



## Some Notes on Homeric Folk-Lore

W. Crooke

To cite this article: W. Crooke (1908) Some Notes on Homeric Folk-Lore, *Folklore*, 19:2, 153-189, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1908.9719822](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1908.9719822)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1908.9719822>



Published online: 14 Feb 2012.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 3



View related articles [↗](#)

## SOME NOTES ON HOMERIC FOLK-LORE.

BY W. CROOKE.

(Continued from p. 77.)

AS we have already seen, Homer carefully selects the traditions which he uses, and though he has omitted much, he has provided us with a large number of Sagas and Märchen; the former being tales told of supernatural personages, of heroes and heroines who have definite names and are supposed to have once actually existed, or are attached to definite places; the latter being vague, impersonal, indefinite, in short, more in the manner of the fairy tale. Some critics have attempted to draw a distinction between the two epics—that the *Iliad* is made up of Sagas, the *Odyssey* of Märchen. But this statement is not entirely accurate. Thus the main subject of the *Odyssey* is the Saga of the Absent Husband, who recovers his wife after many adventures, in which Tokens of Recognition, like the bed of Odysseus, the scar left by the boar, the facts known to Penelope and Laertes alone, form a leading part.<sup>1</sup> Here it may be remarked that in tales of this class the hero is very often recognised by his skill in cooking. In the *Mahabharata*, Nala is recognised in this way, and the same incident occurs in the Arab tale of Nur-al-din Ali and his son Badr-al-din Hasan, where he is identified by his skill in cooking the pomegranate conserve.<sup>2</sup> It is, in this light, suggestive,

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xxiii. 180 ff.; xix. 467 ff.; xxiv. 330 ff.      <sup>2</sup> Burton, *Nights*, i. 224.

that when Odysseus offers to serve the Wooers he says, "No mortal may vie with me in the business of a serving-man, in piling well a fire, in cleaving dry faggots, and in carving and roasting flesh and in pouring of wine."<sup>1</sup> In the same category is the testing of the hero's skill in the competition of shooting through the rings of the axes, which also occurs in the Panjab tale of Rasalu, while in the *Ramayana* Rama's arrow flies through seven palm trees and through the hill behind them.<sup>2</sup>

Tales of the Absent Husband type are to be found in a Chinese Saga; in a Greek tale from Kato Sudena; in an Italian story; in one of Grimm's German tales; largely in ballad literature, as in those of Hind Horn and King Horn; and in the Arabian Saga of Kamaralzaman and Badaura.<sup>3</sup> These tales seem to fall into two groups—one where the separation is caused by a misunderstanding; the other, where, as in the German story, the hero goes away for some other reason. With this is combined in the *Odyssey* the Saga of the Wooing and the means by which the faithful wife baffles her importunate lovers.<sup>4</sup>

In the Saga of Bellerophon<sup>5</sup> we have, first, the only

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xv. 319 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Swynnerton, *Romantic Tales*, 213; *Cambridge Jataka*, v. 68; Griffith, *Ramayana*, 228, 338.

<sup>3</sup> Dennys, *Folk-lore of China*, 161; Von Hahn, *Griechische und Albanesische Märchen*, i. 266; Pitre, *Biblioteca delle Tradizioni Popolare Siciliani*, v. 146; Grimm, *Household Tales*, No. 101; Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. i.; Burton, *Nights*, iii. 1 ff. For these references I am indebted to Mr. Sidney Hartland. See also Lang, *Homer and the Epic*, 226 f.

<sup>4</sup> This I have already discussed in *Folk-lore*, ix. 97 ff. Mr. Monro (*Odyssey*, ii. 302) objects to my solution on the ground that Telemachus claims the right to dispose of his mother's hand. This does not seem relevant. Naturally he does so as head of the house in the absence of his father. But we find that pressure is put upon her by his parents and brethren also (*Odyssey*, xv. 16, xix. 158).

<sup>5</sup> *Il.* vi. 155 ff. [ii. A].

mention of writing in the epics. It is remarkable that in the *Ramayana* also, the "kernel" of which was composed before 500 B.C., we have only one mention of writing in the form of marks on arrows, which were probably spells to make them reach their mark.<sup>1</sup> Recent enquiries show that various forms of writing were current in the eastern Aegean at a date much earlier than is commonly supposed. Cuneiform characters were probably in use in Cyprus about 1500 B.C.; the Babylonian custom of writing on clay tablets passed as far west as Crete, and it was adopted by the Mycenaean of Knossos for their pictographic script; a system independent of this seems to have been in use in Mycenae.<sup>2</sup> "The clay archives of the palace of Knossos," says Mr. A. J. Evans, "conclusively show that in the Aegean world there existed, at least as early as the 15th century B.C., a highly developed form of linear script containing a series of forms practically identical with those in use down to a much later date by the Greeks of Cyprus." In the Homeric passage which we are discussing it is worth while to notice, first, that the contents of the tablet, "many deadly things" (*θυμοφθόρα πολλά*), seems to imply that writing was then regarded as a semi-magical art; secondly, I would venture to suggest a view which I have not seen in any of the commentaries which I have been able to consult, that the phrase describing the tablet (*ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῶ*), which implies, as Mr. Leaf says, a double wooden tablet with the writing inside, and sealed up, may have been an imitation of the method in use among the Babylonians of protecting valuable documents within an outer envelope of clay.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Griffith, *Ramayan*, 407.

<sup>2</sup> Hale, *The Oldest Civilisation in Greece*, 138 ff.; A. J. Evans, *Journal Hellenic Studies*, xvii. 327 ff., xxi. 339; Flinders Petrie, *Journal Anthropological Institute*, xxix. 204 f., xxx. 217.

<sup>3</sup> See an illustration in Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, 732.

In this Saga we have also the Letter of Death, which the hero was to show to the father of Anteia that he might be slain. We are reminded of David's letter to Joab: "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die"; of Somadeva's tale of Adityavarman, who directs his ally to slay the wise minister, Sivavarman, or of the treacherous queen, Kāvya-lankārā, who plans in the same way the death of the gallant princes, the sons of her rival; of Grimm's German story of the *Devil with the Golden Hair*, where the king writes in a letter to the queen, "As soon as the boy arrives with this letter, let him be killed and buried, and all must be done before I come home"; of Ahmed the Orphan in the *Seven Wazirs*, where the bearer hands the letter to another, who suffers in his stead, whence it was adopted into the *Gesta Romanorum*, in the tale where the innocent lad delays to hear Mass, and the contriver of the plot, who bears the fatal letter, is flung into the furnace.<sup>1</sup> The incident, in fact, is so familiar, that in oriental folk-lore such letters have acquired a special name, "those of Mutalammis, the poet."<sup>2</sup>

We find, again, in the Saga of Bellerophon the very common tale of seduction successfully resisted by the continent hero, which we meet in Semitic literature in the tale of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, the Yusuf and Zuleikha of the more modern East, itself derived from the old Egyptian tale of the two brothers, Satu and Anapu.<sup>3</sup> Buddhist story-tellers adopted the incident in the tales of Kunāla and the wife of the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> II. Samuel, xi. 14; Tawney, *Katha*, i. 27, 383; *id.* *Kathākoṣa*, 172; Grimm, *Household Tales*, i. 120; Clouston, *Popular Tales*, ii. 465; *id.* *Sindibad*, 138; Temple-Steel, *Wideawake Stories*, 410; *North Indian Notes and Queries*, iv. 85; Knowles, *Folk Tales of Kashmir*, 48.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, *Nights*, xii. 68 f.

<sup>3</sup> Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (ed. 1899), ii. 318 ff.; Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 378.

Asoka, Sarangdhara and his step-mother Chitrangī, Gunasarman and the wife of King Mahāsenā, while the Babylonians used it in the story of Ishtar's charge against Gisdhubar.<sup>1</sup> In classical literature it appears in the legend of Phaedra and Hippolytus, who was worshipped as a god at Troezen, where he was regarded as a god of healing, and to him maidens before marriage offered their hair. It would be natural that the seduction myth should be connected with him to emphasise his purity.<sup>2</sup>

The Bellerophon Saga diverges into another cycle, that of Tasks imposed upon the hero. The king of Lycia orders him to slay Chimaira, to fight the Solymi and the Amazons. Finally, when the hero succeeds, and escapes from an ambush laid for him, he receives the hand of the king's daughter, the last an incident very common in the folk-tales and suggesting descent in the female line.<sup>3</sup> We find in the epics, Tasks imposed on the hero in the case of Herakles forced by Eurystheus to bring from Erebus the hound of loathed Hades, and in the story of Neleus, who would give his daughter to none save he who could drive off the kine of mighty Ephicles.<sup>4</sup> Of such Tasks we have many instances throughout the whole range of folk-lore. Like Herakles, Hans in the Lithuanian tale of *Strong Hand and Strong Peter* overcomes Cerberus and the Devil.<sup>5</sup> In a Gypsy tale from Transylvania the test is to recover a ring from a fountain of boiling water.<sup>6</sup> In the Eyrbyggja Saga, Styrr says: "Thou shalt form a path through the

<sup>1</sup> Clouston, *Popular Tales*, ii. 499; Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 29; Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 248; *North Indian Notes and Queries*, iv. 85; Burton, *Nights*, v. 42; Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Day ii. Novel 8.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments*, Intro. cliv.

<sup>3</sup> Frazer, *Lectures on Kingship*, 231 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* viii. 362 ff. [iii. B]; *Od.* xi. 621 ff., 288 ff., xv. 231 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, i. 48 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 102.

rocks at Biarnarhaf, and a fence between my property and that of my neighbours; thou shalt also construct a house for the reception of my flocks, and these tasks accomplished thou shalt have Adisa to wife."<sup>1</sup> Homer does not mention the Task imposed upon Herakles of cleaning the Augean stable; but this is one of the three Tasks the Giant in the Highland tale of the *Battle of the Birds* requires, the others being to bring the eggs of the magpie unbroken from a lofty tree, and to thatch the byre with bird's down.<sup>2</sup> In another form of the story the Tasks are byre-cleaning, byre-thatching, and swan-watching.<sup>3</sup> So in *Nicht, Nought, Nothing* the Giant requires the boy to clean his byre, to drain a lough, and to fetch eggs from a tree.<sup>4</sup> In these cases, as in *Lady Featherflight*,<sup>5</sup> the hero is aided by the friendly daughter of the Giant, an incident which, as we shall see, appears in the Homeric tale of Proteus. The records of this cycle of tales displays infinite variety. In one of Somadeva's Hindu stories the Task is to sow an immense quantity of sesame, while in an Arabian story the lover is obliged to sift a great pile of this same grain mixed with clover seed and lentils.<sup>6</sup> In the Italian versions, besides the usual physical Tasks, a higher form of cultured life has suggested the winning of the bride by solving a riddle.<sup>7</sup>

The Chimaira, which appears in this Homeric Saga—"the unconquerable one," "of divine birth was she and not of men, in front a lion and behind a serpent, and

<sup>1</sup> Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, 526.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, *Popular Tales of Western Highlands*, i. 29 ff.

<sup>3</sup> MacInnes-Nutt, *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition*, 436 f.

<sup>4</sup> Lang, *Custom and Myth*, 90. <sup>5</sup> *Folk-lore Congress Report*, 40 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Tawney, *Katha*, i. 360; Burton, *Nights*, xi. 159.

<sup>7</sup> Crane, *Italian Popular Tales*, 66 f.; Max Müller, *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*, i. 80 ff. For Tasks generally, McCulloch, *Childhood of Fiction*, 17, 392.

she breathed out dread fierceness of blazing fire," in another place called "the bane of many a man"<sup>1</sup>—is the only Homeric example of the fell beasts of later Greek and oriental mythology. Such were the fantastic monsters of Egypt and Babylonia.<sup>2</sup> By some she has been less probably identified with a volcano, and Pliny<sup>3</sup> tells of a Lycian mountain of that name which poured forth fire continually. But she seems rather akin to the tribe of monsters, like the later Harpies, Cerberus, the Hydra of Lerna, and the Sphinx.

This leads us to the Centaurs. Homer does not mention the horse Centaurs, which were a creation of later writers; and Ixion, their reputed father, is not named in the epics, where he might have been classed with those famous criminals, Sisyphus and Tantalus, who expiate their crimes in the underworld. Homer seems to regard the Centaurs as men. He speaks of the famous heroes who destroyed the Pheres, or wild men of the mountain caves; he tells how the renowned Centaur, Eurytion, went to the Lapithae, and how when his soul was darkened with wine he wrought foul deeds in the house of Peirithous, how the heroes mutilated him with the sword, and ever after with darkened mind he bare about with him the burden of his sins in the foolishness of his heart.<sup>4</sup> Hence arose the feud between the Centaurs and the sons of men. Of this remarkable myth many explanations have been suggested. Some have supposed that it describes the contest between civilised man and the aborigines; others see in it a comparison of the mountain torrents with galloping horses. To one school of mythologists, now in disrepute, it was sufficient to derive the name from the Gandharva

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* vi. 179 ff. [ii. A], xvi. 325 ff. [i.].

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, 84, 539, 582; Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, Intro. 20; Sayce, *Ibid.* 392.

<sup>3</sup> *Nat. Hist.* ii. 106, v. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* i. 266 ff. [i.], ii. 742 [iv.].



singers of Hindu myth, though Cheiron alone is said to have been skilled in music. This derivation is now generally abandoned.<sup>1</sup> The connexion, again, of the Centaurs with Thessaly has been supposed to imply horse worship, while others suggest an ass cult.<sup>2</sup> Recently a more plausible explanation has been suggested by Professor Gardner, that they are forest or mountain spirits, a common folk belief representing that the devastation caused by hurricanes is due to the conflict of these spirits when they hurl tree-trunks and rocks at each other. "The appropriateness of the form of the horse, or of association with the horse, to spirits that ride the storm, is both obvious in itself and attested by numerous instances from folk-lore; but the peculiar form taken by this association in the earliest Greek Centaurs, which are merely men with a horse's body and hind quarters growing out of their back, is probably due to some accidental association, or to some too literal interpretation of a metaphor used by an early poet."<sup>3</sup>

Next comes the tale of the Amazons. Professor Geddes remarks that they appear only in what he calls the Ulyssean cantos of the *Iliad*, where he finds frequent indications of oriental influence.<sup>4</sup> Priam says that he was an ally of the men of Phrygia when the Amazons came, and the third task imposed on the Lycian Bellerophon was to slay the Amazons, women peers of men. According to one theory, the legend of these warrior women is based on the hosts of female slaves employed in the temples of Asia Minor and the further east.<sup>5</sup> But against this it may be urged that the legend

<sup>1</sup> Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 137.

<sup>2</sup> Geddes, *Problem of the Homeric Poems*, 246 f.; *Journal Hellenic Studies*, xiv. 90.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal Hellenic Studies*, xvii. 301.

<sup>4</sup> *Problem*, 284 f.; *Il.* iii. 189 [ii. B], vi. 186 [ii. A].

<sup>5</sup> Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 235; Müller, *Dorians*, E.T. i. 405.

has a much wider provenance, and the stories of the many kingdoms in which women by the law of succession and otherwise asserted superiority over men may be connected with the matriarchate or with crude ideas of conception, such as those adopted by the Australian Arunta.<sup>1</sup> Stories of this kind are current in South America, which are supposed to be based either on the warlike character of the women of some tribes or on the effeminate appearance of the men.<sup>2</sup> In the east we meet many stories of a Kingdom of Women, such as that of Rāma Paramita in the *Mahabharata*, which also appears in Chinese tradition, and in the "Island of Wāk" and the "City of Women" in the *Arabian Nights*.<sup>3</sup> Among a people beyond Cathay the women were said to have reason like men, while the males were great hairy dogs; even nowadays in Assam there is a tale of a village in which only women dwell; near Sumatra is an island of women, who, like the mares in Virgil's *Georgics*, conceive by the agency of the wind.<sup>4</sup> The same legend appears in North Europe, where in the Celtic land of the Everliving "there is no race but women and maidens alone."<sup>5</sup> It is current among the Ainos of Japan; in Africa it is supported by accounts of the female body-guard of the kings of Dahome and Ashanti; and North American tradition tells of an island in which the men are ruled by a tall, fair woman.<sup>6</sup> The story is, in short,

<sup>1</sup> Spencer-Gillen, *Tribes of Central Australia*, 663.

<sup>2</sup> Bates, *A Naturalist on the River Amazon*, l. 215 n.; Frazer, *Pausanias*, ii. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Yule, *Marco Polo*,<sup>1</sup> ii. 396; Burton, *Nights*, vi. 217, vii. 252.

<sup>4</sup> Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, i. Intro. 129; Gait, *Assam Census Report*, 1891, i. 250; Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, 297.

<sup>5</sup> Rhys, *Celtic Folk-lore*, ii. 661; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, iii. 777; Pinkerton, *Voyages*, iii. 704.

<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain, *Aino Folk Tales*, 37; Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, iii. 153; Burton, *Mission to Galele*, ii. 63; Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, 385.

a world-wide myth which was adopted by Greek storytellers.

Another tale of the same kind reported by early mariners appears in Homer's account of the Cranes, who with approaching winter wing their flight to the streams of Ocean, bearing slaughter and fate to the Pygmy race.<sup>1</sup> The orderly flight of the cranes in the direction of the great African lakes naturally gave rise to the belief that they marched as an army does to attack an enemy, and this enemy could only be the Pygmies, whom recent explorations have made familiar to us. Accounts of them must at an early date have reached the Greeks through the Egyptians, to whom they were familiar.<sup>2</sup> Such travellers' tales did not lose in the telling, and the story was more generally believed in Europe as these Pygmies came to be connected with the tiny fairies which occupy the burial mounds. The course of the myth was perhaps from west to east; and so they come into the tale of *Sindibad the Seaman*, and even the matter-of-fact traveller, Marco Polo, identified them with the apes of Java.<sup>3</sup>

Iphimedeia, wife of Aloeus, bore, we are told, twin sons to Poseidon, Otos and Ephialtes. Doomed to enjoy but short life, they were far the tallest men that earth ever reared, and the goodliest after Orion. At nine years of age they were in breadth nine cubits and nine fathoms high. They threatened war on the gods, and essayed to pile Ossa on Olympus, and on Ossa Pelion, that there might be a pathway to the sky; and this they would have accomplished had they reached full manhood. But Apollo slew them ere their cheeks were

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* iii. 2 ff. [ii. A].

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, 397, 428.

<sup>3</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>3</sup> i. 388; Burton, *Nights*, iv. 364; Yule, *Marco Polo*,<sup>1</sup> ii. 228; Pinkerton, *Voyages*, iii. 601; Sir T. Brown, *Works*, i. 424; Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, i. 122.

darkened with the bloom of youth.<sup>1</sup> In another passage we learn that they tried to bind Ares, a legend which I have elsewhere discussed.<sup>2</sup> They are by affiliation akin to the Moliones and Polyphemus,<sup>3</sup> a fact which indicates that some attempt was made to include them in the Olympian dynasty, the story of the descent from rivers being here replaced by the fatherhood of Poseidon; the same transition shows itself in the curious tale of Tyro, whom Poseidon woos in the form of Enipeus, the river god.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, like so many Homeric demigods, they appear in pairs, like Podaleirios and Machaon, Peisandros and Hippolochos, Lykaon and Polydoros, Kreithon and Orsilochos. The same idea appears in the twin groups of Achilles-Patroclus, Theseus-Peirithoos, Phaethon-Helios, Pelias-Neleus, Prometheus-Epimetheus, Odysseus-Telemachus, Eteokles-Polyneikes, and the Dioscuri. In Rome we have Romulus-Remus; in India the two Asvins, Rama-Lakshmana, Krishna-Balarāma, Yama-Yamī, Yajna-Dakshina, Pūshan-Indra. Similarly related are the Norse Odinn-Loki, the Egyptian Osiris-Set, the Huron Ioskeha-Tawis, the Persian Ormuzd-Ahriman. In these pairs of male gods their association possibly points either to the syncretism of allied cults, or to the development of new cults out of a primitive cult epithet; where the pair are male and female it suggests the union of the male and female principles.

Thirdly, in this legend we have the familiar tale of the attempt to scale the heavens. In the Hindu version the Asuras build a fire-altar in the hope of reaching the sky. Each of them placed a brick on it, and Indra, passing himself off as a Brahman, added one for himself. At last Indra pulled out his brick, and the Asuras fell down and were turned into spiders, except two of them, who flew away to heaven and became the heavenly

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xi. 305 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* xi. 750 ff. [iv.]; *Od.* ix. 412.

<sup>3</sup> *Folk-lore*, viii. 325 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* xi. 235 ff.

dogs. The bricks here may be compared to the mountains in the Greek myth.<sup>1</sup> So the Egyptian story tells of an ascent to heaven by a tower, the Babel of Semitic tradition, or the attempt of Nimrod to climb to the sky.<sup>2</sup> In the common European version we have *Jack and the Beanstalk*, where the boy climbs to the sky and robs the Giant of his treasures, a tale of the class in which the culture-hero, like Prometheus, steals something necessary to mankind from the people of the other world. The motif has been moralised in the remarkable Indian tale of *Sedit and the Two Brothers Hus*, in which the brothers abandon the attempt on the ground that theirs is a mistaken ideal, and that it is better for men to live and work on earth rather than enjoy the passive repose of heaven.<sup>3</sup>

Fourthly, we have the tale of the *Precocious Children*. In the Homeric Hymn, Apollo new-born tastes the nectar and ambrosia, leaps from his swaddling-clothes, begins to speak, and wanders through the land. In the Norse tale, Vali, when one night old, sallies forth to avenge the death of Balder; and Magni, when three years old, flings the enormous foot of the Giant Hrungrnir off his father, and would have beaten the monster to death with his fists.<sup>4</sup> The Hindus tell equally marvellous tales of the might of the infant Krishna, and the Dayaks have a divine child in Seragunting.<sup>5</sup> Robert the Devil bites off the paps of his nurse, is fed through a horn, and surpasses in strength and wisdom all the children of his age; and Tom Hickathrift, "at ten years old, was six feet high and three feet across, with a hand like a shoulder of mutton, and everything else pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, xii. 286, xlii. 500.

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, *Life in Egypt*, 212; Sale, *Koran*, 269 n. 1. For the Malay version, Skeat-Blagden, *Pagan Races*, ii. 300.

<sup>3</sup> *Folk-lore*, x. 344 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, i. 320 f.

<sup>5</sup> Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, i. 198 f.

portionable.”<sup>1</sup> As St. Benedict sang Eucharistic hymns before he was born, so the Zulu tale tells of a child who sings in his mother’s womb, and the modern Lamas of Tibet are said when only a few months old to have full powers of speech.<sup>2</sup>

In the famous tale of Niobe and her children we reach the cycle of myths based on the common belief in the petrification of human beings, some accidental conformation of mountain, rock, or tree being accepted as the basis of the story. Of Niobe Homer tells us that Apollo slew her sons and Artemis her daughters, for that she matched herself with Leto, saying that the goddess bare only twain, but herself many children. Nine days they lay in their blood and there was none to bury them, for Kronion turned the folk to stone. But at last the gods buried them:

“Haply she now, a rock amongst the rocks,  
Amid the desert hills of Sipylus,  
There where they say the Nymphs divine, who whirl  
In dance round Acheloius, make their couch,  
Changed though she be to stone, retains her woe.”<sup>3</sup>

This famous rock of Niobe Pausanias tells us he saw himself, and from his account it was undoubtedly a rock, not an image of Cybele, with which attempts have been made to identify it.<sup>4</sup> It is needless to illustrate this legend by parallels. But it may be noted that Homer has other cases of petrification, all probably based on the same idea. Thus the mixing bowls, jars of stone, and stone looms of the Nymphs, which Odysseus saw in the Cave of the Naiads, were probably some form of stalactite, as in Ireland a group of dolmens

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt, *Tales and Legends*, 59, 431.

<sup>2</sup> Callaway, *Nursery Tales*, i. 6; Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 247.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* xxiv. 602 ff. [iii. B].

<sup>4</sup> *Pausanias*, i. 21, 3; ii. 21, 9, 13, 7, with Frazer’s notes; *Journal Hellenic Studies*, i. 88, iii. 39 ff., 61 ff.

is supposed to consist of petrified weavers' spools.<sup>1</sup> The ship of the Phaeacians which Poseidon smote into stone is probably represented by the rock Karavi off the harbour of Corcyra, if M. Bérard's identification of this and the Cave of the Cyclops with the Cave of Sejanus at Cumae, where two great obelisks represent the rocks flung by the monster, be accepted. In another passage the son of crooked-counselling Kronos turns the snake into stone.<sup>2</sup>

The legend of Proteus embodies several familiar incidents. In the *Odyssey* Proteus is fixed, perhaps by Cretan sailors, at the mouth of the Nile, in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> Pausanias describes the worship of "The Old Man of the Sea" at Gythium, and this is the title by which he is known in the *Iliad*, where, however, no local habitation is assigned to him.<sup>4</sup> Homer says that he knows the depths of every sea and that he is thrall of Poseidon. His later representations suggest his connexion with a fish-god, like that of Nineveh, and Mr. Hall with some hesitation compares him to Dagon.<sup>5</sup> In any case, he appears to be a disestablished sea-god, and in the later accounts, as in that of Diodorus and Herodotus,<sup>6</sup> he seems to have oriental affinities. Proteus, Homer tells us, sleeps with his flock of seals in a hollow cave; he can change himself into the shapes of all manner of things that creep upon the earth, into water and burning fire. When Odysseus seizes him he becomes successively a lion, a snake, a pard, a boar, running water, a tall and flowering tree.<sup>7</sup> This power of transformation is common in the folk-tales. In Norse tradition, for instance, the Trollman and the witch could appear as whales or

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xiii. 105 f.; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, iii. 769.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* ii. 319 [ii. A].

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* iv. 365, 385.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* xviii. 140 f. [iii. B], *Pausanias*, iii. 21, 9, with Frazer's note.

<sup>5</sup> Layard, *Nineveh*, ii. 466 f.; Hall, *Oldest Civilisation*, 135 n.

<sup>6</sup> *Diod.* i. 62; *Herod.* ii. 112.

<sup>7</sup> *Od.* iv. 384 ff.

other animals, and the Trollwife, in order to kill King Frodi, transforms herself into a sea cow and her sons into calves.<sup>1</sup> In another tale Hardgrip says to Hadding: "Be not moved by my unwonted look of size. For my substance is sometimes thinner, sometimes ampler; now meagre, now abundant; and I alter and change at my pleasure the condition of my body, which is at one time shrivelled up, and at another expanded; now my tallness reaches to the heavens, and now I settle down into a human being, under a more bounded shape."<sup>2</sup> In his reluctance to prophesy Proteus is like other sea gods. The taciturn, prophetic Marmennil of Germany is fished out of the sea and requires to be allowed to dive again into the depths, and the Chaldaean Eabani, who pastures the flocks of the sea, must be seized by wiles.<sup>3</sup>

But it is the Transformation Combat which is most prominent in the tale of Proteus. One of the best examples of this incident is the terrible scene in the tale of the "Second Calendar" in the *Arabian Nights*, where oriental fancy reaches the highest pitch of tragedy, as the Ifrit becomes successively a lion, a scorpion, a wolf, and a cock, and finally blazing fire which consumes the unlucky princess.<sup>4</sup> In a Hindu tale Somada becomes a black mare, and Bandhumochanī, as a bay mare, overcomes her; in the Norwegian tale of *Farmer Weathersky* the youth turns into a horse and is sold, and when the farmer seizes the ring of the princess it slips into the ashes, and he becomes a cock which begins to scratch in the ashes in search of the ring, whereupon the boy changes into a fox and bites off the cock's head.<sup>5</sup> In a modern Greek story, when

<sup>1</sup> Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, i. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Saxo, i. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, i. 434; Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, 576 n.

<sup>4</sup> Burton, *Nights*, i. 123 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Tawney, *Katha*, i. 342 f.; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 56 f.; Dasent, *Popular Tales*, 335 f.; Clouston, *Popular Tales*, i. 482 ff.



the musician catches the Nereid, she becomes a dog, a serpent, a camel, and fire; but he holds on to her till the cocks begin to crow, when she resumes her original form, follows him quietly, and becomes his wife.<sup>1</sup> In a German tale of the same cycle the magician finds the youth reading one of his magical books, and when he tries to seize him the boy turns into a bird of prey and flies away. Finally, the magician becomes a grain of corn, which the boy in the form of a cock promptly eats, and thus the career of the warlock ends.<sup>2</sup> The combat, again, often takes the form of a struggle by the Giant to pass his soul into something else, in the course of which he attempts to gain his purpose by a series of magical transformations, as in the Highland tales of the *Young King of Easaidh* or *The Fair Gruagach*.<sup>3</sup>

This cycle would naturally connect itself with Proteus, if we accept the theory that he is a seal-god, because this animal, in virtue of its semi-human appearance, is supposed to be specially capable of transformation. "In the Faroe Islands," says Thorpe,<sup>4</sup> "the superstition is current that the seal every ninth night assumes a human form and dances and amuses itself like a human being, until it resumes its skin and again becomes a seal. It once happened that a man passing by during one of these transformations, and seeing the skin, took possession of it, when the seal, which was a female, not finding her skin to creep into, was obliged to continue in human form, and being a comely person the man made her his wife, had several children by her, and they lived happily together, until after a lapse of several years she chanced to find her skin, which she could not refrain from creeping into, and so became a seal again." The tale thus diverges into the Swan Maiden cycle, which is

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, *Pausanias*, iii. 614.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm, *Household Tales*, i. 431.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, *Popular Tales*, i. 21, ii. 437.

<sup>4</sup> *Northern Mythology*, ii. 173.

often in Celtic tradition connected with the seal.<sup>1</sup> In Germany the seal is supposed to possess the same power of shape-changing; in the Hebrides sailors suppose that drowned people turn into seals; the South American Indians believe that porpoises are water women, and the sea-cows of South African rivers are identified with the mermaids.<sup>2</sup>

The last incident of the Proteus tale to which I shall refer concerns Eidothee, his daughter, who instructs Odysseus how he may snare her father. In many of the tales of the Outwitted Giant cycle it is his wife, mother, or daughter who has pity on the stranger and points out a way for his escape. Thus in the German tale of *The Devil and the Three Golden Hairs* it is the Devil's grandmother who saves the stranger; in one version of *The Iron Stove* the cannibal's wife saves the maiden; in the Italian tale *Thirteenth* the ogress protects the boy from her husband; and it would have gone hard with Jack when he climbed the Beanstalk if the kindly giantess had not protected him, as in the Basque tale of *Errua the Madman*, the old woman explains to the hero how he may evade the Tartaro.<sup>3</sup>

The myth of the Sirens, as told in the *Odyssey*,<sup>4</sup> describes them as a pair of maidens who sit in a meadow and entice wayfarers by their singing. Round them lies a great pile of the bones of men, corrupt in death, and about the bones the skin is wasting. Odysseus escapes from them by anointing the ears of his comrades

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, *Legendary Fictions*, 109; Curtin, *Tales of the Faeries*, 150 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton, *Voyages*, iii. 595, 699, 788; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, iii. 1095 n.; Crantz, *History of Greenland*, i. 339 ff.; O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, 72; Im Thurn, *Among Indians*, 40; Rogers, *Social Life in Scotland*, iii. 219; Reade, *Savage Africa*, 467.

<sup>3</sup> Grimm, *Household Tales*, i. 122, ii. 426, 564; Crane, *Italian Folk Tales*, 90 f.; Webster, *Basque Legends*, 6 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* xii. 39 ff., 166 ff.

with wax, and compelling them to bind him to the ship-mast. Many interpretations of this myth have been suggested—that their songs are the sighing of the wind in the trees, like the music of Orpheus or the flute of the Pied Piper, which neither beast nor man can resist; that their music is the murmur of the waves amid the hollow caves and over broken rocks; that they represent the belt of calms so dreaded by seamen; that they are the witches of the dangerous shoal water. An archaic cult statue of Hera Coronea, described by Pausanias, shows her holding the Sirens in her hand, on which Mr. Farnell remarks that “the Sirens are most commonly sepulchral symbols, emblems of the lower world, and called ‘daughters of the earth’ by Euripides; and if Hera were an earth-goddess, the Sirens would be naturally explained. But they were also regarded as the personifications of charm and attractiveness, and on the hand of Hera they may simply denote the fascinations of married life.”<sup>1</sup>

These witch-maidens abound in other mythologies. They are the bird-maidens or Gandharvīs of Buddhist tales, who charm travellers by their singing;<sup>2</sup> the Rākshasīs or ogresses of India, who live on human flesh, and change themselves into lovely maidens who seduce voyagers. These steel themselves against their charms when they find the mangled remains of former victims. Closer still is the analogy of the Slavonic tale, where the three sisters set out in search of the Water of Life, and enter the garden where the trees sing so sweetly that every one stops to listen, and is forthwith turned, like Niobe, into stone; but the youngest sister, as is usual in myth, escapes by closing her ears with dough and wax, and thus passes through the enchanted garden in safety.<sup>3</sup> In an Irish tale the Druids advise

<sup>1</sup> *Pausanias*, ix. 34, 3; Farnell, *Cults*, i. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, x. 291 f.

<sup>3</sup> Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 171.

the travellers to close their ears with wax to avoid the fascinations of the mermaids.<sup>1</sup>

We have, again, the water witches who annually demand a human victim, like the spirit of the Fulda and Necker in Germany, the Lorelei of the Rhine, the Drome in Normandy, Peg Powler, Nanny Powler, Peg O'Neill and Jenny Greenteeth of North England, or the Kelpie and its kinsfolk in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> "The river Dart every year claims its heart" is a South of England saying. Akin to these are the Nixen of Germany, the Huldra which sings in the mountains, and the Grim which lives by waterfalls and entices travellers by her music.<sup>3</sup> The Norwegian mermaid lulls mariners to sleep by her songs, as do the Morrows of Ireland and the Nixen of the Netherlands, who come out of rivers and sing with magical sweetness.<sup>4</sup> In one of the Scotch ballads a mermaid decoys a knight to his doom, and the same tale is told of Slavonian water sprites.<sup>5</sup> In short, dancing, song, and music are the delight of these fairy denizens of the water. Of the Rākshasīs of Ceylon the old Buddhist traveller tells that, like the Sirens, they receive travellers with flowers, scents, and music, the meadow in which they dwell being specially described, as in some of the Irish versions of the tale; finally, they shut up their visitors in an iron prison and devour them.<sup>6</sup> So the Pragangan of Java live on the banks of streams and madden men with their singing.<sup>7</sup> As in the case of the Sirens, the power of prophecy, the interpretation of dreams, and other uncanny arts are attributed

<sup>1</sup> O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, iii. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, iii. 81 ff.; Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties*, 265 f.; *Denham Tracts*, ii. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, i. 246, ii. 3, 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 27, iii. 199.

<sup>5</sup> *Folk-lore Record*, ii. 105, iv. 62 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Beal, *Sī-yu-ki*, ii. 240 ff.; Tawney, *Katha*, ii. 638.

<sup>7</sup> Featherman, *Papuo-Melanesians*, 396.

to water or wood sprites, like the Latin Fauni, who controlled the rustic oracles.<sup>1</sup>

Homer evidently recognises something uncanny about the Sirens, because, contrary to his usual practice, he says nothing about their parentage or origin. Hence there is much to be said for Miss Harrison's theory that they were originally a form of the Keres or death sprites, and that Homer "by the magic of his song lifted them once for all out of the region of mere bogeydom."<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, in later Greek art they are represented as winged sprites on tombs, probably originally placed there as a sort of charm to guard the dead from evil spirits, and afterwards regarded as tender mourners lamenting the untimely fate of youth or maiden snatched away in their bloom. Their successors are the angels on our sepulchral monuments, who waft the weary spirit to its rest.

In the story of Polyphemus, the Cyclops, we reach the cycle of the Baffled Giant. This famous myth would need a paper to itself; but as it has been considered by Lauer, Grimm, and Mr. McCulloch,<sup>3</sup> I shall note only a few points in the story. In the first place, it looks as if the Cyclops was really a disestablished or semi-forgotten deity. Pausanias, speaking of Corinth, says: "There is also an ancient sanctuary called the altar of the Cyclopes; and they sacrifice to the Cyclopes on it."<sup>4</sup> He tells us nothing more, and even the learning of Dr. Frazer has been unable to unearth any further account of this cult. The name of the Cyclops, Polyphemus, "the much sayers," has been compared with that of the Celtic Gwyd Gwydion, "son of saying," in allusion to his powers of soothsaying or vaticination.<sup>5</sup> He alone of the Cyclopes is called one-

<sup>1</sup> Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 198.

<sup>2</sup> *Prolegomena*, 197 ff.; *Myths and Monuments*, 582 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Merry-Riddell, *Odyssey*, i. 546 ff.; McCulloch, *Childhood of Fiction*, 279 ff.; Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 343 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Pausanias*, ii. 2, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 280 f.

eyed, a characteristic he shares with the smith-god of Japan,<sup>1</sup> and a host of other monsters—the Irish giant Balor, who had one eye in his forehead and another at the back of his skull, the former being never opened except on the field of battle, when it always took four men with hooks to raise the lid, and then his glance enfeebled a whole army of his enemies; the same tale is told of the monsters Kabandha and Vaisravana in the *Ramayana*.<sup>2</sup> In a tale from Syra the monster is half man, with only one eye, one hand, and one foot; Celtic legend tells of the Angling Giant, who had only one eye, and the ocean rose no higher than his knee; in the Irish tale of Diarmaid and Grainne, as in the Arthurian story of Peridun, the giant, like the Basque Tartaro, has only one eye in the centre of his forehead.<sup>3</sup>

The blinding of the monster with a red-hot poker need not detain us. It is thus that Popelusa, the Hungarian Cinderella, dealt with the one-eyed giant; the Basque hero with the Tartaro; and Bissat blinds the Tartar monster Depeghoz.<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps a reminiscence of the Homeric story that Sindibad in his Third Voyage, Oscar in the Highland, and Lug in the Celtic story in the same way deal with their monsters.<sup>5</sup>

As to the escape under the belly of the ram—in one of the Russian tales, the blacksmith who is enslaved by the witch puts on his pelisse inside-out, feigns himself to be a sheep, and passes out with the rest of the flock, as in one of the Highland variants the hero escapes by flaying

<sup>1</sup> Aston, *Nihongi*, i. 81 n.

<sup>2</sup> O'Donovan, *Four Masters*, i. 18; Joyce, *Social History*, i. 309; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, i. 15; Griffith, *Ramayan*, 311.

<sup>3</sup> MacInnes-Nutt, *Waiifs and Strays*, 263; *Folk-lore*, vii. 223; Rhys, *Studies in the Arthurian Legend*, 92; *id.* *Hibbert Lectures*, 314; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, iii. 888; Webster, *Basque Legends*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Cox, *Cinderella*, 208, 489; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, ii. 554; Webster, *Basque Legends*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Burton, *Nights*, iv. 367; Campbell, *Popular Tales*, iii. 314; Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 317.

the Giant's dog and puts on its skin; the escape under the sheep's belly in the Basque version seems to be obviously a reminiscence of Homer's story.<sup>1</sup> In the Celtic *Voyage of Maildune* we have another account of a similar escape. The adventurers approach an island inhabited by gigantic blacksmiths, and one burly fellow rushes out with a piece of glowing iron in the tongs, and flings it after the curragh, which, however, it fortunately misses.<sup>2</sup> A similar tale is also told of St. Brendan. In some cases, as in the remarkable parallel from Yorkshire, in which Jack blinds the Giant, skins his dog, and throwing the hide over his shoulder runs out on all fours barking between the legs of the monster, it has been suggested that the tradition is independent of the *Odyssey*.<sup>3</sup> Others see in this and the very similar tale of Conall Cra Buidhe from Islay distinct evidence of borrowing from the Homeric original.<sup>4</sup> It is more probable that the Cyclops Saga is made of very ancient folk-tradition, and that later versions were shaped by the splendid imaginativeness of Homer's story.

The device by which Odysseus calls himself Outis or "Nobody" appears in the Highland tale of the Brollichan who is scalded by the woman. She gives her name as "Myself," and the goblin, when asked who scalded him, answers "Myself," the same idea forming the motif of the English story *My own Self* and the Basque *Fairy in the House*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gubernatis, *Zoological Mythology*, i. 408 n.; *Folk-lore Congress Report*, 325; Webster, *Basque Legends*, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce, *Social History*, ii. 304.

<sup>3</sup> Henderson, *Folk-lore of the N. Counties*, 195.

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, *Popular Tales*, i. 105 ff.; Jacobs, *More English Fairy Tales*, 228; *id.* *Celtic Fairy Tales*, 247.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell, *Popular Tales*, i. Intro. 47; Jacobs, *More English Fairy Tales*, 221; Webster, *Basque Legends*, 55; Clouston, *Book of Noodles*, 194; cf. Cox, *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, ii. 366; Burton, *Nights*, xi. 31; *Folk-lore*, vii. 154 f.

The second cannibal-tale in the *Odyssey* is that of the Laestrygons.<sup>1</sup> Various theories have been suggested as to the position of this people. On the one hand it has been argued that the scene of the legend lies in Sicily, and that the curious statement of the poet—"where herdsman hails herdsman as he drives in his flock, and the other who drives forth answers the call; there might a sleepless man have earned a double wage, the one as neatherd, the other shepherding white flocks; so near are the outgoings of the night and day"—refers to the danger from gadflies which prevents the cattle from pasturing except after sundown, while the sheep, protected by their fleeces, could feed during the day. The reference to the smoke rising from the land<sup>2</sup> might, it has been thought, be based on an eruption of Etna. This view has been rightly rejected.<sup>3</sup> Another solution has been proposed by Dr. Verrall. "It seems more probable that 'Fargate of the Laestrygons' is, or originally was, a picture coloured, if not drawn, from the report of some terrified mariners, who, trading from lands of pasture and agriculture, saw for the first time some place, on the Euxine, maybe, where metal-work was practised on a large scale; a sort of Black Country, where 'the smoke went up from the land,' where the trolly, on paths of incredible facility, rolled down from the hills the wood for the furnaces, where shifts so extended the hours of labour that 'night and day met in one,' and where the visitor, roughly handled by the hard workmen and appalled by the signs of their skill and power, fled away to report that their figures were gigantic, and that they lived, like the Martians of Mr. Wells' romance, on the flesh of men."<sup>4</sup> He suggests that there is nothing inconsistent in this view with the possibility of a reference to the short summers of the

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* x. 50 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* x. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Merry-Riddell, *Odyssey*, x. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal Hellenic Studies*, xviii. 7 f.



North, of which a rumour would first reach the Greeks on the Euxine.

All the probabilities, however, point to the North as the scene of the story. The short nights and the volcanic outbursts suit the North of Europe, of which Homer seems to have gained some knowledge, if the island of Aeolus represents an iceberg, and if the Phaeacian legend was suggested by the Northern tale of the Ferrymen of the Dead. His account of the land of the Cimmerians seems to support this inference.<sup>1</sup> The communication between North Europe and the Mediterranean along the Amber Route must date from a very early period, and this traffic continued during the Bronze Age.<sup>2</sup>

It must be remembered that there are traditions of cannibalism in North Europe in early times, and some evidence in support of the belief that it prevailed there.<sup>3</sup> As a proof of this the condition of the bones found in the barrows has been adduced; but, as Dr. Windle remarks, this conclusion is not quite certain.<sup>4</sup> St. Jerome, whatever his evidence may be worth, testifies to cannibalism among the Celts, and the folk-lore tradition is abundant, as in the case of the Celtic fairies, the Russian Baba Yaga, the hags or ogresses of the Eskimo tribes, and even some versions of our own *Blue Beard* cycle,<sup>5</sup> which would have been sufficient to suggest the idea to the Homeric Greeks.

Of the Lotos-eaters we are told that whoever ate the honey-sweet fruit of the lotos had no more wish to bring tidings or to come back, but rather chose to abide with the lotos-eating men, ever feeding on the lotos and for-

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xi. 14 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ridgeway, *Folk-lore*, i. 82 ff.; Montelius, *Journal Anthropological Institute*, xxx. 89 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, ii. 469. On the cannibalism of the Celtic fairies, see Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, ii. 673.

<sup>4</sup> *Remains of the Prehistoric Age*, 138.

<sup>5</sup> McCulloch, *Childhood of Fiction*, 289 ff.

getful of his return.<sup>1</sup> What the plant may have been to which Homer refers need not concern us here, for the Potion of Forgetfulness appears in the traditions of many races. One special form of it is the belief that those who eat the food of spirit-land, as in the case of Persephone and Kore, never return. A Maori tale ascribes much the same effect to the sweet potato, as the Sioux story does to the rice of the other world.<sup>2</sup> In the Norse legend, when Gorm went to the realm of Guthmundas, the king offered him his daughter in marriage. He was prescient enough to decline, but four of his men could not resist the temptation, and paid the penalty with loss of memory and enfeebled minds;<sup>3</sup> a situation reproduced with admirable power in Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* So Gudmund saps the chastity of the Danes: "The infection maddened them, distraught their wits, and blotted out their recollection." Thorkill, like Odysseus, tries to save his comrades, and gives them a horn smeared with fat as an antidote to the fascination.<sup>4</sup> With this we may compare the common belief in the miraculous lapse of time in fairyland.

Thus the tale of the Lotos-eaters is linked with the witcheries of Circe and Calypso. The one is usually taken to be a double of the other. In many respects the situation is the same; but there is one important difference. Calypso lives in a cave, Circe in a palace, the latter representing the fascination of a life of refined luxury, as contrasted with semi-savagery. Both are fair and lovely goddesses, dwelling in a remote isle, and attended by handmaidens; both are connected with gold and silver, and weave a mighty web as they sing; both are fair-haired awful goddesses of mortal speech; the

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* ix. 82 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>3</sup> ii. 51 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, 213.

<sup>4</sup> Elton-Powell, *Saxo*, 346 ff.; cf. Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, i. 103, 216, ii. 91; Rhys, *Celtic Folk-lore*, i. 113.

abode of both is surrounded by woods; both love the hero, who unwillingly responds to their passion; neither of them is permitted to retain him for ever; each solemnly swears not to injure him; each at dawn arrays herself in a great shining robe, light of woof and gracious, and casts about her waist a golden girdle; finally, both send him home with a favouring breeze.

But, be it cave or palace, the home of the witch is that land of mystery, that Castle of Indolence in which the witch queen of folk-lore enslaves the sons of men—the house of the Hindu Tārā Bāī, the star maiden, who can neither grow old nor die, and the witchery of whose lulling songs no mortal can resist; the Hørselberg into which Venus entices Tannhauser; the Ercildoune where the fairy queen enthralls Thomas the Rimer. We find the same situation in the Arabic tale of Ahmed and Peri Banou, in the Latin legend of Numa and Egeria. We may, again, compare the Celtic tale of Maildune, detained with his comrades by the island queen. They try to escape in a curragh; but the queen flings a thread towards them, which Maildune catches, and it clings to his hand. Then she draws them back, and they are detained nine months longer, every attempt which they make to escape being defeated in the same way. At last they begin to suspect that Maildune is a party to the trick, and they get another man to seize the thread. When he catches it they cut off his hand, and, plying their oars, pass away, while the isle rings with the lamentations of the queen and her maidens.<sup>1</sup>

Circe, the witch queen, turns the voyagers into beasts. Traces of Animism, as we have seen, appear in the epics, and people who believed in horses which weep and talk, would have no difficulty in accepting such cases of transformation. A good instance of these transformations is that of Jauharah, who spits in the face of

<sup>1</sup>Joyce, *Social History*, ii. 531; *Old Celtic Romances*, 152.

Badr Bāsīm and turns him into a bird; or Queen Lāb: "Whoever entereth this city, being a young man like thyself, this miscreant witch taketh him, and he becometh a mule, or a horse, or an ass."<sup>1</sup> In one of the Russian tales the boy, by the enchantment of the witch, is turned into a kid, and in the Lorraine story of the *Fisherman's Son*, the witch strikes the hero with her wand, and turns into a tuft of grass himself, his horse, and his dog.<sup>2</sup> A parallel so remarkable to the tale of Circe occurs in the Buddhist Mahawanso that it is difficult not to suspect borrowing from the *Odyssey*. Here the Yakkhinī, an ogress, enthralls the comrades of Wijaya in a cave; he arms himself and goes to rescue them; she entices him to eat and drink, but he threatens her with his sword, and forces her to swear to cast no more spells; a feast follows, and he retires with her to a room which she causes to spring up at the foot of a tree.<sup>3</sup> In this and other seduction-tales of this class we seem to have an echo of the Matriarchate.

The myth of Scylla and Charybdis represents the cult of the whirlpool demon, a cruder variety of the tale of the Sirens. Scylla dwells in a cave turned towards Erebus; her voice is that of a new-born whelp; a dreadful monster is she; not even if a god met her would he behold her with gladness. She has twelve feet all dangling down, and six long necks, on each a hideous head, and therein three rows of teeth set thick and close, full of black death. She lies half concealed in her cave, and stretches out her arms to grope for dolphins or sea-dogs, or any other monstrous beast which deep-voiced Amphitrite feeds. Charybdis, again, under a great fig-tree in fullest leaf, sucks down

<sup>1</sup> Burton, *Nights*, vi. 77, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Gubernatis, *Zoological Mythology*, i. 209; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Tennent, *Ceylon*, i. 332 f.

her dark water. Thrice a day she sucks it in, and thrice spouts it out in terrible wise. "Far be thou from thence when she sucks in her water, for not the Earth-shaker himself might then save thee from thy bane."<sup>1</sup> Charybdis is thus more the actual, demoniacal whirlpool, while Scylla is a type of the monstrous water-beasts that drag men beneath the water, rend and devour them.

Scylla is connected with the dog, but Homer gives no support to the fancies of Vergil or Milton, who represent her extremities as ending in dogs. In a legend of this kind told in one of the Northern Sagas, the travellers reach a darkness which the eyes can scarcely pierce, and are exposed to a maelstrom which threatens to drag them down to chaos. Finally, they come quite unexpectedly to an island surrounded with a wall of rock, like that of Aeolus, containing subterranean caves, where giants lie concealed. At the entrances of these dwellings are tubs and vessels of gold. The adventurers take with them as much of the treasure as they can carry, and hasten to their ships. But the giants in the form of monstrous dogs rush after them, and tear one of the Frisians to pieces while the others escape.<sup>2</sup>

Charybdis, again, lives under a tree, and this is the place where the Hindu whirlpool spirit lurks. Thus we read: "Thus Satyavarta said, 'O Brahman! this is a banyan tree; under it they say that there is a gigantic whirlpool, the mouth of the subterranean fire, and we must take care in passing this way to avoid the spot; for those who enter that whirlpool never return again.'" Saktideva clings to the tree, as we are told Odysseus did, "like a bat," when he was saved from Charybdis, or as Sindibad did when he landed on the monstrous fish.<sup>3</sup>

In the stories of Autolycus and Sisyphus we seem to

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xii. 85 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, 218.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* xii. 432; Tawney, *Katha*, i. 220 f.; Burton, *Nights*, iv. 348.

have vague echoes of the cycle of the "Master Thief." In the *Iliad* Autolycus breaks into the well-built house of Amyntor and steals his golden casque; while in the *Odyssey* we learn that he surpassed all men in knavery and skill in swearing, a gift conferred upon him by Hermes because he honoured him with an offering of the thighs of lambs and kids.<sup>1</sup> It was from Autolycus, his maternal grandfather, that Odysseus inherited his wiliness. In fact, his affiliation to the house of Laertes seems to be a later form of the tradition.<sup>2</sup> We may, perhaps, compare this robbery of the casque of Amyntor with that which Herodotus tells of Rhampsinitus and Pausanias of Trophonius and Agamedes, the Highland "Shifty Thief," or the Irish "Jack, the Cunning Thief."<sup>3</sup>

The other Homeric sharper is Sisyphus, if his name really means "the very wily one." He was, the poet tells us, the craftiest of men, and in calling him the son of Aiolos he has been supposed to imply that he belongs to the non-Hellenic area of the poems.<sup>4</sup> Homer does not tell us the nature of his crime. According to some he betrayed the designs of the gods; according to others he beguiled Persephone and made his escape from Hades; or, it is said, that he used to waylay travellers and slay them with a mighty stone. Another story tells that when Death came to carry him off he chained him; and Death being chained, no one died till Ares came and released Death. We have a parallel to this in the well-known tale of the innkeeper who shut up Death in a bottle.<sup>5</sup> Sisyphus may thus

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* x. 267 [iv.]; *Od.* xix. 394 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* xi. 85, xix. 395.

<sup>3</sup> *Herod.* ii. 121; *Pausanias*, ix. 37, 3; Campbell, *Popular Tales*, i. 330 ff.; Jacobs, *Celtic Folk Tales*, 224; Grimm, *Household Tales*, i. 431; Knowles, *Folk Tales of Kashmir*, 110, 338.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* vi. 153 [ii. A].

<sup>5</sup> Crane, *Italian Popular Tales*, 215 ff.; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, ii. 854.

be compared with Gambling Hansel in the German tale, with Billy Dawson in the Irish story of the *Three Wishes*, and with Conan in the Finn Saga, who harries hell.<sup>1</sup>

In the stories of Sisyphus and Tantalus, it is specially to be noted that their punishment is quite inconsistent with the Homeric tradition of the underworld, in which there is no trace of retribution after death. The Homeric religion, says Miss Harrison,<sup>2</sup> "was too easy-going, too essentially aristocratic, to provide an eternity even of torture for the religious figures it degraded and despised. Enough for it if they were carelessly banished to their own proper kingdom, the underworld." Hence these tales are probably late additions to the *Nekuia*, and there is much to be said for the suggestion that Sisyphus is a disestablished sun-god, banished to the nether world, which, like the sun, he visits daily only to rise again with the dawn. It may be remembered in this connexion that Helios himself threatens to go down and shine among the dead if Zeus will not avenge his wrongs.<sup>3</sup> This, then, is one of the few Homeric puzzles which may be solved by the methods of the mythological school of interpreters. The ball which he rolls up the slope may represent the sun's course in the heavens, which we know was in other mythologies pictured in the same way.<sup>4</sup>

It is much more difficult to grasp the idea which lies behind the myth of Tantalus. It is almost certain that it is a late addition to the *Nekuia*, because Homer uses a comparatively modern version of the story. The archaic tale told that Tantalus suffered not in hell, but in heaven, where he was admitted to the table of the gods. Zeus promised to grant him his heart's desire, and he willed

<sup>1</sup> Grimm, *Household Tales*, i. 322 ff.; Campbell, *The Fians*, 73; Jacobs, *Celtic Folk Tales*, 266 f.; Frazer, *Pausanias*, ii. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Prolegomena*, 613.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* xii. 382.

<sup>4</sup> Cox, *Introduction*, 7 ff.; Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 453.

to live for ever like the gods. Zeus gave him the boon of immortality, but he hung a great stone over him, which, like the sword of Damocles, prevented him from enjoying the banquet spread before him.<sup>1</sup> In the Homeric version of the story, as in the case of Sisyphus, the poet does not describe the sin for which he was condemned to grievous torment, unable to drink the water or touch the fruits which seemed to be within his grasp until the wind tossed them to the clouds.<sup>2</sup> The older story possibly points to a clash of rival cults, and Tantalus may be a degraded sun-god, striving to grasp the waters which dry up before the splendour of his rays. For his punishment we may perhaps compare the American famine-giant, who hangs from the lodge-pole with his head just touching the ground;<sup>3</sup> or more closely the Norse myth of the Jutlander who broke the water-jug of King Cnut: "He met with his reward. He became mad, and suffered from burning thirst, and one day having laid himself down by a spring to draw up water, he slipt halfway down into the water, and remained hanging by his legs, though without touching it, and so died."<sup>4</sup> The same fate is reserved in the Buddhist hell for those who are miserly, covetous, uncharitable, or gluttonous.<sup>5</sup>

Another of these broken-down sun myths probably appears in the tale of the Planktai or Wandering Rocks. "By this way even winged things may never pass, not even the cowering doves that bear ambrosia to Father Zeus; but the sheer rock evermore takes one of these away, and the Father sends another to make up the tale."<sup>6</sup> The story has been explained in various ways—as a tradition of icebergs seen by mariners in the northern seas; by the actual appearance of some islands in the

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 392.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft, *Notes on the Iroquois*, 154.

<sup>3</sup> Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, ii. 226.

<sup>4</sup> Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 96 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Od.* xi. 582 f.

<sup>6</sup> *Od.* xii. 61 ff.



Bosporus, parts of which are occasionally submerged in stormy weather, or which seem to meet and separate again as a ship passes between them.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the sun is supposed by many races to pass through two rocks always opening and shutting, and by this route the spirit has to pass to gain its rest.<sup>2</sup> Among the Egyptians this fancy of the road of the soul was very fully developed, and they had a myth which closely resembles that of Homer. Every year, they said, all the herons assemble at the mountain now called Gebel-et-ter. One after another they plunge their beaks into the cleft of the hill until it closes on one of them; and then forthwith all the others fly away. But the bird that has been caught struggles until it dies, and there its body lies till it has fallen into dust, an obvious reminiscence of the mountain cleft at Abydos, whereby the souls must pass in the form of human-headed birds in order to reach the other world.<sup>3</sup> In a Russian tale the hero is sent to find the Water of Life from between two mountains which fly apart for three minutes every day. His horse's hind legs are caught by the rocks, but the water revives him; in another tale of the same kind the hare passing through rocks like these loses her tail, and since then hares have no tails to speak of.<sup>4</sup> Of rocks that close and open at a word, as in the tale of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, the instances in folklore are legion.<sup>5</sup>

Of much the same class is the myth of the Floating Island in which Aeolus dwelt.<sup>6</sup> The idea was familiar

<sup>1</sup> See Crantz, *History of Greenland*, i. 24 f.

<sup>2</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 347 ff.; cf. Gill, *Myths and Songs of the S. Pacific*, quoted by Monro, *Odyssey*, ii. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 141; *Dawn of Civilisation*, 10 n.

<sup>4</sup> McCulloch, *Childhood of Fiction*, 59; Miss Cox, *Introduction*, 268.

<sup>5</sup> Miss Cox, *Cinderella*, 499 f.; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, ii. 971 f.; *id.* *Household Tales*, ii. 439; Rhys, *Celtic Folk-lore* i. 254.

<sup>6</sup> *Od.* x. 3.

to the Greeks in the case of Delos, but even the credulity of Herodotus hesitated at the account of the floating island of Chemmis.<sup>1</sup> Some have supposed that the floating island of Aeolus was an iceberg; but in view of the wide provenance of the legend this seems inadequate. We have the story in the case of Disco Island, which two Eskimos towed with the hair of a little child, chanting a magical lay, and anchored it where it now stands.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese tell the same tale of Onogoro; and in the Celtic story Balor directs his men to fix a cable round the isle of Erin and sail with it home out of the reach of the De Danaan, as Brian draws the sunken isle of Fiucarn out of the depths of the sea.<sup>3</sup>

Aeolus is the wizard who has the winds in his keeping. Laamao-mao is the Hawaiian Aeolus, from whose calabash winds come at his bidding.<sup>4</sup> Oddi, the Danish admiral, could raise a storm against his enemies, and Hraesvelg was the storm-giant of Scandinavia, who could shake the winds out of his bag.<sup>5</sup> In Irish tradition the Druids of the De Danaan can raise a wind which blows a fleet to sea; the wind prophets of Samoa and the Solomon Islands can bring wind and rain, and to this day women in Lerwick earn their living by selling winds to sailors.<sup>6</sup>

The tale of the Phaeacians is of peculiar interest. Some have seen in it a prototype of "a long series of imaginings, which with various degrees of bitterness or of gentle irony have reflected some features or some tendencies of contemporary life, or have embodied a contemporary

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* ii. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Rink, *Tales and Traditions*, 464.

<sup>3</sup> Joyce, *Old Celtic Romances*, 41, 87; Rhys, *Celtic Folk-lore*, i. 90.

<sup>4</sup> Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, ii. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, i. 215, 218, ii. 193, iii. 23; Saxo, ed. Elton-Powell, 156; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, ii. 640, iii. 1057.

<sup>6</sup> O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, ii. 189; Guppy, *Solomon Islands*, 55; Turner, *Samoa*, 320, 462; Rogers, *Social Life in Scotland*, iii. 220; cf. Frazer, *Golden Bough*,<sup>3</sup> i. 119 ff.

ideal, such as More's *Utopia*, Swift's *Laputa*, or Johnson's *Rasselas*. All grosser elements are purged away; humanity appears in the most engaging aspect; and yet in the complacency of this island folk, in their imagined security, their pride of ships, their boast of nearness to the gods, it seems allowable to trace some good-humoured persiflage of the poet's own neighbours, whom, to avoid offending them, he has purposely located on a distant and imaginary shore."<sup>1</sup> In short, he is supposed to have placed at Corcyra, which can in no wise be compared with it, the cultured, luxurious people of the Ionian coast. If the tale has a basis of fact, it may be a reminiscence of the Minoan civilisation. At the same time, it is clear that the Phaeacians are in the land of faery. Gerland long ago compared the Phaeacian episode with the tale of Saktideva in Somadeva's collection.<sup>2</sup> He, like Odysseus, is saved from a whirlpool by clinging to the tree which overhangs it; he is carried to the Golden City, and entertained by the Vidhyādhari or fairy queen, who is destined to wed a mortal. But as in the beautiful account of Nausikaa, her lover deserts her and returns to marry his old love.<sup>3</sup>

An attempt, again, has been made to compare this ideal Phaeacian world with the Northern legend of the Ferry-men of Death, who, as Procopius tells us, convey the souls of the departed to the Isle of Brittonia.<sup>4</sup> But this gloomy tale is ill suited to the Phaeacians, who live an easy, joyous life, devoid of care, in no sense akin to the gloomy denizens of the lower world. Their ships are the magic vessels of which there are many examples in legend—the enchanted ship of the Highland tale, which can sail on sea or land; Gonachry, the "heart-wounder," which bears the hero in search of the

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *Religion in Greek Literature*, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Monro, *Odyssey*, ii. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Tawney, *Katha*, i. 194 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Rhys, *Celtic Folk-Lore*, ii. 439 f.

White Swan of the Smooth Neck, whom he loves; the magic bone on which Oller, the mighty Norse wizard, sails across the deep; Odinn's bark, Skidvlandner, which can be folded up as a napkin, and when her sails are set a favouring breeze arising wafts her to whatever shore the helmsman wills.<sup>1</sup> So the Edda tells of the ship, Naglfar, which is to be built of the parings of dead men's nails, and hence they held it a sacred duty to cut the nails of the corpse, because both men and gods dread the coming of this awful bark.<sup>2</sup> In short, these magical conveyances, like the carpet of Solomon, the wooden horse of the *Arabian Nights*, the flying image of the bird Garuda in Hindu tradition, are common to the folk-lore of the whole world, and the origin of many of them may be traced to the magic ships which early fancy saw in the racing clouds or the hailstorm drifting across the sky.

The Saga of the Wooden Horse, in which the warriors are concealed, appears only in the *Odyssey*,<sup>3</sup> and forms part of a wide cycle of tradition. Perhaps the earliest form of the tale is to be found in the Egyptian story of the *Taking of Joppa*, and the Arab plan for the capture of Edessa, which was framed on similar lines, is said to have failed owing to the suspicions of the Governor of the city.<sup>4</sup> The best modern instance is that of Ali Baba, where the robber captain and his comrades conceal themselves in oil jars, and are detected by the wit of the slave girl, Morgiana.<sup>5</sup> In a variant from Cyprus the black men are concealed by the ogre

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *Popular Tales*, i. 257; Macdougall-Nutt, *Folk and Hero Tales*, 289; MacInnes-Nutt, *Waifs and Strays*, 449; Saxo, ed. Elton-Powell, 99; Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, 24; Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, 435.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, ii. 814; Rydberg, *op. cit.* 379; Mallet, *op. cit.* 452.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* iv. 271 f.; viii. 502 ff.; xi. 523 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii. 1 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Burton, *Nights*, x. 209 ff.

in bales, and in Sicily Ohime, the ogre, hides in a hollow statue of silver which he causes to be introduced into the room of the heroine.<sup>1</sup> Besides this class of story, which may be called the "Robber Chief" type, there are two others, one of which Shakespeare uses in *Cymbeline*, derived from Boccaccio, where the traitor lover conceals himself in the lady's chamber, and notes a mark on her breast whereby he deludes her husband into suspecting her honour.<sup>2</sup> The other type of the story is even more widely spread, and may be called the "Princess of Balkh," which belongs to the "Bride Wager" group, in which the youngest of the brothers finds the princess by entering her palace concealed in a lion of gold and silver, which appears in the Sicilian version in the shape of the "Musical Eagle."<sup>3</sup> Of these types there are numerous variants, as in the Magyar tale of the hero who enters the palace concealed in a silver horse, or in the Hindu story of the "King of Vatsa," who is attacked by warriors hidden in an artificial elephant.<sup>4</sup> In the Celtic tale, Brandruff conceals his warriors covered over with provisions in great hampers laden on oxen, and these he drives into the camp of the King of Ireland, whom he overcomes.<sup>5</sup> Even at the present day the capture of many famous Hindu forts is said to have been effected by introducing warriors in female guise concealed in litters.<sup>6</sup> In countries where women are secluded this device may often have

<sup>1</sup> *Folk-lore Record*, iii. pt. ii. 185 f.; *Folk-lore Journal*, iii. 206 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Decameron*, Day ii. Tale 9; Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library*, i. pt. ii. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Punjab Notes and Queries*, iv. 48; Pitrè, *Biblioteca*, v. 307.

<sup>4</sup> Jones-Kropf, *Magyar Folk Tales*, 139 f.; Geldart, *Folk-lore of Modern Greece*, 98; Tawney, *Katha*, i. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce, *Social History*, i. 141.

<sup>6</sup> Tod, *Annals of Rajasthan*, i. 252, 665; *Journal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, lxiii. 13.

been practised with success, and the whole cycle may be based on some historical incidents.

Closely connected with this Saga is that of the "Disguised Deserter," who maims himself, as Odysseus did, and makes his way into the enemy's camp.<sup>1</sup> This also may be of historical origin. Herodotus tells the same tale of the Zopyrus, who feigned himself to be a deserter from the Persian army, and enabled Darius to capture Babylon; of Peisistratus, who by a similar device secured a bodyguard and became tyrant of Athens; the same plan was repeated to complete the ruin of the army of the Emperor Julian.<sup>2</sup> We have a variant of these disguise stories in the return of Odysseus as a beggar, an incident which is constantly reproduced in the later folk-tales.<sup>3</sup>

I must bring this paper to a close with the final tragedy which ends the story of the siege of Troy. I have been able to discuss only a small portion of the folk-lore and archaic beliefs which are embedded in the epics. The result, I venture to think, is only to increase our admiration of the great writer who has wedded these incidents to the noblest verse. We honour him not only as the first of European folk-lorists, but as the first and noblest writer who devoted his genius to the record of beliefs and traditions which it is the task of this Society to collect and interpret.

W. CROOKE.

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* iv. 244 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Herod.* iii. 154, i. 59; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, iii. 206; Frazer, *Pausanias*, iii. 413.

<sup>3</sup> Grimm, *Household Tales*, i. 406.

---