

# ÆSOP'S FABLES

ILLUSTRATED BY

*ERNEST GRISET.*

WITH TEXT BASED CHIEFLY UPON

CROXALL, LA FONTAINE, AND L'ESTRANGE.

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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“ 'Twas the Golden Age, when every brute  
Had voice articulate, in speech was skilled,  
And the mid-forests with its synods filled.  
The tongues of rock and pine-leaf then were free ;  
To ship and sailor then would speak the sea ;  
Sparrows with farmers would shrewd talk maintain ;  
Earth gave all fruits, nor asked for toil again.  
Mortals and gods were wont to mix as friends.  
To which conclusion all the teaching tends  
Of sage old Æsop.”

BABRIUS. *Proem I.*

It is probable that Fables which have passed current under the name of Æsop for two thousand years, will continue to bear his name as long as fables shall retain their power to instruct and charm—in other words, as long as men remain in need of instruction and reproof, and are impatient of their reception. Truth, however, calls for the assertion, that the connection of Æsop with the collection known by his name is very slight. Nearly all that can be said with certainty is, “that there is abundant proof that fables passing under the name of Æsop were current and popular in Athens during the most brilliant period of its literary history, and not much more than a century after the death of the supposed author.” We are further told, on good authority, that of Æsop's works, “none are extant, and of his life scarcely anything is known.”

What is known of the life of Æsop is briefly this:—He was







disfigured by unnecessary licence of expression, and now obsolete idiom. The second contains much quaint humour, but the Fables are of unequal merit, and at times are lengthy and somewhat wearisome.

In revising these editions to suit modern tastes and current modes of expression, no principle has been followed save that of trying to exhibit each Fable in its liveliest and most attractive dress. To this end, in some cases, almost the exact words of Croxall and L'Estrange are given; in others, the versions of these authors have been added to, altered, or curtailed; while in not a few the dress is almost, if not altogether, new.

J. B. R.







## THE FOX AND THE APE.

UPON the decease of the Lion, the beasts of the forest assembled to choose another king. The Ape played so many grimaces, gambols, and antic tricks, that he was elected by a large majority, and the crown was placed upon his head. The Fox, envious of this distinction, seeing soon after a trap baited with a piece of meat, approached the new king, and said with mock humility, "May it please your majesty, I have found on your domain a treasure to which, if you will deign to accompany me, I will conduct you." The Ape thereupon set off with the Fox, and on arriving at the spot, laid his paw upon the meat. Snap! went the trap, and caught him by the fingers. Mad



with the shame and the pain, he reproached the Fox for a false thief and a traitor. Reynard laughed heartily, and going off, said over his shoulder, with a sneer, "You a king, and not understand a trap!"

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### THE POWER OF FABLES.

DEMADES, a famous Greek orator, was once addressing an assembly at Athens on a subject of great importance, and in vain tried to fix the attention of his hearers. They laughed among themselves, watched the sports of the children, and in twenty other ways showed their want of concern in the subject of the discourse. Demades, after a short pause, spoke as follows: "Ceres one day journeyed in company with a Swallow and an Eel." At this there was marked attention, and every ear strained now to catch the words of the orator. "The party came to a river," continued he. "The Eel swam across, and the Swallow flew over." He then resumed the subject of his harangue. A great cry, however, arose from the people. "And Ceres? and Ceres?" cried they. "What did Ceres do?" "Why, the goddess was, and indeed she is now," replied he, "mightily offended that people should have their ears open to any sort of foolery, and shut to words of truth and wisdom."



