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On: 04 May 2015, At: 18:21

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Folklore

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfol20>

Minutes of Meeting

Max Gate ^a

^a Dorchester

Published online: 14 Feb 2012.

To cite this article: Max Gate (1897) Minutes of Meeting, Folklore, 8:1, 10-12, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1897.9720394](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1897.9720394)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1897.9720394>

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17th, 1896.

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Edward Clodd) in the Chair.

THE minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The resignation of the Rev. A. A. Lambing, Miss Dendy, Miss Sargant, Sir A. W. Franks, Mr. G. Whale, Mr. R. F. Yeo, Mr. L. White King, and the Leicester Permanent Library, were reported.

The election of the following new members was announced: Miss C. J. Morrison, Miss M. Dickson, Mr. N. W. Thomas, Mr. R. H. Marsh, Messrs. Van Stockum and Son, Mr. P. Manning, Professor Singer, Mr. F. Seebohm, Rev. T. Clarke, and Mrs. K. M. Clark.

The following new books which had been presented to the Society since the last meeting were laid upon the table, viz.: *Voyage of Bran*, by K. Meyer and A. Nutt, vol. i., presented by Mr. Nutt; *Anthropology of the Todas and Kotas of the Nilgiri Hills*, by E. Thurston, C.M.Z.S., presented by the Madras Government; *The Færeyinga Saga*, by F. York Powell, presented by Mr. Nutt; *Sixth Report of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*, presented by the Association; *The Myths of the New World*, by D. G. Brinton, presented by the Author; *Bilder aus dem Fastnachtsleben im alten Basel*, by E. Hoffman Kraye, presented by the Author; *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, vol. xix., presented by the Society; *Final Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Western Duars of Bengal*, by D. H. E. Sunder, presented by the Author.

Mr. F. G. Green read a paper entitled "One-sided Folklore," and a short discussion followed, in which Dr. Gaster and Mr. Gomme took part.

A note by Miss M. Debenham on a cure for human beings, or cattle, overlooked by the Evil Eye (see p. 92) was read by the President.

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The President also read the following letters from Mr. Thomas Hardy and Mr. J. G. Frazer :—

MAX GATE, DORCHESTER.

October 30, 1896.

MY DEAR CLODD,

Here is a bit of folklore that I have just been reminded of.

If you plant a tree or trees, and you are very anxious that they should thrive, you must not go and look at them, or look out of the window at them "on an empty stomach." There is a blasting influence in your eye then which will make them pine away. And the story is that a man, puzzled by this withering of his newly-planted choice trees, went to a white witch to enquire who was the evil-worker. The white witch, after ascertaining the facts, told him it was *himself*.

You will be able to classify this, no doubt, and say exactly where it belongs in the evolutionary chain of folklore. . . .

Yours sincerely,

THOMAS HARDY.

The President having communicated the substance of this letter to Mr. Frazer, and suggested that the explanation lay in the *hungry* man looking on the trees, which thereby became sympathetically starved, and so died, Mr. Frazer replied :—

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

November 1st, 1896.

DEAR MR. CLODD,

The superstition you mention was unknown to me, but your explanation of it seems highly probable.

As explained by you, the superstition is a very interesting example of the supposed sympathetic connection between a man and a tree. As you say, it bears very closely on my explanation of the connection between the priest of Diana at Aricia and the sacred tree, he having to be always in the prime of health and vigour in order that the tree might be so too. I am pleased to find my theory (which I confess often seems to me far-fetched, so remote is it from our nineteenth century educated ways of thought) confirmed by evidence so near home. It is one more indication

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of the persistence of the most primitive modes of thought beneath the surface of our civilisation. Thank you for bringing it to my notice. . . .

Yours very truly,
JAMES G. FRAZER.

Short notes on "Straw Goblins" and "Marks on Ancient Monuments" (see pp. 87, 86), by Mr. C. G. Leland, were read; and some observations upon the latter were offered by Mr. Gomme, Mr. Naaké, and Dr. Gaster.

Mr. L. Goldmerstein read a paper entitled "The Part played by Water in Marriage Customs" (see p. 84). In the discussion which followed, Dr. Gaster, Messrs. Gomme and Nutt, and the President took part.

A paper on the "Customs of the Peasantry of Innishowen," by Mr. Thomas Doherty of Carndonagh, was read by the President. A discussion followed, in which Messrs. Nutt, Higgins, and Kirby took part.

SOME NOTES ON THE PHYSIQUE, CUSTOMS, AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE PEASANTRY OF INNISHOWEN, CO. DONEGAL.

BY THOMAS DOHERTY.

Hair.—Along the seaboard districts, the prevailing colour of the hair among men and women is red, light red, or sandy. Many assert that this is to be attributed to some peculiar action of the sea air, the salt water, the diet (chiefly fish), or the employment. Most of the people in these places are engaged in outdoor pursuits, in all seasons and in all weathers—principally agriculture and fishing. I rather think that hereditary influences are the prevailing causes. The inhabitants are mostly descendants of the old Celtic tribes, pretty tall, strongly made, of straight long visage,