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NOTES ON CORNISH FOLK-LORE.

Piper's Hole.—It is interesting that Miss Courtney should record in her Cornish traditions the “Piper’s Hole” legend. This legend is very common round Ireland, in places where there are cliffs and caves, one of the latter nearly invariably being called the “Piper’s Hole or Cave,” into which a piper went to explore, and never returned; but at times he takes to play the pipes that can be plainly heard. Only the other day I heard of such a cave, which, as yet, I have not had time to visit. It is situated on the west shore of Lough Swilly, some six or eight miles of Rathmullen. The story is:—In the troubled times when the McDonnells first invaded the county, they made from Rathmullen, their headquarters, a raid into the country to the northward, and the inhabitants with their piper took refuge in this sea-cave. The invaders smothered the people in the cave (whose bones remain there till this day) except the piper, who went forward to explore, but never came back, and at the present day he at times is heard playing at Kerrykeel, some eight miles to the westward, and at other times at Rossnakill, some ten miles to the northwest. The origin of the legend in so many places seems to me to be due to natural causes, as at certain times when the wind is in a certain direction, or perhaps on account of some peculiarity in the atmosphere, you will hear in a cave a sound as if of bagpipes. There is somewhere in Ireland a place marked on the maps as the “Devil’s Mill.” Where it is, I cannot now recollect; but I think it is somewhere in the co. Wexford. I went to visit it, and was surprised to find that there was not the trace of any sort of mill on the stream. On looking up some of the natives, I learned that there never was a mill, and no one would presume to utilize the water, as it was pre-occupied, the devil having a mill there, the working of which could be plainly heard

when there was a flush in the stream ; this I afterwards verified, as, on a visit after rain, the rattle of the mill was quite audible, even before you got to the place.

Children's Games.—Miss Courtney's Cornish children's games bring back the hours of happy childhood, as many of them are quite familiar ; but, unfortunately, I have forgotten most of the rhymes. Our old nurse in the house before I was born was a Kilkenny woman Ann Lawless, *née* McCormick, by name, and she seemed to have had a nearly unlimited store of round games for children. I have remarked, when in Cornwall, the natives are very fond of introducing into the games loving and kissing ; our rhymes were more general, but otherwise the games are nearly identical. The words of " My daughter Jane " were somewhat like, but it was a prince, not a duke, that came to wed. The last verse of the rhyme was—

" Here is your daughter safe and sound,
And in her pocket a thousand pound,
And on her finger a golden ring—
She's fit to walk with any queen."

I forget our name and rhyme for the game called " Pray, pretty maid ; " but the person in the ring, he or she, walked around with a handkerchief, repeating a rhyme, and at the end of it struck the person, he or she, wanted to come in. The Counting-out rhyme in general was,—

" Vickery vickery vay,
The cock is lost in the hay,
Hirum jorum cockty forum,
Vickery vickery vay."

The oracle, however, was allowed a great deal of latitude, all that was expected of him being that he should begin with the regular formula. In fact, as a rule the favourite oracle was some one who could knock off a pithy or funny rhyme. I remember in a party of big girls and boys from sixteen years old and upwards, there was a young lady who was supposed to dispense with stays, and had a figure like a sack of flour ; another was very learned, and the third a Fenian ; the rhyme was somewhat as follows :—

“ Vickery vickery vaist,
 I know a girl who has got no waist ;
 Another is blue, another is red ;
 A cock if he's killed must be dead.”

The best oracle was the boy or girl who could be most funny. Here I might mention a very popular rhyme game, when every one in turn made a couplet to the toast, “ Vive la company,” in which they brought in some characteristic of some one present, such as the following :—There was a stout girl who was asked to dance, and said she was tired ; her would-be partner answered, “ Oh, never mind, I'll carry you.” After supper, when the rhymes were going round, hers was—

“ I drink to those who are jolly and sound,
 Vive la company ;
 I'll dance with the man who can carry round,
 Vive la company.”

This twenty years ago was a favourite after-supper game with grown people in Munster. “ Looby looby light ” was a favourite game. I knew an old couple in Galway about twenty years ago who delighted to get a lot of young people together, and always ended off with, “ Here we dance looby light,” the man enjoying the fun as much as the youngest child, while the wife played the piano. The words were :—

“ Here we dance looby looby,
 Here we dance looby light ;
 Put your right hand in,
 Put your right hand out,
 Shake it a little a little,
 And then we will turn about ;
 Then it was the left hand,
 Then the right foot,
 Then the left foot.”

Ending with—

“ Put your noodle in,
 Put your noodle out,
 Shake it a little a little,
 And then you may turn about.”

The noodle business led to a bit of romping and accidental (?) knocking of heads together. We had also the game of “ Fool fool,”

but with a different rhyme, and games allied to "Pig in the middle" and "Solomon's dog," but under different names, which I do not now recollect. "Hole in the wall" we called "Crow's nest," and it was played in two ways: one way like that described when the finger was put into a person's mouth and bitten, the blindfolded persons being asked to put their finger in the crow's nest, as the crow was out, and as soon as they did, it was sung out, "Oh, the crow's in," and their fingers were bitten. The other way was to make a nest of your hand, and ask, "Put your finger in the crow's nest, the crow's out." You were let to put it in a few times, and then the player suddenly sang out, "Oh, the crow's in," and stuck his thumb-nail into your finger. "She said and she said" was a general, not a love game, and before what she said a certain animal was mentioned, which was previously arranged, generally a cat or a dog. I remember a case when it was to be dog, and the "saying" was missed. When one confederate accused the other of misleading him, she said, "I did not say dog," and he replied, "But you did say Toby," Toby being the name of the family-dog which she should not have mentioned except before the saying. There used to be cunning deviations as to the plan to be followed to prevent the uninitiated finding out how it was done, such as putting the catch-word two or three questions before the right answer, and changing the animal to be named. Other games mentioned I could refer to, but as I forget particulars it is unnecessary. I am, however, surprised that Miss Courtney does not mention "Hunt the slipper," as I saw a game, if not it, nearly identical played by a party of the "Band of Hope" at Land's End the year of the meeting of the British Association in Exeter. I did not go near the party; as previously when I did, they wanted me to join in "Kiss in the ring," which, for certain reasons, I declined. By the way, this game is not mentioned, and to me it seems to be a great favourite, not only in Cornwall, but also in the Cornish settlements in Ireland, so numerous some years ago before the failure in the mining industry. Many a game of this have I seen both in Cornwall and the co. Cork, where the Cornishers most did congregate.

G. H. KINAHAN.