

Croxall Edition

# ÆSOP'S FABLES.

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## FAB. I. *The Cock and the Jewel.*



A BRISK young Cock in company with two or three Pullets, his mistresses, raking upon a dunghill for something to entertain them with, happened to scratch up a jewel; he knew what it was well enough, for it sparkled with an exceeding bright lustre; but, not knowing what to do with it, endeavoured to cover his ignorance under a gay contempt. So, shrugging up his wings, shaking his head, and putting on a grimace, he expressed himself to this purpose: indeed, you are a very fine thing; but I know not any business you have here. I make no scruple of declaring that my taste lies quite another way; and I had rather have one grain of dear delicious barley, than all the jewels under the sun.

## THE APPLICATION.

There are several people in the world that pass, with some, for well accomplished gentlemen, and very pretty fellows, though they are as great strangers to the true use of virtue and knowledge, as the Cock upon the dunghill is to the real value of the Jewel. He palliates his ignorance by pretending that his taste lies another way: but whatever gallant airs people may give themselves upon these occasions, without dispute, the solid advantages of virtue, and the durable pleasures of learning, are as much to be preferred before other objects of the senses, as the finest brilliant diamond is above a barley-corn. The greatest blockheads would appear to understand, what at the same time they affect to despise; and nobody yet was ever so vicious as to have the impudence to declare in public, that virtue was not a fine thing.

But still, among the idle, sauntering young fellows of the age, who have leisure, as well to cultivate and improve the faculties of the mind, as to dress and embellish the body, how many are there who spend their days in raking after new scenes of debauchery, in comparison of those few who know how to relish more reasonable entertainment? Honest and undesigned good sense is so unfashionable, that he must be a bold man, who, at this time of day, attempts to bring it into esteem.

How disappointed is the youth, who in the midst of his amorous pursuits, endeavouring to plunder an outside of bloom and beauty, finds a treasure of impenetrable virtue concealed within! And, why may it not be said, how delighted are the fair sex, when from among a crowd of empty, frolic, conceited admirers, they find out, and distinguish with their good opinion, a man of sense, with a plain unaffected person, which at first sight they did not like!

## THE APPLICATION.

They who are of a ravenous greedy temper, and for swallowing all that comes into their way, may chance to meet with stinging in the end. When people are actuated by an insatiable avarice, they stick at nothing: without considering the lawfulness, or indeed, the real emolument of snapping at all, right or wrong, down it goes; and, if it has not the appearance of gain, they are for making seizure, let the consequences be what will.

Thus the covetous, whom God and man abhor, punish himself for his own iniquity. Being deaf to the voice of conscience, and the dictates of natural reason, and blind to everything but his own vile selfish views, he throws himself after their getting, with a precipitate violence, and often dashes himself to pieces upon an unseen rock.

FAB. CXCIV. *The Fox and the Hedge-hog.*

A Fox was swimming across a river; and when he came to the other side, he found the bank so steep and slippery, that he could not get up it. But this was not all his misfortune; for while he stood in the