

### **The Serpent and the Nail**

A Serpent in the course of its wanderings came into an armorer's shop. As he glided over the floor he felt his skin pricked by a file lying there. In a rage he turned upon it and tried to dart his fangs into it, but he could do no harm to the heavy iron and had soon to give over his wrath.

### **The Fox and the Crow**

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. "That's for me," said the Fox, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. "Good day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking today: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eyes. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does. Let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds." The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by the Fox. "That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future: Don't trust flatterers."

### **The Deer in the Ox-Stall**

A Deer hotly pursued by a Hunter's hounds fled for refuge into an ox-stall, and buried itself in a large bale of hay, leaving nothing to be seen but the tips of its horns. Soon after the Hunter came and asked if any one had seen the Hart. The stable boys, who had been resting after their dinner, looked round, but could see nothing, and the Hunters went away. Shortly afterwards the Master came in, and looking round, saw that something unusual had taken place. He pointed to the hay and said: "What are those two curious things sticking out of the hay?" And when the stable boys went to look they discovered the Hart.

### **The Wolf and the Crane**

A Wolf had been gorging on an animal he had killed, when suddenly a small bone in the meat stuck in his throat and he could not swallow it.

He soon felt terrible pain in his throat, and ran up and down groaning and groaning and seeking for something to relieve the pain. He tried to induce every one he met to remove the bone. "I would give anything," said he, "if you would take it out." At last the Crane agreed to try, and told the Wolf to lie on his side and open his jaws as wide as he could. Then the Crane put its long neck down the Wolf's throat, and with its beak loosened the bone, till at last it got it out. "Will you kindly give me the reward you promised?" said the Crane. The Wolf grinned and showed his teeth and said: "Be content. You have put your head inside a Wolf's mouth and taken it out again in safety; that ought to be reward enough for you."

### **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 home with me and I'll 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?" asked 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, and in came two huge dogs, and the two mice had to scamper down and run off. "Good-bye, Cousin," said the Country Mouse. "What! Going so soon?" asked the other. "Yes," he replied. "Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear."

### **The Lamb and the Wolf**

A wolf pursued a Lamb, which fled for refuge to a certain Temple. The Wolf called out to him and said, "The Priest will slay you in sacrifice, if he should catch you." On which the Lamb replied, "It would be better for me to be sacrificed in the Temple than to be eaten by you."

### **The Lion in Love**

A Lion once fell in love with a beautiful maiden and proposed marriage to her parents. The old people did not know what to say. They did not like to give their daughter to the Lion, yet they did not wish to enrage the King of Beasts. At last the father said: "We feel highly honored by your Majesty's proposal, but you see our daughter is a tender young thing, and we fear that in the forcefulness of your affection you might possibly do her some injury. Might I suggest that your Majesty should have your claws removed, and your teeth extracted, and then we would gladly consider your proposal again?" The Lion was so much in love that he had his claws trimmed and his big teeth taken out. But when he came again to the parents of the young girl they simply laughed in his face, and bade him do his worst.

### **The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey**

A Man and his son were once going with their Donkey to market. As they were walking along by its side a countryman passed them and said: "You fools, what is a Donkey for but to ride upon?"

So the Man put the Boy on the Donkey and they went on their way. But soon they passed a group of men, one of whom said: "See that lazy youngster; he lets his father walk while he rides."

So the Man ordered his Boy to get off, and got on himself. But they hadn't gone far when they passed two women, one of whom said to the other: "Shame on that lazy old man to let his poor little son trudge along."

Well, the Man didn't know what to do, but at last he took his Boy up before him on the Donkey. By this time they had come to the town, and the passers-by began to jeer and point at them. The Man stopped and

asked what they were scoffing at. The men said: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for overloading that poor donkey with you and your hulking son?"

The Man and Boy got off and tried to think what to do. They thought and they thought, till at last they cut down a pole, tied the donkey's feet to it, and raised the pole and the donkey to their shoulders. They went along amid the laughter of all who met them till they came to Market Bridge, when the Donkey, getting one of his feet loose, kicked out and caused the Boy to drop his end of the pole. In the struggle the Donkey fell over the bridge, and his feet being tied together he was drowned.

### **Hermes and the Workmen**

A workman, chopping wood by the side of a river, let his axe drop by accident into a deep pool. Being thus deprived of his tool, he sat down on the bank and lamented his misfortune. Hermes, the messenger of the gods, appeared and wanted to know the cause of the workman's tears. After he told him his misfortune, Hermes plunged into the stream, and, bringing up a golden axe, inquired if that were the one he had lost. On his saying that it was not his, Hermes disappeared beneath the water a second time, returned with a silver axe in his hand, and again asked the Workman if it were his. When the Workman said it was not, he dived into the pool for the third time and brought up the axe that had been lost. The Workman claimed it and expressed his joy at its recovery. Hermes, pleased with his honesty, gave him the golden and silver axes in addition to his own.

The Workman, on his return to his house, related to his companions all that had happened. One of them at once resolved to try and secure the same good fortune for himself. He ran to the river and threw his axe on purpose into the pool at the same place, and sat down on the bank to weep.

Hermes appeared to him just as he hoped he would; and having learned the cause of his grief, plunged into the stream and brought up a golden axe, inquiring if he had lost it. The Workman seized it greedily, and declared that truly it was the very same axe that he had lost. Hermes, displeased at his dishonesty, not only took away the golden axe, but refused to recover for him the axe he had thrown into the pool.