

lar, the Folk-lore of the rose, and indeed of all flowers, has attained vast dimensions. Ghulistan is literally "the country of Roses." One beautiful eastern fable represents the Bulbul—so the Armenians call the nightingale—as falling in love with the rose, and as only beginning to sing when inspired by the tender passion. This fable has been happily rendered by Thackeray:—

"Under the boughs I sat and listened still,
I could not have my fill.
'How comes,' I said, 'such music to his bill?
Tell me for whom he sings so beautiful a trill.'

"'Once I was dumb,' then did the Bird disclose,
'But looked upon the Rose;
And in the garden where the loved one grows,
I straightway did begin sweet music to compose."

The poet Jami represents the perfect nature of our flower when he says "you may place a hundred handfuls of fragrant herbs and flowers before the nightingale, yet he wishes not in his constant heart for more than the sweet breath of his beloved rose."

One of the legends of Roumania recounts how the rose is an enchanted princess. It is thus given by Mr. E. C. G. Murray, in his "Doine":—

"It is early morning and a young princess comes down into her garden to bathe in the silver waves of the sea. The transparent whiteness of her complexion is seen through the slight veil which covers it, and shines through the blue waves like the morning star in an azure sky.

"She springs into the sea and mingles with the silvery rays of the sun, which sparkle on the dimples of the laughing waves.

"The sun stands still to gaze upon her; he covers her with kisses, and forgets his duty. Once, twice, thrice, has the night advanced to take her sceptre and reign over the world—thrice has she found the Sun upon her way.

"Since that day the Lord of the Universe has changed the princess into a rose; and this is why the rose always hangs her head and blushes when the sun gazes on her."

Into the origin of the custom of holding the rose to be the symbol of silence, as is expressed by the common phrase "under the rose," I do not propose to enter at length. The question has been discussed enough already, without any satisfactory conclusion having been reached. It is certain that the custom prevailed in Egypt, and also in ancient Greece, where Eros is figured as offering a rose to the god of silence. "The vulgar saying," says Brand, "is stated to have taken its rise from convivial entertainments, where it was an ancient custom to wear chaplets of roses about the head, on which occasions, when persons desired to confine their words to the company present, that they 'might go no farther,' they commonly said they are spoken under the rose." In the Tyrol, it may be added that the rose-gall is believed to produce sleep.