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Poems

Poems and fables

Gay, John

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Fable XX

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

He caught their manners, looks, and airs :

An ass in ev'ry thing, but ears!

If e'er his Highness meant a joke,

They grinn'd applause before he spoke :

But at each word what shouts of praise !

Good Gods! how natural he brays !

Elate with flatt'ry and conceit,

He seeks his royal sire's retreat :

Forward, and fond to show his parts,

His Highness brays ; the Lion starts.

Puppy, that curs'd vociferation

Betrays thy life and conversation :

Coxcombs, an ever-noisy race,

Are trumpets of their own disgrace.

Why so severe ? the Cub replies ;

Our senate always held me wise.

How weak is pride ! returns the sire ;

All fools are vain, when fools admire !

But know, what stupid asses prize,

Lions and noble beasts despise.

F A B L E XX.

The Old HEN and the Cock.

Restrain your child ; you'll soon believe
The text, which says, we sprung from Eve.

F 2

As an old Hen led forth her train,
 And seem'd to peck to shew the grain ;
 She rak'd the chaff, she scratch'd the ground,
 And glean'd the spacious yard around.
 A giddy chick, to try her wings,
 On the well's narrow margin springs,
 And prone she drops. The mother's breast
 All day with sorrow was possess'd.

A Cock she met ; her son she knew ;
 And in her heart affection grew.

My son, says she, I grant your years
 Have reach'd beyond a mother's cares.
 I see you vig'rous, strong, and bold ;
 I hear with joy your triumphs told.
 'Tis not from cocks thy fate I dread :
 But let thy ever-wary tread
 Avoid yon well ; that fatal place
 Is sure perdition to our race.
 Print this my counsel on thy breast ;
 To the just gods I leave the rest.

He thank'd her care : Yet day by day
 His bosom burn'd to disobey ;
 And every time the well he saw,
 Scorn'd in his heart the foolish law :
 Near and more near each day he drew,
 And long'd to try the dang'rous view.

Why was this idle charge ? he cries :
 Let courage female fears despise.
 Or did she doubt my heart was brave,
 And therefore this injunction gave ?
 Or does her harvest store the place,
 A treasure for her younger race ?

And would she thus my search prevent?

I stand resolv'd, and dare th' event.

Thus said. He mounts the margin's round,

And pries into the depth profound.

He stretch'd his neck; and from below

With stretching neck advanc'd a foe:

With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,

The foe with ruffled plumes appears:

Threat answer'd threat, his fury grew

Headlong to meet the war he flew.

But when the watry death he found,

He thus lamented, as he drown'd.

I ne'er had been in this condition,

But for my mother's prohibition.

F A B L E XXI.

The RAT-CATCHER and CATS.

THE rats by night such mischief did,

Betty was ev'ry morning chid.

They undermin'd whole sides of bacon,

Her cheefe was sapp'd, her tarts were taken;

Her pasties, fenc'd with thickest paste,

Were all demolish'd, and laid waste.

She curs'd the cat for want of duty,

Who left her foes a constant booty.