

The ant is a friend  
 (And here she might mend)  
 Little given to lend.  
 'How spent you the summer?'  
 Quoth she, looking shame  
 At the borrowing dame.  
 'Night and day to each comer  
 I sang, if you please.'  
 'You sang! I'm at ease;  
 For 'tis plain at a glance,  
 Now, ma'am, you must dance.'

[1] For the story of this fable, as for the stories of so many of the fables which follow, especially in the first six books, La Fontaine is indebted to the Father of Fable, Aesop the Phrygian. See account of Aesop in the Translator's Preface.

## II.--THE RAVEN AND THE FOX.[2]

Perch'd on a lofty oak,  
 Sir Raven held a lunch of cheese;  
 Sir Fox, who smelt it in the breeze,  
 Thus to the holder spoke:--  
 'Ha! how do you do, Sir Raven?  
 Well, your coat, sir, is a brave one!  
 So black and glossy, on my word, sir,  
 With voice to match, you were a bird, sir,  
 Well fit to be the Phoenix of these days.'  
 Sir Raven, overset with praise,  
 Must show how musical his croak.  
 Down fell the luncheon from the oak;  
 Which snatching up, Sir Fox thus spoke:--  
 'The flatterer, my good sir,  
 Aye liveth on his listener;  
 Which lesson, if you please,  
 Is doubtless worth the cheese.'  
 A bit too late, Sir Raven swore  
 The rogue should never cheat him more.

[2] Both Aesop and Phaedrus have a version of this fable.

## III.--THE FROG THAT WISHED TO BE AS BIG AS THE OX.[3]

The tenant of a bog,  
 An envious little frog,  
 Not bigger than an egg,  
 A stately bullock spies,  
 And, smitten with his size,  
 Attempts to be as big.  
 With earnestness and pains,  
 She stretches, swells, and strains,