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Poems

Poems and fables

Gay, John

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Fable XIV

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Examines ev'ry fift for meat,
 And though repuls'd, disdains retreat;
 Attacks again with levell'd horns;
 And man, that was his terror, scorns.

Such is the country maiden's fright,
 When first a red-coat is in fight;
 Behind the door she hides her face;
 Next time at distance eyes the lace.
 She now can all his terrors stand,
 Nor from his squeeze withdraws her hand.
 She plays familiar in his arms,
 And every foldier hath his charms.
 From tent to tent she spreads her flame;
 For custom conquers fear and shame.

F A B L E XIV.

The MONKEY who had seen the world.

A Monkey, to reform the times,
 Resolv'd to visit foreign climes!
 For men in distant regions roam
 To bring politer manners home.
 So forth he fares, all toil defies:
 Misfortune serves to make us wise.

At length the treach'rous snare was laid;
 Poor Pug was caught, to town convey'd,
 There sold. (How envy'd was his doom,
 Made captive in a lady's room!)

Proud as a lover of his chains,
 He day by day her favour gains,
 Whene'er the duty of the day,
 The toilette calls ; with mimic play
 He twirls her knots, he cracks her fan,
 Like any other Gentleman.
 In visits too his parts and wit,
 When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.
 Proud with applause, he thought his mind
 In ev'ry courtly art refin'd ;
 Like Orpheus burnt with public zeal,
 To civilize the monkey weal :
 So watch'd occasion, broke his chain,
 And sought his native woods again.

The hairy sylvans round him press,
 Astonish'd at his strut and dress.
 Some praise his sleeve ; and others glote
 Upon his rich embroider'd coat ;
 His dapper periwig commending,
 With the black tail behind depending ;
 His powder'd back, above, below,
 Like hoary frosts, or fleecy snow ;
 But all, with envy and desire,
 His flutt'ring shoulder-knot admire.

Hear and improve, he pertly cries ;
 I come to make a nation wise.
 Weigh your own worth ; support your place,
 The next in rank to human race.
 In cities long I pass'd my days,
 Convers'd with men, and learn'd their ways.
 Their dress, their courtly manners see ;
 Reform your state, and copy me.

Seek ye to thrive? In flatt'ry deal ;
 Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.
 Seem only to regard your friends,
 But use them for your private ends.
 Stint not to truth the flow of wit ;
 Be prompt to lie whene'er 'tis fit.
 Bend all your force to spatter merit ;
 Scandal is conversation's spirit.
 Boldly to every thing pretend,
 And men your talents shall commend.
 I knew the great. Observe me right ;
 So shall you grow like man polite.

He spoke, and bow'd. With mutt'ring jaws
 The wond'ring circle grinn'd applause.

Now, warm with malice, envy, spite,
 Their most obliging friends they bite ;
 And fond to copy human ways,
 Practise new mischiefs all their days.

Thus the dull lad, too tall for school,
 With travel finishes the fool ;
 Studious of ev'ry coxcomb's airs,
 He drinks, games, dresses, whores, and swears ;
 O'erlooks with scorn all virtuous arts,
 For vice is fitted to his parts.