



H. Kent inv.

P. Fourdrinier scul.

FABLE XXXIII.

The COURTIER and PROTEUS.

WHence'er a courtier's out of place,
 The country shelters his disgrace;
 Where, doom'd to exercise and health,
 His house and gardens own his wealth.
 He builds new schemes, in hope to gain
 The plunder of another reign;

Like *Philip's* son would fain be doing,
And fights for other realms to ruin.

As one of these (without his wand)
Pensive, along the winding strand
Employ'd the solitary hour
In projects to regain his power;
The waves in spreading circles ran,
Proteus arose, and thus began.

Came you from court? For in your mien
A self-important air is seen.

He frankly own'd his friends had trick'd him,
And how he fell his party's victim.

Know, says the God, by matchless skill
I change to ev'ry shape at will;
But yet, I'm told, at court you see
Those who presume to rival me.

Thus said. A snake, with hideous trail,
Proteus extends his scaly mail.

Know,

Know, says the Man, though proud in place,
All courtiers are of reptile race.

Like you, they take that dreadful form,
Bask in the sun, and fly the storm;
With malice hiss, with envy glote,
And for convenience change their coat,
With new-got lustre rear their head,
Though on a dunghill born and bred.

Sudden the God a lyon stands,
He shakes his mane, he spurns the sands;
Now a fierce lynx, with fiery glare,
A wolf, an ass, a fox, a bear.

Had I ne'er liv'd at court, he cries,
Such transformation might surprize;
But there, in quest of daily game,
Each able courtier acts the same.

Wolves, lyons, lynxes, while in place,
Their friends and fellows are their chace;
They play the bear's and fox's part,
Now rob by force, now steal with art;

They

They sometimes in the senate bray;
Or, chang'd again to beasts of prey,
Down from the lyon to the ape,
Practice the frauds of ev'ry shape.

So said. Upon the God he flies,
In cords the struggling captive tyes.

Now, *Proteus*, now (to truth compell'd)
Speak, and confess thy art excell'd.

Use strength, surprize, or what you will,
The courtier finds evasion still;
Not to be bound by any tyes,
And never forc'd to leave his lyes.

