

The Cat and the Eagle—A Fable.

By DE. FRANKLIN.

Lord Spencer was a great admirer of Dr. Franklin, as I never missed sending him a card when he intended a company of learned ones at his table. The last time that our philosopher enjoyed this honour was in 1775, just before he was driven from England by Lord North. The conversation taking a turn on fables, Lord Spencer observed, that it had certainly been a very lucky thing, especially for the young, that this mode of instruction had ever been hit on, as there was something in it wonderfully calculated to touch a favorite string with them, i.e., novelty and surprise. They would listen, he said, to a fox, when they would not to a father, and they would be more apt to remember anything good told them by an owl or a crow, than by an uncle or an aunt. But I am afraid, continued his lordship, that the age of fable is past. Esop and Phoebus among the ancients, and Fontaine and Gay among the moderns, have given us so many fine specimens from the birds and beasts, that I suspect their budgets are pretty nearly exhausted.

The company concluded with his lordship, except Franklin, who was silent.

"Well doctor," said Lord Spencer, "what is your opinion on this subject?"

"Why, my lord," replied Franklin, "I cannot say that I have the honor to think with you in this affair. The birds and beasts have indeed said a great many wise things; but it is likely they will say a great many more yet before they are done. Nature, I am thinking, is not quite so easily exhausted as your lordship seems to imagine."

Lord Spencer, evidently confused, but still with that countenance of pleasure which characterizes great souls when they meet superior genius, exclaimed—"Well, doctor, suppose you give us a fable! I know you are good at an impromptu. The company all seconded the motion. Franklin thanked them for the compliment, but begged to be excused. They would hear no excuse. They knew, they said, he could do it, and insisted he should gratify them. Finding all resistance ineffectual, he drew his pencil, and after scribbling a few minutes, reached it to Spencer, saying—"Well, my lord, since you will have it so, here's something fresh from the brain, but I'm afraid you'll not find 'Esop in it'."

"Read it, doctor, read it!" was the cry of the noble lord and his friends. In a mood, spiteful and pleasant, Franklin began—"Once upon a time—hem! an ant eagle, in the full pride of his wings, soared over an humble farm-yard, darting his fiery eyes around in search of a pig, a lamb, or some such pretty tit bit, which should be held but a plump young rabbit, as he thought, squatted among the weeds. Down at once upon him, he pounced like thunder, and bearing him aloft in his talons thus chuckled to himself joy—"Zounds, what a lucky dog I am!—such a nice rabbit here, this morning, for my breakfast!"

"His joy was but momentary; for the supposed rabbit happened to be a stout cat, who, spitting and raging, instantly struck his teeth and nails, like any wild cat squalling with fury, into the eagle's thighs, making the blood and feathers fly at a dreadful rate."

"Hold! hold! for mercy's sake, hold! cried the eagle, his wings shivering in the air with terror.

"'Tis ill," retorted the cat, with tiger-like growl, "fair you talk of mercy after treating me thus, who never injured you!"

"O, break you, Mr. Cat, is that you? rejoined the eagle, mighty complainant on honor, I did not intend, sir. I thought it was only a rabbit I had got hold of—and you know we are all fond of rabbits. Do you suppose, my dear sir, that I had but dreamt it was you, I would ever have touched the hair of your head? No, indeed: I am not such a fool as to let you, half a bottle will be all that is needed. We know of nothing we can recommend with such confidence for a family medicine, as the Invigorator—Esopus Republican."

"Yes, you'll let me go, scoundrel, will you—here into the clouds—to break every bone in my skin! No, villain, carry me back, and put me down exactly where you found me, or I'll tear the throat out of you in a moment."

"Without a word of reply, the eagle stooped at once from his giddy height, and sailing humbly down, with great complaisance restored the cat to his humble farm-yard, there to sleep, or hunt his rats and mice at pleasure."

A solemn silence ensued. At length, with a deep prophetic sigh, Lord Spencer thus replied:—"Ah! Dr. Franklin, I see the drift of your fable; and my fears have already made the application. And grant that Britain may not prove the eagle, and America the cat." This fable, paraphrased in the Whig papers of that day, concludes in this way:

"Thus Britain thought in seventy-six: Her toots in a hole to fix; But the scutts it was found, The bird received a dangerous wound, Which, though pretending off to hide, Still rankles in his Royal side."

Old Time Ship.

A foreign correspondent of the Philadelphia *North American*, in referring to the launch of the *Leviathan*, says:

We live in an age of gigantic undertakings, but in such an advanced state of science, popular astonishment is proportionately subdued. Former attempts at colossal ship-building created a sensation that in these days would scarcely be excited. The great *Harry Grace a Dieu* of 1690, the first Englishman of the regular navy, was thought the *no plus ultra* of marine architecture, but she measured only about ten hundred tons. There was another ship-built about this time, which was truly a wondrous construction, if we are to credit a contemporary description—*Lindsay of its time*, the authorizing historian of Scotland, relates that in 1606, King James IV. "launched a great ship, called the *Great Michael*, which was the greatest and of most strength that ever sailed in England or France, for this ship was of great stature, and took much timber, that, except England, she wanted the woods of Fife, which was then wood, by themselves; all that was gotten out of Norway; she was so strong and of so great length and breadth, that it was a year and a day ere she was complete—to wit, she was twelve score foot of length;

and thirtytwo feet within the sides."

The attempt to have outdone all preceding attempts—the *Leviathan* of 1858 alone exceeded. Some of the gallies, from descriptions left us, were superb. *Polyne Philaster* had one built which was four hundred and twenty feet long and thirty-eight broad, and required a complement of four thousand sailors, four thousand soldiers, and three hundred soldiers; but that of *Hiero*, constructed by the renowned Archimedes, consumed wood enough to build sixty large galley ships, and it was fitted up in a style that threw the most splendid of our vessels into a wide distance. There was not only hunting rooms, galleries, baths, library, and a spacious gymnasium, furnished and finished with the most admirable skill and costly materials, with stables, fishponds, mills and gardens, but there was a temple to *Venus*, fitted up in a gorgeous style, the floor being talus with precious stones, the walls of cy, rose wood, ornamented with choice paintings and statues. The warlike appointments of this marine monster were on a corresponding scale of formidable grandeur. The vessel was surrounded by iron bulwarks, like a rampart, massive, and strengthened with eight towers, and there were machines sufficiently powerful to project a stone three hundred pounds weight, or a cast iron half a mile and a half foot long—a distance of half a mile. So wonderful did her magnificence appear to an old writer, that he devoted two volumes to the subject. Considering the great difficulties which have attended the launching of the *Leviathan*, with all our improvements in scientific and mechanical contrivances, it may be equally matter of surprise how this mass could have been propelled into her proper element.

Stick to the Farm.

Amid your plans of the future, never, for one moment, harbor the idea of leaving your condition by entering the ranks of a commercial life. Do not exchange a house of quiet, real enjoyment for the turmoil and illusion of a city residence. Rather not sweep roads for villages of empty wallets, nor let notes due on the morrow assume the prerogatives of the nightmare. Very poor comforters for care and anxiety are these little realities in the commercial world. Stick to the farm. What though hard labor be the every-day command, it is noble, healthful and conducive to the full development to the whole man.

A nobly in feminine costume, more startling and revolutionary than the red petticoat, made its appearance in Broadway. We refer to scarlet trowsers, cut as a causal observer could judge, altogether a la *Turkey*, buttoned closely around the ankle, and producing a very brilliant and impressive effect. Whether it is an imported fashion, invented like crinoline by an empress, or like the Bill-moral petticoat by a queen, or whether like the Bloomer, it is a creature of native genius, in our ignorance on such subjects we are totally unable to say. But we can testify to the combination of Oriental magnificence with Accidental comfort by which this particular pair of flamingoes seemed to be characterized; and to the grace with which by an elevation of sundry other garments rendered necessary from the muddy condition of the streets, they were jauntily displayed.

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