavour.
Alone `gainst all, one yields at last —
Such is the lesson of the past.
Our dog, tho' prudent and tho' wise,
Could not keep open sleepy eyes,
And his young master left his duty,
To trifle with a village beauty.
The wolves have come! O frightful waking!

Growler springs up — a parley rose : —
They'll grant his life, if, whilst they're slaking
Their thirst in blood, he'll seem still taking —

Unconscious of th'event — repose.
Shall he the flock allow to perish,
Which 'tis his duty e'er to cherish?
Shall he with wolves partake in guilt? —
Oh, never, tho' life's blood be spilt.
And spilt it was; nor zeal nor force
Could check the vile assassins' course.

A thousand times be death preferred
To infamy in deed or word.
All ye who Fatherland defend
Serve it like Growler, to the end.

EPILOGUE.

The Stars and the Sun.

Night had just spread its veil o'er day,
And thus had made the stars look brighter,
E'en as they wished, in fact, for they
Are very vain, — so people say,
And so I've read in many a writer.
Well, one clear night — the whole night long —
About their lustre they disputed;
Put forth pretensions, right or wrong,
And right or wrong, denied, refuted. —
Save in an academic sphere,
The strife was never equalled here. —
But day-light dawns, and one by one
The pretty stars grow dim, retire;
For see, before they all are gone,
The sun bursts forth with all its fire.

In realms poetic, thus mere wits
Are paled whene'er true genius shines;
And I — o'er whom the mem'ry flits
Of my great master, in whose lines

True inspiration we all trace —
Sink quietly to my proper place.
Two months of fables! In due haste,
I'll break my rod and *Finis* write;
Sarcasm, indeed, is doubtful taste;
Moreo'er my time and toil I waste, —
In follies still will man delight (108).

END OF BOOK THE SEVENTH.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

FABLE THE FIRST.

The Horse and the Bear.

TO MONSIEUR P.-J. DE BÉRANGER.

1847.

I promised to renounce all fable writing :
Always on morals harping and inditing
Lessons which do no good! — for, when will men
Grow wiser, better? Prithee, tell us, then,
What motives you allege — my friends all say —
For giving further lessons in this way? —
Brief my reply : in Æsop's realm to wander
Is my delight, tho' e'en my time I squander.
A very instinct leads me there, and so —
Involuntary even — on I go.
To whom these new attempts shall I inscribe?
To thee, chief poet of the lyric tribe,
To thee, whose genius will, from age to age,
Fresh triumphs meet with, and fresh hearts engage.

A young and handsome courser, thorough-bred,
Was chosen king of animals, and he
Would fain full scope give to his buoyancy.

In such a case, no monarch need e'er dread
To be without resources, apt and ready. —
Thousands will swear his course is one most steady.

A steeple chase he orders, all applaud;
“ I know the ground well ”, cried a solemn bear,
A frightful precipice I've found out there.

No need, however, to be overawed,
If but your majesty a circuit take.
This warning do not slight, for goodness' sake”.
“ Your loyalty I prize and sage advice,”

Replied the prince, “ but I'm no novice, friend;
On! on, all fearlessly! And in a trice

We'll reach the goal.” Scarce was the speech at end,
Before a troop of young and hot-brained fools —
Stallions and hounds, wild fillies and wild mules —
Swift e'en as arrows on the race set off.

Oh, why did they at good Sir Bruin scoff?
Into the yawning precipice, pell-mell
The giddy racers in few minutes fell.

Two-thirds, at least, soon met a painful death.
The prince himself, wounded and out of breath,
With much ado was rescued and brought home;
Whom did he blame when to his palace come?
Himself? His flatterers? oh no, but solely

The solemn Bruin who, he said, was still
The enemy of kings and courts, and wholly
The cause of the mishap.

When things go ill,
And grave mistakes bring danger on the state,
Oft cabinets will blame for it the pate
Which, in its wisdom, saw the risk and gave
Most timely counsel, the poor land to save.

FABLE II.

The Stroller, the Bull-dog and the fawning-Cur.

Whilst on my rambles, there is nought
I more enjoy than Nature's soft repose ;
A rhymers I'm at times, then my chief thought
Is, at my ease, my verses to compose.

Yestern, at early dawn, my way I bent
'Midst rural scenes, all silent, fresh and fair,
Busied, as is my wont, whilst on I went,
In building sundry castles in the air.

Lo ! all at once a bull-dog's frightful yelp
Startled mine ear, in quick and stunning fits ;
It seemed fine fun for the unruly whelp,
But nearly drove me out of all my wits.

And still he followed me, intent
On picking up a quarrel, till he found
That all his bullying was idly spent,
Then stopped he short and took a homeward bound.
Relieved at last, I sought a pleasant seat
Upon a knoll, when, creeping to my feet,
A cur disturbed my thought, in his own guise —

By bows and scrapes, and each obsequious trick ;
I wished both dogs sincerely to—Old Nick !

Then we should e'er avoid, if we're but wise,
All fawning discourse and each cringing act ;

Yet ne'er, whilst these despising, fall
Into a brutal way, which is, in fact,
As bad. —Extremes to shun, with tact,
Is the best mode to gain th'esteem of all.

FABLE III.

The good Neighbours.

1843.

“ To live on terms most neighbourly, you know
Is my delight ”, said Lubin once to Luke;
“ Not oft enough by half we meet, and so
We'll pierce the wall in some convenient nook,
And make a passage 'tween each domicile.
In pleasing converse we'll our time beguile.
'Twill be delightful ev'ry morn at ease —
With dressing-gown and slippers on — to talk
About all kinds of things, e'en as we please—
Our pleasures we'll increase and dull care baulk.
At ev'nings, too, whilst sitting o'er our glasses,
We'll chat o'er youthful days—of friends and lasses. ”
“ The very thing, ” cried Luke, “ I've often thought
To make the proposition — no delay!
We'll pierce our garden-wall this very day ”.
Soon was the work to full completion brought.
What then? Ah, what indeed! Each one soon places
A bull-dog at each side. When Luke draws nigh,
Up Tiger springs and bites him in the thigh,
Whilst Lion after Lubin's turkeys races.

O kings and rulers, ye oft imitate
Our friendly neighbours; all in vain does steam

Both time and space, as'twere, annihilate,
And favour commerce, if ye only dream
About protective duties, and uphold
A war of tariffs. — Let this truth be told :
More prosperous would ev'ry nation be,
Were it not fettered thro' chicanery.

FABLE IV.

The Hen.

1847.

Dupont de Nemours was a thorough sage :
'Twas his delight with animals to dwell,
And e'en their languages he spoke right well.
He liked their converse better, I engage,
Than all the trifles we in Paris hear :
" I knew once," thus he said, " a charming hen,
One that was made to please both fowls and men. —
An upright mind was her's, a heart sincere.
All qualities, in fine, were shed upon her—
The poultry-yard's delight she was and honour.
Often her boldness and maternal cries
Had scared the vulture when he sought a prize.
But lo, man comes—good cheer providing —
And kills her chickens all, her wrath deriding.
For death likewise, she pitifully begs,
But spared she is, because she lays good eggs.
From that day forth, howe'er, the frightful scene
Which she had witnessed plunged her in despair —
All thin her form, all sorrowful her mien.
Heaven at last, attentive to her pray'r,
Saved her, thro' death, from further grief and care.
" Now, boast of mankind even as you may,"

Added the speaker, " animals, I'll bet,
Are, after all, of better stuff than they.

How many mothers' hearts are wholly set
On dress and jewels and all vain display,

The while their children no attention get.
Mothers, forsooth ! Now, tell me, if you please,
Was not my hen far worthier than these (109)?"

FABLE V.

The Charioteer and his Horses.

1846.

Cigar in mouth and whip in hand,
A lion of the human breed
Looked vastly vain and wondrous grand,
Whilst urging to their utmost speed
Four noble steeds 'neath his command.

And still he whips them on, and still
Thinks he can stop them at his will —
Their mettle and their force restraining.
O grave delusion! see, they're gaining
The middle of the hill and now
Are wildly dashing up its brow!
Now comes the danger, now the fear!
Pull, check and soothe — thou charioteer!
Oh why those cries, those oaths, that dread?
Trembles thy heart and turns thy head? —
And down they rush, all swift as lightning
In spite of reins and bits all tight'ning,
And where the car? To pieces shattered,
With remnants here and there all scattered.
Dying or dead, suffused with gore,
The coursers drop, to rise no more.
And where the driver — he whose air
Was all sufficient? Where? — ah, where!

**Ye who direct a nation's helm
 Restrain all party-spirit, lending
 No ear to claims which, still ascending
Thro' being flattered, all o'erwhelm.**

FABLE VI.

The Sportsman, the She-Wolf and the Dog.

1815.

A poor and harmless roe to chase,
To shoot the quail or partridge race,
Is not the way to gain much glory;
 But when true sportsmen wolves destroy,
To save their sheep from carnage gory,
 Nor slight their fame, nor small my joy.

One of those gallant sportsmen, who
The wolves e'en in their lairs pursue,
Had over hill and valley strayed,
And no slight havoc 'mongst them made.
Worn out at last, repose he found
Beside a hill with dark pines crowned.
But whilst he slept, a she-wolf, raging
 With hunger, passed in search of food;
 A moment in suspense she stood,
Then tow'rd's him sprung — to be assuaging
That horrid famine which impelled her.
 Growler was there, howe'er, and he
Was at her throat and tightly held her,
 'Till she expired in agony.
The sportsman wakes, his fortune blesses,
And tenderly his dog caresses :
“ Whene'er a faithful friend is given,
'Tis the best benefit of Heaven. ”

FABLE VII.

The Children, the Spaniel and the Bull-dog.

1846.

Beneath a weeping willow's shade,
Young Lewis and his sister sate,
And heartily their breakfast ate, —
In fine, a little pick-nick made.
A charming spaniel, near them pressing,
Would fain partake of their repast;
But vain his bounding and caressing—
Not e'en a bone he got at last.
His pretty tricks might have been spared,
For all that they about them cared.
But lo, a bull-dog loudly barking
Approaches them, the feast remarking;
And oh, the haste with which they threw him
Whate'er they thought could best subdue him.

As men are feared, so oft they're treated.
Your snarling gentlemen, who're sent
To make their way in parliament
Full oft with honours will be greeted,
While governments will ill provide
For those who vote e'er on their side.

FABLE VIII.

The Nightingale in the Magpie's Drawing-room.

1846.

E'en like a certain dowager, round whom
A host of triflers gather ev'ry night,
Margot, the magpie, listens with delight,
To all the scandal which from gossips flows.
Amongst the company who haunt her room,
And who, all times, e'er meet a kindly greeting,
Are cuckoos, turkeys, goslings, ducks and crows,
Who, when in high conclave they all are meeting,
A pretty chorus form, as each one knows.
But how shall I describe each senseless jeer,
Each witless joke that sounded in this sphere,
And levelled was against the lark, the linnet,
And finches of all kinds? The room resounded
With deaf'ning gabble. Lo, amazed, confounded,
A charming nightingale by chance came in it,
And took a corner seat—not once e'en speaking.
Cuckoos and goslings gathered round him, seeking
To make him utter something, so that they
Might, on some good occasion, hiss away : —
“ What language does he speak ? ” the turkeys cried,
“ Oh, he is dumb ! ” the goslings all replied.

Where fools assemble, wiser it appears
To keep your mouths shut, if you can't your ears.

FABLE IX.

King Lion's Example.

1846.

“ The feeble I shall now defend —
To all injustice put an end ;
And hark ye, master wolves, forbear
The sheep, the kids, the lambs to tear —
Or you and I accounts shall square. ”
Thus spoke King Lion.

What a change!

All animals in safety range.
E'en hares and rabbits eat their fill
In gardens, meadows, nor e'er fear
That wolf, or hound e'en, will appear.—
O golden age, devoid of ill !

One morn, howe'er, King Lion rose
With appetite all keen : “ I'm sure, ”
He cries, “ that these fine bucks and does
Would satisfy an epicure.
There's no great harm, if I but try one,
And so I'll take this plump and shy one. ”
He seized a doe. Soon each great lord
Goes hunting o'er the hills and meads ;

The reign of rapine is restored,
And carnage soon to peace succeeds.
If ye would have your laws obeyed,
Break not, O kings, the laws ye've made.

FABLE X.

The Parrot

1837.

Tastes are e'er varying. Some time ago,
Our ladies of bon ton, as many know,
Had all their hearts and thoughts on parrots set.
'Twas quite a rage a pretty Poll to get.
Many a husband grew, in fact, quite sore,
To find his lady loved her parrot more
Than she did him. But let that pass.

One night,

I was a witness of a most strange scene,
A sad mistake : A parrot who had been
Trained by his mistress, from his tend'rest age,
Repeated e'er, with visible delight:
" O pretty countess ! " when she neared his cage.
Her constant guest in drawing-room and e'en
In her sweet boudoir, he was quite her pet —
Quite an adept, moreo'er, in etiquette.
Well, on that night our charming countess gave
A brilliant *soirée* ; ev'ry one was there :
Courtiers, diplomatists, the gay, the grave
All kinds of lions, wonderful and rare —
Hosts of the brave, and hosts, too, of the fair.

The cage approaching with a gracious smile,
Her darling parrot she caressed a while,
Still urging him to speak — she knew the plan —
And speak he did — exclaiming all aloud :
“ O silly countess ! ”

What a titter ran
'Mongst the refined but still malicious crowd !
Our hostess fainted. Pretty creature, she
No more — that night — her visitors would see.
A large Angora cat next morning made
Her breakfast on poor Poll :

You understand : —
So great a fault by death must be repaid.
Who incense seeks oft finds rebuke at hand.

FABLE XI.

The Blind Man and the Torch.

From sleep, my friends, I started up one night. —
Good Heavens! What confusion and affright!

Around me nought but bustle, and the cries
Of “fire!” “fire!” rent the very skies.

From out my house I rushed, and lo!

A fearful spectacle, one full of woe.

From glowing roofs, the flames came bursting forth :

A chain of human beings formed, and then

All set to work—women and boys and men—

To ply the engines. From the North

More fiercely blew the wind. In vain, in vain,

They sought the burning torrents to restrain.

Despair soon seizes on the crowd, and hark!

The mass of walls comes thund’ring to the ground.

A rash blind man, who could not see a spark,
Had seized a torch, in order that all round

Might think he had his eyesight from his birth.

I bless the light, and ready am to raise

Altars to its great Author; for all earth,

Be it a guide! But fools there are who think,

They blindly can replace it by a link

With which they set the whole world in a blaze.

FABLE XII.

The free Warbler and the caged Parrot.

1846.

Poll's constant cry again ! — “ I'm happy here ! ”
As in his cage he struts. No vain courtier
Was prouder of his slavery than he,
That is to say, affected more to be —
For in his heart he sighed still to be free.
The warbler from afar this boasting heard : —
“ Such happiness as this I envy not ”
Exclaimed the wise and freedom-loving bird,
“ A gilded prison ! — What a charming lot !
Let great folk dwell in palaces like these —
Give me the blooming meads and verdant trees.
Be freedom mine ! No more than that I ask,
Light is each sorrow then and sweet each task.”

FABLE XIII.

The Builders and the Destructives.

1847.

The beavers once a city raised,
(Vitruvius the work had praised)
Utility and beauty blending,
In nought, good taste or skill offending.
King Lion was quite pleased, no doubt,
When he beheld the royal palace —
A charming one within, without;
But no; his courtiers, full of malice
Prevented him from seeing well
With his own eyes. All blamed each gate,
Each column, arch and pinnacle —
The offices and rooms of state.
In fact, the whole affair they spurned;
All must destroyed be, all o'erturned, —
('Twas thus their spiteful tongues all ran)
And one rebuilt with more effect,
Upon the highly graceful plan
Of Master Ass, the architect.
Like Cossacks, rams, goats, dogs and apes,
And asses of all kinds and shapes,
Soon set to work and soon destroyed
The city, leaving all a void.

But how rebuild? That was the question!
In vain each effort, each suggestion!
How to begin not one e'en knew;
Into a rage king Lion flew —
No palace had he now to sleep in —
In fact, not e'en a hut to creep in.
“ No more, ” he cries, whilst wroth he scans
The gaping set “ I'll hear your plans;
Leave well alone and I'm contented.
'Tis well your folly's not resented.
Destructives are a fertile breed —
Good architects are rare indeed ”.

FABLE XIV.

The Owl and the Ringdoves.

1847.

Within a lime tree's hollow trunk,
A hermit, in reflection sunk,
A learned personage, in fine
 A solemn owl, dwelt all secluded,
And, plunged in apathy supine,
 E'er moaned and sighed, e'er grieved and brooded.

Two ringdoves nested near his dwelling,
With breasts with love, most tender, swelling;
And all the day they passed in wooing,
That is to say, in billing, cooing :
“ If love ye must, ” our hermit screeched,
 “ No need to let the whole world know it ;
 You're ignorant—but why thus show it ?
How oft have saints and sages preached
In favour of a single life —
All free from trouble and from strife !
A sentence on that point I'll quote,
Penned by a doctor of great note :
He tells us — ”

“ Pray, my lord, forbear,
The ringdoves cried, “ that trouble spare ;
On love alone we place reliance, —
’Tis all our bliss and all our science. ”

Ye dark denouncers of man's bliss,
Ye egotists, attend to this.

FABLE XV.

The badly driven Waggon.

1847.

“ Keep ever in the middle of the road, ”
Cried farmer Bumpkin to a rustic clown,
The driver of a waggon, with a load
Of garden produce, for the market town.
Our village Phæton panted for renown ; —
To take a straight course was an easy matter,
But how could he show off— no noise, no clatter !
So, right and left, he belabours his horses,
Checks, urges, pulls, — zig-gag e’er going,
And all the while his skill, most wondrous, showing,
By forcing them from out their wonted courses.
One wheel is in the ditch, but out he gets it —
Then in a heap of mud he tightly sets it.
Now left, now right, he hurries and he dashes,
At last each axle-tree to pieces smashes.
No house is nigh, no forge or smith at hand.
Dark clouds soon gather, rain in torrents falls,
Each lightning flash the trembling clown appals.
The unyoked horses, free from all command,
Dash wildly o’er the fields nor heed his calls.
What’s to be done? The fruit is washed away —
All is destroyed — oh, what will Master say?

Ye self-sufficient statesmen, oft displaying
Your skill most mischievous, and oft betraying
 Such faults as these, be not I pray too rash, —
To reach the goal in some strange way essaying.
Beware of ruts, lest the state-car ye smash (110).

FABLES XVI.

Jocrisse on his Ass.

In merry mood, friend Jocrisse trudged, one morn,
Astride his donkey to the village fête :

“ Well, I’m a happy youth,” he cried, elate ;
Sure for each other Jane and I were born.

To night the Polka ! Turn not, O love, my pate ! ”
To spoil somewhat the pleasures of the ride,

The noon-day sun shone forth in all its force ;
No hospitable shade on either side,
Whilst clouds of dust soon made poor Jocrisse hoarse ;
And no inn near. What to do
He knew not, till in view

Of splendid pear-trees all at once he came,
And then the proverb struck him on the way :
“ Put by a pear, friend, for a thirsty day.”

The fruit was high and how to reach the same
Our genius sate devising. Lucky thought !

He stood upon his donkey ! But instead
Of quickly seizing that which he had sought
He ’gan to chaunt his qualities of head :

“ Ha ! ha ! ” quoth he, “ now who so well as I
Could turn this circumstance to such account ?

No fool is Jocrisse ! But should a passer by,
Ere from my docile comrade I dismount,
Cry out : Gee-up ! Gee-up ! ”

Oh, words most rash!
Off set the donkey, at a merry pace,
And Jocrisse on his face
Came down slap-dash!

To think aloud, my friends, is not, all times,
A prudent course, as proved is by these rhymes.

FABLE XVII.

The liberal Vulture.

1847.

“ Three cheers for liberty ! Let’s all arise
Against injustice, ” Master vulture cries,
“ Reject we must the eagle’s galling yoke,
Perish all tyrants, ’neath our common stroke.
Must you for ever be the wretched tools
Of one who like a very despot rules ?
Now, for my part, if I for power pant,
’Tis not thro’ love of it. — I merely want
To have the means to make you happy all,
I’m not ambitious, and in fact I’d make
No trifling sacrifice, if place I take. ”
No candidate ’mongst us — that I recall —
Could better speak ; and loud applauses rose
When this oration brought was to a close.
But, once made tribune, he, day after day,
Soothed down his satires, ’gainst the eagle’s sway,
At last, all openly he praised his kindness,
His father-like indulgence, wisdom, sense,
And e’en his matchless wit and eloquence.
Next, censured he the people for their blindness
In not discerning all their ruler’s worth.

Touched at this change, the eagle, it is stated,
The late conspiring vulture nominated
Comptroller of all poultry-yards on earth.
Oh, what a windfall! Gratefully he fills
The splendid post, and lives e'en like a prince; —
Four meals a day and yet no trouble, since
Whate'er he fancies, he but takes and kills.
Loud the complaints respecting all these ills.
“Ye're mad,” he cries, “or silly at the least,
Vultures were made on poultry e'er to feast.”

In confidence, I'll whisper in your ear; —
'Mongst liberals, oft hypocrites appear;
Tribunes will oft most strange conversions show. —
Many in France and elsewhere, too, I know.

FABLE XVIII.

The Peacock at the Ball.

1847.

The peacock's pride has often been man's theme ;
 Our new-made lords, particularly those
 Who from the counting-house to honours rose,
 Neither less haughty nor less pompous seem.
 A certain peacock whom I may e'en deem
 An old acquaintance, lately made a count
 Of some new poultry-yard, one ev'ning strolled
 With wide-spread tail and with no small amount
 Of *nonchalance* — in fact, with air quite bold,
 Amidst a group of cocks and hens all dancing,
 In honour of some fête. 'Twas quite entrancing
 To see how well they waltzed, how well quadril-
 [led!

All were contented, all with true joy filled —
 Say, can as much of all court balls be told?
 The hens coquetted and the cocks cajoled :
 "Your lordship here!" A cock low bowing said,
 " This is an honour we could not expect ;"
 Such compliments work well, for more erect
 Count Peacock stood, his tail more widely spread.
 He wished to dance! A set was formed — but lo
 His tale was in the way! None could advance ;

A few e'en stumbled o'er his feathers, so
All vain the music and all spoiled the dance.
The hens began their discontent to show —
Loud the complaints of ev'ry belle and beau.
Confusion spread ; the ball at last broke up —
And all the cocks and hens went home to sup.

There is a moral in these lines, no doubt ;
So, gentle reader, deign to find it out.

FABLE XIX.**The Imprudent Miller.**

1843.

The waters of a mountain rill
Sufficient were to turn a mill;
Quick went the wheel e'er round and round;
No better flour could e'er be found.
And good the produce. Still the master
Would have the mill turn ten times faster.
To form a torrent he aspired,
 So here and there canals laid down,
To get the waters he desired.
And soon they came, his hopes to crown,
His ends to aid — that is to say,
Miller and mill they swept away.

Ye potentates, whose trade it is
 To govern men, of course you'll show
More wisdom and more tact than this. —
Who undertakes too much will miss
 His object oft, and bring but woe.

FABLE XX.

The satirical Magpie.

1847.

Have you Viloison known? — a learned man,
All full of sense in some respects, and yet
Too fond of mingling with a prattling set,
Too fond of scandal too. As rumour ran,
He had a magpie as his constant guest,
On whom he doted. Well, death paid at last
A visit to Viloison, and his best
His dearest friend, in fact his magpie, fast
As wings could carry her, the dwelling fled
And sought another home. Soon one she found, —
One like Vert-Vert's, and one, too, be it said
Not quite unlike the one she had deserted —
In fact a convent. With success soon crowned,
Full scope she gave to her malicious tongue,
'Till the whole nunnery with scandal rung.
Often and long the portress she diverted
With quips and quirks, aided by nod and look,
About the youthful laundress of the place.
E'en sister Ursula her birds forsook
To listen to their gossip, for report
Will have it that a scandal-loving race

Are found as oft in convents as at court.
Magpie all bounds soon passed — no nun was safe,
Nay, all began 'neath her vast spite to chafe.
A chapter was convoked, which put on trial
Our gabbling magpie, and as no denial
Would be allowed—condemned her e'en to death. —
Thus paid she for her sarcasms with life's breath.

To be satirical is not all times,
A safe and prudent course in prose or rhymes (111).

FABLE XXI.

The moderating Power.

1847.

A farm dog, of a captious breed,
Declared that 'twas his joy and glory
To show himself an ultra-tory,
Thinking thereby that he'd succeed
In gaining all his master's favour.
Now, Bob the tom-cat, who was famed
For radical ideas, blamed
Old Growler's objet and behaviour :
“ And may I ask,” he cries, “ what are
The services such dogs can boast ?
Those that I render are, by far,
More useful—worth in fact a host
Of such as his. Were't not for cats,
Soon would the stores be cleared by rats. ”
“ I've not, in truth, a fluent tongue,
But ere the wolves on sheep have sprung,”
Cried Growler “ at my post am I — ”
But why this loss of time? Good by ! ”
But Bobby in a warlike mood,
Before the door all boldly stood ;
Sharp words exchanged were, then sharp blows, —
Great the confusion which arose.

Soon farmer Giles came in : “ Well, well,
This is fine work — the laws all breaking ”
Thus he exclaimed — “ a riot making!
If still your breasts with rage must swell,
If still each other ye must hate
Refrain from blows — at any rate. ”
Off Bob went, after rats to creep
And Growler to protect the sheep.

Progression and repulsion form
Two jarring elements in states —
And oft their vehement debates
Will lead to conflicts long and warm.
A wise and prudent government,
Excess avoiding, will in turn
Excesses of all kinds prevent,
And thus esteem and honour earn.

EPILOGUE.

The moralizing Hedge-hog.

1847.

On moralizing ever bent,
A hedge-hog deemed he had been sent,
To blame—e'en Cato-like—each vice
And hunt down folly in a trice :
“ This earth is shared by knaves and fools”,
'Twas thus he cried, “ great Jove, who rules
This world, may have wise plans, but then
Are they applied to beasts and men? ”
Our cynic hedge-hog now begins
To scan the lists of faults and sins.
To trace each folly, and recall
The weaknesses of great and small.
“ What right have you,” a bull-dog said,
“ To sketch my portrait thus, and spread
Injurious reports about? —

Pray cease to chide and mock and flout,
You have your own faults, so, reclaim them,
And as for others do not name them. ”

We fabulists should take the hint,
And not be in such haste to print;
My tone I'll lower. — He who preaches
Without respite his end ne'er reaches.
So, friends all, I shall say “ farewell ”—
Henceforth, on mine own faults to dwell.

END OF BOOK THE EIGHTH.

NOTICE.

The translator is indebted to the kindness of the Baron de Stassart for the four following fables, which have not appeared in any of the seven editions of the original.

The secondary part which the former plays in a production of this kind, in which he merely embodies, in his own native language, the incidents and thoughts so well narrated, and so nobly expressed, in another, renders any observations on his part ill-placed. He may be allowed, however, merely to state, that he was induced to undertake the translation on three grounds : The first, that an attentive perusal of the original fables convinced him that they were, in every respect, worthy of being made known to the British public; the second, that he was desirous of paying a tribute of esteem and friendship to their distinguished and amiable author, and the third, that he was anxious to testify (to the best of his ability) his gratitude for the kindness he has ever experienced at the hands of Belgians, during a residence (with the exception of some sixteen months passed in various parts of Germany) of

six years in Brussels. With respect to the last point, he thought he could not better attain it, than by translating some of the most popular literary productions of a man who long filled such eminently national posts as that of President of the Belgian Senate, Director of the Royal Academy of Belgium, and governor of its metropolis.

Upon all those grounds, the translator only wishes that he was better able to do justice to the task he undertook, the result of which he now respectfully submits, to the impartial and judicious critics of his native land.

Brussels, April the 14th, 1830.

ADDITIONAL FABLES.

FABLE I.

The Swallows and the Sparrow.

For solid workmanship, our masons may
A model in the swallow's nest e'er find.

Under my window, yesterday,
I saw one building, and with glances kind
The young and loving pair I sought to cheer.
Quick sped the work. With wool, moss, hair and hay,

A charming bed was made, but ere
The fruit of all this labour was enjoyed,
Came in a good-for-nothing fellow, for
E'en birds such folk can show. Of shame devoid,
Neither good feeling manifesting, nor
Respect for other's goods, the home he seized. —
Our communists, of course, would be quite pleased
To do the same now, if they 'd be permitted. —

The bold usurper was a sparrow, who,
Like Polyphemus e'en, himself acquitted,
When homeward with delight the couple flew :
With beak most menacing, he twitted
The swallows on their claims. So far, so good.
Rising in air, above their nest they flitted,
With cries of vengeance and distress! Soon popped

A host of sparrows from their holes, with beaks
Well filled with clay, and in a moment stopped —
Hermetically e'en — the usurped cell.
The sparrow thus, in spite of all his squeaks
And protestations loud, was punished well ; —
For Ugolino's fate the plunderer befell.

Now for our moral : — Let us all unite
To punish wrong and vindicate the right (112).

FABLE II.

The Steed as Dictator.

Fortune and fame, and popular applause
High-sounding words are, signifying nought.
In these our days, the proudest men are brought

From their high pinnacle of honour, wealth,
E'en to the ground. One day above the laws,

The next in chains. In fine, by stealth
Disaster creeps on triumph. In one day,
The public raise an idol, then destroy.

Know the Tarpeian rock is but short way
From e'en the capitol. 'Midst praise and joy,
A courser, famous for his noble deeds,
Was named dictator. Ev'ry thing succeeds
Just as folk wish. Abundance flows ,

Thanks to his wondrous foresight, and, in fine ,
Exempt the land is both from cares and woes.

But hold, the wolves and foxes still repine ,
Denounce his measures and his will oppose.
Foxes and wolves, of course, are not o'erpleased

When justice holds full sway. Their complaints, alas,
Soon echo find; many a cur and ass
The party join. The steed at last is seized,
And then expelled. What next? No need to state ! —

Amidst the anarchy each wolf and fox
Find ample booty, e'en the public box ,
That is the treasury , they force and then
Its rich contents they idly dissipate. —
All wish the courser was come back again.

FABLE III.

The two Dogs.

War's striking image, long the chase
Was deemed a sport e'en fit for kings ;
And still our modern dandy race
Much zest e'er to the pastime brings.
Thinking it better e'en than all
The charms of theatre and ball.
Two hounds, to their great grief, belonged
To an old sportsman, rough, severe,
And who, suspicious e'er, oft wronged
The dogs, without a good cause near.
They had the wolves' fate envied, nay
Thro' deep despair e'en pined away,
Did not each night bring sweet relief
And solace amidst all their grief.
For doubly dear their converse then —
Unbroken and unheard by men.

To bless this earth, a boon is given —
Friendship, the noblest gift of Heaven.

FABLE IV.

The two Bears.

Now, politics are all the rage ;
The sole affair of fool and sage ;
“ Progress, ” — that word of ill and good,
Paris has roused, and made a panic
Even amongst the race Germanic, —
But is it rightly understood ?
I have my doubts, and I recall
A certain fable — that’s to say
A truthful history, for all
I now relate, I saw one day.

The owner of a grand collection
Of dancing bears provided e’er
For all their wants with kindest care —
Nay, treated them with due affection.
Well fed, well tended and applauded,
Theirs’ was a lot which might be lauded.
They should have thanked each lucky star
For their dependence, but they deemed
Full liberty was better far ;
Hateful, in fact, their muzzles seemed,
When after each repast their master
Quick clapped them on t’avoid disaster :
“ Oh, if we were,” they cried quite free,

How gay and merry we should be!
How nimbly dance the saraband,
The Polka and the Allemande! —
How clever should we be — how funny —
What gaping hosts, what loads of money! ”
Their master was good-natured, so
He let them in full freedom go.
What the result? Half-wild, ill-bred,
Their dispositions soon they showed; —
Soldiers arrived and shot them dead,—
Ere lives were lost, or blood had flowed.
I have to add that all commended
This act of justice, when ’twas ended.

END OF THE FABLES.

NOTES.

1. No one disputes the assertion that a certain negligence of style is peculiar to the composition of fable; but all are not agreed as to what constitutes the apologue itself. Some modern Aristarchi declare that action is indispensable; but numerous examples taken from Æsop, Phædrus, La Fontaine, Florian and almost all the modern fabulists, prove the contrary. *The Bird wounded by an Arrow, the Fox and the Bust, the Fox and the Grapes, the Peacock complaining to Juno, the Ivy and the Thyme, the Viper and the Lecch* and a hundred others which occur to my memory possess no action. The moral meaning, however, is found within them, so that they will be always looked upon as fables, although they are, no doubt, inferior to *the Animals sick with the pest, the Cat, the Weasel and the young Rabbit, the Ape and the Leopard*, etc.

The first edition of these fables was published on the 10th. of September 1818; Paris, Fain, in 12; the second, on the 10th. of November following. Brussels, Wahlen, in-18; the third in 1819. Paris, Firmin Didot, in-12; the fourth in 1821. Paris, Firmin Didot, in-18, with the addition of thirteen fables; the fifth in 1823 Brussels, Lacrosse in-18 with two new fables. The sixth, containing seven new pieces, was also published in-16, by Lacrosse in Brussels, in 1837, and was on the eve of appearing in Paris in August 1830 (the first sheet having already gone to press) when political circumstances and the peculiar position of the establishment which had undertaken the publication arrested the further progress of the work.

The fifth edition contained one hundred and forty-four fables, and the sixth one hundred and fifty-one. The seventh edition, published by Paulin, in Paris, in 1847, is increased by an eighth book, so that at present the total number of fables is one hundred and seventy-four, including the prologue and two epilogues.

2. The following are brief notices of the fabulists mentioned in the preface to the first edition :

GELLERT, LICHTWER and LESSING are, together with HAGEDORN, the most celebrated fabulists of Germany. All four lived, so to say, at the same epoch, having been born and having died in the 18th century.

CATS (Jacob) one of the best poets of Holland, born at Brouwershaven, in 1577, and deceased in 1660. CONSTANTINE HUYGHENS, the father of the celebrated mathematician, Christian Huyghens, has also composed some fables in Dutch which are not without merit.

GAY, born in 1688 and deceased on the 4th of December 1732; EDWARD MOORE, born in 1712, deceased in 1757, and Dodsley, who died on the 25th of September 1764, are the three English fabulists who have obtained the greatest success. Some esteemed fables are also found in the works of the poet Dryden.

PIGNOTTI and BERTOLA, who are, no doubt, still living (1818) have brought the apologue into honour amongst the Italians. The former is distinguished by elegance and diversity of style, and the latter by a simplicity which may be compared with that of the ancient writers of fables. Longtime before them, VERDIZOTTI (Giovanni Marius) born in 1523, at Venice and deceased at Treviso in 1600, acquired fame by a collection of one hundred fables, from which La Fontaine did not disdain to borrow some subjects.

YRIARTE (Don Thomas d') the best Spanish fabulist (without excepting even Samaniego) and the best known out of his own country. Florian is indebted to him for his smartest apologies. The fables of Yriarte, translated

into French verse by J.-B. Lanos, and published in 1800, were unsuccessful, but not through the fault of the original author. The lately published version (1838) by M. Brunet, (the father of M. Brunet de Presle (the learned author of the *Investigations into the establishments of the Greeks in Sicily*), combines an elegant style with a careful versification. [A translation appeared several years ago in English.]

KRASICKI (born at Doubiesko in 1735, died at Berlin on the 14th of March 1801) the Polish fabulist, full of talent, good sense and gaiety, was Archbishop of Gnesen. Frederick the Great took much pleasure in his society. One day as the Archbishop was playing at chess with the King, the latter, as was his wont, began to banter him on his religious principles : — “ Heretics,” observed his royal antagonist “ will not be admitted into Heaven, but I hope you will contrive to pass me in under your cloak. ” “ Your Majesty,” replied his Grace, (who since the division of Poland was living on a small yearly allowance) “ has rendered my cloak so short that there is no longer any opportunity of concealing smuggled goods under it. ”

This note was printed, for the first time, in 1818 ; I mention that fact because since that year, it has been textually borrowed from me. (Hennequin. *Cours de Littérature*, t. iv. P. 310. Paris 1827.)

KRILOFF, born at Moscow in 1768, died at St.-Petersburg in 1844. A handsome edition of his fables, with French and Italian imitations by several poets of the present epoch, was published by Firmin Didot, in Paris, in 1825, 2 vols. in-8, adorned with the author's portrait and five very pretty engravings. As well as Kriloff, two other Russian poets, Khemnitser and Dmitrief, have successfully cultivated the apologue.

THE INIMITABLE “ **FABLIER** ” is a name created by Madame de La Sablière or Madame de Cornuel for La Fontaine ; it is now in some respects a noun proper,

designating only him — the “*Fablier*” *par excellence*.

FLORIAN's reputation as a fabulist is still increasing every day. His contemporaries pretended that he was deficient in colouring and in poetic diction. Posterity, however, — now commencing for him — displays more justice; his merit is better appreciated and he is now commended for not having buried, under a too poetic colouring that graceful simplicity which, as La Harpe judiciously observes, is the distinguishing characteristic and charm of fable.

Never before, perhaps, did there appear, at the same time, so many distinguished fabulists as at present. At the risk of recalling the names of formidable rivals, I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of quoting MM. Arnault, Le Bailly, P. Didot, Dumas (of Lyons), François de Neufchâteau, Gauldrée de la Caze, Gosse, Grenus, Hoffman, Hubin, Jauffret, Le Montey, Vitallis and Madame Joliveau. I hasten also, with a species of patriotic pride, to inscribe on the list the name of M. Rouveroy, born like Grétry, at Liège. He is the author of some charming fables (published in 1822), which elicited general eulogium. The republic of letters lost, on the 7th of November 1816, M. Ginguené whom sixty apologues, displaying a pleasing originality, although imitated, for the most part, from Italian writers place (at least in my humble opinion) above Lamotte, Richer, Lemonnier, Nivernais and even Aubert, but beneath Florian. Death has also just deprived us of M. du Tremblay, whose characteristics were gracefulness of style and a charming ingeniousness in the treatment of his subjects.

Since the first insertion of this note, MM. Arnault, F. de Neufchâteau, Gauldrée de la Caze, Gosse, Hoffman, Hubin, Jauffret, Le Bailly, Le Montey, Vitallis, and Madame Soliveau, as well as MM. Conte de Saint-Donat, d'Hauteclair and Rigaud, have disappeared from our ranks; but MM. Bergeron, Boyer-Nioche, Bourguin,

Bressier, Desains, Duvivier, de Foudras, Léon Halévy, de Jussieu, La Chambeaudie, de la Doucette, S. Lavalette, de Montesquiou, Varennes, Viennet and some others have replaced them.

It may be stated here that launched very young in the career of public employment, and resolved never to sacrifice my duties to my dearest inclinations, I long neglected the cultivation of letters. In the interval between 1803 and 1814, I did not compose, perhaps, five hundred verses. Now, that circumstances give me more leisure, I make myself amends; — but is it quite wise, when youth has fled, to become a wooer of the Muses? Why not, if this relaxation contributes to render us more happy.

Reference is made, in the preface to the first edition, to d'Ardenne (Esprit-Jean de Rome) who died in 1748 at Marseilles, where he was born on the 3rd of March 1684, and not 1687, as stated in the *Dictionnaire historique* of MM. Chaudon and Delandine. His apologues which enjoyed at the time some reputation, are now very little known. They scarcely arise above mediocrity but the accompanying discourse on fables merits a perusal.

3. "One morn within a tranquil grove was heard."

A man of talent and worth has objected to my making the lark sing in a grove, because that bird usually inhabits the open fields. It appears to me, however, that that very circumstance furnished another ground for the surprise of the blackbird. The line : *Sifflons pour déjouer ce projet odieux* (Let us hiss in order to thwart that odious project) originally ran thus : — *Sifflons ce chantre audacieux* (Let us hiss this overbold singer.) But the love of glory appears odious in the eyes of certain people — hatred being the daughter of

envy. I thought it, therefore, better to say : *sifflons pour déjouer ce projet odieux.*

“ Accompaniment like this would baffle Amphion.”

It may be well to state, for the information of young people who may read these fables, previously to their becoming well acquainted with mythology, that Amphion, the son of Jupiter and Antiope, the queen of Thebes, is considered the inventor of music. The word *Amphion*, which has now become, as it were, the name of a *genus*, is employed as a synonym for *musician*, and *virtuoso*.

True phenix.

The phenix was, according to mythology, the most charming of birds and the only one of his species. He sprung up to new life, from his ashes, at the end of several centuries of existence.

The Egyptians, who had consecrated the phenix to the sun, and placed his image on their religious monuments, imagined that his life was equal in duration to the sothic period (of which he was the emblem) that is to say 1461 years. No one, I am inclined to think, has painted the phenix in richer colours than M. Norvins in his poem : *L'immortalité de l'âme*.

4. M. Blondeau, my fellow-countryman and oldest friend (to whom this fable is dedicated) is distinguished by the excellent lectures which, for many years past, he has given at the Ecole de Paris, as well as by the synoptical tables of Roman law (which he published in 1813) and a great number of articles on jurisprudence, inserted in the *Bibliothèque du Barreau*. He is also one of the editors of *Thémis*, a journal enjoying a large circulation not only in France but in other countries.

M. Blondeau is a member (in the capacity of free academician) of the class of moral and political sciences, of the French Institute.

“ But Rousseau erred when in a fit of spleen.”

The *Confessions* of J. J. Rousseau, which are, certainly, no honour to his memory, prove that that philosopher had the misfortune to disbelieve in the existence of friendship.

“ O joy untroubled, when around me press
My old associates.”

I have had, more than once, the satisfaction of finding myself in the midst of my friends and my old school-fellows. All of us who happened to be in Paris retained at one time the custom of dining together on the first Tuesday of each month. The charms of such meetings may be easily described as well as the pleasing reminiscences which they throw over one's whole life. But, alas, our ranks grow thinner and thinner. One does not grow old with impunity, and I cannot reflect on our cruel losses without recalling those true and beautiful verses in the poem of the *Saisons* : —

“ Malheur à qui les Dieux accordent de longs jours,
Consumé de douleurs vers la fin de leurs cours,
Il voit dans le tombeau ses amis disparaître,
Et les êtres qu'il aime arrachés à son être.
Il voit autour de lui tout périr, tout changer ;
A la race nouvelle, il se trouve étranger ;
Et lorsqu'à ses regards la lumière est ravie,
Il n'a plus en mourant à perdre que la vie.”

“ Worthy of two friends in Grecian story named.”

Orestes and Pylades were celebrated, in ancient times, for their mutual and unceasing friendship. The attachment of Patroclus for Achilles is also immortalised by Homer in the *Iliad*. Those who do not know Greek

sufficiently to have recourse to the original will read with pleasure this episode in the beautiful French verss of M. Aignon, or in the excellent prose translation by the Duke of Plaisance, (Lebrun, also the translator of Tasso's *Gierusalemme Liberata*. [English readers need not be reminded of the translations of the Iliad by Pope and Cowper.]

"On the sweet love song which, at love's soft hour,
Philomela poured forth."

Philomela, a name given to the nightingale, because it was into a bird of that species that Philomela, the daughter of Pandion, the king of Athens, was metamorphosed — her sister Progne being transformed into a swallow. This adventure, as well as all kinds of information of a mythological nature, will be found in M. Noel's *Dictionnaire* (one of the excellent classical works which are now-a-days published) or in Chompré's *Abrégé*, revised by Millin.

5. This fable is imitated from Father Desbillons, a Jesuit, who was born at Châteauneuf-sur-Cher, in Berry, on the 25th of January 1711, and who died at Mannheim on the 19th of March 1789, after having published, I think, more than five hundred fables in Latin verse. They obtained some success, particularly in the colleges; but they exhibit dryness and monotony and the morals appear forced. A selection of his fables, with the French translation opposite the original text, was published by the author, in two volumes, several editions of which have appeared.

6. To furnish a note respecting the two great Latin poets (Horace and Virgil) mentioned in this fable, would be an insult to the knowledge of our readers, even the youngest. Their writings are the delight of all ages. Count Daru has translated the former with remarkable success. The epistles and satires leave little to desire.

“ With foreign orders all bedizened out. ”

Court etiquette, so apt to take offence, will not I hope be startled by a piece of pleasantry which will not, assuredly, prevent any person from seeking those vain favours, now more in demand than ever, in this philosophical age, in which every one is consumed with the equestrian fever and the mania for distinctions.

“ By dint of change, disorders they foment. ”

Amongst the innovators of the present day, may we not well class all those blind partisans of Gothic usages, all those censurers of modern institutions who shudder at the very mention of *Charter*, *code* and *national representation*? They would wish to deprive us of the lessons of experience and make the age retrograde towards barbarism. Insensates as they are, they unchain formidable passions around them, without possessing the necessary force to direct them; and they are far from perceiving the natural result of their rash enterprises. How much would they need our pity, if they procured the triumph of their absurd system! It is the duty of the friends of order and all good citizens to oppose unceasingly those attempts of maddened egotism, and to constantly defend the principles of constitutional monarchy, an inestimable benefit, but one which the revolutionary tempest has already made us pay for, by too many sacrifices.

These observations, first penned in 1818, are still true, and experience fully justifies them; but in these our days, they are, perhaps, more applicable to another class of innovators.

7. Denys, the well-known tyrant of Syracuse, died in the year 586 A.-C. His son who succeeded him, and who was twice deposed, ended his days in the city of Athens

or, according to others, Corinth. It is asserted that he was obliged to open a school for his maintenance. He was not deficient either in cultivation or even (to a certain extent) in greatness of soul. Being asked, one day, what benefit he had derived from the precepts and conversations of Plato: "They have taught me," he replied, "to support my reverses, my exile and your sarcasms."

"For e'en the crocodile sheds tears."

In the opinion of the ancients,—an opinion, however, which naturalists reject, but which the fabulist may turn to account—the crocodile had the faculty of shedding tears.

8. "Our modern Chrysostom."

Chrysostom, signifying *mouth of gold*, is the glorious epithet of John of Antioch, archbishop or rather patriarch of Constantinople, who died in the beginning of the fifth century, and who was famous for his contests with the empress Eudoxia.

"Unto our four-legged Talleyrand."

The celebrity of this name, I imagine, requires no note to retrace the reminiscences it awakens.

Thus we, or, if you like, the French.

It may be stated here that the author, a native of Belgium, composed in that country the majority of his fables. The French console themselves for everything by a *bon-môt*, even their civil wars offer few events which have not been lampooned, and a collection of the Vaudevilles, written in that strain, would not be, perhaps, without use for the study of the human mind.

9. "The owl has shocking eye-sight."

It is scarcely necessary to state that the owls cannot support light—in a word that they are birds of darkness.

“Need Arnault of the envious complain?”

M. Arnault has just published at the Hague (1818) an edition of all his works. Party spirit, envy and all hateful passions have seized this opportunity to indulge in new invectives against the author of *Marius*, the *Venitiens* and *Germanicus*. For my part, I am happy to have it in my power to offer this public homage of my esteem to one of the worthiest, supporters of our tragic scene, and to the most charming fabulist, perhaps, of our epoch. M. Arnault, long an exile in Belgium, was at last restored to his country and numerous friends. The French Academy did honour to itself by making him one of its members; subsequently, he replaced Andrieux as perpetual secretary, but death did not allow him to enjoy that post long.

10. This apologue was written in 1808. I am indebted, for the idea, to Herr Kohlman, a German writer who did me the honour of translating into his native tongue the *Pensées de Circé*, from the third edition—the one published by Stapleaux in Brussels in 1815. (1 vol. in-18.)

“I’ll seek a name at dread Bellona’s call.”

Bellona was the goddess of war and sister of Mars, whose chariot and steeds she got ready whenever he departed for the combat.

These mythological notes (some sixteen or seventeen) will not, in all probability, give any fresh information to the majority of my readers, but they may be useful to youthful ones by enabling them the better to understand the fables.

“E’en Bayard-like, with reputation graced.”

If our concoctors of biographical dictionaries, whose microscopes transform many a pigmy into a Colossus,

showed less disdain for four-legged heroes, we should, assuredly, have notices respecting the horse *Bayard*. I recollect that such was the name also of the horses of the four sons of Aymon, famous knights in the time of Charlemagne and even in our own, thanks to the *Bibliothèque bleue*, in which their history occupies a distinguished place, as children of all ages well know. The steed of the brave palatine Rinaldo is also called Bayard by Ariosto. It will be seen that the race is a very ancient one, and one, moreover, which on all sides appears to be illustrious.

11. "The finny race of Neptune."

Neptune, the son of Saturn and Rhea. He shared with Jupiter and Pluto the inheritance of his father—Jupiter having the heavens, Pluto the infernal regions and Neptune the empire of the waters. The last is represented armed with a trident. Lemièrre says :

"Le trident de Neptune est le sceptre du monde."

"A Frenchman swears he spied
Within the moon this pleasant couple."

Beffroy-Regny, nicknamed Cousin James, the author of *Nicodème dans la Lune*, as well as of a periodical called *les Lunes*, composed the words and the music of *Club des bonnes gens*, *Madelon*, *la petite Nanette*, *Ailes de l'Amour* and of some other little pieces full of cleverness and sprightliness. I do not know for what reasons the cousin has quitted the career of letters. Is he reserving his productions for the inhabitants of the moon? If so, it appears to me that we have, on many grounds, a previous right to them.

Since the above paragraph was written, I have learned that he died in the Charenton lunatic asylum in 1811. His madness was that of many an unfortunate individual,

viz ambition — poor Beffroy-Regny imagining that he was a senator and a count of the empire.

“ Distrust, O people, I beseech
Those factious tribunes.”—

As well known, the tribunes of the Roman people often became the enemies of order, under the pretext of defending interests entrusted to them. They appeared to consider that their duty consisted in the persecuting of the most distinguished members of the senate, and those generals who contributed the most to the glory of their country. Those ferocious partisans of democracy were seldom influenced by other feelings than those emanating from egotism, pride and love of power — so rarely do passions lose their empire over mankind. I am far, however, from confounding with those factious tribunes the true friends of real liberty; I attack only those political Tartufes, who are not less common in this century than were the religious Tartufes in the time of Lewis the fourteenth.

12. Trismegistus signifies *thrice great*. It is the surname of Mercury the second, the king of Thebes and contemporary of Moses, celebrated for his discoveries in the sciences and for the wisdom of his institutions. Hermetes, the inventor, it is asserted, of hieroglyphics, was also called Trismegistus. No philosopher before him propounded such just notions of the divinity: “God,” he observes, “existed in his solar unity before all beings. He is the source of all that is endowed with intelligence, the first incomprehensible principle, sufficing for himself, and the father of all essences.”

15. It is, I think, generally known that the *Phèdre* of Pradon was, for some time, deemed a production superior to that of Racine; and that in the last century people ventured to compare the ephemeral ornaments

and ridiculous affectation of the abbé de Voisenon with the good taste and immortal graces which distinguish the fugitive pieces of Voltaire. One must be just, however : if Voisenon received exaggerated praise at one time, he is now too much forgotten. His works, if reduced to a little volume of prose and verse, would deserve a place in every library. [The English scholar will easily recall similar instances of the preference given, for a time, to mediocrity over real and unperishing genius.]

[The bird designated in this fable as the Warbler (*Fauvette*, in French), is the Blackcap-Warbler, known in Yorkshire, under the name of Petty Chap. Its song is so fine, that it is considered by some equal to that of the nightingale. It is met with in England chiefly in orchards and gardens. It is of the nightingale or *Sylvia* species. — *Translator.*]

14. In depriving moles of eye-sight, I have taken advantage of the privilege (possessed by all fabulists) of enlisting into service a popular opinion, although it may be controverted by naturalists. Aristotle and the Greek philosophers always maintained that the mole was blind. In our times, however, the eyes of the animal have been discovered. They are black and hard, about the size of a millet-seed, and protected not only by eye-brows but also by long soft hairs which cross each other, and form, as it were, a thick bandage.

15. I might have dispensed with a moral to this fable, but I recalled the precept of the master : — “ The apologue, is composed of two parts, one of which may be termed the body, the other the soul. The body is the fable, the soul the moral. Aristotle admits only animals into fables, excluding men and plants. This rule, however, is one less of necessity than convenience, for neither Æsop nor Phædrus, nor in fact any of the

fabulists have observed it. Such, however, is not the case with regard to the moral, all looking upon it as indispensable. If I have omitted it in any case, it is only in places where it could not enter with becoming grace, or where it might be easily supplied by the readers themselves."

(LA FONTAINE. *Preface to his fables.*)

16. "Descended from that moping bird
Which sad Heraclitus once kept."

Heraclitus, a philosopher of Ephesus, who lived about five centuries before Christ, was of a melancholy nature and was constantly weeping over human follies. He was surnamed the *gloomy philosopher*. It may be easily imagined that he kept an owl, just as many people now-a-days have parrots.

"If misanthropic Timons quit
The world for woods, what benefit?"

Timon, a citizen of Athens, known for his hatred of mankind and his love of solitude. His name is now the synonym for a misanthropist.

17. "Dishonoured the receiver stands
Of gifts and favours at the hands
Of beings whom he e'er despises."

I have elsewhere (*Pensées de Circé*, p. 82) made the following observations: — "It is essential for every one to impose on himself, on entering into society, the law of selecting his benefactors with care and discernment; for I know nothing more painful than the lying under obligations to a man whom one despises." Faithful to this maxim, long engraved on my heart, I made my *début* in the career of public employment, under the auspices of Baron Perès (of the Haute Garonne) known for his courageous conduct during the trial of the unfor-

tunate Lewis XVI, and dear to the province of Namur of which he was, during fourteen years, the governor ; of M. Lambrechts, a member of the senate, of the Duc de Plaisance, of Count Montalivet — names, the quoting of which may be attributed to a feeling of pride on my part ; but I find a real pleasure in being able to pay them this tribute of disinterested gratitude.

18

“ A Roman senate once, for so
Vertot informs us.”

Few historians possess, like Abbé Vertot, the art of interesting their readers. The following is his description, in the first book of his *Révolutions Romaines*, of the death of Romulus : —

“ Romulus vainquit ces peuples (ceux du Latium) les uns après les autres, prit leurs villes dont il ruina quelques-unes, s'empara d'une partie du territoire des autres dont il disposa depuis, de sa seule autorité. Le sénat en fut offensé, et il souffrait impatiemment que le gouvernement se tournât en pure monarchie. Il se défit d'un prince qui devenait trop absolu. Romulus, âgé de 53 ans, et après 37 ans de règne, disparut sans qu'on ait pu découvrir de quelle manière on l'avait fait périr. Le sénat, qui ne voulait pas qu'on crût qu'il y eût contribué, lui dressa des autels après sa mort, et fit un dieu de celui qu'il n'avait pu souffrir pour souverain.”

“ It was the wicked courtiers' steel
Which made good Henri c'en expire.”

No historical event, I believe, is involved in greater uncertainty, than the death of Henri-Quatre, as to its true causes : “ His judges,” says l'éréfixe, “ never dared to open their mouths on the subject and only shrugged their shoulders when allusion was made to it.” The memoirs of the time give rise, moreover, to the impression that Ravallachad for accomplices courtiers adroit enough to get the judicial questions asked in a manner which

should not compromise themselves. Legouv  has made this opinion the basis of his tragedy, and I must confess that I quite agree with his views.

“ To Princes of the Trajan school,
These horrid tactics I disclose,
To warn them 'gainst the assassins' blows.”

These verses appeared, for the first time, in the sixth edition, as I thought them necessary to establish, so to say, the moral of the fable. The emperor Trajan, the adopted son of Nerva, deserves (although his private life is not, perhaps, free from reproach) to be placed amongst the benefactors of mankind. Born on the 18th of September, A. D. 82, at Seville, he died on the 10th of August, in the city of Salimante which was afterwards called Trajanopolis.

19. “ 'Twas thus that Buffon lived and wrote.”

The eloquent historian of nature, George Louis Leclerc, Count de Buffon, was born at Montbar, in Burgundy, on the 7th September, 1707, and died at Paris on the 16th of April 1788.

Nay, Deputies of the centre, do not smile.

The Deputies of the Centre in France had the reputation of being very sensible of gastronomic seductions, and of believing in the infallibility of ministers, as well as in that of their cooks.

20. Their shoulders rests all Helicon

Helicon, a mountain of Beotia consecrated to the Muses and to the God of vers .

21. With less modesty and, possibly, with less love of leisure, M. Violet d'Epagny (to whom this fable is dedi-

cated) would be reckoned amongst our most pleasing poets. Several anonymous pieces have been favourably received by the public. Our readers will, no doubt, be pleased with me for quoting here his pretty fable of *Le Tournesol*, — a quotation which will prove that friendship easily triumphs over self-love.

LE TOURNESOL ET LES FLEURS.

Dans un parterre où mille fleurs
Répandaient leurs douces odeurs,
Un tournesol, à la tige élancée,
Présentent au soleil sa tête nuancée,
Se pavanait avec orgueil ;
Il n'accordait pas un coup d'œil
Aux autres fleurs dont la foule empressée
Semblait mériter plus d'accueil.
Une pensée, auprès de lui fleurie,
Modestement lui disait quelquefois :
« Mon cher ami, c'est une étourderie
« De mépriser la terre, ta patrie,
« Et tes bons amis d'autrefois.
« Au blond Phébus on sait ce que tu dois ;
« Comme toi, chaque fleur lui rend un humble hommage,
« Toutes, nous attendons de sa bénignité
« Notre éclat et notre beauté ;
« Mais à nos sœurs nous faisons bon visage,
« Et nous nous aiderions s'il venait un orage.
« Il ne fait pas toujours beau temps ;
« Souvent on a besoin d'un abri tutélaire
Contre l'inclémence des vents :
« Et l'arbuste le plus vulgaire
« Nous sauve quelquefois de graves accidents. »
A ce discours le courtisan superbe
Répondit sans baisser les yeux :
« Qu'importe l'amitié de gens cachés sous l'herbe ?
« De l'astre étincelant qui brille dans les cieux
« J'ai constamment suivi le disque radieux ;
« J'adore sa chaleur, et ma fleur parasite,
« Tirant son nom de lui, devient sa favorite.

« Aussi, dès qu'il verse ses dons,
 « Je voudrais, à moi seul, absorber ses rayons. »
 A ce propos joignant un dédaigneux sourire,
 Il indigna les fleurs qui paraient les gazons,
 Et courrouça Flore et Zéphyre.
 Alors, vers le ciel azuré
 L'on vit naître un sombre nuage;
 Le soleil en fut entouré;
 Bientôt le plus affreux orage
 Sortit de son flanc déchiré.

Chaque fleur à l'instant s'accôle à sa voisine.
 Chacune se protège, et réciproquement
 Soutient l'autre contre le vent
 Dont le souffle les déracine.

Le pauvre tournesol, sans secours, sans appui,
 Veut résister en vain, hélas ! c'est fait de lui !
 Sa tige fragile est brisée !
 Il a vu son dernier soleil !

Et sa fleur vient mourir au pied de la pensée
 Dont il négligea le conseil.

A la cour jouez-vous un rôle,
 Ayez pour le temps de malheur
 Un bon ami qui vous console :
 L'éclat de courtisan s'envoie
 Avec le vent de la faveur.
 L'amitié des puissants est un bien si frivole !
 Et le plus brillant protecteur
 Ne vaut pas un ami du cœur.

Three pieces in five acts and in verse, *Luxe et Indigence*, *l'Homme habile* and *Lancastre* have placed M. d'Epagny, since the appearance of his first productions, amongst the good dramatic poets of our epoch.

“Even like Bayard our most trusty bird.”

Bayard (Pierre du Terrail) was born at the château de Bayard in Dauphiny, on the 15th of January, 1476. and died of a wound received at the retreat of Rebec, on the

30th of April, 1524. He is looked upon as the eternal glory of French chivalry. His anxiety to preserve the fair fame of the fair sex is well known — his discretion in love being equal to his courage and his other virtues.

22.

“Of Berchoux.”.....

M. Berchoux was born in the Lyonnais in 1763. His poem of *La Gastronomie* is placed by connoisseurs on the same line as *Vert Vert* and the *Lutrin*, not, it is true, on account of its poetic colouring, but for its wit, attic salt, pleasantry and gaiety. *La Dansomanie ou les Dieux de l'opera*, without having obtained the same success, offers a multitude of details full of sprightliness and touches of humour. This amiable poet died at Marcigny (Saône et Loire) on the 17th of December 1854.

..... Or La Reynière.

M. Grimod de La Reynière, a man of much talent, died in 1838, aged 80. His *Almanachs des Gourmands*, above all, the principal volumes, bear the impress of the most pleasing originality. He is the author of the *Physiologie du goût*. M. Brillat-Savarin makes a conspicuous figure, in our days, amongst the legislators of the culinary art.

[In England, any allusion to this civilizing art immediately brings up the name of Soyer who, although he has not written any of his pleasing and valuable works in verse, is already termed “the immortal.”]

The Sorbonne's trash.

The theses and decisions of the Sorbonne are, no doubt, very orthodox and very respectable, but one may easily choose a more interesting and entertaining line of reading.

Ségur, they say, a gleaner is.

The Count de Ségur is a fresh proof, in addition to so

many others, that agreeable talents are not incompatible with the profound knowledge of a statesman. His historical works are in as much demand on the part of men of education as are his lyrical productions on that of the fair sex and the young men of our day.

23. Amongst other poets, whose mature productions soon destroyed the fame gained by youthful ones, was Dorat-Cubièrre, the author of *Hochets de ma jeunesse*, a promising work. He ended by re-casting Racine's tragedy of Phèdre which he considered to be very inferior to Pradon's production on the same subject.

24. A steed from famed Bucephalus descended.

It is not necessary to state that Bucephalus was Alexander's war-horse.

A very Rosinante in his gait.

Ever since the works of Aubusson and other fashionable novelists have come into vogue, Rosinante, the steed of the illustrious Don Quixotte de la Mancha, Don Quixotte himself and his squire Sancho are now less known to young people; but we shall never cease to take pleasure in those amusing adventures which have immortalized the name of their author, Cervantes, and which Florian (it may be incidentally stated) might have translated in a more sprightly manner.

25. Were followers of old Silenus.

In many parts of France, the generic name for tipplers is *Disciples de Grégoire*, (Gregory's disciples.)

26. Next morn, the sage of Guinea.

The majority of the monkeys we see in Europe, and particularly those of the larger sort, come from Guinea.

27.

Livy and Cicero, Herodotus.

Notes upon such distinguished classical authors as the above-named would be out of place. Young readers, who would wish to become acquainted with them, before they are capable of perusing their works in the original languages, may consult the *Biographie universelle*, and other historical dictionaries.

[The Thuringian Wald, referred to in the beginning of this fable, is that beautiful chain of wooded hills which covers a great portion of the centre of Germany and the Saxon duchies. The Wald commences at the sources of the Werra, where it branches off from the Franconian Wald (Franken-Wald) and ends in the vicinity of Eisenach, a beautifully situated town, near which the Duchess of Orleans and the Comte de Paris, accompanied by a few faithful friends, (amongst whom is the sister-in-law of the Baron de Stassart) have found a pleasing and tranquil asylum. In traversing the Thuringer-Wald, some two years and a half ago, I was much struck with the picturesque nature of the scenery—its lonely valleys, precipitous cascades, natural grottoes, vast forests of pines and sloping groves.— *Translator.*]

27.

Jove's bird.

Jupiter, the master and sovereign of the Gods, adopted the eagle as his favourite bird — Juno making choice of the peacock, Venus of the dove, and Minerva of the owl.

28.

In spite of Lullin.

M. Lullin, of Geneva, is the author of several good works on sheep and other animals of the woolly breed, as well as on cattle diseases. His works were sent, by order of the French government, to all the prefectures.

Valberg knew not where to dine.

Valberg is the name of a parasite in the *Marionnettes*, one of the best pieces of Picard, and the one, perhaps, in which the dramatic combinations reflect the greatest honour on the originality of his talent.

29. One Mercier in our day.

Mercier (Louis-Sebastien) the author of the *Tableau de Paris*, of the *An 2440*, of *Mon bonnet de nuit*, of *Fictions morales*, and of a hundred other volumes was not, assuredly, a common thinker; but his affected use of new words and phrases, his paradoxes, and his eccentricities, have ruined his reputation, except in some parts of Germany. He looked upon himself as the dictator of the republic of letters. Impatient to see all the originals of Paris, I paid him a visit in 1802. He resided at that time in a kind of garret in the Hotel de la Rochefoucauld, rue de Seine. On saluting him, I was addressed by him in a solemn tone with the following words: — « Vous aimez sans doute les lettres, vous les cultivez, et vous aurez voulu leur rendre hommage en ma personne. »

Mercier, who was born on the 6th of June 1740, died on the 25th of April 1814.

Better than Martinet.

Martinet, a bookseller in Paris, rue du Coq-Saint-Honoré not only sells caricatures but makes very good ones.

30. A modern Solon

M. Reyphens, one of the most fluent speakers of the time, pronounced an eulogium on tea in the Second Chamber of the States General of the Hague, on the 16th of december 1817.

Gets year on year
More out of favour.

. Recent travellers assert that the use of tea has been sensibly diminishing in China since a century.

51. Minerva's bird.

Pallas, surnamed Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, is the protectress of the Greeks. The Owl, as already stated, was her adopted bird.

Lucullus—like to live.

Lucullus, consul and pro-consul in the latter days of the Roman republic, is more celebrated for his love of luxury and good cheer than for his victories in Asia. Europe is indebted to him for cherry-trees, indigenous to the kingdom of Pontus; such, at least, is the common opinion, and Delille has adhered to it in the following verses : —

“ Quand Lucullus, vainqueur, triomphait de l'Asie,
L'airain, le marbre et l'or frappaient Rome éblouie ;
Le sage, dans la foule, aimait à voir ses mains
Porter le cerisier en triomphe aux Romains ”

“ Cependant, ” says the Marquis de Marnezia (in the notes which accompany his *Essai sur la nature champêtre*, a poem much less known than it deserves to be), “ il est impossible de parcourir nos forêts, et de ne pas être convaincu, par la multitude de cerisiers qu'on y rencontre, que cet arbre est indigène. Peut-être dans le royaume de Pont son fruit a-t-il été perfectionné par le moyen de la greffe, et que Lucullus en enrichit les Romains. Long-temps barbares et guerriers, nos pères savaient détruire, et négligeaient le premier, le plus heureux des arts, celui de cultiver.”

52. So courtiers, at a distance seen.

The best qualified young men of Rome, eager to please the emperors, did not hesitate to descend into the arena

to combat common gladiators. Since that time, gentlemen pay their respects in a less perilous manner. Devout at the end of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, irreligious and licentious under the regency, intriguing and temperate under Lewis the Fifteenth, courtiers contrive to cover successively all the vices with a varnish known only to themselves. The history of courtiers, such as they have shown themselves in different epochs, would be a work of the highest moral interest. It should be written, however, in that philosophical spirit and with that equity so rare now-a-days, when all is spoiled by exaggeration.

53. The Institute ne'er does such wrong.

I had at first said : *Gentlemen of the Institute, open well your ears*, but this verse might appear somewhat rude. Be that as it may, I entertain too much respect for the members to think it necessary for me to make excuses for a harmless pleasantry which cannot affect them.

54. Nobody is so little acquainted with the literature of our age as not to know Jocrisse, one of the heroes of our theatre. His reputation has penetrated even into Russia, as proved by my fable, imitated from Kriloff. The following is a literal translation : —

JOCRISSE'S COAT.

Jocrisse's coat was quite out at elbows. Well, no great reflection was needed. He quickly shortened each sleeve by half a foot, seizes a needle and patched up the holes. His coat is now quite ready for use, but then the sleeves are too short. No harm in that ! Nevertheless, all who meet Jocrisse laugh at him : " I'm not exactly a fool " says Jocrisse, " and I shall repair the evil ; I'll make my sleeves longer than they have ever been before. " Well,

after all, Jocrisse is no simpleton. He cuts off his coat-tails, adds them to his sleeves, and jogs off, gay as a lark, although his coat is now shorter than a waistcoat.

I know certain great lords who, after having embarrassed their affairs, repair them, like Jocrisse, and put on dresses like his.

Thus, one day,
Was Henri-Quatre's doublet,

The good Henri-Quatre complained to Francois d'O, his comptroller of the household, that all his doublets were patched at the elbows. This prince was crowned at Chartres, and in the accounts of the city, there is an item of three crowns for repairs to the king's doublet.

35. This portrait — one of Vernet's.

Charles Vernet, the son of Joseph, the excellent marine painter, and father of Horace who has retraced so brilliantly the military glory of France.

36. "Why praise yourself," cries Lemièrè.

Lemièrè (Antoine-Marin) of the French academy, born in 1833, at Paris, died in 1793, author of the poem : *de la Peinture*, of the *Fastes*, of the tragedies of *Hypermetre*, of the *Veuve du Malabar*, of *Guillaume Tell*, etc. If one may quote from this poet, who had incontestably more genius than good taste, a number of eccentric verses, some pretty ones may be also cited, such for example the following line which has been often applied to the fugitive poems of Voltaire : —

"Même quand l'oiseau marche, on sent qu'il a des ailes."

Lemièrè's self love could only be excused by his extreme good-nature. One day, whilst he was speaking of his works with enthusiasm, some one asked him how

he could have the courage to praise them so much : " Ma foi," he rejoined, " mes frères s'adressent aux journalistes pour avoir des éloges, et moi je trouve plus simple de faire mes affaires moi-même."

And one which Salgues declares most fair.

The author, who designed Salgues only by the first three letters of his name, observes that " although this allusion is only an inoffensive piece of pleasantry, I give only the initial letters of a name which is not without lustre in the republic of letters. Let us never forget this maxim of the author of OEdipus, ' If we only owe truth to the dead, we owe respect to the living."

Salgues (Jacques-Barthélemy), died at Paris on the 26th of July 1850. He was born at Sens, towards the year 1760.

37

Thus did the Jews
At ev'ry adverse incident.

The murmurs of the Hebrews against Moses, after the departure from Egypt, occupy more than one page of the Bible : the quarrels between governors and the governed are of long date. May they be brought to a close after so much agitation and so many troubles!

38. The Abbé Sotteau, professor of belles-letters at the college of Namur, was incontestably one of the most eloquent preachers of Belgium. He published in 1819 his *Rhétorique française* which places him amongst the worthy successors of the Rollins and the Ratteaux. His Latin verses prove that he could give examples to his pupils as well as precepts. Literature and his friends lost him on the 23th of November 1828.

39.

Like Perrette with his pot of milk

Every one knows by heart, as at were, that charming fable of La Fontaine : —

“ Perrette sur sa tête ayant un pot au lait
Bien posé sur un coussinet, etc.”

40. Morpheus soon packed his poppies up.

Morpheus, principal minister of sleep. He held a poppy plant in his hand, in order to set all those asleep who approached it. A wag of a sculptor took it into his head lately to give to Morpheus the traits of a learned academician of Germany or, perhaps, Belgium, and to add to the poppy a roll of paper inscribed with the words : *On liege homage and its imprescriptible consequences.*

41. Young, the Grashopper, (as we have been told.

Allusion is here made to La Fontaine's *La Cigale et la Fourmi*, the first fable of the collection.

No brilliant marquis of a brilliant race.

One may see in the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, with what art the courtier extracts money from poor M. Jourdain. Molière has traced those characters with so much vigour and truth that his personages cannot be separated from the vices or the follies which they exhibit on the stage. It is thus that Harpagon has become the synonym for a miser and Tartuffe for a hypocrite.

42. He'd quickly send her to the Styx.

The Styx is the river which, according to mythology, surrounds hell nine times. The Cocytus, another river of hell, environs Tartarus and is increased by the tears of the wicked. Its width and depth are not known, but it may be presumed that they are prodigious.

43. La Fontaine says we cannot praise too much.

La Simonide préservé par les Dieux. It is the 14.h fable of the 1st book : —

“ On ne peut trop louer trois sortes de personnes ,
Les dieux, sa maitresse et son roi.”

But I am warned by Chateaubriand's fate.

At the time of the publication of the *Génie du Christianisme*, some critics pronounced a severe judgment on it; the work, however, contains many sublime pages, and it may be justly considered one of the finest monuments of our age. Chateaubriand speaks of religion in enthusiastic terms which did not prevent Rome, however, from putting the book in the Index, that is to say, prohibiting the reading of it.

44. Which noble Washington for freedom fought.

Washington (George) the principal founder and first president of the United States of America, was born in 1732, and died in 1799. The name of this virtuous citizen is, undoubtedly, one of the noblest and most respected of modern times.

Thus to Achilles, Xanthe once foretold.

Xanthe, the horse of Achilles, is celebrated for his prophesies. He announced his master's death, but his warning was disregarded. Cassander, the daughter of Priam, who foretold the fall of Troy, and Jeremias who predicted that of Jerusalem, were not more attended to. It appears that it has been the fate of prophets in all ages not to have been believed on their word.

45. Why Mordechai ne'er was honoured so.

The tragedy of *Esther* which is not a chef-d'œuvre with respect to its dramatic combinations, but which on account of its enchanting style, the style of Racine, will be read with delight so long as the French language is

spoken, would render the history of the triumph of Mordechai visible, as it were, to all the world, even if that history were not found in the Bible. Mordechai, the uncle of Esther (the wife of Assuerus, king of Persia) having discovered a conspiracy against the life of the monarch was conducted in triumph through the streets of the capital, mounted on a richly caparisoned horse, clothed with the royal robe and holding a sceptre in his hand. The principal minister of the king, the proud Haaman, who had sworn the destruction of Mordechai, as well as of the people of Israel, held the bridle of Mordechai's horse, exclaiming from time to time; "It is thus Assuerus honours those whom he delights to honour."

It has not been hitherto remarked, I believe—but the fact appears to me incontestable.—that the tragedy of *Esther* had in view the inducing of Lewis the fourteenth to become (although somewhat late) more indulgent towards the Protestants. The allusions in that respect are striking and numerous. Madame de Maintenon, it may be added, did not take that part which is attributed to her, by many historians, in the too fatal revocation of the edict of Nantes. On the contrary, we find her writing in the following terms to her relative, M. de Villette: — "Vous êtes converti : ne vous mêlez plus de convertir les autres. Je vous avoue que je n'aime pas à me charger envers Dieu ni devant le Roi de toutes ces conversions." And to her brother M. d'Aubigné, who persecuted the protestants: "Ayez pitié de gens plus malheureux que coupables; ils sont dans des erreurs où nous avons été nous-mêmes, et dont la violence ne nous aurait jamais tirés. Henri IV a professé la même religion, et plusieurs grands princes. Ne les inquiétez donc point, il faut attirer les hommes par la douceur et la charité... Jésus-Christ nous a donné l'exemple, et telle est l'intention du Roi. C'est à vous à contenir tout le monde dans l'obéissance; c'est aux évêques et aux curés à faire des conversions par la doctrine et par l'exemple. Ni Dieu ni le Roi ne vous

ont donné charge d'âmes. Sanctifiez la vôtre, et soyez sévère pour vous seul."

46. A thousand traits from Æsop.

Some savants call in doubt the existence of this father of apologue, and to justify their pyrrhonism, they do not fail to adduce the best reasoning in the world. La Fontaine, however, has not the less on that account given after Planudeus a life of Æsop, and the fables in the name of the latter are in the hands of every one.

47. Thus was Delille e'er greeted.

The translator of the *Georgics* and the *Æneid* of *Virgil*, and the *Paradise Lost* of *Milton*. The poet to whom we are also indebted for *Les Jardins*, *l'Homme des champs*, *la Pitié*, *l'Imagination*, *les trois Règnes de la Nature* and other poems, was an unequalled reader. I had only once the happiness of hearing him, and that is one of my most pleasing reminiscences. The fauteuil of Delille at the French Academy, occupied at first by Camponon, one of his most brilliant pupils, is now filled by M. Saint-Marc-Girardin. His chair of Latin poetry at the Collège de France was given to the *littérateur* of his choice, M. P. F. Tissot, who is not satisfied with pointing out the promised land. His translation of the *Bucolics* and of the *Kisses* of Johannes Secundus as well as his original love-poetry give him an advantageous position on Parnassus.

48. Was that their golden age.

It was thus that the age of Saturn was called, the first age of the world and the happiest, if the poets are to be believed. For my part, I am inclined to adopt the philosophy of the good M. de Plinville, the optimist: —

L'âge le plus heureux est le siècle où je vis.

Which Montesquieu preferred.

The immortal author of the *Esprit des lois*. "His virtues and his writings," says Lord Chesterfield "do honour to human nature." The reputation of Montesquieu, far from diminishing increases by time, because the experience of our faults in politics shows us every day more and more the wisdom of those principles which the genius of this great man had, in some sort, revealed to him. Voltaire, who did not like him, pronounced, nevertheless, the most beautiful of eulogiums on him when he said : *Le genre humain avait perdu ses titres, Montesquieu les a retrouvés.*

49. This fable is imitated from King Lewis of Bavaria. The original bears the date of 1813. The following is a literal translation : —

"Would I were king!" said the wolf one day.—"What would you do?" asked the lion, "I would have a sheep every day on my table. "Well, be king, then." And king he became. — From that time forth, he only devoured shepherds.

50. I cannot tell on what grounds the ex-abbé Rioust, formerly chaplain in ordinary of the king of France, and editor of the official journal of the Netherlands, imagined he could recognize himself in this little portrait.

51. This fable which I have entirely re-modelled, had the fault, in the three preceding editions, of recalling to mind the *Chameau et le Bossu*, one of the best apologies of M. Bailly. My fable stood originally thus.

LE PAPILLON ET LES OISEAUX.

Un gentil papillon, dont les ailes dorées
Et très-joliment diaprées
Devaient séduire tous les yeux,
Sur un lis se posa. Les regard curieux

S'arrêtent à plaisir sur notre personnage.

Chaque oiseau vint lui rendre hommage.

« J'aime sa grâce et sa légèreté ! »

Disait le roitelet : « cette vivacité ,

« A mon avis, est le plus beau partage. »

Pour le pivoet, ami de la variété,

Des diverses couleurs il vanta l'assemblage.

Sur ce même ton-là, je gage,

Chacun (c'est la mode aujourd'hui)

Allait parler en s'admirant en lui ,

Quand tout à coup le papillon déloge.

On veut , dans l'éloge d'autrui ,

Ne faire que son propre éloge.

52.

On Pactolus he steers

The sands of the Pactolus , a river of Lydia, became gold after Midas had bathed in it.

53.

Of Pales and the pastured fields.

Pales is the goddess of pastures , shepherds and sheep; she is sometimes confounded with Ceres, the goddess of harvests.

54. This fable, in the first editions, was dedicated to the Prince of Orange, afterwards William, II king of the Netherlands. The cordial reception he gave the Belgians, on their return to their country, after the battle of Waterloo, inspired that act of homage as well as the following verses which accompanied it : —

Vous que les plus nobles travaux

Placent au temple de Mémoire,

Prince, modèle des héros,

Vous qu'à vingt ans couronna la victoire,

Du milan et de l'aigle , accueillez bien l'histoire ,

De l'aigle on voit, en vous , la générosité ,

Mais non l'orgueilleuse fierté...

Votre destin jamais peut-il être semblable ?

28.

Rassurons-nous ! votre bonté
 Rendrait même le joug aimable.
 Vous possédez l'art de gagner les cœurs ,
 Heureux secret peu connu des vainqueurs.

Moreover, there was some question of familiarizing the French with the name of the descendant of the Nassaus. This had reference to a certain plan of General Lamarque, and which the prince did not reject, a plan which was, no doubt, very little susceptible of success, but one which, nevertheless, was not displeasing to those Belgians who retained a lively remembrance of France.

Thro' gen'rous desires
 And magnanimity oft heroes bleed.

The results of Cæsar's clemency and many other examples taken from ancient and modern history prove, unfortunately, the truth of this assertion.

55. That donkey trumpeter.

See the part played by the ass in La Fontaine's fable of *Le Lion s'en allant en guerre*. This fable is the 19th of the 5th book.

56. The learned dogs.

The literary education of these ambulatory troops of dogs is brought to such perfection that they now play tragedy and comedy with the aid of a prompter who, it is true, speaks rather loud, but who is the two-legged actor who can dispense with such aid? A little pug-dog filled the part of Andromache at the Hague fair in 1812, with the greatest success. A spaniel, an artiste of the same company, excelled in the *marquises* of Molière.

Cried Roscius.

Roscius, the most celebrated actor of ancient Rome. This is now a generic name for all who are distinguished in that career.

57.

Like d'Assas.

The chevalier d'Assas, born in the Cevennes, commanded the advanced posts, near Closter-Camp, on the night of the 16th of October, 1760. Having advanced rather too far into the forest, in order to examine it, he was surprised by the Brunswick grenadiers who threatened him with death, if he uttered a word, and on that word depended the safety of the French army. D'Assas did not hesitate. He cried out with all his might: — *Auvergne à moi, voilà les ennemis*, and fell covered with wounds. “ *Ce dévouement*, says Voltaire, *digne des Romains, aurait été immortalisé par eux; on dressait alors des statues à de pareils hommes; de nos jours ils sont oubliés.*” The voice of the philosopher of Ferney reached the throne of Lewis the sixteenth, and that monarch decreed that an hereditary pension should be given to the descendants of d'Assas until the race became extinct. The family was originally settled in the Cevennes.

This fable is, so to express myself, an historical fact under the form of an allegory. Have I not seen one of my most intimate acquaintances return to his home after the famous catastrophe of 1814, after having, in order to preserve his honour intact, disdained to enrich himself in the conquered provinces. What reception did he meet with from so many fellow-countrymen whom he had a hundred times obliged? Why, such a reception as that given to the cock in my fable. Beware however, of complaining. Virtue easily elevates itself above the injustice of men, and finds its sweetest conso-

lation in itself. Moreover, in that position, one can the better appreciate one's true friends, and enjoy more the affections of the heart. This is the triumph of the consoling system of Azaïs [The system of compensation]. And, do not doubt it, the mass of the people is almost always just, because it is seldom directed by the petty passions and miserable calculations which influence the high classes of society. Thus public opinion indemnifies us in the long run for the hateful prejudices and intrigues of the drawing-room. Moreover, persons of a base character, by attacking a man of a superior cast of mind, are the bolder on account of not incurring any risk. If thy succeed in removing him from a public career, they gain an easy triumph, because he respects himself too much to have recourse to unworthy means of vengeance; if, on the contrary, they fail in their efforts, they are convinced that such a man considers it to be one of his duties — I shall not say to forget, but — to forgive injuries.

58. The following is a literal translation of the Russian fable, from which I have taken the first idea of mine : —

THE WREN.

A wren flew rapidly over the sea. He had propagated the report that he would set it on fire, and rumour made known his intentions in all parts of the world. Terror spreads amongst the inhabitants of the empire of Neptune; the birds arrive in hosts to enjoy the spectacle; the denizens of the forest quit their lairs to see the ocean boiling; it is said even that a great number of cooks went down to the strand, forks in hand, to taste the fish which the ocean should throw up—fish of a rarer kind even than that served up on the tables of contractors, when dinners are given to the secretaries of cabinet ministers. Every one is impatient; every one admires, beforehand, the spectacle which he is to witness. All

grow silent, at last, all fix their eyes on the surface of the ocean; "very soon now," they said, "we shall see the flames." — Not yet! There are no flames whatever, but, perhaps, the water is getting hot, at least? No, not even that! Well, then, in what way did all these gigantic projects terminate.—The wren, abashed, returned to his nest. He had filled the hundred trumpets of Renown; but the Ocean did not undergo any change whatever.

Without offending any one, we may derive this moral from our fable : before we have completed any affair, we must take care not to boast of it."

Two dogs, they say.

See La Fontaine's *Deux chiens et l'âne mort*. Book VII, fable 25.

59.

A thousand little Solons.

Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and the legislator of Athens, his country, died in the year 539 A. C. in his 80th year. A witness of numerous abuses and of crying injustices, he loved to repeat this saying of Anarcharis : — "What are you busying yourself about, dear Solon? Know you not that laws are spiders' webs in which the weak are caught, but which the powerful break through?"

In our Ardennes.

Without wishing to call into question the merits of English pigs, we may observe that those of our Ardennes enjoy an extensive and justly acquired reputation. This fable is a bit of pleasantry called forth by one of my neighbours in the country, who got over a boar from England, from which he expected a numerous posterity, and which died a bachelor.

60.

Burrhus-like.

Burrhus, Nero's tutor. His austere virtue did not long succeed in retaining his pupil in the paths of honour. We need not be astonished at this, when we recollect that the infamous Commodus was the son of the virtuous Aurelius. Education is, no doubt, of much influence, but I do not think that it can ever entirely change a vicious nature, for there are monsters in a moral as well as in a physical point of view. The character of Narcissus, placed in contrast with that of Burrhus, in the tragedy of *Britannicus*, produces a grand dramatic effect.

[The author states in this fable that the Spartan would have given a similar reply to Bruin's.]

The laconic mode of speaking of the Spartans is well known. We may remark here that, without pluming ourselves on being learned in etymology, the word *laconism* is derived from the celebrated answer of the Laconians to Phillip, the king of Macedon, who threatened to sack their country, if he ever entered it. The Laconians contented themselves with writing the monosyllable *if* at the bottom of the letter, which they sent back to the proud monarch.

61.

'Twas said that Perrault had designed it.

Perrault (Claude) born in 1613, in Paris, died in that city in 1688. He has immortalized himself by the beautiful colonnade of the Louvre, and by other architectural *chefs-d'œuvre* which place his name amongst those which illustrate the reign of Lewis XIV. We are indebted to Perrault for a French translation of Vitruvius; but M. Moreau de Bioul, a member of the equestrian order of Namur, has published a more correct translation (Brussels 1816.) The interesting notes which accompany it throw a great light on the architecture, as well as on several customs, of the ancients.

62. The shameless Briton
At public auction e'en.

Let us see what General Pillet, in his work on England, says of the sale of wives at London : —

“ Un magistrat m'a assuré que les formalités des divorces par la vente de la femme, dans la basse peuple, étaient fondées sur des usages transmis par les anciens Brices ou les Bretons, antérieurement aux dynasties danoises. Cette espèce de divorce n'exige pas de grandes cérémonies.

“ Un mari mécontent veut divorcer; il y a preuve d'inconduite de la femme, il y a consentement entre les époux; ils viennent l'un et l'autre se présenter, le jour du marché, dans la place publique. Le mari conduit sa femme, liée par le cou, avec une corde; il l'attache au lieu où se vend le bétail, et là il la vend publiquement, en présence de témoins. Quand le prix est arrêté, et il ne dépasse pas quelques shillings (pièce d'un franc environ), l'acquéreur détache la femme; il la mène, liée de la même manière, en la tenant par la bout de la corde, et il ne la délie qu'après avoir parcouru à peu près la moitié de la place. ” *L'Angleterre vue à Londres et dans ses provinces*; vol. in-8°, Paris, 1813, pages 299 et 300.

Had she amongst the ancient Romans.

The Roman senators freed the people from all imposts, affirming that the poor paid a sufficient one to the republic by the subsistence which they procured for their numerous children. Tit., Liv., lib. 11, 9. In France, under the administration of the great Colbert, the father of ten children was exempted, during his life, from the payment of the *taille*.

63. Cold Lethe's stream.

The *Lethe*, or the river of forgetfulness, is celebrated in mythology.

64.

So Peter, Fritz.

Peter the Great, emperor of Russia, and Frederick the Great have acquired a more solid glory by their laws than by their victories.

I'll seek my plough again.

After so many political storms, how happy should one esteem himself who can live far from faction, enjoy the repose of the fields, and exclaim amidst his philosophic leisure, — Horace in hand — *Beatus ille qui procul negotiis*.

Replaced in public posts, the agriculturist and fabulist, who read again this note in 1837, could not refrain from uttering a sigh, and from regretting his pleasant retreat of Corioule. In 1847, freed from all the chains of a political career, he enjoyed, at last, the happiness of being able to give himself up wholly to that sweet philosophy, that studious idleness, the dream of his whole life.

65. M. Rabillon (Frederick), a member of the academy of Vaucluse, chief secretary of the Mayor of Orange, and afterwards *juge de paix*, is one of the most estimable men that I know. His distinguished talents, his views full of sound sense and wisdom, and his principles of honour, foreign to every species of party exaggeration, but eminently French, have procured for him the gratitude and affection of all his fellow-citizens. The eldest of his seven children is the author of a Latin fable which has furnished the subject of the one just read. A critic, in an article on my fables, has observed that the public at large did not need this eulogium of M. Rabillon, but I shall reply with good Colin d'Harleville in a similar case: "Le critique n'a pas pensé que j'en avais besoin, moi, et que j'acquittais ainsi une dette chère à mon cœur."

We saw each other during a few minutes, in November, 1840, on my return from Turin. It was our last

adieu — Rabillon died in the beginning of March, 1841.

66. Oh, save me from the lawyer's claw.

I must admit, however, that if more than one lawyer dishonours himself by his avidity, there are many who respect themselves, and who prove to us that the character placed on the stage by M. Roger, with so many charms, is not, as many would think, a being of pure imagination. Should there be any objection to, in this case, the word *serre* (claw) the lines may be altered thus : —

Feu Domergue aurait dit : les griffes mercenaires,
Mais *griffes* est un mot trop faible en pareil cas.

Lebrun, in four lines, has thus eulogized this Urbain Domergue : —

Ce pauvre Urbain, que l'on taxe
D'un pédantisme assommant,
Joint l'esprit du rudiment
Aux grâces de la syntaxe.

67. Influenced by the judicious observations of one of our best critics, I have entirely re-cast this fable which ran as follows in the first editions : —

Le rossignol, chanteur heureux des amours,
Et le paon hautain et superbe,
Ensemble passaient tous leurs jours ;
Ils faisaient leurs repas sur l'herbe.
De toutes parts, en les voyant on dit :
« Étrange liaison ! singulière alliance ! »
Pas tant ! ... Détrompez-vous ; en pareille concurrence
Le grand seigneur croit avoir de l'esprit ;
Le bel-esprit se croit de la naissance.
Ainsi de tous deux, en effet,
La vanité trouve son fait.

These last verses recall a saying of Lewis the 14th

respecting Racine; seeing him one day walking with M. de Cavoye, "voilà," said he, "deux hommes que je vois souvent ensemble; j'en devine la raison: Cavoye avec Racine se croit bel-esprit; Racine avec Cavoye se croit homme de Cour."

68.

The great Confucius.

Con-fou-tzee, whom we Europeans call Confucius, the greatest philosopher of China, was born in the year 551 A. C. if MM. Lenglet-Dufrenoy and Deginque may be believed. They are not, however, in accord with other chronologists on that point. His works have been translated into Latin by Couplet, a Jesuit, (born at Malines in 1628) and three of his brethren under the title of *Confucius sinarum philosophus, sive scientia sinica, latine exposito studio et opera Prosperi Intercetta, Christiani Herdrich, Francisci Rougemont et Philippi Couplet PP. societ. Jesu., libri III, Paris-D. Hortemels 1687, in-fol.*

There exists another collection published by Father Noël in Latin, in one vol. in-4. Prague 1711, and translated into French by the abbé Pluquet. 7 vols in-18. Paris 1784. M. Lévêque has given an elegant translation in French of the most remarkable thoughts of Confucius. It is a portion of the collection of ancient moralists published by Didot in 1782.

The emperor Tcham, to whom reference is made here. was at first a simple peasant, but being taken by the emperor Yao from the plough, on his reputation for virtue, wit and talent becoming known. he was adopted by that sovereign. His conduct on the throne completely justified the choice which had been made of him: "How great" says Confucius, "was the wisdom of the emperor Tscham; he distrusted his own judgment and prudence; he relied, for the government of the state, on the wisdom and views of his ministers; he loved to seek counsel,

even on ordinary occasions, and took pleasure in examining the most simple replies of his councillors. If their advice did not seem conformable to reason he did not follow it but he dissembled his opinion, respecting it, thus keeping up the confidence of his ministers and that candour with which they communicated their thoughts to him. When their counsels were wise, he was not satisfied with following them, he eulogized them in order to encourage still more those who had given them, and to excite them to develope their sentiments. If those opinions verged too far from the exact measure which one should always keep, he took the two extremes, weighed them scrupulously in the balance of reason, and discovered the just point which separated the two opposed ends. It was thus that Tscham became a great prince.

Our good Henry IV (I say *our*, although he never reigned over my country; but he belongs to all men who pique themselves on chivalrous sentiments) Henry IV said: "The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to make him your friend," — a sublime lesson of politics, and the best refutation, perhaps, of the system of Machiavelli.

[One should not, however, act as the Stuarts did, and abandon old friends whilst endeavouring to make new friends of old enemies. — *Translator.*]

69. See Buffon's description of the habits of roes.

70. The eagle, as well known, figured on the ensigns of the Roman legions.

71. [It is stated in the original that the cider which our Normans sold was that of Isigny, and the author informs us that it has acquired such celebrity that it has superseded the other kinds — in fact, that for the purposes of sale, all the cider made in Normandy and even Picardy is termed *cidre d'Isigny*.]

72. In the collection of the moral thoughts of various Chinese authors, I met with the following passage which furnished the idea of my fable : — “ Proud of thy rank, puffed up with thy knowledge, thou lookest upon others with contempt. — Thou resemblest that child who, proudly seated on a heap of snow, glories in his elevation. The sun darts forth his rays, the snow is dissolved and the vain little fellow falls into the mire.”

Tarquin the Proud, in fact, resembling.

Historians have not flattered the portrait of Tarquin, the last king of Rome, who was precipitated from the throne 500 years A. C. The epithet given to him announces sufficiently that he was proud and haughty in character, but has he deserved all the opprobrium cast on him? Some doubt may exist on that point : — “ Les places que la postérité donne ” says Montesquieu, when speaking of Tarquin, in his *Considérations sur la grandeur et la décadence des Romains*, “ sont sujettes, comme les autres, aux caprices de la fortune. Malheur à la réputation de tout prince qui est opprimé par un parti qui devient le dominant, ou qui a tenté de détruire un préjugé qui lui survit.”

The crimes of Nero, the adopted son of the Emperor Claudius, — such as the assassination of Agrippina his mother, and of the philosopher Seneca, the poisoning of the virtuous Burrhus and Britannicus, and in fine a thousand other acts of cruelty are, unfortunately, too well proved, and render this name the horror of all ages. [It would be deeply interesting to know the motives of the person, who, unseen, strewed flowers upon Nero's tomb. — *Translator.*]

73. Provence is indebted, for the silkworm and the cultivation of the Mulberry-tree, to Olivier de Serres, lord of Pradel, a celebrated agronomist, born in the year 1539

at Villeneuve de Berg, and deceased in 1619. He had the honour of being in direct correspondence with Henri IV who entrusted him with the duty of improving the royal demesnes, and particularly the white mulberry-trees in the garden of the Tuileries. Count François de Neuf-Château, has edited a new edition of the *Théâtre d'Agriculture* of Olivier de Serres, enriched with notes and observations of the greatest interest.

Orosman-Lafon.

Lafon was a celebrated actor, particularly in the part of Orosman in the well-known tragedy of *Zaire*. It is probable that, as a good Frenchman, he would have substituted, in the interest of national industry, the Lyons silk for the Indian Cachemire.

Arachne, whom Minerva, it is said, metamorphosed into a spider, because she deemed her a dangerous rival in the art of embroidering. What can we hope, alas, from the poor human species, when even the goddess of wisdom is not exempt from envy, and gives herself up to vengeance?

In this fable I had, at first, placed a bull-dog and a hound on the stage, but those personages were not sufficiently connected with the action. I accordingly retrenched the following lines which terminated my fable : —

- Ces injustes propos excitèrent l'humeur
 - « De certain dogue fort sévère,
 - « Plus que Guillaume Franc-Parleur.
- « Il les tança de la belle manière. »
- Un lévrier lui dit : « Pour Dieu ! mon cher doyen ,
 - « Calmez-vous votre colère ?
 - « Eh ! mais ne savez-vous pas bien
 - « Que ces dames sont des fileuses ?

- « Laissez-leur le plaisir de faire les railleuses.
 « Qui ne le sait?... rival partout, voit un défaut,
 « Dans sa bouche le blâme à l'éloge équivalait. »

A-propos of the *franc-parleur*, I said in a note which appeared to me worth preserving : — Guillaume, le franc-parleur is, as well known, the immediate successor of the *Hermit of the Chaussée d'Antin*, whose reputation he has worthily sustained. Mere articles in journals, united in one work, place M. Jouy, their author in the rank of the most distinguished moralists and best writers of our time.

The good *hermit* died on the 4th of September 1846. He was born at Versailles, on the 22d of September 1764.

74. It is impossible to deny, now-a-days, the triumph of constitutional principles ; but we must be more than ever on our guard against every species of exaggeration, in order not to pass the goal as was done in 1791. This is the object which I had in view in this fable, and in order to develop my ideas more, I shall transcribe here the reflections which I made in the *Journal de la Belgique* of the 10th of November 1820, in an article on a new work of the abbé de Pradt : —

« On ne peut se le dissimuler, une grande révolution s'opère en Europe, et la monarchie constitutionnelle est devenue maintenant le besoin de tous les Etats. On s'était flatté qu'à la suite du congrès de Vienne, les souverains sentiraient l'importance de diriger eux-mêmes l'esprit du siècle et d'établir sur tous les points un gouvernement analogue aux lumières acquises, un ordre stable et définitif, de manière à prévenir des concessions toujours fâcheuses, lorsqu'elles sont arrachées par la violence ; mais un malheureux système d'hésitation a prévalu. Qu'en résulte-t-il ? une lutte déplorable, qui nous éloigne du but en semant des inquiétudes, des méfiances, et en provoquant l'exaltation, l'enthousiasme, fort mauvais conseillers de leur nature.

« Le régime constitutionnel a pour adversaires quelques incorrigibles vétérans de l'aristocratie, quelques prétendus hommes d'état qui, pour connaître à merveille les anciens traités diplomatiques et l'étiquette des cours n'en ignorent pas moins l'état actuel et les vœux de la société qu'ils doivent régir; mais l'absurdité de leurs vues et la maladresse de leurs démarches les rendent peu redoutables. Certes, ils n'empêcheraient point les rois de se convaincre à la fin que les institutions proposées n sont pas moins dans l'intérêt de leur gloire et de leur puissance que dans l'intérêt du peuple, si d'autres ennemis plus dangereux du régime constitutionnel ne venaient déranger tous les calculs; ce sont d'abord ces tartufes libéraux, misérables intrigants qui, pour mieux s'insinuer et parvenir, ont pris les couleurs à la mode aujourd'hui, comme ils auraient adopté le masque de la dévotion sous le règne de Louis XIV; ensuite ces brise-raisons, ces cerveaux brûlés, véritables roquets politiques qui ne savent que crier à tort et à travers contre les hommes et les choses: esprits orgueilleux et superficiels, sans principes comme sans suite dans les idées, plus intolérants que les défunts inquisiteurs espagnols, ils voudraient faire ployer l'univers sous le joug despotique de leurs bizarres systèmes; ils voudraient proscrire la modération et la sagesse, parce qu'agiter les passions, réveiller les haines, bouleverser l'ordre, est leur unique talent; enfin viennent ces jeunes gens, pleins de sentiments nobles, mais privés des ressources de l'expérience, et ces *idéologues* philanthropes qui, n'ayant médité sur l'espèce humaine que dans le silence du cabinet, ce foyer des illusions philosophiques, où jamais l'obstacle ne se présente, imaginent des théories admirables pour des êtres privilégiés et surnaturels; ceux ci, de la meilleure foi du monde, nous entrainerait avec eux dans le tourbillon des chimères, s'ils nous inspiraient assez de confiance pour les suivre en aveugles.

« Vedette attentive, le publiciste annonce aux ministres

et aux princes une crise qui peut encore devenir salutaire, si l'on s'empresse de fonder les institutions que le siècle réclame, et de fortifier ainsi les trônes, tant contre les projets insensés d'une aristocratie qui n'est plus de ce siècle, que contre les coupables efforts de l'esprit monarchique. »

75. Machiavelli (Nicholas) born in Florence in 1469, died in 1627. He was an historian of superior merit, but a dangerous political writer. His *trattato del principe* is a work which appears to authorize all kinds of crimes, provided they be useful. Frederick the Great made his *début* in the career of letters by the refutation of this work. Pity it is, that we must add that the first steps of Frederick the Great in his political career were in dire opposition to the sage and virtuous principles which he had upheld. It is thus that too often our conduct is at variance with the noblest discourses.

This fable, which was composed in July 1815, appeared at the epoch in a French journal. Dr O'Meara quotes it in his interesting work on the illustrious prisoner of St-Helena.

[It may be stated here, with reference to Machiavelli, that some writers maintain that his real object in suggesting to princes plans and schemes of all kinds for the government, or rather, misgovernment of their subjects, was to place the latter on their guard — the circumstances of the times not allowing him to take a more direct course. — *Translator.*]

How Neddy once.

76. See the *Ane et le petit Chien*. La Fontaine book IV, fable V.

Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire.

This is the last verse of the 1st canto of the *Art poétique* of Boileau.

Some few kings, I fear.

It is stated in the original fable that De Pradt waged war with kings in his numerous works, and the author in a note observes : — With opinions less versatile and with a character more dignified, M. de Pradt, formerly archbishop of Malines, would be placed beside Benjamin Constant in the first line of modern publicists. His *Antidote au Congrès de Rastadt*, his *Congrès de Vienne* and his other works deserve to be read and pondered on by statesmen. It is to be regretted that, in his *Histoire de l'ambassade à Varsovie*, he has sacrificed to his irascible self-love a man of such real merit as M. Bignon, advantageously known in the diplomatic career, and one of the most eloquent defenders of constitutional principles, in the chamber of deputies. M. Bignon published in 1814 a work which does honour to the variety of his knowledge : — It is intitled : — *Exposé comparatif de l'état financier, et moral de la France et des principales puissances de l'Europe*.

77.

Thus Lewis thought
And Charles-Quint also.

One of the secrets of the policy of the Emperor Charles-Quint was to show himself, by turn, a Spaniard, an Italian, a German, a Fleming, and a Frenchman. and to speak always the language of the country in which he happened to be residing. Lewis XIV took care not to forbid the Alsacians to make use of their idiom. Thus, notwithstanding their German origin, they have constantly proved themselves to be the firmest defenders of their adopted country.

78. The European celebrity of the name of Vestris, the name of several generations of dancers, who distinguished themselves at the Royal Academy of music, renders a lengthy note unnecessary. Vestris the First maintained, at the epoch of his triumphs (some eighty years ago)

that the universe contained only three great men : Frederick, he himself, and Voltaire.

Beaucaire.

Beaucaire, a small town of Lower Languedoc (department of the Gard). Its fair which begins on the 22d of July and lasts six days is one of the most considerable of Europe. Its origin dates from the year 1217, under the reign of Raymond the Old, Count of Toulouse. The fraudulent trick referred to in this fable was played as described. I was a witness of it in 1810.

Ne'er Talma on provincial stage.

Talma disputes with Lekain the honour of being the greatest tragic actor which France has seen. He died on the 19th of October, 1826.

Lebrun in his pindaric rage.

Lebrun (Ponce-Denis Ecouchard) born in Paris in 1729, died in that city on the 2d of September 1807. His epigrams have offended the self-love of too many persons and his political principles displayed too much exaggeration to allow his contemporaries to judge of this great poet with equity. This reputation can only increase; the original beauties which shine in so great a number in his odes make amends for the faults with which he is reproached. If Lebrun had as much taste as he had ardour and imagination, he would have carried off the lyric palm. Those who have heard him, know the delightful manner in which he recited verses.

Ne'er Doctor Gall at his début.

The enthusiasm displayed at first in favour of the system of Doctor Gall respecting craniology, was not of long duration. He was not, however, considered the less on that account to be an anatomist of the first order. It cannot be denied, too, that since his death, which hap-

pened in 1828, phrenology has again become a popular science. It appears to be acquiring, every day, more importance.

79. M. de Carrion-Nisas, after having distinguished himself as an orator at the tribune; made with distinction the campaign of 1807 in Prussia, and those of Spain which followed. He has published an important work on the military art. His tragedies of *Montmorenci* and of *Pierre-le-grand* contain beautiful thoughts and noble verses. The epistles and poems which he has in his portfolio will no doubt add fresh lustre to his literary reputation. His son, still very young, is already known by his *coup d'œil sur l'état de la liberté publique en France aux diverses époques de l'histoire*. In this little work, full of research, one meets with interesting details respecting the three colours immortalized by so many victories of the French;

“Charles VII,” says M. de Nisas, “jaloux de fixer sur la gendarmerie la plus haute considération, en choisit les trois premières compagnies pour leur remettre la garde des enseignes les plus distinguées. La préséance fut accordée à la *cornette blanche*; le roi l'avait créée comme le signe de sa confiance dans le secours de la Vierge, lorsque les Anglais, maîtres de Paris, s'étaient emparés de l'*oriflamme* et de la *bannière royale*, qui se gardaient l'une et l'autre dans le trésor de Saint-Denis; l'*oriflamme* était *rouge*, et la *bannière royale* était *bleue*. Depuis cette époque, ces trois enseignes ont appartenu : la première, au régiment du colonel-général de la cavalerie; la seconde, à celui du mestre-de-champ-général; et la troisième, au régiment du commissaire-général. Telle est l'origine des *trois couleurs*, prétendues *révolutionnaires*.”

When the Dutch, during their insurrection against Spain, wished to form an independent republic, they left to Henri IV the choice of the flag which they should raise.

That prince gave them the French colours (the white, red and blue) which have ever since floated over the vessels of the United Provinces : “ *Les liens d'amitié,* ” he wrote to them, *se resserreront sans doute de plus, tant que les républicains auront sous leurs yeux un objet qui rappelle le souvenir des services nombreux par lesquels la France a garanti l'existence de leur liberté.*

Camillus-like.

Camillus (Marcus-Furius), conqueror of the Veii, was forced through the pride and jealousy of the tribunes to take refuge at Ardea. He quitted, nevertheless, this place of exile, in order to march to the assistance of his fellow-citizens besieged in Rome by the Gauls. He saved the republic by a brilliant victory, and by his wise measures. The people decreed him the glorious title of liberator of his country and of second founder of Rome. He died of the pest in the year 565 A. C., aged 80.

80.

The “ Latin land.”

80. The *pays latin*, or *quartier latin*, is the name given in Paris to the districts of St-Jacques and the Pantheon, in which one meets with the following celebrated establishments : — The College of France, the observatory, the medical and law schools, the Polytechnic school and the defunct Sorbonne.

It is stated in the original fable that Monsieur Mondor alighted at the shop of the descendant of Etienne or of Barbin; several members of the former family acquired a well-deserved reputation by the fine editions which they published from 1509 to 1674. Etienne is also the name of one of the best French comic poets of modern times. He died in 1845. Barbin was one of the most celebrated book-sellers of the age of Louis XIV. It was at his house that all the beaux esprits of his time assembled.

“ Good Master Turearel.”

Turcaret, as well as Mondor, has become the generic name for financiers, ever since the appearance, in 1709, of Lesage's comedy of les *financiers*.

81. The name, Hippocrates, the most celebrated doctor of antiquity, is pronounced by medical men with a religious respect. He delivered the Athenians from the horrible pest with which they were inflicted at the beginning of the Peloponesian war, a service which procured for him the right of citizenship, a crown of gold and the initiation into the great mysteries. His *aphorisms* are still consulted like so many oracles.

M. Pinel, a member of the French Institute, after having gained celebrity by his wonderful cures has immortalized himself by his *Nosographie philosophique* or *l'analyse appliquée à la médecine*. He was born in a village near Castres, on the 11th April 1743, and died on the 25th of October 1826, in the capacity of head physician of the Salpêtrière at Paris.

82. How many persons do we find.

The Marchioness of La Jeannotière considered the science of heraldry as the most important of all. In truth, it has more than once opened the doors of the academy and the path to honours.

Balaam's ass.

Balaam's ass was not a bad speaker. The race however has somewhat de generated. It is thus that we see each day :

Tant de fils inconnus de si glorieux pères.

The Gauls who, under Brennus, had seized on Rome, arrived one night as far as the capitol which they were

already scaling when the grese consecrated to Juno awakened Manlius by their cries. He hastened immediately to the threatened point, the garrison followed him and the enemy was soon obliged to retire.

83. This fable is imitated from Mary of France who lived in the 15th century :

“ Me nomerai par remembrance :
Marie ai nom ; si suis de France ,”

She says , at the end of the collection of her fables, of which de Roquefort has published a very fine edition, worthy of a place in the library of every *savant* and man of taste.

84. Chazet is not the only one of his species , but he is incontestably *primus inter pares* as a doctor of the Sorbonne would say. He died in 1844.

85. The *noble* song of the swan enjoys, it appears, a usurped reputation, but it dates from so long that there is no disputing it. Moreover, great wonders were related in 1785 respecting the singing swans of Chantilly, as narrated by M. Mongez, in the article *Cygne* of the *Encyclopédie méthodique*. M. Comhaire of Liège (who died in 1830), a poet full of grace and harmony, has devoted the following beautiful verses to the portrait of the swan, in his charming Idyl of *l'Etang* :

Un cygne y flotte en paix ; ses élégants contours
Sont formés avec soin par la main des amours ;
Il vogue , amant superbe, auprès de sa maltresse ;
Des baisers les plus vifs il savoure l'ivresse ;
Il étonne les yeux par sa noble fierté ;
Tout en lui nous enchante et peint la volupté.
Roi d'une humide plaine il en parcourt l'espace ;
Ses ailes sur son dos se gonflent avec grâce ,
Orgueilleux de son port, ravi de sa blancheur ,

Il relève son cou, navigue avec lenteur,
 Son amant l'admire; et l'onde, qu'il partage,
 En sillons tremblotants fuit jusques au rivage.

Apollo's sons.

So poets have in all times been called; but how many
 of these children have been disinherited by their father!

86. Sneaks off each paltry Zoilus.

Zoilus, a rhetorician, born in the city of Amphopolis in Thrace, 239 years A. C. is celebrated for his animosity towards Homer. Ptolemæus Philadelphus, king of Egypt, ordered him to be crucified in order to revenge the honour of the Greek poet. In modern times, less regard is had for the reputation of great men. The parish beadle may flout them without receiving the slightest scratch.

The name, Zoilus, is now a generic one and designates, now-a-days, those obscure critics who have less in view the serving of the cause of good taste than of revenging themselves, by their unjust remarks, on a reputation which is offensive to them.

87. It is scarcely necessary to state here that the Homer alluded to in this fable is La Fontaine.

Fréron (E. E.) editor of the *Année littéraire*, died in Paris in 1776. His fierce animosity towards the patriarch of Ferney and his bad faith in a literary point of point greatly injured his reputation. Critics in general are too modest: anxious for momentary success, they wish appear smart in the eyes of frivolous readers and do not think of posterity which only keeps account of impartial and equitable judgments.

Delille has praised me.

The following verses on the ass are from Delille's poem, *Les Trois Règnes de la nature* :

- « Pour lui Mars n'ouvre point sa glorieuse école.
- « Il n'est point conquérant, mais il est agricole ;
- « Enfant, il a sa grâce et ses folâtres jeux :
- « Jeune, il est patient, robuste et courageux ;
- « Il paie, en les servant avec persévérance,
- « Chez ses patrons ingrats sa triste vétérance.
- « Son service zélé n'est jamais suspendu :
- « Porteur laborieux, pourvoyeur assidu,
- « Entre ses deux paniers de pesanteur égale,
- « Chez le riche bourgeois, chez la veuve frugale,
- « Il vient, les reins courbés et les flancs amaigris,
- « Souvent à jeun lui-même alimenter Paris.

88. Niobe, the daughter of Tantalus and wife of Amphion, having had fourteen children, dared, according to mythology, to claim superiority over Latona who revenged herself by inducing Apollo to put to death seven of her rival's sons and five of her daughters.

Dorat (C. J.) died in Paris in 1780. He essayed all branches of literature—tragedies, comedies, didactic poems, erotic compositions, odes, epistles, tales, fables, songs, romances, literary criticism, etc. La Harpe says of him : —

- « De nos papillons enchanteurs
- « Émule trop fidèle,
- « Il caressa toutes les fleurs,
- « Excepté l'immortelle. »

If the works of Dorat were reduced to two volumes, they would be sought after by the connoisseur. About a dozen of his fables are remarkable for a truly original

turn. Barthelemy (J. J.) born in 1716, died in Paris in 1793. He is the author of *Les amours de Carite et de Polydore*, of interesting dissertations on various branches of learning and of a *Voyage en Italie*. But it is to his *voyage du jeune Anacharsis* that he is indebted for being ranked amongst classical writers. An irreproachable life, a constant moderation and the most striking virtues have rendered him, as stated in the fable, the model of the sage. He was uncle of Count Barthélemy, one of the best French publicists of France, who died in April 1830. The Duke de Nivernais who is almost an octogenarian, has celebrated the modern Anacharsis in a notice full of interest.

89. This fable has some analogy with one of Gellert's imitated also by Béranger (Laurent-Pierre) who died in 1822. His *soirées provinciales*, his *poésies fugitives* and his other works have found numerous readers. Our readers will not, of course confound this poet with Béranger whose songs are the delight of the friends of old French gaiety, and whose patriotic odes, for they are real odes, place him in the first rank amongst the poets of the epoch.

And dainty even as a Doctor.

The gastronomic reputation of the doctors is incontestable. They seldom prescribe a strict diet when they are to dine with their patients.

With Cato measure.

Cato, the censor (Marcus-Porcius) who died 148 years before Christ, was famous for his austere manners and the severity of his censures of the conduct of his fellow-citizens.

90. This fable, as well as *Jocrisse's Coat* and the *ambitious Wren*, has already appeared in Count Orloff's collection of fables from Kriloff. Paris 1835, 2 vol. Didot.

Comus is the god of good cheer. — He is now a days worshipped more fervently than ever.

91. Caius Julius Octavianus Cesar, who desolated Rome by his proscriptions, became afterwards the model of princes under the name of Augustus. Historians are in accord with Horace and Virgil respecting the talent he displayed in the art of governing.

92. Dupont de Nemours, a member of the French Institute, and author of *Mémoires sur l'instinct des animaux*, written in a style of *bonhomie* which recalls La Fontaine. Dupont de Nemours died in the United States of America, in 1817, after having composed for his adopted country a treatise on education which may be read with advantage even in our old Europe.

93. A greater number of donkeys are seen at Montmartre than in any part near Paris. Anières even only occupies the second place, whatever a famous etymologist, one of my confreres at the Celtic academy may say about it.

Sancho-Panza cried

94. Were justice fairly dealt out, Sancho-Panza would be quoted every moment. When Vauvenargues exclaimed : " great thoughts come from the heart " he merely repeated in other terms, this saying of Sancho, " True genius comes from the heart and not from the head " Perhaps the origin of both expressions may be found in Quintilian : " the heart is the seat of eloquence ".

The literary reputation of Fontane as a critic, an orator and a poet is one of the most brilliant of our epoch. He died in 1821 at Paris.

95. Gauldrée de Boilleau, marquis de la Caze, is advantageously known by two volumes of fables published in 1812. He was *commissaire-ordonnateur* at Berlin, when

I filled there, in 1808, the functions of *intendant*. We composed, as it were in common, the *instinct des animaux*, the *Religieuse*, an elegy, etc. The perusal of his agreeable productions and our peaceful literary discussions were delightful relaxations from the painful labours incidental to the administration of a conquered territory. The remembrance of those moments is one of the most pleasing of my existence. I lost this excellent friend in 1830.

The following are the verses which he addressed to me in reply to my fable : —

Ah ! mon ami, quel heureux temps
 Que celui qu'à mes yeux retrace votre fable !
 Que votre prologue est aimable ?
 Vous y parlez raison, et vos vers sont charmants !
 D'une amitié tendre et fidèle,
 Ainsi que vous je sens le prix ;
 Ainsi que vous je me rappelle
 Berlin et nos jeux favoris :
 Conquérant avide de gloire,
 Alors Napoléon dominait l'univers ;
 Tandis que ses exploits fatiguaient la victoire,
 Et sur son front superbe appelaient les revers,
 Paisibles, nous faisions des vers,
 Et sans orgueil nous osions croire
 Qu'on pouvait par d'autres plaisirs
 Se faire un nom fameux et charmer ses loisirs.
 Cependant quelquefois je maudis ma mémoire :
 Loin de vous, le présent est pour moi sans attrait,
 Et chaque souvenir excite mes regrets ;
 Mais lorsque le sort nous sépare,
 En cédant aux regrets dois-je être sans espoir ?
 Je me plains du présent, et je ne puis prévoir
 Ce qu'en secret l'avenir me prépare.
 Si le cours des événements
 Entraîne tout sans résistance,
 Offrant ainsi plus d'une chance,
 Il est fertile en changements ;
 Que plus tôt ou plus tard le ciel nous soit propice,

Il suffit qu'il nous réunisse ;
 Je suis certain qu'en amitié
 De tout temps avec moi vous serez de moitié.
 Comme vos imprudents, si quelque barque frêle
 Nous recevait, alors, sur des flots orageux,
 En bons amis nous ramerions tous deux,
 Entre nous jamais de querelle.
 En quittant la rive, d'accord,
 Et d'accord pendant le voyage,
 Ensemble échappés au naufrage,
 Nous rentrerions ensemble au port.

Berlin is one of the most agreeable cities of Europe. It is constructed with unsurpassed taste and regularity. Letters, arts and sciences are successfully cultivated there. How great the delight I took in the company of Jordan, Beglein, Bister, Erman, Lombard, Catel, Formey, Hauchecorne, Rosentzels etc. We followed different banners, but the same tastes, the same principles of honour and morality drew us together. Each one served zealously the sovereign and the country that he was bound to serve, but we had not, on that account, less esteem and less attachment one for the other. M. Catel, to whom Germany is indebted for a translation of the fables of La Fontaine, has done me the honour of expressing his intention of translating mine.

On Pegasus together mounted.

Pegasus, the winged horse which sprung from the blood of Medusa, one of the three Gorgons, daughters of Phorcus, a sea god. At his birth, Pegasus struck the ground with his hoof and gave rise to the fountain Hippocrene. He inhabited mount Parnassus and Helicon. Pegasus is the ordinary steed of poets, but he does not always conduct them to the banks of Pactolus. If we are to believe the authors of the *Cheilles de Maître Adam*, and Maynard :—

« Pégase est un cheval qui porte
 « Les grands hommes à l'hôpital. »

The idea of this fable is, if I recollect rightly, taken from one in the *maximes et réflexions* of the duc de Levis, whose distinguished talents in more than one branch of literature did not require the aid of an illustrious birth to open the doors of the French academy to him.

96. There is no need to say anything about Seneca, Cicero and Voltaire. Charron, born in 1541 at Paris, and deceased in 1603, was the disciple of Montaigne. His book *de la sagesse* may still be read with advantage; an analysis was published in 1763 by the Marquis de Luchet. — The abbé Cotin is known by the satires of Boileau. —

Sabatier who, as it were, lived on swindling and who died in a shameful state of destitution in Paris in 1817 was often the subject of the biting satires of Voltaire. This Sabatier, the author of a number of insipid or licentious works is now only known by his *trois siècles de la littérature française*, attributed, however, by some bibliographers to an abbé Martin. — Lesuire, who died a few years ago, is the author of the heroic poem *Christophe Colomb*, and of some fifty volumes now forgotten.

La Serre, the object also of the sarcasms of the French Juvenal was, nevertheless, a man of talent, although his productions were detestable. One day, after hearing a very bad speech, he embraced the orator exclaiming : — “ depuis vingt ans, j'ai bien débité du galimatias, mais vous venez d'en dire plus en une heure que je n'en ai jamais écrit pendant toute ma vie ”.

Valant put *Telcmachus* into verse — and a pretty specimen of versification it is.

97. Rodriguez Dias de Bivar or Bivah, surnamed the *Cid*. This hero of the eleventh, age the honour of Castilian chivalry, when exiled from the court and even from the states which he had conquered, did not hesitate, to return to the defence of his persecutors when they needed his sword : “ Toujours prêt, dans sa disgrâce, à tout oublier

pour son roi, (says Florian) toujours prêt, dans sa faveur à lui déplaire pour la vérité, il mourut à Valence, chargé de gloire et d'années, l'an 1099.

98. Back to the deluge! This is an allusion to the famous hemistich in the comedy of *Les Plaideurs : Avoca', passez au déluge*.

[In a note to this fable, the author deines that any allusion is made, as some critics alleged to Napoleon, whose character, he contends, had nothing vindictive in it. The author adds that he still glories in the sentiments which he entertained for that hero, particularly as he can reconcile those sentiments with his new duties].

Voltaire, in his *essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* often recurs to this idea : " le caractère de ceux qui gouvernent fait en tout lieu les temps de douceur ou de cruauté ".

" Si la justice n'est point dans le cœur des gouvernants et des gouvernés (says a Belgian littérateur, the Baron Trappé; les plus belles constitutions sont des châteaux en Espagne "

Robertson (William) born in Scotland in 1721, died in June 1793. His *History of the discovery of America*, and his *Reign of Charles the Fifth* have been translated into French by Suard. The introduction to the latter work passes for a *chef-d'œuvre*, but it is not of the same order as the *Considerations on the causes of the greatness and the decay of the Romans*.

99. The laurel-tree was consecrated to the god of poetry, as was the oak to Jupiter, the pine to Cybele, the beech to Pan, the myrtle to Venus, the olive to Minerva and the poplar to Hercules.

[100. This fable was composed in order to show, in opposition to the views set forth by a *soi-disant* critic (in an article on M. du Tremblay's fables) that it would be easy

to carry on the subjects of many fables of La Fontaine without rendering the *dénouement* defective. This fable, then, was composed with reference to the *lion amoureux* of that poet.]

101. E'en like Pythagoras.

Pythagoras, the celebrated philosopher of Samos, was born towards the year 592 A. C. He professed metempsychosis, and consequently forbade the use of all aliments imbued with life.

The author of the tragedy of the Templiers, M. Raynouard who has devoted an article to my fables in the *Journal des savants*, seems to think that propriety is not sufficiently respected, by supposing animals endowed with moral or religious ideas. The reproach is not well-founded, for it would limit too much the demesne of fable. Precedents may be found in La Fontaine's *obsèques de la lionne* and in Florian's *le milan et le pigeon*.

Not Socrates could better reason.

Socrates, the eternal honour of ancient philosophy, was born at Athens 469 years A. C. and was persecuted by the thirty tyrants who desolated his country. Accused by Anitus and Melitus of not believing in the divinities of Greece, he was condemned to drink the juice of the hemlock at the age of 70. — He put Æsop's fables into verse, in order to afford himself entertainment whilst in prison, but this work has not come down to us.

102. The following brief fable of Father Desbillons furnished the subject of mine : —

« Tui me miseret acibat testudini
 « Lacerta ; quæ, quocumque libeat vadere,
 « Tuam ipsa tecum ferre cogaris domum.
 « Quod utile, inquit illa, non grave est onus. »

This was imitated in 1847 by M. Marique of Namur:—

De votre sort que mon âme est émue !

Dit le lézard à la tortue.

Quoi ! devoir en tous lieux porter votre maison !...

— Sur mon sort, reprit-elle, ayez l'âme tranquille ;

Ne me plaignez plus sans raison :

Une charge est légère alors qu'elle est utile.

103. It is no doubt from Pysche, the amiable object of the pursuit of Cupid that the name of *Psyches* is given to those elegant looking-glasses which gallant husbands present to their ladies the day after the wedding.

104. Boreas, the north-wind.

105. The brave Dunois, the bastard of Orleans, who powerfully contributed to save France under Charles VII, is well known. The celebrity of the handsome Dunois, whose prowess all our ladies sing, does not repose on such solid foundations, but it is one that has its value.

My honest Dunois is not a creature of the imagination, The details here given are of historical accuracy.

As much as in great Turenne.

The disinterestedness of Turenne is as celebrated as his military talents. His reply to the deputies of a German town who presented him with 100,000*l.* with the request that he would not pass by their city, has often been quoted : — « Messieurs, gardez votre argent, et rassurez vos concitoyens, je n'avais pas l'intention de passer par votre ville. » Another time, he made the following reply to one of those generals, unfortunately too common, whose cupidity disgraces their valour, and who showed how they might gain the sum of 400,000 *fr.* without the court knowing anything about it : — « Je vous suis fort obligé mais comme j'ai souvent trouvé de ces occasions-là, sans en profiter, je ne crois pas devoir changer de conduite à mon âge. »

So said Pythagoras.

See the *golden verses* of this philosopher.

106. Is't a doctor
of Salamanca?

The university of Salamanca is somewhat fallen from its ancient renown; but it may be taken for granted that the pretensions of its doctors have not abated.

The tiresome pedants.

The *savants* of the kind here alluded to scarcely exist now in France, where literary talent and the charms of politeness are almost always united to science and erudition; but such folk are not rare elsewhere. They are capable of writing a host of commentaries on an ill-placed comma, but not of composing two lines worthy of being read. A man of wit, M. Legros, formerly secretary to the marshal Prince de Ligne, said with reason: —

Les érudits que je révère,
Assez souvent sont ennuyeux,
Par la raison qu'ils sont verbeux;
C'est pourquoi le dictionnaire
Est le savant que je préfère:
Je l'interroge quand je veux,
Et, quand je veux, je le fais faire.

107. The spirit of Democritus.

Democritus, the laughing philosopher, died 362 years A. C. aged 109 years. It will be seen, from this age, that his prescriptions were good. If every one followed them, things would go on much better, and this world would be the best of all possible worlds, as the great philosopher Pangloss asserted.

108. The idea of my fable was taken from the following one of Father Desbillons : —

- « De principatu contendebant sidera :
 « Sol oritur : omnis cessat hic contentio.
 « Procerum superbia deficit, cùm adest. »

Two months of fables

All these fables, with the exception of twenty-four, were composed between the 16th of December 1817 and the 20th of February 1818.

109. See Buffon respecting the repulse of vultures by hens. *OEuvres complètes*, t. XIX, p. 33, Paris, Eymery, 1818.

110. Our village Phæton.

The way in which Phæton conducted the chariot of the sun is known to all classical readers.

111. J. B. d'Ansse de Villoison, one of the most celebrated hellenists of his epoch, was born of a noble family at Corbeil in 1750 and died in Paris in 1803. He was nominated in 1772 with dispensation respecting age, a member of the royal academy of inscriptions. No one was of a more obliging character, but he was too fond of the small gossip of society. An artist, who had some complaints on that score against him, represented him in a caricature assisting with evident pleasure at a violent family quarrel; underneath the engraving were the words :

“ Danse Vil' oison.”

Villoison's fortune, which was considerable, for he was very economical, was inherited by a member of his family, named Dansse, who had fallen into misery and whom I had seen on the Pont-Neuf exercising the profession of a clipper of dogs' hairs.

See the *Vert-Vert*, the chef-d'œuvre of Gresset, and one of the smartest productions of French gaiety.

END OF THE NOTES.

EXTRACTS

(BY THE TRANSLATOR) OF NOTICES OF THE BARON DE STASSART'S
FABLES : —

Extract from the speech of M. Hyacinthe Morel,
perpetual secretary of the academy of Vaucluse,
at the public sitting on the 30th of September,
1820 : —

“ When in 1814, his quality of a foreigner removed the Baron de Stassart from the career of public employment, he ennobled his leisure moments by enriching morals with a collection of maxims, in which the talent of observation is carried to an uncommon degree, and by composing a volume of Fables, in which one meets with action, always well-chosen, a rapid narrative, occasionally interrupted by a striking observation — the more striking on account of being unexpected — a sparkling dialogue, but one in which the wit is concealed under its *naïveté*, and in fine, with an exact description of the habits of animals, of their natural tendencies and, if I may so express myself, of their special costumes. All those fables form a series of interesting dramas, from which persons of all ages and of all conditions may derive appropriate and useful morals.”

Extract from the notes appended to the *Fables* of the Chevalier Coupé de Saint-Donat; Paris 1825. 3rd edition.

“The Baron de Stassart, a member of the States General of the kingdom of the Netherlands, has composed a series of Fables which have deservedly met with the greatest success. Those fables have reached the fifth edition which, in all probability, will not be the last one. Much imagination and a sprightly manner of rendering his ideas are the characteristics of the author. His poetry is easy and graceful, and the moral of his fables always just and appropriate.”

Extract from an article by M. Alvin, in *La Belgique littéraire et industrielle* :

“The first edition of the fables of the Baron de Stassart created in 1818 considerable attention in Paris. All the journals of the epoch devoted articles to them, appreciated his talents and special qualities, and mingled deserved praise with well-founded criticism, which the author turned to account in the subsequent editions. It may be stated here that, amongst the French journals which published reviews of the work, were the *Gazette de France*, the *Quotidienne*, the *Journal Général de France* the *Courrier des Spectacles*, and the *Indépendance*.”

A copy of the last edition of the fables was ordered by M. Salvandy to be placed in every public library throughout France.

Extract from an article by M. Collin de Plancy, in the *Emancipation* of Brussels : —

“The Baron de Stassart, notwithstanding the modesty of his character, will not escape the title of the Belgian La Fontaine. The great popularity which his fables

have acquired in France, their reputation and their success, as proved by the exhaustion of several large editions, — all this celebrity, exempt from trouble and bitterness, must have something sweet and agreeable for our honourable countryman, for whom, it may be said, posterity has commenced. The piquancy of Sterne and the wit of Rivarol are often concealed under the charming *bonhomie* of the Baron de Stassart. That freshness of colouring which shines in his productions has not deserted him amidst all the overwhelming cares of public life. A skilful administrator and a pleasing poet, he presides over the Belgian senate and the Belgian academy, is the governor of the most important of our provinces, neglects none of the slightest details of his high and heavy functions, and yet composes charming fab'les, accompanied by a sparkling collection of pretty anecdotes, modestly intituled *Notes*."

Extract from the Preface to the *Corbeille d'Æsopé*,
by G. Perquin, Paris. Terry, 1838 : —

"The third place amongst fabulists, (after La Fontaine and Florian) appears to belong to a writer of our own days, the Baron de Stassart, whose productions display an unexampled variety. The author possesses, above all, the secret of introducing the most unexpected and piquant allusions; he combines wit with simplicity; sentiment with gaiety, and malice with *bonhomie*. He is well acquainted with the art of applying its true character and gait to every animal. If, at times, he may be blamed for dwelling too long on the morals, those morals are at least quite just."

Extract from the Preface to the *Petit Fablier des écoles* : —

"Other fabulists of our day, such as Stassart, Arnauld
31.

and Lebailly may, perhaps, have the right of disputing with Florian the possession of the second place after La Fontaine."

Extract from *Les Étrennes d'Ésope* par M. Billois,
Paris 1846 : —

"After the restoration of 1815, when politics occupied every head, and when it was found necessary to combat absurd pretensions, Arnault and Stassart appeared with much lustre. The former was caustic, epigrammatic, and full of *verve*, and the latter, a closer observer of decency and propriety, and of the *bienséances* of the apologue. He joined, moreover, a charming good-nature and an amiable philosophy to refined wit."

[It may be stated here, as a little anecdote, that M. Billois, when he published his work, was under the impression that the Baron de Stassart was no longer a denizen of this world. He was greatly astounded, one morning, to receive a visit from an individual whose epitaph, as it were, he had assisted in writing, and who had come to thank him for the honour he had done him. *Translator.*]

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