

# IRISH FOLK-TALES

Collected by

JEREMIAH CURTIN

(1835-1906)

Edited with Introduction and Notes

by

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*To the memory of the storytellers  
who told these tales to  
Jeremiah Curtin*

## INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah Curtin, the celebrated Irish-American anthropologist and linguist, is best known to students of Irish oral literature as the collector and editor of three outstanding collections of Irish folk- and fairy-tales viz.: (1) *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland*, Boston: London, 1890 and 1911; (2) *Hero-Tales of Ireland*, Boston: London, 1894, and (3) *Tales of the Fairies and of the Ghost World, collected from oral tradition in Southwest Munster*, Boston: London, 1895.

The present volume contains sixteen additional tales from Curtin's Irish collections. They are reprinted here from the New York newspaper the *Sun*, to which they were contributed during the years 1892-93, appearing in the Sunday supplements. In this way Curtin first published almost all of the material in his *Hero-Tales* and *Tales of the Fairies*.<sup>1</sup>

*Hero-Tales* contains 24 *märchen*, distributed as follows: Kerry 14, Galway 6, Donegal 3, Limerick 1. In his first Irish book, *Myths and Folk-Lore*, Curtin neglected to give the provenance of the material, and it is also a matter for regret that while in *Hero-Tales* (549) he gives the names and addresses of his informants, he did not add this very desirable information to the tales as they appeared in the *Sun*, and with two exceptions we do not know who the storytellers were who gave him the tales which are here reprinted.

Jeremiah Curtin<sup>2</sup> was the eldest child of David Curtin and Ellen Furlong, and was born in Detroit, Michigan, on 6 September, 1835. His father was an immigrant from Ireland, and a Milwaukee pioneer of 1836, and was of Co. Limerick stock. His mother was the daughter

<sup>1</sup> For a list of the material published in the *Sun* see *Béaloideas* IV, 93, 1933.

One tale, *Smallhead and the King's Son* (the *Sun*, 11 December, 1892) was reprinted by Joseph Jacobs: *More Celtic Fairy Tales*, London, 1894, 135 (notes 230).

See also *Béaloideas* xiii, 1943 p. 254 ff., *Fairy-Tales from West Kerry*, a reprint from the *Sun*.

<sup>2</sup> This information has been culled from the following sources: (a) Joseph Schafer, *Memoirs of Jeremiah Curtin*, published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison [Wisconsin] 1940. Pp. 925. (b) The biographical sketch by Walter Hough in the *Dictionary of American Biography*; (c) Joseph Schafer: "The Place and Date of Jeremiah Curtin's Birth", in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXII, 344 (1939), for a copy of which I am indebted to the author. I have accepted Mr. Schafer's conclusions. (d) Charles A. Curtin: "Jeremiah Curtin" in *Journal of the American Irish Historical Society*, XXXI 55, New York, 1937; this last contains a portrait of Curtin.

of an Irish immigrant family who came to Canada with her parents in 1822; she was a native of Buttevant, Co. Cork.

Jeremiah Curtin was brought up on a farm at Greenfield, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. Here he had many opportunities to talk with German, Norwegian, and Polish settlers. Graduating from Harvard in 1863, he entered the Government service as a translator and interpreter. In 1864, writing from St. Petersburg, he accepted the U.S. Government's commission as secretary of legation there. He lived for some years in Russia between 1864 and 1870. He married, 17 July, 1872, Alma M. Cardell of Vermont. "Mrs. Curtin, a talented New English woman, utterly devoted to her husband's interests, must be credited with a large influence upon his literary and scientific success."<sup>3</sup> She acted for many years as secretary to her husband, wrote books from his dictation, and accompanied him on his travels.

Curtin's visits to Ireland began in 1871, when he spent some months here; later visits took place during 1872, 1887, 1891, and 1892-1893.

During the period 1883-1891 he was a member of the staff of the Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, where his knowledge of Indian languages stood him in good stead; in his youth on the frontier in Wisconsin he had learned to speak some Indian languages, and to this knowledge he added considerably during these eight years (1883-1891), most of which were spent among various Indian tribes in both N. and S. America.

Jeremiah Curtin is undoubtedly "one of the most extraordinary figures in American literature". He was an accomplished linguist, a scholar of international repute, and a traveller with the world as his province. He numbered among his many friends men like John Fiske, the historian, Henry W. Longfellow, Theodore Roosevelt, Charles A. Dana, and Charles W. Eliot, the famous president of Harvard. The last years of his life were spent in the mountains around Bristol, Vermont, and there he died on 14 December, 1906.

#### HIS WORK IN IRELAND.

The following extracts from the digest of Curtin's notes on his visit to Ireland in 1887, are of particular interest to students of Irish folklore.

"For many years", Curtin remarks, "I had been possessed with the idea that there was a great stock of myths current among the people of Ireland, as well as many of that class of facts which throw light on the history of the human mind, facts of value to the scientific world. I hoped that there might still remain in the minds of the people of the remote districts of Ireland many idioms useful in explaining the language

<sup>3</sup> Schafer *op. cit.*

of the manuscripts preserved in the Irish Academy, and myths that would supplement and strengthen recorded mythology. I was going to Ireland to settle that question."

On 13 June, 1887, Mr. and Mrs. Curtin landed at Queenstown. In Cork he spent "the greater part of three days with Dr. Sullivan, President of Queen's College, one of Ireland's celebrated Gaelic scholars. We talked about the political conditions of the country." He went on to Mallow and Tralee where he recorded some fairy tales, and then proceeded to Ballybunion. He was much affected by the "deplorable conditions" of the country. "The poverty and oppression the people of Ireland endure is beyond belief."

"I was in search of men who knew myths and could speak Gaelic. I found these men in Ballybunion. In most cases they were Limerick farmers, who, not well, had come to the sea-shore to rest. They told me of strange adventures, told their 'beliefs' (superstitions) and their myths.

"One of my myth-tellers was O'Conner, a Limerick man. He knew the story of the battle fought at Bantry Bay, a battle which lasted a year and a day, and ended only when seven men of all the great forces were left. O'Conner was a believer in fairies. He had many incidents to relate which came under his own observation.

"From Ballybunion to Listowel and by side-car to Newcastle West. I was fortunate in arriving on the day of a cattle show, for I had a chance to talk with men from adjoining towns. I visited the farm O'Conner rented. O'Conner had asked an old man, an ex-schoolmaster, to meet me. He brought with him a manuscript a hundred and twenty years old. After patiently listening to a long story about the manuscript I asked the old man if he could tell me a Gaelic myth. His answer, was: 'I don't care to be telling lies that have been handed down from father to son. I care only for things that have been recorded and are authentic.' I told him that the manuscript contained myths which had been handed down for a thousand years or more, but I couldn't reason with him. 'What was written was true.'

"From Newcastle West to Knockadarra to look over the parish records. The old records were written in Latin, the ink faded from age. I found one item that interested me; the birth of a child to Diametria Curtin and Joanna Curtin, born Cronen. My grandfather's name was Jeremiah, but Diametria is used in Latin for Jeremiah. My grandmother's maiden name was Joanna Cronen.

"A few days later I was in Dublin, at the Imperial Hotel. I wished to meet the Gaelic scholars of Dublin; Professor O'Lunney, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Fleming, Canon O'Hanlon, and others; and to examine the Gaelic manuscripts. Those manuscripts fill about two thousand volumes, and

are kept in the Royal Irish Academy, and the University of Dublin. This is the largest collection of myths in Europe. Neither in ancient nor modern times had any nation on the mainland such a collection.

"During my stay in Dublin I frequently visited Professor O'Lunney. He was a man who loved his own Gaelic language, and the preservation of it was the subject ever uppermost in his mind.

"July 25th, all Ireland, except one county, was proclaimed under the 'Crimes Act.' It was an interesting time politically, but I was in Ireland to study Gaelic and collect myths, and I avoided politics in as far as possible. I spent several hours each day in the Irish Academy, or with old men, who came to tell me myths. Evenings Mr. Fleming came to read Gaelic with me."

Curtin, accompanied by his wife, now set off for Donegal in search of folk-tales; he seems to have collected material mainly in the south of the county,<sup>4</sup> in the parish of "Glen Columbkille." They stayed at Carrick.

"From Donegal over the hills and along the bay to Killybegs and on to Carrick and Teelin Point. At Teelin Point I found a man, Donald McBrearty,<sup>5</sup> who knew a good number of fine myths, and later I spent many hours with him at his home. (Describes home and living conditions).

"I went to Garrigan Head (*sic*) . . . I found an old man, Barror/(*sic*) who told me a very good myth.

"In a small house at the foot of the mountain (Slieve League), I found a man, James McLaughlin, who told me a good myth. I spent the following day at his house taking down what myths he knew. Work in a small room, where a peat fire is burning and hens roosting, is very wearisome for one accustomed to fresh air and light.

"Donald thought there were old men in Glen Columbkille who knew about fairies, so I went there. . . . During the week we spent there I talked with most of the old men living there and obtained a few excellent myths. I visited the celebrated holy well. From there to Kilcar. We left Carrick the last day of August.

"After a few days [in Dublin] I went to Galway. The interesting part of the town for me was the Claddagh. Till recent times the Claddagh fishermen governed themselves. In the old times they had their own king. I found an assembly of small stone huts in all stages of decay. They were near together and built without regularity, wherever there was a sufficiently large plot of land.

<sup>4</sup> In *Hero-Tales* li, he mentions "Falcarra", but this he may have visited during his visit to Ireland in 1892-93.

<sup>5</sup> One of the best of the story-tellers whom I met in Teelin in 1935 was Seán 'ac Mriartaigh of Iomaire Mhurnáin; he was probably a relative of "Donald". S. Ó D.

"The second man I met was a sailor. I asked if he knew an old man who could tell stories. He said that he did, and conducted me to one of the houses where I found an aged couple sitting by a turf fire, their morning meal on a chair in front of them. The meal consisted of a bowl of tea and some bread the woman had baked on the coals. They welcomed me pleasantly, and the old man told me a long myth.

"The following day there was a horse fair. It was held on the 'strand of the sea', and the streets of Galway were crowded till a late hour of the night. People had come from villages forty and even sixty miles away. I had a good opportunity to see the different types of Irish in County Galway. Among the people were men dressed, as usual a hundred years ago, in knee pants, and tailcoats trimmed with brass buttons; the women wore immense cloaks made of long wool.

"I spent a week in Galway working each day, from morning till evening, with old men at the Claddagh. The trials of myth collecting were intensified by the misery of the people and the terrible conditions in which they lived.

"We spent only three days in Athenry. . . . A sheep fair was in full blast when we arrived, and I had a chance to get acquainted with some of the old farmers. There had been a heavy rain, and mud was nearly ankle deep in the streets. I drove to Ballinacrag and brought back an old man who knew myths. Under most unpleasant circumstances, for there was tumult in the rooms adjoining mine, I took down all he knew. Then I went to Limerick."

Curtin visited Newcastle West, "and went out to" Knockadarra and to the townland of Grange, on the river Deal. "In that township", he says, "I think my grandfather was living when he decided to come to America." From Newcastle West Curtin went on to Killarney, but he "found no myths" there. In Mallow he was more successful, and "collected a few myths" there. On 21 September, 1887, he sailed from Queenstown for New York.

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#### THE STORY-TELLERS.

An Seabhac has written at length in a valuable appendix to this volume of some of the story-tellers who gave Curtin part of the material in his *Hero Tales* and *Tales of the Fairies*. One of these men was Maurice Lynch (Muiris Ó Loingsigh). His son Pádraig I myself knew quite well. He lived at Baile an tSléibhe at the foot of Sliabh an Fhiolair, at the western end of the Dingle Peninsula. When I met him in 1932 he was old and feeble, but he had retained in his memory a vast amount of oral tradition, and was very willing to tell the tales which he and



his father had told to Jeremiah Curtin forty years before. In this connection it is of interest to note that Pádraig told me that it was he himself who was the storyteller, and that his father then translated the tales for Curtin and his wife who took them down in shorthand. Pádraig did not know English, but Muiris, his father, did. Muiris Ó Loingsigh died in 1905, aged 95.

To Seán Ó Dubhda of Baile na nGall, we owe the preservation in Irish of a great part of the traditions of Muiris and Pádraig Ó Loingsigh; some of these are in I.F.C. MSS. 2, 3, 244, 293, 304. For a note on Pádraig Ó Loingsigh by Seán Ó Dubhda, appended to the original Irish version of the Tale, "Bladhmhann, Mac an Ubhail" (Aa. Th. 300) which Curtin published in English (*Hero-Tales* 373), see *Béaloideas* V (1935) 21-23.

The old story-teller died 26 December, 1935, aged 89-90 years. Up to the day of his death he delighted to tell the stories and anecdotes which, with his pipe, were the solace of his old age, and some of these tales he was telling to his grandchildren a few hours before God called him. He is buried in the graveyard at Fionntrá. May he rest in peace!

Another story-teller of Curtin's whom I knew very well, and from whom I recorded a number of long *märchen*, was Seán (Éadbhaird) Ó Briain of Loch na Con Uidhre, near Cill Chiarán in the parish of Cárna, West Galway. He was the finest story-teller I have ever known. He died 1 January, 1934, at the age of 82. I was introduced to Seán Ó Briain in 1932 by Seán Mac Giollarnáth of Galway, who had recorded a great amount of valuable material from him.<sup>6</sup> In September of that year I spent a few weeks in his company, and wrote down *inter alia* the following long tales from him: (1) *Cú Bhán an tSléibhe*, Aa. Th. 425; (2) *Sgológ na Féasóige Léithe*, Aa. Th. 313; this is the original of the tale in *Hero-Tales* 163; (3) *Sir Slanders*, Aa. Th. 550; (4) *An Fear a chuaidh ar aimsir leis an gcroc*. Mac Giollarnáth gives, *op. cit.* *nf.*, (pp. xiii-xvi), a biographical sketch (in Irish) of this grand old storyteller, and a portrait; for an appreciation in English by the same writer see *The Irish Press*, Dublin, 8 January, 1934.

The tales obtained from Seán Ó Briain<sup>7</sup> were written down in the house of Miss Cooke, Cill Chiarán, where Mr. and Mrs. Curtin stayed during their visit to Conamara in 1892-93; the parish clerk, Séamus Ó Laidhe, who lived close by, acted as interpreter.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Three of Seán Ó Briain's "hero-tales" are in an excellent collection of Conamara folk-tales by Seán Mac Giollarnáth: *Loinnir Mac Leabhair agus sgéalta gaisgidh eile*, Dublin, 1936; these are (1) "Lán-dhearg, Mac Rí i nEirinn" 90=*Curtin's Hero-Tales* 262; (2) "Cod, Céad agus Mí-chead" 120=*Hero-Tales* 198; and "Loinnir Mac Leabhair" 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Hero-Tales* 163, 198, 262, 356. <sup>8</sup> See introduction by Seán Mac Giollarnáth, *op. cit.* xvi.

It is not quite clear how much Irish Curtin knew, but his knowledge was insufficient to enable him to record without the aid of an interpreter. Of this I have been assured personally by two of the men who told tales to Curtin, viz. Seán Ó Briain (Curtin's "John O'Brien" of the *Hero-Tales*) and Pádraig Ó Loingsigh to whom reference has been made above.

Douglas Hyde, in the introduction to his *Beside the Fire*, London, 1890, xiv *seq.* refers to Curtin's inadequate knowledge of Irish. But he freely acknowledges the value of the work—the *Myths and Folk-Tales*—and admits that Curtin was the first collector to go to the fountain-head of Irish oral literature, the Irish-speaking countryman.

Curtin was alive to the value of Irish and the traditional and orally-preserved culture enshrined in it, and he deplored the decay of the language and the apathy of the Irish people towards it. His remarks on this subject in the introduction to *Myths and Folk-Tales* written in 1889 (pp. 9-11) are very striking. "There is no country in Europe so special in its conditions as Ireland, none in which hitherto there has been in some things a more resolute conservatism, coupled with such a frivolous surrender of the chief mental possession of the people, cherished during so many centuries of time . . .; for the character and mould of a nation's thought are found in its language as nowhere else. No language has been treated with such cruelty and insult by its enemies and with such treasonable indifference by the majority of the people to whom it belongs as the Gaelic."

While Curtin wrote these words in Humboldt County, California, young men who held the same belief in Ireland were already attempting to arrest the decay of the language and to restore it to its rightful place in the nation; four years later the Gaelic League was founded. It is but fitting that the burning words of a great lover of Ireland, of the Irish people, their language, and their folklore should be remembered, and that the name of Jeremiah Curtin be honoured by those who, fifty years afterwards, are engaged in the recording of the tales and traditions of Ireland.

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I wish to record here my sincere thanks to the following who helped materially in forwarding the project of republishing these long-forgotten tales of Jeremiah Curtin. First of all, my sincere thanks are due to the late Mrs. Alma M. Cardell Curtin, who gave me permission (14 October, 1936) to reprint the tales, and who took a great interest in the work. She survived her husband for many years, and passed away on 14 April, 1938, and lies buried beside him in the Curtin vault in the cemetery at Bristol, Vermont.

To Mrs. Curtin's relative, Mrs. Helen Cardell, I am indebted for her kindness in supplying a digest of Curtin's diary covering his visit to Ireland in 1887, the fruit of which was his first book *Myths and Folklore of Ireland* (1890).<sup>9</sup>

Grateful acknowledgment is due in particular to my friend the late Professor A. C. L. Brown, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. From the beginning of my interest in the matter in 1930, he helped me in various ways, and succeeded with the aid of his sister, Mrs. Adalbert Harding, of New York, in locating these stories; Mrs. Harding sent me summaries of the tales from the file of the *Sun* in the New York Public Library.

To Walter Hough, Head Curator of the Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum, Washington, D.C., for procuring (13 June, 1933) the photograph of Curtin (reproduced as frontispiece) from the Bureau of Ethnology, to the authorities of which I wish also to express my appreciation.

To my friends, Professor Dr. Fred. N. Robinson of Harvard, and Alfred C. Potter of the Harvard Library, for their successful enquiries which resulted in my establishing contact with Mrs. Jeremiah Curtin in 1936.

To the authorities of the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress, Washington, for their courtesy and attention. From these institutions photostats of the tales here reprinted were obtained.

To "An Seabhac" for his interesting notes on West Kerry storytellers, printed as an appendix to this volume.

And finally, to my colleagues, Seán Ó Súilleabháin, Máire Nic Néill, and Eibhlín Ní Dhuígeannáin for help in the preparation of the text for the press.

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<sup>9</sup> See *Myths Folk-Lore* 7; *Hero-Tales* 1.

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## IRISH FOLK-TALES

### THE SON OF THE KING OF ERIN AND THE QUEEN OF THE MOVING WHEEL

THERE was a King in Erin long ago, and he had three sons. On a day this King went out to walk with the Queen and look at the waves and the rocks on the strand. After they had walked for a time they saw a boat sailing in from the old sea (the distant sea). When the boat came to land they saw no one on board but a grey-haired old man, who came ashore and walked up to the King and the Queen.

"It is the wonder of the world to me", said the old man to the King, "that you never take thought of going out on the water to have amusement and pleasure for yourself."

"How could I go on the water when I have neither ship nor boat?" asked the King.

"Walk into my boat with the Queen, and I will hold the cable while you sail and get as much sport as you like."

The two entered the boat, and they were a good while inside sailing this way and that not far from land. At last the old man drew in the boat.

"Will you come out?" asked he of the King.

The King rose, and was coming out.

"It is a wonder to me", said the old man, "that you, a King, should be so thoughtless as to come out before the Queen. She might fall between the boat and the rock. You should let her go first, and keep your eye on her."

The King stepped back and told the Queen to go first. The moment she stepped on the rock the grey-haired old man put his foot to the stem of the boat and gave a shove that sent it out nine leagues to sea.

The boat went tossing about in one direction and another till it came to Lonesome Island. The King left the boat then, anchored, and went his way walking till he came to a splendid castle in the middle of the island. He entered the castle; there was no one

inside but a woman, the most beautiful that ever he had seen. That was the Queen of Lonesome Island. She made ready a dinner, and both she and the King of Erin ate and drank at the one table.

Next morning she had breakfast ready before him. After breakfast they walked to the strand where the boat had been left, but neither ship nor boat was to be seen on sea or land. The King of Erin remained there with the Queen of Lonesome Island for a day and a year. The Queen at that time had a son three months old.

"King of Erin", said she, "you may go home if you choose."

The King made ready to start.

"Do not go", said she, "without marking this child in the way that you will know him surely if you meet him again."

"What mark am I to put on him?" asked the King.

"If you take off the small toe of his right foot it will do him no harm, and the mark will be certain."

The King did that. The best ship ever seen was ready for him. He sailed away with fair wind and good wishes till he came to his own harbour with speed and in safety. While the King of Erin was on Lonesome Island word had gone out that he was lost. This word was going slowly from one place to another till it came to the White King.

Said the White King to himself: "Now is my time to collect a fleet, sail to Erin, and take that land for my own use."

He prepared a great fleet and went to Erin. At this time the son of the Queen of Lonesome Island was seven years old. His mother had been training him in all exercises and arts from one room of the castle to another, and great was his skill.

When the White King came with his fleet he sent a challenge to the King of Erin to fight for his crown or lie under tribute and pay the tribute without trouble.

The King of Erin sent back the answer that he would fight and die rather than lie under tribute to any man.

When his own three sons at home heard of his trouble they hurried away to hide where no man could find them.

"Now", said the Queen of Lonesome Island to her son, whose name was Wishing Gold. "It is very pleasant for us to be sitting here to-night, but with your father, the King of Erin, it is different. There is great trouble on him."

"What trouble is on my father?" asked the boy.

"When I sent him wandering on the sea, so that he might come to this island, word went out of Erin through all lands in the world that he was lost. The White King heard this word at last, and

now he has gone with a great fleet to take Erin for himself. Your father, unaided by anyone, will go out to-morrow to give battle to the fleet of the White King, and you must give him a day of assistance."

"Has he not three sons older than I?" asked Wishing Gold.

"That matters not", said the Queen. "It was I that brought him to this trouble, and you must assist him."

Wishing Gold made ready next morning, and, mounting a steed, hurried off to Erin. When the King of Erin was going out, with his sword under his arm, to face the fleet, he saw a horseman rushing in on the water from the old sea, and he said to himself:

"I have time for delay. I will wait till I see where this horseman is going. There are men enough against me if the horseman is with me, and if it is going against me he is there are too many."

When the horseman came to the fleet of the White King he closed with it and went through like a hawk through small birds, or a fox through hens, making one pile of men's heads, another of their bodies, and a third of their weapons. He killed all and spared none, till he came to the White King himself. Him he led, took under his arm, and threw down before his father and asked:

"Are we to kill this man or let him lie under tribute forever?"

"I will not take his head without reason", said the King of Erin. "If he is willing to lie under tribute I will spare him. Oh, but I had not the luck to have the like of you for a son." The boy drew the shoe from his right foot, showed that his little toe was missing, and told his story. The King of Erin knew his son then, and rejoiced.

The White King was glad to escape, and promised to pay tribute without trouble. Wishing Gold was for turning back on the spot to his mother, but his father would not let him go till he had spent two or three days in Erin.

Next day the King had a great hunt, and when they were starting, the Queen would not let Wishing Gold out of her sight.

"I like him so well", said she, "that I must have him with me while he stays in Erin."

It was a delight to the King that the Queen was so fond of Wishing Gold, and he told him to stay with her that day. When the King and his men had gone the Queen went to the old druid and said:

"I will have the head taken off you unless you tell me how to put an end to Wishing Gold."



"You are the worst woman I have ever seen", said the druid. "You wish to kill the boy who saved your husband and your kingdom."

"I know well that unless I put him to death he will have the kingdom, and my own sons will be without it."

"Very well", said the druid, "I will tell you what to do. On the island where this boy was reared there are no banks; the place is flat and level. Take him now to the 'Wonderful Banks' beyond this castle, and he will say that in truth they are wonderful. You can say then that they are no wonder to you; that your own sons leap down from them and then spring back to the top again. When he hears this he will try to do it himself, and he will leap to the bottom."

The Queen did as the druid advised. Wishing Gold leaped down, and when he was springing back and was near the highest point of the bank she was at the brink and pushed him; he lost balance, rolled down and out into the sea. He was dashed from one wave to another, till at last he was thrown in on an island. He rose and walked on to the middle of the island; there he found a house, and going in, saw a white trout broiling on a spit before a fire. "I will eat that trout", said he to himself. Then he thought, "It is not mine, and I will not touch it." He went outside to look about, and saw hurrying towards him a terrible giant with five heads and five necks. The giant let such a laugh out of him that a man might have seen through his throat all that was in his body.

"You ugly beast", said Wishing Gold. "Why are you laughing like that?"

"I am glad to have your flesh to eat to-day; that's why I'm laughing", said the giant.

"You haven't me yet", said Wishing Gold.

The two then faced each other and began. Wishing Gold was better and far better than the giant, so he brought him to the ground, cut off the five heads, and sprang between them and the body.

"If you had not done that", said one of the heads, "I should be now on my body, and neither you nor all the world could put me off again."

"I have done a good work", said Wishing Gold. Then he went to the house, saying to himself, "I will eat the trout", but he thought and said: "By all that I have been taught, there never is one in a place but there may be more." So he went out to look, and saw coming a far greater giant, with five heads and five necks.

As soon as the giant came near they closed in combat, but



Wishing Gold was stronger and far stronger than the giant, and he brought him to the ground, drew his sword, cut off the five heads, and sprang between the heads and the body.

"Only that you did that", said a tongue in one of the heads, "I should be now on my body and all the world could not put me off."

Wishing Gold went in thinking to eat the trout, and he ate it. As soon as he had eaten it he said to himself: "There may be other giants in the place." He went out and saw the third giant coming, and soon he was before him. They closed and fought in the way that they made hardness out of softness and softness out of hardness, and if people came from the lower to the upper world it was to look at the wonder of this battle that they came, but at last Wishing Gold was stronger and far stronger than the giant, so he put him to the ground, drew out his sword, cut the five heads off him, and sprang between the heads and the body.

"Only that you did that", said one of the heads, "I should be on my body now, and you, with all the world besides, would not put me off."

"I've done a good deed", said Wishing Gold. He went in then and sat down and said to himself: "As these three were in one place their mother must be in it, too." He rose and went out, and soon saw a dreadful old hag coming. He and she fell to fighting, and fought for three days and nights. Wishing Gold was doing no harm to the old hag, but the old hag was squeezing the heart out of him, until at last he was thinking: "It is here my death is."

That moment his mother's voice spoke behind him. "Wishing Gold", said she, "think not that I am here to help you. If you were to lose your life ten times I would not help you, since you are so simple and keep not in mind what I've told you so often. It is a disgrace for a hero to fight three days and nights with an old woman. Often have I told you that all the world cannot do the old hag any harm while she has the long net on her."

By hearing his mother's words Wishing Gold grew strong, thrust the point of his sword in between the net and body of the hag and cut the net to the top of her head, when she had no greater strength than another, and he killed her. He went home with the mother then, and she was teaching him exercises and arts of all kinds.

The report had gone through the seven kingdoms that Wishing Gold was lost. "It is my time now", said the White King. "No