

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUPERNATURAL LAPSE OF TIME IN FAIRYLAND.

The story of Rhys and Llewelyn—Dancing for a twelvemonth—British variants—Lapse of time among the Siberian Tartars—German and Slavonic stories—The penalty of curiosity and greed—A Lapp tale—The mother leaving her child in the mysterious cave—Rip van Winkle—Eastern variants—King Herla—The Adalantado of the Seven Cities—The Seven Sleepers—King Wenzel and the smith—Lost brides and bridegrooms—The Monk Felix—Visits to Paradise—A Japanese tale.

IN previous chapters we have seen that human beings are sometimes taken by fairies into Fairyland, and that they are there kept for a longer or shorter period, or, it may be, are never permitted to return to earth at all. We have noted cases in which they are led down for temporary purposes and, if they are prudent, are enabled to return when those purposes are accomplished. We have noted other cases in which babes or grown women have been stolen and retained until their kindred have compelled restoration. The story cited in the last chapter from Giraldus describes a seduction of a different kind. There the visit to Fairyland was of a more voluntary character, and the hero was able to go to and fro as he pleased. We have also met with tales in which the temptation of food, or more usually of drink, has been held out to the wayfarer ; and we have learned that the result of yielding would be to give himself wholly into the fairies' hands. I propose now to examine instances in which temptation of one kind or

other has been successful, or in which a spell has been cast over man or woman, not merely preventing the bewitched person from regaining his home and human society, but also rendering him, while under the spell, impervious to the attacks of time and unconscious of its flight.

These stories are of many types. The first type comes, so far as I know, only from Celtic sources. It is very widely known in Wales, and we may call it, from its best-known example, the "Rhys and Llewelyn type." A story obtained between sixty and seventy years ago in the Vale of Neath relates that Rhys and Llewelyn were fellow-servants to a farmer; and they had been engaged one day in carrying lime for their master. As they were going home, driving their mountain ponies before them in the twilight, Rhys suddenly called to his companion to stop and listen to the music. It was a tune, he said, to which he had danced a hundred times, and he must go and have a dance now. So he told his companion to go on with the horses and he would soon overtake him. Llewelyn could hear nothing, and began to remonstrate; but away sprang Rhys, and he called after him in vain. Accordingly he went home, put up the ponies, ate his supper and went to bed, thinking that Rhys had only made a pretext for going to the alehouse. But when morning came, and still no sign of Rhys, he told his master what had occurred. Search proving fruitless, suspicion fell on Llewelyn of having murdered his fellow-servant; and he was accordingly imprisoned. A farmer in the neighbourhood, skilled in fairy matters, guessing how things might have been, proposed that himself and some others, including the narrator of the story, should accompany Llewelyn to the place where he parted with Rhys. On coming to it, "Hush!" cried Llewelyn, "I hear music, I hear sweet harps." All listened, but could hear nothing. But Llewelyn's foot was on the outward edge of the fairy-ring. "Put your

foot on mine, David," he said to the narrator. The latter did so, and so did each of the party, one after the other, and then heard the sound of many harps, and saw within a circle, about twenty feet across, great numbers of little people dancing round and round. Among them was Rhys, whom Llewelyn caught by the smock-frock, as he came by him, and pulled him out of the circle. "Where are the horses? where are the horses?" cried he. "Horses, indeed!" said Llewelyn. Rhys urged him to go home and let him finish his dance, in which he averred he had not been engaged more than five minutes. It was only by main force they got him away; and the sequel was that he could not be persuaded of the time that had passed in the dance: he became melancholy, took to his bed, and soon after died.¹

Variants of this tale are found all over Wales. At Pwllheli, Professor Rhys was told of two youths who went out to fetch cattle and came at dusk upon a party of fairies dancing. One was drawn into the circle; and the other was suspected of murdering him, until, at a wizard's suggestion, he went again to the same spot at the end of a year and a day. There he found his friend dancing, and managed to get him out, reduced to a mere skeleton. The first question put by the rescued man was as to the cattle he was driving. Again, at Trefriw, Professor Rhys found a belief that when a young man got into a fairy-ring the fairy damsels took him away; but he could be got out unharmed at the end of a year and a day, when he would be found dancing with them in the same ring. The mode of recovery was to touch him with a piece of iron and to drag him out at once. We shall consider hereafter the reason for touching the captive with iron. In this way was recovered, after the expiration of a year and a day, a youth who had

¹ Croker, vol. iii. p. 215. This tale is given by Sikes, p. 70, of course without any acknowledgment. It is also found in Keightley, p. 415.

wandered into a fairy-ring. He had new shoes on at the time he was lost ; and he could not be made to understand that he had been there more than five minutes until he was asked to look at his new shoes, which were by that time in pieces. Near Aberystwyth, Professor Rhys was told of a servant-maid who was lost while looking for some calves. Her fellow-servant, a man, was taken into custody on a charge of murdering her. A "wise man," however, found out that she was with the fairies ; and by his directions the servant-man was successful at the end of the usual period of twelve months and a day in drawing her out of the fairy-ring at the place where she was lost. As soon as she was released and saw her fellow-servant (who was carefully dressed in the same clothes as he had on when she left him), she asked about the calves. On their way home she told her master, the servant-man, and the others, that she would stay with them until her master should strike her with iron. One day, therefore, when she was helping her master to harness a horse the bit touched her, and she disappeared instantly and was never seen from that time forth. In another case, said to have happened in Anglesea, a girl got into a fairy-circle while looking, with her father, for a lost cow. By a "wise man's" advice, however, he rescued her by pulling her out of the circle the very hour of the night of the anniversary of his loss. The first inquiry she then made was after the cow, for she had not the slightest recollection of the time she had spent with the fairies.¹

A ghastly sequel, more frequently found in a type of the story considered later on, sometimes occurs. In Carmarthenshire it is said that a farmer going out one morning very early was lost ; nor were any tidings heard of him for more than twelve months afterwards, until one day a man passing by a lonely spot saw him dancing, and spoke to him. This broke the spell ; and the farmer,

¹ "Y Cymmrodor," vol. vi. pp. 174, 157, 196, 187.

as if waking out of a dream, exclaimed : " Oh dear ! where are my horses ? " Stepping out of the magical circle, he fell down and mingled his dust with the earth. In North Wales a story was generally current a couple of generations since of two men travelling together who were benighted in a wood. One of them slept, but the other fell into the hands of the fairies. With the help of a wizard's advice, some of his relatives rescued him at the end of a year. They went to the place where his companion had missed him, there found him dancing with the fairies and dragged him out of the ring. The unfortunate man, imagining it was the same night and that he was with his companion, immediately asked if it were not better to go home. He was offered some food, which he began to eat ; but he had no sooner done so than he mouldered away. A similar tradition attaches to a certain yew-tree near Mathafarn in the parish of Llanwrin. One of two farm-servants was lost at that spot, and found again, a year after, dancing in a fairy-circle. On being dragged out he was asked if he did not feel hungry. " No," he replied, " and if I did, have I not here in my wallet the remains of my dinner that I had before I fell asleep ? " He did not know that a year had passed by. His look was like a skeleton ; and as soon as he had tasted food he too mouldered away.¹

In Scotland the story is told without this terrible end. For example, in Sutherlandshire we learn that a man who had been with a friend to the town of Lairg to enter his first child's birth in the session-books, and to buy a keg of whisky against the christening, sat down to rest at the foot of the hill of Dorchâ, near a large hole

¹ Howells, pp. 141, 145 ; Sikes, p. 73. I have not been able to trace Mr. Sikes' authority for the last story ; but his experience and skill in borrowing from other books are so much greater than in oral collection that it is probably from some literary source, though no doubt many of the embellishments are his own. The foundation, however, appears to be traditional.

from which they soon heard a sound of piping and dancing. Feeling curious, he entered the cavern, and disappeared. His friend was accused of murder, but being allowed a year and a day to vindicate himself, he used to repair at dusk to the fatal spot and call and pray. One day before the term ran out, he sat, as usual, in the gloaming by the cavern, when, what seemed his friend's shadow passed within it. It was his friend himself, tripping merrily with the fairies. The accused man succeeded in catching him by the sleeve and pulling him out. "Why could you not let me finish my reel, Sandy?" asked the bewitched man. "Bless me!" rejoined Sandy, "have you not had enough of reeling this last twelvemonth?" But the other would not believe in this lapse of time until he found his wife sitting by the door with a yearling child in her arms. In Kirkcudbrightshire, one night about Hallowe'en two young ploughmen, returning from an errand, passed by an old ruined mill and heard within music and dancing. One of them went in; and nothing was seen of him again until a year after, when his companion went to the same place, Bible in hand, and delivered him from the evil beings into whose power he had fallen.¹

The captive, however, does not always require to be sought for: he is sometimes released voluntarily by his captors. A man who lived at Ystradgynlais, in Brecknockshire, going out one day to look after his cattle and sheep on the mountain, disappeared. In about three weeks, after search had been made in vain for him and his wife had given him up for dead, he came home. His wife asked him where he had been for the past three weeks. "Three weeks! Is it three weeks you call three hours?" said he. Pressed to say where he had been, he told her he had been playing on his flute (which he usually took with him on the mountain) at the Llorfa, a spot near the Van Pool, when he was surrounded at a

¹ Campbell, vol. ii. pp. 63, 55.

distance by little beings like men, who closed nearer and nearer to him until they became a very small circle. They sang and danced, and so affected him that he quite lost himself. They offered him some small cakes to eat, of which he partook ; and he had never enjoyed himself so well in his life. Near Bridgend is a place where a woman is said to have lived who was absent ten years with the fairies, and thought she was not out of the house more than ten minutes. With a woman's proverbial persistency, she would not believe her husband's assurances that it was ten years since she disappeared ; and the serious disagreement between them which ensued was so notorious that it gave a name to the place where they lived. A happier result is believed to have attended an adventure that foreboded much worse to a man at Dornoch, in Sutherlandshire. He was present at a funeral in the churchyard on New Year's Day, and was so piqued at not being invited, as all the others were, to some of the New Year's festivities, that in his vexation, happening to see a skull lying at his feet, he struck it with his staff and said : "Thou seemest to be forsaken and uncared-for, like myself. I have been bidden by none ; neither have I invited any : I now invite thee !" That night as he and his wife were sitting down alone to supper, a venerable old man entered the room in silence and took his share of the delicacies provided. In those days the New Year's feast was kept up for eleven days together ; and the stranger's visit was repeated in the same absolute silence for six nights. At last the host, alarmed and uneasy, sought the priest's advice as to how he was to get rid of his unwelcome guest. The reverend father bade him, in laying the bannocks in the basket for the seventh day's supper, reverse the last-baked one. This, he declared, would induce the old man to speak. It did ; and the speech was an invitation—nay, rather a command—to spend the remainder of the festival with him in the churchyard. The priest, again consulted, advised com-

pliance ; and the man went trembling to the tryst. He found in the churchyard a great house, brilliantly illuminated, where he enjoyed himself, eating, drinking, piping and dancing. After what seemed the lapse of a few hours, the grey master of the house came to him, and bade him hasten home, or his wife would be married to another ; and in parting he advised him always to respect the remains of the dead. Scarcely had he done speaking when the grey old man himself, the guests, the house, and all that it contained, vanished, leaving the man to crawl home alone in the moonlight as best he might after so long a debauch. For he had been absent a year and a day ; and when he got home he found his wife in a bride's dress, and the whole house gay with a bridal party. His entrance broke in upon the mirth : his wife swooned, and the new bridegroom scrambled up the chimney. But when she got over her fright, and her husband had recovered from the fatigue of his year-long dance, they made it up, and lived happily ever after.¹

A story of this type has been elaborated by a Welsh writer who is known as "Glasynys" into a little romance, in which the hero is a shepherd lad, and the heroine a fairy maiden whom he weds and brings home with him. This need not detain us ; but a more authentic story from the Vale of Neath may be mentioned. It concerns a boy called Gitto Bach, or Little Griffith, a farmer's son, who disappeared. During two whole years nothing was heard of him ; but at length one morning when his mother, who had long and bitterly mourned for him as dead, opened the door, whom should she see sitting on the

¹ "F. L. Journal," vol. vi. p. 191. (This story was told to the present writer and Mr. G. L. Gomme by Alderman Howel Walters, of Ystradgynlais, who had it from an old man who knew the hero well and gave implicit credit to the narrative.) "Trans. Aberd. Eistedd." p. 227 ; "F. L. Journal," vol. vi. p. 183. A similar tale is referred to in Jones' "Account of the Parish of Aberystroth," 1779, quoted in "Choice Notes," p. 157.

threshold but Gitto with a bundle under his arm. He was dressed and looked exactly as when she last saw him, for he had not grown a bit. "Where have you been all this time?" asked his mother. "Why, it was only yesterday I went away," he replied; and opening the bundle, he showed her a dress the "little children," as he called them, had given him for dancing with them. The dress was of white paper without seam. With maternal caution she put it into the fire.¹

I am not aware of many foreign examples of this type; but among the Siberian Tartars their extravagant heroes sometimes feast overlong with friends as mythical as themselves. On one occasion

" They caroused, they feasted.
That a month had flown
They knew not;
That a year had gone by
They knew not.
As a year went by
It seemed like a day;
As two years went by
It seemed like two days:
As three years went by
It seemed like three days."

Again, when a hero was married the time very naturally passed rapidly. "One day he thought he had lived here—he had lived a month; two days he believed he had lived—he had lived two months; three days he believed he had lived—he had lived three months." And he was much surprised to learn from his bride how long it really was, though time seems always to have gone wrong with him. For after he was born it is recorded that in one day he became a year old, in two days two years, and in seven days seven years old; after which he performed some heroic feats, ate fourteen sheep and three cows, and then lying down slept for seven days and seven

¹ "Cymru Fu," p. 177 (a translation is given by Professor Rhys in "Y Cymmrodor," vol. v. p. 81); Croker, vol. iii. p. 208.

nights—in other words, until he was fourteen years old. In a Breton tale a girl who goes down underground, to become godmother to a fairy child, thinks, when she returns, that she has been away but two days, though in the meantime her god-child has grown big : she has been in fact ten years. In a Hessian legend the time of absence is seven years.¹

Turning away from this type, in which pleasure, and especially the pleasure of music and dancing, is the motive, let us look at what seem to be some specially German and Slavonic types of the tale. In the latter it is rather an act of service (sometimes under compulsion), curiosity or greed, which leads the mortal into the mysterious regions where time has so little power. At Eldena, in Pomerania, are the ruins of a monastery and church, formerly very wealthy, under which are said to be some remarkable chambers. Two Capuchin monks came from Rome many years ago, and inquired of the head of the police after a hidden door which led under the ruins. He lent them his servant-boy, who, under their direction, removed the rubbish and found the door. It opened at the touch of the monks, and they entered with the servant. Passing through several rooms they reached one in which many persons were sitting and writing. Here they were courteously received ; and after a good deal of secret conference between the monks and their hosts, they were dismissed. When the servant came back to the upper air, he found he had been absent three whole years. Blanik is the name of a mountain in Bohemia, beneath which are lofty halls whose walls are entirely fashioned of rock-crystal. In these halls the Bohemian hero, the holy King Wenzel, sleeps with a chosen band of his knights, until some day the utmost need of his country shall summon him and them to her aid. A smith, who dwelt near the mountain, was once

¹ Radloff, vol. i. p. 95, vol. iv. p. 109 ; Sébillot, "Contes," vol. ii. p. 8 ; Grimm, "Tales," vol. i. p. 162.

mowing his meadow, when a stranger came and bade him follow him. The stranger led him into the mountain, where he beheld the sleeping knights, each one upon his horse, his head bent down upon the horse's neck. His guide then brought him tools that he might shoe the horses, but told him to beware in his work of knocking against any of the knights. The smith skilfully performed his work, but as he was shoeing the last horse he accidentally touched the rider, who started up, crying out : " Is it time ? " " Not yet," replied he who had brought the smith thither, motioning the latter to keep quiet. When the task was done, the smith received the old shoes by way of reward. On returning home he was astonished to find two mowers at work in his meadow, whereas he had only left one there. From them he learned that he had been away a whole year ; and when he opened his bag, behold the old horse-shoes were all of solid gold ! On Easter Sunday, during mass, the grey horse belonging to another peasant living at the foot of the Blanik disappeared. While in quest of him the owner found the mountain open, and, entering, arrived in the hall where the knights sat round a large table of stone and slept. Each of them wore black armour, save their chief, who shone in gold and bore three herons' feathers in his helm. Ever and anon one or other of the knights would look up and ask : " Is it time ? " But on their chief shaking his head he would sink again to rest. While the peasant was in the midst of his astonishment he heard a neighing behind him ; and turning round he left the cavern. His horse was quietly grazing outside ; but when he got home every one shrank in fright away from him. His wife sat at the table in deep mourning. On seeing him she shrieked and asked : " Where have you been for a whole year ? " He thought he had only been absent a single hour. A servant-man driving two horses over the Blanik heard the trampling of steeds and a battle-march played. It was the knights returning from their mimic combat ;

and the horses he was driving were so excited that he was compelled to follow with them into the mountain, which then closed upon them. Nor did he reach home until ten years had passed away, though he thought it had only been as many days.¹

We shall have occasion to return to Blantik and its knights. Parallel traditions attach, as is well known, to the Kyffhäuser, a mountain in Thuringia, where Frederick Barbarossa sleeps. A peasant going with corn to market at Nordhausen, drove by the Kyffhäuser, where he was met by a little grey man, who asked him whither he was going, and offered to reward him if he would accompany him instead. The little grey man led him through a great gateway into the mountain till they came at last to a castle. There he took from the peasant his waggon and horses, and led him into a hall gorgeously illuminated and filled with people, where he was well entertained. At last the little grey man told him it was now time he went home, and rewarding him bountifully he led him forth. His waggon and horses were given to him again, and he trudged homeward well pleased. Arrived there, however, his wife opened her eyes wide to see him, for he had been absent a year, and she had long accounted him dead. It fared not quite so well with a journeyman joiner from Nordhausen, by name Thiele, who found the mountain open, as it is every seven years, and went in. There he saw the Marquis John (whoever he may have been), with his beard spreading over the table and his nails grown through it. Around the walls lay great wine-vats, whose hoops and wood had alike rolled away ; but the wine had formed its own shell and was blood-red. A little drop remained in the wine-glass which stood before the Marquis John. The joiner made bold to drain it off, and thereupon fell asleep. When he awoke again he had slept for seven years in the mountain.²

¹ Jahn, p. 199 ; Grohmann, pp. 19, 20, 18.

² Kuhn und Schwartz, pp. 220, 222.

Curiosity and greed caused this man to lose seven years of his life. This is a motive often met with in these stories. A young girl during the midday rest left a hayfield in the Lavantthal, Carinthia, to climb the Schönofen, whence there is a fine view over the valley. As she reached the top she became aware of an open door in the rock. She entered, and found herself in a cellar-like room. Two fine black steeds stood at the fodder-trough and fed off the finest oats. Marvelling how they got there, she put a few handfuls of the oats into her pocket, and passed on into a second chamber. A chest stood there, and on the chest lay a black dog. Near him was a loaf of bread, in which a knife was stuck. With ready wit she divined, or recollected, the purpose of the bread ; and cutting a good slice she threw it to the dog. While he was busy devouring it she filled her apron from the treasure contained in the chest. But meantime the door closed, and there was nothing for it but to lie down and sleep. She awoke to find the door wide open, and at once made the best of her way home. But she was not a little astounded to learn that she had been gone for a whole year.¹

A Lapp tale presents this mysterious lapse of time as the sequel of an adventure similar to that of Ulysses with Polyphemus. An old Lapp, having lost his way while hunting, came to a cottage. The door was open ; and he entered to remain there the night, and began to cook in a pot he carried with him the game he had caught that day. Suddenly a witch entered, and asked him : "What is your name?" "Myself," answered the Lapp ; and taking a spoonful of the boiling liquid he flung it in her face. She cried out : "Myself has burnt me ! Myself has burnt me ! " "If you have burnt yourself you ought to suffer," answered her companion from the neighbouring mountain. The hunter was thus delivered for the moment from the witch, who, however, as she went away, ex-

¹ Rappold, p. 34.

claimed : "Self has burnt me ; Self shall sleep till the new year !" When the Lapp had finished his repast he lay down to repose. On awaking he rummaged in his provision-sack : he found its contents mouldy and putrid. Nor could he understand this before he got home and learned that he had been missing for six months.¹

This story is unlike the previous ones, inasmuch as it represents the six months' disappearance as in no way due to any enticements, either of supernatural beings or of the hero's own passions. Neither music, nor dancing, neither greed nor curiosity, led him astray. The aboriginal inhabitants of Japan in like manner tell of a certain man who went out in his boat to fish and was carried off by a storm to an unknown land. The chief, an old man of divine aspect, begged him to stay there for the night, promising to send him home to his own country on the morrow. The promise was fulfilled by his being sent with some of the old chief's subjects who were going thither ; but the man was enjoined to lie down in the boat and cover up his head. When he reached his native place the sailors threw him into the water ; and ere he came to himself sailors and boat had disappeared. He had been away for a whole year ; and the chief appeared to him shortly afterwards in a dream, revealing himself as no human being, but the chief of the salmon, the divine fish ; and he required the man thenceforth to worship him. Curiously similar to the Japanese tale is a tale told to M. Sébillot by a cabin-boy of Saint Cast in Brittany. A fisherman caught one day the king of the fishes, in the shape of a small gilded fish, but was persuaded to let him go under promise to send (such is the popular belief in the unselfishness of kings) at all times as many of his subjects as the fisherman wanted into his nets. The promise was royally fulfilled. More than this, when the fisherman's boat was once capsized by a storm the king of the fishes appeared, gave its drowning owner

¹ "Archivio," vol. vi. p. 398.

to drink from a bottle he had brought for the purpose, and conveyed him under the water to his capital,—a beautiful city whose streets, surpassing those of London in the traditions of English peasant children, were paved not only with gold but with diamonds and other gems. The fisherman promptly filled his pockets with these paving-stones; and then the king politely told him: "When you are tired of being with us, you have only to say so." There is a limit to hospitality; so the fisherman took the hint, and told the king how delighted he should be to remain there always, but that he had a wife and children at home who would think he was drowned. The king called a tunny and commanded him to take the fisherman on his back and deposit him on a rock near the shore, where the other fishers could see and rescue him. Then, with the parting gift of an inexhaustible purse, he dismissed his guest. When the fisherman got back to his village he found he had been away more than six months. In the chapter on Changelings I had occasion to refer to some instances of women being carried off at a critical time in their lives. One more such instance may be added here. Among the Bohemians a mythical female called Polednice is believed to be dangerous to women who have recently added to the population; and such women are accordingly warned to keep within doors, especially at noon and after the angelus in the evening. On one occasion a woman, who scorned the warnings she had received, was carried off by Polednice in the form of a whirlwind, as she sat in the harvest-field chatting with the reapers, to whom she had brought their dinner. Only after a year and a day was she permitted to return.¹

In some of the German and Bohemian tales a curious incident occurs. Beneath the Rollberg, near Niemes, in Bohemia, is a treasure-vault, the door of which stands

¹ "F. L. Journal," vol. vi. p. 33; "Archivio," vol. ix. p. 233
Grohmann, p. 112.

open for a short time every Palm Sunday. A woman once found it open thus and entered with her child. There she saw a number of Knights Templars sitting round a table, gambling. They did not notice her ; so she helped herself from a pile of gold lying near them, having first set down her child. Beside the gold lay a black dog, which barked from time to time. The woman knew that the third time it barked the door would close ; wherefore she hastened out. When she bethought herself of the child it was too late : she had left it behind in her haste, and the vault was closed. The following year she returned at the hour when the door was open, and found the little one safe and sound, in either hand a fair red apple. Frequently in these tales a beautiful lady comes and ministers to the child during its mother's absence ; at other times, a man. The treasure of King Darius is believed to be buried beneath the Sattelburg in Transylvania. A Wallachian woman, with her yearling babe in her arms, once found the door open and went in. There sat an old, long-bearded man, and about him stood chests full of silver and gold. She asked him if she might take some of this treasure for herself. " Oh, yes," answered he, " as much as you like." She put down the child and filled her skirts with gold, put the gold outside and re-entered. Having obtained permission, she filled and emptied her skirts a second time. But when she turned to enter a third time the door banged-to, and she was left outside. She cried out for her child, and wept—in vain. Then she made her way to the priest and laid her case before him. He advised her to pray daily for a whole year, and she would then get her child again. She carried out his injunction ; and the following year she went again to the Sattelburg. The door was open, and she found the babe still seated in the chest where she had put it down. It was playing with a golden apple, which it held up to her, crying : " Look, mother, look ! " The mother was astonished to hear it speak, and asked :

"Whence hast thou that beautiful apple?" "From the old man, who has given me to eat too." The man was, however, no longer to be seen; and as the mother took her child and left the place, the door closed behind her.¹

But the most numerous, and assuredly the most weird and interesting, of these stories belong to a type which we may call, after the famous Posthumous Writing of Diedrich Knickerbocker, the "Rip van Winkle type." Here the hero remains under the spell of the supernatural until he passes the ordinary term of life; and he comes back to find all his friends dead and himself nothing but a dim memory. It will be needless here to recapitulate the tale of Rip van Winkle himself. Whether any such legend really lingers about the Kaatskill mountains I do not know; but I have a vehement suspicion that Washington Irving was indebted rather to Otmar's "Traditions of the Harz," a book published at Bremen in the year 1800. In this book the scene of the tale is laid on the Kyffhäuser, and with the exception of such embellishments as the keen tongue of Dame van Winkle and a few others, the incidents in the adventures of Peter Claus the Goatherd are absolutely the same as those of Rip van Winkle.²

Of all the variants of this type it is in China that we find the one most resembling it. Wang Chih, afterwards one of the holy men of the Taoists, wandering one day in the mountains of Kū Chow to gather firewood, entered a grotto in which some aged men were playing at chess. He laid down his axe and watched their game, in the course of which one of them handed him something in size and shape like a date-stone, telling him to put it into his mouth. No sooner had he done so than hunger and thirst passed away. After some time had elapsed one of the players said: "It is long since you came here; you should go home now." Wang Chih accordingly pro-

¹ Grohmann, pp. 29, 289, 296, 298; Müller, p. 83.

² See Thorpe's translation of the story, "Yule Tide Stories," p. 475.

ceeded to pick up his axe, but found that its handle had mouldered into dust ; and on reaching home he became aware that not hours, nor days, but centuries had passed since he left it, and that no vestige of his kinsfolk remained. Another legend tells of a horseman who, riding over the hills, sees several old men playing a game with rushes. He ties his horse to a tree while he looks on at them. In a few minutes, as it seems to him, he turns to depart ; but his horse is already a skeleton, and of the saddle and bridle rotten pieces only are left. He seeks his home ; but that too is gone ; and he lies down and dies broken-hearted. A similar story is told in Japan of a man who goes into the mountains to cut wood, and watches two mysterious ladies playing at chess while seven generations of mortal men pass away. Both these legends omit the supernatural food which seems to support life, not only in the case of Wang Chih, but also in that of Peter Claus. In another Chinese tale two friends, wandering in the T'ien-t'ai mountains, are entertained by two beautiful girls, who feed them on a kind of haschisch, a drug made from hemp ; and when they return they find that they have passed seven generations of ordinary men in the society of these ladies. Another Taoist devotee was admitted for a while into the next world, where he was fed on cakes, and, as if he were a dyspeptic, he received much comfort from having all his digestive organs removed. After awhile he was sent back to this world, to find himself much younger than his youngest grandson.¹

Feasts in Fairyland occupy an unconscionable length of time. Walter Map, writing in the latter half of the twelfth century, relates a legend concerning a mythical British king, Herla, who was on terms of friendship with the king of the pigmies. The latter appeared to him one day riding on a goat, a man such as Pan might have been described to be, with a very large head, a fiery face, and

¹ Dennys, p. 98 ; Giles, vol. ii. pp. 89 note, 85 ; Brauns, p. 366.

a long red beard. A spotted fawn-skin adorned his breast, but the lower part of his body was exposed and shaggy, and his legs degenerated into goat's feet. This queer little fellow declared himself very near akin to Herla, foretold that the king of the Franks was about to send ambassadors offering his daughter as wife to the king of the Britons, and invited himself to the wedding. He proposed a pact between them, that when he had attended Herla's wedding, Herla should the following year attend his. Accordingly at Herla's wedding the pigmy king appears with a vast train of courtiers and servants, and numbers of precious gifts. The next year he sends to bid Herla to his own wedding. Herla goes. Penetrating a mountain cavern, he and his followers emerge into the light, not of sun or moon, but of innumerable torches, and reach the pigmies' dwellings, whose splendour Map compares with Ovid's description of the palace of the sun. Having given so charming, and doubtless so accurate, a portrait of the pigmy king, it is a pity the courtier-like ecclesiastic has forgotten to inform us what his bride was like. He leaves us to guess that her attractions must have corresponded with those of her stately lord, telling us simply that when the wedding was over, and the gifts which Herla brought had been presented, he obtained leave to depart, and set out for home, laden, he too, with gifts, among which are enumerated horses, dogs, hawks, and other requisites of a handsome outfit for hunting or fowling. Indeed, the bridegroom himself accompanied them as far as the darkness of the cavern through which they had to pass ; and at parting he added to his presentations that of a bloodhound, so small as to be carried, forbidding any of the train to alight anywhere until the hound should leap from his bearer. When Herla found himself once more within his own realm he met with an old shepherd, and inquired for tidings of his queen by name. The shepherd looked at him astonished, scarcely understanding his speech ; for he

was a Saxon, whereas Herla was a Briton. Nor, as he told the king, had he heard of such a queen, unless it were a queen of the former Britons, whose husband, Herla, was said to have disappeared at yonder rock with a dwarf, and never to have been seen again. That, however, was long ago, for it was now more than two hundred years since the Britons had been driven out and the Saxons had taken possession of the land. The king was stupefied, for he deemed he had only been away three days, and could hardly keep his seat. Some of his followers, forgetful of the pigmy king's prohibition, alighted without waiting for the dog to lead the way, and were at once crumbled into dust. Herla and those who were wiser took warning by the fate of their companions. One story declared that they were wandering still ; and many persons asserted that they had often beheld the host upon its mad, its endless journey. But Map concludes that the last time it appeared was in the year of King Henry the Second's coronation, when it was seen by many Welshmen to plunge into the Wye in Herefordshire.¹

Cases in which dancing endures for a whole twelve-month have already been mentioned. This might be thought a moderate length of time for a ball, even for a fairy ball ; but some have been known to last longer. Two celebrated fiddlers of Strathspey were inveigled by a venerable old man, who ought to have known better, into a little hill near Inverness, where they supplied the music for a brilliant assembly which lasted in fact for a hundred years, though to them it seemed but a few hours. They emerged into daylight again on a Sunday ; and when they had learned the real state of affairs, and recovered from their astonishment at the miracle which had been wrought in them, they went, as was meet, to church. They sat listening for awhile to the ringing of the bells ; but when the clergyman began to read the

¹ Map, Dist. i. c. 11. But see below, p. 234.

gospel, at the first word he uttered they both fell into dust. This is a favourite form of the legend in Wales as well as Scotland ; but, pathetic and beautiful as the various versions are, they present no variations of importance.¹

Often the stranger's festive visit to Fairyland is rounded with a sleep. We have seen this in the instance of Rip van Winkle. Another legend has been put into literary form by Washington Irving, this time from a Portuguese source. It relates the adventures of a noble youth who set out to find an island in which some of the former inhabitants of the Peninsula had taken refuge at the time of the Moorish conquest, and where their descendants still dwelt. The island was believed to contain seven cities ; and the adventurer was appointed by the king of Portugal Adalantado, or governor, of the Seven Cities. He reached the island, and was received as Adalantado, was feasted, and then fell asleep. When he came to himself again he was on board a homeward-bound vessel, having been picked up senseless from a drifting wreck. He reached Lisbon, but no one knew him. His ancestral mansion was occupied by others : none of his name had dwelt in it for many a year. He hurried to his betrothed, only to fling himself, not, as he thought, at her feet, but at the feet of her great-granddaughter. In cases like this the supernatural lapse of time may be conceived as taking place during the enchanted sleep, rather than during the festivities. According to a Coptic Christian romance, Abimelek, the youthful favourite of King Zedekiah, preserved the prophet Jeremiah's life when he was thrown into prison, and afterwards persuaded his master to give him charge of the prophet, and to permit him to release him from the dungeon. In reward, Jeremiah promised him that he should never see the destruction of Jerusalem, nor experience the Babylonish captivity, and yet that he

¹ Croker, vol. iii. p. 17 ; Howells, p. 123 ; "Y Cymmrodor," vol. iv. p. 196, vol. v. pp. 108, 113.

should not die. The sun should take care of him, the atmosphere nourish him ; the earth on which he slept should give him repose, and he should taste of joy for seventy years until he should again see Jerusalem in its glory, flourishing as before. Accordingly, going out one day, as his custom was, into the royal garden to gather grapes and figs, God caused him to rest and fall asleep beneath the shadow of a rock. There he lay peacefully slumbering while the city was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, and during the horrors of its capture and the whole of the seventy sad years that followed. When he awoke, it was to meet the prophet Jeremiah returning from the captivity, and he entered the restored city with him in triumph. But the seventy years had seemed to him but a few hours ; nor had he known anything of what passed while he slumbered. Mohammed in the Koran mentions a story referred by the commentators to Ezra. He is represented as passing by a village (said to mean Jerusalem) when it was desolate, and saying : "How will God revive this after its death ?" And God made him die for a hundred years. Then He raised him and asked : "How long hast thou tarried ?" Said the man : "I have tarried a day, or some part of a day." But God said : "Nay, thou hast tarried a hundred years. Look at thy food and drink, they are not spoiled ; and look at thine ass ; for we will make thee a sign to men. And look at the bones, how we scatter them and then clothe them with flesh." And when it was made manifest to him, he said : "I know that God is mighty over all."¹

Mohammed probably was unconscious that this is to all intents and purposes the same story as that of the Seven Sleepers, to which he refers in the chapter on the Cave. Some of the phrases he uses are, indeed, identical. As

¹ "Wolfert's Roost, and other Sketches," by Washington Irving (London, 1855) p. 225 ; Amélineau, vol. ii. p. 111 ; Koran, c. 2 ("Sacred Books of the East," vol. vi. p. 41) ; "Masnavi i Ma'navi," p. 214.

usually told, this legend speaks of seven youths of Ephesus who had fled from the persecutions of the heathen emperor Decius, and taken refuge in a cave, where they slept for upwards of three hundred years. In Mohammed's time, however, it should be noted, the number of the sleepers was undetermined ; they were credited with a dog who slept with them, like Ezra's ass ; and Mohammed's notion of the time they slept was only one hundred years. One of the wild tribes on the northern frontier of Afghanistan is said to tell the following story concerning a cavern in the Hirak Valley, known as the cave of the Seven Sleepers. A king bearing the suspicious name of Dakianus, deceived by the devil, set himself up as a god. Six of his servants, however, having reason to think that his claim was unfounded, fled from him and fell in with a shepherd, who agreed to throw in his lot with theirs and to guide them to a cavern where they might all hide. The shepherd's dog followed his master ; but the six fugitives insisted on his being driven back lest he should betray their whereabouts. The shepherd begged that he might go with them, as he had been his faithful companion for years ; but in vain. So he struck the dog with his stick, breaking one of his legs. The dog still followed ; and the shepherd repeated the blow, breaking a second leg. Finding that the dog continued to crawl after them notwithstanding this, the men were struck with pity and took it in turns to carry the poor animal. Arrived at the cave, they all lay down and slept for three hundred and nine years. Assuming the genuineness of the tradition, which perhaps rests on no very good authority, its form is obviously due to Mohammedan influence. But the belief in this miraculous sleep is traceable beyond Christian and Mohammedan legends into the Paganism of classical antiquity. Pliny, writing in the first century of our era, alludes to a story told of the Cretan poet Epimenides, who, when a boy, fell asleep in a cave, and continued in that state for fifty-seven years. On waking

he was greatly surprised at the change in the appearance of everything around him, as he thought he had only slept for a few hours ; and though he did not, as in the Welsh and Scottish tales, fall into dust, still old age came upon him in as many days as the years he had passed in slumber.¹

Nor is it only in dancing, feasting, or sleeping that the time passes quickly with supernatural folk. A shepherd at the foot of the Blanik, who missed one of his flock, followed it into a cavern, whence he could not return because the mountain closed upon him with a crash. A dwarf came and led him into a large hall. There he saw King Wenzel sleeping with his knights. The king awoke, and bade him stay and clean the armour. One day—perhaps the criticism would be too carping which inquired how he knew the day from the night—he received permission to go, and a bag which he was told contained his reward. When he reached the light of day, he opened the bag and found it filled with oats. In the village all was changed, for he had been a hundred years in the mountain, and nobody knew him. He succeeded in getting a lodging, and on again opening his bag, lo ! all the grains of oats had turned to gold pieces and thalers, so that he was able to buy a fine house, and speedily became the richest man in the place. This was a pleasanter fate than that of the Tirolese peasant who followed his herd under a stone, where they had all disappeared. He presently came into a lovely garden ; and there a lady came, and, inviting him to eat, offered to take him as gardener. He readily assented ; but after some weeks he began to be homesick, and, taking leave of his mistress, went home. On arriving there he was astounded that he knew no one, and no one knew him, save an old

¹ Koran, c. 18 ("Sacred Books of the East," vol. ix. p. 14) ; "Indian N. and Q." vol. iv. p. 8, quoting the "Pall Mall Gazette" (The story of the Seven Sleepers is also localized at N'gaous in Algeria ; Certeux et Carnoy, vol. i. p. 63.) Pliny, "Nat. Hist." l. vii. c. 33.

crone, who at length came to him and said : " Where have you been ? I have been looking for you for two hundred years." Thus saying, she took him by the hand and he fell dead ; for the crone who had sought him so long was Death.¹

Save in the legends that tell of a mother leaving her child in the mountain from her eagerness to gather treasure, we have encountered but few instances of women being beguiled. They are, indeed, not so numerous as those where the sterner sex is thus overcome ; nor need we be detained by most of them. A Danish tradition, however, runs that a bride, during the dancing and festivities of her wedding-day, left the room and thoughtlessly walked towards a mound where the elves were also making merry. The hillock was standing, as is usual on such occasions, on red pillars ; and as she drew near, one of the company offered her a cup of wine. She drank, and then suffered herself to join in a dance. When the dance was over she hastened home. But alas ! house, farm, everything was changed. The noise and mirth of the wedding was stilled. No one knew her ; but at length, on hearing her lamentation, an old woman exclaimed : " Was it you, then, who disappeared at my grandfather's brother's wedding, a hundred years ago ? " At these words the aged bride fell down and expired. A prettier, if not a more pathetic, story is widely current on the banks of the Rhine. A maiden who bore an excellent character for piety and goodness was about to be married. She was fond of roses ; and on the wedding morning she stepped into the garden to gather a small bunch. There she met a man whom she did not know. He admired two lovely blossoms which she had, but said he had many finer in his garden : would she not go with him ? " I cannot," she said ; " I must go to the church : it is high time." " It is not far," urged the stranger. The maiden allowed

¹ Grohmann, p. 16 ; Schneller, p. 217.

herself to be persuaded ; and the man showed her beautiful, beautiful flowers—finer she had never seen—and gave her a wonderful rose of which she was very proud. Then she hastened back, lest she should be too late. When she mounted the steps of the house she could not understand what had happened to her. Children whom she knew not were playing there : people whom she did not recognize were within. And every one ran away from her, frightened to see a strange woman in an antiquated wedding-dress stand there bitterly weeping. She had but just left her bridegroom to go for a moment into the garden, and in so short a time guests and bridegroom had all vanished. She asked after her bridegroom, and nobody knew him. At last she told her story to the folk around her. A man said he had bought the house, and knew nothing at all of her bridegroom or her parents. They took her to the parish priest. He reached his church-books down, and there he found recorded that almost two hundred years before, a certain bride on the wedding-day had disappeared from her father's house. Burdened thus with two centuries of life, she lingered on a few lonely years, and then sank into the grave ; and the good, simple villagers whisper that the strange gardener was no other than the Lord Jesus, who thus provided for His humble child an escape from a union which would have been the source of bitterest woe. After this it is almost an anti-climax to refer to a Scottish tale in which a bridegroom was similarly spirited away. As he was leaving the church after the ceremony, a tall dark man met him and asked him to come round to the back of the church, for he wanted to speak to him. When he complied, the dark man asked him to be good enough to stand there until a small piece of candle he held in his hand should burn out. He good-humouredly complied. The candle took, as he thought, less than two minutes to burn ; and he then rushed off to overtake his friends. On his way he saw a man cutting turf,

and asked if it were long since the wedding party had passed. The man replied that he did not know that any wedding party had passed that way to-day, or for a long time. "Oh, there was a marriage to-day," said the other, "and I am the bridegroom. I was asked by a man to go with him to the back of the church, and I went. I am now running to overtake the party." The turf-cutter, feeling that this could not be, asked him what date he supposed that day was. The bridegroom's answer was in fact two hundred years short of the real date : he had passed two centuries in those two minutes which the bit of candle took, as he thought, to burn. "I remember," said he who cut the turf, "that my grandfather used to tell something of such a disappearance of a bridegroom, a story which his grandfather told him as a fact which happened when he was young." "Ah, well then, I am the bridegroom," sighed the unfortunate man, and fell away as he stood, until nothing remained but a small heap of earth.¹

Every reader of Longfellow loves the story of the Monk Felix, so exquisitely told in "The Golden Legend." Its immediate source I do not know ; but it is certain that the tradition is a genuine one, and has obtained a local habitation in many parts of Europe. Southey relates it as attached to the Spanish convent of San Salvador de Villar, where the tomb of the Abbot to whom the adventure happened was shown. And he is very severe on "the dishonest monks who, for the honour of their convent and the lucre of gain, palmed this lay (for such in its origin it was) upon their neighbours as a true legend." In Wales, the ruined monastery at Clynog-Fawr, on the coast of Carnarvonshire, founded by St. Beuno, the uncle of the more famous St. Winifred, has

¹ Thorpe, vol. ii. p. 138 ; Birlinger, "Volkst." vol. i. p. 257 (*cf.* Bartsch, vol. i. p. 326, where there is no wedding, and curiosity is the lady's motive for venturing into the fairy cavern) ; "Celtic Mag." Oct. 1887, p. 566.

been celebrated by a Welsh antiquary as the scene of the same event, in memory whereof a woodland patch near Clynog is said to be called *Llwyn-y-Nef*, the Grove of Heaven. At *Pantshonshenkin*, in *Carmarthenshire*, a youth went out early one summer's morning and was lost. An old woman, *Catti Madlen*, prophesied of him that he was in the fairies' power and would not be released until the last sap of a certain sycamore tree had dried up. When that time came he returned. He had been listening all the while to the singing of a bird, and supposed only a few minutes had elapsed, though seventy years had in fact gone over his head. In the *Mabinogi* of *Branwen*, daughter of *Llyr*, *Pryderi* and his companions, while bearing the head of *Bran the Blessed*, to bury it in the *White Mount* in *London*, were entertained seven years at *Harlech*, feasting and listening to the singing of the three birds of *Rhiannon*—a mythical figure in whom Professor *Rhys* can hardly be wrong in seeing an old Celtic goddess. In *Germany* and the *Netherlands* the story is widely spread. At the abbey of *Afflighem*, *Fulgentius*, who was abbot towards the close of the eleventh century, received the announcement one day that a stranger monk had knocked at the gate and claimed to be one of the brethren of that cloister. His story was that he had sung matins that morning with the rest of the brotherhood; and when they came to the verse of the 90th Psalm where it is said: "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday," he had fallen into deep meditation, and continued sitting in the choir when the others had departed, and that a little bird had then appeared to him and sung so sweetly that he had followed it into the forest, whence, after a short stay, he had now returned, but found the abbey so changed that he hardly knew it. On questioning him about his abbot and the name of the king whom he supposed to be still reigning, *Fulgentius* found that both had been dead for three hundred years. The same tale

is told of other monasteries. In Transylvania it is told concerning a student of the school at Kronstadt that he was to preach on the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity in St. John's Church, now known as the Church of the Franciscans, and on the Saturday previous he walked out on the Kapellenberg to rehearse his sermon. After he had learned it he saw a beautiful bird, and tried to catch it. It led him on and on into a cavern, where he met a dwarf, who showed the astonished and curious student all the wealth of gold and jewels stored up in the vaults of the mountain. When he escaped again to the upper air the trees and the houses were altered ; other and unknown faces greeted him at the school ; his own room was changed—taken by another ; a different rector ruled ; and in short a hundred years had elapsed since he had gone forth to study his sermon for the next day. The old record-book, bound in pigskin, reposed on the rector's shelves. He took it down : it contained an entry of the student's having quitted the school and not returned, and of the difficulty caused thereby at St. John's Church, where he was to have preached the following day. By the time the entry was found and the mystery solved, it was noon. The student was hungry with his hundred-years' fast ; and he sat down with the others at the common table to dine. But he had no sooner tasted the first spoonful of soup than his whole frame underwent a change. From a ruddy youth he became an old man in the last stage of decrepitude. His comrades scarce had time to hurry him upon a bed ere he breathed his last. Some pretty verses, attributed to Alaric A. Watts, commemorate a similar incident, said to have happened to two sisters who were nuns at Beverley Minister. They disappeared one evening after vespers. After some months they were found in a trance in the north tower. On being aroused they declared they had been admitted into Paradise, whither they would return before morning.

They died in the night ; and the beautiful monument called the Sisters' Shrine still witnesses to the truth of their story.¹

From monastic meditations we may pass without any long interval to a type of the story that perhaps appears at its best in M. Luzel's charming collection of distinctively Christian traditions of Lower Brittany. In this type we are given the adventures of a youth who undertakes to carry a letter to "*Monsieur le Bon Dieu*" in Paradise. Proceeding by the directions of a hermit, he is guided by a ball to the hermit's brother, who points out the road and describes the various difficulties through which he will have to pass. Accordingly he climbs the mountain before him ; and the path then leads him across an arid meadow filled with fat cattle, and next over a lush pasture tenanted only by lean and sickly kine. Having left this behind he enters an avenue where, under the trees, youths and damsels richly clad are feasting and making merry ; and they tempt the traveller to join them. The path then becomes narrow and steep, and encumbered with brambles and nettles and stones. Here he meets a rolling fire, but standing firm in the middle of the path, the fire passes harmlessly over his head. Hardly has it gone by, however, when he hears a terrible roar behind him, as though the sea in all its fury were at his heels ready to engulf him. He resolutely refuses to look back ; and the noise subsides. A thick hedge of thorns closes the way before him ; but he pushes through it, only to fall into a ditch filled with nettles and brambles on the other side, where he faints with loss of blood. When he recovers and scrambles out of the ditch, he reaches a place filled with

¹ Southey, "Doctor," p. 574 ; "Y Brython," vol. iii. p. 111, and Cymru Fu, p. 183 ; Howells, p. 127 ; "Y Llyvyr Coch," p. 40 (Lady Charlotte Guest's translation, p. 381) ; Thorpe, vol. iii. p. 297, quoting Wolf ; Müller, p. 50 (*cf.* Jahn, p. 96). The reader will not fail to remark the record-book bound in pigskin as a resemblance in detail to Longfellow's version. Thorpe alludes in a note to a German poem by Wegener, which I have not seen. Nicholson, p. 58.

the sweet perfume of flowers, with butterflies, and with the melody of birds. A clear river waters this beautiful land ; and there he sits upon a stone and bathes his cruelly torn feet. No wonder he falls asleep and dreams that he is already in Paradise. Awaking, he finds his strength restored, and his wounds healed. Before him is Mount Calvary, the Saviour still upon the cross, and the blood yet running from His body. A crowd of little children are trying to climb the mountain ; but ere they reach the top they roll down again continually to the foot, only to recommence the toil. They crowd round the traveller, and beseech him to take them with him ; and he takes three, one on each shoulder and one by the hand ; but with them he cannot get to the top, for he is hurled back again and again. Leaving them therefore behind, he climbs with ease, and throws himself at the foot of the cross to pray and weep. On rising, he sees before him a palace that proves to be Paradise itself. St. Peter, the celestial porter, receives his letter and carries it to its destination. While the youth waits, he finds St. Peter's spectacles on the table and amuses himself by trying them on. Many and marvellous are the things they reveal to him ; but the porter comes back, and he hastily takes off the glasses, fearing to be scolded. St. Peter, however, tells him : "Fear nothing, my child. You have already been looking through my glasses for five hundred years !" "But I have only just put them on my nose !" "Yes, my child," returned the door-keeper, "it is five hundred years, and I see you find the time short." After this it is a trifle that he spends another hundred years looking at the seat reserved for himself in Paradise and thinks them only a moment. The Eternal Father's reply to the letter is handed to him ; and since his master and the king who sent him on the errand have both long been dead and in Paradise (though on lower seats than that which he is to occupy), he is bidden to take the reply to his parish prices. The priest will in return hand him a

hundred crowns, which he is to give to the poor, and when the last penny has been distributed he will die and enter Paradise, to obtain the seat he has been allowed to see. As he makes his way back, one of the hermits explains to him the various sights he beheld and the difficulties he conquered during his outward journey. I shall not stop to unveil the allegories of this traditional Pilgrim's Progress, which is known from Brittany to Transylvania, from Iceland to Sicily. Other Breton tales exist, describing a similar journey, in all of which the miraculous lapse of time is an incident. In one the youth is sent to the sun to inquire why it is red in the morning when it rises. In another a maiden is married to a mysterious stranger, who turns out to be Death. Her brother goes to visit her, and is allowed to accompany her husband on his daily flight, in the course of which he sees a number of remarkable sights, each one of them a parable.¹

A story is told at Glienke, near New Brandenburg, of two friends who made mutual promises to attend one another's weddings. One was married, and his friend kept his word; but before the latter's turn to marry came the married man had fallen into want, and under the pressure of need had committed robbery, a crime for which he had been hanged. Shortly afterwards his friend was about to be married; and his way a few days before, in the transaction of his business, led him past the gallows where the body still swung. As he drew near he murmured a Paternoster for the dead man, and said: "At your wedding I enjoyed myself; and you promised me to come to mine, and now you cannot come!" A

¹ Luzel, "Légendes Chrét." vol. i. pp. 225, 216, 247, 249; "Contes," vol. i. pp. 14, 40; cf. Pitré, vol. vi. p. 1; and Gonzenbach, vol. ii. p. 171, in neither of which the lapse of time is an incident. Dr. Pitré says that the tale has no analogues (*riscontri*) outside Sicily; by which I understand him to mean that it has not been hitherto found in any other Italian-speaking land.

voice from the gallows distinctly replied : " Yes, I will come." To the wedding feast accordingly the dead man came, with the rope round his neck, and was placed between the pastor and the sacristan. He ate and drank in silence, and departed. As he left, he beckoned the bridegroom to follow him ; and when they got outside the village the hanged man said : " Thanks to your Pater-noster, I am saved." They walked a little further, and the bridegroom noticed that the country was unknown to him. They were in a large and beautiful garden. " Will you not return ? " asked the dead man ; " they will miss you." " Oh ! let me stay ; it is so lovely here," replied his friend. " Know that we are in Paradise ; you cannot go with me any further. Farewell ! " So saying the dead man vanished. Then the bridegroom turned back ; but he did not reach the village for three days. There all was changed. He asked after his bride : no one knew her. He sought the pastor and found a stranger. When he told his tale the pastor searched the church-books and discovered that a man of his name had been married one hundred and fifty years before. The bridegroom asked for food ; but when he had eaten it he sank into a heap of ashes at the pastor's feet. The Transylvanian legend of " The Gravedigger in Heaven " also turns upon an invitation thoughtlessly given to a dead man and accepted. The entertainment is followed by a counter-invitation ; and the gravedigger is forced to pay a return visit. He is taken to Heaven, where, among other things, he sees at intervals three leaves fall slowly one after another from off a large tree in the garden. The tree is the Tree of Life, from which a leaf falls at the end of every century. He was three hundred years in Heaven and thought it scarce an hour. The Icelandic version concerns a wicked priest. His unjust ways are reproved by a stranger who takes him to the place of joy and the place of torment, and shows him other wonderful things such as the youth in the Breton tale is permitted to

behold. When he is brought back, and the stranger leaves him, he finds that he has been absent seven years, and his living is now held by another priest.¹

Here, perhaps, is a fitting place to mention the Happy Islands of Everlasting Life as known to Japanese tradition, though the story can hardly be said to belong to the type we have just discussed,—perhaps not strictly to any of the foregoing types. A Japanese hero, the wise Vasobiove, it was who succeeded in reaching the Happy Islands, and in returning to bring sure tidings of them. For, like St. Brendan's Isle in western lore, these islands may be visible for a moment and afar off to the seafarer, but a mortal foot has hardly ever trodden them. Vasobiove, however, in his boat alone, set sail from Nagasaki, and, in spite of wind and waves, landed on the green shore of Horaisan. Two hundred years he sojourned there; yet wist he not how long the period was, there where everything remained the same, where there was neither birth nor death, where none heeded the flight of time. With dance and music, in intercourse with wise men and lovely women, his days passed away. But at length he grew weary of this sweet round of existence: he longed for death—an impossible wish in a land where death was unknown. No poison, no deadly weapons were to be found. To tumble down a chasm, or to fling oneself on sharp rocks was no more than a fall upon a soft cushion. If he would drown himself in the sea, the water refused its office, and bore him like a cork. Weary to death the poor Vasobiove could find no help. In this need a thought struck him: he caught and tamed a giant stork and taught him to carry him. On the back of this bird he returned over sea and land to his beloved Japan, bringing the news of the realm of Horaisan. His story took hold of the hearts of his fellow-countrymen; and that the story-tellers might never forget it, it has been

¹ Bartsch, vol. i. p. 282; Müller, p. 46; Powell and Magnusson, vol. ii. p. 37.

emblazoned by the painters in a thousand ways. Nor can the stranger go anywhere in Japan without seeing the old, old man depicted on his stork and being reminded of his voyage to the Happy Islands.¹

¹ Brauns, p. 146.