FOLK-LORE.

Highland Parallels to Welsh Popular Tales, and other Jottings.

By his interesting papers on "Welsh Fairy Tales", Professor Rhys has not merely earned the gratitude of readers of the *Cymmrodor* who have been interested by those tales, but also of present and future students of the folk-lore of this country, who will feel grateful to the Professor for the efforts he is making to save what is still left, but fast vanishing, of the legendary lore of the Cymry.

Mr. Rhys has not thought fit to cite parallels to the tales he has brought together, or to institute any comparison between the fairy lore of Wales and that of other lands and peoples, though to one so widely read this would have been an easy and pleasant task, as the result would have been interesting to his readers. As he has intimated, the important thing to do now is to collect what is left—a mere gleaning, but not, alas! after a harvest. I have no desire to depart from the example set by Professor Rhys, by indulging in theories and speculations; but as everything which tends to bring into clearer light the early relations of the Celtic peoples, whether in history, in tradition, or in legend, is of value, it may be worth while to direct attention to a few common features in the popular tales of Wales and those of the Gaelic Highlands. And as the first two volumes of Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, from which the examples are taken, are very scarce, it will be necessary to give some of these tales in full.

I.—Welsh and Gaelic Fairies.

To the Llanvabon tale of the changeling a close parallel is found in Campbell's tale (ii, 47) of—

THE SMITH AND THE FAIRIES

(From the Rev. Thomas Pattieson, Islay).

"Years ago there lived at Crossbrig a smith of the name of MacEachern. This man had an only child, a boy of about thirteen or fourteen years of age, cheerful, strong, and healthy. All of a sudden he fell ill; took to his bed, and moped whole days away. No one could tell what was the matter with him, and the boy himself could not, or would not, tell how he felt. He was wasting away fast; getting thin, old, and yellow; and his father and all his friends were afraid that he would die.

"At last, one day, after the boy had been lying in this condition for a long time, getting neither better nor worse, always confined to bed, but with an extraordinary appetite,—one day, while sadly revolving these things, and standing idly at his forge, the smith was agreeably surprised to see an old man, well known to him for his sagacity and knowledge of out-of-the-way things, walk into his shop. Forthwith he told him the occurrence which had clouded his life.

"The old man looked grave as he listened; and after sitting a long time pondering over all he had heard, gave his opinion thus—

"'It is not your son you have got. The boy has been carried away by the *Daoine Sith,* and they have left a *Sibhreach* in his place.'

"'Alas! and what am I then to do?' said the smith. 'How am I ever to see my own son again?'

"'I will tell you how,' answered the old man. 'But first, to make sure that it is not your own son you have got,

take as many empty egg-shells as you can get, go with them into the room, spread them out carefully before his sight, then proceed to draw water with them, carrying them two and two in your hands, as if they were a great weight, and arrange, when full, with every sort of earnestness, round the fire.'

"The smith accordingly gathered as many broken egg-shells as he could get, went into the room, and proceeded to carry out all his instructions.

"He had not been long at work before there arose from the bed a shout of laughter, and the voice of the seeming sick boy exclaimed, 'I am now 800 years of age, and I have never seen the like of that before.'

"The smith returned and told the old man. 'Well, now,' said the sage to him, 'did I not tell you it was not your own son you had? Your son is in Borra-cheill, in a digh there' (that is, a round green hill frequented by fairies). 'Get rid as soon as possible of this intruder, and I think I may promise you your son.'

"'You must light a very large and bright fire before the bed on which this stranger is lying. He will ask you, "What is the use of such a fire as that?" Answer him at once, "You will see presently!" and then seize him and throw him into the middle of it. If it is your own son you have got, he will call out to save him; but if not, this thing will fly through the roof.'

"The smith again followed the old man's advice; kindled a large fire, answered the question put to him as he had been directed to do, and seizing the child, flung him in without hesitation. The *Sibhreach* gave an awful yell, and sprung through the roof, where a hole was left to let the smoke out.

"On a certain night the old man told him the green hill where the fairies kept the boy, would be open. And on that night, the smith, having provided himself with a Bible, a

dirk, and a crowing cock, was to proceed to the hill. He would hear singing and dancing, and much merriment going on, but he was to advance boldly; the Bible he carried would be a certain safeguard to him against any danger from the fairies. On entering the hill, he was to stick the dirk in the threshold, to prevent the hill from closing upon him; 'and then', continued the old man, 'on entering, you will see a spacious apartment before you, beautifully clean, and there, standing far within, working at a forge, you will also see your own son. When you are questioned, say you are come to seek him, and will not go without him.'

"Not long after this the time came round, and the smith sallied forth, prepared as instructed. Sure enough, as he approached the hill, there was a light, where light was seldom seen before. Soon after, a sound of piping, dancing, and joyous merriment reached the anxious father on the night wind.

"Overcoming every impulse to fear, the smith approached the threshold steadily, stuck the dirk into it as directed, and entered. Protected by the Bible he carried on his breast, the fairies could not touch him; but they asked him, with a good deal of displeasure, what he wanted there. He answered, 'I want my son, whom I see down there, and I will not go without him.'

"Upon hearing this, the whole company before him gave a loud laugh, which wakened up the cock he carried dozing in his arms, who at once leaped up on his shoulders, clapped his wings lustily, and crowed loud and long.

"The fairies, incensed, seized the smith and his son, and throwing them out of the hill, flung the dirk after them, 'and in an instant all was dark'.

"For a year and a day the boy never did a turn of work, and hardly ever spoke a word; but at last, one day, sitting by his father and watching him finishing a sword he was

making for some chief, and which he was very particular about, he suddenly exclaimed, 'That is not the way to do it'; and taking the tools from his father's hands, he set to work himself in his place, and soon fashioned a sword the like of which was never seen in the country before.

"From that day the young man wrought constantly with his father, and became the inventor of a peculiarly fine and well-tempered weapon, the making of which kept the two smiths, father and son, in constant employment, spread their fame far and wide, and gave them the means in abundance, as they before had the disposition, to live content with all the world and very happily with one another."

The close resemblance of this tale to the Llanvabon fairy tale in *Cymmrodor* (vol. vi, pp. 204-214) is at once seen, the episode of the egg-shells especially marking their identity.

In all essential points the Gaelic fairies have a strong family likeness to those of Wales. "Stealing children from their cradles during the absence of their mothers" was a common practice with the Llanvabon fairies; and similarly in Scotland, "When poor women are confined it is unsafe to leave them alone till their children are baptised. If through any necessity they must be left alone, the Bible left beside them is sufficient protection" (Campbell, ii, 52). And, as has been seen, if they succeeded in carrying away an infant, the changeling, *Crimbil* in Glamorganshire, *Sibhreach*[1] in Islay, could be got rid of in some way by the agency of fire.

In both countries the fairies would work for certain people to whom they were friendly. They were very skilful, and would turn out an astonishing amount of work in a very short time.

Again, persons who entered their circles were unable to return, and could be recovered only with great difficulty and danger. The fairy tale from Sutherland (Campbell, ii, 63)

[1] Irish, *siobhradh* or *siobhrag*, a fairy, elf, goblin, sprite.—O'Reilly.

is a close parallel to several told in Sikes' *British Goblins*, pp. 70-5.

"A man, whose wife had just been delivered of her first-born, set off with a friend to the town of Lairg, to have the child's birth entered in the Session-books, and to buy a cask of whisky for the christening *fête*. As they returned, weary with a day's walk, or, as it is called in the Highlands, 'travelling', they sat down to rest at the foot of this hill [the hill of Durchâ], near a large hole, from which they were, ere long, astonished to hear a sound of piping and dancing. The father, feeling very anxious, entered the cavern, went a few steps in, and disappeared. The story of his fate sounded less improbable *then* than it would now; but his companion was severely animadverted on; and when a week elapsed, and the baptism was over, and still no signs of the lost one's return, he was accused of having murdered his friend. He denied it, and again and again repeated the tale of his friend's disappearance down the cavern's mouth. He begged a year and a day's law to vindicate himself; and used to repair at dusk to the fatal spot, and call and pray. The time allowed him had but one more day to run, and, as usual, he sat in the gloaming by the cavern, when what seemed his friend's *shadow* passed within it. He went down, heard reel tunes and pipes, and suddenly descried the missing man tripping merrily with the fairies. He caught him by the sleeve, stopped him, and pulled him out.

"'Bless me! why could you not let me finish my reel, Sandy?'

"'Bless me!' rejoined Sandy, 'have you not had enough of reeling this last twelvemonth?'

"'Last twelvemonth!' cried the other, in amazement; nor would he believe the truth concerning himself till he found his wife sitting by the door with a yearling child in her arms, so quickly does time pass in the company of THE *good people*."

The period of time demanded by the accused to clear himself, "a year and a day", constantly recurs in the Highland tales and others. And among ourselves, the holding of a National Eisteddfod (if one may, without treason against the *Gorsedd,* mention that venerable institution in connection with the fairies) must be proclaimed *un dydd a blwyddyn* beforehand. In Welsh fairy tales seven years was a common period of dwelling in fairyland.

The last tale seems to be incomplete, as it gives no clear account of the means by which the missing man was liberated. The following is more definite in that respect.

"If anyone is so unfortunate as to go into one of these hills, which are open at night, they never get out unless some one goes in quest of them, who uses the precaution of leaving a *gun* or *sword* across the opening, which the fairies cannot remove. A certain young woman was decoyed into one of these openings, who was seen by an acquaintance dancing with the merry race. He resolved on trying to rescue her, and, leaving his gun at the entrance, went forward, and seizing the young woman by the hand, dragged her out before they could prevent him. They pursued them, but having got her beyond the gun, they had no longer power to keep her. She told him she had nearly dropped down with fatigue, but she could not cease dancing, though she felt it would soon kill her. The young man restored her to her friends, to their great joy." (Campbell. ii, 51, 52.)

Here we are told that the fairies are powerless in the presence of a *gun* or a *sword.* In the story of "The Smith and the Fairies," given above, it was a *dirk.* In the Welsh fairy tales the same antipathy to iron appears, but in a slightly different form. In several of the Lake legends the lady returns to her own family whenever the husband *strikes* her with *iron.*

It has been thought that fairy tales are in the main nothing

but distorted history; that the fairies themselves represent a former race of men, of lower civilisation than those who came after and overcame them, and in whose traditions they were converted into supernatural beings. It has been supposed that, as these savages either originally dwelt, or were driven for safety to conceal themselves, in caves and holes in the earth, from which they would only emerge by stealth and generally during the night, the popular imagination converted them into a distinct race of beings tenanting a subterranean world, and having the power to issue from and return to it at their pleasure. If there is any truth in this theory, the antipathy of these beings to iron, and their helplessness in the presence of an iron weapon, may be simply the traditional record of a historical fact, that the primitive inhabitants, the originals of the imaginary race, were unacquainted with the use of iron, the possession of which enabled the invaders to overcome them.

II.—The Three Causeless Blows.

It will be remembered that in one form of the Welsh lake legend, the lake maiden warns her lover that if ever he should give her "three causeless blows" she will be forced to leave him and return to her own people. The blows were given thoughtlessly, and the predicted result came about.

An interesting parallel to this is found in one of Campbell's Highland tales, *Nighean Righ fo Thuinn*—the Daughter of King Under-waves (vol. iii, 403). It is one of the Ossianic tales, and evidently incomplete; but the episode bearing on the Welsh legend is given fully.

"The Fhinn were once together on the side of Beinn Eudainn on a wild night, and there was pouring rain and falling snow from the north. About midnight a creature of uncouth appearance struck at the door of Fionn. Her hair

was down to her heels, and she cried to him to let her in under the border of his covering. Fionn, observing her repulsive aspect, refuses. She went away and she gave a scream. Applying to Oisean, the son of Fionn (the well-known Ossian), she is similarly repulsed. She then turns to that pink of gallantry and knightly perfection, Diarmaid, Fionn's nephew, so celebrated for his flight with Grainne. Diarmaid, a *connoisseur* in female beauty, finds her appearance anything but pleasing, yet he admits her into his tent. She then asks permission to approach the fire, which is granted, and 'when she came up the people of the Finn began to flee, so hideous was she.' Her next demand, 'to be under the warmth of the blanket together with himself', somewhat severely tested his complaisance. He remonstrated mildly:

"'Thou art growing too bold,' said Diarmaid. 'First thou didst ask to come under the border of the covering, then thou didst seek to come to the fire, and now thou seekest leave to come under the blanket with me; but come.'

"She went under the blanket, but"—*Honi soit qui mal y pense*—"he turned a fold of it between them."

She is then suddenly transformed into "the most beauteous woman that man ever saw",[1] and asks Diarmaid where he would like to have the finest castle he had ever seen built; and in the morning, to the surprise of all, a beautiful castle is standing on the spot he had indicated.

The lady invites Diarmaid to take possession of it as his own, and consents to live in it with him as his wife; "but", she warns him, "SAY NOT TO ME THRICE HOW THOU DIDST FIND ME.'

[1] On this Mr. Campbell observes in a note—"The very same idea exists in a Spanish legend of the Cid, who in like manner showed kindness to, and shared his couch with, a leper. In the night he changed into St. Lazarus, all bright and shining."

"'I will not say to thee for ever how I found thee,' said Diarmaid.

* * * * *

"They spent three days in the castle together, and at the end of three days she said to him, 'Thou art sorrowful because thou art not together with the rest.'

"'Think that I am not feeling sorrow surely that I am not together with the Fhinn,' said he.

"'Thou hadst best go with the Fhinn, and thy meat and drink will be no worse than they are,' said she.

"'Who will take care of the greyhound bitch[1] and her three pups?' said Diarmaid.

"'Oh', said she 'what fear is there for the greyhound and for the three pups?'

"He went away when he heard that. He left a blessing with her, and he reached the people of the Finne, and Fionn, the brother of his mother, and there was a chief's honour and welcome before Diarmaid when he arrived, and they had ill-will to him because the woman had come first to them, and that they had turned their backs to her, and that he had gone before her wishes, and that matters had turned out so well.[2]

"She was out after he had gone away, and what should she see but one coming in great haste. Then she thought of staying without till he should come, and who was there but Fionn? He hailed her and caught her by the hand.

"'Thou art angry with me, damsel,' said he.

[1] Of this unfortunate "greyhound bitch", the tale gives no clear account; but she was evidently a great favourite with her master, who was as solicitous about her as a Northern collier might be about his "bull pup" at the present day.

[2] It is not stated in the tale, which is clearly defective, but we must assume from what follows that Fionn and the others had ascertained from Diarmaid the conditions on which the Princess had consented to become his wife, and that in their jealousy they concerted measures to bring about a violation of those conditions, and effect the separation of the pair.

"'Oh, I am not at all, Fhinn,' said she. 'Come in till thou take a draught from me.'

"'I will go if I get my request,' said Fionn.

"'What request might be here that thou shouldst not get?' said she.

"'That is, one of the pups of the greyhound bitch.'

"'Oh, the request thou hast asked is not great,' said she; 'the one thou mayst choose, take it with thee.'

"He got that and he went away.

"At the opening of the night came Diarmaid. The greyhound met him without, and she gave a yell.

"'It is true, my lass, one of thy pups is gone. But if thou hadst mind of how I found thee, how thy hair was down to thy heels, thou hadst not let the pup go.'

"'Thou, Diarmaid, what saidst thou so?'

"'Oh,' said Diarmaid, 'I am asking pardon.'

"'Oh, thou shalt get that,' said she; and he slept within that night, and his meat and drink were as usual.

"On the morrow he went to where he was yesterday, and while he was gone she went out to take a stroll, and while she was strolling about, what should she see but a rider coming to where she was. She stayed without till he reached her.

"Who reached her here but Oisean, son of Fionn?

"They gave welcome and honour to each other. She told him to go in with her, and that he should take a draught from her; and he said that he would if he might get his request.

"'What request hast thou?' said she.

"'One of the pups of the greyhound bitch.'

"'Thou shalt get that,' said she; 'take thy choice of them.'

"He took it with him, and he went away.

"At the opening of the night Diarmaid came home, and the greyhound met him without, and she gave two yells.

"'That is true, my lass', said Diarmaid; 'another is taken from thee. But if she had mind of how I found her, she had not let one of thy pups go. When her hair was down to her heels!'

"'Diarmaid! what saidst thou?' said she.

"'I am asking pardon,' said Diarmaid.

"'Thou shalt get that,' said she; and they seized each other's hands, and they went home together, and there was meat and drink that night as there ever had been.

"In the morning Diarmaid went away awhile, and after he had gone, she was without taking a stroll. She saw another rider coming to-day, and he was in great haste. She thought she would wait and not go home till he should come forward. What was this but another of the Fhinn.

"He went with civil words to the young damsel, and they gave welcome and honour to each other.

"She told him to go home with her, and that he should take a draught from her. He said that he would go if he should get his request.

"She asked that time what request that might be. 'One of the pups of the greyhound bitch,' said he.

"'Though it is a hard matter for me,' said she, 'I will give it to thee!'

"He went with her to the castle, he took a draught from her, he got the pup, and he went away.

"At the opening of the night came Diarmaid. The greyhound met him, and she gave three yells, the most hideous that man ever heard.

"'Yes, that is true, my lass, thou art without any this day,' said Diarmaid; 'but if she had mind of how I found her, she would not have let the pup go. When her hair was down to her heels she would not have done that to me!'

"'Thou, Diarmaid, what saidst thou?'

"'Oh, I am asking pardon,' said Diarmaid. He went home, and he was without wife or bed beside him, as he ever had been. It was in a moss-hole he awoke on the morrow. There was no castle, nor a stone left of it on another."

This story has several features in common with other tales of the same class.

1. The Sea Princess presents herself to mortals on a wild and stormy night; so (to go no further for a parallel) does Undine in Fouqué's well-known tale.

2. The castle vanishes with its builder, and the hero awakes "in a moss-hole". This is the common end of fairy magnificence and wealth.

3. In the continuation of the Highland tale, Diarmaid sets out in search of his lost love, and after some strange adventures succeeds in reaching the realms of *Righ fo Thuinn*, and there finds the Princess. Readers of Lane's *Arabian Nights* will remember a well-told parallel, into the details of which it would be out of place to enter here. It will be observed that this episode is entirely wanting in the Welsh tales; the forsaken husband is nowhere represented as finding his way to the mysterious region beneath the waters, to which it is known his wife has returned. Perhaps it may be urged that the story of *Y Forforwyn*, in *Cymru Fu* (p. 434 ff.), in which we do get a peep at the legendary *Gwerddonau Llion*, is an exception. But, unfortunately, it is absolutely uncertain how much (if any) of this tale is true tradition, and how much belongs to Glasynys, and therefore it cannot be used for purposes of comparison.

4. When Diarmaid finds his lost wife, their mutual joy is turned to sorrow by the assurance that the lady is dying, having on her way home lost "three gulps" of her life-blood through the bitterness of her grief. These Diarmaid had recovered, and carefully preserved; he also, after sundry

adventures, gains possession of the cup[1] of *Righ Magh an Ioghnaidh* (the King of the Plain of Wonder) and a bottle of the water of a certain well. Three draughts of this water, combined with the "three gulps of blood", and drunk from the magic cup, restore the Princess to life.

As both this Highland tale and the story of the Lady of the Van Lake are probably fragmentary, it is rather dangerous to hazard a guess as to any connection between them. But one is tempted to think that the healing of the Princess by Diarmaid, in the way related, and the wonderful medical knowledge possessed by the Physicians of Myddvai, the descendants of the Lake Lady, may have been in some way connected in the common original of the two tales.

III.—Witchcraft.

Tales of witchcraft were formerly very common in Wales. A favourite practice with witches was to transform their neighbours into horses, and ride out on them in their nightly rambles. The same belief in their power, and this special exercise of it, prevailed in Scotland, as is shown by the following story from Kirkcudbright (*Pop. Tales of W. H.*, ii, 59), which is an exact type of many told in Wales not very long ago.

"The Macgowans of Grayscroft in Tongland, and latterly of Bogra, had the power of witchcraft to a considerable extent, and it descended from one generation to another. At the time we refer to, Abraham Macgowan and his daughter Jenny resided at Grayscroft. Jenny had an unlimited power from Old Nick to act as she pleased. The ploughmen

[1] These magical cups are common in legend and romance; and if I am not mistaken, there is at Nanteos, in Cardiganshire, a wonderful cup, to which, even in these days of unbelief, some marvellous healing properties are attributed.

at that time in their employ were Harry Dew and Davie Gordon, young men about twenty-two years of age. They had been there for the last twelve months, and conversing one day together, the following took place:—

"*Harry:* 'Losh, man, Davie, what makes ye sae drowsy, lazy, and sleepy-like the day, for I am verra sure ye work nae mair than I do; ye eat the same and sleep the same as I do, and yet ye are so thin, and wearied, and hungry-like, I dinna ken ava what ails ye. Are ye weel eneugh, Davie?'

"'I'm weel eneugh, Harry, but it's a' ye ken about it; sleep a night or twa at the bedside, and maybe you'll no be sae apt to ask me sic questions again.'

"*Harry:* 'The bedside, Davie! What differ will that make? I hae nae mair objections to sleep there than at the wa'.'

"This being agreed to, they exchanged places. Nothing occurred to disturb either of them till the third night, although Harry kept watch. Their bed was on the stableloft, when, about midnight, the stable door was opened cautiously, and some one was heard (by Harry only) coming up the ladder and to the bedside, with a quiet step. A bridle was held above the one next the bedside, and the words, 'Up, horsey,' whispered in his ear. In one moment Harry was transformed into a horse at the stable-door. The saddle was got on with some kicking and plunging, but Jenny gets mounted, and off they set by the Elfcraigs, Auld Brig o' Tongland, the March Cleughs, and on till they reach the Auld Kirk of Buittle. Harry was tied to the gate along with others. Meg o' Glengap was there on her dairymaid, now a bonny mare, neat in all her proportions. 'Tib' o' Criffle came on her auld ploughman, rather wind-broken. 'Lizzy', frae the Bennan, came on her cot wife, limping with a swelled knee. 'Moll o' the Wood' came on a herd callant frae the 'How o' Siddick'. When all the horses were mustered, there was some snorting

and kicking, and neighing amongst them. Fairies, witches, brownies, and all, met in the kirk, and had a blithe holiday, under the patronage of his Satanic majesty, which continued till the crowing of the cock. Wearied with his gallop, Harry, when the charmed bridle was taken off, found himself in his own bed, and in his own shape. Harry is determined to be revenged; he finds the charmed bridle in a hole in the kitchen in a week after; he tries it on Jenny, using the same words, when Jenny is transformed into the auld brown mare of the farm. He takes her to the neighbouring smithy, and gets her, after much ado, shod all round, when he returns and leaves her, after securing the wonderful bridle.

"Next morning Harry is ordered to go for a doctor, as his mistress has taken ill. He goes into the house to ask for her, pulls the bedclothes off her, and discovers there was a horseshoe on each hand and foot; when Harry says, 'Jenny, my lass, that did ye.' Jenny played many more similar tricks on her neighbour lads and lasses."

I have heard several Welsh tales of witchcraft more or less closely resembling this, but do not remember the details with sufficient accuracy to reproduce them.

IV.—A Passage in the Mabinogion.

In the long "Story of Conall Gulban" we find the following (*Campbell*, iii, 200, 201):—

"He (Conall) went, and he reached the green mound; he laid his face downwards on the hillock, and he thought that there was no one thing that would suit himself better than that he should find his match of a woman. Then he gave a glance from him, and what should he see but a raven sitting on a heap of snow; and he set it before him that he would not take a wife for ever, but one whose head should be as black as the raven, and her face as fair as the snow, and her cheeks as red as blood."

On this, Mr. Campbell remarks in a note: "It is clear that the raven ought to have been eating something to suggest the blood, and so it is elsewhere.

"*Mr. Fraser of Mauld, Inverness, East Coast.*—He had gone to see his grandfather, the mysterious old grey man.

"When he got up in the morning there was a young snow, and the raven was upon a spray near him, and a bit of flesh in his beak. The piece of flesh fell, and Conall went to lift it; and the raven said to him that Fair Beauteous Smooth was as white as the snow upon the spray, her cheek as red as the flesh that was in his hand, and her hair as black as the feather that was on his wing.

"*MacPhie, Uist.*—On a snowy day Conall saw a goat slaughtered, and a black raven came to drink the blood. 'Oh,' says he, 'that I could marry the girl whose breast is as white as the snow, whose cheeks are red as the blood, and whose hair is as black as the raven'; and Conall fell sick for love."

With these three versions from the Highlands of to-day it is interesting to compare our own Kymric version from the *Mabinogion:* "Peredur ab Evrawg" (*Mab.* i, 250):—

"Trannoeth y bore ef a gyfodes odyno. Aphan deuth allan ydoed gawat o eiry gwedy ry odi y nos gynt. a gwalch wyllt wedy llad hwyat yn tal y kudugyl. achan dwryf y march kilyaw or walch. a disgyn bran ar gic yr ederyn. Sef a oruc peredur seuyll a chyffelybu duet y vran. agwynder yr eiry. a chochet y gwaet. y wallt y wreic uwyaf a garei a oed kynduet ar muchud. Ae chnawt oed kynwynnet ar eiry achochter y gwaet yn yr eiry yr deuvann gochion oed yny grudyeu."

"Next day, in the morning, he arose from thence, and when he went out a shower of snow had fallen the night before, and a wild hawk had killed a duck at the end of the hut; and at the noise of the horse the hawk flew away and

a raven alighted on the flesh of the bird. Then Peredur stood and compared the blackness of the raven, and the whiteness of the snow, and the redness of the blood, to the hair of the woman he most loved, which was as black as the jet, and her flesh, which was as white as the snow, and the redness of the blood in the snow to the two red spots that were on her cheeks."

THE WREN.

It is, perhaps, the perky manner of this little bird that has gained for him the reputation for vanity which he bears in the popular estimation. I have heard a fable to the following effect, told in Cantrev Buallt:—

"A wren one day observing some wood-splitters at work, felt a desire to emulate them. So he flew up to the fork of a huge oak, and drawing himself up, struck at the tree with his beak. Then, observing that he produced no effect, he asked, in a pompous way, '*Pam na hyllt y pren?*' (Why does not the tree split?)"

The following proverbial saying from the Highlands seems to attribute to him the same character:—

"'*S bigead thu siod, ars an dreolan, 'n ur thunn e gob ans an fhairige,* 'Thou art lessened by that', said the wren, when he dipped his beak in the sea." (Campbell's *Popular Tales,* i, 278.)

The wren sometimes utters a small, clucking sound, somewhat resembling the sound used to urge on a horse. This is popularly supposed to be a sign of rain. I have often heard it said in Breconshire: "*Y mae 'r dryw yn gyrru 'i geffyl y bore hyn, ni gawn 'law heb fod yn hir* (The wren is driving his horse this morning, we shall have rain ere long)."

The wren was a great favourite with us as schoolboys; and his nest, whenever found, was treated with much respect. Its sanctity was enforced by a traditional rhyme:—

"Y sawl a dyno nyth y dryw
Ni chaiff weled wyneb Duw."

"Whoever robs the wren's nest, he
The face of God shall never see."

The rural muse had humanely exerted her powers on behalf of other birds also. We used to repeat, with approval, the following:—

"Y sawl a dyno nyth y 'wyalchen
Ni wêl e byth o'r nefoedd lawen."

"He that shall rob a blackbird's nest
Shall never come to God's sweet rest."

By substituting *bronrhudden*, redbreast, for *mwyalchen*, this was very generally applied to the robin as well.

An attempt was made sometimes to put in a plea even for the crow, by a kind of adaptation of the last couplet:—

"Y sawl a dyno nyth y frân
Ni wel e byth o'r nefoedd lân."

But doubts were always felt with regard to the authenticity of this last, and the schoolboy conscience refused to regard it as obligatory.

Rain with Sunshine.

When rain was falling, and the sun shining at the same time, it used to be said that the devil was beating his wife: "*Mae'r gwr drwg yn wado 'i wraig.*"

If these popular representations are to be trusted, Old Nick is by no means pleasant or happy in his domestic relations. When a boy, I often heard a certain tree described by the farm servants as *y pren y crogodd y gwr drwg 'i fam arno* (the tree on which the devil hanged his mother). I heard no story about it, and don't now know what tree it is.

Horses Ridden by Goblins.

In summer, when the horses, not being kept in the stable, rolled on the ground a good deal, their manes often became tangled and knotted. When this was observed, it used to

be remarked (rather, however, as an old saying than an article of belief) that the goblin, or *bwci*, had been riding them. Campbell (*Popular Tales of W. H.*, ii, 71) found a similar belief in Devonshire, where the riding was assigned to the "Piskies". GLANIRVON.

FAIRY LEGEND.

Communicated by MR. W. W. COBB, *of Hilton House, Atherstone.*

"Llanddwyn, Anglesey, August 1884.

"The following was told me by Mrs. Williams, wife of Thomas Williams, pilot, in whose house I lodged:—

"'Mary Roberts, of Newborough, used to receive visits once a week from a "little woman"[1], who used to bring her a loaf of bread in return for the loan of her iron grid (*gradell*) for baking bread. The fairy always told her not to look after her when she left the house; but one day she transgressed, and took a peep as the fairy went away. The latter went straight to the lake, Lake Rhosddu, near the house at Newborough, and plunged into its waters and disappeared. This took place about a century ago.'

"The house where Mary Roberts lived is still standing about 100 yards north of the lake.[2] "W. W. C."

[1] Mr. Cobb (who does not know Welsh) annotates these words with the word *tylwuth*. His informant evidently referred to the *tylwyth teg*, or "good people."—E. G. B. P.

[2] This lake seems to be the one referred to in the following lines, ascribed to Prydydd y Moch (A.D. 1160-1220):

Mae llys yn Rhosyr, mae llyn, mae eurglych,
  Mae Arglwydd Llywelyn;
A gwyr tal yn ei ga'lyn,
Mil [a] myrdd mewn gwyrdd a gwyn.

(See "*Cymru*", by the Rev. Owen Jones, s.v. *Niwbwrch*. He reads *Rhos-fair* for *Rhosyr*; the latter—the old Welsh name of Newborough—occurs in other versions of the lines, and is the form used by Dafydd ab Gwilym.)—E. G. B. P.