

Fables For Children, Leo Tolstoy

by Leo Tolstoy

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AESOP'S FABLES

THE ANT AND THE DOVE

AN Ant came down to the brook : he wanted to drink. A wave washed him down and almost drowned him. A Dove was carrying a branch; she saw the Ant was drown-ing, so she cast the branch down to him in the brook. The Ant got up on the branch and was saved. Then a hunter placed a snare for the Dove, and was on the point of drawing it in. The Ant crawled up to the hunter and bit him on the leg; the hunter groaned and dropped the snare. The Dove fluttered upwards and flew away.

THE TURTLE AND THE EAGLE

A Turtle asked an Eagle to teach her how to fly. The Eagle advised her not to try, as she was not fit for it; but she insisted. The Eagle took her in his claws, raised her up, and dropped her : she fell on stones and broke to pieces.

THE POLECAT

A Polecat entered a smithy and began to lick the filings. Blood began to flow from the Polecat's mouth, but he was glad and continued to lick; he thought that the blood was coming from the iron, and lost his whole tongue.

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

A Lion was sleeping. A Mouse ran over his body. He awoke and caught her. The Mouse besought him; she said :
" Let me go, and I will do you a favour ! "
The Lion laughed at the Mouse for promising him a favour, and let her go.

Then the hunters caught the Lion and tied him with a rope to a tree. The Mouse heard the Lion's roar, ran up, gnawed the rope through, and said :

“ Do you remember ? You laughed, not thinking that I could repay, but now you see that a favour may come also from a Mouse.”

THE LIAR

A Boy was watching the sheep and, pretending that he saw a wolf, he began to cry :

Help ! A wolf ! A wolf ! “

The peasants came running up and saw that it was not so. After doing this for a second and a third time, it happened that a wolf came indeed. The Boy began to cry:

“ Come, come, quickly, a wolf ! “

The peasants thought that he was deceiving them as usual, and paid no attention to him. The wolf saw there was no reason to be afraid : he leisurely killed the whole flock.

THE ASS AND THE HORSE

A man had an Ass and a Horse. They were walking on the road; the Ass said to the Horse :

“ It is heavy for me, – I shall not be able to carry it all; take at least a Part of my load.”

The Horse paid no attention to him. The Ass fell down from overstraining himself, and died. When the master transferred the Ass's load on the Horse, and added the Ass's hide, the Horse began to complain :

“Oh, woe to me, poor one, woe to me, unfortunate Horse! I did not want to help him even a little, and now I have to carry everything, and his hide, too.”

THE JACKDAW AND THE DOVES

A Jackdaw saw that the Doves were well fed, so she painted herself white and flew into the dove-cot. The Doves thought at first that she was a dove like them, and let her in. But the Jackdaw forgot herself and croaked in jackdaw fashion. Then the Doves began to pick at her and drove her away. The Jackdaw flew back to her friends, but the jackdaws were frightened at her, seeing her white, and themselves drove her away.

THE WOMAN AND THE HEN

A Hen laid an egg each day. The Mistress thought that if she gave her more to eat, she would lay twice as much. So she did. The Hen grew fat and stopped lay-ing.

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX

A Lion and a Bear procured some meat and began to fight for it. The

Bear did not want to give in, nor did the Lion yield. They fought for so long a time that they both grew feeble and lay down. A Fox saw the meat between them; she grabbed it and ran away with it.

THE DOG, THE COCK, AND THE FOX

A Dog and a Cock went to travel together. At night the Cock fell asleep in a tree, and the Dog fixed a place for himself between the roots of that tree. When the time came, the Cock began to crow. A Fox heard the Cock, ran up to the tree, and began to beg the Cock to come down, as she wanted to give him her respects for such a fine voice.

The Cock said :

“ You must first wake up the janitor, he is sleeping between the roots. Let him open up, and I will come down.”

The Fox began to look for the janitor, and started yelping. The Dog sprang out at once and killed the Fox.

THE HORSE AND THE GROOM

A Groom stole the Horse's oats, and sold them, but he cleaned the Horse each day. Said the Horse :

“ If you really wish me to be in good condition, do not sell my oats.”

THE FROG AND THE LION

A Lion heard a Frog croaking, and thought it was a large beast that was calling so loud. He walked up, and saw a Frog coming out of the swamp. The Lion crushed her with his paw and said :

“ There is nothing to look at, and yet I was fright-ened.”

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANTS

In the fall the wheat of the Ants got wet; they were drying it. A hungry Grasshopper asked them for some-thing to eat. The Ants said :

“ Why did you not gather food during the summer ? ”

She said :

“ I had no time : I sang songs.”

They laughed, and said :

“ If you sang in the summer, dance in the winter ! ”

THE HEN AND THE GOLDEN EGGS

A master had a Hen which laid golden eggs. He wanted more gold at once, and so killed the Hen (he thought that inside of her there was a large lump of gold), but she was just like any other hen.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN

An Ass put on a lion's skin, and all thought it was a lion. Men and animals ran away from him. A wind sprang up, and the skin was blown aside, and the Ass could be seen. People ran up and beat the Ass.

THE HEN AND THE SWALLOW

A Hen found some snake's eggs and began to sit on them. A Swallow saw it and said:
" Stupid one ! You will hatch them out, and, when they grow up, you will be the first one to suffer from them."

THE STAG AND THE FAWN

A Fawn once said to a Stag :
" Father, you are larger and fleeter than the dogs, and, besides, you have huge antlers for defence; why, then, are you so afraid of the dogs ? "
The Stag laughed, and said :
" You speak the truth, my child. The trouble is, the moment I hear the dogs bark, I run before I have time to think."

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

A Fox saw some ripe bunches of grapes hanging high, and tried to get at them, in order to eat them.
She tried hard, but could not get them. To drown her annoyance she said : " They are still sour."

THE MAIDS AND THE COCK

A mistress used to wake the Maids at night and, as soon as the cocks crowed, put them to work. The Maids found that hard, and decided to kill the Cock, so that the mistress should not be wakened. They killed him, but now they suffered more than ever : the mistress was afraid that she would sleep past the time and so began to wake the Maids earlier.

THE FISHERMAN AND THE FISH

A Fisherman caught a Fish. Said the Fish :
" Fisherman, let me go into the water; you see I am small : you will have little profit of me. If you let me go, I shall grow up, and then you will catch me when it will be worth while."
But the Fisherman said :
" A fool would be he who should wait for greater profit, and let the

lesser slip out of his hands.”

THE FOX AND THE GOAT

A Goat wanted to drink. . He went down the incline to the well, drank his fill, and gained in weight. He started to get out, but could not do so. He began to bleat. A Fox saw him and said :
“ That’s it, stupid one ! If you had as much sense in your head as there are hairs in your beard, you would have thought of how to get out before you climbed down.”

THE DOG AND HER SHADOW

A Dog was crossing the river over a plank, carrying a piece of meat in her teeth. She saw herself in the water and thought that another dog was carrying a piece of meat. She dropped her piece and dashed forward to take away what the other dog had : the other meat was gone, and her own was carried away by the stream. And thus the Dog was left without anything.

THE CRANE AND THE STORK

A peasant put out his nets to catch the Cranes for tramping down his field. In the nets were caught the Cranes, and with them one Stork. The Stork said to the peasant :
“ Let me go ! I am not a Crane, but a Stork; we are most honoured birds; I live on your father’s house. You can see by my feathers that I am not a Crane.”
The peasant said :
“ With the Cranes I have caught you, and with them will I kill you.”

THE GARDENER AND HIS SONS

A Gardener wanted his Sons to get used to gardening. As he was dying, he called them up and said to them :
“ Children, when I am dead, look for what is hidden in the vineyard.”

The Sons thought that it was a treasure, and when their father died, they began to dig there, and dug up the whole ground. They did not find the treasure, but they ploughed the vineyard up so well that it brought forth more fruit than ever.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A Wolf had a bone stuck in his throat, and could not cough it up. He called the Crane, and said to him :
“ Crane, you have a long neck. Thrust your head into my throat and draw out the bone ! I will reward you.”

The Crane stuck his head in, pulled out the bone, and said:

“ Give me my reward ! “

The Wolf gnashed his teeth and said :

“ Is it not enough reward for you that I did not bite off your head when it was between my teeth ? “

THE HARES AND THE FROGS

The Hares once got together, and began to complain about their life :

“ We perish from men, and from dogs, and from eagles, and from all the other beasts. It would be better to die at once than to live in fright and suffer. Come, let us drown ourselves ! “

And the Hares raced away to drown themselves in a lake. The Frogs heard the Hares and plumped into the water. So one of the Hares said :

“ Wait, boys ! Let us put off the drowning ! Evidently the Frogs are having a harder life than we: they are afraid even of us.”

THE FATHER AND HIS SONS

A Father told his Sons to live in peace : they paid no attention to him. So he told them to bring the bath broom, and said :

“ Break it ! “

No matter how much they tried, they could not break it. Then the Father unclosed the broom, and told them to break the rods singly. They broke it.

The Father said :

“ So it is with you : if you live in peace, no one will overcome you; but if you quarrel, and are divided, any one will easily ruin you.”

THE FOX

A Fox got caught in a trap. She tore off her tail, and got away. She began to contrive how to cover up her shame. She called together the Foxes, and begged them to cut off their tails.

“ A tail,” she said, “ is a useless thing. In vain do we drag along a dead weight.”

One of the Foxes said :

“ You would not be speaking thus, if you were not tail-less ! “

The tailless Fox grew silent and went away.

THE WILD ASS AND THE TAME ASS

A Wild Ass saw a Tame Ass. The Wild Ass went up to him and began to praise his life, saying how smooth his body was, and what sweet feed he received. Later, when the Tame Ass was loaded down, and a driver began to goad him with a stick, the Wild Ass said :

“ No, brother, I do not envy you : I see that your life is going hard with you.”

THE STAG

A Stag went to the brook to quench his thirst. He saw himself in the water, and began to admire his horns, seeing how large and branching they were; and he looked at his feet, and said : " But my feet are unseemly and thin."

Suddenly a Lion sprang out and made for the Stag. The Stag started to run over the open plain. He was get-ting away, but there came a forest, and his horns caught in the branches, and the lion caught him. As the Stag was dying, he said :
"How foolish I am! That which I thought to be unseemly and thin was saving me, and what I gloried in has been my ruin."

THE DOG AND THE WOLF

A Dog fell asleep back of the yard. A Wolf ran up and wanted to eat him.

Said the Dog :

" Wolf, don't eat me yet : now I am lean and bony. Wait a little, - my master is going to celebrate a wedding; then I shall have plenty to eat; I shall grow fat. It will be better to eat me then."

The Wolf believed her, and went away. Then he came a second time, and saw the Dog lying on the roof. The Wolf said to her :

" Well, have they had the wedding? "

The Dog replied :

" Listen, Wolf ! If you catch me again asleep in front of the yard, do not wait for the wedding."

THE GNAT AND THE LION

A Gnat came to a Lion, and said: "Do you think that you have more strength than I? You are mistaken ! What does your strength consist in? Is it that you scratch with your claws, and gnaw with your teeth ? That is the way the women quarrel with their husbands. I am stronger than you : if you wish let us fight! "

And the Gnat sounded his horn, and began to bite the Lion on his bare cheeks and his nose. The Lion struck his face with his paws and scratched it with his claws. He tore his face until the blood came, and gave up.

The Gnat trumpeted for joy, and flew away. Then he became entangled in a spider's web, and the spider began to suck him up. The Gnat said :

" I have vanquished the strong beast, the Lion, and now I perish from this nasty spider."

THE HORSE AND HIS MASTERS

A gardener had a Horse. She had much to do, but little to eat; so she began to pray to God to get another master. And so it happened. The gardener sold the Horse to a potter. The Horse was glad, but the potter had even more work for her to do. And again the Horse complained of her lot, and began to pray that she might get a better master. And this prayer, too, was fulfilled. The potter sold the Horse to a tanner. When the Horse saw the skins of horses in the tanner's yard, she began to cry:
" Woe to me, wretched one ! It would be better if I could stay with my old masters. It is evident they have sold me now not for work, but for my skin's sake."

THE OLD MAN AND DEATH

An Old Man cut some wood, which he carried away. He had to carry it far. He grew tired, so he put down his bundle, and said :
" Oh, if Death would only come ! "
Death came, and said :
" Here I-am, what do you want ? "
The Old Man was frightened, and said :
" Lift up my bundle ! "

THE LION AND THE FOX

A Lion, growing old, was unable to catch the animals, and so intended to live by cunning. He went into a den, lay down there, and pretended that he was sick. The animals came to see him, and he ate up those that went into his den. The Fox guessed the trick. She stood at the entrance of the den, and said :
" Well, Lion, how are you feeling ? "
The Lion answered :
" Poorly. Why don't you come in ? " The Fox replied :
" I do not come in because I see by the tracks that many have entered, but none have come out."

THE STAG AND THE VINEYARD

A Stag hid himself from the hunters in a vineyard. When the hunters missed him, the Stag began to nibble at the grape-vine leaves. The hunters noticed that the leaves were moving, and so they thought, " There must be an animal under those leaves," and fired their guns, and wounded the Stag.
The Stag said, dying :
" It serves me right for wanting to eat the leaves that saved me."

THE CAT AND THE MICE

A house was overrun with Mice. A Cat found his way into the house,

and began to catch them. The Mice saw that matters were bad, and said :
“ Mice, let us not come down from the ceiling ! The Cat cannot get up there.”

When the Mice stopped coming down, the Cat decided that he must catch them by a trick. He grasped the ceiling with one leg, hung down from it, and made believe that he was dead.
A Mouse looked out at him, but said :
“ No, my friend ! Even if you should turn into a bag, I would not go up to you.”

THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

A Wolf saw a Goat browsing on a rocky mountain, and he could not get at her; so he said to her :
“ Come down lower ! The place is more even, and the grass is much sweeter to feed on.”
But the Goat answered :
“ You are not calling me down for that, Wolf : you are troubling yourself not about my food, but about yours.”

THE REEDS AND THE OLIVE-TREE

The Olive-tree and the Reeds quarrelled about who was stronger and sounder. The Olive-tree laughed at the Reeds because they bent in every wind. The Reeds kept silence. A storm came : the Reeds swayed, tossed, bowed to the ground, and remained unharmed. The Olive-tree strained her branches against the wind, and broke.

THE TWO COMPANIONS

Two Companions were walking through the forest when a Bear jumped out on them. One started to run, climbed a tree, and hid himself, but the other remained in the road. He had nothing to do, so he fell down on the ground and pretended that he was dead.
The Bear went up to him, and sniffed at him; but he had stopped breathing.
The Bear sniffed at his face; he thought that he was dead, and so went away.
When the Bear was gone, the Companion climbed down from the tree and , laughing, said : “ What did the Bear whisper in your ear ? “
“ He told me that those who in danger run away from their companions are bad people.”

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A Wolf saw a Lamb drinking at a river. The Wolf wanted to eat the Lamb, and so he began to annoy him. He said :
“ You are muddling my water and do not let me drink.”

The Lamb said :

“ How can I muddle your water ? I am standing down-stream from you; besides, I drink with the tips of my lips.”

And the Wolf said :

“ Well, why did you call my father names last summer ? ”

The Lamb said :

“ But, Wolf, I was not yet born last summer.”

The Wolf got angry, and said :

“ It is hard to get the best of you. Besides, my stomach is empty, so I will devour you.”

THE LION, THE WOLF, AND THE FOX

An old, sick Lion was lying in his den. All the animals came to see the king, but the Fox kept away. So the Wolf was glad of the chance, and began to slander the Fox before the Lion.

“ She does not esteem you in the least,” he said, “ she has not come once to see the king.”

The Fox happened to run by as he was saying these words. She heard what the Wolf had said, and thought :

“ Wait, Wolf, I will get my revenge on you.”

So the Lion began to roar at the Fox, but she said :

“ Do not have me killed, but let me say a word ! I did not come to see you because I had no time. And I had no time because I ran over the whole world to ask the doctors for a remedy for you. I have just got it, and so I have come to see you.”

The Lion said :

“ What is the remedy ? ”

“ It is this : if you flay a live Wolf, and put his warm hide on you ,

When the Lion stretched out the Wolf, the Fox laughed, and said :
“ That’s it, my friend : masters ought to be led to do good, not evil.”

THE LION, THE ASS, AND THE FOX

The Lion, the Ass, and the Fox went out to hunt. They caught a large number of animals, and the Lion told the Ass to divide them up. The Ass divided them into three equal Parts and said : “ Now, take them ! ”

The Lion grew angry, ate up the Ass, and told the Fox to divide them up anew. The Fox collected them all into one heap, and left a small bit for herself. The Lion looked at it and said :

“ Clever Fox ! Who taught you to divide so well ? ”

She said :

“ What about that Ass ? ”

THE PEASANT AND THE WATER-SPRITE

A Peasant lost his axe in the river; he sat down on the bank in grief, and began to weep.
The Water-sprite heard the Peasant and took pity on him. He brought a gold axe out of the river, and said : " Is this your axe ? "
The Peasant said : " No, it is not mine."
The Water-sprite brought another, a silver axe.
Again the Peasant said : " It is not my axe."
Then the Water-sprite brought out the real axe.
The Peasant said : " Now this is my axe."

The Water-sprite made the Peasant a present of all three axes, for having told the truth.
At home the Peasant showed his axes to his friends, and told them what had happened to him.

One of the peasants made up his mind to do the same : he went to the river, purposely threw his axe into the water, sat down on the bank, and began to weep.
The Water-sprite brought out a gold axe, and asked : " Is this your axe ? "

The Peasant was glad, and called out : " It is mine, mine ! "
The Water-sprite did not give him the gold axe, and did not bring him back his own either, because he had told an untruth.

THE RAVEN AND THE FOX

A Raven got himself a piece of meat, and sat down on a tree. The Fox wanted to get it from him. She went up to him, and said :
"Oh, Raven, as I look at you, – from your size and beauty, you ought to be a king ! And you would certainly be a king, if you had a good voice."
The Raven opened his mouth wide, and began to croak with all his might and main. The meat fell down. The Fox caught it and said :
" Oh, Raven ! If you had also sense, you would certainly be a king."
Adaptations and Imitations of Hindoo Fables

THE SNAKE'S HEAD AND TAIL

Snake's Tail had a quarrel with the Snake's Head about who was to walk in front. The Head said :
"You cannot walk in front, because you have no eyes and no ears."
The Tail said :
" Yes, but I have strength, I move you; if I want to, I can wind myself around a tree, and you cannot get off the spot."
The Head said :
" Let us separate ! "
And the Tail tore himself loose from the Head, and crept on; but the moment he got away from the Head, he fell into a hole and was lost.

FINE THREAD

A Man ordered some fine thread from a Spinner. The Spinner spun it for him, but the Man said that the thread was not good, and that he wanted the finest thread he could get. The Spinner said :

“ If this is not fine enough, take this ! ” and she pointed to an empty space.

He said that he did not see any. The Spinner said :

“ You do not see it, because it is so fine. I do not see it myself.”

The Fool was glad, and ordered some more thread of this kind, and paid her for what he got.

THE PARTITION OF THE INHERITANCE

A Father had two Sons. He said to them : “ When I die, divide everything into two equal Parts.”

When the Father died, the Sons could not divide with-out quarrelling. They went to a Neighbour to have him settle the matter. The Neighbour asked them how their Father had told them to divide.

They said :

“ He ordered us to divide everything into two equal Parts.”

The Neighbour said :

“ If so, tear all your garments into two halves, break your dishes into two halves, and cut all your cattle into two halves ! ”

The Brothers obeyed their Neighbour, and lost every-thing.

THE MONKEY

A Man went into the woods, cut down a tree, and began to saw it. He raised the end of the tree on a stump, sat astride over it, and began to saw. Then he drove a wedge into the split that he had sawed, and went on sawing; then he took out the wedge and drove it in farther down.

A Monkey was sitting on a tree and watching him. When the Man lay down to sleep, the Monkey seated herself astride the tree, and wanted to do the same; but when she took out the wedge, the tree sprang back and caught her tail. She began to tug and to cry. The Man woke up, beat the Monkey, and tied a rope to her.

THE MONKEY AND THE PEASE

A Monkey was carrying both her hands full of pease. A pea dropped on the ground; the Monkey wanted to pick it up, and dropped twenty peas. She rushed to pick

them up and lost all the rest. Then she flew into a rage, swept away all the pease and ran off.

THE MILCH COW

A Man had a Cow; she gave each day a pot full of milk. The Man invited a number of guests. To have as much milk as possible, he did not milk the Cow for ten days. He thought that on the tenth day the Cow would give him ten pitchers of milk. But the Cow's milk went back, and she gave less milk than before.

THE DUCK AND THE MOON

A Duck was swimming in the pond, trying to find some fish, but she did not find one in a whole day. When night came, she saw the Moon in the water; she thought that it was a fish, and plunged in to catch the Moon. The other ducks saw her do it and laughed at her. That made the Duck feel so ashamed and bashful that when she saw a fish under the water, she did not try to catch it, and so died of hunger.

THE WOLF IN THE DUST

A Wolf wanted to pick a sheep out of a flock, and stepped into the wind, so that the dust of the flock might blow on him.

The Sheep Dog saw him, and said :

“ There is no sense, Wolf, in your walking in the dust : it will make your eyes ache.”

But the Wolf said :

“ The trouble is, Doggy, that my eyes have been aching for quite awhile, and I have been told that the dust from a flock of sheep will cure the eyes.”

THE MOUSE UNDER THE GRANARY

A Mouse was living under the granary. In the floor of the granary there was a little hole, and the grain fell down through it. The Mouse had an easy life of it, but she wanted to brag of her ease : she gnawed a larger hole in the floor, and invited other mice.

“ Come to a feast with me,” said she; “ there will be plenty to eat for everybody.”

When she brought the mice, she saw there was no hole. The peasant had noticed the big hole in the floor, and had stopped it up.

THE BEST PEARS

A master sent his Servant to buy the best-tasting pears. The Servant came to the shop and asked for pears. The dealer gave him some; but the Servant said :

“ No, give me the best ! “

The dealer said :

“ Try one; you will see that they taste good.”

“ How shall I know,” said the Servant, “ that they all taste good, if I try one only ? ”
He bit off a piece from each pear, and brought them to his master. Then his master sent him away.

THE FALCON AND THE COCK

The Falcon was used to the master, and came to his hand when he was called; the Cock ran away from his master and cried when people went up to him. So the Falcon said to the Cock :

“ In you Cocks there is no gratitude; one can see that you are of a common breed. You go to your masters only when you are hungry. It is different with us wild birds. We have much strength, and we can fly faster than anybody; still we do not fly away from people, but of our own accord go to their hands when we are called. We remember that they feed us.”

Then the Cock said :

“ You do not run away from people because you have never seen a roast Falcon, but we, you know, see roast Cocks.”

THE JACKALS AND THE ELEPHANT

The Jackals had eaten up all the carrion in the woods, and had nothing to eat. So an old Jackal was thinking how to find something to feed on. He went to an Elephant, and said :

“ We had a king, but he became overweening : he told us to do things that nobody could do; we want to choose another king, and my people have sent me to ask you to be our king. You will have an easy life with us. Whatever you will order us to do, we will do, and we will honour you in everything. Come to our kingdom ! ”

The Elephant consented, and followed the Jackal. The Jackal brought him to a swamp. When the Elephant stuck fast in it, the Jackal said :

“ Now command ! Whatever you command, we will do.”

The Elephant said :

“ I command you to pull me out from here.”

The Jackal began to laugh, and said :

“ Take hold of my tail with your trunk, and I will pull you out at once.”

The Elephant said :

“ Can I be pulled out by a tail ? ”

But the Jackal said to him :

“ Why, then, do you command us to do what is impossible ? Did we not drive away our first king for telling us to do what could not be done ? ”

When the Elephant died in the swamp the Jackals came and ate him up.

THE HERON, THE FISHES, AND THE CRAB

A Heron was living near a pond. She grew old, and had no strength left with which to catch the fish. She began to contrive how to live by cunning. So she said to the Fishes :

" You Fishes do not know that a calamity is in store for you : I have heard the people say that they are going to let off the pond, and catch every one of you. I know of a nice little pond back of the mountain. I should like to help you, but I am old, and it is hard for me to"

The Fishes begged the Heron to help them. So the Heron said :

" All right, I will do what I can for you, and will carry you over : only I cannot do it at once, I will take you there one after another."

And the Fishes were happy; they kept begging her : " Carry me over ! Carry me over ! "

And the Heron started carrying them. She would take one up, would carry her into the field, and would eat her up. And thus she ate a large number of Fishes.

In the pond there lived an old Crab. When the Heron began to take out the Fishes, he saw what was up, and said:

" Now, Heron, take me to the new abode ! "

The Heron took the Crab and carried him off. When she flew out on the field, she wanted to throw the Crab down. But the Crab saw the fish-bones on the ground, and so squeezed the Heron's neck with his claws, and choked her to death. Then he crawled back to the pond, and told the Fishes.

THE WATER-SPRITE AND THE PEARL

A Man was rowing in a boat, and dropped a costly pearl into the sea. The Man returned to the shore, took a pail, and began to draw up the water and to pour it out on the land. He drew the water and poured it out for three days without stopping.

On the fourth day the Water-sprite came out of the sea, and asked :
" Why are you drawing the water ? "

The Man said :

" I am drawing it because I have dropped a pearl into it."

The Water-sprite asked him :

" Will you stop soon ? "

The Man said :

" I will stop when I dry up the sea."

Then the Water-sprite returned to the sea, brought back that pearl, and gave it to the Man.

THE BLIND MAN AND THE MILK

A Man born blind asked a Seeing Man

" Of what colour is milk ? "

The Seeing Man said : " The colour of milk is the same as that of white paper."

The Blind Man asked : " Well, does that colour rustle in your hands like paper ? "

The Seeing Man said : " No, it is as white as white flour."

The Blind Man asked : " Well, is it as soft and as powdery as flour ? "

The Seeing Man said : " No, it is simply as white as a white hare."

The Blind Man asked : " Well, is it as fluffy and soft as a hare ? "

The Seeing Man said : " No, it is as white as snow."

The Blind Man asked : " Well, is it as cold as snow ? "

And no matter how many examples the Seeing Man gave, the Blind Man was unable to understand what the white colour of milk was like.

THE WOLF AND THE BOW

A hunter went out to hunt with bow and arrows. He killed a goat. He threw her on his shoulders and carried her along. On his way he saw a boar. He threw down the goat, and shot at the boar and wounded him. The boar rushed against the hunter and butted him to death, and himself died on the spot. A Wolf scented the blood, and came to the place where lay the goat, the boar, the man, and his bow. The Wolf was glad, and said :

" Now I shall have enough to eat for a long time; only I will not eat everything at once, but little by little, so that nothing may be lost : first I will eat the tougher things, and then I will lunch on what is soft and sweet."

The Wolf sniffed at the goat, the boar, and the man, and said :
" This is all soft food, so I will eat it later; let me first start on these sinews of the bow."

And he began to gnaw the sinews of the bow. When he bit threw the string, the bow sprang back and hit him on his belly. He died on the spot, and other wolves ate up the man, the goat, the boar, and the Wolf.

THE BIRDS IN THE NET

A Hunter set out a net near a lake and caught a number of birds. The birds were large, and they raised the net and flew away with it. The Hunter ran after them. A Peasant saw the Hunter running, and said :
" Where are you running ? How can you catch up with the birds, while you are on foot ? "

The Hunter said :

" If it were one bird, I should not catch it, but now I shall."

And so it happened. When evening came, the birds began to pull for the night each in a different direction : one to the woods, another to the swamp, a third to the field; and all fell with the net to the ground, and the Hunter caught them.

THE KING AND THE FALCON

A certain King let his favourite Falcon loose on a hare, and galloped after him.

The Falcon caught the hare. The King took him away, and began to look for some water to drink. The King found it on a knoll, but it came only drop by drop. The King fetched his cup from the saddle, and placed it under the water. The water flowed in drops, and when the cup was filled, the King raised it to his mouth and wanted to drink it. Suddenly the Falcon fluttered on the King's arm and spilled the water. The King placed the cup once more under the drops. He waited for a long time for the cup to be filled even with the brim, and again, as he carried it to his mouth, the Falcon flapped his wings and spilled the water.

When the King filled his cup for the third time and began to carry it to his mouth, the Falcon again spilled it. The King flew into a rage and killed him by flinging him against a stone with all his force. Just then the King's servants rode up, and one of them ran up-hill to the spring, to find as much water as possible, and to fill the cup. But the servant did not bring the water; he returned with the empty cup, and said :

" You cannot drink that water; there is a snake in the spring, and she has let her venom into the water. It is fortunate that the Falcon has spilled the water. If you had drunk it, you would have died."

The King said :

" How badly I have repaid the Falcon ! He has saved my life, and I killed him."

THE KING AND THE ELEPHANTS

An Indian King ordered all the Blind People to be as-sembled, and when they came, he ordered that all the Elephants be shown to them. The Blind Men went to the stable and began to feel the Elephants. One felt a leg, another a tail, a third the stump of a tail, a fourth a belly, a fifth a back, a sixth the ears, a seventh the tusks, and an eighth a trunk.

Then the King called the Blind Men, and asked them : " What are my Elephants like ? "

One Blind Man said : " Your Elephants are like posts." He had felt the legs.

Another Blind Man said : " They are like bath brooms." He had felt the end of the tail.

A third said : " They are like branches." He had felt the tail stump.

The one who had touched a belly said : " The Elephants are like a clod of earth."

The one who had touched the sides said : " They are like a wall."

The one who had touched a back said : " They are like a mound."

The one who had touched the ears said : " They are like a mortar."

The one who had touched the tusks said : " They are like horns."
The one who had touched the trunk said that they were like a stout rope.
And all the Blind Men began to dispute and to quarrel.

WHY THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD

A Hermit was living in the forest, and the animals were not afraid of him. He and the animals talked together and understood each other.

Once the Hermit lay down under a tree, and a Raven, a Dove, a Stag, and a Snake gathered in the same place, to pass the night. The animals began to discuss why there was evil in the world.

The Raven said :

" All the evil in the world comes from hunger. When I eat my fill, I sit down on a branch and croak a little, and it is all jolly and good, and everything gives me pleasure; but let me just go without eating a day or two, and everything palls on me so that I do not feel like looking at God's world. And something draws me on, and I fly from place to place, and have no rest. When I catch a glimpse of some meat, it makes me only feel sicker than ever, and I make for it without much thinking. At times they throw sticks and stones at me, and the wolves and dogs grab me, but I do not give in. Oh, how many of my brothers are perishing through hunger ! All evil comes from hunger."

The Dove said :

" According to my opinion, the evil does not come from hunger, but from love. If we lived singly, the trouble would not be so bad. One head is not poor, and if it is, it is only one. But here we live in pairs. And you come to like your mate so much that you have no rest : you keep thinking of her all the time, wondering whether she has had enough to eat, and whether she is warm. And when your mate flies away from you, you feel en-tirely lost, and you keep thinking that a hawk may have carried her off, or men may have caught her; and you start out to find her, and fly to your ruin, – either into the hawk's claws, or into a snare. And when your mate is lost, nothing gives you any joy. You do not eat or drink, and all the time search and weep. Oh, so many of us perish in this way ! All the evil is not from hunger, but from love."

The Snake said :

" No, the evil is not from hunger, nor from love, but from rage. If we lived peacefully, without getting into a rage, everything would be nice for us. But, as it is, whenever a thing does not go exactly right, we get angry, and then nothing pleases us. All we think about is how to revenge ourselves on some one. Then we forget ourselves, and only hiss, and creep, and try to find some one to bite. And we do not spare a soul, – we even bite our own father and mother. We feel as though we could eat ourselves up. And we rage until we perish. All the evil in the world comes from rage."

The Stag said :

" No, not from rage, or from love, or from hunger does all the evil in the world come, but from terror. If it were possible not to be afraid, everything would be well. We have swift feet and much strength : against a small animal we defend ourselves with our horns, and from a large one we flee. But how can I help becoming fright-ened ? Let a branch crackle in the forest, or a leaf rustle, and I am all atremble with fear, and my heart flutters as though it wanted to jump out, and I fly as fast as I can. Again, let a hare run by, or a bird flap its wings, or a dry twig break off, and you think that it is a beast, and you run straight up against him. Or you run away from a dog and run into the hands of a man. Frequently you get frightened and run, not knowing whither, and at full speed rush down a steep hill, and get killed. We have no rest. All the evil comes from terror."

Then the Hermit said :

" Not from hunger, not from love, not from rage, not from terror are all our sufferings, but from our bodies comes all the evil in the world. From them come hunger, and love, and rage, and terror."

THE WOLF AND THE HUNTERS

A Wolf devoured a sheep. The Hunters caught the Wolf and began to beat him. The Wolf said :

" In vain do you beat me : it is not my fault that I am gray, God has made me so."

But the Hunters said :

" We do not beat the Wolf for being gray, but for eating the sheep."

THE TWO PEASANTS

Once upon a time two Peasants drove toward each other and caught in each other's sleighs. One cried :

" Get out of my way, I am hurrying to town."

But the other said :

" Get out of my way, I am hurrying home."

They quarrelled for some time. A third Peasant saw them and said :

" If you are in a hurry, back up ! "

THE PEASANT AND THE HOUSE

A Peasant went to town to fetch some oats for his Horse. He had barely left the village, when the Horse began to turn around, toward the house. The Peasant struck the Horse with his whip. She went on, and kept thinking about the Peasant :

" Whither is that fool driving me ? He had better go home."

Before reaching town, the Peasant saw that the Horse trudged along through the mud with difficulty, so he turned her on the pavement; but the Horse began to turn back from the street. The Peasant gave the Horse the whip, and jerked at the reins; she went on the pavement, and thought :

" Why has he turned me on the pavement ? It will only break my

hoofs. It is rough underfoot."

The Peasant went to the shop, bought the oats, and drove home. When he came home, he gave the Horse some oats. The Horse ate them and thought :

" How stupid men are ! They are fond of exercising their wits on us, but they have less sense than we. What did he trouble himself about ? He drove me somewhere. No matter how far we went, we came home in the end. So it would have been better if we had remained at home from the start : he could have been sitting on the oven, and I eating oats."

THE TWO HORSES

Two Horses were drawing their carts. The Front Horse pulled well, but the Hind Horse kept stopping all the time. The load of the Hind Horse was transferred to the front cart; when all was transferred, the Hind Horse went along with ease, and said to the Front Horse :
" Work hard and sweat ! The more you try, the harder they will make you work."

When they arrived at the tavern, their master said :
Why should I feed two Horses, and haul with one only ? I shall do better to give one plenty to eat, and to kill the other : I shall at least have her hide."
So he did.

THE AXE AND THE SAW

Two Peasants went to the forest to cut wood. One of them had an axe, and the other a saw. They picked out a tree, and began to dispute. One said that the tree had to be chopped, while the other said that it had to be sawed down.

A third Peasant said :
" I will easily make peace between you : if the axe is sharp, you had better chop it; but if the saw is sharp you had better saw it."

He took the axe, and began to chop it; but the axe was so dull that it was not possible to cut with it. Then he took the saw; the saw was worthless, and did not BEW. So he said :
" Stop quarrelling awhile; the axe does not chop, and the saw does not saw. First grind your axe and file your saw, and then quarrel."
But the Peasants grew angrier still at one another, be-cause one had a dull axe, and the other a dull saw. And they came to blows.

THE DOGS AND THE COOK

A Cook was preparing a dinner. The Dogs were lying at the kitchen door. The Cook killed a calf and threw the guts out into the yard. The Dogs picked them up and ate them, and said :

“ He is a good Cook : he cooks well.”

After awhile the Cook began to clean pease, turnips, and onions, and threw out the refuse. The Dogs made for it; but they turned their noses up, and said :

“ Our Cook has grown worse : he used to cook well, but now he is no longer any good.”

But the Cook paid no attention to the Dogs, and continued to fix the dinner in his own way. The family, and not the Dogs, ate the dinner, and praised it.

THE HARE AND THE HARRIER

A Hare once said to a Harrier :

“ Why do you bark when you run after us ? You would catch us easier, if you ran after us in silence. With your bark you only drive us against the hunter : he hears where we are running; and he rushes out with his gun and kills us, and does not give you anything.”

The Harrier said :

“ That is not the reason why I bark. I bark because, when I scent your odour, I am angry, and happy because I am about to catch you; I do not know why, but I cannot keep from barking.”

THE OAK AND THE HAZELBUSH

An old Oak dropped an acorn under a Hazelbush. The Hazelbush said to the Oak :

“ Have you not enough space under your own branches? Drop your acorns in an open space. Here I am myself crowded by my shoots, and I do not drop my nuts to the ground, but give them to men.”

“ I have lived for two hundred years,” said the Oak, “ and the Oakling which will sprout from that acorn will live just as long.”

Then the Hazelbush flew into a rage, and said :

“ If so, I will choke your Oakling, and he will not live for three days.”

The Oak made no reply, but told his son to sprout out of that acorn. The acorn got wet and burst, and clung to the ground with his crooked rootlet, and sent up a sprout.

The Hazelbush tried to choke him, and gave him no sun. But the Oakling spread upwards and grew stronger in the shade of the Hazelbush. A hundred years passed. The Hazelbush had long ago dried up, but the Oak from that acorn towered to the sky and spread his tent in all directions.

THE HEN AND THE CHICKS

A Hen hatched some Chicks, but did not know how to take care of them. So she said to them :

“ Creep back into your shells ! When you are inside your shells, I

will sit on you as before, and will take care of you."

The Chicks did as they were ordered and tried to creep into their shells, but were unable to do so, and only crushed their wings. Then one of the Chicks said to his mother :

" If we are to stay all the time in our shells, you ought never to have hatched us."

THE CORN-CRAKE AND HIS MATE

A Corn-crake had made a nest in the meadow late in the year, and at mowing time his Mate was still sitting on her eggs. Early in the morning the peasants came to the meadow, took off their coats, whetted their scythes, and started one after another to mow down the grass and to put it down in rows. The Corn-crake flew up to see what the mowers were doing. When he saw a peasant swing his scythe and cut a snake in two, he rejoiced and flew back to his Mate and said :
" Don't fear the peasants ! They have come to cut the snakes to pieces; they have given us no rest for quite awhile."

But his Mate said :

" The peasants are cutting the grass, and with the grass they are cutting everything which is in their way, - the snakes, and the Corn-crake's nest, and the Corn-crake's head. My heart forebodes nothing good : but I cannot carry away the eggs, nor fly from the nest, for fear of chilling them."

When the mowers came to the nest of the Corn-crake, one of the peasants swung his scythe and cut off the head of the Corn-crake's Mate, and put the eggs in his bosom and gave them to his children to play with.

THE COW AND THE BILLY GOAT

An old woman had a Cow and a Billy Goat. The two pastured together. At milking the Cow was restless. The old woman brought out some bread and salt, and gave it to the Cow, and said :

" Stand still, motherkin; take it, take it ! I will bring you some more, only stand still."

On the next evening the Goat came home from the field before the Cow, and spread his legs, and stood in front of the old woman. The old woman wanted to strike him with the towel, but he stood still, and did not stir. He remembered that the woman had promised the Cow some bread if she would stand still. When the woman saw that he would not budge, she picked up a stick, and beat him with it.

When the Goat went away, the woman began once more to feed the Cow with bread, and to talk to her.

" There is no honesty in men," thought the Goat. " I stood still better than the Cow, and was beaten for it."

He stepped aside, took a run, hit against the milk-pail, spilled the milk, and hurt the old woman.

THE FOX'S TAIL

A Man caught a Fox, and asked her :

" Who has taught you Foxes to cheat the dogs with your tails ? "

The Fox asked : " How do you mean, to cheat ? We do not cheat the dogs, but simply run from them as fast as we can."

The Man said :

" Yes, you do cheat them with your tails. When the dogs catch up with you and are about to clutch you, you turn your tails to one side; the dogs turn sharply after the tail, and then you run in the opposite direction."

The Fox laughed, and said :

" We do not do so in order to cheat the dogs, but in order to turn around; when a dog is after us, and we see that we cannot get away straight ahead, we turn to one side, and in order to do that suddenly, we have to swing the tail to the other side, just as you do with your arms, when you have to turn around. That is not our invention; God himself invented it when He created us, so that the dogs might not be able to catch all the Foxes."

The End

Fables Paraphrased From The Indian And Imitations, Leo Tolstoy

Fables Paraphrased From The Indian And Imitations

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1885

I

HEAD AND TAIL OF THE SERPENT

serpent's Tail was disputing with the serpent's Head as to which should go first.

The Head said :

"You cannot go first; you have no eyes or ears."

The Tail replied :

" But at all events I have the strength to make you go. If I wanted, I could twine around a tree, and you could not stir."

The Head said :

" Let us Part company."

And the Tail tore itself away from the Head, and crawled away in its own direction.

But as soon as it had left the Head, it came upon a cranny and fell into it.

II

FINE THREADS

A MAN bade a spinner spin fine threads. The spinner spun fine threads; but the man declared that the threads were not good, and that he wished the very finest of fine threads.

The spinner said :

“ If these are not fine enough for you, then here are some others that will suit you.”

And she pointed to a bare spot. The man declared that he could not see them.

The spinner replied :

“ The fact that you cannot see them proves that they are very fine; I can't see them myself.”

The fool was rejoiced, and ordered some more of the same thread, and paid down the money for it.

III

DIVISION OF THE INHERITANCE

A FATHER had two sons. He said to them :

“ I am dying; divide everything equally.”

When the father was dead, the sons could not make the division without quarreling.

They went to a neighbor to help them decide.

The neighbor asked them what their father had com-manded them to do.

They replied :

“ He commanded us to make equal shares of every-thing.”

Then said the neighbor :

“ Tear all the raiment in two; break all the utensils in two; cut all the live stock in two.”

The brothers took the neighbor's advice, and at the end neither had anything.

IV

MONKEY

A MAN went into the woods. He felled a tree, and began to cut it in pieces. He lifted the end of the tree on the stump, sat astride upon it, and began to saw. Then he drove a wedge into the cleft, and began to saw farther along; then he removed the wedge, and put it in the new place.

A monkey was sitting on a tree, watching him.

When the man lay down to sleep, the monkey got astride of the tree and began to saw; but when he took out the wedge, the tree closed together again, and nipped his tail.

He began to struggle and squeal.

The man awoke, knocked the monkey down, and tied him with a rope.

MONKEY AND THE PEAS

A MONKEY was carrying two handfuls of peas. One little pea dropped out. He tried to pick it up, and spilt twenty. He tried to pick up the twenty, and spilt them all. Then he lost his temper, scattered

the peas in all directions, and ran away.

VI

MILCH COW

A MAN had a Cow; every day she gave a pail of milk. The man invited some guests. In order to get more milk he did not milk the Cow for ten days.

He thought that on the tenth day the Cow would give him ten pails of milk.

But the Cow's milk had dried up, and she gave less milk than ever before.

VII

DUCK AND THE MOON

A DUCK was floating down the river; she had been hunting for a fish, and all day long she had not found one.

When night came, she saw the Moon in the water, and thought that it was a fish, and she dived down to catch the Moon.

The other ducks saw this, and began to make sport of her.

From that time forth the Duck began to be ashamed and lose courage, so that whenever she saw a fish under the water she would not seize it, and so she died of starvation.

VIII

WOLF IN THE DUST

A WOLF was anxious to steal a sheep from the flock, and went to the leeward, so that the dust from the flock might cover him. The Shepherd Dog saw him and said :

" It 's no use, Wolf, for you to go in the dust; it will spoil your eyes."

But the Wolf replied :

" It is very unfortunate, Doggy, 1 my eyes were spoiled long ago, but they say that the dust from a flock of sheep is an excellent remedy for the eyes."

IX

MOUSE UNDER THE GRANARY

A MOUSE lived under a granary. In the granary floor was a little hole and the grain slipped down through the hole. The Mouse's life was happy, but the desire came ov^er her to make a show of her life. She gnawed a larger hole, and invited other Mice.

" Come," said she, " and have a feast; there will be food enough for all."

But after she had brought the Mice, she discovered that there was no hole at all. The farmer had noticed .the big hole in the floor, and closed it up.

1 Sobachenka, diminutive of Sobaka.

X

VERY BEST PEAR

A GENTLEMAN sent his servant to buy the very best pears. The servant went to the shop, and asked for pears. The merchant gave them to him; but the servant said :
" No; give me your very best pears."
The merchant said :
" Taste one; you will find that they are delicious."
"How can I know," exclaimed the servant, that they are all delicious, if I taste only one ? "
So he bit a little out of each pear, and took them to his master. Then his master dismissed him.

XI

FALCON AND THE COCK

A FALCON became tame, and would fly to his master's hand whenever he called. The Cock was afraid of the master, and screamed when he came near him.

And the Falcon said to the Cock :

" You Cocks have no sense of gratitude ! What a race of slaves you are ! As soon as you are hungry, you go to your master. It is a very different thing with us wild birds; we are strong and we can fly faster than all others, and we are not afraid of men; but we go of our own accord and perch on their hands when they call us. We remember that they have given us food."

And the Cock said :

" You do not run away from men, because you never saw a Falcon roasted; but many a time have we seen Cocks roasted ! "

XII

JACKALS AND THE ELEPHANT

Jackals had eaten all the carrion in the forest, and there was nothing left for them to devour. Now there was an aged Jackal, and he devised a plan to get food. He went to the Elephant, and said :
" We used to have a tsar, but he became spoiled; he would lay such tasks on us that it was impossible to do them; we wish to elect another tsar; and my people have sent me to beg you to become our tsar. We live well; whatever you wish, that we will do, and we will honor you in all respects. Come, let us go to our empire."

The Elephant consented, and followed the Jackal. The Jackal led him into a bog. When the Elephant began to sink, the Jackal said :

" Now order whatever you desire, and we will do it."

The Elephant said :

" I command you to pull me out of here."

The Jackal laughed, and said :

“ Seize my tail with your proboscis, and I will instantly pull you out”

The Elephant replied :

“ Can you pull me out with your tail ? ”

But the Jackal demanded :

“ Why, then, did you order anything that was impos-sible to do ? We drove away our first tsar for the very reason that he laid impossible commands on us ! ”

When the Elephant had perished in the swamp, the Jackals came and ate him up.

XIII

HERON, THE FISHES, AND THE CRAB

A HERON lived by a pond, and was beginning to grow old. She was no longer strong enough to catch fish. So she began to plan how she might contrive to get a living. And she said to the Fishes :

“ Fishes, you have not the least idea what a misfortune is threatening you. I have heard some men say that they are going to drain the pond, and catch all of you. I happen to know that beyond this mountain is a nice little pond. I would help you to get there; but I am now in years; it is hard for me to fly.”

The Fishes began to beseech the Heron to help them.

The Heron replied :

“ I will do my best for you, I will carry you over; but I cannot do it all at once, only one at a time.”

And so the Fishes were delighted; they all said :

“ Carry rne ! carry me ! ”

And the Heron began to carry them; she would take up one at a time, carry him off to a field, and feast on him. In this way she ate up many fishes.

Now there lived in the pond an aged Crab. When the Heron began to carry off the Fishes, he suspected the true state of affairs; and he said :

“ Well, now, Heron, take me also to your new settle-ment.”

The Heron seized the Crab, and flew off with him. As soon as she reached the field, she was going to drop the Crab. But the Crab, seeing the bones of the Fishes on the field, clasped his claws around the Heron's neck, and strangled her; and then he crawled back to the pond and told the Fishes.

XIV

WATER-SPRITE AND THE PEARL

A MAN was sailing in a boat, and dropped a precious pearl into the sea. The man returned to land, and took a pail, and began to scoop up the water and pour it on the shore.

For three days unweariedly he scooped and poured.

On the fourth day a Water-sprite came up out of the water, and

asked :

“ Why art thou scooping ? ”

The man replied :

“ I am scooping because I have lost a pearl.”

The Water-sprite asked :

“ Are you going to stop before long ? ”

The man replied :

“When I have scooped the sea dry, then I shall stop.”

Then the Water-sprite returned into the depths, and brought up the very same pearl, and gave it to the man.

XV

BLIND MAN AND THE MILK

ONE blind from birth asked a man who could see :

“What color is milk?”

The man who could see replied :

“ The color of milk is like white paper.”

The blind man asked :

“ This color, then, rustles in the hands like paper ? ”

The man who could see replied :

“ No; it is white, like white flour.”

The blind man asked :

“ Then it is soft and friable like flour, is it ? ”

The man who could see replied :

“ No; it is simply white, like a rabbit.”

The blind man asked :

“ Then it is downy and soft like a rabbit, is it? ”

The man who could see replied :

“ No; white is a color exactly like snow.”

The blind man asked :

“ Then it is cold like snow, is it ? ”

And in spite of all the comparisons which the man who could see made, still the blind man was wholly un-able to comprehend what the color of milk really was.

XVI

WOLF AND THE BOW

A HUNTSMAN with his bow and arrows went out to hunt; he killed a goat, flung it over his shoulders, and was carrying it home.

On the way he saw a wild boar.

The Huntsman dropped the goat, shot the boar, and wounded him.

The boar rushed upon the Huntsman, gored him to death with his tusks, and then himself died.

A Wolf smelled the blood, and came to the place where were lying the goat, the boar, the man and his bow.

The Wolf was overjoyed, and said to himself, “ Now I shall have enough to eat for a long time; but I am not going to eat it all up at once; I will eat a little at a time, so that none of it may be wasted. First I will eat the hardest Part, and then I will feast on

the softest and daintiest."

The Wolf sniffed the goat, the boar, and the man, and he said :
" This food is soft, I will eat this afterward; but first of all I will eat the tendon on this bow."

And he began to gnaw at the tendon on the bow. When he had bitten through the bowstring, the bow sprang and hit the Wolf in the belly. And the Wolf also perished, and the other wolves came and ate up the man, and the goat, and the boar, and the Wolf.

XVII

BIRDS IN THE SNARE

A HUNTSMAN set a snare by a lake. Many birds were caught in it. The birds were large; they seized the snare, and flew off with it. The Huntsman began to run after the birds. A peasant saw him running after them, and he said : " Where are you going? Can you catch birds on foot ? "

The Huntsman replied:

" If there were only one bird, I should not catch him; but as it is, I shall bag my game."

And so it proved.

When evening came, the birds each tried to fly off in his own direction; one to the forest, another to the swamp, a third to the field, and all fell with the net to the ground, and the Huntsman captured them.

XVIII

TSAR AND THE FALCON

A TSAR, while out hunting, unleashed his favorite Falcon at a hare, and galloped after it.

The Falcon caught the hare. The Tsar took away the hare, and started to seek for some water to quench his thirst. The Tsar found the water on a hillside. But it trickled out, a drop at a time. So the Tsar drew his cup from the holster, and placed it under the water. The water trickled into the cup, and when the cup was full, the Tsar put it to his mouth, and was about to drink. Suddenly the Falcon fluttered down upon the Tsar's hand, flapped his wings, and spilled the water.

Again the Tsar placed the cup under the spring. He waited long, until it was filled brimming full, and again, when he lifted it to his lips, the Falcon flew upon his wrist and spilled the water.

When for the third time the Tsar managed to get his cup filled, and was lifting it to his lips, the Falcon again spilled it. The Tsar grew wroth, and struck the Falcon with all his might with a stone, and killed him.

Then came the Tsar's servants, and one of them ran up to the spring in order to find a more plentiful supply of water and come back quickly with a full cup.

But the servant brought no water back; he returned with an empty

cup, and said :

“ The water is not fit to drink; there is a serpent in the spring, and it has poisoned all the water. It is a good thing that the Falcon spilt it. If you had drunk of the water, you would have perished.

The Tsar said :

“ Folly have I recompensed the Falcon; he saved my life, and I killed him for it.”

XIX

TSAR AND THE ELEPHANTS

AN Indian Tsar commanded to gather together all the blind men, and when they were collected, he commanded to show them his Elephants. The blind men went to the stables, and began to feel of the Elephants.

One felt of the leg; another, of the tail; a third, of the rump; a fourth, of the belly; a fifth, of the back; a sixth, of the ears; a seventh, of the tusks; an eighth, of the proboscis.

Then the Tsar called the blind men to him, and asked them :

“ What are my Elephants like ? ”

And one blind man said :

“Thy Elephants are like pillars.”

This blind man had felt of the legs.

The second blind man said :

“They are like brooms.”

This one had felt of the tail.

The third said :

“ They are like wood.”

This one had felt of the rump.

The one who had felt of the belly said :

“ Elephants are like lumps of earth.”

The one who had felt of the side said :

“ They are a wall.”

The one who had felt of the back said :

“ They are like a hill.”

The one who had felt of the ears said :

“They are like a handkerchief.”

The one who had felt of the head said :

“ They are like a mortar.”

The one who had felt of the tusks said :

“They are like horns.”

The one who had felt of the proboscis said :-

“ They are like a stout rope.”

And all the blind men began to dispute and quarrel.

XX

WHY THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD

A HERMIT lived in the forest, and the animals were not afraid of him. He and the wild animals used to talk together, and they understood one another.

Once the Hermit lay down under a tree, and a Raven, a Dove, a Stag, and a Snake came to the same place to sleep. The animals began to reason why evil should exist in the world.

The Raven said :

"It is all owing to hunger that there is evil in the world. When we have as much as we wish to eat, we sit by ourselves on the bough and caw, and everything is good and gay, and we are in every respect well off; but some other day we are famished, and everything is quite the opposite, so that we can see no brightness in God's world, and we feel full of unrest; we fly about from place to place, and there is no rest for us. And even if we see some meat afar off, then it becomes still worse; for if we fly down to get it, either sticks and stones are thrown at us, or wolves and dogs chase us, and we are absolutely destroyed. How much trouble comes upon us from hunger ! All evil is caused by it."

The Dove said :

" In my opinion, evil does not arise from hunger, but it all comes from love. If we only lived alone, we should have little trouble. Wretchedness shared makes one doubly wretched. And so we always live in pairs. And if we love our mates there is no peace for us at all. We are always thinking, * Has she had enough to eat ? is she warm ? ' And when our mate is away from us anywhere, then we are wholly lost; we cannot help worrying all the time, ' If only the hawk does not carry her off, or men make way with her; ' and we ourselves fly off in pursuit of her, and perhaps find the poor thing either in the hawk's claws or in the snare. And if our mate is lost, then there is no more comfort for us. We cannot eat, we cannot drink; we can only fly about and mourn. How many of us have perished in this way ! No; evil comes not from hunger, but from love."

The Snake said :

" No; evil arises neither from hunger nor from love, but from ill-temper. If we lived peacefully, we should not do so much harm; everything would be delightful for us. But now if anything is done to us, we fall into a rage, and then there is nothing gentle about us; we only think how we can avenge the wrong on some one. We lose control of ourselves and hiss, and try to bite some one. We would not have pity on any one, we would bite our own father and mother ! It seems as if we could eat our own selves. The moment we begin to lose our temper we are undone. All the evil in the world arises from ill-temper."

The Stag said :

" No; not from ill-temper, and not from love, and not from hunger arises all the evil that is in the world, but evil arises from fear. If it were possible for us to live without fear, all would be well with us. We are swift-footed, and have great strength. With our antlers we can defend ourselves from little animals; and we can run from the large ones. But it is impossible to escape fear. If it is only the twigs creaking in the forest, or the leaves rustling, we are all of a tremble with fear, our heart beats, we instinctively start to run, and fly with all our might. Another' time a hare runs

by or a bird flutters, or a dry twig crackles, and we think it is a wild beast, and in running away we really run into danger. And again we are running from a dog, and we come upon a man. Oftentimes we are frightened and start to flee, we don't know whither, and we roll over a precipice and perish. And we have to sleep with one eye open, with one ear alert, and we are always in alarm. There is no peace. All evil comes from fear."

Then the Hermit said:

" Not from hunger, nor from love, nor from ill-temper, nor from fear come all our troubles; but all the evil that is in the world is due to our different natures. Hence come hunger and love, ill-temper and fear."

XXI

WOLF AND THE HUNTSMEN

A WOLF was eating up a sheep. The Huntsmen discovered him, and began to beat him.

The Wolf said:

" It is not right for you to beat me. It is not my fault that I am a wild beast; God made me so."

But the Huntsmen replied :

" We do not beat wolves because they are wild beasts, but because they eat the sheep."

XXII

TWO PEASANTS

ONCE upon a time two peasants attempted to pass each other, and their sledges became entangled. One cried :

" Give me room; I must get to town as quickly as possible; " and the other said :-

" You give me room; I must get home as quickly as possible."

Thus for a long time they disputed. A third peasant saw it, and said :

" If you are in such a hurry, then each of you give way a little." l

XXIII

PEASANT AND THE HORSE

A PEASANT went to town to get oats for his Horse. As soon as he got out of the village, the Horse wanted to return home. The Peasant lashed the Horse with his whip.

The horse started up, but in regard to the Peasant it thought :

" The fool ! Where is he driving me ? We should be better off at home."

Before they reached the city the Peasant noticed that the mud made the going hard for the Horse, so he turned him upon the wood-block pavement; but the Horse re-fused to go upon the pavement.

The Peasant lashed the Horse again, and twitched at the reins. The animal turned off upon the pavement, and said to himself :
“ Why did he turn me off upon the pavement; it only breaks my hoofs. It is hard here under my feet.”

The Peasant drove up to the shop, bought his oats, and went home. When he reached home he gave the Horse the oats. The Horse began to eat, and said to himself :

“What stupid things men are! They only love to show their mastery over us, but their intelligence is less than ours. Why did he take so much trouble to-day ? Where did he go and drive me ? We had no sooner got there than we returned home. It would have been better for both of us if we had stayed at home in the first place. He would have sat on the oven, I and I should have been eating oats.”

XXIV

TWO HORSES

Two Horses were carrying two loads. The front Horse went well, but the rear Horse was lazy. The men began to pile the rear Horse's load on the front Horse; when they had transferred it all, the rear Horse found it easy going, and he said to the front Horse :-

“ Toil and sweat ! The more you try, the more you have to suffer.”

When they reached the tavern, the owner said :

“ Why should I fodder two horses when I carry all on one ? I had better give the one all the food it wants, and cut the throat of the other; at least I shall have the hide.”

And so he did.

XXV

AX AND THE SAW

Two peasants were going to the forest after wood. One had an ax and the other had a saw. After they had selected a tree they began to dispute.

One said it was better to chop down the tree, and the other said it ought to be sawed.

A third peasant said :

“ I will settle the question for you in a moment : if the ax is sharp, then it is better to chop; but if the saw is sharper, then it is better to saw.”

He took the ax and began to chop the tree. But the ax was dull, so that it was impossible for him to cut.

1 In Russian huts the oven is made of earth; and, as it is never very hot, the peasants use it for a bed and lounge.

He took the saw; the saw was wretched, and would not cut at all.

Then he said :

“ Don't be in haste to quarrel; the ax does not chop, and the saw does not cut. Sharpen your ax and file your saw, and then quarrel as much as you wish.”

The two peasants, however, became even more angry with each other than before, because the one had a blunted ax, the other had an ill-set saw; and they fell to blows.

XXVI

DOGS AND THE COOK

A COOK was preparing dinner; some dogs were lying at the kitchen door. The cook killed a calf, and threw the insides into the yard. The dogs seized them, ate them up, and said : " The cook is good; he knows how to cook well." After a little while the cook began to clean tur-nips and onions, and he threw away the outsides. The dogs ran up to them, turned up their noses, and said :

" Our cook is spoiled; he used to make good things, but now he is worthless."

But the cook did not hear the dogs, and cooked the dinner in his usual way. The people of the house, however, ate up the dinner and praised it, if the dogs did not.

XXVII

HARE AND THE HOUND

A HARE once asked a Hound :

" Why do you bark when you chase us ? You would be much more likely to catch us, if you ran without barking. But when you bark, you only drive us into the huntsman's hands; he hears where we are running, and he hastens up, shoots us with his gun, kills us, and does not give you anything."

The Dog replied :

" That is not the reason that I bark; I bark simply because I get scent of you; I become excited, or else glad because I am going to catch you immediately; and I myself know not why, but I cannot help barking."

XXVIII

OAK AND THE HAZEL BUSH

AN ancient Oak let drop an acorn on a Hazel Bush. The Hazel Bush said to the Oak :

" Have you, then, so little room under your branches? You might drop your acorns on a clear space. Here I myself have scarcely room for my branches; I don't throw my nuts away, though, but I give them to men."

"I live two hundred years," replied the Oak; "and the little oak that will come up from the acorn will live as many more."

Then the Hazel Bush grew angry, and said :

" Then I will choke off your little oak, and it will not live three days."

The Oak made no reply to this, but told his little son to come forth from the acorn.

The acorn grew moist, burst open, and the rootlet caught hold of the earth with its little hooks, and another sprout was sent up above.

The Hazel Bush tried to choke it, and would not give it the sun. But the little Oak stretched up into the air, and waxed strong in the

Hazel Bush's shadow.

A hundred years passed away. The Hazel Bush had long ago died away; and the Oak had grown from the acorn as high as heaven, and spread its tent on every side.

XXIX

SETTING HEN AND THE CHICKENS

A BROOD HEN hatched out some Chickens, and did not know how to take care of them. And so she said to them :

" Creep into the shell again; when you are in the shell, I will sit on you, as I used to sit on you, and I will take care of you."

The Chickens obeyed their mother, tried to creep into the shell; but they found it perfectly impossible to get into it again, and they only broke their wings.

Then one of the Chickens said to his mother :

" If we were to remain always in the shell, it would have been better if you had not let us out of it."

XXX

QUAIL AND HIS MATE

A QUAIL had been late in building his nest in a meadow; and when haying-time came, his Mate was still sitting on her eggs.

Early in the morning the peasants came to the meadow, took off their kaftans, whetted their scythes, and went, one after the other, cutting the grass and lay-ing it in windrows.

The Quail flew up to see what the mowers were doing. When he saw that one peasant was swinging his scythe and had just cut a snake in two, he was rejoiced, flew back to his Mate, and said :

" Don't be afraid of the peasants; they have come out to kill our snakes; for a long time there has been no living on account of them."

But his Mate said :

" The peasants are cutting grass; and with the grass they cut everything that comes in their way, either a snake or a quail's nest. I am sick at heart, for I can-not either carry away my eggs, or leave my nest lest they get cold." '

When the mowers reached the quail's nest, one peas-ant swung his scythe and cut off the mother-bird's head; but he put the eggs in his pocket, and gave them to his children to play with.

XXXI

COW AND THE GOAT

AN old woman had a Cow and a Goat. The Cow and the Goat went to pasture together. The Cow always turned around when they came after her. The old woman brought bread and salt, gave it to the Cow, and said :

" Now stand still, little mother, I na, na, I will bring you some more; only stand still."

On the next evening the Goat returned from the pasture before the Cow, spread his legs, and stood before the old woman. The old woman waved her handkerchief at him, but the Goat stood without moving. He thought that the old woman gave bread to the Cow because she stood still.

The old woman perceived that the Goat did not move away; she took her stick and beat him.

When the Goat went away, the old woman began to feed the Cow again with grain, and to coax her.

"There is no justice in men," thought the Goat; "I stood stiller than the Cow does, but she beat me."

He ran to one side, hurried back, kicked over the milk-pail, spilled the milk, and knocked over the old woman.

1 Matushka.

XXXII

FOX'S BRUSH

A MAN met a Fox, and asked her :

" Who taught you Foxes to deceive dogs with your tails?"

The Fox asked :

" How do you mean deceive ? We do not deceive the dogs, but merely run from them with all our might."

The man said :

" No; you deceive them with your brushes. When the dogs chase you, and are about to seize you, you throw your brushes to one side; the dog makes a sharp turn after it, and then you dash off in another direction."

The Fox laughed, and said :

" We do this, not to deceive the dogs, but we only do it so as to dodge; when the dogs chase us, and we see that we cannot run straight, we dodge to one side; and in order that we may dodge to that side, we have to fling our brushes to the other, just as you do the same thing with your hands when you try to turn round when you are running. This is not reason on our Part. God Him-self thought it out when He made us for this reason, that the dogs might not catch all the foxes."

The End