

VHI



Character Development Part One

1. Wisdom, ignorance, keenness, Wit, etc. in some of their many phases are shown in the fables and the brief poems listed.



SAYING GRACE

A THOUGHT

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

It is very nice to think
 The world is full of meat and drink,
 With little children saying grace
 In every Christian kind of place.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN



AN Ass dressed himself in a lion's skin and went about frightening the little animals by his roaring. After a while he met a Fox and tried to scare him also. But the Fox, not frightened in the least, called out to the Ass, "You silly Ass, I might have been frightened if I had not

heard you bray, and seen your ears sticking out of the lion's skin!"

Many people who dress finely show by their manners and their speech that they are very common after all.

THE FOX AND THE STORK



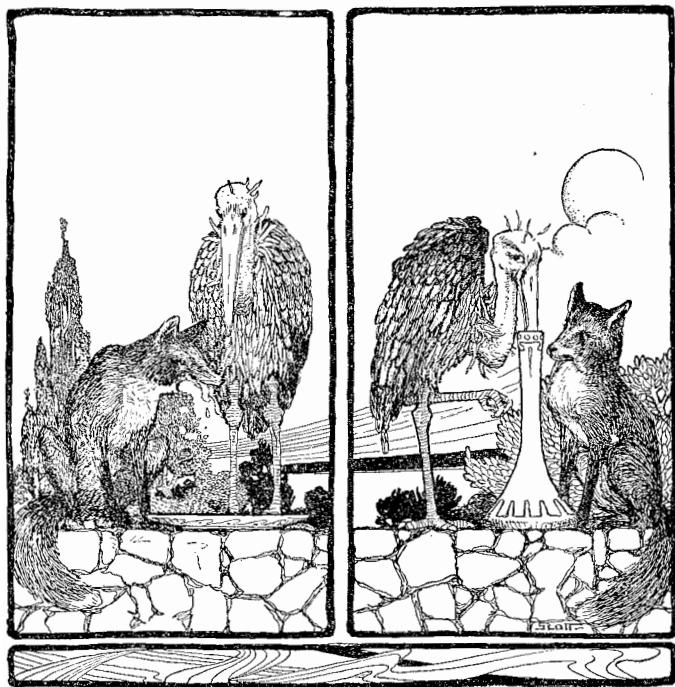
FOX and a Stork one time struck up quite a friendship; but the Fox never could forget how much smarter he was or how great enmity he felt against most birds, so he was quite willing to amuse himself at the expense of his friend.

Finally he thought of a plan which pleased him so much as he thought it over that he ran his best to invite the Stork to take dinner with him on the morrow. When the Stork came, as she did promptly and willingly, she found that the Fox had prepared a dinner of soup, and had put it in a large, shallow plate, from which he could lap it very nicely, but from which she was unable to get anything, for she could barely wet the tip of her bill in it.

The Stork was rather wise herself, and when she reached home she kept thinking about the treatment she had received at the hands of Master Fox, and after a long and wakeful night she conceived a plan for revenge. In the morning she called upon the Fox and invited him to take dinner with her in return.

Master Fox arrived on time, still chuckling

over the joke he had played on the Stork; but he was surprised and no little disappointed to find that the Stork had provided for the dinner a quantity of fine minced meat, which she had put in the bottom of a vase with a very long neck. She could thrust her bill into this and

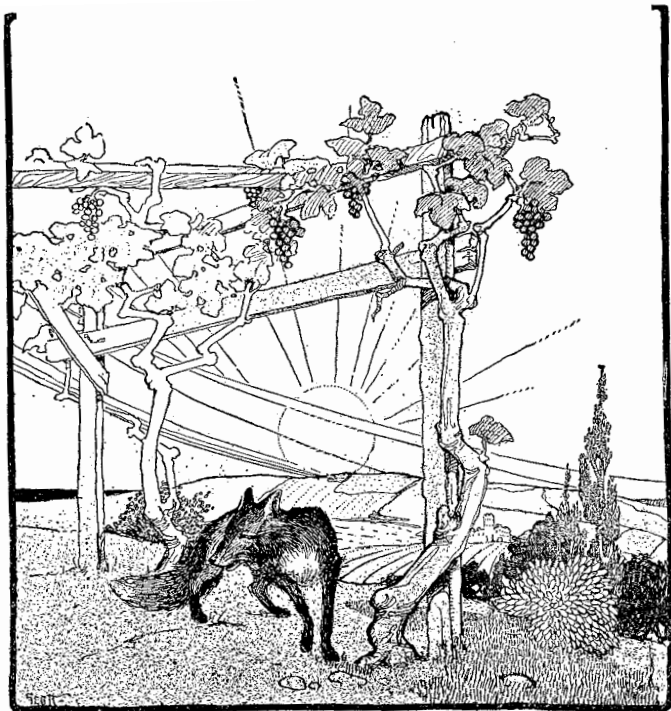


THE FOX AND THE STORK

pick up the meat without trouble; but the Fox could get nothing except the drippings that he licked from the sides of the vessel.

“A fine dinner we have had!” said the Stork.

“You need not apologize,” replied the Fox.



THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

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A hungry Fox once saw some fine, luscious grapes hanging temptingly from a vine a few feet above his head. He leaped and snapped and leaped again, but never could he quite

reach the grapes. So many times did he try that he tired himself out completely, and it was some time before he could drag himself limping away.

As he went along he grumbled savagely to himself, "What nasty things those grapes are! No gentleman would eat a thing so sour."



When a person says he does not want a thing which he knows he cannot get, we may hear some one exclaim "Sour grapes!" Nearly every one knows just what the speaker means, for this fable is many times older than any of us. People keep reading it and liking it because it shows up a common trait of character in a very sharp manner. We might say, "Most every man thinks that the thing he cannot have is no good," but nobody would remember the saying half as long as he remembers the little fable of the Fox and the grapes.



THE BAT AND THE TWO WEASELS



WEASEL seized upon a Bat, who begged hard for his life.

“No, no,” said the Weasel; “I give no quarter to birds.”

“Birds!” cried the Bat. “I am no bird. I am a mouse. Look at my body.”

And so she got off that time.

A few days after she fell into the clutches of another Weasel, who, unlike the former, had a stronger antipathy to mice than to birds. The Bat cried for mercy.

“No,” said the Weasel; “I show no mercy to a mouse.”

“But,” said the Bat, “you can see from my wings that I am a bird.”

And so she escaped that time as well.

THE HORSE AND THE STAG

One day the Horse and the Stag had a quarrel, in which the Horse was beaten. Although the Horse tried his best, he could find no way to revenge himself upon his enemy until he applied to a man for help.

The man said promptly, "I can tell you how we will do it. You let me saddle and bridle you, and then you can carry me till we overtake the Stag, when I can easily kill him."

The angry Horse consented, and the Stag was killed.

The Horse neighed with joy, and cried out, "Now take off this heavy saddle, this iron bit, and the bridle that galls me so. I want to run back and tell my family."

"No, no," said the man; "you are much too useful to me as you are."

Always afterward the Horse served the man, and he found that his revenge had cost him his liberty.

THE FOX, THE WOLF, AND THE HORSE



FOX, seeing a Horse for the first time, at once ran to a Wolf, and described the animal.

“It is, perhaps,” said the Fox, “some delicious prey that fortune has put in our path. Come with me, and judge for yourself.”

Off they ran, and soon came to the Horse.

“Sir,” said the Fox, “we would learn the name by which you are known to your friends.”

The Horse said it was written on his hoofs.

“Gladly would I read it,” replied the sly Fox, “but I never learned to read. My companion here, on the contrary, can both read and write.”

The Wolf at once went up to examine one of the hoofs which the Horse raised for his convenience; and when he had come near enough, the Horse gave a sudden kick, and back to earth fell the Wolf, his jaw broken and bleeding.

“Well, cousin,” cried the Fox, “you need never ask for the Horse’s name again.”

THE BALD KNIGHT



A CERTAIN knight, who wore a wig to conceal his baldness, was out hunting one day, when a sudden gust of wind carried away his wig.

His friends all laughed heartily at the odd figure he made, but the old fellow, so far from being put out, laughed heartily also.

“Is it any wonder,” said he, “that another man’s hair will not keep on my head when my own would not stay there?”

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB



AS a Wolf was lapping at the head of a running brook, he spied a stray Lamb paddling at some distance down the stream. Having made up his mind to seize her, he bethought himself how he might justify his violence.

“Villain,” said he, running up to her, “how dare you muddle the water that I am drinking?”

“Indeed,” said the Lamb humbly, “I do not see how I can disturb the water, since it runs from you to me, not from me to you.”

“Be that as it may,” replied the Wolf, “it was but a year ago that you called me names.”

“Oh, Sir!” said the Lamb, trembling, “a year ago I was not born.”

“Well,” replied the Wolf, “if it was not you, it was your father, and that is all the same; but it is no use trying to argue with me;” and he fell upon the Lamb and tore her to pieces.

MINERVA AND THE OWL



“Y most solemn and wise bird,” said Minerva one day to her Owl, “I have hitherto admired you for your profound silence; but I have now a mind to have you show your ability in discourse, for silence is only admirable in one who can, when he pleases, triumph by his eloquence and charm with graceful conversation.”

The Owl replied by solemn grimaces, and made dumb signs. Minerva bade him lay aside that affectation and begin; but he only shook his wise head and remained silent. Thereupon Minerva commanded him to speak immediately, on pain of her displeasure.

The Owl, seeing no remedy, drew up close to Minerva, and whispered very softly in her ear this sage remark:

“Since the world is grown so depraved, they ought to be esteemed most wise who have eyes to see and wit to hold their tongues.”

THE COUNTRY SQUIRE

*TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH OF THOMAS
YRIARTE*

A country squire of greater wealth than wit
 (For fools are often blessed with fortune's
 smile),
Had built a splendid house and furnished it
 In splendid style.

“One thing is wanting,” said a friend; “for
 though
 The rooms are fine, the furniture profuse,
You lack a library, dear sir, for show,
 If not for use.”

“’Tis true, but zounds!” replied the squire with
 glee,
 “The lumber-room in yonder northern wing
(I wonder I ne’er thought of it) will be
 The very thing.

“I’ll have it fitted up without delay
 With shelves and presses of the newest mode,
And rarest wood, befitting every way
 A squire’s abode.

“And when the whole is ready, I’ll dispatch
 My coachman—a most knowing fellow—down
To buy me, by admeasurement, a batch
 Of books in town.”