

THE MAN, HIS SON, AND HIS DONKEY

A MAN and his Son were once driving their Donkey along a country road, to sell him at the fair. They soon passed some girls, who were drawing water at a well.

“Look,” said one of the girls; “see those silly people trudging along in the dust, while their Donkey walks at his ease.”

The Man heard what they said, and put his boy on the Donkey’s back. They had not gone far before they came to some old men.

“See here, now,” said one of them to the others, “this shows that what I said is true. Nowadays the young take no care of the old. See this boy riding while his poor old father has to walk by his side.”

Hearing this, the Man told his Son to get down, and he mounted the Donkey himself. In a little while they met three women with children in their arms.

“For shame!” said the women. “How can you let that poor boy walk when he looks so tired, and you ride like a king?”

The Man then took the boy up behind him on the saddle, and they rode on to the town. Just before they got there, some young men stopped them and said:

“Is that Donkey yours?”

“Yes,” said the Man.

“One would not think so,” said they, “by the way you load him. You look more fit to carry him than he to carry you.”

So the Man and the boy got off, tied the Donkey’s legs with a rope, fastened him to a pole, and, each taking one end of the pole, carried him along, while every one they met laughed outright.

By and by they came to a bridge. Then the Donkey began to kick, and breaking the rope, fell into the water and was drowned.

The old Man and his Son made their way home as best they could, thinking to themselves, “When we try to please everybody, we please nobody.”