

Tales and Novels of J. de La Fontaine — Volume 10 eBook

Tales and Novels of J. de La Fontaine — Volume 10 by Jean de La Fontaine

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*The tales and novels
of
J. De La Fontaine*

Volume 10.

Contains:
The Two Friends
The Country Justice
Alice Sick
The Kiss Returned
Sister Jane
An Imitation of Anacreon
Another Imitation of Anacreon

The two Friends

AXIOCHUS, a handsome youth of old,
And Alcibiades, (both gay and bold,)
So well agreed, they kept a beauteous belle,
With whom by turns they equally would dwell.*It* happened, one of them so nicely played,
The fav'rite lass produced a little maid,
Which both extolled, and each his own believed,
Though doubtless one or t'other was deceived.



*But when to riper years the bantling grew,
And sought her mother's foot-steps to pursue,
Each friend desired to be her chosen swain,
And neither would a parent's name retain.*

*Said one, why brother, she's your very shade;
The features are the same—your looks pervade.
Oh no, the other cried, it cannot be
Her chin, mouth, nose, and eyes, with your's agree;
But that as 'twill, let me her favours win,
And for the pleasure I will risk the sin.*

The country justice

*Two lawyers to their cause so well adhered,
A country justice quite confused appeared,
By them the facts were rendered so obscure
With which the truth remained he was not sure.
At length, completely tired, two straws he sought
Of different lengths, and to the parties brought.
These in his hand he held:—the plaintiff drew
(So fate decreed) the shortest of the two.
On this the other homeward took his way,
To boast how nicely he had gained the day.*

*The bench complained: the magistrate replied
Don't blame I pray—'tis nothing new I've tried;
Courts often judge at hazard in the law,
Without deciding by the longest straw.*

Alice Sick

Sick,

Page 2

Alice grown, and fearing dire event,
Some friend advised a servant should be sent
Her confessor to bring and ease her mind;—
Yes, she replied, to see him I'm inclined;
Let father Andrew instantly be sought:—
By him salvation usually I'm taught.

A Messenger was told, without delay,
To take, with rapid steps, the convent way;
He rang the bell—a monk enquired his name,
And asked for what, or whom, the fellow came.
I father Andrew want, the wight replied,
Who's oft to Alice confessor and guide:
With Andrew, cried the other, would you speak?
If that's the case, he's far enough to seek;
Poor man! he's left us for the regions blessed,
And has in Paradise ten years confessed.

The kiss returned

As *William* walking with his wife was seen,
A man of rank admired her lovely mien.
Who gave you such a charming fair? he cried,
May I presume to kiss your beauteous bride?
With all my heart, replied the humble swain,
You're welcome, sir:—I beg you'll not refrain;
She's at your service: take the boon, I pray;
You'll not such offers meet with ev'ry day.

*The*gentleman proceeded as desired;
To get a kiss, alone he had aspired;
So fervently howe'er he pressed her lip,
That *Petronella* blushed at ev'ry sip.

Sevendays had scarcely run, when to his arms,
The other took a wife with seraph charms;
And *William* was allowed to have a kiss,
That filled his soul with soft ecstatick bliss.
Cried he, I wish, (and truly I am grieved)
That when the gentleman a kiss received,
From her I love, he'd gone to greater height,
And with my *Petronella* passed the night.



Sister Jane

&nbs

p; *When* Sister Jane, who had produced a child,
 In prayer and penance all her hours beguiled
 Her sister-nuns around the lattice pressed;
 On which the abbess thus her flock addressed:
 Live like our sister Jane, and bid adieu
 To worldly cares:—have better things in view.

Yes, they replied, we sage like her shall be,
When we with love have equally been free.

An imitation of Anacreon

Painter in Paphos and Cythera famed
Depict, I pray, the absent Iris' face.
Thou hast not seen the lovely nymph I've named;
The better for thy peace.—Then will I trace
For thy instruction her transcendent grace.
Begin with lily white and blushing rose,
Take then the Loves and Graces... But what good
Words, idle words? for Beauty's Goddess could
By Iris be replaced, nor one suppose
The secret fraud—their grace so equal shows.
Thou at Cythera couldst, at Paphos too,
Of the same Iris Venus form anew.

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Another imitation of Anacreon

Prone, on my couch I calmly slept
Against my wont. A little child
Awoke me as he gently crept
And beat my door. A tempest wild
Was raging-dark and cold the night.
"Have pity on my naked plight,"
He begged, "and ope thy door".—"Thy name?"
I asked admitting him.—"The same
"Anon I'll tell, but first must dry
"My weary limbs, then let me try
"My mois'ened bow."—Despite my fear
The hearth I lit, then drew me near
My guest, and chafed his fingers cold.
"Why fear?" I thought. "Let me be bold
"No Polyphemus he; what harm
"In such a child?—Then I'll be calm!"
The playful boy drew out a dart,
Shook his fair locks, and to my heart
His shaft he launch'd.—"Love is my name,"
He thankless cried, "I hither came
"To tame thee. In thine ardent pain
"Of Cupid think and young Climene."—
"Ah! now I know thee, little scamp,
"Ungrateful, cruel boy! Decamp!"
Cupid a saucy caper cut,
Skipped through the door, and as it shut,
"My bow," he taunting cried, "is sound,
"Thy heart, poor comrade, feels the wound."

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