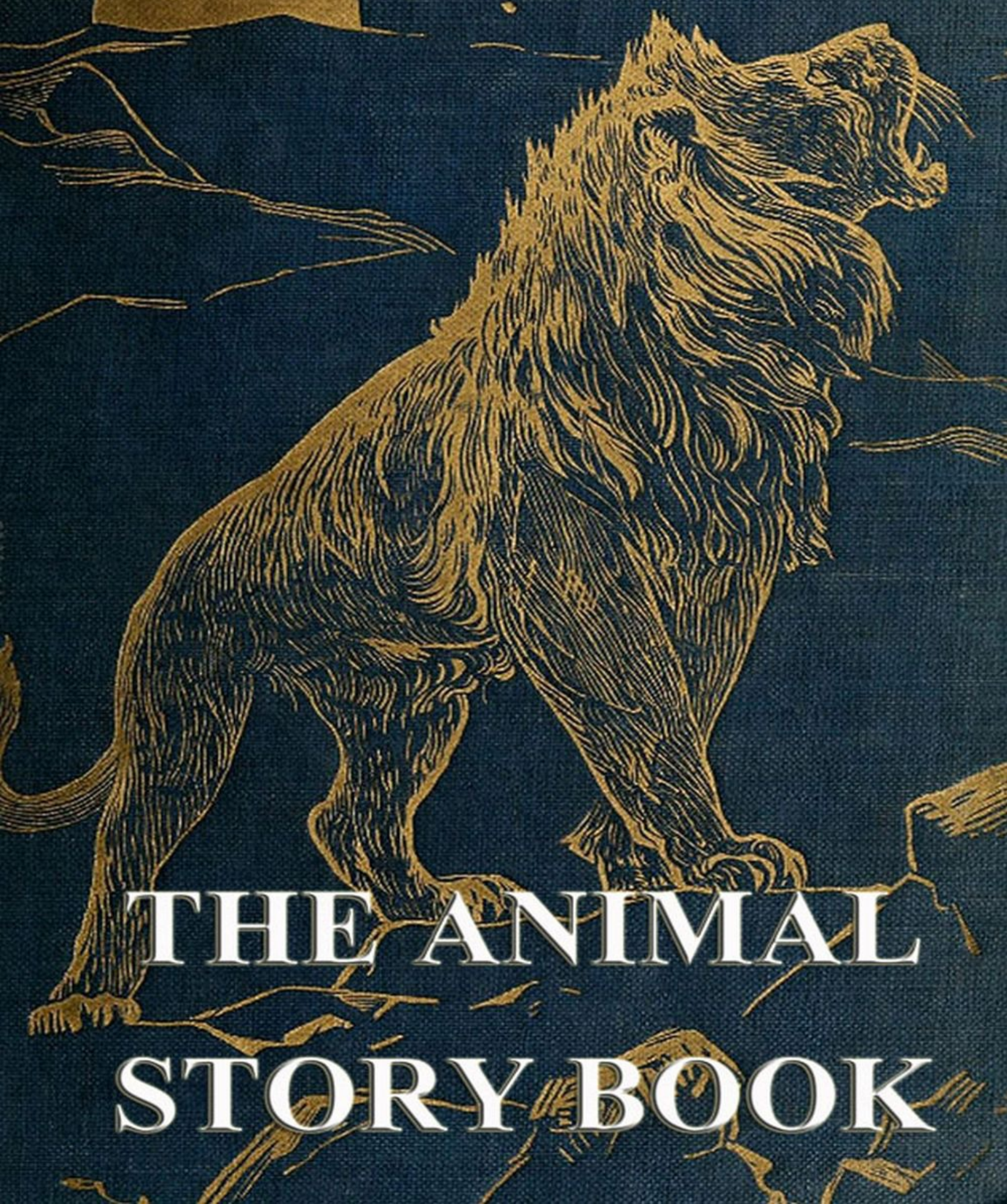


ANDREW LANG



THE ANIMAL
STORY BOOK

The Animal Story Book

Andrew Lang

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www.jazzybee-verlag.de
admin@jazzybee-verlag.de

ANDREW LANG (1844-1912)

Biographical Sketch from "Portraits And Sketches" by
Edmund Gosse

INVITED to note down some of my recollections of Andrew Lang, I find myself suspended between the sudden blow of his death and the slow development of memory, now extending in unbroken friendship over thirty-five years. The magnitude and multitude of Lang's performances, public and private, during that considerable length of time almost paralyse expression; it is difficult to know where to begin or where to stop. Just as his written works are so extremely numerous as to make a pathway through them a formidable task in bibliography, no one book standing out predominant, so his character, intellectual and moral, was full -of so many apparent inconsistencies, so many pitfalls for rash assertion, so many queer caprices of impulse, that in a whole volume of analysis, which would be tedious, one could scarcely do justice to them all. I will venture to put down, almost at haphazard, what I remember that seems to me to have been overlooked, or inexactly stated, by those who wrote, often very sympathetically, at the moment of his death, always premising that I speak rather of a Lang of from 1877 to 1890, when I saw him very frequently, than of a Lang whom younger people met chiefly in Scotland.

When he died, all the newspapers were loud in proclaiming his "versatility." But I am not sure that he was not the very opposite of versatile. I take "versatile" to mean changeable, fickle, constantly ready to alter direction with the weather-cock. The great instance of versatility in literature is Ruskin, who adopted diametrically different views of the same subject at different times of his life, and defended them with equal ardour. To be versatile seems to be unsteady, variable. But Lang was through his long career singularly unaltered; he never changed his point of view; what he liked and admired as a youth he liked and admired as an elderly man. It is true that his interests and knowledge were vividly drawn along a surprisingly large number of channels, but while there was abundance there

does not seem to me to have been versatility. If a huge body of water boils up from a crater, it may pour down a dozen paths, but these will always be the same; unless there is an earthquake, new cascades will not form nor old rivulets run dry. In some authors earthquakes do take place as in Tolstoy, for instance, and in S. T. Coleridge but nothing of this kind was ever manifest in Lang, who was extraordinarily multiform, yet in his varieties strictly consistent from Oxford to the grave. As this is not generally perceived, I will take the liberty of expanding my view of his intellectual development.

To a superficial observer in late life the genius of Andrew Lang had the characteristics which we are in the habit of identifying with precocity. Yet he had not been, as a writer, precocious in his youth. One slender volume of verses represents all that he published in book-form before his thirty-fifth year. No doubt we shall learn in good time what he was doing before he flashed upon the world of journalism in all his panoply of graces, in 1876, at the close of his Merton fellowship. He was then, at all events, the finest finished product of his age, with the bright armour of Oxford burnished on his body to such a brilliance that humdrum eyes could hardly bear the radiance of it. Of the terms behind, of the fifteen years then dividing him from St. Andrews, we know as yet but little; they were years of insatiable acquirement, incessant reading, and talking, and observing gay preparation for a life to be devoted, as no other life in our time has been, to the stimulation of other people's observation and talk and reading. There was no cloistered virtue about the bright and petulant Merton don. He was already flouting and jesting, laughing with Ariosto in the sunshine, performing with a snap of his fingers tasks which might break the back of a pedant, and concealing under an affectation of carelessness a literary ambition which knew no definite bounds.

In those days, and when he appeared for the first time in London, the poet was paramount in him. Jowett is said to have predicted that he would be greatly famous in this line, but I know not what evidence Jowett had before him. Unless I am much mistaken, it was not until Lang left Balliol that his peculiar bent became obvious. Up to that time he had been a promiscuous browser upon books, much occupied, moreover, in the struggle with ancient Greek, and immersed in Aristotle and Homer. But in the early days of his settlement at Merton he began to concentrate his powers, and I think there were certain influences which were instant and far-reaching. Among them one was pre-eminent. When Andrew Lang came up from St. Andrews he had found Matthew Arnold occupying the ancient chair of poetry at Oxford. He was a listener at some at least of the famous lectures which, in 1865, were collected as "Essays in Criticism"; while one of his latest experiences as a Balliol undergraduate was hearing Matthew Arnold lecture on the study of Celtic literature. His conscience was profoundly stirred by "Culture and Anarchy" (1869); his sense of prose-form largely determined by "Friendship's Garland" (1871). I have no hesitation in saying that the teaching and example of Matthew Arnold prevailed over all other Oxford influences upon the intellectual nature of Lang, while, although I think that his personal acquaintance with Arnold was very slight, yet in his social manner there was, in early days, not a little imitation of Arnold's aloofness and superfine delicacy of address. It was unconscious, of course, and nothing would have enraged Lang more than to have been accused of "imitating Uncle Matt."

The structure which his own individuality now began to build on the basis supplied by the learning of Oxford, and in particular by the study of the Greeks, and "dressed" by courses of Matthew Arnold, was from the first eclectic.

Lang eschewed as completely what was not sympathetic to him as he assimilated what was attractive to him. Those who speak of his "versatility" should recollect what large tracts of the literature of the world, and even of England, existed outside the dimmest apprehension of Andrew Lang. It is, however, more useful to consider what he did apprehend; and there were two English books, published in his Oxford days, which permanently impressed him: one of these was "The Earthly Paradise," the other D. G. Rossetti's "Poems." In after years he tried to divest himself of the traces of these volumes, but he had fed upon their honey-dew and it had permeated his veins.

Not less important an element in the garnishing of a mind already prepared for it by academic and aesthetic studies was the absorption of the romantic part of French literature. Andrew Lang in this, as in everything else, was selective. He dipped into the wonderful lucky-bag of France wherever he saw the glitter of romance. Hence his approach, in the early seventies, was threefold: towards the mediaeval *lais* and *chansons*, towards the sixteenth-century Pleiade, and towards the school of which Victor Hugo was the leader in the nineteenth century. For a long time Ronsard was Lang's poet of intensest predilection; and I think that his definite ambition was to be the Ronsard of modern England, introducing a new poetical dexterity founded on a revival of pure humanism. He had in those days what he lost, or at least dispersed, in the weariness and growing melancholia of later years a splendid belief in poetry as a part of the renown of England, as a heritage to be received in reverence from our fathers, and to be passed on, if possible, in a brighter flame. This honest and beautiful ambition to shine as one of the permanent benefactors to national verse, in the attitude so nobly sustained four hundred years ago by Du Bellay and Ronsard, was unquestionably felt by Andrew Lang through

his bright intellectual April, and supported him from Oxford times until 1882, when he published "Helen of Troy." The cool reception of that epic by the principal judges of poetry caused him acute disappointment, and from that time forth he became less eager and less serious as a poet, more and more petulantly expending his wonderful technical gift on fugitive subjects. And here again, when one comes to think of it, the whole history repeated itself, since in "Helen of Troy" Lang simply suffered as Ronsard had done in the "Franciade." But the fact that 1882 was his year of crisis, and the tomb of his brightest ambition, must be recognised by every one who closely followed his fortunes at that time. Lang's habit of picking out of literature and of life the plums of romance, and these alone, comes to be, to the dazzled observer of his extraordinarily vivid intellectual career, the principal guiding line. This determination to dwell, to the exclusion of all other sides of any question, on its romantic side is alone enough to rebut the charge of versatility. Lang was in a sense encyclopaedic; but the vast dictionary of his knowledge had blank pages, or pages pasted down, on which he would not, or could not, read what experience had printed. Absurd as it sounds, there was always something maidenly about his mind, and he glossed over ugly matters, sordid and dull conditions, so that they made no impression whatever upon him. He had a trick, which often exasperated his acquaintances, of declaring that he had "never heard" of things that everybody else was very well aware of. He had "never heard the name" of people he disliked, of books that he thought tiresome, of events that bored him; but, more than this, he used the formula for things and persons whom he did not wish to discuss. I remember meeting in the street a famous professor, who advanced with uplifted hands, and greeted me with "What do you think Lang says now? That he has never heard of Pascal!" This merely signified that Lang, not interested (at all events for the moment) in

Pascal nor in the professor, thus closed at once all possibility of discussion.

It must not be forgotten that we have lived to see him, always wonderful indeed, and always passionately devoted to perfection and purity, but worn, tired, harassed by the unceasing struggle, the lifelong slinging of sentences from that inexhaustible ink-pot. In one of the most perfect of his poems, " Natural Theology," Lang speaks of Cagn, the great hunter, who once was kind and good, but who was spoiled by fighting many things. Lang was never " spoiled," but he was injured; the surface of the radiant coin was rubbed by the vast and interminable handling of journalism. He was jaded by the toil of writing many things. Hence it is not possible but that those who knew him intimately in his later youth and early middle-age should prefer to look back at those years when he was the freshest, the most exhilarating figure in living literature, when a star seemed to dance upon the crest of his already silvering hair. Baudelaire exclaimed of Theophile Gautier: " Homme heureux! homme digne d'envie! il n'a jamais aimé que le Beau!" and of Andrew Lang in those brilliant days the same might have been said. As long as he had confidence in beauty he was safe and strong; and much that, with all affection and all respect, we must admit was rasping and disappointing in his attitude to literature in his later years, seems to have been due to a decreasing sense of confidence in the intellectual sources of beauty. It is dangerous, in the end it must be fatal, to sustain the entire structure of life and thought on the illusions of romance. But that was what Lang did he built his house upon the rainbow.

The charm of Andrew Lang's person and company was founded upon a certain lightness, an essential gentleness and elegance which were relieved by a sharp touch; just as

a very dainty fruit may be preserved from mawkishness by something delicately acid in the rind of it. His nature was slightly inhuman; it was unwise to count upon its sympathy beyond a point which was very easily reached in social intercourse. If any simple soul showed an inclination, in eighteenth-century phrase, to "repose on the bosom" of Lang, that support was immediately withdrawn, and the confiding one fell among thorns. Lang was like an Angora cat, whose gentleness and soft fur, and general aspect of pure amenity, invite to caresses, which are suddenly met by the outspread paw with claws awake. This uncertain and freakish humour was the embarrassment of his friends, who, however, were preserved from despair by the fact that no malice was meant, and that the weapons were instantly sheathed again in velvet. Only, the instinct to give a sudden slap, half in play, half in fretful caprice, was incorrigible. No one among Lang's intimate friends but had suffered from this feline impulse, which did not spare even the serenity of Robert Louis Stevenson. But, tiresome as it sometimes was, this irritable humour seldom cost Lang a friend who was worth preserving. Those who really knew him recognised that he was always shy and usually tired.

His own swift spirit never brooded upon an offence, and could not conceive that any one else should mind what he himself minded so little and forgot so soon. Impressions swept over him very rapidly, and injuries passed completely out of his memory. Indeed, all his emotions were too fleeting, and in this there was something fairy-like; quick and keen and blithe as he was, he did not seem altogether like an ordinary mortal, nor could the appeal to gross human experience be made to him with much chance of success. This, doubtless, is why almost all imaginative literature which is founded upon the darker parts of life, all squalid and painful tragedy, all stories that "don't end well" all religious experiences, all that is not superficial and

romantic, was irksome to him. He tried sometimes to reconcile his mind to the consideration of real life; he concentrated his matchless powers on it; but he always disliked it. He could persuade himself to be partly just to Ibsen or Hardy or Dostoieffsky, but what he really enjoyed was Dumas père, because that fertile romance-writer rose serene above the phenomena of actual human experience. We have seen more of this type in English literature than the Continental nations have in theirs, but even we have seen no instance of its strength and weakness so eminent as Andrew Lang. He was the fairy in our midst, the wonder-working, incorporeal, and tricky fay of letters, who paid for all his wonderful gifts and charms by being not quite a man of like passions with the rest of us. In some verses which he scribbled to R.L.S. and threw away, twenty years ago, he acknowledged this unearthly character, and, speaking of the depredations of his kin, he said:

Faith, they might steal me, w? ma will,
And, ken'd I ony fairy hill
I#d lay me down there, snod and still,
Their land to win;
For, man, I maistly had my fill
O' this world's din

His wit had something disconcerting in its impishness. Its rapidity and sparkle were dazzling, but it was not quite human; that is to say, it conceded too little to the exigencies of flesh and blood. If we can conceive a seraph being fanny, it would be in the manner of Andrew Lang. Moreover, his wit usually danced over the surface of things, and rarely penetrated them. In verbal parry, in ironic misunderstanding, in breathless agility of topsy-turvy movement, Lang was like one of Milton's "yellow-skirted fays," sporting with the helpless, moon-bewildered traveller. His wit often had a depressing, a humiliating

effect, against which one's mind presently revolted. I recollect an instance which may be thought to be apposite: I was passing through a phase of enthusiasm for Emerson, whom Lang very characteristically detested, and I was so ill-advised as to show him the famous epigram called "Brahma." Lang read it with a snort of derision (it appeared to be new to him), and immediately he improvised this parody:

If the wild bowler thinks he bowls,
Or if the batsman thinks he's bowled,
They know not, poor misguided souls,
They, too, shall perish unconsolated.
I am the batsman and the bat,
I am the bowler and the ball,
The umpire, the pavilion cat,
The roller, pitch and stumps, and all

This would make a pavilion cat laugh, and I felt that Emerson was done for. But when Lang had left me, and I was once more master of my mind, I reflected that the parody was but a parody, wonderful for its neatness and quickness, and for its seizure of what was awkward in the roll of Emerson's diction, but essentially superficial. However, what would wit be if it were profound? I must leave it there, feeling that I have not explained why Lang's extraordinary drollery in conversation so often left on the memory a certain sensation of distress.

But this was not the characteristic of his humour at its best, as it was displayed throughout the happiest period of his work. If, as seems possible, it is as an essayist that he will ultimately take his place in English literature, this element will continue to delight fresh generations of enchanted readers. I cannot imagine that the preface to his translation of "Theocritus," "Letters to Dead Authors," "In the Wrong

Paradise," " Old Friends," and " Essays in Little " will ever lose their charm; but future admirers will have to pick their way to them through a tangle of history and anthropology and mythology, where there may be left no perfume and no sweetness. I am impatient to see this vast mass of writing reduced to the limits of its author's delicate, true, but somewhat evasive and ephemeral. genius. However, as far as the circumstances of his temperament permitted, Andrew Lang has left with us the memory of one of our most surprising contemporaries, a man of letters who laboured without cessation from boyhood to the grave, who pursued his ideal with indomitable activity and perseverance, and who was never betrayed except by the loftiness of his own endeavour. Lang's only misfortune was not to be completely in contact with life, and his work will survive exactly where he was most faithful to his innermost illusions.

THE ANIMAL STORY BOOK

PREFACE

Children who have read our Fairy Books may have noticed that there are not so very many fairies in the stories after all. The most common characters are birds, beasts, and fishes, who talk and act like Christians. The reason of this is that the first people who told the stories were not very clever, or, if they were clever, they had never been taught to read and write, or to distinguish between Vegetable, Animal, and Mineral. They took it that all things were ' much of a muchness: ' they were not proud, and held that beast and bird could talk like themselves, only, of course, in a different language.

After offering, then, so many Fairy Books (though the stories are not all told yet), we now present you (in return for a coin or two) with a book about the friends of children and of fairies — the beasts. The stories are all true, more or less, but it is possible that Monsieur Dumas and Monsieur Théophile Gautier rather improved upon their tales. I own that I have my doubts about the bears and serpents in the tales by the Baron Wogan. This gentleman's ancestors were famous Irish people. One of them held Cromweirs soldiers back when they were pursuing Charles II. after Worcester fight. He also led a troop of horse from Dover to the Highlands, where he died of a wound, after fighting for the King. The next Wogan was a friend of Pope and Swift; he escaped from prison after Preston fight, in 1715, and, later, rescued Prince Charlie's mother from confinement in Austria, and took her to marry King James. He next became Governor of Don Quixote's province, La Mancha, in Spain, and was still alive and merry in 1752. Baron Wogan, descended from these heroes, saw no longer any king to fight for, so he went to America and fought bears. No doubt he was as brave as his ancestors, but whether all his stories of serpents are absolutely correct I am not so certain. People have also been heard to express doubts about Mr. Waterton and the Cayman. The terrible tale of Mr. Gully and his deeds of war I know to be accurate, and the story of Oscar, the sentimental tyke, is believed in firmly by the lady who wrote it. As for the stories about Greek and Roman beasts, Pliny, who tells them, is a most respectable author. On the whole, then, this is more or less of a true story-book.

There ought to be a moral; if so, it probably is that we should be kind to all sorts of animals, and, above all, knock trout on the head when they are caught, and don't let the poor things jump about till they die. A chapter of a very

learned sort was written about the cleverness of beasts, proving that there must have been great inventive geniuses among beasts long ago, and that now they have rather got into a habit (which I think a very good one) of being content with the discoveries of their ancestors. This led naturally to some observations on Instinct and Reason; but there may be children who are glad that there was no room for this chapter.

' TOM ' - AN ADVENTURE IN THE LIFE OF A BEAR IN PARIS

Some sixty years ago and more, a well-known artist named Decamps lived in Paris. He was the intimate friend of some of the first authors, artists, and scientific men of the day, and was devotedly fond of animals of all sorts. He loved to paint them, and he kept quite a small menagerie in his studio where a bear, a monkey, a tortoise, and a frog lived (more or less) in peace and harmony together.

The bear's name was ' Tom,' the monkey was called ' Jacko I.,' the frog was 'Mademoiselle Camargo,' and the tortoise ' Gazelle.'

Here follows the story of Tom, the bear.

It was the night of Shrove Tuesday in the year 1832. Tom had as yet only spent six months in Paris, but he was really one of the most attractive bears you could wish to meet.

He ran to open the door when the bell rang, he mounted guard for hours together, halberd in hand, standing on his

hind legs, and he danced a minuet with infinite grace, holding a broomstick behind his head.

He had spent the whole day in the exercise of these varied accomplishments, to the great delight of the frequenters of his master's studio, and had just retired to the press which did duty as his hutch, to seek a little repose, when there was a knock at the street door. Jacko instantly showed such signs of joy that Decamps made a shrewd guess that the visitor could be no other than Fan, the self-elected tutor in chief to the two animals — nor was he mistaken. The door opened, Fan appeared, dressed as a clown, and Jacko flung himself in rapture into his arms.

' Very good, very good,' said Fan, placing the monkey on the table and handing him a cane. 'You're really a charming creature. Carry arms, present arms, make ready, fire! Capital! '

' I'll have a complete uniform made for you, and you shall mount guard instead of me. But I haven't come for you to-night; it's your friend Tom I want. Where may he be?'

' Why, in his hutch, I suppose,' said Decamps.

' Tom! here, Tom! ' cried Fan.

Tom gave a low growl, just to show that he knew very well who they were talking of, but that he was in no hurry to show himself.

' Well! ' exclaimed Fan, ' is this how my orders are obeyed? Tom, my friend, don't force me to resort to extreme measures.'

Tom stretched one great paw beyond the cupboard without allowing any more of his person to be seen, and began to yawn plaintively like a child just wakened from its first sleep.

'Where is the broomstick?' inquired Fan in threatening tones, and rattling the collection of Indian bows, arrows, and spears which stood behind the door.

'Ready!' cried Decamps, pointing to Tom, who, on hearing these well known sounds, had roused himself without more ado, and advanced towards his tutor with a perfectly innocent and unconscious air.

'That's right,' said Fan: 'now be a good fellow, particularly as one has come all this way on purpose to fetch you.'

Tom waved his head up and down.

'So, so — now shake hands with your friends: — first rate!'

'Do you mean to take him with you?' asked Decamps.

'Rather!' replied Fan; 'and give him a good time into the bargain.'

'And where are you going?'

'To the Carnival Masked Ball, nothing less! Now then Tom, my friend, come along. We've got a cab outside waiting by the hour.'

As though fully appreciating the force of this argument, Tom trundled down stairs four steps at a time followed by his friend. The driver opened the cab door, and Tom, under

Fan's guidance, stepped in as if he had done nothing else all his life.

' My eye! that's a queer sort of a fancy dress,' said cabby; ' anyone might take him for a real bear. Where to, gentlemen? '

' Odeon Theatre,' said Fan.

' Grrrooonnn,' observed Tom.

' All right,' said the cabman. ' Keep your temper. It' s a good step from here, but we shall get there all in good time.'

Half an hour later the cab drew up at the door of the theatre. Fan got down first, paid the driver, handed out Tom, took two tickets, and passed in without exciting any special attention.

At the second turn they made round the crush-room people began to follow Fan. The perfection with which the newcomer imitated the walk and movements of the animal whose skin he wore attracted the notice of some lovers of natural history. They pressed closer and closer, and anxious to find out whether he was equally clever in imitating the bear's voice, they began to pull his hairs and prick his ears — ' Grrrooonnn,' said Tom.

A murmur of admiration ran through the crowd — nothing could be more lifelike.

Fan led Tom to the buffet and offered him some little cakes, to which he was very partial, and which he proceeded to swallow with so admirable a pretence of voracity that the bystanders burst out laughing. Then the mentor poured out a tumbler full of water, which Tom took gingerly between

his paws, as he was accustomed to whenever Decamps did him the honour of permitting him to appear at table, and gulped down the contents at one draught. Enthusiasm knew no bounds! Indeed such was the delight and interest shown that when, at length, Fan wished to leave the buffet, he found they were hemmed in by so dense a crowd that he felt nervous lest Tom should think of clearing the road with claws and teeth. So he promptly led his bear to a corner, placed him with his back against the wall, and told him to stay there till further orders.

As has been already mentioned, this kind of drill was quite familiar to Tom, and was well suited to his natural indolence, and when a harlequin offered his hat to complete the picture, he settled himself comfortably, gravely laying one great paw on his wooden gun.

'Do you happen to know,' said Fan to the obliging harlequin, ' who you have lent your hat to? '

' No,' replied harlequin.

' You mean to say you don't guess? '

' Not in the least.'

' Come, take a good look at him. From the grace of all his movements, from the manner in which he carries his head, slightly on one side, like Alexander the Great — from the admirable imitations of the bear's voice — you don't mean to say you don't recognise him? '

' Upon my word I don't.'

' Odry! ' whispered Fan mysteriously; ' Odry, in his costume from ' ' The Bear and the Pacha "!' '

' Oh, but he acts a *white* bear, you know.'

' Just so; that's why he has chosen a brown bear's skin as a disguise.'

'Ho, ho! You're a good one,' cried harlequin.

' Grrooonnn,' observed Tom.

' Well, now you mention it, I do recognise his voice. Really, I wonder it had not struck me before. Do ask him to disguise it better.'

' Yes, yes,' said Fan, moving towards the ball-room, ' but it will never do to worry him. However, I'll try to persuade him to dance a minuet presently.'

' Oh, could you really? '

' He promised to do so. Just give a hint to your friends and try to prevent their teasing him.'

' All right.'

Tom made his way through the crowd, whilst the delighted harlequin moved from one mask to another, telling his news with warnings to be discreet, which were well received. Just then, too, the sounds of a lively gallop were heard, and a general rush to the ball-room took place, harlequin only pausing to murmur in Tom's ear: ' I know you, my fine mask.'

' Grrooonnn,' replied Tom.

' Ah, it's all very well to growl, but you'll dance a minuet, won't you, old fellow? '

Tom waved his head up and down as his way was when anyone asked him a question, and harlequin, satisfied with this silent consent, ran off to find a columbine and to dance the gallop.

Meanwhile, Tom remained alone with the waiters; motionless at his post, but with longing eyes turned towards the counter on which the most tempting piles of cake were heaped on numerous dishes. The waiters, remarking his wrapped attention, and pleased to tempt a customer, stretched out a dish, Tom extended his paw and gingerly took a cake — then a second — then a third: the waiters seemed never tired of offering, or Tom of accepting these delicacies, and so, when the gallop ended and the dancers returned to the crush-room, he had made short work of some dozens of little cakes.

Harlequin had recruited a columbine and a shepherdess, and he introduced these ladies as partners for the promised minuet. With all the air of an old friend he whispered a few words to Tom, who, in the best of humours after so many cakes, replied with his most gracious growl. The harlequin, turning towards the gallery, announced that his lordship had much pleasure in complying with the universal request, and amidst loud applause, the shepherdess took one of Tom's paws and the columbine the other. Tom, for his part, like an accomplished cavalier, walked between his two partners, glancing at them by turns with looks of some surprise, and soon found himself with them in the middle of the pit of the theatre which was used as a ball-room. All took their places, some in the boxes, others in the galleries, the greater number forming a circle round the dancers. The band struck up.

The minuet was Tom's greatest triumph and Fan's masterpiece, and with the very first steps success was assured and went on increasing with each movement, till at the last figure the applause became delirious. Tom was swept off in triumph to a stage box where the shepherdess, removing her wreath of roses, crowned him with it, whilst the whole theatre resounded with the applause of the spectators.

Tom leant over the front of the box with a grace all his own; at the same time the strains of a fresh dance were heard, and everyone hurried to secure partners except a few courtiers of the new star who hovered round in hope of extracting an order for the play from him, but Tom only replied to their broadest hints with his perpetual 'Grroonnn.'

By degrees this became rather monotonous, and gradually Tom's court dwindled away, people murmuring that, though his dancing powers were certainly unrivalled, his conversation was a trifle insipid. An hour later Tom was alone! So fleeting is public favour.

And now the hour of departure drew near. The pit was thinning and the boxes empty, and pale rays of morning light were glinting into the hall when the box-opener, who was going her rounds, heard sounds of snoring proceeding from one of the stage boxes. She opened the door, and there was Tom, who, tired out after his eventful night, had fallen fast asleep on the floor. The box-opener stepped in and politely hinted that it was six o'clock and time to go home. 'Grrooonnn,' said Tom.

'I hear you,' said the box-opener; 'you're asleep, my good man, but you'll sleep better still in your own bed. Come,

come, your wife must be getting quite anxious! Upon my word I don't believe he hears a word I say. How heavily he sleeps! ' And she shook him by the shoulder.

' Grrrooonnn! '

' All right, all right! This isn't a time to make believe. Besides, we all know you. There now, they're putting out the lights. Shall I send for a cab for you? '

' Grrrooonnn.'

' Come, come, the Odeon Theatre isn't an inn; come, be off! Oh, that's what you're after, is it? Fie, Monsieur Odry, fie! I shall call the guard; the inspector hasn't gone to bed yet. Ah, indeed! You won't obey rules! You are trying to beat me, are you? You would beat a woman — and a former artiste to M. Odry, would you? For shame! But we shall see. Here, help — police — inspector—help!'

' What's the matter? ' cried the fireman on duty. ' Help! ' screamed the box-opener, ' help! '

' What's the matter? ' asked the sergeant commanding the patrol.

' Oh, it's old mother what's her name, shrieking for help in one of the stage boxes.'

' Coming! ' shouted the sergeant.

' This way, Mr. Sergeant, this way,' cried the box-opener.

' All right, my dear, here I am. But where are you? '

' Don't be afraid; there are no steps — straight on this way — he's in the corner. Oh, the rascal, he's as strong as a Turk! '

' Grrrooonnn,' said Tom.

' There, do you hear him? Is that to be called a Christian language? '

' Come, come, my friend,' said the sergeant, who had at last managed to distinguish Tom in the faint twilight. ' We all know what it is to be young — no one likes a joke better than I do — but rules are rules, and the hour for going home has struck, so right about face, march! and quick step too.'

' Grrrooonnn ' —

' Very pretty; a first-rate imitation. But suppose we try something else now for a change. Come, old fellow, step out with a good will. Ah! you won't. You're going to cut up rough, are you? Here, my man, lay hold and turn him out.'

' He won't walk, sergeant.'

' Well, what are the butt ends of your muskets for? Come, a tap or two will do no harm.'

' Grrrooonnn — Grrrooonnn — Grrrooonnn — '

' Go on, give it him well! '

' I say, sergeant,' said one of the men, ' it strikes me he's a real bear. I caught hold of him by the collar just now, and the skin seems to grow on the flesh.'

' Oh, if he's a real bear treat him with every consideration. His owner might claim damages. Go and fetch the fireman's lantern.'

' Grrrooonnn.'

'Here's the lantern,' said a man; 'now then, throw some light on the prisoner.'

The soldier obeyed.

' It is certainly a real snout,' declared the sergeant.

' Goodness gracious me! ' shrieked the box-opener as she took to her heels, ' a real live bear! '

'Well, yes, a real live bear. Let's see if he has any name or address on him and take him home. I expect he has strayed, and being of a sociable disposition, came in to the Masked Ball.'

' Grrrooonun.'

' There, you see, he agrees.'

' Hallo! ' exclaimed one of the soldiers.

' What's the matter? '

' He has a little bag hung round his neck.'

' Open the bag.'

' A card.'

' Read the card.'

The soldier took it and read:

' My name is Tom. I live at No. 109 Rue Faubourg St. - Denis. I have five francs in my purse. Two for a cab, and three for whoever takes me home.'

' True enough; there are the five francs,' cried the sergeant.
' Now then, two volunteers for escort duty.'

'Here! ' cried the guard in chorus.

' Don't all speak at once! Let the two seniors have the benefit of the job; off with you, my lads.'

Two of the municipal guards advanced towards Tom, slipped a rope round his neck and, for precaution's sake, gave it a twist or two round his snout. Tom offered no resistance — the butt ends of the muskets had made him as supple as a glove. When they were fifty yards from the theatre, ' Bah! ' said one of the soldiers, ' 'tis a fine morning. Suppose we don't take a cab. The walk will do him good.'

'Besides,' remarked the other, 'we should each have two and a half francs instead of only one and a half.'

' Agreed.'

Half an hour later they stood at the door of 109. After some knocking, a very sleepy portress looked out.

'Look here, Mother Wideawake,' said one of the guard; ' here's one of your lodgers. Do you recognise him? '

'Why, I should rather think so. It's Monsieur Decamps' bear! '

The same day, Odry the actor received a bill for little cakes., amounting to seven francs and a half.

SAI THE PANTHER

About seventy or eighty years ago two little panthers were deserted by their mother in one of the forests of Ashantee. They were too young to get food for themselves, and would probably have died had they not been found by a passing traveller, and by him taken to the palace as a present to the king. Here they lived and played happily for several weeks, when one day the elder and larger, whose name was Sai, gave his brother, in fun, such a dreadful squeeze that, without meaning it, he suffocated him. This frightened the king, who did not care to keep such a powerful pet about him, and he gave him away to Mr. Hutchison, an English gentleman, who was a sort of governor for the English traders settled in that part of Africa.

Mr. Hutchison and Sai took a great fancy to each other, and spent a great deal of time together, and when, a few months later, Mr. Hutchison returned to Cape Coast he brought Sai with him. The two friends always had dinner at the same time, Sai sitting at his master's side and eating quietly whatever was given him. In general he was quite content with his portion, but once or twice, when he was hungrier than usual, he managed to steal a fowl out of the dish. For the sake of his manners the fowl was always taken from him, although he was invariably given some other food to satisfy his hunger.

At first the inhabitants of the castle and the children were much afraid of him, but he soon became very tame, and his teeth and claws were filed so that he should not hurt anyone, even in play. When he got a little accustomed to the place, he was allowed to go where he liked within the castle grounds, and a boy was told off to look after him. Sometimes the boy would go to sleep when he ought to have been watching his charge, and then Sai, who knew perfectly well that this was not at all right, would steal quietly away and amuse himself till he thought his keeper would be awake again. One day, when he returned from his wanderings, he found the boy, as usual, comfortably curled up in a cool corner of the doorstep sound asleep. Sai" looked at him for a moment, and then, thinking that it was full time for him to be taught his duty, he gave him one pat on his head, which sent the boy over like a nine-pin and gave him a good fright, though it did not do him any harm.

Sai was very popular with everybody, but he had his own favourites, and the chief of these was the governor, whom he could not bear to let out of his sight. When his master went out he would station himself at the drawing-room window, where he could watch all that was going on, and catch the first sight of his returning friend. Being by this time nearly grown up, Sai's great body took up all the space, to the great disgust of the children, who could see nothing. They tried to make him move, first by coaxings and then by threats, but as Sai did not pay the smallest attention to either one or the other, they at last all took hold of his tail and pulled so hard that he was forced to move.

Strange to say, the black people were a great deal more afraid of Sai than any of the white ones, and one of his pranks nearly caused the death of an old woman who was the object of it. It was her business to sweep out and keep

clean the great hall of the castle, and one morning she was crouching down on all fours with a short broom in her hand, thinking of nothing but how to get the dust out of the floor, when Sai, who had hidden himself under a sofa, and was biding his time, suddenly sprang on to her back, where he stood triumphantly. The old woman believed her last hour had come, and the other servants all ran away shrieking, lest it should be their turn next. Sai' would not budge from his position till the governor, who had been alarmed by the terrible noise, came to see what was the matter, and soon made Master Sai" behave himself.

At this time it was settled that Sai' was to travel to England under the care of one of his Cape Coast friends and be presented to the Duchess of York, who was very fond of animals. In those days, of course, journeys took much longer than they do now, and there were other dangers than any which might arise from storms and tempests. While the strong cage of wood and iron was being built which was to form Sai's house on the way to England, his lady keeper thought it would be a good opportunity to make friends with him, and used to spend part of every day talking to him and playing with him; for this, as everyone knows, is the only way to gain the affection of bird or beast. It was very easy to love Sai'; he was so gentle and caressing, especially with children; and he was very handsome besides in his silky yellow coat with black spots, which, as the French say, does not spoil anything. Many creatures and many men might have made a great fuss at being shut into a cage instead of being allowed to walk about their own house and grounds, but everyone had always been kind to Sai, so he took for granted it was all right, and made himself as comfortable as he could, and was quite prepared to submit to anything disagreeable that he thought reasonable. But it very nearly happened that poor Sai" had no voyage at all, for while he was being