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## **Poems**

Poems and fables

**Gay, John**

**Edinburgh, 1773**

Fable XXII

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A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,  
 Thus spoke, and sav'd her sister's life.  
 In ev'ry age and clime we see,  
 Two of a trade can ne'er agree.  
 Each hates his neighbour for inroaching ;  
 'Squire stigmatizes 'squire for poaching ;  
 Beauties with beauties are in arms,  
 And scandal pelts each other's charms ;  
 Kings too their neighbour kings dethrone,  
 In hope to make the world their own.  
 But let us limit our desires ;  
 Not war like beauties, kings, and 'squires ;  
 For though we both one prey pursue,  
 There's game enough for us and you.

## F A B L E XXII.

*The GOAT without a Beard.*

**T**IS certain, that the modish passions  
 Descend among the croud, like fashions,  
 Excuse me then ; if pride, conceit,  
 (The manners of the fair and great),  
 I give to monkeys, asses, dogs,  
 Fleas, owls, goats, butterflies, and hogs.  
 I say, that these are proud. What then ?  
 I never said, they equal men.

A goat (as vain as goat can be)  
 Affected singularity.  
 Whene'er a thymy bank he found,  
 He roll'd upon the fragrant ground;  
 And then with fond attention stood  
 Fix'd, o'er his image in the flood.

I hate my frowzy beard, he cries;  
 My youth is lost in this disguise.  
 Did not the females know my vigour,  
 Well might they lothe this rev'rend figure.

Resolv'd to smooth his shaggy face,  
 He sought the barber of the place.  
 A sippant monkey, spruce and smart,  
 Hard by, profess'd the dapper art.  
 His pole with pewter basons hung,  
 Black rotten teeth in order strung;  
 Rang'd cups, that in the window stood,  
 Lin'd with red rags, to look like blood,  
 Did well his three-fold trade explain,  
 Who shav'd, drew teeth, and breath'd a vein.

The goat he welcomes with an air,  
 And seats him in his wooden chair:  
 Mouth, nose and cheek the lather hides:  
 Light, smooth and swift the razor glides.

I hope your custom, Sir, says pug.  
 Sure never face was half so snug!

The goat, impatient for applause,  
 Swift to the neighb'ring hill withdraws;  
 The shaggy people grinn'd and star'd.

Heighday! what's here? without a beard!  
 Say, brother, whence the dire disgrace?  
 What envious hand hath robb'd your face?

When thus the fop with smiles of scorn :  
 Are beards by civil nations worn ?  
 Ev'n Muscovites have mow'd their chins.  
 Shall we, like formal Capuchins,  
 Stubborn in pride, retain the mode,  
 And bear about the hairy load ?  
 Whene'er we through the village stray,  
 Are we not mock'd along the way ;  
 Insulted with loud shouts of scorn,  
 By boys our beards disgrac'd and torn ?  
 Were you no more with goats to dwell,  
 Brother, I grant you reason well,  
 Replies a bearded chief. Beside,  
 If boys can mortify thy pride,  
 How wilt thou stand the ridicule  
 Of our whole flock ? affected fool !  
 Coxcombs, distinguish'd from the rest,  
 To all but coxcombs are a jest.

## F A B L E XXIII.

*The OLD WOMAN and her CATS.*

**W**HO friendship with a knave hath made,  
 Is judg'd a partner in the trade.  
 The matron who conducts abroad  
 A willing nymph, is thought a bawd ;  
 And if a modest girl is seen  
 With one who cures a lover's spleen,