

## ON SOME JAPANESE LEGENDS.

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It is more than sixty years ago since the publication by the brothers Grimm of a collection of popular and nursery tales which they had gathered from the lips of the German peasantry, laid the foundation of a new study which has ever since been pursued with interest and ardour. The legends of nearly every country and province in the world have been assiduously sought for and recorded, and a comparison of them has led to many curious results. Some of these old wives tales, now only related for the amusement of children, are found to be disguised forms of old mythologies, others are the remains of poems or romances or perhaps even of veritable historical narratives. Stories which can be traced to Central Asia are found localized in remote corners of Europe, as though they had grown there spontaneously. Such an one is the story of the faithful hound Gelert, whose tomb is shown in Wales to the present day, at the village named Bedd-Gelert, although precisely the same legend is found in the ancient collection of Persian tales, known under the name of Syntipas, of which we possess a Greek translation. The question how and when these tales were spread over the world is one of much interest. Some of them may have been carried by the Aryan tribes at their first emigration from their Asian homes. Others may have been imported by wandering minstrels at later periods. The process of communication must have gone on from a very remote antiquity. Quite recently Egyptian romances have been discovered in manuscripts of the 13th or 14th centuries before Christ, which have all the childish *näiveté* and the stock incidents of the modern fairy tale. The intercourse which early existed between Egypt, the Western part of the Asian Continent and Europe explains sufficiently the diffusion of this ancient literature over that portion of the earth's surface which we are accustomed to call the West. But we should be less prepared *à priori* to find European legends making their appearance in a country like Japan so isolated and remote, and which, so far as it has borrowed, has done so chiefly from China, itself a country of which the literature is indigenous, and whose legends have not much affinity with those of Western Asia.

Some instances, however, of Japanese legends bearing affinity to those of the far West do occur, and one at least so remarkable that it has appeared to me worth making the subject of enquiry. The object of the present paper is simply to open the matter and to invite to it the attention of Japanese scholars, who are more qualified than myself, to institute a comparison between the whole cycle of Japanese legends and those current in different countries of the West.

A short story included among those given in Mitford's "Tales of old Japan," struck me when I first read it, as having a remarkable resemblance to one with which I had been familiar from my childhood—an Irish story first published by Crofton Croker about the year 1824 or 1825—and called the Legend of Knockgrifton. As I have unfortunately no copy of Crofton Croker's work by me, I must tell this tale as well as I can from memory.

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### THE LEGEND OF KNOCKGRAFTON.

In some remote district in Ireland, but whereabouts I forget, is a village called Knockgraston, near which are the ruins of an ancient castle surrounded by a moat, known in ancient times as the haunt of fairies or elves.

In the village of Knockgraston lived a good-natured little humpbacked man named Lusmore. He was a general favorite from his cheerful and pleasant humour and nature had endowed him with a good pair of lungs and a taste for music.

One sunny day Lusmore lay down on the bank of the moat, and had a nap from which he was awakened by the sweet sound of voices apparently proceeding from beneath the water. He knew at once that it must be the fairies singing. Their song was of a very simple character, for it was nothing, when translated into English (the fairies of Knockgraston of course sang in the Irish or Erse language)—but—Monday, Tuesday, Monday, Tuesday, and so on *ad infinitum*. Lusmore listened for some time and at length got rather tired of this perpetual repetition, and seizing a moment when there was a slight pause he sang at the top of his voice, but in a musical tone—‘and Wednesday too.’ Scarcely had he done this, when he found himself caught up and whirled down to the bottom of the moat, where was a spacious hall full of elves dancing and singing. They took up Lusmore’s words and went on singing lustily “Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday too.” After this had continued for some time Lusmore was conducted to a place of honour, and two of the strongest elves came and with a saw made of butter they cut off his hump,—and then they all sang

Lusmore, Lusmore,  
Weep not nor deplore  
The hump that you bore  
On your back is no more;  
Look down on the floor  
And view it Lusmore.

Little Lusmore now found to his astonishment that he was no longer bent double as he used to be, but that he could lift himself upright and was a tall man, and in doing this he nearly knocked his head against the ceiling. After much rejoicing and feasting it became time for the elves to give up their festivities. Lusmore fell asleep and when he awoke he found himself again on the bank outside the moat. He got up rubbed his eyes, and felt his back, and found that true enough he was rid of his hump. He went back rejoicing and told all the neighbours how he had danced and sung with the elves, and how they had taken off his hump. The story soon got wind and all the neighbourhood came to see Lusmore and congratulate him upon his good fortune. Now there was another hump-

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back at Knockgrafton known by the name of Jack Madden, an ill-conditioned young scamp whom nobody liked. His mother was an envious old crone who did nothing but murmur at Lusmore's back and wondered why the same did not happen to her son Jack. By her advice Jack Madden went and laid himself one day down by the moat, and there sure enough he heard the fairies singing their song with Lusmore's elegant addition—"Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday too." Now Jack Madden, who was as deficient in taste as he was in voice, thought to himself if Lusmore pleased the fairies by adding another day to their song, why should not I do better still by adding all the rest of the week,—so without waiting for a pause, or paying any regard to time or measure, he began in a harsh loud voice shouting out Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Now the fairies have not only an exquisite ear for rhythm and time, but they have also a peculiar aversion to hear the Lord's day named. No sooner therefore had Jack Madden commenced this tasteless uproar than he found himself whirled into the moat and surrounded by fierce-looking fairies. Two of the strongest of these, by orders from the chief, took up Lusmore's hump which was still lying about, and elapped it on Jack Madden's back, where it instantly stuck as tight as wax. Then they all sang

Jack Madden, Jack Madden!  
Your words came so bad in!  
The tune we feel glad in.—  
This castle you'r had in  
That your life we may sadden;  
Here's two humps for Jack Madden—

Immediately after this they kicked him out of the moat, and he was found on the ground next morning by the old crone his mother, when she came to look after him, with two humps instead of one. Such was the reward of envy and bad taste.

This is the Irish story picked up from the mouths of the peasantry more than fifty years ago. I am not able to say whether it has been found in any form in any other

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part of Europe, but my impression is that it is not known out of Ireland. The Japanese tale which resembles it is told very briefly by Mr. Mitford, and as he does not give any reference to the source from whence he obtained it, I made enquiries upon the subject, and my friend Mr. J. C. Hall of H. M. Consular Service kindly ascertained for me where it was to be found. It is given in the second volume of the Japanese work entitled "Uji Shu-i monogatari"—i.e. Stories omitted from the Uji collection. This book was first printed in 1664, but is supposed to have been written in the 13th century, the author being unknown.

Mr. Hall kindly transliterated the Japanese text and has also supplied me with the following translation.

#### THE STORY OF THE MAN WITH THE WEN.

The following also happened now a long time ago. There was an old man who had a big wen on the right side of his face. He went to (cut wood on) mount Tai-ko. It came on to rain and blow without stopping, so that he could not get back, and much against his will stopped the night on the hills. There was not even a wood-cutter's (cabin) near. He was in a dreadful plight and did not know what to do. So he crept into the hollow of a tree that was there and whilst he was crouching inside, unable to close his eyes, there came from the distance a sound as of men hurrying along and talking loudly the while. Sure enough as he was all alone there in the midst of the hills, he felt his spirits somewhat revive within him at the indication of people approaching, and he looked out and beheld beings of all sorts of shapes and appearances, some of them of a red colour wearing blue clothes and others of a black colour wearing red clothes. Running well in front of the rest were some with only one eye and some without a mouth, and such like, and altogether, indeed, a quite indescribable kind of beings. The whole throng, to the number of about a hundred, came together with a whizzing sort of sound, and after lighting a great fire as bright as the eye of heaven, they spread themselves about it in front of the hollow tree in which the old man was, who thereupon lost the power of his senses more and more. One elf who seemed to be their chief sat on a seat set thwart-wise, while the elves ranged themselves on each side of him in two rows. I don't know how many there were of them, and time would fail me if I were to attempt to describe the appearance of them one by one. They enjoyed themselves drinking *saké* just like people of this world, and after passing the bowl round repeatedly the chief elf seemed to get uncommonly drunk. Then one young elf rose at the further end, and clapping a dish-tray on his head begged for something or other. Uttering witty sayings he marched up slowly to the front of the elf on the thwart seat and seemed to be importuning him: the latter remained seated holding the drinking cup in his left hand and smiling good humouredly, just like a person of this world. Then he led off into a dance and the rest joined in order all down the line: some danced well, others badly. When at length they seemed to have had enough of it the elf of the thwart seat spoke and said: "We have prolonged the fun to-night much beyond our usual time; no

“wonder, however; the jig was a sight to see.” Hereupon the old man, whether it was that something had bewitched him, or that some god or saint put it into his mind to do so—at any rate he felt a desire to start out and dance. Then all at once he changed his mind, but the elves hereupon without more ado struck up a tune of so pleasing a sound that he made up his mind. “So be it,” said he, “I will run out and have my dance; I must, even if I die for it,” and with his cap cocked over his nose and his woodman’s hatchet stuck in his girdle, forth he came dancing up in front of where the elf on the thwart seat was. Up sprang the elves, bounding and buzzing about him, to know what this meant. The old man, now stretching himself out, now drawing himself together, with quips and cranks and every gesture he was master of, went circling round the entire area, singing in a drunken voice the while. All the elves there assembled, and he on the thwart-seat amongst the foremost, looked on applauding and amused. Then the elf of the thwart-seat said, “For many years we have indulged in this amusement, but never yet have we come across anything like this. Henceforth this old man must positively come and join in the amusement with us.” The old man replied: “No need to order me; come I will. This being an impromptu effort I forgot to keep time to the music, but if you are so good as to be pleased with it I will endeavour to perform more cleverly next time.” The elf of the thwart seat affably rejoined “You must really come, you know.” Then an elf who was sitting three seats back said; “Although this old man speaks in this way, it is possible he may not come at all; we had better take some likely pledge or other from him.” “Just so, just so” said the elf on the thwart seat, “what ought we to take?” Then some suggested one thing, some another, but the elf on the thwart seat said: “We should take the wen which the old man has on his face: a wen is a lucky thing and he will hardly be willing to part with it.” Then the old man said: “You may take my nose or my eye if you like, but please do allow me to keep this wen: it would be unfair of you to take away from me without cause a thing that I have had for so many years.” “Oh! you are so unwilling to part with it as all that, then?” said the elf of the thwart seat; “that’s just the thing to take.” Whereupon up came an elf, and “off it goes,” says he, and twisted it off, causing hardly any pain. “So you must come and play

next time, now" said they, and as it was now dawn and the birds were beginning to sing, the elves went away. The old man felt his face and, lo! the wen he had had for years was clean gone, not even a trace of it being perceptible on the smooth even surface. He went back to his home forgetting even to cut the wood he had come for. When the old woman his wife asked him what wonderful thing had happened him he told her it was so and so. "What a vexatious affair" said she.

Next door lived a certain old man who had a big wen on the left side of his face. This old man observing that the other had lost his wen, thought it very queer and asked him about it, saying:—"How did you come to get rid of your wen? What doctor took it off for you? Kindly tell me, for I want to have this wen of mine taken off." "It was n't taken off by a doctor at all," said the other, "it happened on this wise," and he told him how it had been taken away by the elves. "I'll have mine taken off in the same way" thought he, and he questioned the first old man closely, who told him the whole circumstances. Following out what he had heard he went and waited inside the hollow tree, and true enough, just as he had been told, the elves came, and spreading themselves all about began to amuse themselves drinking *saké*. Then they said "Has the old man come who was here? The other old man swung himself out, though very much afraid he was. Then the elves said "Yes, the old man has come; here he is. "Come here, dance, quick," said the elf on the thwart seat. Now this old man was not fit to be compared to the former one, and after making an awkward attempt at a dance the elf on the thwart seat said to him "you dance very badly this time; ever so many times worse than you danced before. Let him have back the wen we took from him as pledge" Here upon an elf from the far end came forward saying "Here you may have your pledge, the wen, back again", and with that he threw it at him and it stuck on his other cheek, so that he now had a wen on both sides of his face.

Moral. People ought not to feel envious.

These stories are unmistakeably identical. Can it be supposed that the same leading idea, that of the taking off the hump or wen of one man, by the agency of elves, and the clapping it on another in reward for his envy and want of skill came into the heads of two different story-tellers, one a Celt and the other a Japanese, independently? Is it credible that one of these stories is not borrowed from the other? But, if so, then at what age of the world did the loan take place, and which country was the borrower and which the lender?

As we know of no recent epoch at which the communication from one country to the other is likely to have taken place, we are led to think that this story may be one of the most ancient traditions of the human race, and that it may date from a time far anterior to history, when a Turanian tribe have occupied Iceland, preceding the Celtic tribes who are now the oldest stratum of humanity remaining in the far west.

In the remarkable Dutch novel, entitled *Max Havelaar*, of which an English translation by Baron Alphonse Nahuijs, appeared in 1868, a Japanese legend is introduced professedly taken from a periodical paper called "*Dutch India*," and attributed to a writer named Jerome. This story entitled "*The Japanese Stone-cutter*" is told nearly as follows.

'There was a man who cut stones out of a rock. His labour was heavy and he laboured much, but his wages were small, and he was not content. He sighed because his labour was heavy, and he cried 'O that I were rich, in order to rest on a couch, with curtains,'

And there came an angel out of heaven, who said 'Be it as you have said.' And he was rich. And he rested on a couch, and the curtain was of red silk. And the king of the country passed with horsemen before his carriage, and likewise behind the carriage there were horsemen, and the golden umbrella was held over the head of the king.

And as soon as the rich man heard this he was sad because they held no golden umbrella over *his* head, and he was not content. He sighed and cried 'I should like to be a king.'

And there came an angel out of heaven and said 'Be it as you have said.'

And he became a king. And before his carriage were many horsemen, and behind were also horsemen, and over his head they held the golden umbrella.

And the sun shone with hot beams, and burned the earth in such a manner that the grass was dried up.

And the king complained that the sun burned his face, and had more power than he; and he was not satisfied. He sighed and cried 'I should like to be the sun.'

And there came an angel out of heaven who said 'Be it as you have said.' And he became the sun. And he sent up his beams on high, and down to the earth; to the right and to the left—everywhere.

And he burned up the grass on the earth and the faces of the princes who were on the earth.

And a cloud came between him and the earth and the beams of the sun were turned back.

And he was angry that his power was resisted; and he complained that this cloud had more power than he; and he was dissatisfied.

He desired to be the cloud that was so mighty.

And there came an angel from heaven who said 'Be this as you have said.'

And he became a cloud, and placed himself between the sun and the earth, and intercepted the beams, so that the grass became green. And the cloud rained in large drops on the earth and made the rivers swell, and the floods carried away the herds.

And the cloud devastated the field with much water.

And it fell on a rock which did not move, and rattled in large streams, but the rock did not yield.

And the cloud was angry because the rock would not yield, and because the strength of its streams was vain,

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and it was not contented.

It cried 'This rock has more power than I have. I wish to be this rock.'

And there came an angel out of heaven who said 'Be this as you have said, and it became a rock, and moved neither when the sun shone nor when it rained, and there came a man with pick-axe and sharp chisel and heavy hammer, who cut stones out of the rock.

And the rock said 'What is this, that the man has power over me and cuts stones out of my bosom? And it was discontented. It cried 'I am weaker than he, I should like to be that man.'

And there came an angel out of heaven who said 'Be this as you have said' and he became a stone cutter. And he cut stones out of the rock with heavy labour, and he laboured hard for small wages, and *was* contented.'

When I first came across this story, it reminded me of one which is to be found in Grimm's Popular tales, that entitled "The Fisherman and his wife," the moral of which is "Be content with your station."

The book which contains "the Japanese stone-cutter" being a Dutch one, and the tale evidently containing many touches of colouring which are not Japanese, it was necessary before drawing any inference from its resemblance to the well-known German tale, to make some enquiry as to its authenticity and its real origin.

The result of the enquiry has been that no such tale is to be found at present in any Japanese book, but that one in the main similar is current in the mouths of the people, and that in a great variety of forms. One version has been obtained for me by Mr. J. C. Hall from a Japanese teacher, who wrote it down from recollection. Mr. Hall has kindly transcribed the Japanese text into English characters, and has furnished me with a translation, which is as follows.

#### THE STORY OF THE AMBITIOUS MICE.

'In a certain place there lived a pair of mice, and a daughter was born unto them. The parent mice were uncommonly fond of her, and wished to marry their daughter to whatever was most powerful in the whole world, so they set about choosing a son-in-law. A neighbour mouse said "The most powerful thing in the world, is, beyond comparison, the sun. If you marry your daughter to the sun there will be nobody in all the world to equal you." When the parent mice heard this they were



greatly delighted and went straightway to the sun and told him of their desire that he should take their daughter to wife. The sun replied—"I am extremely obliged to you for coming such a long journey and for your kind intention of allowing me to wed your dearly beloved daughter. But what, pray, was your idea in choosing me for a son-in-law?" The mice said, "We wish to marry our daughter to whatever is most powerful in the world, and as you are, beyond rivalry, the most powerful personage in the world, that is why we desire to give you our daughter in marriage." The Sun rejoined:—"You are certainly not without reason in considering me the most powerful thing in the world;" but there is one still more powerful than I am, for whose strength I am in no way a match. It is to that you ought to marry your daughter." "Can there be aught more powerful than you?" said the mice. The Sun rejoined:—"Often times when I want to illumine the world a floating cloud comes out and covers me so that I am rendered powerless. My power is no match for that of the cloud. If it is a powerful thing you want there is nought like the cloud." The mice answered "What you say is certainly the truth." After that they went to the cloud, and expressed to it their wish to have it for their son-in-law. The cloud said, "True, I have the strength to cover over the Sun, but as soon as the wind begins to blow I am at once scattered to pieces and can do nothing. I am no match for the power of the wind." Then the mice went their way and coming to the wind, made their proposal of marriage. The wind said.—"True, I have the strength to blow the cloud to pieces, but when a wall is put up to keep me off, I cannot blow through that wall. I am no match for the power of the wall." Then the mice went their way and coming to the wall told their story as before. The wall said. "True, I have the strength to keep off the wind, but there is the mouse who sometimes gnaws my body, opens a hole through me and hurts me. I cannot withstand the power of the mouse. Far better for you to make the mouse your son-in-law than me." The mice were convinced by this reasoning and returned home, and after all, it is said, they married their daughter to one of their own kind.

Although the stories of the stonecutter and the ambitious mice, have evidently a common basis, there are, as will be seen, many important points of dissimilarity, and

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it is possible that these may be principally due to the Dutch author who may have had the German tale in his mind. This is a point which I am unable now to determine. I should be much obliged to any Japanese scholar who would supply other genuine Japanese varieties of the tale.

The German story in Grimm to which I have alluded is substantially as follows.

#### THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE.

'A fisherman once lived contentedly with his wife in a little hut near a lake, and he went every day to throw his line into the water.

One day after angling for a long time without even a bite, the line suddenly sunk to the bottom, and when he pulled it up again there was a large flounder hanging to the end of it.

'Oh! dear,' exclaimed the fish, 'good fisherman let me go, I pray you; I am not a real fish, but a prince in disguise. I shall be of no use to you, for I am not good to eat; put me back into the water, and let me swim away.'

'Ah,' said the man 'you need not make such a disturbance. I would rather let a flounder who can speak swim away, than keep it.'

With these words, he placed the fish back again in the water and it sunk to the bottom leaving a long streak of blood behind it. Then the fisherman rose up and went home to his wife in the hut.

'Husband,' said the wife, 'have you caught anything to-day?'

'I caught a flounder' he replied, 'who said he was an enchanted prince, and I threw him back into the water, and let him swim away.'

'Did you not wish?' she asked.

'No,' he said, 'what should I wish for?'

'Why, at least for a better hut than this dirty place; how unlucky you did not think of it. He would have promised you whatever you asked for. However, go and call him now, perhaps he will answer you.'

The husband did not like this task at all; he thought it was nonsense. However, to please his wife he went and stood by the sea. When he saw how green and dark it looked he felt much discouraged, but made up a rhyme and said

Flounder, flounder, in the sea  
Come I pray and talk to me,  
For my wife, dame Isabel,  
Sent me here a tale to tell.

Then the fish came swimming up to the surface and said, 'What do you want with me?'

'Ah,' said the man, 'I caught you and let you go again to-day, without wishing, and my wife says I ought to have wished, for she cannot live any longer in such a miserable hut as ours and she wants a better one.'

'Go home, man,' said the fish, 'your wife has all she wants.' So the husband went home and there was his wife no longer in her dirty hovel, but sitting at the door of a neat little cottage, looking very happy. She took her husband by the hand and said, 'come in and see how much better it is than the other old hut.'

So he followed her in and found a beautiful parlour, and a bright stove in it, a soft bed in the bed-room, and a

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kitchen full of earthenware, and tin and copper vessels for cooking, looking so bright and clean, and all of the very best. Outside was a little farm yard, with hens and chickens running about, and beyond, a garden containing plenty of fruit and vegetables. 'See,' said the wife, 'is it not delightful?' 'Ah yes!' replied her husband, 'as long as it is new you will be quite contented; but after that we shall see.'

'Yes, we shall see,' said the wife.

A fortnight passed and the husband felt quite happy, till one day his wife startled him by saying 'Husband, after all, this is only a cottage, very much too small for us, and the yard and the garden cover very little ground. If the fish is really a prince in disguise, he could very well give us a larger house. I should like above all things to live in a large castle built of stone. Go to the fish, and ask him to build us a castle.'

'Ah, wife,' he said 'this cottage is good enough for us; what do we want with a castle?'

'Go along,' she replied, 'the flounder will be sure to give what you ask.'

'Nay; wife,' said he, 'the fish gave us the cottage at first, but if I go again he may be angry.'

'Never mind,' she replied; 'he can do what I wish easily, and I have no doubt he will; so go and try.'

The husband rose to go with a heavy heart. He said to himself, 'This is not right,' and when he reached the sea he noticed that the water was now a dark blue yet very calm, so he began his old song.

Flounder, flounder in the sea  
Come I pray and talk to me—  
For my wife, dame Isabel,  
Wishes what I fear to tell.

'Now then, what do you want?' said the fish, lifting his head above the water.

'Oh dear,' said the fisherman, in a frightened tone, 'my wife wants to live in a great stone castle.'

'Go home, man, and you will find her there' was the reply.

The husband hastened home, and where the cottage had been there stood a fresh stone castle, and his wife tripped down the steps saying, 'come in to me, and I will show you what a beautiful dwelling we now have.'

The fisherman's wife soon becomes discontented in the the splendid castle, and her next wish is to be queen.

Her husband reluctantly complies with her desires and once more addressed himself to the fish, with their new

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request, which is granted and he returns to find his wife invested with all the splendours of royalty.

She now desires to be empress and this wish is also granted.

Nor satisfied with being empress she next requires to be the Pope, and even this is conceded, and when the husband comes back he finds her in a large cathedral.

'Well wife,' says the husband, 'and you are Pope?' 'Yes,' she said 'I am.'

He stood still for a time watching her, and at length he remarked 'You cannot be higher than the Pope, so I suppose you are now content.'

'I am not quite sure,' she said. But when evening came, and they retired to rest, she could not sleep for thinking of what next she should wish for.

Her husband slept soundly, for he had tired himself the day before; but she rose even before the day broke, and stood at the window to watch the sun rise. It was a beautiful sight, and she exclaimed as she watched it 'Oh, if I only had the power to make the sun rise! Husband wake up,' she added, pushing him in the ribs with her elbows; 'wake up and go and tell the enchanted prince that I wish to be equal to the Creator, and make the sun rise.'

The husband was so frightened at this that he tumbled out of bed, and exclaimed, 'Ah wife, what did'st thou say?'

She repeated the words

Her husband fell on his knees before her 'Don't ask me to do this, I cannot' he cried, but she flew into a rage and drove him from the house.

The poor fisherman went down to the shore in terror, for a dreadful storm had arisen, and he could scarcely stand on his feet. Ships were wrecked, boats tossed to and fro, and rocks rolled into the sea.

In his terror and confusion he heard a voice from amidst the storm 'Your wife wishes to be equal to the Creator. Go home, man, and find her again in her dirty hut by the sea.'

He went home, to find the glories, the riches, and the palaces vanished, and his wife sitting in the old hut, an example of the consequences of impious ambition.'

Notwithstanding the general resemblance between the German story of the fisherman and the Japanese one of the ambitious mice, the differences in treatment are so

great that it may fairly be questioned whether they have a common origin. The story of the Japanese stone-cutter, as told in the Dutch novel, forms a kind of link between the two, but until we are sure that the peculiar features contained in it which bring it nearer to the German legend, have not been added by the author of the novel, we can form no satisfactory conclusion on the subject. The three legends, however, together furnish an instructive example of the manner in which one leading idea may be varied and decorated.

The last story I have to refer to is one which was printed in the *Japan Mail* of November 28th, 1874, and which I am informed is current amongst the old-wives of Japan at the present day.

It is entitled

“ A RETORT IN KIND. ”

‘Kisaburo, a man of a careful and saving disposition, abandoned his old lodgings and took a small dwelling next door to a famous eel-house. Now as every one knows that the titillating odour of eels fried in soy may be perceived far and near, Kisaburo found this change of quarters vastly to his advantage, and eat his simple meal of rice to the accompaniment of the delicious smell, dispensing with the usual adjuncts of fish or vegetables.

The eel-man was not slow to discover this, and determining at length to ask his frugal-minded neighbour for payment, took him an account for the “smell” of his eels. Kisaburo eyed him astutely, and drawing from his pocket-book the amount claimed from him, laid the money on the bill and began to converse with his visitor. The latter at length rose to depart, when Kisaburo quietly replaced the money in his pocket-book. “Hey!” quoth the eel-man “I thought that money was for me; why don’t you give it to me?” “Not so” was the reply; “You have charged me for the smell of your eels;—I pay you back with the sight of my money.”—*Japan Mail, Nov. 28.*

It was pointed out by a writer in the *Japan Daily Herald* of the 5th December, 1874, that the counterpart of this story is to be found greatly elaborated in Rabelais in the 37th chapter of the 3rd Book. The Rabelaisian version is as follows.

“At Paris, in the roast-meat cookery of the Petit-Chastelet before the cook shop of one of the roast-meat-sellers of that lane, a certain hungry porter was eating his bread, after he had by parcels kept it a while above the reek and steam of a fat goose on the spit, turning at a great fire, and found it, so besmoked with the vapour, to be savoury; which the cook observing, took notice, till after having ravined his penny loaf, whereof no morsel had been unsmokified, he was about decamping and going away. But, by your leave, as the fellow thought to have departed thence scot-free, the master-cook laid hold upon him by the gorget, and demanded payment for the smoke of his roast-meat. The porter answered, That he had sustained no loss at all,—that by that he had done there was no diminution made of the flesh,—that he had taken nothing of his, and that therefore he was not indebted to him in anything. As for the smoke in question, that, although he had not been there, it would howsoever have been evaporated: besides, that before that time it had never been seen nor heard, that roast-meat-smoke was sold upon the streets of Paris. The cook hereto replied, That he was not obliged nor any way bound to feed and non-

rish for nought a porter whom he had never seen before, with the smoke of his roast-meat, and thereupon swore, that if he would not forthwith content and satisfy him with present payment for the repast which he had thereby got, that he would take his crooked staves from off his back ; which, instead of having loads thereafter laid upon them, should serve for fuel to his kitchen fires. Whilst he was going about so to do, and to have pulled them to him by one of the bottom rungs, which he had caught in his hand, the sturdy porter got out of his grip, drew forth the knotty cudgel, and stood to his own defence. The altercation waxed hot in words, which moved the gaping hoidens of the sottish Parisians to run from all parts thereabouts, to see what the issue would be of that babbling strife and contention. In the interim of this dispute, to very good purpose, Seyny John, the fool and citizen of Paris, happened to be there, whom the cook perceiving, said to the porter. Wilt thou refer and submit unto the noble Seyny John, the decision of the difference and controversy which is betwixt us ? Yes, by the blood of a goose, answered the porter, I am content. Seyny John the fool, finding that the cook and porter had compromised the determination of their variance and debate to the discretion of his award and arbitrament, after that the reason on either side, whereupon was grounded the mutual fierceness of their brawling jar, had been to the full displayed and laid open before him, commanded the porter to draw out of money, if he had it. Whereupon the porter immediately without delay, in reverence to the authority of such a judicious umpire, put the tenth part of a silver Philip into his hand. This little Philip Seyny John took, then set it on his left shoulder, to try by feeling if it was of a sufficient weight. After that, laying it on the palm of his hand, he made it ring and tingle, to understand by the ear if it was of a good alloy in the metal whereof it was composed. Thereafter he put it to the ball or apple of his left eye, to explore by the sight, if it was well stamped and marked ; all which being done, in a profound silence of the whole doltish people, who were there spectators of the pageantry, to the great hope of the cook's, and despair of the porter's prevalency in the suit that was in agitation, finally caused the porter to make it sound several times upon the stall of the cook's shop. Then with a presidential majesty holding his bawble, sceptre-like, in his hand, muffling his head with hood of marten skins, each side whereof had

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the resemblance of an ape's face, spruced up with ears of pasted paper, and having about his neck a bucked ruff, raised, furrowed, and ridged, with pointing sticks of the shape and fashion of small organ pipes, he first with all the force of his lungs coughed two or three times, and then with an audible voice pronounced this following sentence. The Court declareth, that the porter, who ate his bread at the smoke of the roast, hath civilly paid the cook with sound of his money. And the said Court ordaineth, that every one return to his own home, and attend his proper business, without costs and charges, and for a cause. This verdict, award, and arbitrament of the Parisian Fool did appear so equitable, yea, so admirable to the aforesaid Doctors, that they very much doubted if the matter had been brought before the Sessions for Justice of the said place, or that the judges of the Rota at Rome had been umpires therein, or yet that the Areopagites themselves had been the deciders thereof, by any one part, or all of them together, had been so judicially sententiated and awarded. Therefore advise if you will be counselled by a fool."

I have no means at present of tracing this story in its migration. It is one likely enough to have gone all over the world. But the question arises here, as in the case of the story of the man with the wen, have the Japanese received it in comparatively recent times, whether by way of China or from Arabian or Indian merchants, or later from Portuguese or Dutch missionaries or merchants, or does it belong to the most ancient cycle of Turanian legend, which may have existed all over Asia and Europe in times long antecedent to the dawn of history?

Recent discoveries have tended to show that the story of the Deluge and others which had previously passed for Shemitic or Aryan are really of Turanian origin, or at least were in the possession of Turanian tribes before they were current among Shemites or Aryans.

It is possible that further enquiries into the Japanese legends may throw some further light upon this strange but very interesting subject. - Would not a complete translation of the Uji stories, and of the supplementary collection from which the "Man with the Wen" is taken, be worth the trouble of making?