

**KRILÓFF'S FABLES,
WITH 4 PLATES**

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Krilóff's fables, with 4 plates by Ivan Andreevich Krylov & C. Fillingham Coxwell

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IVAN ANDREEVICH KRYLOV & C. FILLINGHAM COXWELL

**KRILÓFF'S FABLES,
WITH 4 PLATES**

KRILÓFF'S FABLES

Translated from the Russian into
English in the original metres

BY

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Author of Chronicles of Man, Through Russia in War Time

WITH 4 PLATES

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PREFACE

KRILÔFF is such a remarkable figure in Russian literature, and his Fables are so interesting and admirable that I have ventured to render eighty-six of them into English. No prose translation can do this poet-fabulist justice, but a rendering in metrical forms, corresponding with his own, may give readers some idea of his merits.

If it be recalled that the source of most fables is hidden in the mists of antiquity, then Krilôff's originality can scarcely fail to be a recommendation. He wrote, in all, 201 fables and there seems little doubt that, in four-fifths of them, he was not indebted to anyone. He began as a translator in verse of La Fontaine, into whose work he, before long, introduced fresh humorous touches. Next, striking boldly into the rich field of Russian life, he displayed power as a story teller and, calling to his aid terseness, genial humour and satire, succeeded at once in obtaining a foremost place in Russian letters. Of eighty-six fables here rendered into English, seventy-one are original. In the other fifteen fables, Krilôff has borrowed as to eight of them, sometimes merely the germ, sometimes the greater part of the story; while, in seven fables, he has followed *Aesop* or *La Fontaine* with little deviation. I have sought to be faithful to Krilôff's spirit and meaning,

and have observed the length of his lines and used rhyme forms answering to those of the original compositions. It need scarcely be said that literal translation into verse is impossible.

A certain directness of expression and a closeness of texture in Kriloff's work, combine with his strongly iambic metre, and varying length of line, to make his fables very characteristic. Their variety is astonishing. I have selected the shorter rather than the longer fables and have omitted occasionally the introductory or concluding "moral," as for instance when it seemed more or less superfluous.

My renderings have been made from the Fourth Edition of Kriloff's Fables, published by Messrs. Wolff, of Petrograd and Moscow. I am much beholden to M. A. Alexinsky's sketch of the fabulist's life which has afforded me biographical details, supplemented by Pletnev and one or two other Russian writers.

Kenévich* has been almost wholly the source of the Notes. I have not wantonly deviated from the text, but once or twice it has not been easy to choose between retention and abandonment of a Russian method of speech or setting, in a book for English readers.

C. F. C.

* *Bibliograficheskiya ee Istoreeticheskiya Primyetchaniya Basnyam Krylova, Sostavil, V. F. Kenévich, Sankt Peterburg, 1869.*

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