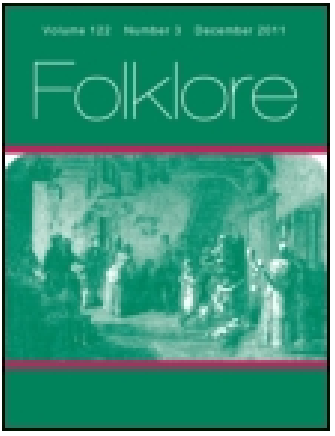

Folklore

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: W. A. Clouston (1890) The Story of "The Frog Prince", Folklore, 1:4, 493-506, DOI: 10.1080/0015587X.1890.9720033

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1890.9720033

THE STORY OF "THE FROG PRINCE":

BRETON VARIANT, AND SOME ANALOGUES.

IN the following tale we have a Breton form of the well-known *märchen,* in Grimm's collection, of "The Frog Prince", combined with incidents found in other popular European and Asiatic fictions. It was taken down from the recital of an old beggar woman of Plouaret by M. F. M. Luzel, and published in *Mélusine* for September 1888, under the title of "Jannac aux Deux Sous", or

PENNY JACK.

A poor orphan lived on alms which he daily collected from door to door. One day a gentleman, passing along the highway, gave him a penny (*deux sous*). Laughing and dancing with joy at the possession of so much money, he rushed to the town, shouting through the streets, "I've a penny! I've a penny!" As his clothes were in rags, he went to a draper's and ordered coat, vest, and trousers. "Have you the money, my boy?" asked the merchant. "O yes," showing his cash. "Get you gone, Penny Jack!" said the draper, pushing him out of the door. The name "Penny Jack" stuck to him. At play with some youngsters he lost his money, wept like a calf, and set off for the country.

On the way he drinks at a fountain, lies down, and passes the night. In the morning, as he is about to drink again, he perceives an enormous frog in the basin, and shrinks back in horror. "Don't be alarmed, my boy; come, kiss me"; and the frog leaps up on the edge of the basin. After some persuasion and the promise of his finding money in abundance, Jack kissed the frog. He is directed to look behind a moss-grown stone for money, and is told he will get as much more there to-morrow

at the same hour. Jack finds money enough, which he takes, and then runs back to town. "Look! look!" cries he, showing his money; "my pockets full of gold and silver." The street boys and swindlers get round him, and he is soon left without a coin.

The next night he spends at the fountain, and tells of his loss in the morning. "Never mind," says the frog, "kiss me again, and you'll get plenty." But the frog is now larger and more hideous, and Jack has scruples which poverty overcomes. Money is got and lost as before, and for the third time Jack goes to the fountain. The frog is now so large as to fill the basin, and hideously swollen up with poison; but, when kissed a third time, a spell is broken, and the frog becomes a beautiful princess, who thanks Jack, and tells him that a charm had kept her in the ugly form he had seen in the fountain, until a "virgin" young man of twenty years should kiss her thrice. She was going to her father, a powerful king of the East, but she intended to marry Jack, who would succeed her father. Meanwhile, he was to return to town, and after a year and a day he must come to the fountain, at eight in the morning, alone and fasting. She would be there, and would take him to her father. He must kiss no other woman, and take care to come fasting, else he should not see her.

He takes a new supply of money, and this time puts it in the keeping of the mistress of an inn where he stays. One of the servant girls took a fancy for him, in spite of his silliness, but he would have nothing to do with her, telling her how he must marry a princess, and stating the precautions he must observe. The girl clasped him round the neck, and kissed him, thus trying to make him break his promise; but Jack still kept to it, and would go on the day appointed to the fountain. She tries in vain to get him misled as to the exact date; and, as he sets out, she slips a pea into his pocket.

Jack arrives too early at the fountain, and, while waiting, finds the pea in his pocket, and thoughtlessly eats it and falls asleep. The princess comes presently, discovers him asleep, and exclaims: "Alas, he has either eaten, or embraced another!" She places in his hands a paper, on which she had written: "Alas, Jack, you have eaten, or perhaps kissed a woman before coming here,

and you are asleep. I shall be back at ten o'clock to-morrow at this fountain. Be careful to come fasting, and without having kissed either woman or girl." Jack awakes, and cries when he sees not the princess; and, finding the paper, he takes it to the inn, where the girl reads it to him.

Next morning he sets out again, but the girl has slipped a bean into his vest, which he eats, and then falls asleep, as before. The princess comes, and leaves a paper with him: she will give him one more chance; to-morrow, at noon. He awakes, and is full of sorrow, and, returning to the inn, gets the girl to read the paper for him as before.

The girl puts a fig into his pocket before he starts a third time for the fountain. Jack eats the fig and falls asleep. When he awakes he discovers a paper in his hand, and half of the princess's gold ring. This time Jack gets the schoolmaster to read the paper: The princess will return no more; she has gone to her Castle of Gold, held by four chains over the Red Sea. If he loves her he may see her there, but only after many trials and much hardship. She adds that, as soon as he returns to the inn, he must pull off all the buttons of his clothes, and, as each came off, someone in the house would die. So he goes back to the inn, pulls off his buttons, and all die—the girl first. Then he takes his staff and the half-ring, and sets out in quest of the Golden Castle.

After long travel and vain inquiries, he meets with an old hermit, who refers him to an elder brother-hermit, who commands all the beasts, from whom he receives an ointment that can heal any wound, and a ball which rolls before him when the anchorite says: "Go, my ball; go straight to my brother, the hermit—to his hermitage two hundred leagues hence." Jack follows. When the ball strikes against the door, out comes the elder hermit, who recognises the ball, but knows nothing of the Golden Castle, nor do the beasts, whom he summons, and who come, from the mouse to the lion, from the goat to the camel. Jack is sent by him three hundred leagues off to his brother-hermit, who commands all the feathered tribes. He follows a conducting-ball, as before, and feels very tired when it raps at the door of the third hermit. Out comes a man of great age, who is so wise that he knows all Jack's history and his mission, but confesses he knows

not the Golden Castle. He summons his birds, from the wren to the eagle. It is only after two calls that the eagle appears, last of all, and, when questioned as to the cause of his delay, he says that he was far away at the Golden Castle of the Red Sea, where the princess was next day to be married; oxen, calves, sheep, etc., were being slaughtered in great numbers, and he had been getting his share.

The eagle undertakes to carry Jack to the Castle, on condition of having a supply of fresh meat all the way. Twelve sheep are killed, and the quarters and Jack are fastened on the eagle's back. Whenever the bird cries "Oak!" Jack gives him a quarter of a sheep. The provision is all consumed as the Red Sea appears. "Oak! oak!" cries the eagle. "You've eaten the whole," says Jack. "Give me meat," rejoins the eagle, "or my strength is gone." Jack has to give the bird four more successive supplies, taken from the calves of his legs and his thighs. He is at length set down on the Castle wall, nearly dead from the loss of blood, but the ointment restores him, and he is as well as ever.

As the bridal procession goes to church, Jack puts himself in the way, and he is recognised by the bride, She pretends sudden sickness, and the ceremony is postponed till next day. In like manner she delays it for three days more. On the third day the wedding-dinner takes place, but they had not yet been to church. Jack is invited as a foreign prince, the princess having sent him splendid robes and jewels. At the end of the feast stories were told, and the princess, when asked, rose and related her story: "I had, your majesty, a key for my wardrobe, which I lost. I got a new key instead. I have now found the old one. Which would your majesty advise me to use?" The king said: "Honour is ever due to the eldest." Replied the princess: "That is also my opinion," and, pointing to Jack, she told how he had freed her from the spell, and so forth. So Jack was married to the princess, and in course of time became king.

In fairy tales of human beings transformed by witchcraft into hideous shapes, the spell is usually to be done away when some very unlikely thing should happen. Sometimes the victim declares the condition, as in the story told by

William of Malmesbury (ed. 1725, ch. iv, pp. 23-26) of the "Doughtre of Ypocras [*i.e.*, Hippocrates], in forme and lykenesse of a gret Dragoun, that is an hundred Fadme of lengthe, as Men seyn, for I have not seen hire," the famous traveller is careful to add. "And sche lyethe in an olde Castelle, in a Cave, and schewethe twyes or thryes in the Zeer. And sche dothe non harm to no Man, but if [*i.e.*, unless] Men don hire harm. And sche was thus chaunged and transformed, from a fair Damysele, in to lykenesse of a Dragoun, be a Goddesse, that was clept Deane [*i.e.*, called Diana]. And Men seyn, that sche schalle so endure in that forme of a Dragoun, unto the tyme that a Knighte come, that is so hardy, that dar come to hire and kisse hire on the Mouthe: And then schalle sche turne ayen to hire owne Kynde, and ben a Woman ayen: But aftre that sche schalle not liven longe." One brave Knight of Rhodes, it seems, undertook this bold enterprise, but so soon as he beheld "that forme so hidous and so horrible he fleyghe away", and the disappointed damsel cast him and his horse into the sea. Another time, a youth, who knew not of the enchanted maiden, quitted his ship, and, going over the island, came upon her, and she told him that if he would kiss her on the mouth she should be restored to her woman's form, and he should have, for his reward, herself and all her great treasure; but he also could not screw his courage to the kissing point.

In most cases, however, the spell can only be broken in entire ignorance of the fact that the hideous creature is not what he, or she, appears to be, as in Grimm's story, where a princess accidentally drops her golden ball into a well, and a frog puts up his head and offers to restore it to her on condition that she love him, let him live with her, eat off a golden plate, and sleep on her couch. She promises to do all that he requires, in order to get back her golden ball. At night the frog comes to her door, and chants:

"Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!

And mind the words that you and I said,
By the fountain cool in the greensward shade!"

She opens the door, and, after the frog has supped off a golden plate, he sleeps on her couch till morning, when he goes away. This happens three nights in succession, but when the princess awakes, on the third morning, she is astonished to see, instead of the frog, a handsome young prince, gazing on her with the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen, and standing at the head of her bed. He then explains how he had been enchanted by a spiteful fairy, and so on.

Robert Chambers, in his collection of Scottish songs, gives a curious variant, as told by an old Annandale nurse. A young girl is sent by her mother "to the well at the world's end" with a wooden dish to fetch water. When the lassie cam' to the well, she fand it dry; but there was a padda [*i.e.*, a frog] that cam' loup-loup-loupin', and loupit into her dish. Says the padda to the lassie: "I'll gie ye plenty o' water if ye'll be my wife." The lassie didna like the padda, but she was fain to say she wad tak' him, just to get the water; and, ye ken, she never thought the puir brute wad be serious, or wad ever say ony mair about it. Sae she got the water, and took it hame to her mother; and she heard nae mair o' the padda till that night, when, as she and her mother were sitting by the fireside, what do they hear but the puir padda at the outside o' the door, singing wi' a' his micht:

"Open the door, my hinny, my heart,
Open the door, my ain true love;
Remember the promise that you and I made,
Doun i' the meadow where we twa met."

Says the mother: "What noise is that at the door, dauchter?" "Hout!" says the lassie, "it's naething but a filthy padda." "Open the door to the puir padda," says the mother. Sae the lassie opened the door, and the padda

cam' loup-loup-loupin' in, and sat down by the ingle-side. Then out says he:

"O gie me my supper, my hinnie, my heart,
O gie me my supper, my ain true love;"

and so on, as before. The lassie, persuaded by her mother, gives the padda his supper, after which he sings out:

"O put me to bed, my hinnie, my heart,"

and so on, and she puts the padda in bed. Then he asks her to come to her bed, which she does. Next, at his request, she takes him to her bosom; and lastly, to strike off his head with an axe, which, we may well suppose, she was nothing loth to do, whereupon up starts "the bonniest prince that ever was seen; and, of course, they lived happy a' the rest o' their days."

In this version, it will be seen, the transformed prince is more exacting than in the German story, where, after having supped off a golden dish, and lain on the girl's couch for three nights, the spell is broken. In the Breton version, the enchanted princess is restored to her proper form when she has been *kissed* three times. We shall consider the incidents that follow in the Breton story after referring to some analogues which were current in Europe during mediæval times.

Under the title of "The Knight and the Loathly Lady", in *Originals and Analogues of some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (published for the Chaucer Society, pp. 483 ff.), I have cited, in full generally, the following variants, etc., of the "Wife of Bath's Tale": Gower's Tale of Florent, from the First Book of the *Confessio Amantis*, Harl. MS. 3869 leaf 34 ff.; Ballad of the Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell; Ballad of the Marriage of Sir Gawain; Border Ballad of King Henrie; Icelandic Version, from the Latin of Torfœus; Another Icelandic Version, from Grim's Saga; Gaelic Version, from Campbell's collection; Mandeville's story, outlined above; Turkish, Sanskrit, and

Kaffir analogues. The outline of Gower's Tale of Florent I reproduce as follows, from my side-notes to the reprint :—

Florent, nephew to the emperor, a worthy and brave knight, in quest of adventures, came to a castle, the heir of which, Branchus, he had slain. They would be avenged, but feared the anger of the emperor. The grandmother of Branchus, a sly woman, devised a plan for causing his death without blame to them. She sends for Florent, and says he will be quit if he answer a question, but, failing, he shall be killed. He will be allowed to depart, and time for inquiry. The agreement is sealed. She asks: "What do women most desire?" Florent returns to his uncle's court, and tells him of his pact. The wisest men are sent for, but can't agree, each having a different opinion of women's chief desire. So Florent must needs go forth to inquire, for he would rather die than break his word. Alone he goes, wondering what to do. Under a forest tree he sees a loathly woman, so foul as never was seen before. She calls him to her, and he comes up, marvelling. She says: "Florent, I only can save thee from death." Florent begs her counsel. "What will you give me if I save you?" "Anything." "Good; but, first, you must promise to marry me." "That I can't do." "Away, then, to thy fate." He promises much goods and lands, but she refuses them. He ponders the matter, and resolves to wed her, thinking she could not live long, and he would hide out of men's sight. So he says: "If only the answer to the question can save me, I will wed thee." "Agreed; for there is no other way. Listen: Return and make this answer without fear: 'Woman would be sovereign of man's love, and have her own will.' Then come back to me without fail."

Florent rides back, sad at heart, to think of such an ugly bride, and comes to the castle, to live or die The lord comes with his council, sends for the old dame (*i.e.* the grandmother of the slain Branchus), and the covenant is read in presence of all three. Florent tries other answers at first, but in the end he says as the loathly lady had taught him. "Ha!' cries the old dame, "thou hast told truly; would thou wert burnt!" But Florent is safe; and now he grieves anew, for he must keep his word to the loathly lady. He finds the old witch in the same place. Never saw man

such a monster. She seizes his bridle and demands his part of the bargain, and he would fain flee if he could. As a sick man takes bitter drugs with spice and sugar, Florent drinks his draught. But, as a true knight, he must keep his troth, for the honour of womanhood; and so he speaks to her as gently as he can, and sets her before him on his horse, sighing as he rides along. Like an owl, he hides during the day and journeys at night, till he comes to his own castle, and smuggles in the loathly lady. Then he consults his confidants how to wed her. The tire-women take off her rags, bathe and clothe her, but she wouldn't let them comb her hair. She looked more foul in her fine clothes. They were wedded that night. She begins to fondle him, calls him her husband, invites him to bed, and offers him a kiss. He was in torment, but he must bed with her. He lies awake, turning his face from the foul sight. She clips him, and prays him to turn towards her, but he lies still. At last he takes her hand, and, looking on her, sees a damsel of eighteen, the fairest in the world. She bids him choose whether he would have her so by night or by day. He is at a loss to decide, and leaves it with herself: "My love, I will be ruled by thee, for I cannot choose." Quoth she: "Since you give me sovereignty, I shall, night and day, be as you now see me. I am the King of Sicily's daughter, and was changed into a foul shape by my stepmother, until a good knight should give me his love and the mastery." Now all was joy, and they lived long and happily.

"And clerkes that this chaunce herde,
Thei writen it in evidence,
To teche how that obedience
May wel fortune a man to love,
And sette him in his lust a-bove,
As it be-fell un-to this knyght.
For-thi,[1] my sone, if thou do ryht,
Thou shalt unto thi love obeie,
And folwe her will, be alle weie."

Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale", though on the same "lines" as Gower's *Florent*, differs from it in several of the details, and there does not seem any reason to suppose

[1] Therefore.

that he borrowed it from "moral Gower". In Chaucer, a bachelor of the royal household is condemned to lose his life for committing rape. The queen intercedes for him, and the king leaves his life at her disposal. She tells the knight that he will be pardoned if he answer the question, "What does woman most desire?" The loathly lady is a benevolent fairy who had assumed a hideous form to test the knight's fidelity to his word, and save his life. In Gower she is the daughter of the King of Sicily metamorphosed by a spiteful stepmother. In most of the versions the loathly lady is a king's daughter. The solution of the question is peculiar to Chaucer, Gower, and the two ballads of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnall. In most of the other versions the loathly lady seeks admission, which is reluctantly granted, then to be allowed to lie beside the king, or knight; but, in the Grim's Saga, she makes it the condition of saving the hero's life, by curing his desperate wounds, that he should kiss her. Her appearance is thus described by Gower: Her nose low, or flat, her brow high; eyes small and deep-set; cheeks, wet with tears, shrivelled and hanging down to her chin; lips, shrunken with age; forehead narrow; locks hoary; neck, short; shoulders, bent; in brief, all her limbs and features distorted. In the ballad of "The Marriage of Sir Gawain" (*Percy Folio MS.*, ed. Hales and Furnivall, vol. i), her portrait is thus limned:

> "Then there as shold have been her mouth,
> Then there was sett her eye;
> The other was in her forehead fast,
> The way that she might see.
>
> "Her nose was crooked and turned outward,
> Her mouth stood all a-wry;
> A worse formed lady than shee was
> Never man saw with his eye."

Nor does the author of the Border ballad of "King Henrie" spare the details:

" Her head touched the roof-tree of the house ;
Her middle ye weel mot span ;
Each frighted huntsman fled the ha',
And left the king alane.

" Her teeth were a' like tether stakes,
Her nose like a club or mell ;
And I ken naething she appeared to be,
But the fiend that wons in hell."

In Torfœus : " Expergefactus igitur, recluso ostio, informe quoddam mulieris simulacrum, habitu corporis fædum, veste squalore obsita, pallore, macie frigorisque tyrannide prope modum peremptum, deprehendit."—In Grim's Saga : Not taller than a child of seven years ; Grim's arms could not go round her ; misshapen, bald, black, ugly, and disgusting in every particular.—In the Turkish analogue (which occurs in a story-book not yet fully done into English) a poor orphan girl marries an exceedingly ugly old man for the sake of a home, and one day, while he is at the bazár, she begins, for the first time, to long for his return. When he came home she " ran to meet him with such joy as if the world had become her own, and when he beheld her longing, and her countenance glowing with delight, he suddenly shook himself, and became a young man of seventeen years—a sun of the world, a darling of the age ; and he clasped her round the neck and blessed her." Then he explained that he was a king of the fairies, whose mother, because of an idle word he had uttered, changed him to a man of seventy years, and he was not to return to his original shape until he was beloved by a daughter of the children of Adam.—In one of the Kaffir analogues, a youth had been changed to a crocodile by the enemies of his father's house ; in the other, to a snake with five heads. It is not easy to decide on the question of whether the transformation was originally to a beast-shape or to that of a hideous old woman.—The ending of the German tale, where the frog becomes a handsome young

prince the moment his head is struck off, has many parallels in European folk-tales; commonly it is a fox or a horse who had rendered the hero important service, and desires to be decapitated, with the like result.[1]

To return to the Breton version, the first part of which only is analogous to "The Frog Prince", the other incidents having a very distinct Eastern flavour; such as the lady's appointing Jack to meet her a year and a day hence at the fountain, fasting, and without having embraced another woman in the interim; his falling asleep after eating a trifle, and his consulting the maid of the inn: these will doubtless recall to readers of the *Arabian Nights* similar incidents in the story of "Azíz and Azíza" (Lane, Payne, Burton). Then we have the lady's departure for her own country—fairyland, evidently—and her imposing on him the task of coming to her; which reminds us of the Arabian tales of Mazin of Khurasán and Ḥasan of Basra (Scott, Lane, Payne, Burton), when the hero goes in quest of his fairy bride, after she has obtained possession of her feather-robe and fled away. The magic balls which rolled before Jack and conducted him to the second and third hermits are decidedly of Eastern conception, and occur in the tale of Mazin of Khurasán and others. The sending of Jack by one old man to one older, to obtain the information he desires, is common to European as well as Asiatic fictions. Thus in the Swedish tale of the Beautiful Palace, etc. (Thorpe's *Yule-tide Stories*), the hero is sent by an old woman to an older sister, who in turn sends him to one still more aged. In No. 2 of Dozon's *Contes Albanais* the hero is directed in like manner; and in Laura Gonzenbach's *Sicilianische Märchen*, a prince goes to three aged

[1] In the story of "The Laidly Worm of Spindleston Haugh," a young damsel is turned to a dragon by her wicked stepmother, and the enchantment can only be done away by Chylde Wynde, her own brother, kissing her.—See Mr. Jacobs' *English Fairy Tales*, lately issued in a dainty volume by Mr. Nutt.

hermits in succession. In the great Hindú collection, *Kathá Sarit Ságara* (Ocean of the Streams of Story), Saktideva, in quest of the Golden City, is dispatched by a hermit, who had lived eight hundred years and never heard of it, to an elder brother. The same also occurs in the tale of Hasan of Basra. In the Tamil romance, translated by Pandit Natésa Sastrí under the title of *Dravidian Nights*, a prince is directed by an ascetic who opened his eyes once every watch to another who opened his eyes every second watch, and he sends him to another who opened his eyes every third watch. Similar instances occur in the countless Eastern and Western forms of the Legend of the Oldest Animal, the probable original of which is found in the *Mahábhárata*, and reproduced by me in the *Academy*, October 27, 1888, and other versions are cited in my *Popular Tales and Fictions*, vol. ii, p. 90 ff; from which the foregoing few are taken.

Jack's feeding the eagle with pieces of his own flesh occurs in many stories, and it seems to be essentially a Buddhistic idea. In Dozon's *Contes Albanais* (No. XV) a young hero in quest of a sister bridles a huge falcon, and supplies him with flesh from his thigh when the provision he had taken with him is exhausted, and on arriving at their destination, when the bird discovers that he is bleeding it disgorges the pieces, and, replacing them in his thigh, the youth is at once healed. In the Persian *Túti Náma*, or Parrot-Book, a prince saves a frog from a snake, and gives the snake, in place of the prey of which he had been deprived, a piece of flesh from his arm. The snake then assumes the form of a man, as does also the frog, and the prince by their aid obtains a post of honour at the court of a foreign king, and marries his daughter, of course. In the Persian romance, which purports to recount the adventures of Hátim Taï, the generous Arab chief, we read that, while the self-sacrificing hero was journeying through a desert, he discovered a wolf pursuing a doe. Hátim calls on the wolf to allow the doe to escape, and then gives the

brute a slice of flesh from his own thigh, which, however, he heals instantly by means of a talisman. In the *Kathá Sarit Ságara* a prince meets with a rákshasa, and, "not being able to obtain other flesh to give the demon to eat, he cut off with his sword some of his own flesh and gave it to him."

The story of "Penny Jack", which begins so divertingly, belongs to that class of popular fictions in which the youngest son—aptly styled "Boots" by Dasent—who is considered as the fool of the family, proves to be the favourite of Fortune: at first he acts like an arrant noodle, but ultimately he becomes a great prince.

W. A. CLOUSTON.