



WOODCUT OF AESOP.

AROUND THE EARLIEST SPANISH VERSION OF AESOP'S FABLES.

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FABLES and parables have always played a prominent part in the history of the human race. They are credited with guiding the minds of men to vital decisions in times of crisis. We all remember the "pretty tale" of Menenius Agrippa as presented in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* about the members of the body and its success in placating the "company of mutinous citizens"—in terms of reputed history the story of the secession of the plebeians to the Sacred Mount in 494 B.C. Even so recently as last October (1940) a German spokesman was glad to avail himself for his purpose of the fable of the grasshopper and the ant.

The fable partakes of the nature of dramatic dialogue; indeed, it may have been the germ from which drama gradually emerged. It is perhaps not entirely without significance that the Latin word "fabula" has the two meanings, fable and drama.

Example is better than precept in the sense that the human mind apprehends more readily in most cases what it can visualise than it does any abstract statement. The fable or parable puts before a man issues as they present themselves in daily life. The moral, or psychological, problem becomes vivid and real; the solution designed by its author, if the illustrative story has been deftly told, has an inevitableness about it that alike for good or ill is equally potent. In the hands of the skilful narrator the mind of the listener is plastic as often no other method of appeal could render it.

Between the fable and the parable there are points of likeness. Both aim at correcting what is wrong, and seek to achieve their end by means of a story. The characters in the fable are

provided by animals and plants, which for the purpose are endued with powers of speech and reasoning. The fable is designed for the inculcation of some moral truth of a general kind, or the enforcement of some maxim of worldly wisdom, which it tries to accomplish by arousing the interest of the listener and stimulating his sense of humour.

The parable, although it too adopts the story as its form of communication, is in reality in a different category to the fable. Whilst the fabulist is concerned with the errors of mankind from the standpoint of their folly, the author of a parable endeavours to treat them on a plane where right replaces prudence as a guiding principle of action. With this loftier end in view, there is no place in the parable for animals and plants as actors without crediting them with the possession of those spiritual qualities by which man believes that he is essentially distinguished from them.

The difference between the fable and the parable becomes more marked when to the lesson which the speaker or writer of a fable wishes to impress, there is added a touch of satire with a personal application—"De te fabula narratur". The design of the narrator is, in fact, in such cases to depress rather than to elevate; it is, indeed, only a way on his part of manifesting his own ascendancy. There may be a latent strain of satire in a parable which the teller of it does not altogether wish to conceal, but he does not allow it to distract from the purpose of his story—to restore the erring one to paths of sanity and rectitude. The Prophet may say "Thou art the man", but it is not in order to achieve a fleeting triumph at the expense of the King that the words are uttered.

The distinction between fable and parable is not always clearly marked. The parable of Jotham to the men of Shechem (Judges ix) approximates closely in character to the form of the fable.

To draw attention to the differences between the parable and the fable is not to detract from the value of the latter as a medium for the communication of ethical ideas. Like the lower forms of currency the importance of the fable is to be gauged not merely by its intrinsic worth, but by the extent and facility of its cir-

ulation among all ranks of society, and with persons of all ages. Judged by such a standard, it must be accorded a high place in that class of imaginative literature which under an ingenuous aspect can veil a serious purpose.

There is nothing which we receive with so much Reluctance as Advice. We look upon the Man who gives it us as offering an Affront to our Understanding, and treating us like Children or Ideots. We consider the Instruction as an implicit Censure, and the Zeal which any one shews for our Good on such an Occasion as a Piece of Presumption or Impertinence. The Truth of it is, the Person who pretends to advise, does, in that Particular, exercise a Superiority over us, and can have no other Reason for it, but that, in comparing us with himself, he thinks us defective either in our Conduct or our Understanding. For these Reasons, there is nothing so difficult as the Art of making Advice agreeable; . . . But among all the different Ways of giving Counsel, I think the finest, and that which pleases the most universally, is *Fable*, in whatsoever Shape it appears.—(Addison.)

J. Jacobs, in the *History of the Æsopic Fable*, vol. 1 of his reprint of Caxton's edition of the *Fables of Æsop* (Bibliothèque de Carabas, 4, 5, 1889), expresses his doubts as to the continuance of the appeal by the fable to the modern mind. "Has it a future as a mode of literary expression? Scarcely; its method is at once too simple and too roundabout. Too roundabout; for the truths we have to tell we prefer to speak out directly and not by way of allegory. And the truths the Fable has to teach are too simple to correspond to the facts of our complex civilisation; its rude *graffiti* of human nature cannot reproduce the subtle gradations of modern life" (pp. 219-220). I do not share these misgivings. Simplicity of form and subtlety of thought are not incompatible. If the soul of wit is brevity, then its embodiment surely is simplicity. One cannot conceive of a time in this world when the sense of humour, the balance-wheel of life, should have lost its power. Not in Aesop alone, but in Greek literature and art generally, simplicity is the element which imparts to each work that sincerity of expression whence spring its permanence and vital force.

There is a temptation to consider as apocryphal the various accounts of Aesop's life recorded in ancient authors, and, further, a tendency amongst some writers to minimise the importance of his contribution to the world's storehouse of ethical tales.

Even if parallels can be discovered in Oriental literature that may have been the remote source from which by devious channels similar motifs have found their way into the fables of Aesop, it is at his hands, if we do not wish to disregard tradition altogether, that they received form and colour congruent to the Western mind, of which the Greeks were the first and greatest interpreters.

The literature relating to Aesop and the fable is so large and its ramifications so extensive that any attempt to survey even a corner of the field would not only be impossible, but inappropriate, within the compass of a short article. If we select for notice the *History of the Æsopic Fable*, by J. Jacobs, already referred to, and *Les fabulistes latins*, by L. Hervieux (5 vols. 1893-1899), we mention these works without prejudice to the merits of the valuable contributions by other scholars to the study of the subject.

That the versatile and witty minds of the men and women of the renaissance should have been attracted by the humour of the Aesopic fable with its applicability to all the phases and incidents of human life is hardly surprising. The number of editions and translations of the Fables which were printed in the fifteenth century supplies convincing evidence on this point. We find that no fewer than seventy editions and versions of various kinds came from the press in this period, besides sixty-three editions of the metrical paraphrase *Aesopus moralisatus* which has been attributed to Gualterus Anglicus, the chaplain of Henry II of England. The earliest of all these to appear is the Latin translation of Omnibonus Leonicensis which is believed to have been printed at Venice by Christopher Valdarfer about 1470-1471. The first edition of the Greek text (which was accompanied by the Latin translation of Rinuccio) was issued by Bonus Accursius at Milan about 1480.

Of these various versions of the Aesopic fables issued in the fifteenth century the one which forms the subject of the present article is the earliest edition of the first Spanish translation printed at Toulouse in 1488, of which the only known copy is in the John Rylands Library.

The contents of the text of the volume can be summarised

Comēço el libro tercero del Esopo varon
muy sabio y declarissimo ingenjo.

La primera fabula del leon ⁊ del pastor.



Como los poderosos devē fazer
gracia alos pequeños et meno/
res. ⁊ que avn q̄ passe largo tiem/
po nō devē olvidar la gracia los
que la ffescibē: pñeua esta fabu/
la. Andādo el leon en vna mon/
taña crzo el camjino. y assy passan/
do por lugar espinoso se le entro
vna espina en la mano la qual le
causo materia ⁊ venjio enella. et yendo por el mōte coxo de
la mano encōtro con vn pastor. Al qual como viēse el leon
comiença delo falagar con la cola teniendo alçada la mano
Uiendo el pastor venir para si al leon fuerte et espantoso: et
turbado de su pñencia començo dele dar del ganado que co/
miesse. Mas el leon non curando del comer: mas antes bu/
scando melezina: puso la mano en el seno del pastor. et como
viēse el pastor la llaga ⁊ mchazon en la mano: entendio lo q̄
q̄ria el leon. ⁊ cō su buen ingenjo con vna lezne aguda poco

5 11

briefly. The life of Aesop extends from fo. [ii]a to fo. xxxa. Four books of Aesop, being the collection associated with the name "Romulus", follow—fo. xxxb to fo. lxix—each containing twenty fables. Next, "Las fabulas extravagantes del Esopo comiençan enesta orden" (17 fables)—fo. lxixb to fo. lxxxviiia. Then from fo. lxxxviib to fo. xcvb: "Siguien algunas fabulas del Esopo de la translaçion nueva de remigio" (17 fables). The fables of Avianus (27) occur next—fo. xcvia to fo. cxiiia. Then on fo. cxiiib we find: "Aqui comiēçan las fabulas coletas de Alfonso z de Poggio z de otros enla forma z orden siguiente", with a subheading on fo. cxxxvia, "Aqui comiençan las fabulas añadidas". This section comprises twenty-six fables in all and ends on fo. cxxxixa, on which page beneath the concluding lines of the text occur the colophon and the printers' device. The work concludes with a list of contents—fo. cxxxixb to fo. [142]a, or rather fo. [140]a, if the error in the foliation of the volume indicated elsewhere is corrected.

On fo. [1] verso is a portrait of Aesop, "I Z O P O", misshapen, it is true, but less displeasing perhaps than some which are to be found in the early editions (see facsimile). He is facing towards the left in this volume, which is the opposite direction to that in some of the celebrated fifteenth-century editions. This woodcut is, however, not a mere reverse of these, as the various objects and beings, intended to exemplify the sources from which Aesop drew his moral lessons, which are placed on either side of him, are quite differently drawn. The woodcuts, too, of which there are 195, are dissimilar to those occurring in other better-known early editions. Twenty-eight of these serve to illustrate the life of Aesop, one is prefixed to the preface of the First Book of Fables, and there is one for each of the entire collection of fables. These woodcuts, if somewhat crude in appearance, are yet fresh and vigorous, displaying admirably in many cases the comic nature of the tales that they illustrate. They measure about 125 mm. in width and about 70 mm. in height.

There is a fine woodcut border of arabesque pattern in the Italian style on fo. [2] recto. It is in four pieces, the one at the

base containing a representation of two angels supporting a blank shield, intended for the insertion by an illuminator of the arms of the owner. This border has unfortunately suffered at the binder's hands, owing to the volume being shorn too closely.

A large and ornate woodcut initial, measuring 52 mm. in height by 57 mm. in width, is to be found at the commencement of each section of the book. These initials, which are of worn appearance, resemble closely in character those used by Peter Wagner, of Nuremberg, and also previously, according to Proctor, by Conrad Zeninger, of the same city, whose stock of type passed into the possession of Wagner, probably about 1483. The letters C, R, T, L, M, E occur in the volume. In other cases, where, by the nature of the text, a smaller initial was required, blank spaces have been consistently left, varying in depth from 3 to 5 lines, occupied only by a director, a method of indication commonly employed by the early printers to guide any illuminator who might be engaged by a wealthy book-lover to embellish a volume for him.

The volume is printed in a fine Gothic type, described as Type 4 in the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (vol. 1, no. 379), following the classification of Haebler in the *Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke*, Abt. II, S. 314 (1908), and agreeing with that of Proctor in *An Index to the Early Printed Books in the British Museum*, who refers to the peculiar form of the letter r used in it (not exclusively), "r perruña", which resembles a double f in appearance. 20 lines measure 111 mm.

A full page of text contains 36 lines and measures 201 mm. in height by 127 mm. in width. The outside measurements of the copy are 263 mm. by 190 mm. approximately. The volume has foliation throughout, except for the first two leaves and the last three, i.e. fo. iij to fo. cxxxix. An error in foliation occurs after fo. cviiij, which is succeeded by fo. cxj. The register is : a^s-n^s o^s p^s q^s r^s s^s—140 leaves.

Watermarks.—(a) A hand raised in benediction, of variant form, appears as a watermark throughout the volume, measuring 56 mm.-63 mm. in height by 26 mm. in width resembling in some respects the watermark 11552 in the work of C. M. Briquet,

la gallina. si nõ fuesse por entretenir el honor delas dueñas
yo lo diria : mas por q cada vno es obligado delo guardar
quãto pudiere por el presente non lo declaro. mas tn que la
question me demandas dixo la gallina que tomes exemplo
de ser conel tuyo pntento. ca cosa es muy plazient adios quã
do viuen dos en vna carne: como el mando.

Aquí se acaba el libro del Esopete ystoriado: aplicadas
las fabulas en fin junto conel principio a moralidad proue
chofa ala correccion 7 avisamjeto dela vida hñana: con las fa
bulas de ffemigio: de aviano: doligamo: de alfonso: 7 pogio
con otras extravagãtes 7 añadidas. El qual fue sacado de
latin en ffomãçe: et imprimido en la muy noble cibdad Tho
losa: por los muy discretos maestros Joan parir 7 Estevan
cleblat. en el año del seño: de mill et. cccclxxviij.



Les filigranes (1907). M. Briquet considers that this type of watermark, the hand raised in benediction, if it occurs in any paper is to be regarded as a sign of French origin.

(b) A capital R, enclosing a smaller capital I, is also distinguishable in some cases, near the edge of a leaf measuring 18 mm. in height by 22 mm. in width.

Beneath the colophon of this Spanish translation of Aesop's fables is the rather ornate but somewhat puzzling device of the press (shown in the accompanying facsimile), in white on a black ground, within a rectangle measuring 73 mm. in width by 95 mm. in height. Brunet in his *Manuel du libraire*, vol. 1, col. 1092 (5th ed., 1860), in giving a description of "Laiguillon damour divine" ("sans lieu ni date") of St. Bonaventura, reproduces the device, and being unaware of the names of the printers reads the cipher portion of it as representing the letters C.S.H.R.; in the supplement to the *Manuel*, vol. 1, col. 149 (1878), this edition is described again, but by this time the printers had been identified, so this portion of the device is said to stand for a combination of the letters S.C.H.P., "qui signifient: Stevan (pour Estevan) Clebat, et Hierosme Parix". Haebler in the *Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke*, Abt. II, S. 314 (1908), finds here a representation of the letters S.C.H.R., a decipherment differing only from the one originally proposed in Brunet's work in the arrangement of the letters. Haebler, moreover, was cognisant of the printers' names, as he gives this rendering in the subdivision treating of the various types which they employed. M. Polain, in his book *Marques des imprimeurs et libraires en France au xve siècle* (1926), beneath a reproduction of the device, says, "Marque avec les initiales: S C (Stephan Cleblat) et H P A R I X (Hans Parix)". Before referring to the work of M. Polain I had tried to interpret the right-hand monogram in this way, but the attempt was inviting rather than convincing.

Heinrich Turner, who belonged to Bâle, where he acquired his knowledge of printing, seems to have left that city for Toulouse in 1475, to establish a press in the latter place. His residence there was only a short one, as we know that his death had already occurred before July, 1477. In the meantime Johann Parix of Heidelberg had become a partner in the firm. By the

year 1479 he had reorganised the press, at which he printed various Latin books until 1483 when his business as a printer ceased for a while. It was not until 1488 that Jean Parix reappears as a printer at Toulouse in partnership with another German, Stephan Cleblat. The first time that the names of the two partners appear together in a book bearing a date is in the colophon of the Spanish version of Aesop's fables which forms the subject of the present article. Two other dated Spanish books were avowedly printed by them the following year, the *Vision deleytable de la filosofia et delas otras sciēcias* of Alfonso de la Torre, and *La ystorya de la linda Melosyna*. A third book which issued from their press was *Laiguillon damour divine*, a French translation by Jean Gerson of the supposititious work of St. Bonaventura, entitled "Stimulus divini amoris". This work is without date, name of place, or printer. It has the device, however, of Parix and Cleblat at the end of the volume (as already mentioned)—the same that is found in their edition of Aesop's fables. From the fact that it is printed in type 5 it may probably be attributed to the year 1489.

No other books than those mentioned seem to have been produced at the press of Parix and Cleblat. The latter figures in a list of imposts of 1489 for the district of Saint-Etienne as "Mestre Esteve, molayre de libres . . . detz sous X^s". To Cleblat, "mouleur de livres", i.e. typefounder, may be given the credit for the handsome fount used in the edition of Aesop which we are describing. Whilst we have no further information about Cleblat after 1489, the name of Johann Parix is found in certain later records. He would seem to have been an enterprising business man, for he appears to have carried on a fairly extensive bookselling trade in Spain, which would account for the printing of the Spanish books which were issued during his partnership with Cleblat. A further indication of his capacity in this direction may be found in his relations with Heinrich Mayer, the only other printer at Toulouse in the fifteenth century. This printer was responsible for the publication of some twenty-three works, including the first French translation of the *De imitatione Christi*, from the year 1484 till towards the close of the century. In the later part of his career he experienced

difficulties in carrying on his business. On his death in 1500 his plant passed into the hands of Johann Parix, perhaps by reason of financial aid rendered by the latter at some time to Mayer. Parix did not retain the material, but sold it in April, 1501, to Johannes Magni, a bookseller of Toulouse, who parted with it again in the summer of the same year. Although the books produced at Toulouse in the fifteenth century, the third city in France where the typographic art was practised, were not numerous, they included some noteworthy works. *Non multa sed multum*.

There is an enigma connected with Heinrich Turner, whom we have already spoken of as a partner of Jean Parix, of a similar kind to one which we have previously examined. Certain initials H T D B M H O occurring at the end of an edition of the work of Antoninus Florentinus, *De sponsalibus et matrimonio*, and M H D B found after the "Explicit" of an edition of the *De ludo scachorum* of Jacobus de Cessolis, which had puzzled many persons, were plausibly enough supposed by Mlle. Pellechet to represent respectively: (a) "Huius Operis Typographus Martinus Huss De Botvuar", and (b) "Martinus Huss De Botvuar" (a form of the name used by this printer at Lyon). Haebler, in his work *Die deutschen Buchdrucker des XV. Jahrhunderts im Auslande*, p. 235 (1924), gives two different interpretations, based on cogent evidence. The first group of initials he would read "Henricus Tornerii De Basilea Magister Huius Operis", and the second "Magister Henricus De Basilea". The somewhat cryptic entry, "Toulouse. [Martin Huss=] Heinrich Turner" (as it appears at first sight), in Haebler's *Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke*, Abt. V, Ergänzungsband II, S. 158 (1924), is thus explained. Heinrich Turner displaces Martin Huss as a printer at Toulouse, who previously had been believed to have practised the typographic art in that city prior to the establishment of his press at Lyon. The *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, vol. 6, no. 6524 (1934), in a note appended to the entry under Jacobus de Cessolis for the edition of the work *De ludo scachorum* already alluded to, supports Haebler's interpretations of the initials which affects, as is indicated, one or two earlier attributions in that catalogue to Martin Huss. The

heading to Tafel 2273 of the *Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft für Typenkunde des XV. Jahrhunderts* (1935-1936), which reads, "Toulouse: Heinrich Turner [1476] and Johann Parix [1476-81]", shows additional acceptance of H. Turner as a printer at Toulouse.

The controversy that existed at one time with respect to printing at Toulouse in the fifteenth century raised by advocates of the claims of Tolosa in Spain may be regarded as closed. The names of printers mentioned in this article occur, for instance, in the records of the city of Toulouse. The colophon, again, to the Spanish translation of the work of Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, which issued from the press of Henry Mayer in 1488, reads expressly, "Aqui feneçe el libro de consolaçion de Boeçio el qual fue inpresso en Tolosa de françia por maestro Enrique mayer aliman . . .". Since the systematic study and classification of types used in the fifteenth century as developed by Proctor, Haebler, and other workers in the same field of research, there is no longer a place for arguments about the printing of incunabula based on plausible conjecture alone, except in the very rare cases where positive evidence of a typographical nature is either conflicting, or entirely lacking.

The contents of this Spanish translation of Aesop's fables are similar to those of the first French version by Julien Macho, printed at Lyon in 1480 by Nicolaus Philippi and Marcus Reinhard, of which an English rendering was made by William Caxton and printed by him at Westminster in 1484, and a Dutch version was printed by Gerard Leeu at Antwerp in 1485. A Latin edition of like contents, accompanied by a German translation by Heinrich Steinhöwel was printed at Ulm by Johann Zainer about 1476-1477. Jacobs in his *History of the Æsopic Fable*, p. 186, speaks of "Steinhöwel's Æsop as the parent of all the printed Æsops of Europe".

This version was made, as we learn from the prefatory matter, for Henry, Infant of Aragon, who was a son of Ferdinand, Infant of Castile and afterwards King of Aragon, and a brother of John, King of Navarre, afterwards King of Navarre and of Aragon. He was the source of a great deal of political

trouble during the reign of John II, King of Castile. After a life spent in active opposition to the King, his forces were defeated with those of his brother John by the royal army in a battle near Olmedo on 19th May, 1445. Although he escaped capture in the battle by flight, he did not survive long, as he died at Calatagud on 15th July, 1445, as the result of a wound received in the engagement which set up gangrene in his left arm. There is said to have been at one time in the Escorial a manuscript containing the following work attributed to him, "*Leges & statuta Ordinis Militiæ Sancti Iacobi de Spatha in eiusdem Ordinis generalibus Comitibus Toleti anno MCCCCXL celebratis editæ*", of which famous order he was Grand Master. Two other editions of this translation of Aesop's fables appeared in the fifteenth century, one printed at Zaragoza by Hans Hurus in 1489, and the other at Burgos by Friedrich Biel in 1496.

At the beginning of the volume is a lengthy biography of Aesop, which after some preliminary matter follows closely the life in Latin of Rinuccio d'Arezzo, which is a version of the Greek one compiled by Maximus Planudes (c. A.D. 1260-1330) from earlier sources. This Latin version of Aesop's life by Rinuccio was printed with his Latin translation of the fables a number of times in the fifteenth century.

Rinuccio (variously known as Rainucius, Remigius, Rimitius, etc.) was a secretary at the curia of Pope Nicholas V along with Poggio, who acquired a knowledge of Greek under his guidance. He was born at Castiglione about A.D. 1395 and is known to have been still living in A.D. 1450. Of the original life by Maximus Planudes, Bentley said "that, perhaps, it cannot be matched in any language for ignorance and nonsense".

A little further on Bentley says, speaking still of Planudes : "But of all his injuries to Aesop, that which can lest be forgiven him, is ; the making such a monster of him, for ugliness : an abuse, that has found credit so universally ; that all the modern Painters, since the time of Planudes, have drawn him in the worst shapes and features, that fancy could invent". (The picture of Aesop by Velasquez in the Prado Museum at Madrid forms no exception to this rule.) "What credit" (Bentley asks) "then can be given to an ignorant Monk ; that broaches

a new story, after so many ages? In Plutarch's *Convivium*, our Æsop is one of the guests; with Solon and the other Sages of Greece: there is abundance of jest and raillery among them; and particularly upon Æsop: but nobody drolls upon his ugly face; which could hardly have escaped, had he had such a bad one."

The argument of Bentley that the association of Aesop with the beautiful Rhodope (or Rhodopis), his fellow-slave, who, according to one story, became Queen of Egypt, cannot be considered altogether convincing. It may well have been that wit rather than comeliness of person would attract "Rhodope, that built the pyramid", in the words of Tennyson, who is here following an ancient legend discredited by Herodotus (Book II, 134-135). Landor in his *Imaginary Conversations*, it will be remembered, has essayed two fictitious dialogues between Aesop and Rhodope for the entertainment of his readers. Further, agreeably to Herodotus, Sappho attacked her brother, Charaxus, bitterly in a poem, because he was captivated by the charms of Rhodope and ransomed her from slavery. The beauty who was the cause of Sappho's ire, however, is generally believed to have been named Doricha, and it is quite probable that Herodotus has confused two different persons. A theory, on the other hand, which has been advanced that Doricha was the real name of this celebrated individual, and that Rhodopis (*Ῥοδῶπις*), "the rosy-faced", was an appellation by which she was commonly known, would remove this difficulty of identification.

In his reference to the statue of Aesop by the sculptor Lysippus (latter half of the fourth century B.C.) Bentley seems to be on surer ground. "And must so great a hand be employed, to dress-up a lump of deformity?" In ancient Greece deformity of body or mind was not calculated to evoke admiration, nor to attract the efforts of her artists. In life and art the Greeks anticipated, with their own experience, the merit of the Roman poet's counsel, "Orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano".

In case the half-length statue of a humpback in the Villa Albani at Rome should be cited as an early witness (second century A.D.) to the deformity of Aesop it should be stated that A. Hekler in his *Greek & Roman Portraits* (p. xxxviii

—1912) regards it as a representation of a Roman "court dwarf formerly called Aesop". Helbig, in his *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom . . . Dritte Auflage* (Bd. 2, S. 416, 1913), does not agree, it is true, that the statue exhibits an imperial court jester, but at the same time gives no reason for considering that it is a representation of Aesop, which evidently rests on a pure assumption. Sieveking, in *W. von Christs Geschichte der griechischen Literatur. Fünfte Auflage* (Teil 2, ii, S. 1307—1913), puts as the heading for his description of this statue "Sog[enannte] Aisopos", and is inclined to agree with Hekler that it is a portrait of a buffoon at the imperial court. He suggests that a bronze in Naples of an unprepossessing man, which he attributes to the early Hellenistic period, that was formerly supposed to represent Seneca, and then various other persons, may be intended for Aesop.

In the collection of vases in the Etruscan Museum of the Vatican there is a cup which is carefully described by Helbig (Bd. I, S. 341). On it is depicted a dwarf of exaggerated ugliness, seated on a stone, and wrapt in a mantle, from which projects a crutch-stick. He is gazing at the scene opposite where a fox (the choregus amongst animals), with brush drawn back, sits on a rock gesticulating with fore-pad upraised, whilst engaged in conversation. Helbig considers that the human figure is meant for Aesop, an opinion which is supported by the delineation of the fox as accompaniment.

The only indication of the date for this cup (numbered 571 in Helbig's work) is to be found in the chronological register at the end of vol. 2, where nos. "569-582" appear in a list of Attic red-figured vessels assigned to the fifth century B.C. Assuming that this particular antique is believed to be of that date, and granting that the human figure pictured on it is intended to represent Aesop, it must certainly be accounted a very early instance of his portrayal as a deformed being. It seems highly probable that the artist was only treating his subject humourously—as befitting the theme, and as the posture of the figures more or less clearly indicates—and so he would be in no sense attempting to produce a portrait of Aesop. In that case, one would no sooner regard such a representation of

Aesop as true to life than one would think of resorting to a comic cartoon for a portrait of a modern celebrity.

"Solventur risu tabulæ; tu missus abibis."

"Oh, then a laugh will cut the matter short:

The case breaks down, defendant leaves the court."—Conington.

In a subject replete with conjecture one may allude to the fantastic derivation mentioned by W. G. Rutherford in his edition of the fables of Babrius (1883), which might conceivably have been responsible for the imputation of ugliness to Aesop, that his name evolved from *Αἰσχρος* and *ὤψ*, signifying the "ugly-faced one". Even in later times such weird efforts in etymology are not uncommon.

Ménage, in the seventeenth century, accounted by Bayle "one of the most learned men of his time", who to his own satisfaction traced the etymological descent of the word "haricot" from the Latin "faba", sought in "equus" the derivation of Alfana, the name of the horse of Gradasso, one of the notable warriors in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. This elicited from the Chevalier d'Aceilly (the pseudonym of Jacques de Cailly) an epigram which on account of its comparative pertinence seems worth quoting here:—

Alfana vient d'equus sans doute
Mais il faut convenir aussi
Qu'à venir de là jusqu'ici
Il a bien changé sur la route.

After stating the facts such as they are about the reputed portraits of Aesop, one can surely be content, until some unimpeachable evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, to concur with the opinion of Bentley on this question of the fabulist's looks and physical form.

On fo. xxxb of the volume which we are describing, beneath a woodcut on the right of which a man is seated at a desk writing, whilst on the left a servant is apparently handing a volume to another man, we find the introductory passage: "Aqui comiêça el pfacio z plogo del p̃mero libro del Esopo. Romulo a Tiberino su fijo dela cibdad athica premissa salud zc Ciertamēte el esopo ombre griego clarissimo et ingenioso cō sus fabulas z exemplos

ensēna alos ombres : de q̃ deuā guardar se en sus fechos . . .”, followed a little further on by these words, “. . . ʒ otras muchas cosas enseña. segūd q̃ paresçe por estas sus fabulas seguiētes. Eyo Romulo las traslade de griego en latī. . . .”. Although it may be slightly outside the scope of this article, it may be considered of some interest to allude to the enigma surrounding the name “Romulus”. In certain manuscripts we find Romulus described as “Rome imperator”, “urbis Romæ imperator”, etc. Some writers in consequence have been inclined to identify the author of this prologue with Romulus Augustulus, last Roman Emperor of the West (A.D. 475-476), but it seems probable that this title was an embellishment of the text attributable to the fancy of some copyist. Hervieux, in *Les fabulistes latins* (vol. 1, p. 305), would regard the name Romulus merely as a pseudonym. A point in favour of this opinion is the doubtfulness of the statement that the fables were translated directly from the Greek as claimed in the prologue by the writer of it, a fact which creates a feeling of distrust not confined to the one issue. Hermann Oesterley, on the other hand, who published an edition of the “Romulus” fables in 1870, believed that Romulus was the real name of the person so designated in the prologue, who might have lived in the tenth century. In support of this view he refers to the frequency with which the name Romulus is found in the middle ages, as well as that of Tiberinus. A suggestion, however, which he makes as to the identity of “Romulus” is only to be regarded as conjectural, although it proves the occurrence of that name in Rome as late as the year A.D. 964. Still, the opinion of this scholar on the question of the genuineness of the name is entitled to due attention and respect.

It may appear at first sight that the words occurring at the beginning of the prologue “dela cibdad athica”, as found in this Spanish version, or “de ciuitate athica” in some Latin editions, standing in the position which they do would sufficiently disprove the theory of Oesterley that “Romulus” and “Tiberinus” were Italians, but Hervieux, who has examined this point with care, adduces good reasons for thinking that an error in punctuation was responsible in the first instance for a misconstruction

of the phrase, which was followed afterwards by a transposition in the text. He supports the theory that originally these words referred to Aesop, and then suffered a transference in their application. The Burney manuscript (59) of the fables in the British Museum, for instance, assigned to the tenth century by Oesterley, commences in this way: "Romulus tyberino filio. De ciuitate attica esopus quidam homo greçus et ingeniosus", etc. It will be seen from this quotation how easily a mistake in the application of the phrase could arise through the insertion of a full stop in the wrong place, and that the explanation which has been suggested is highly probable.

This Romulus collection of fables is in reality a prose version of those of Phaedrus who lived in the first century A.D. and turned into verse the fables that were in circulation under Aesop's name, introducing at the same time anecdotes of various kinds. It may have derived from a still earlier prose version, styled "Aesopus ad Rufum", well known from the manuscript preserved at Wolfenbüttel, but on this matter one cannot speak with certainty. A point worth noting is that the Burney manuscript of the fables in the British Museum, already mentioned, although dissimilar in character, concludes with a letter "Magistro Rvfo Aesopvs", of which the commencement resembles that prefixed to the Wolfenbüttel manuscript. The texts of both manuscripts are reprinted by Hervieux in vol. 2 of *Les fabulistes latins*.

Of "Las fabulas extravagantes" which follow the "Romulus" fables in this Spanish translation of 1488, the author is not known. An English version of Aesop's fables, commonly attributed to King Alfred, but also to King Henry I, which was apparently in existence in the thirteenth century, has been suggested by Jacobs in his *History of the Æsopic Fable* (p. 186) as the ultimate source of them. They appear in Steinhöwel's edition of Aesop, which, as we have previously indicated, provided the model for the later impressions of the fifteenth century.

"Las fabulas de remigio [otherwise Rinuccio]", coming after "Las fabulas extravagantes" are actually a selection of fables that this scholar is believed to have translated from a prose

recension, which may have had its origin in the collection in Greek verse by Babrius, who can probably be assigned to the second century of the Christian era. Babrius is thought to have been a Roman, residing in Asia, probably in Syria. The greater number of his fables were found in a manuscript discovered in 1842 in the Monastery of St. Laura on Mount Athos by a Greek, Minoides Menas, who made a copy of them, from which J. F. Boissonade prepared an edition of the text that was published at Paris in 1844. The original codex was afterwards acquired by Menas, and in 1857 passed from his possession into that of the British Museum. Some fables of Babrius had been known previous to the discovery of this manuscript, and others have been found subsequently.

We come next to Avianus whose forty-two fables were written in elegiac verse. In some manuscripts he is called Avienus, but there is little doubt that he is to be distinguished from Rufius Festus Avienus, a Latin poet of the fourth century A.D., known, amongst other works, for a verse translation of the "Phænomena" of Aratus. The period when Avianus lived was probably at the end of the fourth century, or the beginning of the fifth century A.D., and therefore a little later than the translator of Aratus. Of the forty-two fables written by Avianus, only twenty-seven are included in this Spanish translation, as in the edition of Steinhöwel, whose text was based on one of the prose versions of the original poetic compositions.

To Steinhöwel is due also the inclusion of the last section of the volume in the collection of Aesopic fables, namely, "Las fabulas coletas de Alfonso e de Poggio e de otros". Petrus Alfonsi (1062-1110) was physician to King Alfonso VI of Castile. As a Jew by birth, his original name was Moses Sephardi, which he changed to the aforementioned form on his adoption of Christianity in 1106. His collection of thirty-three tales, written in Latin, and entitled "Disciplina clericalis", attained a great popularity in the middle ages. It is from this work that Steinhöwel chose to select a certain number of stories for incorporation in his edition of Aesop. The celebrity of Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) as apostolic secretary to various popes, and a foremost scholar of the renaissance, is such that it is

unnecessary to say more about him here than that the stories of his which appear in "Las fabulas coletas" were taken originally by Steinhöwel from a collection composed in Latin, and completed by Poggio about 1450.

We have deferred to this point any allusion to the question of the authorship of the life of Aesop, ascribed to Planudes. An edition of Aesop's fables was published at Florence in 1809 (2 vols.) with the title "*Αἰσώπου μῦθοι*. Fabulae Aesopicae quales ante Planudem ferebantur ex vetusto cod. abbatiae Florentinae nunc primum erutae Latina versione notisque exornatae cura . . . Francisci de Furia . . .". In the prolegomena to this edition Furia, on palæographical grounds which he considered satisfactory, attributed this manuscript to the end of the thirteenth century, whereas Planudes flourished in the early part of the next century. As this date has been usually accepted for this codex, the opinion has gained currency that Planudes was not the author of this fatuous life of Aesop. This manuscript contains a very miscellaneous collection of works, including, besides the fables and life of Aesop, letters of Theodore II (Lascaris), Emperor of Nicaea from 1254 to 1258, various Greek romances such as that of Chariton Aphrodisiensis, entitled "De Chærea et Callirrhoe", and the one of Xenophon Ephesius, called "De amoribus Anthiæ et Abrocomæ" (for both of which novels this volume provides the source of the text), besides other writings. On the question of the date of this codex G. A. Hirschig in a preface, written in 1853, to an edition of *Erotici scriptores* speaks thus: "Florentinus noster est seculi XIII aut XIV". It is very improbable that Hirschig was unaware of the date that had been assigned to it previously, so that we can only think that he was deliberately proposing a later one—one, moreover, that does not exclude the possibility of Planudes being the author of the life of Aesop with which his name was so early associated, and for which a reason must have originally existed. Also, in *W. von Christs Geschichte der griechischen Literatur. Fünfte Auflage* (Teil 2, ii, S. 642—1913) the XIII-XIVth century is given as the date of this manuscript. Some explanation must be offered for this attribution to Planudes, and, if the thirteenth century is pre-

ferred for the date of the single manuscript, on which the question of his authorship depends, then, perhaps, he may still not be free from the minor charge of plagiarism. The codex appears to have passed at some time into the possession of the Laurentian Library at Florence, as it is referred to in *Mnemosyne* (vol. 8, p. 229) by C. G. Cobet, one of the editors, in some notes on Chariton, as "Laurentianus liber".

The best accredited events of Aesop's life may be succinctly recounted. If they are few in number and uncertain, it need occasion little surprise when we recall how welcome any additional information would be for the biography of Shakespeare at a period two thousand years later in the history of the world. He was born probably about 620 B.C. and lived to about 560 B.C. The locality of his birth is doubtful; Phrygia, Thrace, and other places have been named. In favour of Phrygia it is claimed that his name is derived from the river Aisepos (*Αἰσηπος*—in the present century called Aesopos), running through the part of that country adjacent to the Propontis, and discharging its waters there. It is probably more exact to describe it as a river of Mysia. It was customary for slaves to be named after the country whence they came, and it is interesting to note that the name Aesop recurs later as a slave appellation. After apparently serving other masters Aesop, it is generally agreed, became the slave of Iadmon of Samos, with Rhodope as a companion. His position as a slave is an indication that he was not a true-born Greek. He must evidently have obtained his freedom, as Aristotle in his treatise on Rhetoric (Book II, 20) relates how he defended a demagogue at Samos who was on trial for his life by the employment of a fable about a fox. Incidentally, it may be asked whether even in ancient times it was probable that a man of repellent aspect and stammering tongue would be selected by the defendant of a capital charge as an advocate likely to obtain an indulgent hearing from those acting as judges in his case?

It is related that Aesop went to the court of Croesus, King of Lydia, and while he was there is said to have rebuked Solon, who was on a visit, for a lack of courtesy to the monarch. He is said to have travelled to Athens in the time of the Tyrant

Pisistratus and to have narrated the fable of "The Frogs and Jupiter" in order to reconcile the citizens to the government of their ruler.

His end was a tragic one. He was sent on a mission to Delphi by Croesus with a large quantity of gold to make an oblation to the gods and for distribution amongst the priests and citizens there. Some disagreement occurred and Aesop without disbursing the money sent it back to Sardis. The inhabitants of Delphi, enraged at his action, charged him with sacrilege, and threw him in their wrath over a steep precipice called Hyampia. Famine and disease overtook the land, which the people of Delphi attributed to divine vengeance for their crime. In order to placate the Deity and to atone for their act they made it known throughout Greece that they would give satisfaction and submit to any penalty if someone appeared who was entitled to make such a claim as a representative of Aesop. Three generations afterwards an application by "Idmon a Samian . . . descended from those who had purchased Aesop in Samos" was recognised by the Delphians, who paid him the indemnity which he demanded, and so obtained release from their calamities. For this account of Aesop's death we have relied on the story as it was told by Plutarch in his work "*De sera Numinis vindicta* (12)". The fact that Aesop was entrusted by Croesus with such an important mission provides a remarkable testimony to the confidence which his character and personality inspired in that sovereign.

It is considered improbable that Aesop himself committed his fables to writing. Herodotus, indeed, describes him as *λογοποιός*, a term usually applied to writers of prose, and the employment of it raises the question whether it would have been used in the case of Aesop if there had been no written records of the fables in the historian's day. By the time of Aristophanes the fables must have gained widespread currency, for allusions to Aesop and his witticisms are found in the "Birds", the "Peace", and the "Wasps", which by their introduction show clearly enough the familiarity of the Athenian populace with them. In the "Birds" (l. 471), produced 414 B.C., an expression occurs which would seem to indicate clearly

the existence of manuscript copies of the fables at this period, "οὐδ' Αἴσωπον πεπάτηκας", "you have not pored over your Aesop". Blaydes, in his edition of this comedy (1842), renders *πεπάτηκας* "assidue legisti"; the word is used in a similar sense in Plato's *Phaedrus* (273 A): "Ἀλλὰ μὲν τὸν γε Τισίαν αὐτὸν πεπάτηκας ἀκριβῶς." "Well now you have studied Tisias himself carefully." Under any circumstances it would seem unlikely that in the case of stories with such an extensive circulation no attempt should have been made during a long period to gather them together, whether one conceives such a collection as a cause of their popularity, or as the outcome of it.

We know from Plato's *Phaedo* how Socrates during his imprisonment preceding his execution spent some of his time: "I therefore put into verse those fables of Aesop, which I had ready at hand and knew, on which I chanced first". These somewhat equivocal words have been interpreted as a circumlocution for "which I remembered". If they do imply that Socrates was trusting to his memory and not to any kind of manuscript material, there is still no justification for the inference that he could only have made his acquaintance with the fables through oral tradition as the sole form in which they were preserved. The previous remarks about Aristophanes furnish sufficient reasons in support of the contrary view.

The first collection of Aesop's fables of which we have authentic information was made by Demetrius Phalereus, the Athenian statesman (c. 345—c. 285 B.C.). Beyond the fact that he formed such a collection which Diogenes Laertius mentions in his "Lives of eminent philosophers" (Bk. V, 80-81) we do not know anything about it. Of the fables in Greek verse by Babrius we have spoken previously. We have now traced the history of the fables of Aesop so far as it is in any way connected with the earliest Spanish version of them, in such detail as the nature of the text seemed to require. In a subject so complex unanimity of opinion on various questions is not to be expected and for that reason we have cited in many cases the authorities on which we have chosen to rely for our statements.

When we speak of the intellectual debt that the world owes to Greece, our minds turn to Homer, Sappho, Thucydides, and

the great dramatists, orators and philosophers whose radiant lustre, despite the passage of the ages, remains unclouded and undimmed, yet perhaps a place may still be found in our thoughts for the companion of our childhood and the mentor of our more mature years, Aesop, the one-time slave, whose stories were not deemed unworthy to illumine the last days of Socrates.