JULIEN VINSON, WENTWORTH WEBSTER

BASQUE LEGENDS; WITH AN ESSAY ON THE BASQUE LANGUAGE

Wentworth Webster

Basque Legends; With an Essay on the Basque Language

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Introduction

The study of the recent science of Comparative Mythology is one of the most popular and attractive of minor scientific pursuits. It deals with a subject-matter which has interested most of us at one period of our lives, and turns the delight of our childhood into a charm and recreation for maturer age. Nor is it without more useful lessons. In it we see more clearly than perhaps elsewhere the reciprocal influence, which none can wholly escape, of words and language upon thought, and again of thought and fancy upon words and language; how mere words and syllables may modify both conception and belief; how the metaphor, which at first presented an object more clearly and vividly to the mind than any more direct form of speech could do, soon confuses and at last wholly distorts the original idea, and buries its meaning under a new and foreign superstructure. We may mark here, too, by numerous examples, how slowly the human mind rises to the conception of any abstract truth, and how continually it falls back upon the concrete fact which it is compelled to picture to itself in order to state in words the simplest mental abstraction. The phrase, "The dawn flies before the sun," passing into the myth of Daphne and Apollo, is a lesson in psychology no less than in philology and in comparative mythology.

Now, both the interest and the value of these studies are enhanced in proportion as they become complete. Our conclusions approach nearer to certainty, and will gradually pass from theory to demonstration, as we find the same legends and modes of thought and expression on natural phenomena constantly reappearing among the most distant and the most isolated peoples, in languages which in their complex forms tell of the infancy of human speech, and also in those whose worn-down frame speaks of the world's old age.

Of the peoples now settled in Western Europe, the Basques are those which are the most separate from other populations; distinct in language, they represent, in a more or less mixed state, some older stratum of European ethnology. Their language, too, as regards the mass of the people, is still practically unwritten.[1] Here there is a chance of finding legends in a purer and older form than among any other European people; and in what they have borrowed from others, we may have an almost unique crucial test of the time which it takes for such traditions to pass orally from people of one language to another and totally different one. None of these legends have been published or even noticed till within the last two years, when M. d'Abbadie read the legend of the Tartaro before the Société des Sciences et des Arts de Bayonne, and M. Cerquand his "Légendes et Récits Populaires du Pays Basque," before the sister society at Pau.[2]

Of course we must expect to find such legends very much altered, and in a state of almost inextricable confusion, and this not only through forgetfulness, and through the lapse of time since their origin, not only by the influence of a total change of religion, but they are also mingled and inter-penetrated with totally new ideas; the old and the new will be found side by side in striking and sometimes grotesque contrast. As in Campbell's "Tales of the West Highlands," personages of mythical antiquity go to kirk, and indulge in other decidedly post-Reformation practices, so in these

[1] See on this head M. Vinson's Essay in Appendix.

[2] The second part of M. Cerquand's "Légendes et Récits Populaires du Pays Basque" (Pau, 1876), appeared while the present work was passing through the press. It is chiefly occupied with legends of Basa-Jaun and Lamiñak.

Basque tales the reader must not be startled by the introduction of maize and tobacco, of cannon and gunpowder, of dances at the mairie, and the use of the guillotine, in stories which, perhaps, originally told of the movements of the stars, of the wars of the forces of the atmosphere, of the bright beauty of the rising, or of the glowing glory of the setting sun.[3] The body is the same in all ages, but the dress varies with the changing fashions. To borrow an illustration from a slightly older science, this is not a simple case of contorted and overlying strata to be restored to their original order, but rather of strata worn down, reconstructed, and deposited anew, and even modified in their latest stage by the interference of human action. And thus our problem becomes an exceedingly complex and difficult one, and our readers must not be disappointed if our conclusions are not so clear and positive as might be wished. The present is merely a tentative, and not, in any sense, a final essay towards its solution.

How are these legends told now, and how have they been preserved? They are told by the Basque peasants, either when neighbours meet—after the fashion made familiar to us by American novelists in the "Husking Bee"—for the purpose of stripping the husks from the ears of maize, an operation generally performed in one or two long sessions; or at the prolonged wedding and other feasts, of which we have evidence in the tales themselves, or else in the long nights round the wintry hearth of their lonely dwellings. For it is one of the charms of the Basque land that the houses are scattered all over the face of the country, instead of being collected into crowded villages; and it is, perhaps, to this fact chiefly that we owe the preservation of so much old-world lore, and of primitive ideas, among this people. The reader must not be surprised at the length of some of our specimens. The details of the incidents of the longest are religiously preserved and, as told at home, they are probably more lengthy (as anyone will understand who has ever taken anything down from recitation) than as here given. Many an unlettered Basque peasant could serve an irritable stranger as Glendower did Hotspur, when he kept him "at least nine hours in reckoning up the several devils' names that were his lackeys."

In La Soule the "Pastorales," or Basque dramas, which last from six to eight hours of uninterrupted action, are learnt in the same way by word of mouth during the long evenings of winter.

These legends are still most thoroughly believed in. They still form part of the faith of these simple people—not at all, we need hardly say, in the use of mythological or atmospheric allegory, but as narratives of veritable fact. They believe them as they do the histories of the Bible or the "Lives of the Saints." In fact, the problem of reconciling religion and science presents itself to their minds in this strange guise—how to reconcile these narratives with those of the Bible and of the Church. The general solution is that they happened before the time of which the Bible speaks, or before Adam fell. They are "Lege zaharreko istorriguak"—"histories of the ancient law"—by which is apparently meant the time before Christianity. "This happened, sir, in the time when all animals and all things could speak," was said again and again by our narrators at the commencement of their story; not one doubted the literal truth of what they told. Their naïve good faith occasionally severely tested our own gravity. Appeal was often made to our supposed superior knowledge to confirm the facts. The varying tone of the voice told how truly the speakers sympathised with what they uttered. At times sobs almost interrupted utterance, when the frequent apostrophe came: "Think how this poor so-and-so must have suffered!" More often bursts of laughter at traditional jokes, too poor to raise a smile on less unsophisticated lips, broke the recital. Very determined, too, is their adherence to what they believe to be the genuine text of these old tales. "I don't understand it, but the history says so;" "It is so;" "The story says so," was positively affirmed again and again—e.g., in one of the Peau d'Ane or Cinderella stories, when the lady has dazzled her admirer by her dress of silver (moonlight?), then of gold (sunlight?), then of diamonds (dew-drops?), at last, on the wedding-day, the bride and

[3] Not that we suppose all these tales to be atmospheric myths; we adopt this only as the provisional hypothesis which appears at present to cover the largest amount of facts. It seems certainly to be a "vera causa" in some cases; but still it is only one of several possible "veræ causæ," and is not to be applied to all.

bridegroom dress each other. “I don’t know why,” interrupted the story-teller, “but the story says so.” Could anything tell more quaintly of the marriage of the sun and dawn? The sun decking the morning clouds with his light and beauty, and they again robing him in their soft and tender colouring.

But we must pass on to the tales themselves. None of these, we think, will be found to be genuinely or exclusively Basque; the oldest we take to be those most widely known, and which are most distorted. The heads under which we have arranged them are: (1) Legends of the Tartaro, or Cyclops; (2) of the Heren-Suge, the Seven-Headed Serpent; (3) of purely Animal Tales, which are neither fables nor allegories; (4) of Basa-Jauna, Basa-Andre, and of the Lamiñak, or Fairies; (5) Tales of Witchcraft; (6) those which, for want of a better name, we have entitled Contes des Fées, in which the fairy is an Eastern magician—these we have divided into sections, (a) those which resemble the Keltic and other tales, and (b) those which are probably borrowed directly from the French; our last division (7), Religious Tales and Legends, are probably from mediæval sources common to Latin Christianity, but they are interesting as specimens of the tales which probably delighted the highest born of our own ancestors in the middle ages, and now linger only among the peasantry in out-of-the-way corners of Europe. Some of these tales seem to us to be more gracefully told, and have more of human interest in them, than any of the others.

We fear scientific men will be disappointed in this collection. Notwithstanding that we have been careful to collect from those who know the Basque only, or who certainly knew only Basque when they first learnt these tales, yet they are evidently much mixed with French and Spanish. Our translations are literal to baldness; the only liberty we have taken is in softening down the exceeding directness and grossness of some portions. Not one tale is in the least licentious—but the Basque language calls a spade a spade, and not an implement of husbandry.[4] The Carlist war of the last four years has prevented our getting any legends from the Spanish Basque provinces, and has even to some extent hindered our work in the French Pays Basque, by providing an almost exclusive object of interest. In the more remote districts of the Pays Basque itself, which we have not been able to revisit since we commenced this collection, purer forms of some of these legends may be found, and others of which we have no example;[5] but these which we give are really representative. Though collected mainly in the neighbourhood of St. Jean de Luz, we have tested them by enquiry of natives of all the provinces, and find that they are equally well known in La Soule and in Basse Navarre as in the Labourd. We never met with a Basque peasant who could not tell us what are the Tartaro, the Heren-Suge, Basa-Jaun, and the Lamiñak.

As a curious coincidence, we may notice how closely some of the Basque names of the stars parallel those given in Miss Frere’s delightful “Old Deccan Days.” In the narrator’s narrative, pp. 27, 28, we read, “She (the grandmother) would show us the hen and chickens” (the Pleiades)—the same in Basque, “Oiloa chituekin;” “The three thieves climbing up to rob the Ranee’s silver bedstead”—the three stars in Orion’s belt, in Basque, the three kings, or brothers, or robbers; the milky way, “the great pathway of light on which He went up to heaven,” has also obtained in Basque a Christianized name—”Erromako zubia, or Bidea,” “the bridge or road to Rome.” Again, “All the cobras in my grandmother’s stories were seven-headed,” so the Heren-Suge in the Basque country is always seven-headed. Little or nothing can be gathered from the names of the actors, the heroes or heroines of these tales. They are mostly anonymous, but the name, when given, is almost always borrowed from the French. This is disappointing, and much increases the difficulty of tracing the origin; but it is analogous to the fact that scarcely a single purely Basque name is to be found among the so-called kings and chieftains of the Basques during the early middle ages.[6] Among the classic writers, too, and

[4] Cf. Campbell’s “Introduction,” p. xxviii.:—“I have never heard a story whose point was obscenity publickly told in a Highland cottage; and I believe such are rare. If there was an occasional coarse word spoken, it was not coarsely meant.”

[5] One class, of which we have given no example, is that of the Star Legend given by M. Cerquand, “Légendes et Récits Populaires du Pays Basque,” p. 19, and reprinted, with variations, by M. Vinson, “Revue de Linguistique,” Tom. VIII., 241–5, January, 1876.

[6] Cf. “Etudes Historiques sur la Ville de Bayonne, par MM. Balasque et Dulaurens,” Vol. I., p. 49.

among the soldiers and followers of our Anglo-Gascon princes, hardly a name indubitably Basque is to be found.

For all more special details and discussions we refer to the Introductions to the separate sections. The few references given to the parallel legends of other countries are not intended to be at all complete, much less exhaustive. The Pays Basque is not a land of libraries, and it is not easy to collect these legends on the spot, and at the same time to get together the books necessary for a comparison of them with those of other countries. The few we offer are only those which have fallen in our way, and though worthless to the specialist, may be of some little aid as suggestions to the ordinary reader.[7] For the same purpose we annex a list of the first publication of the chief collections of foreign legends in France.[8] It is curious to remark that, while the masterpieces of French literature seem never to have penetrated beyond the surface of society, these legends have pierced to the very bottom of the social mass, and have become real living household words, even to those many millions of Frenchmen who do not understand one word of French.

There remains the pleasant task of thanking some of the many friends who have assisted us in this collection. I had hoped to have joined the name of M. J. Vinson, the well-known Basque and Dravidian scholar, to my own as joint-author of this simple work. I should hardly have had the courage to have undertaken it had I not been assured of his invaluable assistance in difficulties about the language of the originals. Unavoidable circumstances have, however, prevented his seeing the Basque of many of the later tales, and he therefore prefers that the “Essay on the Basque Language” should alone bear his name. I cannot but accede to his wishes; but, at the same time, I offer him my most grateful thanks for the unfailing and unwearied help which he so kindly afforded me for many months. The legends contributed by him are noticed in their proper place. Our first acknowledgments are due to M. d’Abbadie, of Abbadia, the well-known “Membre de l’Institut,” for his kind assistance and ready communication of the legends in his possession, and which were the starting point of our work. Next, and even more, to Madame M. Bellevue, of Dajieu-baita, through whose kind intervention the majority of these tales were collected, and who assisted in the translation of almost all. And then to the sisters Estefanella and Gagna-haurra Hirigaray, who contributed more than twenty tales; to Dr. Guilbeau and other friends at St. Jean de Luz who have taken a friendly interest in our work, and to all those whose names are appended to the tales they furnished. It would be presumptuous to hope that our readers will find as much pleasure in perusing these tales as we have had in collecting them.

[7] We have purposely omitted references to Greek and Latin mythology, as these are to be found “passim” in the pages of Max Müller and of Cox. The preparation for the Press was made at a distance from our own library, or more references to Spanish and patois sources would have been given.

[8] See page 192.

I.—Legends of the Tartaro

Who, or what is the Tartaro? "Oh! you mean the man with one eye in the middle of his forehead," is the prompt and universal answer. The Tartaro is the Cyclops, the sun's round eye, κύκλωψ. But the word Tartaro has apparently nothing to do with this. M. Cerquand, in his "Legendes et Récits Populaires du Pays Basque," derives the word from Tartare, Tartar, in the same way as the French word Ogre is said to be derived from Hongrois, Ugri. The only objection to this highly probable derivation (made still more probable by a Souletin variation, Moiriak) is the comparatively late date (the 13th century) of the first appearance of the Tartars in Europe.[9] It is besides perfectly true that in many tales the Tartaro replaces, and is identical with the giant or ogre; but this does not appear to us to be the original conception of this mythological monster, nor have we ever heard from an unlettered Basque such a description of him. To them he is simply a Cyclops—a huge man, with an eye in the centre of his forehead.

It is an interesting question—Is there any connection between the Basque Tartaro and the Cyclops of the Odyssey and of the classics? First, we must remark that the Cyclops legend is not peculiar either to the Greek and Latin writers, or even to the Aryan nations; e.g., in his communication of the Tartaro legends to the Société des Sciences de Bayonne, M. d'Abaddie relates how he heard the tale told in June, 1843, in Eastern Africa, in Lat. N. 9.2, E. Lon. 34.48, by a man who had never before quitted the country. It is then only the special form of the legend, and not the primary idea, that the Greeks may have borrowed from the Basques. But there is this to observe—that, with both Greeks and Latins, the Cyclops myth is an occidental and not an oriental one, and is more strictly localised than almost any other. This may be accounted for by saying that the sun's great fiery eye is rather that of the setting than of the rising sun; that the red-hot stake is the ruddy mountain peak, or the tall fir-trunk, seen against the western horizon, and illumined by his descending rays. But in the stories of Theocritus and Ovid, where the sun-myth is not so apparent, the home of the Cyclops is still Sicily. Our first Tartaro legend reads very like a rough outline of Ovid's story of "Acis and Galatea." Now, W. Von Humboldt in his "Prüfung der Untersuchung über die Urbewohner Hispaniens vermittelst der Vaskischen Sprache" (Berlin, 1821), in cap. xlv., p. 167, and, again, con. vii., p. 178, arguing on quite different grounds, places Sicily as the most easterly habitation of the Basques within historic times.[10] We leave it then to classical scholars to consider whether the Italic races in Magna Græcia and Sicily may not have come in contact with the Basques there, and from them have adopted their special form of the Cyclops legend.

As we said above, the Tartaro sometimes replaces the giant or the ogre; at other times we find him as Basa-Jaun, or even as an animal, substituted for Acheria, the fox. He is, in his proper form, a huge one-eyed giant, occasionally a cannibal, but not without a rough "bonhomie" when satiated with food and drink. Intellectually far below the feebler race of mankind, he is invariably beaten in his contests with them, notwithstanding his enormous strength; he loses all his wagers, and is generally lured on to commit involuntary suicide. In some aspects he reminds one of Milton's "Lubbar Fiend," and in his constant defeats and being constantly outwitted, recals one of the types of the Devil in mediæval story. At times he appears in gentler guise, as when he aids the young prince to his rights, and supplies Petit Yorge with the means of victory over the Heren-Suge. What the talking ring is

[9] There seems to be a Basque root "Tar," which appears in the words, "Tarro, Tarrotu, v., devenir un peu grand. Tarrapataka, adv., marchant avec précipitation et en faisant du bruit."—Salaberry's "Vocabulaire Bas-Navarrais," sub voce. Cf. Campbell's "Tales of the Western Highlands," Vol. II., 94:—"He heard a great Tartar noise," Tartar being printed as if it were a Gaelic word.

[10] Cf. also Müller's "Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum" (Didot, Paris, 1841), Vol. I., p. 246. "Ephori Fragmenta," 51, with the references there given.

which appears in so many of these stories we confess ourselves unable to interpret; it is found in the Keltic, but, as far as we are aware, not in the classic legends.

One peculiarity of the Basque, and especially of the Tartaro legends, is that the hero of them is so often a madman, an idiot, or a fool. If we can trust our memory, the case is the same in the Slavonic representatives of Odysseus.[11] But the Basques seem to dwell upon and to repeat the idea in a peculiar way; they ring the changes on all states, from the wild madman, like the Scandinavian Berserker, through the idiot and fool, to the mere blockhead and ninny. Errua, Enuchenta, Ergela, Sosua, Tontua, are terms employed to designate the heroes who have sometimes, to our modern apprehension, little of the idiot or fool, except the name. Can it be that the power which put out the sun's fiery eye was looked upon as a beneficent being in a burning tropic land, while, as the legend travelled northward, the act seemed more like that of madness, or of senseless stupidity?

One type of these Tartaro tales will at once recal Grimm's "Valiant Little Tailor," and some of the more modern versions of "Jack the Giant-Killer." But though the incidents are identical, it is hardly possible that they can be thus borrowed. Several of our narrators were utterly ignorant of French, and learnt the tale as children from old people, who died a few years since at upwards of 80. The first translation of Grimm's Tales into French was published in the year 1845.

[11] Cf. also the Gaelic, "The Story and the Lay of the Great Fool," Campbell, Vol. III., pp. 146–154.

The Tartaro

Once upon a time there was the son of a king who for the punishment of some fault became a monster. He could become a man again only by marrying. One day he met a young girl who refused him, because she was so frightened at him. And the Tartaro wanted to give her a ring, which she would not accept. However, he sent it her by a young man. As soon as the ring was upon her finger it began to say, "Thou there, and I here."[12] It kept always crying out this, and the Tartaro pursued her continually; and, as the young girl had such a horror of him, she cut off her finger and the ring, and threw them into a large pond, and there the Tartaro drowned himself.

Estefanella Hirigarray,
of Ahetze.

[12] This talking giant's ring appears in Campbell's "Popular Tales of the West Highlands," Vol. I., p. 111, in the tale called "Conall cra Bhuidhe." He also refers (p. 153) to Grimm's tale of the "Robber and his Sons," where the same ring appears:—"He puts on the gold ring which the giant gave him, which forces him to cry out, 'Here I am!' He bites off his own finger, and so escapes."

M. d'Abbadie's Version

Our next story was communicated by M. d'Abbadie to the Société des Sciences et des Arts de Bayonne. The narrator is M. l'Abbé Heguiagaray, the Parish Priest of Esquiule in La Soule:—

In my infancy I often heard from my mother the story of the Tartaro. He was a Colossus, with only one eye in the middle of his forehead. He was a shepherd and a hunter, but a hunter of men. Every day he ate a sheep; then, after a snooze, every one who had the misfortune to fall into his hands. His dwelling was a huge barn, with thick walls, a high roof, and a very strong door, which he alone knew how to open. His mother, an old witch, lived in one corner of the garden, in a hut constructed of turf.

One day a powerful young man was caught in the snares of the Tartaro, who carried him off to his house. This young man saw the Tartaro eat a whole sheep, and he knew that he was accustomed to take a snooze, and that after that his own turn would come. In his despair he said to himself that he must do something. Directly the Tartaro began to snore he put the spit into the fire, made it red-hot, and plunged it into the giant's one eye. Immediately he leapt up, and began to run after the man who had injured him; but it was impossible to find him.

"You shall not escape. It is all very well to hide yourself," said he; "but I alone know the secret how to open this door."

The Tartaro opened the door half-way, and let the sheep out between his legs. The young man takes the big bell off the ram, and puts it round his neck, and throws over his body the skin of the sheep which the giant had just eaten, and walks on all fours to the door.

The Tartaro examines him by feeling him, perceives the trick, and clutches hold of the skin; but the young man slips off the skin, dives between his legs, and runs off.

Immediately the mother of the Tartaro meets him, and says to him:

"O, you lucky young fellow! You have escaped the cruel tyrant; take this ring as a remembrance of your escape."

He accepts, puts the ring on his finger, and immediately the ring begins to cry out, "Heben nuk! Heben nuk!" ("Thou hast me here! Thou hast me here!")

The Tartaro pursues, and is on the point of catching him, when the young man, maddened with fright, and not being able to pull off the ring, takes out his knife, and cuts off his own finger, and throws it away, and thus escapes the pursuit of the Tartaro.

In other versions the young man goes into the forest with some pigs, meets the Tartaro there, is carried by him home, blinds him with the red-hot spit, and escapes by letting himself down through a garret window. The Tartaro pursues, guided by his ring, which at last he throws to the young man to put on, when it cries out as above, and the young man cuts off his finger, and throws it down a precipice or into a bog, where the ring still cries out, and the Tartaro following, is dashed to pieces and drowned.

Errua, the Madman

Like many others in the world, there was a man and woman who had a son. He was very wicked, and did nothing but mischief, and was of a thoroughly depraved disposition. The parents decided that they must send him away, and the lad was quite willing to set off.

He set out then, and goes far, far, far away. He comes to a city, and asks if they want a servant. They wanted one in a (certain) house. He goes there. They settle their terms at so much a month, and that the one who is not satisfied should strip the skin off the other's back.[13]

The master sends his servant to the forest to get the most crooked pieces of wood that he can find. Near the forest there was a vineyard. What does the servant do but cut it all up, and carries it to the house. The master asks him where the wood is. He shows him the vine-wood cut up. The master said nothing to him, but he was not pleased.

Next day the master says to him, "Take the cows to such a field, and don't break any hole in the fence."

What does the lad do? He cuts all the cows into little pieces, and throws them bit by bit into the field. The master was still more angry; but he could not say anything, for fear of having his skin stripped off. So what does he do? He buys a herd of pigs, and sends his servant to the mountain with the herd.

The master knew quite well that there was a Tartaro in this mountain, but he sends him there all the same.

Our madman goes walking on, on, on. He arrives at a little hut. The Tartaro's house was quite close to his. The pigs of the Tartaro and those of the madman used to go out together. The Tartaro said one day to him—

"Will you make a wager as to who will throw a stone farthest?"

He accepted the wager. That evening our madman was very sad. While he was at his prayers, an old woman appeared to him, and asks him—

"What is the matter with you? Why are you so sad?"

He tells her the wager that he has made with the Tartaro. The old woman says to him—

"If it is only that, it is nothing."

And so she gives him a bird, and says to him—

"Instead of a stone, throw this bird."

The madman was very glad at this. The next day he does as the old woman told him. The Tartaro's stone went enormously far, but at last it fell; but the madman's bird never came down at all.

The Tartaro was astonished that he had lost his wager, and they make another—which of the two should throw a bar of iron the farthest. The madman accepted again. He was in his little house sadly in prayer. The old woman appears again. She asks him—

"What's the matter with you?"

"I have made a wager again, which of the two will throw the bar of iron the farthest, and I am very sorry."

"If it is only that, it is nothing. When you take hold of the bar of iron, say, 'Rise up, bar of iron, here and Salamanca.'" (Altchaala palenka, hemen eta Salamanka.)[14]

Next day the Tartaro takes his terrible bar of iron, and throws it fearfully far. The young man could hardly lift up one end, and he says—

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[13] Cf. Campbell's "Mac-a-Rusgaich," Vol. II., 305:—"I am putting it into the covenant that if either one of us takes the rue, that a thong shall be taken out of his skin, from the back of his head to his heel."

[14] Salamanca was the reputed home of witchcraft and devilry in De Lancre's time (1610). He is constantly punning on the word. It is because "Sel y manque," etc. See also the story of Gerbert, Pope Sylvester II., in the 10th century.

"Rise up, bar of iron, here and Salamanca."

When the Tartaro heard that (he cried out)—

"I give up the wager—you have won," and he takes the bar of iron away from him. "My father and my mother live at Salamanca; don't throw, I beg of you, I implore you—you will crush them."

Our madman goes away very happy.

The Tartaro says to him again:

"I will pull up the biggest oak in the forest, and you pull up another."

He says, "Yes." And the later it grew in the day, the sadder he became. He was at his prayers. The old woman comes to him again, and says to him—

"What's the matter with you?"

He tells her the wager he has made with the Tartaro, and how he will pull up an oak. The old woman gives him three balls of thread, and tells him to begin and tie them to all the oaks in the forest.[15]

Next day the Tartaro pulls up his oak, an enormously, enormously big one; and the madman begins to tie, and to tie, and to tie.

The Tartaro asks him:

"What are you doing that for?"

"You (pulled up) one, but I all these."

The Tartaro replies,

"No! No! No! What shall I do to fatten my pigs with without acorns? You have won; you have won the wager."

The Tartaro did not know what to think about it, and saw that he had found one cleverer than himself, and so he asks him if he will come and spend the night at his house.

The madman says, "Yes."

He goes to bed then with the Tartaro. But he knew that there was a dead man under the bed. When the Tartaro was asleep what does the madman do? He places the dead man by the Tartaro's side, and gets under the bed himself. In the middle of the night the Tartaro gets up, and takes his terrible bar of iron and showers blows upon blows, ping pan, ping pan, as long and as hard as he could give them.

The Tartaro gets up as usual, and goes to see his pigs, and the madman also comes out from under the bed; and he goes to see the pigs too. The Tartaro is quite astounded to see him coming, and does not know what to think of it. He says to himself that he has to do with a cleverer than he; but he asks him if he has slept well.

He answers, "Yes, very well; only I felt a few flea-bites."

Their pigs had got mixed, and as they were fat, he had to separate them in order to go away with his. The Tartaro asked the madman what mark his pigs had.

The madman says to him, "Mine have some of them one mark, some of them two marks."

They set to work to look at them, and they all had these same marks.

Our madman goes off then with all the hogs. He goes walking on, on, on, with all his pigs. He comes to a town where it was just market day, and sells them all except two, keeping, however, all the tails, which he put in his pockets. As you may think, he was always in fear of the Tartaro. He sees him coming down from the mountain. He kills one of his hogs, and puts the entrails in his own bosom under his waistcoat. There was a group of men near the road. As he passed them he took out his knife, and stabs it into his chest, and takes out the pig's bowels, and our madman begins to run very much faster than before, with his pig in front of him.

When the Tartaro comes up to these men, he asks if they have seen such a man.

[15] This incident is found in Cenac-Moncaut's Gascon tale, "Le Coffret de la Princesse." "Litterature Populaire de la Gascogne," p. 193 (Dentu, Paris, 1868).

"Yes, yes, he was running fast, and in order to go faster just here he stabbed himself, and threw away his bowels, and still he went on all the faster."

The Tartaro, too, in order to go faster, thrusts his knife into his body, and falls stark dead.[16]

The madman goes to his master's. Near the house there was a marsh quite full of mud. He puts his live pig into it, and all the tails too. He enters the house, and says to the master that he is there with his pigs. The master is astounded to see him.

He asks him, "Where are the pigs, then?"

He says to him, "They have gone into the mud, they were so tired."

Both go out, and begin to get the real pig out, and between the two they pull it out very well. They try to do the same thing with the others; but they kept pulling out nothing but tails.

The madman says, "You see how fat they are; that is why the tails come out alone."

He sends the servant to fetch the spade and the hoe. Instead of bringing them he begins to beat the mistress, whack! whack! and he cries to the master, "One or both?"

The master says to him, "Both, both."

And then he beats the servant maid almost to pieces. He goes then to the master, taking with him the spade and the hoe, and he sets to beating him with the spade and the hoe, until he can no longer defend himself, and then he thrashes the skin off his back, and takes his pig and goes off home to his father and mother; and as he lived well he died well too.

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learnt it from his Grandmother, who died a few years since, aged 82.

[16] For this incident compare the death of the giant in one of the versions of "Jack the Giant-Killer;" and especially "the Erse version of Jack the Giant-Killer." Campbell, Vol. II., p. 327.

Variations of Errua

We have several variations of this tale, some like the above, very similar to Grimm's "Valiant Little Tailor," others like Campbell's "Highland Tales." In one tale there are two brothers, an idiot and a fool (Enuchenta eta Ergela). The idiot goes out to service first, and gets sent back for his stupidity. Then the fool goes, and outwits both his master and the Tartaro, whose eye he burns out with a red-hot spit, as in the first instance. In another the servant frightens the Tartaro at the outset by cracking two walnuts, and saying that they were bones of Christians he was cracking. Another wager is as to which shall carry most water from a fountain. The Tartaro fills two hogsheads to carry, but the lad says to him, "Only that; I will take the whole fountain;" and he begins to stir the water about with a stick. But the Tartaro cries out, "No! No! No! I give up. Where shall I go and drink if you carry away all my water?" Another variation is as follows:—

The Three Brothers, the Cruel Master, and the Tartaro

Like many others in the world, there lived a mother with her three sons. They were not rich, but lived by their work. The eldest son said one day to his mother—

"It would be better for us if I should go out to service."

The mother did not like it, but at last she let him go. He goes off, far, far, far away, and comes to a house, and asks if they want a servant. They say "Yes," and they make their agreement.

The master was to give a very high salary—100,000 francs—but the servant was to do everything that the master ordered him, and, if he did not do it, the master was to tear the skin off his back at the end of the year, and to dismiss him without pay.[17]

The servant said to him,

"All right; I am strong, and I will work."

On the morrow the master gives him a great deal of work, but he does it easily. The last months of the year the master presses him much more, and one day he sends him into a field to sow fourteen bushels of wheat in the day. The lad goes sadly, taking with him a pair of oxen. He returns to the house very late in the evening. The master says to him,

"Have you done your work?"

He says, "No."

"Do you remember the agreement we made? I must tear the skin off your back: that is your salary."

He tears the skin off, as he had said, and sends him away home without anything. His mother was in great grief at seeing him come home so thin and weak, and without any money.

He tells what has happened, and the second brother wishes to start off at once, saying that he is strong, and that he will do more work. The mother did not like it, but she was obliged to let him go.

He goes to the same house as his brother, and makes the same terms with the master. When he had almost finished his year, his master sends him too to sow fourteen bushels of wheat. He starts very early in the morning, with two pair of oxen; but the night came before he had sown it all. The master was very glad at the sight of that. He strips his skin off his back also, and sends him away without any money. Think of the vexation of this mother in seeing both her sons return in this fashion.

The third wishes to start off at once. He assures his mother that he will bring back both the money and the skin of his back. He goes to this same gentleman. He tells this one, too, that he will give him a high salary, on condition that he will do all that he shall tell him to do, otherwise he shall have the skin torn off his back, and be sent away without anything, at the end of the year.

He had made him work hard and well for ten months, and then wished to try him. He sent him to the field, and told him to sow fourteen bushels of wheat before night. He answers, "Yes."

He takes two pairs of oxen, and goes off to the field. He ploughs a furrow all round the field, and throws his fourteen bushels of wheat into it. He then makes another furrow, to cover it up, and at night time he goes home to the house. The master is astonished. He asks him if he has sown it.

"Yes, it is all under ground; you may be sure of it."

The master was not pleased; he had his fears.

The next day he sends him with sixteen head of cattle to such a field, and says to him,

"You must take all these cattle into the field without unlocking the gate or making a gap."

Our lad takes a hatchet, a hoe, and a fork. Off he goes, and when he gets to the field he kills them all, one by one. He cuts them up with the hatchet, and throws them with the fork into the field.

[17] This agreement is found also in the Norse and in Brittany. See "Contes Populaires de la Grande Bretagne," by Loys Brueyre, pp. 25, 26. This is an excellent work. The incident of Shylock, in the "Merchant of Venice," will occur to every one.

He comes home at nightfall, and says to his master that all the cattle are in the field as he had told him. The master was not pleased, but he said nothing.

The next day he told him to go to such a forest and to bring a load of wood from there, but all the sticks quite, quite straight. Our lad goes off and cuts down in the chestnut copse all the young chestnut trees which his master had planted, and which were very fine ones; and he comes home. When the master saw that, he was not pleased, and said to him,

"To-morrow you shall go again with the oxen; and you must bring a load of wood quite crooked, all quite crooked; if you bring only one straight, so much the worse for you."

The lad goes off, and pulls up a fine vineyard. After he had loaded his cart, he comes home. When the master saw that, he could not say anything; but he did not know what to think of it.

He sends him into a forest. There was a Tartaro there; and all the persons, and all the animals who went there, he ate them all. The master gives him ten pigs, and also food for ten days, telling him that the hogs would fatten themselves well there, because there were plenty of acorns, and that he must return at the end of ten days.

Our lad begins, and he goes on, and on, and on. He meets an old woman, who says to him:

"Where are you going to, lad?"

"To such a forest, to fatten these pigs."

The woman says to him:

"If you are not a fool, you will not go there. That horrible Tartaro will eat you."

This woman was carrying a basket of walnuts on her head, and he said to her:

"If you will give me two of these walnuts I will beat the Tartaro."

She willingly gives them to him, and he goes on, and on, and on. He meets another old woman, who was winding thread. She says to him:

"Where are you going, lad?"

"To such a forest."

"Don't go there. There is a horrible Tartaro there, who will be sure to eat you, and your pigs as well."

"I must go there all the same, and I will conquer him, if you will give me two of your balls of thread."

She gives him them, willingly; and he goes on farther, and finds a blacksmith, and he, too, asks him where he is going? And he answers, "To such a forest, to fatten my pigs."

"You may just as well go back again. There is a terrible Tartaro there, who will be sure to eat you."

"If you will give me a spit, I will beat him."

"I will give it you, willingly," and he gives it him with goodwill.

Our lad goes on, and comes to this forest. He cuts off the tails of all his pigs, and hides them in a safe place. The Tartaro appears, and says to him:

"How did you come here? I am going to eat you."

The lad says to him:

"Eat a pig if you like, but don't touch me."

He takes his two nuts, and rubs them one against the other.

"I have two balls here, and if one of them touches you, you are dead."

The Tartaro is frightened, and goes away in silence. After having eaten a pig, he comes back again, and says to him:

"We must make a wager—which of the two will make the greatest heap of wood?"

The Tartaro begins to cut and to cut. Our lad leaves him alone, and when he has made a terrible big heap, he begins to go round all the trees with his balls of thread, and says to him.

"You, that; but I, all this;" and he goes on tying and tying. The Tartaro gives in, saying "that he is more clever than he." As he had stopped his ten days, he makes in the night a great fire, and

makes his spit red-hot in it; and while the Tartaro was sleeping, he plunges this spit into his only eye. After having taken his pigs' tails, he goes away from the forest without any pigs, because the Tartaro had eaten one every day. Near his master's house there was "a well of the fairy."[18] Our lad sticks in there the tails of all his hogs, excepting one, as well as he could. He then goes running to his master, telling him that all the pigs were coming home very gaily, and that they had got so hot in coming so fast that they had all gone under the mud. "I wished to drag one out by pulling, but only the tail came away; here it is."

He goes off then with the master to this marsh; but the master did not dare go in there to pull them out. He goes off sadly with his servant home, not knowing what to think about it. There he counts him out his 100,000 francs, and he went home proudly to his mother and his brothers. There they lived happily, and their master was left with 100,000 francs less. That served him right for having so much.

[18] Literally, "Marsh of the Basa-Andre." The "Puits des Fées" are common in France, especially in the Landes and in the Gironde.

The Tartaro and Petit Perroquet

Like many others in the world, there was a mother and her son. They were very wretched. One day the son said to his mother that he must go away, to see if he could do anything. He goes far, far, far away. He traverses many countries, and still goes on and on. He arrives in a great city, and asks if they know of a place for a servant. They tell him that there is one in the king's house. There they tell him that he is to be gardener. But he tells them that he does not know how to use a hoe at all, but that, all the same, he would learn it with the others. He was very nice-looking. He soon learnt it, and was liked by everybody.

This king had a daughter, and she often noticed Petit Perroquet, because he was polite to everybody. In this city there was a prince, and he was paying court to this young princess, and he was seized with dislike and jealousy of Petit Perroquet. One day this prince[19] went to find the king. He said to him,

"You do not know what Petit Perroquet says?—that he could bring the Tartaro's horse here."

The king sends for Petit Perroquet, and says to him,

"It seems that you have said that you could bring the Tartaro's horse here?"

"I certainly did not say it."

"Yes, yes," said the king, "you said it."

"If you will give me all that I ask for, I will try."

He asks for a great deal of money, and sets off. He travels on, and on, and on, and he had to pass a wide river. He speaks to the ferryman, and pays the passage money, and tells him that perhaps he will have a heavy load on his return, but that he will be well paid.

He lands on the other side; but he had yet a long way to go in the forest, because the Tartaro lived in a corner of the mountain. At last he arrives, and knocks at the door. An old, old woman comes to him, and says to him,

"Be off from here as quickly as possible; my son smells the smell of a Christian a league off."

"To eat me here, or to eat me elsewhere, it is all the same to me."

But he goes outside, and hides himself under a great heap of cut ferns. He had scarcely been there a moment, when he hears a deep breathing and a grinding of teeth, which sounded like thunder. He stops where he is, trembling. The Tartaro goes to his house, and asks his mother if there is not some Christian or other hidden here.

"No, no," says she. "But eat away, your dinner is all ready."

"No, no! I must eat this Christian first."

He goes hunting, looking, looking into every corner. He goes to the heap of ferns, and pulls off some to put them on one side; but our Petit Perroquet was quite, quite at the bottom. The Tartaro was just on the point of finding him, but he grew tired, and went indoors, and began to eat and to drink enormously. Our Petit Perroquet creeps out of his ferns, and goes off to the stable. The horse had a big bell round his neck, but he fills it with ferns (this bell was as large as the big bell in the church of St. Jean de Luz). He mounts on the horse's back, and very soon he arrives at the ferry, and the ferryman comes to meet him. Together they get the horse into the ferry-boat as well as they could, and they cross over. He gave him a handsome reward. As soon as he was on the other side, the Tartaro appeared, crying out to him to give him his horse back again, and that he would give him all he could wish for. He replies, "No," and goes off full gallop. When he came near the king's palace he took the fern out of the bell, and everybody comes running out of doors or to the windows. All the world was astonished to see Petit Perroquet return.

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[19] Only in this, and one other tale, is the word "prince" used instead of "king's son." Compare the Gaelic of Campbell in this respect. This tale is probably from the French, and the Tartaro is only a giant.

The king was in ecstasy. He did not know what to say, but he liked him even more than he did formerly, and the princess did also. The other prince was not at all pleased, and he begins to think of some other plot. He goes off to find the king, and he says to him,

"Do you not know that Petit Perroquet says that he could bring the Tartaro's diamond?"

The king sends for Petit Perroquet, and says to him,

"It seems that you say you can get the Tartaro's diamond?"

"I certainly did not say any such thing."

"Yes, yes—you said it."

"No, no! I did not say it; but I will try, if you give me all I shall ask for."

And he asks for a great deal of money.

He goes off, and reaches the ferry, and pays the ferryman well, and goes far, far, far away into the forest, till he gets to the house of the Tartaro. The old woman tells him to be off from there; and he goes and hides himself again in the ferns. And he stops there until the Tartaro comes to the house, just as he did the first time. He turns over nearly all the ferns, and leaves him scarcely covered. He stops quietly there all the time that the Tartaro was having his huge supper, and when he thinks he has finished, and is taking his nap, he creeps out very, very gently. The Tartaro always put his diamond under his pillow, and he takes it away without waking him, and escapes, running off as fast as if to break his feet. The ferryman is there, and he crosses him over, and he pays him well. The Tartaro appears on the other side again, and calls out to him telling him to give him back his diamond, and that he would give him all that he could wish for. He answers, "No, no!" and runs on to the king's house.

When he arrived there, the king did not know what to do. One feasted him, and another feasted him, and all the world was busied about him, and everyone loved him more and more, and the princess as well as the rest. The wicked prince did not know what to think of it. He was eaten up with jealousy, and he thought of something else, and said to the king:

"Petit Perroquet says that he can bring the Tartaro himself."

The king sends for Petit Perroquet, and says to him:

"It appears that you have said that you will bring the Tartaro himself here."

"No, no, no, I did not say anything at all like that; but if you will give me all I ask for, I will try. You must have a carriage made of iron, half-a-yard thick, and three horses to draw it, and lots of money. When all that is ready, I will set out."

He asks, also, for a barrel of honey, another of feathers, and two horns, and starts off.

When he comes to the ferry, it was no easy thing to get this carriage into the boat. When he has got to the other side, he first puts himself into the barrel of honey, and then into the barrel of feathers, and ties the horns on to his head, and then mounts as postilion. He then comes to the Tartaro's house, and just then he happened to be at home. Petit Perroquet knocks at the door. The Tartaro himself comes to open, and asks:

"Who are you? You!"

"I!!—I am the oldest of all the devils in hell."

He opens the carriage door for him, and says:

"Get in there."

The Tartaro gets in, and Petit Perroquet, very glad, starts off, and arrives at the ferry. He crosses, as he best can, with his carriage and horses. He pays the ferryman generously, and comes to the king's palace. They were all terrified when they saw that he had the Tartaro there. They tried to shoot him with cannon, but he caught the bullets, and sent them back as if they had been balls to play with. They could not kill him in that way, so they finished him with other arms.

As Petit Perroquet had well gained her, they gave him the princess in marriage. He sent for his mother to the court, and as they lived well, so they died happily.

Pierre Bertrand.

II—The Heren-Suge.—The Seven-Headed Serpent

It would only be spoiling good work by bad to attempt to re-write the exhaustive essay which appears, under the heading of "St. George," in Baring Gould's "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages." He there traces the atmospheric myth in which the Dragon is the storm-cloud, the Maiden the earth, and the Hero the sun, through all the forms of the great Aryan legend, in Indian, Egyptian, Phœnician, Italic, Keltic, Teutonic, and Scandinavian mythology. He shows that it was merely by a mistaken metaphor[20] that St. George came to assume the place, and wear the glories of the solar hero; and that England only followed in the wake of other countries, in making him her national Saint and Patron.

We will, therefore, now only glance at some of the Basque and Pyrenean forms of this wide-spread myth. M. Cerquand boldly places one form of the story, which is attached to the house of Belzunce, among historical legends. But the history of Belzunce and the Dragon stands in the same relation to the original myth as does that of Guy, Earl of Warwick, Moor of Moor Hall, and of scores of other heroes. In a Basque version, collected by ourselves, the concluding words show that in this form it is simply an Eponymous legend, to account for the name, "and that is whence comes the name of Belzunce." The oldest Pyrenean version with which we are acquainted is that of the "Serpent d'Isabit." We give the outlines of it from memory, as we heard, and read it, at Bagnères de Bigorre.

The serpent lay with his head resting on the summit of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre, his neck stretched down towards Barèges, while his body filled the whole valley of Luz, St. Sauveur, and Gédres, and his tail was coiled in the hollow below the cirque of Gavarnie. He fed but once in three months, or the whole country would have been desolate. With a strong inspiration of his breath, he drew into his capacious maw, across the valleys, whole flocks of sheep and goats, herds of oxen, men, women, children, the population of whole villages at once. He was now asleep, and inert, after such a repast. The whole male population of several valleys assembled to consult on what should be done. After long and fruitless debate an old man arose and spoke:—"We have nearly three months yet before he will wake; let us cut down all the forests on the opposite hills; then let us bring all our forges and all the iron we possess, and with the wood thus cut down let us melt it all into one red-hot fiery mass; then we will hide ourselves behind the rocks, and make all the noise we can to try and awaken the monster." So said, so done. The serpent awoke in a rage at having his slumbers broken, he saw something bright on the opposite side of the valley, and drew in a long breath, and the fiery mass, with a roar like a thunderbolt, flew across the valley, right down the monster's throat. Then, what convulsions ensued; rocks were uptorn or split open, the mountains were shattered, the glaciers beaten into dust as the serpent twisted and lashed about in his agony. To quench his agony of thirst he descended to the valley, and drank up all the streams from Gavarnie to Pierrefitte. Then, in his last convulsion, he threw himself back upon the mountain side and expired; his head rested in a deep hollow; as the fire within him slowly cooled, the water he had swallowed poured out of his mouth, and formed the present Lac d'Isabit. In M. Cerquand's legend of the Dragon d'Alçay, the red-hot iron is replaced by "a cow's skin full of gunpowder." In all the Basque legends of this class the hero dies.

But these legends differ widely from the following tales; there is in them no princess to be rescued, no charcoal-burner, no marriage, or any other wonders. Were it not for their still closer resemblance to the Gaelic tales, we should suspect the following legends to be simply translations of some French legend of St. George. As we remarked before, like the Deccan cobras, the Heren-Suge is always seven-headed. It is strange, too, to notice that the princess always behaves in the same

[20] One of the oddest instances of mistaken metaphors that we know of occurs in "La Vie de St. Savin, par J. Abbadie, Curé de la Paroisse" (Tarbes, 1861). We translate from the Latin, which is given in a note:—"Intoxicated with divine love, he was keeping vigil according to his custom, and when he could not find a light elsewhere, he gave light to his eyes from the light that was in his breast. The small piece of wax-taper thus lit passed the whole night till morning without being extinguished."—Off. S. Savin.

chivalrous way. “One is enough to die.” The union, too, of Tartaro and Heren-Suge in the same tale is curious.

The Grateful Tartaro and the Heren-Suge

Like many of us who are, have been, and shall be in the world, there was a king, and his wife, and three sons. The king went out hunting one day, and caught a Tartaro. He brings him home, and shuts him up in prison in a stable, and proclaims, by sound of trumpet, that all his court should meet the next day at his house, that he would give them a grand dinner, and afterwards would show them an animal such as they had never seen before.

The next day the two sons of the king were playing at ball against (the wall of) the stable where the Tartaro was confined, and the ball went into the stable. One of the boys goes and asks the Tartaro —

"Throw me back my ball, I beg you."

He says to him, "Yes, if you will deliver me."

He replies, "Yes, yes," and he threw him the ball.

A moment after, the ball goes again to the Tartaro. He asks for it again; and the Tartaro says:

"If you will deliver me, I will give it you."

The boy says, "Yes, yes," takes his ball, and goes off.

The ball goes there for the third time, but the Tartaro will not give it before he is let out. The boy says that he has not the key. The Tartaro says to him:

"Go to your mother, and tell her to look in your right ear, because something hurts you there. Your mother will have the key in her left pocket, and take it out."

The boy goes, and does as the Tartaro had told him. He takes the key from his mother, and delivers the Tartaro. When he was letting him go, he said to him:

"What shall I do with the key now? I am undone."

The Tartaro says to him:

"Go again to your mother, and tell her that your left ear hurts you, and ask her to look, and you will slip the key into her pocket."

The Tartaro tells him, too, that he will soon have need of him, and that he will only have to call him, and he will be his servant for ever.

He puts the key back; and everyone came to the dinner. When they had eaten well, the king said to them that they must go and see this curious thing. He takes them all with him. When they are come to the stable, he finds it empty. Judge of the anger of this king, and of his shame. He said:

"I should like to eat the heart, half cooked, and without salt, of him who has let my beast go."

Some time afterwards the two brothers quarreled in presence of their mother, and one said to the other:

"I will tell our father about the affair of the Tartaro."

When the mother heard that, she was afraid for her son, and said to him:

"Take as much money as you wish."

And she gave him the Fleur-de-lis.[21] "By this you will be known everywhere as the son of a king."

Petit Yorge[22] goes off, then, far, far, far away. He spends and squanders all his money, and does not know what to do more. He remembers the Tartaro, and calls him directly. He comes, and Petit Yorge tells him all his misfortunes; that he has not a penny left, and that he does not know what will become of him. The Tartaro says to him:

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[21] This Fleur-de-lis was supposed by our narrator to be some mark tattooed or impressed upon the breast of all kings' sons.

[22] This, of course, is "Little George," and makes one suspect that the whole tale is borrowed from the French; though it is just possible that only the names, and some of the incidents, may be.

"When you have gone a short way from here you will come to a city. A king lives there. You will go to his house, and they will take you as gardener. You will pull up everything that there is in the garden, and the next day everything will come up more beautiful than before. Also, three beautiful flowers will spring up, and you will carry them to the three daughters of the king, and you will give the most beautiful to the youngest daughter."[23]

He goes off, then, as he had told him, and he asks them if they want a gardener. They say, "Yes, indeed, very much." He goes to the garden, and pulls up the fine cabbages, and the beautiful leeks as well. The youngest of the king's daughters sees him, and she tells it to her father, and her father says to her:

"Let him alone, we will see what he will do afterwards." And, indeed, the next day he sees cabbages and leeks such as he had never seen before. Petit Yorge takes a flower to each of the young ladies. The eldest said:

"I have a flower that the gardener has brought me, which has not its equal in the world."

And the second says that she has one, too, and that no one has ever seen one so beautiful. And the youngest said that hers was still more beautiful than theirs, and the others confess it, too. The youngest of the young ladies found the gardener very much to her taste. Every day she used to bring him his dinner. After a certain time she said to him,

"You must marry me."

The lad says to her,

"That is impossible. The king would not like such a marriage."

The young girl says, too,

"Well, indeed, it is hardly worth while. In eight days I shall be eaten by the serpent."

For eight days she brought him his dinner again. In the evening she tells him that it is for the last time that she brought it. The young man tells her, "No," that she will bring it again; that somebody will help her.

The next day Petit Yorge goes off at eight o'clock to call the Tartaro. He tells him what has happened. The Tartaro gives him a fine horse, a handsome dress, and a sword, and tells him to go to such a spot, and to open the carriage door with his sword, and that he will cut off two of the serpent's heads. Petit Yorge goes off to the said spot. He finds the young lady in the carriage. He bids her open the door. The young lady says that she cannot open it—that there are seven doors, and that he had better go away; that it is enough for one person to be eaten.

Petit Yorge opens the doors with his sword, and sat down by the young lady's side. He tells her that he has hurt his ear, and asks her to look at it;[24] and at the same time he cuts off seven pieces of the seven robes which she wore, without the young lady seeing him. At the same instant comes the serpent, and says to him,

"Instead of one, I shall have three to eat."

Petit Yorge leaps on his horse, and says to him,

"You will not touch one; you shall not have one of us."

And they begin to fight. With his sword he cuts off one head, and the horse with his feet another;[25] and the serpent asks quarter till the next day. Petit Yorge leaves the young lady there. The young lady is full of joy; she wishes to take the young man home with her. He will not go by any

[23] Cf. "Ezkabi Fidel," 112, below.

[24] In Campbell's "Tale of the Sea-Maiden," instead of looking in his ear, the king's daughter put one of her earrings in his ear, the last two days, in order to wake him; and it is by these earrings and her ring that she recognises him afterwards, instead of by the pieces of dress and the serpent's tongues.

[25] Campbell, Vol. I., lxxxvii., 8, has some most valuable remarks on the Keltic Legends, showing the Kelts to be a horse-loving, and not a seafaring race—a race of hunters and herdsmen, not of sailors. The contrary is the case with these Basque tales. The reader will observe that the ships do nothing extraordinary, while the horses behave as no horse ever did. It is vice versâ in the Gaelic Tales, even when the legends are identical in many particulars.

means (he says); that he cannot; that he has made a vow to go to Rome; but he tells her that "to-morrow my brother will come, and he will be able to do something, too." The young lady goes home, and Petit Yorge to his garden. At noon she comes to him with the dinner, and Petit Yorge says to her,

"You see that it has really happened as I told you—he has not eaten you."

"No, but to-morrow he will eat me. How can it be otherwise?"

"No, no! To-morrow you will bring me my dinner again. Some help will come to you."

The next day Petit Yorge goes off at eight o'clock to the Tartaro, who gives him a new horse, a different dress, and a fine sword. At ten o'clock he arrives where the young lady is. He bids her open the door. But she says to him that she cannot in any way open fourteen doors; she is there, and that she cannot open them, and he should go away; that it is enough for one to be eaten; that she is grieved to see him there. As soon as he has touched them with his sword, the fourteen doors fly open. He sits down by the side of the young lady, and tells her to look behind his ear, for it hurts him. At the same time he cuts off fourteen bits of the fourteen dresses she was wearing. As soon as he had done that, the serpent comes, saying joyfully,

"I shall eat not one, but three."

Petit Yorge says to him, "Not even one of us."

He leaps on his horse, and begins to fight with the serpent. The serpent makes some terrible bounds. After having fought a long time, at last Petit Yorge is the conqueror. He cuts off one head, and the horse another with his foot. The serpent begs quarter till the next day. Petit Yorge grants it, and the serpent goes away.

The young lady wishes to take the young man home, to show him to her father; but he will not go by any means. He tells her that he must go to Rome, and set off that very day; that he has made a vow, but that to-morrow he will send his cousin, who is very bold, and is afraid of nothing.

The young lady goes to her father's, Petit Yorge to his garden. Her father is delighted, and cannot comprehend it at all. The young lady goes again with the dinner. The gardener says to her,

"You see you have come again to-day, as I told you. To-morrow you will come again, just the same."

"I should be very glad of it."

On the morrow Petit Yorge went off at eight o'clock to the Tartaro. He said to him that the serpent had still three heads to be cut off, and that he had still need of all his help. The Tartaro said to him,

"Keep quiet, keep quiet; you will conquer him."

He gives him a new dress, finer than the others, a more spirited horse, a terrible dog,[26] a sword, and a bottle of good scented water.[27] He said to him,

"The serpent will say to you, 'Ah! if I had a spark between my head and my tail, how I would burn you and your lady, and your horse and your dog.' And you, you will say to him then, 'I, if I had the good-scented water to smell, I would cut off a head from thee, the horse another, and the dog another.' You will give this bottle to the young lady, who will place it in her bosom, and, at the very moment you shall say that, she must throw some in your face, and on the horse and on the dog as well."

He goes off then without fear, because the Tartaro had given him this assurance. He comes then to the carriage. The young lady says to him,

"Where are you going? The serpent will be here directly. It is enough if he eats me."

He says to her, "Open the door."

She tells him that it is impossible; that there are twenty-one doors. This young man touches them with his sword, and they open of themselves. This young man says to her, giving her the bottle,

[26] The three days' fight, and the dog, appear in Campbell's "Tale of the Sea-Maiden," Vol. I., pp. 77–79.

[27] The Basque word usually means "Eau de Cologne."

"When the serpent shall say, 'If I had a spark between my head and my tail, I would burn you,' I shall say to him, 'If I had a drop of the good-scented water under my nose;' you will take the bottle, and throw some over me in a moment."

He then makes her look into his ear, and, while she is looking, he cuts off twenty-one pieces from her twenty-one dresses that she was wearing. At the same moment comes the serpent, saying, with joy,

"Instead of one, I shall have four to eat."

The young man said to him,

"And you shall not touch one of us, at any rate."

He leaps on his spirited horse, and they fight more fiercely than ever. The horse leaped as high as a house, and the serpent, in a rage, says to him,

"If I had a spark of fire between my tail and my head, I would burn you and your lady, and this horse and this terrible dog."

The young man says,

"I, if I had the good-scented water under my nose, I would cut off one of your heads, and the horse another, and the dog another."

As he said that, the young lady jumps up, opens the bottle, and very cleverly throws the water just where it was wanted. The young man cuts off a head with his sword, his horse another, and the dog another; and thus they make an end of the serpent. This young man takes the seven tongues with him, and throws away the heads. Judge of the joy of this young lady. She wanted to go straight to her father with her preserver (she says), that her father must thank him too; that he owes his daughter to him. But the young man says to her that it is altogether impossible for him; that he must go and meet his cousin at Rome; that they have made a vow, and that, on their return, all three will come to her father's house.

The young lady is vexed, but she goes off without losing time to tell her father what has happened. The father is very glad that the serpent was utterly destroyed; and he proclaims in all the country that he who has killed the serpent should come forward with the proofs of it.

The young lady goes again with the dinner to the gardener. He says to her,

"I told you true, then, that you would not be eaten? Something has, then, killed the serpent?"

She relates to him what had taken place.

But, lo! some days afterwards there appeared a black charcoal-burner, who said that he had killed the serpent, and was come to claim the reward. When the young lady saw the charcoal-burner, she said immediately, that most certainly it was not he; that it was a fine gentleman, on horseback, and not a pest of a man like him. The charcoal-burner shows the heads of the serpent; and the king says that, in truth, this must be the man. The king had only one word to say, she must marry him. The young lady says, she will not at all; and the father began to compel her, (saying) that no other man came forward. But, as the daughter would not consent, to make a delay, the king proclaims in all the country, that he who killed the serpent would be capable of doing something else, too, and that, on such a day, all the young men should assemble, that he would hang a diamond ring from a bell, and that whosoever riding under it should pierce the ring with his sword, should certainly have his daughter.[28]

From all sides arrive the young men. Our Petit Yorge goes off to the Tartaro, and tells him what has happened, and that he has again need of him. The Tartaro gives him a handsome horse, a

[28] This is a much better game than the ordinary one of tilting at a ring with a lance, and is a much more severe test of horsemanship. The ring, an ordinary lady's ring, is suspended by a thread from a cross-bar, at such a height that a man can just reach it by standing in his stirrups. Whoever, starting from a given point, can put a porcupine's quill, or a small reed, through the ring, and thus carry it off at a hand-gallop, becomes possessor of the ring. We have seen this game played at Monte Video, in South America; and even the Gauchos considered it a test of good horsemanship. Formerly, it seems, the ring was suspended from the tongue of a bell, which would be set ringing when the ring was carried away. The sword, of course, was the finest rapier.

superb dress, and a splendid sword. Equipped thus, Petit Yorge goes with the others. He gets ready. The young lady recognizes him immediately, and says so to her father. He has the good luck to carry off the ring on his sword; but he does not stop at all, but goes off galloping as hard as his horse can go. The king and his daughter were in a balcony, looking on at all these gentlemen. They saw that he still went on. The young lady says to her father:

"Papa, call him!"

The father says to her, in an angry tone,

"He is going off, because apparently he has no desire to have you." And he hurls his lance at him. It strikes him on the leg. He still rides on. You can well imagine what chagrin for the young lady.

The next day she goes with the gardener's dinner. She sees him with his leg bandaged. She asks him what it is.

The young lady begins to suspect something, and goes to tell to her father how the gardener had his leg tied up, and that he must go and ask him what is the matter. That he had told her that it was nothing.

The king did not want to go, (and said) that she must get it out of the gardener; but to please his daughter, he says he will go there. He goes then, and asks him, "What is the matter?" He tells him that a blackthorn has run into him. The king gets angry, and says "that there is not a blackthorn in all his garden, and that he is telling him a lie."

The daughter says to him,

"Tell him to show it us."

He shows it to them, and they are astonished to see that the lance is still there. The king did not know what to think of it all. This gardener has deceived him, and he must give him his daughter. But Petit Yorge, uncovering his bosom, shows the "fleur-de-lis" there. The king did not know what to say; but the daughter said to him,

"This is my preserver, and I will marry no one else than him."

Petit Yorge asks the king to send for five dressmakers, the best in the town, and five butchers. The king sends for them.

Petit Yorge asks the dressmakers if they have ever made any new dresses which had a piece out; and on the dressmakers saying "No," he counts out the pieces and gives them to the dressmakers, asking if it was like that that they had given the dresses to the princess. They say, "Certainly not."

He goes, then, to the butchers, and asks them, if they have ever killed animals without tongues? They say, "No!" He tells them, then, to look in the heads of the serpent. They see that the tongues are not there, and then he takes out the tongues he has.

The king, having seen all that, has nothing more to say. He gives him his daughter. Petit Yorge says to him, that he must invite his father to the wedding, but on the part of the young lady's father; and that they must serve him up at dinner a sheep's heart, half cooked, and without salt. They make a great feast, and place this heart before this father. They make him carve it himself, and he is very indignant at that. The son then says to him:

"I expected that;" and he adds, "Ah! my poor father, have you forgotten how you said that you wished to eat the heart, half cooked, and without salt, of him who let the Tartaro go? That is not my heart, but a sheep's heart. I have done this to recall to your memory what you said, and to make you recognize me."

They embrace each other, and tell each other all their news, and what services the Tartaro had done him. The father returned happy to his house, and Petit Yorge lived very happily with his young lady at the king's house; and they wanted nothing, because they had always the Tartaro at their service.

Laurentine.

In a variation of the above tale, from the narration of Mariño Amyot, of St. Jean Pied de Port, the young prince, as a herdsman, kills with a hammer successively three Tartaros who play at cards

with him; he then finds in their house all their riches and horses, barrels full of gold and silver, etc., and also three “olano,” which is described as an animal who serves the Tartaro, like a dog, but much larger and more terrible, but also more intelligent and able to do any message. He kills the serpent with the aid of the “olanos,” and the princess helps by striking the serpent’s tail with a sword,[29] instead of sprinkling the “sweet-scented water.” The “olano” then steals dishes off the king’s table for the prince. The charcoal-burner comes; but at last the prince shows the tongues and pieces of dress, and all ends happily, except for the charcoal-burner, who is placed on the top of seven barrels of powder, and fire is applied beneath, and then nobody sees him any more.

The commencement of the next is so different that we give it at length.

[29] One of those present here interrupted the reciter—“What did she hit the serpent on the tail for?” “Why, to kill him, of course,” was the reply; “ask Mr. Webster if serpents are not killed by hitting them on the tail?”

The Seven-Headed Serpent

Like many others in the world, there was a mother with her three sons. The eldest said to her that he wished to go from country to country, until he should find a situation as servant, and that she should give him a cake.

He sets out. While he is going through a forest he meets an old woman, who asks him for a morsel of his cake.[30] He says to her, "No!" that he would prefer to throw it into the muddy clay. And the lad asks her if she knows of a servant's place. She says, "No." He goes on from forest to forest, until the night overtakes him. There comes to him a bear. He says to him,

"Ant of the earth! who has given you permission to come here?"

"Who should give it me? I have taken it myself."

And the bear devours him.

The second son asks his mother to give him a cake, for he wishes to go as a servant, like his brother. She gives him one, and he goes away like his brother. He meets an old woman, who says to him,

"Give me a little of your cake."

"I prefer to throw it into this muddy clay rather than to give you any of it."

He asks her if she knows of a servant's place. She replies, "No." And on he goes, on, on, on, deeper into the forest. He meets a huge bear. He says to him,

"Ant of the earth! Who has given you permission to come here?"

"Who should give it me? I have taken it myself."

And the bear devours him.

The third son asks his mother to give him a cake, for he wishes to go off, like his brothers. He sets off, and walks on, and on, and on. And he finds an old woman. She asks him,

"Where are you going?"

"I want a situation as servant."

"Give me a little bit of your cake."

"Here! Take the whole as well, if you like."

"No, no! A little bit is enough for me."

And he asks her if she knows of a servant's place. She says to him,

"Yes; you will find it far beyond the forest. But you will meet an enemy here; but I will give you a stick, with the touch of which you may kill him."[31]

He goes on, and on, and on. There comes to him a bear, and says to him,

"Ant of the ground! Who has given you permission to come here?"

"Who has given it me? I have taken it myself."

The lad gives him a little blow with his stick, and the bear gives a howl—

"Oy, oy, oy!—spare my life! Oy, oy, oy!—spare my life!"

But he said to him,

"Tell me, then, how many you are in the place where you live?"

"Seven."

He gives him another blow, and he falls stark dead.

He goes on, on, on, until he finds a palace. He goes in, and asks,

"Do you want a servant?"

They say to him,

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[30] I have a dim recollection of having read something very similar to this either in a Slavonic or a Dalmatian tale.

[31] This incident is in the translation of a tale by Chambers, called "Rouge Etin," in Brueyre's "Contes de la Grande Bretagne," p. 64. See notes ad loc.

"Yes, yes; our shepherd has gone away, and we want one."

They send him to bed; and the next day they give him a fine flock of sheep, and tell him not to go on the mountain, because it is full of large and savage animals, and to pay great attention, because the sheep always want to go there. The next day he goes off with his sheep, and all of them run away to this mountain, because the herbage was very good there. Our shepherd had, fortunately, not forgotten his stick, for at that moment there appeared before him a terrible bear.

"Who has given you permission to come here?"

"I have taken it myself."

"I must eat you."

He approaches, but our shepherd gives him a little blow with his stick, and he begins to cry out,

"Oy, oy, oy!—spare my life!"

"Tell me, then, how many you are where you live?"

"We were seven yesterday, but to-day we are only six, with me."

He gives him another blow, and he falls stark dead. And the shepherd hides him as well as he can in a hedge, and then he returns home with his sheep, well filled. That evening the sheep gave him a great deal of milk, and he made fine cheeses with it.[32] The master and mistress were delighted to have such a servant. The next day he goes off again. As soon as he opened the stable-door the sheep start off running to the good pasture and fine herbage, and the same things (happen again). At the end of a moment there appears a bear, who asks him why he comes there into those parts. Our shepherd, with his stick, gives him a little blow on the neck, and the bear begins to cry,

"Ay, ay, ay!—spare my life!"

He asks him,

"How many are you there where you live?"

"We were seven, but at present we are five with me."

And he gives him a little blow, and he falls stiff and dead. And in five days he kills all the bears in the same way; and when he saw the last one come, he was frightened to see a beast so immense and so fearful, and which came dragging himself along, he was so old. He says to him,

"Why have you come into these parts?"

And at the same time the shepherd gives him a little blow. He begins to cry out to him to spare his life, and that he would give him great riches and beautiful apartments, and that they should live together. He spares his life, and sends the flock back to the house. They go through hedges and hedges, and "through the fairies' holes,"[33] and arrive at last at a fine palace. There they find the table set out with every kind of food and drink. There were also servants to attend on them, and there were also horses all ready saddled, and with harness of gold and silver. There was nothing but riches there. After having passed some days there like that, our shepherd said to himself that it would be better to be master and owner of all that fortune. So he gives a blow to the bear, and kills him stark dead.

After having dressed himself splendidly, he gets on horseback, and goes from country to country, and comes to a city, and hears the bells sounding, dilin-don, dilin-don, and all the people are in excitement. He asks, "What is the matter?" They tell him how that there is in the mountain a serpent with seven heads, and that one person must be given to him every day. This serpent has seven heads. They draw lots to know who must be given to the serpent. The lot had fallen on the king's daughter, and every one was in grief and distress, and all were going, with the king at their head, to accompany her to the mountain. They left her at the foot of the mountain, and she went on mounting alone to the top. This young man goes after her, and says to her,

"I will accompany you."

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[32] In the Pyrénées the ewes are usually milked, and either "caillé"—a kind of clotted cream—or cheese is made of the milk. The sheep for milking are often put in a stable, or fold, for the night.

[33] For the "fairies' holes," see Introduction to the "Tales of the Lamiñak," p. 48.

The king's daughter says to him,

"Turn back, I beg you. I do not wish you to risk your life because of me."

He says to her,

"Have no fear for me. I have a charm of might."

At the same time they hear an extraordinary noise and hissing, and he sees the serpent coming like the lightning. As our man has his stick with him, he gives him a little blow on one of his heads, and one by one the seven heads fall off, and our princess is saved.

In order to go to the mountain, she was dressed in her most beautiful robes. She had seven of them on. He took a little piece from each of the seven robes, and he likewise takes the tongue from each of the heads, and puts them in these little pieces of silk. He then takes the king's daughter on his horse, and descends the mountain. The daughter goes home to her father, and our gentleman to the bear's house. The news that the seven-headed serpent is killed spreads quickly. The king had promised his daughter, and the half of his kingdom, to the man who should have killed him. The serpent was killed, as we have said. Three charcoal-burners, passing by on the mountain, see the serpent, and take the seven heads, and go to the king, asking to have a reward. But, as they were three, they were in a difficulty; and they were sent away until the council was assembled, and to see if any other person would come. As nobody appeared, they were going to draw lots who should be the husband of the king's daughter. There was great excitement that day, and there was also a great stir when this young man arrived in the city. He asks what it is. They tell him what it is. He was splendidly dressed, and had a magnificent horse. He asks to see the king, and, as he was handsomely dressed, he is received immediately. He asks if the seven heads of the serpent had seven tongues in them; and they cannot find them. Then he shows the seven tongues. He sends, too, for the princess' seven robes, and he shows the seven pieces that are wanting, as well as the seven tongues. When they see that, all exclaim—

"This is the true saviour of the king's daughter!"

And they are married.

The three charcoal-burners, after having been dressed in a coat of sulphur, were burnt alive in the midst of the market-place.

Our gentleman and lady lived very happily, sometimes at her father's house and at other times at their own bear's-house; and, as they had lived well, they died happily. Then I was there, and now I am here.

Our next tale will show the serpent in a new character, and might have been included under the variations of "Beauty and the Beast."

The Serpent in the Wood

Like many others in the world, there was a widower who had three daughters. One day the eldest said to her father, that she must go and see the country. She walked on for two hours, and saw some men cutting furze, and others mowing hay.

She returned to the house, astonished at having seen such wonderful things. She told her father what wonderful things she had seen, and her father replied:

"Men cutting furze! Men mowing hay!!"

The second daughter asks, too, to go like her sister, and she returned after having seen the same things. And the third daughter said that she ought to go, too.

"Child, what will you see?"

"I, like my sisters, something or other."

She set off on the same road as the others; and she, like the others, saw men cutting furze, and men mowing hay. She went on further, and she saw some washerwomen; and she went still a little further on till she had walked for three hours, and she saw some wood-cutters cutting firewood. She asked them if she should see anything more if she went a little further. They told her that she would see some more wood-cutters cutting firewood.

She went very much farther into the wood, and she was caught, and kept prisoner by a serpent. She remained there crying, and not able to eat anything; and she remained like that eight days, very sad; then she began to grow resigned, and she remained there three years. At the end of three years she began to wish to return home. The serpent told her to come back again at the end of two days; that his time was nearly finished, and that he was a king's son condemned for four years[34] (to be a serpent). He gave her a distaff and spindle, of silver-gilt, and a silk handkerchief. He said to her:

"If you do not find me here on your return, you will have to wear out seven pairs of shoes, six of leather and one pair of iron ones (before you will be able to find me)."

When she came home, her father would not let her go back to the house where she had passed such a long time with a son of a king, condemned to be a serpent. She said that his time was almost finished, and that in gratitude she ought to return; that he had said that he would marry her. The father had her put in prison, confined in a room very high up. The fourth day she escaped, and went to the place, but she did not find the king's son. She had already shoes on her feet. She had almost worn them out. After that she bought another pair. She kept journeying on and on, and asking if it were far, and they told her that it was very far. She bought still another pair of shoes, and these, too, got worn out on the road. She bought a fifth pair, and after them the sixth also. She then asked if she were near yet, and they told her that she was still very far. Then she bought the seventh pair of shoes, of iron. And when she had gone a short way in these shoes, she asked if it were far from there to the son of the king. The seventh pair of shoes were almost worn out when she came to a city, and heard sounds of music. She inquired what was happening in the city.

"Such a king's son is being married to-day."

She went to the house, and knocked at the door. A servant came.

"What do you want?"

She asked if there were any work to spin, and she would spin it.

And the servant went to tell it to the mistress. The lady ordered the servant to bring her in. She brought her in. And when she was in the kitchen, she showed the silk handkerchief which the king's son had given her; and she began to blow her nose with that. The lady was quite astonished to see the girl blow her nose with such a beautiful handkerchief, as if it were nothing,[35] when her son had one

[34] Cf. "Mahistruba," p. 100; and "Beauty and the Beast," p. 167.

[35] Silk kerchiefs are generally used, especially by women, as head-dresses, and not as pocket-handkerchiefs, all through the south

just like it for his marriage-day. So she told her son, when he came back from the church, that she had a spinster who came from a great distance, and said to him:

"She has a silk handkerchief just like yours!"

And the king's son said to his mother:

"I, too, must see this spinster that you have there." And he began to go there.

And his mother said to him,

"But why must you see her?"

"I wish to see her."

He went to the kitchen, and in his presence she used her silk handkerchief.

He said to her,

"Show me that."

She said to him,

"It is too dirty to put into your hands, sir."

The gentleman says to her,

"I wish to see it, and show it to me."

(Then) he recognised the young girl. She showed him (too) the distaff and spindle.

At table, when everybody was engaged telling stories, this king said:

"I also have a story to tell."

Everybody was silent, and turned to look at him, and he said:

"Formerly, I had a key to a chest of drawers, and I lost it, and had a new one made. (After that, I found the old one.)"

And he turned to his wife:

"Should I use the old one or the new one?"

And she replied:

"If the first was a good one, why should you make use of the new one?"

Then he gave her this answer:

"Formerly, I had a wife, and now I have taken you. I leave you, and take the former one. Do you go off, then, to your own house."

Gagna-haurra Hirigaray.
(Learnt at Guethary.)

For the version of the Heren-Suge tales which most closely approaches the Gaelic, see below, "Keltic Legends," "The Fisherman and his Sons," p. 87.

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of France.

III.—Animal Tales

We give two stories as specimens of animal tales, which are neither allegories, nor fables, and still less satires. The reader must remember the phrase, “This happened when animals and all things could talk.” So thoroughly is this believed, that the first tale of this class recited to us completely puzzled us. The animals are in them placed so fully on a footing with human beings—not in the least as our “poor relations,” but rather as sharper-witted, and quite as happy and well off as ourselves—that it is difficult at times to determine whether it is the beast or the man who is the speaker.

Of the latter part of our first story we have heard many variations. In one given by M. Cerquand, p. 29, note,[36] the fox is represented by Basa-Jauna; in a version from Baigorry, by the Tartaro; but in three others, from separate localities, he is a fox. The first two truths are the same in all the versions. In that here given, the fun is heightened by the fox talking and lisping throughout like a little child. All these versions we take to be merely fragments of a much longer story.

In M. Cerquand’s “The Chandelier of St. Sauveur,” p. 22, the hero’s name is Acherihargaix —“the fox difficult to be caught;” and we suspect that he, too, was originally merely an animal.

[36] “Légendes et Récits Populaires du Pays Basque,” par M. Cerquand. Part I., Pau, 1875, and Part II., p.28, Pau, 1876.

Acheria, the Fox

One day a fox was hungry. He did not know what to think. He saw a shepherd pass every day with his flock, and he said to himself that he ought to steal his milk and his cheese, and to have a good feast; but he needed some one to help him in order to effect anything. So he goes off to find a wolf, and he says to him,

"Wolf, wolf! we ought to have a feast with such a shepherd's milk and cheese. You, you shall go to where the flocks are feeding, and from a distance you must howl, 'Uhur, uhur, uhur.' The man, after having milked his sheep, drives them into the field, with his dog, very early in the morning, and he stops at home to do his work, and then he makes his cheese; and, when you have begun to howl 'Uhur, uhur,' and the dog to bark, the shepherd will leave everything else, and will go off full speed. During this time I will steal the milk, and we will share it when you come to me."

The wolf agreed to have a feast, and set out. He did just what the fox had told him. The dog began to bark when the wolf approached. And when the man heard that he went off, leaving everything, and our fox goes and steals the vessel in which the curdled milk was. What does he do then, before the arrival of the wolf? He gently, gently takes off the cream, thinly, thinly, and he eats all the contents of the jug. After he has eaten all, he fills it up with dirt, and puts back the cream on the top, and he awaits the wolf at the place where he had told him. The fox says to him, since it is he who is to make the division, that as the top is much better than the underneath part, the one who should choose that should have only that, and the other all the rest. "Choose now which you would like."

The wolf says to him,

"I will not have the top; I prefer what is at the bottom."

The fox then takes the top, and gives the poor wolf the vessel full of dirt.[37] When he saw that, the wolf got angry; but the fox said to him,

"It is not my fault. Apparently the shepherd makes it like that."

And the fox goes off well filled.

Another day he was again very hungry, and did not know what to contrive. Every day he saw a boy pass by on the road with his father's dinner. He says to a blackbird,

"Blackbird, you don't know what we ought to do? We ought to have a good dinner. A boy will pass by here directly. You will go in front of him, and when the boy goes to catch you, you will go on a little farther, limping, and when you shall have done that a little while the boy will get impatient, and he will put down his basket in order to catch you quicker. I will take the basket, and will go to such a spot, and we will share it, and will make a good dinner."

The blackbird says to him, "Yes."

When the boy passes, the blackbird goes in front of the boy, limping, limping. When the boy stoops (to catch him), the blackbird escapes a little further on. At last the boy, getting impatient, puts his basket on the ground, in order to go quicker after the blackbird. The fox, who kept watching to get hold of the basket, goes off with it, not to the place agreed upon, but to his hole, and there he stuffs himself, eating the blackbird's share as well as his own.

Then he says to himself,

"I shall do no good stopping here. The wolf is my enemy, and the blackbird, too. Something will happen to me if I stay here. I must go off to the other side of the water."

He goes and stands at the water's edge. A boatman happened to pass, and he said to him:

"Ho! man, ho! Will you, then, cross me over this water? I will tell you three truths."

The man said to him, "Yes."

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[37] Cf. Campbell's tale, "The Keg of Butter," Vol. III., 98, where the fox cheats the wolf by giving him the bottoms of the oats and the tops of the potatoes. See also the references there given.

The fox jumps (into the boat), and he begins to say:

"People say that maize bread is as good as wheaten bread. That is a falsehood. Wheaten bread is better. That is one truth."

When he was in the middle of the river, he said:

"People say, too, 'What a fine night; it is just as clear as the day!' That's a lie. The day is always clearer. That is the second truth."

And he told him the third as they were getting near the bank.

"Oh! man, man, you have a bad pair of trousers on, and they will get much worse, if you do not pass over people who pay you more than I."

"That's very true," said the man; and the fox leapt ashore.

Then I was by the side of the river, and I learnt these three truths, and I have never forgotten them since.

The Ass and the Wolf

Astoa Eta Otsoa.

Like many others in the world, there was an ass. He was going along a ravine, laden with Malaga wine. (You know that asses are very much afraid of wolves, because the wolves are very fond of the flesh of asses.) While he was journeying along in that fashion, he sees a wolf coming at some distance; he could not hide himself anywhere. The wolf comes up, and the ass says to him:

"Good morning, good morning, Mr. Wolf; in case you should be thirsty, I have some excellent Malaga to drink."

"I am not thirsty; no!—but astoundingly hungry; yes! My dinner to-day shall be your head and ears."

"Mr. Wolf, if you were good enough to let me go and hear one mass–?"

He says to him, "Well! yes."

Our ass goes off then. When he gets into the church he shuts the door inside with his foot, and stops quietly there.

When the wolf began to get impatient at waiting, he said:

"Ay, ay, what a long mass! one would say it was Palm Sunday."

The ass said to him:

"Dirty old wolf, have patience. I am staying here with the angels, and I have my life (safe) for to-night."

"Ay, ay, you bad ass, you are too, too, filthy, you know. If ever you meet with me again, mass you shall not hear."

The ass said to him:

"There are no dogs round the fold of Alagaia; if you go there you would get lots of sheep."

The wolf gives it up, and sets off for the flock where the ass had told him to go. When the ass saw that he had gone away he came out of the church, and went home, and took good care not to come near the wolf's place any more.

IV.—Basa-Jaun, Basa-Andre, and Lamiñak

It is somewhat difficult to get a clear view of what Basa-Jaun and Basa-Andre, the wild man and the wild woman, really are in Basque mythology. In the first tale here given Basa-Jaun appears as a kind of vampire, and his wife, the Basa-Andre, as a sorceress, but we know of no other such representation of the former. Basa-Jaun is usually described by Basque writers as a kind of satyr, or faun, a wood-sprite; and Basques; in speaking of him to us, have frequently used the French term, "Homme de Bouc," "He-goat-man," to describe him. In some tales he appears rather as a species of brownie, and has received the familiar sobriquet of Ancho,[38] from the Spanish Sancho. In this character he haunts the shepherds' huts in the mountains, warms himself at their fires, tastes their clotted milk and cheese, converses with them, and is treated with a familiarity which, however, is never quite free from a hidden terror. His wife, the Basa-Andre, appears sometimes as a sorceress, sometimes as a kind of land-mermaid, as a beautiful lady sitting in a cave and "combing her locks with a comb of gold," in remote mountain parts.[39]

The Lamiñak are true fairies, and do not differ more from the general run of Keltic fairies than the Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and Cornish fairies do from each other. In fact, the legends are often identical. The Lamiñak were described to us by one who evidently believed in, and dreaded them, as little people who lived underground. Another informant stated that they were little people who came down the chimney. They long to get possession of human beings, and change and carry off infants unbaptized, but they do not seem to injure them otherwise. They bring good luck to the houses which they frequent; they are fond of cleanliness, but always speak and give their orders in words exactly the opposite of their meaning. In common with Basa-Jaun and Basa-Andre they hate church bells,[40] and though not actively hostile to Christianity, are driven away as it advances. They were formerly great builders of bridges, and even of churches,[41] but were usually defrauded of their wage, which was to have been power over some human soul at the completion of the contract. Fairies' wells and fountains are common in the Landes and neighbouring Gascon provinces, but we know of none in the Pays Basque.[42] We failed distinctly to make out what are the "fairies' holes (Lamiña-ziloak)," spoken of in the Heren-Suge tale (p. 36); as far as we could gather from the narrator they are simply bare places in hedges, when covered by the web of the gossamer spider. We know of no dances by moonlight on fairy rings of green herbage; but if the reader will carefully eliminate from his memory the rare fancies of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson about Puck, Oberon, and Titania, he will find little otherwise to differentiate between the Basque Lamiñak and the fairies of Sir Walter Scott, of Campbell, and of Croker's "Irish Legends." One peculiarity certainly is that all the Basque Lamiñak are sometimes said to be all called "Guïllen,"[43] which appears to be the same as the French Guillaume, and our William.

It must be a sign of a failing belief and interest that witches and fairies are so often confounded. In these few stories it is evident that the witch is often a fairy, and the fairy a witch.

[38] Cf. Cerquand, Part I., p. 27, "Ancho et les Vaches," and notes. Also Part II., 34, et seq.

[39] Cf. Cerquand, Part I., pp. 33, 34, "La Dame au Peigne d'Or."

[40] Cerquand, Part I., p. 30, "Basa-Jauna et le Salve Regina."

[41] Cerquand, "L'Eglise d'Espés." "Le Pont de Licq," Part I., pp. 31, 32, and Part II., pp. 50–52.

[42] But compare the well or marsh of the Basa-Andre in the Tartaro tale, p. 15.

[43] Cerquand, Part I., pp. 32, 33.

Basa-Jauna, the Wild Man

Once upon a time there lived in one house the landlady and the farmer's wife.[44] The farmer's wife had three sons; one day they said to their mother to give each of them a ball and a penny roll, that they wished to go from country to country. The mother was sorry to part with her three much-loved sons; but all three started off.

When they were in the midst of a forest they saw that night was coming on, and the eldest brother said that he would climb up the first tree. He finds a tall tree, and climbs up to the top, to the very tip-top, and the second says to him:

"Do you see nothing?"

He says, "No, no; there's nothing to be seen, nothing; not a feather! nothing!"

"Come down then; you are an old donkey."

And the second climbs, and he sees nothing. The third says to him:

"You are no good at all, you others. I will climb up."

And he climbs to the top, to the very tip-top. The others say to him:

"And do you not see anything?"

He says to them:

"Yes; I see a long column of smoke, but very, very thin, and far, very far away. Let us go towards that."

And the three brothers set out together. At eight o'clock in the evening they come to a grand castle, and they knock at the door, and the Basa-Andre (wild woman) comes to answer. She asks:

"Who is there?"

And they reply, "It is we who are here."

"What do you want, young children? Where are you going to at this time of night?"

"We ask and beg of you to give us shelter for to-night; we will be satisfied with a corner of the floor, poor wretches as we are."

"I have my husband, the Basa-Jaun, and if he catches you he will eat you; that's certain."

"And if he catches us outside he will eat us all the same."

Then she let these three brothers come in, and she hides the three in three different corners. Afterwards, at nine o'clock, the Basa-Jaun comes. He made a great noise and blustering, and then the Basa-Andre goes out, and says to him:

"There is nobody here."

"Yes, you have somebody; bring them out, or else I will eat you myself."

And she goes and brings out the eldest brother, trembling with fright. The Basa-Jaun says to him,

"Will you be my servant?"

He says to him, "Yes."

And Basa-Jaun begins again to sniff about.

"You have still somebody else here?"

And she brings out the second, and he says to him:

"Will you be servant to me?"

And he said, "Yes."

Again, he smelled the smell of some one, and at the third time she brings out the third, and he says to him:

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[44] The owner of the farm and the "métayère," or tenant's wife. Under the "métayer" system the landlord and tenant divide the produce of the farm. This is the case almost universally in South-Western France, as elsewhere in the South. The "métayer's" residence often adjoins the landlord's house.

"All three of you shall sup with me to-night, and afterwards we shall go to bed. But to-morrow we will all go hunting."

And they go hunting the next day until eight o'clock in the evening.

Now, they had at home a little sister. She was little then, but in time she grew up. One day the landlady and the farmer's wife had put out the new maize in the garden to dry; and when no one saw her, the little girl took some from her mistress' heap, and put it to her own. When the mistress saw that, she began to cry out, saying to her,

"Bold hussey that you are, there is no one like you! You will come to a bad end like your brothers."

And the young girl began to cry, and goes to find her mother, and says to her,

"Mother, had I any brothers?"[45]

She says to her, "Yes, my child."

"What were they?"

"Child, they went away a long time ago," she said to her.

This little girl says,

"I, too, must be off to-day. Give me a distaff to spin with, and a penny cake."

She sets off, and comes to the house of the Basa-Jaun, and she knocks at the door, and she lets her in. While his wife was telling her that it is the house of the Basa-Jaun, the elder brother comes in; but they did not recognise one another at all. And afterwards Basa-Jaun comes, and says, as he enters the house:

"You have something here for me," says he.

"No," says she.

"Show it."

And immediately she shows her. Basa-Jaun says to her:

"Will you engage yourself as my servant?"

She says to him, "Yes, sir."

Some days afterwards the brothers recognised their sister, and they embraced each other very much. And this young girl who was so well before began to grow thin. And one day one of her brothers asked her:

"What is the matter with you that you are getting thin like this?"

And she answered:

"The master every evening asks me to put my little finger through the door, and he sucks the finger through the door, and I become every day more sad and more languid."[46]

One day, when the Basa-Andre was not at home, these brothers and the sister plotted together to kill Basa-Jaun, if they could catch him in a ravine in a certain place. And they kill him.

One day the wife asks,

"Where is Basa-Jaun?"

And Basa-Andre takes out three large teeth, and brings them to the house, and tells this young girl herself, when she heats the water for her brothers' feet in the evening, to put one tooth in the water of each.[47] And as soon as the third had finished washing the three brothers became oxen; and this young girl used to drive all three into the fields. And this young girl lived there on the birds they (the oxen) found, and nothing else.

One day, as she was passing over a bridge,[48] she sees Basa-Andre under, and says to her:

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[45] Cf. "The Sister and her Seven Brothers."

[46] This is the only representation that we know of Basa-Jaun as a vampire.

[47] As the Basques commonly go barefooted, or use only hempen sandals, the feet require to be washed every evening. This is generally done before the kitchen fire, and in strict order of age and rank. Cf. also "The Sister and her Seven Brothers."

[48] The running water, we suspect, gives the girl power over the witch.

"If you do not make these three oxen men as they were before, I will put you into a red-hot oven."

She answers her:

"No! go to such a dell, and take thence three hazel sticks,[49] and strike each of them three blows on the back."

And she did what she told her, and they were changed into men the same as they were before; and all the brothers and the sister lived happily together in Basa-Jaun's castle, and as they lived well they made a good end also.

Estefanella Hirigaray.

[49] "Hazel sticks." In the sixteenth century the dog-wood, "cornus sanguinea," seems to have been the witches' wood. In the "Pastorales," all the enchantments, etc., are done by the ribboned wands of the Satans. This tale ends rather abruptly. The reciter grew very tired at the last.

The Servant at the Fairy's

Once upon a time there was a woman who had three daughters. One day the youngest said to her that she must go out to service. And going from town to town, she met at last a fairy who asked her:

"Where are you going to, my child?"

And she answered, "Do you know a place for a servant?"

"Yes; if you will come to my house I will take you."

She said, "Yes."

She gave her her morning's work to do, and said to her:

"We are fairies. I must go from home, but your work is in the kitchen; smash the pitcher, break all the plates, pound the children, give them breakfast (by themselves), dirty their faces, and rumple their hair."[50]

While she was at breakfast with the children, a little dog comes to her and says:

"Tchau, tchau, tchow; I too, I want something."

"Be off from here, silly little dog; I will give you a kick."

But the dog did not go away; and at last she gave him something to eat—a little, not much.

"And now," says he, "I will tell you what the mistress has told you to do. She told you to sweep the kitchen, to fill the pitcher, and to wash all the plates, and that if it is all well done she will give you the choice of a sack of charcoal or of a bag of gold; of a beautiful star on your forehead, or of a donkey's tail hanging from it. You must answer, 'A sack of charcoal and a donkey's tail.'"

The mistress comes. The new servant had done all the work, and she was very well satisfied with her. So she said to her:

"Choose which you would like, a sack of charcoal or a bag of gold?"

"A sack of charcoal is the same to me."

"A star for your forehead, or a donkey's tail?"

"A donkey's tail would be the same to me."

Then she gives her a bag of gold, and a beautiful star on her forehead.[51] Then the servant goes home. She was so pretty with this star, and this bag of gold on her shoulders, the whole family was astonished at her. The eldest daughter says to her mother:

"Mother, I will go and be a servant too."

And she says to her, "No, my child, you shall not do so."

But as she would not leave her in peace (she assented), and she goes off like her sister. She comes into the city of the fairies, and meets the same fairy as her sister did. She says to her:

"Where are you going, my girl?"

"To be a servant."

"Come to us."

And she takes her as servant. She tells her like the first one:

"You will dig up the kitchen, break the plates, smash the pitcher, give the children their breakfasts by themselves, and dirty their faces."

There was some of the breakfast left over, and the little dog comes in, and he went:

"Tchow! tchow! tchow! I too, I should like something."

And he follows her everywhere, and she gives him nothing; and at last she drove him off with kicks. The mistress comes home, and she finds the kitchen all dug up, the pitcher and all the plates broken. And she asks the servant:

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[50] Basque Lamiñak always say exactly the contrary to what they mean.

[51] Cf. Bladé's "Contes Agenais," "Les Deux Filles," and Köhler's "Notes Comparatives" on the tale, p. 149.

"What do you ask for wages? A bag of gold or a sack of charcoal? a star on your forehead, or a donkey's tail there?"

She chose the bag of gold and a star on her forehead; but she gave her a sack of charcoal, and a donkey's tail for her forehead. She goes away crying, and tells her mother that she comes back very sorry. And the second daughter also asks permission to go.

"No! no!" (says the mother), and she stops at home.

Estefanella Hirigaray.

The Fairy in the House

There was once upon a time a gentleman and lady. And the lady was spinning one evening. There came to her a fairy, and they could not get rid of her; and they gave her every evening some ham to eat, and at last they got very tired of their fairy.

One day the lady said to her husband:

"I cannot bear this fairy; I wish I could drive her away."

And the husband plots to dress himself up in his wife's clothes just as if it was she, and he does so. The wife goes to bed, and the husband remains in the kitchen alone, and the fairy comes as usual. And the husband was spinning. The fairy says to him:

"Good-day, madam."

"The same to you too; sit down."

"Before you made chirin, chirin, but now you make firgilun, fargalun."[52]

The man replies, "Yes, now I am tired."

As his wife used to give her ham to eat, the man offers her some also.

"Will you take your supper now?"

"Yes, if you please," replies the fairy.

He puts the frying-pan on the fire with a bit of ham. While that was cooking, and when it was red, red-hot, he throws it right into the fairy's face. The poor fairy begins to cry out, and then come thirty of her friends.

"Who has done any harm to you?"

"I, to myself; I have hurt myself."[53]

"If you have done it yourself, cure it yourself."

And all the fairies go off, and since then there came no more fairies to that house. This gentleman and lady were formerly so well off, but since the fairy comes no longer the house little by little goes to ruin, and their life was spent in wretchedness. If they had lived well they would have died well too.

Estefanella Hirigaray.

[52] That is, the wife span evenly with a clear steady sound of the wheel, but the man did it unevenly.

[53] Cf. Campbell's "The Brollachan," Vol. II., p. 189, with the notes and variations. "Me myself," as here, seems the equivalent of the Homeric "οὔτις."

The Pretty but Idle Girl. [54]

Once upon a time there was a mother who had a very beautiful daughter. The mother was always bustling about, but the daughter would not do anything. So she gave her such a good beating that she sat down on a flat stone to cry. One day the young owner of the castle went by. He asks:

"What makes such a pretty girl cry like that?"

The woman answers him:

"As she is too pretty she will not work."

The young man asks if she knows how to sew.

She answers, "Yes; if she liked she could make seven shirts a day."

This young gentleman is much smitten with her. He goes home, and brings a piece of linen, and says to her:

"Here are seven shirts, and if you finish them by such a time we will marry together."

She sat thinking without doing anything, and with tears in her eyes. Then comes to her an old woman, who was a witch, and says to her:

"What is it makes you so sad?"

She answers, "Such a gentleman has brought me seven shirts to sew, but I cannot do them. I am sitting here thinking."

This old woman says to her:

"You know how to sew?"

"I know how to thread the needle; (that is all)."

This woman says to her:

"I will make your shirts for you when you want them, if you remember my name in a year and a day." And she adds, "If you do not remember I shall do with you whatever I like. Marie Kirikitoun —nobody can remember my name."

And she agreed. She makes her the seven shirts for the appointed time. When the young man came the shirts were made, and he takes the young girl with joy and they are both married.

But this young girl grew continually sadder and sadder; though her husband made great feasts for her she never laughed. One day they had a frightfully grand festival. There came to the door an old woman, and she asks the servant:

"What is the reason that you have such grand feastings?"

She answers, "Our lady never laughs at all, and her husband has these grand feasts to make her gay."

The old woman replied:

"If she saw what I have heard this day she would laugh most certainly."

The servant said to her, "Stay here; I will tell her so at once."

They call the old woman in, and she told them that she had seen an old woman leaping and bounding from one ditch to another, and saying all the time:

"Houpa, houpa, Marie Kirikitoun; nobody will remember my name."

When this young lady heard that, she was merry at once, and writes down this name at once. She recompensed highly the old woman, and she was very happy; and when the other old woman came she knew her name.[55]

Estefanella Hirigaray.

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[54] M. Cerquand has the same tale, Part I., p. 41.

[55] This is a very widely spread legend. Cf. Patrañas, "What Ana saw in the Sunbeam;" "Duffy and the Devil," in Hunt's "Popular Romances of the West of England," p. 239; also Kennedy's "Idle Girl and her Aunts," which is very close to the Spanish story; and compare the references subjoined to the translation of the Irish legend in Brueyre's "Contes Populaires de la Grande Bretagne," p. 159.

The Devil's Age

There was a gentleman and lady who were very poor. This man used to sit sadly at a cross-roads. There came to him a gentleman, who asked: "Why are you so sad?"

"Because I have not wherewith to live."

He said to him, "I will give you as much money as you like, if at such a time you tell the age of the devil."

Our man goes off happy. He leads a merry life with his wife, for they wanted for nothing. They lived at a great rate. But time went on, and the time was approaching. This man recollected that he had not busied himself at all about the devil's age. He became pensive. His wife asked him what was the matter with him then? why is he not happy? that they wanted for nothing; why is he so sad? He tells her how it is that he got rich, and what compact he had made with a gentleman. His wife said to him:

"If you have nothing but that, it is nothing at all. Get into a barrel of honey, and when you come out of it get into another barrel of feathers, and dressed like that go to the cross-roads and wait for the devil there. You will put yourself on all fours, and walk backwards and forwards, and go between his legs, and walk all round him."

The man does as his wife had told him. The devil comes, and draws back (when he sees him); and our man goes up quite close to the devil. The devil being frightened said to him:

"I am so many years old, and I have never seen any animal like that, and such a frightful one."[56]

Our man had heard enough. He went off home at full speed, and told his wife that they would want for nothing, that he had done as she had told him, just as if she had been a witch, and that he was no longer afraid of the devil. They lived rich and happily, and if they lived well, they died well too.

Franchun Beltzarri.

[56] Cf. "The Brewery of Egg-shells," in Croker's "Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland," pp. 32–36.

The Fairy-Queen Godmother. [57]

There were, like many others in the world, a man and a woman over-burthened with children, and very poor. The woman no more knew what to do. She said that she would go and beg. She goes off, far, far, far away, and she arrives at the city of the fairies. After she had told them how many children she had, all give her a great many alms—she was laden with them.

The queen of the fairies gives her besides twenty pounds in gold, and says to her:

"If you will give me your child when you are confined—you shall bring it up in your law—I will give you a great deal of money, if you will do that."

She told her that the godmother was already decided upon, but that she would speak about it to her husband. The queen told her to go home, and to return with the answer in a week.

She gets home as she best can, very much fatigued by her burthen. Her husband was astonished that she could have carried so much. She tells him what had happened with the queen of the fairies. He says to her:

"Certainly, we will make her godmother."

And she returns at the end of a week to tell the queen that she accepts her. She tells her not to send and tell her when she is confined, that she will know it herself, and that she will come all right. At the end of a week she is confined of a daughter. The queen arrives, as she had said, with a mule laden with gold. When they came back from the christening, the godmother and the child fly away; and the parents console themselves with their other children, thinking that she will be happier in the house of the queen of the fairies.

The queen takes her to a corner of a mountain. It is there where her house was. She had already another god-daughter; this was a little dog, whose name was Rose,[58] and she named this last god-daughter Pretty-Rose. She gave her, too, a glint of diamonds in the middle of her forehead.[59] She was very pretty. She grew up in the corner of the mountain, amusing herself with this dog. She said to her one day:

"Has the queen no other houses? I am tired of being always here."

The dog said to her: "Yes, she has a very fine one by the side of the king's highway, and I will speak to my godmamma about it."

And the dog then told her how Pretty-Rose was bored, and (asked her) if she would not change her house. She said to her, "Yes," and off they go. While they were there one day Pretty-Rose was on the balcony, and a king's son passes, and he was astonished at the beauty of Pretty-Rose; and the king begged and prayed her to look at him again, and (asked her) if she would not go with him. She told him, "No, that she must tell it to her godmamma." Then the dog said, aside:

"No, without me she shall not go anywhere."

This king says to her: "But I will take you, too, willingly; but how shall I get you?"

Rose says to him: "As I give every evening to my godmother always a glass of good liqueur to make her sleep well, as if by mistake, instead of half a glass, I will give her the glass full, and as she will not be able to rise any more to shut the door as usual, I, I will go and take the key to shut it. I will pretend to, and will give her back the key, leaving the door open, and you will open it when you come. She will not hear anything; she will be in a deep sleep."

The king's son said that he would come at midnight, in his flying chariot.

When night came, Rose gave her godmother the good drink in a glass, brim, brim-full. The godmother said:

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[57] This tale, or at least this version of it, with the names Rose and Bellarose, must come from the French.

[58] "A little dog" is mentioned in Campbell's "The Daughter of the Skies," Vol. I., 202, and notes.

[59] "Kopetaen erdian diamanteko bista batez"—"a view of diamonds in the middle of the forehead."

"What! what! child!"

"You will sleep all the better, godmamma."

"You are right," and she drinks it all.

But she could not any more get up to shut the door, she had become so sleepy.

Rose said to her: "Godmamma! I will shut the door to-day; stop where you are."

She gave her the key, and Rose turns and turns it back again and again in the keyhole as if she had locked it; and leaving it unlocked she gave the key to her godmother, and she puts it in her pocket. She goes to bed; but Rose and Pretty-Rose did not go to bed at all. At midnight the son of the king arrives with his flying chariot. Rose and Pretty-Rose get into it, and go to this young man's house. The next day Rose says to Pretty-Rose:

"You are not so pretty as you were yesterday;" and looking at her closely, "I find you very ugly to-day."

Pretty-Rose said to her: "My godmamma must have taken away my diamond glint."

And she said to Rose, "You must go to my godmamma, and ask her to give me back the glint that I had before."

Rose did not want to go there—she was afraid; but Pretty-Rose prayed her so much, that she took off the silver dress and set out.[60] When she came to the mountain, she began to call out:

"Godmamma! godmamma! Give Pretty-Rose her beautiful glint as before. I shall be angry with you for always (if you do not), and you will see what will happen to you."

The godmother said to her:

"Come here, come in, I will give you breakfast."

She said, "I am afraid you will beat me."

"No! no! come quickly, then."

"You will give Pretty-Rose her glint?"

"Yes, yes, she has it already."

She then goes in. The queen washes her feet and wipes them, and puts her upon the velvet cushion, and gives her some chocolate; and says to her, that she knows where Pretty-Rose is, and that she will be married, and to tell her from her not to trouble herself about her toilet, nor about anything that is necessary for the wedding and feast, that she would come on the morning of the day.

Rose goes off then. While she is going through the city where Pretty-Rose is, she hears two ladies, who were saying to two gentlemen, "What kind of wife is it that our brother is going to take? Not like us, because he keeps her shut up so close. Let us go and see her."

The little dog said to them, "Not a bit like you, you horrible blubber-lips, as you are. You shall see her—yes."

When the young kings heard that, they were ready to run their swords through the poor little dog. When she gets to Pretty-Rose's house she hides herself, and tells her all that has happened. Pretty-Rose gives her some good liqueur to drink, and she comes to herself. The king makes a proclamation that whoever shall (merely) spit where the little dog shall have placed her feet shall be killed, and to mind and pay attention to it.

When the marriage day had arrived, came the queen. She brought for the wedding-day a robe of diamonds; for the next day, of gold; and for the third day, of silver. Judge how beautiful she was with her glint of diamonds, and her dress of diamonds, too. They could not look at her. Her godmother told her to have her sisters-in-law there, and not to be afraid of them; that they could not come near her in beauty. When she went out (of her room) on the wedding-day, her sisters-in-law could not look at her, she dazzled them so much. They said to each other:

"The little dog was right when she said she was beautiful, this lady."

[60] Nothing has been said about this dress before. Something must have dropped out of the story.

And for three days Pretty-Rose walked about,[61] and every one was astounded at her beauty. When the feast was over, the godmother went home. Rose would not leave Pretty-Rose. The godmother told Pretty-Rose that she was born of poor parents, and that she had once helped them, but that what she had given them must be already exhausted. Pretty-Rose gave them enough for all to live grandly. She herself had four children, two boys and two girls; and if they had lived well, they had died well.

Laurentine
Learnt it from her mother.

[61] At a Pyrenean wedding the bride and bridegroom, with the wedding party, spend nearly the whole day in promenading through the town or village. The feast often lasts several days, and the poor bride is an object of pity, she sometimes looks so deadly tired.

V.—Witchcraft and Sorcery

Our legends of witchcraft and sorcery are very poor, and in some of these, as said above, the witch is evidently a fairy. The reason of this is not that the belief in witchcraft is extinct among the Basques, but because it is so rife. Of stories of witchcraft (as matters of fact), and some of them very sad ones, we have heard plenty; but of legends, very few. In fact, witchcraft among the Basques has not yet arrived at the legendary stage. The difference is felt at once in taking down their recitations. In the legends they are reciting a text learnt by heart. It is "the story says so." "It is so," whether they understand it or not. But they tell their stories of witchcraft in their own words, just as they would narrate any other facts which they supposed had happened to themselves or to their neighbours. One woman told us, as a fact within her own knowledge, and persisted in it, a tale which appears both in M. Cerquand's pages and in Fr. Michel's "Pays Basque."[62] It was only after cross-examination that we could discover that it had not really happened to her own daughter, but that she had only seen the cottage and the chapel which are the scene of the alleged occurrence. We have, too, been informed on undoubted authority that, only a year or two back, a country priest was sorely puzzled by one of his parishioners, in his full senses, seriously and with contrition confessing to him that he frequented the "Sabbat."

But what is strange and unexpected is, that with this prevalence of belief in witchcraft and sorcery, and which can be traced back to our earliest notices of the Basques, there is nothing to differentiate their belief on this subject from the current European belief of three centuries back. All the Basque words for witchcraft and sorcery are evidently borrowed. The only purely Basque term is Asti, which seems to be rather a diviner than a sorcerer. The term for the "Sabbat" is "Akhelarre"—"goat pasture"—and seems to be taken from the apparition of the devil there in form of a goat, which is not uncommon elsewhere. Pierre de Lancre, by the terrors of his hideous inquisition in 1609, produced a moral epidemic, and burnt numerous victims at St. Jean de Luz; but there is not a single Basque term in all his pages. Contrary to general opinion, both the Spanish Inquisition and the French ecclesiastical tribunals were more merciful and rational, and showed far less bigotry and barbarity than the two doctrinaire lawyers and judges of Bordeaux. The last person burnt for witchcraft at St. Jean de Luz was a Portuguese lady, who was accused of having secreted the Host for purposes of magic, in 1619. While her case was being investigated before the Bishop of Bayonne, in the crypt of the church, a mob of terrified fishermen, on the eve of starting for Newfoundland, burst in, tore her out of the church, and burnt her off-hand, in the midst of the "Place." "They dared not," they said, "sail while such a crime was unpunished." The Bishop's procés-verbal of the occurrence is still extant in the archives of the Mairie.

[62] Cerquand, Part I., p. 29, notes to Conte 8; Fr. Michel, "Le Pays Basque," p. 152 (Didot, Paris, 1857).

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.