

UNCLE FRANK'S
FABLES,

FOR

CHILDREN.

THE

FIR AND THE BRAMBLE.



WM. H. MURPHY
PRINTER AND PUBLISHER,
384 PEARL STREET,
NEW-YORK.

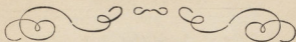
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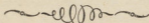
UNCLE FRANK'S

SELECT

Fables,

FOR

Good Boys and Girls.



NEW-YORK :

WM. H. MURPHY, PRINTER & PUBLISHER,
Franklin Bookstore 384 Pearl Street.

1845



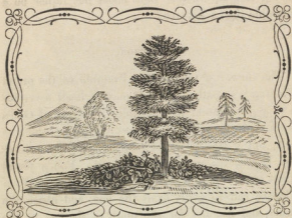
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THE FIR AND THE BRAMBLE.

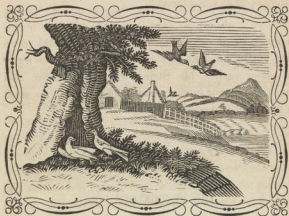
“My head,” says the boasting Fir-tree to the humble Bramble, “is advanced among the stars; I furnish beams for palaces, and masts for shipping; the very sweat of my body is a sovereign remedy for the sick and wounded: whereas thou, O rascally Bramble, runnest creeping in the dirt, and art good for nothing in the world but mischief.” “I pretend not to vie with thee,” said the Bramble, “in the points thou gloriest in. But, not to insist upon it, that He, who made thee a lofty Fir, could have made thee an humble Bramble, I pray thee tell me, when the carpenter comes next with the axe into the wood,

Select Fables.

to fell timber, whether thou hadst not rather be a Bramble than a Fir-tree?"

REFLECTION.

The answer of the humble Bramble to the proud Fir-tree is so pathetic, that it may of itself serve for a very good moral to this fable. Nothing of God's works is so mean as to be despised, and nothing so lofty but it may be humbled; nay, and the greater the height, the greater the danger. For a proud great man to despise an humble little one, when Providence can so easily exalt the one, and abase the other, and has not for the merit of the one, or the demerit of the other, conferred the respective conditions, is a most inexcusable arrogance. The Fir may boast of the uses to which it is put, and of its strength and stature; but then it has not to boast of the creeping Bramble's safety; for the value of the one tempts the carpenter's axe, while the property of the other makes it little worth any one's while to molest it. Upon the whole matter, we may add, That as pride or arrogance is a vice that seldom escapes without a punishment; so humility is a virtue that hardly ever goes without a blessing.




THE DOVE WITH A STRING AT ITS FOOT.

A COUNTRY Fellow took a Dove, and tied a String to its foot, and so gave it to a little boy to play with. The Dove did not much like his companion, and upon the first opportunity gave him the slip, and flew away into the woods again, where he was shackled and starved. When he came to die, he reflected upon the folly of exposing his life in the woods, rather than live in an easy servitude among men.

REFLECTION.

Men that are impatient under imaginary afflictions,

change commonly for the worse, as the Dove did here in the fable, that threw himself into a starving situation, rather than submit to the tolerable inconvenience of an easy restraint. Nothing would serve him, but he must be at his own disposal, and so away he goes, carries his String along with him, and shackles himself in the wood, where he dies for want of food and water.

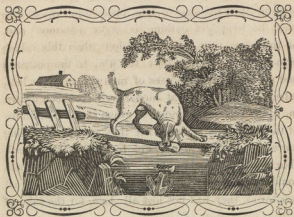


THE MISCHIEVOUS DOG.

THERE was a Dog so wild and mischievous, that his master was obliged to fasten a heavy clog about his neck, to prevent him biting and worrying his neighbours. The Dog, priding himself upon his badge, paraded in the market-place, shaking his clog to attract attention. But a sly friend whispered to him, "The less noise you make, the better; your mark of distinction is no reward of merit, but a badge of disgrace!"

REFLECTION.

Men often mistake notoriety for fame, and would rather be remarked for their vices or follies than not be noticed at all.



THE DOG AND THE SHADOW.

A Dog, crossing a little rivulet with a piece of flesh in his mouth, saw his own Shadow represented in the clear mirror of the limpid stream ; and believing it to be another Dog, who was carrying another piece of flesh, he could not forbear catching at it ; but was so far from getting any thing by his greedy design, that he dropt the piece he had in his mouth, which immediately sunk to the bottom, and was irrecoverably lost.

REFLECTION.

It is wisely decreed that vice should carry its own

Select Fables.

punishment along with it. Therefore, he, that catches at more than belongs to him, justly deserves to lose what he has; yet nothing is more common and, at the same time, more pernicious, than this selfish principle. It prevails from the king to the peasant; and all orders and degrees of men are, more or less, infected with it. Great monarchs have been drawn in, by this greedy humour, to grasp at the dominions of their neighbours; not that they wanted any thing more to feed their luxury, but to gratify their insatiable appetite for vain glory. If the kings of Persia could have been contented with their own vast territories, they had not lost all Asia, for the sake of a little petty state of Greece.

He, that thinks he sees another's estate in a pack of cards, or a box and dice, and ventures his own in the pursuit of it, should not repine, if he finds himself a beggar in the end.

Base is the man, who pines amidst his store,
And fat with plenty, griping, covets more:
But doubly vile, by av'rice when betray'd,
He quits the substance for an empty shade.



THE OAK AND THE WILLOW.

A CONCEITED Willow had once the vanity to challenge his mighty neighbour the Oak to a trial of strength. It was to be determined by the next storm; and Æolus was addressed by both parties, to exert his most powerful efforts. This was no sooner asked than granted; and a violent hurricane arose; when the pliant Willow, bending from the blast, or shrinking under it, evaded all its force; while the generous Oak, disdaining to give way, opposed its fury, and was torn up by the roots. Immediately the Willow began to exult, and to claim the victory; when thus the fallen Oak interrupted his exultation:

"Callest thou this a trial of strength? Poor wretch! not to thy strength, but weakness; not to thy boldly facing danger, but meanly skulking from it, thou owest thy present safety. I am an Oak, though fallen; thou still a Willow, though unhurt: but who, except so mean a wretch as thyself, would prefer an ignominious life, preserved by craft or cowardice, to the glory of meeting death in an honourable cause."

REFLECTION.

The courage of meeting death in an honourable cause is more commendable, than any address or artifice we can make use of to evade it.

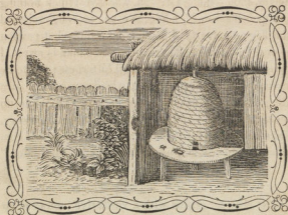


THE MOLE AND HER MOTHER.

SAID a young Mole to her mother, "Mother, I can see." So, in order to try her, her Mother put a lump of frankincense before her, and asked her what it was. "A stone," said the young one. "O, my child!" said the Mother, "not only do you not see, but you cannot even smell."

REFLECTION.

Brag upon one defect, and betray another.



THE BEE AND THE FLY.

A BEE, observing a Fly frisking about her hive, asked him, in a very passionate tone, what he did there? "Is it for such scoundrels as you," said she, "to intrude into the company of the queens of the air?" "You have great reason, truly," replied the Fly, "to be out of humour: I am sure they must be mad, who would have any concern with so quarrelsome a nation." "And why so, thou saucy thing?" returned the enraged Bee; "we have the best laws, and are governed by the best policy in the world. We feed upon the most fragrant flowers, and all our business is to make honey: honey, which equals

Select Fables.

nectar, thou tasteless wretch, who livest upon nothing but putrefaction." "We live as we can," rejoined the Fly: "poverty, I hope, is no crime; but passion is one, I am sure. The honey you make is sweet, I grant you; but your heart is all bitterness: for to be revenged on an enemy, you will destroy your own life; and are so inconsiderate in your rage, as to do more mischief to yourselves than to your adversary. Take my word for it, one had better have less considerable talents, and use them with more discretion."

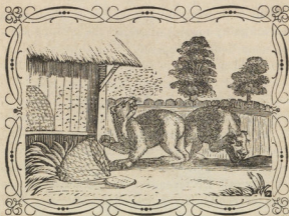
REFLECTION.

The greatest genius with a vindictive temper is far surpassed in point of happiness by men of talents less considerable.



THE FLIES AND THE HONEY-POT.

A Pot of Honey having been upset in a grocer's shop, the Flies came around it in swarms to eat it up, nor would they move from the spot while there was a drop left. At length their feet became so clogged that they could not fly away, and stifled in the luscious sweets they exclaimed, "Miserable creatures that we are, who, for the sake of an hour's pleasure, have thrown away our lives!"



THE TWO BEARS AND THE BEE-HIVES.

Two Bears, climbing over a fence into a place where Bees were kept, began to plunder the Hives, and rob them of their honey. But the Bees, to revenge the injury, attacked them in a whole swarm together; and though they were not able to pierce their rugged hides, yet, with their little stings, they so annoyed their eyes and nostrils, that, unable to endure the smarting pain, with impatience they tore the skin over their ears with their own claws, and suffered ample punishment for the injury they did the Bees, in breaking open their waxen cells.

Select Fables.

REFLECTION.

Many and great are the injuries of which some men are guilty towards others, for the sake of gratifying some liquorish appetite. For there are those who would not stick to bring desolation upon their country, and run the hazard of their own necks into the bargain, rather than balk a wicked inclination, either of cruelty, ambition, or avarice. But it were to be wished, all who are hurried by such blind impulses would consider a moment before they proceed to irrevocable execution. Injuries and wrongs not only call for revenge and reparation with the voice of equity itself, but oftentimes carry their punishment along with them, and, by an unforeseen train of events, are retorted on the head of the actor of them; and not seldom, from a deep remorse, expiated upon himself, by his own hand.



THE LAMB AND THE WOLF.

A LAMB pursued by a Wolf took refuge in a temple. Upon this the Wolf called out to him, and said, that the priest would slay him if he caught him. "Be it so," said the Lamb: "it is better to be sacrificed to God, than to be devoured by you."



THE COCK AND THE FOX.

A Cock, being perched among the branches of a lofty tree, crowed aloud, so that the shrillness of his voice echoed through the wood, and invited a Fox to the place, who was prowling in quest of his prey. But Reynard, finding the Cock was inaccessible, by reason of the height of his situation, had recourse to stratagem in order to decoy him down ; so, approaching the tree, "Cousin," says he, "I am heartily glad to see you ; but at the same time, I cannot forbear expressing my uneasiness at the inconvenience of the place, which will not let me pay my respects to you in a handsomer manner ; though I suppose you will come down presently, and so that difficulty is easily

Select Fables.

removed." "Indeed, cousin," says the Cock, "to tell you the truth, I do not think it safe to venture myself upon the ground, for though I am convinced how much you are my friend, yet I may have the misfortune to fall into the clutches of some other beast, and what will become of me then?" "O dear," says Reynard, "is it possible that you can be so ignorant, as not to know of the peace which has been lately proclaimed between all kinds of birds and beasts; and that we are, for the future, to forbear hostilities on all sides, and to live in the utmost love and harmony, and that, under penalty of suffering the severest punishment that can be inflicted?" All this while the Cock seemed to give little attention to what was said, but stretched out his neck, as if he saw something at a distance. "Cousin," says the Fox, "what is that you are looking at so earnestly?" "Why," says the Cock, "I think I see a pack of hounds yonder." "O then," says the Fox, "your humble servant, I must be gone." "Nay, pray cousin, don't go," says the Cock, "I am just coming down; sure you are not afraid of dogs in these peaceable times." "No, no," says he; "but ten to one whether they have heard of the proclamation yet."

REFLECTION.

Perfidious people are naturally to be suspected in reports that favour their own interest.



THE BOY AND THE NETTLE.

A LITTLE Boy playing in the fields, chanced to be stung by a Nettle, and came crying to his father: he told him, he had been hurt by that nasty weed several times before; that he was always afraid of it: and that now he did but just touch it, as lightly as possible, when he was so severely stung. "Child," says he, "your touching it so gently and timorously is the very reason of its hurting you. A nettle may be handled safely, if you do it with courage and resolution; if you seize it boldly and gripe it fast, be assured it will never sting you: and you will meet with many sorts of persons, as well as things

Select Fables.

in the world, which ought to be treated in the very same manner."

REFLECTION.

There are certain persons who require to be treated rather with spirit and resolution, than either tenderness or delicacy.



THE BULL AND THE GOAT.

A BULL being pursued by a Lion, fled into a cave where a Wild Goat had taken up his abode. The Goat upon this began molesting him and butting at him with his horns. "Don't suppose," said the Bull, "if I suffer this now, that it is you I am afraid of. Let the Lion be once out of sight, and I will soon show you the difference between a Bull and a Goat."

REFLECTION.

Mean people take advantage of their neighbours' difficulties to annoy them; but the time will come when they will repent them of their insolence.



THE KITE AND THE PIGEONS.

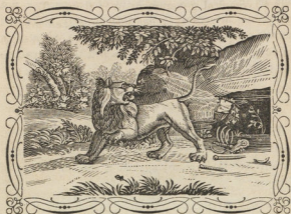
A KITE, who had kept sailing in the air for many days near a dove-house, and made a stoop at several Pigeons, but all to no purpose, at last had recourse to stratagem, and took his opportunity one day to make a declaration to them, in which he set forth his own just and good intentions, who had nothing more at heart than the defence and protection of the Pigeons in their ancient rights and liberties, and how concerned he was at their fears and jealousies of a foreign invasion, especially their unjust and unreasonable suspicions of himself, as if he intended, by force of arms, to break in upon their constitution, and

Select Fables.

erect a tyrannical government over them. To prevent all which, and thoroughly to quiet their minds, he thought proper to propose to them such terms of alliance and articles of peace, as might for ever cement a good understanding betwixt them: the principal of which was, That they should accept of him for their King, and invest him with all kingly privilege and prerogative over them. The poor simple Pigeons consented: the Kite took the coronation oath after a very solemn manner, on his part, and the Doves, the oath of allegiance and fidelity, on theirs. But much time had not passed over their heads, before the good Kite pretended that it was part of his prerogative to devour a Pigeon whenever he pleased. And this he was not contented to do himself only, but instructed the rest of the royal family in the same kingly arts of government. The Pigeons, reduced to this miserable condition, said one to the other, "Ah! we deserve no better! Why did we let him come in?"

REFLECTION.

What can this fable be applied to, but the exceeding blindness and stupidity of that part of mankind, who wantonly and foolishly trust their native rights of liberty without good security?



THE LION AND THE GNAT.

“AVAUNT! thou paltry, contemptible insect!” said a proud Lion one day to a Gnat that was frisking about in the air near his den. The Gnat enraged at this unprovoked insult, vowed revenge, and immediately darted into the Lion’s ear. After having sufficiently teased him in that quarter, she quitted her station and retired under his belly: and from thence made her last and most formidable attack in his nostrils, where stinging him almost to madness, the Lion at length fell down, utterly spent with rage, vexation, and pain. The Gnat having thus abundantly gratified her resentment, flew off in great exultation:

Select Fables.

but in the heedless transports of her success, not sufficiently attending to her own security, she found herself unexpectedly entangled in the web of a spider; who, rushing out upon her, put an end to her triumph and her life.

REFLECTION.

Little minds are so much elevated by any advantage gained over their superiors, that they are often thrown off their guard against a sudden change of fortune.



THE BLIND MAN AND THE WHELP.

A BLIND Man was wont, on any animal being put into his hands, to say what it was. Once they brought to him a Wolf's whelp. He felt it all over, and being in doubt, said, "I know not whether thy father was a Dog or a Wolf; but this I know, that I would not trust thee among a flock of sheep."

REFLECTION.

Evil dispositions are early shown.



THE SPARROW AND THE HARE.

A HARE, being seized by an Eagle, squeaked out in a most woful manner. A Sparrow, that sat upon a tree just by and saw it, could not forbear being unseasonably witty, but called out and said to the Hare, "So, ho! what! sit there and be killed? Pr'ythee up and away; I dare say, if you would but try, so swift a creature as you are would easily escape from the Eagle." As he was going on with this cruel raillery, down came a Hawk, and snapt him up; and, notwithstanding his vain cries and lamentations, fell a devouring of him in an instant. The Hare, who was just expiring, yet received com-

Select Fables.

fort from this accident, even in the agonies of death; and addressing her last words to the Sparrow, said, "You, who just now insulted my misfortune with so much security, as you thought, may please to show us how well you can bear the like, now it has befallen you."

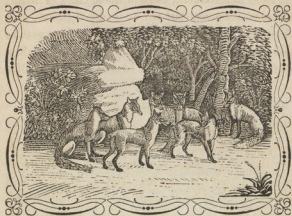
REFLECTION.

Nothing is more impertinent than for people to be giving their opinion and advice in cases, in which, were they to be their own, themselves would be as much at a loss what to do. But so great an itch have most men to be directors in the affairs of others, either to show the superiority of their understanding, or their own security and exemption from the ills they would have removed, that they forwardly and conceitedly obtrude their counsel, even at the hazard of their own safety and reputation.



THE CREAKING WHEELS.

As some Oxen were dragging a wagon along a heavy road, the Wheels set up a tremendous creaking. "Brute!" cried the driver to the wagon; "why do you groan, when they who are drawing all the weight are silent?"—Those who cry loudest are not always the most hurt.



THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL.

A Fox taken in a trap was glad to compound for his neck, by leaving his tail behind him. It was so uncouth a sight for a Fox to appear without a tail, that the very thought of it made him weary of his life: but, however, for the better countenance of the scandal, he got the *master and wardens of the Foxes' company* to call a *court of assistants*, where he himself appeared, and made a learned discourse upon the trouble, the uselessness, and the indecency of Foxes wearing tails. He had no sooner delivered his oration, but up rises a cunning snap, then at the board, who desired to be informed, whether the

Select Fables.

worthy member that moved against the wearing of tails, gave his advice for the advantage of those that *had tails*, or to palliate the deformity and disgrace of those that *had none*.

REFLECTION.

In respect to temporal affairs, they who pretend to advise what measures are most conducive to the public welfare are often guided entirely by their own private interest: but whenever they counsel any extraordinary innovations, or endeavour to change any established proceedings long used and approved, we may be almost certain that they have some other design, rather than the promotion of the general good. When new regulations are proposed, we should turn our eyes on those who propose them, and consider with attention, whether they have not some personal motives for their conduct, and we should be particularly cautious not to suffer ourselves to be imposed on by fine speeches and pretended patriotism: for he, who is very solicitous to bring about a scheme, not attended with any visible advantage to the community, must only mean his own benefit; or, like the Fox, when he has been caught himself in one trap, endeavour to catch us in another.



THE TRAVELLERS AND THE BEAR.

Two Men being to travel through a forest together, mutually promised to stand by each other, in any danger they should meet upon the way. They had not gone far, before a Bear came rushing towards them out of a thicket; upon which one, being a light nimble fellow, got up into a tree; the other falling flat upon his face, and holding his breath, lay still, while the Bear came up and smelled at him; but that creature, supposing him to be a dead carcase, went back again into the wood, without doing him the least harm. When all was over, the spark who had climbed the tree, came down to his companion, and, with a pleasant smile, asked him what the Bear

Select Fables.

said to him; "for," says he, "I took notice that he clapt his mouth very close to your ear." "Why," replies the other, "he charged me to take care for the future, not to put any confidence in such cowardly rascals as you are."

REFLECTION.

Though nothing is more common than to hear people profess services of friendship, where there is no occasion for them; yet scarce anything is so hard to be found as a true friend, who will assist us in time of danger and difficulty. All the declarations of kindness, which are made to an experienced man, though accompanied by a squeeze of the hand and a solemn asseveration, should leave no greater impression upon his mind, than the whistling of the hollow breeze which brushes one's ear with an unmeaning salute, and is presently gone. He that succours our necessity by a well-timed assistance, though it were not ushered in by previous compliments, will ever after be looked upon as our friend and protector; and, in a so much greater degree, as the favour was unasked and unpromised; as it was not extorted by importunities on the one side, nor led in by a numerous attendance of promises on the other. Words are nothing till they are fulfilled by actions; and therefore we should not suffer ourselves to be deluded by a vain hope and reliance upon them.



THE OWL AND THE ECHO.

A SOLEMN Owl, puffed up with vanity, sat repeating her screams at midnight, from the hollow of a blasted oak. "And whence," cried she, "proceeds this awful silence, unless it be to favour my superior melody? Surely the groves are hushed in expectation of my voice; and when I sing, all nature listens." An Echo, resounding from an adjacent rock, replied immediately, "all nature listens." "The nightingale," resumed she, "has usurped the sovereignty by night; her note indeed is musical, but mine is sweeter far." The voice, confirming her opinion, replied again, "is sweeter far." "Why then am I diffident," continued she; "why do I fear to join the tuneful choir?" The

Select Fables.

Echo, still flattering her vanity, repeated, "join the tuneful choir." Roused by this empty phantom of encouragement, she on the morrow mingled her hootings with the harmony of the groves. But the tuneful songsters, disgusted with her noise, and affronted by her impudence, unanimously drove her from their society, and still continue to pursue her wherever she appears.

REFLECTION.

The vain hear the flatteries of their own imagination, and fancy them to be the voice of fame.



THE HART AND THE VINE.

A HART pursued by hunters concealed himself among the branches of a Vine. The hunters passed by without discovering him, and when he thought that all was safe, he began browsing upon the leaves that had concealed him. But one of the hunters, attracted by the rustling, turned round, and guessing that their prey was there, shot into the bush and killed him. As he was dying, he groaned out these words: "I suffer justly for my ingratitude, who could not forbear injuring the Vine that had protected me in the time of danger."



FORTUNE AND THE BOY.

A Boy was sleeping by the side of a well. Fortune saw him, and came and waked him, saying, "Prythee, good child, do not lie sleeping here; for if you should fall in, nobody would impute it to you, but lay all the blame upon me, Fortune."

REFLECTION.

Poor Fortune has a great deal thrown upon her indeed; and oftentimes very unjustly too. Those of our actions, which are attended with success, though often owing to some accident or other, we ascribe,

Select Fables.

without any scruple, to some particular merit or good quality in ourselves; but when any of our doings miscarry, though probably through our own insufficiency or neglect, all the ill consequence is imputed to Fortune, and we acquit ourselves of having contributed anything towards it. The weakest part of each sex, when they dispose of themselves indiscreetly or disadvantageously in marriage, and have nothing else to say in excuse, cry out, Oh, there is a fate in everything, and there is no resisting fate, &c. But these people should take notice, that, as they have a very good proverb on their side in relation to Fortune already, it is highly unreasonable in them to claim more than their share, and to ascribe the ill success of their own foolish negociations to the management of Fortune. Probably, the first occasion of confining the smiles of Fortune to people of this stamp more particularly, might arise from the improbability of their succeeding by any art or right application of their own. And, therefore, by an opposite rule, the wise and industrious only should be entitled to ill luck, and have it in their power to charge Fortune with every loss and cross which befalls them; for if, when they have concerted their measures judiciously, and been vigilant and active in their business, matters refuse still to answer their expectation, they must be allowed to have very hard fortune; but fools have not the least right to take hold of this handle.



THE DOVE AND THE BEE.

A BEE, compelled by thirst, went to drink in a clear purling rivulet; but the current, with its circling eddy, snatched her away, and carried her down the stream. A Dove, pitying her distressed condition, cropt a branch from a neighbouring tree, and let it fall into the water, by means of which the Bee saved herself, and got ashore. Not long after, a Fowler, having a design upon the Dove, planted his nets and all his little artillery in due order, without the bird's observing what he was about; which the Bee perceiving, just as he was going to put his design into execution she stung him

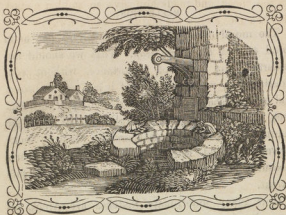
Select Fables.

on the cheek, and made him give so sudden a start, that the Dove took the alarm, and flew away.

REFLECTION.

One good turn deserves another ; and gratitude is excited by so noble and natural a spirit, that he ought to be looked upon as the vilest of creatures, who has no sense of it. It is, indeed, so very just and equitable a thing, and so much every man's duty, that to speak of it properly one should not mention it as anything meritorious, or that may claim praise and admiration, any more than we should say a man ought to be rewarded or commended for not killing his father, or forbearing to set fire to his neighbour's house. The bright and shining piece of morality, therefore, which is recommended to us in this fable, is set forth in this example of the Dove, who, without any obligation or expectation, does a voluntary office of charity to its fellow-creature in distress.





THE TWO FROGS.

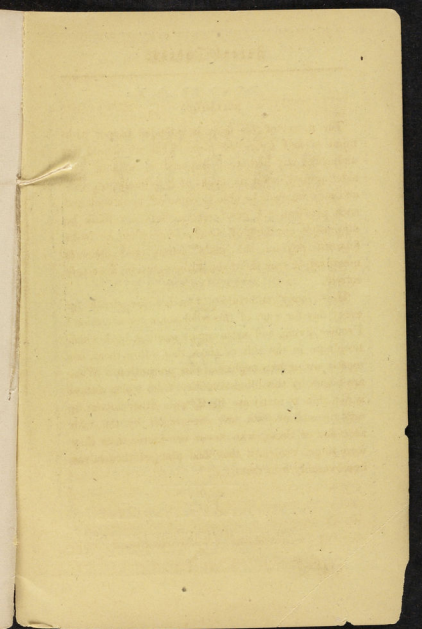
ONE hot sultry summer, the lakes and ponds being almost every where dried up, a couple of Frogs agreed to travel together in search of water. At last they came to a deep well, and sitting upon the brink of it, began to consult, whether they should leap in or not. One of them was for it; urging, that there was plenty of clear spring water, and no danger of being disturbed. Well, says the other, all this may be true; and yet I cannot come into your opinion for my life: for, if the water should happen to dry up here too, how should we get out again?

• Select Fables.

REFLECTION.

The moral of this fable is intended to put us in mind *to look before we leap*. That we should not undertake any action of importance, without considering first, what the event of it is likely to prove, and how we shall be able to come off, upon such and such provisos. A good general does not think he diminishes anything of his character when he looks forward beyond the main action, and concert measures, in case there should be occasion, for a safe retreat.

How many unfortunate matches are struck up every day for want of this wholesome consideration! Profuse living, and extravagant gaming, both which terminate in the ruin of those that follow them, are mostly owing to a neglect of this precaution. Wars are begun by this blind stupidity, from which a state is not able to extricate itself with either honour or safety; and projects are encouraged by the rash accession of those, who never considered how they were to get out, until they had plunged themselves irrecoverably into them.



MORAL
AND
ENTERTAINING

F A B L E S

FOR
CHILDREN.

I.
THE UNDUTIFUL YOUNG LION.

...

II.
THE THIEF AND THE DOG.

...

III.
THE FIR AND THE BRAMBLE.

...

IV.
THE ANT AND THE CATERPILLAR.

...

V.
THE SWALLOW AND OTHER BIRDS.

...

VI.
THE TORTOISE AND THE TWO CROWS.