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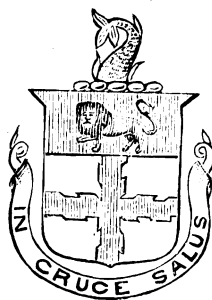
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LEGENDS



FRENCH
PROVINCES

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FAIRY LEGENDS

OF THE



FRENCH PROVINCES

TRANSLATED BY

with a (10 and)
MRS. M. CAREY

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

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ASSOCIATE IN THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



THE young readers into whose hands this book may come, will care little for a preface which only keeps them from the entertainment which they have learned unfailingly to expect from such stories. But their elders have rights which the purveyors of folk-stories are bound to respect; for these popular tales, or old wives' fables, while losing none of their popularity in the nursery, have descended thence, and found a place also in the parlor and the study. They are like the rough little box which the kind fairy has given to the little brother, and at which his elders at first look with disdain, until, when it has been opened, and fold after fold of rich stuff has tumbled out of it, they value it highly, for all its outward roughness, and even would despoil the youngest of his magic prize. The fairy stories, which had hitherto been only food for childish entertainment, became, in the hands of the brothers Grimm and the philologists and literary students who succeeded them, the foundation of a

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science rich in conclusions respecting portions of human history anterior to or unrepresented in more artificial literary memorials.

It is not possible, in an introductory page or two, to say anything of all that the study of such stories and of their transmission has added to the sum of modern learning, nor of the light they throw on peasant character; but it is only justice to readers who approach these studies from this point of view, with a more or less scientific interest in studies of folk-lore, to state the sources whence the tales in this collection have been translated, and to attest the fidelity of the translation. Of these stories, — derived from the French provinces or, in one or two cases, colonies, — the first part, extending to page 200, have been selected and translated from the pages of the admirable French folk-lore journal, “*Mélusine*,” of which the first volume appeared in 1878, the second in 1884 and 1885, the third in 1886 and 1887; the remaining stories have been selected and translated from Paul Sébillot’s “*Contes des Provinces de la France*” (Paris, 1884). Scrupulous care has been taken to preserve a note of the sources of the stories.

Naturally some slight verbal changes have here and there been necessary; but these have been

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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few in number. In all other passages, a scrupulous fidelity to the original has been aimed at, and has, I believe, been attained.

J. F. JAMESON.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY,
BALTIMORE, October 1, 1887.

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THE LEGEND OF THE LAKE OF
ISSARLÈS.



NORTHWEST of Ardèche, on the limits of Haute-Loire and Lozère, in the commune of Issarlès, may be seen one of the largest lakes formed by the volcanic craters of the Northern Cévennes. The origin of the lake is thus told in a legend heard from an old woman of Sainte Eulalie, the next commune to Issarlès.

There was, in old times, not far from where I live, a large parish with houses scattered far apart in the rural portions, and containing only one town, named Issarlès. One day a poor man came to this parish to ask for alms. He began in the country. At the first house to which he came, he cried, "Give me something, for I am hungry." "Oh! my friend, I have nothing for you," answered the woman, pityingly. "Have you not even a few potatoes in your pot?" said he. "Yes," replied the woman, "there are two, if you want them." The poor

man took one and departed. Then he walked on, and came to another house. "Give me something, for the love of God," he cried. The woman rose, and said, "My friend, we have no bread, but the dough is in the tray all ready; the oven is almost warm enough; we shall soon bake it, and then we will give you some sweet bread; sit down and wait." The poor man said, "Your bread is baked." The woman said to her husband, "My husband, the poor man says that our bread, which is in the tray, is already baked. How can that be? We have not yet put it in the oven." The husband looked into the tray and saw the bread already baked, and near the large loaves he saw a small sweet loaf. "What you have declared is really so," said he to the poor man; "the bread is baked without having been in the oven. It is God's doing. Sit down at our table, and eat with us." The poor man refused. "Then take," said the husband, "the loaf that my wife wished to prepare for you, and which is already baked as well as the large loaves." The poor man took the loaf, and before leaving, said to the husband, "In a little while you will hear a great noise; don't be frightened."

At some distance from the house, the poor man met two little children playing by the roadside. "What are you doing, my children?"

“We are playing.” “Are you hungry?” “No.” “If you want some sweet bread, I will give you some.” “Hungry or not, we can eat it very well,” said the children. The poor man divided his sweet loaf, and gave half of it to each of the children, who ran off with it to their mother. “Mamma, a poor man gave us each half a sweet loaf,” they cried. Their mother scolded them. “Never take bread from beggars,” she said; “it is not clean; I forbid your eating it.” “Mamma, it is very good; it is better than our bread.” “I forbid your eating it; I do not know the person who gave it to you,” and saying this, she took the pieces of bread from the children’s hands and threw them into the chicken coop.

A few moments after, the poor man appeared at the door of this woman’s house, which was at the entrance of the town. The children pointed him out to their mother, who said, “You begging! you, who can give bread to the children you find on the road! You had better keep your bread; it is not fit food for my children. For me, I have nothing to give to those who themselves can give.” The poor man went away; he entered the town, begging from house to house, and everywhere was driven away. He was about to leave the town, when in the suburbs, he saw two little houses, and thought he would

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make one more attempt, by applying there. A woman came out of the first house to which he went, and said, "I have no bread, I have only leaven; do you want some? I will give you some." "I cannot eat leaven," replied the poor man. Now, this woman told a lie, for she had bread, but did not wish to give him any.

The poor man went a few steps further on, and soon came to the second house. A woman was seated by the wall, milking a goat. "I am very thirsty," said the beggar; "would you give me a little milk?" "Ah! my friend," she answered, "I will give you all my goat's milk, if you want it." "I do not want all the milk of your goat; a little will be enough for me." The woman went to get a glass; filled it with milk, and offered it to the beggar, saying, "Will you dip some bread in it?" "No; I am not hungry; I am only thirsty, and I have more than enough to drink." Then he drank, and as the woman continued to milk her goat, Jesus drew near to her (for the beggar was Jesus), and said: "You will soon hear a great noise, but no matter how loud it may be, or from what direction it may come, do not move; continue milking your goat."

At that very moment, a tremendous noise burst upon them. It was the town of Issarlès sinking down into the yawning earth. The

woman half turned her head to see whence the noise came ; she had no sooner done so than she was swallowed up with the town. The ruins were immediately covered up by a sheet of water.

On a clear day one may see at the bottom of the lake the ruins of the town of Issarlès, and distinguish clearly by the side of a small house, the last in the town, a woman, who with both her hands is milking a goat. I have seen her many a time when I was passing along the shore.

VICTOR SMITH.

THE FAIRIES AND THE TWO HUNCH- BACKS.

A STORY OF PICARDY.

ONCE there were three fairies who used to amuse themselves by dancing round and round, and singing, "Sunday, Monday; Sunday, Monday." One day a little hunchback surprised them at this sport, and without being afraid, he took them by the hand and began to dance with them, repeating also, "Sunday, Monday; Sunday, Monday." He danced so prettily that the fairies were charmed, and to reward him took away his hunch. Perfectly happy, he returned home, constantly singing as he went, "Sunday, Monday; Sunday, Monday." On the road he met another little hunchback whom he knew. The latter was greatly astonished to see his friend relieved of his hunch, and said: "How did you manage it? Your hunch is gone." "It is all very easy," replied the other; "you have only to go to a certain wood, when you will find some fairies; you must dance with them and

sing, 'Sunday, Monday ; Sunday, Monday,' and they will take away your hunch."

"I will go, I will go at once," cried the little hunchback, and started immediately for the wood to which he had been directed, where, sure enough, he found the three fairies. Without hesitating, he took them by the hand and danced with them, repeating, "Sunday, Monday." But unhappily for him, he added, "Tuesday, Wednesday." The fairies, indignant, added to his hunch that of the first hunchback, so that he was a fright to behold, so frightful that if you had seen him you would have run away from him. And then?—And then the cock crew, and it was day.

Told by Auguste Gourdin, miller, aged 63, at Warloy-Baillon (Somme).

HENRI CARNOY.

THE SKILFUL THIEF.

A BRETON STORY.

THERE was once upon a time a poor man who had two children, a boy and a girl, Efflam and Hénori.

One day the father said to Efflam: "My son, now that you are grown up, you should be able to get your own living and take care of yourself. Suppose you go to Paris and seek your fortune."

"Very well, father," said Efflam; "I will go to Paris and seek my fortune."

And so the next day Efflam set out for Paris. He travelled and travelled, always on foot. One night surprised him in the midst of a deep forest. He got up in a tree to wait for the morning and to keep himself safe from the wild beasts. Soon three robbers laden with booty stopped under the tree. They lifted a large stone and deposited their booty in a cavern whose entrance the stone had concealed. Then they seated themselves under the tree to

eat and drink, meanwhile talking of their adventures. Efflam listened, and this is what he heard:—

“I,” said one of the robbers, “have a marvellous cloak which carries me through the air, wherever I wish to go.”

“I,” said the second, “have a hat which renders me invisible, and when I have it on my head I can go everywhere without being seen by any one.”

“And I,” said the third, “have some boots with which I can walk as swiftly as the wind blows.”

“If I could have the cloak, the hat, and the boots, or only one of the three,” said Efflam to himself, “that would easily make my fortune; but how can I manage it?” Then he turned it over in his head, and hit upon this plan: that, by letting himself down through the leafy branches, he would fall into the midst of the robbers and shout, “Stop, thief!” so as to make them believe that the devil or the police were at their heels. No sooner said than done, and the three robbers, seized with fright, ran off as fast as they could, leaving on the ground the cloak, the hat, and the boots.

Efflam seized the three talismans, and, having put on the boots, he soon found himself in Paris. As he was walking along the streets, astonished

at the beautiful things he saw on all sides, he noticed a jeweller's shop which seemed finer and richer than the others, and was tempted to take from it a few articles of value. He put on his magic hat, made his way into the shop without being perceived by any one, and took everything he pleased. Afterward, in order to get ready money, he sold in another shop the articles he had obtained in this way. Meeting a soldier from his own country, he led him a gay life for several days. When the money was all gone, Efflam was at no loss to know how to get more. One day he saw at a market a vender of earthen vases who was doing a good business, and put his money, as he received it, into a wooden chest beside him. "I must take away his chest," said Efflam to himself, and putting on his hat, he easily carried off the chest, took it where no one could see him, broke it open, took the money which was in it, and once more lived a gay life while it lasted.

Another day, as he was taking a walk through one of the squares of the city, he overheard three men talking together about the king's treasure. They were saying that they thought it a needless piece of caution on the king's part to place sentinels near the tower which contained his treasure, because, since there were neither doors nor windows to this tower, and

the walls were so thick and solid, it was impossible to make the slightest breach in it. "Very good," said Efflam to himself; "now I know where the king's treasure is." Then, addressing the three men, he said, "So you think it impossible to steal the king's treasure?" "Why, yes," they answered. "Well, I, for one, do not think so." And with that he left them. When night had come, he repaired to the foot of the tower, and having spread his magic cloak on the ground, he seated himself on it, put on his hat, and said, "Cloak, do your duty, and bear me immediately into the king's treasure-chamber." This was immediately done without being perceived by the guards or any one else. He went out in the same manner, with his pockets filled with gold and silver. The next night, and the next, and every night after that, he returned to the attack, and always with the same success. Having now become rich in a short time, he bought a palace, and sent for his father and sister. On the day on which they were to arrive he went to meet them with a fine carriage drawn by two horses. When he had got about three miles from the city, seeing his father and sister coming along the road on foot, and poorly clad, he ordered his coachman to return to his house with one of the horses, and bring him a box which he

had forgotten and left on the table in his chamber, and which he wanted very much. He would wait for him, he said, in a certain house by the roadside.

The coachman unhitched one of the horses and set off. Efflam then took his father and sister into the house by the roadside, gave them changes of rich garments that he had brought for them in the carriage, and also to each of them a purse filled with gold, so that the coachman, on his return, should not take them for poor peasants, as they really were. The coachman returned, and said to his master, "I did not find the box in your chamber." "Oh! I had it with me in my carriage and did not know it." Then they returned to the city.

One day the father asked his son how he had managed to get so rich, and Efflam acknowledged to him that he had stolen the king's treasure. "If you wish," said the old man, "I will go with you, and between us we can bring away a larger sum." "Very well," said Efflam.

When night had come, they both placed themselves on the magic cloak, put both their heads in the magic hat, and were transported into the treasure-chamber; then they returned in the same manner, each bearing his load of money.

But the king perceived that his treasure was being stolen, and was very much astonished at

it, for he never trusted any one with the key. Moreover, he saw no traces of any attempt to break in. Then he set traps around the vases which contained the silver and the gold, in order to catch the thief. And sure enough, the next night the father was caught. Finding he could not get away, and hoping at least to save his son, he said to him, "Cut off my head and take it away from here, with my clothes, so that I may not be recognized." Efflam took his advice, cut off his head, and took it away to bury it in his garden. When the king came the next day to the treasure-chamber, he cried out with joy, on seeing there the lifeless body: "Aha! my thief is taken at last. Let us see who he is." But neither he nor any one else could identify the body without a head, so that he was even more puzzled than ever. Then he published through the city that the thief had been caught and that his body would be dragged on a hurdle through all the streets of the town. This was accordingly done, and four soldiers, two before and two behind, accompanied the body, with orders to listen attentively, and look well about them to see if any one cried or groaned or appeared distressed as they passed along. Efflam ordered his carriage early in the morning, and before setting out he told his neighbors and all in his house, that he was

going to take his father to his own country, since he wished very much to return. This was to explain the disappearance of the old man. On getting about a mile from the city, he said to his servant as before, "Take one of the horses and return with all speed to the city, and bring my father his purse which he forgot when he came away." The coachman took one of the horses and departed. Then Efflam saw a postman coming along down the road, and asked him if he was not very tired. "Not yet," replied the man; "but I shall be before I have made my rounds, for I have a long way to go." "If you wish," said Efflam, "I will give you my horse and carriage." "You are joking with me, my lord." "I am not joking with you, and to prove it — here — take them." Then Efflam got down from his carriage and almost forced the postman to mount, while he returned to the city quietly on foot. When he met his coachman coming again, he said: "Again I gave you a useless ride: my father had his purse in his pocket, and did not know it: at his age memory begins to fail. I have given him my carriage and horse that he may return to his own country, and I am hurrying back, for I have just remembered that I ought to be at the house to-day." Accordingly he mounted the horse the coachman had ridden, and set off at a gallop.

On reaching home he told his sister the whole affair, and advised her not to cry, or groan, or appear sad, nor even to remain out of sight, when the mutilated body of her father should pass by on the hurdle; for if she showed the slightest sign of grief, he would be lost, and she too. Soon the crowd was heard crying, "Here is the thief who stole the king's treasure!" All the people ran to the doors of the houses, and a great crowd followed the headless body, and no one could say who he was. When they passed by Efflam's house, he also was on his doorsteps, with his sister by his side. But Hé-nori, not being able to endure the sight, uttered a cry and ran into the house. Efflam followed her, and drawing his dagger he wounded her hand with it. Two soldiers presented themselves and said, "We have heard cries of grief in this house." "Yes," said Efflam; "it was my sister, who had just cut herself with my knife, and was crying out; see how it is bleeding." And true enough, there was the poor girl all bleeding and crying. The soldiers withdrew.

This plan not having succeeded, the king thought of another. He had the body of the thief hung up on a nail fixed in the wall of his palace, and set guards to watch near by, feeling sure that when night came the friends and relatives of the thief would try to carry off his body.

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When Efflam saw this, he disguised himself as a wine merchant, loaded an ass with leather bottles of wine mixed with a narcotic, and went with it, accompanied by his sister, along under that side of the palace wall where the body of his father was suspended. With a movement of his shoulder, he made the bottles fall off, and one of them, which he had prepared for that purpose, came unstopped. He and his sister began to cry and call for help. The guards ran to them, helped them to reload their ass, and received for reward the bottle which had become unstopped in falling, but which, nevertheless, was still more than half full. Efflam and his sister then continued on their way. But they retraced their steps about a half-hour later, and found the guards stretched upon the ground and sleeping as soundly as if they were dead. "All right," said they. Then they went to a monastery near by and pretended to sell them some excellent wine very cheap. By means of the wine they made the monks all sleep soundly, from the abbot to the porter, and took advantage of the opportunity to bury their father's body in holy ground in the cemetery of the monastery. Then they changed the clothing of the monks and soldiers, so that the monks were dressed as soldiers, and the soldiers as monks. Next morning, when the hour for

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matins came, the monks dragged themselves to the chapel, only half awake and not seeing very clearly. The first one who perceived the singular dress of the abbot was at first utterly confounded. He rubbed his eyes, thinking he did not see well. But as he continued to see before him a soldier and not a monk, he touched his next neighbor with his elbow and said, "Do you see how our abbot is dressed? What does it mean?" The monk next him was in turn also greatly astonished, but, looking at those who stood on each side of the abbot, they discovered that they too were dressed like soldiers; then they looked at the whole line of monks opposite them on the other side of the choir; and at last they looked at each other, and found that all were in soldiers' uniform. What could it mean? It was doubtless the work of the evil spirit! Then the chant and prayers ceased, and they began trying to unravel the mystery.

On the other hand, when the captain came in the morning to inspect the soldiers set to guard the body of the thief, he also was greatly astonished to find them all sleeping profoundly, and habited as monks. Worse still, the body of the thief was gone. He flew into a great passion, swore and raged, and kicked the soldiers till they awaked. The report spread rapidly through the city that the body of the thief who stole

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the king's treasure had been carried off, and that the soldiers set to guard it had been found in the morning dead drunk, and disguised as monks; while the monks of the neighboring monastery, equally drunk, wore the uniform of the soldiers. It was undoubtedly a fresh trick of an accomplice of the thief who had been caught. It made a great stir in the city, and every one laughed heartily.

"I am mocked again," said the king, when he heard what had taken place. "It must be acknowledged that this is a very skilful thief; but all the same, I mean to find out how far his skill goes, for I hope soon to foil it." Then he caused notice to be given through the city that he would the next day exhibit in the public square before his palace a beautiful white goat of which he was very fond, and that if the thief could succeed in taking it away, it should be his.

"That's good," said Efflam to himself when he heard the notice. "The king's white goat will be mine to-morrow before the sun goes down."

Next day the white goat was in fact exhibited on the square in front of the king's palace, and a great crowd gathered, curious to know how the thief would manage to take it away in spite of the soldiers who guarded it. The king himself was on the balcony with the queen, and surrounded by princes, generals, and courtiers.

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Efflam put his magic hat on his head, and carried off the goat as easily as possible, and without any one's seeing or knowing anything about it.

"I am mocked again!" cried the king, in vexation, when he saw that the goat had disappeared. "But who can this man be? He must be a great magician, for there is magic in all this. Never mind; I will not acknowledge myself beaten, and I propose to know how far this will go."

Efflam had killed the king's goat as soon as he reached home, and told his sister to use it for their own table as long as there was any of it, advising her to cook it in the greatest secrecy, and not to give the smallest portion of it to any other person, not even to a beggar.

Meanwhile the king thought of another means of testing the skill and cunning of the thief. He sent for a blind beggar, and told him to go and ask alms at the door of every house in the city, and to beg at each door for a bit of meat, which he should taste as soon as he received it. If any bit of goat's flesh was given him, he should, with a piece of white chalk, make a cross on the door of the house where he had received it, and come at once and tell the king.

The beggar at once began his rounds. When he came to Efflam's house, Hénori, who had

doubtless forgotten her brother's warning, or had no fear of being accused by a blind man who knew neither her nor her house, gave him a morsel of the king's goat. The blind man recognized it as soon as he had tasted it, and, unknown to the young girl, who had gone back into the house as soon as she had ministered to his need, he marked the door with a white cross, and hastened at once to inform the king. The latter sent four soldiers to search the house, the door of which was marked with a white cross in chalk, with orders to bring to him immediately the inmates of the house. But Efflam had noticed the white cross on his door, and questioned his sister, to see if she had disobeyed him in anything. Hénori told him she had indeed given the remnant of their last meal to an old beggar who had excited her pity, but there was nothing to be feared from him, for he was blind. Efflam, without waiting to hear another word, got a bit of chalk and went all about the city drawing crosses on all the doors. The soldiers stopped at the first door where they saw a cross, exclaiming, "Here it is!" They entered and found two old people, husband and wife, and requested them to accompany them to the king's palace. "What does the king want with us?" they asked, filled with astonishment. "You have stolen his treasure

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and his goat." "How could we do it," they cried, overcome with fright, "old and feeble as we are? It is more than six months since we have set foot out of our house." The soldiers, seeing them so old and so helpless, looked at each other, and said, "These are not the right ones; that is evident: come, let us see if we do not find a cross on some other door." So they went out, and found with surprise that the doors of all the houses in that quarter of the city were marked with similar crosses; so they went and told the king.

"What a man this thief is!" said the king; and began to devise at once some other means of catching him. The next day he caused notice to be given throughout the city that he would expose his royal crown on the public square in front of the palace, and that it should belong to the person who could steal it without being caught. When Efflam heard that, he said to himself, "His crown shall be mine as well as his goat."

The royal crown was exhibited at the appointed time and place. A considerable crowd had assembled on the square, curious to see if the thief would succeed in carrying off this also. The king and his court were on the balcony of the palace, and a large number of soldiers mounted guard, with drawn swords, around the

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velvet cushion on which the crown set. But all these precautions were vain ; and Efflam, wearing his magic hat, bore off the king's crown as easily as he had carried away the goat. The old monarch, perceiving at last that he had to contend with the most cunning thief in his kingdom, who was evidently a great magician besides, perceived that it was useless to contend against him, and that it would be better to win him over and attach him to himself, than to persecute him. He then proclaimed that he would set his only daughter in the same place in the square where the white goat and the royal crown had been exposed, and that if the thief should succeed equally well in stealing her, he would give her to him for his wife.

He was by this time quite certain that the thief would stand this last test as well as all the others.

And true enough, Efflam bore off the princess in the same mysterious fashion, without any one knowing what had become of her.

Then when the king had returned to his palace, Efflam repaired thither also, accompanied by the princess, and reminded the old monarch of his promise. The latter did not hesitate to keep his word, and the marriage of Efflam and the princess was celebrated with pomp and solemnity.

Moreover, the king, who was a widower, took for his wife Hénori, the sister of his son-in-law, and for a whole month there were holidays and games and magnificent banquets every day.

- Related in Breton, by Vincent Coat, a workman in a tobacco factory in Morlaix, Aug. 20, 1876.

THE KING'S THREE SONS;
OR,
THE HUNCHBACK AND HIS TWO BROTHERS.
A BRETON STORY.



ONCE upon a time there was a king who had three sons, two of whom were fine, handsome young men, and the third was a hunchback whose name was Alain. This last was not beloved by his father, who sent him off to the kitchen with the cooks, while the two older brothers ate with him at his own table and went with him everywhere.

One day the old king sent for his three sons, and said to them:—

“You see I am getting old, my children, and I want to spend the rest of my days in peace and quiet. I wish to give up my crown, with the administration of my kingdom, to that one of you three who will bring me the finest piece of linen. Set out, then, travel far away, and return in a year and a day.”

Thereupon the three brothers started off on three different routes. The two elder brothers had each a fine horse to carry him, and pockets full of gold and silver. They went first to see their sweethearts and bid them good by. But there they forgot their quest, and led gay lives as long as their money lasted.

The hunchback, who had received from his father only a six-franc piece, and no horse, walked and walked bravely on. When he was hungry he gnawed a crust of bread, gathered hazel-nuts, whortleberries, and wild mulberries from the bushes along the road, and drank out of the hollow of his hand from the wayside springs. One day as he was crossing a great moor he heard a clear, fresh voice singing an old song. He stopped to listen, and said, "I must see who it is that sings like that;" and he followed the sound of the voice.

He soon came upon a young girl of great beauty, who addressed him thus, —

"Good morning, Alain, youngest son of the king of France."

"You know me, then?" asked the astonished prince.

"Yes, I know you; I even know where you are going and what you seek; your father has told you and your two brothers that he will give up his crown and his kingdom to that one of

you three who will bring him the finest piece of linen : is it not so ?”

“It is quite true,” replied Alain, more and more astonished.

“Well, your two brothers have gone to see their sweethearts, and are having a good time with them, without caring anything about the search for the fine linen. You, who have no lady-love, have resolutely set to work, and you deserve to succeed. Come with me to my castle, and I will tell you what to do.”

Alain followed her to what she called her castle, but which was only a miserable hut of mud and clay. He remained there some time with her, and, before he left, she gave him a little box, not larger than his fist, and said to him, —

“It is time for you to return home ; take this little box, and present yourself with confidence before your father.”

Alain returned with his box. When he reached the court of his father’s palace, he saw his two brothers at the windows, quite happy and content with themselves. They had returned, with their horses laden with fine pieces of linen.

“See ! Alain has come, too,” they cried ; “he comes without the smallest piece of linen, as ugly and miserable as when he set out, and has not even lost his hunch by the way !”

The two elder brothers then spread out their linens before their father. They were very fine and expensive.

“And you, Alain,” said his father, “do you refuse to compete? for you have brought nothing.”

Then Alain drew the small box from his pocket, and presented it to his father, saying, —

“Take this box, my father, and open it.”

The old king took the box, opened it, and immediately there fell out of it a piece of white linen, smooth to the touch, soft and shining as silk. And for more than an hour, piece after piece fell out, so that the box seemed inexhaustible.”

“Alain has won!” said the king. “My crown is his!”

“There is sorcery in this,” said the two elder brothers, much put out, “and there must be three trials.”

“I agree,” said the king, who was much displeased at the idea of leaving his crown to a hunchback.

“Give us another test,” they cried.

“Very well; to him who brings me the finest horse.”

And the three brothers set out, each by himself. The two older ones went, as before, to see their lady-loves, and the hunchback took once

more the road across the moor, where he had met the beautiful young girl who had gained him his first victory. When, after much trouble, he reached it, he heard the same voice singing its song. "All's well," said he, comforted and full of hope. And he hastened toward the singer's clay house.

"Good morning," said he, as he entered; "I have come to see you again."

"Good morning, young son of the king," replied the young girl; "I know why you have come! Your brothers, beaten in the first contest, have demanded that there shall be three, and the second test is to bring to your father the finest horse."

"That is true; but how can I get a fine horse without money?"

"You got the finest linen without money; why should you not also have the finest horse without money? Remain here with me until the time comes to return, and do not be at all uneasy."

Alain took courage, and remained with the young girl. When the day arrived, she gave him another box, bidding him be sure not to open it until he should be in the courtyard of his father's palace.

Then he departed. But he had not gone far when he yielded to curiosity. He opened his

box to see what was in it ; and immediately a beautiful horse jumped out, — swift as lightning, — and disappeared in a moment. And now, our young man began to cry. What should he do now ? He resolved to return to the young girl, as he had not gotten very far from her house, and tell her of his misfortune. His kind friend gave him a second box, bidding him again not to open it until he should be in the courtyard of his father's palace, and holding it between his knees.

This time he did not open it. When he reached the court of the palace, his two brothers had been there already some time, and each of them had a magnificent horse, of which he was very proud. When they saw Alain arrive, they cried, —

“ Here is the hunchback, at last ; but he has no horse ! ”

“ I have a box, as before, ” answered Alain, drawing his box from his pocket.

“ Your fine horse is in that, no doubt, ” said they.

“ Perhaps, ” said Alain.

“ Open it, then, that we may see your mouse. ”

Alain put his box between his knees, opened it, and immediately he found himself in the saddle on a superb horse with a golden bridle on his head, fiery and spirited, and with sparks

flying from his four feet, his nostrils, and his eyes.

“Alain has won it this time, too,” cried the old king, filled with astonishment ; and his victory was indeed so apparent that his brothers did not dream of disputing it. But they cried out spitefully : “Now for the third trial. What shall it be, father ?”

“Well,” said the king, “this time to him who shall bring me the most beautiful princess.”

Then the three brothers set out again at once. The two elder ones went as before to see their fair ladies, and Alain returned to his mysterious friend in the great moor.

“Good morning, young son of the king,” said she, seeing him return. “Your father has said that his crown shall be given to that one of his three sons who shall bring him the most beautiful princess.”

“Yes,” said the prince, “and I do not even know a princess.”

“That makes no difference ; stay here with me until the time comes to present yourself to your father, and have faith in me.”

So Alain remained again with his friend, and when the time was come, she said to him :—

“Here is a hen with a linen cloth on her back ; return with it to your father’s house, and be very sure not to lose the hen and the linen also.”

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“But shall I have no princess, then?”

“Go on with your hen, and trust me for the rest.”

So Alain set out with the hen. But as he was going through a dark forest, she flew away, and then he began to cry. Two princesses, one more beautiful than the other, suddenly appeared beside him. “Why do you weep thus?” said one of them to him.

“I have lost my hen!” said Alain.

“If that is all, be comforted; I will find her for you.”

And sure enough, the hen came back at a sign from the princess, and she still had her linen on her back. The most beautiful of the princesses touched her with the end of a white wand she had in her hand, and immediately she was changed into a fine gilded carriage drawn by six superb horses. Alain saw his hunch suddenly disappear, and found himself a very handsome young man, with magnificent princely clothes, and seated in the coach by the side of the less beautiful of the two princesses. The other, the more beautiful one, was seated on the coachman's seat, holding the reins and driving the coach. They repaired in this state to the king's palace. The two elder brothers had already arrived there, and were waiting for the hunchback at the windows, each having by his

side a beautiful princess of whom he was very proud.

When Alain entered the courtyard with his splendid, shining coach and his two companions, it seemed as if the sun himself had driven in there in his chariot. The two elder brothers and their princesses, dazzled by so much light and beauty, and bursting with envy at seeing the state in which their youngest brother returned, covered their faces with their hands. The old king, formerly so cross and full of pains, brightened up again, and slowly descended to the court to receive Alain and his train.

“My crown and my kingdom are yours, my son Alain,” he cried.

Then he gave his hand to the princesses to help them alight, and led them into the palace. The two elder princes and their princesses hid themselves for shame and envy.

However, they had to come to a great feast which the old king ordered to be prepared, and to which he invited all the court and the great men of his kingdom.

During the feast, Alain's beautiful princess put into her apron a bit of each of the dishes served to her; seeing this, his brother's princesses imitated her. When all arose from the table, she said that she wished to make a little

present to each guest, and even to the servants. And putting her right hand into her apron, which, with her left she held gathered up to her breast, she drew from it again and again gold rings, pearls, diamonds, and flowers, and distributed them freely, to the great astonishment and satisfaction of all.

The other two princesses wished to imitate her also in this ; but, alas ! instead of gold rings, pearls, diamonds, and lovely, sweet-scented flowers, they drew out of their aprons, only what they had put there — meat, sausages, and such eatables. Their fine clothes were all soiled by the grease and gravy which ran out of them. Attracted by the general bursts of laughter, the dogs and cats pursued them and tore their dresses to pieces. They ran away with their lovers, filled with rage and confusion, and appeared no more.

Soon afterward the marriage of Alain and his beautiful princess was celebrated, and the holidays and plays and feasts continued for a whole month.

Told by Marguerite Philippe, July 21, 1871.

F. M. LUZEL.

THE HARE, THE BEAR, AND THE
FOX.



THERE was a young soldier named Hervé Laz-Bleiz. When he returned from the war in far away lands, his father and mother were dead. He had no brother, but he had a young sister named Hénori. Their parents had left them, for their entire inheritance, a cow and two sheep. Hervé said to Hénori, —

“Let us sell the cow and the sheep, and go to seek our fortunes somewhere else, instead of remaining here in poverty.”

The cow and the sheep were sold; then the brother and sister set out on their journey, by the grace of God. After having walked a long time and gone very, very far, they found themselves one day in a great forest, in the midst of which there was an old castle surrounded by high walls. They gained entrance to the court, creeping in under the door, but saw no one. The castle door stood open. They entered and found themselves in a hall, but no one was

there. But they saw on a table meals which were quite hot, and the odor of them was delicious. They were very hungry, and they looked at each other out of the corners of their eyes, and their mouths watered. They remained silently standing, waiting for some one to come, of whom they might ask hospitality.

But they waited in vain; no one came, and the castle appeared to be abandoned. Seeing this, Hervé, who was not very timid, said to his sister, —

“Upon my word, it is useless to wait longer, and it is a shame to let such a good dinner get cold; let us seize the opportunity, and eat and drink, and then we shall see what will happen.”

They seated themselves at the table, and ate and drank with good appetites, without any one coming to interrupt them. Hénori, who was at first much frightened, became quite brave when she had drunk a glass or two of the excellent wine she had found on the table; and as for Hervé, who had drunk much more, he already dreamed of being master of the chateau, and thought it would be a great pity to leave a hotel when he was so comfortable.

On rising from the table, the brother and sister went through the halls and rooms. In the first room, they found heaps of gold and silver; in the second, more gold and silver; in the

third, there were guns, and pieces of linen and stuff goods, and men's clothing of all shapes and sizes.

"It is a den of robbers," said Hervé, when he saw all this. "They have gone off on some expedition, and will doubtless soon return. But since we are here, and these are good arms, let us take possession of them and all the treasure will be ours."

And they began to prepare themselves, as well as possible, to stand a siege. They barricaded the doors and window casements, loaded all the guns, and sat down to wait.

About two or three o'clock in the morning the robbers returned, laden with booty and all drunk. Hervé and Hénori, each stationed at a window on the first floor, and having near them a great many guns all loaded, began immediately to fire on them. The robbers threw themselves against the door, raging and swearing. But they could not break it open, and Hervé and his sister killed one with each discharge of their guns, so that the number rapidly diminished. At last, seeing that their efforts were in vain, all those who remained still unhurt, retired, leaving the courtyard strewn with dead and wounded.

Hervé and Hénori passed the day in strengthening the barricades of the doors and windows

and reloading their guns, for they were sure the robbers had gone to seek reinforcements, and would return to give them another charge. And they were not mistaken, for they returned, having mustered up some comrades. It was now broad daylight, so that Hervé and his sister, each stationed at a window on the first floor, could see clearly through the holes they had made in the shutters, and they struck down one at each discharge of their guns. They shot so well that they finally killed them all, except two or three wounded ones, who ran away.

The next day there was a third attack. But this time the robbers were all killed, every single one.

And now, Hervé and Hénori were in possession of the castle and all the treasure it contained. However, they did not dare go out for several days. But when they saw that no more robbers came to trouble them, they grew bolder, and visited the gardens and all the apartments of the castle, and everywhere they found treasures and provisions of every kind. So, seeing that everything needful was provided, they determined to take up their abode there.

The wood which surrounded the castle was full of all sorts of game. Hervé went hunting there every day, often with his sister and sometimes alone. One day when he went out alone,

he ran across a fine hare and aimed at it to kill it, when he was perfectly astonished to hear the animal say to him, as plainly as if it had been a man, —

“Do not kill me, Hervé.”

“What! do you know me, you poor beast of the good God?”

“Yes, I know you, and I may perhaps be useful to you some day.”

“Very well! come with me then.”

And he went on, followed by the hare.

Farther on he saw a fox, and aimed at him also, but the fox said, as the hare had done, —

“Do not kill me, Hervé, and I will pay you back some day.”

“Am I then known to all the beasts of this wood?” said Hervé, and he lowered his gun and told the fox to follow him as well as the hare.

A little farther on he saw a bear and aimed at his jaw. But the bear said to him also, —

“Do not kill me, Hervé, and I will pay you back some day.”

“Good! come on; follow me and let us see what will happen.”

He continued to hunt until the evening, and killed so much game that, not being able to carry it himself, he put it on the back of the bear. Then they started on the road to the castle. On the way, the bear ate the game, and

the fox, seeing him, said to Hervé, "Master, the bear is eating your game." Hervé threatened to shoot the bear, who growled and promised not to eat any more. When the four had reached the castle walls the hare said to Hervé, "Master, do you know that your sister is in her room with the chief of the robbers?"

"How can you say so? We killed all the robbers."

"No matter, their chief still lives and he comes every day to see your sister, while you are out hunting. Look out for them, for they are thinking of betraying you and getting rid of you."

"My sister loves me, and I do not believe a single word you tell me."

"Your life is in danger, I assure you; but leave it to me: I will save you."

"Very well, I leave it to you, and we shall see."

"When he knows that you are in the castle, he will hide himself somewhere, so that he may strangle you in the night while you sleep. But as soon as we enter, you, fox, who have such a good nose, you go sniff all around to find where he is hid; then when you have found him, come and tell me and we will see about it."

They entered the castle. Hervé remained in the kitchen with the hare and the bear, and the

fox went on the search for the chief of the robbers, sniffing and ferreting around everywhere with his pointed snout. He discovered him in an empty cask and came to inform his comrades.

“Go, bear,” said the hare, “go with the fox, and bring him to us.”

The bear mounted the stairs, following the fox and growling as he went. He pulled the robber out of the cask, and taking him by one foot, he dragged him down the stone stairway, his head falling heavily on each step, and laid him at Hervé’s feet in the kitchen. When he saw the latter, he ground his teeth and tried to throw himself on him. But the bear prevented him and tore him to pieces at his master’s order. Then Hénori was treated in the same manner.

Hervé continued to live in the castle with his three animals. Every day they went out hunting and killed all the game they could wish.

II.

ONE day the hare said suddenly, —

“I have just had something whispered in my ear!”

“What is it?” asked Hervé.

“The daughter of the king of England is

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about to be taken to a dragon to be devoured by him; shall we go and deliver her?"

"That would be a very perilous undertaking," said Hervé.

"Pshaw!" said the bear, "I will undertake it: you will see."

"All four of us," said the fox, "can surely see it well put through."

"Let us go, then," said Hervé.

"Let us go," they all repeated at once.

So they all four set out together.

But the road was long, and Hervé, overcome with fatigue, could not walk any farther. Then the bear took him on his back and they went on. At last they reached England, and when they came to the suburbs of London, they met the procession which was conducting the poor princess. All the people of the land were there, and they were grieved and weeping as though they were at a funeral. When they came to the edge of an immense plain, all bare and desolate, all the people turned back and left the poor princess to go on her way alone. The cavern of the dragon was in the midst of this plain, and twice a day he threw out fire from his seven mouths, and burned up all vegetation for several leagues around.

The poor princess, abandoned by all the world, went slowly on, sobbing and shedding great

tears. Hervé, who was provided with a horse, joined her, followed by his three animals, and said to her, —

“Come with me in the croup, dear lady, and I will take you where you are going.”

“Alas!” she replied, “I shall get there only too soon, and I do not wish to run to my death.”

“Confide in me, mount to the croup on my horse, and I will save you from the monster, with the aid of my three companions whom you see.”

And he showed her the three animals who were following him.

The princess mounted, and immediately Hervé put his horse at a gallop, for already the dragon had begun to throw out fire.

The hare had told each one what to do. He had said to the bear, —

“You, bear, must drag the monster from his cavern; and you, fox, fill your stomach with water so as to extinguish the fire which he will throw on us, while I shall fight him with my good sabre.”

When they reached the opening of the cavern, the dragon said, —

“Here you are at last, daughter of the king of England! I was getting impatient, and you have done well to come, for I should have reduced your father’s whole kingdom to ashes if

you had kept me waiting too long. But I see that you have not come alone; so much the better, for I shall eat you all."

Then, addressing Hervé:—

"Throw me the princess first."

"Come take her," he replied.

"Throw her to me, I tell you, and at once!"

"Come take her, I tell you, if you want her."

"Throw her to me, or I shall burn you to ashes."

"Pshaw! I am not afraid of you."

And addressing his companions:—

"Come, my friends, do your duty and work hard."

Then the bear seized the monster and dragged him from his cave. Immediately he began to throw fire from his seven mouths; but the fox vomited over it torrents of water, and the hare, on his part, made such frequent and terrible thrusts with his sword, that at last they killed the seven heads. "Victory!" then cried Hervé and the princess.

They had conquered, in truth, but not without difficulty, and the hare, the fox, and the bear, had their skins all torn and burned, and they were overcome with fatigue. Hervé, himself, and the princess had suffered somewhat, though they kept at a distance. Moreover, night was approaching, and for many reasons they could

not think of returning to the city. They resolved then to pass the night in the open plain, without shelter. Hervé, fearing the effect of a night spent in the open air upon the princess, whose constitution appeared delicate, was much troubled. Fortunately there were on the plain great masses of rocks to which they repaired, and when the bear had rolled together several bowlders so as to form quite a sheltering cavern, they all gathered there to wait for the morning, except the horse, who was fastened near by and slept on the sand. Then the hare served as a pillow for the princess, and the bear slept at her feet to keep them warm. The fox was a little indisposed from having drunk too much water, in spite of having thrown it all up.

Before going to sleep, though very much fatigued, they talked a little over the events of the struggle and their plans for the future. It was clearly understood that Hervé should marry the princess.

A charcoal-burner, who was passing by, heard a noise and stopped to listen. He drew near the rocks, heard all their conversation, and resolved to profit by it. When they were all fast asleep, he took away the rock which closed the entrance to the grotto, entered softly, cut off Hervé's head, and carried off the princess. The hare, the fox, and the bear were so broken down

by fatigue that they heard not a sound. When they woke next morning, and saw Hervé dead, with his head cut off, and the princess nowhere to be seen, their astonishment was great.

“How is it, bear, that you who were at the feet of the princess, did not wake up?” said the hare.

“I was so weary,” replied the bear, “that I slept like a rock.”

“And you, fox, whose ear is so keen?”

“And you, yourself, hare, who served as a pillow for the princess?” replied the fox.

“The first thing to be done,” said the hare, “is to put our master’s head again upon his shoulders and bring him to life; then we will see what has become of the princess. Fortunately I know how to make an ointment which will bring the dead to life, but I shall need the assistance of you both to do this. You, bear, must find and bring to me the solitary worm which is hidden a thousand feet under the ground; and you, fox, bring me a blackbird and a gray raven to make my ointment.”

“But that is not easy,” said the bear, “a thousand feet under the ground.”

“Suppose you go look for them yourself,” said the fox.

“And would you know how to make the ointment? You wouldn’t, would you?”

“Go, then, each on your way, work, and do not return without bringing me what I have ordered.”

So the bear went in one direction, growling, and the fox took another road, grumbling.

The bear went all over the plain, with his nose to the earth, sniffing everywhere. He stopped at last and began to dig up the earth. He dug and dug till he came to the solitary worm, and he seized it eagerly and carried it to the hare.

The fox had run to a forest which he had perceived from a distance, mounting to it over a mass of rocks. He stretched himself on his back in the bottom of a ravine, where there was a little running brook, his four paws in the air and his mouth wide open, as if he were dead. Soon a blackbird flew down upon him from a tree, hoping to regale himself. But the make-believe snapped it up quickly and strangled it. He hid it in a bush, went a little farther, and stretched himself under an old oak, and pretended to be dead again. After a while a gray raven passed by, crying, *Oak ! oak !* and seeing a dead fox, lighted on him, and was caught like the blackbird.

Then the fox also took the fruit of his search to the hare, who immediately set about preparing the ointment. And when it was finished he said to the bear,—

“Come, bear, stand your master on his feet and keep him in that position.”

The bear stood Hervé's body up.

“Now, then, put his head in its place.”

The bear took his head, and put it on facing the wrong way.

“Idiot! see what you are doing!”

Then the hare himself put it on in the right way, rubbed the wound and the whole body with his ointment, and the head grew again on the neck, life returned little by little to the whole body, Hervé opened his eyes, rubbed them as one does on awaking, and said, “How well I have slept!” Then looking round and seeing only the hare, the fox, and the bear, —

“Where is the princess?” he asked.

The hare told him all that had happened and he was greatly astonished. But the disappearance of the princess vexed him very much.

“Be comforted,” said the hare to him, “we will find her again.”

The charcoal-burner carried her back to her father, the king of England, and claimed to be her deliverer and the conqueror of the dragon. The old king had promised the hand of his daughter to the man who should deliver her from the monster, whoever he might be. But the princess, who knew the treachery of the

charcoal-burner, refuses to take him for her husband, and declares it is not he to whom she owes her life, although the impostor shows the seven heads of the dragon which he has cut off and brought with him in a sack. He has the heads, but the heads have no tongues in them, for "I cut them out myself and here they are." Then he showed them where he had put them in a corner of the grotto, adding: "In spite of the resistance of the princess, her father, finding the proofs quite sufficient, and wishing to keep his word, has fixed to-morrow for the wedding. We have then no time to lose, and we must set off at once." So they all four started out on the road to London. Hervé was on horseback, having in the croup the tongues of the dragon in a bag; the hare, the fox, and the bear followed him.

They stopped in a small wood near the king's palace, and the hare said to his companions, "You three remain here, and I will go and see what is going on in the king's palace."

Then he crept into the palace and went even into the dining-hall, where they were at table when he arrived. There had been feasting and rejoicing every day since the return of the king's daughter; not only at the palace, but in the whole city.

The charcoal-burner was betrothed to the

princess, and although she steadily refused to take him for her husband, the marriage was to take place the next day.

“Look! look! a hare!” cried the guests, astonished.

The servants went in pursuit of it and tried to catch it. About to be overtaken, he jumped into the princess’s lap, and said in a low voice, —

“It is I! Hervé is still alive and loves you always!”

“What! is it you, poor animal?”

And she embraced him and gave him some sweetmeats.

The charcoal-burner, seeing this, cried, —

“Drive it away, this ugly beast.”

“What harm has he done?” said the princess, wrapping the hare in the skirt of her gown.

“Drive it away quickly I tell you; it is an infamous sorcerer.”

“A sorcerer?” cried the old king, much frightened.

“A sorcerer! put him out the door at once!”

And the servants, armed with brooms and sticks, set to work to drive away the hare.

But the latter leaped lightly through the window, and rejoined his companions in the woods.

The charcoal-burner urged the old king to have the marriage take place the next morning. But the princess cried and implored her father

so constantly that the ceremony was deferred to the day after.

The hare had told Hervé, as well as the fox and the bear, what was going on at the palace.

“I, too, will go there to-morrow,” said the fox.

“Take care you are not caught,” said the hare.

“Fear nothing, and be sure that I shall not return without having had a taste of the feast and bringing you your share also.”

So the fox set out the next day, as he had said, at the hour for dinner. He also got well into the dining-hall; but as soon as the charcoal-burner saw him he rose and cried out, —

“See! the wicked sorcerer has come back again. Drive him out at once, or something dreadful will happen to us!”

Then all the servants hunted down the poor animal with brooms and sticks.

He leaped on the table, passed near the princess, and said to her, “To-morrow we will all come; Hervé, the hare, the bear, and I.” Then he jumped through the window. As he passed through the court he snapped up a hen and ran off with her to the wood.

The next day the whole little company, Hervé, the hare, the fox and the bear, went to the palace. The bear marched at the head, carrying Hervé on his back. The others followed, and thus made their way into the banquet hall.

Every one wished to escape from this sight, the charcoal-burner first of all. But Hervé, raising his hand, said, —

“Stay! let no one go out for a moment, or he will have to deal with my friend here.” And he pulled the bear’s ear, who growled.

“Do you believe, sire, that it is this ugly charcoal-burner here, this imposter, who has delivered your daughter from the dragon, and are you willing to give him your daughter’s hand?”

“I am a man of my word,” said the king.

“Very well! the man who delivered your daughter from the monster is not this charcoal-burner; it is I who have done it with the aid of my friends”; and he pointed to his three animals.

The charcoal-burner was white as the cloth before him.

“He has given us his proofs,” replied the king; “he brought us the seven heads of the dragon.”

“Very well! let me see these heads and I will expose the fraud.”

The king ordered the dragon’s heads to be brought, and a servant emptied them from a bag on the flags of the hall.

“Open their mouths,” said Hervé then, “and see if they have tongues.”

The same servant opened the jaws of the

seven heads, one after the other, and not one had a tongue ; all had been cut out.

“Where are the tongues ?” said the king.

“Here they are,” said Hervé, throwing them on the table.

“Yes, it is indeed he who is my deliverer, and who shall be my husband !” cried the princess, throwing herself on Hervé’s neck.

Seeing that everything was going against him, the charcoal-burner wanted to go out, but the bear stopped the way.

Then the old king, addressing his servants, said angrily, —

“Seize this impostor and let him be burned !”

And they built an enormous pile of fagots, set it on fire, and threw the charcoal-burner into the midst of the flames. Then Hervé married the princess and they had holidays and magnificent banquets.

Told by Margaret Philip, of Pluzunet, 1873.

F. M. LUZEL.

PAPA TIGER AND PAPA SHEEP.

A CREOLE STORY.

—♦—

A LONG, long time ago the sheep was feared by all the animals on the savannas, and in the great forests. When he passed along the road, walking slowly, his face grave and stern, with his long white beard and his curved horns, it was frightful, and the animals who met him saluted him politely, then ran away as fast as their legs could carry them. Had he ever eaten any of his neighbors? The gossips of the country dared not say so positively, but he looked so terrible, that, as they say, it is better to believe it than to go to see. By degrees, from hearing it said that he was to be feared, he finally came to believe it entirely himself. Once when he was stooping over a brook to drink, he saw his image in the stream, and jumped three feet back, frightened at the sight of his beard and his horns.

A Tiger, which lived not far from Papa Sheep's hut, plucked up all his courage one day, and determined to make a formal visit to his neighbor.

He took with him his son, a little tiger already able to walk about. As far off as he could see Papa Sheep, he saluted him very humbly, and when he came near he asked after his family.

“Neighbor, I have come to pay my respects to you, and my wife would have been pleased to pay her compliments to Madam Sheep if she had not been kept at home by indisposition.”

Papa Sheep invited Papa Tiger to come into his house. While the two fathers conversed gravely on the affairs of the country, little Tiger went to play in the garden with little Sheep.

“Be very polite to little Sheep,” said his father to him, “or else he will eat you.”

So the two children began to play together; after a moment or so little Tiger jumped on little Sheep and threw him down head over heels. Then little Sheep laughed.

“Bless me! what little teeth you have!” said little Tiger to him.

“It is so with all my family; Papa’s are all like mine,” said little Sheep.

This remark made little Tiger reflect; and when the visit was over, and father and son had left their hosts, little Tiger scarcely waited for Papa Sheep to shut the door before he said to his father, —

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“Papa, Papa, little Sheep has very small teeth, and he told me that his father’s were no longer than his own.”

“Hold your tongue, hold your tongue, you rascal! if Papa Sheep should hear us, he would eat us both up.”

Papa Tiger resolved, however, to know the truth of this matter. Certainly, Papa Sheep had seemed to him very fat, and only the thought of it made him lick his moustaches. But how could he see Papa Sheep’s teeth? This was not easy. Papa Sheep scarcely ever opened his mouth to speak, and his beard entirely covered his lower lip and chin. However, the opportunity came to the Tiger as it does to all those who know how to wait. The day that Papa Sheep and his son returned his visit, while the children were playing outside, he was exceedingly polite to Sheep, and gave him a bottle of his best wine, then a second, and a third. Papa Sheep became extremely gay, and losing his seriousness, he opened his mouth wide so as to enjoy his laugh. Then Papa Tiger saw his guest’s little teeth. Without hesitation he jumped on the Sheep and throttled him. Hearing his father scream, little Sheep ran off as fast as he could, and reached his home before the Tiger, excited over his first prey, had thought of following him.

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All day long there were nothing but tears and groanings in the Sheep's hut. Mamma Sheep and her son cried until it was a pity to hear them. Hearing the noise they made, the Queen of the Birds came flying from the great forest near by, and lighting on the roof of the hut, she asked Mamma Sheep the cause of her grief.

"Alas! kind lady, Papa Tiger has eaten up my poor husband! My child and I do not dare to go out, for he will come prowling around here to eat us also."

Touched by her grief, the Queen of the Birds consoled her as well as she could, and promised her a complete revenge. Then with a few flaps of her wings she soon reached the neighboring forest. All the birds of the great forest responded to her appeal; the large Aras, with their brilliant plumage; the Cockatoos, with their white crests; thousands of emerald Paroquets, with coral beaks; little scarlet and green Humming-birds, looking like precious stones, to which God had given wings. The Queen told them of the death of Papa Sheep. "Let us swear to avenge our good neighbor," cried she. "We swear it!" squalled, whistled, and screamed the birds, each in his own language.

At this deafening noise, the Alligators ran to hide themselves in the high grass, the Boas and

Rattlesnakes ran hastily into the hollows of the trees.

“Be confident!” said the Queen of the Birds. “To-morrow is Sunday; I will give a great feast in the forest. As soon as high mass is over I wish all the birds of the forest to assemble. My pretty Paroquets, fly around and give the invitations. Get everything ready for the feast; be prompt at the appointed hour, and obey me in everything. I will fly over myself and invite Papa Tiger.”

Flattered by the visit of the Queen of the Birds, Papa Tiger promised to come to the great ball in the forest. He put on his finest clothes, curled his moustache, and before setting out he kissed his wife on her lips, and his son on his two cheeks.

As soon as they saw him come the Queen of the Birds cried to all her subjects, —

“Take your places quickly, form the quadrilles, and let each one of you begin to dance, hiding his head under his wing. Music, play!”

And the orchestra played, —

“Tig, tig, malinboin
La chelema che tango
Redjoum
La chelema che tango!”

The Queen of the Birds flew down before Papa Tiger, and bade him welcome. How

splendid the feast was! Papa Tiger was dazzled by it! Long lines of birds with rich plumage placed themselves opposite each other. "The quadrille is beginning now," said the Queen; "you shall be my cavalier." Papa Tiger stood up beside his partner, and the orchestra played, —

"Tig, tig, malinboin
La chelema che tango
Redjoum
La chelema che tango!"

At once the birds, their heads under their wings, began to dance to the music. The Queen also hid her head, and when Papa Tiger, proud, and marching with his head high, was about to make the first turn, she cried, —

"But, Papa Tiger, you don't understand! It is the custom at my court, that in order to take part in the dance, you must have no head. Look at all my invited guests; they would consider they had been wanting in the manners of distinguished society, indeed, in the simplest politeness, if they dared raise their heads before their sovereign. So, my friend, do as they do, and you will then be able to move with distinction in the quadrille of the Queen of the Birds."

Papa Tiger blushed red with shame.

"My Queen," he cried, "I beg your pardon humbly for this breach of etiquette. I am a

wild hunter, accustomed to pass entire nights on the watch, and I am ignorant of the customs of courts. Kindly promise me a quadrille and I will return in a moment in the attitude that you require."

With a few bounds Papa Tiger was at home. He said to his wife, —

"My wife, in order to have the honor of dancing with the Queen of the Birds, it is essential to have no head; I saw all the guests dancing in that condition. It is the etiquette of the court. Take this axe and cut off my head."

"You have lost it already, my poor husband," said Mamma Tiger. "Instead of dancing with Queens, you would do better to stay at home with your wife and children. I do not like husbands who leave their wives in the lurch and pass the night at balls."

"If you do not obey me," growled the Tiger, in a rage at being scolded by his wife, "I will strangle you this moment."

Then Mamma Tiger seized the axe, and with one blow cut off her husband's head. It killed him outright, as you may imagine.

Two Paroquets, waiting in ambush, flew off rapidly to carry the news of the Tiger's death to the Queen of the Birds. Then the birds all took their heads from under their wings; all the beasts of the forest were brought in; each of

them wished in his turn to embrace Mamma Sheep and her son. After that, they formed a line to dance and the orchestra began to play :—

“ Tig, tig, malinboin
La chelema che tango
Redjoum
La chelema che tango !”

It would be impossible to tell you how they leaped, how they fluttered! At last it was necessary to go away, for everything comes to an end in this lower world; but before doing so, they took up a collection and gave the money to little Sheep and his mother.

Sheep, and you children who hear me, let the death of Papa Sheep be a lesson to you; it is better not to open your mouth than to laugh with people you know nothing about.

LOYS BRUYÈRE.

JOHN BIT-OF-A-MAN.

A STORY OF THE DISTRICT OF METZ.



ONCE there was a woman who had a little son who was extremely small ; so very small that she named him John Bit-of-a-man. One day she called him to her and said, —

“Come, take this to your father who is working down there in the fields, and when you get to him, say : ‘ See father ! here is your buttered roll ! ’ ”

“I will, mother,” said John Bit-of-a-man ; and all along the way he repeated the words so as not to forget them : “ See, father ! here is your buttered roll ; see, father ! here is your buttered roll ! ”

When he reached his father who was occupied in repairing the ditches, he took up his refrain : “ See, father ! here is your buttered roll.”

The good man, hearing some one speak, looked around him on every side, but saw no one ; at last, however, he spied little John Bit-of-a-man in the grass at his feet.

"Ah!" said he, "it is you, is it? What do you want?"

"I have brought you a buttered roll," said John Bit-of-a-man.

"You are very good, my child, to bring me this buttered roll;" and taking it in his hands he ate it all up, without offering John Bit-of-a-man a mite.

"The glutton! he did not give me any! The glutton! he did not give me any!" groaned John Bit-of-a-man.

Some time after that, a lord passed by. He called to the laborer, "You have a pretty little boy; will you sell him to me?"

"I will, gladly."

"How much will you take?"

"A hundred crowns."

"A hundred crowns you shall have."

The bargain concluded, the lord put John Bit-of-a-man in his pocket and went on his way. At the end of an hour, the child put his head out of the pocket and begged his master to put him down on the ground for a moment as he felt faint. The lord was good enough to listen to him, and in a moment John Bit-of-a-man glided under a heap of leaves and his master could not find him. John Bit-of-a-man being free once more, went back to his father.

A few days after that, the lord again passed

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by the laborer, who was still repairing the ditches. "You have a pretty little boy there," said he; "will you sell him to me?"

"I will, gladly."

"How much will you take?"

"A hundred crowns."

"A hundred crowns you shall have."

The bargain concluded, the lord clapped John Bit-of-a-man into his pocket. At the end of an hour the child put his head out of the pocket and begged his master to put him down on the ground awhile as he felt cramped.

"Well, stay in my pocket and be cramped!" said the lord, who remembered how he had been caught before.

When he reached his castle, he took John Bit-of-a-man out of his pocket and put him in a basket which he suspended from the kitchen ceiling, and told him to watch everything he saw going on, and tell him faithfully all that he saw.

John Bit-of-a-man agreed to do this, and each day he told his master all that he saw and heard.

One day our hero leaned his little head over the edge of the basket, so he could see around him, and a servant saw him and said to him, —

"So it is you who watch us, you little wretch! It is you who tell the master all that happens! Very well! you shall pay for it!"

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Amid the applause of his companions, the servant took down the basket, seized the poor little fellow by the hair, and threw him into the horse-trough. That same day an ox went there to drink, and swallowed him whole.

At the end of a week, the lord had the ox killed for a great feast that he made; the entrails were thrown out into the road. An old woman passing by saw the entrails. "Oh! what splendid entrails! What a pity to throw them away!" and so saying, she clapped them into the basket which she carried on her back. She had not taken many steps, when she heard a noise that came from her basket saying,—

"Toc! toc!
The devil's imp is in your basket!
Toc! toc!
The devil's imp is in your basket!"

The old woman threw down her basket, and ran away frightened.

A hungry wolf came along who seized on the entrails with avidity, and John Bit-of-a-man was once more swallowed alive.

As the wolf was crossing the plain, he heard a voice which came from the inside of his body cry out,—

"Help! shepherd! help! here is the wolf that devours your sheep."

“Be quiet! you cursed stomach; be quiet! cursed stomach!” said the wolf in desperation.

“I will not hold my tongue until you have put me down at my father’s door,” answered John Bit-of-a-man.

“Very well; I will go there,” said the wolf.

When they got there, John Bit-of-a-man got out of the wolf’s stomach, and ran quickly into the house, passing by the cat’s hole; at the same moment, seizing the wolf by the tail, he cried, “Come, father, come, I have got the wolf by the tail.” His father ran to him, killed the wolf with one stroke of his axe, and sold his skin.

Restored to his home again, John Bit-of-a-man lived ever after happy and peaceful.

Told by Madam Richet, aged 77, at Woippy, near Metz.

NÉRÉE QUÉPAT.

LONG TIME.

A STORY OF CARAYAC (QUERCY).

ONCE upon a time there was a man who was not rich, but by dint of hard work he had saved up a little sum. Every day when he went to his work, he said to his wife, —

“Take care of this money. It is for the long time.”

The woman, as soon as he was gone, would take pleasure in counting over the crowns and the sous. One day when she was alone in her house, counting her money as usual, a beggar came by and asked her for charity.

“Alas! poor man,” said she, “we are very poor; I have nothing to give you.”

“What!” said he, “and all those beautiful crowns and those sous that you have there! Could you not give me some of those for charity?”

“I wish I could,” said the woman, “but we are keeping this for the long time.”

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“The long time?” said the beggar; “I am the long time.”

“Ah! if you are the long time, that is another thing. Take some, take some.”

The beggar, not at all ashamed, pocketed the whole sum, leaving not a farthing or a mite, and went away satisfied with his windfall, as you may imagine.

The husband returned. “Long Time came,” said the wife, “and I gave him the money that we saved for him.”

“Long Time? you miserable baggage!”

“Yes; a poor man who told me that he was Long Time. I have given him all.”

“Ah! poor dunce! you let him steal the savings from you. Come, there is nothing left for us to do, but take a wallet and go out ourselves and beg from village to village. Take your clothes and let us go forth.”

The husband had nothing but what he had on, the wife not much more. He went in front, she followed.

“Shut the door tight,” said the husband.

“Did you say carry it?”

“I said shut it.”

“Shall I carry it?”

“Yes, carry it.”

The obedient wife took the door off the hinges, put it on her shoulders, and fol-

lowed her husband towards the neighboring wood.

Night came on. They heard the noise of a band of robbers, who were coming in their direction. "Let us climb up into a tree to hide," said the husband.

"What shall I do with the door?" asked his wife.

"The door? Leave it there."

"Shall I take it up?"

"Leave it there."

"Shall I take it up?"

"Yes, take it up."

She climbed up after her husband into a large old spreading oak-tree, dragging the door after her. They were scarcely settled in the branches when the robbers arrived at the foot of the tree, made a halt, opened their provisions, lighted a fire, prepared their supper, counted the booty they had taken during the day, and then began to eat and drink.

The wife, from the top branch, said in a low voice to her husband,—

"The door is going to fall!"

"Hold on to it, you miserable baggage, or we are lost."

"Shall I let it go?"

"Hold on to it!"

"Shall I let it go?"

“Yes, let it go.”

The women let go the door, which tumbled with a great crash from branch to branch, and fell into the midst of the robbers and frightened them so that they ran away as fast as they could, forgetting all their plunder and never looking behind them.

The husband and wife came down, picked up the jewels, the pieces of gold, and all the booty left by the robbers, and returned to their house, rich for the rest of their lives.

MARCEL DEVIC.

SKILFUL JOHN.

A STORY OF PICARDY.



ONE day a poor man sent his son, Skilful John, to carry some buttered rolls to his parents, who lived three miles off, telling him not to stop by the way. John sauntered along the road and lost his way. Seeing a light, he followed it and came to a little hut. He knocked at the door.

“Tap! tap!

Open to a poor lost boy.

Tap! tap!

God therefor will have great joy.”

The door opened; an old woman with a grinning face appeared and asked, “Who are you?”

“I am Skilful John; will you lodge me for the night?”

“If I lodge you, what will you pay me?”

“I will give you a piece of buttered roll.”

The old woman made him come in; he seated himself in a corner while the old woman made him some broth.

“I bet,” said she to him after a few moments, “that with my old legs I can reach my garden wall before you do. If I win, I will eat your buttered roll ; and if I lose, you shall keep your roll, and have my broth into the bargain.”

“Very well,” said the child ; and, darting out, he soon reached the garden wall. But the old woman, instead of running, shut and bolted her door, and took possession of the buttered roll that John had left on his bench. John knocked in vain ; the door was not opened for him a second time ; and, as it was raining very hard, he got into a bee-hive. In the middle of the night some thieves came to steal the hives. John heard a voice say, —

“Lift the hives, and take away the heaviest.”

As the hive in which John was, was one of the heaviest, it was taken away by the thieves, who put it in a bag.

When the thieves came to a wood, they put down their burdens, John took his knife, made a hole in the bag and escaped.

After wandering for some time, he met a shepherd who gave him a piece of bread, and took him afterwards to sleep in the barn of a farmhouse. During the night the floor fell in, and John woke up in a stable astride of an ox. Just at that moment the thieves were busy unfastening the oxen ; seeing John, they took him

and carried him away with them to the forest. Not wishing to kill him, they shut him up in an old cask and abandoned him to his unhappy fate. A pack of wolves came up to devour the remains of the thieves' repast: one of them passed near the cask. John put his hand out of the bung-hole and seized him by his tail. The frightened wolf fled through the woods, dragging behind him the cask, which was soon broken into a thousand pieces. John, once more set free, went wandering around till he came to a hut. It was the same old woman's hut. Its door was only latched. John entered softly; the old woman, who was asleep, did not hear him. He took his buttered roll and ate all there was left of the broth, then went out singing as loud as he could, —

“Old woman! old woman!
I have eaten your broth.
Old woman! old woman!
I am sharp enough!”

Told in Picardy by Narcisso Dufaux, aged 48 years, a cap-maker at Warloy-Baillon (Somme).

HENRI CARNOY.

THE TAILOR AND THE HURRICANE.

A BRETON STORY.



ONCE there was a tailor and his wife. Tailors' wives are generally lazy, and this one was like the rest. Her name was Jeanne ar Balc'h and her husband's name was Iann troad scarbet (John Cross-foot). In the morning, as soon as Jean had gone out to his work, Jeanne got back into bed, and when she rose again, about eleven or twelve o'clock, she went to gossip in the village, and chatted from door to door like a magpie. When Jean returned in the evening she was always at her spinning-wheel; so he thought she had not left it the whole day.

One morning Jean said to Jeanne, —

“I shall not go out to-day, wife, for a day's work, and we will both go together to the market to sell the yarn; for you must have a great deal by this time.”

Jeanne was greatly embarrassed at this; what should she do? She had not three bobbins of yarn. She went to the house of a neighboring gossip, and told how it was.

“Tell your husband,” said the gossip, “that after having washed your thread, you had put it to dry in the oven of the furnace, and that he, not knowing of it, lighted the fire as usual and burned up all the thread.”

Jeanne returned to her house, and told her husband, word for word, what the gossip said.

“Fool!” cried Jean angrily, “you must have lost the little sense you had, and I shall never be anything but poor with you. Now, to punish you, you shall sow in the garden the half-bushel of flaxseed that we have there; and this evening when I come home, the flax must be ripe, reaped, retted, dried, and put in bundles in the barn.”

“But, my poor husband,” said Jeanne, “how can you talk in such a way? No one in the world can do this; and how can you expect me to do it?”

“You may manage it as you like” answered Jean; “but it must be done when I come back this evening, or woe to you!”

Then he went away as usual. Jeanne, much disturbed, ran at once to the house of her gossiping neighbor.

“If you only knew, neighbor, what my husband has ordered me to do! He must have lost his senses completely.”

“What has he ordered you to do?”

“What has he ordered me to do? He says that this evening when he returns from his day’s work, I must have sown in our garden a half-bushel of flaxseed, and that, moreover, the flax must be ripe, reaped, retted, dried, and put in bundles in the barn! I should like to know if you do not think he must have lost his senses to ask such an impossible thing of me?” And she cried as she said this.

“Be comforted, neighbor,” said the other woman; “we will find out some way of deceiving Jean yet; he thinks himself cunning, but he is only a fool. This is what you must do. I have a little flax in my barn from last year. Take two or three bundles of it, and scatter it over the fields and meadows around, and hang some on the hedges and bushes, and when he returns in the evening, you can tell him that you have done all that he ordered you, but that a hurricane came while the flax was drying in the meadow, and carried it all away; and as a proof of this you can show him what is left hanging on the trees and bushes.”

This appeared to Jeanne to be an excellent plan; so she took three bundles of her neighbor’s dry flax, and went and scattered it over the fields and meadows, and hung it on the bushes and the branches of the trees.

When Jean returned in the evening he asked at once, —

“Well, wife, have you done what I told you, this morning?”

“Certainly, I did just exactly what you told me; but we have no luck, my poor husband.”

“Well, what has happened?”

“What has happened? Think of it! The flax, after being taken out of the pond where it had been retted, was drying in the meadow, and I was getting ready to pick it up and bind it in bundles to put it up in the barn, when a hurricane came which has carried it all away.”

“Tut, tut, tut! I do not believe any such stories,” said Jean.

“But, my husband, this is not a story at all; come with me and I will show you that it is the pure truth.”

And she led him to the field, where she pretended to have spread her flax to dry, and showed it to him, scattered all over the neighboring fields and meadows, or hanging on the bushes and branches of the trees.

Jean believed her then, and he exclaimed, —

“Very well! since it is the hurricane that has done all this damage, it is he that shall pay for it, and I will go this moment and complain to the master of the winds.”

Then he went into his house, took his *penn-baz*, a taste of barley bread and some buttered rolls, and started off. He travelled a long time; after going straight ahead, farther and farther off, he came, one day, to the foot of a hill on which there was seated an old woman as large as a giantess. Her white hair floated in the wind, and one long, black tooth, the only one she had left, shook in her mouth.

“Good morning, grandmother!” said Jean.

“Good morning, my son,” answered the old woman; “what do you want?”

“I am looking for the dwelling-place of the winds.”

“Then, my son, you are at the end of your journey, for this is the dwelling-place of the winds, and I am their mother. What do you want with them?”

“I want to complain of the damage they have caused me.”

“What damage have they caused you? Tell me, and I will repay you if it is possible.”

“Your son Hurricane has ruined me;” and he told the whole affair to the old woman.

She said to him, “Come into my house, my son, and when my son the Hurricane returns I will make him repay you.”

And she then descended the hill and took Jean to her house, which was at the foot of it. It

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was a hut built of branches and clods of earth, and the wind came in and blew through and through it. She gave him something to eat, and told him not to be afraid of her son, when he returned, although he might threaten to eat him up, for she would know very well how to manage him.

Soon a terrible noise was heard; the trees cracked, small stones flew through the air, and the wolves howled.

“That is my son the Hurricane, coming,” said the old woman.

Jean was so terribly frightened that he hid himself under the table. The Hurricane came in muttering, sniffing the air, and cried out, —

“I smell the blood of a Christian! There is a Christian here, and I must eat him up!”

“Do not think, my son, that I am going to let you eat up this pretty little Christian; think rather of repaying him for the damage you have done him,” said the old woman; and, taking Jean by the hand, she made him come out from under the table.

The Hurricane, as soon as he saw him, opened his enormous mouth, and sprang at him to swallow him. But his mother said to him, pointing with her finger to a bag which was hanging from one of the beams of the hut, —

“Do you want to be put in prison?” And

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he became calm immediately. Then the tailor grew bold and said to him,—

“Good morning, Mr. Hurricane; you have ruined me.”

“How is that, my good man?” answered the Hurricane gently.

“You carried away all my flax from the meadow where my wife had spread it to dry.”

“That is not true; and your wife is a liar and a good-for-nothing creature. But as you are an honest man and a good workman, and because in spite of all the trouble you take you will always be poor with such a wife, I will reward you for the trouble you have taken in coming here, and for your confidence in my justice. See! here is a mule, and when you are in want of silver and gold you have only to spread a white napkin under his mouth and say to him, ‘Mule, do your duty!’ and he will furnish you with gold and silver as much as you want. But take care not to let him be stolen from you, or you will find yourself poor as before.”

Then the Hurricane gave him a mule which was in a corner of a hut, and which was not at all different from an ordinary mule. The tailor thanked the Hurricane, bade farewell to him and also to his mother, and then went away, taking with him the precious animal.

When he had gone a considerable distance, as

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he was crossing a large field, he wished to assure himself that his mule really possessed the virtue which had been attributed to him. He spread his handkerchief under his mouth and said, "Mule, do your duty!" And immediately pieces of gold and silver fell in his handkerchief until it would not hold any more. He filled his pockets with them, then he started again on his way, singing, laughing, dancing, and jumping for joy, as if he were foolish.

Toward sunset he stopped to pass the night in an inn by the roadside. As he left his mule with the stable-boy, he charged him to take special care of it and never to say to it, "Do your duty." Poor Jean, as we have seen, was none of the sharpest. After having supped comfortably, eaten and drunk of the best there was in the house, he went to bed and slept without anxiety till morning.

The stable-boy was astonished at Jean's charging him not to say to the mule, "Do your duty"; no traveller had ever told him such a thing. "There is something back of this," said he to himself.

This thought kept him from sleeping: he went to tell his master about it. When all the household was asleep, the inn-keeper, his wife, and the stable-boy, went to the stable, and going up to the mule, the stable-boy said, —

“Mule, do your duty!”

And pieces of gold and silver fell at once, making a ringing sound. They were overcome with astonishment. After they had all three filled their pockets, they put another mule in place of the tailor's and hid his in a room well fastened up, far from the stable.

The next day, Jean breakfasted well, paid his reckoning, and then set out again on his journey, taking with him the mule which the stable-boy brought him, and not dreaming of the trick that had been played on him.

As he had his pockets filled with gold and silver, he had no need, during the rest of his journey, to say to his mule, “Do your duty.”

When he reached his home, his wife and children were ready to die of hunger. On seeing him, Jeanne began to heap abuses upon him: “So here you are at last, wicked, heartless man; you run off, no one knows where, and leave your wife and children at home to die of hunger.”

And she shook her fist at him.

“Hold your tongue! wife,” said Jean, quietly, and with the air of a man sure of his powers; “you will never again want for bread or anything else; we are rich now, as you shall see! Take off your apron and spread it on the ground under the mule's mouth.”

Jeanne spread her apron on the ground and Jean said, —

“Mule, do your duty!”

But to his astonishment nothing fell in the apron. He said, a second time, louder than before, thinking perhaps he had not heard, —

“Mule, do your duty!”

Still nothing; then a third time he cried still louder, —

“Mule, do your duty!”

But neither gold nor silver fell on the apron. Jeanne, now persuaded that her husband was mocking her, siezed a stick and darted at him. Poor Jean, to get out of her way, ran out, and not daring to go into his house, and not knowing just where his mule had been stolen, he determined to go again to see the Hurricane.

When the latter saw him returning all cast down he said to him, —

“I know why you have come back; you let them steal your mule from you at the first inn where you lodged on your way home. Here is a napkin, and when you spread it on a table or even on the ground, saying to it, ‘Napkin, do your duty!’ it will furnish you immediately with all you want to eat and drink. But take care not to let this be stolen also.”

“Do not be anxious! they shall steal my life first.”

Then he bade farewell to the Hurricane and his mother and set out on his journey. He lodged, the first night, at the same inn as before. There was a wedding feast going on when he arrived. He was heartily welcomed and asked to sit at the table with the newly married pair, to which he agreed with pleasure. Finding the repast not much to his taste, or perhaps being anxious to excite the astonishment of the guests and to pass for a great scholar or a magician, he drew his napkin from his pocket, spread it on the table, and proudly uttered the words, “Napkin, do your duty!”

Immediately there was a magnificent repast, delicious meats, such as are seen only on the tables of kings, and fine wines from all countries. Intoxicated, as much by the praises as by the wine, Jean let them steal away his napkin also, and the next day he was as poor and destitute as ever.

This time he dared not show himself before his wife in such a condition, and he thought that the only thing he could do was to go again to the home of the mother of the winds. So he went there again, but this time very much ashamed and cast down.

When the Hurricane saw him, he said to him, —

“You have let them steal away your napkin also, unfortunate man !”

“Have pity on me, Mr. Hurricane,” said the tailor, humbly ; “my wife and my children are dying of hunger at home, and I cannot go back to them without taking them something.”

“I consent to come to your assistance one last time, for you are not a wicked man ;” and handing him a stick — “Here is a stick, and when whoever has it in his hand says, ‘Stick, do your duty !’ he will immediately begin to beat his master’s enemies, and nothing can stop it until he cries, ‘Enough !’ With this stick, you can recover your mule and your napkin.”

Jean thanked him and departed. He lodged at the same inn as before. They welcomed him in the heartiest manner, in the hope of stealing some other talisman from him. He invited the inn-keeper and his wife and also the stable-boy to supper with him. When the repast was nearly over, he said to his stick, which he had held constantly in his hand, not being willing to be separated from it, —

“Stick, do your duty !”

And immediately the stick was in motion and beat the inn-keeper and his wife and the stable-boy with all its might. All their efforts to stop

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it were useless, and in vain they tried to hide themselves under the table and other things; the stick reached them everywhere, and Jean laughed and made a joke of it. "Pity! Mercy!" they cried to him, and he said to them, —

"That will teach you to steal mules and napkins!"

"Pity! We will give them all back to you! You will kill us!"

"Enough!" cried Jean, at the end of half an hour of this exercise; and the stick stopped striking, and Jean returned to his home with his mule, napkin, and stick. If he has been wise enough to keep them, he has nothing to complain of. For my part, I have heard nothing of him since that time.

Told by Barbe Tassel, of Plouaret (Côtes-du-Nord).

F. M. LUZEL.

THE BAKER'S THREE DAUGHTERS;
OR,
THE DANCING WATER, THE SINGING APPLE,
AND THE BIRD OF TRUTH.

THERE was once an old baker who was a widower with three daughters. One evening after supper they sat before the fire talking about their loves. "Whom do you love, oldest sister?" asked the youngest.

"The king's gardener," she replied.

"And you?" she asked of the second sister.

"The king's waiting-man."

"Very well; as for me, I love the king's son."

"The king's son! you are joking!" cried the other two.

"Certainly not, and I tell you, moreover, that we shall have three children, the king's son and I, two boys, each with a gold star on his forehead, and a daughter with a silver star."

The father, who had gone to bed, and who overheard the conversation of his daughter, said to them then, —

"What sort of talk is this? You must be crazy! go to bed at once."

So the three girls went to bed.

The king's son was taking a walk that evening through the village, accompanied by his waiting-man and his gardener. A shower came up, and they went under the baker's shed for shelter and overheard the conversation of the three girls. The prince took down the name of the baker, which was on his sign, and the next morning he sent to ask the oldest daughter to come to the palace to speak to him.

"Do you remember," said he to her, "what you said yesterday evening, beside your fire, in your father's house?" The young girl was very much surprised and frightened. "Do not be afraid, my girl," said he, "speak boldly, for I have heard all; do you remember what you said?"

"Yes," she replied.

"And you would be willing to marry my gardener?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Very well; go home and tell your second sister to come and talk with me."

When the latter came to the palace, the prince asked of her, as he had done of her elder sister,—

"Do you remember what you said yesterday evening, beside your fire, in your father's house?"

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“Yes, sire, certainly,” she replied.

“And you would be willing to take my waiting-man for your husband?”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Very well; go home and tell your youngest sister to come also and talk with me.”

The latter came also in her turn, and the prince asked of her, as of the other two, “Do you remember what you said yesterday evening, by the fireside, in your father’s house?”

“I remember, sire,” she replied.

“And you would be willing to marry me?”

“Yes, with all my heart.”

“And you would have three children, as you said, two boys, each with a gold star on his forehead, and a daughter with a silver star?”

“Yes, as truly as I have said it, sire.”

“Very well; then you shall be my wife. Now go home and tell your father to come and talk with me.”

The young girl went home, very happy, and told her father to go to the palace and talk with the king’s son.

“Why?” asked the old man; “I told you so; your foolish talk has come to the prince’s ears, and now he has doubtless sent for me to punish me.”

“No, no, my father; go and fear nothing,” said his daughter.

The old baker went to the palace, sad and sighing, as if he were going to his death. But when he heard the son of the king ask his three daughters in marriage, one for his gardener, one for his waiting-man, and the third for himself, he was as joyful and happy as before he had been anxious and afraid.

The three weddings were celebrated at once, and for a whole month there were feasts every day, dances, and all sorts of amusements.

The gardener and the waiting-man went to live in the city with their wives, and the young prince remained with his, in his father's palace. The other two were jealous of the youngest sister because she was a princess, and they tried every day to find some means to destroy her. At last they consulted an old fairy. She told them that when the princess' baby was born they must bribe the old nurse to put a little dog in the cradle instead of the baby and send the baby out on the river. Then they recommended a nurse to their sister, who, they said, was the best in the kingdom. The princess asked to see her and welcomed her kindly. The baby that was born was a magnificent child, with a gold star in the middle of his forehead. The nurse gave the poor little creature to a man who was waiting at the door, to take it and leave it

on the shore of the Seine, which they tell me flows by Paris. Then she put in his place in the cradle, a little dog that she had brought with her. When the prince asked to see his child they showed him the little dog.

“Ah! ah! what is this that you are showing me?” he cried.

“Alas! my prince,” replied the perfidious nurse, “God does all as it pleases Him!”

“Ah! misery for me! But it is useless to complain, since it is the will of God. Take care always of this poor creature.”

The husband of the baker's oldest daughter, the king's gardener, had a beautiful garden on the shore of the river, and as he was walking in it one day, he saw a basket which was floating on the water. He jumped into his boat, caught the basket, and was very much astonished to find in it a beautiful child with a gold star in the middle of his forehead. “God be praised,” said he, “who sends me such a lovely child, for I have none of my own.” And he carried it to his wife, who received it with great joy, and took as much pleasure in caring for it as if it had been her own child.

A year after, a second son was born to the princess, having also a gold star in his forehead like the first. The perfidious nurse substituted a little dog for him also, and the poor

baby was put out on the water in a basket as his brother had been.

The king (the prince had become king, his father having died) asked to see his new-born son.

“Alas! another dog!” cried he, as soon as he saw it, and he turned away his head and wept. “But since it is the will of God,” he added, “what God does is well done.”

The gardener, who was fishing with hook and line in his garden, saw a basket floating down the river. He caught it and hastened to carry to his wife the beautiful child he found in it. The latter received it joyfully, saying, —

“How delightful! Now we each have one, my husband and I!”

They chose a godfather and godmother, and the child was baptized.

A third child was born to the princess, and this time it was a little girl, with a silver star in the middle of her forehead. The perfidious nurse put a little dog in her place, too, and the poor thing was exposed as her brothers had been. This time the king began to swear and storm like one beside himself, when they showed him another little dog.

“They will call me,” said he, “the father of dogs! and not without reason. But all this does not come from God; there is some mystery at

the bottom of it." And he had the queen shut up in a tower, with only bread and water for food, and a little book to read.

The gardener found another child floating on the water, and picked it up and carried it home, as he had done the others.

"Enough children like that," said his wife, seeing him come in with the basket. "How is it that you find so many children?"

"Very well, wife, do not worry; be quiet. I will carry the child back where I found it on the water; but it is a great pity; such a pretty little girl!"

"It is a girl, do you say? Show her to me. Oh! the pretty little angel, with a silver star in the middle of her forehead. We will keep her, husband; we have sufficient means, and since God has given us no children of our own, we will take these instead."

Meanwhile the poor queen was in her tower, weeping and moaning night and day, and no one came to see her. Her two sisters were happy with their husbands.

By and by the gardener and his wife died. The king had their three children brought to his palace, and as they were handsome children and well brought up, they pleased him very much. Every Sunday they were seen in his pew at church, — at high mass, — having each

a bandage round his forehead to hide his star. Every one was astonished to see these bandages, and asked, "What does it mean?"

One day, when the king was out hunting, an old woman came to the kitchen of the palace, and said, "Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! how cold I am!" And she trembled and her teeth chattered.

"Come near the fire, grandmother," said the young girl with the silver star, who happened to be there.

"Blessings on you, my child. Ah! how beautiful you are! Ah! if you had the dancing water, the singing apple, and the bird of truth, you would not have your equal on the earth!"

"Yes, grandmother; but how can I get these marvellous things?"

"You have two brothers here who can get them for you."

Then she went away without saying anything more.

From that moment the young girl could think of nothing but the words of the old woman; she dreamed only of the dancing water, the singing apple, and the bird of truth, and she was very sad.

"Why are you so sad?" asked her brothers.

"There is nothing the matter," she replied.

“Yes, there is something the matter, and you must tell us what it is.”

“An old woman came to warm herself in the kitchen, and she said to me, ‘My child, if you had the dancing water, the singing apple, and the bird of truth, you would not have your equal on the earth!’ And since then I am always dreaming of the dancing water, the singing apple, and the bird of truth. But how can I ever procure such marvellous things?”

“My little sister, I will find them for you if they are anywhere on this earth,” said the elder brother.

“How can you do it, my poor brother?”

“Leave it to me, and do not be worried. See! here is a dagger, which I give you; draw it from the scabbard several times a day for a whole year and a day; as long as you can draw it out, no harm will have happened to me; but when you cannot pull it out, alas! I shall be dead!”

Then he bade farewell to his sister and brother, and departed.

His sister often drew the dagger-blade from the scabbard, and it came out easily. But alas! one day she could not draw it out, although she tried her best. Then she began to cry.

“What is the matter, my dear little sister?” said her younger brother.

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"Alas! poor brother, our elder brother is dead!" And they both began to cry.

"I must go and look for him."

"Oh, no! do not go, my brother; stay here with me."

"No, I must go, and I never will stop walking till I have found my brother. Here! I give you this necklace; slip the beads around constantly; when you come to one that will not move, then I also shall be dead." Then he said good by to his sister and went away.

She, left all alone, was very sad and full of care. She constantly slipped the beads on her necklace around, and she saw with pleasure that they moved easily. But alas! one day there was one that would not move.

"My God!" she cried, "my second brother is dead, also! What shall I do now? I must go and seek for them, and I will never stop travelling until I have found them, dead or alive."

She bought a horse, dressed herself as a cavalier, and set out, without saying anything to any one. She continued to go on and on till she reached a great plain.

There she saw in an old hollow tree a little old man with a long white beard.

"Good morning, daughter of the king of France!" said the little old man with the white beard.

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“Good morning, grandfather ; but you surely take me for some one else, for I am not the daughter of the king of France.”

“No, no, I am not mistaken, for I know you well.”

“But, grandfather, is not that long beard very much in your way ?”

“It is, indeed, my child ; I have worn it for five hundred years, and it has been very much in my way, I assure you.”

“If you wish it, I will cut it off.”

“Oh, yes, do !”

She took her scissors out of her pocket and cut off the old man’s beard.

“My blessing on you, daughter of the king of France,” said he, “for you have delivered me ! A great many people have passed by here, during these five hundred years, and no one has had pity on me but you, and you shall never have reason to regret it. I know where you are going ; you are going to look for your two brothers. Listen to me well, and do exactly what I tell you. Sixty miles from here you will find an inn by the roadside. Alight there, eat, drink, and then leave your horse there and say you will pay when you return. Soon after you leave this house, you will come to a high mountain. You will have much difficulty in climbing this mountain, and it will even be necessary

sometimes to get down on your hands and feet. A tremendous wind will soon rise ; hail, snow, ice, and a bitter cold will assail you ; but take care and do not lose courage, and continue to climb up as before. On each side of the way you will see a great number of stone pillars. These are so many persons, who, like you, have attempted to climb this mountain, but have lost courage, and have been changed into pillars of stone. When you reach the top, you will see a plain with a turf dotted with flowers, as if in the month of May. Then you will see a golden seat under an apple-tree. Sit down on this seat and pretend to be asleep, and you will see a blackbird hop down the apple-tree from branch to branch, and go into a cage which is under the tree. Then shut the cage quickly, for it is the Bird of Truth. Then cut a branch of the apple-tree with an apple on it ; that will be the Singing Apple. And finally, draw a phial full of water from the fountain under the tree, for that is the fountain of the Dancing Water. Then you can come away. As you descend the mountain, drop a drop of water from your phial on each pillar of stone, and out of each pillar will rise a knight. Your two brothers will rise also, like the others."

The young girl thanked the little old man and continued her journey. She did just exactly

what she had been told. She ate and drank at the inn, left her horse there, and began to climb the mountain. But the cold became so intense that her limbs were almost frozen, and she came near stopping and being changed to stone like the others. However, at last she reached the top of the mountain. There the sky was clear, and the air mild, as in the middle of summer. She seated herself on the golden seat, under the apple-tree, and pretended to be asleep. The blackbird hopped down the tree, from branch to branch, and went into the cage. Then she got up at once and shut the cage; and the blackbird, seeing himself caught, said, —

“You have caught me, daughter of the king of France! Many others, before you, have tried to catch me, but none have succeeded. But you have been guided by some one.”

Then she cut a branch of the apple-tree with an apple on it, filled her phial with water from the fountain, and departed. As she went down the mountain, she dropped a drop of water on each pillar of stone, and out of them came princes, dukes, barons, and knights; her two brothers arose also, the last two; but they did not recognize their sister; and all crowded around her, some saying, “Give me the Dancing Water, young knight”; and others, — “Give

me the Singing Apple"; and others,—“Give me the Bird of Truth.”

But she went quickly away, taking with her the water, the apple, and the bird. As she passed the inn where she had left her horse, she paid her reckoning, then turned quickly homeward and arrived there a long time before her brothers. When the latter arrived, they embraced their sister.

“Ah! my poor brothers,” said she to them, “how anxious I have been about you. How long your journey has been! But God be praised, since I have you back again!”

“Alas! yes, my poor sister, we were gone a long time, and we have done no good by it; it is only by chance that we returned at all.”

“Why, have you not brought me the Dancing Water, the Singing Apple, and the Bird of Truth?”

“Alas! no, poor sister; a young knight whom we did not know took them away. Ah! what a handsome knight! We wish you could have seen him.”

The old king, who had no children (as he thought) loved his sister-in-law's children, and was glad to see them back again. He ordered a great feast, to which he invited many people, princes, dukes, marquises, barons, and generals. When the supper was nearly over the young

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girl placed on the table the Dancing Water, the Singing Apple, and the Bird of Truth, and told each of them to do his duty. And immediately the water began to dance, the apple to sing, and the bird to fly over the table. And all the people, in ecstasy, mouths and eyes open, looked and listened at these wonders. They had never seen nor heard anything like it.

“Whose are these wonderful things?” asked the king, when he could speak.

“Mine, sire,” said the young girl.

“And what are they?”

“The Dancing Water, the Singing Apple, and the Bird of Truth.”

“And from whom did you get them?”

“I went, myself, to seek for them.”

Then the two brothers knew that it was their sister who had delivered them. As for the king, he was almost beside himself with joy and admiration.

“My crown and my kingdom,” he said, “for your wonderful things; and you — you shall be queen.”

“Wait a moment, sire, till you have heard my bird speak; the Bird of Truth, for he has important matters to reveal to you. Now, my little bird, tell the truth.”

“I will indeed,” said the bird, “but let no one go out of the room.”

So they shut the doors. The wicked old nurse, and one of the king's sisters-in-law were there, and they were not at all comfortable when they heard these words.

"Come, my bird, tell the truth now." And this is what the bird said, —

"It is twenty years now, sire, since your wife was shut up in the tower, abandoned by every one, and you have long believed her to be dead. But she is not dead; no harm has happened to her, for she was unjustly accused and cast into a dreary prison."

Just here the nurse and the king's sisters-in-law said they felt sick and wanted to go out.

"No one shall go out yet," said the king; "go on telling the truth, little bird."

"You have had two sons and a daughter, sire," continued the bird, "all three children of your wife, and here they are! Take off their bandages, and you will see that each has a star in his forehead."

The bandages were taken off, and they saw that each of the two young men had a gold star on his forehead and the young girl had a silver star.

"The authors of all this wickedness," continued the bird, "are your two sisters-in-law and the nurse, that sorceress of the devil. They made you believe that your wife gave

birth to dogs, and your poor children were sent, as soon as they were born, to float on the waters of the Seine. When the nurse learned that the children had been saved, and were being brought up in your palace, she sought for other means of destroying them. She went into the palace, one day, disguised as a beggar, ready to die of cold and hunger, and inspired the princess with a desire to possess the Dancing Water, the Singing Apple, and the Bird of Truth. Her two brothers went, one after the other, to seek them for her, and the sorceress knew very well that they would never return. And they never would have returned, alas! if their sister had not succeeded, after much trouble, in delivering them, and bringing away the Dancing Water, the Singing Apple, and the Bird of Truth."

The king fainted on hearing all this. When he came to himself, he went himself to seek his queen in the tower, and returned to the festive hall, leading her by the hand. She had not changed at all; she was beautiful and gracious as ever. She ate and drank a little, then died suddenly in her chair. The king, wild with grief and anger, ordered that a furnace should be heated immediately and his sisters-in-law and the old nurse thrown into it. It was done.

I do not know anything more of the princess

and her two brothers. I think they were all happily married. And as for the bird, it is not told whether he continued always to tell the truth, but I presume that he did, as he was not a man.

Told by Barbe Tassel, written down and translated into French by F. M. Luzel. Plouaret, December, 1858.

YOU MUST NOT WORK ON SUNDAY.

A STORY OF THE DISTRICT OF AMIENS.



THERE was once upon a time a woodcutter and his wife who had an invalid daughter ; they had made all the pilgrimages in the neighborhood in vain, and had become entirely discouraged. But it happened one evening that Mathias (that was the woodcutter's name), being belated in the forest, came upon a noisy company of dwarfs, who insisted upon his dancing with them. The dwarfs were singing, —

“The day is for working,
The day is for working ;”

and they did not know how to sing anything else. Mathias said to them, — “Your song has but little variety ; it would be well to add something to it.” “Add! add!” cried the dwarfs. And when they began to sing again, —

“The day is for working,”

the woodcutter added, —

“And the night is for resting.”

Then there was a great commotion; a little old man, mounted on a colt, appeared in the midst of the assembly; when silence was re-established he addressed these words to the woodcutter, —

“You shall be rewarded for having added something to our song; I will give you the choice between riches for yourself, and beauty, with health, for your daughter.”

Mathias did not hesitate; he preferred the happiness of his child to riches; and when he returned to his house, he found that she was in good health and had become marvellously beautiful. This adventure caused much stir in the country, and the baker's wife, who had also an invalid daughter, after having heard from the woodcutter, in detail, all that had happened to him, resolved to go and find the dwarfs in the forest. The latter seized her quickly by the petticoats and dragged her round and round in their circle. After awhile, the dwarfs, seeing her out of breath, gave her a moment to recover.

“It is my opinion, my joyous companions,” said she to them, “that your song is too short.”

“Cheerly, woman, cheerly! Round we go!”

shouted the dwarfs as they again began their dance, singing, —

“The day is for working,
And the night is for resting.”

The baker’s wife added, —

“All the whole year long.”

She was going to go on, but moved her lips in vain ; she could not speak another word. At this moment, the ground opened, and out of the opening came a young girl mounted on a goat.

“Choose,” said she, “between riches for yourself, and beauty, with health, for your daughter.”

The baker’s wife was very avaricious ; she chose riches, and when she returned to her house she found her daughter dying. She became envious of the happiness of the woodcutter, and as he owed her some money, she threatened to sell his hut and all that he possessed.

In order to pay their debts, the woodcutter, his wife, and daughter, went to work earnestly together in the forest. While Mathias cut the wood, his wife and daughter made fagots of the twigs.

One Sunday our woodcutter left his wife and daughter at home and went to work in the wood ; but he was so overcome by fatigue that

he fell asleep ; when he awoke he found himself surrounded by the company of dwarfs who were singing, —

“ The day is for working,
And the night is for resting,
All the whole year long.”

Mathias, who had been forced against his will to join in the dance, cried out for spite, —

“ Save Sunday alone,
Which God kept for his own.”

At this moment the forest became illuminated ; the little old man on the colt appeared, followed by an immense crowd of dwarfs, and said to the woodcutter, “ By finishing our couplet you have broken the charm which forced us to impose such hard tests on mankind ; for your reward, we give you all our riches.” Each dwarf then came and placed a large sack at Mathias’ feet. He gathered up as many of them as he could and returned triumphantly to his house. But when he opened them he saw that they contained only dry leaves !

“ The dwarfs have mocked thee,” said his wife ;
“ I shall sprinkle the sacks with holy water, for one must purify what comes from the evil one.”

No sooner said than done ; but what was her

astonishment to see the dry leaves change into bright gold crowns!

The baker's wife was paid immediately; she died of vexation a few days after; the wood-cutter and his wife lived ever after rich and happy.

Told in the Picard dialect by Fernand Delaunoy, aged 51 years, at Warloy-Baillon (Somme).

HENRI CARNOY.

DESTINY.



THERE was once a very rich woman whose son was born when the moon was hung (suspended from a cloud by one horn). As the child grew, the mother, who knew he would be hung as soon as he was eighteen years old, became sadder day by day, and could not look at him without sighing and shedding tears. Seeing this, he wished to know the cause, and one day he asked her, —

“Why do you weep so much, mother?”

“Never mind, my child; do not trouble yourself about it.”

But he insisted so much, that at last his mother said to him, —

“Alas! my poor child, you were born under a very unfortunate star. A monk told me, the moment you came into the world, that you would be hung at the age of eighteen because the moon was hung at the same moment.”

“Pshaw! mother,” replied the child; “do not believe that; and,” he added, “I will leave the

country ; I will go far away, and if it is the will of God that what the monk told you should happen to me, at least you will not have to blush for me."

So he left his country and went far, far away. He came to a beautiful castle and asked if they needed a servant there. He was taken as assistant gardener. Day and night he prayed to God to avert his evil fate. As he was a handsome young fellow, the young lady of the castle, who saw him as she was walking in the garden, fell in love with him. She passed most of her time in the garden, watching him work and talking with him. At last she made known her feelings to him. "I do not deserve such honor, my lady," said the young man ; "and moreover, for another reason this cannot be. If you knew how sad my destiny is !"

Then he told the young lady the monk's prediction. But she only laughed at it. Her love increased every day. She decided at last to tell her father about it. The old lord got very angry. "What," said he, "do you wish to dishonor me? Marry a gardener, an adventurer? No one knows where he comes from, or who he is !"

But the young lady was so persistent, that the old lord, who had no child but her, and who could refuse her nothing, finally yielded, and

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there was a grand wedding, with holidays, plays, and rejoicings of every sort.

The first night after the wedding, the young husband went to sleep early. The new wife did not sleep at all. Towards midnight she was amazed to see her chamber suddenly illuminated. Then the window opened and she saw some men with horrible faces come in, who put up a gallows in the middle of the room. When their task was finished, they went straight to the bed and took the newly married man, — who was still asleep, — passed a rope around his neck, and fastened him to the gibbet. One of the executioners rested his feet on his shoulders ; — then, after a little while they unfastened him from the gallows, put him back in his bed, and then went away through the window.

The young woman saw all this, pale and horror-stricken, — she could neither move nor speak a single word. Her husband was lying by her side, motionless, cold as ice, and with the marks of the rope around his neck.

Suddenly he awoke with a start, and cried out, —

“Oh ! how my body is bruised ! and how sore my throat is !”

Then his wife threw her arms around him and covered him with kisses, exclaiming, —

“Oh ! thank heaven, you are not really dead !”

“No, indeed, I am not dead, but I am so tired!”

“I thought you were dead. They hung you there, right before my eyes, in the middle of the room!”

“Really? ah! God be praised! for my destiny is then accomplished and I am released from my terrible fate. A monk told my mother that I should be hung at the age of eighteen, — and I am eighteen years old this very night!”

They lived together a long time, happy and fearing God, and had many children.

Told by Marguerite Philippe, of Pluzunet (Côtes-du-Nord).

F. M. LUZEL.

THE LITTLE ANT THAT WAS GOING
TO JERUSALEM, AND THE SNOW.



THERE was once a little ant that was going to Jerusalem.

She met the snow, and the snow cracked the paw of the little ant that was going to Jerusalem.

“Oh! snow, how strong you are, to crack the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!”

And the snow replied, “The sun that melts me is a great deal stronger.”

“Oh! sun, how strong you are, to melt the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!”

And the sun replied, “The cloud that hides me is a great deal stronger.”

“Oh! cloud, how strong you are, to hide the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!”

And the cloud replied, “The wind that drives me away is a great deal stronger.”

“Oh! wind, how strong you are, to drive away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!”

And the wind replied, “The mountain that stops me is a great deal stronger.”

“Oh! mountain, how strong you are, to stop the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!”

And the mountain replied, “The mouse that bores through me is a great deal stronger.”

“Oh! mouse, how strong you are, to bore through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!”

And the mouse replied, “The cat that eats me is a great deal stronger.”

“Oh! cat, how strong you are, to eat the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!”

And the cat replied, “The dog that chases me is a great deal stronger.”

“Oh! dog, how strong you are, to chase the

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cat, that eats the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!"

And the dog replied, "The stick that beats me is a great deal stronger."

"Oh! stick, how strong you are, to beat the dog, that chases the cat, that eats the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!"

And the stick replied, "The fire that burns me is a great deal stronger."

"Oh! fire, how strong you are, to burn the stick, that beats the dog, that chases the cat, that eats the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!"

And the fire replied, "The water that puts me out is a great deal stronger."

"Oh! water, how strong are you, to put out the fire, that burns the stick, that beats the dog, that chases the cat, that eats the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the

sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!"

And the water replied, "The cow that drinks me is a great deal stronger."

"Oh! cow, how strong you are, to drink the water, that puts out the fire, that burns the stick, that beats the dog, that chases the cat, that eats the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!"

And the cow replied, "The man who kills me is a great deal stronger."

"Oh! man, how strong you are, to kill the cow, that drinks the water, that puts out the fire, that burns the stick, that beats the dog, that chases the cat, that eats the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant that is going to Jerusalem!"

And the man replied, "God is much stronger, who can kill the man, that killed the cow, that drinks the water, that puts out the fire, that burns the stick, that beats the dog, that chases the cat, that eats the mouse, that bores through the mountain, that stops the wind, that drives away the cloud, that hides the sun, that melts

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the snow, that cracks the paw of the little ant
that is going to Jerusalem!"

Told in 1876, by M. G. de la Landelle, the maritime
novelist, who had learned it in his childhood, at Mont-
pellier.

F. M. LUZEL.

THE MOST POWERFUL HUSBAND IN
THE WORLD.

AN ARABIAN STORY.



IT is said that a monk, whose prayers were always answered, was one day seated on the seashore, when he saw a kite fly holding in one of its claws a little mouse, which escaped and fell on the monk. Touched with compassion for the mouse, he took it, wrapped it up in a leaf, and carried it home with him.

Fearing that his people would not be very eager to care for it, he prayed his Lord to change into a young girl; and immediately it became a young girl gifted with great beauty. The monk led her to his wife, and said to the latter, —

“Here is a girl who belongs to me, and I desire that you shall treat her as my own child.”

When she had come to the age of womanhood, the monk said to her, —

“My dear daughter, you are quite grown up, and you absolutely must have a husband; choose

then, one to suit yourself, so that I may unite you to him."

"Since you leave me free to choose," she replied, "I wish for my husband, he who is the most powerful in the world."

"Perhaps you would like the sun?" said he; and he went to find the sun, and said to it, —

"O! thou who art so essentially great, I have a daughter who desires to have for a husband he who is the most powerful in the world; would you be willing to marry her?"

"I will show you some one who is more powerful than I," said the sun; "it is the cloud which obscures me, and makes my rays pale and tarnishes the splendor of my fires."

The monk went to the cloud and repeated to him the sun's words.

"And I," said the cloud, "I will show you some one more powerful than I; go find the wind which makes me come and go, which drives me from east to west."

The monk went to find the wind, and said to him the same things which he had said to the cloud; but the wind said to him also, —

"I will show you some one more powerful than I; it is the mountain that I cannot move."

Then the monk went to speak to the mountain, which made him this reply, —

"I will show you some one more powerful

than I; it is the rat, against which I cannot defend myself, when he bores into me and makes his home in me."

At last the monk went and said to the rat, —

"Do you wish to marry my young daughter?"

"And how could I do so?" cried the rat.

"My hole is narrow, and a rat only marries a mouse."

The monk then prayed his Lord to change the young girl into a mouse, as she was before, and this to the entire contentment of the young girl. Immediately she resumed her original shape, and she ran away with the rat.

THE NINE BROTHERS, WHO WERE
CHANGED TO SHEEP, AND
THEIR SISTER.

A BRETON STORY.

THERE were once nine brothers and their sister, who were left orphans. They were rich also, and lived in an old castle in the midst of a forest. The sister, whose name was Lévénéz, who was the oldest of the ten children, undertook the direction of the house, when the old lord died, and her brothers consulted and obeyed her in everything, as if she had been their mother. They often went hunting in the woods, which were full of all sorts of game. One day, following a roe, they came to a hut built of branches of trees, wattled together with clods of dirt. It was the first time they had seen it. Curious to know who could live in it, they entered under pretence of asking for some water to quench their thirst. They saw only an old woman with teeth as long as one's arm, and

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whose tongue went nine times around her body. Frightened at this sight, they were about to run away, when the old woman said to them, —

“What do you want, my children? Come in, and do not be so frightened; I love children very much, especially when they are good and gentle like you.”

“We should like a little water, if you please, grandmother,” said the oldest, whose name was Goulven.

“Certainly, my children; I will give you some fresh, clear water, which I drew this morning from my fountain. But come in, and do not be afraid, my poor dears.”

And the old woman gave them some water in a wooden porringer, and while they drank it, she caressed them, stroking the soft curls of their blond hair, and when they were ready to go, she said to them, “Now, my children, you must pay me for the little service I have rendered you.”

“We have no money with us, grandmother,” replied the children, “but we will ask our sister for some, and bring it to you to-morrow.”

“Oh! it is not money I want, my friends; but one of you, — the oldest, perhaps, for the others are still very young, — must take me for his wife.”

And turning to Goulven, —

“Will you, Goulven, take me for your wife?”

The poor boy could not reply at once, the request seemed so strange to him.

"Come, answer, will you have me for your little wife?" asked the horrible old woman again, embracing him.

"I do not know," said Goulven, confounded; "I will ask my sister."

"Very well; to-morrow morning I will come myself to the castle, for your answer."

The poor children returned to the house, sad and trembling, and hastened to tell their sister all that had happened.

"Shall I be obliged to marry that horrible old woman, sister?" asked Goulven, weeping.

"No, my brother, you shall not marry her," replied Lévénéz; "I know that we shall all have to suffer for it, but we will endure whatever comes to us, and we will never abandon you."

The next day, the sorceress came to the castle as she had promised. She found Lévénéz and her brothers in the garden.

"You know, doubtless, why I have come," said she to Lévénéz.

"Yes; my brother has told me everything," said the young girl.

"And you are very willing that I should become your sister-in-law?"

"No; that cannot be."

“Why not? Perhaps you do not know who I am, and what I can do.”

“I know that you can do a great deal of harm to my brothers and me; but you cannot force me to consent to what you ask.”

“Think well of it, and repent quickly of this foolish resolution, while there is yet time, or misery to you!” cried the sorceress, furious, and her eyes shone like two burning coals.

Lévénéz’s nine brothers trembled all over; but she, calm and resolute, replied to these threats, —

“I have thought of it all, and I shall change nothing of all I have said.”

Then the horrible old woman turned a wand, which she carried in her hand, towards the castle, pronounced a magic sentence, and immediately the castle fell to the ground with a great noise. Not one stone was left upon another. Then turning the wand towards the nine brothers, who were hiding behind their sister in great terror, she pronounced another magic sentence and the nine brothers were immediately changed into nine white sheep. Then she said to Lévénéz, who still retained her natural form, —

“Now you can go and keep your sheep in this plain. And take care never to tell any one that they are your brothers, or the same thing

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will happen to you." Then she went away, sneering.

The beautiful gardens of the castle, and the grand wood which surrounded it, had been changed also instantly, into a great arid and desolate plain.

Poor Lévénéz, left alone with her nine white sheep, pastured them on the open plain, and never lost them from her sight a moment. She sought for tufts of fresh grass, which they ate from her hand, and she played with them, caressed them, embraced them, and talked to them as if they understood her. And indeed they appeared to understand her. One of them was larger than the others; it was Goulven, the oldest of the brothers. Lévénéz had built a shelter, a sort of hut, with stones, clods of earth, moss and dry grasses, and at night, or when it rained, she took refuge there with her sheep. But when the weather was fine, she ran and played about in the sun with them, or sang songs or recited her prayers, to which they listened attentively, all ranged in a circle around her. She had a very beautiful voice, clear and correct.

One day a young lord who was hunting in those parts, was astonished to hear such a beautiful voice in a place so deserted. He stopped to listen; then going in the direction from

which it came, he soon found himself in the presence of a lovely young girl, surrounded by nine white sheep, who appeared to love her very much. He spoke to her and was so struck with her sweetness, her wit, and her beauty, that he wished to take her and her sheep away with him to his castle. She refused to go. But the young lord could think of nothing but the pretty shepherdess, and every day, under pretence of hunting, he went to see her and talk with her in the great plain. At last he carried her away with him to his castle, and they were married, and there were long holidays and great feasting.

The nine sheep had been installed in the garden of the castle, and Lévénéz passed almost all her days there, playing with them, caressing them, and talking to them as if they understood her; and they did indeed seem to understand all that she said to them. Her husband was astonished to see them so intelligent, and he asked himself if it were possible that they could be real sheep.

Lévénéz had an attendant who was the wife of the castle gardener, and who was also the daughter of the old woman who had changed her brothers into sheep; but of this she knew nothing. One day, when Lévénéz was leaning over the edge of a well which was in the garden, to see how deep it was, her attendant took her

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by the feet and threw her down the well. Then she ran to her mistress' chamber, got into her bed, and drew the curtains close around the bed and at the windows, and pretended to be sick. The lord was absent at the moment. But on his return, not finding his wife in the garden among her sheep as usual, he went to her chamber.

"What is the matter, my sweetheart?" said he.

"I am very sick," replied the traitress; and when he was about to open the curtains, "Don't open the curtains, I beg you; I cannot stand the light."

"Why are you alone? Where is your attendant?"

"I do not know; I have not seen her the whole day long."

The lord looked for her in the castle, and then in the garden, and not finding her, he returned to his wife and said to her, —

"I do not know what has become of your attendant. I cannot find her anywhere. Do you want anything? Perhaps you are hungry?"

"Oh, yes! I am very hungry."

"What would you like to eat?"

"I must have a bit of that big white sheep in the garden."

"What a strange notion! You who love your sheep so much, and this one most of all!"

“That is the only thing that will soothe the frightful pain I suffer. But do not make any mistake ; I want a piece of the big white sheep, and not of any other.”

The husband went to the garden and ordered the gardener to take the big white sheep and kill it at once and put it on the kitchen spit.

So the gardener, who was conniving with the attendant, ran after the white sheep. But it ran so fast round and round the well, bleating so pitifully all the time, that he could not catch it. The lord, seeing this, wanted to help him, and went up to the well. He was astonished to hear moans and groans which seemed to come up from it. He leaned over the opening and called out, —

“Who is there? is there any one down the well?”

And a gentle voice that he knew so well, answered him, —

“Yes, it is I, your wife Lévénéz.”

The lord, without waiting to hear more, quickly lowered the bucket into the well and drew up his wife. She was all trembling and terrified.

Soon after this occurrence a child was born to them, a son, as beautiful as the day.

Lévénéz said it must be baptized at once.

“You may choose the godmother, if you wish,

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but I want my big white sheep for the godfather," said she to her husband.

"What! have a sheep for your son's godfather?"

"I wish it, I tell you; do as I say and do not be uneasy about it."

Not wishing to cross his young wife, and fearing lest he should make her sick, the father consented, though grieved at his heart, that the big white sheep should be his son's godfather.

They went to church. The big white sheep, very happy, walked in front with the father and the godmother, a young and beautiful princess. The other eight sheep, his brothers, followed him. The whole procession entered the church, to the great astonishment of the village people. The father presented the child to the priest. The latter looked at the godmother, but seeing no godfather, he asked,—

"Where is the godfather?"

"Here he is," replied the father, pointing to the big white sheep.

"What! a sheep?"

"Yes, it seems so; but do not stop for a matter of form, but go on without fear with the service."

The priest made no more objections, such transformations being, doubtless, common in his day, and proceeded to baptize the child.

The sheep then raised himself on his two hind legs, took his godson in his two forelegs, with the assistance of the godmother, and all passed off very well.

But as soon as the ceremony was over, the sheep godfather became a handsome young man. He was Goulven, Lévénez's oldest brother.

He told how he and his brothers had been changed into sheep by an old sorceress because he had refused to marry her. His sister, the child's mother, could not tell of it lest the same fate should befall her; but now the charm was broken, and the sorceress had no longer any power over them.

"Are the sheep really your brothers?" asked the priest.

"Yes, they are my brothers, and the time has come for them also to escape from the power of the sorceress, and return to their human form. Lay your stole over them, say a prayer, and you will see them become men again, as I have done."

The priest followed his advice: he laid his stole on each of the sheep successively, recited a prayer each time, and immediately they resumed their original form.

Goulven then told of the terrible deed which had been done to his sister by her attendant, the daughter of the sorceress.

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So they returned to the castle determined to treat each one as she had deserved.

They sent men to seek for the old sorceress in the wood where she dwelt, and when they brought her, she and her daughter and the gardener were torn to pieces by four horses and then thrown into a great fire and burned to ashes.

Goulven and Lévénez lived after that peacefully and happily, and were blessed, they say, with many children.

Told by Le Noac'h, of Gourin, at Merville, near Lorient, March 10, 1874.

F. M. LUZEL.

THE KING AND HIS THREE SONS.



ONCE there was a king who had three sons. He wanted to lay aside his crown. In his kingdom it was the custom to give it to the oldest; but as this king loved his three children equally, he could not resolve to obey this custom and exclude the youngest in advance. He wished that each of his children should have equal chance to succeed him. He decided that the crown should belong to whoever of his sons should bring him the most beautiful flower. He called them together and said to them, —

“The crown shall belong to the one who shall bring me the most beautiful flower; go and search.”

The three sons started out, each his own way, after having agreed to meet in a field well known to them. The first who reached the field was the oldest. He brought a beautiful flower. The second arrived next, with a flower still more beautiful. The oldest, seeing it, said bitterly, —

“I shall not have the crown!”

The youngest came last. His flower was so beautiful that it eclipsed those of his brothers.

“I shall not have the crown,” said the oldest to himself, angrily; and seizing the knife which hung from his girdle, he struck his youngest brother and killed him.

The father, grieved at not seeing his youngest child return, continued to wait for him before resigning his crown. The younger was so much afraid of the oldest that he dared not speak.

Several years had passed after the murder, when a shepherdess who was keeping her sheep in the field where the three brothers had had their meeting, found a bone made like a flute.

She put it to her lips and blew. A voice came out of it which sang, —

“Blow softly, shepherdess,
Blow, blow softly;
The knife from the girdle
Cruelly killed me.”

The king heard that the shepherdess had found a bone like a flute which made harmonious sounds. He had it brought to him, put it to his mouth and blew. The bone sang, —

“Blow softly, my father,
Blow, blow softly;
The knife from the girdle
Cruelly killed me.”

The king called his younger son, handed him the bone and told him to blow in it. The son blew; the bone sang, —

“Blow softly, my brother,
Blow, blow softly;
The knife from the girdle
Cruelly killed me.”

The king called his oldest son, handed him the bone and told him to blow in it. The son blew; the bone sang, —

“Blow softly, my brother,
Blow, blow softly;
The knife from thy girdle
Cruelly killed me”

At these words, “The knife from thy girdle,” the father understood it all. He had his oldest son quartered at once.

Told at Fraisses (Loire) by Jacques Bayon, Aug. 19, 1877.

V. S.

FANCH SCOUARNEC.

A BRETON STORY.



A RICH lord was returning, alone, on horseback, from Brest to Rennes. At Brest, his footman had left him and sailed. He wished to get another in his place, and as he went along he had already proposed to more than one ; but all had refused ; his terms did not suit them. Between Plounevez-Moëdec and Belle-Isle-en-Terre (doubtless on the bridge of Saint-Elo) he saw by the roadside a little hut, the one door and window of which stood open. He got down from his horse so as to walk up to it. He went to the hut to ask for a fire to light his pipe. Holding his horse by the bridle, he put his head in at the door, standing with one foot inside and one out. His horse also put his head in through the window, which, as I have said, was open. A boy of twelve or thirteen years was alone in the hut, seated by the hearth-stone.

“Are you alone, my boy?” asked the traveller.

“No,” replied Fanch. (His name was Fanch Scouarnec.)

“But I see no one beside you.”

“It is nevertheless true, that there are in this house at this moment, a man and a half and the head of a horse.”

“You love to joke I see, but give me a little fire to light my pipe. Where is your father?”

“My father has gone hunting, and he will leave what he catches, and bring back to the house what he does not catch.”

“That seems difficult; and where is your mother?”

“My mother has gone to the oven to bake some bread that has been eaten?”

“Good, good, you are a real joker; and your sister?”

“My sister is crying for the joy of last year.”

“I do not understand any of it; but you, what are you doing there?”

“I,—I am watching some leap over others and catching a few.”

“Surely, I have never seen any one so full of joke as you; but will you not explain it all to me?”

“There is nothing easier,” said Fanch, “and although you are a lord, you are not of the sharpest, it seems to me. My father is like me; he never goes out alone; he is always accompanied

by a crowd of little animals who love him so that they would like to eat him up. Once upon a time, when there were too many of them, he seated himself down there in the sun, and went hunting among the little beasts that I spoke of. He left on the spot those he caught and brought to the house those he did not catch. Do you understand me now ? ”

“Perfectly.”

“My mother borrowed some bread last month and she has gone to the oven to bake some bread to return what she borrowed, so therefore you see she has gone to bake some bread already eaten. My sister had a lover, and her greatest happiness was to go walking with him at the hour for the angelus, and dance with him on the new threshing-floors ; but after promising to marry her, he left her, and went away to France, and that is the reason she is crying for the joy she had last year. And as for me, I am busy cooking some peas in a pot, and when the pot boils the peas leap over each other, and with my spoon I catch some of them and eat them. Now, my lord, is it not all just as I said ? ”

“Yes, upon my word ! But you have not explained your first answer.”

“You asked me if I was alone in the house ; and I told you that I was not alone, but that there were here a man and a half and the head

of a horse. Now, you see, you have your head, one foot, and half your body inside the house, and I am entirely inside, and that makes a man and a half; and the horse's head is the head of your horse which was in at the window."

"I see that there are bigger fools than you in the country; but tell me now where this road goes."

"That road, my lord, does not go anywhere; I have always seen it there."

"I want to know to what place it leads; do you hear me?"

"Ah! that is different; it leads to Belle-Isle, to Louargat, to Bré, to Guingamp, and even to Paris, they say."

"Very well! Would you like to come with me and be my footman?"

"Perhaps, yes, when you have told me your terms."

"I will give you a hundred crowns, and a bag full of farthings, when you shall have served me for a year and a day; but on condition that you do everything I command you, and that you shall never get angry, no matter what is said to you, or what you are ordered to do; if you get angry, you shall have a strip of skin taken off from your neck to your heels, and be sent away without a penny."

"The sum is tempting, a hundred crowns!

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but the conditions are hard. The strip of skin makes me shiver. But now about your part, my lord? Are you never to get angry either?"

"That is the bargain."

"If you do, your skin shall be stripped off too?"

"Just so; it shall be done to the first one who gets angry."

"Very well, it is a bargain; I will go with you, and I will go with you now while my father and mother are away."

So they both started off on horseback, for the lord was leading the horse of the footman who had left him at Brest.

After travelling several days they came to the lord's castle. At first Fanch was set to take care of two children, four or five years old, with the order never to contradict them and to do everything they asked, if possible.

"Very well!" said Fanch; "that is not hard work to begin with."

That evening when they were at the table (for Fanch ate with the master and mistress of the house, so as to be always with the children), the two little brats cried out, —

"I want to get down, I want to get down!"

"Come, Fanch, do you not hear?" said the lady.

"Yes, yes," answered Fanch; and he took

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them away. He had only eaten his soup, and when he came back into the room with the children, the table was cleared away, there was nothing left on it.

“How is it there is nothing on the table?” asked he, after waiting a while.

“There is a rule in my house,” replied the lord, “that whoever comes after the table has been cleared away shall have nothing.”

“A bad rule!” he muttered.

“Are you not satisfied with it?”

“Oh! yes! I will not die for the loss of one poor meal; I was used to that at my father’s house.”

“If you are not pleased, you can have your skin taken off.”

“I am pleased, I tell you.”

The next day at supper, Fanch had hardly begun to eat his soup, when the little brats began to cry out, —

“I want to go.”

“Come, Fanch, do you not hear?”

And Fanch went to please the children.

“Come, children, make haste and go back!” said he to them.

But when he returned, there was nothing on the table.

“How is this,” said he; “must I go without supper two days together?”

“Are you dissatisfied, Fanch?”

“I did not say that; but the children could just as well stay and let me eat in peace.”

“You promised to do everything the children asked, and if you are displeased, you know —”

“Yes, yes, I am entirely satisfied.”

And Fanch went to bed again without eating anything.

“Ah!” said he, “this thing cannot go on; I must eat sometime; we will see how it will be to-morrow.”

The next day the children began their song again.

“Ah!” cried Fanch, “this is no way to live; I must put an end to it. You want to go, my little scamps? Very well, go to the devil! I want some supper to-night, I do!” and he threw the two children out of the window.

“Stop!” cried the master and mistress, rising, “this is too much! To throw our children out of the window! Ah! you shall pay for it!”

“So then you are angry, master?” said Fanch quickly.

“I am not angry,” he replied, growing a little calmer, “but that is no way to do; it is a mercy if my poor children are not crippled!”

“If you are angry, master, you know our conditions, and I will strip off —”

"I tell you I am not angry, but I shall not trust my children with you again."

"Just as you like; I would rather do anything than mind children like a nurse."

That evening Fanch could eat comfortably. The next day the lord said, —

"Go to the blacksmith's and have the horses' feet shod."

"Very well," said Fanch; "I like that better than minding children."

Then he went to the stable, cut off the horses' feet with a hatchet, put them in a wagon, and took them to the blacksmith. That evening when he returned, the lord was in the court-yard of the castle.

"Here are your horses' feet," said Fanch; "see if they are well shod."

"What have you done, you miserable creature?"

"Did you not tell me to have the horses' feet shod?"

"You have ruined me, you wretch!"

"Why, master, you are angry, it seems to me!"

"Ah! it is enough to make me, — but you know very well that I do not get angry very easily."

"If you are angry, you know — I shall strip off your skin —"

“Go to your supper at once, and say nothing of this to your mistress; to-morrow I will see how I can employ you.”

The next day Fanch was sent to watch a great herd of beeves, in a pasture which was by the side of the high road. A butcher passed along the road. He went into the pasture and began to examine and feel the beeves. “Fine beeves,” said he to himself. “They are fat as moles. I have to furnish the meat at the castle, for the wedding of the young lady, which will take place the coming week, and if I can get three or four of these beeves, that will suit me exactly. Eh! boy!” cried he to Fanch, who was lying under a beech-tree singing.

“What do you want?” he asked, without moving.

“Come here, so that I can speak to you.”

“Come yourself, if you want me.”

Then the butcher went to him, saying to himself, —

“He does not look like the sharpest kind of a fellow.”

“Will you sell me three or four of your beeves?”

“All, if you wish.”

“How much do you ask for them?”

“Five hundred crowns, and the tail of one of them!”

“Why, for goodness’ sake?”

“Do not bother about that; that is my business.”

“Very well, agreed! The bargain is made!”

And they shook hands with each other.

“And the money at once,” added Fanch.

The butcher, pleased with his bargain, counted the five hundred crowns to him, and was about to go off with the beeves, when Fanch called out, —

“But the tail? I must have the tail.”

“You insist upon that, do you?”

“Why, certainly, and nothing is concluded without it.”

Then the butcher cut off the tail of one of the beeves and gave it to him.

When the butcher was gone with all the beeves, Fanch climbed up into an oak-tree, with the tail, and began crying out with all his might, “Help! help! help at once!”

They heard his cry at the castle, and sent a footman to see what was the matter. Fanch, seeing the footman coming, called to him, —

“Run to the castle and tell the lord to come here as quickly as possible, or all of his beeves will be lost.”

So the footman ran to the castle and said to the lord, —

“Come as fast as you can to the field, master, or all your beeves will be lost.”

The lord ran to the field, and saw Fanch up

in a tree, and apparently holding on with all his might to the tail of a beef.

“What are you doing there, Fanch, and where are the beeves?”

“Come up here quickly, my poor master, come up quickly, or you will lose them all! A terrible whirlwind came suddenly and carried them up to the sky, each holding on to the other by the tail! I seized the tail of the last one, and have been lifted up here. I am still holding on, but for goodness' sake make haste and come to my assistance, or I shall have to let go; I cannot hold on any longer.”

So the lord went up and took hold of the tail also. But as soon as he did so, Fanch let go, and his master fell to the ground, taking the tail along.

“Alas! my poor master,” said he then, “we held on so long that the tail is all that is left; the beeves have gone to heaven.”

The poor lord, all mangled and bleeding, swore and stormed.

“Miserable wretch, accursed rascal! you have almost killed me!”

“Why, master, are you angry?” asked Fanch quietly; he was still in the tree.

“And who would not be angry?”

“Well, you know your conditions, and I shall strip off your skin.”

“But I did not say that I was angry, though indeed I think I had good right to be. You will ruin me! I shall be thankful if you do not kill me.”

Then the lord returned to his house, rubbing his back and trying to think how he could get rid of such a rascal.

The next day he sent Fanch to take care of his hogs. A hog merchant passed by on his way to the fair at Lannion.

“Will you sell me your hogs, my boy?” said he to Fanch.

“I should like nothing better,” he replied.

“How much will you take?”

“Two hundred crowns and the tail of one of them.”

“Agreed! It is a bargain!”

“And the money on the spot?”

“Yes, yes, on the spot.”

Then the merchant paid two hundred crowns and went away, taking the hogs along.

There was a pond near by, part of which was all marshy and filled up with grass and branches of trees. Fanch waded in up to his stomach, and began to call out as loud as he could. He had stuck the large end of the hog's tail which he had, down in the mud, and was pretending to pull it up with all his might, crying, “Help! help! help, quickly!” The lord was walking in

the wood, not far from the pond, and ran to his assistance on hearing his cries.

“What is the matter now?” asked he, seeing Fanch in the mud up to his stomach.

“Come quickly and help me, my poor master, or we shall lose all of them. An animal unlike any I ever saw before,—a frightful creature, a real demon, I believe,—came up out of the pond, when I was not dreaming of such a thing, and then went back again dragging my hogs after him, all holding on to each other by the tail. I caught the tail of the last one, you see! Come help me to pull it up, for if we can pull this one up, all the others will come after it. Come quickly, for I am ready to let go.”

Then the lord went into the pond without hesitation, and began to pull on the tail with Fanch. But the latter, letting go suddenly, he fell, and sinking into the mud, was almost stifled.

“Alas! they are all lost! They are gone below!” cried Fanch.

The other, after getting out with great difficulty, swore and threatened.

“Why, master, are you angry?” said Fanch to him, jeeringly.

“Leave me in peace, you villain! I wish you were in purgatory!”

“If you are angry, you have only to give me my hundred crowns, with the bag of farthings,

according to our agreement, and I will go whenever you wish ; but before I go, you know, I will strip off your skin from your neck — ”

“ Who said I was angry ? Though indeed I had great reason, I think ; you will ruin me utterly ! ”

“ What could I do ? I could not prevent the demon’s taking off your hogs.”

“ To-morrow I will give you another occupation, and as soon as the year is ended you shall go, for you are good for nothing.”

“ As you like ; but when will my year be ended ? ”

“ When the cuckoo sings.”

The next day the lord said to Fanch, —

“ Take this gun and come with me to the woods ; the poachers are destroying all my game, and the poor people of the whole country provide themselves with wood at my expense ; I want to see after these matters.”

“ Very well,” said Fanch, “ that suits me.”

And he put his gun on his shoulder, and followed his master to the woods. At the edge of it they saw an old woman who had a great load on her back.

“ Fire at her ! ” said the lord to Fanch.

“ Must I do it ? ”

“ Yes, yes.”

“ And if I kill her ? ”

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“So much the worse for her! That will teach her to steal my wood.”

So Fanch fired, bang! and the old woman rolled over on the ground with her load. They went to her.

“She is dead!” said the lord.

“Quite,” said Fanch, “unfortunately for you, for I should not like to be in your place. This old woman has two sons,—two jolly fellows, upon my word, and when they know that you have killed their mother—”

“But it was you who killed her.”

“Yes, but by your order; I am your servant, and I must obey you, but you will have to pay for it.”

“You frighten me; go quickly to the castle and bring me two shovels, so we can bury her in the earth and no one will know anything about it. You will find them in the passage near the chamber of my wife and daughter. Put them in a bag, so that no one can see, and return quickly.”

Fanch went to the castle and found the door of the lady’s room open, where she was sitting with her daughter. He entered and said,—

“My master has ordered me to put both of you in a bag.”

“What is it you say, idiot? You must have lost your senses!”

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“You shall hear him say it himself.”

And going to the window, he called out to the lord, who was waiting for him below, —

“Both of them in a bag, shall I not, my lord?”

“Yes, both, and make haste.” (He meant the two shovels.)

“Do you hear? I must obey my master.”

And he seized upon the mother and daughter, and succeeded, not without difficulty, — for they resisted as well as they could, — in shutting them up in a bag. The lord, hearing the noise, and their screams, ran up to see what was going on.

“What trick have you played on me now, miserable wretch, demon incarnate?” cried he, seeing the bag rolling on the floor, and hearing the screams that came out of it.

“Well, I put them in the bag; did you not tell me to bring you two women in a bag?”

“Two women, idiot!”

“Bless me! I thought you said two women.”

“I have a good mind to run my sword through your body.”

“You are angry it seems to me, my master.”

“Angry, angry, — and who would not be in my place?”

“Oh! then I am going to strip off your skin.”

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“But I am not angry at all. I said nothing of the sort; you know very well that I have a good temper, and that I never get angry. But go, run quickly to the woods, take two shovels in a bag, — you understand now, two *shovels*, — and do what I told you.”

The lord then pulled his wife and daughter out of the bag, and consulted with them upon some means of getting rid of Fanch as soon as possible.

“It was agreed,” said the lady, “that his year should end when the cuckoo began to sing.”

“Yes, but it is not yet time for the cuckoo to sing.”

“Pshaw! that boy is such a fool, he would never know what time of the year the cuckoo ought to sing; to-morrow I will make the cuckoo sing myself.”

The next day, just as Fanch was going to the wood with his gun on his shoulder, he heard, “Cuckoo! cuckoo!” from a large oak-tree which was near the gate of the court-yard.

“What is this?” said he; “does the cuckoo sing in the month of February in this country? I will teach you in a moment, how to wait till the right time comes to sing, vile bird!”

And he fired, bang! and the lady fell dead at his feet.

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“Why, what a singular cuckoo!” said he.

“Ah! you demon!” cried the lord, “you have killed my wife! I will kill you, too, as I would a dog.”

“Oh! this time you are angry, my master, you are very angry, and I shall strip off your skin.”

“No, I am not angry, because I never get angry, myself. But from this moment, you shall never have anything to do at the castle but eat, drink, and go walking; for you would bring me to beggary!”

“Oh! delightful! that is just what I had wished for.”

One day the cuckoo sang at last in the month of May. They gave Fanch his hundred crowns and his bag of farthings, and bade him farewell. And he returned to his country, without having had his skin stripped off; more fortunate than many others who had been before him at this castle; for there was a room there where you could see a great number of skins hung up against the wall.

With the five hundred crowns that he got for the beeves, the two hundred crowns for the hogs, and the hundred crowns and the bag of farthings for his wages, he found himself quite rich. Moreover, he married one of the richest heiresses in his neighborhood, and for three

whole days there were holidays and feasts, to which all the people in the neighborhood were invited, the poor as well as the rich.

Told in Breton by Barbe Tassel, Plouaret, December, 1868.

F. M. LUZEL.

THE ROEBUCK HUNT.

AN IROQUOIS STORY.



AN old man lived in a cabin with his grandson, who was twenty years old. They were the last survivors of a nation exterminated by the sorceresses.

The young man was a good hunter, but he had one great trouble: his grandfather forbade his hunting the roebuck, without giving him any reason for this interdiction. One day, returning from the hunt sooner than usual, the young man surprised his grandfather making soup of some bones. Being questioned very narrowly on the subject, the old man told the following story:—

“These bones that you have seen are the bones of a roebuck. When you were born, our nation was numerous and powerful. But unfortunately there were some young people who would not obey their chiefs. These young people became more and more insolent, and were imitated by

others. The Lord of life became angry and sent the sorceresses to destroy the cabins : you see that ours is the only one now remaining. Our warriors were all killed or made prisoners. You were very small then ; I carried you away with me, far away, to a nation allied to ours—a fortunate journey which saved our lives, or at least spared us from slavery. But what do I say? Are we free? Alas! no, for the sorceresses allowed us to live only on condition that we should never hunt the roebuck, and never eat his flesh. The wolves have devoured a roebuck, I gathered up the remains, these few naked bones ; I could not resist the desire to taste some soup made of the bones and to eat the marrow of them.”

Hearing this story, the young man became very angry with the sorceresses, and resolved to find them and punish them. His grandfather then said to him, —

“Since you are determined to go, listen to me. You will be obliged to go through a forest at the end of which there is a place where there are a great many wolves ; throw to them the game you kill by the way, and you will then be able to catch them. Soon after, you will come to the country of the sorceresses ; then, especially, you must be very cautious. Take care not to touch a single ear when you come to their field

of Indian corn; or else immediately they will surprise you, and you will be lost."

The young man took leave of the old man, promising to follow his instructions. All went well till just when he went to the sorceresses' cornfield. The ripe ears made him covetous, and he had just put out his hand when suddenly he heard some one whisper in his ear to go along quietly and not touch a single ear. He had only gone a few steps when he saw a skeleton leaning against the enclosure of the field, as if put there to scare away the birds. It was one of the victims of the sorceresses and the young warrior's paternal uncle. He recognized his nephew and called him by his name.

The latter coming up to him, his skeleton uncle told him everything that he would have to do when he went into the presence of the sorceresses. Furnished with these instructions, he arrived at the dwelling of the sorceresses. He was well received, and they contended as to who should bring him his pottage. The skeleton had told him this beforehand; "Each sorceress," he told him, "will bring you a plate of corn boiled with meat; do not accept it, for if you do you make a fatal engagement with them. Only one, the youngest of them, will not invite you to eat out of her plate, and hers is really

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the corn and meat of which you must partake : you must put the spoon in boldly ; she will give you a sweet smile, and by this you will be married. Meanwhile the other sorceresses will wish to kill you, but your young wife will know very well how to take care of you : you have only to follow our counsels."

Everything happened as he said.

When evening came, the young sorceress said to her husband, —

"The great old woman will come to-night to kill you ; but do not be afraid, I will waken you in time."

Sure enough, about midnight the great old woman came suddenly to the bedside of the newly married pair, but, surprised at finding them awake, she went away without having been able to execute her design. At dawn of day the husband and wife arose, and the wife said to her husband, —

"Go find your uncle ; he has something to tell you," and he went to him immediately.

"My nephew," said the skeleton to him, "what you must do now is to seize upon the bag which is in the chamber of the great old woman."

It was an enchanted bag which had shut up in it all the secrets of sorcery, and he would have been entirely unable to take it away without the aid of his wife, who showed him how to do it, and

procured him the assistance of a rat that helped him by cutting the string of the bag with its teeth. As soon as this was done, the sorceresses uttered cries of rage and despair. What did they see? Roebucks running here and there in their cornfield; and ducks, each wearing a heart around his neck. It was all over with the sorceresses; the newly married husband, instructed by his wife, took the hearts, one after the other, and broke them. They were the hearts of the sorceresses. The vengeance was complete; but there was one more thing still to be done, — they must free the prisoners. These numerous herds of roebucks wandering about the country are a sign of good fortune.

“Do you see that tree near the lake?” said the wife to her husband; “you must cut it down so that it will fall across the lake and serve as a bridge.”

No sooner said than done; thousands of warriors rose up at once and thanked their deliverer. Then began a triumphal march to their own country; the emblem of the nation was erected, the recaptured roebuck should be the family token of the children that should be born to the young couple.

Ten days had scarcely passed since the grandfather and his grandson had parted. Five days, thanks to the skill of the young sorceress, was

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enough for the journey home. The joy of the old man on seeing his grandson again and hearing the story of his adventures can scarcely be imagined. And the nation arose from its ruins and became more powerful than before.

J. A. Cuoq.

PIERRE AND HÉLÈNE.

A STORY OF LOWER BRITANNY.



ONCE there were two orphans who lived in a village, a brother and a sister; the brother's name was Pierre, and the sister's Hélène. Pierre was married. The woman he married was wicked and jealous, and from the moment she entered Pierre's house she hated her sister-in-law; Hélène was good.

A year passed, and Pierre became the father of a little girl.

"Hélène shall be her godmother!" said he.

"As you like," said his wife, casting an angry glance upon the poor girl.

Little Hélène grew; and when she began to say a few words she was always lisping that of her good godmother. Pierre's wicked wife was very indignant at it.

"Hypocrite!" cried she in a rage, "is she going to deprive me of my child's affection as she has of my husband's love? I will find some

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sure means of driving this perfidious creature out of the house."

One day she went to her husband. "See here," said she, "it is I who do all the work; your sister takes her pleasure when your wife is worn out with fatigue; she folds her arms from morning to night while I do her work and mine. Send her away, then, and you will see that everything will go better in our household."

Pierre was very sad at these words, for he loved Héléne tenderly.

"My sister," said he to her the next day, "it is not right that you should eat the bread that others have earned, and be idle yourself."

"I milk, I bake the bread, I make the butter," said Héléne; "what more do you wish me to do?"

But the wicked woman could not restrain her hatred, and a few days after this she said,—

"I cannot stand it any longer; she must go!"

And she ran to the stable and killed an ox.

"Pierre, Pierre!" cried she to her husband, "see what your sister Héléne has done; she has killed one of your oxen."

"My sister, why did you do this?" said Pierre to her, greatly mortified.

"I did not do it, brother," answered Héléne sweetly.

The next day the second ox died.

“Pierre, Pierre!” cried the wicked woman, “see; your other ox is dead, and it is H el ene who killed this one also.”

“I shall be ruined if I have no beasts to take into the fields,” said Pierre to his sister, “and this is the second one of my oxen that you have killed.”

“I did not do it, brother,” answered H el ene quietly.

The next day the horse was found dead in the stable.

“Pierre, Pierre! see what your sister has done. Next thing she will set the house on fire.”

“Sister,” said Pierre, “how could you kill my horse? Do you wish me to be obliged to beg my bread?”

“I did not do it, brother,” H el ene answered sadly.

“Pierre, Pierre!” cried the wicked woman, the day after, “come see what your demon of a sister has done. Look at our child; I found her smothered in her bed.”

Pierre tore out his hair in despair, and sent for H el ene, who had gone out to her work early in the morning.

“Sister,” said he angrily, “you killed my oxen and my horse, and I pardoned you; but now you have killed my child: you must leave

this house, and receive the punishment for your crimes !”

Then Pierre cut off Héléne’s two arms ; and they prepared to go away.

“Where are you going to take me ?” said Héléne.

“You will see,” replied Pierre.

“Give me my mass-book, brother, and let my little dog go with me.”

Pierre took Héléne a long distance, and they came at last to a great forest ; the wind blew through the trees and made the leaves shake. Suddenly a large oak-tree fell. Pierre took his sister in his arms and placed her up among the branches ; he opened the mass-book and laid it on her lap, and the little dog played nimbly by his mistress’ side.

“Farewell, my sister !” said Pierre, turning away to wipe his tears.

“Farewell !” answered Héléne.

At that moment she saw that Pierre had hurt himself, and that there was a thorn in his foot.

“Go on, brother,” said she to him ; “some day I will come and take it out.”

Pierre went on his way, and when he returned to his dwelling, he sat down beside his hearthstone ; and suddenly the thorn grew immensely, and a great tree sprang up from his foot and went up the chimney. He was thus

condemned to remain where he was seated and to wait till his sister should come to set him free as she had promised him.

Hélène continued in the forest, seated in the top of the great tree, and the wind turned the leaves of the mass-book she had on her knees. Hélène prayed.

At the hour for meals, twice a day, the oak-tree bent down as if blown down by the wind, and the little dog jumped to the ground and went to look for his mistress' breakfast.

There was in the neighborhood a castle where a young lord and his mother lived.

Every day, for some time, the lady of the castle had remarked, on sitting down to her table, that several of her dishes had been partly consumed.

"See here!" said she to her astonished servants, "who is permitted to eat of the meats before they are brought to the table? Is it proper that my son and I should eat what our servants leave?"

"Madam," said the steward, "I placed those meats there only a moment ago, and I assure you they had not been touched."

"Very well," said the lady angrily; "find out as soon as possible who this insolent creature is, who feeds upon our meats before we have tasted them ourselves."

The next day, at the dinner hour, the steward took his place near the table, which was all served for dinner. Suddenly a little dog leaped in at the open window; he held a handkerchief between his teeth. With one bound he was on the table; and seizing several bits of meat, some bread, and a few pieces of fruit, he fled away. The steward was completely confounded.

“Well?” said the lady as she entered.

“I have seen him!” cried the steward; “I have seen him!”

“Who?” she asked.

And he explained all that had passed.

“You must follow it,” said the lady of the castle.

“I will try, madam.”

The next day, at the same hour, the steward took his place near the table. The dog came in through the window and took his provision as usual; then, seeing they were watching for him, he fled away rapidly. The steward tried to follow him in vain: the little animal disappeared in the forest.

“Leave it to me,” said the young lord; “I will find out where this dog goes.”

And the next day he took the steward’s place. The window had been left open purposely. At the usual hour the little dog appeared. The

lord of the castle did not interfere with him ; but when he saw him take the four corners of Hélène's handkerchief between his teeth, he darted out and ran in pursuit of the thief.

He followed the dog for several minutes ; but soon worn out by the useless chase, he threw himself at the foot of a tree, breathless, but not discouraged.

"To-morrow," said he resolutely, "to-morrow I will find out where this dog goes."

So the next day he had his horse saddled, and, taking his place under the window, he waited. The little dog appeared, jumped on the table, chose among the dishes that were served a breakfast for his mistress ; but when he started as usual to return to his retreat, the gallop of a horse resounded behind him.

The dog stopped suddenly ; one of the oak-trees bent down just then, and the intelligent little animal took his place near his mistress. The young lord of the castle, looking up, saw a charming young girl seated among the branches at the top of the tree. He was struck with her beauty. A book was lying on her lap, and the wind turned the leaves of it as she read ; for oh, strange ! the poor child had been deprived of both her arms.

He questioned Hélène ; and she answered his questions.

The lord of the castle heard all the young girl's history. His heart was moved with pity. He came to see her often; and one day he swore he would have no one but her for his wife.

One day a carriage stopped at the foot of the oak-tree, which bent down; and the young husband received his betrothed in his arms.

When the ceremony was over, the old lady of the castle, looking at the young wife, said to herself, —

“So this is my son's wife!” and an expression of hatred came over her face. “Patience!” she added, in a low voice, “patience! the day will come when she shall leave my house forever.”

A few months after, the young husband went away to the war.

One morning the crabbed old lady of the castle came into the young wife's room. Twin babies had just been born to her; and they were resting quietly by her side in a gilded cradle.

“Ah!” she muttered with disgust, and went out. Her hand trembled with anger as she dipped the pen into the ink and wrote the news to her son: —

“Well,” said she, “your wife has brought two very ugly little children into the world.”

The springtime came ; but still the lord of the castle had sent no tidings of himself.

“Your husband is dead,” said H  l  ne’s wicked mother-in-law to her one day ; “I do not wish you to be any longer under my roof. Go ; neither you nor your brats shall disgrace this castle any longer.”

“Alas, madam !” answered H  l  ne, “I can go away very well ; but who will carry my dear little ones ?”

“You yourself,” said the horrible woman. “Do you suppose I would put my servants at your service ? They would refuse to go with a beggar like you.”

“Alas !” replied H  l  ne, “I have no arms, as other mothers have, to carry my poor children.”

“We will manage it,” said the hard-hearted mother-in-law.

And the next day H  l  ne left the castle, carrying the two innocent little ones in a cloth which was tied round her waist.

She wandered a long time in the forest, followed by her little dog ; and when evening came on, weariness overcame her, and she was very thirsty. A fountain flowed a few steps from her. H  l  ne sighed.

“Alas !” she thought, “if I only had one arm, I could catch some water in the palm of my hand and quench my thirst.”

And as she uttered the words, a little bird, perched on the edge of the fountain, began to twitter. He said, in his language, —

“Do not cry, poor Héléne.”

Héléne, astonished, stopped to listen to it; but the little bird continued to sing. Héléne approached the fountain, and leaned over the water; she tried to drink.

But before her lips could reach the water, one of her nurselings fell into the fountain. Poor Héléne! who would give her little baby back to her?

But the bird went on singing; and in its language it said, —

“Dip what there is left of your right arm into the fountain, and fear nothing for your child.”

Héléne obeyed the little bird, and dipped what remained of her arm; and at once a strong and active arm and a supple hand grew out in place of the right arm and hand that she had lost.

Héléne picked up her child with delight; but at the same moment the other dropped from the cloth that held it, and fell into the water, as his brother had done. But the little bird kept on singing; and in its joyous language it said, —

“Dip what remains to you of your left arm into the fountain, and fear nothing for your child.”

Hélène dipped what there was left of her other arm, and immediately she had a new left arm.

Hélène picked up her other child.

A cabin under the shade of an oak-tree sheltered Hélène and her children. One day the two children were playing on the threshold. A stranger passed by. He stopped before the two children.

"I, too," cried he bitterly, "I would one day have been surrounded by fair young ones; but Hélène has fled from my home." When suddenly Hélène appeared at the cabin door.

"It is she!" cried the stranger.

But he drew back as if struck by lightning. This woman had two arms, and her fingers fondled her children's hair. His Hélène had both arms cut off.

Meanwhile, she had also recognized the stranger, and sprang towards him.

A few hours after, a magnificent carriage stopped at Pierre's farm. Hélène descended quickly from her carriage, and went into the house. Poor Pierre was still seated beside the fire. He suffered terribly, and his wicked wife never consoled him. When she heard the carriage stop, and saw her sister-in-law get out of it, she suddenly disappeared.

"Where is your wife?" asked Héléne of her brother.

"I do not know," answered Pierre. "Heaven has punished me for my crime, for I have not had a day of happiness since I left you in the forest; and my wife, who caused me to do such a deed, leaves me to my misery."

At this moment they heard the voice of the wicked woman. "Héléne," said she, coming forward, and speaking in a sweet voice, "I hope you have pardoned me; Heaven has punished us, and we are, as you see, very unhappy. But come," she added, leading the way to the upper story.

"I cannot," said Héléne; "I must cure my brother first."

"Come up, so that I may show you what Heaven has left me to console me in my misfortune."

Héléne, thinking her sister-in-law wished to show her a new baby, started towards the winding stairway.

"Go first," said Pierre's wife, with hypocritical respect.

"No," said Héléne; "I do not wish to go in front of you. I am always poor Héléne, Pierre's sister."

The sister-in-law then went up first, and suddenly a loud noise was heard; two steps of the

stairway fell in with a great crash, and the wicked woman fell into a pot of boiling water that she had prepared for H el ene. She thought she had counted the steps, and was sure of the success of her treachery ; but hatred bewildered her, and made her the victim of her own perfidy. H el ene turned away her head in horror and descended the stair.

“My brother,” said she to Pierre, “Heaven has punished the crime ; your wife is dead ; she fell into the snare she set for me. But you see I have come to fulfil my promise. Show me your foot, and I will take out the thorn which has caused you so much suffering.”

“Alas, my sister ! this thorn is a great tree whose branches already cover the roof of my dwelling,” said Pierre.

But as he spoke, H el ene touched her brother’s foot, and in a moment the tree disappeared up the chimney, and fell with a crash on the other side of the house.

MARGUERITE DE BELZ, “La Clef des Champs.”

THE THREE EGGS.

A CREOLE STORY.



ONCE upon a time there was a negro and his wife who lived in a village on the shore of the Oyapok. They had a little girl who was much the prettiest child that ever was seen. Obedient, intelligent, loving her parents with all her soul, she was the joy and pride of her father and mother. The whole family lived on the produce of a little field of tapioca and potatoes which surrounded their hut.

When winter came, the torrents of rain caused the river to overflow, and when the waters retired, all the plain, for a great distance, was only a mass of gravel and stones. Poverty desolated the country. In the negro's hut there was soon scarcely a morsel of cassava; the provision of potatoes diminished day by day. After having talked many times in a low voice over their sad condition, after having wept over it, the poor people resolved to go and leave their precious child to be lost in the forest.

One morning they started out. As they went along, the mother and her good man walked slowly, with great tears in their eyes; the little girl went in front gathering berries that she found in the bushes. Suddenly, not hearing her parents talking any longer, the child called, —
“Mamma! mamma!”

No reply. Alas, poor little one! you are lost in this thick forest! The more she tried to find her way, the more she went astray.

Night came; the foliage was so thick that she could not even see the moon or the stars to guide her. The ferocious beasts howled terribly. The child continued to walk on and on; her little feet were bleeding, her teeth chattered with fright, she was faint from hunger and fatigue. Soon, however, the trees became more scattered; a light shone in the distance. The child went in the direction of the light. At last she saw a cabin. She knocked at the door. “In the name of the good Virgin, open to me,” she cried.

The door opened, creaking. An old witch, all wrinkled, appeared on the threshold. “What do you want, my child?” said she, in a coarse voice.

“I am a poor little girl who has lost her parents in the great forest below there; I am afraid of being eaten up by the ferocious beasts; let me rest to-night in your house.”

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The coarse voice answered, —

“Here, little one, raise your eyes. Do you see over the door those three large pumpkins? In order to be able to enter my house, you must catch them one by one on your head.”

“Ah, good mamma! if they fall on my head, surely they will crush me! I am so little, they are so big!”

“Then, my child, I will catch them for you.” Then the old witch began to sing in a melancholy tone, —

“Fall, fall, big pumpkins!
So she can come into my house.”

Then she leaned her poor old head forward and caught the three big pumpkins on it, one after the other. Each time, her body bent and her knees gave way.

As soon as the child came in, she asked for something to eat.

“Open this cupboard, little one; you will find two plates. In one there is some good meat and some good fish; in the other there are only bones and fish-bones. Put them in the fire, and when they are cooked, you can give me whichever one you choose.”

The little one lighted the fire, warmed the two plates, and gave the old witch the plate of

meat and fish ; she kept for herself the plate of bones and fish-bones.

When the dinner was over, the old witch put the child to bed.

“To-morrow,” said she, “when you are well rested, we will go and bathe in the river.”

Before going to sleep, the child kneeled down to pray, and thanked the little Jesus for having rescued her from the dark night and the wicked beasts.

As soon as it was day, the old witch and the child went to the river. When they had taken their bath, the old witch said to the child, —

“Little one, rub me all over my body to make me clean.”

The child then looked at the witch’s back ; it was covered with razors, knives, pointed nails, pieces of broken glass. However, she did not hesitate to rub the witch’s back and her old limbs as well as she could. Soon her hands were all bloody. When the witch saw that, she cried, —

“You are a good little girl ; you have taken pity on a poor old woman ; give me your hands.”

The child held them to her ; then she spat in her hands and said to her, —

“Now rub yourself.”

Immediately the wounds disappeared.

“Now, my child, you must set out to go back

to your parents. Here are three eggs. When you encounter any obstacle along the way, you have only to break an egg, and the obstacle will disappear. I only charge you one thing: do not stop a moment, and if, by chance, young people meet you, and pay you compliments, do not listen to them, and continue your journey without paying any attention to their fine speeches."

Then the little one embraced the old witch, thanked her for her goodness, and departed. After having travelled a long time, she came to a large river. It was impossible to find a ford where she could cross it. Then she broke her first egg. A boat appeared upon the river. She began to sing,—

"Put me across, O boatman!
Put me across, O boatman!"

The boatman drew near, made her get into the boat, and put her across to the other side of the river.

"Thanks, good boatman, for your kindness."

"Good luck to you, miss."

She went on her way. She travelled and travelled, and found herself at last stopped by a great bare mountain.

"Mountain, open!" cried she, breaking her second egg.

The mountain opened; a beautiful road ran through it. Flowering shrubs bordered the road; in the green trees, loaded with fruit, birds of a thousand colors were singing. Suddenly joyous voices were heard; a party of young people drew near, dancing and laughing.

“Oh! what a beautiful little girl that is going along the road! see her beautiful hair,” said one. “Oh! what pretty little feet!” said another. “Come play with us, young lady; we will take you to our house; you shall be the absolute mistress of it, you shall do nothing all day long; we will work for you. You will only have to look at yourself in your mirror, comb your hair, and make yourself beautiful.”

But the little girl, remembering the counsels of the old witch, did not even turn her head.

“Leave me alone,” said she; “I have promised not to stop till I have found my parents again.”

Then she continued her journey and came to a plain. The mountain closed up behind her, and became, as before, barren and desolate. After having travelled a long time, the little girl came at last to a village. The people were in a great commotion; the queen had just died. As soon as the inhabitants saw the stranger, they surrounded her, and charmed with her beauty and grace, they proposed to her to choose her

to replace the queen whom they had just lost. To all their entreaties she replied, —

“I can agree to reign over you only on one condition ; that is, that you shall take my father and mother for your sovereigns as soon as I have found them. It is not right for the child to be above its parents.”

The people having accepted the condition, the child broke her third egg.

The egg was scarcely broken before the old negro and his wife were seen to arrive at the end of the village, all covered with tatters, thin, emaciated, and bent with grief and poverty. Seeing their daughter, whom they believed lost forever, they shed abundant tears, and were about to throw themselves at her feet to ask her pardon for having abandoned her. But she did not give them time for this, and throwing her arms around their necks, she embraced them tenderly. They were proclaimed sovereigns of the country and lived happily with their daughter ever after. They were good and charitable to the poor people, for they had been poor themselves.

The news of this adventure was quickly spread around. It reached the little village where the good little girl formerly lived. All their neighbors were delighted ; only one negro and his wife became extremely jealous of them.

These people had a wicked, cross-grained daughter, the very image of her mother.

“My daughter, I want you to be queen also; I will go and lose you in the forest. You are worth much more than that affected little thing; and when you are queen, you can send for me and your father also, so that we can pass the rest of our days in sleeping and doing nothing.”

Then they went into the forest and left their daughter there. Night came, and the ferocious beasts began to howl. Ah! truly, the child was much frightened, but, taking courage in the face of danger, she tried to get out of the forest. Then she saw the light in the old witch's cabin. She went in that direction and came to the door.

“Open to me,” said she, thumping on it with all her might with her feet and her fists; “I do not want to spend the night out of doors.”

The coarse voice answered, —

“Do you see those three enormous pumpkins? In order to enter my house, you must catch them on your head.”

“Very well, catch them yourself, so I can come in.”

The witch, without saying anything, sang her song, and caught the pumpkins on her poor old head.

As soon as she had come in, the little girl called out, —

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“I am hungry ; give me something to eat.”

Then the old witch put two dishes on the fire ; one of good meat and good fish, the other containing only bones and fish-bones. The child, without thanking her, took all that was good, and paid no attention as to what was left for the old woman.

When the morning came, they went to the river, and when she saw the witch's back, she said, —

“What, do you think I am going to rub your old back? It is all full of broken glass and pieces of broken bottles.”

The witch dressed herself again, and when the time came to go away, she gave the child three eggs.

“My child, take my advice ; do not stop on the way until you have found your parents ; else some harm will happen. When you see any obstacle, or when you want anything, break one of the eggs, and you will be quite satisfied.”

Without even thanking the old witch, who had been so good, the child went on her way.

Having reached the river, the breaking of the first egg brought the boatman to her, and he put her across to the other shore. Then after that the mountain stopped her way ; so she broke her second egg, and the mountain opened. A beautiful road bordered with flowers showed

itself to her. She followed it. Then the young people approached.

“Beautiful child, will you come and play with us? You will find in our house mirrors in which you can see your whole figure. We will be your slaves; one who is as pretty as you are should not work, but live to do nothing and think of nothing but being amused.”

Blushing with pleasure and vanity, the child sprang towards the young people; but she had scarcely crossed the road bordered with flowers when the mountain closed up with a great noise and swallowed her up.

She was pitied by only one person, — the good little girl. Young ladies, let this story be a lesson to you.

LOYS BRUEYRE.

THE THREE BROTHERS ;
OR,
THE CAT, THE COCK, AND THE LADDER.
A BRETON STORY.

—•—

ONCE upon a time there were three brothers : the oldest was named Yvon ; the second, Goulven ; and the youngest, Guyon. Their mother was dead, and they asked their father to give each of them the portion that would fall to him, so that they might go out into the world to seek their fortunes.

“I am very willing,” said the old man, “but you know that we are not rich ; a cat, a cock, and a ladder — these are all I have to give you.”

“Very well ; let us draw straws,” replied the three brothers, “and see what will fall to the lot of each of us.”

They drew straws, and the cat fell to Yvon, the cock to Goulven, and the ladder to Guyon. Each took his property and began to get ready to set out. Their father accompanied them to

a place near by, where four roads crossed and led in different directions, and then they bade farewell to each other, and took each a different road, after having appointed a meeting at the same place at the end of a year and a day. The old man returned alone to his house, by the fourth road.

Yvon, to whom the cat had fallen, was led by his road to the seashore. He followed the beach for a long time without coming to any dwelling. He and his companion were obliged to live for several days on shell-fish, and principally on mussels and lumpets, which cats love above all things. They came at last to a mill, not far from which rose the walls and towers of a castle high upon the cliff. Yvon entered the mill, carrying the cat on his left arm. He saw there four men, in their shirt-sleeves, armed with sticks and earnestly engaged in chasing the mice which ran about in every direction, so as to hinder them from cutting holes in the sacks and eating the flour.

“How much trouble you take for a small matter!” said he to them.

“How is it a small matter? Do you not see that if we should let them, these vile beasts would eat both the wheat and the flour and would reduce us to die of hunger?”

“Ah, well! here is a little animal” (and he

showed them his cat) "that, all by himself, in less than an hour, will do more work than you four in a whole year; he will very soon get rid of all your mice."

"This little animal? You are joking, doubtless; he does not seem at all dangerous. What do you call him?" (In that country they had never seen a cat.)

"He is called Mr. Cat. Do you wish to see him work?"

"Yes; let us see something of what he can do."

Yvon let go his cat, which was very hungry. The mice, which were not afraid of it, never having seen a cat, made no haste to run into their holes, and it made a frightful slaughter of them. The four men watched it work, in great astonishment, and in less than an hour the whole threshing-floor of the mill was strewn with dead mice. There were heaps of them in every direction. The men with the sticks and the miller could not recover from their astonishment. One of them ran to the castle, and said to the lord, —

"Make haste, my lord, and come to the mill; you will see there what you have never seen before in your life."

"What is it?" asked the lord.

"A man has arrived from some country, we know not what, bringing with him a little animal

that appears to be very mild and gentle, yet which in the wink of an eye has killed all the mice against which we have had so much trouble to defend your wheat and your flour.”

“I trust this may be true!” cried the lord.

He hastened to the mill, and seeing the great work of the cat, he stood still, filled with admiration, his eyes and his mouth wide open. Then, seeing on Yvon’s arm the author of all this carnage, which, well fed and happy, and its eyes half closed, was making a continuous sound like that of a wheel turned by the hand of a spinner, he asked, —

“And is it this animal, that looks so gentle and sweet, which has worked so bravely?”

“Yes, my lord, it is indeed,” replied the four men armed with sticks.

“What a treasure such an animal must be! Ah! if I could only have it! Will you sell it to me?” asked he of Yvon.

“Willingly,” replied Yvon, passing his hand down the back of his cat.

“How much will you take for it?”

“Six hundred crowns, with lodging for myself and good board in your castle; for my friend, the cat, will not work well if I do not stay with him.”

“Agreed! shake hands.”

And they shook hands.

Yvon was accordingly installed in the castle, having nothing to do every day but eat, drink, go walking, and from time to time to make a visit to his friend, the cat, at the mill. He had become the friend of the lord, and also of his daughter; for he was a very handsome young man. His acquaintance with the young girl became very intimate; and he got from her all the gold and diamonds that he wanted. But the time came when he thought it was most prudent for him to go away; so he disappeared one night without saying anything, taking with him the best horse in the castle stable to carry him, and all that he took away from the old lord.

Now we will follow him no farther, since his fortune is made, but see what has become of Goulven and his cock.

After having walked a long time, and getting farther and farther from home, Goulven at last reached a country where there were no cocks. One evening, about sunset, overcome with fatigue, he came to a beautiful castle, and knocked at the door.

“What do you want?” asked the porter.

“Lodging for the night, if you please, for my little comrade and myself.”

“Come in,” said the porter to him; “you may lodge here, for my master is charitable.”

He ate in the kitchen with the servants, then went to sleep in the stable with the stable-boys and wagoners, taking his cock with him.

In that country they were obliged to go each morning to look for the day. So in the barn where he was with his cock, Goulven heard the conversation of the stable-boys and wagoners. They were saying to each other, —

“To-morrow morning we shall have trouble again when we go to look for the day. Let us grease the axle-tree well, so that the wagon will run more easily, and not break down, as it did the other day; for see how many wagons are already broken, and many horses worked to death, and the master is displeased, and says that we shall ruin him.”

“Yes, grease the axle-tree well before we go to bed.”

Goulven listened, astonished at what he heard; and, as the lord and the servants had told him that they had never seen a bird like his cock, the idea struck him that he might make something out of it; so that he cried to the stable-boys and the wagoners, —

“Do not be so troubled and anxious, my friends. I will undertake your task.”

“You will undertake to go yourself, all alone, to look for the day to-morrow morning?”

“Yes; I and my companion.”

“But, unhappy man, if you do not bring it, or if you are late returning, the master will have you hanged on the spot.”

“Let us alone, I tell you, and go to sleep quietly.”

Accordingly, the stable-boys and wagoners went to sleep without greasing the wagon or making any of the usual preparations.

The cock crowed out from the loft about three o'clock in the morning.

“What is that?” cried the wagoners and stable-boys, awakened by this song that they had never heard before.

“It is nothing,” replied Goulven; “do not disturb yourselves. My comrade only announces that he is about to go in search of the day.” So they went to sleep again.

About four o'clock the cock crowed again, and they woke up as before, and cried, —

“What is it? what is it?”

“It is my comrade, telling you that he is coming with the day,” replied Goulven; “get up and see.”

So they got up, and saw with astonishment that, sure enough, the day had come without their having been to look for it with so much trouble. They hastened to go and tell their master.

"Master, if you only knew —"

"What is it? What has happened that you should come to wake me so early?"

"You know the stranger whom you lodged last night, with his little animal that he called a cock?"

"Well, what has he done?"

"What has he done? Why, this little animal, that does not look as if he were anything in particular, is stronger than all your horses together, and will be able to spare you much expense, and us much trouble. Would you believe it? he has brought us the day this morning all by himself, without horses or wagons, while we slept quietly."

"It is impossible; you are mocking me!"

"Nothing is truer, however; and you have only to assure yourself of it by keeping the man and his little animal at the castle and watching with us to-night."

"Very well; tell him to remain, so that I can see this thing."

So they told the man with the cock to remain with his animal.

When evening came, after supper, the servants, the stable-boys, and the wagoners went to sleep as usual, and Goulven climbed again to the loft, with his cock, after having told them that they need not disturb themselves at all,

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and that he would undertake to bring the day back again at the appointed hour.

About three o'clock in the morning the lord, who had not gone to bed, came also to the stable to see and hear for himself what took place. The cock crowed the first time on the cock-loft.

"What is that?" asked the lord.

"It is my comrade, just setting out to look for the day," replied Goulven; "do not be disturbed. Wait quietly; he will not be slow in returning."

At four o'clock the cock crowed again.

"Why has the cock crowed?" asked the lord.

"Because he has just arrived, bringing the day back to us," replied Goulven. "Open the door, and go out, and you will see."

The lord went out of the stable, and saw that day had really dawned, all rosy and bright (it was the the month of May), without his horses and his iron-bound wagons having gone to look for it. He was filled with amazement, and could not understand it. He called Goulven, and said to him, —

"The wagons that they break for me, the horses they cripple for me, going every morning to look for the dawn, are ruinous to me; if you will sell me your little animal, you will do

me a great service ; how much do you ask for it ?”

“A thousand crowns,” replied Goulven, “and to remain with it at the castle, well fed, well clothed, and having nothing to do but to go walking for my pleasure where I will.”

“Agreed,” said the lord.

So Goulven lived at the castle, the happiest of men, having nothing to do every day but eat, drink, sleep, and go out walking. The cock, for his part, never failed to bring the day back at the proper hour, and all were very well satisfied with their services. Goulven also made love, to the lord’s daughter, who had noticed him because he was a handsome fellow, and having behaved just as Yvon had done under the same circumstances, he ran away also, when he thought the moment had come, taking with him not only the thousand crowns that he had gotten for the cock, but handsome presents which he had received from the young lady, and which he bore off on the best horse in the lord’s stable.

Of the three brothers, we have already seen two entirely successful ; one with his cat, the other with his cock. Now let us see what became of the third, Guyon, the man with the ladder.

After having walked a long time, going al-

ways straight before him, and carrying his ladder on his shoulder, and having gone a great distance from his own country, he found himself one day in front of a grand castle, surrounded on all sides by high walls, and brambles and thorns. At the window of one of the towers he saw a young lady of remarkable beauty. He stopped to look at her; she smiled, and they soon began to talk together. The lady told him that her husband, the lord of the castle, was absent. He was a jealous wretch, who kept her a captive in this tower with only a servant for company, and allowed her to receive no one else. She had grown very weary of her tower and wished very much to go out of it; but her lord had taken away the keys, and until his return she was obliged to stay locked up. He was expected to return the next day.

“I can come to you without a key, if you will permit it,” said Guyon.

“How can you, unless you change yourself to a bird? Into this castle, no man but my husband ever enters, and if any other should succeed in getting in, he would never go out alive.”

“We will see about that,” said Guyon.

Then he leaned his ladder against the wall. Alas! it was too short. But the lady and her

servant held the curtains out to him, and at last he reached them, to their great joy. The next morning, early, he departed by the same way by which he had come. As he had greatly amused the young lady and her servant, to whom such good fortune had never happened, they filled his pockets before he left with gold, jewels, and diamonds.

As Guyon was going quietly along, carrying his ladder on his shoulder, he met the lord returning, who said to him as he passed, —

“You appear much burdened and very much fatigued, my good man.”

“A little,” replied he; and each went on his way.

As soon as the lord had entered his castle, his wife, who knew nothing, and who had never seen any other man but her husband near enough to speak, made haste to tell him everything. To her great astonishment, her lord was furious.

“How could he get into the tower?”

“With an instrument that he called a ladder. And he amused us very much; and before he left, to reward him, we filled his pockets with gold, jewels, and diamonds.”

“Ah! miserable woman, what do you say? You have given my gold and my jewels and diamonds to this creature?”

And he was furious, and stamped his feet and pulled out his hair.

“I shall run after him, and if I catch him!—”

“Do him no harm, I beg you,” said the wife, who could not understand her husband’s anger.

The latter took the best horse from his stable and was soon off at great speed in pursuit of Guyon. But Guyon, who thought he would be followed, looked behind him, from time to time; and as he saw him just as he came near a house covered with slate which was by the roadside, he placed his ladder against the wall, mounted to the roof, and began to throw down the slate tiles, as a tiler does when repairing an old roof. When the lord arrived in front of the house, he stopped his horse, and addressing Guyon, said,—

“How now, tiler, have you seen a man go by who carried a ladder on his shoulder?”

“Yes indeed! my lord; he passed by only a moment ago.”

“Which way did he go?”

“He kept on straight along there; hold on, you can see him still from here. Come up, and you will see him.”

Then Guyon descended, and the lord, leaving his horse, climbed upon the roof. But as soon as he had done so, Guyon took away the ladder, mounted the horse, taking his ladder with him,

and set off at a full gallop, leaving the lord swearing and storming on the roof.

At the end of a year and a day, exactly, the three brothers, mounted on fine horses and dressed like lords, met at the cross-roads where they had parted, and found their father waiting for them.

They had all three made their fortunes with the cat, the cock, and the ladder ; and they married rich women, and built three fine castles, one for each, and a fourth, finer than the others, for their old father.

Told by Marguerite Philippe, September, 1873.

F. M. LUZEL.

THE COCK'S WIFE.

A STORY OF THE DISTRICT OF METZ.



ONCE upon a time there was a cock's wife who was scratching with all her might in a great heap of rubbish, and seemed deeply absorbed in her task.

"You are very silly, Cock's-wife," said a man who passed by, "to waste your time so, and wear out your feet so uselessly."

"You are mistaken, my good fellow; I am not wasting my time, for I have just found a purse with a hundred crowns."

"Really?"

"See here!"

"Come, my good creature, lend me a hundred crowns; I will return them in eight days."

"Very well; here they are," said the Cock's-wife, putting the purse into his hand:— she could never refuse to do a kindness.

At the end of the week, the Cock's-wife, seeing that her debtor did not return, began to fear that she had been deceived, and indignant, she

started in the direction of the house where the fellow lived. As she was going along, at a turn in the road she met a ladder.

“Where are you going, Cock’s-wife?” asked the ladder.

“I am going to a fellow’s house to get back a hundred crowns that I lent him. Will you come with me?”

“Gladly!”

“Very well; get inside of me,” said the Cock’s-wife.

Cock’s-wife went on her way, and a little farther on she met a river.

“Where are you going, Cock’s-wife?” said the river.

“I am going to a fellow’s house to get back a hundred crowns that I lent him. Will you come with me?”

“With pleasure,” replied the river.

“Very well; get inside of me,” said the Cock’s-wife.

The Cock’s-wife started off again; when in the midst of a wood she came across a wolf.

“Where are you going, Cock’s-wife?” asked the wolf.

“I am going to a fellow’s house to get back a hundred crowns that I lent him. Will you come with me?”

“I will.”

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“Very well; get inside of me.”

In spite of the weight of her three companions, the Cock's-wife got safely to the end of her journey.

“Good morning, my man, good morning,” said she, as she entered; “I have come to ask you to pay me my hundred crowns.”

The fellow, who had made up his mind not to pay his debt, fell upon the Cock's-wife, seized her by the wings, and threw her into a well near the house. Although stunned by the fall, the poor creature did not lose her senses.

“Ladder, ladder, come out of me,
Or I am a lost Cock's-wife,”

cried she.

The ladder obeyed immediately; and the Cock's-wife rapidly climbed the ladder, and jumped out of the well.

The fellow, who had thought she was drowned, could not control his anger when he saw her. He sprang on her again, and threw her into his oven.

When she felt the heat of the flames, she cried in an eager voice, —

“River, river, come out of me,
Or I am a lost Cock's-wife.”

The river flowed out immediately and put out the fire.

The Cock's-wife, rejoiced at having so happily escaped so many dangers, was going away unsuspectingly, when she was again seized by the fellow.

"Ah! vile beast," he screamed, "you thought to escape me, but you shall not succeed;" and saying these words, he threw her violently between the legs of his oxen standing close together in a narrow stable, sure that they would certainly trample her.

"Wolf, wolf, come out of me,
Or I am a lost Cock's-wife."

At this despairing appeal, the wolf jumped out, and in a few moments killed the oxen, and then the man.

The Cock's-wife took the hundred crowns, which she found hidden in the fellow's house, in the bottom of a desk, and after having warmly thanked the ladder, the river, and the wolf, she returned to her own country, where she led ever afterwards a peaceful and honored life.

Told by the widow Madame Richet, aged 77 years, at Woippy, near Metz.

NÉRÉE QUÉPAT.

THE CASTLE HUNG IN THE AIR.

A SAILOR'S STORY.



ONCE upon a time there was a fisherman whose only possessions consisted of a little cabin by the seashore, his boat, and his nets. He had a son who went fishing with him, and he was so good-looking that as he passed along every one turned to look at him. He had also three daughters, very nearly of the same age, and all three as beautiful as the day.

The fisherman, who was old, died ; his son became the head of the family, and at all eventides he went in his boat to fish, so as to get something to eat for all his household.

One day as he was setting out to go to the strand, he saw before his door three handsome lords, who asked his permission to enter his cabin to rest themselves there a few moments, as they came from a distance and were tired. He consented very willingly, and welcomed them to the best that he had. They seated themselves in the cabin, and were so struck with the beauty of

the sisters that they all three fell in love with them. A few days after, they married them, and the next day after the wedding the three nobles, who were the king of Fishes, the king of the Birds, and the king of the Rats and the Mice, wished to take their wives away to their own kingdoms. Before leaving their brother-in-law, they each made him a present. Two of them gave him large purses full of gold, but the gift of the third was only an old snuff-box. The fisherman put it into the pocket of his jacket, without even having a desire to open it, for he thought that his brother-in-law had wished to mock him.

The fisherman grew very lonely after his sisters were gone, and as he had a well-filled purse, he dressed himself as a well-to-do countryman, left his cabin, and went to Paris. For two years he led a gay life there, as he wanted nothing, having his pockets full of money; but he finished all the same by seeing his last crown; and when he had nothing left but debts, his friends turned their backs on him, and he was turned out of his house. Then he remembered his village and his little cabin, and he resolved to return there and once more take up his trade of fisherman. But when he came to the little creek where he had left his boat, he saw it no longer; for the north wind had carried it away, and he

found only his grapnel and some bits of half-rotten ground-tackling. He went into his cabin, which had also suffered much from wind and weather, and began to fumble in the pocket of his jacket to see if he could find there some five-franc pieces. But he turned his pockets in vain, there was not even one poor penny; there was nothing there but the old snuff-box that his brother-in-law had given him. He was on the point of throwing it into a corner, but he thought that perhaps it contained some tobacco, and he opened it. As soon as he had raised the lid, he heard a small voice, which said to him, —

“Master, what do you want?”

“What do I want?” murmured the fisherman, much astonished at hearing a voice, but seeing no one. “There are a great many things; at this moment I would like a table with a good dinner on it.”

Immediately a table was set before him covered with bread and meats; there were also bottles of wine, and even coffee and brandy were not forgotten. The fisherman, who had fasted somewhat for some time, ate with a good appetite; then, when he was no longer hungry, he opened his snuff-box again, and ordered it to transport him to the chamber of the king's daughter. Immediately he rose gently above

the clouds as if he had been borne on the wings of the wind, and saw beside him a princess as beautiful as the day, and who slept so quietly that one could scarcely hear her breathe. In the morning he opened his snuff-box again so as to return to his cabin before the princess was awake. For three days he had himself served with good meals, and for three nights he remained gazing upon the king's daughter as she slept; but he would not awaken her, lest he should frighten her and give her trouble.

However, the princess' father caused it to be trumpeted throughout his kingdom and in the neighboring countries that his daughter was of an age to be married, and that he would give her to the one who should bring him the greatest quantity of grain; for the harvest had been bad, and his subjects were threatened with famine. Wagons were to be seen on the roads coming from every direction, loaded with grain; and in all the ports ships whose holds were filled with wheat. The young fisherman was delighted to hear of the king's promise, for he thought that, thanks to his snuff-box, he should be able to become the husband of the princess who pleased him so much.

He opened his snuff-box, and immediately he heard the small voice saying, —

“Master, what do you want?”

“I would like thousands and thousands of wagons loaded with wheat, so that no one could be able to carry as much to the king’s palace as I.”

Accordingly the roads were covered, farther than the eye could reach, with wagons, and the fisherman took them to the king, who found that he alone brought more grain than all the others together. Eight days after, the fisherman married the princess, who was not sorry for it, because he was a handsome fellow.

The day after the wedding he opened his snuff-box and asked of it a beautiful castle which should be hung from the sky by four golden chains, near the palace of his father-in-law. As soon as he had spoken, he saw the castle in the sky, hanging from the clouds by four golden chains. It was so beautiful that nothing had ever been seen equal to it, and it shone as if it had been made entirely of gold. When the king saw this beautiful palace which glistened in the sun, he asked his son-in-law what it could be.

“Sire,” replied the fisherman, “it is my castle that my invisible workmen have built this night above your garden. If you wish to come and look over it, you will see that it is perfectly furnished.”

The king embraced his son-in-law, for he was charmed to see him with such a beautiful castle ; and when he had gone over it from the garret to the cellar, he proposed to him to go hunting, and they both started off.

Meanwhile one of the princess' old lovers came to the castle hung by the golden chains, and looking over it, he perceived in a corner an old worn-out snuff-box. Very much astonished to see it in such a place, he wished to open it to find out what there was inside ; immediately he heard a small voice, which said, —

“Master, what do you wish for?”

“What do I wish for?” replied the lord. “I wish that this castle may be transported more than four hundred and fifty leagues from here.”

In a moment he felt the castle move, and he saw it pass over great forests and vast seas, which it crossed in the wink of an eye. At last he saw it stop in the midst of a country where, as far as the eye could reach, not a living soul could be seen.

Returning from the hunt with his father-in-law, the young fisherman came to a rising ground from whence he thought he should perceive his castle ; but was greatly surprised to see it no longer. He felt in his pockets and found that his snuff-box was not there.

When the king learned that the castle where his daughter was had disappeared, he got into a great rage, and swore upon his kingly word that, if his son-in-law did not bring the princess back before two months had passed, he would have him torn in pieces by four horses.

The fisherman was very sad at having lost his wife and his castle; but he thought that his brothers-in-law would be able to help him, and he set out to go and see them. He first went to find the king of the Fishes. On entering the palace, he embraced his sister, who was as happy as a princess should be; then he related his misfortune to his brother-in-law, and asked him if he had not heard of a castle hung from the sky by four golden chains.

"No," replied the king of the Fishes; "I have not heard of it: but wait, I think I can tell you in a moment where it is."

He plunged into the sea, and assembled all his subjects from the whale to the flea-of-the-sea, and asked them if they had not seen a castle hung from the clouds by four golden chains; but they all declared that it was the first time they had heard of it. As the king finished questioning them, he saw an old porpoise come up, who had stood many shots and many storms.

“And you, porpoise,” asked the king of him, “have you not seen the castle hung in the air by four golden chains?”

“No,” he answered, “I have not seen it; but as I was playing on the waves, I met an eagle who told me of a castle hung by four golden chains; a marriage was to be celebrated there in eight days, and so many meats were taken there for the guests that the eagle told me he had never seen so many before.”

The king of the Fishes thanked the old porpoise; then he came out of the sea and went to tell his brother-in-law all he had learned. The fisherman was very glad of it, and set out at once to go to see his other brother-in-law, the king of the Birds.

When he reached his palace, he embraced his sister, then told his adventures to the king of the Birds, and asked him if he had not heard of a castle hung in the air by four golden chains. The king assembled his subjects, and asked them if they had seen the castle. The eagle answered, —

“Yes, I have seen it; it shines like gold, and a marriage is to be celebrated there in seven days. It will be a grand wedding, for already there are so many meats of all sorts that yesterday I could eat as much of them as I wanted.”

“Could you,” asked the king, “carry a man as far as that?”

“Yes,” answered the eagle; “but first I must eat a great deal, for the way will be long.”

During the whole night the eagle was supplied with meats, and he feasted until the break of day. In the morning he took the fisherman on his back, and flew away to go to the castle hung in the air by four golden chains.

For several hours the eagle flew over a great sea, so vast that neither shores nor islands were to be seen, nothing but the sky and the sea; but his strength began to fail, and he put the fisherman down on a rock that the tide had just exposed to view; then he went off at a single flight for the castle of the four golden chains, so as to fill his stomach again with meats, and be able to take the man upon his back again.

The fisherman remained alone upon the rock, and the time seemed long to him, for the eagle did not return, and he knew that the high tide would cover the rock. Meanwhile the tide rose higher and higher, and in vain he looked with all his eyes; he did not see the eagle returning. He stood upon the highest point of the rock; soon the water reached him there; it bathed his feet, then his knees; it rose to his waist, then to his shoulders, and still he saw nothing coming. Just at the moment when the waves

reached his chin, the eagle appeared, and having taken him on his back, he put him down in the court-yard of the castle, where the wedding was to be celebrated the next day.

The fisherman's wife was at her window ; she recognized her husband, and was very glad to see him, for she loved him very much, and it was against her will that she had been taken away. She found an opportunity to speak to him secretly, and said to him, —

“The lord who carried me away never leaves the magic snuff-box, and every evening when he goes to bed, he puts it under his pillow, so it is difficult to take it without waking him. The eagle must go and find the husband of your third sister, the one who commands the Rats and the Mice, and tell him to order some of his subjects to come here. When the lord is snoring, a little mouse will go and stuff his tail in his open mouth ; then he will cough, and while he is sitting up, you will be able to secure the snuff-box.”

The eagle hastened to go to the country of the Rats and Mice, and quickly returned, bringing on his back a little mouse, that looked wise, as all mice do, and a big rat with a long tail.

The following night, as soon as the lord, who before going to bed had put the magic snuff-box under his pillow, began to snore, the little mouse

stuffed her tail into his mouth ; but it was not long enough to reach to his throat, and without waking, the man squeezed it so tightly that she thought he had cropped it off. She began to make a little plaintive sound, and he loosened his teeth ; then she ran to tell the fisherman's wife that she had not been able to succeed, because her tail was too short. Then the lady ordered the big rat to try in his turn ; he took his aim so well that he stuffed his tail quite down the lord's throat. The latter awakened with a start, half strangled, and sat up in bed, coughing and spitting as if he were ready to die.

Meanwhile the fisherman, who was hidden under the bed, had passed his hand under the pillow and seized upon the snuff-box. He opened it immediately and heard a small voice, which said, —

“ Master, what do you wish for ? ”

“ What do I wish for ? I wish that my castle may be taken back again to my father-in-law's garden, to the place where it was before this rascal stole my snuff-box from me.”

In a moment he felt that the castle was lifted and borne through the air ; he saw it cross over vast seas and through great forests in the wink of an eye, and soon it stopped still in the king's garden, in front of the palace.

The king, who had just awakened, went to his

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window, and when he saw the castle hung by four golden chains between heaven and earth, he rubbed his eyes, thinking he was losing his sight ; but he saw his son-in-law and his daughter coming, and they embraced him and told him all that had happened to them.

He was greatly rejoiced to see them again, and to punish him who had carried off the snuff-box, he caused him to be torn in pieces by four horses. There were great rejoicings in honor of the return of the princess, and the fisherman lived happily with her. But he took care to carry the magic snuff-box always with him.

PAUL SEBILLOT, "Contes des Marins."

THE TWO SOLDIERS.

A LORRAINE STORY.



ONCE upon a time there were two soldiers who were about sixty years old. Being obliged to leave the service, they determined to return to their country. As they were journeying along, they said one to the other, —

“What are we going to do to get our living? We are too old to learn a trade; if we beg our bread, we shall be told we are not too old to work, and nothing will be given us.”

“Let us draw lots,” said one of them, “who will let his eyes be put out, and we will go begging together.”

The other one thought it a good idea. The lot fell on the one who made the proposition; his comrade put out his eyes, and, one leading the other, they went from door to door begging their bread. A great deal was given to them. But the blind man got but little good of it; his

companion kept all that was good for himself, and gave him only the bones and crusts of hard bread.

“Alas!” said the unfortunate creature, “is it not enough to be blind? Must I be so badly treated also?”

“If you complain again,” said the other, “I will leave you here.”

But the poor blind man could not help complaining. At last his companion left him in a forest.

After having wandered all about, the blind man stopped at the foot of a tree.

“What will become of me?” said he to himself; “night is coming, and the wild beasts will devour me.”

He climbed up into a tree for safety. Towards eleven or twelve o'clock four animals came to the same place, — the fox, the wild boar, the wolf, and the roebuck.

“I know something,” said the fox; “but I will not tell it to any one.”

“I also know something,” said the wolf.

“And I also,” said the roebuck.

“Pshaw!” said the wild boar, “you, with your little horns, what do you know?”

“Ah!” remarked the roebuck, “there is a great deal of wit in my little brain and in my little horns.”

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“Well,” said the wild boar, “let each one tell what he knows.”

The fox began, —

“There is a little river near here whose water will restore the sight of the blind. I have had an eye put out several times in my life; I bathed in that water, and I was healed.”

“I know that river too,” said the wolf; “I have known it longer than you. The king’s daughter is very sick; she is promised in marriage to the one who will cure her. To give her water of this river would be quite sufficient to restore her health.”

The wild boar said in his turn, —

“The city of Lyons is in need of water, and they have promised fifteen thousand francs to the one who shall be able to get a supply for it. Now, if they would dig up the tree of liberty, they would find a spring, and they would have an abundance of water.”

“I,” said the wild boar, “I know nothing.”

Thereupon the animals separated.

“Ah!” said the blind man to himself, “if I could only find that spring!”

He got down from the tree, and went groping through the country. At last he came to the river. There he bathed his eyes, and he began to see again; he bathed them again, and his sight was perfectly restored.

Then he went at once to the mayor of Lyons, and told him that if he wanted water he had only to pull up the tree of liberty. Sure enough! when the tree was dug up, they discovered a spring; and the city had as much water as was necessary. The soldier received the promised fifteen thousand francs, and went to see the king.

“Sire,” said he to him, “I have heard that your daughter is very sick; and I have something that will cure her.”

And he told him of the water of the river. The king sent one of his footmen immediately for some of the water. They made the princess drink it, they made her take baths of it, and she was cured.

The king said to the soldier, —

“Although you are a little old, you shall marry my daughter; or else, if you prefer it, I will give you some money.”

The soldier preferred to marry the princess; he knew very well that with the daughter he would have the money also. The marriage took place without delay.

One day when the soldier was taking a walk in the garden, he saw a man all in rags who was asking charity; he recognized at once his old comrade.

“Were there not two of you begging for-

merly?" said he to him as he came up to him.

"Where is your companion?"

"He is dead," answered the beggar.

"Tell the truth; you will not repent of it. What has become of him?"

"I abandoned him."

"Why?"

"He was always complaining. It was always he who got the good pieces; when we had bread, I gave him the crumbs, because he had no teeth, and I ate the crusts; I gave him the meat, and kept the bones for myself."

"It is a lie! you did just the opposite. Would you recognize your companion?"

"I do not know."

"Well, I am that companion."

"But are you not the king?"

"Doubtless; but I am also your old comrade. Come in; I will tell you all about it."

When the beggar learned all that had happened to the blind man, he said to him, —

"I would like to have the same luck. Take me therefore to that same tree; perhaps the animals will come there again."

"Willingly," said the other; "I am willing to return you good for evil."

He took the beggar to the tree; and the beggar climbed up into it.

About eleven or twelve o'clock, the four ani-

mals collected there again. The fox said to the others, —

“What we said the other night was overheard; the king’s daughter is cured, and the city of Lyons has water. Who, then, has revealed our secrets?”

“It is not I,” said the wolf.

“Nor I,” said the roebuck.

“I am sure that it is the wild boar,” said the fox; “he had nothing to say himself, and he went and told what the others said.”

“It is not true,” replied the wild boar.

“Take care!” said the fox; “we shall all three be against you.”

“I am not afraid of you,” said the wild boar, showing his teeth; “just you meddle with me!”

Suddenly raising their eyes, they saw the beggar up in the tree.

“Oh! oh!” said they, “here is a man who is spying upon us.”

Immediately they set to work to root up the tree; then they seized upon the man and devoured him.

EMMANUEL COSQUIN, “Contes Populaires Lorrains.”

THE THREE BROTHERS AND THE GIANT.

A STORY OF PICARDY.

A GOOD woman had three children, all boys : the first was named Jean ; the second, Jeannot ; and the third, Jeannois. These three children passed for the sharpest in the canton, and the good woman was very glad of it, as you may imagine. Onè fine day she went to the wood with them to pick up some dead wood there, and make fagots of it for the approaching winter. The children soon had enough of looking for pieces of dead wood, and preferring to gather mulberries, nuts, and dog-berries, they left their mother and plunged into the coppice farther and farther, until they did not hear the cries and calls of the good woman, who after awhile, thinking they had returned to the village, went back to her house.

Soon evening came on, and Jean, Jeannot, and Jeannois perceived with terror that they were lost in the woods.

“What shall we do?” said Jean. “What shall we do?” said Jeannot. “What shall we do?” added Jeannois.

They did not know what to do, and they began to hear the howling of the foxes and wolves in the depth of the forest. At last Jean, the oldest, had an inspiration. He climbed to the top of a great oak-tree which grew near by, and turned in every direction so that he could observe the neighborhood. He discovered a light which shone in the distance, and having well observed the position of it, he came down from the oak and walked with his brothers in the direction of the light.

After they had gone beyond the wood, they saw a palace before them, and went and knocked at the door.

Tap! tap!

“Who is there at this hour?”

“We are three little children lost in the forest, and we want to pass the night in this beautiful palace. Will you give us lodging here?”

A young woman half opened the door.

“Do you not know that this is the palace of the Giant of the Golden Beard? He is out at this moment, but he will be back before long. If you take my advice you will make haste and run away, for he might kill you and eat you as he has done so many persons.”

“But, madam, we do not know which way to go this dark night. Hide us safely somewhere, and to-morrow, at the break of day, we will go away without the Giant’s suspecting anything of it.”

The woman was moved to pity, and let the children come into the castle. She made them go down into the cellar, and gave them good cakes to eat. Then, hearing the Giant’s step in the distance, she charged the lost children to hide themselves well behind a big cask, and went up stairs as if nothing had happened.

The Giant of the Golden Beard had been on a long tramp and was dying of thirst. He went down into the cellar to refresh himself, in spite of his wife, who besought him to go to bed.

“I smell fresh meat here,” muttered the Giant as he came near the cask behind which the children were cowering.

As he was very thirsty, he took out the bung, lifted the cask as if it had been a straw and drank and drank through it. As he set the great wine cask down on the ground he hurt little Jeannois, who could not help uttering a cry.

“Ah! ah!” cried the Giant of the Golden Beard, “I was sure I smelt fresh meat! It is good! it is good! I shall take you up stairs and kill you; I shall have an excellent breakfast to-morrow.”

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He took the three unfortunate boys in one hand and brought them up into the kitchen.

But the wife, who had heard what the Giant had just said, had hastened to hide his big knife, and her husband looked for it in vain: he could not succeed in finding it.

“Very well! very well! You will lose nothing by waiting! Wife, put these three children in my daughters’ room and give them a bed. I will kill them to-morrow. The flesh will be fresher.”

The woman obeyed tremblingly, and every one went to bed.

“We are in a very bad place,” thought Jeannot. And he got down from his bed to examine the Giant’s daughters, who were sleeping in the bed near by.

The moon had risen, and Jeannot perceived that the young girls wore a crown of gold on their heads, and that there were, as in their own case, three of them.

“Suppose the Giant should get up and come to wring our necks during the night,” thought Jeannot. “It is very possible, certainly. I am going to take off the three crowns and put them on my head and my brothers’. The Giant will perhaps be deceived.”

So he did what he had thought of, and went to bed again. He was just in time. The Giant

of the Golden Beard had drunk too much wine, and found himself uncomfortable in his bed. To kill time, he determined to get up and go and kill the three little boys whom chance had sent to him.

He went to the bed where the latter were pretending to be asleep and took hold of Jean's head.

"Idiot!" said he to himself, "I was about to kill my daughters. I have mistaken the bed." And he went to the other bed and wrung the necks of his own children.

Then, satisfied with his work, he went to bed again.

Jean, Jeannot, and Jeannois dressed themselves hastily and escaped through the window.

Imagine the anger and dismay of the Giant, when on waking the next morning he saw what he had done during the night. He became more wicked than before, and went about through the country killing the travellers, murdering peasants, and setting at defiance the armies that the king sent against him.

As for Jean, Jeannot, and Jeannois, not knowing which way to go, they took at last a highway, which at the end of two days' journey brought them to the capital of the kingdom. They asked to speak to the king and to tell him their adventures in the palace of the Giant of

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the Golden Beard. The king appointed them to be pages from that day forth.

I told you that the Giant, made furious by the death of his children, went about ravaging the kingdom. This went on for two or three years. Many knights had gone forth to fight against him, and not one of them had returned. The king also trembled in his palace, fearing that some day this terrible man would take a fancy to come and attack him in his city.

One day Jean, the oldest of the three pages, went to the king and asked the hand of his eldest daughter, with the title of knight. The king refused at first ; then, on reflection, he said to the page,—

“I grant you what you desire, on condition that you show yourself worthy of it. You have not forgotten that famous Giant of the Golden Beard, who came near killing both yourself and your brothers. Very well ; bring me his golden beard, and I swear to you that I will make you a knight and give you my daughter in marriage.”

Jean accepted these terms. The king wanted to give him arms like those of the knights, but he refused them. He took the road his brothers and he had taken before, and presented himself at the Giant's castle. It was broad daylight, and the page sounded the horn.

“What do you want?” asked the Man with the Golden Beard.

“I want to fight with you to-morrow morning. I have beaten all the giants I have been able to encounter hitherto, and I want to beat you as I have done all the others.”

“You are very young, handsome page; but no matter. Come into my castle, and to-morrow we will fight.”

Jean did not wait to be persuaded, and entered the palace of the Giant of the Golden Beard, who gave him an invitation to dine with him. The page accepted, and while the Giant had his back turned, he poured out for him a liquor which possessed the quality of causing sleep for several days.

“Here is to your health!”

“Here is to your health!”

And the page and the Giant emptied their glasses with a single draught. At the same moment the latter fell under the table and began to snore so loud that the whole castle shook. Without losing time the young man took the scissors which he had brought, and cut off the Giant's golden beard. Then he left the palace and set out for the capital, where he arrived two days after.

The king was very much astonished; he had promised his daughter to the page, and he be-

stowed her upon him, telling him he would dub him knight later on. A short while after that, Jeannot came also to find the king.

“My lord the king,” said he, “I love your daughter Marie, and I think she loves me. Will you make me a knight and bestow her hand upon me?”

“But you have done nothing that I know of to merit such an honor.”

“I am ready to show myself worthy of it. Command, and I will obey you.”

The king reflected, and then said,—

“Well, you shall have what you ask me for, when you bring me the Giant’s broadsword, that you will remember.”

Jeannot agreed, and set out for the Giant’s castle, wearing neither arms nor shield.

He arrived there at the end of two days and sounded the horn.

“Ah! ah!” cried the Giant, “another one who wishes to rob me! Very well; I will see to it.”

“I do not come for that purpose; but I have been told that you could drink more wine than any one in the world, and I have come to compare myself with you.”

“Is that really true?”

“Perfectly true! But I verily believe that I can beat you. I can drink fifty casks of wine without being hurt by it.”

"We will see; we will see. Come into the castle. I am ready to have a match with you. But who will begin first?"

"You, if you please."

"Agreed."

Jeannot went down in the Giant's cellar, and the latter wishing to drink as much as he possibly could, swallowed ever and ever so much wine, so that soon he staggered and fell down dead-drunk. Jeannot took his broadsword and carried it to the king, who was more astonished than when Jean returned with the golden beard.

Jeannot married the princess Marie, but the king did not make him knight at once.

There was only Jeannois left.

One day he came to the king, and said, —

"My lord the king, I love your youngest daughter; she loves me also, and I come to ask you for her hand, and the title of knight."

"All that is very well. But you must deserve it."

"Command, and I will do whatever you order me to do."

The king thought awhile, and at last he said, —

"Your brothers have taken the Giant's beard and his broadsword. Could you bring him to me in an iron cage?"

"I will try, my lord the king; farewell."

Jeannois had a very large iron carriage made

and went to the Giant's castle. When he got there he sounded the horn.

"What do you want? worm of the earth! dust of nothingness!"

"Let me into your castle, and I will tell you."

"Ah! you are one of those pages who stole my beard and my broadsword. I see what you want, and I am going to kill you."

"One moment, if you please. Do not be in a hurry. I have just come to find you in order to restore what they stole from you. The two pages are alone in a distant castle, and I have brought my carriage so as to carry us there more quickly."

The Giant allowed himself to be deceived again, and got into the iron carriage, where he found himself imprisoned. And Jeannois returned quickly to the court. The king was very glad, as he well might have been, at having got rid of the robber, who was burned on an immense pile built on the great square of the city. Jeannois married the princess whom he loved, and the king made the three brothers knights of his kingdom. During the feasts that were given, the mother of Jean, Jeannot, and Jeannois came to the city, still searching for her children. Imagine her happiness and that of her sons.

E. H. CARNOY, "Litterature Orale de la Picardie."

THE FAIRY AND THE DAUGHTER
OF THE EARTH.

A STORY OF THE ISLE OF OUESSANT.



ONCE upon a time, — a very long time ago, — perhaps the time when Saint Pol came to us from Hibernia in a stone trough, — there was a young girl sixteen or seventeen years old, with fair hair, blue eyes, and cheeks as red as two apples, and her name was Mona Kerbile. She was so beautiful that all who saw her stopped to admire her, and said to her mother, old Jeanne Kerbile, a poor woman like myself, —

“You have a very pretty daughter, Jeanne! She is as pretty as a fairy! Such a beautiful girl has never before been seen in the island, and there are even those who say that she must be the child of a fairy.”

“Do not believe those who say so,” replied the good woman, “for I truly am her mother, and Fanch Kerbile, my husband, is surely her father.”

Mona's father was a fisherman, and spent almost all of his time on the water, and her mother tended a small spot of ground that she had, as all the island people did, or spun in her hut when the weather was too bad. Mona went, as all the young girls of her age did, to seek for limpets, mussels, periwinklès, and other shellfish on the shore. It seems that the fairies, who were then very numerous in the island, had observed her, and had, themselves also, been struck with her beauty. One day when she was on the shore with her companions as usual, they were talking of their lovers. Each one boasted of the skill of her own in catching fish and steering a boat, and in guiding it among the numerous dangers by which the island was surrounded.

"You, Mona," said Marc'harit Ar Fur to her, "you are wrong to discourage Fanch Kerdudal as you do, for he is a young fellow of excellent character, clever, and no one comes back in the evening with more fish than he, nor guides his bark better among the difficult passes of the Vieille Jument or the point of Stiff."

"I," said Mona, scornfully, — for on account of hearing it said that she was beautiful, she had become vain and proud, — "I will never take a fisherman for my husband ; I am too pretty for that. I am as beautiful as a fairy ; they tell

me so every day, and I shall marry no one but a prince, or at least the son of a great lord.”

It happened that an old fairy, hidden behind a rock or under a tuft of sea-wrack, heard her, and jealous at seeing that a daughter of the earth could rival the beauty of the children of the fairies, he conceived the design of carrying her off and taking her with him to his home under the water. He dared not try to do it that day, for Mona was in the midst of her companions. But the next day about sunset, while she was still catching shell-fish with two other of the village girls, and was somewhat apart from her friends, the old fairy suddenly sprang out from behind a rock where he was watching her, seized her and took her away down to the bottom of the water. She cried loudly, and called her friends to her assistance, but alas! they could not come to help her; they could only run to the house and tell her mother what they had seen. Old Jeanne was spinning on her doorsteps. She threw down her distaff and her spindle, and ran to the shore, and called her daughter loudly, and even went into the water as far as she could at the place where they told her that Mona had disappeared with the fairy. But it was all in vain, and no voice replied to her cries and her tears.

The report of the adventure spread quickly

over the island, and every one was of the opinion that what had happened to the beautiful Mona was a punishment for her pride and her vanity; for however beautiful a young girl may be, she should neither be proud nor vain, for God gives beauty and ugliness, and riches and poverty also, as it pleases him.

The old fairy was the king of the fairies in those parts, and he took the young Ouessantine with him to the bottom of the sea, to a beautiful palace made of shells and coral.

The old fairy had a son, the handsomest fairy that ever was seen, and he fell in love with Mona and asked his father to let him marry her. But the old king answered that he would never consent to allow him to take for his wife a daughter of man who boasted of being as beautiful as the daughter of a fairy. There were plenty of the most beautiful fairies, who would be glad to have him for their husband, and he would not withhold his consent when he should have made his choice among them.

Our young fairy was then in despair. He told his father that he would never marry if he was not allowed to have for his wife the daughter of man whom he loved. His father seeing him dying of sadness and grief, compelled him to marry a young fairy, the daughter of an old lord among the fairies, and who was

celebrated for her beauty. The wedding day was fixed, and a great many people were invited. The betrothed couple set out on their way to the church, followed by a rich and numerous train ; for it appears that these people of the sea have their religion and their churches as we do, although they are not Christians ; they even have bishops, we are told, and an old bishop of the sea was to perform the ceremony. Poor Mona received an order from the old fairy to stay at home and prepare the wedding feast. But they gave her nothing that was needed for all this, absolutely nothing but large pots and empty saucepans (which were large shells), but they told her that if everything was not ready, and if she did not serve them a good feast when they returned from church, she should be put to death immediately. Imagine her grief and perplexity, poor girl ! But the poor young bridegroom was not less troubled and disconsolate.

As the procession was on its way to the church, he suddenly cried out, —

“ I have forgotten the wedding ring ! ”

“ Tell me where it is, and I will send for it,” said his father to him.

“ No, no ; I will go myself, for no one but me could find it where I have put it. I will hasten there and will return in a moment.”

And he let go the bride's arm and ran to the house. He found poor Mona in the kitchen, weeping and desolate.

"Do not weep," said he to her; "your feast will be ready and cooked to perfection; so do not be troubled on that account."

And going to the fireplace, he said, —

"Good fire in the fireplace!"

And the fire burned up in the fireplace. Then touching with his hand each of the pots and saucepans successively, he said, —

"Some beef in this saucepan, veal and mutton in that other one; here a mutton on the spit; cider and wine in these pots!" and so on.

And the saucepans and pots were filled at once, to the surprise and joy of Mona, who was no longer weeping.

Then he hastened to rejoin his bride and his party, and they went to the church, and the ceremony was performed by a bishop of the sea. After that they returned to the house.

When they arrived there, the old fairy hastened the first thing to the kitchen, and asked for Mona.

"Here we are; we have come back; is everything ready for the feast?"

"Yes; everything is ready," answered Mona quietly.

And he uncovered all the saucepans, examined all the pots, and then said, with a displeased air, —

“You have been helped; but never mind; I have not finished with you yet.”

The wedding guests seated themselves at the table, and they eat and drank as much as they would; then they sang and danced till night.

After the evening's entertainment, the two young married people retired to their chamber, and the old fairy told Mona to go with them, and remain there, holding in her hand a burning wax-taper to give them light. When the taper should be burnt down to her hand, she should be put to death.

Poor Mona was obliged to obey. The old fairy was in a room near by, and from time to time he asked, —

“Is the taper consumed?”

“Not yet,” answered Mona.

He asked this question several times. At last when the wax-taper was almost entirely consumed, the young husband said to the new wife, —

“It is your turn now to go and hold the wax-taper a while!”

As she did not know the intentions of her father-in-law, she got up and took the wax-taper from Mona's hands.

The old fairy asked again,—

“Has the wax-taper burned down to your hand?”

“Tell him yes,” said the bridegroom.

“Yes,” answered the young fairy.

And immediately the old fairy came into the room, seized upon her who held in her hand the remnant of the wax-taper, and cut off her head. Then he went away.

In the morning, as soon as he had risen, the young fairy went to his father, and spoke thus to him,—

“I have come to ask you to allow me to marry, my father.”

“To allow you to marry? Were you not married yesterday?”

“That is true; but my wife is dead, father.”

“Your wife is dead? How did it happen? Have you killed her, you miserable creature?”

“It is not I who have killed her, father, but you, yourself.”

“I?”

“Yes, father; did you not yesterday cut off the head of the woman who was holding the lighted wax-taper near my bed?”

“Yes; but it was the daughter of the earth.”

“No, my father, it was the young fairy whom I had just married; and if you do not believe

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me, you can easily be assured of it, for her body is still in my chamber.”

The old fairy hastened to his son's chamber, and recognized his mistake. His anger was terrible, and a little more and he would have killed his son himself.

“Whom do you wish to take for a wife?” he asked his son the next day when he was a little pacified.

“The daughter of the earth, my father.”

The father found at last that it was useless to seek to cure his son of this love, and he concluded to allow him to marry the daughter of the earth.

The young fairy was very attentive to his wife. He fed her on delicate little fish, and made for her necklaces and bracelets of fine pearls, and gathered for her every day pretty shell-fish and the most beautiful and rarest sea-plants. In spite of all this, Mona was weary, and wanted to return to the earth to see once more her island, and her father and mother in their little hut by the seashore. The fairy would not let her go, for he feared she would never return. Then she became very sad, and did nothing but weep night and day. Seeing this, her husband said to her one day, —

“Smile on me a little, and I will take you back to your father's house.”

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Mona smiled, and the fairy, who was also a magician, then said, —

“Bridge, rise up!”

And immediately a beautiful bridge rose up, reaching from the bottom of the sea to the land. The old fairy, seeing this, and feeling sure that his son knew well as he did himself how to use magic, said, —

“I should like to go with you also.”

The three went together on the bridge, the old man behind, and the other two a few steps in advance of him. But as soon as the young fairy stepped ashore with his wife, he turned and said, —

“Bridge, return!”

And immediately the bridge went back again to the bottom of the sea, and with it the old fairy, who was still on it.

The fairy not being able to accompany his wife to her father's house, let her go alone, giving her the following precautions before leaving her :—

“Come back at sunset, and you will find me here waiting for you ; but do not let any man embrace you, or even take your hand, or you will make me very unhappy.”

Mona promised, and hastened to her father's house, which was not far off on the shore. It was the dinner hour, and all the family were assembled.

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“Good morning, father and mother; good morning, brothers and sisters,” said she as she entered the poor hut.

The good people opened their eyes wide, and looked at her, astonished, and none of them recognized her for their daughter or their sister. She was so beautiful, so grand, and so well dressed! This grieved her very much, and tears came into her eyes; then she began to go around the house, touching each object with her hands, and saying, —

“Here is the little stool on which I sat beside the fire; here is the bed where I slept; here is the pitcher with which I brought water from the spring; here is the broom with which I swept the house; here is the wooden porringer from which I ate my soup.”

At last her brother, hearing all this, recognized her, and threw himself on her neck to embrace her, and her father and mother and sisters did the same thing; but from that moment Mona lost entirely all recollection of her husband, the fairy, and his home under the sea. She remained with her parents, and soon plenty of lovers came to the house to sue for her hand; but she would not listen to any of them, and had no desire to marry.

This family, like the other inhabitants of the

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island, had a bit of ground where they planted potatoes and sowed barley, and this, together with the daily supply of fish and shell-fish which they caught out of the sea, was sufficient for them to live simply but contentedly.

There was a little space before the house containing a stack of barley straw. Often when she was lying in bed, and the winds howled, and the waves dashed and broke against the rocks on the shore, Mona thought she heard plaintive moanings near her door; but she believed it to be poor shipwrecked souls asking for the prayers of the careless living beings, and she recited a "De profundis"; then she pitied the poor sailors who were in the sea, and went to sleep again.

But one night she heard distinctly these words, uttered in a sad, heart-broken voice:—

"Oh, Mona! have you then forgotten your husband, the fairy who loves you so much, who saved you from death, and brought you back from the depths of the sea to see your father and mother, your brothers and sisters? You promised me so faithfully to come back again; I have been waiting for you so long and I am so unhappy without you!"

Then Mona recollected everything all at once. She rose up hastily, sent out and found the fairy, who was lamenting thus near the stack of barley

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straw. She threw herself into his arms, and since then she has never been seen.

This story is taken from an article entitled "A Voyage to the Island of Ouessant," published in the "Revue de France," March and April, 1874.

F. M. LUZEL.

SISTER AND HALF-SISTER.

A MULHOUSE STORY.



ONCE there was a woman who had two daughters: one was her husband's daughter by his first marriage, and the other was her own child. One day when the half-sister was spinning by the well, her spindle fell into the water, and her mother beat her cruelly. She went back to the well and was trying to get her spindle out again, when her hard-hearted mother gave her such a push that the poor girl fell into the well.

When she reached the bottom she found a large and magnificent garden. As she was walking along, in tears, the pear-tree said to her, —

“Young girl, why are you crying so?”

The young girl answered, —

“Have I not good reason to cry? My step-mother gave me such a push that I fell into the well.”

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The pear-tree said, —

“Young girl, hold your apron ; I will give you some pears.” And the young girl received from him the most delicious pears.

Afterwards she came to a plum-tree ; the plum-tree said to her, —

“Young girl, why are you crying so ?”

The young girl answered, —

“Have I not good reason to cry ? My step-mother gave me such a push that I fell into the well.”

The plum-tree said to her, —

“Hold your apron ; I will give you some plums ;” and he shook into her lap the most beautiful plums. And the good little girl was treated in the same way by the other trees.

At last she came to a grand castle all of gold, and she was still shedding bitter tears. A fair lady was looking out at the window ; she asked her, —

“Young girl, why are you crying ?”

“Have I not good reason to cry ? My step-mother gave me such a push that I fell into the well.”

“Come now,” said the lady, “you can spend the night with me ; but first tell me, where do you prefer to eat — with the little dog and the little cat, or with the gentleman and lady ?”

The young girl answered modestly, —

“With the little dog and the little cat. I should not like to be in any one’s way.”

And on this account they permitted her to eat with the lady and gentleman.

The lady said to her, —

“Where do you prefer to sleep— with the little dog and the little cat, or with the gentleman and lady?”

The young girl answered, —

“With the little dog and the little cat.”

And accordingly they permitted her to sleep with the gentleman and lady.

The next day the lady said to her, —

“How would you prefer to be driven back to your home?— in a carriage smeared with pitch and resin, or in one all of silver and gold?”

The young girl answered, —

“In one smeared with pitch and resin.”

But she was allowed to return in a carriage of silver and gold.

When she arrived at home, her half-sister, who was looking out of the window, began to clap her hands and cry out, —

“O! Bidi bidi boum!
My half-sister comes,
And heavily laden
With silver and gold.
I must go and help her unload.
O! Bidi bidi boum!”

When the wicked mother saw that the half-sister had become so distinguished, she said to her own child, —

“Come now, Annette! throw your spindle also into the well and jump in after it! Who knows? Perhaps the same thing will happen to you down there, and you will be able to come back in a golden carriage.”

But this one was a wicked and obstinate child. Her mother had scarcely finished speaking before the spindle was at the bottom of the well, and the little girl leaped after it and came into the large beautiful garden of which I have already spoken. The sun shone with a golden brightness, and the roses and lilies — oh! but it was perfectly splendid!

The little girl went to the pear-tree and said, —
“Come now, give me some pears also!”

But she waited a long time, and the pear-tree did not move.

She went a little farther and came to a plum-tree, and said to it, —

“Come, plum-tree, give me also some plums.”

But it gave her nothing, that is what the plum-tree did; what the other trees did, it is needless for me to tell you.

The fair lady was again looking out from her palace at the end of the garden, and said, —

“Young girl, where are you going? From

whence do you come? What does your little heart long for?"

"I wish to come in, I wish to eat, I wish to sleep in a little garden bed, and I wish to go back again in a little golden carriage."

The lady could scarcely help laughing, but she continued her questions:—

"With which do you prefer to eat — with dog and cat, or with lord and lady?"

"Why, with lord and lady, of course."

And consequently she was obliged, as a punishment, to eat with the dog and cat.

A little while afterwards the lady asked her again, —

"With which would you like best to sleep — with the dog and cat, or with the lord and lady?"

"Why, with the lord and lady, of course."

But who was obliged to sleep with the dog and cat? It was my wicked little girl.

The next morning when she got up, the lady said to her, —

"How would you prefer to go back to your home — in a carriage smeared with pitch and resin, or in the carriage of gold and silver?"

"In the gold carriage, certainly," cried she.

But for punishment, she was obliged to go back again in the carriage smeared with resin.

What did her mother say when she saw her

child return in the carriage smeared with pitch and resin, disgraced and scoffed at, and what did she look like then? Well, I should like to tell you about it; but my great-grandmother, who was so good as to tell me the story, was losing her memory, and could not remember any more.

AUGUSTE STOEBER, "Elsaessisches Volksbüchlein."

THE FAIRIES' SHIP.

A SAILORS' STORY.



ONCE upon a time there was, at Saint-Cast, a young captain who had no ship to command. He made application after application. He went to see the ship-owners, and offered his services; but although he was known to be a good sailor, he had no command given him. One day when he had been again to Saint-Malo, without being more successful than at other times, he started out late, and on foot, to return to his village; and when night came on, he was not far from the wood which crossed the main road.

“Ah!” said he, “I should have done better to stay and sleep at Saint-Malo; for I shall have to go through the wood of Pontual; and they say that after nightfall one is apt to encounter strange things there.”

He quickened his pace and entered the wood; when he was in the middle of it, he heard a

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noise, and having stopped to listen, he heard a voice which cried, "Help! help! save me!"

"Ah!" thought he, "it is perhaps some one whom the robbers are trying to kill; but it shall never be said that I left any creature to die without trying to help him."

He hastened to the spot from which the cries came, and saw a good woman who was defending herself as well as she could against five men, who were trying to kill her. He took her part, and between them they killed the robbers.

When they had gotten out of the wood, the old woman, who was a fairy, said to him, —

"Captain, you are brave, and you shall be rewarded for it. If I had wished, I could easily have killed all five of the robbers, for I have power enough for that; but I wanted to see if you were courageous, and ready to help poor people."

Then she disappeared; the captain continued his journey, and reached Saint-Cast without accident.

The next day a beautiful lady, whom he did not know, came to his house, and said to him, —

"I am the good woman to whose assistance you came yesterday in the wood of Pontual. I am a fairy, and I know that you were returning from Saint-Malo, where you had vainly applied for the command of a ship. It is needless for

you to make any more applications. I will give you the command of a ship — a splendid one ; the handsomest that ever was seen.”

The captain thanked the lady with all his heart ; then he invited her to dine with him.

When the meal was ended, she said to him, —

“ Now, you come with me ; I am one of the fairies of the Cavern of Saint-Briac, and near my grotto you will see your ship.”

The captain followed the lady ; and when they reached the seashore, she took him by the hand, and they walked together over the waves, as though they were on a high-road ; the water did not even wet the soles of their shoes. They arrived at the cavern, and the fairy showed the captain the ship she had designed for him. The hull was all of gold, the masts, also, as well as the yards and the pulleys, and the cordage was of twisted threads of gold. It was not yet quite ready ; and the goldsmiths of the cavern were busy finishing it.

It was so dazzling that the captain could scarcely look at it.

“ When will it be finished, this beautiful ship ? ” he asked of the fairy who had brought him there.

“ Why do you ask me that question ? ”

“ So as to have time to get up a crew to man the ship when it is finished.”

"Do not be disturbed," said the fairy; "your crew is ready, and I am going to show it to you."

She rubbed some salve round his eyes; immediately he saw at least thirty little male fairies of tiny size, who were dressed like admirals; and she said to him, pointing to them with her finger, —

"Captain, these are the little men who will be your sailors. In three days the ship will be ready; you can set out, and they will help you to manage it, for they are good sailors. Meanwhile, come and dine with me and the other inhabitants of the cavern."

The captain followed the fairy. She led him through a long suite of apartments bright as gold; and at last they came to a great hall, where a handsome table was set. Here the fairy women, with their husbands and sons, and the tiny male fairies, came to take their meals. The captain looked out of the window, and saw in a court-yard some of the male fairies, large and small, drilling with the sword and bayonet.

"Why," asked he, "are they drilling in this way?"

"They are our soldiers," answered the fairy, "and they are preparing to go to fight with the fairies of Chélin, who have declared war against us."

When the fairy men, large and small, had finished drilling, they made playful music with their swords ; then every one went into the hall to dine. That day there was a great feast at the cavern ; for the queen of the fairies had just given birth to a boy, and they celebrated his birth.

After the feast was over, the captain proposed to go ; the fairy who had brought him, and who was named Gladieuse, conducted him as far as the door of the grotto, and before leaving him, she said to him, —

“ Here are some boots which you must put on to cross the sea ; as long as you have them on, you will be able to go over land or sea, wherever you wish. To-morrow you must return here to take command of your ship.”

The captain thanked the fairy ; then having put on his boots, he walked over the waves of the sea as if on a highway, and arrived at Saint-Cast. But when he went into his house he found nothing there ; his parents, who had seen him cross the sea, believed him to be drowned, and they had removed his furniture. He went to ask them for it, but they took him, at first, for a ghost. When he had convinced them that he was a man of flesh and bone, he told them that he had taken command of a ship. He made them a present of his furniture ; then after hav-

ing embraced his father and mother, he went away.

He proceeded to the point of the island, and having put on his boots, he crossed the sea without getting wet. His ship was close by the cavern, all rigged and ready to set sail. He stepped on board, and the fairy Gladiouse, who was on the deck, said to him, —

“This ship will sail under the water, as well as on it, in the air as well as in the water, just as you wish.”

Then she went back to the land, and the sailors of the cavern came on board; immediately the wind swelled out the sails, and the ship started off like lightning.

It sailed as fast as the wind, which blew always right aft; they never had to tack about, they never had head winds, and there was no need of holding the helm nor of hauling in the sails; a fairy man, who was unseen, directed everything as he wished. At the end of a fortnight he steered the ship into a port, and the anchor was immediately thrown out.

The port was in an island where fairy men and women lived, and they heartily welcomed the captain and his crew.

The next day after their arrival in the island, while all the sailors were on shore, and the cap-

tain was alone on board, the fairy man appeared and said to him, —

“It is I, who by my will, have brought your ship into this port ; it is I who guided it here, and you had no trouble in steering it, because the wind was always right aft. Now you are to take on board some fairy men to help us fight the fairies of Chélin.”

“Very well, Mr. Fairy ; I shall go ashore at once and take the passengers aboard according to your orders.”

“As soon as they are on board,” said the fairy man, “you must set sail for Saint-Briac ; but I shall leave the ship, which, hereafter, will sail only under your own command. Here is a little whistle which I give you ; as soon as you reach the shore, you have only to whistle, and immediately your sailors and the fairy men who are to take part in the war will come on board.”

The captain went ashore on the island, and as soon as he had blown his whistle, five hundred fairy men, and the thirty tiny fairies that he had brought with him, jumped aboard. In less than ten minutes the ship spread her sails and went out of the port. During the whole voyage he had a wind right aft, and in less than three weeks from the time he set sail he arrived at Saint-Briac.

The five hundred fairy men disembarked, and

went into the cavern, where they were well received. Three days after they went to war against the fairies of Chélin; but they were not the stronger, and they asked for peace.

The war was ended, and there were great rejoicings at the cavern and at Saint-Briac; the captain carried the fairy men back to their island, then he went to Antwerp to take a load of sea-coal for the fairies. They were very much pleased with him, and when he returned, they paid him a hundred thousand francs for his voyage.

Two days after, the ship stood out to sea; for three whole years it sailed over the seas without touching at any land, and sometimes they were left without provisions; but then the captain made use of the ring that the fairy Gladiuse had given him, and he obtained as much of everything as he needed.

At the end of the third year they came in sight of a little island, and the captain and the tiny fairy sailors went ashore. Among the trees there were fruits of every kind; the brooks were of wine, cider, and all sorts of good things to drink, and the ground was covered with precious stones of gold and with diamonds. The tiny fairies tasted everything; then they loaded the ship with diamonds and precious stones of gold. Just as they were ready to leave they saw an old

fellow coming, so old that he looked as if his years numbered a thousand. He was the only inhabitant of the island, and he begged them to take him on board so that he could go to Saint-Briac.

He was so very, very ugly that the captain himself was afraid of him; and he was right, for it was a demon. As soon as the old fellow came on board he tried to take command of the ship; but the captain resisted him and forced him to obey.

They set sail again, and when they were on the broad sea they were attacked by pirates, who for a long time had been chasing the golden ship. At least two hundred of them leaped aboard, and the old demon took their side; but the tiny fairies killed them all, and also killed the devil. They threw the dead bodies into the sea; but the pirates who were left on their ship ordered the powder to be set on fire so as to blow themselves up with the golden ship. Then the captain said, —

“By the power of my ring, let my ship sail under the water as it does on top of it.”

Immediately the ship plunged under the sea, and the pirates could not do it any harm.

Since that time the demon, to whom all the race of fairies was subject, and who was coming to Saint-Briac to punish them, having been cut

to pieces by the tiny fairies, dare not command them any longer ; and since then neither fairy men nor women belong to him any more.

The golden ship continued its voyage and returned to the Cavern of Saint-Briac. The fairy men and women were so pleased with the load that the captain brought them, that they married him to the fairy Gladieuse, and he lived happily with her in the grotto.

I picked up this story at the little port of Saint-Cast (Côtes-du-Nord).

PAUL SÉBILLOT.

THE SHEPHERD WHO WON THE
KING'S DAUGHTER BY A
SINGLE WORD.

A TALE OF LOWER BRITANNY.



ONCE upon a time there was a king who never told a single lie in his life. As he heard the people about his court constantly saying to each other, "That is not true! You are a liar," he was very much displeased; so much so that he said one day, —

"I am astonished at you; a stranger who should hear you speak in this way would not fail to say that I am the king of liars. I do not wish to hear any more such language in my palace. He who hears me say to any one, no matter who he may be, 'You are a liar!'—well, I will give him the hand of my daughter."

A young shepherd, who was present at the time, having heard these words of the king, said to himself, "Good! we will see about this."

The old king loved to hear the old Giverziou and the new Soniou sung, and marvellous tales told. Often after supper he came into the kitchen, and took pleasure in listening to the songs and stories of his footmen. Each one sang or related something in turn.

“And you, young shepherd, do you know nothing?” said the king one evening.

“Oh, yes! my king,” answered the shepherd.

“Let us see what you know, then.”

And the shepherd told what follows:—

“One day, as I was going through a wood, I saw an enormous hare coming. I had in my hand a ball of wax; I threw it at the hare, and struck it just in the middle of the forehead, where it stuck. Then the hare ran faster than ever with the ball of wax on its forehead. He met another hare which was coming from an opposite direction; they struck against each other’s foreheads and stuck together so that they could not get apart, and thus I caught them very easily. How do you like that, sire?”

“Very much,” answered the king; “but go on.”

“Before coming to your court as a shepherd, sire, I was miller’s boy in my father’s mill, and I went every day with an ass to carry the flour to the customers. One day I had such a load on my ass that, upon my word, his spine broke!”

“Poor beast!” said the king.

“Then I went to a hedge near by, and with my knife I cut a hazel-stick, which I stuffed into the body of my ass to take the place of its spine. Then the animal got up and carried its load gently along to its destination as if no harm had happened to it. What do you say to that, sire?”

“That is very good; and what next?”

“The next morning I was very much astonished (for it was then the month of December) to see that branches, leaves, and even hazel-nuts had grown upon the hazel-stick; and when I took my ass out of the stable, the branches continued to grow up so very, very high that they reached up to the sky.”

“That is first-rate!” said the king; “but what happened after that?”

“Seeing that, I began to climb from branch to branch on the hazel-tree, so high and so safely that at last I reached the moon.”

“That is first-rate, first-rate! but go on.”

“There I saw some old women who were winnowing oats from the chaff and straw, and I stopped to look at them. But I soon got tired of looking at these old women, and wanted to descend to the earth again. But my ass had gone away, and I could no longer find the hazel-tree by which I had climbed up. What was to

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be done? Then I went to work to tie the oat straws together, head to head, so as to make a cord by which I could go down."

"This is certainly first-rate!" said the king; "and what next?"

"Unfortunately my cord was not long enough; it was too short by thirty or forty feet, so that I fell on a rock head-foremost, and so heavily that my head sank down into the rock as far as my shoulders."

"That is first-rate, first-rate; and what next?"

"I struggled so vigorously and successfully that my body became detached from my head, which latter remained buried in the rock. I ran at once to the mill to find an iron crow-bar, with which to pry my head out of the rock."

"Better and better!" said the king; "but what next?"

"When I returned, there was an enormous wolf that also wished to pull my head out of the rock, in order to eat it! I gave him a blow on the back with my crow-bar, but such a very, very heavy one, that a letter flew out of him!"

"Oh! a better one than that could not be told!" cried the king; "but what was written on that letter?"

"On that letter, my king, with all due respect to you, was written that your father had

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formerly been mill boy at my grandfather's mill."

"It's a lie, you young rascal!" cried the king, immediately rising up, furious.

"Holloa, sire! I have won!" said the shepherd quietly.

"How is that? What have you won?"

"Did not you say, my king, that you would willingly give the hand of the princess, your daughter, to the first one who would make you say, 'That is a lie,' or 'You are a liar'?"

"It is true," replied the king, growing calmer; "I did say so. A king should always keep his word; therefore your betrothal to my only daughter shall be celebrated tomorrow, and the wedding in a week!"

And thus it was that the shepherd won the king's daughter by a single word.

F. M. LUZEL, "Archives des Missions Scientifiques."



THE ENCHANTED RING.

A CORSICAN STORY.



BEFORE the invasion of the Saracens there were six brothers and their sister who were very, very poor; their parents were sick and not able to work. One day when they had been hunting for chestnuts in the neighboring wood and had scarcely been able to find any, the smallest said to his brothers, —

“I want to go out into the world to see if I can make a fortune. At the end of the week I will come back to tell you what has happened to me.”

And the little brother went away. He travelled for several days, and at last he saw a small house in the midst of a forest.

“At last,” said he to himself, “I shall be able to rest myself a few moments and eat a piece of bread.”

Tap! tap!

“Who is there?”

“It is I.”

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Seeing it was a man, the mistress of the house, who was a fairy, dropped her ring as if by mistake.

The little brother saw it and put it on his finger, saying, —

“Ah! what a beautiful ring!

But immediately his body was covered with hairs, two horns grew out from him, his ears became long, and his two hands were changed into the feet of a goat.

In fact, he was altogether changed into a goat.

“Baa! baa! baa!” said the little brother; but nothing could bring him back to his original shape.

The fairy tied him, put him down in the cellar, and gave him some very fresh grass.

Seeing that their brother did not come back, the other five wished to go and look for him.

They started out one after the other; but when they reached the fairy's house, they each put on the ring that she threw to them, and all shared their youngest brother's fate.

The sister wanted to go too.

She was beautiful and well formed, with blue eyes and black hair; her name was Milia.

As she was going along, the little sister came upon a large bird caught in a bush; it could not get out in spite of all its efforts.

The young girl took her knife, cut off the

briers and set free the bird, which flew away, saying, —

“Thanks, thanks, Milia; thanks, thanks, Milia.”

The latter continued her journey; as night came on, she sat down under a tree to eat a piece of bread.

As she was making her frugal meal, she saw a poor old woman coming who could scarcely drag herself along.

Milia ran to meet her, saying to her, —

“My good mother, lean on me; come rest yourself a moment and have part of the small quantity of bread that I have left.”

Milia had scarcely uttered these words when she was completely dazzled. The old woman was changed suddenly into a beautiful fairy, adorned with a lovely necklace of fine pearls, and dressed in a magnificent robe of blue and rose-color, all embroidered with gold.

“What do you wish for? I am powerful; ask, and it shall be granted you.”

“I wish to know where my brothers are; are they dead or alive?”

“Your brothers are living, but it will be very difficult for you to recognize them. To find them you have only to go on straight before you. They are shut up in the first house that you will find on your way.”

“Thanks, good fairy.”

And Milia set out.

After having walked hours and hours, the little sister saw a house.

“That is where they are, doubtless,” she thought, and she walked more rapidly.

Milia was not more than fifty paces from it when the wicked fairy saw her.

She threw out her ring quickly.

But a large bird flew by and carried it off in its beak.

It was the bird that the young girl had set free.

Tap ! tap !

“Come in.”

Milia entered.

“Sit down a moment, while I go to find you something to eat ; you must be tired,” said the old woman to her ; then she went out.

Then the bird came and tapped at the window.

“Milia, take nothing from that wicked old woman, or you will be turned to stone. Your brothers, changed to goats, are shut up in the cellar.”

The old fairy came in at that moment.

“Here, eat a piece of this cake and drink a little of this exquisite wine.”

“Thanks, madam ; I am neither hungry nor thirsty.”

“What, after such a long journey ?”

"I do not want anything; if you wish to please me, let me sleep quietly in this corner."

"Make yourself comfortable, my good child."

However, the fairy thought, —

"This little one must not escape me; I wish to have her at all hazards."

And she went for a necklace of gold and robes changeable as the sky.

"Since you will not accept anything to eat, take these things, at least; for it must not be said that any one rests at my house without taking away some token of my good will."

"What do you wish a poor girl to do with all these wonderful things? Robes and necklace would soon be torn up among the bushes through which I must pass."

Seeing that all her designs were baffled, the perfidious fairy stretched herself on her bed and slept soundly.

The bird came again and tapped at the window.

"Milia, wake up! wake up, Milia!"

"What do you want?"

"Kill that wicked fairy, or she will soon find means to destroy you. Then take the chemise that she wears, put it on yourself, and you will possess her magic power."

Milia got up softly, and taking a knife which was on the table, killed the wicked old woman;

then she undressed her, took her chemise and put it on herself.

Her mind was enlightened in a moment. A number of things which she had thought impenetrable mysteries were now explained to her.

Before trying her power, Milia went over the whole house. In a hall were a number of statues, two of which were in a niche. They were a king and queen laid under a spell by the magician.

Then Milia went down into the cellar. There she saw six goats, extremely emaciated, though they had an abundance of food.

“Ah, poor beasts! and to think they are my brothers!”

And Milia, good sister that she was, began to cry. She would have restored them to their original shape at that moment, but she did not know how to manage it.

Happily, she remembered that on the fairy's chemise was written, —

“Chemise, chemise, until death,
Obey me in everything.”

Milia repeated these words, then thought, —

“Chemise, chemise, cause these goats to become men again, as they were before!”

And immediately the goats lost their hair,

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their horns fell off, and their feet were changed into the two hands and feet of a man.

Imagine Milia's joy! She threw herself on her brothers' necks, for she knew them at once; and for a long time they embraced each other joyfully.

"Where is the old fairy who changed us to beasts?"

"She is dead; and I have all her power."

"How did it happen? In what does this power reside?"

"I cannot tell you my secret. I am going now to set free all those who are in this castle."

This was quickly done.

The king and the queen and all the other persons thanked Milia very much, as you may suppose. They wished to bestow castles and villas on her; but she refused them all. Had she not the fairy's chemise to put her in possession of all that she desired?

By means of her magic power the young girl made handsome carriages come up out of the ground, and distributed them among all those who were there, so that they could return to their homes.

She bestowed one of them upon herself, and harnessed to it two beautiful horses as fleet as the wind.

Thus she went back to the home of her par-

ents, who were amazed to see her with her brothers in such an equipage.

“Ah! our daughter has a fortune,” said they to themselves.

And they were happy.

Unfortunately, the chemise became so very, very dirty that one day Milia wanted to have it washed.

It was spread in the sun to dry.

A tramp saw it, seized upon it, and ran away.

They sought for it a long time in vain; they could never find it.

Milia died in despair at having lost the precious chemise from which she derived all her power.

As for her brothers, who went in search of the thief, nothing more was heard of them. If I learn anything about them, you may be sure I will tell you of it.

ORTOLI, “Contes de l’Ile de Corse.”

THE SIREN OF LA FRESNAYE.

A STORY OF UPPER BRITANNY.

ONCE upon a time there was in the woods of the isle of Aval, in the parish of Saint-Cast, a wooden-shoe maker, who lived with his wife and two children in a poor little mud hut which he had built himself by the seashore, just at the end of the valley. There are those who say that the ruins of it may still be seen; but that is hardly credible, for it is a long time since then, and usually the cabins of wooden-shoe makers do not last very long.

They were not rich; for they had only their work to live on; and you know wooden-shoe makers rarely buy small farms. The husband dug out the wooden shoes, his wife helped him as well as she could, and the little boy and girl, who were not large enough to work in the wood, went every day to fish along the shore.

One day when the little boy was fishing among the rocks, he heard suddenly a sweet,

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musical song, and looking in the direction from which it seemed to come, he saw the Siren, who was singing as she swam among the waves; and around her the sea was so brilliant that it dazzled you to look at it.

He ran very quickly to the cabin where his father was working.

"Ah, papa!" said he to him, "do come and see! there is a fish in the bay of Port-au-Moulin more beautiful than any I have ever seen; it sings, and it shines like gold!"

"Like fire, papa," added the little girl, who had seen it also.

The wooden-shoe maker and his wife hastened to follow their children; but when they reached the shore, the Siren had disappeared; they saw nothing on the sea and heard no singing.

"It was nothing," said the mother; "the children dreamed it all."

But the wooden-shoe maker was not so incredulous as his wife. The next morning he said to the children, —

"Go back again to the edge of the water, and watch attentively to see if the beautiful singing fish will show herself again."

The little boy went out; but as soon as he had gone a few steps from the cabin he ran back, crying out, —

“Ah, papa! the beautiful fish has returned; you can hear it sing from here.”

When they went outside, they heard a delicious music in the distance; and they hastened to go to the seashore, where they saw the Siren, who sang as she played about on the waves, and leaped sometimes more than three feet above the water.

“It is not an ordinary fish,” said the wooden-shoe maker; “it looks like a human being.”

“Ah!” said his wife, “we must get the lines; perhaps you can catch it. I should like very much to see it close by.”

They all went to work to get the lines ready; and when the sea was high, they set them; but in vain. They put the choicest bait on the hook; the singing fish did not come to take it, although they saw it every day.

The wooden-shoe maker thought often of the wonderful fish, and devised means to possess himself of it. One day as he was walking on the shore, he saw the Siren, who, cradled by the waves, and fast asleep, was floating at a short distance from the shore. He went into the water without making any noise, and slipped a large basket that he had, under her, and carried her off in it to the land without waking her.

She was about the size of a child of eight years. She had golden hair on her head, and

her white and polished body resembled that of a woman ; but instead of feet she had fins, and her body ended with the tail of a fish.

“Ah!” said the wooden-shoe maker, as he looked at her, “my little brats did not lie ; it is really the most curious thing that ever was seen. It is doubtless a siren ; for it is half woman and half fish.”

He made these reflections on his way back to his cabin, and he had almost reached it when the Siren awoke and said to him, —

“Ah, wooden-shoe maker! you surprised me while I was asleep ; I beg you to take me back to the water, now that you have seen me close, and I will protect you, you and all your family, as long as you live.”

“No,” answered the wooden-shoe maker ; “I will not put you back into the sea ; I have watched for you for a long time, and so have my wife and children. I am going to take you to the house so that they can see you ; but when you have sung a song, if my wife wishes, I will carry you back to the place from which I took you.”

He called his wife, who was named Olérie, and cried to her, —

“Olérie, come here and see, and bring the children ; I have the singer in my basket.”

The good woman ran, full of joy, followed by

the little boy and girl, and began to examine the Siren.

“She asks to be taken back to the water,” said the wooden-shoe maker; “she will sing you a song first. Do you agree to that?”

“No,” she answered; “it is too beautiful a fish; I have never seen one like it; we must eat it.”

“Ah!” said the Siren, “if you feed upon my flesh, if you feast upon my fish, you will never eat anything else in this world, for you will perish. I am not a fish like the others; I am the Siren of Fresnaye, and your husband surprised me while I was sleeping. Ask of me what you will, and I will grant it, for I have the power of a fairy. But make haste to carry me back to the sea, and do not lose any time; I am already growing weak and I shall soon die.”

“What do you say about it?” asked Olérie of her husband.

“If you consent to it, I am very willing to put her back into the sea; it would be a shame to kill her, she is so pretty and has never done any harm to any one.”

They each took hold of one end of the basket, and carried the Siren gently to the sea, and let her plunge into it again without thinking of asking anything of her.

When she felt the freshness of the water, she shouted with laughter, for joy that she was no longer in captivity, and she said to the wooden-shoe maker, —

“What do you ask of me now?”

“I ask,” said he, “for some bread, some fish, and clothing for my wife and my children.”

“You shall have all that in twenty-four hours,” said the Siren.

“I should like very well also,” added he, “if it is in your power, to have a little money to pay my master, for I am not at all rich.”

The Siren did not make any reply, but she began to flap the water with her fins, and each time that she struck the waves they flashed up in little drops, and all that went up in the air became gold which fell down at the feet of the wooden-shoe maker. The shore was soon covered with it; then she became still and said to the wooden-shoe maker and his wife, —

“All that is for you, good people; you can pick it up.”

They thanked the Siren, who went off singing; then they filled their pockets with gold and returned to their cabin very happy.

When the twenty-four hours had passed, Olé-rie and her husband returned to the seashore to look for the clothing that the Siren had promised them. They heard her singing in the

distance, and soon they saw her glide over the waves and come near them, always singing her sweet and melodious song. She flapped the water with her fins ; a large wave broke into foam on the strand, and rolled back, leaving at the feet of the wooden-shoe maker a very large and tightly closed chest. Then the Siren leaped three times out of the water and said to the wooden-shoe maker, —

“ You will find in this chest what I promised you ; good by, till I see you again, you who have been so good to me ! When you want some fish, do not forget this shore.”

They took the chest away with them to their house ; it contained good clothing made to fit them ; and every time that they or their children wanted to catch fish, they went to the seashore, and in a few moments they caught an abundance.

For a whole year they did not see the Siren ; their purse grew lighter meanwhile, and the lighter it grew, the more they thought of the Siren. They often went to the seashore, listening and hoping to hear her voice.

One day they heard her singing in the distance ; they ran at once to the shore, and were very glad to see her gliding over the waves ; all along where she had passed, the sea gleamed like a pathway of fire.

When she came within a little distance, the wooden-shoe maker said to her, —

“My Siren, I am very glad to see you again ; if you will, you can do me a great service, for I have no longer either bread or money.”

“I will give you,” said the Siren, “enough to fill your purse again.”

After saying these words, she unfolded her fins, and beating the water around her, she sent to the shore a wave of gold and silver.

“With that,” said she, “you can buy all you need ; but if you wish to keep it, use it well. Hereafter you will see me no more ; I am going to leave this country and go to India.”

The Siren went away after having said this ; since then no one has ever seen her, or heard her sing in the bay of Fresnaye.

PAUL SÉBILLOT, “Contes des Paysans et des Pêcheurs.”

THE LITTLE HUNCHBACK.

A LORRAINE STORY.



ONCE there was a king who had three sons ; but he treated only the first two as his sons : the youngest was a hunchback ; only his mother loved him.

One day the king called the oldest to him and said to him, —

“My son, I should like to have the water which restores youth.”

“My father, I will go after it.”

The king gave him a beautiful carriage drawn by four horses, and as much gold and silver as he wanted, and the young man started on his journey.

He had gone two hundred leagues on the way, when he met a shepherd, who said to him, —

“Prince, my handsome prince, would you help me to set free one of my sheep which is caught in a thicket?”

“You should not have let it go there,” replied the prince; “I have no time to lose.”

When he arrived at Peking, he went to a fine hotel, had his horse taken out, and ordered a good dinner. He soon made friends, and thought no more of continuing his journey.

At the end of six months the king, seeing that he did not return, called his second son, and asked him to go and seek for the water that restored youth. He gave him a handsome carriage, drawn by four horses, covered with pearls and diamonds. The young man got into it and started off. After having gone two hundred leagues, he met the shepherd, who said to him,—

“Prince, my handsome prince, would you help me to set free one of my sheep which is caught in a thicket?”

“For whom do you take me?” answered the prince. “You should not have let it go there.”

He arrived at Peking, where he lodged in the same hotel as his brother. He also soon made friends and did not think of going any farther. The king waited a year, and seeing that he did not return, he said to himself: “I have no more children! Who, then, will wear my crown?” He thought no more of the little hunchback than if he had not been in the world.

Meanwhile the latter fell sick. They sent for a physician; the young prince told him that he was

ill of grief seeing that his father did not love him, and that he wished very much to travel. The physician repeated these words to the king, who came to see his son.

“My father,” said the little hunchback to him, “I would like to go after the water that restores youth, and I will not do as my brothers did; I will bring it back with me.”

“You can go if you wish,” said the king.

He gave him an old carriage that had only three wheels, an old horse that had only three legs, very little money, — though the queen added something to that, — and the prince set out.

After having gone two hundred leagues, he met the shepherd, who said to him, —

“Prince, my handsome prince, would you help me to set free one of my sheep which is caught in a thicket?”

“Willingly,” said the prince.

And he helped the shepherd to set free his sheep. When he had gone away, the shepherd, remembering that he had given him nothing for his trouble, called him back and said to him, —

“Prince, I forgot to reward you. Here, take these arrows; all that these arrows pierce will be well pierced. Here is a flageolet; all who hear it will dance.”

The prince went on his way and arrived at Peking. When he passed by the hotel where his

brothers lodged, the latter, who were on the steps, were ashamed of him and went into the house. The poor little hunchback alighted at a miserable inn, where he unhitched his horse himself; then he took with him a guide to show him the city. As he was walking along he saw a dead man who had been left unburied.

“Why do they not bury this man?” asked he.

“Because he had a great many creditors and could not pay them.”

“If they were paid for him, would they have him buried?”

“Yes, certainly.”

The prince sent for the creditors, paid the dead man's debts, and gave the money to have him buried. After that he continued his journey. One day a good old woman received him in her little house and gave him something to eat and drink; he paid her generously and then went on farther.

When he had gone two hundred leagues more, he found that all his money was gone and he had no longer anything to eat. His horse was more fortunate than himself; he could browse a little on the grass along the road. A fox passed by; the prince was about to let fly one of his arrows at him, when the fox cried to him,—

“Wretch! what are you going to do? would you kill me?”

The prince, seized with fright, put his arrow back into the quiver. Then the fox gave him a napkin in which he found something to eat and drink, and said to him, —

“You are looking for the water that restores youth? It is in that castle very far below there. The castle is guarded by an ogre, by tigers, and by lions. To reach it, it is necessary to cross a river; on this river you will see a boat, which the same man has steered for eighteen hundred years. Be very careful to enter the boat feet foremost; for if you should get in backwards, you would take the man’s place forever. When you reach the castle, do not allow yourself to be charmed by the magnificence that you will find there. You will see in the stables mules adorned with plates of gold: take the ugliest one: you will see also two green birds: take the ugliest one.”

The prince was careful to enter the boat feet foremost, and arrived at the castle; he was just going to take the mule and the bird when the ogre came in.

“What are you doing here?” said the ogre to him.

The prince excused himself, bowed to him, and asked his pardon. The ogre said to him, —

“I will not eat you; you are too thin.”

He gave him something to eat and to drink,

and the prince remained at the castle, where he had everything he wanted. The ogre sent him to fight his enemies, beasts like himself; the prince, thanks to his arrows, won the fight and brought back the skins. He fought five or six times and was always conqueror.

Now there was in the castle a princess whom the ogre wished to marry, but who did not want him. One day, when the prince had won a great fight, he took a notion to play a tune on his flageolet. The princess was at table with the ogre; as they heard the marvellous flageolet, they began to dance together, without knowing at first whence the music came. When the ogre saw that it was the prince who was playing, he made him come to the table, and said to him, —

“Ask me what you will; I will grant it.”

He thought surely that the prince would ask of him permission to go away.

“I ask,” said the prince, “for what is most beautiful here, and for permission to go over the castle three times.”

The ogre consented to it. There was so much gold in the castle that they did not know what to do with it; but the prince did not touch it: he took the uglier of the two green birds, and the ugliest mule, which stepped seven leagues at a time, and did not forget a vial of

the water which restores youth ; then he put the princess, who was a party to the whole thing, on the mule. Instead of going over the castle three times, he only went twice and ran off with the princess. As soon as the ogre found it out, he went in pursuit of them, but he could not catch them.

The young man met the fox the second time ; and the fox said to him, —

“ If you see any one in trouble, be sure not to help them out.”

A little farther on, he was very kindly received by the good old woman in her little house. At last he arrived at Pekin with the princess. On one of the squares there was a gallows erected.

“ For whom is that gallows ? ” asked the prince.

He was told that it was for two young strangers who were to be hung that day. At that moment the condemned men were brought out ; he recognized his brothers. He asked what their crime was.

He was told that they had contracted debts which they were not able to pay.

The young man assembled the creditors, paid them, and set his brothers free ; then they set out together on the road to their father's kingdom. The little hunchback had given the mule to his oldest brother ; to the other, the

green bird ; and the water which restores youth, he kept for himself and the princess. Still his brothers were not satisfied ; together they sought out opportunities to get rid of him, and the princess, who saw their jealousy, was distressed on account of it.

One day as they were passing by a well which was three hundred feet deep, the two elder brothers said to the youngest, —

“Look at that beautiful well !”

And as he leaned over to look, they pushed him in and carried off the princess, the mule, and the bird. When they arrived at the castle, the princess was in a fainting condition ; the mule and the bird were dejected. They put the mule in an old stable, the bird in an old cage. The water could not restore the king's youth : they put it in a corner among the old drugs.

Meanwhile the poor prince sent up loud cries from the bottom of the well ; the fox hastened to him and went down into the well.

“I charged you especially not to help any one out of trouble. However, I am going to help you to get out of this place ; hold fast to my tail.”

The young man did as he was told, and the fox climbed up ; he had almost reached the top when his tail broke, and the young man fell back to the bottom of the well. The fox tied

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his tail on again, rubbing it with grease, and took the prince on his back. Once more in the open air, he straightened him up, and the young man, disburdened of his hunch, became an elegant prince.

He went to the castle of the king, his father, and had himself announced as a great physician, saying that he could cure the king and the princess. At first he went into the stable; at once the mule took on a handsome hide and began to neigh: he approached the bird; it resumed its beautiful plumage and began to sing. He gave his father some of the water which restores youth; the king became young again immediately and got up out of his sick-bed. The princess was restored to health as soon as she saw the young man. Then the prince made himself known to his father and told him what had happened; then the bird spoke in its turn and told the whole story over again.

The elder sons of the king were out hunting. The king had their young brother concealed behind the door; and when they came in, he said to them, —

“I have just heard of a strange adventure which took place in one of the cities of my kingdom. Three young men were walking together on the shore of the lake; two of them threw their

companion into the lake. Give Solomon's judgment ; what punishment do these men deserve?"

"They deserve death."

"Miserable creatures ! then you also deserve it. You shall not be thrown into the water, but you shall be burned."

The sentence was executed. Afterwards they made a great feast, and the young prince married the princess.

EMMANUEL COSQUIN, "Contes Populaires Lorrains."

THE PRINCESS OF TRONKOLAINE.

A STORY OF LOWER BRITANNY.



ONCE upon a time there was a poor coal-man who had already had twenty-five children baptized. God sent him the twenty-sixth, and he set out to look for a godfather and godmother for it. He saw the king pass in his carriage, and knelt down in the mud to greet him. The king threw him a piece of gold.

"This is not what I am in search of at this moment, although I am in great need of it," said the coal-man; "I want a godfather for the twenty-sixth child that my wife has just presented me."

"Twenty-six children, my poor man!" exclaimed the king. "Ah! well! come to the church to-morrow with your child and a godmother, and I will be the godfather, myself."

The coal-man was promptly at the appointed place; he took with him the godmother, and the king arrived also at the hour agreed upon.

The child was baptized, and named Louis. The godfather gave the father a purse full of gold and told him to send his son to school when he was ten years old. He gave him also half of a platine, keeping the other half himself, and charging him to give it to his son when he should have reached the age of eighteen, to bring it back to him at his court at Paris. He would recognize him by this sign. Then he went away.

The child was put to school when he was ten years old, and as he was intelligent, he made rapid progress. When he was eighteen, his father gave him the half-platine, and told him to go and take it to his godfather, the king of France, at his palace in Paris. Until then he had concealed from him who his godfather was. He gave him also one of his horses, a jade used for hauling coal, and the young man set out.

As he was going along a long and narrow street, he met a little old woman, bending over her stick, who said to him, —

“Good morning, Louis, godson of the king of France.”

“Good morning, grandmother,” answered Louis, astonished at being known to the old woman.

“Almost immediately, my child,” said the latter, “you will come to a spring by the roadside,

and you will see some one there who will invite you to get down from your horse and quench your thirst ; do not listen to him, but go on your way."

"Thanks, grandmother," answered the young man. And he passed along.

Sure enough, a moment after, he came to a spring near which there was a person of disagreeable countenance, who cried to him, —

"Come, Louis ! stop a moment, and get down from your horse."

"I have not time," answered Louis ; "I am in a hurry."

"Come, I tell you, quench your thirst at this spring, — the water is delicious, — and converse a little ; you do not recognize me, then — one of your schoolmates ?"

Louis, hearing these last words, got down from his horse ; but he did not recognize the pretended schoolmate. Nevertheless, he started to drink from the spring, and as he was leaning over the water to drink out of the hollow of his hand, the other, with one hunch of his shoulder, threw him into it ; then he took away his half-platine, mounted his horse and departed. Poor Louis got out of the water as well as he could and began to run after the thief. The horse was old and foundered, so that at last he overtook him, and they entered the courtyard of the king's

palace together. The king, at sight of the half-platine, had no doubt that the bearer of it was his godson, and welcomed him heartily, although he thought him ill-looking. He asked him also, who the young man was who accompanied him.

"That is a young countryman, godfather," replied he, "who followed me, hoping to find employment at your court."

"Very well," answered the king; "occupation shall be found for him."

He was, in fact, employed as a stable-boy, while the other followed the king everywhere, dressed like a prince, and had nothing to do every day but eat, drink, and go out walking.

Very soon the pretended godson, wishing to get rid of Louis, the sight of whom annoyed him, said to the king one day, —

"If you could only know, godfather, what the stable-boy from my country boasts that he will do!"

"What does he boast that he will do?" asked the king.

"That he will go and ask the sun why he is red when he rises in the morning."

"Indeed? Very well; let him go, for I am really very curious to know why."

And poor Louis was obliged to start off to go to see the sun, although he declared that he had never said anything of the sort.

As he was going sadly along by the sea-shore, he met a venerable old man, who asked him, —

“Where are you going, my son?”

“Truly, grandfather,” he replied, “I do not know at all. I was told that, under pain of death, I should find out from the sun why he is so red when he rises in the morning, and I do not know where to find the sun.”

“Well! my son, I will help you to find him.” And showing him a wooden horse, he said, —

“Jump on this horse, which will rise in the air, at your command, and carry you to the foot of a mountain on the summit of which is the castle of the sun. Leave the horse at the foot of the mountain, where you will find it again on your return, and go alone to the castle.”

Louis mounted the wooden horse, which rose at once into the air and put him down at the foot of a high mountain. He climbed the mountain with difficulty, and when at last he reached the summit, he saw a place so fine, so resplendent, that he was dazzled by it. It was the palace of the sun. He knocked at the door. An old woman came and opened it for him.

“Is my lord the sun at home?” asked he.

“No, my child; but he will soon return,” answered the old woman.

“I will wait for him, then.”

"But, my poor child, my son will be very hungry when he comes; he might very likely eat you up."

"I beg you, madam, do not let him eat me, for I must speak to him."

"Very well! come in at any rate, my boy, and I will try to manage it."

And he went in. The sun arrived a little while after, calling out, —

"I am hungry, I am very hungry, mother!" Then having sniffed the air: "I smell the smell of a Christian. There is a Christian here, and I am going to eat him."

"Oh, yes," said his mother; "it's very likely that I should give you *this* poor, pretty child to eat! *There* is your supper all ready; eat it quickly and keep silent, or look out for my stick!"

The sun hung his head, at this threat, like a timid child, and began to eat in silence. When he had finished, Louis, emboldened by seeing him so gentle, put this question to him, —

"I should like very much to know, my lord the sun, why you are so red, so handsome, when you rise in the morning."

"I will tell you willingly," answered the sun; "it is because the castle of the princess of Tronkolaine is near here, and she is so beautiful

that I have to show myself in all my splendor so as not to be surpassed by her."

"I am very much obliged, my lord the sun," answered Louis.

And he bowed low and went away. He went down the mountain again, mounted his wooden horse, which was waiting for him, and quickly returned to the king's court.

"Well!" said the latter to him, "have you really been all the way to the sun, and can you tell me now why he is red when he rises in the morning?"

"Yes, sire; I can tell you why."

"Let us hear it, then."

"It is in order not to be eclipsed by the Princess Tronkolaine, whose castle is near his own, and who is the most wonderful beauty in existence." The king appeared satisfied with the explanation.

But some time after that the false godson said again,—

"If you could know, godfather, how this stable-boy still brags!"

"What does he brag about?" asked the king.

"Of being able to bring the Princess Tronkolaine herself to your court so that you can marry her."

"Indeed! has he boasted of that? Very

well! he must do it, or death is his only portion."

And poor Louis was obliged to attempt this adventure, in spite of all his protestations of never having said any such thing. Fortunately for him, he met again on the road the unknown old man, who said to him, —

"Go back to the king, and tell him that in order to accomplish your enterprise you must have a ship loaded with wheat, bacon, and beef, that you may distribute these provisions among the kings of the ants, the sparrow-hawks, and the lions which you will meet on your way, and which, if you feast them well, will be useful to you later."

He obtained the ship loaded with provisions. Then the old man gave him besides a white stick, by means of which he could obtain a favorable wind from whatever direction he should turn it toward. He set sail, passed by the kingdoms of the ants, the sparrow-hawks, and the lions, and regaled all these animals as well as he could, and they all promised to come to his help as soon as he called them.

Then he landed on an island. In the middle of the island there was a magnificent castle. It was there that the princess of Tronkolaine dwelt. He saw her, beside a fountain, combing her blond hair with a golden comb, and a large

toothed comb of ivory. He plucked an orange from an orange-tree near by and threw it into the fountain. The princess turned, saw him, smiled at him, and told him to come forward. Then she led him to her castle, feasted him on exquisite meats and delicious fruits, and invited him to remain with her. At the end of a fortnight's stay at the castle Louis asked the princess if she would agree to follow him to the court of France.

"Willingly," she answered, "when you shall have done all the work there is to do here."

"Tell me, princess, what you wish me to do, and if it is possible, I will do it."

The next morning the princess took him to the barn of the castle, and showed him a great heap of mixed grain.

"There," said she, "is a heap of mixed grain, — wheat, rye, and barley. You must put each kind of grain in a pile by itself, without making a mistake in a single grain, and it must be done by sunset." Then she went away.

Louis called the ants to his assistance, and the sorting was done perfectly by the appointed hour. So when the princess came at sunset, she was very much astonished. She examined carefully, and not finding a single grain of a different sort in any one of the three piles, —

"It is very well done," said she.

“Will you come with me now, princess?” asked Louis of her again.

“Not yet; I have something else to ask of you first.”

Accordingly, the next morning, she gave him a wooden axe, and having led him into the great avenue of the castle, she said to him, showing him the great oaks, —

“You must cut down all these trees before sunset, with your wooden axe.” Then she went away.

As soon as the princess was gone, Louis called the lions to his assistance, and when she returned at sunset, there was not a single tree left standing in the avenue. Her astonishment was greater than before.

“Will you follow me now, princess?” asked Louis.

“I have still another task — a last test to give you,” she answered; “and if you get through it as successfully as the others, nothing shall then prevent me from following you.”

The next morning the princess led him to the foot of a high mountain, and said to him, —

“Here is a mountain which obscures my palace and prevents my seeing at a distance, and I desire that it shall disappear by the setting of the sun.” And she went away again.

This time Louis called the sparrow-hawks to

his assistance, and they were so numerous that with their beaks and claws they soon made the mountain disappear, and levelled down the earth. When the princess returned at sunset, —

“Well, princess, are you satisfied?” said Louis.

“Yes,” she replied, “you have not your equal on the earth; and now I will follow you where you will.”

Then she gave him a kiss. They went towards the sea after that. The ship in which Louis had come to the island was there waiting for him. They went aboard of her and reached the continent without hindrance. During the voyage, the princess let the key of her castle fall into the sea, without saying anything of it to Louis.

The old man was waiting for them on the other side of the water.

“Well, my son,” said he to Louis, “did you succeed?”

“Yes, grandfather, thanks to you, and may God bless you.”

When the princess arrived at the court, the old king was so charmed with her beauty, that he wished to marry her immediately.

“Holloa!” said she then, “I did not come here for an old gray-beard like you, nor for this other creature,” and she pointed to the pretended godson, “whom you believe to be your

godson, and who is only a demon! Here is your real godson, and it is he who shall be my husband." And she pointed to Louis. "Now, have the furnace heated, and let this demon be thrown into it."

No sooner said than done. And as the demon, otherwise the pretended godson, uttered fearful cries, and tried to get out of the furnace, they sent for a young woman with her first child, and with her wedding ring, which she presented to him at the opening of the furnace when he tried to get out, she forced him to stay inside. Then he cried out, —

"If I had remained at the court only a year, I should have reduced the kingdom to a hopeless condition."

Then Louis married the Princess Tronkolaine, and he succeeded to the throne of the old king, his godfather, who had no children. He brought his old father and mother to the court, and also his brothers and his sisters, whom he established very magnificently.

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