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THE DESERET NEWS CO.

DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Friday, May 2, 1890.

Was Æsop So Very Ugly?

The celebrated Æsop was the author of those short moral stories which go by the name of "Fables." He lived about six hundred years before Christ. Where he was born is uncertain. It has been the fashion to describe him as a very ugly man, with a flat nose, humpback, blubber lips, tandy legs, crooked body and a coalheaver's complexion. This flattering portrait is now thought to be an untrue one. None of the old writers say one word about Æsop's hideous looks. The first writer who mentions them is Planudes, a monk of Constantinople, who lived A. D. 1350. It is now thought by some that Planudes invented many of the fables, and put them in the mouth of the monster for the sake of contrasting his sharp wit with his ill-favored body.

The learned Dr. Bentley says he wishes he could make the painters change their pencil, for he is sure Æsop was no deformed person, and he believes he was most likely a handsome man. His reasons are these:

1. Æsop certainly was a slave. Now, slave traders commonly bought up the most beautiful boys and girls they could light upon, because such would yield the greatest profit. Moreover, Æsop's fellow-slave was a woman named Rhodopis, whose beauty has passed into a proverb. Whence, argues the learned doctor, we must needs believe Æsop himself to have been a comely person.

2. In all the two thousand years between Æsop and Planudes there is not a single author who has left the least hint that Æsop was ugly.

3. When he dined with Solon and other wise men there was plenty of "chaff," but nobody twitted Æsop about his "ugly mug," which surely would have been the case had he been so very hideous.

4. Besides, Æsop was a great favorite of Crœsus, who used him as an ambassador. Would a magnificent king have chosen a humpbacked, blubber-lipped, flat nose for such a purpose—one whose presence would have thrown certain ridicule upon his mission? Plutarch assures us that Æsop was an elegant courtier and one who rebuked Solon for his clownish behavior to Crœsus.

5. Once more: Phædrus assures us "the Athenians raised a great statue to Æsop;" and, as Dr. Bentley argues, had Æsop been so unfortunate in his personal appearance, it would have been far kinder to have left no record in perpetual brass or marble of his ugliness.

So far as regards Æsop's appearance. Now as to his fables. The same learned doctor is of opinion that Æsop did not leave a single fable behind him in writing. His drolleries, we are told by Aristophanes, were learned at convivial parties, not read out of books. It seems that Socrates, the philosopher, was the first who attempted to catch Æsop's floating witticisms, and embalm them in verse. "I wrote," said he, "those that I knew." A prose collection of Æsop's fables was afterwards made by Demetrius Phalereus. Several other Greek versions were attempted, the best of which seems to have been one by Babrius, now lost. Bentley thinks the versions by Babrius were equal, if not superior, to that of Phædrus, who published his book in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar.

The fables in the Greek language now extant, and going by the name of Æsop's, consist of two groups. The more ancient collection contains 136 fables; they are certainly not all Æsop's own compositions, for they mention holy monks, and a verse out of the book of Job is quoted entire. A story, too, is told of Demades, who lived 200 years after Æsop, and some of the lines in metre are clearly taken from the edition of Babrius, who wrote in choliambic verse. The more modern group consists of 144 fables. These, Dr. Bentley thinks, were drawn by the monk Planudes, who, by his use of modern language and so forth, betrays himself to the discerning student. But Planudes catches the lash of Bentley chiefly on account of his outrageous biography of Æsop. The angry critic waxes uncourteous, and calls Planudes "that idiot of a monk," whose book "cannot be matched in any language for ignorance and nonsense."

That Æsop was a slave was admitted by all, and there is no doubt he had a ready wit, whether joined to contemptible bodily presence or not. Being the weakest slave, he was once allowed to choose his own burden. He selected the panier of bread which was twice as heavy as anything else. A roar of laughter greeted Æsop's choice. But the sage had the laugh on his side soon, for a meal or two lightened the basket most effectually.

The wife of his master, Xanthus, quarrelled with her husband and left him, to his great sorrow. In these untoward circumstances Xanthus asked Æsop what he had better do. The ready-witted slave contrived a trick to restore matters to their proper state. He went about town buying victuals, and gave out everywhere that his master was going to be married. These rumors had the desired effect, and before the day was out the wife came posting home to forbid the banns.

Another story, which makes the witty slave play the deliverer to his master is evidently borrowed from a kingly source. The King of Ethiopia's problem to Amasis, King of Egypt, about drinking up the sea, is used by Planudes for Æsop's benefit in this fashion. One day Xanthus got tipsy, and in a drunken swagger undertook to drink up the sea by such a time, or to forfeit all he had. When the poor man became sober he was in great distress about his foolish wager, but Æsop was equal to the occasion. His master, in pursuance of his engagement, went to the shore and filled a bumper with sea water. "I am ready now," said he to his antagonist, "to drink up the sea, but I did not bargain to drink up one drop of the rivers that run into it; you must be good enough therefore to stop them!" This clever objection put an end to the business, and brought more credit of wisdom to Xanthus than he deserved.

One day a fearful prodigy happened. The ring on which the town seal was hung was snatched up by an eagle. What did this portend? All the leading citizens of Samos put their heads together, but no light was shed upon the matter. Xanthus wished Æsop to be consulted, and the slave engaged to give the townsfolk a satisfactory answer by a certain day. When the day came the Senate despised Æsop (as Planudes will have it) for his deformity; but he reminded them they needed not a handsome man now, but a wise head. "Moreover," said he, "it is not for your honor to be advised by a slave, and therefore, before I give you my opinion, I think I ought to receive my liberty." This was done, and then he declared the omen to portend a message from Crœsus, demanding tribute or declaring war. This did happen soon afterwards, and the whilom slave, who had read the sign right, became prime minister, and saved his city by means of an adroit diplomacy with Crœsus.

The story of Æsop's death is undoubtedly true. The sage, hoping to enjoy the society of wise and earnest men, went to Delphi, but he was disgusted with the frivolous conversation of those who lived in that sacred seat of learning. With great indiscretion he expressed his opinion of the Delphians, and they, in revenge, contrived his ruin, by stealthily introducing a golden cup into his baggage just before his departure. He was followed, accused of sacrilege, and eventually thrown headlong from a rock, vainly protesting his innocence, and truly foretelling the woes which would punish their injustice and cruelty.—*New York Mail and Express.*

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The Oldest Girl.

There is a certain ring of pride in a man's voice, says the *Ladies' Home Journal*, when he introduces one of his own friends by saying: "This is my oldest girl." It's a ring that comes from satisfaction. He has found that that oldest girl of his has known how to make all life pleasanter in the household, and there is nothing which delights him so much as for her to have some sort of an entertainment where the other girls and the young men are asked. Then he thinks they see just what his oldest girl is. She knows how to make this formal party a very pleasant one; she hasn't got the room so crowded with decorated scrap baskets, paper flowers, ribbon-trimmed chairs and untidy tidies as to interpose a screen between everybody; but she has it looking well furnished, homelike and cheerful. The lamp shades are so bright as only glasses can be, and you know whose busy hands keep them in order all the year round. On the table are the illustrated papers, some photographs and some books. Not stiffly piled, but laid about carelessly that they may be picked up and talked about. Some pretty pictures stand on the top of the piano, and there is a vase filled with flowers, so that the shyest girl in the world doesn't mind going back there to play for everybody because her face is hidden. Your oldest girl is considerate. Then the pleasant little break comes when the light cake, the daintily-cut sandwiches, the chocolate in its thin cups and the lemonade in its small glasses are served. Your oldest girl and the other girls arranged all this, and then, so that there might be no confusion, had plates and napkins piled on the table, and, in addition to your own one obliging maid, got in her sister for the evening, so everybody was served. She had hard work to convince the maid that all the ladies were not to be attended to first, but at last she did make her understand that each group was to be served, and so the chatter and talk were not stopped. She got whoever she could to play something pleasant on the piano, but she didn't encourage classical music. When it came to a question of singing she preferred that whoever could would give them dainty little ballads, and eventually the evening was wound up with a song familiar to them all, and everybody, old and young, joined in the chorus. You're right. Say it with pride always. Look at her lovingly and appreciate at her full worth "your oldest girl."

Wise Words.

It is better to sacrifice one's love of sarcasm than to indulge it at the expense of a friend.

A beautiful woman pleases the eye, a good woman pleases the heart; one is a jewel, the other a treasure.

It is always a poverty of mind where men are ever aiming to appear great, for they who are really never seem to know it.

Sometimes it is hard to tell whether a man is firm in principle or simply obstinate; but the man himself never expresses any doubt.

When we are most filled with heavenly love, and only then, are we best fitted to bear with human infirmity, to live above it and forget its burden.

The art of putting the right men in the right places is first in the science of government, but that of finding places for the discontented is the most difficult.

Laziness grows on people; it begins in cobwebs and ends in iron chains. The more business a man has to do the more he is able to accomplish, for he learns to economize his time.

He Is Changing Color.

Mr. T. H. Knabe, the popular occupant of St. Paul's cathedral, is suffering from a peculiar disease. The skin has been changing color for nearly a year, until now it is a very dark yellow. He resembles a Spaniard of the darker type, and Mr. Knabe used to be of fair complexion. Only the gentleman's hands, arms, face, neck and feet are affected. His hands are yellow, while the color deepens on the fingers until above the joints they have almost become black. His breast, back and limbs are still white.—*Pittsburg Dispatch.*

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Brighton...Frederick W. Schoenfeld, care E. Schoenfeld, Z.C.M.I., S. L. City
Draper...Isaac M. Stewart
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Farmers (S. L. City)...Henry F. Burton
Granite (Butler)...Alvin Butler
Granger (Taylorsville)...Danl. McRae
Herriman...Robert Daniels
Hunter (S. L. City)...William Miller
Mill Creek...James C. Hamilton
Mountain Dell...William B. Hardy
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Pleasant Green (S. L. C.) L. N. Hardman
Riverton (Gale)...Orin P. Miller
Sugar House...Apollos G. Driggs
South Cottonwood...Jos. S. Rawlins
Sandy...Ezekiel Holman
South Jordan (Gale)...William A. Bills
Union...Ishmael Phillips
West Jordan...Archibald Gardner

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Jerosa...J. H. Jack, P. E.
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Morgan (La)...J. J. Simpson.

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Ephraim, North Ward...L. S. Andersen
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Fairview...Amasa Tucker
Fayette...John Bartholomew
Fountain Green...James Yorgason
Gunnison...C. A. Madsen
Indianola...John Spencer
Manti, North...Wm. T. Reid
Manti, South...Hans Jensen
Mayfield...O. C. Olsen
Moroni...J. W. Irons
Mt. Pleasant, North...N. P. Madsen
Mt. Pleasant, South...Wm. S. Seeley
Spring City...J[illegible]
Stirling...J. L. [illegible]
Wales...[illegible]

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Bueno...Geo. W. McConkie, P. E.

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Mancos...George Halls

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Burnham...Luther C. Burnham
La Plata...Jesse Steele

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Central...George M. Haws
Graham...P. O. Peterson
Layton...John Welker
Matthews...D. H. Matthews
Thatcher...Samuel Claridge
Pima...John Taylor

Cochise County, A. T.

St. David...Peter A. Lofgreen

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Showlow...Hans Hansen
Snowflake...John Hunt
St. Joseph...John Bushman
Taylor...Merrill E. Willis
Woodruff...James C. Owens

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Tuba City...David Brinkerhoff

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WARDS. — BISHOPS.

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Aurora...Harry M. Payne
Burrville...Wm. H. Cloward
Elsinore...Jens I. Jensen
Glenwood...Herbert R. Bell
Inverury...Barnard H. Greenwood
Joseph...Gideon A. Murdock
Monroe...Thomas Cooper
Redmond...Hans Rasmussen
Richfield, 1st Ward...Paul Poulsen
Richfield, 2nd Ward...Joseph S. Horne
Salina...James S. Jensen
Vermillion (Sigurd)...P. Gottfredson
Gooseberry (Salina) A. J. Russell, P. E.

Piute County.

Blue Valley (Teasdale)...Henry Giles
Fremont...James A. Taylor
Grass Valley (Koosharem)...C. Jensen
Loa...Willis E. Robison
Teasdale...George Coleman
Thurber...Wm. Meeks

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Duncan...David B. Ott, P. E.
Fosters...Wm. Chadburn, P. E.
Glen Edwin...Edwin Hamblin, P. E.
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Mountain Dell...Wm. Isom, P. E.
Pine Valley...Wm. Gardner
Pinto...Robert Knell
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Rockville...C. N. Smith
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Shonesburg...Oliver De Mill, P. E.
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St. George, 2nd Ward...Walter Granger
St. George, 3rd Ward...C. A. Terry
St. George, 4th Ward...Thos. P. Cottam
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Virgen...Leroy W. Beebe
Washington...Andrew Sproul
Westover...Charles Westover, P. E.

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Clover Valley...Lyman L. Woods, P. E.
Eagle Valley...John E. Hammond, P. E.
Overton...Brigham Whitmore
Panacca...Milton L. Lee
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Trumbull...Claborn Elder, P. E.

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Apache County, Arizona.

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Erastus...C. I. Kempe
Nutrioso...John Brown, P. E.
Springerville (Union)...G. H. Crosby
St. Johns...Willard Farr

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Ramah...James R. McNeil

Socorro County, N. M.

Luna (Heber Ward)...Gilbert D. Greer

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Coalville, North Ward...Wm. Hodson
Coalville, South Ward...Geo. Beard
Echo...Elias Asper
Henneferville...Charles Richins
Hoytsville...Wm. Sargent
Kamas...S. F. Atwood
Park City...Jno. Heimberg, P. E.
Parley's Park...G. M. Pace
Peoa...Stephen Walker
Rockport...J. M. Malin
Upton...John Clark
Wanship...E. R. Young, Jr.

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Almy...James Bowns
Evanston...James Brown

Sweet Water County, Wyoming.

E. Rock Springs...Joseph Soulsby.

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Tooele County, Utah.

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Deep Creek...O. H. Barrus
E. T. City...W. F. Moss
Grantsville...W. G. Collett
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St. John...D. H. Caldwell
Tooele City...Thos. Atkin
Vernon...J. C. Shar[illegible]

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COUNSELORS.—R. S. Collett, James Hacking, Vernal P. O.

Uintah County, Utah.

WARDS. — BISHOPS.

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Glines (Vernal P. O.)...Peter Abplanalp
Merrills (Vernal P. O.)...T. J. Caldwell
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American Fork...Geo. Halliday
Benjamin...Andrew J. B. Stewart
Cedar...Eli Bennett
Goshen...Wm. Price
Lake Shore...Lorenzo Argyle
Lehi...T. R. Cutler
Mill Fork...John Risley, P. E.
Payson...J. S. Tanner
Pleasant Grove, 1st Ward, John Brown
Pleasant Grove, 2d Ward, Jas. Cobley
Pleasant Grove, 3d Ward, K. Swenson
Provo, 1st Ward...J. P. R. Johnson
Provo, 2nd Ward...
Provo, 3rd Ward...Myron Tanner
Provo, 4th Ward...J. E. Booth
Provo, 5th Ward...Peter Madsen
Salem...D. R. Taylor
Santaquin...Eli Openshaw
Spanish Fork...G. D. Snell
Springville...Nephi Packard
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Emery County, Utah.

Pleasant Valley (Scofield) T. J. Parmley
Scofield...

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Charleston...N. C. Murdock
Daniels Creek (Heber) J. Jordan, P. E.
Hailstone (Heber)...Henry Cluff
Heber, East...R. S. Duke
Heber, West...Henry Clegg
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Woodland (Kamas)...John Moon

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Weber County, Utah.

WARDS. — BISHOPS.

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Harrisville...P. G. Taylor
Hooper...Wm. W. Child
Huntsville...David McKay
Lynn...D. F. Thomas
Marriott...James Rich[illegible]
Mound Fort...David Moore
North Ogden...Thos. Wallace
Ogden, 1st Ward...Moroni F. Brown
Ogden, 2nd Ward...Robt. McQuarrie
Ogden, 3rd Ward...Winslow Farr
Ogden, 4th Ward...Edwin Stratford
Ogden, 5th Ward...Thos. J. Stevens
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Pleasant View...E. W. Wade
Riverdale...Sanford Bingham
Slaterville...J. A. Allred
West Weber...Zacharias Ballantyne
Wilson...B. H. Bingham
Uintah...Alma Keyes, P. E.
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