

The Falcon and The Little Dog

Jean de La Fontaine

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THE FALCON

I RECOLLECT, that lately much I blamed,
The sort of lover, avaricious named;
And if in opposites we reason see,
The liberal in paradise should be.
The rule is just and, with the warmest zeal,
To prove the fact I to the CHURCH appeal.

IN Florence once there dwelled a gentle youth,
Who loved a certain beauteous belle with truth;
O'er all his actions she had full controul;
To please he would have sold his very soul.
If she amusements wished, he'd lavish gold,
Convinced in love or war you should be bold;
The cash ne'er spare: invincible its pow'rs,
O'erturning walls or doors where'er it show'rs.
The precious ore can every thing o'ercome;
'Twill silence barking curs: make servants dumb;
And these can render eloquent at will:
Excel e'en Tully in persuasive skill;
In short he'd leave no quarter unsubdued,
Unless therein the fair he could include.

SHE stood th' attack howe'er, and Frederick failed;
His force was vain whenever he assailed;
Without the least return his wealth he spent:
Lands, houses, manors of immense extent,
Were ev'ry now and then to auction brought;
To gratify his love was all he thought.

THE rank of 'squire till lately he had claimed;
Now scarcely was he even mister named;
Of wealth by Cupid's stratagems bereft,
A single farm was all the man had left;
Friends very few, and such as God alone,

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Could tell if friendship they might not disown;
The best were led their pity to express;
'Twas all he got: it could not well be less;
To lend without security was wrong,
And former favours they'd forgotten long;
With all that Frederick could or say or do,
His liberal conduct soon was lost to view.

WITH Clytia he no longer was received,
Than while he was a man of wealth believed;
Balls, concerts, op'ras, tournaments, and plays,
Expensive dresses, all engaging ways,
Were used to captivate this lady fair,
While scarcely one around but in despair,
Wife, widow, maid, his fond affection sought;
To gain him, ev'ry wily art was brought;
But all in vain: by passion overpower'd,
The belle, whose conduct others would have soured,
To him appeared a goddess full of charms,
Superior e'en to Helen, in his arms;
From whence we may conclude, the beauteous dame
Was always deaf to Fred'rick's ardent flame.

ENAMOURED of the belle, his lands he sold;
The family estates were turned to gold;
And many who the purchases had made,
With pelf accumulated by their trade,
Assumed the airs of men of noble birth:
Fair subjects oft for ridicule and mirth!

RICH Clytia was, and her good spouse, 'tis said,
Had lands which far and wide around were spread;
No cash nor presents she would ever take,
Yet suffered Frederick splendid treats to make,
Without designing recompense to grant,
Or being more than merely complaisant.

ALREADY, if my mem'ry do not fail,
I've said, the youth's estates were put to sale,
To pay for feasts the fair to entertain,
And what he'd left was only one domain,
A petty farm to which he now retired;
Ashamed to show where once so much admired,
And wretched too, a prey to lorn despair,
Unable to obtain by splendid care,
A beauty he'd pursued six years and more,
And should for ever fervently adore.
His want of merit was the cause he thought,
That she could never to his wish be brought,
While from him not a syllable was heard,
Against the lovely belle his soul preferred.

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'MID poverty oft Fred'rick sighed and wept;
A toothless hag his only servant kept;
His kitchen cold; (where commonly he dwelled;)
A pretty decent horse his stable held;
A falcon too; and round about the grange,
Our quondam 'squire repeatedly would range,
Where oft, to melancholy, he was led,
To sacrifice the game which near him fed;
By Clytia's cruelty the gun was seized,
And feathered victims black chagrin appeased.

'T WAS thus the lover whiled his hours away;
His heart-felt torments nothing could allay;
Blessed if with fortune love he'd also lost,
Which constantly his earthly comforts crossed;
But this lorn passion preyed upon his mind:
Where'er he rode, BLACK CARE would mount behind.

DEATH took at length the husband of the fair;
An only son appointed was his heir,
A sickly child, whose life, 'twas pretty plain,
Could scarcely last till spring returned again,
Which made the husband, by his will, decree,
His wife the infant's successor should be,
In case the babe at early years should die,
Who soon grew worse and raised the widow's sigh.

TOO much affection parents ne'er can show:
A mother's feelings none but mothers know.

FAIR Clytia round her child with anxious care,
Watched day and night, and no expense would spare;
Inquired if this or that would please his taste;
What he desired should be procured with haste;
But nothing would he have that she proposed;
An ardent wish howe'er the boy disclosed,
For Fred'rick's Falcon, and most anxious grew:
Tear followed tear, and nothing else would do.
When once a child has got a whim in brain,
No peace, no rest, till he the boon obtain.

WE should observe our belle, near Fred'rick's cot,
A handsome house and many lands had got;
'Twas there the lovely babe had lately heard,
Most wondrous stories of the bird averred;
No partridge e'er escaped its rapid wing:
On every morn down numbers it would bring;
No money for it would its owner take;
Much grieved was Clytia such request to make.
The man, for her, of wealth had been bereft;
How ask the only treasure he had left?

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And him if she were led to importune,
Could she expect that he'd accord the boon?
Alas! ungratefully she oft repaid,
His liberal treats, his concerts, serenade,
And haughtily behaved from first to last:
How be so bold, (reflecting on the past,)
To see the man that she so ill had used?
And ask a favour? could she be excused?
But then her child! perhaps his life 'twould save;
Naught would he take; the falcon she must crave.

THAT her sweet babe might be induced to eat,
So meant the bird of Fred'rick to intreat;
Her boy was heard continually to cry,
Unless he had the falcon, he should die.

THESE reasons strongly with the mother weighed;
Her visit to the 'squire was not delayed;
With fond affection for her darling heir,
One morn, alone she sought the lorn repair.

TO Fred'rick's eye an angel she appeared;
But shame he felt, that she, his soul revered,
Should find him poor: no servants to attend,
Nor means to give a dinner to a friend.
The poverty in which he now was viewed,
Distressed his mind and all his griefs renewed.
Why come? said he; what led you thus to trace,
An humble slave of your celestial face?
A villager, a wretched being here;
Too great the honour doubtless must appear;
'Twas somewhere else you surely meant to go?
The lady in a moment answered no.
Cried he, I've neither cook nor kettle left;
Then how can I receive you, thus bereft?
But you have bread, said Clytia: that will do;
The lover quickly to the poultry flew,
In search of eggs; some bacon too he found;
But nothing else, except the hawk renowned,
Which caught his eye, and instantly was seized,
Slain, plucked, and made a fricassee that pleased.

MEANWHILE the house-keeper for linen sought;
Knives, forks, plates, spoons, cups, glass and chairs she
brought;
The fricassee was served, the dame partook,
And on the dish with pleasure seemed to look.

THE dinner o'er, the widow then resolved,
To ask the boon which in her mind resolved.
She thus begun: good sir, you'll think me mad,

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To come and to your breast fresh trouble add;
I've much to ask, and you will feel surprise,
That one, for whom your love could ne'er suffice,
Should now request your celebrated bird;
Can I expect the grant? the thought 's absurd
But pardon pray a mother's anxious fear;
'Tis for my child: his life to me is dear.
The falcon solely can the infant save;
Yet since to you I nothing ever gave,
For all your kindness oft on me bestowed;
Your fortune wasted: e'en your nice abode,
Alas! disposed of, large supplies to raise,
To entertain and please in various ways:
I cannot hope this falcon to obtain;
For sure I am the expectation's vane;
No, rather perish child and mother too;
Than such uneasiness should you pursue:
Allow howe'er this parent, I beseech,
Who loves her offspring 'yond the pow'r of speech,
Or language to express, her only boy,
Sole hope, sole comfort, all her earthly joy,
True mother like, to seek her child's relief,
And in your breast deposit now her grief.
Affection's pow'r none better know than you,
How few to love were ever half so true!
From such a bosom I may pardon crave
Soft pity's ever with the good and brave!

ALAS! the wretched lover straight replied,
The bird was all I could for you provide;
'Twas served for dinner. Dead? exclaimed the dame,
While trembling terror overspread her frame.
No jest, said he, and from the soul I wish,
My heart, instead of that, had been the dish;
But doomed alas! am I by fate, 'tis clear,
To find no grace with her my soul holds dear:
I'd nothing left; and when I saw the bird,
To kill it instantly the thought occurred;
Those naught we grudge nor spare to entertain,
Who o'er our feeling bosoms sov'reign reign:
All I can do is speedily to get,
Another falcon: easily they're met;
And by to-morrow I'll the bird procure.
No, Fred'rick, she replied, I now conjure
You'll think no more about it; what you've done
Is all that fondness could have shown a son;
And whether fate has doomed the child to die,
Or with my prayers the pow'rs above comply;
For you my gratitude will never end
Pray let us hope to see you as a friend.

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THEN Clytia took her leave, and gave her hand;
A proof his love no more she would withstand.
He kissed and bathed her fingers with his tears;
The second day grim death confirmed their fears:

THE mourning lasted long and mother's grief;
But days and months at length bestowed relief;
No wretchedness so great, we may depend,
But what, to time's all-conqu'ring sithe will bend:

TWO famed physicians managed with such care;
That they recovered her from wild despair,
And tears gave place to cheerfulness and joy:—
The one was TIME the other Venus' Boy.
Her hand fair Clytia on the youth bestowed,
As much from love as what to him she owed.

LET not this instance howsoe'r mislead;
'Twere wrong with hope our fond desires to feed,
And waste our substance thus: not all the FAIR,
Possess of gratitude a decent share.
With this exception they appear divine;
In lovely WOMAN angel-charms combine;
The whole indeed I do not here include;
Alas; too many act the jilt and prude.
When kind, they're ev'ry blessing found below:
When otherwise a curse we often know.

THE LITTLE DOG

THE key, which opes the chest of hoarded gold.
Unlocks the heart that favours would withhold.
To this the god of love has oft recourse,
When arrows fail to reach the secret source,
And I'll maintain he's right, for, 'mong mankind,
Nice presents ev'ry where we pleasing find;
Kings, princes, potentates, receive the same,
And when a lady thinks she's not to blame,
To do what custom tolerates around;
When Venus' acts are only Themis' found,
I'll nothing 'gainst her say; more faults than one,
Besides the present, have their course begun.

A MANTUAN judge espoused a beauteous fair:
Her name was Argia: Anselm was her care,
An aged dotard, trembling with alarms,
While she was young, and blessed with seraph charms.
But, not content with such a pleasing prize,
His jealousy appeared without disguise,
Which greater admiration round her drew,

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Who doubtless merited, in ev'ry view,
Attention from the first in rank or place
So elegant her form, so fine her face.

'TWOULD endless prove, and nothing would avail,
Each lover's pain minutely to detail:
Their arts and wiles; enough 'twill be no doubt,
To say the lady's heart was found so stout,
She let them sigh their precious hours away,
And scarcely seemed emotion to betray.

WHILE at the judge's, Cupid was employed,
Some weighty things the Mantuan state annoyed,
Of such importance, that the rulers meant,
An embassy should to the Pope be sent.
As Anselm was a judge of high degree,
No one so well ambassador could be.

'T WAS with reluctance he agreed to go,
And be at Rome their mighty Plenipo';
The business would be long, and he must dwell
Six months or more abroad, he could not tell.
Though great the honour, he should leave his dove,
Which would be painful to connubial love.
Long embassies and journeys far from home
Oft cuckoldom around induce to roam.

THE husband, full of fears about his wife;
Exclaimed my ever darling, precious life,
I must away; adieu, be faithful pray,
To one whose heart from you can never stray
But swear to me, my duck, (for, truth to tell,
I've reason to be jealous of my belle,)
Now swear these sparks, whose ardour I perceive,
Have sighed without success, and I'll believe.
But still your honour better to secure,
From slander's tongue, and virtue to ensure,
I'd have you to our country-house repair;
The city quit: these sly gallants beware;
Their presents too, accurst invention found,
With danger fraught, and ever much renowned;
For always in the world, where lovers move,
These gifts the parent of assentment prove.
'Gainst those declare at once; nor lend an ear
To flattery, their cunning sister-peer.
If they approach, shut straight both ears and eyes;
For nothing you shall want that wealth supplies;
My store you may command; the key behold,
Where I've deposited my notes and gold.
Receive my rents; expend whate'er you please;
I'll look for no accounts; live quite at ease;

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I shall be satisfied with what you do,
If naught therein to raise a blush I view;
You've full permission to amuse your mind;
Your love, howe'er, for me alone's designed;
That, recollect, must be for my return,
For which our bosoms will with ardour burn.

THE good man's bounty seemingly was sweet;
All pleasures, one excepted, she might greet;
But that, alas! by bosoms unpossessed,
No happiness arises from the rest:
His lady promised ev'ry thing required:
Deaf, blind, and cruel, whosoe'er admired;
And not a present would her hand receive
At his return, he fully might believe,
She would be found the same as when he went,
Without gallant, or aught to discontent.

HER husband gone, she presently retired
Where Anselm had so earnestly desired;
The lovers came, but they were soon dismissed,
And told, from visits they must all desist;
Their assiduities were irksome grown,
And she was weary of their lovesick tone.
Save one, they all were odious to the fair;
A handsome youth, with smart engaging air;
But whose attentions to the belle were vain;
In spite of arts, his aim he could not gain;
His name was Atis, known to love and arms,
Who grudged no pains, could he possess her charms.
Each wile he tried, and if he'd kept to sighs,
No doubt the source is one that never dries;
But often diff'rent with expense 'tis found;
His wealth was wasted rapidly around
He wretched grew; at length for debt he fled,
And sought a desert to conceal his head.
As on the road he moved, a clown he met,
Who with his stick an adder tried to get,
From out a thicket, where it hissing lay,
And hoped to drive the countryman away:
Our knight his object asked; the clown replied,
To slay the reptile anxiously I tried;
Wherever met, an adder I would kill:
The race should be extinct if I'd my will.

WHY would'st thou, friend, said Atis, these destroy?
God meant that all should freely life enjoy.
The youthful knight for reptiles had, we find,
Less dread than what prevails with human kind;
He bore them in his arms: they marked his birth;
From noble Cadmus sprung, who, when on earth,

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At last, to serpent was in age transformed;
The adder's bush the clown no longer stormed;
No more the spotted reptile sought to stay,
But seized the time, and quickly crept away.

AT length our lover to a wood retired;
To live concealed was what the youth desired;
Lorn silence reigned, except from birds that sang,
And dells that oft with sweetest echo rang.
There HAPPINESS and frightful MIS'RY lay,
Quite undistinguished: classed with beasts of prey;
That growling prowled in search of food around:
There Atis consolation never found.
LOVE thither followed, and, however viewed,
'Twas vain to hope his passion to elude;
Retirement fed the tender, ardent flame,
And irksome ev'ry minute soon became.
Let us return, cried he, since such our fate:
'Tis better, Atis, bear her frowns and hate,
Than of her beauteous features lose the view;
Ye nightingales and streams, ye woods adieu!
When far from her I neither see nor hear:
'Tis she alone my senses still revere;
A slave I am, who fled her dire disdain;
Yet seek once more to wear the cruel chain.

AS near some noble walls our knight arrived,
Which fairy-hands to raise had once contrived,
His eyes beheld, at peep of early morn,
When bright Aurora's beams the earth adorn,
A beauteous nymph in royal robes attired,
Of noble mien, and formed to be admired,
Who t'ward him drew, with pleasing, gracious air,
While he was wrapped in thought, a prey to care.

SAID she, I'd have you, Atis, happy be;
'Tis in my pow'r, and this I hope to see;
A fairy greet me, Manto is my name:
Your friend, and one you've served unknown: the same
My fame you've heard, no doubt; from me proceeds
The Mantuan town, renowned for ancient deeds;
In days of yore I these foundations laid,
Which in duration, equal I have made,
To those of Memphis, where the Nile's proud course
Majestically flows from hidden source.
The cruel Parcae are to us unknown;
We wond'rous magick pow'rs have often shown;
But wretched, spite of this, appears our lot
Death never comes, though various ills we've got,
For we to human maladies are prone,
And suffer greatly oft, I freely own.

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ONCE, in each week to serpents we are changed;
Do you remember how you here arranged,
To save an adder from a clown's attack?
'Twas I, the furious rustick wished to hack,
When you assisted me to get away;
For recompense, my friend, without delay,
I'll you procure the kindness of the fair,
Who makes you love and drives you to despair:
We'll go and see her: be assured from me,
Before two days are passed, as I foresee,
You'll gain, by presents, Argia and the rest,
Who round her watch, and are the suitor's pest.
Grudge no expense, be gen'rous, and be bold,
Your handfuls scatter, lavish be of gold.
Assured you shall not want the precious ore;
For I command the whole of Plutus' store,
Preserved, to please me, in the shades below;
This charmer soon our magick pow'r shall know.

THE better to approach the cruel belle,
And to your suit her prompt consent compel,
Myself transformed you'll presently perceive;
And, as a little dog, I'll much achieve,
Around and round I'll gambol o'er the lawn,
And ev'ry way attempt to please and fawn,
While you, a pilgrim, shall the bag-pipe play;
Come, bring me to the dame without delay.

NO sooner said, the lover quickly changed,
Together with the fairy, as arranged;
A pilgrim he, like Orpheus, piped and sang;
While Manto, as a dog, skipt, jumped, and sprang.

THEY thus proceeded to the beauteous dame;
Soon valets, maids, and others round them came;
The dog and pilgrim gave extreme delight
And all were quite diverted at the sight.

THE lady heard the noise, and sent her maid,
To learn the reason why they romped and played:
She soon returned and told the lovely belle,
A spaniel danced, and even spoke so well,
it ev'ry thing could fully understand,
And showed obedience to the least command.
'Twere better come herself and take a view:
The things were wond'rous that the dog could do.

THE dame at any price the dog would buy,
In case the master should the boon deny.
To give the dog our pilgrim was desired;
But though he would not grant the thing required;

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He whispered to the maid the price he'd take,
And some proposals was induced to make.
Said he, 'tis true, the creature 's not for sale;
Nor would I give it: prayers will ne'er prevail;
Whate'er I chance to want from day to day,
It furnishes without the least delay.
To have my wish, three words alone I use,
Its paw I squeeze, and whatsoe'er I choose,
Of gold, or jewels, fall upon the ground;
Search all the world, there's nothing like it found.
Your lady's rich, and money does not want;
Howe'er, my little dog to her I'll grant
If she'll a night permit me in her bed,
The treasure shall at once to her be led.

THE maid at this proposal felt surprise;
Her mistress truly! less might well suffice;
A paltry knave! cried she, it makes me laugh;
What! take within her bed a pilgrim's staff!
Were such a circumstance abroad to get,
My lady would with ridicule be met;
The dog and master, probably, were last
Beneath a hedge, or on a dunghill cast;
A house like this they'll never see agen;
But then the master is the pride of men,
And that in love is ev'ry thing we find
Much wealth and beauty please all womankind!

HIS features and his mien the knight had changed;
Each air and look for conquest were arranged.
The maid exclaimed: when such a lover sues,
How can a woman any thing refuse?
Besides the pilgrim has a dog, 'tis plain,
Not all the wealth of China could obtain.
Yet to possess my lady for a night,
Would to the master be supreme delight:

I SHOULD have mentioned, that our cunning spark;
The dog would whisper (feigning some remark,)
On which ten ducats tumbled at his feet;
These Atis gave the maid, (O deed discreet;)
Then fell a diamond: this our wily wight
Took up, and smiling at the precious sight,
Said he, what now I hold I beg you'll bear,
To her you serve, so worthy of your care;
Present my compliments, and to her say,
I'm her devoted servant from to-day.

THU female quickly to her mistress went;
Our charming little dog to represent:
The various pow'rs displayed, and wonders done;

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Yet scarcely had she on the knight begun,
And mentioned what he wished her to unfold,
But Argia could her rage no longer hold;
A fellow! to presume, cried she, to speak
Of me with freedom! I am not so weak,
To listen to such infamy, not I
A pilgrim too! no, you may well rely,
E'en were he Atis, it would be the same,
To whom I now my cruel conduct blame:
Such things he never would to me propose;
Not e'en a monarch would the like disclose;
I'm 'bove temptation, presents would not do:
Not Plutus' stores, if offered to my view;
A paltry pilgrim to presume indeed,
To think that I would such a blackguard heed,
Ambassador my rank! and to admit
A fellow, only for the gallows fit!

THIS pilgrim, cried the maid, has got the means
Not only belles to get, but even queens;
Or beauteous goddesses he could obtain:
He's worth a thousand Atis's 'tis plain.
Bur, said the wife, my husband made me vow.
What? cried the maid, you'd not bedeck his brow!
A pretty promise truly: can you think,
You less from this, than from the first, should shrink?
Who'll know the fact, or publish it around?
Consider well, how many might be found,
Who, were they marked with spot upon the nose,
When things had taken place that we suppose,
Would not their heads so very lofty place,
I'm well assured, but feel their own disgrace.
For such a thing, are we the worse a hair?
No, no, good lady, who presumes to swear,
He can discern the lips which have been pressed,
By those that never have the fact confessed,
Must be possessed of penetrating eyes,
Which pierce the sable veil of dark disguise.
This favour, whether you accord or not,
'Twill not a whit be less nor more a blot.
For whom, I pray, LOVE'S treasures would you hoard?
For one, who never will a treat afford,
Or what is much the same, has not the pow'r?
All he may want you'll give him in an hour,
At his return; he's very weak and old,
And, doubtless, ev'ry way is icy cold!

THE cunning girl such rhetorick displayed,
That all she said, her mistress, having weighed,
Began to doubt alone, and not deny
The spaniel's art, and pilgrim's piercing eye:

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To her the master and his dog were led,
To satisfy her mind while still in bed;
For bright Aurora, from the wat'ry deep,
Not more reluctantly arose from sleep.

OUR spark approached the dame with easy air,
Which seemed the man of fashion to declare;
His compliments were made with ev'ry grace,
That minds most difficult could wish to trace.

THE fair was charmed, and with him quite content;
You do not look, said she, like one who meant
Saint James of Compostella soon to see,
Though, doubtless, oft to saints you bend the knee.

TO entertain the smiling beauteous dame,
The dog, by various tricks, confirmed his flame,
To please the maid and mistress he'd in view:
Too much for these of course he could not do;
Though, for the husband, he would never move,
The little fav'rite sought again to prove
His wond'rous worth, and scattered o'er the ground,
With sudden shake, among the servants round,
Nice pearls, which they on strings arranged with care;
And these the pilgrim offered to the fair:
Gallantly fastened them around her arms,
Admired their whiteness and extolled her charms:
So well he managed, 'twas at length agreed,
In what his heart desired he should succeed;
The dog was bought: the belle bestowed a kiss,
As earnest of the promised future bliss.

THE night arrived, when Atis fondly pressed,
Within his arms, the lady thus caressed;
Himself he suddenly became again,
On which she scarcely could her joy contain:
Th' ambassador she more respect should show,
Than favours on a pilgrim to bestow.

THE fair and spark so much admired the night;
That others followed equal in delight;
Each felt the same, for where's the perfect shade;
That can conceal when joys like these pervade?
Expression strongly marks the youthful face,
And all that are not blind the truth can trace.
Some months had passed, when Anselm was dismissed;
Of gifts and pardons, long appeared his list;
A load of honours from the Pope he got:
The CHURCH will these most lib'rally allot.

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FROM his vicegerent quickly he received
A good account, and friends his fears relieved;
The servants never dropt a single word
Of what had passed, but all to please concurred.

THE judge, both maid and servants, questioned much;
But not a hint he got, their care was such.
Yet, as it often happens 'mong the FAIR,
The devil entered on a sudden there;
Such quarrels 'tween the maid and mistress rose,
The former vowed she would the tale disclose.
Revenge induced her ev'ry thing to tell,
Though she were implicated with the belle.

SO great the husband's rage, no words can speak:
His fury somewhere he of course would wreak;
But, since to paint it clearly would be vain
You'll by the sequel judge his poignant pain.

A SERVANT Anselm ordered to convey
His wife a note, who was, without delay,
To come to town her honoured spouse to see;
Extremely ill (for such he feigned to be.)
As yet the lady in the country stayed;
Her husband to and fro' his visits paid.

SAID he, remember, when upon the road,
Conducting Argia from her lone abode,
You must contrive her men to get away,
And with her none but you presume to stay.
A jade! she horns has planted on my brow:
Her death shall be the consequence I vow.

WITH force a poinard in her bosom thrust;
Watch well th' occasion: die, I say, she must,
The deed performed, escape; here's for you aid;
The money take: pursuit you can evade;
As I request, proceed; then trust to me:
You naught shall want wherever you may be.

TO seek fair Argia instantly he went;
She, by her dog, was warned of his intent.
How these can warn? if asked, I shall reply,
They grumble, bark, complain, or fawn, or sigh;
Pull petticoat or gown, and snarl at all,
Who happen in their way just then to fall;
But few so dull as not to comprehend;
Howe'er, this fav'rite whispered to his friend,
The dangers that awaited her around;
But go, said he, protection you have found;
Confide in me: I'll ev'ry ill prevent,

The Falcon and The Little Dog

For which the rascal hither has been sent.
As on they moved, a wood was in the way,
Where robbers often waited for their prey;
The villain whom the husband had employed,
Sent forward those whose company annoyed,
And would prevent his execrable plan;
The last of horrid crimes. disgrace to man!
No sooner had the wretch his orders told,
But Argia vanished none could her behold;
The beauteous belle was quickly lost to view:
A cloud, the fairy Manto o'er her threw.

THIS circumstance astonished much the wretch,
Who ran to give our doating spouse a sketch
Of what had passed so strange upon the way;
Old Anselm thither went without delay,
When, marvellous to think! with great surprise,
He saw a palace of extensive size,
Erected where, an hour or two before,
A hovel was not seen, nor e'en a door.

THE husband stood aghast! admired the place,
Not built for man, e'en gods 'twould not disgrace.
The rooms were gilt; the decorations fine;
The gardens and the pleasure-grounds divine;
Such rich magnificence was never seen;
Superb the whole, a charming blessed demesne.
The entrance ev'ry way was open found;
But not a person could be viewed around,
Except a negro, hideous to behold,
Who much resembled AEsop, famed of old.

OUR judge the negro for a porter took,
Who was the house to clean and overlook;
And taking him for such, the black addressed,
With full belief the title was the best,
And that he greatly honoured him, 'twas plain
(Of ev'ry colour men are proud and vain:)
Said he, my friend, what god this palace owns?
Too much it seems for those of earthly thrones;
No king, of consequence enough could be;
The palace, cried the black, belongs to me.

THE judge was instantly upon his knees,
The negro's pardon asked, and sought to please;
I trust, said he, my lord, you'll overlook
The fault I made: my ignorance mistook.
The universe has not so nice a spot;
The world so beautiful a palace got!

The Falcon and The Little Dog

DOST wish me, said the black, the house to give,
For thee and thine therein at ease to live?
On one condition thou shalt have the place
For thee I seriously intend the grace,
If thou 'lt on me a day or two attend,
As page of honour: dost thou comprehend?
The custom know'st thou better I'll expound;
A cup-bearer with Jupiter is found,
Thou'st heard no doubt.

ANSELM

What, Ganymede?

NEGRO

The same;
And I'm that Jupiter of mighty fame;
The chief supreme who rules above the skies;
Be thou the lad with fascinating eyes,
Though not so handsome, nor in truth so young.

ANSELM

You jest, my lord; to youth I don't belong;
'Tis very clear; my judge's dress my age!

NEGRO

I jest? thou dream'st.

ANSELM

My lord?

NEGRO

You won't engage?
Just as you will: 'tis all the same you'll find.

ANSELM

My lord!. . . The learned judge himself resigned,
The black's mysterious wishes to obey;
Alas! curst presents, how they always weigh!

A PAGE the magistrate was quickly seen,
In dress, in look, in age, in air, in mien;
His hat became a cap; his beard alone
Remained unchanged; the rest had wholly flown.

The Falcon and The Little Dog

THUS metamorphosed to a pretty boy,
The judge proceeded in the black's employ.
Within a corner hidden, Argia lay,
And heard what Anselm had been led to say.
The Moor howe'er was Manto, most renowned,
Transformed, as oft the fairy we have found;
She built the charming palace by her art,
Now youthful features would to age impart.

AT length, as Anselm through a passage came,
He suddenly beheld his beauteous dame.
What! learned Anselm do I see, said she,
In this disguise? It surely cannot be;
My eyes deceive me: Anselm, grave and wise;
Give such a lesson? I am all surprise.

'TIS doubtless he: oh, oh! our bald-pate sire;
Ambassador and judge, we must admire,
To see your honour thus in masquerade:
At your age, truly, suffer to be made
A modesty denies my tongue its pow'r's
What! you condemn to death for freaks like ours?
You, whom I've found *** you understand for shame
Your crimes are such as all must blush to name.
Though I may have a negro for gallant,
And erred when Atis for me seemed to pant,
His merit and the black's superior rank,
Must lessen, if not quite excuse my prank.
Howe'er, old boy, you presently shall see,
If any belle solicited should be,
To grant indulgencies, with presents sweet,
She will not straight capitulation beat;
At least, if they be such as I have viewed:
Moor, change to dog; immediately ensued
The metamorphose that the fair required,
The black'moor was again a dog admired.
Dance, fav'rite; instantly he skipped and played;
And to the judge his pretty paw conveyed.
Spaniel, scatter gold; presently there fell
Large sums of money, as the sound could tell.
Such strong temptation who can e'er evade?
The dog a present to your wife was made.
Then show me, if you can, upon the earth,
A queen, a princess, of the highest birth,
Who would not virtue presently concede,
If such excuses for it she could plead;
Particularly if the giver proved
A handsome lad that elegantly moved.

I, TRULY, for the spaniel was exchanged;
What you'd too much of, freely I arranged,

The Falcon and The Little Dog

To grant away, this jewel to obtain
My value 's nothing great, you think, 'tis plain;
And, surely, you'd have thought me very wrong,
When such a prize I met, to haggle long.
'Twas he this palace raised; but I have done;
Remember, since you've yet a course to run,
Take care again how you command my death;
In spite of your designs I draw my breath.
Though none but Atis with me had success,
I now desire, he may Lucretia bless,
And wish her to surrender up her charms,
(Just like myself) to his extended arms.
If you approve, our peace at once is made:
If not while I've this dog I'm not afraid,
But you defy: I dread not swords nor bowl;
The little dog can warn me of the whole;
The jealous he confounds; be that no more;
Such folly hence determine to give o'er.
If you, to put restraints on women choose,
You'll sooner far their fond affections lose.

THE whole our judge conceded; could he less?
The secret of his recent change of dress
Was promised to be kept: and that unknown,
E'en cuckoldom again might there have flown.

OUR couple mutual compensation made,
Then bade adieu to hill, and dale, and glade.

SOME critick asks the handsome palace' fate;
I answer: that, my friend, I shan't relate;
It disappeared, no matter how nor when.
Why put such questions? strict is not my pen.
The little dog, pray what of that became?
To serve the lover was his constant aim.

AND how was that? You're troublesome my friend:
The dog perhaps would more assistance lend;
On new intrigues his master might be bent;
With single conquest who was e'er content?

THE fav'rite spaniel oft was missing found;
But when the little rogue had gone his round,
He'd then return, as if from work relieved,
To her who first his services received.
His fondness into fervent friendship grew;
As such gay Atis visited anew;
He often came, but Argia was sincere,
And firmly to her vow would now adhere:
Old Anselm too, had sworn, by heav'n above;
No more to be suspicious of his love;

The Falcon and The Little Dog

And, if he ever page became again,
To suffer punishment's severest pain.