

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

Once upon a time a Wolf was lapping at a spring on a hill-side, when, looking up, what should he see but a Lamb just beginning to drink a little lower down. 'There's my supper,' thought he, 'if only I can find some excuse to seize it.' Then he called out to the Lamb, 'How dare you muddle the water from which I am drinking?'

'Nay, master, nay,' said Lambikin; 'if the water be muddy up there, I cannot be the cause of it, for it runs down from you to me.'

'Well, then,' said the Wolf, 'why did you call me bad names this time last year?'

'That cannot be,' said the Lamb; 'I am only six months old.'

'I don't care,' snarled the Wolf; 'if it was not you it was your father;' and with that he rushed upon the poor little Lamb and ate her all up. But before she died she gasped out 'Any excuse will serve a tyrant.'

THE TOWN MOUSE AND THE COUNTRY MOUSE

Now you must know that a Town Mouse once upon a time went on a visit to his cousin in the country. He was rough and ready, this cousin, but he loved his town friend and made him heartily welcome. Beans and bacon, cheese and bread, were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely. The Town Mouse rather turned up his long nose at this country fare, and said: 'I cannot understand, Cousin, how you can put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country; come you with me and I will show you how to live. When you have been in town a week you will wonder how you could ever have stood a country life.' No sooner said than done: the two mice set off for the town and arrived at the Town Mouse's residence late at night. 'You will want some refreshment after our long journey,' said the polite Town Mouse, and took his friend into the grand dining-room. There they found the remains of a fine feast, and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice. Suddenly they heard growling and barking. 'What is that?' said the Country Mouse. 'It is only the dogs of the house,' answered the other. 'Only!' said the Country Mouse. 'I do not like that music at my dinner.' Just at that moment the door

flew open, in came two huge mastiffs, and the two mice had to scamper down and run off. 'Good-bye, Cousin,' said the Country Mouse, 'What! going so soon?' said the other. 'Yes,' he replied;

'Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear.'

THE BAT, THE BIRDS, AND THE BEASTS

A great conflict was about to come off between the Birds and the Beasts. When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join. The Birds that passed his perch said: 'Come with us'; but he said: 'I am a Beast.' Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said: 'Come with us'; but he said: 'I am a Bird.' Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings, but they all turned against him and he had to fly away. He then went to the Beasts, but soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces. 'Ah,' said the Bat, 'I see now,

'He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends.'

THE DOG AND THE WOLF

A gaunt Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a House-dog who was passing by. 'Ah, Cousin,' said the Dog. 'I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?'

'I would have no objection,' said the Wolf, 'if I could only get a place.'

'I will easily arrange that for you,' said the Dog; 'come with me to my master and you shall share my work.'

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together. On the way there the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

'Oh, it is nothing,' said the Dog. 'That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it.'

'Is that all?' said the Wolf. 'Then good-bye to you, Master Dog.'

Better starve free than be a fat slave.