

golden-sanded Hydaspes. Anyone at all acquainted with the literature of Russia, of Poland or of the Slavonic provinces of the Danube, will recognize at once how characteristic the folk-lore is of the people, and how, from the study of its proverbs, and of the tales handed down from "sire to son" since the grey dawn of antiquity, we can learn much that must otherwise fail to reveal itself even to the most patient and industrious research. A convincing proof of identity of race is found when peoples speak allied languages and possess an almost identical stock of proverbs and folk-lore. In this way Dr. Rink has shown that the Eskimo, so widely scattered over their extensive territory, are yet one and the same people, from the banks of the Anadyr in Siberia to Cape Farewell and from the icy shores of far northern Greenland to the less inclement coast of South Labrador. Transferred from his old home in the "dark continent," the Negro of America cannot abandon, cannot forget the old tales that were told by his ancestors, long years, nay, centuries perhaps, before the germs of the civilizations of Egypt and Assyria had begun to sprout; long ere the Nile listed to the toil-worn captives' plaint, who builded the lofty Pyramid; long ere the waters of the Persian Gulf bore up the ship of Sisit and mankind was saved from the ruin of the Deluge.

In the investigation of the pre-history of the so-called Aryan peoples, the study of their proverbs and folk-lore must ever be of utmost importance. Proverbs that we hear perhaps everyday, may possess an antiquity that casts into the shade the composite Iliad, the Zend-Avesta, or the sacred books of the world-old Chinese. But, after all, are not the works just mentioned, but recastings of older and simpler thoughts and tales, re-formed and re-inspired, by master minds like Homer, Zoroaster or Confucius! Nay, to come nearer home, are not the Proverbs of Solomon a bright ornament of Jewish literature, and do they not form a part of the Book of Books?

Enough by way of introduction. The Slav Proverbs which I venture to lay before you, I have Englished from an article by Dr. Fr. Krauss, (1) on "Fortune and Fate in the Folk-Lore of the South Slavs."

(1.) Fortune (luck) flees from the good but remains close by the bad. (2.) Ask fortune, it will lead thee to the way, but not wait for thy coming. (3.) Seize fortune by the hair, misfortune (ill-luck) by the horns. (4.) God dispenses fortune, but the grandmother eggs, to the children, and the cook, soup. (5.) To me give fortune, and knowledge to whomsoever you may. (6.) Give me fortune (luck) and put me in a sack (*i.e.* even then circumstances will turn out lucky for me.) (7.) The father gives the dowry, but the Lord God gives fortune. (8.) A white raven (brings) long-enduring fortune. (9.) Where there is wealth is joy also. (10.) The fortune of a maiden is a quiet husband, a good servant. (11.) When ill-luck sleeps, do not try to wake it. (12.) To me give fortune, to you wisdom. (13.) Even a bad year can do no harm to the lucky (fortunate) man. (14.) Hold fortune fast when it puts in an appearance, so that you will not have to pursue it when it is past. (15.) Even the ant helps him with whom fortune (luck) abides. (16.) Fortune stretches out its hand to the bold. (17.) To every one his fortune. (18.) To the sleeper even fortune sleeps (*i.e.* especially to him who sleeps long, does fortune fail to come). (19.) Friendship rides after fortune. (20.) Ill-luck is an evil possession. (21.) Misfortune stares out of his eyes (*i.e.* said of an unlucky individual). (22.) Misfortune (ill-luck) spins fine threads. (23.) An unlucky man should not even try to catch hedgehogs (*i.e.* even in so easy an operation as catching a hedgehog, his bad luck will cling to him). (24.) To the unlucky man even his intelligence is too much, (it is a burden to him.) (25.) In case God grants it, and the year brings it. (26.) If one does not meet with fortune, then he will never overtake it. (27.) For him to whom God has given no fortune, no smith can forge it. (28.) Without health there is no fortune. (29.) As long as fortune stands by him, one suffers no harm. (30.) Without fortune the soul is naked. (31.) Even on the ice, the house of the unlucky man burns down. (32.) In their turn rust falls upon heroes. (33.)

(1.) The article in question is to be found in Vol. XVII. of the Publications of the Anthropological Society of Vienna (pp. 102-162).

In turn misfortune visits all. (34.) Where there is fortune, there is also misfortune. (35.) He who is not fortunate, (lucky) should not be alive at all. (36.) In (times of) fortune do not exalt thyself, (be haughty,) in misfortune do not humble thyself to the dust. (37.) Hold fortune fast with both hands when it comes within thy reach. (38.) The early riser grasps double fortune. (39.) For the fortunate man even a cock lays eggs. (40.) The fortune of the diligent and the misfortune of the rich are well-known. (41.) Fortune is fickle. (42.) Much fortune, little wisdom.

I have not the time just now to bring forward the equivalents of these proverbs in the other Aryan tongues, and shall therefore be content to point out a few of them. Some of them are indeed of so general a type that any student will be able at once to cite parallels. Very widespread, for example, is the view of the raven as "a bird of omen ill," and it is natural that the white raven should be to the augur of the people a fore-runner of good fortune. The hedgehog too plays a not unimportant role in popular beliefs and superstitions. With proverb eleven one might compare our own English "Let well enough alone." The lines of F. von Logau, "Wenn ein Mensch mit Gott gut steht, Der steht wohl wenn's uebel geht" coincide with the thought expressed in the thirteenth and twenty-ninth proverbs given. Our English proverbial expression, "Seize time by the forelock," has something of kinship with numbers fourteen and thirty-seven. With proverb seventeen everyone is acquainted. It is the Latin "Audentes fortuna juvat," the Spanish, "Al hombre osado la fortuna le da la mano;" and in English, besides the remodelling of the Latin phrase, we have the well-known proverb, "God helps those, who help themselves," (the German "Hilf dir selbst, so hilft dir Gott,") and others of like intent and purport. Akin also is the German "Frisch gewagt ist halb gewonnen," "boldly ventured is half won. To compare with number eighteen we have the Spanish "Por hacer placer al sueno, ni saya ni camisa tengo." Number nineteen recalls at once the lines of Goldsmith:—

"And what is Friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
And leaves the wretch to weep."

and the Spanish proverb "Quien pobreza tien, de sus deudos es desden; y el rico sin serlo, de todos es deudo (he that is poor is despised by his kindred; and he that is rich is akin to everybody, though he be not so). Of similar purport to number twenty-four is the Spanish "Al hombre desdichado poco le vale ser esforzado" (If a man is unfortunate, it avails him but little to be brave). The twenty-eighth proverb recalls our own English "health is wealth," and the Latin "Salus populi suprema lex," and other similar sayings. As we read number thirty-two the echo of Shakespere's words strikes on our ears, and we feel how:

"Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."

and the famed lines of Horace "Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regum que turres." With number thirty-four coincides the Italian "Ogni ritto ha il suo rovescio;" and the converse is seen in the English "Every cloud has its silver lining," or as Milton has it:—

"I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,"

"The early riser's double fortune," is well expressed in our good old English speech, "the early bird catches the worm," for which our German cousins have, "Morgens-tunde hat Gold im Munde" (early morn hath a golden mouth); and quaintly does the Spanish turn the same, "Al que madruga Dios le ayuda" (God helps him who rises early).

Did time and space permit many other interesting coincidences might be pointed out and remarked upon, but "levis Fortuna" just now calls me hence, and I rest content with having called attention to the advantages of the study of comparative folk-lore.

As the Aryan village community still exists with many of its essential features unimpaired in Russia and the Slavonian provinces of Turkey in Europe, so it is but reasonable to suppose that a close study of Slavonian proverbs and folk-lore will enable us to see how our forefathers lived and thought "in the days when earth was young."

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