

**A CENTURY OF
FABLES. IN VERSE**

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A Century Of Fables. In Verse by W. R. Evans

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W. R. EVANS

**A CENTURY OF
FABLES. IN VERSE**

A Century of Fables.

IN VERSE.

FOR THE MOST PART PARAPHRASED OR IMITATED
FROM VARIOUS LANGUAGES.

By W. R. EVANS.

"Duplex libelli dos est: quod risum movet,
Et quod prudenti vitam consilio monet."

PHÆD. Fab.

"Beloved as Fable, yet believed as Truth."

BULWER-LYTTON.

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1860.

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TO
THE RIGHT HON.
THE LORD BROUGHAM,
Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh.

THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF KIND ENCOURAGEMENT
RECEIVED AT HIS HANDS BY
THE AUTHOR.

12

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14

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16



PREFACE.

THIS unpretending Work is offered to the public, not as the mature and studied production of a professed author, but merely as the fruit of literary recreation to which the Writer has been enabled to devote himself in the restricted leisure which a journeyman printer may enjoy ; or perhaps he might be permitted to say, as the precursory blossoms of a fruit which he trusts may subsequently develop itself.

Attached to the study of languages, for philological purposes, the fruit of this study the Author hopes to exhibit hereafter in the form of scientific writings. Meanwhile, with, as he believes, some natural or acquired aptitude for versification, but lacking that poetical imagination which would enable him to produce original verse of much worth, he has varied his severer studies, from time to time, by rendering into English metre any attractive foreign poems met with in his reading, when they were not of such length as to distract his attention from more solid employment.

By this means he has accumulated a number of metrical translations (some of which have appeared in "BEAUTIFUL POETRY" and other Magazines); and among these, some months ago, he possessed a number of Fables,—a species of composition to which he had ever been partial.

These Fables were twenty or more in number; and to them the Author resolved to add sufficient to constitute a collection which might assume the form of a small volume, and, after some further progress, fixed the number he would translate at one hundred, to be published under the title of this work.

But in proceeding to carry out this intention, he found himself constrained to modify his original plan of merely translating from poetical versions, and of admitting only such Fables as were almost or entirely unknown to English readers; for, in following this method, he could scarcely have obtained a hundred Fables, even from collections containing thousands, equal to his proposed standard of excellence. Therefore, extending his field of selection, he began to cull from prose as well as poetical authors, even including, in some few instances, English authors of the former class, and making new metrical versions of various Fables which have long been popular in a prose dress;

but, as far as he knew, he always avoided competition with any popular translator or adapter.

While increasing his stock of materials, the Author also found it advisable to vary his mode of dealing with them; that is to say, instead of merely translating even in a free manner, he began to paraphrase, imitate, or adapt; and in some cases wrote Fables which had little but the moral in common with those by which they were suggested.

In short, his object has not been to represent authors, but to present Fables in the best English form he could; and he hopes that in general the marks of the translator will not be found upon his work. If he has not succeeded in so thoroughly anglicizing his originals as to obliterate all traces of alien diction or habits of thought, he has failed in his purpose; but if his more critical readers, on perusal of a Fable previously unfamiliar to them, should turn to the Table of Contents to discover the primary author and his language, the Writer would feel this a cause for self-gratulation. In this table he has sought to define the obligations under which he lies to various writers; attributing to them the invention of the story, while often claiming for himself the authorship of the poem, whatever credit may be attached to this.