Poems

Poems and fables

Gay, John

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Fable XXV

F A B L E XXV.

The Scold *and the* Parrot.

THE husband thus reprov'd his wife.
 Who deals in slander, lives in strife.
Art thou the herald of disgrace,
Denouncing war to all thy race?
Can nothing quell thy thunder's rage,
Which spares nor friend, nor sex, nor age?
That vixen tongue of your's, my dear,
Alarms our neighbour far and near.
Good gods! 'tis like a rolling river,
That murm'ring flows, and flows for ever!
Ne'er tir'd, perpetual discord sowing!
Like fame, it gathers strength by going.
 Heighday! the flippant tongue replies,
How solemn is the fool! how wise!
Is nature's choicest gift debarr'd?
Nay, frown not; for I will be heard.
Women of late are finely ridden,
A parrot's privilege forbidden!
You praise his talk, his squaling song;
But wives are always in the wrong.
 Now reputations flew in pieces
Of mothers, daughters, aunts, and nieces;
She ran the parrot's language o'er,
Bawd, hussy, drunkard, slattern, whore;

On all the sex she vents her fury,
Tries and condemns without a jury.
     At once the torrent of her words
Alarm'd cat, monkey, dogs, and birds;
All join their forces to confound her.
Puss spits; the monkey chatters round her;
The yelping cur her heels assaults;
The magpye blabs out all her faults;
Poll, in the uproar, from his cage,
With this rebuke out-scream'd her rage.
     A parrot is for talking priz'd,
But prattling women are despis'd,
She who attacks another's honour,
Draws ev'ry living thing upon her.
Think, Madam, when you stretch your lungs,
That all your neighbours too have tongues:
One slander must ten thousand get,
The world with interest pays the debt.

F A B L E   XXVI.

The CUR and the MASTIFF.

A Sneaking cur, the master's spy,
     Rewarded for his daily lye,
With secret jealousies and fears
Set all together by the ears.