NEW PUBLICATIONS.

IRISH FOLK-LORE.

MYTHS AND FOLK-LORE OF IRELAND. By Jeremiah Curtin. 12mo. pp. 345. (Boston, Little, Brown & Co.)

ANCIENT CURES, CHARMS AND USAGES OF IRELAND. Contributions to Irish Lore. By Lady Wilde. 12mo. pp. 255. (Scribner & Welford.)

Mr. Curtin has made a very interesting contribution to Irish folk-lore. The stories in this volume were collected by him personally in the West of Ireland, in Kerry, Galway and Donegal, two years ago, and all of them were "taken down from the mouths of men who, with one or two exceptions, spoke only Gaelic, or but little English, and that imperfectly." The story-tellers, moreover, were all "well advanced in years, and some very old," so that their myth tales may be regarded as fairly representing the traditions of a considerable antiquity, and as offering unusually favorable illustrations of the genuine and little modified native Irish mythology. It is of course, as every student of folk-lore knows, idle to look for new motives in tales of this kind. The most secluded community will always be found to possess a folk-lore many elements of which it shares with all the rest of the world, and the most that can be expected in opening an undeveloped field is the discovery of some variants of familiar stories characterized by originality of treatment. The dominant feature in the tales collected by Mr. Curtin is as should have been anticipated, the preservation in especial freshness of the older Gaelic legends and myths. We are transported in reading these tales to the Erin of Fin MacCool and the Fenians. The modern element which distinguishes the Irish stories collected by Kennedy and others is not present here, save in occasional fortuitous interpolations by the story-tellers. We may say, also, that the traces of that humor which render most modern Irish stories so attractive are very slight.

A pre-mediaeval spirit is recognizable. The supernatural plays a great part in life, but its incidence is more what it was among the Northmen of the Saga period than what it came to be when the Church had established its supremacy. We feel ourselves, in a word, nearer to Paganism in these stories than to the Middle Ages. They are full of fighting, and their bloodthirstiness is sometimes so great as to recall the slaughter-house epics of the Nibelungen Lied, though it must be said that they are not overshadowed by the gloom which broods so heavily above that tragical history, darkening more and more to the close. Our Fenian heroes perform the most stupendous feats with a light heart, if with a heavy hand. It is quite an everyday occurrence for one of them to challenge a whole army and to "go through it like a hawk through a flock of pigeons," leaving no survivor. The witches and wizards, too, are far more formidable than those of the Middle Ages, reminding us again of the Scandinavian sorcerers in the extent of their malefic powers. Of course the Fenian hero is always more than a match for the strongest of them, but then, the hero is invariably helped at the critical moment, either by some animal or bird or some spirit-maiden or swan-maiden who knows the secrets of the adversary. All the old friends of universal folk-lore reappear in Mr. Curtin's tales: the inevitable swan-maidens are here, to reawaken the long contention over their origin, and incidentally to emphasize the fact that, whatever else folk-lore may be, it is not yet a science, for thus far it has been found impossible to reach agreement upon its most elementary principles. Take this one question of swan-maidens, and observe how various are the interpretations thereof. Sir George Cox, Mr. Andrew Lang, Professor Max Muller, Mr. John Fiske, Professor Gubernatis, each and all hold their own views. Folk-lorists also are lamentably inclined to dogmatism, though one should not be surprised at that, inasmuch as dogmatism appears to be the normal effect of absolute uncertainty in regard to any subject. Science alone is not dogmatic. Men of science frequently are; but when they are it is a sufficient proof that they have been venturing beyond the realm of demonstrable truths. There being no stable foundation for the science of folk-lore hitherto, it is therefore quite natural that its professors should be more than ordinarily positive, and that they should look with a fine scorn upon such as decline to accept their speculations as conclusive. Perhaps those who hold the "forces of Nature view," as it may be named; those who explain all myths upon the convenient theory that they originated in observation of natural phenomena, and especially in solar and lunar phenomena, are the most arbitrary of all the disputants; and that, too, is natural, since it is obvious that their explanations are often the furthest from explaining.

In general, the folk-lorists follow one another in the commission of one fatal blunder. They attribute to the myth-makers an intelligence, an imagination, a sense of analogies, which it is quite certain the myth-makers did not possess. The student who, with all the knowledge of the nineteenth century at his disposal, tries to find out the meaning of myths by literally putting himself in the place of the myth-makers, is almost certain to fall into this error, and in so doing to vitiate all his subsequent inferences. Mr. Fiske's theory is another which is liable to be overworked, and he has overworked it notably in his study of the were-wolf question. But the whole subject of transformations, which includes were-wolves, swan-maidens, enchantments, etc., is full of obscurities, and we are inclined to think that these are unlikely to be cleared away until a stronger current of research is directed to the source of these stories—which is, undoubtedly, the Orient. The reader of Mr. Curtin's tales must often be forcibly reminded of the "Thousand and One Nights": and of the elder Scandinavian and many of the Teutonic myths, the same may be said. Transformation is an Oriental characteristic, it will be remembered; and the East has for ages been the one country in the world in which the cult of induced hallucination has been systematically and professionally followed. Reuss, in his "Sarcelleric," some years ago, threw out a clew to this problem in his examination of the element of reality subsisting in the mediaeval witchcraft, and particularly in the reports of the "Sabbat," made by so many thousands of accused—and often self-accused—persons. Reuss was perhaps the first to put his finger upon the mediaeval prevalence of narcotics, and to suggest the instrumentality of these drugs in the creation of those grotesque and fantastic visions which, accepted literally both by victims and inquisitors, set so many fires burning all over Europe.

In the following up of this clew it is quite possible that very interesting and clarifying results may be obtained, and it is in Eastern countries that the discoveries will have to be prosecuted. There, too, are to be sought, also in the interest of folk-lore, new lights upon another branch of the same general subject; that, namely, of the hypnotic phenomena which were commonplace manifestations in India thousands of years ago, and were, moreover, unquestionably familiar to the priests of Chaldea, Babylon and Egypt. These two things, narcotism and hypnotism, may hereafter be shown to have played important parts in the shaping of that folk-lore which modern investigators have these many years struggled vainly to elucidate on the natural forces theory and others even more far-fetched. In this volume all the old conditions are to be found, under somewhat fresh arrangement. These tales represent a distinctly rude and almost wholly material period—the period of giants and great dragons and mighty magicians and swords of light and caps of darkness and invisible cloaks and powerful enchantments and fierce combats and a fiercer feasting. Instead of the Holy Grail, the objects of research are cups which cannot be drained and cooking-pots which cannot be emptied. The most natural action is that homicide, and an amount of killing goes on continually such as might satisfy the King of Dahomey, or the ferocious Hagan in the Nibelungen Lied. To those who are not interested in folk-lore it may be well to say that Mr. Curtin's stories are highly entertaining as fairy tales simply, and they are full of quaint turns of expression which sufficiently mark their birthplaces, while the originality of their combinations will probably make them appear new to most readers.

Lady Wilde has followed her volume on "Ancient Legends of Ireland" with another, in which she treats of Irish cures, charms, plant-lore, superstitions and curious customs. Her method is too scrappy, and her information is, for the most part, rather superficial; but she has collected a mass of odd and recondite matter, useful both for purposes of reference and for amusement. She deals, unlike Mr. Curtin, with the common and modern popular traditions, recollections and usages, and she does not undertake to trace or to elucidate the beliefs and customs which she records. Many interesting and quaint stories and anecdotes are scattered through her book, and the mingling of Pagan and Christian superstition is everywhere strikingly shown. Many of the charms and cures are common to several countries, such as the belief in the medicinal virtues of spiders. Here is a nice tonic, for example: "Also a black spider, laid as a sandwich between two slices of bread and butter, and eaten—one every morning—will be found a great strengthener of the body." Swallowing a spider rolled up in a lump of butter is a sovereign remedy for ague, and "a few spiders" tied up in a bag and hung round the neck will ward off the same complaint. Whence this faith in the healing power of the Arachnidae it would be difficult to ascertain, but interesting. For the falling sickness a combination of salt and white snails is recommended, or the heart of a crow beaten up with his blood and drunk for nine days, or a belt of the fresh skin of a wolf, or three hairs of a milk-white greyhound worn as an amulet. Then there are directions for curing a fairy-stricken child. It is needless to say that black cats play a prominent part in both white and black magic. They have "great power either for or against witchcraft"—which would seem to render their attitude about as uncertain as politics. If you want your child to be safe from fairies and witches, give it, at midnight, "a drink mixed with the blood of a crowing hen," which of course possesses special virtues. But for sickness generally the Prohibitionists will be shocked to learn that "there is nothing so good as the native poteen, for it is peculiarly adapted to the climate, and, as the people say, it keeps away ague and rheumatism, and the chill that strikes the heart; and if the gaugers would only let the private stills alone, not a bit of sickness would there be in the whole country round." We presume that this opinion about the private stills is that of "the people," and not Lady Wilde's. Fairies and Leprechauns and Banshees and Phookes are still believed in in some parts of Ireland, if not in most parts, and it has to be admitted that these superstitions add a decidedly picturesque and attractive element to the popular traditions and customs. Lady Wilde tells stories very neatly, and her book will be found both curious and amusing, if not in any sense deep.

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Auction Sales.

TRUSTEES SALE.—Whereas the St. Louis Gas, Fuel and Power Company, a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Missouri, by its deed of trust, dated February 1st, 1884, and recorded in the office of the Recorder of Deeds in and for the City of St. Louis, Missouri, in Book 653, page 396, conveyed to the undersigned, the Fidelity Insurance, Trust and Safe Deposit Company, as trustee, the following described property; that is to say:

FIRST—All that certain lot or parcel of land situated in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, and located in Block Eight (8) of Central Addition to said city, and in City Block sixteen hundred and seventy (1,670), and described as follows, that is to say: Beginning at the northwest corner of Clark avenue and Eighteenth street, and running thence west, along the north line of Clark avenue, one hundred (100) feet; thence north, and parallel with Eighteenth street, ninety (90) feet, more or less, to an alley; thence east, along said alley, one hundred (100) feet to said Eighteenth street; thence south, along Eighteenth street, ninety (90) feet, more or less, to the place of beginning, and bounded north by an alley, east by Eighteenth street, south by Clark avenue, and west by the leasehold premises next below described. Located on said premises, above described, are the following buildings, viz.: One brick fireproof building, 45x45 feet, one story high, with basement, having a corrugated iron roof and iron floor, fitted for and used as a gas generating house, and containing 1 Lowe Improved Generator and Super-Heater, combined, 7 feet in diameter, capacity 400,000 cubic feet per day; 2 Generators, of 5 feet diameter, and 2 Super-Heaters, of 4 feet diameter, connected together, and having a capacity of about 150,000 cubic feet, each, per day; 3 Washers, 1 Scrubber and 1 Condenser; 1 Tank, capacity 60 gallons. Also one boiler and engine house, 36x53 feet, and one story high, built of brick, with gravel roof, and containing one twenty-horse power Phoenix horizontal engine; one 40-horse power upright engine; 2 double riveted tubular boilers, 52x16 feet, with all connections complete; 1 No. 8 Sturdevant Blower, 1 No. 7 Sturdevant Blower; one 4-foot Worthington Hydraulic Pump, 2 No. 5 Hoeker Pumps, 1 Heater, 24x12x7, 1 Steam Drum, 6x30. Also one 2-story brick office and storage building, 35½x25 1-3 feet, and containing one Connally Automatic Governor (10) with all connections complete, office desk, table, chairs, heating stove and heating coil. Also one one-story store house, of wood, 25x14 feet. Also one open Coal Shed, of wood, 20x14 feet. Also one Gas-Holder, single section, 50 feet diameter, capacity 40,000 cubic feet.

SECOND—A certain leasehold estate in that certain lot or parcel of land situated in said City of St. Louis and located in Block eight (8) of Central Addition to said City of St. Louis and in City Block sixteen hundred and seventy (1,670) and described as follows, that is to say: Lots numbered eight (8) and seven (7) and five to eighty-eight (88 feet of lot numbered six (6), of Block number eight (8) of Central Addition to the City of St. Louis, according to a plat thereof duly recorded in the office of the Recorder of Deeds, in and for the City of St. Louis, and having an aggregate front of seventy-two (72) feet and one (1) inch on the north line of Clark avenue, by a depth northwardly and parallel with Eighteenth street, of ninety-five (95) feet to an alley ten (10) feet wide; and bounded north by said alley, east by property of the St. Louis Gas, Fuel and Power Company formerly the St. Louis Heat and Power Furnishing Company, south by Clark avenue, and west by Eighteenth street. Located on said leasehold premises is one storage (naphtha) tank, having a capacity of 10,215 gallons. Said leasehold estate was created by a certain Indenture of Lease bearing date the first day of July, 1882, and executed by Frederick Shields and John W. Harrison, as lessors, and the St. Louis Heat and Power Furnishing Company (now the St. Louis Gas, Fuel and Power Company), as lessee, for a term of ten years commencing on the first day of July, 1882, and ending on the first day of July, 1892, at an annual rent reserved in said lease, of four hundred and thirty-three dollars, payable semi-annually, on the first day of January and July in each year, the last payment being due on the first day of July, 1892, and the said lessee also covenanting for itself and for all parties claiming under it, to pay all city and state taxes and all other taxes and demands of every description, whether general or special, by lawfully required or demanded in respect of said premises during the continuance of said lease. Said lease contains a clause permitting the lessee, or its assigns, in case of punctual payment of rent and taxes, as specified in said lease, to remove at the expiration of said lease all such improvements as may have been erected on said leased premises during the said term by said lessee or any one claiming under it. Said lease also contains a further clause giving said lessee the privilege, at its option, of purchasing the premises embraced in said lease at any time during the term created thereby for cash, at such price as may be agreed upon by the parties to said lease, and providing, in case of their failure to agree, that the purchase shall be made at such price as may be agreed upon by an arbitration, and providing also the mode of selecting the arbitrators for such purpose.

THIRD—Also a certain leasehold estate in certain lots or parcels of land situated in said City of St. Louis and located in City Block sixteen hundred and sixty-nine, said City Block sixteen hundred and seventy, of said city, that is to say: Lots numbered twelve (12), thirteen (13), fourteen (14), fifteen (15), sixteen (16), seventeen (17), eighteen (18), nineteen (19), twenty (20), twenty-one (21), twenty-four (24), and twenty-five (25), of said City Block numbered sixteen hundred and sixty-nine (1,669); and lots numbered twenty-two (22), twenty-three (23), twenty-four (24), twenty-five (25), twenty-six (26), twenty-seven (27), twenty-eight (28), twenty-nine (29), thirty (30), and thirty-one (31), located in said City Block numbered sixteen hundred and seventy (1,670). Located on said leasehold premises are the following buildings and structures, viz.: One stone and brick purifying house, one story high, 82x59 feet, with basement and slate roof, and containing 4 purifying boxes, each 24x32 feet, with centre seal and connections complete, and one Goodwin Station Meter 13x13 feet. Also one washer, double shell, 10 feet diameter, capacity 2,000 cubic feet. Said leasehold is held by a certain Indenture of Lease bearing date the 16th day of April, 1884, and executed by Frederick Shields and John Harrison, as lessors, and the St. Louis Gas, Fuel and Power Company, as lessee, for a term of ten (10) years commencing on the first day of April, 1884, and ending on the first day of April, 1894, at an annual rent, reserved in said lease, of two thousand dollars for the first six years of said term, and of two thousand five hundred dollars for the remaining five years of said term, payable semi-annually on the first day of October and April in each year, the last payment to be made on the first day of April, 1894, and said lessee also covenanting for itself and for all parties claiming under it, to pay all city and State taxes, and all other taxes and demands of every description, whether general or special, by lawfully required or demanded in respect of said premises during the continuance of said lease. Said lease contains a clause permitting the lessee, its successor or assigns, in case of the punctual payment of the rent and taxes, as specified in said lease, to remove at the expiration of said lease all improvements which said lessee may have erected on said premises during the said term, and contains a further clause giving the said lessee the exclusive or option of purchasing the premises embraced in said lease, at the end of said term, at the price of forty thousand dollars, or of purchasing the same at any time during the term at the price of thirty-three thousand three hundred dollars, and an additional sum of one hundred and fifty dollars for each year, or a proportionate part of said last named sum for each additional part of a year from the beginning of said term down to the date of such purchase; the said lease to be recorded in the office of the Recorder of Deeds in and for the city of St. Louis, in Book 1,094, at page 1,272 of gas street, in the 20th ward, and in Book 1,094, at page 1,272 of gas street, in the 20th ward, of St. Louis, of the 12th day of July, 1884, and 2nd day of July, 1884, said mains are laid in part on said City Block numbered 1,669, and in part on said City Block numbered 1,670, and in part on the west line of Wright street, between Clark avenue and Washington avenue, and on Washington avenue, between Wright and Eighteenth street, respectively, from Washington avenue to Park avenue, Fourth street from Washington avenue to Market street, and Broadway from Washington avenue to Carr street, and Sixth street from Washington avenue to St. Louis street and also Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh streets from Washington avenue to the north line of Lawton street, and Twenty-first street from Washington avenue to Chouteau street. Also about 2,207 services, ranging in size from ¾ to 20, of which about 2,152 extend from the mains to the meters in the respective buildings, and the balance from the mains to the curb of the streets. Also about 1,337 meters of various sizes and 1,248 of various sizes, not set. Also 2,000 No. 3 and 22 No. 2 gas cooking stoves and 8 broilers, and 10 No. 1 gas cooking stoves and 16 gas heating stoves, mostly new, and 21 No. 3 and 12 No. 2 cooking stoves and 2 gas ranges out of repair.

FIFTH—A lot of tools and implements, consisting of tongs, dies, adjusting irons, taps, reamers, tap reaming irons, pumps and gauges, vise, rubber bags, meter provers, gas-fitters' tongs, wrenches, pipe-fitters' stock, street lanterns, street bar, service rock, etc. Also a lot of office furniture, consisting of two safes, two stoves, counter railing, screen, desks, office hair, letter presses, cases of drawers and pigeon holes, all located at 1104 and 1106 North Sixth street, respectively, and at such times, and from time to time, as they may be ordered during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1890, and ending June 30, 1891, for the use of any branch of the departmental or postal service. Blanks for proposals, with specifications giving detailed statement