

The Romanitshels' Didakais' and folk-lore gazette, reflecting also the opinions of tinkers, travellers, gawjos, show-folki and posh-rats.

Contributors

Royal College of Surgeons of England

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may be quoted as the
"GYPSY AND FOLK-LORE GAZETTE."

No. 12.



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THE
**ROMANITSHEL'S',
DIDAKAIS'
AND FOLK-LORE GAZETTE.**

Reflecting also the opinions of TINKERS,
TRAVELLERS, GAWJOS, SHOW-FOLKI AND POSH-RATS.

SONGS OF THE OPEN ROAD.

Didakai Ditties and Gypsy Dances.

TUNES AND WORDS

COLLECTED BY—

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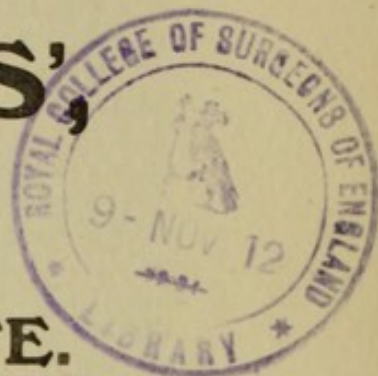
Vol. 1.

THE

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No. 2.

ROMANITSHEL'S, DIDAKAIS' AND FOLK-LORE GAZETTE.



Reflecting also the opinions of TINKERS,
TRAVELLERS, GAWJOS, SHOW-FOLKI AND POSH-RATS.

THE GYPSY GIRL AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

The sleeping flowers breathed perfumes of delight,
The summer air seemed tranced with ecstasy—
Tranced by a nightingale's wild melody
That thrilled its passion through the fragrant night:
Rhona, just taught by me to read and write, *bathos*
Stole from the tents to carve upon a tree
Strange signs—strange cryptic words. What could they be?
I followed—watched her in the moonbeams bright.
Her Romany knife moved glittering all night long.
"What are you striving there, minaw, to spell?"
"I'm takin' down that chirikel's sweet throng
O' sounds a-gurglin' over Gypsy Dell." *bathos*
She hoped to capture that divinest song
Not Keats, not Swinburne's self could syllable!

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

A DESCRIPTION OF SCOTTISH TINKERS FIFTY YEARS AGO.

The following account is taken from James T. Calder's "History of Caithness," Glasgow, 1861, pp. 39-40;—

"Within the last few years the county has been very much infested by tinkers, and their number seems to be greatly on the increase. There are, between young and old, it is said, nearly a hundred and forty of them in Caithness, composed of different bands or tribes, named the Macfees, the Newlands, the Johnstones, and the Williamsons. They have no particular place of abode, but roam about through the various parishes, following the profession of tinsmiths, but subsisting in a great measure by begging and stealing. They lie out all the year round, even in the roughest weather. A frequent haunt of theirs in the winter season is the links of Dunnet, which abounds with sand hillocks covered with long bent. Another place to which they betake themselves for shelter from the storm is a cave near the village of Brough, in the same parish. What money they acquire by the disposal of their tinware they commonly spend in drink; and their orgies never terminate without a quarrel, and a regular fight by both sexes. In this respect, when inflamed by liquor, they very much resemble the lower orders of the Irish. From their personal appearance, they would seem to be of a mixed race. Some of them have all the characteristics of the genuine gipsy—viz., very brown complexions, dark hair and eyes; while others have fair complexions, with red hair and blue eyes, indicative of a Saxon or Gothic origin. They have a patois of their own, which they use when they find it convenient to do so; but they all speak the English with a whining tone, which is particularly marked when they beg; and so importunate are they as beggars, that they will not leave any house they enter until they get either food or money. They are a regular pest and scourge to the community; and what with begging, thieving, and occasional maintenance in prison, they cost the county a very considerable sum annually."

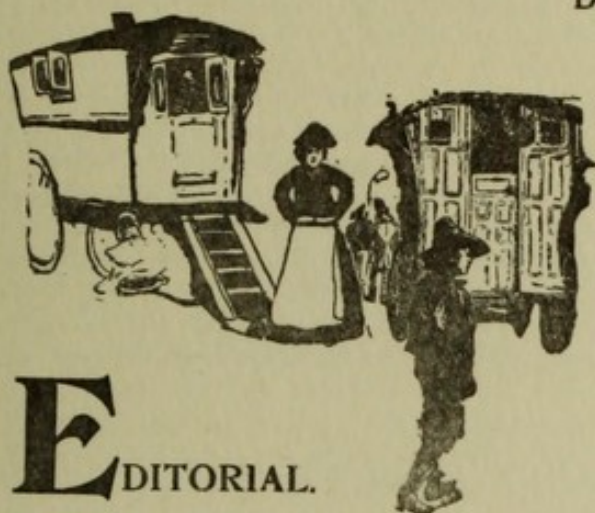
It is interesting to compare this account with the notices of North of Scotland Gypsies which are reproduced in the Old Series of the "Gypsy Lore Journal," Vol. III., pp. 59-62 and p. 128. One of these is by Hugh Miller, who describes his encounter with a band of Cromarty tinkers, ninety years ago. They were then inhabiting a cave near Cromarty. "They were a savage party, with a good deal of the true gipsy blood in them, but not without mixture of a broken-down class of apparently British descent; and one of their women was purely Irish. . . . There were two things that used to strike me as peculiar among these gipsies—a Hindu type of head, small of size, but with a considerable fulness of forehead, especially along the medial line, in the region, as the phrenologist would perhaps say, of *individuality* and *comparison*; and a singular posture assumed by the elderly females of the tribe in squatting before their fires, in which the elbow rested on the knees brought close together, the chin on the palms, and the entire figure (somewhat resembling in attitude a Mexican mummy) assumed an outlandish appearance, that reminded me of some of the more grotesque sculptures of Egypt and Hindustan. The peculiar type of head was derived, I doubt not, from an ancestry originally different from that of the settled races of the country; nor is it impossible that the peculiar position—unlike any I have ever seen Scottish females assume—was also of foreign origin." Hugh Miller again remarked this Oriental type on the occasion of another visit to the same cave, whither he had gone in order to witness a tinker wedding. "On a couch of dried fern sat evidently the central figure of the group, a young, sparkling-eyed brunette, more than ordinarily marked by the Hindu peculiarities of head and feature, and attended by a savage-looking fellow of about twenty, dark as a mulatto, and with a

profusion of long, flexible hair, black as jet, hanging down to his eyes, and clustering about his cheeks and neck. These were, I ascertained, the bride and bridegroom."

The other account referred to ("Gypsy Lore Journal," Old Series, Vol. III., p. 128) gives practically no indication of an Oriental type. "In the North of Scotland the Gypsies claim kindred with the clans, and are in many cases real descendants of Highland freebooters. We have little need in the North to look to India as the origin of these tribes. They speak very pure Gaelic, and have the physiognomy of the natives. . . . They call themselves Macneills, Macalisters, Williamsons, and Stewarts. . . . There are two families of Stewart, one of which looks down upon the other as not being so 'aristocratic,' and as being only pretenders to the name. Besides these, there are often tribes from England that pay a flying visit, and others whose original country it would be difficult to determine." This account was written in 1891.

Of these three accounts that by Hugh Miller, the earliest in date, points most strongly to a survival of real Gypsy blood among the tinkers of the North of Scotland.

DAVID MACRITCHIE.



EDITORIAL.

THE "DIRTY" GYPSY. Much as we like to think to the contrary, the recent eviction of Gypsies from the neighbourhood of Llanelly makes it all too clear that the Gypsy is still regarded as being the natural enemy of man, that is, normal man. And so while the Renaissance in Folk-Lore goes on apace, not to mention actual Gypsy-lore, the position of the Romani chel remains unaltered; he is regarded as a marauding robber, wholly without morals of any kind, as one who lives the life of a savage, in fine, something not far short of a cannibal. At best he is a filthy leper who never washes, and suffers from half the diseases to which flesh is heir. Therefore he is hunted from pillar to post, and made to be even more of a wanderer than is compatible with his own primeval passion for journeying.

The first thing to be borne in mind in dealing with the Gypsy is that he is a nomad, that his primary instinct is to travel, and that he is on that account an entirely different being to ourselves, who should be judged from a different standard. In every particular other than this imperative necessity for freedom and the life of the open road, he is the same. That the Gypsy is immoral is a grave perversion of the truth, and it can be avowed with the utmost certainty by all who know these nomads intimately *that no more moral class exists*. So far as disease is concerned the imputation brought against the Gypsy, is another laughable fallacy; disease is a *rara avis* immediately attributable to his mode of life.

Then he is overburdened with shyness, which gives a reputation for cunning and everything else that is base. He sometimes steals chickens, and we hold no brief for the actual violation of the laws of the land. If the Gypsy commits crime, he must, in common, with the rest of mankind, suffer the penalty.

And so when the facts have been marshalled and reviewed thoughtfully and dispassionately, the real case against the Gypsy seems to be his refusal to incarcerate himself in bricks and mortar; and for this we hound him, making his life intolerable, yet gaining absolutely no benefit ourselves.

The Llanelly incident when the *in*-human resource to the hose-pipe was adopted, can be described as nothing short of barbarous. Yet he has absolutely no redress, whatever befalls him, and although the instance referred to was responsible for at least one member of the encampment, an old woman, being robbed of her home, nothing but the joint beneficence of her own people could replace it.

If only legislation could be made with the protection of the Gypsy as its object a great thing would certainly be accomplished. Why do not Rural Councils take up the matter sensibly, and considering the position of the Gypsy in his relation to the rest of mankind, make Bye-laws which would do justice to the nomad and even treat him with charity.

As things stand at present and with Llanelly fresh in our minds, all that can be done is for every lover of the Gypsies to do everything in his power to dispel the unjust misunderstanding of the travellers in our midst, and we earnestly call for this assistance from all our confrères in Gypsiania. If the suggestion were taken up with seriousness and vigour, systematic work could be done in this direction, work which would have far reaching effects beyond what the poor Honorary Secretary can do in the way of letter writing. Enthusiasts throughout the Country could specially pledge themselves to do their utmost for the benefit of the real Romani and hold meetings whose object would be the enlightenment of people in regard to the Romanichel.

THE GRAAL LEGEND AND ITS EXPONENTS.

By D. F. DE L' HOSTE RANKING.

(continued).

There are two different versions as to the hero who achieves the quest; in one it is Sir Percival who is the Graal King; but in the other version, by far the finer and more spiritual of the two it is Sir Galahad. Tennyson in his longer poem of the Holy Graal has followed the Percival version; though in his earlier short poem of Sir Galahad he had evidently recognised the latter as the true Graal Knight. All this legend is interwoven with the old British legends of King Arthur and his Knights. We have therefore a three-fold source, the various threads of which have been twined together to make the story as we now have it. The Graal story as it appears in the twelfth century romances is clearly only a Christian and spiritualised version of a much earlier and pre-Christian legend of a Vase or Caldron connected with the Celtic Mysteries. In the Welsh Mabinogion we have the Caldron of inspiration and science from which Talieson drew his prophetic powers; while in the tale of

"Kilhwch and Olwen" we find mentioned as one of the thirteen wonders of Briton the basket of Gwyddnew Garanhir of which it is said: "If the whole world should come together, thrice nine men at a time, the meat that each of them desired would be found within it." Talieson's poem "Bendigeid Vran" also mentions the bowl of Peredur which could restore the dead to life "but those who were restored to life by it were not to speak least they should divulge the mysteries of the vessel." Mr. Waite makes a curious mistake with regard to this word Bendigeid evidently thinking it to be a proper name and using it as such whereas it is really an adjective meaning Saint blessed. The Peredur spoken of by Talieson is a character in another of the Mabinogion and is probably the earliest hint that we have of a quest. He was the son of Evrawc and, when seeking knighthood at the hands of King Arthur, was set to fulfil various adventures; in the course of one of these at the Castle of one of his uncles he sees a mighty spear from which poured three streams of blood, this was borne by two youths who were followed by two maidens carrying a large salver whereon was a man's head swimming in blood. Here we have some of the materials which we find in the Graal legend but with no Christian sense attached to them. Monsieur Eugene Hucher in his introduction to the Legend of the San-Graal has shown that this mystic vase may be traced back beyond the sixth century by means of representations on coins and medals, to the Gauls. It is first found among Armorican tribes on coins of the Unelles and Baiocasses, that is to say in the parts of Britany nearest to Gaul. This precious vase served from the earliest time among the Gauls and above all in Britany for the performance of certain sacred rites; and therefore easily became transformed into the Chalice of the later Christian Legend. Here in this vase of pre-Christian origin we have a symbol, common to the mysteries of every religion. This symbol was in all the old mysteries invariably accompanied by something in the nature of a rod; this second talisman we find appear in the tale of Peredur in the form of the spear dropping blood, and both these we shall later find transferred into the Graal legend and there accompanied by two lesser talismen, a sword, said in some versions to have been that with which John the Baptist was beheaded, and a dish or Paten, which in some versions seems to take the form of a miraculous stone or altar. Many years ago I called attention to the fact that we have here the four emblems which are found in the cards called the Tarot, and I notice that Mr. Waite in his recent book has been struck with the same idea. It is not strange that this portion of the legend, being of Celtic origin, should have become intertwined with the legends bearing on Arthur and his knight, legends which embodied the memories and hopes of the Celtic races in their struggle against foreign oppressors. But the form of the Celtic legends varied very greatly as they were brought into contact with the chivalric idea through French influence. Arthur becomes a hero of romance; he is the great king and the knight-errant, traversing the world to free it from giants and monsters; holding high court at Caerleon-upon-Usk at the great festivals of the Church, notably at Whitsuntide; surrounded by vassal kings and by all the bravest and best knights of Europe, who flocked to his court in search of adventures, and to qualify for admission to the fellowship of the Round Table. In 1155 Wace, a clerk, of Caen, composed a long history in octo-syllabic verse, called the Brut, in which he recounted the deeds of the kings of Britain almost from the fall of Troy to A.D. 680. After Wace the French troubadours of the end of the twelfth century made Arthur and the Round Table the special subject of their tale. Chretien de Troyes wrote the "Chevalier à la Charette," an episode in the life of Sir Lancelot; "Eric and Enid," "Tristan," and "The Chevalier au Lion." But all these French versions differ widely from their Welsh or Breton originals. The principles of chivalry and the refinements of courtly love have been introduced into the old tale; the strong, bold outline is filled with ornament,

and full play is given to the imagination. But there is still one element wanting in order to complete the story as we have it; the Christian and religious feature is still absent. In order to introduce this it was necessary to incorporate the Graal legend with the Arthurian legend.



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Catalogues of the Gypsy-Lore, Folk-Lore, and Open Road Sections are in the press and will be issued to members in the course of a few weeks.

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THE GYPSIES: AN OUTLINE SKETCH.

By R. A. SCOTT MACFIE.

PART I.

ORIGIN—HISTORY—PERSECUTIONS.

No phenomenon in the history of European civilisation is more remarkable than the presence in our midst of two Oriental races—generally hated, always despised and often persecuted—who, though to some extent they conform to the manners of surrounding nations, yet never incorporate with them, but live like parasites within an organism of which they form no part. The separate preservation of the Jews—supported though they are in their isolation by the possession of an ancient religion, a glorious history, and a magnificent literature in their own tongue; ambitious of culture, wealth and power; and consciously united into a corporate whole—is described as “miraculous.” What then shall we say of the preservation of the illiterate and irreligious Gypsy, who, arriving in Europe, *whence*—we can only conjecture, *when*—we do not know, and *why*—we cannot even guess, has maintained his independence for centuries, never forsaking the habits and customs of his first-known forefathers, and ever distinguished by an untamable love of liberty, and by that pride which leads him to apply the contemptuous name *gawjo*, as Jews do “Gentile” and as Greeks did “Barbarian,” to all who have not the honour to belong to his own race.

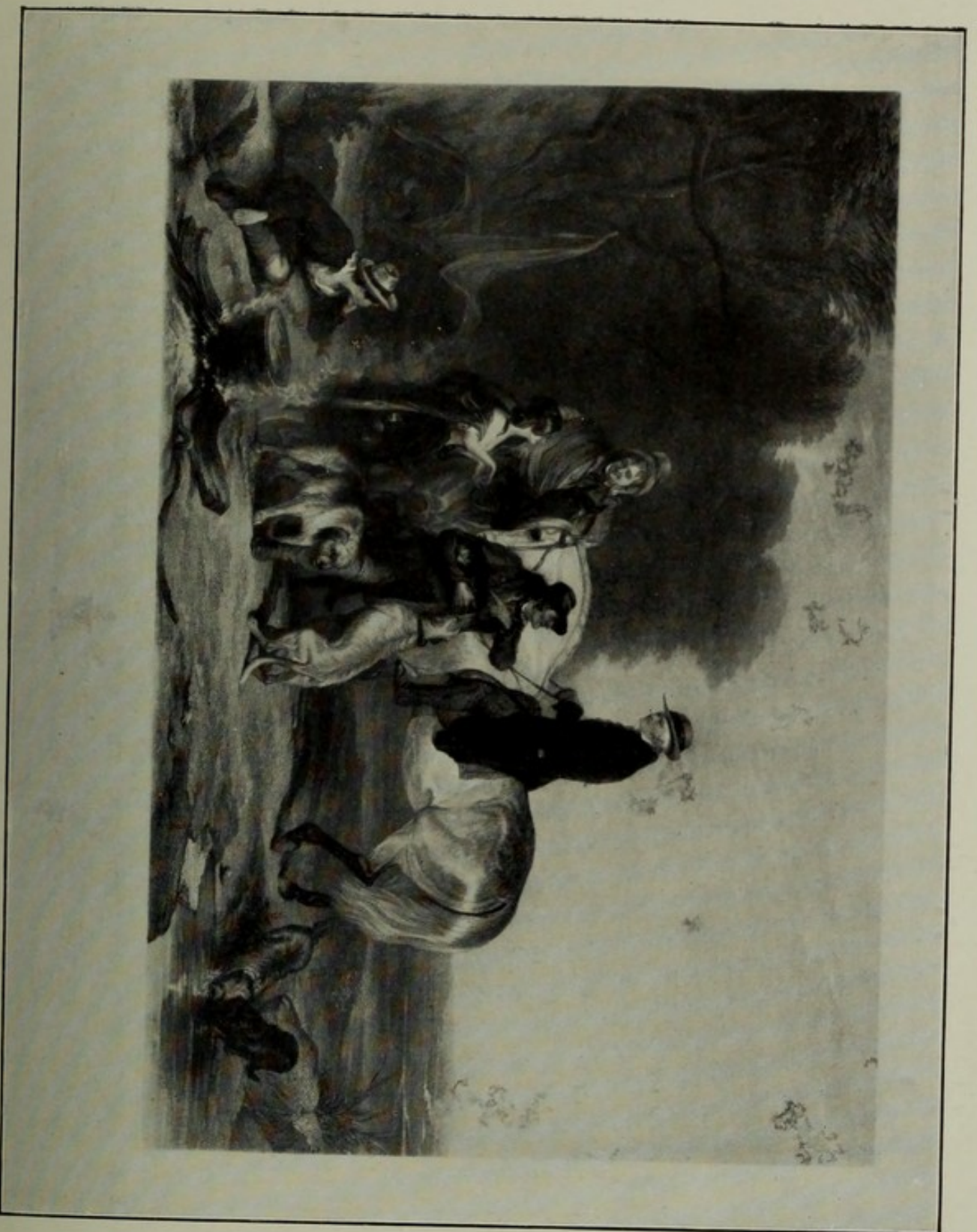
From the beginning of the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century the origin of the Gypsies remained a mystery on which, in spite of diligent investigation, not the faintest ray of light was ever shed. They themselves declared in chorus that they came from Egypt; but their assertion was as false as the scores of theories which scholars advanced to accuse scores of innocent lands of the crime of producing the “accursed race.”

An end was put to this wild speculation by Rüdiger, who confined the problem of Gypsy origin within narrower limits by discovering in 1777 that the tongue of the Gypsies was not “gibberish,” as had previously been supposed, but an ancient *Indian* language. Thereupon ravening philologists swooped down greedily on the camps, looted every word they could find, and set themselves feverishly to tear it to shreds. Like their predecessors they built great superstructures of theory on mean foundations (such as the occurrence of a single sound), which were too weak to bear the weight; and at the outset they made the mistake of assuming that, because the Gypsies spoke an Indian language, therefore they were natives of India—a method of reasoning which would give curious results if applied, for instance, to the Negro population of the United States. Bataillard was nearer the truth when he said that he could not admit that the Gypsy race should ever have been a sedentary one, becoming afterwards nomadic. Wanderers the Gypsies are; wanderers they have been ever since history first noticed them; and the probability is that wanderers they have always been, with no geographical origin at all. Unfortunately the “Gypsy riddle” still remains the treasured preserve of the word-torturers, for no attempt has yet been made to solve it by any other method. Competition wanting, the philologists gained courage in the process of making many books, and at last had the effrontery to declare that their science was the *only* way of discovering the origin of the Gypsies.

Mark then the results of a century of eager linguistic research! They believe that the Gypsies left India at one time, and in one vast horde, in consequence of some political event which they have not identified; against which one may be allowed to object that political events, unless they interfere with Gypsy trade, do not affect Gypsies, and that travelling in such large bands is contrary to immutable Gypsy custom, and would have been impracticable for so ill-organised a race of semi-savages. But it was when they came to date this exodus that the unreliability of their methods became most conspicuous, for, within ten years of one another three very great philologists—Miklosich, Ascoli and Pischel—suggested respectively 1000 A.D., the third century B.C., and the twelfth or thirteenth century A.D.! Finally they committed the crowning absurdity of placing the home of the Gypsies, on linguistic evidence alone, in the Hindu Kush, a wild district in which a parasitic nomad race would not stay a moment longer than it could help. Philological analysis, like the vain imaginings of the early scholars, has failed to solve the problem of Gypsy origin; and no new fact has come to light since Rüdiger's discovery. From it we are not entitled to draw any conclusion except that the Gypsies must have lived for centuries in a district where an Indian language was spoken, probably in India itself. We turn then to history in the hope that it may throw light on their passage towards Europe.

It must be confessed that the early historical references to Gypsies are few in number, meagre in information, and of doubtful relevance. The names by which the old Romanitshels were known, were as unsettled as their places of abode; so that the identification is extremely difficult, and it is only when characteristic habits are fully described that we can be certain that a historian is speaking of real Gypsies. There is good reason to believe that they were in Persia as *Luris* in the fifth century, in Constantinople as *Atsinkan* in the eleventh, and in Germany as *Kultschmiede* in the twelfth. There is a somewhat doubtful passage by Roger Bacon which has been held to indicate their presence in England in the thirteenth century. They were certainly firmly established in the Balkan Peninsula in the fourteenth; and the Spanish Franciscan, Symon Simeonis, who made a pilgrimage from Ireland to the Holy Land in 1322, met them in Crete and described them in unflattering terms. He saw a people beyond the city, who observed the Greek ritual and declared that they were of the race of Ham. They seldom or never remained in one place for more than thirty days, but always, roving and vagrant as if cursed by God, hastened after the thirty days from field to field with little oblong low black tents of Arab fashion, or from cave to cave, because a place inhabited by them was, after that time, full of worms and uncleanness with which it was impossible to dwell. This is one of the most satisfactory of the rare early references to Gypsies. Some of the others are much less convincing, and as a rule the race escaped mention both because Gypsies, under normal circumstances, avoid attention as far as possible, knowing that attention is generally given to them in a disagreeable form, and because no historian, whether Asiatic or European, considered them a people of any importance whatever; a serious writer of those times would have scorned to deface a page of his chronicle with the mention of their name, unless he were driven to do so by very exceptional circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances happened in Western Europe and thither the centre of interest is shifted.

On some date between the 8th November and Christmas Day, 1417, a large band of wide-wandering Gypsies, numbering about 400 persons, arrived like a bolt from the blue at Lüneburg, and visited in rapid succession the other Hanseatic towns on the Baltic. It seems certain that their route took them through Hungary and that



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they called at Lindau, near Constance, where the council was sitting, in order to obtain letters of recommendation from the Emperor Sigismund. The most astonishing feature of this invasion, to those who know the Gypsy character, was the conduct of the invaders. Far from keeping out of the way, avoiding observation, or hiding themselves in the forests and waste lands, they courted publicity and made themselves as conspicuous as possible in the largest towns. It was as if, after a period of sedentary life in South-Eastern Europe, in obscurity and affliction, perhaps in actual slavery, the *Wanderlust* had suddenly reawakened and they had rebelled against their hard lot, shaking the dust of the land of their captivity off the soles of their feet with a sudden, almost mad, passion to revenge themselves on humanity.

And revenge themselves they did with amazing astuteness. In an age of gross superstition, they, the despised Gypsies, could use the weaknesses of Emperors, priests and municipalities for their own advantage. At a time of dense ignorance these unlettered vagrants had the gift of tongues and could converse with the inhabitants of every country they visited. The most undisciplined, free and uncontrollable of men, they combined to foist on Europe a colossal swindle, the echo of which is heard still in many a legend, and even in several of the names by which the race is known—"Gitano," "Pharaoh's people," and our own "Gypsy." So firmly established did the popular faith in their Egyptian origin become that a special oath by King Pharaoh was exacted from them in the Hungarian law-courts:—"As God overwhelmed King Pharaoh in the Red Sea, so may the Gypsy be overwhelmed in the bowels of the earth and accursed if he tell not the truth. At its first step may his horse be changed miraculously into an ass, and may he himself be hung from the gallows by the hand of the executioner." So often was the lie rehearsed that the Gypsies ended by believing it themselves. In one of the ballads which British Gypsies have saved from extinction they have substituted Pharaoh for the Herod of the original legend*; and many Romanitshels still maintain that they are directly descended from that notorious monarch.

But the success of their Egyptian fiction was less amazing than the fact that the Gypsies, devoid of religion and even of the religious sense, were able to combine with it a sacred legend which hocused not only the Emperor of Germany, but even the Pope of Rome himself; and, adapted with extraordinary precision to the credulity of the people with whom they had to deal and to the superstitions of the lands in which they intended to travel, enabled them to bleed unmercifully the municipal authorities of every town they visited.

They approached the Emperor as pilgrims from "Little Egypt" performing, under the leadership of the "Dukes," Andrew and Michael, a penance for sins committed against the Christian religion. According to Münster, who, though not a contemporary, took his version from a copy of Sigismund's passport, the story was that their ancestors in Lower Egypt had abandoned for a time the Christian Religion, and returned to the errors of the pagans. After their repentance, it had been enjoined on them that, during as many years as their predecessors had remained in heathen error, so long should some members of all those families travel about the world without sleeping in a bed, and thus obtain remission of their sin.

This story served them well. Sigismund, as King of Hungary, may have been glad to encourage their Westward progress, and he granted them passports in which the tale was fully set forth. Armed with these powerful instruments, they scoured

* "King Pharim" in Miss Lucy Broadwood's *English Traditional Songs and Carols*, London, Boosey and Co., 1908.

the Continent and were everywhere received with hospitality. States, princes, fortified cities, towns, bishops and prelates admitted them and treated them humanely. The nature—and the exact cost—of this humanity are recorded in the accounts of many a borough—straw for their beds; fuel for their fire; corn, bread, meat and herrings for their diet; beer and wine wherewith to make merry; money for their pockets; and, what is somewhat significant, a guide to speed their progress to their next camp. But the tale had one flaw. Its inventors had limited the penance to a period of seven years: and, as the end of the time approached, the Gypsies found themselves very unwilling to leave this penitential life of ease and affluence, bid farewell to their generous hosts, and return to the hardships and privations of their hypothetical Eastern home. The difficulty must have been a serious one, if anything is ever difficult—or serious—to a Gypsy: but the leaders hit upon a very astute means of prolonging the period of their punishment, and at the same time increasing their prestige throughout Christendom. They made a few simple alterations in their legend and set off for Rome to see the Pope, in order to persuade him to guarantee its truth by inflicting on them a new penance.

It is possible that some of the other religious legends which have become associated with Gypsies were invented for similar purposes, by other bands of whose movements we have no records. A very old tradition asserts that Caspar, one of the three Magi, was a Gypsy: or, in another form, that it was he, who, as their ruler, first converted them to Christianity. The Gypsies of Lithuania believe that stealing had been permitted in their favour by the crucified Jesus, because the Gypsies, being present at the crucifixion, stole one of the four nails, by the aid of which our Saviour was to be fastened to the cross; hence it was that, when the hands had been secured there was only one nail left for the feet: and, therefore, God allowed them to steal, and it is not accounted a sin to them. Until the close of the twelfth century all crucifixes had four nails, and it is very probable that the beautiful form which we now see in every church and every art gallery was invented by Byzantine Gypsy coppersmiths. An unfriendly echo of the same tradition is heard in Montenegro, and in the Scottish Highlands where the Tinklers are believed to be descendants of the smith who made the nails for the cross.

Their visit to Rome was successful, and the Pope inflicted on them the additional penance they craved. But, their object achieved, they took no pains to maintain the pious illusion, and the spectacle of this ignorant, disreputable rabble assuming the ridiculous rôle of devout penitents, fleecing the most business-like, hood-winking the most crafty, laughing at law in the very citadel of civilisation, and bringing perplexity and confusion into the best-regulated communities was too absurd to pass muster. At Tournai, in 1422, an eye-witness described how most of them lived by pilfering, especially the women, who were ill-clothed, and entered the houses, asking alms or bargaining for some sort of merchandise. And it was with difficulty that a man could be on his guard against them without losing something. And there were some who, the better to deceive foolish men and women, pretended to foretell the future, such as the birth of children, or of being soon or well married, or of having good or bad luck, and many other such deceits. And, whilst they were thus abusing the belief of many people, the children cut the purses of those who were too attentive to their charms, or they themselves, with the hand with which they seemed to hold a child (which they did not do, for the child was supported by a band, put on as a sling and covered with a blanket, so that this hand was free) purloined artfully without being perceived.

And some of the men when they bought merchandise, gave a florin in payment,

and in receiving the change, were so skilful with their hands, confusing and cheating the people, or asking for other money than that which was given them, that none escaped without loss. And often, when they had stolen what they could, they would not take the merchandise, pretending not to know that money had been given them in change.

Such was not the usual behaviour of pious pilgrims, and there is little wonder that even in 1417 they so roused the fury of the populace in the Hanseatic towns that several were in various places captured and killed, and that gifts, given at first from compassion, were afterwards offered only on condition of speedy departure. Little wonder that some swindled inhabitants of Bologna took the law into their own hands and slipped into the Gypsies' stable by night to recompense themselves for their losses by stealing the best horse. Nor need we be amazed that the Bishop of Paris not only ruined the trade of the Gypsies and compelled them to depart by excommunicating all those who had believed in them or shown them their hands, but also ordained special processions on the following Sunday to expiate the sins of his congregation.

The penitential disguise and the legend they offered as an excuse for their wanderings had been cleverly chosen. As pilgrims they could live the vagrant life they loved, avoid the labour they hated, subsist on charity, and claim the advantages of gentle or even noble birth, albeit they were, as Dekker described them, "beggarly in apparel, barbarous in condition, beastly in behaviour, and bloody if they met advantage." But they lacked the patience to act their part consistently, and their true character was soon detected.

Bad it was, without doubt, and for centuries the abusive adjectives of every European tongue were cruelly overworked in the hopeless task of expressing it on paper. Yet, since "hard words break no bones," it is probable that the Gypsies were indifferent to abuse. But simultaneously a long period of relentless persecution began. So cruel were the measures adopted in most European countries that it is almost unnecessary to mention such comparatively humane acts as the countless decrees of mere banishment which were pronounced against the race. In 1530 our own Henry VIII. deigned to notice the "outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians, using no craft nor feat of merchandise," but, instead, "great subtle and crafty means to deceive the people, bearing them in hand (that is, "persuading them") that they by palmistry could tell men and women's fortunes, and so many times by craft and subtlety deceive the people of their money, and also had committed many and heinous felonies and robberies." So an act was passed ordering them to void the realm within sixteen days. Of course they turned a deaf ear to the command, and in 1554 Philip and Mary had to banish them again for "using their old accustomed devilish and naughty practices and devices, with such abominable living as is not in any Christian realm to be permitted, named or known." They added the punishment of death for any who chose to take the risk of remaining, and in 1562 this penalty was extended to persons who merely associated with Gypsies. But the Gypsies took as little notice of decrees of banishment as they did of innumerable orders which were issued in various countries enjoining them to adopt at once a sedentary habit of life and practice trades which they had not learned, nor possessed the means of learning; as little notice as they did of Carlos III. of Spain, when, in 1783, he ordered them to stop speaking Romani, or of Maria Theresia when she forbade the Hungarian Gypsy lads to marry Gypsy lasses. The two latter attempted also a means of civilisation which, since it was approved by the British Parliament in 1909, and embodied in their Children's Bill, must, I

suppose, be classified as "humane." I refer to the taking away for educational purposes of the Gypsies' much-loved children. It has been tested also in Germany, Hungary, Spain, Scandinavia, and I know not what other countries, and has in every case produced much misery—and no other result. Humane the measure may seem to some who believe that a smattering of education is the panacea for every ill; but those who know the amazingly intense, almost animal, affection the Gypsies have for their offspring, consider this course nearly as brutal as the rest of European Gypsy legislation. One may also very reasonably doubt whether education has the improving influence which enthusiasts claim for it, and object, as did Mr. Claude Burton in some verses which he recently addressed "To a Gypsy Boy,"*

"Book learning, doubtless, is not quite your forte,
But is there need for much in your position?
Yours is a knowledge of a wider sort,
And . . . well, I envy you your erudition.
I only wish to goodness that I knew
As much about the birds and beasts as you!
I hope they will not cram your little head
With bits and scraps of quite unwanted knowledge;
Better by far to let you teach instead
The teacher from the County Council College;
That he to poor town dwellers may unfold
The marvels that our lanes and commons hold."

As an example of Gypsy treatment abroad I may mention an incident which, even after years of familiarity, I cannot yet recall without emotion and horror. In August, 1782, a band of Gypsies was captured in Hungary and tortured until they confessed that they were cannibals, and that they had among them sons who had killed and eaten their own fathers. Then a dreadful carnival of blood began. At Frauenmark four women were beheaded, six men hanged, two broken alive on the wheel, and one, the leader, quartered alive. At Kameza, seven women were beheaded, five men hanged, two broken on the wheel, and one quartered. At Esabrag, seven women were beheaded, four men hanged, and two broken on the wheel. A hundred and fifty still remained to be dealt with. Then the Emperor sent down a commission from Vienna to investigate into the charge of cannibalism, and it was found after forty-one Gypsies had been thus cruelly done to death, on their own torture-extorted admission, that the persons they had been accused of eating were still alive.

The whole world knows from George Borrow's writings how ferocious, yet how ineffectual, was the Spanish Gypsy legislation. The laws were equally severe in other countries of Europe, and they were more diligently enforced. In Germany an almost endless series of statutes, decrees, electoral mandates, official circulars and police regulations were promulgated against the race, who were usually described as a "land-hurtful rabble," or as "vermin." The Gypsies, simply because they were Gypsies, were to be massacred; their women and children whipped, branded and expelled. They were ordered to be tortured whenever and wherever found, even if they had committed no offence; and all possibility of obtaining an honest livelihood was removed because citizens were expressly forbidden to harbour them, let them lodgings, or give them employment. The Gypsies were not considered as human beings, but as noxious beasts which must be exterminated, and, in several countries, actual Gypsy-hunts were organized. In 1765, the French Government offered rewards of twenty-four francs for male, and nine francs for female Gypsies; and,

**Evening News*, 22 Oct., 1910.

in 1720, a Rhenish potentate entered, among the deer, wild boars, and other game which constituted his day's "bag,"—*Item*, a Gypsy woman, with her sucking babe," Of such horrors is the modern history of the Gypsies composed; and I will quote one more instance lest readers should be unwilling to believe that, only 150 years ago, Christians were inflicting on the Gypsies martyrdoms as inhuman as were inflicted, by ignorant heathen in the dark ages, on those whom we now call "Saints." A gentleman in Siebenbürgen made the following entry in his diary on the 12th of July, 1760—"To-day three Gypsy servants escaped and were arrested by Janos Fara, the royal constable. In the case of one, Peter Chutschdy, it was the second offence. At my dear wife's request I had him beaten with rods on the soles of his feet until the blood ran, and then made him bathe his feet in strong caustic. Afterwards, for unbecoming language, I had his upper lip cut off and roasted, and forced him to eat it." The rest of the story is so horrible that I cannot repeat it in a popular article.

Do not imagine that I am speaking exclusively of the Middle Ages—I speak of our own time. A Hungarian newspaper dated 3rd December, 1909, reported that an influential committee had recommended the government to confiscate the wagons and horses of the Gypsies, and, to facilitate recognition, brand the Gypsies themselves with numbers in a conspicuous part of their bodies.

It is not my intention to catalogue all the wrongs which have been inflicted on Gypsies in order to show them the advantages of Christian civilisation. Many more might be instanced—no nation is innocent,—but, like those I have cited, they prove less the intelligent benevolence of European culture than the amazing vitality and the exemplary patience of the Oriental. In spite of banishment, in spite of persecution, in spite of death, the Gypsy still wanders and pitches his frail tent in all the countries of Europe, and in greater numbers than ever. Cruelty has failed either to rid the Philistine governments of their unwelcome guests, or to compel the instinctive nomad to imitate the ways of the house-dweller.

Blood-letting, either as a cure for disease or a solution of the Gypsy problem, has now been cast upon the scrap-heap of antiquated remedies; and, for more than a century, milder, if still often foolish and sometimes cruel, measures have been in vogue. In Great Britain the Gypsies are at present exposed to a petty persecution, inflicted ostensibly for their good by illogical persons, who pretend to believe that they live an unnatural life and should be driven into town slums for the benefit of their health and morals. They are harassed by prosecutions on such curious pretexts as sleeping-out, over-crowding (in tents every inch of which admits the free passage of God's fresh air), possessing no dustbin, or neglecting to provide a proper water-supply for their habitations. Yet, on the whole, in this country they have for the last century received less unpleasant attention and more sympathy than elsewhere, and it is very noteworthy that they have responded to this kindness by adopting the civilised conception of their duty towards their neighbour. I have many hundreds of press-cuttings from British newspapers published during the last few years. They prove that the Gypsies of this country are never guilty of the greater crimes. The majority of the convictions are for almost inevitable offences, such as halting in the road or allowing horses to stray. Gypsies have, of course, rather primitive views as to rights of property, especially in respect of what grows or moves upon the earth in a more or less wild state, yet, while there are an appreciable number of instances of poaching, fortune-telling, and of certain traditional Gypsy swindles, most of the cases of so-called theft are very insignificant petty larcenies—a handful of fruit taken from an orchard, a few swedes from a field, or a stick or two from the hedge. So conspicuous is the law-abiding character of the British Gypsies in my records, and in my personal experience, that I do not hesitate to assert, that, in spite of their

reputation, they are as superior in honesty to the lower classes of our native population as they are in morality and cleanliness.

The position of the British Gypsies is, however, exceptional; for amongst almost all other nations the aim of the Government, and the will of the people, is to repress or expel them by force. The result is, as we have seen, that the Gypsies are still among them, irreconcilable and lawless, unimproved in character, and in greater numbers than ever. But persecution has had another effect: for it produced sorrow, and it is in sorrow and affliction that human nature finds the greatest need of self-expression. The Gypsies have sought to express themselves in song—the only means possible for so rude and uncivilised a people, and the most natural to a race so richly endowed by nature with musical talent.

Their songs are little verses which they weave in their own tongue, and set to little melodies of their own making. The words of a large number are known, but, perhaps because the same person is seldom qualified to write both Romani and musical dictation, or perhaps because the tunes are of that Oriental kind which Western critics describe as "beginning nowhere and leaving off anywhere," the melodies of only about a score have been recorded. They do not sing them to strangers; but keep them secret among themselves, to be chanted for sorrow or for joy, on occasions of festivity or affliction, on the march or even during monotonous routine duties. The forms, subjects, and music vary with the countries in which the singers wander; songs of love, songs of exultation, bacchic and erotic verses, lines suggested by commonplace events of everyday life, dark hints of terrible legends and superstitions. They are condensed to the point of obscurity, and the crudely expressed notions follow one another, like the visions of a dream, without any apparent logical sequence. The connecting links, or the unifying idea, are supplied in the minds of the Gypsies by tradition, or intuition; but to non-Gypsies they must often be unintelligible. The melodies follow the subjects—mischievous in those of lighter mood, unspeakably melancholy in the sad, and sometimes doleful or even dreary when they express the vanity of life or the monotony of circumstances; while in performance the savage intuitive sympathy of the Gypsy squeezes out the very essence of the sentiment—be it pathos or merriment—which the air and words express. They are little fragments chipped from Gypsy experience, scarce large enough to serve as samples; interjections and exclamations gathered from Gypsy conversation; footnote comments on current events in Gypsy life. Away from the tents and the camp fire; the pine forest or the wilderness; without the attendant circumstances which should first have recalled them to the Gypsy's mind, and rendered them appropriate to the moment, they lose their *raison d'être*, and cannot produce their full effect. Yet as an expression of Gypsy thought—a revelation of his inner self—they must not be neglected by any serious student of the race.

(To be continued).

AMATEUR LAVENGROS BEWARE.

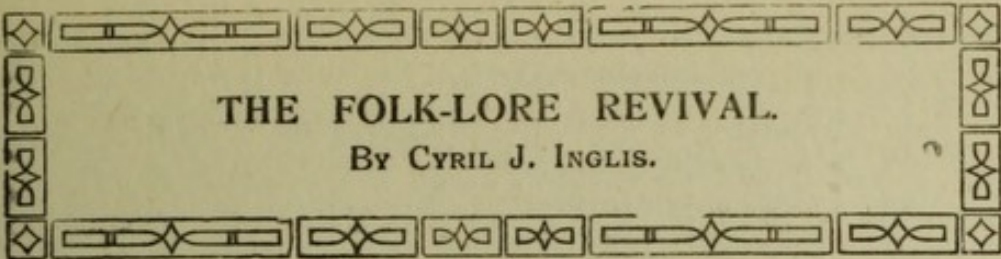
Gypsies are wonderfully ready at coining new words. Here are a few picked up among the Herons and Boswells of the Northern Counties. *Gruvni-wellen*, cucumber, 1; *Sping-a-stor*, pinafore, 2; *Stor-dui-graph*, photograph, 3; *Ziesto-tassera*, artichoke, 4. No wonder that raw amateurs are often floored when such deep test-words are flung at them by the playful Romanichels.

1 Gruvni—a cow, Well—to come.

2 Sping—a pin, Stor—four.

3 Stor—four, Dui—two.

4 Zi—heart, Tasser, to choke.



THE FOLK-LORE REVIVAL.

BY CYRIL J. INGLIS.

The issue of the second number of the Gypsy and Folklore Gazette seems to be an opportune time to make the subject of this paper known and popular. We have in our journal a most fitting organ for producing before the reading public the mysteries and interest contained in Gypsy and Folk-Lore. Up to now, with few exceptions, both Gypsy- and Folk-Lore have remained a closed study to people who might have been interested had the medium of introduction been less "formidable" and expensive. If one turned casually for information regarding a current periodical on Folk-Lore, two only could be found, each devoted to their respective studies, viz.:—"The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society" and "Folk-Lore," the latter the journal of the Folk-Lore Society. The former of these two was a "sealed" publication to most people, for, to obtain it one had to become a member of the Gypsy-Lore Society. "Folk-Lore" was obtainable by the general public (although it was not always sufficiently advertised as such), at a cost of 5/- a number and appeared quarterly.

Now, to a certain extent, there is no doubt that these two periodicals quite met the demands and wants of what may be considered a select "few," but the interest in Folk-Lore and its allied studies, in which I can include Gypsy-Lore, has developed very greatly during the last few years. It is no longer the private study of a few, but is, we can well say, a national topic of interest. Newspapers, current magazines, and literature generally all testify to this, and it behoves that the Club should, I think, make it a first duty of putting before its members and a public likely to be attracted, popular studies and discussions, which though not "dry" should have interest in their simplicity. Quite recently we had the great misfortune to lose one of the chief leaders in the Folk-Lore world, Mr. Alfred Nutt, a man who did I think more than anyone, both in his capacity as publisher and writer, to popularise Folk-Lore. His "Popular Studies in Mythology, Romance and Folk-Lore" placed the subject within the means of the humblest reader. The series opened with a little volume on "Folk-Lore, what is it, and what is the use of it?" by Mr. E. S. Hartland, and I know no better book, small though it be, for obtaining an idea of what Folk-Lore is.

There is so much diversity of opinion regarding Folk-Lore. "What is it?" people say, and you hear the most unsatisfactory answers. As Mr. Hartland says, "Many of you may be disposed to think that Folk-Lore is all about fairy tales, cures for warts, etc., things that no intelligent person would concern himself with but these are only a small part of folk-lore, though I venture to think, a very important part of the larger science of Anthropology, the Science of Man. The portion of Anthropology with which Folk-Lore deals is the mental and spiritual side of humanity," in other words Folk-Lore is the "Science of tradition."

We get a very excellent idea of the vast amount of material which is usually classified under Folk-Lore by consulting the "Handbook of Folk-Lore" published by the Folk-Lore Society some years ago, and not since reprinted. It was edited by another master of Folk-Lore, Sir G. L. Gomme, who classified his book as follows:—

- (1) What Folk-Lore is.
- (2) Superstitious Belief and Practice.
 - (a) Superstitions connected with great natural objects.
 - (b) Tree and plant superstitions.
 - (c) Animal superstitions.
 - (d) Goblinhood.
 - (e) Witchcraft.
 - (f) Leechcraft (or folk-medicine).
 - (g) Magic and divination.
 - (h) Beliefs relating to future life.
 - (i) Superstitions generally.
- (3) Traditional Customs.
 - (a) Festival customs.
 - (b) Ceremonial customs.
 - (c) Games.
 - (d) Local customs.
- (4) Traditional Narratives:
 - (a) Nursery tales or marchen: hero tales, drolls, fables and apologues.
 - (b) Creation, deluge, fire and doom myths.
 - (c) Ballads and songs,
 - (d) Place legends and traditions.
- (5) Folk Sayings.
 - (a) Jingles, nursery rhymes, riddles, &c.
 - (b) Proverbs.
 - (c) Nicknames, place rhymes.

I beg the reader's pardon for such a lengthy list, but the truth is, I know no more complete or useful summary, and as the volume is somewhat rare, my excuse must be in favour of its greater publicity.

Perhaps chief interest in the Folk-Lore revival is centred on Folk-song and it is not hard to seek the reason. The work of the Folk-song Society in editing and arranging from the vast material collected by its members from Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Lincolnshire, Somerset, Dorset and other Counties has evidence in the issue of some sixteen parts of its Journal, making I should think four sumptuous volumes was too late to collect Folk Songs. The last issue of the Folk Song Journal contains some hundreds of airs and tunes, and all this, despite the remark often made that it or some 105 airs collected by Miss Tolmie in the Western Highlands of Scotland. These are classified as Songs of Rest and Recreation (Cradle Songs, Nurses' Songs, and Vocal Dance Music), Songs of Labour (waulking songs, reaping, rowing and milking songs), Ancient Heroic Lays, Songs to Chiefs and others, Laments, Love Lyrics, &c., a most worthy collection, admirably supplementing the work of Mrs. Kennedy Fraser, whose "Songs of the Hebrides" was perhaps the first attempt in later years to garner the folk-music of the Gael.

The "Songs of Labour" mentioned above are exceedingly interesting as they give us the connecting link between modern and primæval times in the art of folk-composition. Prof. Gummere of Harvard University, a worthy successor to Prof. Child of Ballad fame has told us, how on the remote Faroe Islands, the old dances,

with joined hands in a great circle, are still danced to the tune of a traditional ballad which all must sing, and *where on occasion every member of a festive throng must still improvise his stanza*. The ballad was, and is sung by the people "not like dance-music, simply to order their steps," but, "by its meaning and contents to waken certain feelings." They could also make a new ballad in most dramatic fashion at the dance, as for example, when some fisherman has had a mishap with his boat, sturdy companions push him out into the dancing throng, and first one and then another stanza is improvised upon the fatal theme until a complete story of the situation with much repetition, we may be sure, uproarious refrain and considerable dramatic action is attained. If the song wins general favour, it is remembered and sung from year to year, a genuine traditional and communal ballad. So it is similarly with these Gaelic "Songs of Labour." They are genuine improvisations of the people; in the case of the "waulking-songs," improvised by the women at the waulking of the cloth.

We can trace similar improvisation in our English and Scottish Popular Ballads collected and arranged by the late Prof. Child who selected and edited some 305 ballads as being genuine and traditional. Now modern Folk Song as we find it represented in the collections of the Folk Song Society contains on the whole only a few examples of traditional ballads. Many of the songs are of later improvisation, or, in some cases written by 'hacks' and perpetuated on broadside sheets from whence they have been preserved. In the latter case, it is chiefly the air or tune which is of value, and it is astonishing how it is possible to meet with the most beautiful tunes only to find the most wretched words written thereto. The great charm of the modern Folk Song is in the quaintness and beauty of the air or tune. Generally simple, it at once arrests the attention of anyone with a natural musical ear, and it must be due to its simplicity that it has found favour when sung before a crowded London audience.

The truth is that civilization thirsts for change, and the Folk Song has proved itself as refreshing a change as a breath of country air to the jaded town-dweller.

Besides the English Folk Song Society there are also the Welsh and Irish Societies whose publications prove the wealth of material from which they were garnered. The Welsh Folk Song Society is particularly to be commended for the beauty of the songs given, their arrangement and editing. Three parts of the Journal have been issued up to the present.

So much interest has been taken in the recent revival that it is not surprising to find enthusiasm in the Provinces as well as in London. Stratford-on-Avon was one of the first in the field, and a School of Folk-Dance and Song was inaugurated under the supervision of Cecil Sharpe, with much success. Stratford always seems to me to be essentially a centre for the preservation of old English lore. To visit Stratford in Spring or late Autumn when the Tourist rush is unknown is preferably a great pleasure, and if one wanders a few miles out of the town towards the Cotswold Hills, out Campden way, the joys of the journey are multiplied in the beautiful country, ancient half-timbered cottages, village crosses, etc., of little grey villages set in grey hillsides. I would earnestly commend to the notice of members of the Club, the attractive excursions which could be arranged in the vicinity of Stratford. Facilities in the way of travel from London are excellent, indeed it is possible to leave London at 1 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, have lunch on the train, arrive Stratford about 3 p.m. and spend the afternoon say on a walk to Campden, with tea at one of the beautiful inns, and thence train back to Stratford, and arrive in London at about 10 p.m. The cost, too, is very moderate, and need not exceed 10s. for everything. My reason for suggesting this programme is a hope that some at least may be induced to visit a district which quite recently has yielded many "finds."

Stratford is not the only provincial centre interested in the Folk Song movement, for there is now a Society at Oxford which is doing good work locally.

After Folk Song we find much interest being taken in the revival of the old country dances, and London school-teachers are initiating their children into the mysteries of Morris Dancing.

It was, and may perhaps be still possible to see, at Bampton, in Oxfordshire, a troop of villagers known as the Whitsuntide Morris Dancers. Their quaint dance and the custom of presenting a piece of specially prepared cake to bystanders is fully described and illustrated in an early volume of "Folk Lore."

To say that Folk Lore is dead in England is a very grave mis-statement, whilst Folk Song, if I may say so, was never more "prolific," especially as encouragement to the movement is now so often given by the upper classes to the "folk" in their districts.

Children's Singing Games have often a very quaint beauty, both in the grace of movement in playing and the beautiful refrain accompanying their movements. S. R. Crockett, the novelist, has quoted a very beautiful modern instance from Galloway, which he has used in his novel entitled "The Black Douglas."

"William of Douglas reined up Darnaway underneath the whispering foliage of a great beech, for all at unawares he had come upon a sight that interested him more than the noble prospect of the May sunset.

In the centre of the golden glade, and with all their faces mistily glorified by the evening light, he saw a group of little girls singing and dancing as they performed some quaint and graceful pageant of childhood.

Their voices came up to him with a wistful, dying fall, and the slow graceful movement of the rhythmic dance seemed to affect the young man strangely."

" See the robbers passing by, passing by, passing by,
See the robbers passing by,
My fair lady."

The ancient words came up clearly and distinctly to him and softened his heart with the indefinable and exquisite pathos of the refrain whenever it is sung by the sweet voices of children.

And he sat still listening. . . .

" What did the robbers do to you, do to you, do to you,
What did the robbers do to you,
My fair lady ? "

The first two lines rang out bold and clear. Then again the wistfulness of the refrain played upon his heart as if had been an instrument of strings, (and) one voice, the sweetest and purest of all, replied, singing quite alone,

" They broke my lock and stole my gold, stole my gold, stole my gold,
Broke my lock and stole my gold,
My fair lady."

Mr. Crockett has evidently had the great fortune to witness some such graceful pageant of childhood, or he could never have described it with so much feeling.

A friend of mine while in Berwickshire last year, brought back with him some records of his holiday in the shape of a small collection of children's singing games, the verses of which are exceedingly quaint and the movements of the children most charming to see. I am only too sorry that I have not space to quote a few of them here. To Lady Gomme we owe a debt of gratitude for her book on "The Traditional Games of England," issued in two volumes in 1894.

Limit of space again prevents me from discussing as I should like, the many other branches of Folk Lore which may still be found existing in England. Suffice

it to say that superstition is certainly not "dead," a statement which may be easily proved by anyone who stays sufficiently long amongst the country people to learn their ways. I have come across more Folk Lore in a month while staying in Buckinghamshire than I have recorded in probably a year of travel at different times. Witchcraft, of course, is not so rife as it once was, although it exists in places, as for instance on the Welsh Border and in Cambridgeshire. Leechcraft or Folk Medicine may be found in almost any village, and it is very hard sometimes to convince a "rustic" that a cure prescribed by a "wise woman" has often or not more killing than healing powers. The Folk Tales or traditional narratives are probably the most popular branch of Folk Lore after Folk Song nowadays, although it should be said perhaps that prior attention was given to the study of Folk Tales during the early history of the Folk Lore Society. Folk Tales are generally the property of a primitive people, and civilization and religion have killed anything that might have been collected nowadays in England, but there is ample scope for the collector in some parts of Ireland and even in the Highlands of Scotland. J. F. Campbell, of Islay, collected hundreds of stories, many of which were never printed, and they lie buried among the folios of the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh. Quite recently, in London, a friend of mine revived the old Highland custom of telling stories in Gaelic, by the fireside; the experiment was made chiefly to help some students of the Gaelic language, but it has proved more successful as an introduction to Highland Folk Lore.

In concluding this imperfect paper, I should like to say that my experiences in Northumberland, the Highlands, Wales, and more recently, in Buckinghamshire, have proved to me that the study of the ways of the Folk is bound to give the greatest pleasure and enjoyment to the student, and I would refer members of the Club to the somewhat unique and excellent paper entitled "Wizardry on the Welsh Border," printed in volume 15, page 75, of "Folk Lore." The facts there recorded testify to the unflinching beliefs of the "folk," and to the care and trouble taken by Miss Beatrix Wherry, to whom we are indebted for one of the very best accounts of British Folk Lore. I should like to add that I shall be glad to answer any enquiries or suggestions on any phase of Folk Lore.

HOLLYMOUNT, HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

LEARNING SHELTA.

It was near the Shire-Bridge, where the Great North Road, approaching Newark-upon-Trent from the South, quits Lincolnshire for the County of Nottingham. A favourite halting-place is this for all sorts of wayfaring folk. Seated on Mother Earth's green carpet a tinker and his wife were taking tea, and at their invitation I sat beside them for a chat. Presently I showed two bright new pennies to the tinker, saying "If you'll tell me what these are in Shelta, they're yours." In a moment he replied "*Od nyok*" [two heads] and I handed over the coins. With a comic gesture he queried—"Yer would'nt like to larn a bit more o' thet langwidge, would yer?"—G.H.

The following scrap, apparently in the handwriting of the late G. C. Leland, has recently come into our possession, and as we do not remember having come across it before we shall be glad to hear from any reader as to its probable source:—

All English Gypsies and Hindus say of the blind worm that he "carries his sight" for six months on one side, and six months on the other, and I have been assured that this idea is peculiarly "Romanis." At least I have not been able to ascertain that the English peasantry have any such notion,

THROUGH ROMANY LAND.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT
THE CLUB BY
D. F. DE L'HOSTE RANKING,
M.A., L.L.D.



I want to-night to see if we can enter a little into the inner life of the Gypsies as a race, and try to some extent to look at life from their point of view. I should like you to realise that the Gypsies, their traditions, superstitions, and manner of life generally constitute a problem not only curious but intensely interesting; and that the study of the race is not merely a fad or the pursuit of a temporary craze but a serious problem which has engaged and does still engage the attention of some of the most highly trained minds in Europe.

We are examining the problem of a special and distinct race, which though constantly mingling with other races, and dwelling for centuries among them, has yet till very recent times from various causes remained entirely distinct from its surroundings, retaining its own beliefs and customs, its ceremonies and superstitions; and though everywhere treated with scorn and opprobrium, yet returning this scorn in double measure, looking upon the non-Gypsy as a being not only to be pitied and despised, but to be cajoled and spoiled of his goods whenever opportunity serves: almost a primitive race one may say; childish in its outlook on life; childish in its beliefs; childish in its loves and hatreds; childish in its mental attitude; and therefore most difficult to understand by us who pride ourselves on our civilisation and on our intellect, and who have on this very account lost touch with what is childlike and primitive.

In beginning an enquiry into the mental characteristics of a primitive race we should naturally turn first to their religion and mythology, since these should prove the best guide as to their mental condition and beliefs; but in the present enquiry this guide fails us: it may be said that practically nothing is known of the original religious beliefs of the Gypsies, or whether indeed they have any definite system of religion or of mythology peculiar to themselves: one may not go as far as the Hungarian proverb and say "The Gypsies' church was made of bacon and the dogs ate it"; but it must be allowed that the Gypsy is singularly adaptable and seems inclined to feel that the religion of the country in which he happens to be located is good enough for him. I only know of two authorities who profess to have found a definite system of mythology among the race; one of these is the mysterious M. Kounavin, whose alleged discoveries were communicated in a paper read by M. Elyssieff before the Imperial Academy at St. Petersburg, the other is M. Wlislöcki, who has studied carefully especially the Gypsies in Southern and South-Eastern Germany and in Hungary.

With regard to the former of these two, it is doubtful if he can be considered an authority: there is a tendency among experts to consider him a mythical being, and

his experience pure fiction. Personally I am hardly prepared to go as far as this, and I think that it may ultimately be proved that there are elements of truth in his narrative. When however one comes to examine his mythology one cannot but be struck by the fact that he professes to have found a complete system bearing marked resemblance to the Hindu mythology but that these details are not confirmed in any way by other enquirers fully as able as himself. The particulars which he gives are said to have been collected in the tents of central Asia, in Urania and in some parts of South Eastern Europe.

One would have expected them to have been corroborated by the researches of Patkanoff into the tribes of the Bosha and Karaci and by the information which Macalister has furnished as to the Nuri, but there is no such corroboration.

According to Kounavin, the Gypsies have numerous deities, among them being Barami, Djandra, Laki, Matta, and Anremeri; whom he identifies with Brama, Laksmi, Mata-Prithik, and Angra-Manus or Ahriman. There are also lesser powers, the Davanni or good spirits, who he identifies with the Dewa, and the Evil Meri: both of these he refers to a Zend rather than to a Hindu origin.

He gives some legends which he professes to have collected, and one cannot but be struck by the resemblance which some of these such as the visit of Obertshi, the Gypsy Hercules, to the House of the Sun God, bear to the Norse Sagas.

One of these tales I will give you because it appears to me that it may have some bearing on the supposed part which a horse plays in the Gypsy ceremonies connected with marriage and divorce.

"In the beginning of all things the great Barami ordered his daughter Natta to marry with the shining Lakipadi (He suggests that this is identical with Locapalas) the Guardian of the world, of the Hindu Djandra. Matta agreed and from their union sprang the grass, the fruit and the trees. Matta consumed of the fruits which she had produced and from this there was born to her a swift footed horse which traversed the whole world. The evil Prameri coveted this horse and sought to possess it. Long he hunted for it, but Barami himself protected it as being the offspring of his daughter. Prameri being incensed against Barami, strove in every way to injure himself and his creations. He so overwhelmed the earth, and destroyed all the herbage that there was nothing with which the horse might be fed; he so burned up everything that Barami produced nothing. At length with the aid of Anremeri he compassed the death of the horse. Barami, angered at the death of his beloved offspring formed from its vapour the Davanni (the good spirit), and subsequently from this the Romni-Davanni, the spirit of man, clothing it with the blood and bones of the primaeval horse. From the entrails of the horse Barami produced animal life, but from its head he produced a new horse which he gave to the Rom (the man) for all ages that the horse might serve him."

Turning next to Wlislöcki we find that according to him the Gypsies of South Germany and the whole district of the Danube believe that men are influenced by Good and Evil spirits the Evil outnumbering the Good. When God created man, they say there were at first only Good spirits, who aided men. There came once upon a time a strange man to the first man and gave to a certain woman a little fish saying "After eight days I shall return, guard this fish till then. If you do so I will reward you." The stranger went away and the woman cooked and ate the fish. Then came the first flash of lightning on earth and slew the woman.

Since then men die and during life are troubled and plagued; they are subject to sickness and oppressed by pain. The evil spirits entered the world and follow us ever since.

These good and evil spirits can only be seen by witches or by the ninth son of a woman who has borne no daughters, or the seventh daughter of a woman

without sons.

Of the good spirits the first are the Urme; the Fairies or Fates; these are three in number. At the night of birth or of baptism these fates ever appear by the new born child and settle what shall be his fate in life.

Next come the Keshalyi, also three in number: These sometimes weave for the new born the "Luck-Shirt" which is invisible, but makes its wearer lucky throughout life. The Queen of the Keshalyi is called 'Ana' that is 'Bring Me,' this being the cry she utters to any man who wanders near her palace in the mountains. Whoever hears this cry seeks speedily for a frog, a beetle or some insect and throws it into the nearest bush, or he runs away, otherwise he will be shattered by the Queen with a huge stone. Between the good and Evil spirits the Nivaschi, or water spirit and the Phuvush or earth spirits hold a middle portion. The evil spirits who bring illness of all kinds on men are nine in number; each brings its own particular plague, and the attacks of each of which must be warded off by charms.

FESTIVALS.

Before passing on to what Wlislöcki tells us about the Gypsy "clan" system, and the ceremonies connected with Birth, Marriage, and Death, it may be worth while to examine what he tells us about the festivals of the German Gypsies, since these and the ceremonies connected with them are always suggestive.

The festivals are three in number, and correspond with the three chief Lutheran festivals; but as Wlislöcki points out, this arises from the fact that these correspond with the seasons of the year which specially affect the wandering Gypsy.

At Michaelmas the wandering Gypsies of Transylvania begin to think about going into winter quarters. They often retire to caves on the Southern slopes of the Carpathians. Before the clan takes possession of its cave this is rendered "habitable": a fire of thorn apple bushes is lighted before each cave, and alum is thrown on the embers; when this begins to bubble it is taken off, and in it may be seen the outline of any person or persons who might be likely to injure the clan during the course of the winter. To guard against this the burnt alum is ground small and given to a black hound to eat. Then the eldest of the clan makes many holes with a hot needle in a thorn-apple leaf, and with each dig says, this for the eye, this for the hand, and so on, the leaf is then burnt, and it is believed that the enemy is thus rendered harmless. When the cave is taken possession of; after all sorts of festivities a dolly is made of fir-twigs and ivy, called "the black man" (*kale manus*); This is burned and the ashes strewed about the cave to keep off the Evil Spirits of the winter.

CHRISTMAS.

Christmas is one of the chief festivals of the Transylvanian Gypsies. The week before Christmas is specially devoted to the preparation of charms and amulets. The fat of hares collected in this week is a powerful love philtre. The blood of the bat slain in the Christmas week cures animals which are troubled with colic.

On Christmas eve the vampires go abroad and waylay women. It is therefore advisable to hang at the entrance of the family cave a clove and some camphor wrapped in a piece of cloth.

On Christmas night the beasts talk to one another but men dare not listen to them, for he will be slain by the Urme, who at that season visit the beasts.

On this night the ashes of a burnt ash-stick should be strewn under the horses, this will save them all the year from being troubled by the demon which specially attacks cattle.

This may be connected with the old tale of English Gypsies that the fire on

Christmas day should always be made with ash-wood.

Wlislocki gives many other charms and omens as being connected with Christmas, but these I omit, in order to deal with his very interesting account of the mystic "Allsamesbaum," the tree that produces all seeds.

I will put this query to Folk-Lorists :

Do we get the Christmas Tree from the Gypsies ? We certainly get it from Germany, since the idea was unknown in this country before the coming of Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha ; did Germany get it from the Gypsies ?

On Christmas night it is sometimes possible to see this mystic tree whose twigs drip with honey, in whose branches most wonderful birds sing and which produces all the seeds of the earth, a giant snake holds the roots of this tree to the earth, its top reaches to the heavens, and the sight of it gives youth ; compare the tree Ygdrasil, of the Norse Mythology.

The legend connected with this tree I will not relate, it is too long, but the ceremonies connected with it I will give, since they are the grounds for my suspicions as to the origin of our Christmas tree.

In order to gain a sight to this tree the Transylvanian Gypsies plant a young willow on the top of the nearest hill, and twist its twigs into knots, a young fir tree is then planted near it and the two trees are laced together with red threads ; this is called the marriage of the trees. On the next day the two trees are burned, and the ashes are used by the women for making charms. It often happens that on this night the "Allsamen" tree appears near the two wedded trees.

Anyone who sees it must at their peril speak no word, or he will become an idiot, as happened to a Gypsy, Pischata Labeschu, who on seeing the mystic tree cried out, "Is that honey or wine ?"

Before the trees are burned the people assemble very early in the morning on the hill, and whilst some of them prepare the fire the men and women link together in a long row, and taking three steps forward and three steps to the left, chant verses praying for good fortune.

When the song is finished they remain standing and for a short time bend first to the left and then to the right, and then bending forward they cry, "O red, O black. O white birds, give us bread." This is repeated until the burning of the tree is completed.

After this festival they return to their caves, where the eldest of each family takes off his boots or shoes and strews in them some of the ashes from the trees, then each male of the family must put on these boots, it is supposed that this strengthens the family tie.

Wlislocki gives a very gristly form of incantation which is sometimes practiced on the third night of Christmas for the purpose of ensuring good fortune, during the ensuing year, this with much other deeply interesting matter I am forced to omit.

With the coming of Easter the Gypsies again prepare for a very active life so that this season forms another great epoch in their life.

Holy Week is entirely given up to the preparation of charms and amulets of various kinds ; of these Wlislocki mentions several. A hazel rod cut in Holy Week protects buildings and tents from lightning. This same belief I have known for years as existing in this country, but I cannot say whether I originally obtained it from a Gypsy source ; in the form in which I obtained it, a hazel bush was supposed to be a safe refuge in a thunderstorm, the reason given being that Our Lady, with the Holy Child took refuge from a thunderstorm under a hazel bush during the flight into Egypt. In this week also the hazel snake which ordinarily dwells hundreds of miles under the earth, may be found under the roots of the hazel tree.

Anyone who can capture it while it is drinking the Easter dew, is thereby

protected against misfortune of all kinds and becomes possessed of all manner of supernatural gifts and knowledge,

This furnishes an opportunity to the Gypsy which no genuine Rom could miss, During the summer months the Gypsies catch lizards and dry them at the fire or in the sun, then they dye the bodies and on Easter day sell them by the dozens as hazel snakes to the peasants.

Here again I recognise traces of a charm which has been known to me from my earliest childhood and which some of you may also recognise.

An old remedy for the bite of the viper is to take two hazel twigs and bind them into the form of a cross. These are to be laid on the bite, and the following charm is to be repeated nine times, breathing on it the whole time :

Underneath this hazel mote,
Lies a braggarty worm with a speckled throat,
Nine double is he.

Now from nine double to eight double, and to eight double to seven double, etc., etc., etc., and from one double to no double, and no double is he.

It seems to me that this charm comes from Gypsy sources.

Anyone who can find an Owl's egg at Easter tide can easily become the possessor of the "Luckworm" since at this season the owl mother lays an egg which if buried under a hazel bush will contain a worm which will make whoever possesses it rich and happy.

The great festival among the Transylvanian Gypsies is St. George's Day, "Green George" as he is called, which is celebrated not on April 23, O.S. the proper date according to the calendar, but on the second day after Easter.

On this day very early in the morning the brown tent-dwellers flock to some remote spot where they will be free from all foreign influence. On the previous evening there has been felled a young willow tree in preparation for this festival. This tree is lifted up by the young men, and the procession betakes itself to the remote spot, where the stem is planted in the earth. The chief figure of the feast is a lad who from head to foot is covered with green leaves, twigs and flowers, and hence is called "Green George" (obviously our Jack in the Green). Whilst the tent-dwellers lie round about bedecked, and ornamented with flowers, crowns and garlands of leaves, "Green George" gives to the beasts of all those connected with his own tribe a handful of grass to eat which ensures their finding fresh soft grass all through the year. Then "Green George" throws three iron nails, which for three previous days and nights have lain in the fire, into the nearest running water, in order to make the Nivaschi favourable to his kindred. At the end "Green George" is apparently thrown into the water, a "dummy" wound with leaves being actually thrown in. The end of the festival consists in the distribution of George-cakes, the virtue of which is that whoever receives one must be reconciled to the giver however great may be the quarrel between them. On this night no one dares to sleep in the open, since the witches can easily do him an injury.

On George's day the gypsy young men and maidens fast, and eat nothing but George-cakes ; then on going to bed they put under their head a piece of clothing of a man or a woman as the case may be, believing that they will then in their dreams see their "other half." The George's Day Song was recorded by M. Vladimir Gjorgeovic from Servian Gypsies.

Here is another Easter charm which is to me highly interesting as being undoubtedly of Indian origin and as calling to mind the doll which may be seen at the rooms of the Gypsy Lore Club, 5 Hand Court, Bedford Row. This doll is used as a charm by Indian villagers in time of Cholera or other pestilence ; being placed outside the village it will convey the pestilence to anyone who touches it. On the eve of Georges

OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY, No. 2.



Mary Squires the Gypsy, who was Condemned for Stripping Eliz.^a Canning,
at Endfield Wash; and has since obtained his Majesty's most Gracious Pardon.
Drawn from the Life, by the Honourable R. & E. and Etched by Tho. Worlidge,
Painter in the Little Piazza, Covent Garden.



Day the Transylvanian Gypsies prepare a wooden receptacle in the form of a box, which they call the "Message or Gift" (Bichapen). On the outer side of the bottom of this are fastened two cross pieces, so that the box resembles a cradle. In this receptacle are laid herbs which one of those present has stirred with the finger; then the case is wound round with red and white wool and dragged by the eldest of those present from tent to tent.

After this ceremony the box is dragged to the nearest running water and there left, after each of those present has spit in it.

They believe that by this ceremony they have got rid of all the illnesses which might have attacked them during the coming year.

If anyone comes along and finds the box, he will adopt these sicknesses for himself, and his whole clan, if he opens the box and does not at once throw it with all its contents into the stream.

Information as to the ceremonies attending the chief events of life is of course only to be obtained with much difficulty, since Gypsies, in common with all primitive races, are very loth to reveal these matters to strangers; doubtless this disinclination arises not only from natural reticence, but from a fear that the information may be used for the purpose of casting spells. Whislocki gives much information on many points, but even with him one cannot be sure that the details are in all respects accurate, nor do we know that some of the ceremonies, like some of the superstitions already mentioned, may not be common to the races among whom the Gypsies dwell, and not of exclusively Gypsy origin.

BIRTHS.

To begin with the ceremonies attending birth. As soon as a child is born the mother covers it with some portion of a garment belonging to the father, which is taken as being an assertion of the paternity. This seems strongly allied to the ancient Highland custom, whereby the child was first fed with milk sucked from a piece of the father's tartan. It is then rubbed with goose-grease and hare's-fat in order to make it insensible to extremes of heat and cold.

When the mother first leaves the tent after the birth the child must be laid on the ground and the mother must thrice step over it backwards and forwards; this is to prevent it being liable to see spirits: the father must then lift it from the ground and tie a red thread round its neck, thus acknowledging the paternity. If a child be either stillborn or if it dies very shortly after birth and before baptism, the mouth is closed with wax or pitch; some of the mother's milk is cast into the grave together with some peas, in order that the dead child may not haunt the home. It is wise also at the wane of the moon to water the grave for nine consecutive nights with rain water which runs from the roof of a church, in order that the child may rest quietly, and not become a Vampire.

The Vampyres or Mulo-foki are the spirits of still-born children; they have no bones in their body (this reminds us of the Celtic superstition of the "boneless," to which, if I remember rightly, Dr. McDonald refers in his novel "The Portent") they lack the middle finger on each hand, which they are obliged to leave in the grave; they live in the mountains and continue growing till thirty years old, at which age they can enter the "Kingdom of Death."

Till baptism, the child must neither be kissed nor called by a name, otherwise the life may be drawn or called out from it. Baptism is believed to free the child from the Nature-smell, which links it with the brute creation.

After baptism, there is removed from the body of the child the rusty key, which up to that time has been bound close to the flesh.

The assistants at the ceremony are regaled by the parents with bread and brandy, and each one throws a crumb of the bread and a drop of the brandy on the

cradle, to propitiate the "Urme," who are to weave the fate of the child. I do not imagine that this last ceremony is peculiar to the Gypsies, as we find something similar amongst most races.

The clothes in which the child was wrapped before baptism must be burned as soon as possible, otherwise evil spirits might steal them when the child would become mad or imbecile.

I do not find in Whislocki any reference to the "Tabu," which in this country, and I should imagine among all Gypsies, is placed upon a woman after child-birth; for 30 days she must do no cooking for the family, nor must she touch with her bare hands anything belonging to the family; during that time she must wear gloves; she has her own cup, plate, &c., and at the end of that period they are destroyed.

MARRIAGE:

The particulars given by WlislOCKI as to courtship and marriage are not in some respects so full as we could wish, and they do not give us much insight into the ceremonies which really constitute a Gypsy marriage. What these may be has always been a great matter of dispute; reference has always been made to a "Broomstick Marriage," there being a legend in this country that a Gypsy marriage consists simply in the parties jumping over a broomstick; an interesting article on this point was contributed by Miss M. Eileen Lyster to the last number of the journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, which goes to prove that in this country at any rate there is good basis for the legend. Of one thing, we may be sure, that the ceremony if it exists has a symbolic meaning, and I am inclined to wonder whether it has any connection with the reverence which, as Dobrowolski tells us, is among the Russian Gypsies shown to the Whip as being the symbol of the husband's authority. I am also inclined to think, though I cannot give any valid reason for doing so, that a horse may play an important part in the ceremony: in the betrothal song of the Russian Gypsies, as given by Dobrowolski, much importance seems to be attached to the grey horse which always forms an important item in the plenishing which the bride brings to her lord and master; we have already seen how, in the legend given by the mysterious Kounavin, special importance is attached to the horse as the peculiar heritage of the Gypsy. If this be so, it would lend colour to the assertion of Simpson in his work on the Scottish Gypsies that there is a ceremony of divorce which takes place over the body of a dead horse.

I have myself heard from a Gypsy girl in this country many years ago of a custom connected with courtship which I have never been able to verify from other sources, it is that, if a young Gypsy should come courting a girl who wishes to have nothing to do with him, she signifies her unwillingness by withdrawing to the middle of the field where the tents are pitched, and there seating herself on the ground she lets down her hair so that it fall all around her.

WlislOCKI gives various charms of exciting love, but the whole question of Gypsy charms and incantations would form a book by itself. He mentions however one custom which is worth relating since it seems to have a parallel among the Gypsies of other countries.

A young man buys with his earnings two red kerchiefs which he fastens to the big silver buttons of his jacket; anyone who saw the Galician Gypsies who visited us recently cannot have helped being struck by the enormous silver, and in the case of the chief gold, buttons which they wore. When he has fixed his affections on a girl he presents her with one of these kerchiefs, and the other he fastens on his tent, or if, as is often the case he has no tent of his own, then on the tent of the girl. He has still however to make valuable presents to the girl's parents, and to obtain the permission of the head of the tribe. At this point the details given us by Debrewelski,

fill up a great gap in the proceeding. I have already translated the passage from Debrewelski, together with the betrothal song for the journal of the Gypsy-Lore Society, where anyone interested can read it, he describes the formal visit of the father of the intended bridegroom attended by all the chief members of the family to the father of the intended bride; they go in procession singing the betrothal song, and bearing with them, fastened to the stock of a whip, the marriage doll, that is to say, a kerchief made into the form of a doll and adorned with strings of pearls and corals, and having attached to it silver and paper roubles representing the amount which the bridegroom is prepared to give, if this is accepted the doll is placed in the tent with the icons, and the father of the bride brings with her these possessions however, as we shall presently see they are not lost to the bride's family.

A week before the marriage, so says Wlislöcki, the bride and the bridegroom go by night to the nearest running stream and place on the bank two lighted candles, should the wind blow either of them out this is a bad omen, and the couple hasten to throw into the stream apples and eggs to propitiate the water-spirits.

Before the marriage the bride collects "Luck-Posies" and burns them by night at a cross-road. These luck posies are bunches of red and white flowers, called in Transylvania "Himmelfahrtsblumen" that is "Ascention Flowers" these are gathered by the Gypsy girls on St. John's night and bound into posies which are carried concealed under the clothes. They are supposed to protect the wearers from all ill-luck. They are burned lest they should fall into the hands of some other girl, who might by means of them draw away the heart of the bridegroom.

The actual marriage ceremony which Wlislöcki describes has nothing particularly Gypsy in its character, it is simply the ordinary ceremony of the Orthodox Greek Church.

On entering into the Church the bride lets fall unperceived a gold piece which during the betrothal ceremony she has kept tightly squeezed under her arm-pit. (It must be noted that the rite of the Orthodox Church consists of two portions, the betrothal and the crowning), this is to guard against witchcraft, and if anyone finds it he will have no luck for nine years.

A man on his marriage passes into the family of his wife. From his wife's family he receives the tent, the waggon, the horse, the working tools, and everything which goes to constitute the entire plenishing of a Gypsy household. But these still belong to the wife and her family, and the wife's relations keep a sharp look-out that the goods of the clan are not wasted or squandered by the husband. As I have before mentioned the betrothal song given by Dobrowolski enumerates these belongings as forming part of the dowry brought by the wife. Should the wife die, all these chattels, as well as any children of the marriage revert to the family of the wife. This point was confirmed during the visit of the Gallician Gypsies to London. The wife of one of the members died, and shortly afterwards there was a violent quarrel in the camp, the cause of it was unknown to the outer world, since in accordance with Gypsy custom they refused to bring their internal dissensions before a Gorgio Court of Justice, but my friend Mr. Shaw who was often a visitor at the tents found that it all turned on the fact that the husband had attempted to leave the society, taking with him the belongings of the wife, and the children of the marriage. Though the wife and the children of the dead wife belong fully to the family of the wife, the husband is in a way only a half-member of the family. On the death of the wife he can enter into another family by a fresh marriage, but if he does so he becomes a stranger to the family of the first wife, and only can again become a cousin and relation of this family by a certain ceremony. When a child is born of the new wife, he must choose some man of the family of the former wife as "Gossip": when the hair of the newborn child is first cut the gossip rubs on the new shorn head the

contents of three eggs of a black hen which have been broken into salted water.

DEATH AND BURIAL.

The Gypsy loves his kindred with an intensity which the Gorgio can hardly understand; and the death of any member of a family causes heartrending sorrow among the survivors; those who wish to get some idea of a death scene in a camp of English Gypsies should read the singularly beautiful and pathetic account of the death of "Sagul" in Groomes "*Kriegspiel*," the gypsy novel par excellence.

Dobrowolski gives an account of the death of a Gypsy woman, but the ceremonies which he describes are simply those of the Orthodox Church; there is however, one pathetic little touch where the husband asks the priest whether he might be allowed to burn a little incense before her as if she were a saint, since she had been such a "lucky" wife.

Whislocki says that as soon as death takes place the body is washed with salt-water the water being then given to the cattle to drink, in order that they may wax and prosper; this association of salt with death is not peculiar to the Gypsies; in many parts of this country, and notably in the Highlands of Scotland, it was always the custom to place a pewter platter containing salt on the body of a dead person.

The body of the dead Gypsy is then taken into the open air but not by the ordinary entrance of the building; if the death takes place in a tent then an opening is made in the side of the tent, usually towards the east, while if it takes place in a hut then it is taken out through the window.

After the burial the wise women of the tribe collect all the personal belongings of the deceased, and burn them on the grave, to prevent the soul coming back in search of them and terrifying the survivors. This same custom of burning the possessions of the dead has long been known to Gypsy students in this country, and numerous instances have been noted where the waggon and all the most costly belongings have thus been destroyed, gold watches and other matters of this kind being broken to pieces and stamped into the ground: For a full account of all such customs those desirous of information should consult the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*. This observance is to my own knowledge carried in this country to a point beyond the mere destruction of material objects. On the death of a Gypsy the members of his family will altogether renounce the use of some article of food or drink which may have been specially associated with the deceased. I knew of one family in which the survivors after the death of the father entirely gave up the use of brandy, that having been almost the last thing he drank; similarly the use of a particular name will be given up, and there is always a disinclination to refer by name to one recently dead. The journey of the soul to the kingdom of the dead is, according to the Transylvanian gypsies a hard one, it leads over seven mountains which fight one with another, the way is guarded by a serpent, and then it passes through twelve deserts where the wind cuts like a knife; some say that the burning of the cloths is to provide warmth against this bitter cold.

These Transylvanian and Turkish Gypsies believe that the soul cannot enter the kingdom of the dead until the body decays, and the Turkish Gypsies for a year after death light a death fire every seventh day, into which they cast the broken meats from the day's meal, that the soul may be fed and warmed on its journey.

We find a parrallel to this death journey in the "*Razorbridge*" over which a Mohammedan must pass into paradise; and one still more complete in the Yorkshire belief in the passage of the soul over "*Whinny Moor*." Aubrey mentions this belief, and no doubt many are familiar with the death song quoted by the same author, which was reproduced by Scott in the *Minstrels of the Scottish Border*," (vol. 2, p. 363) which runs as follows:—

A LYKE WAKE DIRGE.

This ae nicht, this ae nicht,
 Every nicht and a',
 Fire and sleet, and candelicht,
 And Christ receive thy saul.
 When thou from hence dost pass away,
 Every nicht and a'
 To Whinny-Moor thou comest at last,
 And Christ receive thy saul.
 If ever thou gavest hosen or shoon,
 Every nicht and a',
 Sit thee down and put them on,
 And Christ receive thy saul.
 But if hosen or shoon thou never gave nane,
 Every nicht and a',
 The Whinnes shall prick thee to the bone,
 And Christ receive thy saul.

MY GYPSY FRIENDS.

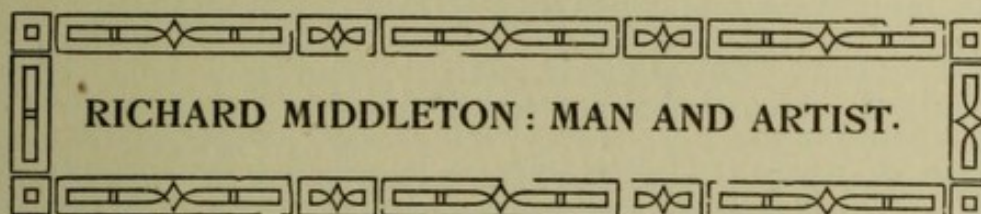
BY J. FAIRFAX BLAKEBOROUGH.

The gypsy fires are shining,
 The kettle sings a song,
 And stomachs want their lining
 That are empty all day long.
 Then welcome if you've lost your way,
 For daylight's past and gone,
 And strangers might do worse than stay
 To house with Gypsy John!
 So dip your fingers in the stew,
 And drink a cup to me;
 I'll fill again, and drink to you
 A health in Romany!

"Noo, Master wa've cummed your waay ageean, an' Ah suppose ya'll let us camp in t'lahl (little) paddock as wa've deean afoor?" Such was the appeal I used to have made me regularly twice a year from the recognised leader of the band of my gypsy friends when I lived at the training stables high up on the Yorkshire Hambleton Hills. "Aye, and welcome" I used to reply adding "All I have to ask is that you'll keep your dogs fastened up as we have nothing to do with the shooting here, and the head-keeper is a friend of mine." So the horses used to be unyoked and "hobbled" (i.e. secured by one leg) in the paddock, and my gypsy friends soon had their open air encampment in order. Almost as a matter of instinct they at once took in the situation with regard to shelter, sun and wind, and placed their vans and arranged their fires etc., accordingly. After "stables" I invariably walked round and had a pipe with our visitors. As I write their faces come before me, finely chiselled, swarthy skinned, jet black eyes and hair, all the racial characteristics which inter-marriage and open-air life have retained from generation to generation. Here one had a link with the past—the long past. Here, in our paddock, adjoining the racing stables, were the lineal descendants of a people misunder-

stood, maligned, misrepresented, and feared by English folk through all time. Still wandering, still harried and hurried on from one place to another, not yet free from superstition and a certain amount of fear, still deeply interesting and surrounded by poetry—such were my gypsy friends of a few years ago, such are they still as a people. It was ever so and I find in the North Riding Quarter Sessions Records that in 1600 the Constables of the little village of Sutton under the Whitestonecliffe (two miles from Hambleton) were presented “for permitting four women (Vagrantes Egyptianorum) to stay in the said Village and go forth unpunished, although previously warned.” The Act of Henry VIII and 1st and 2nd Phillip and Mary was very severe upon gypsies and in rural England the spirit of it is not yet quite obsolete. To revert to the encampment of about twenty souls who used to arrive at Hambleton annually a few days before St. Barnabas’ Tide. They were en route for Borough-bridge fair and had already been at Seamer (near Scarborough) and Helmsley fairs horse “swopping” and dealing. They were always most orderly and never in any way abused the privileges granted them. When I used to arrive it was usually the retiring hour of the younger children and I remember once walking behind the stone wall at the other side of which was a covered flat cart on which the little ones were laid. The mother, or one of the women of the party was with them and all unconscious of my being near was “tucking them in.” “Hez thoo sed thi prayers Kothar?” She asked. Kothar had not and frankly admitted it and forthwith began “Trinitas, Trinitas, Egmar, Egmar, Holy Mother of God and all the defnah Angels, keep me by the Sign of the Cross and Holy Water, by the seven minteries [mysteries, (sacraments?)] from all evil spirits, en to dars, till the golden God does waken me and scare them. Trinitas, Trinitas, Egmar, Egmar.” I have spelled the words as they sounded to me. It was a touching and unintentional eaves-dropping! On reaching the midst of the camp I was offered the place of honour on the box seat of one of the flat carts which did duty as table and seat in gypsy economics. I asked him, whom I took to be the leader and chief (and who certainly gave all the commands and was looked to for instructions) if he were a Roman Catholic but he replied “No! we get oor bairns kessenned at t’chetch (Ecclesia Anglicana) bud wa nivver gans onnywhere, Ya see wa’ve neea Sundaay cleas an’ deean’t know mich aboot beeaks (books).” I found they were very particular about the Sacrament of Baptism and that when any of them were at the point of death they were anxious for a priest to give them the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood. One priest who had been called into the midst of a wood to carry the Holy mysteries once told me a pathetic story of a gypsy girl who was dying and to whom he told the simple gospel story of Our Lord’s death on the Cross and of his having died for her. “Did He die for *me*?.....And I’ve never said thank you,” she said. That en passant. I found my friends much travelled and full of experiences yet beyond horsecraft and woodcraft and the side-lights of these subjects, unable to converse on any other topics. They were deeply interested in the horses we had in training and invariably asked permission to come and look round the boxes containing our thoroughbred equine charges. Although themselves dealing mainly in aged and blemished horses they knew a good animal when they saw one and stood admiringly in the box of such a horse as you and I should dwell and gloat over a work of art. Horsemanship they appreciate too though they rarely use a saddle and I remember one boy, (who came from gypsy stock and who now has a Jockey’s License) who was with us and turned out one of the best horsemen I ever saw. The band had the use of our saddle room when their visits were attended with bad weather and here some of them frequently slept. There was all manner of horse clothing and saddlery in the cases and on the walls but we never missed so much as a brush or a curb chain. On the other hand the gypsies invariably made little presents to some of our lads—kneckchiefs or pendants

and taught them some of their arts—plating leather, making whistles out of certain twigs, setting snares and so on. They always came to bid us good-bye and express their gratitude before they moved off and told us that they expected to “fall in” with some of their friends at a certain common or cross roads a few hours latter. Cleanness of mind and cleanliness of body, softness of speech, poetic and expressive eyes, courteous, grateful, and interesting—these were some of the characteristics of my friends the gypsies, who are a little section of a people unto themselves.



I have before me two books, “Poems and Songs” and “The Ghost Ship and Other Stories,” the work of Richard Middleton, who died in Brussels in December of last year under poignant circumstances, to the great grief of those who knew him and to the permanent loss of English letters.

I met Richard Middleton some six years back, when I was secretary of the Society of New Bohemians, a group of novelists, verse-writers, journalists and miscellaneous literary types. Middleton made an instantaneous appeal by his youth and charm of intellect to a group of men *borné* to a degree, but not too jaded to appreciate a fresh new gift. At that time, I fancy, Middleton had taken no decisive steps in literature but he had written verses of a rare sweetness.

As he was at twenty-nine when he died, so he was at twenty-three, a surprisingly mature figure of a man, tall and heavy in build and strongly bearded. The nose and mouth were youthfully small, however, and the eyes were the clear eyes of childhood, sometimes merry and mischievous, sometimes wistful and troubled. In his quiet moments he had a curious note of deprecation and shyness in his voice; in a more characteristically wide-awake mood his voice was loud and masterful, and of a resonance, in public places, sometimes embarrassing to conventional friends.

There are a number of good talkers in London—the brothers Chesterton, Hillaire Belloc, Edgar Jepson, Norreys Connell, Conrad Noel, to mention a few that spring to mind instantaneously—but Richard Middleton had a quality of tingling unexpectedness in his talk which distinguished him from all other varieties of good talkers whatsoever. His mind was a remarkably sane, lucid and logical one, but his imagination was whimsically and delightfully freakish, giving continual expositions of realism in fairyland, of flashes of joy shooting through forests of nightmare. He was a genuine talker, not an expert monologist with a prepared text. His inspirations were often minted from the remarks of others, a process in which small change was often transmitted into bright gold.

In tavern or tea-house he attracted startled attention, first of all, by his striking appearance, a great hulk of a man, with roughly curling black beard and finely chiselled scarlet lip, dressed with more than Carlylean carelessness, with the large soft felt hat common at once to Nonconformity and Poetry, with delightfully crinkled garments, especially a kind of short corsair cloak. These are not the externals of polite latter-day life and even more polite latter-day literature, and they always excited uneasy recognition from the immense Just-So class, who were further outraged by extravagant remarks pitched by Middleton in the tone of a bo'sun in a half-gale. But hearers of intelligence were generally startled into a laugh after a

short period of overhearing. This loudness of tone sounded like effrontery, but it was the effrontery of combined gaiety and shyness. He was not then concerned with the discussion of heavy matters of life and death or tortuous questions of conduct or destiny. Talking—light, desultory, startling, irresponsible talking—he rightly considered as one of the finest games in the world, and as well worth playing as the Beggar-My-Neighbour of successful commercial people, or of the Consequences of the artistic folk who live in terms of Problems.

Like all men of genuine wit, he had a great command of irony, a species of irony so delicately mischievous that it was excessively difficult to counter it. This was a rapier which made many wounds, and which greatly mortified the wounded.

Over and above the jollity and irony of his conversation in point of attraction was the appeal of a very vivid and unusual imagination, playing often with images and stories sinister and *macabre*, but illuminating them with delicate little flashes of essential humour—a page of Flaubert as it were interwoven with Hans Andersen or J. M. Barrie. Had he lived he would have written many wonderful prose fantasies of the nature of the "Ghost Ship." I have spent many nights of bookish revelling with himself, his chosen friend and editor, Mr. Harry Savage, and a few other intimates. We have drunk in daylight together when the talk was more intoxicating than the wine. Middleton had read much and remembered much. He knew the poets as intimates. In his boyhood he had come under the influence of the singers of the Elizabethan days, and he breathed their spirit. It is not within my power to give any tangible instance of exactly how he conveyed his impressions. His brilliancies were scattered as the little jewels of Buckingham.

But he had fits of morbid despondency, of almost ghastly introspection. He desired the best in life, material and spiritual, and the narrow things of life could at most afford him the second best. His introspection was a curse to him, as under it his achievements withered into insignificance under his own critical and unsatisfied eye.

How can one describe him but as a Personality, as a man who convinced without effort. It can be said with absolute certainty that no one ever met Richard Middleton, even in the most casual and fugitive measure, without being impressed by his force. His effects were obtained not by outward eccentricities or mannerisms, though he was, indeed, the most unconventional of men, but by sheer flashing originality.

I have indicated that Middleton was in the inner sense self-conscious, and that this was much more of a pain than a delight to him. He was also extremely self-centred and appeared curiously indifferent to the feelings of others. As has been pointed out elsewhere, however, by the one who knew him best of all, this hardness of character was, before his passing, yielding to tolerance and sympathy in his more intimate relations with his fellows. For children he had always a wide heart, and was possessed of a surprising comprehension of the soul of childhood. He could talk to them as equals, a privilege granted to few who have left the golden kingdom behind them. He had the secret of the Pied Piper. He was a shaggy Peter Pan with a briar pipe.

There may be varying estimates as to Richard Middleton's place as a poet; but there can be no question that he was a poet. He is in the authentic line of those who wore the purple of song. He had the vision splendid, the eye to survey "the light that never was on sea or land." His guiding impulses in poetry were a passionate desire for beauty, a wistful longing for the great peace of death.

His colouring is always exquisite, his rhythm implicit with the most delicate cadences.

But under the colour, through the melody, there is a bloom that pales, a note that sobs.

In "Dawn Love" he writes of the beauty of the divine conception of womanhood:

Not with my lips, O God, not with my eager hands
These purple seas were made and these enchanted lands,
It was not I who drew these breezes forth
And called these stars to diadem the North,
It was not I who set her in this place
And in a dream of dreams decreed her face.

I only stoop to serve her careless days,
Bid the glad birds sing gladder roundelays
To charm her ears, and summer buds unfold
The crimson petals from their hearts of gold
To deck the earth her very feet have trod.
I sing the triumph of the Artist, God.

"The Bathing Boy" is as finely wrought as an exquisite statue. The marble is coloured, it is true, but the tint is too delicately lustrous to seem incongruous. In this poem, the melancholy I have spoken of is almost hidden away:

I saw him standing idly on the brim
Of the quick river in his beauty clad,
So fair he was that nature looked at him
And touched him with her sunbeams here and there,
So that his cool flesh sparkled, and his hair
Blazed like a crown above the naked lad.

And so I wept: I have seen lovely things,
Maidens and stars and roses all a-nod
In moonlight seas, but love without his wings
Set in the azure of an August sky,
Was all too fair for my mortality,
And so I wept to see the little god.

Till with a sudden grace of silver skin
And golden lock he dived, his song of joy
Broke with the bubbles as he bore them in:
And lo, the fear of night was on that place,
Till decked with new-found gems and flushed of face,
He rose again, a laughing, choking boy.

The poem "Regret" is the pæan for the passing beauty of mortality:

Silver rose was the morning, his breast was strewn with pearls—
Spoil of the dew-bright cherry that danced along the spray,
And I saw the sun of beauty shine out in the eyes of girls
Who bowed their limbs to the morning, for love of the primrose way.

Ah! to dream and awake, to have seen and to see no more!
The roses falter and perish, the clouds droop low on the hill,
And the secret song of the maiden that was so sweet before
Is still with the pipe of the boy, as my echoing heart is still.

The first story in the prose volume, "The Ghost Ship," though gloriously underivative, might have been written by the combined pens of the late R. L. Stephenson and Gilbert Chesterton. It is the yarn of an old pirate craft that is blown by a great wind into a village near the Portsmouth Road, half-way between London and the sea. The simple narrator and the village landlord are inspecting the strange craft. The landlord is speaking:

"All the horses in Fairfield won't move her out of my turnips," he said, frowning at her.

Just then we heard a noise on her deck, and we looked up and saw that a man had come out of her front cabin and was looking down on us very peaceably. He was dressed in a black uniform set out with rusty gold lace, and he had a great cutlass by his side in a brass sheath. "I'm Captain Bartholomew Roberts," he said, in a gentleman's voice, "put

in for recruits. I seem to have brought her rather far up the harbour."

"Harbour!" cried landlord; "Why you're fifty miles from the sea."

Captain Roberts did not turn a hair. "So much as that, is it?" he asked coolly, "Well it's of no consequence."

The village of Fairfield is a notable place for ghosts, historical and home-keeping ghosts, for whom the living dwellers in the village have an affectionate regard, a little tinged with contempt. The junior ghosts are the first to feel the bad example of the cosy ghost-ship with its delectable rum of honey and fire.

There was hardly a young man among all the ghosts of Fairfield who did not roll home in the small hours of the morning the worse for liquor. I used to wake up in the night and hear them stumble past my house, singing outrageous songs. The worst of it was that we couldn't keep the scandal to ourselves, and the folk at Greenhill began to talk of "sodden Fairfield" and taught their children to sing a song about us:

"Sodden Fairfield, sodden Fairfield, has no use for bread and butter,
Rum for breakfast, rum for dinner, rum for tea, and rum for supper."

The ghost-ship goes as it came, in a high wind of mystery and jollity. It is a wonderful tarry yarn with the wild breath of the sea upon it.

There are in the book two unmistakable chapters of autobiography, reminiscent studies in the psychology of boyhood and the miseries of school days to the unusual boy (Dick Middleton had probably a dog's life at school). These studies lose in effect, one fancies, by being too meticulous, by being too carefully "keyed down" but they carry very dismal conviction with them.

"The Conjuror," the story of a very clumsy juggler, takes the breath away. The episode is told with the greatest simplicity and of very uninspiring people, but it catches the throat. A conjuror of sorts who is doing an "extra turn" in a music-hall, along with his wife, in the desperate hope of getting an engagement that will keep the two from starvation, finds he can do nothing with his audience, entirely ignorant as they are of his circumstances, and entirely brutal as they would continue to be if they knew of them. Everything goes ludicrously wrong with him, and his blunders impel the audience to gross hilarity. Finally, he plays his poor trump card, the act known in professional illusionist circles as "the vanishing lady trick."

As he led his wife forward to present her to the audience the conjuror was wondering whether the mishaps that would ruin his chance would meet him even here. If something should go wrong—he felt his wife's hand tremble in his, and he pressed it tightly to reassure her. He must make an effort of will. For a second the lights danced before his eyes, then he pulled himself together. He turned round to conduct his wife to the little alcove from which she should vanish. She was not on the stage!

And, in fact, the little woman never partakes of the steak-and-onion supper she has promised her little man, nor of any other supper, unless perhaps in the fourth Dimension.

There is a sadder note—for the sorrows of children are greater than those of men and women—in "The Passing of Edward."

The story-teller finds Dorothy sitting on the beach, sedate and pale. "Where's Edward?" he enquires. "Edwards' dead," she says simply. "He died last year after you left." He tries to comfort her with the games which some few grown ups know are the fascination of young things, feeling all the time that the dead playfellow is holding her back from him:

And presently we came to a clearing where the leaves of forgotten years lay brown and rotten beneath our feet, and the air was full of death.

"Let's be going back. What do you think Dorothy," I said. "I think," she said slowly, "I think that this would be a very good place to catch beetles."

A wood is full of secret noises, and that is why, I suppose, we heard a pair of small quick feet come with a dance of triumph through the rustling bracken. For a minute we listened deeply, and Dorothy broke from my side with a piercing call on her lips.

"Oh, Edward, Edward!" she cried; "Edward!"

But the dead may play no more.

Ah! but they can. And from the quiet graveyard in Brussels, Dick Middleton, the fantastic playfellow, comes back from the dead.

LOUIS J. McQUILLAND.



THE SILENT WOMAN

NOTES & QUERIES.

MULLOS.

The Lincolnshire Grays are a superstitious family. Even that shrewd old *chovihani*, Caroline Gray, believes in ghosts.

One evening in her tent at Grimsby, she told me the following experience. "We wur campin' one time down a nice bit o' gorsy lane under the shelter of a wood. It wur in the back end o' the year, and the leaves lay on the ground. There wur a biggish dry ditch atween our *tan* and the *wesh*. Lor, I minds one dark night when it wur still as the grave, we wur abed, and my old Tom wur asleep, but fer some reason I couldn't get off. Lyin' there listenin' to sounds,—not a wery pleasant thing, I can tell yer—I heard a footstep a-coming up the ditch side nearest our *tan*. Now in them days there wur rummy characters about, and I sez to me-self, sez I, if blows is goin' to be struck, Carrie had better be the fust to strike. So I up with the kittle-iron, and creeps under the blanket out on to the grass, and listens and listens, but nivver a blessed sound could I catch, till, ay, my *deari chavvi*, there comes a rustling in the *wesh*, and the bushes seemed to part as if summat wur about to appear like. Nex' moment, a woman with a white face stood afore me, wavin' her pore thin arms, but nivver sayin' nothin'. I wur that frit that the kittle-iron, it drops clean outen my hand, and then I screams, and—she wur gone like a flash. Nex' mornin', the keeper's wife, as lived up the lane, tell'd me as how a *râni* wur once murdered in that here *wesh*, and then I know'd it wur her *mulli* as I'd seen. Oh! yes I believes in ghosts, I do. But there's our Eva, as sez she don't believe nothin' of the kind. Life is sweet, sez our Eva, and when yer dead yer done for. *Keka*, she don't believe in them *mullos*, but I do, 'cos I've see'd 'em, I have."

SWOPPING WIVES.

Once upon a time there were two tinkers, one of whom possessed a foal and an ugly old wife with only one eye, while the other had a pretty young wife who was very much admired by his companion. The husband of the comely lady set covetous eyes upon the foal, and after a few friendly glasses, the animal changed owners on the express stipulation, of course, that the wives should also be transferred at the same time. Whenever wives are swopped in this manner, a horse, so much money or whiskey, a new suit of clothes, or perhaps a new budget, generally form part of the exchange. The budget is the sow-skin bag containing the tools used in tinkering.

HANSELL SMITH.

I once picked up the following story while listening to a friend's reminiscences. Said my pal, who, by the way, is not a *Romanichel*, "Hansell Smith was the finest Gypsy I ever saw, and as a boy I admired him so much that I wished I could grow up like him. He had such a fierce moustache, and was very dark, and good-looking. The time I'm thinking of was about thirty-three years ago, when Hansell would be somewhere between twenty-five and thirty years of age. Hansell travelled Buckinghamshire. He was one day standing over a rabbit-hole near a tree. With a piece of iron he struck at a rabbit as it came out of the hole. The iron struck the tree, and glancing off caught Hansell on the head, and killed him. I well remember the funeral, which took place in the next parish to ours."—W. C. HALL.

BEFORE THE BEAKS.

One of the Coopers was once brought before the Magistrates for some trifling misdemeanour. "What is your name?" Asked the pompous, red-faced chairman of the bench. "*Didakai, didakai, tut, tut, tut,*" replied the Gypsy. "Come, come, my man, let's have no nonsense here. We sit here for serious business, not to listen to conundrums. So answer my question, what is your name?" "*Didakai, didakai, tut, tut, tut,*" "Very well then, you'll pay ten shillings for each *didakai*, and fifteen shillings apiece for the *tut-tut-tuts.*" "You *dinelo,*" said Cooper's wife to her husband when he got outside the Court. "You'd better have *pukker'd chi-chi* at all, then the old fool would have let you off without paying nothing."

DEEP ROMANI.

Scene: a leafy glade in the heart of the New Forest. Overhead, the feathered tribes are filling the umbrageous beech-trees with heavenly melody. Below, among the fronded ferns, the pretty little rabbits are running almost between the legs of the Romanichels, who are preparing their evening meal beside a gurgling brook. A lady, good-looking but rather tired and hungry, has joined the merry company, and seeing a plate of bread and butter, she asks for a piece of *kil-mâro*. "No, my dear lady," says an old crone, "that's no *romminus*. Where can you have picked up such a trashy *lav*? If you want to *jin* the real old deep *lav* what us black Gypsies uses for 'bread and butter,' I'll tell you, and it's a great secret this here word is. It's SPREADUMS."

A ROMANI AMULET.

As a boy in Boston in Lincolnshire, I once met an old Gypsy who went by the name of Mrs. Coleman. Her face was deeply browned by years of exposure to sun and wind, and her hair was as dark as a raven's wing. Three large coral beads she wore in each ear as ornaments, while round her neck were hung two rows of similar beads. Her fingers were adorned with several gold and silver rings. I remember her pulling from her breast and showing me an amulet. It was a dried frog, yet so carefully had it been preserved that it still showed the lustre of the skin. Curiously enough I came across the same old Gypsy just recently on the Grimsby road. Near ninety years of age she is now, yet hale and hearty, and ready to brave all elements. She still wears the coral beads and the rings, and still possesses her dried frog. Last Winter she slept in her little wagon on the ice-bound fens near Wisbech.

H. STUART-BAKER.

PLAYFUL GYPSIES.

It was in the time of snow, and in the tent-baulk a poor Gypsy mother sat crouching over a few red embers in a perforated bucket. Just then a rasping voice outside betrayed the presence of a horrid *prastramengo*. "Now you old Gypsy there," said he, peering through a rent in the tent blanket, "I've received horders to move you hoff this ground. So pack up your traps to-day, and let's see no more of your hugly old face." "Oh," sighed Mother Petulengro, "you're a nice dear Christian man, you are. We've got to go, have we? Well, just wait a minute till I speak to my dear children." Presently the "children," in the shape of four big strapping fellows, ranging from eighteen to twenty-five years, came round to the front, and, after a word with their mother, began to snowball that constable. Not content with this, one of the "children" tripped him up, and they all gave a hand at rolling him over and over in the snow. Poor fellow, he was soon in a state of collapse, and, crawling to the tent door, moaned out his bitter tale of ill-treatment into the ear of the Gypsy mother. And this was her reply. "You niver want to take no notice o' little children. They're werry playful, like kittens, you know, werry, werry playful. That's all."

Messrs. Joseph Williams, the well-known publishers of Didakai Ditties, inform us that they own the sole rights of the Lyric "My Sweet Sister," which appeared in our last issue.

Mr. J. Fairfax Blakeborough reminds us of the following which appeared in *Bailey's Magazine* for April, 1912:—

"Lavengro asks the dealer how, if he were down on his luck, he would 'whisper' a horse out of a field. The reply is:—'I whispers a horse out of a field in this way. I have a mare in my stable; well, in the early season of the year I goes into my stable Well, I puts the sponge into a small bottle which I keeps corked. I takes my bottle in my hand, and goes into a field, suppose by night, where there is a fine stag-horse. I manage with great difficulty to get within ten yards of the horse, who stands staring at me just ready to run away. I then uncorks my bottle, presses my forefinger to the sponge, and holds it out to the horse; the horse gives a sniff, then a start, and comes nearer. I corks up my bottle and puts it in to my pocket. My business is done, for the next two hours the horse would follow me anywhere—the difficulty would be to get rid of him.'"

All through Borrow's life and wanderings, gipsies and their horses were his greatest delights. The secret of his popularity amongst the Romanies was a simple one. They never heard a wrong word leave his lips; he never asked a favour; and he loved a horse.

Members are specially asked to assist in the collection of items of news, and to send a letter or postcard to the Secretary immediately anything comes to their knowledge. Customs—habits—births—marriages—deaths—folk-tale, in fact everything of interest is wanted.

A list of the names and addresses of 'settled' Gypsies in every locality is in preparation, and members are asked to report all in their district.

W TOWNLEY SEARLE,
Honorary Secretary.

ENGLISH-GYPSY VOCABULARY.—Continued.

Coffin, Múlo móxto

Coire, Késter, chórda, sōv lása

Cold, n., Shil

Cold, adj., Shilino, shirilo

Collar, Menéngro

Colliers, Wóngaréngries, wón-gali-gáiri

Comb, n., Kóngali

Comb, v., Kóngl, kóna

Come, Av, avél, awél, 'vel, 'wel, áver

Companions, Mályaw

Confined, Chived to woodrus, póshii

Constable, Moóshkero

Conversation, Rókeropén, róker-ben, rókerobén, rókamus

Convict, n., Bitchaméngro

Cook, n., Hóbenéngro, hóben-éngri

Cook, v., Kérav, kel, kair

Cooper, n. pr., Wardéngro

Copper, adj., Harko, * horkipen, * haúrengo, hólono

Copper, n., Haúro

Coppersmith, Hákoméskro*

Cord, Shólo, Shélo

Corn, Ghiv

Corner, Koónsus, koónshi

Corpse, Troópus, troópo, moólo

Cough, Bósherus, shel

Count, Ghinja, ghinya

Country, } Tem

County, }

Country, adj., Teméskri

Countryman, Teméngro

County-town, Stérípen-gav

Court, v., Kom, píriv

Cousin, Siménsa

Cover, v., Choróva

Cow, Groóvni, groóven

Crab, Heréngro-mátcho

Cream, Smenting, sméntini

Creator, Káiróméngro

Cress, Panéngri shok

Crooked, Bóngo

Cross, adj., Hóino, hóno, kórni

Crow, Kaúlo chíriklo

Crown (five shillings), Koórona, pansh kóla

Cry, v., Rōv

Cup, Dash, koóri, kóro, kúra, paloo*

Cup and saucer, Doói-dash, doo-das

Curse, v., Sóverhol, sülverkon, sóvlohol

Curse, n., Sólohóloomus, sóvlo-hóloben, sóverhóloben

Cut, v., Chin

Cut off, Chin talé, chin alé

Cut, n., Chinoben

Cyder, Pobéngro, póbesko-píaméskro

D

Dance, v., Kel

Dance, n., Kélopen

Dark, Támlo, kaúlo

Daughter, Chei

Day, Dívvus, divéz

Dead, Moólo, múlo

Deaf, 'Shoóko

Deaf person, 'Shoóko kanéngri

Dear, Kómelo

Death, Méripén

Deceit, Hoókaben

Deep, Baúro

Deer, Staáni

Derbyshire, Chúmbe-kálesko-tem

Deserter, Práster-méngro

prásteró-móngro

Devil, Bang, beng

Devil's Dyke, Béngesko-hev

Devilish, Bégalo, bengésko

Diamond, Bárvalo-bar

Die, Mer, mel,

Dig, Chin the poov

Dirt, Chik

Dirty, adj., Chilo híní,

moókedo, móxodo

Dirty, v., Móker

Distance, } Door

Distant, }

Divine, Doóvelkanéstó,

doóvelésko

Do, Kair, kel

Doctor, Tátcho drabéngro,

drabéngro

Doer, Kélooméngro

Dog, Joókel, jook, yákel

Doll, Koókelo, kóshno chávi, kóshieno tíkno

Doncaster, n. pr., Meilesto-gav, moilesto-gav

Donkey, Méila, móila

Don't, Maw, ma

Door, Woóda

Down, Talé, alé, 'lé

Dress, v., Rood

Dress, n., Roódoopen, rívoben,

joóvni-kólaw

Drink, v., Pee, pióva

Drink, n., Piaben, píamus

Drown, Tásser

Drug, Drab

Druggist, Drabéngri

Drum, Krámbrookos, koóro-méngri, wásto-bóshoméngro

Drunk, Mótto, peédlo

Drunk, To get, Lel mótti

Drunkard, Móttoméngro, pee-

méngro, píaméngro

Drunkness, Móttoben

Dry, Shoóko

Duck, Rétza

Dumb, Shoóker, kek tátcho adré the moo, lúllero*

Dung, Full, chik

Dunghill, Chíkésko-chúmbe

E

Ear, Kan

Earring, Kanéngro, kili, káno-méngro

Earth, n., Poov, chik

Earth, adj., Poóvesto

Easter, Yórakana koóroko

Easy, Shoókár

Eat, Kol, hol, haw

Eatab'es, Kóben, hóben, hólben

Educate, And apré

Eel, Sap, sápesko-mátcho

Egg, Yóro, yóri

Eight, Oitoo, * ochto, * doói-storáv

Eighteen-pence, Déshto-haúri, désti-kóri

Encamp, Tan

Enchantment, Fiz

Enemy, Wáfedo gáiro

England, Anghitérra

English, Gaújokones, gaújones

Englishman, Gaújo, Anitrákero (Anghitérrákero)

Enough, Doósta, dósta

Entire, Chólo

Entrails, Wéndraw, vénderi

Every, Sórkon

Evil, Doosh

Except, Tálla

Exchange, Púrabén

Excuse, n., Veéna

Eye, Yok

Eyebrow, Kor

Eyeglasses, Yokéngries

F

Face, Moói

Fagot, Túshni, Toóshni

Fair, n., Fáiros, Wagvaúro, walgaúrus, wélingaúro

Fairies, Mi-doóveléski-búta-fólki

Fall, v., Peróva, pel

False, Fóshono, malleco*

False laughter, Posbavaben*

Falsehood, Hoókaben

Famine, Baúro bókalobén

Far, Door

Farmer, Ghivéngro

Farmhouse, Ghívesto kair

Farther, Doórdair

Farthing, Lóli, lúli

Fashion, Drom

Fasten, Pándér, pand, pan

Fast, Pánlo

Fat, adj., Túlo

Fat, n., Túlopen

Father, Dad, dáds

Father-in-law, Stifo-dad

Fear, n. and v., Trash

Fearful, Tráshful

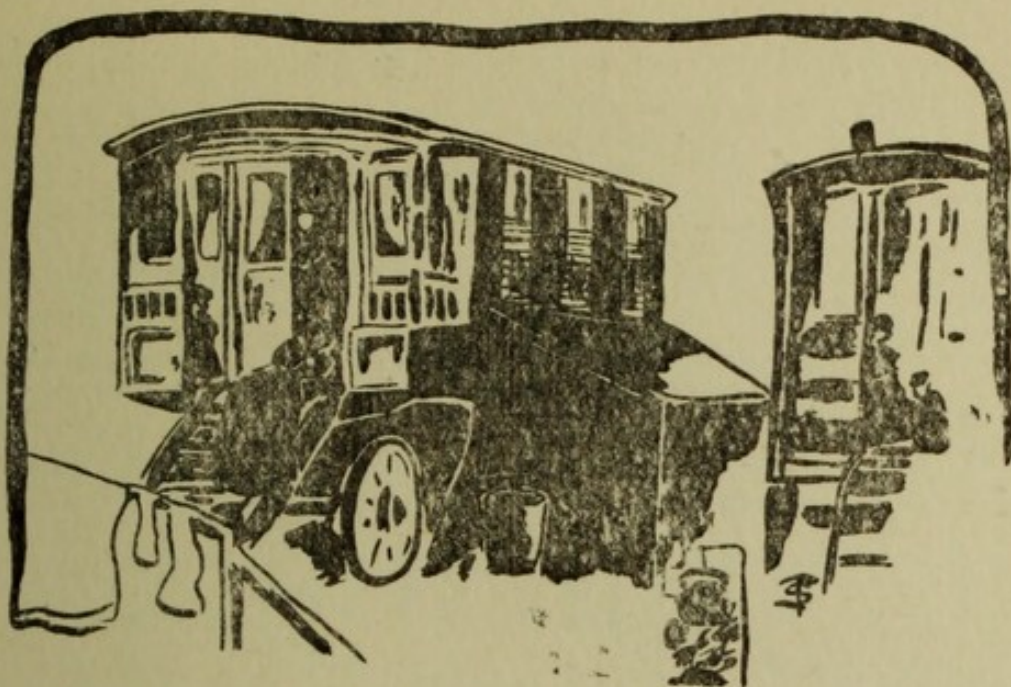
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