

FABLES IN SONG

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Fables in song by Robert Lord Lytton

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ROBERT LORD LYTTON

FABLES IN SONG

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FABLES IN SONG.

BY

ROBERT LORD LYTTON,

AUTHOR OF "POEMS BY OWEN MEREDITH."

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INTRODUCTORY.

1.

HAD I miss'd my way? It would seem so. Still,
Scarce past is an hour of the matin prime
Since safe I was sitting in front of the mill;
Where my first walk ever, this pure May time,
Under the beeches, and round by the rill,
'Twixt brawling ripple, and rustling bough,
Hath its wonted end, by the brook; that, now
When the sweet birds sing together,
Carolling clear in the cool, comes down
From the breezy hills, and the sunburnt heather;
Guided about to his goal unknown
By a glimmer of primrose buds new blown,
And their breath on the balmy weather.

2.

Well, there by the mill, as I say,
Where, between them, the brook and the bough;
For my sake make a musical bower,
Safe I sat in the morn of the day;
And since there I was sitting, I vow
That the day is scarce older an hour.
But now?
Where am I? who ought to know
Every inch of this leafy land.
Yet here, but a step at the most, or two,
From the door of the well-known mill
(Which all the while must be near at hand,
For the sound of it follows me still)
I am lost in a forest whose glades expand
O'er me, before me, immense and dense;
Where shadow and sighing sound profound
Pour into my spirit a sense intense
Of dimness and distance; and, turning around
And around myself, I no further have got
Than the wheel of that mill, which, the more to
confound
My confusion, I hear, tho' I see it not.

3.

I did well to be on my guard!
'Tho' my caution avail'd not much.
One step more over the sward
Which had seem'd so safe and hard,
And the grass, or whatever I took for such,
Giving suddenly way at my foot's first touch,
Down with it, down, I fell
Into the depths of a dell
Sunless and silent and deep
As the dim caverns of sleep.

4.

There, thro' the gloom in distress
Gazing around, I could see
That some four-footed stray-away less
Keen of eye, or of footstep steady
Than I myself, had been caught already
By the snare which had thus caught me.
In the hug of those horrible rocks,
Unacquainted companions we,
Like two vagabonds set in the stocks.
But what could the creature be?
A fox? Was it, truly, a fox?
Ha! how got the rascal here?