

LESSING'S FABLES

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Lessing's Fables by F. Storr

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LESSING'S FABLES

EDITED, WITH NOTES

BY

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P R E F A C E.

Few words are necessary to explain the plan on which this little book has been composed, the objects which it is intended to serve, and the way in which it is meant to be used.

I have for several years taken Lessing's Fables as a first German reading-book. The simplicity of the subject-matter and the language, the shortness of the fables, one or more of which can be read through at a sitting, and, not least, the excellence of the style, an excellence which young boys are quite capable of appreciating, seemed to recommend the book as the best possible German primer. The chief drawback I found in using it was the unequal difficulty of the fables, the first book, as it happens, containing by far the hardest. This I have sought to remedy by rearranging them approximately according to their difficulty.

Most teachers will agree that the chief stumbling-block in the way of learning German is the disproportionate time that a beginner takes in looking out words. I need not here vindicate the principle of Glossaries *versus* Dictionaries. If any are still unconvinced, let them read the preface to Mr. Quick's *Companion to Wilhelm Tell*, or, better still, let them give the glossary system a trial for a single term.

In so short a volume I have not thought it necessary to adopt Mr. Quick's charmingly simple but (for the composer) repulsively laborious plan of giving each word in the order of the text. Whenever I thought the beginner would be likely not to know what to look out in the glossary I have helped him in a note.

In the glossary I have been careful to give in each case the primitive meaning of a word as well as the special meanings which occur in the text. As to etymology, I have added cognate English words, except when they were too obvious to require notice, or too remote to come home to an average schoolboy. Quite apart from the value of the knowledge for itself, I have found by experience that etymology is an invaluable aid to a boy's memory in German almost as much as in French. By these additions, no less than by its omissions, I hope that the glossary will prove more serviceable to the schoolboy than the ordinary dictionary.

The work is meant to be a first German reading-book. Directly a boy has learnt the article, the indicatives of *sein*, *haben*, and *loben*, and perhaps the adjective, I would set him down to the Fables. Let him pick up the grammar as he goes along, and as he requires it, instead of wasting his energy in what must be a distasteful, and what will seem to him an unpractical, study.

CONTENTS.

N.B.—The figures within parentheses refer to the Book and Fable in the original edition of Lessing.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	xi
Buch I.	
1. Die Ziegen,	(2. 24), 1
2. Der Springer im Schaf,	(1. 29), 1
3. Aesopus und der Esel,	(1. 30), 2
4. Das Schaf,	(2. 23), 2
5. Der Sperling und der Strauß,	(1. 19), 2
6. Der Rabe,	(3. 6), 3
7. Der Phönix,	(1. 13), 3
8. Die Eiche und das Schwein,	(1. 15), 3
9. Der Pfau und der Hahn,	(3. 27), 4
10. Der Geist des Salomo,	(3. 3), 4
11. Der Esel und der Wolf,	(1. 28), 5
12. Die Wohlthaten, I.	(3. 13), 5
13. " II.	(3. 14), 5
14. Die Wasserschlange,	(2. 13), 6
15. Die Nachtigall und der Habicht,	(1. 11), 6
16. Jupiter und Apollo,	(2. 12), 6

		PAGE
17. Die Fische,	(3. 15),	7
18. Die Sperlinge,	(1. 17),	7
19. Die Geschichte des alten Wolfs, I.	(3. 16),	7
20. " " II.	(3. 17),	8
21. " " III.	(3. 18),	9
22. " " IV.	(3. 19),	9
23. " " V.	(3. 20),	10
24. " " VI.	(3. 21),	11
25. " " VII.	(3. 22),	11
26. Der Rangstreit der Thiere, I.	(3. 7),	12
27. " " II.	(3. 8),	12
28. " " III.	(3. 9),	13
29. " " IV.	(3. 10),	13

Buch II.

1. Der Affe und der Fuchs,	(1. 6),	15
2. Der Löwe und der Hase,	(1. 3),	15
3. Die Nachtgall und der Pfau,	(1. 7),	16
4. Der Wolf und der Schäfer,	(1. 8),	16
5. Zeus und das Schaf,	(2. 18),	16
6. Das Roß und der Stier,	(1. 9),	17
7. Der kriegerische Wolf,	(1. 12),	18
8. Der Löwe und der Tiger,	(1. 26),	18
9. Der Fuchs und der Storch,	(1. 21),	18
10. Der Stier und der Hirsch,	(1. 27),	19
11. Der Fuchs,	(2. 22),	19
12. Der Dornstrauch,	(2. 27),	19
13. Herkules,	(2. 2),	20
14. Der Stier und das Kalb,	(2. 5),	20