

**FABLES IN  
SONG; VOL. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649741977

Fables in Song: Vol. I by Robert Lord Lytton

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**ROBERT LORD LYTTON**

**FABLES IN  
SONG; VOL. I**



# FABLES IN SONG

BY

ROBERT LORD LYTTON

AUTHOR OF 'PEAS BY OWEN NEEDETH'

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
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## INTRODUCTORY.

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### 1.

HAD I miss'd my way? It would seem so. Still,  
Scarce past is an hour of the matin prime  
Since safe I was sitting in front of the mill;  
Where my first walk ever, this pure May time,  
Under the beeches, and round by the rill,  
Twixt brawling ripple, and rustling lough,  
Hath its wonted end, by the brook; that, now  
When the sweet birds sing together,  
Carolling clear in the cool, comes down  
From the breezy hills, and the sunburnt heather;  
Guided about to his goal unknown  
By a glimmer of primrose buds new blown,  
And their breath on the balmy weather.



## 2.

Well, there by the mill, as I say,  
Where, between them, the brook and the bough  
For my sake make a musical bower,  
Safe I sat in the morn of the day ;  
And since there I was sitting, I vow  
That the day is scarce older an hour.  
But now ?  
Where am I ? who ought to know  
Every inch of this leafy land.  
Yet here, but a step at the most, or two,  
From the door of the well-known mill  
(Which all the while must be near at hand,  
For the sound of it follows me still)  
I am lost in a forest whose glades expand  
O'er me, before me, immense and dense ;  
Where shadow and sighing sound profound  
Pour into my spirit a sense intense  
Of dimness and distance ; and, turning around  
And around myself, I no further have got  
Than the wheel of that mill, which, the more to  
confound  
My confusion, I hear, tho' I see it not.

## 3.

I did well to be on my guard!  
Tho' my caution avail'd not much.  
One step more over the sward  
Which had seem'd so safe and hard,  
And the grass, or whatever I took for such,  
Giving suddenly way at my foot's first touch,  
Down with it, down, I fell  
Into the depths of a dell  
Sunless and silent and deep  
As the dim caverns of sleep.

## 1.

There, thro' the gloom in distress  
Gazing around, I could see  
That some four-footed stray-away less  
Keen of eye, or of footstep steady  
Than I myself, had been caught already  
By the snare which had thus caught me.  
In the hug of those horrible rocks,  
Unacquainted companions we,  
Like two vagabonds set in the stocks,  
But what could the creature be?  
A fox? Was it, truly, a fox?  
Ha! how got the rascal here?

No matter! he gets not out.  
'Tis the end of his bad career.

## 5.

Yet *is* it a fox? I doubt,  
Now the gleam of his eyes grow clear  
Thro' the dim light round about.  
From the look in those wistful eyes  
Who could possibly recognise  
The rogue whose rascalities bold,  
By farmwife and fabulist told,  
Have so ruin'd his reputation?  
What a sadness of resignation!

## 6.

And he seem'd to me wondrous odd.

## 7.

I thought, as he eyed me so,  
He was asking pity from man:  
Tho' needs must the rascal know  
Men have put him under their ban.  
My soul was grieved, I confess,  
At the sight of the brute's distress,  
And I mutter'd, "Poor Reynard! I see