398 Aesop
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

[Drawing of a crane lifting a sign, with birds and a boat in the background]
The Fox and the Grapes.
The Cock and the Pearl.—
The Wolf and the Lamb.
The Wind and the Sun.
King Log and King Stork.
The Frightened Lion.
The Mouse and the Lion.—
The Married Mouse.
Hercules and the Waggoner.
The Lazy Housemaids.
The Snake and the File.—
The Fox and the Crow.
The Dog in the Manger.—
The Frog and the Bull.
The Fox and the Crane.
Horse and Man.—The Ass and the Enemy.
The Fox and the Mosquitoes.—The Fox and the Lion.
The Miser and his Gold.—
The Golden Eggs.
The Man that pleased None.
The Oak and the Reeds.—
The Fir and the Bramble.
The Trees and the Woodman.
The Hart and the Vine.
The Man and the Snake.
The Fox and the Mask.
The Ass in the Lion’s Skin.
The Lion and the Statue.
The Boaster.
The Vain Jackdaw.
The Peacock’s Complaint.
The Two Jars.—The Two Crabs.
Brother and Sister.
The Fox without a Tail.
The Log and the Shadow.
The Crow and the Pitcher.—
The Eagle and the Crow.
The Blind Doc.
The Geese and the Cranes.
The Trumpeter taken Prisoner.
Hot and Cold.
Neither Beast nor Bird.
The Stag in the Ox-stall.—
The Deer and the Lion.
The Lion in Love.
The Cat and Venus.—
Mice in Council.
The Hen and the Fox.—
The Cat and the Fox.
The Hare and the Tortoise.—
The Hares and the Frogs.
Porcupine, Snake & Company.—
The Bear and the Bees.
The Bundle of Sticks.
The Farmer’s Treasure.
The Cock, the Ass, and the Lion.—
The Ass and the Lap Dog.
Fortune and the Boy.
The Ungrateful Wolf.—
The Fisherman and the Fish.
The Herdsman’s Vow.—
The Horse and the Ass.
The Ass and the Sick Lion.
THE FOX & THE GRAPE

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 GRAPE'S OF DISAPPOINTMENT ARE ALWAYS SOUR
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.
THE MOUSE & THE LION

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.

THE MARRIED MOUSE

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*
THE SNAKE & THE FILE

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

S'AID sly Fox to the Crow with the cheese:
"Let me hear your sweet voice
now, de 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
You 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 at.'
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.

ADVANTAGES MAY BE DEARLY BOUGHT.

THE 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."

YOUR REASONS ARE NOT MINE:
THE FOX & THE MOSQUITOES

BEING plagued with Mosquitoes
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 MIZER & 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."

USE 'ALONE' GIVES 'VALUE.'

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 upborne. But slim Reeds at his side, The fierce gale did outride, Since, by bending 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

The 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

A Hart by the hunters pursued,

Safely hid in a Vine, 'till

he chewed

The sweet tender green,

And, through shaking leaves

He was slain by his ingratitude.

SPARE YOUR BENEFECTORS.
The Man & The Snake

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 talk,
You’re a real handsome face;
But what part of your case
Are your brains in, good Sir! let me ask?
"The Ass in the Lion's Skin"

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, 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

INE feathers, 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."

OUR FRIEND OUR ENEMY:

THE TWO CRABS:

So awkward, so shambling a gait, Mrs Crab did her daughter berate,

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."
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:

With 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.

THE EAGLE AND THE CROW:

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

*BEWARE OF OVERRATING 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.
The Geese & 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,
Could not rise, and were caught in retreat.

Beware of enterprises where the risks are not equal.
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?"
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!
A 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 couched there,
For a spring that soon made
him his prey.

AN 'EYE IS
KEEN IN ITS
OWN
INTEREST:

FATE
CAN 'MEET
AS WELL AS
FOLLOW.
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.
THE CAT AND VENUS

"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.

NATURE WILL OUT:

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,
HAD 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 suits,
Many wiles that with man make me quits"
"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:

It was 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 unrevealed
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.

Don'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.
Fortune and the Boy:

A boy heedless slept by the well
By Dame Fortune awaked, truth to tell,
Said she, "Hadst thou been drowned,
I would have surely been found
This by Fortune, not Folly besel."

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

To the Wolf, from whose throat
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 love, so might he
Find his herd, & his herd did he see
Soon, of lions the prey:
Then 'twas "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 remorse
When the Ass lay dead there;
For he then had to bear
Both the load of the Ass & his corpse.

GRUDGE NOT HELP!
THE ASS & THE SICK LION:

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 END
BABY'S OWN AESOP

WALTER CRANE

Also by the same:

"THE BABY'S OPERA"

& "THE BABY'S BOUQUET"

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