

LITTLE
FABLES
FOR
LITTLE
FOLKS

NEW SERIES
TOY BOOKS

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW, 65, ST. PAULS CHURCHYARD,
AND 164, PICCADILLY.

ONE SHILLING

“**I** WONDER now what can the little ones do?
Of what use can the little folk be?”

Thus said Uncle Fred, as he drew little Ned,
And Alice and Tom to his knee:

“Come, listen to me, while a story I tell
Of one who was little and useful as well.

THE MOUSE AND THE LION.

“A wee little Mouse, with his sisters and brothers,
His father and mother, his cousins and others,
When out for a ramble one hot summer’s day,
Frisked over a Lion, as sleeping he lay.
The Lion was heated with hunting, and tired,
And roused thus untimely his anger was fired;
Quick lifting his paw the intruder he seized,
And poor captive Mouse he to death would have squeezed.
Then hard the Mouse pleaded its pitiful fate,
‘Oh spare me,’ he cried; ‘I am small, you are great!
And the noble old beast, like a true forest king,
Raised his foot and let go the poor wee little thing.

Soon after, the Mouse met the Lion again,
Caught fast in a net where he struggled in vain;
‘Lion king,’ said the Mouse, ‘you were gracious to *me*,
Now I in my turn may to you useful be!’
Then with sharp tiny teeth, he nibbled and tore,
Till the Lion broke through, and was free once more.”





“ Well done, little Mouse ! ” cried the children with glee.
“ Then listen again, ” said their Uncle, “ to me ;
While you praise this wee Mouse, in its plain suit of grey,
Take a lesson from one clad in brighter array.

THE BIRDS IN COUNCIL.

“ Now only think of such a funny thing,
The birds one day desired to have a King !
The Magpie, Jackdaw, Peacock, Wren, and Owl,
The Robin, Parrot, and the barn-door Fowl
Together met upon the sunny plain,
To choose a king who over them should reign.

The Peacock spread his tail of feathers gay,
The silly birds admired the vain display.
The Peacock they proclaimed,—they clapped their wings :
But then the Magpie spoke—just a few things
He thought the Birds if wise ought first to know.
He begged to ask the king what he could *do* ?
How he would help them, if in warlike flight
They saw descend the Eagle, Vulture, Kite ?
Alas ! he could not help ; his splendid tail,
His plumage gay would be of no avail.

The birds began to think the Magpie wise ;
The Peacock looked quite foolish in their eyes :
His feathers certainly they much admired,
But more than beauty in their king desired.



“ Fine actions far more than fine feathers adorn :
And I think,” said their Uncle, “ this story should warn
All vain little people, when proud of their dress.
—Are you ever vain?—Now, Alice, confess !”
The children all laughed. “ Not that which we wear,
But that which we *do* should be our chief care.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

“ Now hear of the Dog in a Manger who lay,
Reposing his bones on a bed of sweet hay.
By and by came a poor hungry Ox from the field ;
Oh ! what a good dinner this nice hay should yield !
He knew very well that Dogs never eat hay :
He did not think Rover would bark a ‘ Nay-nay’—
Nor would he deprive the poor Dog of his bed,
For that would be greedy, and very ill bred :
Enough for them both, he believed to be there ;
So he stooped down to take his own rightful share.
Then up jumped the Dog with an ungracious howl,
And drove back the Ox with a bark and a growl :
Quite true he himself could not eat if he would—
The Ox he resolved should not eat if he could !”

“ Oh ! shame on the ill-natured Dog,” Alice said ;
“ A shame indeed, Alice !” replied Uncle Fred ;
“ But greater the shame if selfishly *we*
Good manners forget, and ungenerous be.

“And, children,” he added, “bear this too in mind,
Be as humble and modest, as helpful and kind :
Keep always your place, and of folly beware,
Which would make you pretend to be more than you are.

THE ASS IN LION'S SKIN.

“An Ass once wandered through the forest wide,
With long ears listening for what might betide.
When in the path he found a Lion's skin,
And fastened it around his body thin.
The beasts who saw him, trembled in alarm,
And ran to hide themselves lest he should harm ;
The Ass was charmed that he so mean a thing,
Should be mistaken for the Forest King.
A Fox approached, when, thinking to affright,
He vainly tried to roar with all his might.

The hideous sound made Reynard draw more near :
‘My eye played false,’ he said, ‘but not my ear ;
The while you held your tongue I was deceived ;
Your noisy braying has my fears relieved—
An Ass indeed you are—as Ass by name ;
Who but an Ass would play so mean a game ?
Put off that skin, and know that vain pretence,
Is wanting both in honesty and sense ;
What matters it how lowly be our state ?
It matters more that we be true than great.’



“ And now in another short story we see,
How *obedience*, a safeguard to children may be.

THE WOLF AND THE KID.

‘ By-bye, my kid !’ an old Goat said one day,
‘ Do just as you are bid whilst I’m away ;
The door see bolted ; keep it so till I
Come back to you again ; by-bye, by-bye !’
Then off the mother set upon her way ;
And soon a cunning Wolf who near by lay,
Lifted the knocker with a rat-tat-tat.
Says Kiddy from within, ‘ Pray who is that ?’
‘ Child,’ says the Wolf, in voice as like the Goat
As he could bring from out his husky throat,—
‘ Child, open quick, your mother is outside !’
‘ I know my mother’s voice,’ the kid replied ;
‘ The door is bolted, I am safe within,
Loud you may knock, no entrance will you win !’
The old Goat soon returned, ‘ Dear kid, I’m come !’
And glad the Kid her mother welcomed home
‘ I saw, my child,’ she said, ‘ a Wolf before ;
My heart misgave me, for he left our door.
Oh ! had you opened it, or disobeyed,
You would, my pretty kid, have now been dead.’
‘ I peeped from out the window,’ said the Kid ;
‘ Thought of your words, and *did as I was bid.*’”





The children all listened with silent delight,
Then declared in a breath the little Kid right.
“Once more, learn how those who do selfishly wrong,
Are sure to find out their mistake before long.

THE BEAR AND THE BEES.

“A Bear too fond of honey sweet,
Thought once to give himself a treat;
He climbed a garden fence, where stood
A row of hives in order good;
With lifted paw the sweets to get,
The Hives he in a trice upset;
Then buzzed the Bees like angry foes,
They stung his eyes—they pierced his nose;
He tried to beat them down, but tore
His own ears,—smarting all the more.

“And now, little people,” said Uncle, “one word
My meaning is grave, though my stories absurd.
Would you seek to be useful, and humble, and kind,
And fill wisely the place by your Maker designed?—
Would you learn true obedience and evil avoid,
Lest the hope of your life by its sting be destroyed?—
Believe me, the good and the true and the just,
Are those God has taught in themselves not to trust;
No heart is so happy as that He makes pure;
No hope is like that which in Jesus is sure.
May He pardon your sins, and his Spirit bestow,
That as years pass away, you in wisdom may grow!”

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