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Poems

Poems and fables

Gay, John

Edinburgh, 1773

Fable XXXIV

[urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-263877](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-263877)

Not to be bound by any ties,
And never forc'd to leave his lies.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The MASTIFFS.

THose who in quarrels interpose,
Must often wipe a bloody nose.

A Mastiff, of true English blood,
Lov'd fighting better than his food.
When dogs were snarling for a bone,
He long'd to make the war his own,
And often found (when two contend)
To interpose obtain'd his end;
He glory'd in his limping pace;
The scars of honour seam'd his face;
In ev'ry limb a gash appears,
And frequent fights retrench'd his ears.

As, on a time, he heard from far
Two dogs engag'd in noisy war,
Away he scours, and lays about him,
Resolv'd no fray should be without him.

Forth from his yard a tanner flies,
And to the bold intruder cries,

A cudgel shall correct your manners.
Whence sprung this cursed hate to tanners?

While on my dog you vent your spite,
 Sirrah ! 'tis me, you dare not bite.
 To see the battle thus perplex'd,
 With equal rage a butcher vex'd,
 Hoarse-screaming from the circled crowd,
 To the curs'd Mastiff cries aloud.

Both Hockley-hole and Mary-bone
 The combats of my dog have known.
 He ne'er, like bullies coward-hearted,
 Attacks in public, to be parted.
 Think not, rash fool, to share his fame;
 Be his the honour or the shame.

Thus said, they swore, and rav'd like thunder;
 Then dragg'd their fasten'd dogs afunder;
 While clubs and kicks from ev'ry side
 Rebounced from the Mastiff's hide.

All reeking now with sweat and blood,
 A while the parted warriors stood,
 Then pour'd upon the meddling foe;
 Who, worried, howl'd and sprawl'd below.
 He rose; and limping from the fray,
 By both sides mangled, sneak'd away.

F A B L E XXXV.

The BARLEY-MOW and the DUNGHILL.

HOW many saucy airs we meet
 From Temple-bar to Aldgate-street?