BABY'S OWN AESOP

WALTER CRANE

ROUTLEDGE
BABY'S OWN AESOP
For this rhymed version of the Fables I have to thank my early friend and master W. J. Linton, who kindly placed the M.S. at my disposal. I have added a touch here and there, but the credit of this part of the book still belongs to him.

Walter Crane
To the Possessors of "Baby's Opera" & "Baby's Bouquet"
with Walter Crane's Compliments

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    Lion.
THIS Fox has a longing for grapes; He jumps, but the bunch still escapes. So he goes away sour; And, ’tis said, to this hour Declares that he's no taste for grapes.

"The grapes of disappointment are always sour."
THE COCK & THE PEARL

A ROOSTER, while scratching for grain, found a pearl. He just paused to explain that a jewel's no good to a fowl wanting food, and then kicked it aside with disdain.

"IF HE ASK BREAD WILL YE GIVE HIM A STONE?"

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A WOLF, wanting lamb for his dinner, growled out: "Lamb you wronged me, you sinner."

Bleated Lamb: "Nay, not true!"

Answered Wolf: "Then 'twas Ewe. Ewe or lamb, you will serve for my dinner."

"FRAUD AND VIOLENCE HAVE NO SCRUPLES"
THE WIND & THE SUN

THE WIND and the Sun had a bet,
The wayfarers' cloak which should get:
Blew the Wind, the cloak clung:
Shone the Sun, the cloak flung
Showed the Sun had the best of it yet.

TRUE STRENGTH IS NOT BLUSTER.
'KING'LOG & KING'STORK'

THE FROGS prayed to Jove for a king:
Not a log, but a livelier thing.

Jove sent them a Stork,
Who did royal work,
For he gobbled them up, did their king.

DON'T HAVE 'KINGS'
A BULL FROG, according to rule, 
Sat a-croak in his usual pool: 
And he laughed in his heart 
As a Lion did start 
In a fright from the brink like a fool.

*IMAGINARY FEARS ARE THE WORST*
A poor thing the Mouse was, and yet,
When the Lion got caught in a net,
All his strength was no use
'Twas the poor little Mouse
Who nibbled him out of the net.

'Small' causes may produce great results.

So the Mouse had Miss Lion for bride;
Very great was his joy and his pride:
But it chanced that she put
On her husband her foot,
And the weight was too much,
So he died.

'One may be too ambitious.'
HERCULES & THE WAGGONER

WHEN the God saw the Waggoner kneel,
Crying, "Hercules! Lift me my wheel"
From the mud, where 'tis stuck!
He laughed—"No such luck;
Set your shoulder yourself to the wheel."

"The gods help those who help themselves."
THE LAZY HOUSEMAIDs

Two Maids killed the Rooster whose warning Awoke them too soon every morning:

But small were their gains, For their Mistress took pains To rouse them herself without warning.

Laziness is its own punishment.
A SNAKE, in a fix, tried a File
For a dinner. 'Tis not worth your while;
Said the steel, 'don't mistake;
I'm accustomed to take;
To give's not the way of a File.

WE MAY MEET OUR MATCH.

THE FOX & THE CROW:

Said sly Fox to the Crow with the cheese:
"Let me hear your sweet voice, now, do please!"
And this Crow, being weak,
Cawed the bit from her beak. "Music charms," said the Fox, "and here's cheese!"

BEWARE OF FLATTERERS:
THE DOG IN THE MANGER

A COW sought a mouthful of hay;
But a Dog in the manger there lay,
And he snapped out "how now!"
When most mildly, the Cow
Adventured a morsel to pray.

DON'T BE SELFISH

THE FROG & THE BULL

Said the Frog, quite puffed up to the eyes,
"Was this Bull about me as to size?"
"Rather bigger, frog-brother."
"Puff, puff," said the other,
"A Frog is a Bull if he tries!"

BRAG IS NOT ALWAYS BELIEF
OU have heard how Sir Fox treated Crane:
With soup in a plate. When again
They dined, a long bottle
Just suited Crane's throttle;
And Sir Fox licked the outside in vain.

'There are games that two can play.'
Horse and Man:

When the Horse first took Man on his back,
To help him the Stag to attack,
How little his dread,
As the enemy fled,
Man would make him his slave & his hack.

Ass & the Enemy:

Get up! let us flee from the Foe,
Said the Man; but the Ass said: "Why so?"
Will they double my load,
Or my blows? Then, by goad,
And by stirrup, I've no cause to go.

Advantages may be dearly bought.

Your reasons are not mine.
THE FOX & THE MOSQUITOES

BEING plagued with Mosquitoes one day, Said old Fox: "pray don't send them away, For a hungrier swarm Would work me more harm; I had rather the full ones should stay."

'THERE WERE POLITICIANS IN AESOP'S TIME.'

THE FOX & THE LION

The first time the Fox had a sight Of the Lion, he most died of fright; When he next met his eye, Fox felt just a bit shy; But the next—quite at ease, & polite.

'FAMILIARITY DESTROYS FEAR.'
THE MISER & HIS GOLD

He buried his Gold in a hole.
One saw, and the treasure he stole.

Said another, "What matter?
Don't raise such a clatter,
You can still go & sit by the hole."

THE GOLDEN EGGS

A golden egg, one every day,
That simpleton's Goose used to lay;
So he killed the poor thing,
Swifter fortune to bring,
And dined off his fortune that day.

GREED OVERREACHES ITSELF
The Man That Pleased None

Through the town this good Man & his Son strove to ride as to please everyone: Self, Son, or both tried, then the Ass had a ride; while the world, at their efforts, poked fun.

You cannot hope to please all: *Don't* try.
THE OAK & THE REEDS

GIANT Oak, in his strength & his scorn
Of the winds, by the roots was uptorn:
But slim Reeds at his side,
The fierce gale did outside,
Since, by binding the burden was borne:

BEND, NOT BREAK!

THE FIR & THE BRAMBLE

The Fir-tree looked down on the Bramble,
"Poor thing only able to scramble
About on the ground."
Just then an axe' sound
Made the Fir wish himself but a Bramble.

'Pride of Place' has its disadvantages
THE TREES & THE WOODMAN

HE TREES ask of Man what he lacks:
"One bit, just to handle my axe?"
All he asks—well and good:
But he cuts down the wood,
So well does he handle his axe.

"Give me an inch & I’ll take an ell"
THE HART & THE VINE

Hart by the hunters pursued,
Safely hid in a Vine, till he chewed
The sweet tender green,
And, through shaking leaves seen,
He was slain by his ingratitude.

Spare your benefactors.
In pity he brought the poor snake To be warmed at his fire. A mistake! For the ungrateful thing Wife & children would sting. I have known some as bad as the snake.

Beware how you entertain traitors.
Fox with his foot on a Mask,
Thus took the fair semblance to task;
You're a real handsome face;
But what part of your case
Are your brains in, good Sir! Let me ask?
"What pranks I shall play!" thought the Ass,
In this skin for a Lion to pass;
But he left one ear out,
And a hiding, no doubt,
"Lion" had - on the skin of an Ass!

Impostors generally forget something.
THE LION & THE STATUE:

ON a Statue - King Lion dethroned,
Showing conqueror Man - Lion frowned.
"If a Lion, you know,
Had been sculptor, he'd show
Lion rampant, and Man on the ground.

THE STORY DEPENDS ON THE TELLER.
THE BOASTER

In the house, in the market, in the streets,
Everywhere he was boasting his feats;
Till one said, with a sneer,
"Let us see it done here!
What's so oft done with ease, one repeats."

*DEEDS* NOT *WORDS*
THE VAIN JACKDAW:

One feather, Jack thought,
"make fine fowls;"
I'll be envied of bats & of owls,
But the peacocks' proud eyes
Saw through his disguise,
And Jack fled the assembly
of fowls.

'BORROWED PLUMES'
'ARE SOON DISCOVERED'
The Peacock considered it wrong
That he had not the nightingale's song,
So to Juno he went,
She replied, "Be content
With thy having, & hold thy fool's tongue!"

Do not quarrel with nature.
THE TWO JARS:

"Never fear!" said the Brass to the Clay of two jars that the flood bore away.
"Keep you close to my side!"
"But the porcelain replied, "I'll be smashed if beside you I stay."

THE TWO CRABS:

So awkward, so shambling a gait! Mrs Crab did her daughter be rate.
Who rejoined, "It is true I am backward; but you needed lessons in walking quite late."

'LOOK AT HOME.'
TWIN children: the Girl, she was plain;
The Brother was handsome & vain;
“Let him brag of his looks,”
Father said; mind your books!
The best beauty is bred in the brain.

HANdSOME IS AS HANdSOME DOES: 
The Fox without a Tail:

Said Fox, minus tail in a trap,
"My friends! here's a lucky mishap;
Give your tails a short lease!
- But the foxes weren't geese,
And none followed the fashion of trap.

Yet some fashions have no better reason.
The Dog & the Shadow

His image the Dog did not know,
Or his bone's, in the pond's painted show:
"T'other dog", so he thought,
"Has got more than he ought;"
So he snapped, & his dinner saw go!

'Greed is sometimes'

Caught by its own bait
THE CROW & THE PITCHER

How the cunning old Crow got his drink
When 'twas low in the pitcher, just think!
Don't say that he spilled it!
With pebbles he filled it,
Till the water rose up to the brink.

USE YOUR WITS

THE EAGLE AND THE CROW

The Eagle flew off with a lamb;
Then the Crow thought to lift an old ram,
In his eglish conceit,
The wool tangled his feet,
And the shepherd laid hold of the sham.

BEWARE OF OVERATING YOUR OWN POWERS.
THE BLIND DOE

A poor half-blind Doe her one eye
kept shoreward, all danger to spy,
As she fed by the sea,
Poor innocent! she
Was shot from a boat passing by.

WATCH ON ALL SIDES.
THE GEES & THE CRANES

The Geese joined the Cranes in some wheat;
All was well, till disturbed at their treat;
Light-winged, the Cranes fled,
But the slow Geese, well fed,
Couldn’t rise, and were caught in retreat.

Beware of enterprizes where the risks are not equal.
THE TRUMPETER TAKEN PRISONER

Trumpeter, prisoner made,
Hoped his life would be spared when he said
He'd no part in the fight,
But they answered him—Right,
But what of the music you made?"
HOT AND COLD:

When to warm his cold fingers man blew,
And again, but to cool the hot stew.
Simple Satyr, unused
To man's ways, felt confused,
When the same mouth blew hot &
cold too!

ÆSOP AImED AT DOUBLE DEALING:
NEITHER BEAST NOR BIRD.

Beast he would be, or a bird,
As might suit, thought the Bat,
but he erred.
When the battle was done,
He found that no one
Would take him for friend at his word.

'Between two stools you may come to the ground.'
SAFE enough lay the poor hunted Deer
In the ox-stall, with nothing to fear
From the careless-eyed men:
Till the Master came; then there was no hiding-place for the Deer.

FROm the hounds the swift Deer sped away,
To his cave, where in past times he lay
Well concealed; unaware of a Lion couch'd there,
For a spring that soon made him his prey.

AN 'EYE' IS KEEN IN ITS OWN INTEREST.
Though the Lion in love let them draw all his teeth, and pare down every claw, he'd no bride for his pains, for they beat out his brains ere he set on his maiden a paw.
MIGHT his Cat be a woman," he said:
Venus changed her: the couple were wed:
But a mouse in her sight
Metamorphosed her quite,
And for bride, a cat found he instead.

MICE IN COUNCIL:
AGAINST Cat sat
a Council of Mice.
Every Mouse came out
prompt with advice.
And a bell on Cat’s throat
Would have met a round vote;
Hid the bell-hanger not
been so nice.

THE BEST POLICY OFTEN TURNS ON AN IF:
THE HEN AND THE FOX

The Hen roosted high on her perch;

Hungry Fox down below, on the search,

Coaxed her hard to descend
She replied, “Most dear friend!
I feel more secure on my perch”

BEWARE OF INTERESTED FRIENDSHIPS:

THE CAT AND THE FOX

The Fox said “I can play,
when it fits,
Many wiles that with man make me quit’s

“But my trick’s up a tree!”
Said the Cat, safe to see
Clever Fox hunted out of his wits.

TRUST TO SKILL RATHER THAN WIT:
THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

Twas a race between Tortoise and Hare,
Puss was sure she'd so much time to spare,
That she lay down to sleep,
And let old Thick-shell creep
To the winning post first! You may stare.

Persistence beats impulse.

THE HARES AND THE FROGS:

Timid Hares, from the trumpeting wind,
Fled as swift as the fear in their mind;
Till in fright from their fear,
From the green sedges near,
Leaping Frogs left their terror behind.

Our own are not the only troubles.
Porcupine, Snake, & Company.

Going shares with the Snakes, Porcupine
Said—'the best of the bargain is mine.'
Nor would he back down,
When the snakes would disown
The agreement his quills made them sign.

Hasty partnerships may be repented of.

The Bear & The Bees:

Their honey I'll have when I please;

Who cares for such small things as Bees?'

Said the Bear; but the stings
Of these very small things
Left him not very much at his ease.

The weakest united may be strong to avenge.
The Bundle of Sticks:

To his sons, who fell out, father spake:

"This Bundle of Sticks you can't break;"

Take them singly, with ease,

You may break as you please;

So, dissension your strength will unmake.

Strength is in unity.
Dig deeply, my Sons! through this field!

There's a Treasure — he died:

The spot where 'twas laid,

They dug as he bade;

And the Treasure was found in the yield.

Productive Labour is the only source of wealth.
THE COCK, THE ASS, & THE LION:

THE Ass gave a horrible bray,
Cock crowed; Lion scampered away;
Ass judged he was scared
By the bray, and so dared
To pursue; Lion ate him they say.

DO N'T TAKE ALL THE CREDIT TO YOURSELF:

THE ASS AND THE LAP-DOG:

"How master that little dog pets?"
Thinks the Ass; & with jealousy frets,
So he climbs Master's knees,
Hoping dog-like to please,
And a drubbing is all that he gets.

ASSES MUST NOT EXPECT TO BE FONDLED:
A boy heedless slept by the well
By Dame Fortune awaked, truth to tell,
"Hadst been drowned,
I would have surely been found
This by Fortune, not Folly befel."

Fortune is not answerable for our want of foresight.
THE UNGRATEFUL WOLF:

To the Wolf, from whose throat
Of Crane
Drew the bone, his long bill made
it plain
He expected his fee:
Snarled Wolf—"Fiddle de dee,
Be thankful your head's out again"

Some characters
have no sense of obligation:

THE FISHERMAN & THE FISH:

Prayed the Fish, as the Fisherman took
Him, a poor little mite, from his hook,
"Let me go! I'm so small."
He replied, "Not at all!
You're the biggest, perhaps in the brook."

A little certainty is better than a great chance.
THE HERDSMANS' VOWS

A KID vowed to Jove, so might he
Find his herd, & his herd did he see

Soon, of lions the prey:
Then't was "Get me away,
And a goat of the best take for fee.

How often would we mend our wishes!

THE HORSE AND THE ASS:

OVERLADEN the Ass was the Horse
Wouldn't help, but had time for re:

When the Ass lay dead there;
For he then had to bear
Both the load of the Ass & his corse.

GRUDGE NOT HELP!
Crafty Lion, perhaps with the gout
Kept his cave, where, to solve any doubt,
Many visitors go:
But the Ass, he said "No!"
They go in, but I've seen none come out.

Reason from results.

The Ass & the Sick Lion.

The End.
Crane, Walter

Holmes Coll

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ERRATA AND ADDENDA.
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Page 43.—For "The Cock," &c., read Neither Beast nor Bird.


Page 54.—Add Fisherman and Fish.

Page 55.—Add The Herdsman's Vows.
Babys Own Aesop

Walter Crane

Also by the same:

"The Baby's Opera"

&

"The Baby's Bouquet"

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