THE GREEN MAN OF KNOWLEDGE

Hamish Henderson*

Weel, this is a story aboot an old lady—an auld woman it wes—she bred pigs. She wes a widow-woman, an' she'd a son cried Jack. An' this son wes jist a nit-wit, he'd nae sense, they say—so they said, onywey—an' he used to sit at the fireside amangst ashes. Ay, he'd a big auld hairy Hielan collie-dog. An' this collie-dog wes a' he lookt at, an' mindet; him an' his dog used to sit an' play at cards—an' I couldnae say the dog played back, like—but he played cards wi' his dog. An' that's a' he did, the lee-lang day.

But Jack, he comes to the age o' twenty-one. An' on his twenty-oneth birthday, he rises fae the fireside an' streetches hissel'—he's a man weel over six fit. An' his breekies he was wearin' fin he did streetch hissel' went up to abeen his knees. An' his jaicket an' schuil-buits . . . he wes a giant o' a man, compared to the clothes he wore. He was aye sittin' humphed up.

He says, "Mither," he says, "you feed awa at your pigs, Jack's awa to push his fortune." "Ah," says she, "Jack, dinnae gae awa noo, 'cause ye'll jist get lost, an' ye ken ye've never been past the gate o' the place there a' your life, Jack. Jist bide whaur ye are."

"Ah, but mither," he says, "I'm goin' awa to push my fortune, an' nothin' 'll dee me but I'm goin' to push my fortune."

"No, no, Jack, g'awa an' play wi' your doggie."

He says, "No, I'm gaun to push my fortune."

She says, "Weel, Jack, dinna wander awa." But Jack never bothers, mither or nothing else—he hauds awa, whenever she turns her back. An' he opens the gate an' walks oot—and whenever he opened that yett, he's in anither world. He didnae know where he wes, because he'd never been oot o'

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the fairmyard in his life. An' he walks doon the road. So—if everything be true, this'll be nae lies—there were a cross-roads, an' the one signpost says: 'To the Land of Enchantment'. So Jack says, "Here's for it." So he hauds doon the road to the Land of Enchantment onywey. And in the Land of Enchantment—I must tell ye this, if ye understand what I tell yeze!—everything spoke: animals, birds, everything spoke. So he's comin' on, an' he's feelin' gey hungry, Jack. He's a gey lump o' a lad, an' he liked his meat, and he was feelin' hungry. So he says, "Lord, I wisht I'd asked my mither for a bannock or something to take on the road wi' me, 'cause it's gey hungry, gaein' awa."

He's comin' on, an' he looks—an' d'ye ever see a horse-troch, kin' o' grown wi' moss—an' a lovely troch it wis, at the road-side. An' Jack says: "O, thank the Lord, I'll get a drink onywey, it'll quench the hunger for a bittie—my thirst tae." So—there a wee robin sittin' on the edge o' the watter—the edge o' the troch, ye ken—so he bends his heid to take a drink.

The robin says, "Hullo, Jack."

He says, "Lord, begod, it's a bird speakin'! Whit are ye speakin' for," he says, "I never heard a bird speak in my life."

"Oh," he says, "Jack, ye're in the Land of Enchantment —everything an' everybody can speak."

"Oh, but"—he says—"nae a bird!" He says: "If I didnae see't wi' my ain een, I wouldnae believe't."

"Oh yes, Jack, I can talk."

He says, "Fit wey d'ye ken my name?"

"Oh," he says, "Jack, we knew ye were comin'—we've been waitin' on ye for twenty-one years, Jack."

"Lord, ye'd a gey wait, had ye no?"

But—he has a drink o' water—he says, "ye ken fit I could dae wi, birdie," he says, "I could dae wi' a richt feed o' meat."

"Oh, well," he says, "Jack, jist follae me."

He turns awa, doon the road a bit, and here's a lanely thackit cot at the roadside, an' an old woman in't, she'd the age o' a hunder, an' she's rockin' back an forrit in an auld rockin' chair. So she says, "Come in, Jack." She says, "Go in an' get your supper, Jack."

So when Jack comes in, here's a lovely table set, an' a plate o' porridge, an' milk, an' some tea, an' so on—scones, an' things like that, scones was home-made fancy at that time

onywey. An' a lovely young girl. An' she supplied the food, d'ye see?

So he sits doon, an' has a plate o' this porridge, an' it tasted lovely, he never tasted finer in his life. (When ye're hungry, a'thing tastes fine.) An' he had some tea—no, I'm goin' through my story: there was home-brewed ale. He'd a mug o' this home-brewed ale, an' some scones an' oatcakes, an' things like that.

So she says, "Jack, would you like to lie down?" An' he says, "I wouldnae care, for I'm feeling gey wearriet," he says, "an' things, an' I could dee wi' a lie-doon."

She says, "Come up here, Jack." An' there's the loveliest feather bed that ever you see in your life, a richt bed. And so Jack jist lies doon, an' sinks in't, an' fa's right to sleep.

So he's lyin', but he wakens through the night, an' he's lyin' on a sheepskin an' three peats. He says "My God, my bed's changed quick! Lord," he says, "a queer bed." But he fa's awa again—Jack didnae worry, he wis used to lyin' in ashes onywey. He fa's awa again, an' when he waukens up in the mornin', he's lyin' in this lovely bed again. He says, "My God, this is a queer country. It's jist no like my mither's place at a'."

But he jumps oot-ower his bed, an' he gaes doon, an' the breakfast's waitin' for him again. So the young girl says: "Go out, an' my grandmither 'll give ye some advice, Jack. An' in the land you're in, all the advice you can get, Jack, you take, for you'll need it, see?"

So Jack says, "Ay, I aye tak advice, lassie." An' he says: "It's nae deen nae hairm."

So he gaes oot tae the door, an' he says, "Weel, Grannie, how are ye keepin'?" "Och," she says, "fine, Jack." She says, "Jack, I'm goin' to give ye some advice. When you go along this road today, Jack, never talk to anybody first. Wait tae they talk to you first."

He says: "Well, whatever ye say, Grannie."

So he says good-bye, an' he hauds doon a bit o' the road—the young girl cries efter him, an' gies him some sandwiches to carry on wi'—ye ken, scones an' butter, an' things like that. So he carries them wi' him, see?

But, to mak a lang story short an' a short story lang, he hauds on the road. An' he's ho the road, hey the road, doon the road. He's walkin', an' he hears the bells o' a village, like a church-bell ringin' awa; it wis helluva sweet music, ye ken,

awa in a hollow, ye wad think; it wis bonny-like. So he comes on over the ridge, an' he looks doon in a den, an' here's a lovely village. So, the most of the scones that he got, he ate them—and there was a small something got up in a piece o' cloth, ye ken—an' he opened it up, an' here's a gold piece. Either a geeny, or a . . . fit it wis I dinna ken, but a gold piece, that's a' that I ken. An' he takes it oot, an' he pits it in his pocket, an' he gaes on tae the village.

So he looks, an' here's a inn. He says, "I'll gang in here," he says (for he wes feelin' hungry again). So he gangs in, an' he orders home-brewed ale an' scones, an' he eats a gey hillock, at least a platefu'! An' has a richt drink.

So he looks over in a corner, an' there three men playin' cards, an' they're a' playin' cards jist, neither speakin', movin', naething else, jist playin' cards. An' there were a man dressed heid to fit in green—his heid in green. O a very cunnin'-lookin' man—mebbe he's a man aboot fifty, but what a cunnin' face. Jist a face, you would ken he was very clever—a man o' brains.

So Jack gings ower till 'im, and he says, "Can I get a game?"

He says, "Have ye money?"

Jack says, "Weel, I hinna a lot o' money, but I've money" (he had change, this gold piece). An' he says, "I'd like a game."

He says, "Can you play at cards? We don't play," he says, "with men that canna play at cards."

"O," he says, "I've practised a bittie in my day," and he starts to play at cards. An' the four o' them plays an' plays; the Green Man o' Knowledge wis a good card-player right enough, but he couldnae beat Jack, 'cause Jack had a' his life-time played wi' his collie. He could play cards!

But a' thing's comin' Jack's way, so the ither two fa's oot, but Jack an' the Green Man o' Knowledge plays an' plays an' plays up tae the early 'oors o' the mornin'.

Sae he looks at him, an' he says, "Jack," he says, "ye're too good a man for me at cards." He says, "Good-bye, Jack."

He says, "Wait a minute. Fa are ye?"

He says, "I'm the Green Man o' Knowledge."

"Sae you're the Green Man o' Knowledge, are ye?" he says. "Faur dae ye bide?"

He says, "East o' the moon and west o' the stars."

He says, "Lord, that's a queer direction."

"Make oot o't onythin' ye like, Jack," he says. Sae he jist left it like that.

"My God," says Jack, "he's a gey peculiar kin' o' a lad."

But he heaps a' his money—he has any amount o' money, I couldnae value it, but he's any amount. So he pits it in bags, an' he says to the innkeeper, he says, "You keep this gold to me till I'm back this wey," he says. "I must fin' faur the Green Man o' Knowledge bides."

An' the innkeeper shakes his head. "Jack, dinnae follae him," he says. He says, "You'll go to disaster if you follae him."

"Ach," Jack says, "a' body has only onst to die—why worry!" But Jack reckoned for the Green Man o' Knowledge.

So he hauds on the road, the only road oot o' the village. An' he's haudin' on the road, ye ken—an' he's gettin' tiret an' weary again, and he'd took a few gold pieces wi' him, nae much, in his pocket, frae fear he would come tae ony mair inns or that, ye ken, where he could get refreshments. An' he's haudin' on the road—but he jist comes right in aboot till anither thackit hoosie, the same.

He says, "Well, I'll go up to see this thackit hoosie," he says, "an' they might help me onywey. I'll pay them."

So he chaps at the door, an' he hears a voice: "Come in, Jack." He says, "Lord, they're weel-informed in this country," he says, "everybody kens my name." So he opens the door an' gangs in, and says, "I'm in."

She says, "Are ye hungry, Jack, I suppose ye are."

He says, "Yes, I'm hungry." She says, "Sit doon, Jack." So he sits doon. He gets the same meal again as he got in the other place. If the first girl was bonnie, this girl was ten times bonnier. And if the first woman was old, this woman was much older—she was ancient! And she was sittin', rockin' awa in her chair tae. So they pits him to bed, but the same thing happens in the bed as I tellt ye. He goes tae his bed an' rises in the mornin', and the peats was through the night. But he notices before he goes to bed that this old woman was knittin' —just a round piece o' knittin' she was, like crochetin', but it was knittin' she was, jist a round piece like that table there. And it was lyin' on the floor when he comes in the mornin'. Now she says, "Jack, you're lookin' for the Green Man o' Knowledge." He says, "I am." And she says, "Jack, we're here to help you, because you could never manage yourself, Jack."

He says, "Well," he says, "I'll tak a' the help I can get."

So efter his breakfast, she says, "Jack," she says, "take this piece o' knittin' out to the door, and lay it down and sit on't—and sit plait-legged, Jack. Cross your arms," and she says, "Whatever happens, don't look behind you." She says, "Don't look behind you, because if you look behind you, it's the end." She says, "Whatever happens, don't look behind you."

So he sits plait-legged, and folds his arms. And she says, "Say, away with you. And," she says, "whirl it three times round, when you land with it, and say home with you. And," she says, "that'll be all right, Jack." And he says, "Weel, weel, thank you."

So he says, "Away with you," and he moves that quick that the wind just leaves his body.

And he's through what he doesn't know what—hail, fire, brimstone, water, everything. And he's just dying to look back! And he minds—he's a strong-willpowered man—he minds what the auld woman said. He says, "We'll just keep lookin' forrit." So he looks forrit.

But he lands, and he was glaid to land. So he stands up, and he catches this bit o' knittin', and he pits it roond his heid three times like that, ye ken, an' he says, "away with ye"—or "back with ye", it wis. And away it wis.

So he jist comes roond the corner, he hears 'ting-ting-ting', a blacksmith on an anvil, tinkerin', and so he comes in-aboot, and here's a house. And here's an old woman sittin' like the first een, rockin', ye ken, and she was older.

And he says, "Ah weel weel"—he goes in-aboot. She says, "Well, Jack, we've been waitin' for you." She says, "Go in to the house, Jack." So Jack goes into the house, and he gets the same meal again. The same bed, the same procedure a' through, till the mornin'.

"Now," she says, "Jack, go round to the smiddy shop," she says, "and you shall see my husband, and he's made something for you, Jack. And—do what he tells you, and you won't go wrong."

So the smith says, "I want to talk to you Jack," he says. "Now," he says, "you're nearin' the Green Man o' Knowledge. But," he says, "the Green Man o' Knowledge has many precautions, for getting about them."

He says, "There must be a river to cross—a river to be crossed," he says. "I can't help you to cross it, Jack, and there's a bridge. But," he says, "if you step on that bridge it'll turn to a spider's web. You'll fall through Jack." He says, "If

you fall in the water, Jack, you're finished, because the water goes into boilin' lava." He says, "You're instantly dead."

He says, "There's only one way across, Jack—it's his youngest daughter. He's got three daughters, Jack, and the youngest one is the most powerful of the lot." He says, "They come down to swim, Jack, every mornin'," he says, "at mebbe ten o'clock," he says—"that time o' the mornin'. And whenever they touch water," he says, "they turn into swans. There's two black swans, Jack, and a white swan. It's the white swan you must get, Jack. But if you don't trap her in the way I'm tellin' you, Jack, you're finished, for she'll ca' you doon."

He says, "You watch where they're puttin' their clothes, and pick every article up of her clothes—and if you leave a hairpin, she'll make a outfit out o't—don't leave nothin'." And he says, "Jack, they cross the bridge the side you're on," he says, "and go into the water," he says, "from that side, Jack." He says, "they come back and dress there, Jack."

So he says, "Weel, it'll likely be true. But," he says, "this is a gey queer affair, but weel, weel, we'll try't."

He says, "You see that horse-shoe, Jack?" It was a very large horse-shoe. He says, "You sit on the horse-shoe, Jack, and don't look behind, whatever you do, and say, away with you!" and he says, "put it round your head three times and say back with you!"

So Jack does't, and he gings through the same again, it wis jist torture. But he lands at the banks o' the river. Now the blacksmith tellt him to hide hissel, so Jack hides hissel, just aside the bridge, and he sees this three lovely maidens comin' ower, and they were bonnie lassies. But the littlest one was the slenderest, and the most graceful o' the lot, you would have thought. So they come trippin' ower the bridge and undress, and into the water. And whenever they touched the water, the two oldest ones turned till a black swan, and they swum fast and away. And this youngest one undresses; and he watches where she pits her clothes, and ye ken what like Jack, a big fairm servant, never seen a woman in his life hardly, says, "Lord, this is fine!" They're into the water, and they're away swimmin'. So he up wi' every stitch o' claes she had, everything, even the very ribbons, and hides them.

So the two oldest ones comes out and dresses, and across the bridge and away. And she's up and down the side, and she says, "Where are you, Jack?"

He says, "I'm here."

She says, "My clothes, please, Jack."

"Ah na na, I'm nae gien' ye nae claes," he says. "I was weel warned aboot ye."

She says, "Jack, please, my clothes. Are you a gentleman?"

"Na na," he says, "I'm just Jack the Feel. I'm nae gentleman."

She says, "What have I to do, Jack?"

He says, "Well," he says, "it's a cruel thing to ask, but," he says, "you must help me across this river on your back."

She says, "Oh Jack, you'd break my slender back."

"Ah," he says, "the old smith's nae feel. Ye're nae sae slender." He says, "Ye'll take me across the river."

She says, "Well Jack, step on my back, but whatever you do, on the peril of my life and your life, don't tell how ye got across."

He says, "Okay."

So he jumps on her back, and she takes him across, and he steps up on the bank.

"Now," she says, "Jack, he'll try his best to ken how you got across, but tell him nothing."

He says, "Weel, weel," he says, "I'll tell him nothin'."

So he walks up to the hoose—she gaes awa an' gets dressed, an' runs past him an' awa—he jist gaes straight up tae the hoose an' he chaps at the door, see. So the door opens, and here's the Green Man o' Knowledge, and he was flabbergasted —he was shocked!

So he looks at him, an' he says, "My God, Jack, how d'you get here?"

"Och, jist the wey ye get."

He says, "Jack, how did you cross the river?"

"Och, flew across."

He says, "You've no wings, Jack."

"Oh, nothin's impossible. But I can grow wings," he says.

"Weel, Jack, come in," he says, "I must shake your hand," he says. "You're a good man." So Jack shakes his hand—and Jack's against the wa'—sae he gies Jack a push, an' Jack's through a kin' o' trap-door affair, an' he lands in a wee roomie, there's nae as much room for a moose, never mind a big man like Jack.

An' he looks, an' there a bit dry breid, an' hit blue-moulded, an' water, an' he says, "Drink, an' eat, an' be merry." He says, "My God, a lad winna be very merry on that!"

So he's sittin' awa, but at night he hears a whisper, and

here's the girl that helped him. She says, "Jack, you've won me. Whenever you made me take you across the river, you spelled me, I love you. I'll love you till the day I die, I can't do nothing else. I'll help you in any way, but please Jack, don't move a fit or he'll kill ye." She says, "My father, for he's evil."

She says, "Here's some food, Jack." So Jack, he gets a feed o' meat, an' he was one that loved his meat! He was sittin' there fair out wi' hunger.

So in the mornin', the place opens and Jack creeps oot. An' the Green Man o' Knowledge says, "How was ye last night, Jack?" "Ach," Jack says, "very comfortable, jist fine." He says, "Ye wisnae fine, Jack?" "I never slept better." He says, "You're not bad to please, Jack." "Ach, a lad cannae be bad to please at this time," he says.

So he says, "Would you like, Jack," he says, "would you like to prove to me that you are a man?" Jack says, "Yes, I would like to prove to ye that I'm a man." "Well," he says, "Jack, I'll give ye three tasks." He says, "They're not hard tasks, any child could do them," he says. He says, "They're not hard tasks, but," he says, "they take doin', Jack." He says, "Do you see that dry well in the garden, Jack?" He says, "Ay, I see the dry well." He says, "I want you, Jack, to go down to the bottom o' that well," he says, "an' take out my wife's engagement ring, which she lost there twenty years ago. Oh," he says, "it isn't hard to do, Jack," he says, "I could do it."

Jack says, "Why d'ye nae dee it?" He says, "I want you to do it, Jack." Jack says, "Weel, I'll try 't." So he thinks, My God!

He says, "Not today, tomorrow, Jack." He says, "Come over till I show you a photograph o' my wife, Jack." So Jack's standin' lookin'—"Ay, she's a bonnie woman"—an' he gets a push again, an' he's intae anither kind o' a cavity.

So the hard breid's there again, an' the water, a' the same.

So here she comes again, wi' mair food for 'im. So she says, "Jack, the task he's going to give you is near impossible—it *is* impossible, Jack. I shall help you to make it possible. Now," she said, "the well's thirty-five feet deep, Jack. I'll make a ladder with my body frae the tap o' the well tae the bottom o' the well." An' she says, "If you miss wan step, Jack, you'll break a bone in my body." An' she says, "For God's sake, Jack, watch what you're doin'."

So Jack says, "Weel . . ." An' he says, "Whit wey will I

see't?" She says, "The well's covered with mud," she says, "it's a terrible well—I'll make the bottom clear, an' you'll see the ring shinin'." He says, "Weel, I'll try that."

So the Green Man o' Knowledge takes him oot next mornin', an' takes him oot to the well—an' says: "There's the well, Jack." So Jack says, "Well." So Jack leans over, and he feels for the lether, an' he feels her there, her shouthers, an' he takes ae step, an' plunges doon quick, kiddin' that he's drappin' like, an' he's steppin' doon, steppin' doon, till he comes tae the last step, an' he misses—he says, "My God, I've broke her neck! . . . Ah," he says, "weel, weel, we cannae help it," so he grabs the ring, an' he's up like the haimmers o' hell, an' oot o' the well.

So he shows the Green Man o' Knowledge it, like that. He says, "Here's the ring." So he says, "You're clever, Jack." He says, "Let me see 't, Jack." "No," Jack says.

He says, "Wha's helpin' ye, Jack?" He says, "Nobody's helpin' me." He says, "Somebody's helpin' ye, Jack." Jack says, "No!"

He says, "Well, Jack," he says, "you're a clever man. You've deen the first task, but," he says, "the second ane's harder, Jack."

So he takes Jack back, an' Jack he sits down to a lovely meal. But Jack's away to eat his meal when the seat gaes oot ablow him an' wump! away in another cavity. He says, "My God, I canna stand this much langer, it'll kill me." But he's sittin', an' he's lookin' at this hard breid again, when she comes again. "Oh," she says, "Jack, if it had been the other step, ye'd broke my neck." She says, "You broke my pinkie, Jack, and I wore dinner gloves, an' father didn't notice it. If he had noticed it, Jack, we'd both have been dead."

He says, "Fit dis he plan to dee wi' me the morn?" She says, "He's got a task for ye to do, Jack. Ye've to build a castle oot o' a mere nothing within sixty minutes." "Oot o' nothing? Lord, I couldnae thack a hoose in three months, let alane build a castle oot o' nothing."

She says, "Jack, he's goin' to take ye tae a hill at the back of our castle, an' ask ye to build it. And," she says, "it must be bigger and langer and nicer than ours. An'," she says, "Jack, I shall do it. So watch what ye're sayin', Jack, for ye'll get the baith o' us trapped, d'ye see?"

He says, "Weel, weel," but he gets oot next mornin' again, an' the Green Man o' Knowledge says: "How was ye last

night, Jack?" "Ah," he says, "I wis never better." He says, "My God, ye've got a richt place in this hoose. I like this hoose—this castle." So he says, "Yes, Jack, I've a small task for ye today, Jack. Anybody could do it, but I want you to do it, Jack." Jack says, "What is't?" He says, "I want ye to build a castle, Jack, bigger than my one and larger, and nicer in every way. An' I want ye to build it in sixty minutes."

Jack says: "That's a gey stiff task to gie a lad." "Oh, but you're Jack," he says, "you got here—you got the engagement ring, Jack, this shouldn't bother you." "Well," Jack says, "I'll try 't." He says, "Go on, Jack, do 't." "Ah but," says Jack, "I'll be giein' awa trade secrets—you go awa."

So he says, "I canna watch, Jack?" "No," Jack says, "I canna let ye watch." So he turns his back and leaves.

So Jack sits for aboot half-an-'oor, an' he says, "If this deem doesnae hurry up, I'll be killed. This lad'll be back here—she's takin' an awfu time. Oh," he says. "My God, this is nae ees, she's takin' too lang." He says, "I'm makin' tracks oot o' here." So he turns roon, an' the castle's at the back o'm, he wis lyin' lookin' the ither way. So he says, "Thank God." But he's walkin' roon it, an' he's lookin' ower 't—an' there a hole aboot the size o' this hoose. "Oh," he says, "she's made a mistake. Faur is she?" An' he hears a voice sayin', "Jack, that's nae a mistake. When he comes an' looks at this hole, Jack, he'll say 'what's this, what's this?' An' you say til him, Jack, 'I've left that for you to fill up', an' see whit he says, Jack."

So up comes the Green Man o' Knowledge, an' he says, "My goodness, a lovely castle," he says. "Jack," he says, "I do gie ye credit. You are a clever man." So he walks a' roon it, an' he says, "Oh my goodness, Jack! whit a mess! What did ye leave this hole here for?" He says, "That's for you to fill." He says, "Jack, wha's helpin' ye?" Jack says, "Na, na, naebody's helpin' me. I wis only once pals wi' a collie dog," he says, "that's a'." So he says, "Well done, Jack."

Now, the third task was to clear the ants in a wood—ay, tae clear every one oot within half an 'oor. An'—ye know ants, there are millions o' them, they're uncountable, ye can't clear ants. So he takes Jack out next mornin', an' he says: "Ye're to clean all this ants, Jack. I'll give ye half an hour. If you can do that, Jack, I'll give you as much money as you can carry, any of my daughters for your wife, and your freedom, Jack, and my castle, if ye want it—and your freedom."

Jack says, "Freedom means a lot to me," he says. "I've an auld mither at hame; she's workin' wi' the pigs," he says, "and I'd like to help her tae." But Jack looks at this wuid, an' he says, "My God, this'll take some clearin'." Of course, she dis this job for him again.

So he says, "Jack, you are clever. Now," he says. "Jack, come to my house," he says, an' he gives Jack a lovely meal this time, an' no tricks. "Now," he says. "Jack, I've got you four bags o' gold here," he says, "an' in each bag the money's near uncountable," he says, "an' you're past bein' a rich man, Jack. You're very wealthy," he says. An' he says, "I'll take you to the stable," he says, "and give ye the pick o' my horses. I keep all mares," he says, "an' they're lovely horses, Jack." An' he says, "You can have whatever horse you want." So Jack says, "Weel, weel."

So Jack's pickin' his gold (an' the Green Man o' Knowledge is walkin' alang in front o' him), when he hears the voice again, sayin', "Jack, take the old mule—Jack, take the old mule." So he says, "Weel, weel," he says.

So he gaes intae the stable, an' he's standin', ye see, an' he's lookin'—an' they were lovely beasts, nae doot aboot them, loveliest beasts he had ever seen. There a grey meer, an' he could see the fire in her eyes—a lovely meer. An' there anither meer, a fine black meer, an' he could see the fire in her eyes. So Jack looks at them, an' he looks at this wee scruffy-lookin' animal o' a mule, an' he says, "My goodness, whit 'm I gauna dee wi' that?—My God, she hisnae been wrang yet," til himsel, he says. "I better take a tellin'," he says, "but my God, it's a sin to throw this gold oot-owre its back." An' he looks at this meer, but he says to the Green Man of Knowledge, "I'd like that wee donkey, it's fast enough for Jack."

"Oh, my goodness, Jack," he says, "you wouldn't take *that*? It would disgrace ye goin' through the country, Jack." "Ach," Jack says, "I'm nae good to disgrace, I'm nae worried. I'll take that wee mule." "No, no, Jack," he says, "I won't allow ye to take that, ye'll take one of this meers."

So Jack's newsin' awa, an' he straps his gold on tap o' the wee mule's back. An' he's newsin' awa, an' the wee mule's standin' wi' nae rein nor anything else, so he's owre his leg, an' it wis nae bother, for it wis only a wee thingie, an' he draps owre its back an' away, an' he's aff his mark an' this wee mule could rin. It's rinnin', an' Jack says, "My God, take it easy, lassie, nothing 'll catch ye."

She says, "Jack, you don't know my people," she says, "they'll catch me if I don't hurry, Jack." "Aw, awa, lassie, they'll never see ye—take your time, deemie, ye'll jist kill yersel hastenin'." She says, "No, Jack, I must run, and run hard." Jack says, "Take your . . . but, God," he says, "hurry up, he's ahin' us." An' here, they're jist at the back o' his neck. So he says, "Run harder."

So she's rinnin', but she says, "Jack, I haven't got the speed for him." She says, "Jack, look in my left ear, an' you shall see a drop o' water," she says. "Throw it over your shoulder, an ask for rivers, lakes and seas behind you, and a clear road in front o' you." So he throws it ower his shouther; he says, "Gie's lakes, seas, and rivers, behind me, but," he says, "give me a clear road in front of me." An' he looks behind—"Aw," he says, "lassie, save your breath, there's nothing but seas, they'll never get through it," he says, "they'll be droont."

She says, "Jack, you don't know my people." (This meers wis her sisters, changed into meers.) He said, "Ah, ye're safe enough, lassie, jist take your time." She says, "No, Jack." An' he looks ahin' him, an' they were ahin' him again, an' the Green Man of Knowledge on tap o' one o' his daughters' backs, and they're rinnin'.

So she says, "Look in my left ear, Jack, an' ye'll see a spark o' stone. Throw it over your left shoulder, Jack, an' wish for mountains, hills and dales behind you, and a clear road in front of you." So he does the same again, and the same happens, so he jist tells her to take her time again, but na, she willnae listen, she jist keeps batterin' on. So as sure as truth, they're ahin' him again, within any time.

So she says, "Jack," she says, "I love you, and I will destroy my people for you. But," she says, "it shall put a spell on me for a year, an' you too. An'," she says, "look in my left ear an' ye'll see a spark o' fire. Throw it behind you, an' ask for fire, hell an' pits behind you, and a clear road in front of you."

So he did this, an' he looks roon, an' he sees her people witherin' in the fire, an' dyin' . . . they were witherin' awa in the fire.

So she turns intil a woman again, an' he jist stands on his feet haudin' his gold in his hands. An' she says, "Jack, now, because of that," she says, "I must leave you for a year. One year from today I'll come for ye." "Ah," he says, "lassie, I'll

be waitin' on ye." She says, "Jack, let nobody kiss ye. If anybody kisses ye, ye'll forget the whole affair. Jack, you'll forget the whole proceedings. You'll remember nothing aboot where you've been or what you've done." She says, "Jack, don't let nobody kiss ye."

So he says, "Weel, weel, I'll let naebody kiss me if it's that important, but," he says, "I'll see ye fin ye come onywey."

So he hauds away hame. "God Almichty," he says, "I'm nae far fae hame—that's my mither's place doon there." So he's owre the palins, an' here's his auld wife's place. "O," she says, "Jack, my peer loon," an' she's tryin' to kiss Jack. "Na, na, mither, I want nae kissin' an' slaverin'," he says, "I want naething to dee wi' that. Na, na, stop it." So he would hae nae kissin'. But he went intae the hoose, and here's his big collie dog, an' his collie dog jumps up on his chest and taks a big lick. That wis hit, d'ye see, an' he forgat a' thing.

So Jack's plenty money, an' he's nae feel, Jack, now. He's Sir Jack, an' this, an' that—money maks a' the difference. It even maks feels gentlemen. So Jack's bocht a big place, an' he's workin' awa within twa-three month, an' the miller's dochter's a gey wenchy deem, an' he throws an eye at the miller's dochter, see, an' him an' the miller's dochter's engaged to get mairriet. Jack's a business man, he's aye intae business, an' got a lot o' payin' work, an' that; he mebbe couldnae write his name, but he jist put his cross, an' worked awa like that, ye ken.

So he wis jist gettin' mairriet, a year tae the day he cam hame. So the nicht o' his weddin', Jack's awfu busy, an' there's a' the guests there, but Jack's awfu busy—wi' papers an' things like that, I suppose, an' he's in his room. So a poor tattered and torn girl—but a bonnie queyn—comes tae the back door, and asks for a job, see? So they says, "Whit can ye dee, queyn?" "I can cook, I can clean." He says, "Oh, I could put ye on at the weddin', the night. Help us to cook an' clean an' a'thing, an' for a couple o' days after the weddin', and ye'll have to go."

She says, "That'll do me fine, thank you."

So she's washin' dishes, an' scrubbin' awa, ye ken, an' they're waitin' on the preacher—but the preacher's takin' a gey while, 'cause he was comin' on horse-back at that time, ye see, an' it's a gey bit fae a village—an' the preacher's takin' a good while. An' they're gettin' a' impatient, the guests, ye ken; they're gettin' kin' o' uncomfortable sittin'—they're a'

walkin' aboot newsin'. So she says, "I believe I could smooth the guests a little, an' pass away the time for them, because I can do a trick," she says. "I have a wooden hen and a wooden cock, and they can talk, and they can pick, and," she says, "everything." "Oh," he says, "that's great, we'll hear it."

So she goes ben, an' ye can imagine her amongst a' this well-dressed folk wi' mebbe an auld white torn skirt on her, gey ragged lookin' amangst a' this well-dressed kin' o' folk. An' she's doon this two birds, a cock an' a hen. So she scatters some corn, but Jack jist came oot to watch it tee . . . Jack's standin' watchin', an' the cock picks an' looks at her, an' the hen picks an' looks at the cock, and the hen says to the cock, "Do you remember me, Jack?"

An' the cock looks an' says, "Remember you? No I couldn't say I do remember you." So the cock gaes on pickin'.

She says, "Jack, do you remember the Green Man of Knowledge?"

"The Green Man of Knowledge? Oh no, I don't remember him." So the cock gaes on pickin'.

She says, "Jack, do you remember me, the woman you love?" He says, "No, I'm sorry, I don't know you."

She says, "Jack, do you remember when I killed my own people for you, Jack?" An' the cock looked an' says, "Yes, I do remember ye."

An' Jack says, "It's you, dear. It's you, lassie, is't?"

So the weddin' wis cancelled, an' he mairried her, an' they lived happy ever after.

That's the end o' my story.

This folktale, No. 313 in the Aarne-Thompson classification, was recorded in Aberdeen in August 1954 from Geordie Stewart, a general dealer of tinker stock. The storyteller, who was then twenty-four years of age, learned the story from his grandfather. He says it was very popular when story-telling began around the camp-fire, and that many of his people had it.

The tape-recording, of which the foregoing is an unabridged transcription, was made towards the end of a lengthy *ceilidh* in the house of Jeannie Robertson (Mrs. Jean Higgins), Causewayend, Aberdeen. Jeannie, herself an excellent ballad-singer and storyteller, had invited a number of her acquaintances to the house, stipulating that they must all tell stories

and sing old songs into the machine. Versions of Aarne-Thompson 303 and 1600 were recorded the same night, together with four Child ballads and a number of other folk-songs.—Among the audience were three children, lying stretched out on the floor and trying to keep their eyes open. One of these (Jeannie's nephew, wee Isaac, aged 7) told me bits of 313 the following morning.

The tinker clan of Stewart, to which Geordie belongs, is found in many areas of Scotland, principally the Central and Northern Highlands, and Aberdeenshire. One branch of it, which claims Perthshire origin, usually gets the name of the *brochan* (porridge) or *breacan* (tartan) Stewarts; to this branch Geordie, who told *The Green Man* story, belongs. Another member of it is the blind storyteller Alec Stewart of Lairg, from whom I recorded many *sgialachdan* in Gaelic in the summers of 1955 and 1957. The common ancestor of both men seems to be one Jamie Stewart, travelling tinsmith of Struan, Perthshire, who flourished in the first half of the nineteenth century, and whose prodigal seed is scattered along the high roads and low roads of Scotland from Cape Wrath to the Inch of Perth.

The *breacan* Stewarts are noted as pipers; one of them, the late John Stewart, who died in Blairgowrie, Perthshire, in 1955, was a very fine pibroch player, and at least two of his sons have inherited his piping skill. The same family has also produced a number of good fiddlers and melodeon-players.

There is another branch of the clan, chiefly found in Lochaber and the Isles; these Stewarts are often bynamed the *Tearlachs* (Charleses) or *Siamaidhs* (Jamies). Like their *breacan* cousins, the *Tearlachs* have stories and songs galore. Both branches claim to be descendants of Jacobite nobility forced to take to the roads after the '45 rebellion, and members of both will vie in extolling their pedigrees with all the grace-note elaboration of the accomplished storyteller.

I first got word of young Geordie Stewart from Jeannie Robertson. She told me that, having heard I needed transport to go and see the old ballad-singer Willie Mathieson, he had offered to drive me anywhere in Aberdeenshire I wanted to go. In his car, a battle-scarred veteran of many scrap-dealing forays, I asked him about folk he knew who had songs and stories; after giving me a fair-sized list of such, Geordie informed me as an afterthought that he had one or two himself. Another interesting piece of information he vouchsafed was

that when only a few weeks old, he was missing one night from his parents' tent and was later found two or three hundred yards away. No explanation had ever been forthcoming. He confided to me with a smile, as we bowled along under the shadow of Bennachie, that some of the older tinkers thought he was a changeling; now and then he had had serious doubts on that score himself.

Aa.-Th. 313, "The Girl as Helper in the Hero's Flight", is one of the most widely diffused of international folk-tale types. (For a list of references to collections in which this tale is to be found, see Bolte and Polívka [1915, p. 516]). Its classic prototype is the famous Greek myth of Jason and Medea, and in this form it enjoys a universal literary currency. "Every schoolboy knows" how Jason arrived in Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece, how Medea helped him to accomplish the tasks set him by her father Æetes, and how they made good their escape together. But from every part of the world, from Iceland to Madagascar and from the West Indies to Samoa have come versions of the same basic tale-type; it has been recorded among the bushmen, the Eskimos, the Zulus and the American Indians in a bewildering variety of guises and disguises. Not the least interesting version (as we shall see) was told in Romany by Welsh gypsies. Since starting to write this note I have heard yet another version—a West African one this time—from a Nigerian studying medicine in Edinburgh University.

The first version in the Lowland Scots vernacular to be printed—though not the first to be collected—was *Nicht, Nought, Nothing*, which Andrew Lang contributed to the *Revue Celtique* (1876-78, p. 374) and reprinted in *Custom and Myth* (1884, p. 87). This version was written down for him "many years ago" by an aged lady in Morayshire; her name is given in the *Revue Celtique* as Miss Margaret Craig, of Darliston, Elgin. Lang was born in 1844, so presumably the lady in question wrote out her way of the tale well after the middle of the century. *Green Sleeves*, the first known Scots-English version, was recovered by Peter Buchan, the Aberdeenshire ballad collector, and included by him in the MS. volume *Ancient Scottish Tales* which he sent to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe on 4th February 1829. This collection remained unpublished till the twentieth century (Buchan 1908).

In Ireland the 313 tale-type has enjoyed a tremendous

vogue, as successive numbers of *Béaloideas* prove.[1] The Irish versions have a quite special importance for students of Scottish folk tradition. Scots Gaelic versions will be found in Campbell of Islay's *West Highland Tales* (1890, pp. 25-63); four other versions, still unpublished, have been collected by Mr. Calum Maclean (Benbecula and Moidart) and by Professor Kenneth Jackson (N. Uist and Barra). Of the last of these, more later. Without doubt other variants remain to be collected, both north and south of the Highland line.

The principal questions confronting us in a discussion of the *Green Man of Knowledge* are: does this text represent a native Lowland Scots tradition in the North-east? Is it a break through into Scots of a Gaelic tradition via the story-teller's *breacan* Stewart ancestors?—Or is it maybe a sort of mixture of the two?

Before we risk a tentative opinion on these kittle points, let us take a look at the structure of 313 as it is found in Scottish and Irish tradition. For the purposes of analysis, the story may conveniently be divided—as Professor Reidar Christiansen (1928, p. 107) has pointed out—into the following parts: A.—Introduction. B.—The Journey, i.e. how the hero reaches the strange castle. C.—The Tasks set, and how he performs them. D.—The Escape, and E.—End: "The Forgotten Bride".

A.—No folk-tale exhibits better than 313 the possibilities of the *Rahmentechnik* (framework technique) so common in Celtic story-telling. The hero has got to be brought to the castle of his mysterious adversary, and eventually must find his way back to the starting-point, but the ways of contriving this are multifarious. In his essay Christiansen lists three openings very common in Gaelic folk-tales. The first is the "Playing Episode"; the hero plays a game against a mysterious adversary and what then takes place is in settlement of his gambling debt. [Stith Thompson motif-index, S.226]. "It is the handling of this motif, which may be found elsewhere too, which is peculiar to the Irish versions" (Christiansen 1928, p. 108). The second opening mentioned is the "Rash Promise"; the hero's father promises to give his unborn son to a supernatural being in return for some service rendered, and when the time comes the son is claimed and has to go. The third opening is the "Battle of the Birds"; more common in Scottish Gaelic versions than in Irish ones, this opening gives its name to the best-known version in

Campbell, *Cath nan Eun.* It is a motif full of interest to the folklorist, but as it does not appear in the versions which most closely concern us we need not discuss it here.

In Buchan's *Green Sleeves*, as in most of the Gaelic versions, Irish and Scottish, the hero is a King's son; in our version, he is "Jack the Feel", son of a poor widow-woman. But in both versions the hero is fond of playing a game: in our version, cards, in Peter Buchan, skittles. In *The Green Man*, Jack decides to "push his fortune", and is already well on his way into the Land of Enchantment before he meets his adversary; Buchan's *Green Sleeves* brings the game to the forefront of the story. In the latter, the familiar pattern is followed; the enemy wins, and tells the prince that he must find out "his name and place of abode before that day twelve months, or suffer death". In our version, Jack beats the Green Man; then decides to go and look for his castle out of a spirit of curiosity or adventure.

Two of the Lowland versions, therefore, use the "Playing Episode" as an opening; the third, *Nicht, Nought, Nothing*, uses the "Rash Promise", a motif common to a number of other stories. A Queen has a bairn while her husband the King is away "in far countries"; she does not know what to call him, so christens him "Nicht Nought Nothing" till her man comes home. In the meantime, the King has promised Nicht Nought Nothing to a giant who has done him a service. (In *Cath nan Eun*, Campbell's first variant, the "Rash Promise" is introduced as a subsidiary motif of the opening "framework".)

B.—During his journey, the hero usually receives help from a series of benefactors, and succeeds by magic means in reaching the adversary's castle. In *Green Sleeves* the Prince travels "the longest summer's day in June" and then comes on an old man, 200 years old, sitting on a turf seat, who knows what ploy he is on ("You are come seeking that rogue Green Sleeves"). He is directed to a second old man, 400 years older, and then to a third, a thousand years older; it is this last venerable bodach, a little sulky, who tells him about the swan-maidens. Thus the sequence of events is quite like the journey episode in our *Green Man.* The same sequence is also found in versions of 313 in many parts of the world.

In *Nicht, Nought, Nothing* there is no journey episode, because the giant takes the forfeited son straight to his castle.

C.—The hero gets impossible tasks to accomplish, but succeeds with the help of his enemy's daughter. The first two

tasks in the *Green Man*—getting the ring at the bottom of a well and building a castle—are common to folk-tales everywhere. The third—clearing ants from a forest—is the sort of task that human imagination might easily think up in any day or age (as we shall see, ants are used to help accomplish one of the tasks in a Sanskrit version of 313). The breaking of the girl's pinkie (little finger) which occurs during the accomplishing of the first task is another widely distributed motif. In *Green Sleeves* the tasks are

(1) to build a castle, and thatch it with the feathers of every bird that flies

(2) to sow a cask of lintseed, to harvest the crop, and have seeds back in the cask as at the outset

(3) to clean a stable, and find a gold key.

In *Nicht, Nought, Nothing*, they are

(1) to clean a stable

(2) to drain a loch

(3) to climb a tree seven miles high, and bring back seven eggs from it.

There are two distinctively Irish motifs here. Task (3) in *Nicht, Nought, Nothing* is described by Christiansen as "the special Irish one"[2]; he adds, "in this form it does not occur elsewhere". The fact that it turns up in the Morayshire fairy tale poses another question closely related to the ones with which we have to deal in considering *The Green Man of Knowledge*.

Turning to Buchan's version, we find that Task (1) (thatching the castle with birds' feathers) "is probably to be considered as a Gaelic, if not a Celtic, motif" (Christiansen 1928, p. 110). For that reason, it is very interesting that a story collected in the Scots-speaking North-east in the early nineteenth century should contain it. Other Gaelic motifs are discussed by Koehler (1876-78, p. 377) who writes, "On rencontre seulement dans les parallèles gaéliques, irlandais et scandinaves le fait de nettoyer la grande étable, et seulement dans les parallèles gaéliques et irlandais l'ascension de l'arbre à l'aide des doigts coupés de la jeune fille."

D.—The Escape. In *Nicht, Nought, Nothing* there is a lacuna here; the giant is drowned, but it is not stated how or why. Both *Green Sleeves* and the *Green Man of Knowledge* contain the escape sequence which is one of the characteristic motifs of this tale-type. In *Green Sleeves*, the objects thrown behind to delay the pursuers are

(1) a piece of wood which turns into a forest

(2) a splinter of stone which turns into a big rock
(3) a drop of water which turns into a great river.

The last obstacle does not drown him, however; he is killed when an egg which the hero has gone to fetch from a nest at the top of a high hill is thrown at him and hits a particular part of his breast (cf. Task (3) in *Nicht, Nought, Nothing*). The same motif is often found in Irish folk-tales.

E.—The Forgotten Bride, and the Reconciliation. In Peter Buchan's version, and in others too, the incident of "Waking from Magic Forgetfulness" comes over with considerable artistic power. In both, the waking takes place as a result of a conversation between two magic birds produced at the wedding by the forgotten heroine. Again the Irish variants of the same motif are legion.—In *Nicht, Nought, Nothing*, however, this motif is absent; the girl herself cries to the sleeping hero:

"I cleaned the stable, I laved the loch, and I clamb the tree,
And all for the love of thee,
And thou wilt not waken and speak to me."

One other point deserves mention. In our version, Jack involuntarily breaks the tabu (on kissing) which the Green Man's daughter has imposed upon him by letting his "auld hairy Hielan collie-dog" take a good lick. The motif of forgetfulness induced by a dog's lick [D 2004, 2.1] occurs quite often in versions of 313, but the *Green Man of Knowledge* is the only version I have come across in which the dog is introduced right at the start of the story—is, indeed, a character himself, and not only of the "framework" episodes. Jack's win at the cards when playing against the Green Man is directly attributed by the storyteller to the experience he has gained playing against his collie, and at a decisive moment of the tale—after the completion of the second task—he tells the Green Man: "I was only once pals wi' a collie dog. That's a'."

There is a joke circulating at present in officers' messes, atomic reactor construction-workers' canteens and the like, which goes somewhat as follows: A man is invited to a party, and finds his host playing bridge. Host's partner is a big shaggy dog. Guest says, "That dog must be very intelligent." Reply: "Is he hell! He's revoked twice this evening." [Motif Index B 298].—In a sense, Geordie Stewart's version of Aa.-Th. 313 is the biggest shaggy-dog story of them all.[3]

In 1860 G. W. Dasent, whose *Popular Tales from the Norse* had been published the previous year, sent to J. F. Campbell

of Islay a "verbatim copy" of Peter Buchan's MS. volume of *Ancient Scottish Tales*. This copy had been made in 1847 by A. B. Grosart, a young man much interested in antiquarian matters affecting Scotland; Grosart had attempted without success to purchase the original volume (then in Buchan's hands), but had been allowed to transcribe it (Walker 1915, pp. 106-9). Reading Dasent's *Norse Tales*, Grosart was struck by the resemblance of several of these to the stories collected in Aberdeenshire by Buchan, and he sent his MS. copy to the translator, who shortly afterwards lent it to Campbell. By a fortunate chance, therefore, we know Campbell's views on the provenance of the *Tales* in Buchan's volumes, and the passage in which he discusses these is so relevant to the matter in hand that it is worth quoting in full.

"The tales are written in English, and versions of all except three, had previously come to me in Gaelic. For example, (No. 2), The Battle of the Birds closely resembles 'The Master Maid' from Norway, but it still more resembles Mr. Peter Buchan's 'Greensleeves,' found in Scotland thirteen years before the Norse tales were translated. The manuscript was sent by Mr. Grosart, after he had read the Norse tales, and it seems to be clearly proved that these stories are common to Norway and to Scotland.

"I have found very few stories of the kind amongst the peasantry of the low country, though I have sought them. I find such names as Fingal in Mr Buchan's stories, and I know them to be common in the islands where the scene is often laid. The language is not that of any peasantry, and I have come to the conclusion that this collection is mostly derived from Gaelic, directly or indirectly, perhaps from the shoals of West Highlanders and Irishmen who used to come down as shearers every harvest, and who are now scattered all over Scotland as farm-servants and drovers, and settled in Edinburgh and Glasgow as porters. I know from one of these, a drover, who goes every year to the south with cattle, that he has often entertained lowland farm-servants by telling in English the stories which he learned as a child in South Uist. I know of men in Paisley, Greenock, and Edinburgh, who are noted for their knowledge of sgeulachd. But while I hold that this particular collection was not told in this form by lowland Scotch peasants, I know that they still do tell such stories occasionally, and I also know that Englishmen of the lower ranks do the same. I met two tinkers in St. James's Street in February with black faces and a pan of burning coals each. They were followed by a wife, and preceded by a mangy terrier with a stiff tail. I joined the party, and one told me a version of 'the man who travelled to learn what shivering meant,' while we walked together through the park to

Westminster. It was clearly the popular tale which exists in Norse, and German, and Gaelic, and it bore the stamp of the mind of the class, and of the man, who told it in his own peculiar dialect, and who dressed the actors in his own ideas. A cutler and a tinker travel together, and sleep in an empty haunted house for a reward. They are beset by ghosts and spirits of murdered ladies and gentlemen, and the inferior, the tinker, shows most courage, and is the hero. 'He went into the cellar to draw beer, and there he found a little chap a-sittin' on a barrel with a red cap on 'is 'ed; and he sez, sez he, 'Buzz.' 'Wot's buzz?' sez the tinker. 'Never you mind wot's buzz,' sez he. 'That's mine; don't you go for to touch it,' etc. etc. etc." (Campbell 1890, p. xxxix).

Campbell holds, then, that the version of 313 in Buchan's book has probably entered Lowland Scots tradition from Gaelic. His reasons are (1) that the language "is not that of any peasantry", and (2) that he has found "very few stories of the kind" among the Lowlanders. (We have, in addition, the interesting information that he has collected a version of Aa.-Th. 326 from one of the London "Pikeys" or "Diddy-kayes", who share a certain amount of their underworld folk-culture with the Scots tinkers.)

A glance at the text of Buchan's tales confirms Campbell's opinion regarding the language in which they are couched. It is sufficient to compare Geordie Stewart's handling of the swan-maiden theme with a few sentences of the same episode as it appears in *Green Sleeves*:

> On looking wistfully around her, she spied the Prince, whom she knew, and asked him if he had her swan-skin. He acknowledged the theft, and said, if she would tell him where Green Sleeves stayed, he would deliver unto her the skin. This she said she durst not venture to do; but upon his immediately giving it up she would teach him how to discover the place of his retreat if he would follow her directions (Buchan 1908, p. 41).

There could hardly be a more burlesque contrast. I am convinced, nevertheless, after a careful examination of Buchan's tales—nearly all of which are identifiable international folk-tales—that they were in fact taken down from the recitation of tradition-bearers speaking braid Scots, and constitute in the main faithful if somewhat undistinguished recensions of the stories as originally told. For one mention of Fingal (a suspect name, surely?) there are several which tether the stories quite firmly to the Lowland countryside; the two poor widows in *Red Etin* live "near the burgh of Auchtermuchty in Fife", and

in *Green Sleeves* the scene is laid quite uncompromisingly in Buchan—the swan-maidens take their dip in the waters of the river Ugie. There are only two stories in which the Western Isles are mentioned; these are *The History of Mr. Greenwood* (=Aa.-Th. 955), and *The Cruel Stepmother* (=Aa.-Th. 706), in which latter "The Thane of Mull" is introduced—also a somewhat unconvincing appellation.[4] Furthermore, although Peter (who was constantly being badgered and miscalled because he gave forth the ballads to the world as he found them, warts and all) has written up his tales in a kind of "Babu English", outcroppings of the tongue in which they were originally told keep shining through. For example, when Blue Wing, the daughter of Green Sleeves, refuses to accompany the Prince immediately to his father's court, it is for fear of being taken for "some lightsome leman".

As for the prevalence or non-prevalence of folk-tales among the farm-servant class in the Lowlands, it is sufficient for our purposes to cite the Morayshire version of 313, *Nicht, Nought, Nothing*, which bears in every sentence the marks of rugged indigenous identity (Lang 1876-78, p. 374).[5]

This does not mean, to be sure, that Buchan's fairy tales might not have come over from Gaelic into Scots at some earlier stage of transmission; we feel, however, that (with all due respect to Iain Òg's great eminence as collector and folklorist) the onus of proof is on the man who contends that they *have*.

Having discussed the question of Gaelic origin in the case of *Ancient Scottish Tales*, let us take another look at our present text. Linguistically, as we have seen, it forms the completest contrast to *Green Sleeves* imaginable. Where Buchan's tale is florid and prolix, ours shows the terse epigrammatic qualities of Scots speech at their very best. The wee robin tells Jack that "we've been waitin' on ye for twenty-one years", and the sardonic answer comes pat: "Lord, ye'd a gey wait, had ye no?" Such examples could be multiplied. Geordie's version also shows the occasional use of incantatory formula—"he's ho the road, hey the road, doon the road"—which testifies to a very old tradition of story-telling. And though there are several modern touches—e.g. the Green Man showing Jack his wife's photograph—these are assimilated easily and without incongruity into the relaxed colloquial idiom of the story.

It is noteworthy, too, that the dialogue passages mirror

the linguistic position in present-day Scotland; the speech of the Green Man and his daughter (both clearly "gentry") is much less Scots than the speech of Jack, the country laddie.

This artfully maintained balance of orally transmitted and creative elements, characteristic of a living folk-tale tradition, inclines us to believe that the *Green Man of Knowledge* has a Lowland Scots vernacular ancestry going back many generations—although there may well be a two-three teuchters not very far back in the family tree.

There is, nevertheless, one piece of evidence which at first glance might seem to postulate an irrefutable immediate Gaelic parentage for our *Green Man.* Anyone familiar with the nomenclature employed in Irish and Highland folk-tales will at once have been struck by the very Gaelic-sounding ring of the title. It is untypical of the nomenclature found in Lowland Scots folk-tales; this particular construction, on the other hand, is exceedingly common in Gaelic. One might expect, therefore, to find a Highland version of 313 with a similar title, and one indeed exists. It is called *Fear Uain Òraid*, "The Green Man of Speech" (or "of Discourse"), and was recorded on the island of Barra in 1952 by Professor Kenneth Jackson (MS.) who heard it from Niall Gillies, a crofter at Castlebay. The following is a brief summary of it:

A horseman challenges the Son of the King of Ireland to a game of cards. Latter wins twice, loses the third time. The horseman, who says his name is *Fear Uain Òraid*, puts the prince *fo gheasaibh 's fo chrosaibh* (under spells and crosses) to tell him within a year where he (the horseman) lives. Prince asks advice from his uncle, is told that three daughters of the Green Man come once a year to a certain loch in the shape of swans. Swan-maiden episode follows; youngest daughter makes prince promise to marry her, then carries him over on her back. They get to Green Man's castle before sundown.

The tasks hero is given to do are (1) cleaning out byre, (2) thatching the same byre with feathers, and (3) catching three wild fillies. While helping hero to accomplish second task heroine loses fifth toe. They make escape on palfreys. Hero throws two objects behind to make obstacles, gets them from the two ears of his palfrey. Obstacles are (1) forest, and (2) a great sea. Green Man is not killed, but they escape him.

Kissing tabu, as in other texts. Hero licked by dog, forgets heroine. She gets a smith to make a cock of gold and a hen of silver, and three iron bars. Magic birds converse, iron bars snap. Hero recognises heroine, marries her.

It is clear that this version is a relative, and no distant one, of our text. Furthermore, it is not outwith the bounds of possibility that *Fear Uain Òraid* might be a variant of *Fear Uain Eòlais*, which means "the Green Man of Knowledge". *Eòlas*, "knowledge", can also mean "enchantment, spell, incantation". The phrase, therefore, has richer and more mysterious overtones in Gaelic than it has in English.

Evidence in support of this hypothesis is furnished by the nomenclature of an Irish version of 313 called *Curadh Glas an Eolais* (*The Green* [or *Gray*] *Knight of Knowledge*). In it, the game played is a card game, as in the Aberdeen and Barra variants; after winning two games, hero loses third and has to find the Green Knight's abode in a year and a day, or be killed.[6] In Gaelic, the adjective *glas* can mean either "green" or "gray"; this may explain the plethora of "gray men" in Irish-English versions of 313, e.g. *The Story of Grey Norris from Warland*, collected in County Cork (Britten 1883).

If the Gaelic tales, Scottish and Irish, were the only ones with similar titles, it would be hard to resist the inference that much of Geordie's version had come straight out of Gaelic tradition. However, any such theory must be viewed in a fresh light when one learns that a version of 313, called *The Green Man of Noman's Land*, has been recorded in the Romany language from a Welsh gypsy storyteller (Sampson 1933, p. 17; cf. Groome 1899, p. 254).

This version was collected about 1896 from a member of the Wood clan of gypsies, whose dialect of Romany is regarded by *tsiganologues* as one of the purest and best preserved in Western Europe. The Talyllyn area, where John Sampson first heard the tale, is one of the wildest in central Wales. But in spite of this double barrier of inaccessibility, the Welsh Romany *Green Man* turns out to be a second or third cousin of the Scots tinker one, as the following résumé proves.

Jack—in Romany, *J̌ak*—is a young miller who is a great gambler. A gentleman challenges him to a game, loses first and then wins. Tells Jack his name is *Ō Grīnō Mūrś te ǰivéla arē kekeno T'em* ("The Green Man who lives in Noman's Land") and orders him to find his castle within a year and a day, or be beheaded. Jack gets help from an old woman in a cottage who climbs on to the roof and blows a horn to summon a quarter of the people of the world, and a quarter of all the birds that fly. They don't know where the castle is, so she refers him to an older sister. (Repeat incidents with half instead of quarter.) The eldest sister summons all the

people in the world, and all the birds; she gets the information at last from the eagle, who turns up late.

The episode of the swan-maidens follows. The tasks are (1) cleaning out a stable, (2) felling trees, (3) building a byre, and thatching it with one feather from every bird, (4) climbing a glass mountain, and retrieving a bird's egg from the top of it. (The heroine makes a ladder of herself: he misses a step and breaks one of her fingers.) There is a fifth task—Jack has to tell which daughter is which as they fly over the castle in the guise of swans. He names them correctly, and wins the daughter who has helped him. The tale lacks an escape sequence; in fact, the end of this otherwise admirable Romany version is rather lame:

"Said Jack to the Lord: 'I will have the last one'.

'Yes, Jack, thou hast won her, she shall be thy wife. Now they are married. The old lord died, and the old lady as well; and now Jack is in the castle. And that is all'."

The reader will note that in this story, as in ours, Jack is not a prince but a commoner. In *Fear Uain Òraid*, as in many Irish versions, he is a King's son, and this alone does much to give the Barra story a very different atmosphere.

From our point of view the most revealing thing about the Romany nomenclature of this version is that the word for "Green" is usually "Grīnō"—not "zelano", which is the ordinary Welsh Romany word for that colour. "Grīnō", as Mr. Sampson points out in his dictionary (Sampson 1926, p. 112), is simply the English "green" with the addition of "o"; no other example of its use is cited apart from the title of this folk-tale. In spite of his exotic appearance, Jak is nothing more nor less than plain English Jack, somewhat gaudily gypsified. This suggests that the "Green Man"—whose ubiquitous folk presence is reflected on inn-signs all over rural England—has in fact come into Welsh Romany from English; as far as his name is concerned, at any rate, he still wears under a light gypsy cloak the greenwood livery of shires beyond the Marches.[7]

No version of 313 has ever, it seems, been recorded in England. But in the anonymous fourteenth century romance *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, which is written in the North-west Midland dialect of English, we find a succession of motifs, frequently encountered in the tale-type under discussion. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that an unrecovered English folk version is one at least of the sources of this remarkable poem, which has been described as "non seulement

le plus beau poème arturien anglais, mais une des oeuvres les plus vivantes de la littérature arturienne de tous pays et de tous temps" (Pons 1946, p. 15).

The poem opens at Arthur's court—

This King lay at Camylot upon Krystmasse—

at a time of tournament and revelry. On New Year's Day a gigantic Green Knight, whose skin, hair, beard and eye-brows are green, and who is mounted on a green horse, rides into the hall: he challenges any of the knights present to strike him a blow with the axe he is carrying, and in return to receive a blow from him "in a twelmonyth and a day". Gawain accepts the challenge, and chops off the great green head with one blow; the knight picks up his head, which speaks and tells Gawain to meet the Knight in a year's time at the Green Chapel.

The following autumn Gawain rides on his quest. From Camelot he rides to Wales, and over the river Dee. On Christmas Eve he gets lodging in a castle in the middle of a wild forest; the lord of the castle, Sir Bercilak de Hautdesert (who later turns out to be the Green Knight) welcomes him in. He is entertained by the lord's wife, a woman of matchless beauty, and by an ancient hag of horrible ugliness (cf. the old crones in our present version of 313, and in the *Green Man of Noman's Land*).

The lord tells him that the Green Chapel is "not two miles hence" and invites him to stay till New Year's Day. Sir Bercilak proposes a merry bargain: they should exchange every evening whatever spoils they have won during the day. Three days in succession the lord goes out hunting, while Gawain takes a long lie in bed; he is visited each day by the lord's wife, who tries to get him to make love to her. Gawain withstands these temptations, which are secret tests devised by the lord; on each occasion he receives one, two, and three kisses from the lady. When the knight comes home in the evening, he hands to Gawain the day's kill—venison, a boar, and lastly a fox's pelt—and in return receives the due number of kisses from his guest.

On the third occasion, the lady gives Gawain a green girdle as a love token, telling him that he can never be wounded while he wears it. This gift Gawain keeps dark.

On New Year's Day, the hero rides to the Green Chapel, which turns out to be "nobot an olde cave". The Green Knight appears, brandishing a Danish axe; three times he makes to strike off Gawain's head, but does not touch him till the third time, when he gives the hero's neck a slight nick (this is punishment for concealing the girdle). The Green Knight then explains that the old woman at his castle is Morgan la Fay [= the Irish Morrigu], who has been responsible for the whole enchantment. Gawain

then returns to Arthur's court, wearing the green girdle as a token of penitence.

If we analyse this story according to the scheme already outlined, the Introduction is the "beheading game", or "Champion's bargain". This is an ancient Celtic motif; it is found in the great Irish epic saga *Fled Bricrend* (Bricriu's Feast), which is preserved in a MS. of about A.D. 1100. Here the part of Gawain is played by Cuchulainn (Henderson 1899, pp. 124-9 and 199-207). The "champion's bargain" motif serves much the same purpose in *The Green Knight* as the "playing episode" in our story and in the Welsh Romany variant; it gets the hero moving to his rendezvous.—Furthermore, it is not impossible that the two motifs are actually related. When the Green Knight's head is struck off, the other knights kick it away as it rolls around, in fact play a kind of football with it. It is not as far-fetched as it may at first sound to suggest that the douce and bloodless game of skittles played by Green Sleeves and the Prince in Peter Buchan's version of 313 could be a more civilised descendant of this macabre ball game.

As George Henderson says: "There was abundant possibility for the beheading incident, which ultimately takes its rise out of old Celtic custom, finding its way to Brittany, and of being further transmitted, whether orally or in writing, both on the Continent and in Britain. It at length meets us in the Norman-French romances. Everything we know of as regards the beheading game favours a Celtic origin. But that it is exclusively Gadelic need not at once follow from the silence of Cymric testimony." (1899, p. 205).

It will be remembered that in the Welsh Romany variant of 313, the Green Man of Noman's Land threatens Jak with beheading if he does not find the castle in a year and a day.

The Journey, which is described in *The Green Knight* with marvellous poetic skill, brings the hero to the castle where, without at first realising it, he again meets his adversary. The old crone who acts as one of Gawain's hostesses at once reminds us of the ancient dames in Geordie's story, and in *The Green Man of Noman's Land.* At the end of the poem she turns out, somewhat unconvincingly, to be Morgan la Fay, and almost every critic who has ever discussed *The Green Knight* has pointed to this as the one weak spot in an otherwise masterly work (e.g. Kittredge 1916, pp. 132-6). Various attempts have been made to account for the awkward and

contrived nature of this dénouement; if we postulate a folk variant of our tale as one of the sources of the *Green Knight*, the explanation becomes perfectly simple. The unknown poet had found an old hag in the story, and decided to keep her, because the contrast between the beauty of the heroine and the ugliness of the crone appealed to him. Having kept her, however, he felt that he had somehow to account for her.

When we get to the "Tasks" episode, we are on more difficult ground. At first sight it may seem that there *is* no "Tasks" episode. I do not think that this is the case. The poet of the *Green Knight* (or an unknown predecessor) has incorporated in his plot at this point the Temptation motif which one finds in other mediæval romances, e.g. the old French romance *Ider*, and the Middle English *Carl of Carlisle*. And he has incorporated it precisely because the theme of the Temptation is itself closely related to the "Tasks" episode in the 313 tale-type. Here we may appositely call Professor Kittredge as an expert witness:

> "As the Temptation appears in the English poem, it is a trial of Gawain's fidelity to his host and of his loyalty to the chivalric ideal of 'truth'. Primarily, however, the Temptation is a story of quite a different character—not ethical at all, but connected with a long chain of folklore. For we may unhesitatingly recognize its central incident as one of those tests or proofs to which supernatural beings are wont to subject mortals who venture into their other-world domain." (Kittredge 1916, p. 76).

The task set the young knight is the defence of his chastity, in accordance with the knightly code of "truth", and his obligations as a guest. There is delicious irony in the situation. In spite of his fame as a lover, Gawain is obliged three days running to withstand the wiles of a woman more beautiful than Arthur's Guinevere. Beside this, the hardest task given to "Jack the Feel" by the Green Man of Knowledge appears the merest bagatelle!

The Temptation motif occurs, as I have said, in other mediæval poems, but nowhere is it handled with such consummate skill and delicacy as in the *Green Knight*. The turn given to the story is most subtle; Gawain is being tested, but is not aware of it; nevertheless he is in mortal peril. He survives because of his courtesy and fidelity, but yet shows enough human weakness to accept the green girdle which is supposed to ensure his invulnerability. The tasks episode has been refined and

Christianised to accord with the code of *amour courtois*, and yet for all that (as Kittredge points out) its primitive origin is plainly visible.

The green lace or girdle which Bercilak's wife gives to Gawain has also served as a flimsy trophy for rival critics. To students of Aa.-Th. 313 it is a familiar-looking object, for it is uncommonly like the Green Scarf worn or carried by the swan-maiden heroine in certain Irish versions of this tale-type.

There is one difference—and it is a vital one—between the Temptation or "fairy leman" theme as we find it in the *Green Knight*, and the "fairy leman" theme as we have encountered it in various versions of 313. In the poem, the heroine is the adversary's *wife*, not his daughter. The reason may be partly that the Temptation motif was traditionally associated with the host's wife (*Ider* and *The Carl of Carlisle*)—although there are two French romances (*Humbaut* and *Le Chevalier à l'Epée*) in which the woman is the host's daughter. The principal reason is probably that from the unknown poet's point of view, the heroine had to be Bercilak's wife, if Gawain's courtesy and loyalty were to be tested *à l'outrance*.

In the *Green Knight*, the escape sequence is admittedly missing—but so it is in the Welsh gypsy variant. The lack of it does not materially affect our argument. We are not claiming more for our unrecovered English Jack-tale than that it served as *one* source for the writer of this unique masterpiece. In any case, as we shall see in a moment, it has been argued cogently that the central unifying theme linking together all the widely scattered versions of the 313 tale-type is really the "swan maiden" or "fairy leman" theme.

There is, finally, one odd link between the English poem and one of the Gaelic versions of 313 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission. The Green Knight's name is Sir Bercilak de Hautdesert; the name of the "adversary" in an Irish version of the tale is *Rí na Fásaighe Duibhe*, which means "King of the Black Desert" (personal communication from Seán Ó Súilleabháin). Loomis derives Bercilak from the Irish *bachlach* ("herdsman" or "churl") in *Fled Bricrend* (1927, p. 59).

Forty years ago Professor Kittredge pointed out that the author of the hypothetical French *Green Knight* (generally held to be the prime source of the English poem) may well have been influenced in shaping his plot by "knowledge of the great class of quest tales" (1916, p. 139). We have perhaps

assembled enough evidence to show that the author of the actual *Green Knight* which we possess may well have been familiar with a folk version of such a tale circulating in his own countryside.

The adversary in our tale is "The Green Man of Knowledge"; in the mediæval romance he is the "Green Knight". In Irish versions we get "Green Leaf" and "Green Levery". In Peter Buchan's version, the name is "Green Sleeves". What is the significance of the colour green? First of all, as everyone knows, green is the fairy colour. However, there may be more to it than that. John Speirs, who has explored a number of verdant avenues in the mythological hinterland of the "Green Knight", advances a theory which certainly deserves very serious examination:

"The Green Knight whose head is chopped off at his own request and who is yet as miraculously or magically alive as ever, bears an unmistakable relation to the Green Man—the Jack in the Green or the Wild Man of the village festivals of England and Europe. He can be no other than a recrudescence in poetry of the Green Man. Who is the Green Man? He is surely a descendant of the Vegetation or Nature god of almost universal and immemorial tradition (whatever his local name) whose death and resurrection are the myth-and-ritual counterpart of the annual death and rebirth of nature—in the East the dry and rainy seasons, in Europe winter and spring. The episode (the First Fit of our poem) in which the Green Knight rides into the hall of Arthur's castle to have his head chopped off is exactly a Christmas pageant play or interlude —a castle version of the village Folk Play—become real. The central episode of the traditional Folk Play, Sword Dance and Morris Dance was (as Chambers shows) a mock beheading or slaying followed by a revival or restoration to life (often by the Doctor who administered to the corpse the contents of a bottle—the elixir of life).

"A recent book by C. J. P. Cave, *Roof Bosses in Mediaeval Churches*, demonstrates the vitality of the Green Man in mediæval England. Mr. Cave's photography has revealed carvings on the roofs of cathedrals and parish churches which could previously only be clearly distinguished through field-glasses, or in some cases, because in shadow, have never been very noticeable till this day. The photographs reveal a face with leaves sprouting from the corners of its mouth, its eye-lids, eyebrows and ears, the face of the Green Man." (Speirs 1957, pp. 219-220).

E. K. Chambers, whom Speirs quotes in the above passage, makes no bones about it either; he maintains that "the green man of the peasantry, who dies and lives again, reappears

as the Green Knight in one of the most famous divisions of Arthurian romance" (1903, p. 186).

Against this we must set the warning words of G. L. Kittredge.

Referring to *Fled Bricrend*, he reminds us that "the challenger in the Irish story is neither green nor in any way associated with trees or vegetation, except that the hair of his head is bushy! He appears as green in no extant version of the Challenge until we reach the English romance. Whoever gave him that colour first, whether the English poet or some French predecessor, was influenced, of course, by current folklore, and that folklore may have descended to the innovator in question from primeval ideas about the forces of nature. So much we must grant, but that is all." (1916, p. 199).[8]

That the Green Man has in fact led Speirs and others up the garden has been suggested with wit and erudition by M. J. C. Hodgart in an essay *In the Shade of the Golden Bough* (1955). Nevertheless, the information at our disposal inclines me to the idea that in certain versions of 313 the figure of the adversary has at some stage, and for some mysterious reason, become identified with the Green Man of the pub signs, the mummers' plays and the church roof bosses. One might hazard an explanation along the following lines: when the "playing episode" or "beheading game" attached itself as a lead-in to versions of the 313 tale-type, the decapitation motif, with its overtones of death and resurrection, *may* have led by association to the identification of the adversary with the Green Man of the fertility rites, who (like John Barleycorn) is killed and springs up again. One thing is clear anyway. The explanation of this odd phenomenon is not interred with the famous "lost French romance". We might still find it in the living folk tradition of town and countryside. Norman Douglas, in his collection of *London Street Games*, quotes this description of the game "Green Man Rise-O", written by a schoolboy:

The way we play the game of greenman one of us lay down and cover his self with grass and the others run out and hide then they say green man green man rise up then he gets up and trys to catch them. . . . (1916, p. 104).

Here, at any rate, we have a veritable "flight"; Jack takes to his heels, with the Green Man in hot pursuit.

The Green Knight is believed to have been composed in Lancashire in the last third of the fourteenth century (Tolkien and Gordon 1925, pp. xx and xxiv). The poet seems to have

been familiar with the geography of North Wales, for he describes Gawain's itinerary through these parts in detail. If, therefore, an unrecorded English folk version of our tale was used by the author—and I suggest that there is a strong *prima facie* case that this is so—the version concerned was circulating in the area of the Welsh marches before the arrival of the gypsies in Britain.

Where did the Romanies of Talyllyn get their "Green Man" nomenclature? For the linguistic reasons already advanced, we are inclined to believe that it was in fact from a hypothetical English folk version. But before we find ourselves assuming that they derived plot and incidents from the same source, it is as well to remember that the language in which they told their version of the tale to Sampson was Romany, an Indian language related to Sanskrit, and that many gypsy folk-tales have also been found in India.

A version of 313 is, indeed, to be found in a Sanskrit collection of the eleventh century A.D. This is the *Kathā Sarit Sāgara* ("Sea of Streams of Story"), written by Somadeva Bhatta of Kashmir, translated by Tawney (1880: Vol. I, p. 355; 1924-28: Vol. III, p. 218), and based on a much earlier collection *Brihat Kathā* ("The Great Story"), which may have been written as early as the first century B.C. There are two "translations" of the older collection: one by Kshemendra, and this one by Somadeva. Somadeva's work is a sophisticated literary paraphrase of the older collection, and contains new material, probably itself adapted from popular oral tradition. The tale of Śringhabhuja, which is in its essentials our present story, includes the following incidents:

A prince wounds a Rākshasa (man-eating ogre) with a golden arrow when the ogre is in the shape of a crane. He follows the trail of blood to a forest where he meets the ogre's daughter Rūpaśikha. She falls in love with him, asks father if she can marry him. He is given tasks to do: (1) has to pick heroine out from among her hundred sisters, (2) has to sow sesame-seeds in an unploughed field, and collect it again (does this with the help of ants, which the girl creates), and (3) has to invite ogre's brother to the wedding. (Brother pursues him; hero makes his escape by throwing down magical objects given him by the heroine—earth, water, thorns, fire). After wedding, pair flee. Ogre follows, but heroine outwits him by means of two transformations.

Although the "obstacles" motif of the Magic Flight episode has somehow got incorporated among the tasks, there can be

little doubt that we are dealing here with what is substantially the same tale-type. The use of ants to accomplish task (2) at once calls to mind our task (3) in Geordie's story. Their appearance in both could be the purest coincidence; on the other hand it might indicate a curious link between versions of 313 separated in time by more than seven centuries. The swan-maiden episode does not occur in the story of Śringhabhuja, but it is to be found in many other Oriental versions: indeed, it has been contended—by the American folklorist W. W. Newell (1891)—that this episode is really the central one binding together all the hundreds of Indo-European versions. He claims that "it is only in Hindu mythology that the idea at the basis of our tale is represented in a clear and simple form. This mythology presents us with a race of female beings of divine nature who appear on earth as water-birds, and have at the same time their proper dwelling in heaven. These beings (Apsaras) are connected with the principle of water; as such, they have the power to bestow fertility, and are the objects of worship. . . . Their power of flight lies in their bird-form, the loss of which compels them to remain among mankind" (Newell 1891, p. 63; cf. notes by Penzer on Tawney, Vol. I, 200-2).

In the same essay Newell examines a number of the Oriental variants of 313 and advances the theory that there existed, "probably before our era, a Hindu folk-tale of very great length, in which the several sections of the tale were fully and clearly narrated". Be that as it may, the gypsy nomads who reached the innermost fastnesses of the Welsh mountains after possibly a millennium or more of wandering, must have had countless opportunities of picking up versions of 313 during their truly fabulous migration—even if they did not carry with them from the outset a version of the tale which Somadeva was to retell for the Queen of Kashmir's entertainment.

There remains the question of possible Romany-tinker culture contacts. Here I do not think we need delay long. The tinker clans of the Central Highlands and the North-east have very little Romany blood in them; most of their culture they share with the ordinary Scots country folk.[9] One cannot exclude the possibility that story elements carried by the gypsies have entered the Scots tinker version, but there is precious little in the facts at our disposal which makes it sound likely.

Summing up, then, we believe that our text of 313 has a long and proud Lallan Scots pedigree, but that a subsidiary Gaelic strain may well have entered it at some stage in its development. In any case, it is clearly a mistake to assume that the traffic has been all one way. The presence of a *Green Man* in Buchan and a *Fear Uain* in Barra does not necessarily mean that Gaelic nomenclature has come over into Scots; it could mean the reverse. In this connection, the existence of the Welsh Romany variant with its tell-tale *Grīnō Mūrš* offers fresh ground for pertinent speculation.

Nor can we leave it at that. Where folk-culture is concerned, the erection of boundary marks, either geographical or temporal, is at best only a convenience. The world-wide distribution of this tale-type makes it likely that we are dealing here with one of the basic *Märchen* of the human race; it is by no means out of the question, therefore, that versions of 313 were being told in Scotland and Ireland when there was one Gaelic language spoken—in different dialects—from Bantry to Buchan, via Derry and Dunadd. Furthermore, the presence of distinctively "Irish" motifs in a Welsh Gypsy version which seems to owe its nomenclature at least to an English variant prompts two reflections, at least:

(1) that we are unlikely to do justice to the complexity of folk-tale diffusion if we do not allow for extensive interpenetration between contiguous folk-cultures, and

(2) that an ancient Celtic substratum likely underlies much of the folklore of England, as well as that of Lowland Scotland.

We have tried to chart a small sector of a comparative study which, if it could ever be completed, would fill volumes. The net in whose meshes are entwined the savage myth of Jason and the Argonauts, Geordie Stewart's bucolic fantasy and Somadeva's elegant court entertainment, is submerged deep in time, and reaches out to the ends of the earth. Indeed, when one remembers the antiquity of this story, the extraordinary unity in diversity which its countless transformations display, and most of all the hold which it has maintained on human imagination everywhere, it may not seem out of place, even in a profane context, to quote the words which Dante uses to describe his vision at the end of the *Paradiso*:

> *Un punto solo m'è maggior letargo*
> *Che venticinque secoli alla impresa*
> *Che fè, Nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo.*[10]

[1] The 313 tale-type may be found in the following issues of Béaloideas: i (1928), pp. 270-273; ii (1930), pp. 19-22 and 172-190; iii (1932), pp. 31-35; v (1935), pp. 117-120; vii (1937), pp. 233-238; viii (1938), 214-222; ix (1939), 106-113; xi (1941), Suppl. p. 25; xii (1942), Suppl. p. 159; xx (1951), p. 132. "The tale is one of the most popular of all Irish folktales; on 17 March 1943, there were 66 MS. variants in the material catalogued in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission—when the catalogue is complete the number will run to several hundred, at least." (Béaloideas xii, 1941, 160.)

[2] This motif appears too in Irish folksong; cf. a verse from "The Verdant Braes of Skreen", collected by Herbert Hughes (1909, Vol. I, p. 2) in Co. Derry.

Oh I will climb a high high tree
And rob a wild bird's nest,
And back I'll bring whatever I do find
To the arms that I love best (she said)
To the arms that I love best.

[3] It has a close rival in one of Campbell's variants, where the hero's adversary is "a black dog" who "comes in with a looking glass on every paw". Hero plays cards with the dog and loses; he has to serve the monster for seven years. The end of this version departs completely from the usual pattern; after the forgetfulness episode, the dog re-appears and insists that the hero shall marry his daughter. Finally at the wedding the dog dances with the priest!

[4] In the Cruel Stepmother (= Aa.-Th. 706) there occurs the sentence: "it was supposed, and not without some good show of reason, that his name was Malcolm, brother to Fingal, King of Morven". The conclusion is irresistible that in the matter of nomenclature—and in that only, I feel sure—Peter has been letting his fancy roam a little.

[5] Cf. another story told by Miss Margaret Craig: "Rashin Coatie" (= Aa.-Th. 510) in Lang (1876-78, 365). Further examples of folk-tales in Scots will be found in the "Fireside Nursery Stories" section of Robert Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland* (Chambers 1841).

[6] Personal communication from Seán Ó. Súilleabháin, summarising content of booklet edited by Rev. J. M. O'Reilly and published Dublin 1905.

[7] In this connection, the titles of two of the unpublished Irish versions referred to in Béaloideas II, p. 189—*Sgéal Green Levery*, a version in Kerry Gaelic, and *Green Lave* (= Leaf), from Co. Waterford—are extremely suggestive. *Green Lave* at once calls to mind Buchan's *Green Sleeves*. Maybe the "Pikeys" and "Diddykayes" of London (who still have stories for the collecting) might be able to supply a missing link in the chain.

[8] F. R. Loomis, *doyen* of mythological critics, who regards the champion's bargain between Cuchulainn and Curoi in *Fled Bricrend* as a solar myth, explains the Green Knight's colour as follows (1927, p. 59); the counterpart of the Green Knight in the Irish saga is Curoi, disguised as a *bachlach* (uncouth herdsman). Curoi, in FB, wears a dark grey (or dun) mantle (*brat dub lachtna*), the word for grey being

lachtna. But another word for grey, *glas*, can also mean green, and this ambiguity accounts for the Green Knight's leafy hue! (As we have seen, it is more likely that the two meanings of *glas* account for the "grey men" in Anglo-Irish versions of 313.) . . . Loomis seems to be on firmer ground when he links the Huntsman-Host, Temptation and Battle at the Ford episodes in the *Green Knight* with the first part of the tale of *Pwyll* in the Mabinogion, and equates Arawn, who wears a grey mantle and rides a grey steed, with the wintry huntsman of the *Wilde Jagd* (1956, p. 82).

[9] When I was in Sutherlandshire in the summer of 1957, I tried to establish which of the secret languages of the travelling folk the North Highland tinkers have. What they have is the *Beurla-reagad* (= *Beurla nan Ceard*, "lingo of the tinkers"), a very old Gaelic backslang related to the Irish Shelta. One day, a tinker boy said to me: "Tha fiar gu leoir ann an so air son nan *grais*" (= "there's plenty of grass here for the *grais*"). This is ordinary Gaelic, with the addition of one Romany word, *grai*, meaning "horse". My first reaction was to suspect that these Sutherland Stewarts knew more Romany than they were letting on, but the boy later admitted that he had learned the word from me when I was sounding old Alec the storyteller on his knowledge of the Lowland Scots cant and Romany.

Grai, incidentally, is one of the comparatively few Romany words —probably not above 15 per cent. of the vocabulary—found in the cant of the Lowlands.

[10] Translation: One point of it alone holds me longer spellbound than twenty-five centuries on the enterprise which made Neptune marvel at the shadow of the Argo.

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