

AESOPUS EMENDATUS

by

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JUPITER AND THE BABY SHOW

Jupiter held a baby show, open to all animals, and a Monkey entered her hideous cub for a prize, but Jupiter only laughed at her.

“It is all very well,” said the Monkey, “to laugh at my offspring, but you go into any gallery of antique sculpture and look at the statues and busts of the fellows that you begot yourself.”

“Sh! don’t expose me,” said Jupiter, and awarded her the first prize.

MERCURY AND THE WOODCHOPPER

A Woodchopper who had dropped his ax into a deep pool besought Mercury to recover it for him. That thoughtless deity immediately plunged into the pool, which became so salivated that the trees about its margin all came loose and dropped out.

THE PENITENT THIEF

A Boy who had been taught by his Mother to steal grew to be a man and was a professional public official. One day he was taken in the act and condemned to die. While going to the place of execution he passed his Mother and said to her:

“Behold your work! If you had not taught me to steal I should not have come to this.”

“Indeed!” said the Mother. “And who, pray, taught you to be detected?”

FOX AND GRAPES

A Fox, seeing some sour grapes hanging within an inch of his nose, and being unwilling to admit that there was anything he would not eat, solemnly declared that they; were out of his reach.

FARMER AND FOX

A Farmer who had a deadly hatred against a certain Fox caught him and tied some tow to his tail; then carrying him to the center of his own grain-field, he set the tow on fire and let the animal go.

“Alas!” said the Farmer, seeing the result; “if that grain had not been heavily insured I might have had to dissemble my hatred of the Fox.”

ARCHER AND EAGLE

An Eagle mortally wounded by an Archer was greatly comforted to observe that the arrow was feathered with one of his own quills.

“I should have felt bad, indeed,” he said, “to think that any other eagle had a hand in this.”

TRUTH AND THE TRAVELER

A Man traveling in a desert met a Woman.

“Who art thou?” asked the Man, “and why dost thou dwell in this dreadful place?”

“My name,” replied the Woman, “is Truth; and I live in the desert in order to be near my worshipers when they are driven from among their fellows. They all come, sooner or later.”

“Well,” said the Man looking about, “the country doesn’t seem to be very thickly settled hereabout.”

WOLF AND LAMB

A Lamb, pursued by a Wolf, fled into the temple.

“The priest will catch you and sacrifice you,” said the Wolf, “if you remain there.”

“It is just as well to be sacrificed by the priest as to be eaten by you,” said the Lamb.

“My friend,” said the Wolf, “it pains me to see you considering so great a question from a purely selfish point of view. It is not just as well for me.”

GRASSHOPPER AND ANT

One day in winter a hungry Grasshopper applied to an Ant for some of the food which the ants had stored.

“Why,” said the Ant, “did you not store up some food for yourself, instead of singing all the time?”

“So I did,” said the Grasshopper; “so I did; but you fellows broke in and carried it all away.”

GOOSE AND SWAN

A certain rich man reared a Goose and a Swan, the one for his table, the other because she was reputed a good singer. One night when the Cook went to kill the Goose he got hold of the Swan instead. Thereupon the Swan, to induce him to spare her life, began to sing; but she saved him nothing but the trouble of killing her, for she died of the song.

FISHER AND FISHED

A Fisherman who had caught a very small Fish was putting it into his basket when it said:

“I pray you put me back into the stream, for I can be of no use to you; the gods do not eat fish.”

“I am no god,” said the Fisherman.

“True,” said the Fish, “but as soon as Jupiter has heard of your exploit he will elevate you to the deitage. You are the only man that ever caught a small fish.”

WOLVES AND DOGS

“Why should there be strife between us?” said the Wolves to the Sheep. “It is all owing to those meddlesome dogs. Dismiss them, and we shall have peace.”

“You seem,” replied the Sheep, “to think it an easy thing to dismiss dogs.”

DAME FORTUNE AND THE TRAVELER

A weary Traveler who had lain down and fallen asleep on the brink of a deep well was discovered by Dame Fortune.

“If this fool,” she said, “should have an uneasy dream and roll into the well men would say that I did it. It is painful to me to be unjustly accused, and I shall see that I am not.”

So saying she rolled the man into the well.

WOLF AND SHEPHERDS

A Wolf passing a Shepherd's hut looked in and saw the shepherds dining.

"Come in," said one of them ironically, "and partake of your favorite dish, a leg of mutton."

"Thank you," said the Wolf moving away, "but you must excuse me; I have just had a saddle of shepherd."

LION, COCK AND ASS

A Lion was about to attack a braying Ass, when a Cock near by crowed shrilly and the Lion ran away. "What frightened him?" the Ass asked.

"Lions have a superstitious terror of my voice," answered the Cock, proudly.

"Well, well, well," said the Ass, shaking his head; "I should think that any animal that is afraid of your voice and doesn't mind mine must have an uncommon kind of ear."

SNAKE AND SWALLOW

A Swallow who had built her nest in a court of justice reared a fine family of young birds. One day a Snake came out of a chink in the wall and was about to eat them. The Just Judge at once issued an injunction, and making an order for their removal to his own house, ate them himself.

VICTOR AND VICTIM

Two Game Cocks having fought a battle, the defeated one skulked away and hid, but the victor mounted a wall and crowed lustily. This attracted the attention of a Hawk, who said:

"Behold! how pride goeth before a fall."

So he swooped down upon the boasting bird and was about to destroy him, when the vanquished Cock came out of his hiding-place and between the two the Hawk was calamitously defeated.

HEN AND VIPERS

A Hen who had patiently hatched out a brood of vipers was

accosted by a Swallow, who said: "What a fool you are to give life to creatures that will reward you by destroying you."

"I am a little bit destructive myself," said the Hen, tranquilly swallowing one of the little reptiles; "and it is not an act of folly to provide oneself with the delicacies of the season."

SPENDTHRIFT AND SWALLOW

A Spendthrift, seeing a single swallow, pawned his cloak, thinking that Summer was at hand. It was.

LION AND THORN

A Lion roaming through the forest got a thorn in his foot and meeting a Shepherd asked him to remove it. The Shepherd did so and the Lion, having just surfeited himself on another shepherd, went away without harming him. Some time afterward the Shepherd was condemned on a false accusation to be cast to the lions in the amphitheatre. When they were about to devour him one of them said: "This is the man who removed the thorn from my foot."

Hearing this, the others honorably abstained, and the claimant ate the Shepherd all by himself.

FAWN AND BUCK

A Fawn said to its father: "You are larger, stronger and more active than a dog, and you have sharp horns. Why do you run away when you hear one barking?"

"Because, my child," replied the Buck, "my temper is so uncertain that if I permit one of those noisy creatures to come into my presence I am likely to forget myself and do him an injury."

KITE, PIGEONS AND HAWK

Some Pigeons exposed to the attacks of a Kite asked a Hawk to defend them. He consented, and being admitted into the cote waited for the Kite, whom he fell upon and devoured. When he was so surfeited that he could scarcely move the grateful Pigeons scratched out his eyes.

WOLF AND BABE

A Famishing Wolf passing the door of a cottage in the forest heard a Mother say to her Babe:

“Be quiet, or I will throw you out of the window and the wolves will get you.”

So he waited all day below the window, growing more hungry all the time. But at night the Old Man, having returned from the village club, threw out both Child and Mother.

WOLF AND OSTRICH

A Wolf who in devouring a man had choked himself with a bunch of keys asked an ostrich to put her head down his throat and pull them out, which she did.

“I suppose,” said the Wolf, “you expect payment for that service.”

“A kind act,” replied the Ostrich, “is its own reward; I have eaten the keys.”

HERDSMAN AND LION

A Herdsman who had lost a bullock entreated the gods to bring him the thief and vowed he would sacrifice a goat to them. Just then a Lion, his jaws dripping with bullock’s blood, approached the Herdsman.

“I thank you, good deities,” said the Herdsman resuming his prayer, “for showing me the thief. And now if you will take him away I will stand another goat.”

WAR-HORSE AND MILLER

Having heard that the State was about to be invaded by a hostile army, a War-horse belonging to a Colonel of the Militia offered his services to a passing Miller.

“No,” said the patriotic Miller, “I will employ no one who deserts his position in the hour of danger. It is sweet to die for one’s country.”

Something in the sentiment sounded familiar and looking at the Miller more closely the War-horse recognized his master in disguise.

MAN AND FISH-HORN

A Truthful Man finding a musical instrument in the road, asked the name of it and was told that it was a fish-horn. The next time he went fishing he set his nets and blew the fish-horn all day to charm the fish into them, but at nightfall there was not only no fish in his nets, but none along that part of the coast. Meeting a friend while on his way home he was asked what luck he had had.

“Well,” said the Truthful Man, “the weather is not right for fishing, but it’s a red-letter day for music.”

HERCULES AND THE CARTER

A Carter was driving a wagon loaded with a merchant’s goods, when the wheels stuck in a rut. Thereupon he began to pray to Hercules, without other exertion.

“Indolent fellow!” said Hercules; “you ask me to help you, but will not help yourself.”

So the Carter helped himself to so many of the most valuable goods that the horses easily ran away with the remainder.

HARE AND TORTOISE

A Hare having ridiculed the slow movements of a Tortoise was challenged by the latter to run a race, a Fox to go to the goal and be the judge. They got off well together, the Hare at the top of her speed, the Tortoise, who had no other intention than making his antagonist exert herself, going very leisurely. After sauntering along for some time he discovered the Hare by the wayside, apparently asleep, and seeing a chance to win pushed on as fast as he could, arriving at the goal hours afterward, suffering from extreme fatigue and claiming the victory.

“Not so,” said the Fox; “the Hare was here long ago and went back to cheer you on your way.”

LION AND BULL

A Lion wishing to lure a Bull to a place where it would be safe to attack him said: “My friend, I have killed a fine sheep; will you come with me and partake of the mutton?”

“With pleasure,” said the Bull, “as soon as you have refreshed yourself a little for the journey. Pray have some grass.”

OLD MAN AND SONS

An Old Man, afflicted with a family of contentious Sons, brought in a bundle of sticks and asked the young men to break it. After repeated efforts they confessed that it could not be done. "Behold," said the Old Man, "the advantage of unity; as long as these sticks are in alliance they are invincible, but observe how feeble they are individually."

Pulling a single stick from the bundle, he broke it easily upon the head of the eldest Son, and this he repeated until all had been served.

WOLF AND GOAT

A Wolf saw a Goat feeding at the summit of a rock, where he could not get at her.

"Why do you stay up there in that sterile place and go hungry?" said the Wolf. "Down here where I am the broken-bottle vine cometh up as a flower, the celluloid collar blossoms as the rose and the tin-can tree brings forth after its kind."

"That is true, no doubt," said the Goat, "but how about the circus-poster crop? I hear that it failed this year down there."

The Wolf, perceiving that he was being derided, went away and resumed his duties at the doors of the poor.

MAN AND GOOSE

"See these valuable golden eggs," said a Man that owned a Goose. "Surely a Goose that can lay such eggs must have a gold mine inside her."

So he killed the Goose and cut her open, but found that she was just like any other goose. Moreover, on examining the eggs that she had laid he found they were just like any other eggs.

DOG AND REFLECTION

A Dog passing over a stream on a plank saw his reflection in the water.

"You ugly brute!" he cried; "how dare you look at me in that insolent way?"

He made a grab in the water and getting hold of what he supposed was the other dog's lip lifted out a fine piece of meat which a butcher's boy had dropped into the stream.

MAN AND EAGLE

An Eagle was once captured by a Man, who clipped his wings and put him into the poultry yard, along with the chickens. The Eagle was much depressed in spirits by the change.

“Why should you not rather rejoice?” said the Man. “You were only an ordinary fellow as an eagle; but as an old cock you are a fowl of incomparable distinction.”

MAN AND VIPER

A Man finding a frozen Viper put it into his bosom.

“The coldness of the human heart,” he said with a grin, “will keep the creature in his present condition until I can reach home and revive him on the coals.”

But the pleasures of hope so fired his heart that the Viper thawed, slid to the ground and, thanking the Man civilly for his hospitality, glided away.

NORTH WIND AND SUN

The Sun and the North Wind disputed which was the more powerful and agreed that he should be declared victor who could the sooner strip a traveler of his clothes. So they waited until a traveler came by. But the Traveler had been indiscreet enough to stay over night at a summer hotel, and had no clothes.

CRAB AND SON

A Logical Crab said to his Son, “Why do you not walk straight forward? Your sidelong gait is singularly ungraceful.”

“Why don’t you walk straight forward yourself?” said the Son.

“Erring youth,” replied the Logical Crab, “you are introducing new and irrelevant matter.”

JUPITER AND THE BIRDS

Jupiter commanded all the birds to appear before him, so that he might choose the most beautiful to be their king. The ugly

Jackdaw, collecting all the fine feathers that had fallen from the other birds, attached them to his own body and appeared at the examination, looking very gay. The other birds recognizing their own borrowed plumage indignantly protested and began to strip him.

“Hold!” said Jupiter; “this self-made bird has more sense than any of you. He shall be your king.”

LION AND MOUSE

A Lion who had caught a Mouse was about to kill him, when the Mouse said:

“If you will spare my life, I will do as much for you some day.”

The Lion good-naturedly let him go. It happened shortly afterwards that the Lion was caught by some hunters and bound with cords. The Mouse, passing that way and seeing that his benefactor was helpless gnawed off his tail.

LAMB AND WOLF

A Wolf was slaking his thirst at a stream, when a Lamb left the side of his shepherd, came down the stream and passing ostentatiously round the Wolf, prepared to drink below.

“I beg you to observe,” said the Lamb, “that water does not commonly run uphill. My sipping here cannot possibly defile the water where you are; so you have not the flimsiest pretext for slaying me.”

“I am not aware,” replied the Wolf, “that I need a pretext for liking mutton chops.”

End of that small logician.

MOUNTAIN AND MOUSE

A Mountain was in labor, and the people of seven cities had assembled to watch its movements and hear its groans. While they waited in breathless expectancy out came a Mouse.

“Oh, what a baby!” they cried in derision.

“I may be a baby,” said the Mouse, gravely, as he passed outward through the forest of shins, “but I know tolerably well how to diagnose a volcano.”

THE BELLAMY AND THE MEMBERS

The Members of a body of Socialists rose in insurrection against their Bellamy.

“Why,” said they, “should we be all the time tucking you out with food when you do nothing to tuck us out?”

So, resolving to take no further action, they went away and looking backward had the satisfaction to see the Bellamy compelled to sell his own book.

CAT AND YOUTH

A Cat fell in love with a handsome Young Man and entreated Venus to change her into a woman.

“I should think,” said Venus, “you might make so trifling a change without bothering me. However, be a woman.”

Afterward, wishing to see if the change were complete, Venus caused a mouse to approach, whereupon the woman shrieked and made such a show of herself that the Young Man would not marry her.

FARMER AND SONS

A Farmer being about to die, and knowing that during his illness his Sons had permitted the vineyard to become overgrown with weeds while they gambled with the doctor, said to them:

“My boys, there is a great treasure buried in the vineyard. Dig in the ground until you find it.”

So the Sons dug up all the weeds, and all the vines, too, and even neglected to bury the old man.