

Great Russian Animal Tales

A COLLECTION OF FIFTY TALES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, A SYNOPSIS OF THE ADVENTURES AND
MOTIVES, A DISCUSSION OF THE SAME AND AN APPENDIX

BY

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TO
HEINRICH VON BRUNN
PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MUNICH,
THIS WORK
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PREFACE.

THIS monograph is intended in the first place for folklorists and students of the mediæval animal epics who are not conversant with the Russian language, or who are without access to the originals. It is also addressed to the lover of literature who desires to see another manifestation of the Russian spirit, and to all such as are interested in becoming acquainted with other versions of some of the stories familiar to them from Reynard the Fox, the Tales of the Brothers GRIMM or 'Uncle Remus.' As it has been necessary to bring this collection within the limits of the publications of the MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION, I have not attempted to gather all the tales published, but have selected fifty from among those contained in the manuscript of the unpublished German translation of professor LESKIEN, and I give these as a rule, not in full, but in a more or less shortened form. Having satisfied myself of the excellency of LESKIEN'S version, I have made it the basis of my translations and summaries without, however, neglecting reference to the originals when occasion demanded. In condensing the stories, I have been governed by the principle, both not to omit any important detail and to preserve intact all such passages as are characteristic of the style of the narrative or which bear a special resemblance to anything in the literary versions of the Middle Ages. In the arrangement of the stories I have neither followed the originals nor the German manuscript, but have grouped together such as resemble one another in their principal parts. Accordingly, I give first those in which the fox operates successfully against the wolf or bear; then those in which she is more or less unfortunate in her dealings with animals or men; then those in which a weak animal frightens

a stronger one; thereupon those that relate the misfortunes of the wolf. I note, next, those in which the tomcat holds the first place, and, finally, a few that could not well be grouped with any others.

The tales themselves are preceded by an introduction and followed by a synopsis of the simple adventures and motives of which the tales consist, discussions of the separate adventures, an appendix and a bibliography. The Introduction gives the most necessary information on the editions, the general character and the actors of the tales; it states briefly the results of the investigations on the origin of folk tales and animal tales; dwells at some length on the researches on the Russian and Northern animal stories, and concludes with a few notes on the main phases of the political and literary history of Russia. The Synopsis, which may claim to be an innovation, affords a rapid survey of the constituent parts of each tale, however much they may have been changed in order to suit them to their surroundings, and enables the reader to refer without delay to the place where they are discussed in the following division of this monograph. The peculiarity of this division consists in the fact that, not the separate stories, but the simple adventures that constitute them have been made the basis of the discussion. This was done, in the first place, because the simple adventures are units and homogeneous, while the tales in their present condition are often agglomerations of a number of adventures and very complex; and, in the second place, in order to avoid the repetitions and references which the recurrence of the same adventure in several tales would have necessitated. In the study of each adventure, the most important literary and oral variants are first presented, and then the collections of variants and previous discussions that have come to my knowledge, are mentioned; next a reconstruction of the original form is attempted in the case where the amount of material at my disposal warrants it; thereupon the peculiarities of each Russian version and the way in which it

reached that country are considered: and, finally, the possible sources of the original adventure are examined; at the close of these discussions the more important conclusions are stated. The Appendix contains a summary of a modern Russian animal epic entitled, 'Lisa Patrikjevna' (the Fox Patrickson), a work which possesses some interest both on account of the manner in which the tales are worked into a connected whole, and because of its diversity from the epics of the Middle Ages. As for the Bibliography, finally, it has not been my purpose to attempt to be exhaustive, but only to give all essential works connected with the subject and which are known to me, and the full or nearly complete titles of all works cited in the text in abbreviated form.

There still remains for me the pleasant duty of acknowledging my obligations to those men whose kind assistance has encouraged me to undertake this work in spite of my limited familiarity with the Russian language and Slavonic folk lore. Prof. LESKIEN, of the University of Leipsic, has been so generous as to allow me the use of the manuscript of his German translation of Great Russian animal tales mentioned above; Dr. WOLLNER, *Privatdozent* for Slavonic folklore in the same University has furnished me numerous parallels from other Slavonic animal tales; Mr. KAUSCHEN, a Russian student at Leipsic has read for me those parts of Kolmčevskij that I myself had not translated; Dr. KAARLE KROHN, of the University of Helsingfors, Finland, has sent me some information on Finnish and Northern folklore, together with two of his valuable works that otherwise might not have come to my notice. To these men, as well as to Prof. A. MARSHALL ELLIOTT, of Johns Hopkins University, who has kindly read the whole of my manuscript and offered numerous valuable corrections; to my brother, Dr. THEODOR GERBER, of the Gymnasium of Wandsbeck, who has visited the libraries of Hamburg and Kiel for me, and to all who have otherwise facilitated my work, I tender my warmest thanks.

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