

period of Leonardo's life. It has become very indistinct, and is at present exceedingly difficult to decipher. Some passages remain doubtful.]

[Footnote: Compare No. 1339, written on the same sheet.]

1218.

The watery element was left enclosed between the raised banks of the rivers, and the sea was seen between the uplifted earth and the surrounding air which has to envelope and enclose the complicated machine of the earth, and whose mass, standing between the water and the element of fire, remained much restricted and deprived of its indispensable moisture; the rivers will be deprived of their waters, the fruitful earth will put forth no more her light verdure; the fields will no more be decked with waving corn; all the animals, finding no fresh grass for pasture, will die and food will then be lacking to the lions and wolves and other beasts of prey, and to men who after many efforts will be compelled to abandon their life, and the human race will die out. In this way the fertile and fruitful earth will remain deserted, arid and sterile from the water being shut up in its interior, and from the activity of nature it will continue a little time to increase until the cold and subtle air being gone, it will be forced to end with the element of fire; and then its surface will be left burnt up to cinder and this will be the end of all terrestrial nature. [Footnote: Compare No. 1339,

written on the same sheet.]

1219.

Why did nature not ordain that one animal should not live by the death of another? Nature, being inconstant and taking pleasure in creating and making constantly new lives and forms, because she knows that her terrestrial materials become thereby augmented, is more ready and more swift in her creating, than time in his destruction; and so she has ordained that many animals shall be food for others. Nay, this not satisfying her desire, to the same end she frequently sends forth certain poisonous and pestilential vapours upon the vast increase and congregation of animals; and most of all upon men, who increase vastly because other animals do not feed upon them; and, the causes being removed, the effects would not follow. This earth therefore seeks to lose its life, desiring only continual reproduction; and as, by the argument you bring forward and demonstrate, like effects always follow like causes, animals are the image of the world.

XX.

Humorous Writings.

Just as Michaelangelo's occasional poems reflect his private life as well as the general disposition of his mind, we may find in the

writings collected in this section, the transcript of Leonardo's fanciful nature, and we should probably not be far wrong in assuming, that he himself had recited these fables in the company of his friends or at the court festivals of princes and patrons. Era tanto piacevole nella conversazione-- so relates Vasari--che tirava a se gli animi delle genti. And Paulus Jovius says in his short biography of the artist: Fuit ingenio valde comi, nitido, liberali, vultu autem longe venustissimo, et cum elegantiae omnis deliciarumque maxime theatralium mirificus inventor ac arbiter esset, ad lyramque scito caneret, cunctis per omnem aetatem principibus mire placuit. There can be no doubt that the fables are the original offspring of Leonardo's brain, and not borrowed from any foreign source; indeed the schemes and plans for the composition of fables collected in division V seem to afford an external proof of this, if the fables themselves did not render it self-evident. Several of them-- for instance No. 1279--are so strikingly characteristic of Leonardo's views of natural science that we cannot do them justice till we are acquainted with his theories on such subjects; and this is equally true of the 'Prophecies'.

I have prefixed to these quaint writings the 'Studies on the life and habits of animals' which are singular from their peculiar aphoristic style, and I have transcribed them in exactly the order in which they are written in MS. H. This is one of the very rare instances in which one subject is treated in a consecutive series of notes, all in one MS., and Leonardo has also departed from his

ordinary habits, by occasionally not completing the text on the page it is begun. These brief notes of a somewhat mysterious bearing have been placed here, simply because they may possibly have been intended to serve as hints for fables or allegories. They can scarcely be regarded as preparatory for a natural history, rather they would seem to be extracts. On the one hand the names of some of the animals seem to prove that Leonardo could not here be recording observations of his own; on the other hand the notes on their habits and life appear to me to dwell precisely on what must have interested him most--so far as it is possible to form any complete estimate of his nature and tastes.

In No. 1293 lines 1-10, we have a sketch of a scheme for grouping the Prophecies. I have not however availed myself of it as a clue to their arrangement here because, in the first place, the texts are not so numerous as to render the suggested classification useful to the reader, and, also, because in reading the long series, as they occur in the original, we may follow the author's mind; and here and there it is not difficult to see how one theme suggested another. I have however regarded Leonardo's scheme for the classification of the Prophecies as available for that of the Fables and Jests, and have adhered to it as far as possible.

Among the humourous writings I might perhaps have included the 'Rebusses', of which there are several in the collection of Leonardo's drawings at Windsor; it seems to me not likely that many

or all of them could be solved at the present day and the MSS. throw no light on them. Nor should I be justified if I intended to include in the literary works the well-known caricatures of human faces attributed to Leonardo-- of which, however, it may be incidentally observed, the greater number are in my opinion undoubtedly spurious. Two only have necessarily been given owing to their presence in text, which it was desired to reproduce: Vol. I page 326, and Pl. CXXII. It can scarcely be doubted that some satirical intention is conveyed by the drawing on Pl. LXIV (text No. 688).

My reason for not presenting Leonardo to the reader as a poet is the fact that the maxims and morals in verse which have been ascribed to him, are not to be found in the manuscripts, and Prof. Uzielli has already proved that they cannot be by him. Hence it would seem that only a few short verses can be attributed to him with any certainty.

I.

STUDIES ON THE LIFE AND HABITS OF ANIMALS.

1220.

THE LOVE OF VIRTUE.

The gold-finch is a bird of which it is related that, when it is

carried into the presence of a sick person, if the sick man is going to die, the bird turns away its head and never looks at him; but if the sick man is to be saved the bird never loses sight of him but is the cause of curing him of all his sickness.

Like unto this is the love of virtue. It never looks at any vile or base thing, but rather clings always to pure and virtuous things and takes up its abode in a noble heart; as the birds do in green woods on flowery branches. And this Love shows itself more in adversity than in prosperity; as light does, which shines most where the place is darkest.

1221.

ENVY.

We read of the kite that, when it sees its young ones growing too big in the nest, out of envy it pecks their sides, and keeps them without food.

CHEERFULNESS.

Cheerfulness is proper to the cock, which rejoices over every little thing, and crows with varied and lively movements.

SADNESS.

Sadness resembles the raven, which, when it sees its young ones born white, departs in great grief, and abandons them with doleful lamentations, and does not feed them until it sees in them some few black feathers.

1222.

PEACE.

We read of the beaver that when it is pursued, knowing that it is for the virtue [contained] in its medicinal testicles and not being able to escape, it stops; and to be at peace with its pursuers, it bites off its testicles with its sharp teeth, and leaves them to its enemies.

RAGE.

It is said of the bear that when it goes to the haunts of bees to take their honey, the bees having begun to sting him he leaves the honey and rushes to revenge himself. And as he seeks to be revenged on all those that sting him, he is revenged on none; in such wise that his rage is turned to madness, and he flings himself on the ground, vainly exasperating, by his hands and feet, the foes against which he is defending himself.

1223.

#### GRATITUDE.

The virtue of gratitude is said to be more [developed] in the birds called hoopoes which, knowing the benefits of life and food, they have received from their father and their mother, when they see them grow old, make a nest for them and brood over them and feed them, and with their beaks pull out their old and shabby feathers; and then, with a certain herb restore their sight so that they return to a prosperous state.

#### AVARICE.

The toad feeds on earth and always remains lean; because it never eats enough:-- it is so afraid lest it should want for earth.

1224.

#### INGRATITUDE.

Pigeons are a symbol of ingratitude; for when they are old enough no longer to need to be fed, they begin to fight with their father, and this struggle does not end until the young one drives the father out and takes the hen and makes her his own.



## CRUELTY.

The basilisk is so utterly cruel that when it cannot kill animals by its baleful gaze, it turns upon herbs and plants, and fixing its gaze on them withers them up.

1225.

## GENEROSITY.

It is said of the eagle that it is never so hungry but that it will leave a part of its prey for the birds that are round it, which, being unable to provide their own food, are necessarily dependent on the eagle, since it is thus that they obtain food.

## DISCIPLINE.

When the wolf goes cunningly round some stable of cattle, and by accident puts his foot in a trap, so that he makes a noise, he bites his foot off to punish himself for his folly.

1226.

## FLATTERERS OR SYRENS.

The syren sings so sweetly that she lulls the mariners to sleep;

then she climbs upon the ships and kills the sleeping mariners.

PRUDENCE.

The ant, by her natural foresight provides in the summer for the winter, killing the seeds she harvests that they may not germinate, and on them, in due time she feeds.

FOLLY.

The wild bull having a horror of a red colour, the hunters dress up the trunk of a tree with red and the bull runs at this with great frenzy, thus fixing his horns, and forthwith the hunters kill him there.

1227.

JUSTICE.

We may liken the virtue of Justice to the king of the bees which orders and arranges every thing with judgment. For some bees are ordered to go to the flowers, others are ordered to labour, others to fight with the wasps, others to clear away all dirt, others to accompany and escort the king; and when he is old and has no wings they carry him. And if one of them fails in his duty, he is punished without reprieve.

## TRUTH.

Although partridges steal each other's eggs, nevertheless the young born of these eggs always return to their true mother.

1228.

## FIDELITY, OR LOYALTY.

The cranes are so faithful and loyal to their king, that at night, when he is sleeping, some of them go round the field to keep watch at a distance; others remain near, each holding a stone in his foot, so that if sleep should overcome them, this stone would fall and make so much noise that they would wake up again. And there are others which sleep together round the king; and this they do every night, changing in turn so that their king may never find them wanting.

## FALSEHOOD.

The fox when it sees a flock of herons or magpies or birds of that kind, suddenly flings himself on the ground with his mouth open to look as he were dead; and these birds want to peck at his tongue, and he bites off their heads.

1229.

LIES.

The mole has very small eyes and it always lives under ground; and it lives as long as it is in the dark but when it comes into the light it dies immediately, because it becomes known;--and so it is with lies.

VALOUR.

The lion is never afraid, but rather fights with a bold spirit and savage onslaught against a multitude of hunters, always seeking to injure the first that injures him.

FEAR OR COWARDICE.

The hare is always frightened; and the leaves that fall from the trees in autumn always keep him in terror and generally put him to flight.

1230.

MAGNANIMITY.

The falcon never preys but on large birds; and it will let itself

die rather than feed on little ones, or eat stinking meat.

#### VAIN GLORY.

As regards this vice, we read that the peacock is more guilty of it than any other animal. For it is always contemplating the beauty of its tail, which it spreads in the form of a wheel, and by its cries attracts to itself the gaze of the creatures that surround it.

And this is the last vice to be conquered.

1231.

#### CONSTANCY.

Constancy may be symbolised by the phoenix which, knowing that by nature it must be resuscitated, has the constancy to endure the burning flames which consume it, and then it rises anew.

#### INCONSTANCY.

The swallow may serve for Inconstancy, for it is always in movement, since it cannot endure the smallest discomfort.

#### CONTINENCE.

The camel is the most lustful animal there is, and will follow the female for a thousand miles. But if you keep it constantly with its mother or sister it will leave them alone, so temperate is its nature.

1232.

#### INCONTINENCE.

The unicorn, through its intemperance and not knowing how to control itself, for the love it bears to fair maidens forgets its ferocity and wildness; and laying aside all fear it will go up to a seated damsel and go to sleep in her lap, and thus the hunters take it.

#### HUMILITY.

We see the most striking example of humility in the lamb which will submit to any animal; and when they are given for food to imprisoned lions they are as gentle to them as to their own mother, so that very often it has been seen that the lions forbear to kill them.

1233.

#### PRIDE.

The falcon, by reason of its haughtiness and pride, is fain to lord

it and rule over all the other birds of prey, and longs to be sole and supreme; and very often the falcon has been seen to assault the eagle, the Queen of birds.

#### ABSTINENCE.

The wild ass, when it goes to the well to drink, and finds the water troubled, is never so thirsty but that it will abstain from drinking, and wait till the water is clear again.

#### GLUTTONY.

The vulture is so addicted to gluttony that it will go a thousand miles to eat a carrion [carcase]; therefore is it that it follows armies.

1234.

#### CHASTITY.

The turtle-dove is never false to its mate; and if one dies the other preserves perpetual chastity, and never again sits on a green bough, nor ever again drinks of clear water.

#### UNCHASTITY.

The bat, owing to unbridled lust, observes no universal rule in pairing, but males with males and females with females pair promiscuously, as it may happen.

#### MODERATION.

The ermine out of moderation never eats but once in the day; it will rather let itself be taken by the hunters than take refuge in a dirty lair, in order not to stain its purity.

1235.

#### THE EAGLE.

The eagle when it is old flies so high that it scorches its feathers, and Nature allowing that it should renew its youth, it falls into shallow water [Footnote 5: The meaning is obscure.]. And if its young ones cannot bear to gaze on the sun [Footnote 6: The meaning is obscure.]--; it does not feed them with any bird, that does not wish to die. Animals which much fear it do not approach its nest, although it does not hurt them. It always leaves part of its prey uneaten.

#### LUMERPA,--FAME.

This is found in Asia Major, and shines so brightly that it absorbs



its own shadow, and when it dies it does not lose this light, and its feathers never fall out, but a feather pulled out shines no longer.

1236.

#### THE PELICAN.

This bird has a great love for its young; and when it finds them in its nest dead from a serpent's bite, it pierces itself to the heart, and with its blood it bathes them till they return to life.

#### THE SALAMANDER.

This has no digestive organs, and gets no food but from the fire, in which it constantly renews its scaly skin.

The salamander, which renews its scaly skin in the fire,--for virtue.

#### THE CAMELEON.

This lives on air, and there it is the prey of all the birds; so in order to be safer it flies above the clouds and finds an air so rarefied that it cannot support the bird that follows it.

At that height nothing can go unless it has a gift from Heaven, and that is where the chameleon flies.

1237.

THE ALEPO, A FISH.

The fish alepo does not live out of water.

THE OSTRICH.

This bird converts iron into nourishment, and hatches its eggs by its gaze;--Armies under commanders.

THE SWAN.

The swan is white without any spot, and it sings sweetly as it dies, its life ending with that song.

THE STORK.

This bird, by drinking saltwater purges itself of distempers. If the male finds his mate unfaithful, he abandons her; and when it grows old its young ones brood over it, and feed it till it dies.

1238.

THE GRASSHOPPER.

This silences the cuckoo with its song. It dies in oil and revives in vinegar. It sings in the greatest heats

THE BAT.

The more light there is the blinder this creature becomes; as those who gaze most at the sun become most dazzled.--For Vice, that cannot remain where Virtue appears.

THE PARTRIDGE.

This bird changes from the female into the male and forgets its former sex; and out of envy it steals the eggs from others and hatches them, but the young ones follow the true mother.

THE SWALLOW.

This bird gives sight to its blind young ones by means of celandine.

1239.

THE OYSTER.--FOR TREACHERY.

This creature, when the moon is full opens itself wide, and when the crab looks in he throws in a piece of rock or seaweed and the oyster cannot close again, whereby it serves for food to that crab. This is what happens to him who opens his mouth to tell his secret. He becomes the prey of the treacherous hearer.

#### THE BASILISK.--CRUELTY.

All snakes flie from this creature; but the weasel attacks it by means of rue and kills it.

#### THE ASP.

This carries instantaneous death in its fangs; and, that it may not hear the charmer it stops its ears with its tail.

1240.

#### THE DRAGON.

This creature entangles itself in the legs of the elephant which falls upon it, and so both die, and in its death it is avenged.

#### THE VIPER.

She, in pairing opens her mouth and at last clenches her teeth and

kills her husband. Then the young ones, growing within her body rend her open and kill their mother.

#### THE SCORPION.

Saliva, spit out when fasting will kill a scorpion. This may be likened to abstinence from greediness, which removes and heals the ills which result from that gluttony, and opens the path of virtue.

1241.

#### THE CROCODILE. HYPOCRISY.

This animal catches a man and straightway kills him; after he is dead, it weeps for him with a lamentable voice and many tears. Then, having done lamenting, it cruelly devours him. It is thus with the hypocrite, who, for the smallest matter, has his face bathed with tears, but shows the heart of a tiger and rejoices in his heart at the woes of others, while wearing a pitiful face.

#### THE TOAD.

The toad flies from the light of the sun, and if it is held there by force it puffs itself out so much as to hide its head below and shield itself from the rays. Thus does the foe of clear and radiant virtue, who can only be constrainedly brought to face it with puffed

up courage.

1242.

#### THE CATERPILLAR.--FOR VIRTUE IN GENERAL.

The caterpillar, which by means of assiduous care is able to weave round itself a new dwelling place with marvellous artifice and fine workmanship, comes out of it afterwards with painted and lovely wings, with which it rises towards Heaven.

#### THE SPIDER.

The spider brings forth out of herself the delicate and ingenious web, which makes her a return by the prey it takes.

[Footnote: Two notes are underneath this text. The first: 'nessuna chosa e da temere piu che lla sozza fama' is a repetition of the first line of the text given in Vol. I No. 695.

The second: *faticha fugga cholla fama in braccio quasi ochultata c* is written in red chalk and is evidently an incomplete sentence.]

1243.

#### THE LION.

This animal, with his thundering roar, rouses his young the third day after they are born, teaching them the use of all their dormant senses and all the wild things which are in the wood flee away.

This may be compared to the children of Virtue who are roused by the sound of praise and grow up in honourable studies, by which they are more and more elevated; while all that is base flies at the sound, shunning those who are virtuous.

Again, the lion covers over its foot tracks, so that the way it has gone may not be known to its enemies. Thus it beseems a captain to conceal the secrets of his mind so that the enemy may not know his purpose.

1244.

#### THE TARANTULA.

The bite of the tarantula fixes a man's mind on one idea; that is on the thing he was thinking of when he was bitten.

#### THE SCREECH-OWL AND THE OWL.

These punish those who are scoffing at them by pecking out their eyes; for nature has so ordered it, that they may thus be fed.

1245.

#### THE ELEPHANT.

The huge elephant has by nature what is rarely found in man; that is Honesty, Prudence, Justice, and the Observance of Religion; inasmuch as when the moon is new, these beasts go down to the rivers, and there, solemnly cleansing themselves, they bathe, and so, having saluted the planet, return to the woods. And when they are ill, being laid down, they fling up plants towards Heaven as though they would offer sacrifice. --They bury their tusks when they fall out from old age.--Of these two tusks they use one to dig up roots for food; but they save the point of the other for fighting with; when they are taken by hunters and when worn out by fatigue, they dig up these buried tusks and ransom themselves.

1246.

They are merciful, and know the dangers, and if one finds a man alone and lost, he kindly puts him back in the road he has missed, if he finds the footprints of the man before the man himself. It dreads betrayal, so it stops and blows, pointing it out to the other elephants who form in a troop and go warily.

These beasts always go in troops, and the oldest goes in front and



the second in age remains the last, and thus they enclose the troop. Out of shame they pair only at night and secretly, nor do they then rejoin the herd but first bathe in the river. The females do not fight as with other animals; and it is so merciful that it is most unwilling by nature ever to hurt those weaker than itself. And if it meets in the middle of its way a flock of sheep

1247.

it puts them aside with its trunk, so as not to trample them under foot; and it never hurts any thing unless when provoked. When one has fallen into a pit the others fill up the pit with branches, earth and stones, thus raising the bottom that he may easily get out. They greatly dread the noise of swine and fly in confusion, doing no less harm then, with their feet, to their own kind than to the enemy. They delight in rivers and are always wandering about near them, though on account of their great weight they cannot swim. They devour stones, and the trunks of trees are their favourite food. They have a horror of rats. Flies delight in their smell and settle on their back, and the beast scrapes its skin making its folds even and kills them.

1248.

When they cross rivers they send their young ones up against the stream of the water; thus, being set towards the fall, they break

the united current of the water so that the current does not carry them away. The dragon flings itself under the elephant's body, and with its tail it ties its legs; with its wings and with its arms it also clings round its ribs and cuts its throat with its teeth, and the elephant falls upon it and the dragon is burst. Thus, in its death it is revenged on its foe.

#### THE DRAGON.

These go in companies together, and they twine themselves after the manner of roots, and with their heads raised they cross lakes, and swim to where they find better pasture; and if they did not thus combine

1249.

they would be drowned, therefore they combine.

#### THE SERPENT.

The serpent is a very large animal. When it sees a bird in the air it draws in its breath so strongly that it draws the birds into its mouth too. Marcus Regulus, the consul of the Roman army was attacked, with his army, by such an animal and almost defeated. And this animal, being killed by a catapult, measured 123 feet, that is 64 1/2 braccia and its head was high above all the trees in a wood.

## THE BOA(?)

This is a very large snake which entangles itself round the legs of the cow so that it cannot move and then sucks it, in such wise that it almost dries it up. In the time of Claudius the Emperor, there was killed, on the Vatican Hill,

1250.

one which had inside it a boy, entire, that it had swallowed.

## THE MACLI.--CAUGHT WHEN ASLEEP.

This beast is born in Scandinavia. It has the shape of a great horse, excepting that the great length of its neck and of its ears make a difference. It feeds on grass, going backwards, for it has so long an upper lip that if it went forwards it would cover up the grass. Its legs are all in one piece; for this reason when it wants to sleep it leans against a tree, and the hunters, spying out the place where it is wont to sleep, saw the tree almost through, and then, when it leans against it to sleep, in its sleep it falls, and thus the hunters take it. And every other mode of taking it is in vain, because it is incredibly swift in running.

1251.

#### THE BISON WHICH DOES INJURY IN ITS FLIGHT.

This beast is a native of Paeonia and has a neck with a mane like a horse. In all its other parts it is like a bull, excepting that its horns are in a way bent inwards so that it cannot butt; hence it has no safety but in flight, in which it flings out its excrement to a distance of 400 braccia in its course, and this burns like fire wherever it touches.

#### LIONS, PARDS, PANTHERS, TIGERS.

These keep their claws in the sheath, and never put them out unless they are on the back of their prey or their enemy.

#### THE LIONESS.

When the lioness defends her young from the hand of the hunter, in order not to be frightened by the spears she keeps her eyes on the ground, to the end that she may not by her flight leave her young ones prisoners.

1252.

#### THE LION.

This animal, which is so terrible, fears nothing more than the noise of empty carts, and likewise the crowing of cocks. And it is much terrified at the sight of one, and looks at its comb with a frightened aspect, and is strangely alarmed when its face is covered.

#### THE PANTHER IN AFRICA.

This has the form of the lioness but it is taller on its legs and slimmer and long bodied; and it is all white and marked with black spots after the manner of rosettes; and all animals delight to look upon these rosettes, and they would always be standing round it if it were not for the terror of its face;

1253.

therefore knowing this, it hides its face, and the surrounding animals grow bold and come close, the better to enjoy the sight of so much beauty; when suddenly it seizes the nearest and at once devours it.

#### CAMELS.

The Bactrian have two humps; the Arabian one only. They are swift in battle and most useful to carry burdens. This animal is extremely observant of rule and measure, for it will not move if it has a

greater weight than it is used to, and if it is taken too far it does the same, and suddenly stops and so the merchants are obliged to lodge there.

1254.

#### THE TIGER.

This beast is a native of Hyrcania, and it is something like the panther from the various spots on its skin. It is an animal of terrible swiftness; the hunter when he finds its young ones carries them off hastily, placing mirrors in the place whence he takes them, and at once escapes on a swift horse. The panther returning finds the mirrors fixed on the ground and looking into them believes it sees its young; then scratching with its paws it discovers the cheat. Forthwith, by means of the scent of its young, it follows the hunter, and when this hunter sees the tigress he drops one of the young ones and she takes it, and having carried it to the den she immediately returns to the hunter and does

1255.

the same till he gets into his boat.

#### CATOBLEPAS.

It is found in Ethiopia near to the source Nigricapo. It is not a very large animal, is sluggish in all its parts, and its head is so large that it carries it with difficulty, in such wise that it always droops towards the ground; otherwise it would be a great pest to man, for any one on whom it fixes its eyes dies immediately.

[Footnote: Leonardo undoubtedly derived these remarks as to the Catoblepas from Pliny, Hist. Nat. VIII. 21 (al. 32): Apud Hesperios Aethiopas fons est Nigris (different readings), ut plerique existimavere, Nili caput.-----Juxta hunc fera appellatur catoblepas, modica alioquin, ceterisque membris iners, caput tantum praegrave aegre ferens; alias internecio humani generis, omnibus qui oculos ejus videre, confestim morientibus. Aelian, Hist. An. gives a far more minute description of the creature, but he says that it poisons beasts not by its gaze, but by its venomous breath. Athenaeus 221 B, mentions both. If Leonardo had known of these two passages, he would scarcely have omitted the poisonous breath. (H. MULLER-STRUBING.)]

#### THE BASILISK.

This is found in the province of Cyrenaica and is not more than 12 fingers long. It has on its head a white spot after the fashion of a diadem. It scares all serpents with its whistling. It resembles a snake, but does not move by wriggling but from the centre forwards to the right. It is said that one

1256.

of these, being killed with a spear by one who was on horse-back, and its venom flowing on the spear, not only the man but the horse also died. It spoils the wheat and not only that which it touches, but where it breathes the grass dries and the stones are split.

#### THE WEASEL.

This beast finding the lair of the basilisk kills it with the smell of its urine, and this smell, indeed, often kills the weasel itself.

#### THE CERASTES.

This has four movable little horns; so, when it wants to feed, it hides under leaves all of its body except these little horns which, as they move, seem to the birds to be some small worms at play. Then they immediately swoop down to pick them and the Cerastes suddenly twines round them and encircles and devours them.

1257.

#### THE AMPHISBOENA.

This has two heads, one in its proper place the other at the tail; as if one place were not enough from which to fling its venom.



## THE IACULUS.

This lies on trees, and flings itself down like a dart, and pierces through the wild beast and kills them.

## THE ASP.

The bite of this animal cannot be cured unless by immediately cutting out the bitten part. This pestilential animal has such a love for its mate that they always go in company. And if, by mishap, one of them is killed the other, with incredible swiftness, follows him who has killed it; and it is so determined and eager for vengeance that it overcomes every difficulty, and passing by every troop it seeks to hurt none but its enemy. And it will travel any distance, and it is impossible to avoid it unless by crossing water and by very swift flight. It has its eyes turned inwards, and large ears and it hears better than it sees.

1258.

## THE ICHNEUMON.

This animal is the mortal enemy of the asp. It is a native of Egypt and when it sees an asp near its place, it runs at once to the bed or mud of the Nile and with this makes itself muddy all over, then it dries itself in the sun, smears itself again with mud, and thus,

drying one after the other, it makes itself three or four coatings like a coat of mail. Then it attacks the asp, and fights well with him, so that, taking its time it catches him in the throat and destroys him.

#### THE CROCODILE.

This is found in the Nile, it has four feet and lives on land and in water. No other terrestrial creature but this is found to have no tongue, and it only bites by moving its upper jaw. It grows to a length of forty feet and has claws and is armed with a hide that will take any blow. By day it is on land and at night in the water. It feeds on fishes, and going to sleep on the bank of the Nile with its mouth open, a bird called

1259.

trochilus, a very small bird, runs at once to its mouth and hops among its teeth and goes pecking out the remains of the food, and so inciting it with voluptuous delight tempts it to open the whole of its mouth, and so it sleeps. This being observed by the ichneumon it flings itself into its mouth and perforates its stomach and bowels, and finally kills it.

#### THE DOLPHIN.

Nature has given such knowledge to animals, that besides the consciousness of their own advantages they know the disadvantages of their foes. Thus the dolphin understands what strength lies in a cut from the fins placed on his chine, and how tender is the belly of the crocodile; hence in fighting with him it thrusts at him from beneath and rips up his belly and so kills him.

The crocodile is a terror to those that flee, and a base coward to those that pursue him.

1260.

#### THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

This beast when it feels itself over-full goes about seeking thorns, or where there may be the remains of canes that have been split, and it rubs against them till a vein is opened; then when the blood has flowed as much as he needs, he plasters himself with mud and heals the wound. In form he is something like a horse with long haunches, a twisted tail and the teeth of a wild boar, his neck has a mane; the skin cannot be pierced, unless when he is bathing; he feeds on plants in the fields and goes into them backwards so that it may seem, as though he had come out.

#### THE IBIS.

This bird resembles a crane, and when it feels itself ill it fills  
its craw with water, and with its beak makes an injection of it.

THE STAG.

These creatures when they feel themselves bitten by the spider  
called father-long-legs, eat crabs and free themselves of the venom.

1261.

THE LIZARD.

This, when fighting with serpents eats the sow-thistle and is free.

THE SWALLOW.

This [bird] gives sight to its blind young ones, with the juice of  
the celandine.

THE WEASEL.

This, when chasing rats first eats of rue.

THE WILD BOAR.

This beast cures its sickness by eating of ivy.

#### THE SNAKE.

This creature when it wants to renew itself casts its old skin,  
beginning with the head, and changing in one day and one night.

#### THE PANTHER.

This beast after its bowels have fallen out will still fight with  
the dogs and hunters.

1262.

#### THE CHAMELEON.

This creature always takes the colour of the thing on which it is  
resting, whence it is often devoured together with the leaves on  
which the elephant feeds.

#### THE RAVEN.

When it has killed the Chameleon it takes laurel as a purge.

1263.

Moderation checks all the vices. The ermine will die rather than

besmirch itself.

#### OF FORESIGHT.

The cock does not crow till it has thrice flapped its wings; the parrot in moving among boughs never puts its feet excepting where it has first put its beak. Vows are not made till Hope is dead.

Motion tends towards the centre of gravity.

1264.

#### MAGNANIMITY.

The falcon never seizes any but large birds and will sooner die than eat [tainted] meat of bad savour.

II.

#### FABLES.

Fables on animals (1265-1270).

1265.

#### A FABLE.

An oyster being turned out together with other fish in the house of a fisherman near the sea, he entreated a rat to take him to the sea. The rat purposing to eat him bid him open; but as he bit him the oyster squeezed his head and closed; and the cat came and killed him.

1266.

A FABLE.

The thrushes rejoiced greatly at seeing a man take the owl and deprive her of liberty, tying her feet with strong bonds. But this owl was afterwards by means of bird-lime the cause of the thrushes losing not only their liberty, but their life. This is said for those countries which rejoice in seeing their governors lose their liberty, when by that means they themselves lose all succour, and remain in bondage in the power of their enemies, losing their liberty and often their life.

1267.

A FABLE.

A dog, lying asleep on the fur of a sheep, one of his fleas, perceiving the odour of the greasy wool, judged that this must be a

land of better living, and also more secure from the teeth and nails of the dog than where he fed on the dog; and without farther reflection he left the dog and went into the thick wool. There he began with great labour to try to pass among the roots of the hairs; but after much sweating had to give up the task as vain, because these hairs were so close that they almost touched each other, and there was no space where fleas could taste the skin. Hence, after much labour and fatigue, he began to wish to return to his dog, who however had already departed; so he was constrained after long repentance and bitter tears, to die of hunger.

1268.

A FABLE.

The vain and wandering butterfly, not content with being able to fly at its ease through the air, overcome by the tempting flame of the candle, decided to fly into it; but its sportive impulse was the cause of a sudden fall, for its delicate wings were burnt in the flame. And the hapless butterfly having dropped, all scorched, at the foot of the candlestick, after much lamentation and repentance, dried the tears from its swimming eyes, and raising its face exclaimed: O false light! how many must thou have miserably deceived in the past, like me; or if I must indeed see light so near, ought I not to have known the sun from the false glare of dirty tallow?



A FABLE.

The monkey, finding a nest of small birds, went up to it greatly delighted. But they, being already fledged, he could only succeed in taking the smallest; greatly delighted he took it in his hand and went to his abode; and having begun to look at the little bird he took to kissing it, and from excess of love he kissed it so much and turned it about and squeezed it till he killed it. This is said for those who by not punishing their children let them come to mischief.

1269.

A FABLE.

A rat was besieged in his little dwelling by a weasel, which with unwearied vigilance awaited his surrender, while watching his imminent peril through a little hole. Meanwhile the cat came by and suddenly seized the weasel and forthwith devoured it. Then the rat offered up a sacrifice to Jove of some of his store of nuts, humbly thanking His providence, and came out of his hole to enjoy his lately lost liberty. But he was instantly deprived of it, together with his life, by the cruel claws and teeth of the lurking cat.

1270.

A FABLE.

The ant found a grain of millet. The seed feeling itself taken prisoner cried out to her: "If you will do me the kindness to allow me accomplish my function of reproduction, I will give you a hundred such as I am." And so it was.

A Spider found a bunch of grapes which for its sweetness was much resorted to by bees and divers kinds of flies. It seemed to her that she had found a most convenient spot to spread her snare, and having settled herself on it with her delicate web, and entered into her new habitation, there, every day placing herself in the openings made by the spaces between the grapes, she fell like a thief on the wretched creatures which were not aware of her. But, after a few days had passed, the vintager came, and cut away the bunch of grapes and put it with others, with which it was trodden; and thus the grapes were a snare and pitfall both for the treacherous spider and the betrayed flies.

An ass having gone to sleep on the ice over a deep lake, his heat dissolved the ice and the ass awoke under water to his great grief, and was forthwith drowned.

A falcon, unable to endure with patience the disappearance of a duck, which, flying before him had plunged under water, wished to follow it under water, and having soaked his feathers had to remain in the water while the duck rising to the air mocked at the falcon

as he drowned.

The spider wishing to take flies in her treacherous net, was cruelly killed in it by the hornet.

An eagle wanting to mock at the owl was caught by the wings in bird-lime and was taken and killed by a man.

Fables on lifeless objects (1271--1274).

1271.

The water finding that its element was the lordly ocean, was seized with a desire to rise above the air, and being encouraged by the element of fire and rising as a very subtle vapour, it seemed as though it were really as thin as air. But having risen very high, it reached the air that was still more rare and cold, where the fire forsook it, and the minute particles, being brought together, united and became heavy; whence its haughtiness deserting it, it betook itself to flight and it fell from the sky, and was drunk up by the dry earth, where, being imprisoned for a long time, it did penance for its sin.

1272.

A FABLE.

The razor having one day come forth from the handle which serves as its sheath and having placed himself in the sun, saw the sun reflected in his body, which filled him with great pride. And turning it over in his thoughts he began to say to himself: "And shall I return again to that shop from which I have just come? Certainly not; such splendid beauty shall not, please God, be turned to such base uses. What folly it would be that could lead me to shave the lathered beards of rustic peasants and perform such menial service! Is this body destined for such work? Certainly not. I will hide myself in some retired spot and there pass my life in tranquil repose." And having thus remained hidden for some months, one day he came out into the air, and issuing from his sheath, saw himself turned to the similitude of a rusty saw while his surface no longer reflected the resplendent sun. With useless repentance he vainly deplored the irreparable mischief saying to himself: "Oh! how far better was it to employ at the barbers my lost edge of such exquisite keenness! Where is that lustrous surface? It has been consumed by this vexatious and unsightly rust."

The same thing happens to those minds which instead of exercise give themselves up to sloth. They are like the razor here spoken of, and lose the keenness of their edge, while the rust of ignorance spoils their form.

A FABLE.

A stone of some size recently uncovered by the water lay on a certain spot somewhat raised, and just where a delightful grove ended by a stony road; here it was surrounded by plants decorated by various flowers of divers colours. And as it saw the great quantity of stones collected together in the roadway below, it began to wish it could let itself fall down there, saying to itself: "What have I to do here with these plants? I want to live in the company of those, my sisters." And letting itself fall, its rapid course ended among these longed for companions. When it had been there sometime it began to find itself constantly toiling under the wheels of the carts the iron-shoed feet of horses and of travellers. This one rolled it over, that one trod upon it; sometimes it lifted itself a little and then it was covered with mud or the dung of some animal, and it was in vain that it looked at the spot whence it had come as a place of solitude and tranquil place.

Thus it happens to those who choose to leave a life of solitary comtemplation, and come to live in cities among people full of infinite evil.

1273.

Some flames had already lasted in the furnace of a glass-blower, when they saw a candle approaching in a beautiful and glittering candlestick. With ardent longing they strove to reach it; and one of

them, quitting its natural course, writhed up to an unburnt brand on which it fed and passed at the opposite end out by a narrow chink to the candle which was near. It flung itself upon it, and with fierce jealousy and greediness it devoured it, having reduced it almost to death, and, wishing to procure the prolongation of its life, it tried to return to the furnace whence it had come. But in vain, for it was compelled to die, the wood perishing together with the candle, being at last converted, with lamentation and repentance, into foul smoke, while leaving all its sisters in brilliant and enduring life and beauty.

1274.

A small patch of snow finding itself clinging to the top of a rock which was lying on the topmost height of a very high mountain and being left to its own imaginings, it began to reflect in this way, saying to itself: "Now, shall not I be thought vain and proud for having placed myself--such a small patch of snow--in so lofty a spot, and for allowing that so large a quantity of snow as I have seen here around me, should take a place lower than mine? Certainly my small dimensions by no means merit this elevation. How easily may I, in proof of my insignificance, experience the same fate as that which the sun brought about yesterday to my companions, who were all, in a few hours, destroyed by the sun. And this happened from their having placed themselves higher than became them. I will flee from the wrath of the sun, and humble myself and find a place

befitting my small importance." Thus, flinging itself down, it began to descend, hurrying from its high home on to the other snow; but the more it sought a low place the more its bulk increased, so that when at last its course was ended on a hill, it found itself no less in size than the hill which supported it; and it was the last of the snow which was destroyed that summer by the sun. This is said for those who, humbling themselves, become exalted.

Fables on plants (1275-1279).

1275.

The cedar, being desirous of producing a fine and noble fruit at its summit, set to work to form it with all the strength of its sap. But this fruit, when grown, was the cause of the tall and upright tree-top being bent over.

The peach, being envious of the vast quantity of fruit which she saw borne on the nut-tree, her neighbour, determined to do the same, and loaded herself with her own in such a way that the weight of the fruit pulled her up by the roots and broke her down to the ground.

The nut-tree stood always by a road side displaying the wealth of its fruit to the passers by, and every one cast stones at it.

The fig-tree, having no fruit, no one looked at it; then, wishing to

produce fruits that it might be praised by men, it was bent and broken down by them.

The fig-tree, standing by the side of the elm and seeing that its boughs were bare of fruit, yet that it had the audacity to keep the Sun from its own unripe figs with its branches, said to it: "Oh elm! art thou not ashamed to stand in front of me. But wait till my offspring are fully grown and you will see where you are!" But when her offspring were mature, a troop of soldiers coming by fell upon the fig-tree and her figs were all torn off her, and her boughs cut away and broken. Then, when she was thus maimed in all her limbs, the elm asked her, saying: "O fig-tree! which was best, to be without offspring, or to be brought by them into so miserable a plight!"

1276.

The plant complains of the old and dry stick which stands by its side and of the dry stakes that surround it.

One keeps it upright, the other keeps it from low company.

1277.

A FABLE.



A nut, having been carried by a crow to the top of a tall campanile and released by falling into a chink from the mortal grip of its beak, it prayed the wall by the grace bestowed on it by God in allowing it to be so high and thick, and to own such fine bells and of so noble a tone, that it would succour it, and that, as it had not been able to fall under the verdurous boughs of its venerable father and lie in the fat earth covered up by his fallen leaves it would not abandon it; because, finding itself in the beak of the cruel crow, it had there made a vow that if it escaped from her it would end its life in a little hole. At these words the wall, moved to compassion, was content to shelter it in the spot where it had fallen; and after a short time the nut began to split open and put forth roots between the rifts of the stones and push them apart, and to throw out shoots from its hollow shell; and, to be brief, these rose above the building and the twisted roots, growing thicker, began to thrust the walls apart, and tear out the ancient stones from their old places. Then the wall too late and in vain bewailed the cause of its destruction and in a short time, it wrought the ruin of a great part of it.

1278.

A FABLE.

The privet feeling its tender boughs loaded with young fruit,  
pricked by the sharp claws and beak of the insolent blackbird,

complained to the blackbird with pitious remonstrance entreating her that since she stole its delicious fruits she should not deprive it of the leaves with which it preserved them from the burning rays of the sun, and that she should not divest it of its tender bark by scratching it with her sharp claws. To which the blackbird replied with angry upbraiding: "O, be silent, uncultured shrub! Do you not know that Nature made you produce these fruits for my nourishment; do you not see that you are in the world [only] to serve me as food; do you not know, base creature, that next winter you will be food and prey for the Fire?" To which words the tree listened patiently, and not without tears. After a short time the blackbird was taken in a net and boughs were cut to make a cage, in which to imprison her. Branches were cut, among others from the pliant privet, to serve for the small rods of the cage; and seeing herself to be the cause of the Blackbird's loss of liberty it rejoiced and spoke as follows: "O Blackbird, I am here, and not yet burnt by fire as you said. I shall see you in prison before you see me burnt."

A FABLE.

The laurel and the myrtle seeing the pear tree cut down cried out with a loud voice: "O pear-tree! whither are you going? Where is the pride you had when you were covered with ripe fruits? Now you will no longer shade us with your mass of leaves." Then the pear-tree replied: "I am going with the husbandman who has cut me down and who will take me to the workshop of a good sculptor who by his art will