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Contents :

	PAGE
An Oral Version of the Kesar Saga from Hunza.—D. L. R. LORIMER - -	105
Mummers' Plays and the <i>Sacer Ludus</i> .—H. COOTE LAKE - - -	141
Collectanea.—Palestine Folktales. [<i>The late Mrs.</i>] A. M. SPOER.—An Ancient Fairy-tale translated from the Hebrew. M. GASTER.—Tibetan Tales, I. [<i>Foreword by L. A. WADDELL.</i>] D. MACDONALD - -	150
Correspondence.—The Custom of Couvade. R. KARSTEN.—Threefold Lights. [Mrs.] M. M. BANKS - - - - -	193
Reviews.—J. Bolte u. G. Polivka, <i>Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- u. Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm</i> . M. GASTER.—R. Gallop, <i>A Book of the Basques</i> . [Miss] VIOLET ALFORD.—R. D. Scott, <i>The Thumb of Knowledge</i> . [Miss] ELEANOR HULL.—American Folklore. A. R. WRIGHT -	198
Short Bibliographical Notices - - - - -	213



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The Subscription (£1 1s.) is now due and should be forwarded to the Secretary.

There was once a cock, and he picked up a grain of wheat. A woman was grinding her mill near by, and he asked her to grind it into flour for him. Amused by his request she did so, and he took his flour and then asked for his wheat. "But I have already given you the flour," was the answer. "But I gave you wheat, and you have not given it me back,"—and so he persisted until, to get rid of him, she gave him a handful of flour and told him to be gone. He took his flour to a woman who was kneading, and asked her to make him a cake. This she did, and, when it was baked, he asked for the flour he had brought to her. By pursuing the same policy as before he worried this woman too into giving him something to be rid of him,—a second little loaf,—and he went off to a place where men were digging, and offered his bread, which they accepted and ate. When they had finished he asked for the price, but they had no money and did not know that he expected any, so to be rid of him they gave him a handful of onions. He went off and found some men in the hills guarding the young kids, and offered them the onions. They were far from any place where such things were to be had, and accepted them as a delicacy. As soon as they were eaten, the cock began his old game, and ended by getting the only thing the men had to give, a young kid. Further away among the hills he found some men guarding a herd of camels. They eagerly accepted his kid, ate it, and were then badgered into giving one of the treasures they were guarding,—a *qa'ōōd*, a young camel. This he drove down into a far valley, where he found some men working with a *jamōōs*, a water buffalo, to whom he offered his camel. The flesh of a young camel is a delicacy not to be resisted, and they cooked and ate it, and then the cock asked how he was to be paid. Surely they would be ashamed to give less than a liberal sum of money. Anyone who saw the bones, which remained to tell the tale, would know that no one killed a camel which belonged to him, and they would be said to have stolen it, and so on, and it ended by their giving him a buffalo to be rid of him. With his buffalo he went to a place where a man lived who had a large family and proposed to have a feast, so the buffalo was killed and eaten. Then he demanded his buffalo, and said he knew nothing as to what they had done with it, only that he had brought a fine

buffalo and could not go home without it, and so on as before. What was to be done? They had no money, and the cock was the very spirit of unwearied importunity. "What shall a poor man do?" said his host, "when he has only a pair of hands and his sons and daughters?" "Then give me a daughter," said the cock, and he picked out the handsomest of them, and so the little creature, who had nothing but one grain of corn got a fine 'arōōs (bride). He went off singing:—

Tikeri kil adri

Ana ed-dik en-nadri

I am the cock,—the clever one.
 And I came out of it cleverly.
 And I found one grain of corn.
 And the corn brought forth flour,
 And the flour brought forth a loaf.
 And the loaf brought forth onions,
 And the onions brought forth a kid.
 And the kid brought forth a camel,
 And the camel brought forth a buffalo,
 And the buffalo brought forth a bride!

I considered this story the most immoral I had heard, and quite characteristic of the money-grubbing fellahin. All the same, it ended better than I expected, for it was less unworthy to win a bride than a buffalo. It is perhaps inevitable that from their earliest years the children, whose lives are to be spent in a hard struggle with Nature, should be taught to cultivate the qualities of a pariah dog. To succeed you must fight for yourself, getting what you want by any means, and there are plenty of importunate widows, and still more widowers, among most classes of the Semitic races. *Ed-dīk il-faṣīḥ min il-bēda beṣīḥ*, "the clever cock crows already from the egg," they say.

[The late Mrs.] A. M. SPOER.

Chardin, Rec. égypt 44/46.

AN ANCIENT FAIRY-TALE TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW.
 DURING the last fifty years the tendency has been growing more and more strongly to trace the fairy-tales in much of the popular

lore to some literary source or parallel. It is not always easy to point to the immediate source, and yet the researches, especially of Wesselsky and others, are pointing more and more in the direction of an intimate connection between the written and the popular lore, nay, on the dependence of the latter on the former.

It is now some forty years since I read to our Society the story which I am publishing here. For reasons which I do not remember I did not publish it there and then, but I believe the time has come to place before the students of folklore what I believe to be one of the oldest fairy-tales accessible to European readers. The origin of the fairy in European tales is still a moot point. Many are inclined to connect it with some Irish-Celtic traditions, but there is no direct indication to my knowledge as to the antiquity of the fairy in the Irish popular tales such as it is known to us with all the lovely attributes, of beauty, and sprightliness, and also a little mischief, best expressed in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The fairy such as it appears in our tales is in any case something quite different from the Norns of northern mythology, or the *fata* of the Latin popular belief, or the *moirai* of the Greek, or the *parcæ*, more or less sinister figures differing entirely from the real fairy or fay. It would thus be difficult to say where the origin of the European fairy is to be sought. It appeared at any rate not before the time of the French romances, and it is becoming more clear that there is an intimate connection between the oldest romances of chivalry and the Arabic influences from Spain. It has been denied over and over again, but the more one studies the connection between these romances and some of the tales found in Arabic,—and let me add in Jewish writings of an earlier period,—the more clear does the connection appear. No doubt in India we have the *apsaras*, or rather goddesses, who fall in love with human beings. The same happens with the goddesses of the Greek Olympus, and ascending earlier we find Ishtar falling in love with Gilgamesh, the hero of the great Babylonian epic, and whenever the mortal refuses the love of the goddess, as in the latter case, she tries to punish him. But nowhere do we find in any of these ancient tales that mortals are

invited or are in any way led to the abode of the fairies, the home of immortality and pleasure and rejoicing, and of everlasting youth. Other spirits lurk about, most of which have assumed a malevolent character. They are bent on doing harm. They are the evil spirits, most of them also of female character. They are found especially in conjurations and charms, where different names have been given to them, especially among the nations of the Balkans and the eastern peoples. But alongside with them one comes across some which might be considered to be identical with the fairies of the West. Thus we have in Persia the *peri*; whether it is etymologically connected with the fairy I must leave in doubt. Then we have the *djin* of the Arabic tales; and here these *djin* or *genii* have a twofold character, some demoniacal but in most cases friendly towards the human beings. These approximate to a large extent much more closely to the European fairy. They have also an immortal life, they have homes of their own, they can assume also the most lovely shape and form, they love to associate with human beings, even in conjugal embraces, much as the fairy is depicted in some of the romances, like the story of the fairy with whom Caesar has been living a long time and who gives birth to a child. This offspring is no less a figure than Oberon in the romance of *Huon de Bordeaux* and afterwards in Shakespeare.

Among the spirits which haunt the mind of the people in Babylon are also the *shaddw*. I believe this to be an euphemistic expression and to mean the powerful, the mighty ones. This is more or less identical with the *shed* which occurs in the biblical literature (*Deut.* xxxvii), which afterwards has been identified with these spirits, male and female, more or less akin to the *djin* and the *peri*. It is from a wrong interpretation of this very word in *Ecc. c. i, v. v.*, the book ascribed to king Solomon, where it is said that he had many *shiddah* and *shiddot*, out of which the whole history of his power over the demons has been evolved. Be it as it may, we have now in the story which I have translated here the oldest fairy-tale. It is ascribed to Abraham, the son of Moses Maimonides, who lived at the beginning of the thirteenth century in Egypt. It was printed for the first time in Constantinople in 1618, and has

been reprinted over and over again. It has also been translated into Latin by Wagenseil.

It reads exactly like a chapter from the *Arabian Nights*. It has the same Egyptian atmosphere so characteristic of the *Arabian Nights*, which one feels here throughout. It is because of this thoroughly oriental character that some have been inclined to say that it is a translation from an Arabic tale. Chauvin, who, according to Heller,¹ realised that similarity to the spirit pervading the *Arabian Nights*, went so far as to suggest, rather absurdly, that the story had been told by a Jew who had embraced Islam. Now whoever reads that story will find just the reverse. It could have been much more properly said that a Mohammedan who had been converted to Judaism had written the story. Not only is there no trace of Islam in it, but it has been so thoroughly assimilated to Jewish beliefs and ideas that it has become characteristically Jewish. The *shedim*, the word which I have translated as spirits or genii, are studying the Bible, they have a synagogue, and recite the prayers according to the Jewish rites; the fairy, the daughter of the King of the Spirits, is not only married according to the Jewish custom but insists on obtaining her divorce by a bill drawn in accordance with Jewish law. The Bible is continually quoted. Throughout it is so thoroughly Jewish that only a Jew could have compiled it.

But the real importance of the story lies in the fact that we have here one of the *motifs* which occurs over and over again in later tales:—that the man has been united to a fairy by a certain form and afterwards, overcome by a longing for his earthly life, leaves her, although he promises to return. He then refuses to keep his promise, and is severely punished.

The series of tales in which this *motif* appears,—the hero seeking everlasting youth and immortality,—has been fully described by D'Ancona in his *Il Cavaliere Senso*, to which I contributed at the time the Roumanian and gipsy parallels. But one has to go back a little earlier to find something of a similar kind in the cycle of the story of the swan-maiden and of the Lusignan family, and in other tales of a similar character. Here we have now the oldest parallel,—by the way to my knowledge

¹ Bolte-Polívka, *Anmerkungen etc.*, vol. 4, p. 349.

nothing like it is found in any of the recensions of the *Arabian Nights*, neither in the Egyptian nor the Tunisian recension, and even if it were found in any of these recensions that would not prove it to be of an Arabic origin. It has on sundry occasions been shown that not a few of the tales in the *Arabian Nights* are of purely Jewish origin. They were centuries older in the Jewish literature, and they have been taken up later on. The Arabic tellers of stories have slightly manipulated them, and have introduced them into the *Arabian Nights*, their character having been changed and becoming thoroughly Mohammedan. But no story is found in the Jewish literature which can be proved to have been directly derived from an Arabic source. Mutual influences of course exist, but so far not a single story is of a direct Arabic origin, and this one is so thoroughly Jewish in character and the incidents so peculiar that its Jewish origin cannot be doubted, at any rate in the form in which we find it in this story. Traces of incidents of the cycle of Solomon legends are also found. It is no doubt purely popular and may be of a much higher antiquity, but here we are led on to hypotheses which we must avoid and remain on the firm basis of the written text. We have here also a large number of other *motifs* so familiar to us in fairy-tales. The hero, against the advice or promise made to his father or to the king, goes across the sea, the ship founders, and he is miraculously cast up on a wonderful island, and carried on the back of a bird to an enchanted place; there is the 'smelling' of a human being; he is warned against opening a locked door, behind which he finds a beautiful maiden who had been hidden away from him,—and there are so many other incidents which remind us of fairy-tales right and left. It is therefore of no mean value to be able to trace these incidents back to a definite tale which had not been written down in that form later than the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Questions may perhaps be asked as to the authorship, but the date of its composition and the place are above any doubt. Such a story would circulate then among the Jews, especially in Spain, with whom the Jews of Egypt and the descendants of the famous Maimonides kept in close touch, and it would not be

difficult for the story to be carried across the mountains and the incidents disseminated far and wide by the same intermediary of Jewish literature and Jewish tellers of stories, as has happened with so many oriental books, especially the *Kalila wa Dimna*, *Syntipas*, and others of a similar kind. I have translated the text literally, since tales of this kind must be reproduced in their true character, just as they have been in the original. For, stripped of all its Jewish elements, we have here nothing but a fairy-tale with many incidents found in European folklore.

M. GASTER.

The Story of the Jerusalemite.

Once upon a time there lived a very rich merchant. He had only one son, and he (instructed) taught him the Bible, the Talmud, and the Mishna; he then married him, and thus saw his son's children in his own lifetime.

When his death drew near he gathered the elders of the town and said to them,—“ Know that I possess great riches. I owe to my wife one hundred *selain*, her dowry, as it is written on her marriage contract; all the rest shall belong to my son, if he will keep the commandment I command him before you. Should he, however, transgress it, then shall all my property be devoted to God, and my son shall have none of it.”

He then called his son and commanded him before the elders of the town never to go across the sea all his life; and he said to him,—“ My son! Know that I made all the fortune I possess through sea-voyages, but I underwent such great hardships and fearful dangers that I beg of thee not to try to make any profit by travelling over the sea. I leave unto thee such a great store of wealth that, even if thou doest no business at all, it would suffice for thee and thy children, as long as you live upon earth. I want thee to swear unto me by the Holy Law that thou wilt never transgress my wish and command. For I leave unto thee property enough to live where thou art. If, however, thou shouldst transgress my command, then I vow all my property to Heaven, and thou shalt have none of it.”

The son swore before the elders that he would never undertake a voyage on the sea.

After some days the old merchant died and went to his eternal rest, and his son remained in his house obeying his command.

A year or two elapsed, when there came a ship to the harbour of that town, laden with gold, silver, and pearls. When the men came out of the ship, they asked after the old merchant, if he was still alive? The people of the town answered them,—“He is dead already some time ago, but there is a son of his left, a rich and very wise man.” The sailors from the ship said,—“Pray bring him hither, or show us the way to him.” They showed them the house, and, after greeting him, the men said,—“Art thou the son of that great merchant who used to carry on a large trade beyond the seas?” He answered,—“I am his son!” They said,—“This being so, tell us then what he bequeathed thee before he died, his properties and trusts from beyond the seas?” He answered,—“My father did not make mention in his will of any property beyond the seas; he made me swear and promise never to venture upon such a journey.” And they said,—“If thy father did not make mention of anything he had entrusted us with, then he did not die fully conscious. For thou shalt know, that the ship in which we came is filled with gold and silver and pearls, and this all belongs to thy father; he had entrusted us with it. Now, he being dead, we will not withhold our trust from thee, although he did not bequeath it unto thee, for we are trustworthy men and with the fear of God, and we do not covet thy money. We have, thank God, enough. Now come and take what is thine, for the whole ship belongs to thee.”

When the merchant heard this he went with them, full of joy, and carried all the riches into his house. He also brought with him the sailors, and they feasted and made merry.

The next day the men from the ship said to the merchant,—“We are certain that thy father was not fully conscious when he died and when he made thee swear not to travel upon the sea. That will is certainly void and null, for thy father has immense properties beyond the seas, ten times more than what we have brought. How could he therefore make thee swear to lose all that property, unless he had lost his mind? Take courage, and get also absolution from the king and the counsellors, and come

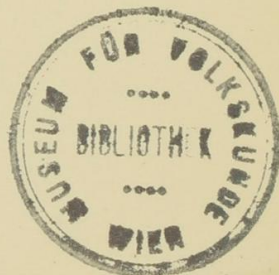
with us. Buy merchandise which is sought in our country, and thou wilt bring with thee at the same time all the riches thy father left there." The merchant answered,—“ I have sworn to my father never to venture upon a sea-voyage, and I will not transgress his command and break my oath, for he made me swear, being in perfect mind. As to his not mentioning all the property he had left there, he did it purposely, in order that I should not be tempted and put myself into danger. Therefore did he conceal it from me. This being so, I will keep my oath and his command.” But they answered,—“ Forsooth, did he love thee better than himself, and he exposed himself to the dangers of the sea ; he was certainly out of his mind, and therefore is his command a foolish one ; without knowing he spoke unto thee, and without knowing he made thee take an oath. It is therefore better for thee to ask absolution from thine oath, for that consideration.”

To cut matters short, they pressed him so long that they at last induced him to go with them and to take the money. So he went and bought merchandise, and sailed away with them together.

They had scarce entered into the great ocean, when the Lord resented the breaking of the oath and the transgression of the command of the merchant's father ; so He roused a storm, and the ship foundered, and all the men were drowned who had advised him to break his oath and allegiance to the command of his father. And God made a sign to the spirit of the seas, and he threw the man upon the land, naked and faint, at the extreme end of the world, on a deserted spot, where no man lived, in order that he should expiate his sin during his lifetime.

When he found himself on land naked and faint, he knew that the anger of the Lord was roused, and that the day of his punishment was come. So he raised his eyes to God, and submitted patiently to his punishment. He then walked along the shore to see if there was any inhabited place there, or something to eat and aught wherewith to cover himself.

After wandering for nearly a whole day, he came to a tree, of which the boughs were hanging over the shore of the sea. He thought to himself, have perhaps men planted that tree ? And



he was looking for its roots. But the darkness overtook him, as it was a huge tree of 40 parasangs (Persian miles) in height. As he did not find anything to eat, he looked out to find something to cover himself with, so he took the young boughs and leaves of the tree and covered himself, so that they might protect him against the cold of the night.

About midnight he heard the roaring of a lion, which was coming to devour him. When he beheld the lion, he was much frightened, for he thought the lion would devour him as a punishment for his transgression of his father's will. So he raised his voice and wept, and implored of God to save him and to restrain His anger, and not to punish him and to kill him by a horrible death. He then seized one of the branches, and lifted himself up on to the tree. When the lion came and found he had vanished, he went away, and the man thanked God with all his heart that He had saved him from the lion. So the thought struck him to ascend higher that tree, in the hope that he might find something to eat, as he was starving.

Climbing from branch to branch he came upon a mighty bird, called Kipupa, which, when it beheld him, opened its mouth to swallow him. The man tried to escape, and God gave him the spirit of wisdom, so he mounted upon the bird, which was very frightened thereat and kept quiet the whole night, out of fear. The man in his turn was also very frightened, and he kept hold with both hands on the bird's feather-crown, for he could not descend. The bird also did not move, as it did not know who was riding upon it.

At daybreak the bird saw that it was a man, and its fear grew stronger, so it spread its wings and, full of anger and dread, it flew the whole day, carrying the man over the seas to the other end of the world. When he beheld the waters of the sea beneath he was still more frightened, and he prayed to God to deliver him. Towards evening they drew near in their flight to a country, and the bird was almost skimming the ground, when the man suddenly heard the voices of children repeating the passage in the Bible, (*Exod. c. xxi, v. 2*), "If thou buy a Hebrew servant." Hearing it, the man said to himself,—“Here in this country there are certainly Jews living. I will throw myself down, and if

I am saved it is impossible that they should not feel pity for me, or at worst I can sell myself for a slave." Thus did he throw himself down from the bird, and he fell close by the door of the synagogue of the town, whilst the bird flew away. Fearfully hurt and bruised by the fall, he lay there for two hours without moving. He was also faint, as he had not eaten for two days. At last he rallied a little, got up, and went to the door of the synagogue, which he found closed. He began to cry,—“Open unto me the gates of pity.” Thereupon came out a boy, and asked,—“Who art thou?” “I am a Jew, and I fear the Lord.” The boy returned to his master, who ordered the door to be opened. When he saw the man, he asked him about it, and the man told him all that had happened to him. The master answered,—“All that thou hast gone through is nothing to that which thou wilt have to suffer, once thou hast come hither.”

The man said,—“Are you not Jews, and are Jews not kind-hearted and compassionate, and especially full of mercy towards such a wretched starveling as I am.” The master answered,—“Do not talk much, for thou shalt certainly die.” The man said,—“Why dost thou talk to me in such a way, why and for what?” “Because this is not a town of men but of spirits (*shedim*), and these are their children, whom I teach. In a short time they will come here together to pray, and, the instant they behold thee, they will kill thee.” When the man heard this he was stunned, and he fell down and kissed the feet of the master, and he wept and he implored him to advise him and to save him from death, as he was a learned man, always God-fearing, and he had sinned only in being induced by those men to transgress the command of his father and to break his oath.

When the master heard it, he felt pity for him, and he said to him,—“As thou art a learned man, and repentest of what thou hast done, and as thou hast kissed my feet, I will take care of thee and take all the trouble. Mayhap I can save thee.”

So he took him to his house, fed him, and gave him to drink, and he slept in the house over night, and nobody touched him.

The next morning the master said,—“Come with me into the synagogue and place thyself under my guard, and do not speak a word until I have spoken for thee.”

So he took the man to the synagogue, and the man placed himself under the protection of the master. When daybreak came on, there came also the spirits to the synagogue like fiery torches, and he heard thunder and roaring making the world quake. And he stood trembling with fear, and he nearly died, so frightened was he. After a while they began to recite the hymns with which the prayers commence, just as if they were living Jews, when suddenly one of the spirits exclaimed,—“ I smell the smell of an earth-born man.” And this was repeated until they noticed him standing near the master. They, however, respected the master, and dared not touch the man as he stood under his protection. When the master saw that they had noticed the man, he waited till they had finished that portion of the prayers, and he told the minister not to proceed with the prayers till he had expressed himself. The spirits said,—“ Our master ! Speak unto thy servants and we will hearken unto thy words.” He said,—“ I beseech you not to hurt this man, as he has come under the shadow of my roof.” They asked him,—“ How is it with this woman-born man here in our midst, and who has brought him hither ? ”

The master told them all that had happened to the man from beginning to end. Then they answered,—“ How can we suffer such a man to live, who has transgressed the command of his father and has broken his oath to the Lord ; he is worthy of death.” The master answered,—“ He has already expiated his sin through the great sufferings which he underwent ; he is, moreover, a man of learning and worthy of protection by reason of his learning (knowledge) ; for, if he had deserved death, God would not have preserved him from the sea and from the lion and from the Kipupa and other perils.

The spirits answered,—“ Nevertheless he still deserves death, the more because he is a man of learning, yet did not observe the command of his father. His errors are like wilful sins, and God has preserved him from all the dangers only in order to have him punished through us, by a cruel death.”

The master answered,—“ You cannot kill him unless according to the prescriptions of the Law, Therefore hearken ye unto my voice : let the minister proclaim under punishment of

excommunication that no spirit may injure him when his prayers are over; and we shall bring him afterwards to our King, Ashmedai, to have him judged either for life or for death."

They all answered,—“Thou hast spoken well.” And they ordered the minister to proclaim the excommunication against everybody who should dare to injure the man, before he had been judged by the King Ashmedai. After the prayer they brought him to King Ashmedai, and said to him,—“O King and Ruler! This man here came to us because he sinned against God, breaking his oath and transgressing the command of his father. Such and such things have befallen him, and we did not like to kill him before thou hast judged him, for he is a man of learning.”

When King Ashmedai heard this, he called his tribunal, and said to them,—“This man here has done such and such a thing, and thus and thus has he fared; search therefore diligently the Law, and see what his judgment may be, according to the law of Moses.”

The tribunal searched and studied his case, and concluded by sentencing him to death, for it says in the Bible (*Deut. c. xxvii, v. 16*),—“Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother,” and he has set light by the command of his father, and as he is cursed for that he deserves death, as is seen in the case of Saul who tried to kill his son Jonathan who trespassed a command, for which a curse was set as a punishment. He has further broken his oath, and it says in the Bible,—“And He will by no means clear the guilty,” (*Num. c. xiv, v. 18*). So they came before the king Ashmedai, and told him the conclusion at which they had arrived, condemning him to death. Ashmedai said,—“Wait before you pronounce your judgment and let a night pass, as it is said “and the community shall judge and the community shall save,” and the sages say,—“be careful in your judgment.” So also did their teacher Moses delay with the judgment of the stickgatherer, and it was not perfectly clear.”

They answered,—“We will do even as thou tellest us, for thou art our king and to thee are our eyes directed.” The king then said,—“Let the man stop with me this night so that nobody shall injure him until the judgment is decided.” And so he

did. There in his house Ashmedai asked him if indeed he had studied, and at his bidding they brought to him the Bible, Mishna, and Talmud, and he examined him and found the man well acquainted with them all. When Ashmedai saw it, he said to the man,—“ Now I see that thou art a scholar, and thou hast found grace in mine eyes : swear to me this hour that thou wilt teach my son all that thou knowest, and I will save thee from the spirits, for I know that they have sentenced thee to death.” The man swore to that effect, and the king said to him,—“ Come, and I will teach thee the way to defend thyself to-morrow, for they have found thee guilty of death. Say thou, that thou art thyself a great lawyer, and that thou wishest to look into their decision and into their arguments. They will then come to me, and I will save thee out of their hands.”

The next day the members of the tribunal came and said to King Ashmedai,—“ We could not find anything in his favour.” The merchant answered,—“ I require a greater tribunal to inquire into my case.” And they answered,—“ Thou art right.” And they took advice from each other as to what to do, and they said,—“ There is nothing better for us than to bring him before King Ashmedai himself ; for he studies in Heaven from the higher tribunal and also on earth from the tribunals below, so he knows both the heavenly and earthly laws.”

So they went and asked Ashmedai what his decision would be. He answered,—“ This man does not deserve death, for he has not done anything wilfully, but only because those men enticed him and induced him, and God delivers those who do anything by compulsion. A proof of it is seen in the prescription of the Bible which says,—“ but unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing ” (*Deut. c. xxii, v. 26*). You can also see that this is right, by the fact that God drowned all those men in the sea, and saved this man alone.” When the tribunal heard this judgment they set the man free.

Ashmedai took him after that into his house, and placed his son before him to be taught by him the Torah and all that he knew ; and he showed him much honour and reverence.

Three years passed by, and the son of Ashmedai knew all that his master knew. About that time one of the towns rebelled

and Ashmedai gathered his army to march against it. Before he left he appointed the man a steward of his household. He gave him all the keys of his treasure, and ordered the men to obey him and to fulfil his commands. Ashmedai showed him all his treasures; among them also a room to which there was no key, and Ashmedai said to him,—“Thou canst enter every room but this.” After that Ashmedai left for that town.

One day the man passed before the room wherein Ashmedai had forbidden him to enter, and he thought to himself,—“What must there be in that room, since the king has allowed me to enter into all his treasure-houses but this!” He went up to the door, and he looked through it and saw the daughter of Ashmedai sitting on a golden throne, and other girls were dancing and playing round her. She was very beautiful.

So he said to himself,—“I will go in.” And he went in and stood before her. She said to him,—“O thou foolish man! Why hast thou transgressed the command of my father Ashmedai? And further what dost thou seek among women? Thou wilt surely die to-day, for my father has already felt that thou didst enter hither and he comes with his sword drawn to kill thee.” When the man heard this he fell down before her, kissed her feet, and implored her to save him from Ashmedai, so that he should not kill him, as he did not come in with any impure thought, nor did he intend to do any evil thing with the girls.

Ashmedai's daughter, seeing him so humbled, said to him,—“The humiliation which thou hast undergone as a learned man suffices. Go now out of the room, and when my father comes and asks thee,—“Why didst thou transgress my command and did'st enter my daughter's room?” and when he prepares himself to kill thee, answer him as follows,—“My Lord! I went in because I love thy daughter, and I request thee to give her to me for a wife!” I know that he will be pleased with thy words, and will give me unto thee. For from the first day thou didst come hither he intended to give me (afterwards) to thee, as thou art a learned man. But it is not right that the woman should woo the man, and it is a shame for such a king as he is to ask thee to take his daughter.”

The man was very glad at what he heard, and he was just

thinking of going out of the room when there appeared Ashmedai with his drawn sword, rebuking him and saying,—“ Why didst thou transgress my command ? Now is the day arrived in which thou shalt be punished for all thy sins.” But he answered,—“ I came hither only because I love thy daughter, and I request thee to give her to me for a wife, for my eye is well pleased with her.” Ashmedai, hearing his words, rejoiced very much, and said to him,—“ I will give her with pleasure unto thee for a wife, but wait until I return from the war ; up to that time thou art free to enter here and to pass thy time with my daughter.”

After that Ashmedai returned immediately to the battle-field, conquered the country, and devastated it. Then he said to the armies,—“ Come ye all to the wedding of my daughter, whom I give to a sage and learned man.” They gathered all the birds and beasts of the wilderness, until they no longer knew their number, and invited them all to the festival. King Ashmedai gave him further numberless treasures, and they wrote the marriage contract, and the man signed it, as did all the counsellors of the king, and they made a great and mighty feast.

In the evening Ashmedai gave away his daughter, and they entered a separate room, as is the custom on earth. She said to him,—“ Do not think that thou art a man and I a spirit, for I am a woman as every other earthly creature. Therefore do not come near me, if thou lovest me not.” But he answered,—“ I love thee as the apple of mine eye, and I will never forsake thee.” She answered,—“ Swear to me to that effect.” He swore and wrote down the oath, which he signed. She kept this document.

After a time she gave birth to a male child, and according to the Law they circumcised it at eight days and called the child Solomon, after the name of King Solomon.

Two years rolled on. One day the man sat playing with the child, his wife, the daughter of King Ashmedai, sitting next to him ; when he suddenly sighed deeply. His wife asked him,—“ Why didst thou sigh ? ” He answered,—“ For my son and my wife whom I have left in my country.” She answered,—“ Dost thou feel any want ? Am I not beautiful in thine eyes ? Dost thou desire riches or honour ? Tell me, and I will fulfil thy

wish." He said,—“ I do not want anything ; but when I behold my son Solomon I am reminded of my other children.” And she answered,—“ Did I not tell thee not to marry me, if my love was not deeply rooted in thy heart ? And now thou sighest for thy wife and rememberest her. Do it no more.” He said,—“ I will take heed thereof.”

After a time the man began again to sigh. So she said to him,—“ Wilt thou not cease to sigh for thy former wife and children ? If thou wilt not, I will bring thee to them, but fix a time when thou wishest to go and when thou wilt return.” He answered,—“ Fix thou the time.” She said,—“ If I grant thee one year to go and to come ?” He answered,—“ Be it so as thou sayest.” And he took an oath to keep to his promise, and he wrote it down, signed it, and gave it to her. She kept all the documents and oaths to have them as witnesses.

So what did she do ? She invited all her servants to come to a banquet. After they had eaten and drunk, she said,—“ My husband here has a desire to see again his former wife and children, living in such and such a place ; who among you has the strength to carry him there ? ” One of them answered,—“ I can bring him thither in two years.” Another said in ten years. A third said,—“ in one year.” Now there was a spirit blind in one eye and humpbacked sitting at the end of the table ; he said,—“ I can bring him thither in only one day.” She said,—“ It is thou of whom I had need. But beware lest thou hurt or injure him ; carry him softly, for he is thy master and a learned man, and he cannot bear any evil thing.” The spirit answered,—“ I will do as thou commandest me.”

She said, however, secretly to her husband,—“ Beware of that spirit and do not annoy him, for he is very passionate, and through his wrath he lost one eye.” The man answered,—“ I will be careful not to annoy him.” So she said,—“ Go in peace, but remember thine oath.”

What did the blind and humpbacked spirit do ? He took him upon his shoulders, and brought him safely to his place, and let him down at the entrance, at the outer end of the bridge.

When daybreak came on, the spirit took the shape of a man, and both entered the town. There they met a man, who knew

this man, and he said to him,—“ Art thou not the man who left for a voyage over the seas and whose ship foundered ? ” He answered,—“ I am the man.” So the man said,—“ I will run and tell the tidings to thy wife, who has been a widow for so many years, and also to thy relatives.” So he ran and told them, and they all turned out to greet him ; and they asked him concerning all that had happened unto him. He told them what he had gone through from beginning to end, up to that very day, and how God had saved him. He then entered his house, and with him the blind and humpbacked spirit in human shape, and he hugged and kissed his wife and his children in the presence of the spirit, and then he gave a feast to his relatives, friends, and acquaintances. After dinner the man turned to the spirit who had brought him home by command of Ashmedai’s daughter, and said to him,—“ Why art thou blind in one eye ? ” He answered,—“ There is a clear verse saying, (*Prov. c. xxi, v. 23*),—“ Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles,” and, further, why dost thou blame me in the presence of others, when thy sages have said,—“ He who blames his neighbour in public, forfeits his future life ” ? ”

But the man was bent upon irritating him, and so he said,—“ And why art thou humpbacked ? ” The spirit answered (*Prov. c. xxvi, v. 11*),—“ “ As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool repeateth his folly.” Nevertheless will I tell thee the truth. As to the blindness of one of my eyes, know that I was once quarrelling with my friends, so one of them struck me with a knife and blinded me ; as to my humpback, go and inquire of my Maker.”

The man answered,—“ I regret my question. Forgive me.” But the spirit said,—“ I never forgive those who put me to shame.” The man said to his people,—“ Give him to drink.” The spirit again said,—“ I will never eat or drink what belongeth to thee ; but order the grace after meals to be said, so that I may be able to return to my country.”

After they had said grace, the spirit said to him,—“ What dost thou charge me to tell to thy wife, my mistress ? ” The man answered,—“ Go and tell her, that I shall not return unto her any more, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband.”

The spirit said,—“ Do not speak in such a manner, and do not transgress thy oath.” But the man said,—“ I do not care for any oath I have sworn unto her.” And he embraced his wife and kissed her, and said,—“ This here is my real wife, for she is a woman, whilst thy mistress is only a spirit ; therefore tell her that I shall never return to her.”

When the spirit heard this, he instantly departed and returned to his mistress full of wrath. His mistress asked him,—“ With what message did my husband, thy master, charge thee for me ? ” He said,—“ Thou askest me of a man who does not love thee but despises thee, and who says that he will never return to thee, as thou art not his wife and he is not thy husband.” And he told her all that had happened to him with the man. But she said,—“ I do not believe thee, nor thy words ! He has spoken so and done all only in order to irritate thee and to make thee wrath, for I know him to be a learned man, and he will never break his oath. I will therefore wait until the appointed time come.”

When the appointed time of a year, which she had accorded to him, was over, she called the same servant and said to him,—“ Go and fetch my husband.” And he said : “ Did I not tell thee in his name that he would never return to thee ? ” She answered,—“ At that time when he spoke those words to thee, the time we had fixed was not yet over. Now, however, is the time come. Go and tell him, that he should not break his oath.”

So he went and came to the man, and said to him,—“ My mistress greets thee peacefully, and reminds thee of thine oath to return to her.” He answered, —“ Go and tell her that I do not care for her greetings, nor will I ever return to her.” After hearing this answer the spirit returned home, and told his mistress the response of her husband.

So she went to her father Ashmedai, and told him all the tale and asked for his advice what was to be done in the matter. He said,—“ May be that he quarrelled with thy blind servant, and he does not wish to return with him. It is further not becoming to him to have sent to him such a blind and humpbacked messenger ; send therefore more honourable messengers to warn him and to remind him of his oath.”

She did accordingly, but the man answered,—“ I will never

return to her any more." The messengers said,—“ Art thou not a learned man, and dost thou not know that thou art transgressing the command which says (*Lev. c. xix, v. 12*), “ And ye shall not swear by my name falsely.” And the other which says (*Exod. c. xxi, v. 10*) “ her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish ” ?” But he gave them the same answer as he had previously given. The messengers returned and reported to her the answer they had received.

Then she sent still more honourable messengers, for, she thought, perhaps he was not pleased with the first ones. They also came to him and reminded him of his oaths, but he answered,—“ Do not make many words, for I shall never return to her. Go and tell your mistress that I do not love her, but that I despise her, and she is not to send any more messengers.”

When she heard the report she went to her father, King Ashmedai, told him all the tale, and again asked his advice,—asked what to do now. Her father said,—“ I will gather my armies and go to him ; if he returns with me, well and good ; if not, then I shall kill him and all his townspeople.” But she said,—“ God forbid that my Lord should go to him ; but let me go with some of the servants whom thou shalt choose, perchance he will have regard to me and come back with me.”

So he sent an army with her, and she took with her also her son Solomon. It was night time when they arrived at that town, and her soldiers wished to enter the town and to kill all the inhabitants thereof together with that man. But she stopped them, saying to them,—“ It is now night and they are all asleep, and you know that, before going to bed, the people commend their souls to the protection of God, and as long as they are in the hands of God we cannot do them any harm. We will wait until the morning, and so be free from sin ; in the morning we will enter the town, and if we find there some doing at our bidding, all will be well ; if not, we will know what to do with them.” The soldiers answered,—“ Our mistress, do as thou pleasest best.”

Whilst they were all standing there, she sent for her son Solomon, and said to him,—“ Go unto thy father and tell him that I am here, and remind him of his oath, that he may return

with me." And the boy went and found his father sleeping, and he awakened him from his slumber. The man began to tremble, and he asked,—“Who art thou to waken me so?” The boy answered,—“I am thy son Solomon, the son of King Ashmedai's daughter.”

When the man heard this he got up frightened, and he embraced the child and kissed it and said,—“Why didst thou come hither?” The boy answered,—“My mother, thy wife, came hither after thee, to bring thee back with her, and she has sent me to tell thee that she is here.” He answered,—“I will not go back any more, and she will never more be my wife, nor I her husband, as I am a man and she is a spirit, and the two things can never come together or be in true union with one another.” The son said,—“Thou dost not speak rightly,—I beg pardon of thine honour,—but, all the time thou hast been with us, no spirit has done any harm to thee, nor have they treated thee without respect. On the contrary they paid thee all the greatest honour, only for my mother's sake; she herself respected thee greatly, and her father Ashmedai made thee commander over all the spirits, and ordered them to obey thee. This being so, why dost thou reject her and dost not remember all the mercy they have shown unto thee? For my grandfather Ashmedai saved thee from the hands of the spirits when they had condemned thee to death; and my mother also in her turn has saved thee from her father, when he wished to kill thee, as thou didst transgress his command. And now, why dost thou break thine oath never to leave her, and also the second oath, to return after one year's time? Father! listen to me, and it will be well for thee; return with my mother and do not fear anything, for no harm will be done unto thee.”

The father answered,—“My son Solomon, do not speak any more about it, and do not make any more words, for I cannot think of ever returning to her, for all the oaths I have taken were under fear that I should otherwise be killed; they were given under constraint, and are therefore void.”

His son Solomon said,—“I will not further speak concerning it, since thou hast forbidden me to do so, but know that thou hast imperilled thy life thereby.” And he returned and told his

mother all that he had spoken. Her anger was kindled when she heard the words of her son, and she said,—“ Still, I will not kill him yet, until I have spoken to him before the congregation, when I shall hear his arguments and see how the people will behave and judge the matter.” So she waited until the morning, when she knew that the people had congregated in the synagogue. She went there accompanied by her princes and great men. She told them to wait outside the synagogue, whilst she would go in and see what he was going to answer and do.

So she entered. When they had finished the first portion of the prayers, she said to the cantor,—“ Stop, until I have said what I have to say ! ” And then, turning to the worshippers, she said,—“ Listen to me, O people, and pronounce your judgment in the transaction I have with this man here, Dihon bar Salmen (for this was his name). This man fell into our hands through his sins, and my father showed him great favour and saved him from the spirits who were bent upon killing him. I have also saved him from the hands of my father, who intended to kill him for his disobedience to his command, and my father gave me to him for a wife, and he made him prince and commander over his armies, and the man married me, according to the Law of Moses and Israel, and he gave me a marriage contract for a great sum, and he swore unto me never to forsake me ; he further promised on oath to return after a year's time if I would allow him to go and see his former wife. And here are all the documents signed by him. Now he wishes to pay back evil for good, and does not care to return with me. I request you now to ask him why he is behaving in this wise and judge according to the documents he has himself given.”

The judges of the congregation asked him thereupon,—“ Why dost thou not return to her, after she has done thee so much good ? And further how canst thou break the oaths thou thyself hast signed ? ”

He answered,—“ I have sworn and acted under constraint, for I feared that if I would not fulfil their wishes they would kill me. I have, moreover, obtained absolution from my oaths. I also do not wish to return with her, for it is unnatural that a

man should marry a genius and beget genii ; I prefer to remain with my wife, who is like unto me, and beget children ; as it is said in the Bible,—“ I will make her an help meet for him.” Whilst this spirit is no “ meet ” partner, and therefore do I not wish to return with her. Let her go and marry a spirit, and so there will be like with like, whilst I will remain with my wife, who is the wife of my youth.”

And the daughter of Ashmedai said to the judges,—“ You will certainly confess that, if a man wishes to divorce his wife, he must give her a bill of divorcement and return to her all her dowry.” And they answered,—“ Verily it is so, and so is the law with us.”

“ This being the case, let him write the bill of divorcement and return my dowry.” And she displayed her marriage contract, wherein was written an incalculable sum of money. And the judges said,—“ Either thou returnest the money or thou goest with her.” But he said,—“ All my property is in the hands of the genii, and I renounce to-day all that I possess, and I give her the bill of divorcement, for I will never return with her.”

The judges, however, said,—“ According to law thou must either go with her, or free her entirely and return her dowry. If thou dost not fulfil the law she can do with thee what she pleases.”

When she heard that judgment, she said,—“ I see that you judge according to law and constrain him to go with me, but now I renounce the right of compelling him to return by force as he deceived me. I request you now to order him to kiss me, and I will then return to my home.”

They said to him,—“ Fulfil her will and kiss her, and she will free thee from all thy obligations.”

So, when he went and kissed her, she killed him with the kiss, and said,—“ This is the reward of thy transgressing the command of God, and the will of thy father, and of thy deceiving me, and thine intention to forsake me and doom me to eternal widowhood. Now will thy wife be a widow, lonely and forsaken, as the proverb says,—“ If anyone tries to take away my husband so may he die, and he will be no good, and no pleasure neither for me nor for anybody else”.”

After that she said to the congregation,—“ If you do not wish me to kill you all, take my son Solomon and marry him to the daughter of the greatest man among you, and make him your head and chief, for he shall live among you. As I have killed his father, I do not wish him to remain with me, for he will remind me of him and cause me pangs of heart. I will further give him riches enough, so that nothing should be wanting. You shall also give him half of his father's property, more than the share of his brothers.”

The congregation did as she told them, and proclaimed him as their chief and master, and she returned to her home and to her father.

The moral of this is :—that no man should break an oath, nor transgress the will of his father. Amen.

TIBETAN TALES, I.

Foreword.

It is a great pleasure for me to accede to my friend Mr. David Macdonald's request that I should contribute a short Foreword to his collection of Tibetan Tales. I have known Mr. Macdonald intimately ever since, over forty years ago, he was Dux boy in the Government High School in Darjeeling, and was recommended to me by the Headmaster, through his training in literary Tibetan and knowledge of the Tibetan vernacular, as a promising assistant in my researches into the great body of the Tibetan sacred canonical books and commentaries, and into Tibetan customs, floating traditions, and superstitions. Latterly, he was my official assistant, in the Lhasa Mission of 1904 in the task of collecting, classifying, and cataloguing for the British National Libraries the greatest collection of Tibetan books, sacred and secular, that ever reached Europe before or since that expedition. As a result of this unusual acquaintance with the Tibetan religion, language, and customs, and his business ability, he was appointed British Trade Agent in Tibet,—a post which he has creditably held for nearly twenty years. In this latter capacity, whilst his headquarters were at Gyantse,

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