

## **THE LOST AXE**

*(From Aesop's Fables)*

### **Honesty is good policy**

A workman, felling wood by the side of a river, by accident dropped his axe into water. Being thus deprived of the means of his livelihood, he sat down on the bank and lamented his fate.

Mercury appeared and demanded the cause of his tears. After he told him his misfortune, Mercury plunged into the stream, and, bringing up a golden axe, inquired if that were the one he had lost.

On his saying that it was not his, Mercury disappeared beneath the water a second time, and returned with a silver axe in his hand, and again asked the workman if it were his.

When the Workman said it was not, he dived into the pool for the third time and brought up the axe that had been lost.

The workman claimed it and expressed his joy at its recovery. Mercury, pleased with his honesty, gave him the golden and silver axes in addition to his

Another wood-cutter who heard what happened, went to that pool, threw his axe in the water and sat bewailing its loss. Mercury appeared to him and asked him why he was crying. When he heard his plight, he jumped into the water and brought out a golden axe.

He asked the wood-cutter whether that was the axe he lost. On affirming that it was his, Mercury threw it again into the pool and disappeared. The wood-cutter's axe was lost for good.