

## The Ass and the Little Dog

by Jean de La Fontaine

One's native talent from its course  
    Cannot be turned aside by force;  
But poorly apes the country clown  
The polish'd manners of the town.  
    Their Maker chooses but a few  
    With power of pleasing to imbue;  
    Where wisely leave it we, the mass,  
Unlike a certain fabled ass,  
That thought to gain his master's blessing  
By jumping on him and caressing.  
"What!" said the donkey in his heart;  
"Ought it to be that puppy's part  
    To lead his useless life  
    In full companionship  
    With master and his wife,  
    While I must bear the whip?  
What doth the cur a kiss to draw?  
Forsooth, he only gives his paw!  
If that is all there needs to please,  
I'll do the thing myself, with ease."  
    Possess'd with this bright notion,--  
His master sitting on his chair,  
At leisure in the open air,--  
    He ambled up, with awkward motion,  
And put his talents to the proof;  
Upraised his bruised and batter'd hoof,  
And, with an amiable mien,  
His master patted on the chin,  
The action gracing with a word--  
The fondest bray that e'er was heard!  
O, such caressing was there ever?  
Or melody with such a quaver?  
"Ho! Martin! here! a club, a club bring!"  
    Out cried the master, sore offended.  
So Martin gave the ass a drubbing,--  
And so the comedy was ended.

