Folklore

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

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

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Published online: 14 Feb 2012.

To cite this article: Charles G. Leland , Havelock Ellis & Joseph Jacobs (1890)
Correspondence, Folklore, 1:3, 403-406, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1890.9720025](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1890.9720025)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1890.9720025>

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CORRESPONDENCE.

"HOW THEY MET THEMSELVES."

To the Editor of FOLK-LORE.

SIR,—In the very interesting paper, by M. Auguste Barth, in FOLK-LORE, No. II, entitled "How They Met Themselves", he states that he could never find among the most intimate friends of Dante Gabriel Rossetti anyone who could explain the subject of the picture by the poet-artist representing a couple meeting their own facsimiles.

I think that I can indicate the possible source of the subject in question. About twenty years ago I saw, in the studio of a picture-cleaner, the late Mr. Merritt, a very beautiful work by Carpaccio, representing two nuns walking in a garden. As Mr. Merritt proceeded in his uncovering, he was astonished to find that there were really four nuns, two of whom had been painted over. When all was perfectly restored (which was done with extraordinary skill and love), it was apparent that the restored nuns were duplicates of the other pair, but evidently of a spiritual nature, as the trees, or other portions of the landscape, were visible through their dresses as through a mist. When Mr. Merritt asked me what I thought it meant, I replied, in the words cited by Mr. Darmstetter :—

"It shall be told, ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my great child,
Met his own image walking in the garden."

There was no old Italian artist more congenial to Rossetti than Carpaccio, and the picture to which I refer, as regards rich golden orange sunset light, pre-Raphaelite details of peacocks and flowers, and a peculiar dreamy

expression as of the olden time, surpassed anything which I ever beheld. I have seen many Carpaccios in Venice and Florence, but none which were so *märchenhaft*, as Germans express it. Rossetti could hardly have been ignorant of it.

It may be worth observing in this connection that the belief in an *alter ego*, *fetch*, *wraith*, or *double*, is one of the few conceptions which may be set down as sporadic, or occurring spontaneously to man independently of tradition. The sight of one's own image in silent water, shining weapons, or mirrors, suggests that of a spirit taking our own likeness. When I was a very little boy, seeing my reflection in a well—this was at Holliston, Massachusetts—I was told that it was the face of another little boy who lived down in the water. The same story is told to children in South Slavonian lands, among the Hungarian Saxons and gipsies, with this difference, that it is a lady who appears to them.

As the reflection in a mirror is evidently due to natural causes, it is, to make it appear supernatural, moved further on, so to speak, to a new phenomenon. The late Abraham Lincoln, one night when looking at himself in a hand-glass opposite a mirror, saw his own face *double* in the former. Mrs. Lincoln explained this as a presage of approaching death, and he was actually murdered very soon afterwards. When I read this I at once went to a looking-glass with a hand-mirror, and succeeded in producing the same appearance.

There is good reason for believing that most of the Tuscan Florentine beliefs are old Etruscan. I have found nearly all of the charms and spells of Marcellus Burdigalensis current in the Toscana Romagna. And as the Etruscans were extremely superstitious, and, moreover, made great use of mirrors, it is possible that they carried the idea of the *Doppeltgänger* to a great extent.

CHARLES G. LELAND.

"FASCINATION" AND HYPNOTISM.

To the Editor of FOLK-LORE.

SIR,—I have sometimes wondered whether students of sorcery, witchcraft, etc., were quite alive to the significance of recent investigations in hypnotism. Mr. Nutt's letter (*supra*, p. 274) seems to show that they are not. The suggestion is not new; it is recognised by scientific investigators of hypnotism that their studies have a bearing on these matters, and "fascination" is the name of a distinct series of hypnotic phenomena. There is a delightful field for fruitful investigation here for anyone combining the requisite qualifications, or for two persons working in collaboration. I hope that in your influential position you will stir someone up to the task.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

[Mr. Nutt's letter was designed to call attention of students of folk-lore to the connection, not that of experts in hypnotism, though, apart from some of M. Charcot's experiments, it would be difficult for these latter to show any direct treatment of the subject.—ED. F.-L.]

A TALE OF CAMPBELL AND ITS FOUNDATION IN USAGE.

To the Editor of FOLK-LORE.

SIR,—Mr. Gomme's interesting paper on a tale of Campbell's, and its foundation in custom (*supra*, p. 197 *seq.*), appears to me to have one main weakness. The incident of finding the mallet in the box which the ill-treated father hides away from his children, pretending that it contained money, is not vital to the story. If the box had contained leaves or bricks or sand, the nemesis on the children would be the same. No doubt the rhyme on the mallet is effective, but against whom? Not against the children;

but against a parent who could be fool enough to trust them with all his wealth before his death. I am encouraged in this view of the want of the vital connection of the mallet by observing a variant of the story found as far away as Kashmir (Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir*, "How the wicked Sons were duped"), and without the mallet. Here we have the ungrateful children, the friend's advice, and the hoarded box with nothing in it, which leads to better treatment by the children; but all that is found in the box after the old man's death is dirt and leaves.

I would add that the presence of the same rhyme in the Gaelic tale, the twelfth century Latin story, and the German inscription, seem to me to tell for the origination of the stone in one single place in historic times, and its diffusion to the remaining spots where it is found. Till that centre of dispersion is settled the story cannot be used as evidence for custom in any place, as it may be merely an unmeaning rhyme borrowed from a place where it had meaning.

JOSEPH JACOBS.