

Education

by Jean de La Fontaine

Lapluck and Cæsar brothers were, descended
From dogs by Fame the most commended,
Who falling, in their puppyhood,
To different masters anciently,
One dwelt and hunted in the boundless wood;
From thieves the other kept a kitchen free.
At first, each had another name;
But, by their bringing up, it came,
While one improved upon his nature,
The other grew a sordid creature,
Till, by some scullion called Lapluck,
The name ungracious ever stuck.
To high exploits his brother grew,
Put many a stag at bay, and tore
Full many a trophy from the boar;
In short, him first, of all his crew,
The world as Cæsar knew;
And care was had, lest, by a baser mate,
His noble blood should e'er degenerate.
Not so with him of lower station,
Whose race became a countless nation--
The common turnspits throughout France--
Where danger is, they don't advance--
Precisely the Antipodes
Of what we call the Cæsars, these!

*Oft falls the son below his sire's estate:
Through want of care all things degenerate.
For lack of nursing Nature and her gifts,
What crowds from gods become mere kitchen-thrifts!*