

## The Cat and the Fox

by Jean de La Fontaine

The cat and fox, when saints were all the rage  
Together went upon pilgrimage.  
Our pilgrims, as a thing of course,  
Disputed till their throats were hoarse.  
Then, dropping to a lower tone,  
They talk'd of this, and talk'd of that,  
Till Renard whisper'd to the cat,  
"You think yourself a knowing one:  
How many cunning tricks have you?  
For I've a hundred, old and new,  
All ready in my haversack."  
The cat replied, "I do not lack,  
Though with but one provided;  
And, truth to honour, for that matter,  
I hold it than a thousand better."  
In fresh dispute they sided;  
And loudly were they at it, when  
Approach'd a mob of dogs and men.  
"Now," said the cat, "your tricks ransack,  
And put your cunning brains to rack,  
One life to save; I'll show you mine--  
A trick, you see, for saving nine."  
With that, she climb'd a lofty pine.  
The fox his hundred ruses tried,  
And yet no safety found.  
A hundred times he falsified  
The nose of every hound.--  
Was here, and there, and everywhere,  
Above, and under ground;  
But yet to stop he did not dare,  
Pent in a hole, it was no joke,  
To meet the terriers or the smoke.  
So, leaping into upper air,  
He met two dogs, that choked him there.

*Expedients may be too many,*

*Consuming time to choose and try.  
On one, but that as good as any,  
'Tis best in danger to rely.*