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Roumanian Tales

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tame when with her. She replied that for some time she had secretly been taking lessons from a great magician and that in two or three days she would be perfected if her father allowed her to continue the lessons. She also added that the dog seemed to her to be a human being, as his eyes were unlike that of a dog and that he resembled the Sultan of Ghazni.

Her father, the butcher, allowed her to finish her lessons in magic, which she did in a few days. She then told the dog that if he would marry her and make her his Sultana she would change him back again into a man. This of course he promised to do, and he was restored to his natural shape instantly.

The Sultan married the butcher's daughter and took her with him to his palace, where she turned his former wife into a mule. The Sultan ordered that everyone who saw the mule was to load her with heavy burdens, and being always overladen she very soon expired. When the Sultan heard she was dead he gave a hundred rupees to the man in whose possession the mule died.

LUCAS W. KING.

ROUMANIAN TALES.

Killing of the Old Men.

(*Folk-Lore*, vol. xxx. p. 136.)

I HAVE just received the last number of the Roumanian Folk-Lore Review, *Ion Creanga*, of Nov.-Dec. 1919. On pages 106-107 there is a curious parallel to the story of which I have already given two other Roumanian parallels in the pages of our *Journal*. This new variant differs entirely from all the others known, hence my reason for reproducing it here in a somewhat abridged form. The Roumanian writer is rather prolix. The essential features of the tale are as follows:

In olden times in some distant country the young folk had come together and decided to get rid of the old men. They did not want their wisdom and their advice, for they were just as clever. They had lived their lives and that was an end of it.

Over that country there ruled a young king who gladly accepted the decision of the young people and gave strict orders that all the old men should be killed. The orders were carried out with the utmost severity. But there lived among these people a young man who had not the heart to kill his old father. Frightened at the consequences of disobeying the king's orders, he took his old father and hid him in the cellar under the house. There he fed him and looked after him, carefully visiting him only by night.

For a while things went well. The country was prosperous, the earth yielded its produce, vineyards flourished and the orchards were laden with fruit. But things did not remain in that state of prosperity. A summer came. There was such drought that for months not a drop of rain fell. The crops were burnt off the face of the earth. The trees withered, and there was dearth and famine in the land. This was followed by a severe winter so cold as the people had never experienced in their life. Heavy snow fell and covered the fields. No food was left, nay not even seed for sowing the field in the spring-time; starvation had set in and the people did not know what to do, for they saw death before their eyes, for themselves and for their starved cattle. One night, when the son came as usual to his father, he could not bring more than a morsel of food. His father asked him what was the matter and why he looked so sad. The son told him what had happened. They had no seed to sow and did not know where to get any, there was nothing for them but rank starvation. They were all at their wits' end and had nowhere to turn for counsel or advice how to save themselves, and the father said, "My son, fear not, take a plough and plough up the road in front of the house and the adjoining road and do not reply to any questions." The son did as his father had bidden. The earth which had become moist and soft through the melting snow was easily ploughed up, when lo! to their great amazement, when the time came all kinds of grains seemed to sprout and to grow up from the ground which had been tilled, maize and corn and wheat were all growing up, and as the weather was favourable yielded a very good crop. His neighbours were greatly

astonished at what they saw, and went and told the king what had happened. The king called the young man and said to him. "This doing is not of your own wisdom. No doubt your father has told you whom you have kept alive. Speak the truth and I will spare thy life." The young man owned that his father had advised him to plough up the thoroughfares and roads close to their house. The young king then sent for the old man and asked him what was the meaning of his advice. The old man replied: "All throughout the year carts laden with all manner of seeds and corn are passing to and fro, some of the corn falls to the ground, and not a few of the seeds fall on the ground and are trodden into the earth by the passers-by. Left in that state they usually rot, but if the ground is ploughed up, and is moist and favourable for the growth, no one passing over that part of the ground, some of the corn has a chance of growing. It is upon that chance that I relied, and thus it has come to pass that we have now a rich crop, not only for our necessities, but also to provide you all with enough necessary seed for your own fields in the future." When the king and the young people heard what the old man had to tell and saw his deep wisdom, they recognised their folly, they rescinded that resolution, and decided henceforth to allow the old people to live in peace and honour.

And henceforth the old men are allowed to live to the end of their days.

M. GASTER.

THE CORN BABY IN INDIA.

WE are indebted to the kindness of Sir James Frazer and Dr. Rendel Harris for a photograph of a Corn Baby used by cultivators in the Sohagpur District, Central Provinces, India. The photograph, which we are unfortunately unable to reproduce, was taken by a missionary, Rev. F. Kilbey, who writes: "I am sending you enclosed a photograph of a Corn Baby, in which I know you are very interested. The Corn Baby is a general institution in India, and excepting Muhammadan