



Aesop's Fables

EDITED AND ILLUSTRATED
WITH WOOD ENGRAVINGS BY
BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF

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Introduction

Nothing historically definite is known about Aesop, but whether he was an actual or a mythical figure, there are certain definite traits and characteristics attributed to him which are quite generally agreed upon. In his person he was extremely deformed, with a hunched back, a long misshapen head, a flat nose; and with a complexion so swarthy that his very name was derived from it. He was supposedly a Greek slave who had been bought and sold several times, and it was in the course of his travels, the various predicaments in which he found himself and his reactions to them, that he gained the reputation for having great wisdom and a mighty wit. It is supposed that like Socrates, he suffered for his wisdom by being murdered and in his death attained immortality. Such is the legend of Aesop.

The fables contained in this book were selected from the Croxall edition of 1722 and the James edition of 1848. In editing them an attempt has been made to combine these two translations. For instance, Croxall's translation contains a dry humor sometimes quite lacking in the James translation; and again, the other way around depending upon the fable. Then there are times when James is more descriptive and shows a much livelier imagination; and then too, quite the other way around. These differences appear in almost every fable, so that in combining the imagination and humor of both men in each fable we may have given them a livelier and gayer interpretation. However, perhaps "too much cunning overreaches itself"!

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BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF

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