

The king says that the crown will shine much better on his head. He goes to fetch it, and places it upon this precious head. He banishes his sons-in-law with his two daughters to the same desert place where Fidel formerly lived. And Fidel and his wife lived much richer than the king was. His precious head gave him this power; and as they lived well they died well too.

LAURENTINE.

We have another version almost identical with the above, except at the commencement. Ezkabi really has the scab. On his journey, after leaving his home, he pays the debts of a poor man whose corpse is being beaten in front of the church, and buries him. There is nothing about a white mare. An old woman is the good genius of the tale. He goes as gardener, and the king's daughter falls in love with him, from catching a sight of his golden hair from her window; for the rest the stories are identical, except that this is a shorter form than the above.

#### THE LADY PIGEON AND HER COMB.\*

LIKE many others in the world, there was a mother and her son; they were very poor. This son wished to leave his mother and go away, (saying) that they were wretched as they were. He goes off then far, far, far away. He finds a castle in a forest, and goes in and asks if they want a servant, and it is a Tartaro who comes to him. He asks him:

"Where are you going to like that, ant of the earth?"

He says that, being very poor at home, he wished to work to better himself.

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\* Cf. with the whole of this tale, Campbell's second tale, "The Battle of the Birds," and the variations, especially the one of "Auburn Mary," Vol. I. pp. 52-58.

The Tartaro says to him, "As you have told the truth I spare your life, and of the earth, and in a few days you will go away from here. Three young ladies will come to bathe in the water in my garden. They will leave their pigeon-robres under a large stone, and you will take the pigeon's skin which is in the middle.\* The two young ladies will come out of the water and will take their skins. She who stops in the water will ask you for her skin, but you shall not give it her before she shall promise to help you always."

The next day our lad sees that the young ladies are in the water. He goes and does as the Tartaro tells him; he takes the middle one of the three skins, the two young ladies take their skins, and the third asks him to give her hers. The lad will not give it her without her promise. The young lady will not give her word. He then says to her that he will not give it her at all. The young lady then says to him that he may reckon upon her, that she gives him her word, and that he shall go to-morrow to her father's house, that he will take him as servant, and that he lives in such a place. The lad goes off then the next day and finds this beautiful house in a forest.

He asks if they want a servant? They tell him, "Yes," but that there is a great deal of work to do there. The next morning (the father) takes him into the forest and says to him:

"You must pull up all these oaks with their roots, you must cut them into lengths, and put the trunks on one side, the branches on another, and the roots by themselves, each in their place. Afterwards you will plough the ground, then you will harrow it, then sow the wheat; you will then cut it, and you bring me at noon a little cake made out of this wheat, otherwise you will be put to death."†

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\* Cf. Baring Gould's chapter, "Swan-Maidens"—"Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," p. 561, *seq.*

† In the Gaelic the labours are more like those of Herakles—to clean out a byre, to shoot birds, and to rob a magpie's nest. The Basque incidents seem to fit better into a climatological myth.

The lad says to him, "I will try."

He goes then to the forest and sits down pensive. It was already eleven o'clock when the young lady appears to him. She says to him :

"Why are you like that, so sad? Have not I promised that I would help you? Shut your eyes, but all the worse for you if you shall open them."

She throws a comb into the air,\* and says :

"Comb, with thy power tear up these oaks with their roots, cut them into lengths, put the trunk's together, and the branches, and the roots too by themselves."

As soon as it was said it was done. She throws another comb, and says to it :

"Comb, with thy power turn up this ground, harrow it, and sow the wheat."

As soon as it was said it was done. She throws another comb, and says :

"Comb, with thy power make a cake of this wheat when you have cut it."

Our lad was curious to know what was taking place, but the young lady said to him :

"Woe to you and to me if you open (your eyes).† Nothing will be finished for us."

He does not open them, and the cake is cooked. Twelve o'clock was going to strike. She says to him :

"Go with speed, you have no time to lose."

The lad goes to the king and brings him the cake. The king is astonished. He says (to himself), "That is a clever lad, that," and he wishes to be assured of it by looking out of window; and, after having seen that this huge forest had been torn up, he is astonished. He sends away the lad,

\* In "Old Deccan Days" ("Truth's Triumph") it is the hair and not the comb that does the wonders. In M. Cerquand's "Récits" the comb is an attribute of the Basa-Andre.

† In Campbell's "Battle of the Birds" the hero always sleeps while the giant's daughter does his task for him.

and goes and tells it to his wife. His wife says to him, "Take care that he is not in league with your daughter."\*

The husband says to her, "What do you mean? They have never seen each other."

This husband was a devil. The young lady told our lad that her father is going to send him to fetch a ring in a river far away. "He will tell you to choose a sword from the midst of ever so many others, but you will take an old sabre and leave the others."

The next day his wife told him that he ought to send him to fetch a ring which he had lost in the bed of a river. He sends him then, and tells him that he must choose a sword; that he will have quantities of evil fish to conquer. The lad says to him that he will not have those fine swords, that he has enough with this old sabre, which was used to scrape off the dirt.

When he arrived at the bank of the river he sat there weeping, not knowing what to do. The young lady comes to him, and says:

"What! You are weeping! Did not I tell you that I would always help you?"

It was eleven o'clock. The young lady says to him:

"You must cut me in pieces with this sabre, and throw all the pieces into the water."

The lad will not do it by any means. He says to her:

"I prefer to die here on the spot than to make you suffer."

The lady says to him, "It is nothing at all what I shall suffer, and you must do it directly—the favourable moment is passing by like this, like this."

The lad, trembling all over, begins with his sabre. He throws all the pieces into the river; but, lo! a part of the lady's little finger sticks to a nail in his shoe. The young lady comes out of the water and says to him:

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\* Here the narrator interposed, "You see it is just as it happens; the women are always the worst." But in Campbell it is the giant himself who says, "My own daughter's tricks are trying me."

"You have not thrown everything into the water. My little finger is wanting."\*

After having looked for it, he sees that he has it under his foot, hooked on to a nail. The young lady gives him the ring. She tells him to go without losing a moment, for he must give it to the king at noon. He arrives happily (in time). The young lady, as she goes into the house, bangs the door with all her might and begins to cry out :

"Ay! ay! ay! I have crushed my little finger."

And she makes believe that she has done it there. The king was pleased. He tells him that on the morrow he must tame a horse and three young fillies.† The lad says to him :

"I will try."

The master gives him a terrible club. The young lady says to him in the evening :

"The horse which my father has spoken to you about will be himself. You will strike him with all your might with your terrible club on the nose, and he will yield and be conquered. The first filly will be my eldest sister. You will strike her on the chest with all your force, and she also will yield and will be conquered. I shall come the last. You will make a show of beating me too, and you will hit the ground with your stick, and I too will yield, and I shall be conquered."

The next day the lad does as the young lady has told him. The horse comes. He was very high-spirited, but our lad strikes him on the nose, he yields, and is conquered. He does the same thing with the fillies. He beats them with his terrible club, they yield, and are conquered; and when the third comes he makes a show of hitting her, and strikes the earth. She yields, and all go off.

The next day he sees the master with his lips swollen, and with all his face as black as soot. The young ladies had also pain in the chest. The youngest also gets up very late indeed in order to do as the others.

\* In Campbell the finger is lost in climbing the tree to get the magpie's nest; but, as here, the bride is recognised by the loss of it.

† In "Auburn Mary" the hero has to catch a young filly, "with an old, black, rusty bridle."—Campbell, Vol. I., p. 55.

The master says to him that he sees he is a valuable servant, and very clever, and that he will give him one of his daughters for wife, but that he must choose her with his eyes shut. And the young lady says to him :

“You will choose the one that will give you her hand twice, and in any way you will recognise me, because you will find that my little finger is wanting. I will always put that in front.”

The next day the master said to him :

“We are here now ; you shall now choose the one you wish for, always keeping your eyes shut.”

He shuts them then ; and the eldest daughter approaches, and gives him her hand. He says to the king :

“It is very heavy, (this hand) ; too heavy for me. I will not have this one.”

The second one approaches, she gives him her hand, and he immediately recognises that the little finger is wanting. He says to the king :

“This is the one I must have.”

They are married immediately.\* They pass some days like that. His wife says to him :

“It is better for us to be off from here, and to flee, otherwise my father will kill us.”

They set off, then, that evening at ten o'clock, and the young lady spits before the door of her room, saying :

“Spittle, with thy power, you shall speak in my place.”† And they go off a long way. At midnight, the father goes to the door of the lad and his wife, and knocks at the door ; they do not answer. He knocks harder, and then the spittle says to him :

“Just now nobody can come into this room.”

The father says, “It is I. I must come in.”

“It is impossible,” says the spittle again.

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\* See below for a second marriage. In Campbell, p. 37, there is a double marriage.

† In Campbell, p. 55, “Auburn Mary,” there is the same “talking spittle.”



The father grows more and more angry; the spittle makes him stop an hour like that at the door. At last, not being able to do anything else, he smashes the door, and goes inside. What is his terrible rage when he sees the room empty. He goes off to his wife, and says to her:

"You were not mistaken; they were well acquainted, and they were really in league with one another, and they have both escaped together; but I will not leave them like that. I will go off after them, and I shall find them sooner or later."

He starts off. Our gentleman and lady had gone very far, but the young lady was still afraid. She said to her husband:

"He might overtake us even now. I—I cannot turn my head; but (look) if you can see something."

The husband says to her: "Yes, something terrible is coming after us; I have never seen a monster like this."

The young lady throws up a comb, and says:\*

"Comb, with thy power, let there be formed before my father hedges and thorns, and before me a good road."

It is done as she wished. They go a good way, and she says again:

"Look, I beg you, if you see anything again."

The husband looks back, and sees nothing; but in the clouds he sees something terrible, and tells so to his wife. And his wife says, taking her comb:

"Comb, with thy power, let there be formed where he is a fog, and hail, and a terrific storm."

It happens as they wish. They go a little way farther, and his wife says to him:

"Look behind you, then, if you see anything."

The husband says to her: "Now it is all over with us. We have him here after us; he is on us. Use all your power."

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\* Cf. "Truth's Triumph," in "Old Deccan Days;" and Campbell, pp. 33, 34; and *supra*, "Ezkabi-Fidel," pp. 113, 114.

She throws again a comb immediately, and says :

“Comb, with thy power, form between my father and me a terrible river, and let him be drowned there for ever.”

As soon as she has said that, they see a mighty water, and there their father and enemy drowns himself.\*

The young lady says, “Now we have no more fear of him, we shall live in peace.”

They go a good distance, and arrive at a country into which the young lady could not enter. She says to her husband :

“I can go no farther. It is the land of the Christians there ; I cannot enter into it. You must go there the first. You must fetch a priest. He must baptize me, and afterwards I will come with you ; but you must take great care that nobody kisses you. If so, you will forget me altogether. Mind and pay great attention to it ; and you, too, do not you kiss anyone.”

He promises his wife that he will not. He goes, then, on, and on, and on. He arrives in his own country, and as he is entering it an old aunt recognises him, and comes behind him, and gives him two kisses.† It is all over with him. He forgets his wife, as if he had never seen her, and he stays there amusing himself, and taking his pleasure.

The young lady, seeing that her husband never returned, that something had happened to him, and that she could no longer count upon him, she takes a little stick, and striking the earth, she says :

“I will that here, in this very spot, is built a beautiful hotel, with all that is necessary, servants, and all the rest.”

There was a beautiful garden, too, in front, and she had put over the door :

“Here they give to eat without payment.”

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\* Campbell, pp. 34 and 56.

† In Campbell, it is an old greyhound that kisses him, but with the same result, pp. 34 and 56.



One day the young man goes out hunting with two comrades, and while they were in the forest they said one to the other :

"We never knew of this hotel here before. We must go there too. One can eat without payment."

They go off then. The young lady recognises her husband very well, but he does not recognise her at all. She receives them very well. These gentlemen are so pleased with her, that one of them asks her if she will not let him pass the night with her.\* The young lady says to him, "Yes." The other asks also, "I, too, was wishing it." The young lady says to him :

"To-morrow then, you, if you wish it, certainly."

And her husband says to her: "And I after to-morrow then."

The young lady says to him, "Yes." One of the young men remains then. He passes the evening in great delight, and when the hour comes for going to bed, the young lady says to him :

"When you were small you were a choir-boy, and they used to powder you; this smell displeases me in bed. Before coming there you must comb yourself. Here is a comb, and when you have got all the powder out, you may come to bed."

Our lad begins then to comb his hair, but never could he get all the powder out, such quantities came out, and were still coming out of his head; and he was still at it when the young lady rose. The lad said to her :

"What! you are getting up before I come."

"And do you not see that it is day? I cannot stop there any longer. People will come."

Our young man goes off home without saying a word more. He meets his comrade who was to pass the night with this young lady. He says to him :

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\* In one of Campbell's "Variations," pp. 51, 52, the ending is something like this. In more than one, the hero marries another bride in his period of oblivion.

"You are satisfied? You amused yourself well?"

"Yes, certainly, very well. If the time flies as fast with you as it did with me you will amuse yourself well."

He goes off then to this house. The young lady says to him, after he had had a good supper:

"Before going to bed you must wash your feet. The water will be here in this big copper; when you have them quite clean you may come to bed."

Accordingly he washes one, and when he has finished washing the other, the first washed is still black and dirty. He washes it again, and finds the foot that he has just well washed very dirty again. He kept doing like that for such a long time. When the young lady gets up, the gentleman says to her:

"What! You are getting up already, without me coming?"

"Why did you not then come before day? I cannot stay any longer in bed. It is daylight, and the people will begin (to come)."

Our young man withdraws as the other had done. Now it is the turn of her husband. She serves him still better than the others; nothing was wanting at his supper. When the hour for going to bed arrives, they go to the young lady's room; when they are ready to get into bed, the young lady says to him:

"Put out the light."

He puts it out, and it lights again directly. He puts it out again, and it lights again as soon as it is put out. He passes all the night like that in his shirt, never being able to put out that light. When daylight is come, the young lady says to him:

"You do not know me then? You do not remember how you left your wife to go and fetch a priest?"

As soon as she had said that he strikes his head, and says to her:

"Only now I remember all that—up to this moment I was as if I had never had a wife at all—how sorry I am;

but indeed it is not my fault, not at all. I never wished it like that, and it is my old aunt who kissed me twice without my knowing it."

"It is all the same now. You are here now. You have done penance enough; your friends have done it too. One passed the whole night getting powder out of his head, and the other in washing his feet, and they have not slept with me any more than you have. At present you must go into your country, and you must get a priest. He shall baptize me, and then we will go into your country."

The husband goes off and returns with the priest, and she is baptized, and they set out for his country. When they have arrived there, she touched the earth with her stick, and says to it :

"Let there be a beautiful palace, with everything that is needed inside it, and a beautiful garden before the house."

As soon as it is said, it is done. They lived there very rich and very happy with the old mother of the lad, and as they lived well they died well too.

LAURENTINE KOPENA.

#### SUGGESTED EXPLANATION OF THE ABOVE TALE (THE LADY-PIGEON AND HER COMB).

THIS legend seems to us to be one of the best examples in our collection of what may be called atmospherical, or climatological myths.

The story opens with man in misery, without the aid of cultivation and agriculture. The old king we take to be a personification of winter; his daughter of spring, warmth, and fertility—of what the French call "*la belle saison.*" The comb, with which she does her marvels, is the power which draws out her golden hair, the sun's bright rays. The young man, who, without her aid, can effect nothing, is man in relation to the frozen ground, which needs her aid to quicken it into fertility. It is the old Sun-god, the Cyclops, who tells him where to find, and how to woo, his

fairy bride. But spring and earth are as yet both fast bound in winter's dominions. There he must go, and learn what he must do, if they are to be married. The felling of the forest, the sowing and ripening corn, and the cooked cake, teach him that he can only succeed by her help; and yet he does not see how she does it—man cannot see the corn grow, etc. The summer warmth and fertilizing power, typified by the ring, still lies buried in the frozen waters. The taming of the horses shows the need and help of domestic animals in agriculture. These things are necessary to be known ere spring can free herself from winter's dominion and marry her chosen lover. Winter would still hold her fast; but even in his own home her influence works secretly against him. He does not suspect that she is in league with her lover. But at length they are joined together; they flee, and the great struggle between winter and spring has fairly set in. She is able to hide her flight a little while; but he discovers it, and pursues and nearly overtakes her. But, by means of her comb, scattering abroad her warm rays, she works wonders. He is stopped by rough, wintry roads. Her path is through fair and pleasant ways; the storms, and hail, and rain of early spring assist her, but it is the mighty inundation of the swollen rivers which finally overwhelms him, and sweeps him for ever away.

But their union is not complete yet. She cannot enter the Christians' land. The natural powers of earth and sky have need of agriculture and civilization for their full expansion. And man, frightened at the toil, is lured back again to the nomad hunter life. He forgets his bride in the pleasures of the chase. He spends the winter thus, but is drawn back by the attraction of his waiting bride in spring. She has food in abundance; he is hungry. Other wooers come; she cheats and deludes them, till her true husband appears, and submits to her once more. Then is the full marriage of earth and husbandry, and man wedded to the summer's warmth and glow.

All parts of the tale are not equally clear, nor do we positively affirm that we have interpreted it aright. But there can be no doubt that we have here a nature allegory; and, told as it is by those who have not the most remote suspicion of its meaning, many things in it must needs be confused; the wonder is that the details are still so clear and so little distorted as they are. And, if this be the interpretation, or even if this kind of interpretation be allowed in this case, then we must consider if it is not to be extended to every case in which the several incidents occur, though they are now mingled and confused with circumstances with which they had no original connection.

#### LAUR-CANTONS.\*

THERE was a man who was very rich. He wished to get married, but the young girls of this country would not marry him, because he had such a bad reputation. One day he sent for a vine-dresser, who had three daughters, and said to him,

“I want to marry one of your three daughters; if I do not marry them, so much the worse for you—I will have you killed.”

This vine-dresser goes away home in sadness. He tells his two eldest daughters what Mr. Laur-Cantons had said to him. The daughters tell him that they will not marry; it is useless to ask them. The father stays indoors in his grief, and his youngest daughter comes home. He tells her, too, what has happened, and this one says to her father,

“Do not be so sad; as for me, I will marry him, and nothing shall happen to you.”

The father and the daughter go off then. He marries this young girl. And, as Mr. Laur-Cantons was very rich, he had quantities of beautiful dresses made for her. He

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\* Cf. Campbell's "The Chest," Vol. II., p. 1. The tales seem almost identical.