

***THE GOLDEN
ASSE***

BOOK IX

By

Lucius

Apuleius "*Africanus*"

THE NINTH BOOK

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius saved himselfe from the Cooke, breaking his halter, and of other things that happened.

In this manner the traiterous Cooke prepared himselfe to slay me: and when he was ready with his knives to doe his feat, I devised with my selfe how I might escape the present perill, and I did not long delay: for incontinently I brake the halter wherewith I was tied, and flinging my heeles hither and thither to save my selfe, at length I ran hastily into a Parlour, where the Master of the house was feasting with the Priests of the goddesse Syria, and disquieted all the company, throwing downe their meats and drinks from the table. The Master of the house dismayed at my great disorder, commanded one of his servants to take me up, and locke me in some strong place, to the end I might disturb them no more. But I little regarded my imprisonment, considering that I was happily delivered from the hands of the traiterous Cooke. Howbeit fortune, or the fatall disposition of the divine providence, which neither can be avoided by wise counsell, neither yet by any wholesome remedie, invented a new torment, for by and by a young ladde came running into the Parlour all trembling, and declared to the Master of the house, that there was a madde Dog running about in the streetes, which had done much harme, for he had bitten many grey hounds and horses in the Inne by: And he spared neither man nor beast. For there was one Mitilius a Mulettour, Epheseus, a Cooke, Hyppanius a chamberlaine, and Appolonius a Physition, who (thinking to chase away the madde Dogge) were cruelly wounded by him, insomuch that many Horses and other beasts infected with the venyme of his poysonous teeth became madde likewise. Which thing caused them all at the table greatly to feare, and thinking that I had beene bitten in like sort, came out with speares, Clubs, and Pitchforks purposing to slay me, and I had undoubtedly beene slaine, had I not by and by crept into the Chamber, where my Master intended to lodge all night. Then they closed and locked fast the doores about me, and kept the chamber round, till such time as they thought that the pestilent rage of madnesse had killed me. When I was thus shutte in the chamber alone, I laid me downe upon the bed to sleepe,

considering it was long time past, since I lay and tooke my rest as a man doth. When morning was come, and that I was well reposed, I rose up lustily. In the meane season, they which were appointed to watch about the chamber all night, reasoned with themselves in this sort, Verely (quoth one) I think that this rude Asse be dead. So think I (quoth another) for the outragious poyson of madness hath killed him, but being thus in divers opinions of a poore Ass, they looked through a crevis, and espied me standing still, sober and quiet in the middle of the chamber; then they opened the doores, and came towards me, to prove whether I were gentle or no. Amongst whom there was one, which in my opinion, was sent from Heaven to save my life, that willed the other to set a bason of faire water before me, and thereby they would know whether I were mad or no, for if I did drinke without feare as I accustomed to do, it was a signe that I was whole, and in mine Assie wits, where contrary if I did flie and abhorre the tast of the water, it was evident prooffe of my madness, which thing he said that he had read in ancient and credible books, whereupon they tooke a bason of cleere water, and presented it before me: but I as soone as I perceived the wholesome water of my life, ran incontinently, thrusting my head into the bason, drank as though I had beene greatly athirst; then they stroked me with their hands, and bowed mine eares, and tooke me by the halter, to prove my patience, but I taking each thing in good part, disproved their mad presumption, by my meeke and gentle behaviour: when I was thus delivered from this double danger, the next day I was laded againe with the goddesse Siria, and other trumpery, and was brought into the way with Trumpets and Cymbals to beg in the villages which we passed by according to our custome. And after that we had gone through a few towns and Castles, we fortun'd to come to a certaine village, which was builded (as the inhabitants there affirme) upon the foundation of a famous ancient Citie. And after that we had turned into the next Inne, we heard of a prettie jest committed in the towne there, which I would that you should know likewise.

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER

Of the deceipt of a Woman which made her husband Cuckold.

There was a man dwelling in the towne very poore, that had nothing but that which he got by the labour and travell of his hands: his wife was a faire young woman, but very lascivious, and given to the appetite and desire of the flesh. It fortun'd on a day, that while this poore man was gone betimes in the morning to the field about his businesse, according as he accustomed to doe, his wives lover secretly came into his house to have his pleasure with her. And so it chanced that during the time that shee and he were basking together, her husband suspecting no such matter, returned home praising the chaste continency of his wife, in that hee found his doores fast closed, wherefore as his custome was, he whistled to declare his comming. Then his crafty wife ready with shifts, caught her lover and covered him under a great tub standing in a corner, and therewithall she opened the doore, blaming her husband in this sort: Comcest thou home every day with empty hands, and bringest nothing to maintaine our house? thou hast no regard for our profit, neither providest for any meate or drinke, whereas I poore wretch doe nothing day and night but occupie my selfe with spinning, and yet my travell will scarce find the Candels which we spend. O how much more happy is my neighbour Daphne, that eateth and drinketh at her pleasure and passeth the time with her amorous lovers according to her desire. What is the matter (quoth her husband) though Our Master hath made holiday at the fields, yet thinke not but I have made provision for our supper; doest thou not see this tub that keepeth a place here in our house in vaine, and doth us no service? Behold I have sold it to a good fellow (that is here present) for five pence, wherefore I pray thee lend me thy hand, that I may deliver him the tub. His wife (having invented a present shift) laughed on her husband, saying: What marchant I pray you have you brought home hither, to fetch away my tub for five pence, for which I poore woman that sit all day alone in my house have beene proffered so often seaven: her husband being well apayed of her words demanded what he was that had bought the tub: Looke (quoth she) he is gone under, to see where it be sound or no: then her lover which was under the tub, began to stirre and rustle himselfe, and because his words might agree to the words of

the woman, he sayd: Dame will you have me tell the truth, this tub is rotten and crackt as me seemeth on every side. And then turning to her husband sayd: I pray you honest man light a Candle, that I may make cleane the tub within, to see if it be for my purpose or no, for I doe not mind to cast away my money wilfully: he by and by (being made a very Oxe) lighted a candle, saying, I pray you good brother put not your selfe to so much paine, let me make the tub cleane and ready for you. Whereupon he put off his coate, and crept under the tub to rub away the filth from the sides. In the meane season this minion lover cast his wife on the bottome of the tub and had his pleasure with her over his head, and as he was in the midst of his pastime, hee turned his head on this side and that side, finding fault with this and with that, till as they had both ended their businesse, when as he delivered seaven pence for the tub, and caused the good man himselfe to carry it on his backe againe to his Inne.

THE THIRTY-NINTH CHAPTER

How the Priests of the goddesse Siria were taken and put in prison, and how Apuleius was sold to a Baker.

After that we had tarried there a few dayes at the cost and charges of the whole Village, and had gotten much mony by our divination and prognostication of things to come: The priests of the goddesse Siria invented a new meanes to picke mens purses, for they had certaine lotts, whereon were written:

Coniuncti terram proscindunt boves ut in futurum loeta
germinent sata

That is to say: The Oxen tied and yoked together, doe till the ground to the intent it may bring forth his increase: and by these kind of lottes they deceive many of the simple sort, for if one had demanded whether he should have a good wife or no, they would say that his lot did testifie the same, that he should be tyed and yoked to a good woman and have increase of children. If one demanded whether he should buy lands and possession, they said that he should have much ground that should yeeld his increase. If one demanded whether he should have a good and prosperous voyage, they said he should have good successe, and it should be for the increase of his profit. If one demanded whether hee should vanquish his enemies, and prevaile in pursuite of theeves, they said that this enemy should be tyed and yoked to him: and his pursuits after theeves should be prosperous. Thus by the telling of fortunes, they gathered a great quantity of money, but when they were weary with giving of answers, they drave me away before them next night, through a lane which was more dangerous and stony then the way which we went the night before, for on the one side were quagmires and foggy marshes, on the other side were falling trenches and ditches, whereby my legges failed me, in such sort that I could scarce come to the plaine field pathes. And behold by and by a great company of inhabitants of the towne armed with weapons and on horsebacke overtooke us, and incontinently arresting Philebus and his Priests, tied them by the necks and beate them cruelly, calling them theeves and robbers, and after they had manacled their hands: Shew us (quoth they) the cup of gold, which (under the colour of your solemne religion) ye have taken away, and now ye thinke to

escape in the night without punishment for your fact. By and by one came towards me, and thrusting his hand into the bosome of the goddesse Siria, brought out the cup which they had stole. Howbeit for all they appeared evident and plaine they would not be confounded nor abashed, but jesting and laughing out the matter, gan say: Is it reason masters that you should thus rigorously intreat us, and threaten for a small trifling cup, which the mother of the Goddesse determined to give to her sister for a present? Howbeit for all their lyes and cavellations, they were carryed backe unto the towne, and put in prison by the Inhabitants, who taking the cup of gold, and the goddesse which I bare, did put and consecrate them amongst the treasure of the temple. The next day I was carryed to the market to be sold, and my price was set at seaven pence more then Philebus gave for me. There fortun'd to passe by a Baker of the next village, who after that he had bought a great deale of corne, bought me likewise to carry it home, and when he had well laded me therewith, he drave me through a thorny and dangerous way to his bake house; there I saw a great company of horses that went in the mill day and night grinding of corne, but lest I should be discouraged at the first, my master entertained me well, for the first day I did nothing but fare daintily, howbeit such mine ease and felicity did not long endure, for the next day following I was tyed to the mill betimes in the morning with my face covered, to the end in turning amid winding so often one way, I should not become giddy, but keepe a certaine course, but although when I was a man I had seen many such horsemills and knew well enough how they should be turned, yet feining my selfe ignorant of such kind of toile, I stood still and would not goe, whereby I thought I should be taken from the mill as an Asse unapt, and put to some other light thing, or else to be driven into the fields to pasture, but my subtilty did me small good, for by and by when the mill stood still, the servants came about me, crying and beating me forward, in such sort that I could not stay to advise my selfe, whereby all the company laughed to see so suddaine a change. When a good part of the day was past, that I was not able to endure any longer, they tooke off my harnessse, and tied me to the manger, but although my bones were weary, and that I needed to refresh my selfe with rest and provender, yet I was so curious that I did greatly delight to behold the bakers art, insomuch that I could not eate nor drinke while I looked on.

O good Lord what a sort of poore slaves were there; some had their skinne blacke and blew, some had their backes striped with lashes, some were covered with rugged sackes, some had their members onely hidden: some wore such ragged clouts, that you might perceiue all their naked bodies, some were marked and burned in the heads with hot yrons, some had their haire halfe clipped, some had lockes of their legges, some very ugly and euill favoured, that they could scarce see, their eyes and face were so blacke and dimme with smoake, like those that fight in the sands, and know not where they strike by reason of dust: And some had their faces all mealy. But how should I speake of the horses my companions, how they being old and weake, thrust their heads into the manger: they had their neckes all wounded and worne away: they rated their nosethrilles with a continuall cough, their sides were bare with their harnessse and great travell, their ribs were broken with beating, their hooves were battered broad with incessant labour, and their skinne rugged by reason of their lancknesse. When I saw this dreadfull sight, I began to feare, least I should come to the like state: and considering with my selfe the good fortune which I was sometime in when I was a man, I greatly lamented, holding downe my head, and would eate no meate, but I saw no comfort or consolation of my euill fortune, saving that my mind was somewhat recreated to heare and understand what every man said, for they neither feared nor doubted my presence. At that time I remembred how Homer the diuine author of ancient Poetry, described him to be a wise man, which had travelled diuers countries and nations, wherefore I gave great thanks to my Asse for me, in that by this meanes I had seene the experience of many things, and was become more wise (notwithstanding the great misery and labour which I daily sustained): but I will tell you a pretty jest, which commeth now to my remembrance, to the intent your eares may be delighted in hearing the same.

THE FORTIETH CHAPTER

How Apuleius was handled by the Bakers wife, which was a harlot.

The Baker which bought me was an honest and sober man; but his wife was the most pestilent woman in all the world, insomuch that he endured many miseries and afflictions with her, so that I my selfe did secretly pittie his estate, and bewaile his evill fortune: for she had not one fault alone, but all the mischiefes that could be devised: shee was crabbed, cruell, lascivious, drunken, obstinate, niggish, covetous, riotous in filthy expenses, and an enemy to faith and chastity, a despise of all the Gods, whom other did honour, one that affirmed that she had a God by her selfe, wherby she deceived all men, but especially her poore husband, one that abandoned her body with continuall whoredome. This mischievous queane hated me in such sort, that shee commanded every day before she was up, that I should be put into the mill to grind: and the first thing which she would doe in the morning, was to see me cruelly beaten, and that I should grind when the other beasts did feed and take rest. When I saw that I was so cruelly handled, she gave me occasion to learne her conversation and life, for I saw oftentimes a yong man which would privily goe into her chamber whose face I did greatly desire to see, but I could not by reason mine eyes were covered every day. And verily if I had beene free and at liberty, I would have discovered all her abomination. She had an old woman, a bawd, a messenger of mischief that daily haunted to her house, and made good cheere with her to the utter undoing and impoverishment of her husband, but I that was greatly offended with the negligence of Fotis, who made me an Asse, in stead of a Bird, did yet comfort my selfe by this onely meane, in that to the miserable deformity of my shape, I had long eares, whereby I might heare all things that was done: On a day I heard the old bawd say to the Bakers wife:

Dame you have chosen (without my counsell) a young man to your lover, who as me seemeth, is dull, fearefull, without any grace, and dastard-like coucheth at the frowning looke of your odious husband, whereby you have no delight nor pleasure with him: how farre better is the young man Philesiterus who is comely, beautifull, in the flower of his youth, liberall, courteous, valiant and stout

against the diligent pries and watches of your husband, whereby to embrace the worthiest dames of this country, and worthy to weare a crowne of gold, for one part that he played to one that was jealous over his wife. Hearken how it was and then judge the diversity of these two Lovers: Know you not one Barbarus a Senator of our towne, whom the vulgar people call likewise Scorpion for his severity of manners? This Barbarus had a gentlewoman to his wife, whom he caused daily to be enclosed within his house, with diligent custody. Then the Bakers wife said, I know her very well, for we two dwelleth together in one house: Then you know (quoth the old woman) the whole tale of Philesiterus? No verily (said she) but I greatly desire to know it: therefore I pray you mother tell me the whole story. By and by the old woman which knew well to babble, began to tell as followeth.

THE FORTY-FIRST CHAPTER

How Barbarus being jealous over his wife, commanded that shee should be kept close in his house, and what happened.

You shall understand that on a day this Barbarus preparing himselfe to ride abroad, and willing to keepe the chastity of his wife (whom he so well loved) alone to himselfe, called his man Myrmex (whose faith he had tryed and proved in many things) and secretly committed to him the custody of his wife, willing him that he should threaten, that if any man did but touch her with his finger as he passed by, he would not onely put him in prison, and bind him hand and foote, but also cause him to be put to death, or else to be famished for lacke of sustenance, which words he confirmed by an oath of all the Gods in heaven, and so departed away: When Barbarus was gone, Myrmex being greatly astonied of his masters threatnings, would not suffer his mistresse to goe abroad, but as she sate all day a Spinning, he was so carefull that he sate by her; when night came he went with her to the baines, holding her by the garment, so faithfull he was to fulfill the commandement of his master: Howbeit the beauty of this matron could not be hidden from the burning eyes of Philesiterus, who considering her great chastity and how she was diligently kept by Myrmex, thought it impossible to have his purpose, yet (indeavouring by all kind of meanes to enterprise the matter, and remembring the fragility of man, that might be intised and corrupted with money, since as by gold the adamant gates may be opened) on a day, when he found Myrmex alone, he discovered his love, desiring him to shew his favour, (otherwise he should certainly dye) with assurance that he need not to feare when as he might privily be let in and out in the night, without knowledge of any person. When he thought, with these and other gentle words to allure and prick forward the obstinate mind of Myrmex he shewed him glittering gold in his hand, saying that he would give his mistresse twenty crowns and him ten, but Myrmex hearing these words, was greatly troubled, abhorring in his mind to commit such a mischief: wherefore he stopped his eares, and turning his head departed away: howbeit the glittering view of these crownes could never be out of his mind, but being at home he seemed to see the money before his eyes, which was so worthy a prey, wherefore poore Myrmex being in divers opinions could not

tell what to doe, for on the one side lie considered the promise which he made to his master, and the punishment that should ensue if he did contrary. On the other side he thought of the gaine, and the passing pleasure of the crownes of gold; in the end the desire of the money did more prevaile then the feare of death, for the beauty of the flowrishing crownes did so sticke in his mind, that where the menaces of his master compelled him to tarry at home, the pestilent avarice of gold egged him out a doores, wherefore putting all shame aside, without further delay, he declared all the whole matter to his Mistresse, who according to the nature of a woman, when she heard him speake of so great a summe she bound chastity in a string, and gave authority to Myrmex to rule her in that case. Myrmex seeing the intent of his Mistresse, was very glad, and for great desire of the gold, he ran hastily to Philesiterus, declaring that his Mistresse was consented to his mind, wherefore he demanded the gold which he promised. Then incontinently Philesiterus delivered him tenne Crownes, and when night came, Myrmex brought him disguised into his mistresses Chamber. About Midnight when he and she were naked together, making sacrifice unto the Goddess Venus, behold her husband (contrary to their expectation) came and knocked at the doore, calling with a loud voice to his Servant Myrmex: whose long tarrying increased the suspition of his Master, in such sort that he threatned to beat Myrmex cruelly: but he being troubled with feare, and driven to his latter shifts, excused the matter saying: that he could not find the key: by reason it was so darke. In the meane season Philesiterus hearing the noise at the doore, slipt on his coat and privily ran out of the Chamber. When Myrmex had opened the doore to his Master that threatned terribly, and had let him in, he went into the Chamber to his wife: In the mean while Myrmex let out Philesiterus, and barred the doores fast, and went againe to bed. The next morning when Barbarus awaked, he perceived two unknown slippers lying under his bed, which Philesiterus had forgotten when he went away. Then he conceived a great suspition and jealousie in mind, howbeit he would not discover it to his wife, neither to any other person, but putting secretly the slippers into his bosome, commanded his other Servants to bind Myrmex incontinently, and to bring him bound to the Justice after him, thinking verily that by the meane of the slippers he might boult out the matter. It fortun'd that while Barbarus went towards the Justice in a fury and rage, and Myrmex fast bound, followed him weeping,

not because he was accused before his master, but by reason he knew his owne conscience guilty: behold by adventure Philesiterus (going about earnest businesse) fortun'd to meet with them by the way, who fearing the matter which he committed the night before, and doubting lest it should be knowne, did suddainly invent a meane to excuse Myrmex, for he ran upon him and beate him about the head with his fists, saying: Ah mischievous varlet that thou art, and perjured knave. It were a good deed if the Goddesse and thy master here, would put thee to death, for thou art worthy to be imprisoned and to weare out these yrons, that stalest my slippers away when thou werest at my baines yester night. Barbarus hearing this returned incontinently home, and called his servant Myrmex, commanding him to deliver the slippers againe to the right owner.

The old woman had scant finished her tale when the Bakers wife gan say: Verily she is blessed and most blessed, that hath the fruition of so worthy a lover, but as for me poore miser, I am fallen into the hands of a coward, who is not onely afraid of my husband but also of every clap of the mill, and dares not doe nothing, before the blind face of yonder scabbed Asse. Then the old woman answered, I promise you certainly if you will, you shall have this young man at your pleasure, and therewithall when night came, she departed out of her chamber. In the meane season, the Bakers wife made ready a supper with abundance of wine and exquisite fare: so that there lacked nothing, but the comming of the young man, for her husband supped at one of her neighbours houses. When time came that my harness should be taken off and that I should rest my selfe, I was not so joyfull of my liberty, as when the vaile was taken from mine eyes, I should see all the abomination of this mischievous queane. When night was come and the Sunne gone downe, behold the old bawd and the young man, who seemed to be but a child, by reason he had no beard, came to the doore. Then the Bakers wife kissed him a thousand times and received him courteously, placed him downe at the table: but he had scarce eaten the first morsell, when the good man (contrary to his wives expectation) returned home, for she thought he would not have come so soone: but Lord how she cursed him, praying God that he might breake his necke at the first entry in. In the meane season, she caught her lover and thrust him into the bin where she bolted her flower, and dissembling the matter, finely came to her husband

demanding why he came home so soone. I could not abide (quoth he) to see so great a mischief and wicked fact, which my neighbours wife committed, but I must run away: O harlot as she is, how hath she dishonoured her husband, I swear by the goddess Ceres, that if I had [not] seene it with mine eyes, I would never I have beleevved it. His wife desirous to know the matter, desired him to tell what she had done: then hee accorded to the request of his wife, and ignorant of the estate of his own house, declared the mischance of another. You shall understand (quoth he) that the wife of the Fuller my companion, who seemed to me a wise and chaste woman, regarding her own honesty and profit of her house, was found this night with her knave. For while we went to wash our hands, hee and she were together: who being troubled with our presence ran into a corner, and she thrust him into a mow made with twigs, appoynted to lay on clothes to make them white with the smoake of fume and brymstone. Then she sate down with us at the table to colour the matter: in the meane season the young man covered in the mow, could not forbear sneezing, by reason of the smoake of the brymstone. The good man thinking it had beene his wife that sneezed, cryed, Christ helpe. But when he sneezed more, he suspected the matter, and willing to know who it was, rose from the table, and went to the mow, where hee found a young man welnigh dead with smoke. When hee understood the whole matter, he was so inflamed with anger that he called for a sword to kill him, and undoubtedly he had killed him, had I not restrained his violent hands from his purpose, assuring him, that his enemy would dye with the force of his brimstone, without the harme which he should doe. Howbeit my words would not appease his fury, but as necessity required he tooke the young man well nigh choked, and carried him out at the doores. In the meane season, I counsailed his wife to absent her selfe at some of her Neighbours houses, till the choller of her husband was pacified, lest he should be moved against her, as he was against the young man. And so being weary of their supper, I forthwith returned home. When the Baker had told his tale, his impudent wife began to curse and abhorre the wife of the Fuller, and generally all other wives, which abandon their bodies with any other then with their owne Husbands, breaking the faith and bond of marriage, whereby she said, they were worthy to be burned alive. But knowing her owne guilty conscience and proper whoredome, lest her lover should be hurt lying in the bin,

she willed her husband to goe to bed, but he having eaten nothing, said that he would sup before he went to rest: whereby shee was compelled to maugre her eies, to set such things on the Table as she had prepared for her lover.

But I, considering the great mischief of this wicked queane, devised with my selfe how I might reveale the matter to my Master, and by kicking away the cover of the binne (where like a Snaille the young-man was couched) to make her whoredome apparent and knowne. At length I was ayded by the providence of God, for there was an old man to whom the custody of us was committed, that drave me poore Asse, and the other Horses the same time to the water to drinke; then had I good occasion ministred, to revenge the injury of my master, for as I passed by, I perceived the fingers of the young-man upon the side of the binne, and lifting up my heeles, I spurned off the flesh with the force of my hoofes, whereby he was compelled to cry out, and to throw downe the binne on the ground, and so the whoredome of the Bakers wife was knowne and revealed. The Baker seeing this was not a little moved at the dishonesty of his wife, but hee tooke the young-man trembling for feare by the hand, and with cold and courteous words spake in this sort: Feare not my Sonne, nor thinke that I am so barbarous or cruell a person, that I would stifle thee up with the smoke of Sulphur as our neighbour accustometh, nor I will not punish thee according to the rigour of the law of Julia, which commandeth the Adulterers should be put to death: No no, I will not execute my cruelty against so faire and comely a young man as you be, but we will devide our pleasure betweene us, by lying all three in one bed, to the end there may be no debate nor dissention betweene us, but that either of us may be contented, for I have alwayes lived with my wife in such tranquillity, that according to the saying of the wisemen, whatsoever I say, she holdeth for law, and indeed equity will not suffer, but that the husband should beare more authority then the wife: with these and like words he led the young-man to his Chamber, and closed his wife in another Chamber. On the next morrow, he called two of the most sturdiest Servants of his house, who held up the young man, while he scourged his buttockes welfavouredly with rods like a child. When he had well beaten him, he said: Art not thou ashamed, thou that art so tender and delicate a child, to desire the violation of honest marriages, and to defame thy

selfe with wicked living, whereby thou hast gotten the name of an Adulterer? After he had spoken these and like words, he whipped him againe, and chased him out of his house. The young-man who was the comeliest of all the adulterers, ran away, and did nothing else that night save onely bewaile his striped and painted buttockes. Soone after the Baker sent one to his wife, who divorced her away in his name, but she beside her owne naturall mischiefe, (offended at this great contumely, though she had worthily deserved the same) had recourse to wicked arts and trumpery, never ceasing untill she had found out an Enchantresse, who (as it was thought) could doe what she would with her Sorcery and conjuration. The Bakers wife began to intreate her, promising that she would largely recompence her, if shee could bring one of these things to passe, eyther to make that her husband may be reconciled to her againe, or else if hee would not agree thereto, to send an ill spirit into him, to dispossesse the spirit of her husband. Then the witch with her abhominable science, began to conjure and to make her Ceremonies, to turne the heart of the Baker to his wife, but all was in vaine, wherefore considering on the one side that she could not bring her purpose to passe, and on the other side the losse of her gaine, she ran hastily to the Baker, threatning to send an evill spirit to kill him, by meane of her conjurations. But peradventure some scrupulous reader may demand me a question, how I, being an Asse, and tyed alwayes in the mill house, could know the secrets of these women: Verily I answer, notwithstanding my shape of an Asse, I had the sence and knowledge of a man, and curiously endeavoured to know out such injuries as were done to my master. About noone there came a woman into the Milhouse, very sorrowfull, raggedly attired, with bare feete, meigre, ill-favoured, and her hayre scattering upon her face: This woman tooke the Baker by the hand, and faining that she had some secret matter to tell him, went into a chamber, where they remained a good space, till all the corne was ground, when as the servants were compelled to call their master to give them more corne, but when they had called very often, and no person gave answer, they began to mistrust, insomuch that they brake open the doore: when they were come in, they could not find the woman, but onely their master hanging dead upon a rafter of the chamber, whereupon they cryed and lamented greatly, and according to the custome, when they had washed themselves, they tooke the body and buried it. The next day morrow, the daughter of the Baker,

which was married but a little before to one of the next Village, came crying and beating her breast, not because she heard of the death of her father by any man, but because his lamentable spirit, with a halter about his necke appeared to her in the night, declaring the whole circumstance of his death, and how by inchantment he was descended into hell, which caused her to thinke that her father was dead. After that she had lamented a good space, and was somewhat comforted by the servants of the house, and when nine dayes were expired, as inheretrix to her father, she sold away all the substance of the house, whereby the goods chanced into divers mens hands.

THE FORTY-SECOND CHAPTER

How Apuleius after the Baker was hanged, was sold to a Gardener, and what dreadfull things happened.

There was a poore Gardener amongst the rest, which bought me for the summe of fifty pence, which seemed to him a great price, but he thought to gayne it againe by the continuall travell of my body. The matter requireth to tell likewise, how I was handled in his service. This Gardener accustomed to drive me, every morning laded with hearbes to the next Village, and when he had sold his hearbes, hee would mount upon my backe and returne to the Garden, and while he digged the ground and watered the hearbes, and went about other businesse, I did nothing but repose my selfe with great ease, but when Winter approached with sharpe haile, raine and frosts, and I standing under a hedge side, was welnigh killed up with cold, and my master was so poore that he had no lodging for himselfe, much lesse had he any littor or place to cover me withall, for he himselfe alwayes lay under a little rooffe shadowed with boughes. In the morning when I arose, I found my hoofes shriveled together with cold, and unable to passe upon the sharpe ice, and frosty mire, neither could I fill my belly with meate, as I accustomed to doe, for my master and I supped together, and had both one fare: howbeit it was very slender since as wee had nothing else saving old and unsavoury sallets which were suffered to grow for seed, like long broomes, and that had lost all their sweet sappe and juice.

It fortunued on a day that an honest man of the next village was benighted and constrained by reason of the rain to lodge (very lagged and weary).in our Garden, where although he was but meanely received, yet it served well enough considering time and necessity. This honest man to recompence our entertainment, promised to give my master some corne, oyle, and two bottels of wine: wherefore my master not delaying the matter, laded me with sakes and bottels, and rode to the Towne which was seaven miles off.

When we came to the honest mans house, he entertained and feasted my master exceedingly. And it fortunued while they eate and dranke together as signe of great amity there chanced a strange and

dreadfull case: for there was a Hen which ran kackling about the yard, as though she would have layed an Egge. The good man of the house perceiving her, said: O good and profitable pullet that feedest us every day with thy fruit, thou seemest as though thou wouldest give us some pittance for our dinner: Ho boy put the Pannier in the corner that the Hen may lay. Then the boy did as his master commanded, but the Hen forsaking the Pannier, came toward her master and laid at his feet not an Egge, which every man knoweth, but a Chickin with feathers, clawes, and eyes, which incontinently ran peeping after his damme. By and by happened a more strange thing, which would cause any man to abhorre: under the Table where they sate, the ground opened, and there appeared a great well and fountain of bloud, insomuch that the drops thereof sparckled about the Table. At the same time while they wondred at this dreadfull sight one of the Servants came running out of the Seller, and told that all the wine was boyled out of the vessels, as though there had beene some great fire under. By and by a Weasel was scene that drew into the house a dead Serpent, and out of the mouth of a Shepherds dog leaped a live frog, and immediately after one brought word that a Ram had strangled the same dog at one bit. All these things that happened, astonied the good man of the house, and the residue that were present, insomuch that they could not tell what to doe, or with what sacrifice to appease the anger of the gods. While every man was thus stroken in feare, behold, one brought word to the good man of the house, that his three sonnes who had been brought up in good literature, and endued with good manners were dead, for they three had great acquaintance and ancient amity with a poore man which was their neighbour, and dwelled hard by them: and next unto him dwelled another young man very rich both in lands and goods, but bending from the race of his progenies dissentions, and ruling himselfe in the towne according to his owne will. This young royster did mortally hate this poore man, insomuch that he would kill his sheepe, steale his oxen, and spoyle his corne and other fruits before the time of ripenesse, yet was he not contented with this, but he would encroch upon the poore mans ground, and clayme all the heritage as his owne. The poore man which was very simple and fearefull, seeing all his goods taken away by the avarice of the rich man, called together and assembled many of his friends to shew them all his land, to the end he might have but so much ground of his fathers

heritage, as might bury him. Amongst whom, he found these three brethren, as friends to helpe and ayd him in his adversity and tribulation.

Howbeit, the presence of these honest Citizens, could in no wise perswade him to leave his extort power, no nor yet to cause any temperance of his tongue, but the more they went about with gentle words to tell him his faults, the more would he fret and likewise fume, swearing all the oathes under God, that he little regarded the presence of the whole City, whereupon incontinently he commanded his servants to take the poore man by the eares, and carry him out of his ground, which greatly offended all the standers by. Then one of the brethren spake unto him somewhat boldly, saying: It is but a folly to have such affiance in your riches, whereby you should use your tyranny against the poore, when as the law is common for all men, and a redresse may be had to suppress your insolency. These words chafed him more then the burning oile, or flaming brimstone, or scourge of whippes, saying: that they should be hanged and their law too, before he would be subject unto any person: and therewithall he called out his bandogges and great masties, which accustomed to eat the carrion and carkases of dead beasts in the fields, and to set upon such as passed by the way: then he commanded they should be put upon all the assistance to teare them in peeces: who as soone as they heard the hisse of their master, ran fiercely upon them invading them on every side, insomuch that the more they fled to escape away, the more cruell and terrible were the dogges. It fortun'd amongst all this fearefull company, that in running, the youngest of the three brethren stombled at a stone, and fell down to the ground: Then the dogs came upon him and tare him in peeces with their teeth, whereby he was compelled to cry for succour: His other two brethren hearing his lamentable voice ran towards him to helpe him, casting their cloakes about their left armes, tooke up stones to chase away the dogs, but all was in vaine, for they might see their brother dismembred in every part of his body: Who lying at the very point of death, desired his brethren to revenge his death against that cruell tyrant: And therewithall he gave up the ghost. The other two brethren perceiving so great a murther, and neglecting their owne lives, like desperate persons dressed themselves against the tyrant, and threw a great number of stones at him, but the bloody theefe exercised in such and like

mischiefes, tooke a speare and thrust it cleane through the body: howbeit he fell not downe to the ground. For the speare that came out at his backe ran into the earth, and sustained him up. By and by came one of these tyrants servants the most sturdiest of the rest to helpe his master, who at the first comming tooke up a stone and threw at the third brother, but by reason the stone ran along his arme it did not hurt him, which chanced otherwise then all mens expectation was: by and by the young man feigning that his arme was greatly wounded, spake these words unto the cruell bloud sucker: Now maist thou, thou wretch, triumph upon the destruction of all our family, now hast thou fed thy insatiable cruelty with the bloud of three brethren, now maist thou rejoyce at the fall of us Citizens, yet thinke not but that how farre thou dost remove and extend the bounds of thy land, thou shalt have some neighbor, but how greatly am I sorry in that I have lost mine arme wherewithall I minded to cut off thy head. When he had spoken these words, the furious theefe drew out his dagger, and running upon the young man thought verily to have slaine him, but it chanced otherwise: For the young man resisted him stoutly, and in buckling together by violence wrested the dagger out of his hand: which done, he killed the rich theefe with his owne weapon, and to the intent the young man would escape the hands of the servants which came running to assist their master, with the same dagger he cut his owne throat. These things were signified by the strange and dreadfull wondres which fortunued in the house of the good man, who after he had heard these sorrowfull tydings could in no wise weepe, so farre was he stroken with dolour, but presently taking his knife wherewith he cut his cheese and other meate before, he cut his owne throat likewise, in such sort that he fell upon the bord and imbraced the table with the streames of his blond, in most miserable manner. Hereby was my master the Gardener deprived of his hope, and paying for his dinner the watry teares of his eyes, mounted upon my backe and so we went homeward the same way as wee came.

THE FORTY-THIRD CHAPTER

How Apuleius was found by his shadow.

As wee passed by the way wee met with a tall souldier (for so his habite and countenance declared) who with proud and arrogant words spake to my master in this sort:

Quorsum vacuum ducis Asinum?

My master somewhat astonied at the strange sights which he saw before, and ignorant of the Latine tongue, roade on and spake never a word: The souldier unable to refraine his insolence, and offended at his silence, strake him on the shoulders as he sate on my backe; then my master gently made answer that he understood not what he said, whereat the souldier angerly demanded againe, whither he roade with his Asse? Marry (quoth he) to the next City: But I (quoth the souldier) have need of his helpe, to carry the trusses of our Captaine from yonder Castle, and therewithall he tooke me by the halter and would violently have taken me away: but my master wiping away the blood of the blow which he received of the souldier, desired him gently and civilly to take some pittie upon him, and to let him depart with his owne, swearing and affirming that his slow Asse, welnigh dead with sicknesse, could scarce carry a few handfulls of hearbs to the next towne, much lesse he was able to beare any greater trusses: but when he saw the souldier would in no wise be intreated, but ready with his staffe to cleave my masters head, my master fell down at his feete, under colour to move him to some pittie, but when he saw his time, he tooke the souldier by the legs and cast him upon the ground: Then he buffeted him, thumped him, bit him, and tooke a stone and beat his face and his sides, that he could not turne and defend himselfe, but onely threaten that if ever he rose, he would choppe him in pieces. The Gardener when he heard him say so, drew out his javelin which hee had by his side, and when he had throwne it away, he knockt and beate him more cruelly then he did before, insomuch that the souldier could not tell by what meanes to save himselfe, but by feining that he was dead, Then my master tooke the javelin and mounted upon my backe, riding in all hast to the next village, having no regard to goe to his Garden, and when he came thither, he turned into one of his friends house and declared all the whole matter, desiring him to save his

life and to hide himselfe and his Asse in some secret place, untill such time as all danger were past. Then his friends not forgetting the ancient amity betweene them, entertained him willingly and drew me up a paire of staires into a chamber, my master crept into a chest, and lay there with the cover closed fast: The souldier (as I afterwards learned) rose up as one awaked from a drunken sleepe, but he could scarce goe by reason of his wounds: howbeit at length by little and little through ayd of his staffe he came to the towne, but hee would not declare the matter to any person nor complaine to any justice, lest he should be accused of cowardise or dastardnesse, yet in the end he told some of his companions of all the matter that happened: then they tooke him and caused him to be closed in some secret place, thinking that beside the injury which he had received, he should be accused of the breach of his faith, by reason of the losse of his speare, and when they had learned the signes of my master, they went to search him out: at last there was an unfaithfull neighbour that told them where he was, then incontinently the souldiers went to the Justice declaring that they had lost by the way a silver goblet of their Captaines, and that a Gardener had found it, who refusing to deliver the goblet, was hidden in one of his friends houses: by and by the Magistrates understanding the losse of the Captaine, came to the doores where we were, commanded our host to deliver my master upon paine of death: howbeit these threatnings could not enforce him to confesse that he was within his doores, but by reason of his faithfull promise and for the safeguard of his friend, he said, that hee saw not the Gardener a great while, neither knew where he was: the souldiers said contrary, whereby to know the verity of the matter, the Magistrates commanded their Seargants and ministers to search every corner of the house, but when they could find neither Gardener nor Asse, there was a great contention betweene the souldiers and our Host, for they sayd we were within the house: and he said no, but I that was very curious to know the matter, when I heard so great a noyse, put my head out of the window to learne what the stirre and tumult did signifie. It fortun'd that one of the souldiers perceived my shadow, whereupon he began to cry, saying: that hee had certainly seene me; then they were all glad and came up into the chamber, and pulled me downe like a prisoner. When they had found mee, they doubted nothing of the Gardener, but seeking about more narrowly, at length they found him couched in a chest. And so they brought out the poore gardener

to the Justices, who was committed immediately to prison, but they could never forbear laughing from the time they found me by my shadow, wherefore is risen a common Proverbe: 'The shadow of the Asse.'

Freeditorial 