Chapter III

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Aesop the great story teller of Greece was the originator for Aesop’s Fables. The physical appearance of Aesop has been described to be blunt-nosed, ugly and deformed in shape. He was dark and his face quite hideously unattractive. In total he was rather frightening to look at. The life history of Aesop is a matter of much obscurity. Since his place of birth is unknown. Sardis, the capital of Lydis, a place in a Greek island called Mesembria, situated in the province of Phrygia was supposed to be the birth place of Aesop.

Aesop was born in the 6th B.C and died around 564 B.C. Since his parents were slaves, he too was destined to become a slave. Due to his unattractive features his master kept him away from home and sent him to the farm instead.

Occasionally Aesop’s master used to visit the farm and take an account of everything. One day when the master went to his farm, he was presented with a few ripe figs. The master left the figs with his trusted servants and went to take bath. The servants were so tempted to see the figs that they ate them all without thinking of the consequences. Having finished the figs they realized their mistake and decided to put the blame on Aesop to save their own skin. The master on return was terribly angry to learn from his servants that Aesop had eaten all the figs. Aesop shuddered with fear. How could he take the brunt of his masters’ wrath for something he had not done? He desperately begged his master to allow him half an hour to
prove his innocence and added that if he failed he would be ready to have his skin flayed. His master agreed to it and allowed him half an hour time to prove his innocence.

Aesop, in the presence of his master, brought a glass of warm water and added a pinch of salt and drank it. This caused him to vomit, as per his plan. There was no trace of fig in it. Now the master was convinced of Aesop’s innocence. However it was now the turn of the servants to consume the same salt water. So they had no way to escape but to accept the truth and apologize. This incident left a great impression on his master, and the outcome of the happening brought a turning point in Aesop’s life in since it revealed how intelligent Aesop was. His intelligence, sharpness, and presence of mind had overshadowed his fellow slaves and his master became so happy with him that he brought him back home from the farm. Aesop was living happily with his master and carrying out his orders promptly and faithfully when one day, his master, due to certain financial constraints, had to sell him to a slave trader.

Aesop’s new master, the slave trader, used to make his slaves carry heavy loads on their heads and travel from town to town. One day it so happened that the slave trader ordered his slaves to pick up loads and carry them to the other town. All the other slaves, being cunning, rushed to pick up lighter loads, whereas Aesop deliberately chose to carry the heaviest one which contained food for everyone. All the other slaves considered it rather foolhardy of him to carry the heaviest
load; even the slave trader thought that it was a fool’s errand. But soon the master was compelled to realize that Aesop was sharp and intelligent, whereas the other slaves were feeble-minded and dull. Consumption of food everyday made the load lesser day by day for Aesop. And by the time they had reached their destination, Aesop had nothing at all to carry on his head, which the other foolish slaves were still perspiring with heavy loads on their heads. Once again Aesop had proved his mettle and shown that he was not an ordinary person.

Again circumstances brought a change into Aesop’s life. His master had to sell a few slaves and Aesop was once again the one to be sold. Since he was ugly and gave an impression of a weak constitution, his master decided to make him stand between two strong and stout slaves, in order to use highlight the strength of the other two and enhance their sale ability.

Xanthus, a philosopher came forward to buy them. He interviewed the two stout slaves and asked them of their capabilities. To this they replied that they were capable of doing everything. Then Xanthus looked at Aesop sarcastically and enquired about his capability. Aesop gave a remarkable reply:

Sir, once my two companions would have completed all the work, do you think there will be anything left for me to do? But sir, still I shall carry out the orders given by you and that too with complete loyalty. Also there is an additional qualification with me; I can be utilized for frightening your children when they are being mischievous.(A, 3)
Xanthus was so happy to hear such a witty reply from him that he immediately bought Aesop and took him home. On reaching home the new master decided to have some fun at his expense, Aesop to remain outside he went in and called his family members, saying that he had bought a very good-looking slave. All the family members came out running, but when they saw Aesop they were terrified.

Once Xanthus had a tiff with his wife and stopped talking to him. Seeing no way to come to a compromise with his wife and end the quarrel, Xanthus consulted Aesop. Aesop sat contemplatively for a long time and then finally came up with an idea and explained it to Xanthus. Xanthus readily agreed to it and at dinner time he said to Aesop, that he would like to see someone who will be his best friend and well wisher too. Everything was going as already decided. Aesop immediately got up and brought his master’s dog before him. The dog began wagging its tail and licking Xanthus feet. This enraged the mistress so much that she almost went mad with anger. She was enraged and hurt to learn that her husband considered the dog to be his best companion. Instead she demanded an explanation from Aesop.

Aesop was as quiet as before. He just commented that if she had considered herself as her husband’s best friend and well – wisher, she would not have quarrelled with him. Tiffs between husbands and wives are a routine matter. But that does not mean that they should make it a serious matter. That incident had such a lasting effect on her that she compromised with her husband and never quarrelled again.
Another incident explains his insight into the supernatural and his capability to read omens as well as interpret anything symbolically. Once the people of the town held a meeting in an open field. While the discussion was on, an eagle flying above dropped the anklet of a slave in the middle of the forum. Everyone around took it to be a bad omen. They could not make out the meaning of this. Since Xanthus was considered the wisest man in the town, these people went to him and asked him to interpret the incident. But Xanthus honestly admitted that it was not possible for him to do so immediately and added that he needed some time to think about it.

When the townsfolk went away, Xanthus narrated the incident to Aesop and asked him for a suggestion. Aesop said that he would give the meaning on condition that he should be freed from slavery. Xanthus agreed and promised him the status of a free citizen. Then Aesop said some king has planned to attack the town and make the inhabitants his slaves. Thus Aesop warned the people of the town and precaution them to fight the situation.

Not much afterwards, there really was a threatening message from Croesus, the King of Lydia, which said that if they wanted to avoid an attack, they would have to send a huge amount of money. A meeting was held by the worried townspeople in order to salvage the unhappy situation. Aesop also attended the meeting as he had become a free citizen.

Aesop was of the view that instead of paying ransom, people should gather courage and defend their town from any possible attack because once a ransom is
paid there will be no end to Croesus’ demand. An ambassador of Croesus, who was present in the meeting, was very much impressed with Aesop. He went back to Lydia and narrated everything to Croesus. Croesus understood the importance of Aesop and concluded that so long as Aesop is with them, no power on earth can conquer the town.

So Croesus changed his demand and asked for Aesop instead. People in the town became very happy to hear that and thought that sending Aesop to Lydia would be cheaper than meeting the demand for a huge amount of money which may go on increasing endlessly.

Everyone said in unison that Aesop should agree to go to Lydia in order to save the town from disaster. Aesop was a little hesitant about leaving his motherland. He narrated a small story to prove how wrong it was to send him to Lydia.

The story told by Aesop – that there was a flock of sheep guarded by a fierce dog. The dog, apart from being fierce, was very intelligent also. And there was a wolf that had always wanted to eat the sheep, but was sure that so long as the flock of sheep was guarded by the dog, it would not be possible for him to succeed in his mission. So the wolf thought of a ruse and came to make a truce with the sheep. He said that if they wish to avoid any attack from his side, they have to abandon the company of the dog and ask him to live with him. All the sheep agreed to this proposal and abandoned the company of the dog. Now the wolf had no problem and ate them all one by one.
The people of the town listened to his story and realized their mistake, but Aesop himself said that it would be more beneficial for them if he left for Lydia and joined Croesus.

Aesop’s intention from the start of the whole imbroglio been to put down Croesus by force, but seeing the town people so frightened and confused he accepted to bow to their witness and leave his motherland.

In a very short time Aesop became very famous in the kingdom of Croesus for his wit, wisdom and sense of humour. Most of the stories that we read today as Aesop’s fables were told by him during the period he was with Croesus. After thousands of years, his fables enjoy all the kudos that go with being moral teachers. His town people had adopted a narrow and parochial view by allowing him to join Croesus, but they had hardly been aware of the fact that they had made a very bad bargain by sending a man of wisdom over to the enemy Aesop’s departure was projected in such a manner to appear if he had left on his own volition.

Aesop rose to the emissary of Croesus once the latter sent him on deputation to Delphi to pay some remuneration to priests. On grounds of his ugliness or for some other reason, the priests did not behave properly and insulted him. Aesop became very angry with them and now that he held authority, he sought to reprimand them. The priests were not used to reprimanding and they were so infuriated that they attacked and wounded Aesop mortally. Some historians say that he was pushed by the priests from a very high cliff. He sustained serious injuries and succumbed to it.
However, whatever method they may have adopted to kill him it was, indeed, very inglorious on their part.

But before Aesop succumbed to his injuries he cursed the horrid priests and said that they will have to pay dearly very soon for their folly. And indeed his predictions came true. The people at Delphi had to meet one calamity after the other and had to pay a thousand times more than the amount they had extorted from Aesop.

History does not say much about Aesop’s personal life except for the fact that he was married and had no issue. He had adopted a baby-boy who proved to be ungrateful to his parents. But it’s a shame that Aesop was put to death when he was at his zenith. Had he survived the world would have had more than what it has today from a man of wisdom. The citizens of Athens realized his importance, but after a period of two hundred years erected a statue of Aesop in the main square of the city.

The Fables of Aesop are didactic and clearly moral fables. In general he has used birds’ animals’ even sun and wind as main characters to give a symbolical meaning. From the very spirit of the fables, it becomes clear that Aesop’s purpose was to instruct through entertainment as in Thirsty Crow and Wit is Mightier Than Force. The stories have been so picturesquely described that every child would find reading them pleasurable ended with a moral ethics.
In Thirsty Crow, a crow, flew for a long distance and became very thirsty. It came down and began looking for water in order to quench its thirst. But it couldn’t find any water around. It became desperate. It was almost on the point of dehydration. The crow thought that it must get some water or else it will die.

Suddenly, the crow located a pitcher at a little distance. It flew to it and peeped in. There it saw little water in it but the level of water was beyond its reach. The crow began thinking quickly of how to reach the water. It hit upon a idea and saw some pebbles lying nearby. It flew there, picked and dropped it inside. It found no difference. But it was not the one who would give up so easily. It continued bringing pebbles and dropping them into the pitcher. After having dropped quite a few, it again peeped in. The water level rose slightly higher. This gave the crow much hope. Encouraged by the success, it continued more enthusiastically.

At last its hard work and stratagem brought it dividends. The water level rose high enough to come within its reach. The crow became very happy. It drank the water to its measure, quenched its thirst and flew away.

**Moral:** *Necessity is the mother of invention.*

Similarly in the fable *Wit Is Mightier Than Force*, there was an dispute between the sun and the wind as to which one was stronger of the two. Atlast, the wind said, that they will see who is stronger. Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road:
Do you see the man? said the wind.

Do you mean the man wearing a cloak? said the sun.

Yes, said the wind, that is the man I mean. The one of us who can make him take his cloak off is stronger. (A, 43)

The wind began blowing with all power. But the more it blew, the more the man pulled his cloak round him, to keep himself warm. The wind could not blow it off. At last the wind had to give up in disgust.

Now is the turn of the sun. The sun came out from behind the cloud and began shining with all his might. The man felt terribly hot and took off his cloak and the sun won.

**Moral:** *Force does not work always.*

Teaching through fables has been a very ancient mode of instruction to be traced in a greater or lesser degree in the early history of all nations. Greek literature is marked by its own separate and distinguishing features. Animals and birds are endowed with speech and reason. Thus in The Fables of Aesop, human intentions are dissected, awakens the conscience more forcibly and condemns the ruling power. Croxall and Sir Roger L’ Estrange say

This is the excellency of a fable that it conveys advice without the appearance of doing so, and thereby serves the self-love of those to whom the counsel it conveys is applicable. (TPT, 79)
Aesop's Fables consist of purely of two parts – the symbolical representation and the application or the instruction intended to be deduced from it. Thus, for example, in The Monkey And The Fishermen, the monkey stand as the symbol of instinctive behaviour by way imitation and short temper. As soon as the name of the monkey is heard of, the instinctive behaviour of the monkey is brought to us immediately.

A monkey perched upon a lofty tree saw some fisherman casting their nets into a river, and narrowly watched their proceedings. The fisherman after a while gave over fishing and, on going home to dinner, left their nets upon bank. The monkey who is the most imitative of animals, descended from the tree-top, and endeavoured to do as they had done. Having handled the net he drew it into the river, but became engaged in the mesh. When drowning, he felt sorry for the action he has done to himself.

**Moral:** *Do not poke your nose in the affairs of others*” is the application of the fable and is indispensable to it.

The construction of the fable involves minute attention to the:

(1) narration of the fable itself,

(2) the deduction of the moral, and

(3) a careful maintenance of the fictitious personages introduced into it.
The characteristic feature of fiction is carefully maintained in all the fables of Aesop, one example is the story entitled The Thief And The Innkeeper. There was a beggar. He had turned into a thief because of his hunger. Everyday he would ramble around stealing from shop to shop. Very soon he became rich and greedy. One day, he went to stay in an Inn with a motive to steal the belongings of other guests staying there.

The thief was successful in his evil intentions. He stole many valuables of the rich visitors and guests. He became even richer than before. So he decided to stay at the Inn for some more time. The Inn keeper was now well acquainted with the beggar turned into thief. But still the Inn keeper did not know his true colour. The thief became friendly with the Inn keeper. Both chatted for hours in the garden.

One day as usual the Inn keeper and the thief were sitting in the garden. The Inn keeper had an expensive coat. The thief had been eyeing the coat for sometime. As they talked, the Inn keeper removed his coat and hung it on the backrest of the bench. The thief weaved a plan. He lured the Inn keeper into some interesting conversation. As the Inn keeper was lost in talking, the thief slowly flicked the coat off and tried to run away. But the Inn keeper was a clever man. He turned around and caught hold of the thief. His grip was so hard that the thief could not get out of it. The Inn keeper said:

Wicked man, I was suspecting you for quite some time.

The only thing I was waiting for was the right moment to catch you red-handed (E A, 94)
The thief was handed over to the police. He himself thought that he should not have been selfish.

**Moral**: *Every greedy action has its end*

The narration of the fable should relate to one simple action and neither be over-laden with a multiplicity of details nor distracted by a variety of circumstances. The fables satisfy the condition invariably. For example

A Dog in the manger barked, "Nay,"

As the Cow tried to eat all day.

When the Dog fell asleep,

The Cow buried him deep,

So he nearly choked in the hay. (A, 45)

There was a dog, which happened to enter the stable. The dog stayed there for a long time. Whenever the horses came for the fodder, the dog would snarl and snap at them. As a result the horses did not get food, and since fodder was of no use to the dog, he would not eat it either. Thus his bad temper turned out to be a source of trouble for himself and for the horses as well.

**Moral**: *We find many ill- natured persons, who refuse to enjoy a good thing themselves, and do not let anybody else enjoy it either.*

Everyone knows this vivid story and it lives in the mind for its own sake, without any reference to the moral significance. Many years after, with the growth
of experience, meaning begins to illuminate the story, but it was the story which attracted all first and which still continues to favour the test of time, with moral percept.

It is to be seen that the fiction of the fable is confined to one incident only and is designed to teach and enforce some practical truth. Here in the above fable, the tale deals with one incident, that of the dog preventing the horse from eating the hay that was kept for them. The incident is narrated directly and without any details. It does not begins with the phrase like, ‘Long long ago…’, or ‘Once upon a time …’. which is characteristic of the fairy tales, but starts at once without much words used in describing the manger or the dog. Therefore, it will be seen that the author is interested in correlating the story only. It implies that brevity is the most important characteristic of a good fable.

A Lesson To The Fox narrates the story of a cunning fox. He was a fun-loving and used to derive pleasure in fooling others. A crane simple and gentle by nature becomes his friend.

One day the fox invited the crane for the dinner. The crane came at the appointed hour and brought some fish with him for his host. At dinner time, as already planned, the fox poured out soup in flat plates. Soup in the plate, for the fox, was no problem. He lapped up the soup and had a nice dinner. But the crane found it very difficult and took it as an insult. In turn, the crane invited the fox for dinner. The crane too had soup for dinner, but he put the soup in tall jugs. The crane got as much
soup as he wanted with his long bill. The fox had to satisfy himself licking the jug. He returned home hungry. Thus, the crane settled his score with the fox.

**Moral**: *Tit for Tat*

False Pride, is about a lion and an ass who were great friends. Being a lion’s friend enhanced the status of the ass. Once they saw a pack of wolves. The ass seeing the wolves moved to them and brayed loudly. The wolves paid no heed and went their way. This incident made the ass happy and proud. With a sense of pride he narrated it to the lion. The lion said that the wolves ran away because the lion was there. So he advised the ass not to bray when alone, or else the wolves would tear him to pieces.

**Moral**: *That which makes the most noise is not always to be dreaded.*

In *The Geese And The Fox*, the story produces moral of the fable. A gaggle of geese lived in the farm, nearby the thick forest. Hence the owner of the farm was always careful. He used to run even at the slightest cry of the geese. In the forest lived a wicked fox. One day since morning he was hungry. His mouth watered when he saw so many geese. Keeping an eye on the geese, the fox stealthily came to pounce upon the prey; one goose saw him and alerted everyone.

All the geese started running. The hungry fox got furious when he saw his food getting out of hand. All the geese were frightened as they can’t defeat the fox in strength, nor can escape, a clever fox thought; and said that the fox can eat them all, but are to perform an important ritual. What ritual? Snored the fox, the goose
replied that they need to chant their daily prayer before they die. The fox permitted, all
the geese huddled at one place and started to quack loudly as they could. The fox thought that they were praying and waited patiently.

The violent gargling of the geese made a terrific sound. When the owner of the farm heard this he sensed danger and ran out of his house to see his geese. There in the fence he saw the fox sitting with his mouth open. At once he realized the seriousness.

The owner caught hold of a thick stick and charged at the fox. The fox got a loud thrash and ran into the deep forest and never again came near the farm. The geese cheered for the clever goose whose wit and intelligence had saved their lives.

**Moral:** *Use your wits at the right time.*

In the fable, *The Crow and the Fox* a crow had a piece of cheese in its mouth, as it nested on the branch of a tree. A fox crossing that way saw the crow with the cheese. The fox immediately tried flattery stating that the crow’s voice was very sweet, and invited him to sing a song. When the foolish crow opened his mouth to sing, at once the cheese fell out. The fox was successful in playing its tricks and getting its reward.

**Moral:** *Never trust the words of others.*
The narration of the fable should be related to only one simple action, consistent with itself and neither over-laden with a multiplicity of details nor distracted by a variety of circumstances. For example, The Goose That Laid The Golden Eggs

A greedy rich man’s goose renowned

Laid golden eggs by the pound.

But he killed the poor thing,

Quicker fortune to bring,

And got only flesh by the mound.(A, 3)

The story is described in only three sentences. The first sentence is:

A cottager and his wife had a goose, which lay every day a golden egg.

The second sentence says what the wife and the man did:

They supposed it must contain a great lump of gold inside and killed it in order that they might get the entire eggs instead of taking every day a golden.

The third one tells the result:

The foolish pair thus hoping to become rich all at once was deprived of the gain of which they were assured day by day.”

Moral: Haste makes waste.
The story *Who Will Bell The Cat* is about mice and a cat who also lived in a big house. The cat pounced on the mice and the number reduced. The mice held a meeting and decided to bell the cat. At this all the mice were rejoicing but an old rat stood up and enquired as to who would bell the cat? There was no answer.

**Moral:** Plans are useless unless they can be carried out.

Still with all the brevity, space may be found for dramatic touch. Most of the fables end with a remark of the principal character. They may be simple in words, as illustrated in the fable *Bullying The Bull*. A bull, while grazing, entered the forest. It was chased by a lion and it entered into a cave, which was the home of a wild goat. The wild goat was annoyed to see the bull in his cave. He began butting him with his sharp horns. For some time the bull tolerated the arrogance and ill-behaviour of the goat. As the lion went out of sight, the bull fumed at the goat, took him by his horns and threw him out of the cave. The goat was left repenting for his insolence.

**Moral:** Taking advantage of someone's difficult situation lands one in great difficulties.

In the story of *The Crab And The Fox*, the crab concludes thus:

I well deserve my fate; for what business had I on land when by nature and habit I am only adapted for the sea? (TPT, 81)
Thus brevity is an important characteristic of a well-told fable. It is of short length and so, cannot be lengthened. There is not just any space to waste and nothing can be added. But it must be noted that in the fable, as in the novel, the theme is same. Its aim is to reveal human life with a sensitive and tender scrutiny, to focus on the truth and to draw out its message. The true measure of the fabulist is his ability to hold infirmity in the palm of his hand, and eternity in an hour. In the older forms of narrative - the fable, the allegory and the parable - the action is coherent and unimpeded.

Since brevity is the hallmark of the fable, characterization must be done boldly and with swift strokes. It also implies that detailed characterization is not to be expected in such a brief compass. The characters are mainly human beings, animals and birds of the air. One fine example is The Mysterious Ring Of The Bell, were Aesop skilfully adopted the characters as that of novels to illustrate the maxims of the fable.

On the outskirts of a small village, there was a temple. The silver bell at the temple door was a target for the thieves. One night when the whole village was asleep, a thief stole the precious silver bell and ran into the forest nearby. He thought that he will sell in the city market and get handsome money.

The same night some wild animals in the forest attacked the unfortunate thief. He somehow managed to escape from there. But in panic, he dropped the silver bell in the forest. The thief was too scared to return to the dense forest to retrieve the bell.
Next morning, as usual the villagers came to worship at the temple. They were shocked to see the silver bell missing from the temple door and were sad. There was nothing to do so the villagers offered the prayers and went to their home. That night, some people heard the ringing of the temple bell. All were shocked and confused as it heard from different directions. In the morning there was a rumour in the village that the temple god is going around to punish the villagers. They feared some calamity.

Standing aside, a young boy was listening to all this. The boy was thinking that the people got panicky for nothing, so he decided to find the truth. It was midnight. The boy heard a faint ringing of the bell. On the second ring the boy ran to the forest there he saw a monkey holding the bell in his hands and jumping from one tree to another.

The boy walked to the tree and took out the peanuts that he had brought with him. The monkey noticed it and hastily threw the bell and jumped to snatch the peanuts from the boy’s hand. He flung the peanut on the ground and ran towards the bell.

While the monkey was busy in picking the peanut, the boy picked up the silver bell and ran towards the village as fast as could. Reaching the village he narrated to the villagers all that had happened. The villagers were happy to get their auspicious bell back. Everyone praised the young boy for his intelligence and bravery act.

**Moral:** *Age is not a hamper for doing any good deed.*
Aesop introduces a number of animals such as ass, bull camel, cat, crow, dog, dolphin, eagle, flea, fox, goose, gnat, grasshopper, hare, horse, hawk, hen, heifer, jackdaw, kite, lamb, lark, lion, mouse, mole, monkey, owl, ox, panther, peacock, partridge, raven, serpent, swan, tortoise, wolf, and wasp, besides others. But it should be noted that the fabulist does not introduce the elephant in his fables. He does not give the characters the label of their species as the Ass, the Lion, the Monkey and the Dog.

The animals and birds are sketched with unexceptional care and attention is given to their natural attributes. Thus the faithfulness of the dog, the boldness of the lion, the timidity of the hare and the hardworking nature of the ass are all recognized in Aesop’s Fables. While they are made to depict the motives and passions of men, they retain in an eminent degree their own special features of craft or counsel, of cowardice or courage, of generosity or rapacity.

Human characters from all walks of life are introduced. They are carpenters, blacksmith, masons, hunters, slaves, cobblers, fishermen, merchants, physicians, butchers, millers, shepherds, etc. However they are not known by their professions.

Aesop in the fable The Dog And The Log talks about the story of the dog owned by the blacksmith. In a certain village lived a blacksmith who had a pet dog. When he barked aloud, it was horrifying. The dog was proud of his strength and might. As days went by, he became more and more vain.
At first, the blacksmith was glad to own such a powerful dog. He also thought that he need not fear anything with his pet around him. But later the dog became arrogant. At times, the dog would bark even at the blacksmith. But the blacksmith did not take it seriously and let it drift.

One day, the arrogant dog chased the little daughter of the village Chief. She ran for the life. When the Chief saw his daughter in such miserable condition, he asked his daughter the reason.

Aesop has to his credit a large number of fables, and he is rightly considered as the Father of the Greek Fables. He is also acknowledged as the founder of this genre of writing, which has ever since borne his name and has secured for him the position of the first of moralists. The fables, through their journey to modern times, may have been subjected to large additions, deletions and changes as translations took place. Yet they have retained the same simplicity in the telling of the tales, the same humorous turn of thought, and in a good measure, the words, and expressions. Hence, there is enough of Aesop left to make a true judgment of his spirit, genius and manner of performance. Joseph Addison says:

The fables are raised altogether upon brutes and vegetables, with some of our species mixed among them, when he moral hath so required. But besides this kind of fable, there is another in which the actors are passions, virtues, vices and imaginary persons of the like nature.(TPT, 83)
The animal characters employed in *The Fables* are nothing but the superimposition of political existence. The ferocity of the tiger, the kingship of the lion, and the stupidity of the ass can be appreciated. More allegories are employed by the fabulist. In each and every society examples of such petty tyrannies arising out of superior might constantly abound. We can see the domination of the superiority of the lion in *The Lion And The Camel*. The story started with the forest scene which wore a festive look in the evening.

The animals were preparing to celebrate the birthday of their beloved king, the lion. The king looked gorgeous, sitting by is royal rock. The monkey climbed upon a low branch of a nearby tree, the rabbit sat by the bushes while the horse, the camel, the rhinoceros, the bear and all others gathered around the lion.

At a nod from the king, the tiger stood up and welcomed the gathering as, Dear friends, today we are here to celebrate the birthday of our majestic king. First let’s all sing for him! And the gathering began singing in chorus. (A, 55)

The lion nodded in acknowledged, as the animals wished in chorus. First came the monkey, it sprang up on the branch and hung upside down by his tail. Then he flung from one tree to another and took a circle around the king and amused like a jester. Then came a fat elephant, he curled his trunk up and saluted the king with a
bow. Then he lifted his front legs up and walked on the hind legs. All the animals cheered at these tricks. When the huge creature started somersaulting, the gathering rolled into peals of laughter.

Next was the bear’s turn. He too performed some rare traits and entertained the king. All the animals clapped and cheered, except for the camel. Standing by a thick bush, the camel felt jealous of the elephant, the monkey and bear. He thought what was so special about them and he can do whatever they have done.

Walking with the crooked legs, the camel came right in front of the lion and said that all the tricks were nothing compared to what he can do. The king was shocked at the haughty behaviour of the camel. But before the king could speak the camel had started imitating the elephant. He raised his front legs and tried to walk on the hind legs, but unable to maintain his balance, and fell down. The other animal felt embarrassed. But the camel did not; he got up and started dancing.

The king did not like this interruption to his amusement. He felt disgusted. But the camel was not at all ready to stop. The monkey noticed the lion was seeing with anger, he warns the camel. The camel was not ready to listen and continued his crooked dance, in the excitement he stamped the lion’s foot. That became too much for the lion. The lion shouted in furious and pounced upon the vain camel and banished from the forest. The camel rightly punished for his jealousy and false pride.

**Moral:** *One may derive pleasure in fooling others but at the end he proves himself to be the biggest fool.*
The animal character is often transgressed, altered and reduced to represent some special quality which it itself represents. The animal character the horse in The Horse And The Groom, once lived a horse. His owner had employed a groom to look after the horse. Every morning, the groom would take the horse for a walk in the meadows. Then he would cleanse his stable and give him a nice hot water bath. He used to say to himself that his horse should be at its best and should look tidy and smart. Then the groom would comb the horse for hours and hours. He would cuddle and brush the horse’s tail. Every now and then he used to say that his horse should look good. But when feeding the horse, the groom would give him only dry grass. The owner would buy nutritious and hygienic feed, the horse was fed with only the dusty and unhealthy fodder.

The groom used to sell it in the black market. Then he would throw some straw in the horse’s manger. The poor horse never liked to eat the tasteless straw, so most of the time the horse had to go hungry, which continued for some days. The horse became week day by day; still the groom was not ready to change his attitude. The horse was unable to starve. The next morning the groom took the horse for a walk and the horse was not in a good mood. The groom as usual gave bath and said that the horse should look handsome. Hearing that the horse lost his temper and saw exactly the groom was bending right beside his hind leg, combing his tail. The angry horse gave a mighty kick of his hind leg to the groom.
If you really wish me to be in good condition, then feed me properly.

If I don’t eat properly, I won’t be able to even stand on my legs.

Then where will the tidiness go and what will the smartness do (A, 120)

The whack of the horse’s leg was so powerful that the groom could not get up for sometime. From that day, the groom never misused the horse’s feed. The horse got proper food at right time and he became strong and smart. The groom had corrected his mistake and become a caretaker in all respects. The horse was indeed at its best. He had learned the lesson in the hard way!

Moral: *A bad way has a bad end*

It is thus individualized and plays a particular role at a particular situation. The ass in *The Ass And The Merchant* is first shown to be clever enough to deceive his master when carrying a bundle of salt. Every moment it stumbles deliberately in the middle of the stream so as to dissolve the salt in the water. But when the ass stumbles for the third time, its plan fail, for the merchant has loaded the ass with bits of sponge. When, therefore, the ass stumbles and falls in the stream, the weight is not reduced, but it becomes heavier, as the sponge absorbs the water instead.

*The Fables* of Aesop contain morals at the end of each narration to engender an ethical value. They have gained steady popularity as an appreciation for folk-lore began to increase. Fables also began to serve as commentaries on human behaviour. Yet the moral of the fable is always subordinate and is never permitted to interfere
with the principal theme of the fable. Many of the morals drawn from Aesop's fables have now attained the status of proverbs: 'Sour Grapes', 'Dog in the manger', 'A bird in hand is worth two in the bush' and 'Great braggars, little doers'.

The Aesopian fable emphasizes the social interaction of human beings and the morals they draw to advice on the best way to deal with the competitive realities of life. They teach worldly wisdom based on peoples' observation of behaviour, show the way to profit by others' wrongs and in general, how to turn everything to good account. The Bat And The Weasel.

The poor Bat could not make up his mind

To be bird or a beast, or what kind.

In caves he would wander

But he stayed there so long he grew blind.(A, 39)

A weasel in search of prey happened to catch a bat. He was about to kill him for his meals when the bat began begging for his life. The weasel questioned as to why he should show mercy on birds. In reply the bat said that it was not a bird a rat. Hearing his plea the weasel let it go free. After some days again the bat was caught by the weasel.

Again the bat pleaded for mercy. As usual the weasel asked why he should show mercy to rats. The bat immediately said that he was not a rat and but a bird. The weasel spared his life and let him go. Thus the bat escaped and saved its life a second time.

Moral: We often see men changing from one side to the other, to suit their needs.
The Fables have been admirably constructed with a motive of general utility and of universal application. Through his fables Aesop is neither a narrator nor an allegorist but a great teacher, a corrector of morals and a censor of virtues. There lies the superiority of the fabulist. The aim of the fables is to create laughter yet under a merry disguise to convey instruction.

It must be noted that the moral content of the fable does not obtrude the story. It is an inherent part of the action, rather than didacticism that is labeled ‘the moral’ of the story. In all the stories that moral content has become the integral part of the well-told story and therefore gained a status as one of the best of world fiction.

The style of the Fables is very simple and direct. It is free from verbosity and high sounding vocabulary. No words are wasted in describing either the characters or the incidents in detail. The most important feature worth mentioning is its marvelous terseness and epigrammatic force. Aesop had the power of packing his thoughts into the smallest possible space as in the fable The Shepherd’s Boy.

A shepherd Boy, not thinking much,

Gave false alarm of “wolf!” and such,

Till none came to his yelp

Of “Help, help, help, help,”

When a real wolf put him in Dutch.(A, 167)
The story contains only four sentences. The first one sets the stage:

A certain shepherd boy had the habit of making fun and often cried out 'Wolf, Wolf'.

The second sentence tells what the people did:

Several times he drew the farmers from nearby field from their work. Finding themselves deluded they resolved to take no notice of his alarm in future.

The third one tells the result of his mischief:

Indeed one day, the wolf came and the boy cried out in earnest. But no heed was paid to his cries. The sheep were devoured by the wolf.

**Moral:** *People do not believe liars, even when they tell the truth.*

The construction of an Aesopian fable is thus very simple. They all have a beginning, middle and an end - thus incorporating the principles of Aristotle in miniature. The exposition comprises of an introduction to the animal characters and the situation or relation or motivation with its possibility of development. The complication merges from the interaction of these motives and the comparative ability of each character in the fable emerges with worldly wisdom. Finally the resolution is invariably in favour of the stronger, the wiser and the more diplomatic. This is followed by the moral generalization, which is in keeping with the tenor of the story.

It is also interesting to note that the Aesopian fables comply with the Three Unities – of Time, Place and Action – put forth by Aristotle. For example, let us take the fable of The Maid And Her Servants
Two Maids killed the rooster whose loud bawl
Roused Mistress at first dawn, to their gall,
Now they're more furious
Because – it’s curious –
She’s up even earlier to call. (A, 135)

An old woman, who was very thrifty, had a habit of waking her maids every morning at cockcrow. The maids were young and lazy and loved sleeping till late in the morning. They hated being awakened so early. They wanted to get rid of the cock which woke their mistress every morning. They decided to kill the cock when the mistress has gone to the market. So they caught the cock and wrung its neck. Now they were very happy, thinking that neither will the cock crow nor will they have to wake up so early in the morning. They felt quite relieved. But they were sadly mistaken. Since then the mistress had no means to know the hour and so she got up much before the break of dawn and turned the maids out of their beds almost in the middle of the night.

Moral: **Look before you leap.**

It is to be seen here that the action of the plot is confined to a few hours and, therefore, not exceeding twenty-four hours. It takes place in only one place, that is, in the house of the old maid. It will also be remembered that Aristotle refers to the fables of Aesop in his work, the *Rhetoric*.
The Sparrow And The Hare is a suitable example to enunciate that Aesopian Fables are having a beginning middle and ends with worldly wisdom. There lived a hare in a forest, he was well-spoken and well-mannered. The hare had made his burrow at the root of a tree. On the branch of the same tree, a sparrow had made her nest. She was very talkative and vain. Very often she used to tease the hare. But the hare never minded her teasing.

One day, the hare was wandering for the food. The sparrow did not have any work, so she followed the hare. Every now and then, she provoked the hare by passing funny remarks. But the hare was, as usual, quiet.

See, I can fly high up in the sky. Your life must be so boring... always on the ground, said the vain sparrow.

That doesn't matter, dear sparrow. Even on the ground we have so many adventures, the hare said smiling.

Henh! What adventure? You can only hop around.

I can just flap my wings and go faaaaar off, the sparrow said dogmatically. We have swift feet, friend. We can run very fast, said the hare. All of us have special quality. But we should not boast about it. All that is important is that we should live in love and peace. (A, 109)
The sparrow saying so flew away. Meanwhile the hare slowly chuckled down and sniffing the grass reached near a mountain. He did not notice that an eagle was eying upon him from the sky. Suddenly the eagle pounced upon the hare and tried to carry it away. But the hare slipped from his claws and fell to the ground. The hare was holding his legs and moaning. The sparrow just came and made fun that he was a fast runner; where had the swiftness gone when the eagle hurt him. The sparrow advised the hare that he should be careful while wandering around.

As the sparrow was making fun of the hare, the hawk suddenly attacked her. Thought the hawk could not carry, her she was badly injured. Now the hare said what happened to the high-flier, and could not she escape from the hawk’s attack. The sparrow now realized how true the hare was. She slowly nursed her injured wings and hopped back home. Hat day she had learned a good lesson not to make fun of other’s misfortune.

**Moral**: *It is easy to advise but not so easy to act.*

It is interesting to note that the titles of a few fables and situations have become axiomatic. Thus a number of proverbs spring from Aesop. Some of them can be mentioned; *Sour Grapes*, ‘*The dog in the manger*’, ‘*A bird in hand is worth two in the bush*’, etc.

Some of the fables take the form of caricature, as for example, *The Wolf And The Crane*, implies that there are some people so strangely infatuated with a sense of their own superiority either by their long ancestry or their personal
attractiveness, that they fail to recognize any service rendered to them. Such individuals would seem to imply that they themselves were conferring a privilege on those from whom they accept favours. In fact they consider themselves to be above all need of expression of gratitude or thankfulness.

The story is that once the wolf was devouring his prey, got a large piece of bone stuck in his throat. He began whining in pain. The pain became unbearable almost impossible for him to breathe. He was almost on the verge of death when he fortunately saw a crane passing by. This created a ray of hope and he said haltingly:

O crane! My dear friend! I have got a large piece of bone struck in my throat. I am dying of pain. I shall be extremely grateful to you if you take out the bone and save my life. I also promise to reward you suitably for your act of kindness. (A, 84)

Now the crane was in a strange state of predicament. She could realize the plight of the wolf, but at the same time she was aware of the risk ahead. She knew her hasty action could put her life into grave jeopardy; but her conscience did not allow her to leave the wolf to die in pain.

At last the crane pitied the wolf and using her long beak, took out the bone. The wolf got immediate relief. Now the crane reminded the wolf of his promise.
The wolf very shamelessly retorted and said to the crane:

You foolish bird! You dare ask for a reward?

Isn’t it reward enough to have spared your life after

You put your head in my mouth. I could have clamped

My jaws shut with your head in my mouth and bid you

farewell from this world. (A, 85)

Saying so the wolf went away.

**Moral:** After helping someone in danger, if you don’t get any thanks, thank your stars for coming to no harm.

The above story talks about the ingratitude. The Lion And The Mouse is a fable which expresses the expressions of gratitude or thankfulness. One hot afternoon, a lion was taking a nap outside his cave. A ting mouse wandered in search of food came closer to the sleeping lion. He mistook the royal animal for a huge rock and climbed over him. The mouse realizing the rock is a lion, before he could jump, the lion woke up. He roared at him, and asked who that was? The mouse humbly said that it was a mouse. So saying the mouse tried to escape but the lion grabbed and said that the mouse has disturbed the sleep so, it has to pay for its attitude. Immediately the mouse begged for mercy. But the lion was not ready to listen and was about to kill the mouse. The mouse requested to forgive and also added who knows; tomorrow may be of some help to the lion. The lion laughed at him and
exclaimed what help the mouse can do for the lion. The mouse pleaded the same
day he will be able to repay his kindness. The lion took pity on the mouse and let
it go. The lion forgot the incident but the mouse did not.

One day the mouse was taking a walk he heard the sound of the lion in the
cave. At first the mouse thought that it was lion’s natural roar, but when it came
closer it was like howling. The lion seems to be in pain, thought the mouse. He
walked into the cave he saw that the lion was right in front; the lion sat . . . . caught
in a net. The mouse enquired what happened to the lion. The lion replied that it
was caught in some hunters’ net. Soon, the hunter will take him said the lion sadly.
The mouse squeaked and said not to be sad and will free the lion before the hunter
come.

The mouse started severing the net with his sharp teeth. Within no time it
freed the lion. The lion delightedly thanked the mouse. The mouse proved that
even tiny creatures could also be helpful to a mighty one.

**Moral:** _One should be grateful to the deeds done to them._

Some fables can be considered as satires. Thus the hare stands for swiftness,
the lion for kingly qualities and the ass for foolishness. In _The Wolf And The
Lion_: a wolf steals a lamb from a fold and carries him off to his lair. A lion meets
him on the way, and seizes the lamb from him. The wolf standing at a safe distance,
complained, that the lion had taken the prey unrighteously from him. The lion
mockingly replied that it was righteously his, since it was the gift from a friend.
The story is a satire on thieves and greedy robbers who fall out with one another when they are out of luck.

**Moral:** *Those who do ill to others themselves suffer.*

The fables of Aesop have produced a recognizable picture of human life through the conversation of animals. When the animals or inanimate things such as cities, trees, mountains, rocks, rivers, are supposed to communicate orally, they can be called as Aesopic. The following can be called as thus, because the characters in them are only animals or inanimate objects:

1. The Oak and the Reeds.
2. The Crow and the Sheep.
3. When the Lamb was Wolfed Down

*When the lamb was wolfed down:* One day a wolf was lapping at the head of a running brook. It saw an innocent lamb paddling in the water a little away from him. The wolf was very happy and planned to feast on the lamb’s flesh. As planned it threatened the lamb stating by stirring up his drinking water, the water has become muddy. The lamb began trembling with fear on seeing the wolf and said that as the brook was running higher near the wolf it was impossible for him to make it dirty. The wolf angrily accused the lamb of using dirty words against him a year before.
The lamb replied that he was not born then. The wolf lost control and pounced on the lamb declaring, that it must have been the lambs father who used dirty words against him.

**Moral:** Bad or quarrelsome people have always some excuse ready for their ill behaviour.

The fables are called Lybystic is that when there is an oral communication of men with beast or beasts with men. The following ones are few examples:


2. When The Hawk Pleased For Mercy.

3. The boys and the frogs.

**The Boys and the Frogs:** Once in a village, there were some mischievous boys, trying to amuse themselves. They were throwing stones on some frogs that were living in a pond, as soon as they popped out from the water. On seeing the frogs getting hurt or seeing it die amused the boys. Seeing many frogs injured or dead, the chief of the frogs gathered some courage and advised the boys to play some other games.

**Moral:** Never harm those who do not harm us.

Another example in Aesopian fable is to prove that not only animals communicate with human beings but even birds do so as in Grateful Vultures.
Once a farmer saw a pair of miserable vultures lying in his field, they were unable to fly. The farmer took pity on them brought them to the dry spot and where he lit a fire and fed them with pieces of meat drawn from the pyre where people burned their dead cattle. Gradually the vultures became friendly with the farmer. The farmer continued to feed them with great care till they had fully recouped.

By about the monsoon season they had fully regained their vital energy. Now recouped in health and strength, they flew away to the hills. But they could never forget the love and sincere care rendered by the farmer so selflessly. They so eager to show their gratitude to the farmer that they resolved to get hold of whatever articles of clothing they could find and give their friend and benefactor. They began flying from house to house and started to steal the drying clothes in the sun and brought to the farmer’s house.

The farmer appreciated their sense of gratitude but could not relish stolen pieces of cloth being dropped into his courtyard everyday. The farmer wanted to tell the vultures what they are doing will bring bad name for both. But every time the vultures brought the cloth when he was busy in the field and could never see them. Anyway the farmer neither sold nor used the stolen clothes, he stored them carefully.

The people in the village got fed of their cloth being stolen, so they laid trap and brought the vultures before the king and interrogated. The vultures gave a flap
to show their humbleness to the king and said that there is a farmer who saved their lives. In order to show their gratitude and to discharge their debt, they had done so to their benefactor, which the king termed as robbing the clothes.

The farmer was summoned before the king. The farmer explained everything and also added that he had kept all the clothes safely and ready to return to the owners. The king was greatly moved to hear the vulture and the farmer. Realising that the vultures had acted out of gratitude though without much discretion; and the farmer too had shown prudence though without much discretion; and the farmer too had shown prudence, he pardoned them.

**Moral**: *It is not the act but the attitude that matters*

There are fables in which only human beings are the characters:

1. The boasting traveller
2. The Milkmaid and her Pail

The Fable *The Milkmaid and her Pail* gives thus:

Miss Milkmaid’s capitalist dreams

Of gains from milk and chick, it seems,

Lost their supporting legs

‘Fore she even bought eggs –

She tripped, to spill her milk in streams. (A, 153)
There was a young girl who worked in the farm. She used to work hard and the farmer told her so. He allowed her to take the milk and the money she gets would belong to her. Immediately the girl dressed well and took the pot of milk on her head and hurried to sell it in the market. As she was walking she planned for her future. With the money she would buy few hens and the hens will lay eggs and with those chickens, her business would develop more and she would become a rich lady. With profits she would buy a beautiful dress. Wearing the gorgeous clothes would attract others. Young boys would like to dance with her and she would refuse to dance with them.

Thus imagining she turned her head with a jerk, causing the pot to fall down and break into pieces. Her dreams shattered

**Moral:** *Don’t count your chickens before they are hatched.*

Heavenly bodies such as the Sun, the Mercury and the Jupiter have also been introduced into *The Fables*:

1. The Frogs ask for the King

2. The bee and the Jupiter

In The fable *The story of The bee and the Jupiter* goes thus: Once a honey bee, in order to please God Jupiter, collected a potful of honey and presented it before Him. Jupiter was pleased and asked the bee to wish for anything and that would be granted. The bee became happy and asked Jupiter to grant him a boon.
Whoever is stung by the bee will have to suffer from intense pain. Jupiter asked the bee to ask for a better boon but the bee insisted. So Jupiter granted the bee’s wish but with a condition, that when he stings someone, the creature will undergo intense pain and suffering, but the bee too will die immediately. With these words Jupiter disappeared.

**Moral:** *Those who wish ill of others, themselves suffer.*

Some fables are aetiological, that is, they try to explain certain aspects of the animal. For example as in the fable *How the tortoise got its shell*. It was long ago when the chief of Gods, Lord Indra, entertained all the gods, goddess and all animals on his wedding feast. All came in time except for the tortoise which arrived very late for the feast being slow of speed. Lord Indra questioned him about this. The tortoise instead of apologizing, replied that he was at home. Indra got angry and retorted that the tortoise was so fond of his home which was a ditch. He then cursed that the tortoise would carry his home with him anywhere he went. Since then, the tortoise has always been carrying his house upon his back.

**Moral:** *Never be self-conceited or you will have to pay the price.*

Thoroughly practical in character, the fables of Aesop concern themselves for the most part with the conduct of life in private and public affairs. Extraordinary insight and sagacity are the salient features behind perhaps any work of the same size. They are loaded with the ripest wisdom of experience but the wisdom which they inculcate is of the distinctly worldly kind.
A theme which reoccurs repeatedly through the fables is that of the weak and the insignificant somehow getting the better of the strong and the confident. Just as the little fishes were in the end luckier than the great fishes, the ‘tortoise’ manages to get the better of the ‘hare’ in the race. The hare boasted that he would of course easily win and was so sure of himself that he decided that he could afford to take up a little nap half-way through the race. But the hare fell deeply asleep and the tortoise, which had been plodding along behind him, managed to pass him and reach the finishing line before the hare woke up. The ‘mouse’ too proves his worth to the mighty ‘lion’ when it gnaws through the ropes of the net in which the lion is trapped.

Another theme which appears again and again is that of friendship. As in fables of The Ass and his purchaser and The Goose and the Cranes, the message is brought to light that one makes good friends by the company he keeps. For example: A purchaser wanted to purchase an ass and took it to his shed. As soon as it went to the straw yard, it joined the idlest and the greatest eaters of them all. The purchaser thought to himself that this ass must also be of the same kind and led the ass back to his owner. The fable highlights that the ass also changed itself to be idle as that of the other ass the purchaser had already.

Moral: Ducks of same character flock together

In the fables of Aesop a warning is given against the tyrants and dictators. The Wolf And The Lamb, When The Hawk Pleadeed For Mercy and Lineal Descendant
are all examples of fables that warn against the tyrants and dictators. The fables, in a way, state that wicked men will always find an excuse for evil doing.

**Lineal Descendant.** It is the story of a mule that had an easy time and had nothing to do but to eat. He was a frisky young mule. One day as he was running about in the pasture in great spirits, he began to fancy himself a runner.

The mule was aware that his mother was a race horse and he thought that he too can run just as fast. And in order to prove himself a lineal descendant of the race horse, he, in a frisson of excitement, began running as fast as he could. Meanwhile, his master, who was in great hurry to reach his village, saw him running. He caught the mule, jumped on his back and began flogging him to run faster.

The mule also tried to run faster but gave up and gasping for breath, he said:

> Master, it is true that my mother was a race horse, but you should know that my father was only a jackass. (A, 135)

**Moral:** One should never ignore the other side of the truth.

The story *When The Hawk Plead For Mercy* is an example for man is the most ambitious of animals. Once a hawk while chasing a pigeon got trapped into a trammel set by a fowler coming towards him, he was distraught with fear.

The hawk gave an imploring look to the fowler and said that he had not done any harm to him and there is no chance in future also to harm the fowler.
The hawk begged to be kind enough to release him from the trammel. Hearing this the fowler laughed at the hawk and said, the pigeon had not done any harm to the hawk, still the hawk chased the pigeon to kill it. Therefore the fowler said that he is not going to let the hawk free and get what is deserved.

**Moral:** *Do unto others what you would have others do unto you.*

Another theme that is dealt in the fables is contentment. Man is the most ambitious of animals. Content is the natural wealth, the story *The Old Woman And Her Maids* cautions against falling from had to worse. Many a time, people, in trying to avoid a present grievance involve themselves in greater damages. The maids in the fable killed the cock that was responsible for their getting up early in the morning, but the old woman, having come to know of the plot resolved to be even with them. She obliged them to get up in the mid-night. This saying is put in the proverb "*Better to lose the wool than the sheep*'. The fable *The Old Woman And Her Hen* also teaches the same lesson of contentment. The old woman in the fable raises the quantity of barley corn to the hen in the hope that it would give more and more eggs daily, but from that day on the hen gave up laying eggs altogether.

**Moral:** *One must be contented with one's station in life.*

All the fables dealt with worldly wisdom which ends with some rippest moral. *Sermons Of A Foolish Sparrow* talks about the moral at the end of the story. An eagle was chasing a rabbit. The rabbit, ran zigzag, somehow managed to reach in dense thickest and save his life. When his heart still pounding with fear, he was trying to
become normal when suddenly heard a sparrow chirping and said why the rabbit is so coward and scared so much. The sparrow then added that he being smaller in size but not scared, and the rabbit though big in size is scared of the eagle. It is a matter of shame said the sparrow.

The eagle was still in search of the rabbit, but could not find it instead it heard the sparrow chirping. The eagle swooped the sparrow with its strong talons and flew away. The rabbit felt sorry for the sparrow.

**Moral:** It is easy to give advice.

Thoroughly practical in character, the fables of Aesop concern themselves for the most part with the conduct of life in private and public affairs and thus with things which comes home to men’s quiness and bosoms. Extraordinary insight and sagacity are their salient features beyond perhaps any other work of the same size; they are loaded with ripest wisdom which they inculcate is on the whole of a distinctly worldly kind.